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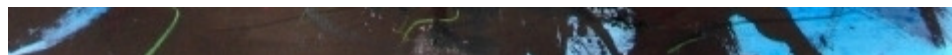
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Exploration of Theme





"Waves III" by Ken Steinkamp; www.kensteinkamp.com

In this new section, we aim to explore themes in popular literature, poetry, plays, art and music. In doing so, we gain new understandings and learn more through the words of the greats and the potent images of our collective histories. Write in, tell us your interpretations of your favorite works, and feel free to suggest the next piece of culture we research to divine its theme! Contact us! themes@thewriteplaceatthewritetime.org

In this summer installment of this page, we're exploring the Great Bard himself-William Shakespeare and the possible inferences in his last solely-authored play, "The Tempest".

In the midst of medical advancements and science, the whimsical Elizabethan Renaissance with its vallery, villains, and symbolic superstitions was fading. Though only middle-aged by modern definition, Shakespeare was considered an old man, a tribute to his time, and his magic world was facing the public's fascination with realism. Thus the magic vs. reality comparisons in the "Tempest" and Prospero's decision to leave his magic 'books' behind to rejoin the outside world. It even ventures to suggest the therapeutic quality of art in creating happy endings and Prospero possibly being the author, artist, or master of theatre concerning his role in the events.

Unofficially, it seemed that "The Tempest" was Shakespeare's farewell. One of the few originally imagined plots, it speaks of redemption through union in the next generation (the marriage of his daughter to his enemy's son), settling unfair accounts with enemies through wisdom, truth, cleverness and of course a bit of Shakespeare's signature magic. The play is written so that sympathies might be bestowed upon all characters. The protagonist, the Duke of Milan, might have actually existed. Poems speaking of this man tell of his immense library and how the goddess Fortunata had once smiled upon him, but he now felt disposed of. This perhaps ties in to the changing times Shakespeare was facing himself at the end of a glorious career or it reflected concerns popular in 1611. Always aware of the world around him, Shakespeare makes his points about the New World voyages, reflecting on colonialism and imperialism and 'Fortune' itself, the idea of the goddess is meant to signify the tempest which in

the end makes amends all in all. A humanist of the time observed that 'Fortune' might actually be referring to God.

Prospero's final speech transcends a gentleness which removes the poison of the wrath in the speech of Medea in Ovid's work. The play seems meant to interject humor and playfulness into the theme of justice and finding those and that which are true in life. As opposed to "Romeo and Juliet", the marriage of the enemies' children reconciles all as opposed to destruction. Shakespeare seems to bid adieu in this last solo work pointing out the foolishness in life which humans cause each other yet also their capacity to set it aright. It is wise and worldly, but it has faith. With modern uses and strong adaptations, his works stand the test of time and oft have meaning to the current world in art, political policy, and human nature. With a flourish of magic, Shakespeare spins his cloak, thereupon exiting the stage as does the noble Prospero. Let us know what the "Tempest" means to you!

themes@thewriteplaceatthewritetime.org

References and Recommended Reading: **Shakespeare** by Michael Wood

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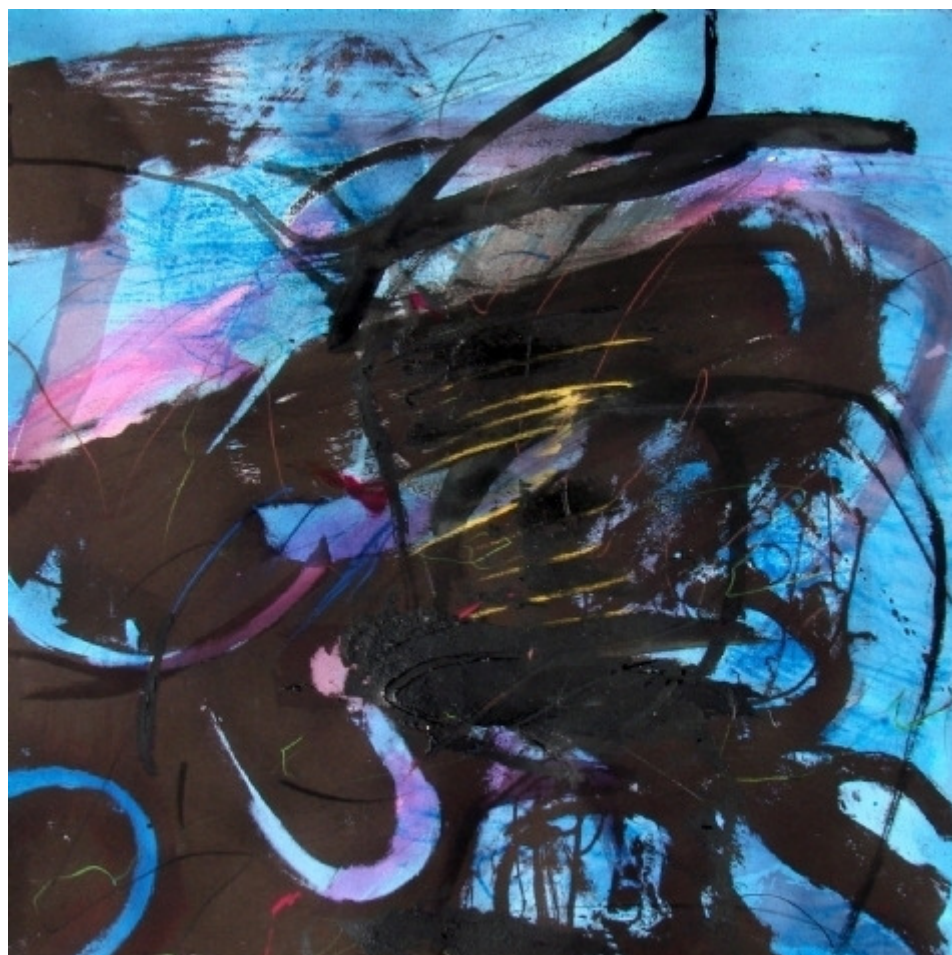
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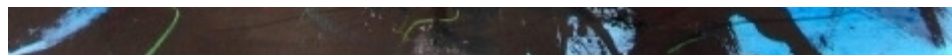
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