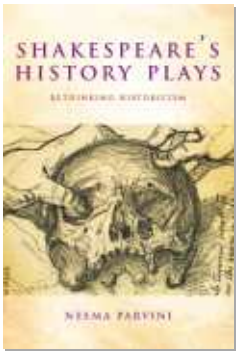
5 Solutions



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Chapter 5

Solutions

The problems with which I have been dealing in the preceding chapters are bound up with the question of history. Reading Shakespeare in itself is an inextricably historical experience, since the plays come to us from the remote past. But they also exist in the present. They occupy a strange dual space: they are simultaneously products of the distant past and objects within the present time that have a history of their own. New historicists and cultural materialists have stressed the need to read historically: to study, above all else, the historical moment from which the plays came. They have argued that history is fundamental to understanding what these plays are about. While agreeing on certain issues, I find the assumptions and methods of both new historicists and cultural materialists problematic. In the chapters that follow, I hope to resolve some of the problems that I have found in new historicism and cultural materialism by turning to Shakespeare's two great tetralogies about English kings: *1, 2* and *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*, and *Richard II*, *1* and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*. These eight plays not only deal directly with historical subject matter but also meditate on the nature of history and, in the process, arguably constitute a unique form of historiography. I wish to advance a method of reading historically that presents a serious alternative to new historicism and cultural materialism. I also wish to come to a better understanding of Shakespeare's own explorations of history and politics as they are manifest in these plays.

Before turning to the history plays, however, in this brief chapter I will summarise the problems I have found in new historicism and cultural materialism and then suggest possible solutions. My critique of new historicism emphasises the following points:

1. New historicist practice is a type of 'hidden formalism' that textualises culture and reads it as a formalist might read a poem.

2. This covertly formalist treatment of culture results in an ahistorical flattening of diachronic history.
3. Accordingly, following Clifford Geertz and Michel Foucault, new historicists tend to study the synchronic field or 'episteme' in historical isolation.
4. Because of this, new historicists seldom seek to make links with previous or subsequent epistemes.
5. When reading these synchronic fields, new historicists have a habit of making arbitrary connections, often by elevating the importance of an incidental anecdote, which then reveals some aspect of early modern thought. As Kiernan Ryan succinctly puts it: 'in the end the eccentric anecdote repeatedly turns out to be a synecdoche, an exemplary illustration of a pervasive cultural logic, which even the wildest imaginations of the age are powerless to escape'.[1]
6. By using anecdotes as synecdoches and making arbitrary connections, new historicists imply that there is a latent unity in the culture in question, whereby all its apparently disparate elements work to the same end; in this way they inadvertently reproduce the functionalism of Talcott Parsons.
7. Stephen Greenblatt's notion of 'social energy' also reveals a kind of culturalism or 'cultural essentialism' in new historicist thought which assumes that there are 'generic structures' in cultures that can be uncovered through analysis. One consequence of this is that it leads to a parochial, localised analysis, which seems incapable of taking wider contexts and influences into account.

Recent critiques of new historicism by other writers have praised it for its creativity and playfulness, especially in its use of the anecdote. For example, Steven Connor argues that new historicism's emphasis on the arbitrariness of the past draws attention to 'the bittiness of things'.[2] Sonja Laden argues that 'new historicism is a mode of "literary history" whose "literariness" lies in bringing imaginative operations closer to the surface of non-literary texts'.[3] For Laden, new historicists employ anecdotes to re-imagine history 'as it might have been' and to demonstrate 'that the primacy of historical evidence over narrative is by no means conclusive'.[4] I am not convinced by these arguments. As I have shown in Chapter 2, new historicists explicitly employ anecdotes to reveal the hidden structures of early modern culture. How can the 'paradigmatic instance' reveal the 'bittiness of things'? The logic of the synecdoche surely relies on homogeneity. And if, as Laden claims, new historicism is simply an elaborate rhetorical game that continually reveals the constructedness of history, then is Shakespeare criticism

really the appropriate arena in which to play it? The primary function of Shakespeare criticism must surely be to illuminate the plays it reads.

To this end, in my own reading of Shakespeare's history plays I will not employ anecdotes or make arbitrary connections, not least because they are not always immediately pertinent to the plays in question. I will also resist the tendency to treat the Renaissance period in isolation. The history plays explicitly refer back to medieval England and, since the time of their writing, have been the subject of over 400 years of critical and cultural reception. Shakespeare's history plays are as inextricably linked to their diachronic contexts as they are to their immediate culture; as Phyllis Rackin has argued, they resist a synchronic understanding of history.[5] I also see no reason to follow the new historicists in their commitment to 'local knowledge', as advocated by Geertz; Shakespeare's England absorbed a range of influences from Renaissance Europe. Furthermore, the country's foreign relations, not least with France, inform the history plays on many levels. Finally, it would be equally ill advised to make any assumptions about the unity of early modern English thought. My analysis will be sensitive to the nuances and fractures that existed in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries without feeling the need to assert its ultimate heterogeneity – it is entirely possible that the populace were largely united on some issues while being divided or even undecided on others.

My critique of cultural materialism finds fewer problems on the level of methodology. My salient criticisms are as follows:

1. Cultural materialism draws on a diverse range of thinkers such as Althusser, Foucault, Gramsci and Williams, but appears to ignore their obvious differences.
2. Cultural materialists implicitly reproduce the orthodox Marxist habit of claiming their writing to be 'the truth'.
3. They incongruously mix this pseudo-scientific aspect of Marxism with self-consciously 'subjective' feminism.
4. Cultural materialism's avowedly radical political position can distort both its treatment of history and its readings of Shakespeare's plays.
5. It also leads cultural materialists to tar their various opponents with the same 'liberal humanist' brush, which allows them to avoid engaging with any objection to their approach that is raised.
6. Cultural materialism lays claim to a marginal position without sufficiently demonstrating how it remains marginal in the twenty-first century.

The political dimension of cultural materialism has traditionally been the one thing for which it has been consistently praised. For Walter

Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Don E. Wayne and the other contributors to *Shakespeare Reproduced*, British cultural materialism represented a refreshing, politically animated antidote to the perceived quietism of American new historicists. My problem is that cultural materialism appears to put the proverbial cart before the horse; the politics are largely driven by the critic and then either substantiated or contradicted by Shakespeare's plays. If critics already know the political point that they want to drive home, and if their conclusions are already drawn, then why go to the trouble of reading the plays at all? If literature cannot challenge our preconceptions and is reduced to the role of supporting political arguments, then it is stripped of any independent power it might have otherwise had. However, even with these reservations made, no one could deny that cultural materialism has been successful in its most vital tasks: the tasks of debunking the myth of universalism that has been built around Shakespeare's plays and exposing the ways in which the status quo has exploited that myth in the classroom to further its own ends. However, I remain sceptical of the need to attack 'the centre' continuously, not least because it is no longer obvious what constitutes that centre. Governments, corporations, media outlets, celebrities and, increasingly, internet sites vie for people's attention and money; it would take a study in itself to determine which of those fields, if any, has hegemony. One thing is particularly clear, though: E. M. W. Tillyard and his brand of patriarchal British imperialism no longer represent the centre. This is not to suggest that the work of feminists and post-colonialists is done, but rather that they should find new targets in our increasingly fragmented post-modern society.

My chief aim in making these critiques of new historicism and cultural materialism has been to suggest ways in which readers of Shakespeare might move beyond the problems these anti-humanist approaches have encountered. There is a fundamental belief at the core of all historicist thought, regardless of its type or theoretical origin: the belief that individuals are shaped, often intractably, by the social organisations in which they find themselves in their particular world and time, and by the dominant ideas and attitudes of that world and time. At its most basic, historicism in the field of literary studies is founded on a fairly simple logic: societies produce individuals who write texts; therefore, in order to understand a text we need to understand the society from which its author came in all its cultural and ideology complexity. And in order to understand the society from which an author comes we need to understand the history of that society. A fuller understanding of the society and its history will facilitate a clearer understanding of the author and his or her text.

However, over the past three decades 'the author' has disappeared from this model since Roland Barthes declared his 'death'. Instead of texts as the products of socially conditioned authors, we have had texts as social products. As I have stressed, both new historicism and cultural materialism are anti-humanist approaches to literature from which the notion of 'the author' as an autonomous individual has been virtually erased. Indeed, in the work of some of these critics, it is difficult to discern *any* notion of individuality – a charge that feminists and humanists have levelled at them repeatedly over the years. Alan Sinfield has answered this charge directly:

> But thinking of ourselves as essentially individual tends to efface processes of cultural production and, in the same movement, leads us to imagine ourselves as autonomous, self-determining. It is not individuals but power structures that produce the system within which we live and think, and focusing on the individual makes it hard to discern those structures . . . I believe feminist anxiety about derogation of the individual in cultural materialism is misplaced, since personal subjectivity and agency are, anyway, unlikely sources of dissident identity and action. Political awareness does not arise out of an essential, individual self-consciousness of class, race, nation, gender, or sexual orientation; but from involvement in *a milieu*, *a subculture*.[6]

In essence, this is a rehash of a version of Althusser: individuals are ideological or cultural effects. The concept of individuality is itself an ideology, designed to give us the illusion of being free and autonomous in order to fulfil our social functions. To this, Sinfield adds the notion of political resistance. When he turns to Shakespeare, what is seen as important is how the plays in question represent and relate to state power – the same state power that ultimately produced the very conditions in which they were written. As a cultural materialist, Sinfield's avowed aim is to find in Shakespeare's plays 'faultlines', which are contradictions in ideological formations produced by 'sub-cultures' that allow individuals to dissent from or subvert state power. As we have seen, new historicists tend to make arguments for the state's ultimate containment of such subversive efforts, but their focus has been on the same basic issue none the less.

My problem with this anti-humanist strain in new historicism and cultural materialism is two-fold. First, it has given rise to a kind of 'post-theory' empiricism in modern Shakespeare scholarship that has nothing to do with either new historicism or cultural materialism. Take, for example, James Siemon's essay '"The power of hope?" An Early Modern Reader of *Richard III*', which appears in a major collection of essays about Shakespeare's histories. The focus of Siemon's study is on a copy of *Richard III* that was annotated by an unknown mid-seventeenth-

century reader. The question he seeks to answer is 'to what degree did the mid-seventeenth-century reader find the play familiar or alien?' Siemon argues that 'the annotations deserve consideration as pieces in an empirical puzzle that remains far from solution'.[7] Which begs the question: should literary critics be in the business of solving 'empirical puzzles'? While Siemon's essay is undoubtedly interesting (because the annotations are historical curiosities in themselves), it does not go on to *interpret* the play. *Richard III* provides the backdrop to the object that is being studied: the early modern reader who annotated it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the essay tells us quite a lot about that early modern reader but not very much about *Richard III* – the mid-seventeenth century is not even the contemporary historical context for a play written in the 1590s. This is not cultural materialism or new historicism (or even 'old' historicism) but a plain form of historicism that studies context for its own sake. However, although there are no discussions of Foucault, Althusser, state power, ideology or discursive formations here, whether consciously or not the same anti-humanist principles that underpin new historicism and cultural materialism underpin Siemon's essay, because he assumes that his seventeenth-century reader broadly represents the thought and values of his time. It might be argued that new historicism and cultural materialism have provided the appropriate intellectual and institutional contexts for Siemon to tackle his 'empirical puzzle'. Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll and Jonathan Gottschall are correct to point out that:

> Many scholars working under the influence of 'New Historicism' or 'cultural studies' now claim they are 'post-theory' because they focus not on theories but on 'empirical' historical data gleaned from archives. In reality, the archivists have not left poststructuralist theory behind but have only internalized it.[8]

Siemon's essay is by no means atypical; it is exactly the type of essay one would expect to find in major collections of modern Shakespeare scholarship. Where once formalists focused on the text in isolation, now historicists are focusing on history alone.

My second objection is theoretical. Gramsci, Althusser, Williams, Foucault and Bourdieu all offer us perfectly plausible explanations for the ways in which we live and think. I am convinced, for example, by Althusser's argument that Marxist revolutions did not occur in the West because capitalist ideologies have been so successful in interpellating individuals. Similarly, I am convinced by Foucault's argument that 'universally widespread panopticism enables [power] to operate, on the underside of the law, a machinery that is both immense and

minute'.[9] But neither of these thinkers can explain why it was Einstein and not someone else who discovered the theory of relativity or why it was Shakespeare and not someone else who wrote his plays. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* offers us the structural possibility of agency,[10] but it does not explain how, for example, two brothers – say Edward IV and Richard III – might have completely different moral values and abilities. We might all be caught in a web of ideology, culture and power structures which conditions and constrains us, but that does not account for the traits of individuals. Sinfield's concept of 'faultlines', or Williams's theory of contradiction on which it is based, does not answer these questions. Are all of the many differences between individuals produced by 'sub-cultures'? 'In that bit of the world where the sub-culture runs', Sinfield tells us, 'you can feel confident, as we used to say, that Black is beautiful, gay is good.'[11] But what of the black or gay person who wants to say *something else*? And what of the rest of us who might not belong to such a sub-culture? Are we doomed to become capitalist automatons? I cannot help but feel that there is something missing here, something individual and unaccountably *human*. According to Sinfield: 'the essentialist-humanist approach to literature and sexual politics depends upon the belief that the individual is the probable, indeed necessary, source of truth and meaning'.[12] But what of a humanist approach that is not essentialist? To maintain that individuals are fundamentally different from each other for reasons that are not reducible to ideology or power is not to assert a universal truth; it is merely to suggest that there is something more to people than structural effects.

There have been several significant recent publications, beyond those outlined in Chapter 4, that posit a form of 'non-essentialist' humanism: Phillip Davis's *Shakespeare Thinking*, A. D. Nuttall's *Shakespeare: The Thinker*,[13] and, remarkably, Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World* – indeed, some readers might be forgiven for gasping at the sight of the father of new historicism admitting that 'Shakespeare was, after all, human'.[14] These studies use a mixture of historical or scientific research, guesswork and imagination to produce strongly suggestive new readings of Shakespeare's plays.

The most radical of these studies is Davis's 'minigraph'. Davis draws on the essays of William Hazlitt and modern brain-scanning technology to suggest why 'Shakespearean thinking . . . somehow feels like no other'.[15] He pays particular attention to Shakespeare's peculiar and distinctive use of words and their physical effects on the reader's brain. For my purposes, however, Davis's most useful suggestions are not about neurological research or 'noun-verb shifts' but about why Shakespeare is a dynamic and original thinker. For Davis, Shakespeare's plays 'are

experiments which call forth a world that comes into being as if for the first time . . . things have to adapt to the places available to them. As characters face each other, the very space between them itself becomes a third presence.' Davis (like Hazlitt before him) thinks of Shakespeare's plays as 'experiments'. Put simply, they are simulations of life in which individuals think and act freely to the extent that they become '*more* than he or anyone can control'.[16] Davis thinks of Shakespeare as an alchemical genius playing with elements without quite knowing what the results will be:

> Shakespeare's experiments are deeply morphological. Everything is thrown into the melting pot to take its chance, and whatever comes out again, under the pressure of contingency, does so anew without explicit intent, lost and found in an improvised replication of life's creative process – a finite full of what is near infinite and almost too much for it.[17]

This is an interesting way of thinking about Shakespeare: as a dramatist who is concerned above all else with *process* – with action and reaction rather than static substance, or in Davis's words, 'a fast-released verb rather than an ever-fixed name'.[18] Andy Mousley echoes these sentiments in *Re-Humanising Shakespeare*, incidentally written the same year as Davis's *Shakespeare Thinking*. He praises 'Shakespeare's inordinate ability to intensify the "existential significance" of otherwise abstract ideas and precepts through human embodiment', which 'presents us with vividly "realised" . . . forms of life, ways of living'.[19] I will return to these ideas later, because I believe they are crucial for understanding Shakespeare's history plays. For now, suffice it to say that, although Davis does not explicitly reject the assumptions of new historicists or cultural materialists (as Mousley does), his view of Shakespeare is a long way away from the ideological state apparatus of Tudor England and its containment strategies.

Nuttall argues that historicism as we know it ignores the cognitive potential of writers:

> I am suggesting that as soon as you allow the poet cognitive or referential power, we enter into a world of analogy in which the social conditions or composition or, for that matter, the psychological genesis remain palpably distinct from the achieved work. The root is not the flower . . . New Historicism now holds sway in universities in Britain and North America (though there are signs that its grip is weakening). Where 'Historicism' means expending all one's attention on the immediate historical circumstances of composition and seeking to explicate the work in terms of those circumstances, I am opposed. The argument of this book is that, although knowledge of the historical genesis can on occasion illumine a given work, the greater part of the artistic achievement of our best playwright is *internally* generated. It is the product, not of his time, but of his own, unresting, creative intelligence.[20]

For Nuttall, it is clear that 'creative intelligence' is not reducible to ideology. There is something more at work in Shakespeare's plays than the process of ideology being reflected back on itself.[21]

As one might expect, Greenblatt's book, unlike Nuttall's, does not position itself against historicism. Instead, it is a playful and imaginative biography of the Bard, or 'Will', as he is called throughout *Will in the World*. Greenblatt's method is fairly straightforward: he tells stories of episodes in Shakespeare's life and then projects the events and people of those episodes on to his plays. For example, at one point he tells us that:

> at some moment in the late 1580s, Shakespeare walked into a room – most likely, in an inn in Shoreditch, Southwark, or the Bankside – and quite possibly found many of the leading writers drinking and eating together: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lodge, George Peele, Thomas Nashe, and Robert Greene.[22]

Greenblatt goes on to suggest that this group of bohemian university wits formed the basic materials out of which Shakespeare fashioned Falstaff and his crew. 'The deeper we plunge into the tavern world of Falstaff,' he tells us, 'the closer we come to the world of Greene.'[23] The hypothesis is clear: Shakespeare wrote about the people he had met, which is a simple, conventional form of historicism. What is striking about Greenblatt's study is the extent to which he humanises Shakespeare as a remarkable individual in a broadly humanist fashion. Greenblatt speaks of 'Will's own *primal* sense of theatricality' and tells us that he was 'intelligent, quick, and sensitive'.[24] Twenty-four years previously, Greenblatt had likewise written that Shakespeare 'possessed a limitless talent for entering into the consciousness of another'.[25] Again, none of these personal traits can be reduced to ideology or power.

While I would hesitate to follow the approaches of either Nuttall or the Greenblatt of *Will in the World*, which at times wander dangerously close to intuiting the author's intention, I do think that they are right to perceive in his writing human qualities that are beyond explanation in terms of ideology, discursive fields, culture and the social milieu. And to assume on the strength of his plays that Shakespeare was an exceptionally intelligent and imaginatively gifted individual is to expect them to be engaged in more than merely upholding or exposing Tudor or Stuart state propaganda. Accordingly, my aim is to attempt to read the history plays on their own terms in order to determine what they have to say about history and politics, and whether they are still of relevance today. What do I mean by 'on their own terms'? I mean that I will assume that, although he was undoubtedly conditioned by the prevalent ideas of his time, Shakespeare had the capacity to write about his subjects in ways

that had no precedent in those ideas. That is not to suggest that his views of these subjects are transculturally, transhistorically true, but to stress the fact that they had their origins in the creative genius of an extraordinary individual who had engaged with and thought deeply about such pertinent issues as the relationship between society and the individual, the forces that motivate individuals to make decisions and take action, and the forces that determine the shape of history.

Despite the diversity of the readings of Shakespeare's plays that new historicists and cultural materialists offer, both sets of critics are united by their basic assumption that the plays are primarily functions of history or, more specifically, the ideological moment of the turn of the seventeenth century. I would like to start my analysis by making the opposite assumption, which is that the plays are primarily the products of Shakespeare's particular thought processes and expressive power. While those thought processes were undoubtedly shaped and mediated by Shakespeare's world – both directly by his immediate location in London and the theatre, and indirectly through his wider social, cultural, philosophical and political mileux – that world still afforded him sufficient room for the free play of his 'creative intelligence'. I will assume, in other words, to quote Wilbur Sanders, that Shakespeare wrote with 'a mind which could read Holinshed and think otherwise'.[26]

The history plays provide perhaps the best means of comparing the playwright's thinking to that of his time, because the chronicle sources on which he based them provide a concrete basis for comparison. The chronicles of Hall and Holinshed, Samuel Daniels's historical poem, *The Civil Wars*, and the popular historical poem, *A Myrroure for Magistrates*, are texts that Shakespeare certainly or almost certainly read. They are all more politically didactic and ideologically transparent than Shakespeare in their treatment of the period between 1399 and 1485. These contemporary historical texts are both the most immediate and the most appropriate context in which to consider Shakespeare's history plays. Furthermore, the broader context of late sixteenth-century historiography – including European texts that Shakespeare may not have read himself – showcases the wide range of approaches to, and ways of thinking about, history that existed in the early modern period; it demonstrates, moreover, that Shakespeare was not alone in his capacity to 'think differently'. The history plays are not simply a complacent reflection of Tudor ideas and ideals; they reveal a brilliant young playwright thinking critically about the fundamental issues of history and politics: what are the mainsprings of actions and events? How much can be attributed to the personalities and motives of individuals and how much to forces beyond their control? What is the scope of personal

and political agency? Is power bestowed on individuals by God, or is it gained by those with the desire, willpower and ruthlessness to take it? And if it is the latter, which attributes and tactics are needed to succeed, and which ones lead to failure? Why do the majority of people in society accept a situation in which they are being exploited, and what might motivate them to rebel? Indeed, in writing the two tetralogies, Shakespeare was thinking through for himself and palpably struggling with the issues raised by history, ideology and power – the very issues that have preoccupied new historicists and cultural materialists, who ironically seem intent on subordinating Shakespeare's insights into those issues to the history, ideology and power of his time. Rather than using the plays to prove the theories of various political philosophers, I would prefer to read them as engaging in a dialogue with them: as a vital contribution to a philosophical debate that has raged in Western Europe from Thomas Aquinas to Niccolò Machiavelli and Michel de Montaigne to Karl Marx and beyond.

In the following chapters, I will first attempt to gain a firm understanding of late sixteenth-century English historiography as the key context in which to appreciate Shakespeare's dramatisations of history. By identifying how Shakespeare's contemporaries thought and wrote about history it will be possible to make some broad claims about Shakespeare's own treatment of history and the respects in which it is different from this. I will then undertake readings of the two tetralogies, paying particular attention to *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI*, *Richard II* and the two parts of *Henry IV*, in order to draw out Shakespeare's distinctive insights into the fundamental questions posed by history, ideology, politics and the individual.

Notes

1. Kiernan Ryan, 'Introduction', in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (London: Arnold, 1996), p. xvii.
2. Steven Connor, 'History in Bits', <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/hist-bits.htm>, accessed 21 December 2007.
3. Sonja Laden, 'Recuperating the Archive: Anecdotal Evidence and Questions of "Historical Realism"', *Poetics Today*, 25:1 (Spring 2004), p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
5. Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 44–6.
6. Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 37.
7. James Siemon, '"The power of hope?" An Early Modern Reader of *Richard III*', in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume II: The Histories*,

ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 361, 362.
8. Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll and Jonathan Gottschall, 'Introduction', in *Evolution, Literature, and Film: A Reader*, ed. Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll and Jonathan Gottschall (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 2.
9. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1977; rpr. New York and London: Penguin, 1991), p. 223.
10. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
11. Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p. 37.
12. *Ibid*., p. 36.
13. For an interesting companion piece to Nuttall's book, see: Marcus Nordlund, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Love: Literature, Culture, Evolution* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007). Nordlund's approach is closer to that of the evolutionary critics, but his approach has several affinities with my own, particularly in the area of character analysis: 'I talk about Lear . . . as if he were a real person endowed with a psychological depth and motivation that we can try to judge using textual evidence' (p. 13).
14. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), p. 216.
15. Phillip Davis, *Shakespeare Thinking* (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), p. 1.
16. *Ibid*., p. 13.
17. *Ibid*., p. 16.
18. *Ibid*., p. 21.
19. Andy Mousley, *Re-Humanising Shakespeare: Literary Humanism, Wisdom and Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 10.
20. A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 11, 24.
21. I am thinking of the process described by Macherey, which has proved useful for, amongst others, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Stuart Hall and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, as well as cultural materialists such as Alan Sinfield and Catherine Belsey. See Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) and *The Object of Literature*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
22. Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, p. 200.
23. *Ibid*., p. 216.
24. *Ibid*., p. 30, emphasis mine.
25. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 245.
26. Wilbur Sanders, *The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 74.