

The character of prospero in "the tempest"

Literature, William Shakespeare



Prospero's intricacy as a character appears to originate from his practically double nature apparent even from the very first act of the play. His love for and extreme compassion towards Miranda are contrasted really highly versus his hatred of Antonio and his maltreatment of Ariel and subsequently Caliban.

Prospero undoubtedly manages the dramatic action of the play but his motives are oftentimes uncertain. Shakespeare instantly establishes a possible, understandable reason for Prospero's retribution: to promote his daughter to her rightful position in society and to guarantee her future by binding her to Ferdinand in marital relationship.

Nevertheless readers spend the rest of the play trying to understand whether Prospero truly acts in favour of his children's interests or his own. Indeed it is unassailable that Prospero does not indulge his own natural disposition for revenge. However Shakespeare tempers Prospero's vengeful acts against those of well being.

Shakespeare utilizes Prospero to establish the theme of power and betrayal- good guys can be affected by the machinations of other guys.

The betrayal of Antonio has actually triggered Prospero to end up being bitter and difficult. As an outcome Prospero discovers as cold and cruel toward Ariel and Caliban-his two servants on the island- but it can be argued that he is just strengthening his position as ruler of the island.

A position that has been unlawfully taken from him once before, a situation that he has taken extreme caution to prevent ever occurring in the future;

hence why the Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano plot is never expected to succeed, as Shakespeare makes the audience fully aware in one of the most effective uses of dramatic irony in the play. Indeed the comedic effect is priceless as the innocent, uneducated Caliban is confident of his freedom and of the success of the murder plot.

Yet even while Prospero's self-serving impulses can be justified, one still wonders to what extent are these justifications truly applicable as while the play is about betrayal it is also about justice and the responsibility an individual must assume to admit his wrongdoings and ask for pardon.

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