

Visions of Wisdom

Although the supernatural are used in both Richard III and in A Midsummer Night's Dream, their principle purposes are actually different. X

Shakespeare's use of the fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream is to educate X
and to solve the major crisis of the young lovers, while the use of the (1)
ghosts in Richard III is to foreshadow the impending doom of Richard and to
remind the audience of the omnipotent presence of God within the play.

Oberon and Puck are, for the most part, the main fairies who do the
educating of Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius. It is through the
dropping of the juice of the flower onto the eyes of the lovers and the
subsequent events that ensue that educate these four lovers in the silliness (2)
of their ways. It is when the spell of the flower is removed from Lysander's
eyes (III,ii) that the problem is solved. It is also through the escapades
of these lovers in II,ii and in III,ii that we the audience see the silliness (3)
and the character flaws of these young lovers and it is here that, in looking
back, the young lovers are educated in the ways of love.

On the other hand, the use of the ghosts in Richard III gives the X
audience the foreknowledge of what will come out of the fight between King (4)

Richard and Richmond on Bosworth Field. The ghosts tell us that Richard is to "despair and die" during the battle, while Richmond is to "[a]wake win the day" (V,iii). It is after these ghosts have appeared before both Richard and Richmond that Richard awakes and calls for another horse (V,iii). It is also the mission of the ghosts to remind the audience that the curses called out by Margaret Have been heard by God and it is his will that these curses will become true and that England will be ridded of the filth known as Richard.

HIDYK?*

X

(5)

Although the supernatural are used in both plays their purposes for being there is different. One is to solve the problem and educate, while the other is to foreshadow and remind. Both instances are in fact a very solid use of the supernatural to explain, to lend a helping hand, and to tell the future.

X

- 1.) Don't be afraid to reveal your point early in the essay —
What do you mean by "educate"? What do you mean by "crisis" — a word rarely associated with comedies?
- 2.) Do the lovers realize their "silliness" at the end?
- 3.) Or is it revealed to the audience?
- 4.) They would almost certainly have known who won.
Remember our discussion of Tudor propaganda?
- 5.) This is a nice point, or will be once you revise.
Why is God's attention important?

* This stands for "How do you know?" Grade C+