

**Exploration of Themes and Characters in William Shakespeare's "The Tempest"**

Author names, Designations

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**Abstract**

William Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is a play that explores themes of power, betrayal, forgiveness, and the supernatural. This article examines the central themes, character development, and the use of literary devices in the play. The article also provides an annotated bibliography and a comprehensive works cited page.

**Keywords**: - up to 5 or 6 separated by commas

**Introduction**

William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," believed to have been written in 1610–1611, is one of his last plays. The play is set on a remote island and follows the story of Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, who uses magic to reclaim his dukedom and seek retribution against those who wronged him.

**Themes and Characters**

**Power and Authority**

The theme of power and authority is central to "The Tempest." Prospero's control over the island and its inhabitants symbolizes his dominance and desire for revenge. His use of magic represents the ultimate form of power, which he wields to manipulate and control others.

**Betrayal and Forgiveness**

Betrayal is a recurring theme in the play, with multiple characters experiencing treachery. Prospero's forgiveness of his brother Antonio, who usurped his dukedom, highlights the play's moral resolution and the triumph of forgiveness over vengeance.

**The Supernatural**

The supernatural elements in "The Tempest" are embodied by the character of Ariel and the magic that Prospero uses. These elements serve to create a fantastical atmosphere and emphasize the theme of power.

**Block Quotes**

> "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep." (Shakespeare 4.1.156-158)

This quote from Prospero's speech in Act 4, Scene 1, reflects the ephemeral nature of life and the play's exploration of reality and illusion.

MLA formatting rules vary for short and long quotes. Let’s take a brief look at both.

Short quotations (less than four lines in prose or three lines in verse) can remain in paragraphs. Enclose the quoted text with double quotation marks (“”), followed by a parenthetical citation before any punctuation marks in the outer sentence. See below for an example:

Literature serves its true purpose when an author’s prose provides profound insight, meaning, or significance for the reader. This begs us to question the centrality of the author’s intent and, instead, approach literature as “that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost” (Barthes 145).

When you’re including longer quotations, place them as a separate block of text, as shown below. Insert the quoted text in a new line, with the entire block double-spaced and indented half an inch from the left margin. Omit quotation marks and add the parenthetical citation after the final punctuation mark in the text.

When you are quoting verse, maintain line breaks as done in the original text.

**Here’s an example of MLA block quotation citation:**

While the episode itself makes no mention of the poem or its subject, the title alludes to it as an analogy to Heisenberg’s fall as a drug kingpin. Walter’s journey throughout this episode parallels the loss of legacy detailed in the poem:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away. (Shelley 549)

The “colossal wreck” mirrors the crumbling losses in Walter’s life: his family, his empire, and any wealth he could claim his own.

**Containers**

In MLA 8th edition, the concept of containers is used to organize citation elements. For example, a journal article within a journal is a container. Here's a citation using this concept:

Shakespeare, William. "The Tempest." *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by John Smith, Penguin Classics, 2016, pp. 345-412.

**et al Usage**

When citing a work by multiple authors, MLA 8th edition uses "et al." for more than three authors. For example:

Brown, James, et al. "The Role of Magic in Shakespeare's Plays." *Renaissance Magic*, Oxford University Press, 2018.

**In-text Citations**

In-text citations in MLA style include the author's last name and page number.

Example: (Shakespeare 23)

**Paraphrasing**

When paraphrasing, you should still provide an in-text citation. Example:

Prospero's control over the island is a manifestation of his desire for power and revenge (Shakespeare 23).

**Page Numbers**

Page numbers are included in the top right corner of each page, preceded by your last name.

Example: Smith 1

**Conclusion**

William Shakespeare’s "The Tempest" is a rich tapestry of themes, including power, betrayal, forgiveness, and the supernatural. Through the intricate relationships between characters and the symbolic use of the supernatural, Shakespeare explores the complexities of human nature and the redemptive power of mercy. The play’s enduring appeal lies in its ability to resonate with audiences across different eras, offering timeless insights into the human condition.

**Works Cited**

**Shakespeare, William. "The Tempest." *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by John Smith, Penguin Classics, 2016, pp. 345-412.**

**Smith, John. "Magic and Authority in The Tempest." *Journal of Renaissance Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2019, pp. 123-138.**

**Doe, Jane. "Forgiveness and Redemption in The Tempest." *Shakespearean Criticism*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2020, pp. 45-60.**

**Brown, James, et al. "The Role of Magic in Shakespeare's Plays." *Renaissance Magic*, Oxford University Press, 2018.**

**Annotated Bibliography**

Smith, John. "Magic and Authority in The Tempest." *Journal of Renaissance Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2019, pp. 123-138.

Smith explores the use of magic in "The Tempest" and its implications for the theme of authority. He argues that Prospero's magic symbolizes his control over the natural and supernatural worlds.

Doe, Jane. "Forgiveness and Redemption in The Tempest." *Shakespearean Criticism*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2020, pp. 45-60.

Doe examines the themes of forgiveness and redemption in "The Tempest." She analyzes Prospero's journey from vengeance to forgiveness and its significance for the play's moral message.