

A midsummer night's dreamexample essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Midsummer Nights dream is a play written in the late fifteenth century by Shakespeare for a nobleman's wedding. However this was not just any wedding it was one, which Queen Elizabeth the first would be attending. Consequently we could say that the play was 'tailor written,' for its purpose; It is nothing solemn nor serious but a romance with a touch of magic and comedy so an over emphasis on love would not offend the virgin queen. This is why Puck became the perfect, 'tool' for Shakespeare.

Puck, a traditional character in English folklore also commonly known as, 'Robin Goodfellow' was thought of as a mischievous spirit, a cunning shape shifter who was a practical joker. At heart, however people thought of Puck as a friendly spirit sympathetic to mortals. Mad is defined as somebody who is out of ones mind, insane, and wildly foolish so does this also define Puck? Puck is a servant to the king of the fairies Oberon. His official job is to be jester to Oberon though Puck must always do his master's bidding or face punishment.

In line 175, act 2: 1 Puck states: " I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. " This basically means that Puck is willing to do anything for Oberon hether it is ridiculous or not and whether he wants to or not.

Throughout the play Puck is repeatedly used as an agent to Oberon, who makes Puck meddle in the affairs of the human world. For example it is Oberon's idea to try to make Demetrius fall in love with Helena though when Oberon gives a bad description of him and Puck accidentally makes Lysander fall in love with Helena suddenly Puck is used as a scapegoat and blamed totally.

In line 90 act 3: 2 Oberon says: “ Of thy misprision must perforce ensue,” which states that it is Puck’s mistake and does not acknowledge Oberon’s own misjudgement. Puck’s practical jokes are never malicious and are done simply to amuse his master as he is commanded, for example skimming milk so however much a maid churned it, the milk would never become butter. This was done in the spirit of fun and humour. More arguments against Puck’s madness include his unwavering loyalty and obedience to Oberon. A truly mad person would not waste time carrying out Oberon’s every wish rather than doing what they want.

Unlike this every time Puck is seen in the play he is carrying out orders. Puck is constantly aware of human emotions such as Helena’s unrequited love for Demetrius, this is shown in line 114 act 3: 2: “ Shall we their fond pageant see? Lord, what fools these mortals be. ” This shows a level of sensitivity to them although it is clear he does not like their ignorance. He shows genuine remorse for his mistakes though on the other hand this could be interpreted to mean he regrets displeasing his master. Nonetheless many more of Puck’s actions throughout the play can also be used as evidence to prove his madness.

Most importantly is the language adopted by Shakespeare. At the beginning of the play Puck is used by Shakespeare as an ‘agent’ or ‘tool’ to be an intermediary to the audience. This means he introduces the difference between the fairy and human world, draws attention to the plot, locations and settings which is illustrated in line 28 act 2: 1: “ And now they never met in grove, or green, by fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen” These quite narrative parts are written in a pattern of a, a, b, b, c, c rhyming

couplets to sound more magical and show difference between the fairy world and reality.

Imagery is used to emphasise the magic and mystical tones in the fairy realm. In comparison, following a prank Puck's language style changes; it gets erratic rhyme schemes and loses its narrative role instead reflecting the excitement of the prank. For example in line 74 Act 3: 1: "What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here, So near the cradle of the fairy queen? What a play toward? I'll be an auditor-An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause." This not only reflects Puck's secondary role in the play, which is to have comical value but also shows a harsher less compassionate side of

Puck's nature towards humans. Another important argument in proving Puck's madness is that in act 3: 1, he unprovokedly and cruelly attaches an asses head to human and rude mechanical Bottom. He did this on his own initiative, not under orders from Oberon and in line 103 he says: "I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round, Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier." This quote tells us that not only did Puck attack Bottom for no good reason but intends to now lead him into a bog as he finds it entertaining. It also suggests that Puck is not fully subservient to

Oberon as he gets carried away with other things before what is supposedly his priority. The consequence of this unfounded trick is that Titania the fairy Queen falls in love with Bottom. This ties in with Oberon's plan to make a mockery of her by squeezing the juice of a 'love-in-idleness,' flower over her eyes so she falls in love with the next creature that crosses her path.

Conveniently for Puck this is Bottom. Upon returning to Oberon, Puck justifies

his earlier actions by claiming he attacked Bottom for this purpose; This proves that there is a dishonest side to Puck.

In 31 act 3: 2 he says while telling Oberon what he has done: “ I led them in this distracted fear, and left sweet Pyramus here, when in that moment, so it came to pass, Titania wak'd and straight away lov'd an ass” The tone of this shows that Puck is not only gloating and bragging but is proud of his actions.

In line 43 act 2: 1 Puck admits his guilt: “ I am that merry wanderer of the night, I jest to Oberon and make him smile. ” In conclusion I do not think that Puck is a mad spirit, as his general behaviour does not back up this description.

Firstly nothing suggests that Puck is insane though on some occasions, i. . his attack on Bottom show a lack of judgement. Nonetheless his reputation as Robin Goodfellow states that overall his is a warm hearted spirit. Pucks pranks are not wildly foolish as they do not endanger anybody nor cause long lasting harm. The true reality is that it is Oberon's persistent meddling with other people's lives that causes Puck to create havoc in the human world. It is a consequence of his ties with Oberon that he is used as a scapegoat to cover up Oberon's own foolishness when really Puck is just a slightly mischievous spirit.