

ABSTRACT

SEEING 'HEAVENLIE THINGS': DREAMS AND VISIONS IN SHAKESPEARE'S FINAL PLAYS

In this thesis I examine what may be called the heightened spiritual sight granted to characters that, through the tempests of life, have learned to see "heavenlie things." In *King Lear*, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *All Is True*, characters persevering through affliction are given new eyes with which they enter a divine plane of reality where they encounter God, or gods, in dreams and visions. These dreams and visions have received little consideration from the critical community, which has, for the most part, ignored the audience's unequivocal Christian habits of thought. In my analysis I utilize religious texts along with the most prevalent theories of the source and interpretation of dreams of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Jane Ellen Reid
May 2003