20 It is beyond doubt that Spinozism appears in Hegel as a utopian philosophy of capitalism. It is an objectivism of being and the beginnings of the dialectic of negation; in other words, Hegel identifies Spinoza as the philosopher of the utopia of production and the first author to identify the critical rhythm of the development of production. Hegel is prepared to philosophically, absolutely complete this initial design. Spinozism is therefore reduced from the beginning to a philosophy of the relation between productive force and relations of production. But Spinoza's thought is something altogether different!

21 On this dimension of Spinoza's thought, on the dignity of the struggle for freedom that organically marks it and identifies it as great philosophy, allow me to refer to Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952).

22 Such different authors as Zac, Corsi, and Alquié all arrive at this conclusion.

23 Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* B. III, t. 9 (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 526.

What is the overall interpretation of Othello?

CHAPTER 14

Cultural Materialism, *Othello*, and the Politics of Plausibility

Alan Sinfield

→ what does this mean?

Alan Sinfield's *Faultlines* (1992) is one of the best examples of Cultural Materialism at work. This chapter on Shakespeare's *Othello* is an especially forceful rendering of the Cultural Materialist argument that texts are not simple registers of social power. Rather, they must necessarily harbor dissident, fractious energies that undermine the sense of cohesive certainty that ruling elites seek to impose on a culture.

'Tis apt and of great credit

Cassio, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, is discovered in a drunken brawl. He laments: "Reputation, reputation, I ha' lost my reputation!" (2.3.254).[1] Iago replies, "You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser" (2.3.261–3), but this assertion is absurd (though attractive), since reputation is by definition a social construct, concerned entirely with one's standing in the eyes of others. In fact, language and reality are always interactive, dependent upon social recognition; reputation is only a specially explicit instance. Meaning, communication, language work only because they are shared. If you invent your own language, no one else will understand you; if you persist, you will be thought mad. Iago is telling Cassio to disregard the social basis of language, to make up his own meanings for words; it is the more perverse because Iago is the great manipulator of the prevailing stories of his society.

Stephen Greenblatt has remarked how Othello's identity depends upon a constant performance of his "story";[2] when in difficulty, his immediate move is to rehearse his nobility and service to the state. Actually, all the characters in *Othello* are telling stories, and to convince others even more than themselves. At the start, Iago and Roderigo are concocting a story – a sexist and racist story about how Desdemona is in "the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor" (1.1.126). Brabantio believes this story and repeats it to the Senate, but Othello contests it with his "tale":

> I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver,
> Of my whole course of love.
> (1.3.90–1)

The tale is – that Othello told a story. Brabantio "Still question'd me the story of my life" (1.3.129), and this story attracted Desdemona. She asked to hear it through, observing,

Explain?

> if I had a friend that lov'd her,
> I should but teach him how to tell my story,
> And that would woo her.
> (1.3.163–5)

So the action advances through a contest of stories, and the conditions of plausibility are therefore crucial – they determine which stories will be believed. Brabantio's case is that Othello must have enchanted Desdemona – anything else is implausible:

> She is abus'd, stol'n from me and corrupted,
> By spells and medicines, bought of mountebanks,
> For nature so preposterously to err,
> (Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,)
> Sans witchcraft could not.
> (1.3.60–4)

To Brabantio, for Desdemona to love Othello would be preposterous, an error of nature. To make this case, he depends on the plausibility, to the Senate, of the notion that Blacks are inferior outsiders. This, evidently, is a good move. Even characters who want to support Othello's story accept that he is superficially inappropriate as a husband for Desdemona. She says as much herself when she declares, "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (1.3.252): this means, he may look like a black man but really he is very nice. And the Duke finally tells Brabantio: "Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.290) – meaning, Othello doesn't have many of those unpleasant characteristics that we all know belong to Blacks, he is really quite like a white man.

With the conditions of plausibility so stacked against him, two main strategies are available to Othello, and he uses both. One is to appear very calm and responsible – as the Venetians imagine themselves to be. But also, and shrewdly, he uses the racist idea of himself as exotic: he says he has experienced "hair-breadth scapes," redemption from slavery, hills "whose heads touch heaven," cannibals, anthropophagi, "and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders" (1.3.129–45). These adventures are of course implausible – but not when attributed to an exotic. Othello has little credit by normal upper-class Venetian criteria, but when he plays on his strangeness, the Venetians tolerate him, for he is granting, in more benign form, part of Brabantio's case.

Partly, perhaps, because the senators need Othello to fight the Turks for them, they allow his story to prevail. However, this is not, of course, the end of the story. Iago repeats his racist and sexist tale to Othello, and persuades him of its credibility:

why do the Venetians need Othello?

> I know our country disposition well . . .
> She did deceive her father, marrying you . . .
> Not to affect many proposed matches,
> Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
> Whereto we see in all things nature tends . . .
> (3.3.205, 210, 233–5)

why?

Othello is persuaded of his inferiority and of Desdemona's inconstancy, and he proceeds to act as if they were true. "Haply, for I am black," he muses (3.3.267), and begins to take the role of the "erring barbarian" (1.3.356–7) that he is alleged to be. As Ania Loomba puts it, "Othello moves from being a colonised subject existing on the terms of white Venetian society and trying to internalise its ideology, towards being marginalised, outcast and alienated from it in every way, until he occupies his 'true' position as its other."[3] It is very difficult not to be influenced by a story, even about yourself, when everyone else is insisting upon it. So in the last lines of the play, when he wants to reassert himself, Othello "recognizes" himself as what Venetian culture has really believed him to be: an ignorant, barbaric outsider – like, he says, the "base Indian" who threw away a pearl. Virtually, this is what Althusser means by "interpellation": Venice hails Othello as a barbarian, and he acknowledges that it is he they mean.[4]

Iago remarks that the notion that Desdemona loves Cassio is "apt and of great credit" (2.1.282); and that his advice to Cassio to press Desdemona for his reinstatement is "Probal to thinking" (2.3.329). Iago's stories work because they are plausible – to Roderigo, Brabantio, the Senate, even to Othello himself. As Peter Stallybrass has observed, Iago is convincing not because he is "superhumanly ingenious but, to the contrary, because his is the voice of 'common sense', the ceaseless repetition of the always-already 'known', the culturally 'given'."[5] The racism and sexism in the play should not be traced just to Iago's character, therefore, or to his arbitrary devilishness, but to the Venetian culture that sets the conditions of plausibility.

What do ya think of Iago originally?

The Production of Ideology

What is the original interpret[illegible]

I have spoken of stories because I want an inclusive term that will key in my theory to the continuous and familiar discourses of everyday life. But in effect I have been addressing the production of ideology. Societies need to produce materially to continue – they need food, shelter, warmth; goods to exchange with other societies; a transport and information infrastructure to carry those processes. Also, they have to produce ideologically (Althusser makes this argument at the start of his essay on ideological state apparatuses).[6] They need knowledges to keep material production going – diverse technical skills and wisdoms in agriculture, industry, science, medicine, economics, law, geography, languages, politics, and so on. And they need understandings, intuitive and explicit, of a system of social relationships within which the whole process can take place more or less evenly. Ideology produces, makes plausible, concepts and systems to explain who we are, who the others are, how the world works.

What does the strength of ideology derive f[illegible]

The strength of ideology derives from the way it gets to be common sense; it "goes without saying." For its production is not an external process, stories are not outside ourselves, something we just hear or read about. Ideology makes sense for us – of us – because it is already proceeding when we arrive in the world, and we come to consciousness in its terms. As the world shapes itself around and through us, certain interpretations of experience strike us as plausible: they fit with what we have experienced already, and are confirmed by others around us. So we complete what Colin Sumner calls a "circle of social reality": "understanding produces its own social reality at the same time as social reality produces its own understanding."[7] This is apparent

stories –
subjects

when we observe how people in other cultures than our own make good sense of the world in ways that seem strange to us: their outlook is supported by their social context. For them, those frameworks of perception, maps of meaning, work.

The conditions of plausibility are therefore crucial. They govern our understandings of the world and how to live in it, thereby seeming to define the scope of feasible political change. Most societies retain their current shape, not because dissidents are penalized or incorporated, though they are, but because many people believe that things have to take more or less their present form – that improvement is not feasible, at least through the methods to hand. That is why one recognizes a dominant ideology: were there not such a powerful (plausible) discourse, people would not acquiesce in the injustice and humiliation that they experience. To insist on ideological construction is not to deny individual agency (though it makes individual agency less interesting). Rather, the same structure informs individuals and the society. Anthony Giddens compares the utterance of a grammatical sentence, which is governed by the lexicon and syntactical rules that constitute the language, but is individual and, through its utterance, may both confirm and slightly modify the language.[8]

Ideology is produced everywhere and all the time in the social order, but some institutions – by definition, those that usually corroborate the prevailing power arrangements – are vastly more powerful than others. The stories they endorse are more difficult to challenge, even to disbelieve. Such institutions, and the people in them, are also constituted in ideology; they are figures in its stories. At the same time, I would not want to lose a traditional sense of the power elite in the state exercising authority, through the ideological framework it both inhabits and maintains, over subordinate groups. This process may be observed in Shakespearean plays, where the most effective stories are given specific scope and direction by powerful men. They authorize scripts, we may say, that the other characters resist only with difficulty. Very often this does not require any remarkable intervention, or seems to involve only a "restoration of order," for the preferences of the ruling elite are already attuned to the system as it is already running. Conversely, scripting from below by lower-order characters immediately appears subversive; consider Shylock, Malvolio, Don John, Iago, Edmund, Macbeth, Caliban. Women may disturb the system (I return to this shortly), and in early comedies they are allowed to script, sometimes even in violation of parental wishes, but their scripts lead to the surrender of their power in the larger story of marriage. Elsewhere, women who script men are bad – Goneril and Regan, Lady Macbeth, the Queen in Cymbeline. Generally, the scripting of women by men is presented as good for them. Miranda's marriage in *The Tempest* seems to be all that Prospero has designed it to be. In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella is given by the Duke the script she ought to want – all the men in the play have conspired to draw her away from an independent life in the convent. To be sure, these are not the scripts of men only. As Stephen Orgel remarks, the plays must have appealed to the women in the audience as well: these were the fantasies of a whole culture.[9] But insofar as they show the powerful dominating the modes in which ideology is realized, these plays record an insight into ideology and power.

The state is the most powerful scriptor; it is best placed to enforce its story. In *Othello*, the Duke offers Brabantio, for use against Desdemona's alleged enchanter, "the bloody book of law" (1.3.67–70): the ruling elite have written this, and they decree who shall apply it. At the end of the play, Othello tries to control the story that will survive him – "When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, / Speak of them as they are" (5.2.342–3). However, the very last lines are spoken by Lodovico, the Venetian nobleman and representative of the Senate: "Myself will straight aboard, and to the state / This heavy act with heavy heart relate." The state and the ruling elite will tell Othello's story in the way they choose. They will try to control Iago's story as well, torturing him until he speaks what they want to hear: the state falls back on direct coercion when its domination of the conditions of plausibility falters. Through violence against Iago, the state means to make manifest his violence while legitimating its own.

violence

The relation between violence and the ideological power of the state may be glimpsed in the way Othello justifies himself, in his last speech, as a good Venetian: he boasts of killing someone. Not Desdemona – that, he now agrees, was bad – but "a malignant and a turban'd Turk," who "Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state." Othello says he "took by the throat the circumcised dog, / And smote him thus" (5.2.352–7). And so, upon this recollection, Othello stabs himself, recognizing himself, for the last time, as an outsider, a discredit to the social order he has been persuaded to respect. Innumerable critics discuss Othello's suicide, but I haven't noticed them worrying about the murdered Turk. Being malignant, circumcised, and wearing a turban into the bargain, he seems not to require the sensitive attention of literary critics in Britain and North America. The character critic might take this reported murder as a last-minute revelation of Othello's long-standing propensity to desperate violence when people say things he doesn't like. But the violence here is not Othello's alone, any more than Venetian racism and sexism are particular to individuals. Othello's murder of the Turk is the kind of thing the Venetian state likes – or so we must assume, since Othello is in good standing in Venice as a state servant, and presents the story to enhance his credit. "He was great of heart," Cassio enthuses (5.2.362), pleased that he has found something to retrieve his respect for Othello. In respect of murdering state enemies, at least, he was a good citizen.

What is the relevance?

It is a definition of the state, almost, that it claims a monopoly of legitimate violence, and the exercise of that violence is justified through stories about the barbarity of those who are constituted as its demonized others. For the Venetians, as for the Elizabethans, the Turks were among the barbarians.[10] In actuality, in most states that we know of, the civilized and the barbaric are not very different from each other; that is why maintaining the distinction is such a constant ideological task. It is not altogether Othello's personal achievement, or his personal failure, therefore, when he kills himself declaring, with respect to the Turk, that he "smote him thus." Othello becomes a good subject once more by accepting within himself the state's distinction between civilized and barbaric. This "explains" how he has come to murder Desdemona: it was the barbarian beneath, or rather in, the skin. And when he kills himself it is even better, because he eradicates the intolerable confusion of finding both the citizen and the alien in the same body. Othello's particular circumstances bring into visibility, for those who want to see, the violence upon which the state and its civilization rest.

Structure and Individuals

My argument has reached the point where I have to address the scope for dissidence within ideological construction. "The class which is the ruling material force is, at the same time, its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material

Historicism and (cultural Materialism)

production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production," Marx and Engels declare in *The German Ideology*.[11] The point is surely only sensible: groups with material power will dominate the institutions that deal with ideas. That is why people can be persuaded to believe things that are neither just, humane, nor to their advantage. The issue is pressed harder in modern cultural theory. In work deriving from Althusser and Foucault, distinct as those two sources are, ideological constructedness, not just of our ideas but of our subjectivities, seems to control the scope for dissident thought and expression. This is a key question: if we come to consciousness within a language that is continuous with the power structures that sustain the social order, how can we conceive, let alone organize, resistance?

The issue has been raised sharply by feminist critics, in particular Lynda E. Boose and Carol Thomas Neely. They accuse both new historicism and cultural materialism of theorizing power as an unbreakable system of containment, a system that positions subordinate groups as effects of the dominant, so that female identity, for instance, appears to be something fathered upon women by patriarchy.[12] How, it is asked, can women produce a dissident perspective from such a complicit ideological base? And so with other subordinated groups: if the conditions of plausibility persuade black or gay people to assume subjectivities that suit the maintenance of the social order, how is a radical black or gay consciousness to arise?

Kathleen McLuskie's argument that *Measure for Measure* and *King Lear* are organized from a male point of view has received particular attention. There is no way, McLuskie says, to find feminist heroines in Regan and Goneril, the wicked women, or in the good woman, Cordelia. Feminist criticism "is restricted to exposing its own exclusion from the text."[13] The alternative feminist position, which we may term a humanist or essentialist feminism, is stated by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely in their groundbreaking collection of essays, *The Woman's Part*. They believe feminist critics should, typically, be finding that Shakespeare's women characters are *not* male constructions – not "the saints, monsters, or whores their critics have often perceived them to be." Rather, "like the male characters the women are complex and flawed, like them capable of passion and pain, growth and decay."[14] This perspective is evidently at odds with the approach I am presenting. In my view, when traditional critics perceive Shakespearean women characters in terms of stereotypes, they are often more or less right. Such critics recognize in the plays the ideological structures that our cultures have been producing. My dispute with them begins when they admire the patterns they find and collaborate in rendering them plausible, instead of offering a critique of them. As McLuskie says, we should attend to "the narrative, poetic and theatrical strategies which construct the plays' meanings and position the audience to understand their events from a particular point of view."[15]

There are in fact two issues here. One is whether there is (for women or men) any such fullness of personhood as Lenz, Greene, and Neely propose, or whether subjectivity is, as I have been arguing, an effect of cultural production. The other is the authority of Shakespeare: can we reasonably assume that he anticipated a progressive modern sexual politics? As McLuskie points out, he was working within "an entertainment industry which, as far as we know, had no women shareholders, actors, writers, or stage hands" (p. 92). Ultimately these issues converge: the idea that Shakespearean texts tune into an essential humanity, transcending cultural production, is aligned with the idea that individual characters do that. As Lynda Boose says, the question is whether the human being is conceived as inscribing "at least something universal that transcends history, or as an entity completely produced by its historical culture." Boose credits McLuskie with "unblinkered honesty," but complains that one has "to renounce completely one's pleasure in Shakespeare and embrace instead the rigorous comforts of ideological correctness."[16] Maybe one does (try listening again to the words of most Christmas carols); but pleasure in Shakespeare is a complex phenomenon, and it may not be altogether incompatible with a critical attitude to ideology in the plays.

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. Literary significance and personal significance seem to derive from and speak to individual consciousnesses. But thinking of ourselves as essentially individual tends to efface processes of cultural production and, in the same movement, leads us to imagine ourselves to be autonomous, self-determining. It is not individuals but power structures that produce the system within which we live and think, and focusing upon the individual makes it hard to discern those structures; and if we discern them, hard to do much about them, since that would require collective action. To adopt the instance offered by Richard Ohmann in his book *English in America*, each of us buys an automobile because we need it to get around, and none of us, individually, does much damage to the environment or other people. But from that position it is hard to get to address, much less do anything about, whether we should be living in an automobile culture at all.[17]

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*. "In acquiring one's conception of the world one belongs to a particular grouping which is that of all the social elements which share the same mode of thinking and acting," Gramsci observes.[18] It is through such sharing that one may learn to inhabit plausible oppositional preoccupations and forms – ways of relating to others – and hence develop a plausible oppositional selfhood. That is how successful movements have worked.

These issues have been most thoroughly considered by recent theorists of lesbian identity. Judith Butler argues against a universalist concept, "woman," not only on the ground that it effaces diversities of time and place, but also because it is oppressive: it necessarily involves "the exclusion of those who fail to conform to unspoken normative requirements of the subject."[19] Butler asks if "unity" is indeed necessary for effective political action, pointing out that "the articulation of an identity within available cultural terms instates a definition that forecloses in advance the emergence of new identity concepts in and through politically engaged actions" (p. 15). For agency to operate, Butler points out, a "doer" does not have to be in place first; rather, she or he is constructed through the deed. Identity develops, precisely, in the process of signification: "identity is always already signified, and yet continues to signify as it circulates within various interlocking discourses" (pp. 142–3). So "construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency, the very terms in which agency is articulated and becomes culturally intelligible" (p. 147). Identity is not that which produces culture, nor even that which is produced as a static entity by culture: rather, the two are the same process.

How [illegible] ? kids!

If these arguments are correct, then it is not necessary to envisage, as Neely does, "some area of 'femaleness' that is part biological, part psychical, part experiential, part cultural and that is not utterly inscribed by and in thrall to patriarchal ideology and that makes possible female discourse."[20] "Female discourse" will be the discourse that women work out together at a historical conjuncture, and it will be rendered plausible by social interaction, especially among women. Desdemona gets closest to seeing what is going on when she talks with Emilia (what she needs is a refuge for battered wives); Othello gets it wrong because he has no reliable friends with whom to check out his perceptions. Subcultures constitute consciousness, in principle, in the same way that dominant ideologies do – but in partly dissident forms. In that bit of the world where the subculture runs, you can feel confident, as we used to say, that Black is beautiful, gay is good: there, those stories work, they build their own kinds of interactive plausibility. Validating the individual may seem attractive because it appears to empower him or her, but actually it undervalues potential resources of collective understanding and resistance.

Entrapment and Faultlines

While the ideology of individualism is associated mainly with traditional modes of literary criticism, the poststructuralist vein in recent cultural work, including new historicism, has also helped to obscure the importance of collectivities and social location. A principal theoretical task in such work has been to reassess the earlier Marxist base/superstructure model, whereby culture was seen as a one-way effect of economic organization. (In apparent ignorance of this work, much of which has been conducted in Europe, J. Hillis Miller supposes that people of "the so-called left" hold "an unexamined ideology of the material base.")[21] It was necessary to abandon that model, but in the process, as Peter Nicholls has pointed out, the tendency in new historicism has been "to replace a model of mechanical causality with one of structural homology." And this works to "displace the concepts of production and class which would initiate a thematics of historical change." Homology discovers synchronic structural connectedness without determination, sometimes without pressure or tension. Hence "the problem of ideology becomes a purely superstructural one."[22] The agency that has sunk from view, following Nicholls's argument, is that, not of individuals, but of classes, class fractions, and groups. Yet Marx was surely right to envisage such collectivities as the feasible agents of historical change.

New historicism has been drawn to what I call the "entrapment model" of ideology and power, whereby even, or especially, maneuvers that seem designed to challenge the system help to maintain it. Don E. Wayne says new historicism has often shown "how different kinds of discourse intersect, contradict, destabilize, cancel, or modify each other... seek[ing] to demonstrate how a dominant ideology will give a certain rein to alternative discourses, ultimately appropriating their vitality and containing their oppositional force."[23] The issue informs the ambiguous title of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; Stephen Greenblatt's central figures aspired to fashion themselves, but he finds that their selves were fashioned for them. So Wyatt "cannot fashion himself in opposition to power and the conventions power deploys; on the contrary, those conventions are precisely what constitute Wyatt's self-fashioning."[24] Hence Carolyn Porter's complaint that the subordinate seems a mere discursive effect of the dominant in new historicism.[25]

Of course, not all work generally dubbed "new historicist" takes such a line (not that of Louis Adrian Montrose). Nor is entrapment only here at issue – it arises generally in functionalism, structuralism, and Althusserian Marxism. Greenblatt has recently denied proposing that resistance is always coopted, and he is in my view right to say that his "Invisible Bullets" essay has often been misinterpreted.[26] I associate the entrapment model with new historicism nevertheless, because its treatment there has been distinctively subtle, powerful, and pressured, and because it is, of course, not by chance that this aspect of new historicism has been emphasized. The notion that dissidence is characteristically contained has caught the imagination of the profession. Therefore, even while acknowledging the diversity and specificity of actual writing, it is the aspect of new-historicist thought that has to be addressed.

An instance that confronts the entrapment model at its heart is the risk that the legally constituted ruler might not be able to control the military apparatus. Valuable new historicist analyses, considering the interaction of the monarch and the court, have tended to discover "power" moving in an apparently unbreakable circle – proceeding from and returning to the monarch. But although absolutist ideology represents the ruler as the necessary and sufficient source of national unity, the early modern state depended in the last analysis, like other states, upon military force. The obvious instance is the Earl of Essex's rebellion in 1601. With the queen aging and military success in Cadiz to his credit, it was easy for the charismatic earl to suppose that he should not remain subordinate. Ideological and military power threaten to split apart; it is a faultline in the political structure. Indeed, army coups against legitimate but militarily dependent political leaders still occur all the time. In the United States, during the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur believed he could override the authority of President Harry S. Truman.

In *Macbeth*, Duncan has the legitimacy but Macbeth is the best fighter. Duncan cannot but delegate power to subordinates, who may turn it back upon him – the initial rebellion is that of the Thane of Cawdor, in whom Duncan says he "built / An absolute trust."[27] If the thought of revolt can enter the mind of Cawdor, then it will occur to Macbeth, and others; its source is not just personal (Macbeth's ambition). Of course, it is crucial to the ideology of absolutism to deny that the state suffers such a structural flaw. Hence the projection of the whole issue onto a supernatural backdrop of good and evil, and the implication that disruption must derive, or be crucially reinforced, from outside (by the Weird Sisters and the distinctively demonic Lady Macbeth). Macbeth's mistake, arguably, is that he falls for Duncan's ideology and loses his nerve. However, this does not mean that absolutist ideology was inevitably successful – when Charles I tried to insist upon it there was a revolution.

Henry V offers a magical resolution of this faultline by presenting the legitimate king as the triumphant war leader. The pressure of aspiration and anxiety around the matter may be gauged from the reference to Essex by the Chorus of Act 5. In the most specific contemporary allusion in any Shakespeare play, Henry V's return from France is compared first to Caesar's return as conqueror to Rome and then to Essex's anticipated return from Ireland:

> As, by a lower but by loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,

> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him! much more, and much more cause,
> Did they this Harry.[28]

Notice the prudent qualification that this is "a lower . . . likelihood" insofar as Essex is but "the general of our gracious empress"; Harry would be welcomed "much more, and much more cause." The text strives to envisage a leader whose power, unlike that of the queen, would be uncontestable, but yet at the same time that of the queen. Promoting Elizabeth to empress (of Ireland) seems to give her a further edge over her commander. Even so the comparisons refuse to stabilize, for Henry V himself has just been likened to a caesar, and Julius Caesar threatened the government after his triumphal entry into Rome. And Elizabeth becomes empress only through Essex's military success, and that very success would enhance his potential for revolt. With the city specified as "peaceful," it seems only thoughtful to wonder whether it would remain so. However, faultlines are by definition resistant to the fantasies that would erase them. The epilogue to *Henry V* has to record that the absolutist pyramid collapsed with the accession of Henry VI, who, precisely, was not the strongest military leader. And Essex failed to mobilize sufficient support to bring Elizabeth within his power.

My argument is that dissident potential derives ultimately not from essential qualities in individuals (though they have qualities) but from conflict and contradiction that the social order inevitably produces within itself, even as it attempts to sustain itself. Despite their power, dominant ideological formations are always, in practice, under pressure, striving to substantiate their claim to superior plausibility in the face of diverse disturbances. Hence Raymond Williams's observation that ideology has always to be *produced*: "Social orders and cultural orders must be seen as being actively made: actively and continuously, or they may quite quickly break down."[29] Conflict and contradiction stem from the very strategies through which ideologies strive to contain the expectations that they need to generate. This is where failure – inability or refusal – to identify one's interests with the dominant may occur, and hence where dissidence may arise. In this argument the dominant and subordinate are structurally linked, but not in the way criticized by Carolyn Porter when she says that although "masterless men" (her instance) may ultimately have been controlled, "their subversive resistance cannot [therefore] be understood simply as the product of the dominant culture's power."[30] It was the Elizabethan social structure that produced unemployed laborers, and military leaders, but it could not then prevent such figures conceiving and enacting dissident practices, especially if they were able to constitute milieux within which dissidence might be rendered plausible.

Desdemona's Defiance

Another key point at which to confront the entrapment model concerns the scope of women. *Othello*, like many contemporary texts, betrays an obsessive concern with disorder; the ideology and power of the ruling elite are reasserted at the end of the play, but equilibrium is not, by any means, easily regained. The specific disruption

stems from Desdemona's marital choice.[31] At her first entrance, her father asks her: "Do you perceive in all this noble company, / Where most you owe obedience?" She replies that she sees "a divided duty" – to her father and her husband: "I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband: / And so much duty as my mother show'd / To you, preferring you before her father, / So much I challenge, that I may profess, / Due to the Moor my Lord." (1.3.179–89). And to justify the latter allegiance, she declares: "I did love the Moor, to live with him" (1.2.248). This is a paradigm instance. For, in her use of the idea of a divided duty to justify elopement with an inappropriate man, Desdemona has not discovered a distinctive, radical insight (any more than Cordelia does when she uses it). She is offering a straightforward elaboration of official doctrine, which said that a woman should obey the male head of her family, who should be first her father (or failing that a brother or uncle), then her husband. Before marriage, the former; afterwards, the latter. Ideally, from the point of view of the social order, it would all be straightforward. The woman's transition from daughter to wife – from one set of duties to another – would be accomplished smoothly, with the agreement of all parties. But things could go wrong here; it was an insecure moment in patriarchy. The danger derived from a fundamental complication in the ideology of gender relations. Marriage was the institution through which property arrangements were made and inheritance secured, but it was supposed also to be a fulfilling personal relationship. It was held that the people being married should act in obedience to their parents, but also that they should love each other.[32] The "divided duty" was not especially Desdemona's problem, therefore; it is how the world was set up for her.

The Reformation intensified the issue by shifting both the status and the nature of marriage. The Catholic church held that the three reasons for matrimony were, first, to beget children; second, to avoid carnal sin; and third, for mutual help and comfort. Protestants stressed the third objective, often promoting it to first place; the homily "Of the State of Matrimony" says: "it is instituted of God, to the intent that man and woman should live lawfully in a perpetual friendly fellowship, to bring forth fruit, and to avoid fornication."[33] Thus protestants defined marriage more positively, as a mutual, fulfilling, reciprocal relationship. However, they were not prepared to abandon patriarchal authority; it was too important to the system. In *Arcadia*, Philip Sidney presents an ideal marriage of reciprocity and mutual love, that of Argalus and Parthenia: "A happy couple: he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself, because she enjoyed him: both increasing their riches by giving to each other; each making one life double, because they made a double life one." However, the passage concludes: "he ruling, because she would obey, or rather because she would obey, she therein ruling."[34] Does this mean that Parthenia was fulfilled in her subordinate role; or that by appearing submissive she managed to insinuate her own way? Neither seems ideal. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton displays a protestant enthusiasm: "You know marriage is honourable, a blessed calling, appointed by God himself in paradise; it breeds true peace, tranquillity, content and happiness." But the elaboration is tricky: "The husband rules her as head, but she again commands his heart, he is her servant, she his only joy and content." The alternation of head and heart sounds reciprocal but is not, for we know that the head should rule the heart. Then the strong phrasing of "servant" reverses altogether the initial priority, introducing language more appropriate to romantic love; and finally "only joy and content"[35] seems to privilege the wife but also places upon her an obligation to please. Coercion and liberty jostle together unresolved, and this is characteristic of protestant attitudes.

In fact, protestantism actually strengthened patriarchal authority. The removal of the mediatory priest threw upon the head of household responsibility for the spiritual life and devout conduct of the family. Also, there was a decline in the significance of great magnates who might stand between subject and monarch. From these developments, protestants devised a comprehensive doctrine of social control, with a double chain of authority running from God to the husband to the individual, and from God to the monarch to the subject. The homily "Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion" derives earthly rule from God and parallels the responsibilities of the monarch and the head of household. Indeed, the latter could be said to have the more important role. "A master in his family hath all the offices of Christ, for he must rule, and teach, and pray; rule like a king, and teach like a prophet, and pray like a priest," Henry Smith declared in "A Preparative to Marriage" (1591). This leaves little space for independence for offspring, or anyone else in the household.[36] Smith says parents must control marital choice because, after all, they have the property: "If children may not make other contracts without [parents'] good will, shall they contract marriage, which have nothing to maintain it after, unless they return to beg of them whom they scorned before?"[37] As with other business deals, it is wrong to enter into marriage unless you can sustain the costs. This was one extreme; at the other, only radicals like the Digger Gerrard Winstanley proposed that "every man and woman shall have the free liberty to marry whom they love."[38] In between, most commentators fudged the question, suggesting that children might exercise a right of refusal, or that even if they didn't like their spouses at first, they would learn to get on. "A couple is that whereby two persons standing in mutual relation to each other are combined together, as it were, into one. And of these two the one is always higher and beareth rule: the other is lower and yieldeth subjection," William Perkins declared.[39] The boundaries are plainly unclear, and conflict is therefore likely. Hence the awkward bullying and wheedling in the disagreements between Portia and Bassanio, Caesar and Portia, Othello and Desdemona, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Leontes and Hermione. Lawrence Stone says dutiful children experienced "an impossible conflict of role models. They had to try to reconcile the often incompatible demands for obedience to parental wishes on the one hand and expectations of affection in marriage on the other."[40] At this point, the dominant ideology had not quite got its act together.

Parental influence over marriage in early modern England is nowadays often regarded simply as an instance of the oppressiveness of patriarchy, but that is not quite all. The ambiguity of official doctrine afforded one distinct point at which a woman such as Desdemona could produce a crisis in the patriarchal story. "Despite the economic and social mechanisms that reinforced parental authority, it was in marriage that parents were most often defied," Dympna Callaghan observes.[41] All too often, such defiance provoked physical and mental violence; at the least it must have felt very unpleasant. That is how it is when you disturb the system – the tendency of ideology is, precisely, to produce good subjects who feel uncomfortable when they transgress. But contradictions in the ideology of marriage produced, nevertheless, an opportunity for dissidence, and even before the appearance of Othello, we are told, Desdemona was exploiting it – refusing "The wealthy curled darlings of our nation" (1.2.68). Her more extreme action – marrying without parental permission, outside the ruling oligarchy, and outside the race – is so disruptive that the chief (male) council of the state delays its business. "For if such actions may have passage free," Brabantio says, "Bond-slaves, and pagans, shall our statesmen be" (1.2.98). Desdemona throws the system into disarray – and just when the men are busy with one of their wars – killing people because of their honor and their property – proving their masculinity to each other.

To be sure, Desdemona was claiming only what Louis Montrose calls "the limited privilege of giving herself,"[42] and her moment of power ends once the men have accepted her marriage. But then dissident opportunities always are limited – otherwise we would not be living as we do. Revolutionary change is rare and usually dependent upon a prior buildup of small breaks; often there are great personal costs. The point of principle is that scope for dissident understanding and action occurs not because women characters, Shakespeare, and feminist readers have a privileged vantage point outside the dominant, but because the social order *cannot but produce* faultlines through which its own criteria of plausibility fall into contest and disarray. This has been theorized by Stuart Hall and his colleagues at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham:

How and why is dissidence possible.

> the dominant culture of a complex society is never a homogeneous structure. It is layered, reflecting different interests within the dominant class (e.g. an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook), containing different traces from the past (e.g. religious ideas within a largely secular culture), as well as emergent elements in the present. Subordinate cultures will not always be in open conflict with it. They may, for long periods, coexist with it, negotiate the spaces and gaps in it, make inroads into it, "warrening [*sic*] it from within.[43]

Observe that this account does not offer to decide whether or not dissidence will be contained; it may not even be actualized, but may lie dormant, becoming disruptive only at certain conjunctures. But if ideology is so intricately "layered," with so many potential modes of relation to it, it cannot but allow awareness of its own operations. In *Othello*, Emilia takes notable steps towards a dissident perception:

> But I do think it is their husbands' faults
> If wives do fall: say, that they slack their duties,
> And pour our treasures into foreign laps;
> Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
> Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us...
> (4.3.86–90)

Emilia has heard the doctrine of mutual fulfillment in marriage, and from the gap between it and her experience, she is well able to mount a critique of the double standard. At faultlines, such as I am proposing here, a dissident perspective may be discovered and articulated.

The crisis over marital choice illustrates how stories work in culture. It appears again and again – in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*. Roughly speaking, in comedies parents are eventually reconciled to children's wishes; in tragedies (as in *Othello*), precipitate actions without parental authority lead to disaster. And in writing, on through the ensuing centuries until the late nineteenth century, the arranged versus the love-match is a recurring theme in literature. This is how culture elaborates itself. In these texts, through diverse genres and institutions, people were talking to each other about an aspect of their life that they found hard to handle. When a part of our worldview threatens disruption by manifestly failing to cohere with the rest, then we reorganize and retell its story, trying to get it into shape – back into the old shape if we are conservative-minded, or into a new shape if we are more adventurous. The question of the arranged versus the love-match died out in fiction in the late nineteenth century because then, for most people in Britain, it was resolved in favor of children's preferences, and therefore became uninteresting (but not, however, for British families deriving recently from Asia). The other great point at which the woman could disturb the system was by loving a man not her husband, and that is why adultery is such a prominent theme in literature. It upsets the husband's honor, his masculinity, and (through the bearing of illegitimate children) his property. Even the rumor of Desdemona's adultery is enough to send powerful men in the state into another anxiety.

This is why it is not unpromising to seek in literature our preoccupations with class, race, gender, and sexual orientation: it is likely that literary texts will address just such controversial aspects of our ideological formation. Those faultline stories are the ones that require most assiduous and continuous reworking; they address the awkward, unresolved issues, the ones in which the conditions of plausibility are in dispute. For authors and readers, after all, want writing to be interesting. The task for a political criticism, then, is to observe how stories negotiate the faultlines that distress the prevailing conditions of plausibility.

can dissidence stand alone?

Reading Dissidence

The reason why textual analysis can so readily demonstrate dissidence being incorporated is that dissidence operates, necessarily, with reference to dominant structures. It has to invoke those structures to oppose them, and therefore can always, *ipso facto*, be discovered reinscribing that which it proposes to critique. "Power relations are always two-way; that is to say, however subordinate an actor may be in a social relationship, the very fact of involvement in that relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other," Anthony Giddens observes.[44] The inter-involvement of resistance and control is systemic: it derives from the way language and culture get articulated. Any utterance is bounded by the other utterances that the language makes possible. Its shape is the correlative of theirs: as with the duck/rabbit drawing, when you see the duck the rabbit lurks round its edges, constituting an alternative that may spring into visibility. Any position supposes its intrinsic opposition. All stories comprise within themselves the ghosts of the alternative stories they are trying to exclude.

It does not follow, therefore, that the outcome of the inter-involvement of resistance and control must be the incorporation of the subordinate. Indeed, Foucault says the same, though he is often taken as the theorist of entrapment. In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, he says there is no "great Refusal," but envisages "a plurality of resistances... spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilising groups or individuals in a definitive way." He *denies* that these must be "only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat."[45] In fact, a dissident text may derive its leverage, its purchase, precisely from its partial implication with the dominant. It may embarrass the dominant by appropriating its concepts and imagery. For instance, it seems clear that nineteenth-century legal, medical, and sexological discourses on homosexuality made possible new forms of control; but, at the same time, they also made possible what Foucault terms "a 'reverse' discourse," whereby "homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified."[46] Deviancy returns from abjection by deploying just those terms that relegated it there in the first place. A dominant discourse cannot prevent "abuse" of its resources. Even a text that aspires to contain a subordinate perspective must first bring it into visibility; even to misrepresent, one must present. And once that has happened, there can be no guarantee that the subordinate will stay safely in its prescribed place. Readers do not have to respect closures – we do not, for instance, have to accept that the independent women characters in Shakespearean comedies find their proper destinies in the marriage deals at the ends of those plays. We can insist on our sense that the middle of such a text arouses expectations that exceed the closure.

Conversely, a text that aspires to dissidence cannot control meaning either. It is bound to slide into disabling nuances that it fails to anticipate, and it cannot prevent the drawing of reactionary inferences by readers who want to do that. (Among other things, this might serve as a case against ultra-leftism, by which I mean the complacency of finding everyone else to be ideologically suspect.) There can be no security in textuality: no scriptor can control the reading of his or her text. And when, in any instance, either incorporation or resistance turns out to be the more successful, that is not in the nature of things. It is because of their relative strengths in that situation. So it is not quite as Jonathan Goldberg has recently put it, turning the entrapment model inside out, that "dominant discourses allow their own subversion precisely because hegemonic control is an impossible dream, a self-deluding fantasy."[47] Either outcome depends on the specific balance of historical forces. Essex's rebellion failed because he could not muster adequate support on the day. It is the same with competence. Williams remarks that the development of writing reinforced cultural divisions, but also that "there was no way to teach a man to read the Bible... which did not also enable him to read the radical press." Keith Thomas observes that "the uneven social distribution of literacy skills greatly widened the gulf between the classes"; but he illustrates also the fear that "if the poor learned to read and write they would become seditious, atheistical, and discontented with their humble position."[48] Both may occur, in varying degrees; it was, and is, all to play for.

[illegible]

It is to circumvent the entrapment model that I have generally used the term *dissident* rather than *subversive*, since the latter may seem to imply achievement that something *was subverted* – and hence (since mostly the government did not fall, patriarchy did not crumble) that containment must have occurred. "Dissidence" I take to imply refusal of an aspect of the dominant, without prejudging an outcome. This may sound like a weaker claim, but I believe it is actually stronger insofar as it posits a field necessarily open to continuing contest, in which at some conjunctures the dominant will lose ground while at others the subordinate will scarcely maintain its position. As Jonathan Dollimore has said, dissidence may provoke brutal repression, and that shows not that it was all a ruse of power to consolidate itself, but that "the challenge really *was* unsettling."[49]

What is the difference b/w dissident & subversive?

of the text · why? force out a little text

The implications of these arguments for literary criticism are substantial, for it follows that formal textual analysis cannot determine whether a text is subversive or contained. The historical conditions in which it is being deployed are decisive. "Nothing can be intrinsically or essentially subversive in the sense that prior to the event subversiveness can be more than potential; in other words it cannot be guaranteed a priori, independent of articulation, context and reception," Dollimore observes.[50] Nor, independently of context, can anything be said to be safely contained. This prospect scandalizes literary criticism, because it means that meaning is not adequately deducible from the text-on-the-page. The text is always a site of cultural contest, but it is never a self-sufficient site.

It is a key proposition of cultural materialism that the specific historical conditions in which institutions and formations organize and are organized by textualities must be addressed. That is what Raymond Williams was showing us for thirty years. The entrapment model is suspiciously convenient for literary criticism, because it means that little would be gained by investigating the specific historical effectivity of texts. And, indeed, Don Wayne very shrewdly suggests that the success of prominent new historicists may derive in large part from their skills in close reading – admittedly of a far wider range of texts – which satisfy entirely traditional criteria of performativity in academic criticism.[51] Cultural materialism calls for modes of knowledge that literary criticism scarcely possesses, or even knows how to discover – modes, indeed, that hitherto have been cultivated distinctively within that alien other of essentialist humanism, Marxism. These knowledges are in part the provinces of history and other social sciences – and, of course, they bring in their train questions of historiography and epistemology that require theory more complex than the tidy poststructuralist formula that everything, after all, is a text (or that everything is theater). This prospect is valuable in direct proportion to its difficulty for, as Foucault maintains, the boundaries of disciplines effect a policing of discourses, and their erosion may, in itself, help to "detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony (social, economic and cultural) within which it operates at the present time" in order to constitute "a new politics of truth."[52]

Shakespearean plays are themselves powerful stories. They contribute to the perpetual contest of stories that constitutes culture: its representations, and our critical accounts of them, reinforce or challenge prevailing notions of what the world is like, of how it might be. "The detailed and substantial *performance of a known model* of 'people like this, relations like this', is in fact the real achievement of most serious novels and plays," Raymond Williams observes; by appealing to the reader's sense of how the world is, the text affirms the validity of the model it invokes. Among other things, *Othello invites recognition* that this is how people are, how the world goes. That is why the criteria of plausibility are political. This effect is not countered, as essentialist-humanists have long supposed, by literary quality; the more persuasive the writing, the greater its potential for political intervention.

The quintessential traditional critical activity was always interpretive, getting the text to make sense. Hence the speculation about character motivation, image patterns, thematic integration, structure: the task always was *to help the text into coherence*. And the discovery of coherence was taken as the demonstration of quality. However, such practice may feed into a reactionary politics. The easiest way to make *Othello* plausible in Britain is to rely on the lurking racism, sexism, and superstition in British culture. Why does Othello, who has considerable experience of people, fall so conveniently for Iago's stories? We can make his gullibility plausible by suggesting that black people are generally of a rather simple disposition. To explain why Desdemona elopes with Othello and then becomes so submissive, we might appeal to a supposedly fundamental silliness and passivity of women. Baffled in the attempt to find motive for Iago's malignancy, we can resort to the devil, or the consequence of skepticism towards conventional morality, or homosexuality. Such interpretations might be plausible; might "work," as theater people say; but only because they activate regressive aspects of our cultural formation.

why?

Actually, coherence is a chimera, as my earlier arguments should suggest. No story can contain all the possibilities it brings into play; coherence is always selection. And the range of feasible readings depends not only on the text but on the conceptual framework within which we address it. Literary criticism tells its own stories. It is, in effect, a subculture, asserting its own distinctive criteria of plausibility. Education has taken as its brief the socialization of students into these criteria, while masking this project as the achievement by talented individuals (for it is in the program that most should fail) of a just and true reading of texts that are just and true. A cultural materialist practice will review the institutions that retell the Shakespeare stories, and will attempt also a self-consciousness about its own situation within those institutions. We need not just to produce different readings but to shift the criteria of plausibility.

why is this yet it?

Notes

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1 *Othello* is quoted from the New Arden edition, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Methuen, 1962). An earlier version of parts of this paper, entitled "Othello and the Politics of Character," was published in Manuel Barbeito, ed., *In Mortal Shakespeare: Radical Readings* (Santiago: University de Santiago de Compostela, 1989).

2 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 245; and also pp. 234–9, and Greenblatt, "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," in Patricia Parker and David Quint, eds., *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 218. On stories in *Othello*, see further Jonathan Goldberg, "Shakespearean Inscriptions: The Voicing of Power," in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, eds., *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1985), pp. 131–2.

3 Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 48. See also Doris Adler, "The Rhetoric of Black and White in Othello," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25 (1974), pp. 248–57.

4 Louis Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 160–5.

5 Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," in Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, eds., *Rewriting the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 139. Greenblatt makes a comparable point about Jews in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, though in *Othello* he stresses Iago's "ceaseless narrative invention": see *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 208, 235. On Blacks in Shakespearean England, see Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, pp. 42–52; Ruth Cowhig, "Blacks in English Renaissance Drama and the Role of Shakespeare's *Othello*," in David Dabydeen, ed., *The Black Presence in English Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

6 Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 123–8. For further elaboration of the theory presented here, see Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), ch. 3.

7 Colin Sumner, *Reading Ideologies* (London and New York: Academic Press, 1979), p. 288.

8 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 69–71, 77–8. Giddens's development of *langue* and *parole* is anticipated in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970), p. 380.

9 Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989), pp. 7–29, pp. 8–10. Jonathan Goldberg writes of the Duke's scripting in *Measure For Measure* in his *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 230–9. See also Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 107–10.

10 On attitudes to Turks, see Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 142–9. The later part of Othello's career, in fact, has been devoted entirely to state violence – as Martin Orkin has suggested, he is sent to Cyprus to secure it for the colonial power: see Orkin, *Shakespeare Against Apartheid* (Craighall, South Africa: Ad. Donker, 1987), pp. 88–96.

11 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965), p. 61. See further Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 139–42; Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in Richard Brown, ed., *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change* (London: Tavistock, 1973).

12 See Lynda Boose, "The Family in Shakespearean Studies; or – Studies in the Family of Shakespeareans; or – the Politics of Politics," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (1987), pp. 707–42; Carol Thomas Neely, "Constructing the Subject: Feminist Practice and the New Renaissance Discourses," *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988), pp. 5–18.

13 Kathleen McLuskie, "The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare," in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *Political Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 97. For a reply to her critics by Kathleen McLuskie, see her *Renaissance Dramatists* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), pp. 224–9; and for further comment, Jonathan Dollimore, "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism," *New Literary History* 21 (1990), pp. 471–93.

14 Carol Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, eds., *The Woman's Part* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 5.

15 McLuskie, "Patriarchal Bard," p. 92.

16 Boose, "Family," pp. 734, 726, 724. See also Ann Thompson, "'The warrant of womanhood': Shakespeare and Feminist Criticism," in Graham Holderness, ed., *The Shakespeare Myth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Judith Newton, "History as Usual?: Feminism and the New Historicism," *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988), pp. 87–121.

17 Richard Ohmann, *English in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 313. See V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (New York and London: Seminar Press, 1973), pp. 17–24, 83–98.

18 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 324.

19 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 6. See Celia Kitzinger, *The Social Construction of Lesbianism* (London: Sage, 1987). Diana Fuss asks: "Is politics based on identity, or is identity based on politics?" (*Essentially Speaking* [London: Routledge, 1989], p. 100).

20 Neely, "Constructing the Subject," p. 7.

21 J. Hillis Miller, "Presidential Address, 1986: The Triumph of Theory, and the Resistance of Reading, and the Question of the Material Base," *PMLA* 102 (1987), pp. 281–91, pp. 290–1. Cf., e.g., Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review* 82 (1973), pp. 3–16; reprinted in Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980; New York: Schocken Books, 1981). James Holstun, "Ranting at the New Historicism," *English Literary Renaissance* 19 (1989), pp. 189–225, makes more effort than most to address European/Marxist work.

22 Peter Nicholls, "State of the Art: Old Problems and the New Historicism," *Journal of American Studies* 23 (1989), pp. 423–34, pp. 428, 429.

23 Don. E. Wayne, "New Historicism," in Malcolm Kelsall, Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, and John Peck, eds., *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 795. I am grateful to Professor Wayne for showing this essay to me in typescript. Further on this topic, see Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, "Introduction," Don. E. Wayne, "Power, Politics and the Shakespearean Text: Recent Criticism in England and the United States," and Walter Cohen, "Political Criticism of Shakespeare," all in Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, eds., *Shakespeare Reproduced* (London: Methuen, 1987); Louis Montrose, "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in H. Aram Veeser, ed, *The New Historicism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 20–4; Alan Liu, "The Power of Formalism: The New Historicism," *English Literary History* 56 (1989), pp. 721–77.

24 Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 120, 209–14.

25 Carolyn Porter, "Are We Being Historical Yet?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 87 (1988), pp. 743–86; see also Porter, "History and Literature: 'After the New Criticism,'" *New Literary History* 21 (1990), pp. 253–72.

26 Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 164–6.

27 William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir, 9th edn (London: Methuen, 1962), pp. 164–6.

28 William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. J. H. Walter (London: Methuen, 1954), Act 5, Chorus, 29–35.

29 Raymond Williams, *Culture* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1981), p. 201.

30 Porter, "Are We Being Historical Yet?" p. 774. For important recent discussions of the scope for movement in the early modern state, see Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, eds., *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1989), esp. Johann Sommerville, "Ideology, Property and the Constitution."

31 I am not happy that race and sexuality tend to feature in distinct parts of this chapter; in this respect, my wish to clarify certain theoretical arguments has produced some simplification. Of course, race and sexuality are intertwined, in *Othello* as elsewhere. See Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, pp. 48–62; Karen Newman, "'And wash the Ethiop white': Femininity and the Monstrous in Othello," in Howard and O'Connor, eds., *Shakespeare Reproduced*; Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), part 4.

32 I set out this argument in Alan Sinfield, *Literature in Protestant England, 1560–1660* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), ch. 4. See also Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp. 53–6, 107–18; Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1985), ch. 7; Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1989), ch. 2 *et passim*; McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists*, pp. 31–9, 50–5 *et passim*.

33 *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (London: Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge, 1899), p. 534.

34 Sir Philip Sidney, *Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1977), p. 501.

35 Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (London: Dent, 1932), 3, pp. 52–3.

36 *Certain Sermons*, p. 589.

37 Henry Smith, *Works*, with a memoir by Thomas Fuller (Edinburgh, 1886), 1, pp. 32, 19.

38 Gerrard Winstanley, *Works*, ed. G. H. Sabine (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1941), p. 599.

39 William Perkins, *Christian Economy* (1609), in *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), pp. 418.

40 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p. 137. See also ibid., pp. 151–9, 178–91, 195–302; Charles and Katherine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 257–94; Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Panther, 1969), pp. 429–67; Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *Representing the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 37–40; Lisa Jardine, *Still*