Significance of the forest setting

Introduction

This play is based on the forest setting which is an important aspect in the love circles between the characters. Notably, the forest setting creates a mysterious, dark and wild atmosphere where the plot of the Shakespeare’s magical elements is played. Since the Elizabethans believed in the existence of supernatural beings, especially the fairies the forest setting in the play offers the natural setting which involves the fairies (Reynolds and Paul 513). Most of the Elizabethans in this play believed in fairies which are rare from the normal belief in fairies (Falk 263). For instance, the Elizabethans failed to picture some of the small creatures possessing wings. However, they possessed the belief that fairies had the equivalent size of human beings and appeared like them.

Additionally, the fairies were related with the nature taken by the forest setting in the play. The love cycle between some of the characters in this play are best suited in the forest (Vlasopolos 21). The forest offers the best place for Lysander and Hermia to escape. It provides the best place for these two characters to elope in pursuit of their personal love affairs. On the contrary the love between Lysander and Hermia gets into confusion in the forest. This is because; the forest possessed the flowers which were used to offer a magical concoction that would align love in one direction when applied in the body of a human being (Reynolds and Paul 514). Since Hermia had disobeyed her father’s will to marry Demetrius, the intention of her father to use the law to lure her to love the man of his choice is mistaken in the forest.

Unfortunately, while sleeping in the forest after elopement, the Puck spreads the magical love concoction to Lysander. Consequently, Helena comes to wake up Lysander to confirm whether he was alive. In response, since the love magical concoction worked on the basis that when applied in the eyelids of a human being, when he or she wakes up, he or she would love the first animal to see (Vlasopolos 23). Whether an animal or a human being. When Lysander is woken up by Helen, he falls in love with her leaving her previous lover Hermia confused. Therefore, the forest setting in this play provides the opportunity to make the play interesting and attractive to the audience. It is in the forest where the flowers that makes the magical love concoction are retrieved.

Moreover, since the Elizabethans in this play believed in the supernatural powers of the fairies, the forest setting of the play provides the mysterious perfect dark setting in the performance of the magic. Elizabethan folklore does not agree with the presentation of Shakespeare in fairy magic (Falk 264). Elizabethan had the belief that fairies were soulless and wicked and performed all their actions based on magical powers in response to individual benefit. On the other hand, in this play, Shakespeare is presenting the fairies to be mischievous beings striving to assist human beings while playing their pranks share (Reynolds and Paul 518). The forest setting in the play provides the best place for Puck fairies characterization to play his tricks.

*Different settings in the play*

 The play commences in the setting where Hermia is declining the demands of her father to marry Demetrius according to their traditions. Alternatively, she loves Lysander who is loved by Helena. The consequence of declining to marry the person of your father’s will in this setting is death (Falk 268). Therefore, the father of Hermia approaches the Duke for the interpretation of the law in marriage who suggests that if Hermia declines to marry the person of her father’s will she would stay chastity and worship the Diana goddess been a nun. The love confusion revealed in this setting leave the audience wondering on the fate of Hermia. The love circle between the four characters in this particular setting is interesting (Reynolds and Paul 520). This is because, Hermia loves Lysander, and her father wants her to marry Demetrius. Contrarily, Demetrius loves Helena. The love confusion between these two pairs in this setting helps to build the theme of love in the entire play.

Another setting in the play which presents confusion is the scene when Oberon the father of fairies together with his queen Titania comes in the forest. This confusion begins when Titania claims that she wants to stay in the forest and wait the wedding between Hippolyta and Theseus. When Titania refuses to give Oberon the Indian boy to use as henchman, Oberon becomes hungry and plans to punish her. The forest and night setting in this scene provides the chance for the next scene (Vlasopolos 25). In response, Oberon instructs the Puck to fetch the flower from the forest which possessed the magical love concoction in order to punish Titania for her decision. In this scene the theme of love confusion between characters is still in progress. Even though Oberon and Titania are in marriage, the difference between them on the Indian boy makes Oberon plan to punish his queen. Oberon wanted the love-in-idleness concoction to be applied in the eyelids of Titania so that when she woke up she would get in love with the first animal she came across (Falk 270). He wanted her to get in love with a forest animal for her refusal to offer him the Indian boy as a henchman in that wedding. In the contrast, Lysander and Hermia had eloped in the forest to avoid the love demands by the father of Hermia. Since Helena was desperate in her efforts to claim love from Demetrius who was the intended to marry Hermia, she got information about the forest elopement and followed Lysander and Hermia in the forest (Vlasopolos 28). Unfortunately, when Puck had prepared the magical love concoction to apply to Titania, he ended up spreading it to Lysander who was sleeping in the forest. The night setting in this scene makes the play become more interesting. Later, Helena finds Lysander sleeping and wakes him up (Reynolds and Paul 519). Consequently, as per the love meaning of the concoction, when applied in human body and the person wakes up he or she would fall in love with the animal or person that he sees first. Therefore, Lysander got in love with Helena leaving Hermia. Demetrius is confused about Lysander falling in love with Helena in the presence of Hermia (Falk 275). This love confusion makes the night setting in the forest reveal the power of supernatural magic. This setting helps to build the contrast in the play since the magical love concoction was intended for Titania by Oberon because of her refusal for him to use the Indian boy. Instead, the magical concoction ends up affecting the love between Hermia and Lysander. The four characters, Hermia, Demetrius, Helena and Lysander quarrel against one another since love confusion engulfs this night forest setting.

Furthermore, this play is based on contrast from one setting to the other. Notably, after the confusion between the four lovers, Shakespeare drives the audience in another setting where Puck is transforming the Bottom head to that of donkey. This makes the other characters appear worried. On the other hand, Titania sleeps and wakes up getting in love with the Bottom (Vlasopolos 27). At that instance, Oberon gets the opportunity to take the Indian boy. He then makes arrangement with Puck to take off the donkey face from Bottom while making Hermia, Demetrius, Helena and Lysander understand that they were dreaming after waking up (Vlasopolos 25). The dark setting in this scene together with the Bottom transformation into a donkey helps Oberon achieve his goals in this play. When Oberon makes these characters understand that they were dreaming, Shakespeare makes the fairies disappear from the play. This makes us understand the meaning of the name of the play. When the play is ending, Shakespeare makes the audience understand that the play was based on a dream when Theseus is waking the other character to attend his wedding. At this instance, the characters are behaving differently, since Bottom retrieves his donkey face (Falk 276). The father of Hermia allows her to marry Lysander since she does not love Demetrius. On the other hand, Demetrius regains his love with Helena.

*Relationship between the play structure and the structure in different settings*

 To begin with, the structure of the entire play is based on the forest setting which makes it suitable for the dream setting of the play. In the first setting, the darkness where the father of Hermia is pushing for his will in daughter’s marriage to be fulfilled reflects the dark wood setting in the forest setting of the entire play (Reynolds and Paul 520). Secondly, in the scene when Titania declines to accept Oberon to take the Indian boy as a henchman, the forest setting of the play help to reveal the confusion and contrast that makes Lysander to love Helena. It is the forest which possesses the flower that contains the magic love juice which spread to Lysander accidentally by Punk. Furthermore, the forest and night setting in this play helps audience to understand at long last that the play was based on a dream.

*Suggestions why Shakespeare begins and ends play this Athens*

 There are different suggestions as to why Shakespeare chooses the Athens as the best suitable setting of his play. The law of marriage in Athens favors the context of the love setting in this play. At the time when Shakespeare was writing this play, girls in Athens would only be married according to the will of their fathers. It is their fathers who decided who they would get married to. Moreover, the Athens girls are beautiful as presented in this play. Therefore, Shakespeare decided to use Athens due to the beauty of their girls. Furthermore, at the time of writing this play, there were many beliefs on supernatural powers in Athens. Hence the reason why Shakespeare decided to use Athens as the best setting.

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