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A LACANIAN ANALYSIS OF PROSPERO AS THE BIG OTHER IN "THE TEMPEST" BY SHAKESPEARE

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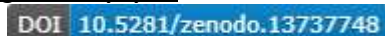
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Abstract

This study intends to prove how Prospero, the central character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest (1610-1611)*, embodies Jacques Lacan's concept of the "big Other" a symbolic authority that governs a subject's desire, identity, and social norms. By applying it, this study demonstrates how Prospero, through his use of language, magic, and psychological manipulation, establishes and maintains the symbolic order on the island and thus effectively controls the behaviours, desires, and identities of the other characters (subjects) in the play. Through a close reading of the text, this study shows that Prospero's role as the "big Other" is crucial to understanding the dynamics of power, i.e., how his authority extends beyond physical dominance to shape the very reality within which the characters exist. This analysis offers a fresh perspective on the mechanisms of authority and control in *The Tempest*. The findings of this study contribute to the field of psychoanalytic literary criticism by stressing the relevance of Lacanian theory in interpreting Shakespeare's work, as well as suggest that further applications of Lacanian theory to Shakespeare's works could enhance our understanding of the complex dynamics of control and desire in these texts.
Keywords: Shakespeare, Tempest, Prospero, Lacan, Symbolic

Introduction

Scholars generally consider *The Tempest (1610-1611)* a romance and frequently interpret it as Shakespearean dramatic art. However, the researcher contends that the play deals primarily with the theme of control and authority within the confines of an unnamed island. Central to the play is Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, who, along with his daughter Miranda, is exiled to an unidentified island. Prospero then punishes his usurpers, his brother Antonio and King Alonso of Naples, by luring them to the island where he controls and exercises authority over everyone. Therefore, this paper explores the role of Prospero through Lacan's concept of the "big Other," which represents the symbolic order that governs language, desire, and social norms. (Soomro, Shayan, 2023), While previous studies have examined the play's themes through feminist, postcolonial, and psychoanalytic frameworks, there has been no exploration of how Lacanian theory applies specifically to Prospero's character. This research aims to address this gap by positioning Prospero as the "big Other" and analyzing how he exerts authority and control over other characters within the symbolic framework of the play. (Diaz, 2024), The study examines the power relationships in the play and shows the harmful effects of this racism on the mental and physical health of people of color. It finally argues that Shakespeare is complicit in racial politics.

Research Questions

1. How does Prospero embody the "big Other" in The Tempest?
2. How does this embodiment enable him to exert authority over the subjects on the island?

Research Objectives

1. To explore how Prospero embodies the role of the "big Other" in The *Tempest.*
2. To analyze how this embodiment allows him to exert authority and shape the desires, behaviors, and identities of other characters.

3. To contribute a new psychoanalytic perspective to the scholarly discussion on Shakespeare's works.

Problem Statement

The central problem this study addresses is the lack of focused scholarly analysis on the function of Prospero as the "big Other" in The Tempest, a perspective that is crucial for understanding the play's power dynamics.

Significance of the Research

This research is significant because it provides new insights into how authority and control are constructed in Shakespeare's work, The Tempest. It offers a unique psychoanalytic interpretation that enriches existing literary criticism and broadens the application of Lacanian theory to early modern texts.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach rooted in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to examine how Prospero embodies the role of the "big Other" in The Tempest by William Shakespeare. The analysis involves a close reading of the text, focusing on key passages where Prospero's actions, language, and interactions with other characters show his function as the "big Other"—the symbolic authority that governs the desires, behaviors, and identities of the island's inhabitants. Furthermore, this study critically examines specific dialogues, monologues, and scenes that were Prospero's dominance and influence manifest or face resistance. This approach relies on textual evidence and relevant scholarly literature to uncover the mechanisms by which Prospero enforces his authority and shapes the subjectivities of the other characters. By integrating Lacanian theory with literary analysis, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and authority in the play to contribute to the broader discourse on psychoanalytic criticism in early modern literature.

Literature Review

Different research scholars and critics have looked at and criticized The Tempest through a

variety of lenses. Early critics, such as Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Bradley of the play, were concerned with structure and unity, meaning, thematic depth, imagination, the combination of natural and supernatural elements, and innocence. However, the rise of theoretical frameworks has led to more nuanced interpretations of the play. Gallagher & Greenblatt (2000) examines "The Tempest" in its historical context, mythic resonance, political overtones, and etymological significance and focus on magic and illusion, describing it as fundamentally about the salvation of individuals from various threats. Mebane (1989) views Prospero's access to supernatural forces as a sign of his closeness to divinity. In contrast, Felix Arcilla's (2023) paper, "Exploring the Dichotomy of Power and Oppression in William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Formalistic Analysis", investigates how Shakespeare employs language, setting, and characterization to convey themes of power dynamics and oppression. Feminist interpretations of The Tempest examine gender roles and relationships among characters: how gender concepts are presented and the underlying ideologies on imbalances and injustices. Early feminist views appear in Anna Jameson's (1832) "Shakespeare's Heroines" and Mary Clarke's (1851) "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines". In addition, Callaghan (2000) suggests that The Tempest mirrors early modern anxieties about female power and sexuality that ultimately reaffirms traditional gender roles. Since 1950, postcolonial theorists, starting with Octave Mannoni's "Psychology of Colonization," have used postcolonial theory to reinterpret the relationship between Prospero as the colonizer and Ariel and Caliban as the colonized is prominently highlighted in The Tempest. It is also argued that Ariel, not Caliban or Prospero, is the island's rightful owner (Kelsey, 2016). Identically, Morrison (2020) revisits the play's exploration of power dynamics to emphasize

Prospero's manipulation and orchestration of events as a reflection of colonial dominance. Paul Brown (2001) extends this analysis by saying that the play critiques colonialism's violence and power dynamics but does so ambiguously; therefore, it simultaneously reinforces and questions European imperialist ideology. These interpretations reveal the text's complex engagement with issues of power, domination, and resistance. Rasheed, Ifzal, & Tabbasum's (2021) study "Psycho-Existential Displacement in Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Fanonian Study" uses Fanon's idea of Psycho-Existential Crisis to critique The Tempest. They argue that the play links whiteness with humanity and suggests one must meet white standards to be considered human. Characters like Caliban are depicted with this racist mentality. The study examines the power relationships in the play and shows the harmful effects of this racism on the mental and physical health of people of color. It finally argues that Shakespeare is complicit in racial politics. Tuğlu's (2016) study "Identities in The Tempest, Tempests in Identities" analyzes the identity formation of characters in Shakespeare's play "The Tempest" through psychoanalytic theories of identity. It portrays patriarchal dominance over marginalized characters and examines the shifting process of identification through societal interpellation. This process reveals the universal effects of elements that nurture identities on a microcosmic scale, which makes the play a perfect stage to explore interactions between different embodiments of identity. (Soomro, Shayan. 2023), The research explores how Western patriarchal ideology, primarily reflected through Prospero, subjugates and controls other identities that fall below the social hierarchy, such as Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban. While Prospero stands as the main authority on the island, other identities remain subjects of his control. Although the play is presented as a romantic comedy, the study suggests that patriarchal ideology is subtly

reinforced through notions of gender and identity. Guillem Mas Solé (2020) applies a psychoanalytic approach to Shakespeare's portrayal of evil in his thesis, "A Method in Their Madness: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Shakespeare's Construction of Evil." The thesis examines the representation of evil through the analysis of two of Shakespeare's most notable villains, *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. Mas Solé combines contemporary understandings of evil, particularly those presented in Michael H. Stone's *The Anatomy of Evil (*2017), with the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to analyze the psychological dimensions of these characters. The study reveals that Shakespeare's depiction of these villains offers insights into the human mind and that their actions reflect a struggle between their conscious and unconscious motivations and impulses. Daniela Cârstea (2022) applies Lacanian psychoanalysis to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the paper, "The Return of the Real: A Lacanian Perspective." The study argues that Oscar Wilde's novel exemplifies Lacan's theory of desire and the "lack-in-being" that drives human behavior. Cârstea explores how Dorian Gray's identity and actions reveal the tension between his idealized self-image and his unconscious desires. As Dorian becomes increasingly alienated from his true self, his portrait—representing his internal conflicts—emerges as his "real" self. Cârstea concludes that Dorian's obsession with his external appearance and his attempts to fill his internal void ultimately led to his self-destruction, which highlights the role of the Lacanian "Real" in shaping human subjectivity. Sarah Ayub, Nabila Akbar, & Amina Bashir (2023) analyze personality structures in cinematic and literary works through Lacanian psychoanalysis in their study, "Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Structural Analysis of Personality Using Borromean Model in the Film 'The Pale Blue Eye.'" Their research uses Lacan's Borromean model to interpret the psychological dimensions of characters in various narratives, such as the psychological thriller Joker and the novel Butterfly. The study shows how characters represent Lacan's three mental states—the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic—and how these concepts reveal the interplay between unconscious desires, symbolic representations, and imaginary formations within character development. The authors discuss the relevance of Lacanian psychoanalysis in understanding the emotional and psychological dimensions of narratives across different media and establish it as an effective tool for interpreting character dynamics. Norman Marín Calderón (2015) analyzes Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through Lacanian psychoanalysis in the paper, "A Lacanian Reading of Hamlet: The Mourning Subject of Desire." Marín Calderón explores how Hamlet represents the conflict between desire and death and focuses on his inability to act until he confronts death itself. (Uddin, Anwar, 2024), Using Lacan's theories, the paper examines how Hamlet's desire is shaped by the unconscious influence of the Other, particularly the figures of his mother, Gertrude, and Ophelia, whom he positions as objects of his desire. Lacan's concept of the "phallus" as a signifier of desire reveals the psychological tensions that drive Hamlet's actions and inactions throughout the play. The paper argues that Hamlet's tragedy lies in his delayed action and the mourning that follows the loss of his phallic signifier—Ophelia—demonstrating Lacan's assertion that desire emerges from a sense of lack or absence. J. Pavithra Devi, S. Mirunalini, A. Bhuvaneshwari, & R. Sasikala (2022) examine the psychological dimensions of Shakespeare's tragedies in their paper, "Shakespeare and Psychology: A Study of the Soliloquies of Select Major Tragedies." The authors argue that soliloquies in plays like *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello* reveal both the conscious and unconscious motivations of the characters to provide insights into the workings of their minds. Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian theories,

the study highlights how Shakespeare's use of soliloquies allows audiences to explore the psychological conflicts of his characters, particularly focusing on themes like the Oedipus complex in *Hamlet* and the split personality dynamics in *Macbeth* and *Othello*. The authors conclude that the psychological complexity embedded in these soliloquies demonstrates Shakespeare's deep engagement with the human psyche, which makes his plays subject to multiple interpretations. Aisling Hearns (2011) provides a Lacanian analysis of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in her paper, "' I am I': A Lacanian Analysis of Richard III." The study explores the connection between Shakespearean tragedy and psychoanalysis, building on the works of Freud and Lacan, who previously analyzed *Hamlet*. Hearns examines the character of Richard of Gloucester and argues that his behavior in the play suggests a regression to the Lacanian Mirror Stage, where a child's self-identity is formed. Hearns suggests that Richard's congenital deformities are key to understanding his psyche and his motivations within the play. The paper discusses the clinical implications of this interpretation, including issues of entitlement for both the client and the analyst, as well as the impact of the Mirror Stage on children with physical deformities. (Zibin, Solopova, 2024), Previous studies have explored various dimensions of The *Tempest,* but they have not focused on how Prospero embodies the symbolic authority that governs the desires, behaviors, and identities of the other characters. Therefore, this study utilizes the Lacanian concept of the Big Other to argue that Prospero, who occupies the position of the Big Other, influences the conversations perceptions, and behaviors of other characters in the play according to his desires. This approach not only deepens our understanding of authority and control in Shakespeare's work but also demonstrates the relevance of Lacanian theory in analyzing early modern texts.

Theoretical Framework: Lacan's concept of the big Other

The concept of the "other" constitutes one of the most complex notions in Jacques Lacan's body of work. Initially introduced by Lacan in the 1930s, the term holds little prominence and primarily refers to "other people". Although Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) discusses both der Andere (the other person) and das Andere (otherness), Lacan's adoption of the term appears to stem from Hegel, whom he studied through lectures by Alexandre Kojève at the École des Hautes Études in 1933. Lacan engages with the concept of the "other" in significant ways. He distinguishes between the "little other" (l'autre) and the "big Other" (l'Autre), i.e, the "little other" refers to one's counterpart or reflection, which is evident in the mirror stage; whereas the "big Other" represents the symbolic, the domain of language, culture and societal norms that govern human subjectivity. According to May-Hobbs, the "big Other" serves as a hypothetical observer who watches our every action and conversation, and we obey its demands and perform for it (May-Hobbs, 2023). Furthermore, the "big Other" is not merely an external entity but also a locus of symbolic authority and functions as the ultimate reference point for meaning; consequently, it shapes identity and desire through language and social codes, as well as influences the psyche and dictates the parameters within which subjects navigate themselves (Hook, 2008). This points out the big Other's crucial role in the formation of the subject within Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. Lacan believes that the big Other, characterized as language and the law, plays an integral role in the order of the symbolic (Evan, 1996). Furthermore, the big Other embodies the symbolic realm, personalized for everyone (ibid). The concept of the Other encompasses both the radical alterity and incomparable uniqueness of another subject, as Evan explicates, while it also serves as the

symbolic framework that facilitates interaction with the said subject (ibid). Nonetheless, the significance of the Other as "another subject" is subordinate to its role as the symbolic order; primarily, the other functions as a locus wherein language formation occurs. Thus, to attribute subjectivity to the Other is a secondary notion, wherein a subject may inhabit this position and thus embody the Other for another subject (Blum & Nast, 2002). Lacan's notion of the big Other, therefore, emphasizes the crucial role of language and societal norms in shaping individual subjectivity and interactions within the symbolic order. Moreover, the big Other is not typically conceptualized as an individual, but rather as a symbolic order or structure that transcends any single person. It represents the totalizing system of language, laws, norms, and societal expectations that shape and govern subjects' identities and desires. The big other functions as the unseen authority that organizes human experience and interaction, defining what is meaningful, acceptable, or taboo within a specific cultural or social context (Grigg, 2009). However, a powerful individual or group can embody aspects of the big Other within a particular symbolic order (Macey, 2002). These individuals can represent the authority and control Inherent in the big Other, effectively shaping and enforcing the symbolic framework within which subjects operate. It is in this context that Prospero can be seen as the one who occupies the position of the big Other for the subjects in the play. Prospero's dominance over the island, his command of magical powers, and his manipulation of events and people illustrates his authority and ability to dictate and control the conversations and perceptions of others. Thus, Prospero embodies the symbolic order and dictates the reality and possibilities within which the subjects exist. This justifies his role as a manifestation of the big Other for the subjects in the play The Tempest.

Discussion

Prospero's orchestration of the tempest itself serves as a metaphor for his control over the symbolic order of the play. By conjuring the storm that shipwrecks his enemies, Prospero not only controls the physical world but also asserts his control over the symbolic order of the play wherein he influences the self-perceptions and realities of the subjects. His declaration, "I have with such provision in mine art/ So safely order[s] that there is no soul/ No, not so much perdition as a hair" (I, ii, 28-30), emphasizes his omnipotent control and his ability to dictate the outcomes within the play's symbolic order. This manipulation of events and characters through language positions Prospero, as the ultimate authority, shapes the reality and experiences of those around him. Through his mastery of language and control over the narrative, Prospero, who embodies Lacan's big Other, brings about the symbolic order within which the subjects exist. For instance, when he says, "By my so potent art. But this rough magic/ I here abjures" (V, I, 50-51), Prospero acknowledges the power he holds and his conscious decision to relinquish it. It is further evident when he assures Miranda, "Be collected;/ No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart/ There's no harm done" (I, ii, 13-15), to calm her fears and assert his authority over the situation. Thus, through these examples, Prospero's role as the big Other is solidified, as he manipulates the symbolic order through his linguistic and magical dominance. Prospero's embodiment of the big other role is also evident through his linguistic authority. He uses this authority to shape, manipulate, and control communications and perceptions within the symbolic order of the play. As the sole possessor of magical abilities, he dictates discourse between Miranda and Ferdinand and directs their interactions and perceptions of one another. For example, when Prospero orchestrates their meeting, he declares, "It goes on, I see, / As my soul prompts it" (I, ii, 424-425), which indicates his control over

shaping their desire. He further asserts his control, "Fair encounter/ Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace/ On that which breed between 'em!" (III, I, 74-76). This solidifies his authority as the primary mediator of reality. This is further illustrated when Prospero remarks, "So glad of this as they I cannot be, / Who are surprised withal; but my rejoicing/ At nothing can be more" (I, ii, 591). His words reveal his orchestration of events. In Lacanian terms, Prospero functions as the symbolic order, regulating the subject's access to reality through language. Prospero's control over the discourse and narrative aligns with Lacan's concept of the "master signifier," meaning that it constructs and maintains power dynamics within the social realm. For instance, through Prospero's linguistic authority, he controls the characters within the play. He commands, "Come on. Obey" (I, ii, 485). This positions him as the ultimate arbiter of meaning and truth. He also commands Ariel, stating, "Thou shalt be as free/ As mountain winds: but then exactly do/ All points of my command" (V, i, 95-97). Similarly, his domination over Caliban is evident when he reminds Caliban of his servitude: "Thou most lying slave, / Whom stripes may move, not kindness" (I, ii, 344-345). Prospero also reinforces his dominance: "For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps, / Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins/ Shall forth at vast of night that they may work/ All exercise on thee" (I, ii, 326-329). This assertion of control through language not only reinforces his authority but also delineates the hierarchical structure within the play, with Prospero at the top as the big Other. Prospero manipulates perception through illusions, crafting an environment where characters are subject to their desires. This domination over their senses and perceptions reinforces his position as the ultimate authority. Alonso acknowledges this power when he says, "Methought the billows spoke and told me of it, / The winds [do] sing it to me, and the thunder, / That deep and dreadful organ pipe, pronounced / The name of Prosper. It [does] bass my trespass" (III, iii, 115-119), highlighting Prospero's control over the island's elements and his ability to shape reality for the subjects. Likewise, Ariel asserts his subjection to Prospero's authority, "Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?" (IV, I, 148), exemplifies his willing obedience and further crystalizes Prospero's control over both the physical environment and the characters' self-perceptions. Through these influences, Prospero maintains his dominance and positions himself as the ultimate arbiter of reality on the island, where he shapes perceptions and truths with his mastery of illusion and linguistic authority and reinforces his control over the subjects. The characters' relational positioning with Prospero further strengthens his role as the big Other. Miranda, for instance, idealizes her father and internalizes his laws and norms. This is demonstrated when she wishes her father to align with her desires: "Pity move my father/ To be inclined my way!" (I, ii, 536-7). In the same way, Caliban's submission to Prospero's authority results in his adoption of the Other's language and beliefs, as seen in his acknowledgment, "For teaching me your language" (I, ii, 435), and his assertion, "For I am all the subjects that you have" (I, ii, 407-8). These interactions picture Lacan's concept of the subject's dependence on the big Other for identity formation. Miranda's deference to Prospero's authority reflects her internalization of his symbolic order, shaping her desires by his expectations. Caliban's grudging acceptance of Prospero's language and his reluctant entry into the symbolic order imposed by the Big Other further entrenches Prospero's dominance. Thus, as the relational dynamics between Miranda and Caliban unfold, Prospero's role as the big Other is reinforced, which highlights his control over their identities and perceptions within the symbolic order of the play. Caliban, despite his

initial resistance, ultimately falls under Prospero's control. His confession, "The spirit torments me. Oh!" (II, I, 69), reveals his suffering under Prospero's influence. Despite this torment, Caliban acknowledges his obligation to obey Prospero: "I must obey. His art is of such power" (I, ii, 444). This explains that regardless of a subject's opposition to the big Other, they are ultimately compelled to yield to its authority. In other words, despite Caliban's desire for freedom and resentment towards Prospero's control, he recognizes the futility of defiance in the face of Prospero's authority. This reflects Lacan's assertion that the subject's agency is always circumscribed by the symbolic order represented by the big Other, which renders resistance ultimately futile. Caliban's plight points to the pervasive influence of the big Other in shaping and constraining individual subjectivities, and it illustrates the inherent power dynamics in Lacanian theory. Thus, through Caliban's submission to Prospero's authority despite his resistance, the play exemplifies the profound impact of the big Other on subjectivity and agency, emphasizing the inevitability of its dominance over individual identities within the symbolic order. Ferdinand's entry into the symbolic realm of the Big Other, personified by Prospero, is evident as he queries the origin of music on the island, signifying his acquiescence to Prospero's authority: "Where should this music be? I' th' air or th' earth? / It sounds no more, and sure, it waits upon / Some god o' th' island." (I, ii, 462-64). This moment highlights Ferdinand's acceptance of the symbolic order imposed by Prospero. His questioning reflects his acknowledgment of Prospero's dominion over the island's symbolic order and his compliance with it, which shows his recognition of Prospero as the ultimate authority shaping reality on the island. Similarly, Ferdinand's declaration of love for Miranda, sanctioned by Prospero, further solidifies his incorporation into the symbolic realm controlled by Prospero. He

professes, "Wherefore weep you? / At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer / What I desire to give, and much less take / What I shall die to want." (III, I, 61-64). This emotional exchange reveals Ferdinand's recognition of Prospero's authority over his personal and emotional life, and it emphasizes Prospero's role as the big Other, which shapes Ferdinand's desires and actions within the play. Ariel's complete submission to Prospero's desire epitomizes the big Other's capacity to command and shape the desires of the subjects. When Prospero commands, "Thou shalt be free/ As mountain winds: but then exactly do/ All points of my command" (V, I, 95-97), Ariel's obedience points to the power dynamics where the big other dictates the terms of freedom and service. This interaction exemplifies the Lacanian concept of the symbolic order, where the big Other establishes the framework within which subjects operate and understand their world. By stating, "If thou more murmur, I will rend an oak/ And peg thee in his knotty entrails till/ Thou hast howled away twelve winters" (I, ii, 294-296), Prospero reinforces his authority and the consequences of disobedience. Ariel's fear of punishment and desire for freedom, which compel compliance, demonstrate how the big Other exerts control through both promise and threat. Ariel's longing for freedom is used by Prospero to ensure loyalty and service, and this shows how the big Other can direct and control the desires of subjects. Prospero's interactions with Ariel provide a vivid portrayal of the Big Other's power to command, shape, and define the subjects' desires and individuality within the play. Prospero's influence as the big Other transcends mere manipulation; it significantly molds the identities and agency of the subjects in the play. Caliban, for instance, primarily exists about Prospero, whose dominance over Caliban shapes his perception of the world and self. Caliban implores Prospero, "and teach me how / To name the bigger light, and how the

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less, / That burn by day and night" (I, ii, 400-3); this puts into focus Prospero's power to shape Caliban's linguistic and cognitive abilities. This interaction shows the profound impact of the big Other on the subject's development and sense of identity within the Lacanian framework. Alongside this, Caliban acknowledges his indebtedness to Prospero, stating, "You taught me language, and my profit won't / Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you / For teaching me your language!" (I, ii, 363-365). This dialogue illustrates Prospero's control over Caliban's education and language acquisition, and it further emphasizes Prospero's role as the dominant force in shaping Caliban's worldview and self-perception. Prospero's authoritative presence not only dictates Caliban's linguistic abilities but also influences his entire sense of being.

Conclusion

This study set out to answer the research question: "How does Prospero embody the role of the 'big Other' in *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare?" Through the application of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, it has shown that Prospero functions as the "big Other," the symbolic authority that shapes the desires, behaviors, and identities of other characters on the island. Prospero's use of language, magic, and manipulation constructs and maintains a symbolic order that dictates the realities and possibilities for the other characters. The findings show that his role as the "big Other" is not only central to understanding the dynamics of power in the play but also reveals the complexities of authority and control in the play. By examining Prospero's interactions with the other characters, this study argues that his embodiment of the "big Other" reflects a broader system of social and psychological control that operates through subtle mechanisms of influence and coercion, rather than mere physical dominance. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of *The Tempest* by highlighting how Prospero's role as the big other shapes the course of the play and the identities of its characters.

Recommendations

Future researchers could further explore how the concept of the "big Other" applies to other Shakespearean texts, such as Macbeth or King Lear to reveal how symbolic authority functions across different contexts and characters. Additionally, scholars might investigate how this concept interacts with other theoretical frameworks, such as Foucauldian ideas of power and surveillance, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of authority in other plays. Comparative studies examining Lacanian psychoanalysis in the context of works by other contemporary playwrights could also broaden the scope of literary analysis.

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