

What is the role of the epilogue in Shakespeare's "THE TEMPEST"

An epilogue is a sequel or an attachment that functions as a conclusion to a play or novel . It provides additional commentary about what happens to the characters. In 'The Tempest' the epilogue has an autobiographical element, as Shakespeare uses Prospero as his mouthpiece. Prospero addresses the crowd like an actor and a character in the play, blending reality with the illusion of a theater. He summarises how he got back his dukedom and forgave his enemies who wronged him and how ariel played a prime role in executing his powerful magic. He says, " Now my magic all is gone and my strength is all my own". He asks the audience if they have been enchanted by the play " or else my dear plan surely fails, which was to please you". He further says that their appreciative applause will be the fuel for his ship.

Just as Prospero is the orchestrator of the plot so is Shakespeare, the author of Prospero's drama. The Tempest is the last play in which Shakespeare bids farewell to the theatre, In the end, when Prospero surrenders his magic , he loses his ability to control the other players. In parallel, Shakespeare closes his dramatic career and relinquishes his position as the all powerful creator of his character.

He concludes the epilogue with the words, " Now free me, for my path to heaven". This is an explicit reference to Shakespeare's retirement from the stage.