

Year 8 English

Knowledge Booklet

The Tempest



Name:

Class:

Big Questions

Big questions:

1. How does setting choice reflect themes of the play?
2. How are oppression and power presented within the play?
3. How do characters defy hierarchy?
4. To what extent has Prospero created a utopian society?
5. How does Miranda's character conform with the patriarchy?
6. How is colonialism a consideration within the play?
7. How is Prospero presented as a character throughout the play?
8. To what extent is this a didactic play?

Key Vocabulary

Key Word	Definition
Antagonist	A person who actively opposes or is hostile towards someone.
Colonialism	The action of taking over or taking control over the indigenous
Comedy	Entertainment intended to make the audience laugh.
Didactic	Intended to teach or provide a moral.
Enslave	To make someone a slave.
Foreshadow	A warning or hint of a future event.
Iambic pentameter	The rhythm of a line of verse; like a heartbeat, with one soft beat and one strong beat repeated five times. Usually used when a character is experiencing a particular emotion like anger or devotion.
Imagery	Visually descriptive language.
Loyalty	To have loyalty is to be faithful or committed to someone or a set of beliefs.
Oppressive	a situation or circumstance that is cruel, brutal or ruthless.
Betrayal	To break a promise or be unfaithful to someone; to expose someone to danger through providing information to an enemy.
Protagonist	Leading character of a drama, movie, novel or other fictional text.
Resolution	A final decision; a conclusion of a story; the action of solving a problem.
Savage	Fierce, violent and uncontrolled.
Soliloquy	Speaking thought aloud, especially by the character in a play.
Tragedy	An event causing suffering, destruction or distress.
Ubiquitous	Appearing or found everywhere.
Utopian	The ideal of perfect example. Usually in reference to society.

Key terminology: The Tempest

Key Term	Definition

Year 8 Knowledge Organiser: The Tempest

Of Mice and Men is a bleak tale of two migrant workers; the novel suggest that in order for life to be meaningful, it must contain hopes and dreams, even if they are unachievable.

Context	Characters			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shakespeare's audiences would have been very interested in England's effort to colonise distant lands. England was fast becoming a world power and Shakespeare explores the problematic relationship between coloniser and native people through Prospero and Caliban. In the early 17th century, the first English colonies were established in Virginia, North America. Paintings played a central role in helping British people understand the so-called 'New World' and gave interesting perspectives on what it means to be savage or civilised. Social status was gained through education, only accessible to the wealthy therefore native people were often seen as second class citizens. In Shakespeare's time, there was little distinction between magic and science. Many writers incorporated otherworldly elements into their work to find some rationale for all the misfortune in the world (plague, war, death, disease) Caliban's name is perhaps intended as an anagram of 'cannibal', though he is not a cannibal. Shakespeare may have seen Theodor de Bry's images of the Brazilian Tupinamba tribe, who raised families and were loyal to their friends but practiced ceremonial cannibalism on their enemies. 	<p>Prospero: The play's protagonist. He wields power over his enemies through magic and, having been usurped as Duke of Milan, now rules the island.</p>	<p>Caliban: Prospero's slave who believes the island rightfully belongs to him. His name is anagram of cannibal.</p>	<p>King Alonso: King of Naples who aided Antonio in usurping Prospero. He learns to regret his actions.</p>	<p>Ferdinand: son and heir of Alonso.</p>
<p>Miranda: Prospero's daughter. Naïve, compassionate and loyal due to her sheltered life on the island.</p>	<p>Gonzalo: An old, honest Lord. He helps Prospero & Miranda when Antonio sends them off in a leaky boat.</p>	<p>Antonio: Prospero's brother. Power-hungry & foolish.</p>	<p>Sebastian: Alonso's brother. Aggressive, cowardly and disloyal (like Antonio).</p>	
<p>Ariel: Prospero's spirit slave. Prospero rescued him from the witch Sycorax (Caliban's mother).</p>	<p>Stephano: a drunken butler.</p>	<p>Trinculo: a jester.</p>		

Plot - The entire timeframe of the novella is four days.

<p>Act one: A fierce storm threatens the lives of all aboard King Alonso's ship including Ferdinand, Gonzalo, Antonio, Sebastian, Stephano and Trinculo all of whom are shipwrecked on Prospero's island. Miranda begs her father to stop the storm but he tells her the story of why they are on the island: his brother betrayed them, taking the title Duke of Naples from Prospero by arranging for Prospero and Miranda to be sent to sea in a rickety boat. Ariel tells Prospero that the ship's inhabitants are all stranded on different parts of the island. He asks to be freed but Prospero refuses. Caliban (Prospero's other slave) claims the island is rightly his but Prospero forces him to comply through magic. On meeting, Miranda and Ferdinand fall instantly in love but Prospero enslaves him.</p>	<p>Act two: Ariel puts all the ship's passengers to sleep except Antonio and Sebastian who plot to seize King Alonso's crown. Just as they are about to attack the sleeping King, Ariel wakes the party up who all leave in search of Ferdinand, Trinculo and Stephano meet Caliban and give him wine. Caliban drunkenly worships Stephano.</p>	<p>Act three: Ferdinand and Miranda declare their love and agree to marry although Ferdinand is still enslaved by Prospero. Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano plot to kill Prospero with Caliban promising that Stephano can marry Miranda. Ariel hears and reports the plan to Prospero. A banquet appears in front of the royal party but, as they are about to eat, Ariel appears as a harpy and accuses King Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian of being sinners. The three flee in fear.</p>	<p>Act four: Prospero arranges the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand but halts the masque as he remembers Caliban's plan. He tells Ariel to tempt the men with garish clothes and sends spirits after them. Prospero promises to free Ariel soon.</p>	<p>Act five: Whole Prospero waits for Ariel to bring the royal party to him, he promises to give up magic. The group arrive and Prospero forgives them but states Antonio must give up his claims on Prospero's dukedom. Alonso grieves for the loss of Ferdinand and Prospero reveals he is alive and married to Miranda. Caliban, Trinculo and Sebastian are brought next to Prospero by Ariel and Caliban repents. The three are sent to decorate Prospero's cell. The royal party are invited to spend the night while Ariel's final duty is to provide calm seas for them to set sail the next morning.</p>
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Themes

Power and control		Betrayal, revenge and forgiveness		Order and Chaos		Master and Servant	
Antagonist	Colonisation	Didactic	Comedy	Enslave	Foreshadow	Iambic pentameter	Imagery
Oppressive	Betrayal	Utopian	Protagonist	Resolution	Savage	Soliloquy	Tragedy
							Ubiquitous

Key vocabulary

Homework

Homework 1 Re-read the context section of the Tempest Knowledge Organiser and make notes at home of how much you can remember from the first week. Prepare to answer the following questions as a knowledge recall quiz:

Due date

1. What is colonialism?
2. *The Tempest* was performed at which theatre?
3. What was the general opinion on the supernatural in Shakespeare's time?
4. *The Tempest* was written in the age of _____.
5. What does ubiquitous mean?
6. Who is the protagonist of the play?
7. Who are the two female characters of the play?
8. Who are the two servants that Prospero keeps enslaved?
9. What is a biblical allusion?
10. Name two possible themes of the play.

Homework 2 Learn the spellings and definitions of the following key vocabulary:

Due date

Colonialism

Enslave

Loyalty

Oppressive

Betrayal

Protagonist

Resolution

Savage

Soliloquy

Utopian

Ubiquitous

Homework

Homework 3 Re-read the scene and character summaries from your knowledge organiser and create a 20 question knowledge recall quiz for a partner which tests their understanding of the play. You must include the answers.

Due date

Example:

Q. Who is Miranda?

A. Prospero's daughter

Summative Assessment Exemplar

Undoubtedly, Prospero represents power within Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, however, as the island lacks hierarchy and power moves from one character to another, Prospero is powerless and other characters overrule him as a result of their intelligence, good character or kindness.

Prospero is a complicated character as he first appeared after the storm and the shipwreck. Shakespeare has created him to be a powerful man, and sometimes brutal, but when it comes to it, he can be kind and compassionate.

At first, Prospero is shown as a kind character when he assures his daughter that no one was harmed in the storm and decided it was time to tell Miranda. The audience then learns that Prospero, before, had political authority – “Thy father was the Duke of Milan, a prince of power”. He enjoys being a leader and wants to be in control of the island, just like he was in Milan. The abstract noun “power” demonstrates Prospero's pride and commitment to his role. Prospero went from ruling over people to being stuck on an island through studying magic and neglecting his duties. Whilst trying to gain power, Prospero lost a lot too.

Shakespeare shows Prospero as magical through the storm, and through act one. However, as the audience begins to question his power when he requests for Ariel to obey him and complete tasks in his replacement. When Prospero first came to the island, he was loving and cared for everyone but through the scene he becomes controlling.

Shakespeare is also presented as controlling over Ariel and Caliban. Caliban was first cared for “when thou carnst first, thou strokst me and made much of me”, but is now ruled over by Prospero. Furthermore, “... thou didst seek to violate the honour of my child”. Although Prospero was just being a father, the audience begins to think that perhaps for Caliban, it was an animal instinct. As Caliban has been treated badly, for technically the island is his by his mother, Sycorax. So, Prospero essentially took it over which links to the exact behaviour and actions Prospero's brother did to him. This enables the audience to question whether Prospero's actions are hypocritical or contradictory.

Shakespeare also presents Prospero as a protective father. The audience knows this as it took him twelve years for him to tell her the truth – “begin to tell” and “but stopped” highlights Prospero's reluctance to tell her in the first instance. Prospero also prizes his daughter – “then didst smile infused with a fortitude from heaven” and loves Miranda more than anything.

Overall, Shakespeare portrays Prospero as the main character with magic often bringing his power. He can sometimes be shown as manipulative and controlling over Ariel and Caliban but prizes his child above everything. He is demonstrated as a warm and loving father towards Miranda and protects her unconditionally.

Summative Assessment Mark Scheme

Key Stage 3 Mark Scheme - READING

	TDS R1 – Response	TDS R2 – Language/Structure	TDS R3 - Comparison
Level 4 Yr 7: 18-20 Yr 8: 17-20 Yr 9: 16-20	Show a perceptive understanding of the text, engaging fully perhaps with some originality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertinent direct references from across the text. • Sensitive and evaluative approach. • Critical analysis of text. 	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of language and structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses the effects of the writer's choices of language • Selects a judicious range of textual detail • Makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology • Analyses the effects of the writer's choice of structural features 	Shows perceptive synthesis and interpretation of both texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes perceptive inferences from both texts • Makes judicious references/use of textual detail relevant to the focus of the question • Statements show perceptive differences between texts
Level 3 Yr 7: 14-17 Yr 8: 12-16 Yr 9: 11-15	Show a secure understanding of key aspects of a text, with considerable engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and justify with well-chosen direct references. • Thoughtful approach to the task. 	Shows clear understanding of language and structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of language • Selects a range of relevant textual detail • Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choice of structural features 	Shows clear synthesis and interpretation of both texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes clear inferences from both texts • Selects clear references/textual detail relevant to the focus of the question • Statements show clear differences between texts
Level 2 Yr 7: 8-13 Yr 8: 7-11 Yr 9: 8-10	Show some understanding of key aspects of a text, perhaps with engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and justify with references to the text. • Straightforward approach to the task. 	Shows some understanding of language and structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to comment on the effect of language • Selects some appropriate textual detail • Makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately • Attempts to comment on the effect of structural features 	Shows some interpretation from one/both texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts some inference(s) from one/both texts • Selects some appropriate references/textual detail from one/both texts • Statements show some difference(s) between texts
Level 1 Yr 7: 1-7 Yr 8: 1-6 Yr 9: 1-5	Basic understanding of some key aspects of a text, with emerging engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May support ideas with references to the text. • Simple approach to the task 	Shows simple awareness of language and structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers simple comment on the effect of language • Selects simple references or textual details • Makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately • Offers simple comment on the effect of structure 	Shows simple awareness from one/both texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers paraphrase rather than inference • Makes simple reference/textual details from one/both texts • Statements show simple difference between texts
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	Nothing worthy of credit.	Nothing worthy of credit.

What is colonialism?

The history of colonialism is one of brutal subjugation of indigenous peoples.

Colonialism is defined as “control by one power over a dependent area or people.” It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people. By 1914, a large majority of the world's nations had been colonized by Europeans at some point.

The concept of colonialism is closely linked to that of imperialism, which is the policy or ethos of using power and influence to control another nation or people that underlies colonialism.

History of colonialism

In antiquity, colonialism was practiced by empires such as Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt, and Phoenicia. These civilizations all extended their borders into surrounding and non-contiguous areas from about 1550 B.C. onward, and established colonies that drew on the physical and population resources of the people they conquered in order to increase their own power.

Modern colonialism began during what's also known as the Age of Discovery. Beginning in the 15th century, Portugal began looking for new trade routes and searching for civilizations outside of Europe. In 1415, Portuguese explorers conquered Ceuta, a coastal town in North Africa, kicking off an empire that would last until 1999.

Soon the Portuguese had conquered and populated islands like Madeira and Cape Verde, and their rival nation, Spain, decided to try exploration, too. In 1492, Christopher Columbus began looking for a western route to India and China. Instead, he landed in the Bahamas, kicking off the Spanish Empire. Spain and Portugal became locked in competition for new territories and took over indigenous lands in the Americas, India, Africa, and Asia.

England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany quickly began their own empire building overseas, fighting Spain and Portugal for the right to lands they had already conquered. Despite the growth of European colonies in the New World, most countries managed to gain independence during the 18th and 19th century, beginning with the American Revolution in 1776 and the Haitian Revolution in 1781. However, the Eastern Hemisphere continued to tempt European colonial powers.

Starting in the 1880s, European nations focused on taking over African lands, racing one another to coveted natural resources and establishing colonies they would hold until an international period of decolonization began around 1914, challenging European colonial empires up to 1975.

Colonial rationale and resistance

Colonial powers justified their conquests by asserting that they had [a legal and religious obligation](#) to take over the land and culture of indigenous peoples. Conquering nations [cast their role as civilizing “barbaric” or “savage” nations](#), and argued that they were acting in the best interests of those whose lands and peoples they exploited.

Despite the power of colonizers who claimed lands that were already owned and populated by indigenous peoples, resistance is an integral part of the story of colonialism. Even before decolonization, indigenous people on all continents staged violent and nonviolent resistance to their conquerors.

Benefits and harm

Colonial governments invested in infrastructure and trade and disseminated medical and technological knowledge. In some cases, they encouraged literacy, the [adoption of Western human rights standards](#), and sowed the seeds for democratic institutions and systems of government. Some former colonies, like Ghana, experienced [a rise in nutrition and health](#) with colonial rule, and colonial European settlement [has been linked to some development gains](#).

However, coercion and forced assimilation often accompanied those gains, and scholars still [debate colonialism’s many legacies](#). Colonialism’s impacts include [environmental degradation](#), the [spread of disease](#), [economic instability](#), [ethnic rivalries](#), and [human rights violations](#)—issues that can long outlast one group’s colonial rule.

Critical Reading 2

Prospero - A Renaissance Magus *from the English and Media Centre Magazine*

Malcolm Hebron introduces some specialist contextual information about Renaissance attitudes towards magic, learning and politics and considers the way in which this knowledge illuminates *The Tempest*.

The Tempest has many familiar characters: the scheming usurper, the clown, the virtuous young nobleman, the faithful old courtier. We can recognise these types in other Shakespeare plays, and indeed in dramas today. But what of the figure at the centre of the play, Prospero himself? We can place him as a kind of wizard, a Gandalf or Dumbledore perhaps, but to a contemporary audience he would have been identifiable at once as something slightly different - a Magus, or mage, an ancestor of the gentle headmaster of Hogwarts, but not sharing all of his traits. Understanding what a Magus was can help us to answer one of the most intriguing questions raised by this play: is Prospero's magic a force for good, or something more sinister?

The Renaissance Mage

In Renaissance culture a Magus is someone who understands the cosmos and man's place within it. This knowledge is gained principally through study. Prospero prizes his books above his dukedom, and we can easily guess what kind of books they are. They would include Astrology, the study of planetary influences on the earth (Prospero notes his magical career is at its height or zenith while a particular star is in the ascendant). Prospero might have had to hand the mystical texts ascribed to the ancient Egyptian sage 'Hermes Trismegistus', which discuss how, through self-knowledge, a person can ascend to the divine. Perhaps, like the Italian scholar Pico della Mirandola, he also studied the Cabbala, the secret Hebrew Law given to Moses, where deeper meanings are encrypted within the letters of the text. A self-respecting Renaissance mage would also have been familiar with the writings of the philosophical school known as Neoplatonism, based on the idea that the soul naturally yearns to leave the body and be with God. Then there was Alchemy, concerned with the transmutation of matter (interestingly, in Alchemy, a 'tempest' is the term for sifting out impurities from a mixture). Such studies were 'hermetic', closed off to all but the initiated.

Next to these, Prospero would also have pursued studies we would deem more scientific, since a Magus must also understand earthly phenomena through careful observation. The goal of all this study is to transcend human limitations and achieve a complete understanding of the universe: the Magus is familiar with celestial, inanimate forces and sees how, through a complex system of 'sympathies' and 'correspondences', these are reflected on earth and in the soul of man. At the highest level, the Magus has the wisdom to perceive the mind of God. To attain this wisdom, he must not only study but also pursue a pure life, untainted by sin.

A Force for Good?

A Magus is, then, someone who devotes himself to the pursuit of wisdom. There were Renaissance scholars who pursued just such a course of study, anxious to unite the various strands of learning - classical, Jewish, Christian - in a quest to pursue a transcendent understanding of the universe. They included scholars like Pico, Marsilio Ficino, Cornelius Agrippa and the Englishman John Dee (a likely source for both Prospero and Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*). But a Magus is not merely a contemplative figure. His wisdom gives him the power to act, and it is this power that makes him controversial. The virtuous Magus acts only in accordance with divine Providence: he assists in God's work, and is thus a force for good. For example, he might apply his knowledge of the natural powers of plants to heal (several magi were medical doctors); or he might use astrological knowledge to calculate the ideal times for a harvest. John Dee was consulted on the most auspicious date for Elizabeth I's coronation. 'Good' magic of this kind is *magia*, or *theurgy*. It does not interfere with God's actions, but works with them, to the greater good of humankind.

A Force of Evil?

The powers of a Magus might equally lead him into bad magic, or goetia. The Church was particularly suspicious of those parts of hermetic study that seemed to suggest humans could alter nature as God has ordered it. Hermes Trismegistus, for example, gives instructions for calling down spirits to animate statues, a dangerous interference with the cosmos. Then there were the more usual kinds of manipulation, involving using this specialist knowledge for personal gain, for example by getting money from people by scaring them or providing a suitably flattering prophecy. There was also the possibility of dabbling in the Occult, or black arts. The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, was burned at the stake in 1600 on charges of dealing with the Occult. Reformed Protestant England was generally suspicious of magic for its associations with Catholic practices and teachings (such as the idea that relics held miraculous powers), and King James I was highly suspicious of magical activities. Dee was forced to defend himself and prove that his practices were in harmony with the divine, and though he succeeded, he died poor and disgraced in 1608, just two years before *The Tempest* was (probably) written.

Weighing Up Prospero's Intent

The Magus, then, was a controversial figure, and it is not surprising that Prospero and his actions have stimulated much critical debate. Is he a virtuous mage, practising magia for a beneficent end? Or does the magic of *The Tempest* have a darker side? Let us review briefly the case for each.

Several scholars have argued that Prospero is a Magus using his powers for the greater good, not for personal gain. His theurgy contrasts with the destructive goetia of Sycorax. If he simply wanted personal vengeance, he could have killed everybody in the storm. But he makes sure that no one is harmed. His aim is to bring his enemies to recognise their evil actions and repent, thus restoring them to divine grace. The illusions he creates are all for this purpose.

Prospero also wishes to marry his daughter to a worthy suitor. From the pure chastity of this couple a truly noble generation should emerge, ensuring the security of the dukedom. Ariel represents Prospero's art in its most spiritual form, free from the constraints of the body. Caliban symbolises his earthly side, and the fact that Prospero clearly has control over Caliban shows he has the proper discipline over his lower human tendencies.

When Prospero renounces his magic art, it is not a sign of guilt, but a necessary step to resuming his worldly duties as a Duke. The final scene of pardon and compassion is a fitting climax for this beneficent magic. If the reconciliation is not complete, it is because Antonio is still unable to repent: not even a Magus can take away divinely bestowed free will, or rid the soul of evil.

However, Prospero and his magic have also led to different readings. Some critics argue that his absorption in study is irresponsible, taking him away from his duties as Duke and allowing his brother to take over. At many points in the play, Prospero becomes angry, and his treatment of Ferdinand is hard to understand. His irritable demeanour and violent imagery hardly suggest a serene mage high above the world of human rivalry. Prospero himself seems to doubt his own 'rough magic' and its dubious effects:

***Graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers.***

It is as if he has been playing God, and wants to step back from this interference with the natural order. (This speech has also been interpreted as Prospero moving from a crude stage of magic to a more refined one.) Even the contrast with Sycorax is not wholly clear, since we have no other real source about her besides Prospero himself. At one point, it is Ariel who apparently points Prospero away from anger to higher thoughts of compassion, based on a human sympathy he is in danger of losing. Immersed in the ideal world of his books, Prospero is possessed by a desire for impossible purity in the world, and incapable of seeing that evil is a normal part of human affairs: he was naive about his brother, and foolish to leave Caliban alone with Miranda. He still seems to find it hard to believe that Caliban and his associates would want to plot against him. According to this argument, Prospero undergoes a journey of self-knowledge in the play: his magic has distanced him from real human behaviour, and he has to renounce it to return from a world of illusion and manipulation - a world similar to the art of theatre - to the human community.

A Drama, Not a Thesis

Which of these arguments seems stronger? The magic in the play does seem to be directed towards the good end of repentance and reconciliation. Yet the play is a drama, not a thesis for or against magic, and it surely reflects some of the suspicious atmosphere of the time. Prospero is not a benign sage but a troubled soul, given to irascible outbursts and brooding soliloquies. He does indeed seem ill at ease with his art and its 'vanity'. Ariel, the disembodied spirit, has to be released; the world must be returned to. Perhaps the play is not attacking magic but suggesting that it tests our humanity to the utmost. As Prospero leaves the island, he leaves us with a host of difficult questions, about magic, about colonialism, and about how successful the outcome of the play really is. On page and stage, the magical action of *The Tempest* is an abiding riddle, one to which no answer seems altogether satisfactory. Perhaps this is fitting since magic is ultimately beyond rational understanding, a hermetic world, a mystery.

Critical Reading 3

Shakespeare's Other World, from CommonLit

SHAKESPEARE'S OTHER WORLD

by Kim Zarins



"Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing" by William Blake is in the public domain.

In Shakespeare's magical plays *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, fairies and *sprites* work magic and dabble for a time in human affairs. Shakespeare drew inspiration for these otherworldly characters from oral tales filled with fairies, imps, hobgoblins, *boggarts*, elves, and many other spirits often believed not good enough to be angels or bad enough to be devils.

Oberon and Robin Goodfellow, two of Shakespeare's main fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are traditional Renaissance characters. Oberon is a legendary fairy lord. Robin, also called Puck, is a traditional, mischievous hobgoblin who changes shape, enjoys misleading travelers, and plays pranks on unsuspecting mortals.

Shakespeare's Ariel, the sprite from *The Tempest*, does not play games as Oberon and Puck do or feel human emotions. He serves a mortal master, Prospero, obediently but reluctantly. Unlike Puck, who serves a fairy lord, Ariel is a sprite imprisoned in a human world. His great desire is to be free.

In English Renaissance culture, good fairies helped mortals in need, often doing the cleaning and other chores. They also punished mortals with pinches and cramps, as the fairies in *The Tempest* do to Caliban. In many non-Shakespearean tales, however, fairies had more sinister links with witchcraft and the dead. The fact that Oberon is also called the "King of Shadows" hints at his connection to the shadowy underworld, although Shakespeare never makes his fairies obviously evil or ghostly.

Renaissance fairies tended to be small (Shakespeare's sprites play among the flowers), and were gifted with song and dance. However, they were not merely pretty but also mysterious and even melancholy. Ariel, for example, sings merrily about lying down in cowslips and playing with flowers, but he also sings about death ("Full fathom five thy father lies") to one of the island's visitors. Although usually beautiful, Ariel also appears before humans as a harpy, a frightening classical monster, half-human, half-bird, that tormented starving mortals by fouling their food. Shakespeare blends English and classical lore to show that fairies can be fearsome.

These two plays have inspired numerous works of art, music, and literature, among them Susan Cooper's modern fantasy novel, *King of Shadows*, about a boy who acts Puck's role. For centuries after the Renaissance, producers of the plays sugarcoated Shakespeare's fairies with butterfly wings and ballerina costumes. Less interested in empty prettiness, modern audiences appreciate otherworldly mischief and mystery.

Wider Reading List



<https://www.rsc.org.uk/first-encounters-the-tempest/>

RSC education have a range of interesting information about Shakespeare, the Tempest and include actor videos about how they approached specific scenes.

<https://www.shakespeareweek.org.uk/libraries/>

The Shakespeare week website have lots of engaging activities and reading around Shakespeare's work and contributions.

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-tempest>

A series of tasks and discussion points around the play from the British Council.

Film adaptations

BBC Teach animated series: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/english-ks2-the-tempest-index/zfdshbk>

A really interesting video to watch on the design of the RSC Tempest set! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmpFYBFpPCM&list=PLWI8THsLoGZpNetaH_poDPXc2Q52d-GSc&index=96