

**THE SELF-FASHIONING OF EUROPEAN COLONIAL IDENTITY AND THE
THREATENING OTHER IN SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST***

Lotfi Salhi
TUNISIA

ABSTRACT

This article uses *The Tempest* to scrutinize the ways in which the political discourse of early modern England might have shaped Shakespeare's plays and informed textual meaning. Being the playwright and poet of his era most quoted for reflecting the spirit of the age and the culture of the time, Shakespeare is used, herein, to show how constructions of subjectivity are central to the literature, theatre and history of Western culture in general. Not only did theatrical performance of the time document the social forces that informed and constituted history and society but itself functioned as a powerful, cultural and political institution which played an indispensable role in the construction of self-awareness and the fashioning of European colonial identity. The task in this article is to trace in *The Tempest* the contours of the dialogue between Shakespeare and the colonial question by emphasizing the fact that the Shakespearean theatre, whatever its ideological complexities, is not somehow above the historical and political conditions of its production.

Keywords: Shakespeare; Colonization; Caliban; Prospero; Identity; Renaissance; Discourse; the tempest.