



A Foucauldian Reading of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Sareh khosravi

MA in English Literature from Guilan University

Abstract

This essay aims to undertake a Foucauldian reading of William Shakespeare's Roman tragedy, *Julius Caesar*. The essay discusses Michel Foucault's ideas regarding the concepts of power and discourse and shows how these ideas are applicable to this play. The study consists of two parts; the first part focuses on Foucault's ideas on power, demonstrating the fact that power is not possessed by a specific individual, group or institution; rather, it circulates in society. The essay shows that in *Julius Caesar* there is no absolute ruler who imposes power on others; rather, there are power relations which indicate that more than one character is in possession of power. The second part of the study focuses on Foucault's ideas on discourse and episteme. According to Foucault, each episteme has its own dominant discourses and it is impossible not to be touched by the dominant discourses of the time one is living in. Therefore, this study demonstrates that though Shakespeare tried to depict the play as a Roman tragedy and with Roman qualities, he could not resist the inclusion of the dominant discourses of the Renaissance period, which was the time he was writing the play. **Keywords:** Foucault, Power, Discourse, Episteme, Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*