

Frye's green world



**ASSIGN
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Frye's Green World model is a literary concept which allows for critical literary analysis. His model states a norm for which Shakespearean comedies follow. However there are clear limitations of the boundaries of Frye's Green World within 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. According to Frye, the Green World "begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis there in which the comic resolution is achieved and returns to a new world." (Frye, 1957, p10)

With this evidence, it is clear that there are conformities of the model; however, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' challenges the multiple concepts exhibited by the model. This essay aims to explore the concept of conformities and limitations with Frye's Green World Model in relation to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Frye asserts that the model is divided into 3 phases "old world, green world, new world" (Frye, 1957) which are defined as separate settings which Frye claims to be "entirely distinct" (Frye, 1957).

This would imply that total division is to be observed. Within the exposition, there is evidence of conformities to Frye's Green World Model through the language of the old world, which is characterised by the rigidity and the language of the law. This can be seen from Egeus language regarding Hermia "As she is mine, I may dispose of her" (Act 1, Scene 1, line 42). In this quote, the language of dominance is used to reinforce the overbearing male values of the old world. The use of the word "dispose" highlights the restriction of women in a patriarchal society.

Here, Egeus is asserting his authority as a dominant parent to Hermia, who he treats as an object. In the 'old world', the lexis used is that of law and

order, which reflects the theme of rigidity and tradition of the court in the old world. The use of possessive language here in the quote “ mine” reinforces that the unmarried daughters were considered as the property of their parents. The effect of this reflects the patriarchal society in which women found themselves in and the control which they were under.

This would have been received in a positive manner, due to the patriarchal society in which ‘ A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ was produced and this highlights the restriction of love for women within a setting of law, in which many women found themselves in. The order and quantity of speech reflects the hierarchy of Athens, where the law of the nobles was law. Egeus and Theseus have a significantly more to say than Hermia. This suggests that there is an apparent necessity for respect of status and one’s elders with regards to who speaks first and how much is spoken.

This implies connotations of 16th century England, during which Shakespeare wrote his plays. As a result, the old, urban world is revealed to be one of apathy towards the younger generation where both young and old live with a sense of discord which then acts as a catalyst for change; freedoms are sought within the green world. As the generations clash due to misunderstandings and decisions that the younger generation find unacceptable, the complications drive them into the concealment of the green world, which in comic terms is the site of hedonism and excess.

For Frye’s theory to appear correct, the language of this world would need to be antithetical to that of the ‘ old’ order. This is, at first, correct as seen by the fairies use of metre and imagery, as evident with the quote, “ Over park,

over pale, thorough flood, thorough fire". (Act 2, Scene 1, Line 3) this quote at the beginning of scene 2, helps to establish a magical setting, where the laws of the court no longer have any impact through the use of rich imagery and a moderately paced rhyme scheme.

The rhyme scheme here is regular, which can also be seen from the line length, which is indicative of the freedom of the green world and the transition from a world of restriction to one of frivolity. The lexical field of nature suggests a naturalistic setting in comparison to the harsh old world. This is used to emphasise the difference between each of the separate spheres, where the green world becomes the location for escape from the restrictions of law and a place for frivolity and mischief.

This helps to establish the contrast in the tripartite structure, where the green world becomes the location of the loosening of rigidity where problems can be solved and reorganised for the better. However, evidence of command and rule are seen here too " thou shalt not from this grove till I torment thee for this injury" (Act 2, scene 1, Line 146) Here, the use of ' torment' and ' injury' highlights the malicious tone in Oberon's voice. The use of ' torment' gives the reader a sense of foreboding for Titania and the potential events which may lead to this torment.

The use of ' injury' implies that Oberon wishes to cause injury, therefore inflicting pain upon Titania, which may be physically. The juxtaposition of ' injury' implies that the events which follow will be ones which harm mentally or physically and will torment the characters in the play. Shakespeare has used this quote to forebode the eventual coupling of Bottom and Titania,

which is instigated by Oberon, as a method of extracting his revenge at her, thereby causing his 'injury' and 'torment' when he tells her afterwards what he did.

The harsh lexis used reinforces the strong male values at the time in Shakespeare's society, for example 'injury', which reflects the injuries which women may have been subject to if they disobeyed their husbands and other authoritative male figures. The use of Oberon's dominant lexis and the inequality in the amount of dialogue suggests a sense of male dominance and values within the play, as women are overpowered by men, such as Oberon putting Titania under the Love in Idleness potion.