



# Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

By Neema Parvini

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In the thirty years since the publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* overthrew traditional modes of Shakespeare criticism, New Historicism and Cultural

Materialism have rapidly become the dominant modes for studying and writing about the Bard. This comprehensive guide introduces students to the key writers, texts and ideas of contemporary Shakespeare criticism and alternatives to new historicist and cultural materialist approaches suggested by a range of dissenters including evolutionary critics, historical formalists and advocates of 'the new aestheticism', and the more politically active presentists.

*Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory* covers such topics as:

The key theoretical

influences on new historicism including Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser.

The major critics, from Stephen Greenblatt to Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield.

Dissenting views from traditional critics and contemporary theorists.

Chapter summaries and questions for discussion throughout encourage students to

critically engage with contemporary Shakespeare theory for themselves. The book

includes a 'Who's Who' of major critics, a timeline of key publications and a glossary of essential critical terms to give students and teachers easy access to essential information.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

Primarily a student guide, Neema Parvini's book first takes the reader on an introductory journey through the critical undergrowth...Shakespeare's works provide rich material informing the ideological conflict at the heart of the modern world. How we understand our past determines how we recognise and react to our contemporary world. -- Gordon Parsons *The Morning Star* Not only is this book a history of recent Shakespearean criticism, it is also an effective introduction to relevant strains of contemporary theory, meant for both students and scholars. It provides, moreover, a fully-fledged contribution to Shakespearean studies ... With an eye to evolutionary studies and neurobiology, Parvini invites students of Shakespeare to explore the vital relation between texts and their readers. -- Riccardo Capoferro, Sapienza University of Rome *Memoria di Shakespeare*

#### About the Author

Neema Parvini is Visiting Lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Richmond, The American International University, UK.

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