Closure and the Antimasque of The Tempest

Geraldo U. de Sousa

Abstract

Closure and the Antimasque of The Tempest

Published
1987-09-01

Issue
Vol. II, No. 1: Fall 1987

Section
ARTICLES AND STUDIES

Scholars may, without prior permission, quote from the Journal to document their own work, but it is their responsibility to make proper acknowledgement and to limit quotation to what is legitimately needed. This waiver does not extend to the quotations of substantial parts of articles or to a quotation presented as primary material for its own sake. Requests for permissions to reprint all or substantial parts of articles should be made to the authors, who retain all rights to their work.

Authors: If you prefer to remove your text(s) from this database please contact the managing editor (jdtc@ku.edu)

Information

For Readers
For Authors
For Librarians

Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism. ISSN 0888-3203.
This electronic edition is supported by the University of Kansas Libraries
The main components of a literary masque were a poetic induction or prologue, antimasque(s), main masque, revels, and then an epilogue. Now that we know what masques and anti-masques are, we can see how Shakespeare uses them in The Tempest. The most striking instance of the masque is the engagement of Ferdinand to Miranda in Act IV, Scene I. Prospero conjures a masque at this event and various goddesses perform. However, the masque in this scene has broader implications as it reminds Prospero of the bridge between magic and reality and paves the way for his return to power. The following anti-masque The Tempest deals with four distinct but mutually interacting worlds of existence -- the Heaven, the world of the supernatural, the human world, and the sub-human world. God with his angels occupy their place in heaven. The elves, fairies and spirits of Prospero, including Ariel, belong to the supernatural world. Prospero, Miranda, Ferdinand, Alonso and his men belong to the human world. And Caliban belongs to the sub-human world, which is half-way-housed between the human and the bestial worlds in "the chain of being". Prospero is an occult personality having mastery over the denize.