

Metaphors of Diseases, Ethical Violation of Historical Writing and Political Ethics as Shown in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Zhang Baike & Tian Junwu

Abstract: Metaphors of diseases and deformities abound in *Julius Caesar*, one of William Shakespeare's Roman historical plays. In this tragedy, which is adapted from Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars*, Shakespeare portrays Caesar, an awe-inspiring general and dictator, as suffering from several diseases and deformities, such as deafness on the left ear, epilepsy and possible sterility. As the diseases and deformities are not recorded in Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars*, Shakespeare's such adaptation touches the issue of ethics of historical literature writing, particularly the ethics in writing historical figures. In our view, although the bard may be not correct ethically in adapting Plutarch's historical work, the diseases and deformities from which Shakespeare portrays Caesar to suffer nevertheless reflect the historical brain text of the English people in the 16th and 17th centuries, which are metaphor of body politic and demythologization of Caesar, and they represent Shakespeare's own ethical politics, namely, his support of republicanism and attack against despotism.

Keywords: Shakespeare; *Julius Caesar*; metaphor of disease; brain text; political ethics

Authors: Zhang Baike is Associate Professor at the School of Foreign Languages, Luoyang Institute of Science and Technology (Luoyang 471023, China). Her research focuses on foreign literature and culture. Tian Junwu (Corresponding author) is Professor at the School of Foreign Languages at Beihang University (Beijing 100191, China). His research is mainly focused on foreign literature and comparative literature (Email: tjw1966@163.com).

标题: 论威廉·莎士比亚《裘力斯·凯撒》中的疾病隐喻、历史书写的伦理违背和共和主义政治伦理

内容摘要: 莎士比亚的罗马历史剧《裘力斯·凯撒》充满了疾病和残疾的描述，一个历史上威震四方的罗马将军和统治者，在莎士比亚的笔下被塑造成一个患有多种疾病和残疾的可笑人物，例如左耳失聪、癫痫以及可能的不孕症。这部历史悲剧改编于古罗马历史学家普鲁塔克《希腊罗马英豪传》中

的《凯撒传》部分，而《凯撒传》中基本没有关于凯撒身体疾病和残疾的记录。莎翁在改编中让凯撒患有各种疾病和残疾，涉及到历史文学书写和改编中的伦理问题。笔者认为，尽管莎翁的改编有违历史真实，但这些疾病反映了16、17世纪英国民众的脑文本，即对凯撒的身体政治和祛魅化的隐喻，表达了莎士比亚的伦理政治观，即拥护共和，反对独裁。

关键词：莎士比亚；《裘力斯·凯撒》；疾病隐喻；脑文本；政治伦理学

作者简介：张柏柯，洛阳理工学院外国语学院副教授，研究方向为外国文学与文化；田俊武（通讯作者），北京航空航天大学外国语学院教授，主要从事外国文学与比较文学学研究。本文为北京航空航天大学“西方文论精品课项目”【项目批号：12112302】的阶段性成果。

In William Shakespeare's historical drama, *Julius Caesar*, the titular hero Julius Caesar is depicted to suffer from diseases and deformities, such as deafness on the left ear, epilepsy and possible sterility by his wife. Did the historical Julius Caesar really contract these deadly diseases or were they merely fictionalized by Shakespeare? For these questions, some scholars have different opinions. For instance, Terence Cawthorne holds that Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's titular play had epilepsy and Meniere's Disease whose symptoms are typically exemplified by unilateral deafness and "falling sickness" (1442). Cedric Watts shares the same idea with Terence Cawthorne, saying that "Caesar is also subject to the 'falling sickness', evidently some form of epilepsy" (49). These affirmative conclusions, of course, can find their evidences in this play. The question is, whether Shakespeare's plausible descriptions of Caesar's diseases are historically true, in comparison with the Caesar in Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars* or the real Caesar in history. If Julius Caesar as a historical figure suffered from those diseases, how could he have become a renowned general, politician, scholar and even dictator of the Roman Empire? If Caesar is falsely represented by Shakespeare, then does the bard's re-writing violate the literary ethics of adaptation, with that of historical literature in particular? What is Shakespeare's political ethics when he purposefully uses metaphors of body politic? To answer these questions, the historical environment in which Julius Caesar and Plutarch lived is to be considered. Just as Nie Zhenzhao says about ethical environment,

Ethical literary criticism pays particular attention to the analysis of the ethical environment, which comprises the historical conditions for the production and dissemination of literature. Ethical literary critics are thus exhorted to set their

study in a certain historical context. In other words, they need to investigate literature in a given ethical environment. Historically speaking, literature is only a part of human civilization and human history. It cannot work without history or be disconnected from history. Literature in distinct historical periods has its own specific ethical environment and ethical context. Hence the basic premise for studying literature is to read it against a particular ethical environment and ethical context. Since literature is produced in a certain historical context, any changes of its ethical environment in our criticism will necessarily lead to misreading and misjudgment. (Nie, “Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism”⁹¹)

Political Ethics and Truth of Historiography in Plutarch’s *Lives of the Caesars*

“The underlying protest is against Shakespeare as a mere player who muscled into the craft of the playwright, arrogantly taking it upon himself to imitate or appropriate or pad out the plays of the established dramatists” (Jowett 7). John Jowett’s words indicate that the bard seemed to have never invented a story by himself but just to have adapted or rewritten plots from the works of his predecessors or contemporary writers. For instance, *Hamlet* is rewritten from an earlier play known as *The Source of Hamlet* or *Ur-Hamlet* (Satin 385). *Romeo and Juliet* derives its plot from Arthur Brooke’s *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), a long poem. *Julius Caesar* is no exception. This historical tragedy is mainly adapted from Plutarch, whose “account of the death of Julius Caesar at the hands of the republican conspirators Brutus and Cassius provided Shakespeare with a story ideally suited to his dramatic intents” (Taylor 301). Since Plutarch’s *Lives of the Caesars*, like Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian*, is both read as history and literature because of its values of historiography and literature, to study the historical environment of its production is also to study the ethical environment of its production, with particular consideration of Plutarch’s political ethics in writing the book.

Plutarch was born in Chaeronea, a Greek town which had been colonized by Romans for two centuries. This post-colonial situation of his home town provided Plutarch with full access to Roman culture and politics, and his travel to and stay in Rome engaged “his personal contacts with Romans” which “would have enriched his general knowledge of Roman customs, traditions, and practices” (Stadter, *Plutarch and Rome* 16). *Roman Questions*, a work written after the death of Domitian in 96 CE, evidently indicates that Plutarch “had immersed himself not only in Roman history but its antiquarian lore” (Stadter, *Plutarch and His*

Roman Readers 11). *Lives of the Caesars*, which treated the eight emperors from Augustus to Vitellius, is “the first known work to have presented Roman history as a series of biographies, directing attention especially to the character and actions of the emperors” (Stadter, *Plutarch and Rome* 18). In writing the biographies of the Roman emperors, Plutarch expresses his own political ethics. Political ethics, according to Dennis F. Thompson, refers to “the practice of making moral judgment about political action” (1), and it is divided into two branches: one is the ethics of process focusing on the moral behaviors of political officials, and the other is the ethics of policy concentrating on the moral judgments about the policies and laws made by the political officials. Both branches draw on moral and political philosophy, concerning on whether a political state is democratic or dictatorial, or whether a politician is utilitarian or altruistic. Influenced by Plato and Aristotle’s theory of politics, Plutarch developed his own political ethics, regarding that “politics is a business of uttermost importance, of pivotal significance for human life. Politics [...] is for him a, or better still, the essential human activity, a fundamental being of civilized people” (Wzn 5). Guided by his political ethics, Plutarch

wished to write history with a philosophical cast, giving attention to moral values and to general issues of just government, according to ethical principles found also in his essays and dialogues. Plutarch held the Platonic view that a monarch should be devoted to the welfare of his people and establish justice, harmony, and peace in his kingdom. (Stadter 18)

Although this biographical book contains many supernatural phenomena commentating upon political events in ancient Rome and expressed his moral criticism on Roman emperors, it generally remains historically accurate in recounting the lives of historical characters. As Chrysanthos Chrysanthou utters, “Plutarch stresses the truth—that is, neither excessive praise, nor excessive blame—which should lie at the core of his narrative” (130). Despite his neutral attitude towards historical figures, Plutarch still eulogizes Caesar’s personality and military efforts:

And now for him selfe, after he had ended his civill warres, he did so honorably behave him selfe, that there was no fault to be founde in him: and therefore me thinkes, amongst other honors they gave him, he rightly deserved this, that they should builde him a temple of clemency, to thanke him for his curtesie he had used unto them in his victorie. (Plutarch 78)

As for Caesar's diseases and deformities, Plutarch only says that he had a usual attack of headache, which was a common ailment in ancient Rome. "For concerning the constitution of his body, he was lean, white, and soft skinned, and often subject to headache, and otherwise to the falling sickness [...] but yet therefore yielded not to the disease of his body" (qtd, in Spencer 37). Living in ancient Rome for a long time and having been very familiar with the Roman historical figures, Plutarch was more authentic than later historians in writing the Roman history.

Violation of Historical Writing Ethics, Brain Text of Body-Politic Metaphor and Demythologization of Caesar

Then why did Shakespeare invent other diseases and endow them to Caesar? For these fabricated plots in *Julius Caesar* and his other historical plays, Shakespeare was sometimes criticized by critics from Ben Johnson to the present, particularly by Thomas Rymer, who accused Shakespeare of "abuse of history" (Rymer 147). In the view of Rymer, Caesar and Brutus were above Shakespeare's "conversation," and "to put them in Fools Coats, and make them Jack-puddens in the Shakespeare dress, is a Sacrilege" (148). Rymer's words indicate that in rewriting Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars*, Shakespeare violates the ethics of historical fiction writing. In the ethics of historical writing,

the use and abuse of anachronism are often seen as the quintessence of the writing of history. Historians tend to conceive it as the hardcore of their métier to avoid anachronism. It designates confusion in order of time, especially the mistake of placing an event, attitude or circumstance too early. (Verbeeck 181)

Although historical literature permits fictional elements and is not exactly equivalent to historiography, it is still required to follow the basic ethics of historical writing, namely, to be truthful to historical events and historical figures. However, Shakespeare's deliberate violation of historical writing ethics in *Julius Caesar* is *métier métier métier* nearly everywhere. Besides portraying Caesar as a senile despot afflicted with diseases and deformities, Shakespeare even characterizes the ancient Rome with the scenes of London of his time, including the notorious London clocks.

As "*Julius Caesar* is a play that enacts the events of an earlier culture within the ethical consciousness of a latter one" (Roe181), Shakespeare's deliberate or inadvertent fallacies in appropriation of historical recourses are even fascinated by

his contemporary English audiences. As is recorded, since it was firstly performed in the “straw-thatched” Globe Theatre on September 11, 1599 (Schanzer 466), *Julius Caesar* “remained in the repertoire of Shakespeare’s company [...] even up to nearly 40 years later. Its theatrical life was vigorous throughout the history of the seventeenth- and eighteenth- century theatre” (Ure 12). To this paradoxical phenomenon, some scholars’ explanation is that by portraying Caesar in such an anti-hero way, Shakespeare clinked with the audience of the Elizabethan era. For instance, Simon Jarvis holds that “Shakespeare was an actor in a day when actors were low, was required to cater to the taste of low audiences” (94). Jarvis’ assertion fails to explicate the true reason of Shakespeare’s blasphemy of Caesar and it can only vulgarize this great historical tragedy into a play of low interest. In our view, Shakespeare’s deliberate anachronism and its wide reception among the English audiences at that time reflected the historical brain text of the English people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Brain text, according to Nie Zhenzhao, “can be defined as memory stored in the human brain. As a peculiar biological form, the brain text contains human beings’ perception and cognition of the world stored in memory. Brain texts can be recollected through memorization, represented via auditory organs, and transformed into written texts that usually take the form of materials such as paper, rock, pottery, metal, and so on” (Nie, “Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory” 194). Brain texts are not innately born, but are influenced by social environment and human ideology.

One historical brain text of the English people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the metaphor of body politic. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, “Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language” (Lakoff & Johnson 3). In explicating their theory of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson list some famous conceptual metaphors, such as “life is a journey” and “a state is a person.” Even before Lakoff and Johnson, Susan Sontag, an American writer, philosopher and political activist, had studied the metaphorical meanings of diseases in politics, asserting that “illness has always been used as metaphors to enliven charges that a society was corrupt or unjust” (Sontag 72). Sontag’s such assertion, as a matter of fact, is the idea of body politic, a medieval metaphor that likens a nation to a corporation (Olwig 87). In Ancient Greece, Plato might be the first to analogize a city-state to a human body, saying “Is not that the best-ordered state...which most nearly approaches the condition of the individual—as in the body? (350) To Plato, “The creation of health is the institution of a natural order and government of one by another in the parts of the body; and the creation of disease is the production of

a state of things at variance with this natural order” (330). In the Roman period, Plato’s idea of body politic was inherited by Cicero, who compared the Roman Republic to a body weakened by disease. In the Medieval Times, body politic found its new expression in Christian thinkers represented by Saint Paul, Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, who transformed the social and political body into that of Christ and the Church. In their eyes, “The body politic, which can be likened to the physical body of Christ...is not merely similar, it is the body of Christ” (Barkan 69). Also in the Medieval Times, political thinkers like John of Salisbury, John Fortescue, Christine de Pizan and Marsilius of Padua all inherited and developed the theory of body politic, agreeing that the health of a political community relies on the mutual cooperation of the diverse institutional organs and disorder among these parts cause disputes and even rebellion. According to Benard J. Dobski and Dustin A. Gish, such theories of the body politic proliferated in Shakespeare’s own times, in the treatises of English commonwealth men...and in the rhetoric of the monarchs and their ministers. The age of Shakespeare, therefore, was ripe with discussion of the body politic as one of the most significant political metaphors for describing England’s constitution and dissecting the constituent parts of the political community, both to diagnose its illness and to celebrate its corporate health as justice. To view the ageing Elizabethan monarchy as a metaphor of body politic had become the common brain text of the English people at that turbulent era (8-10). As a playwright for the royal court as well as a popular dramatist, Shakespeare could hardly be unaware of the brain text of the English people, which found its outside representations in political rhetoric and debate about the dethronement of the English monarchy.

Another brain text of the English people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the demythologization of Caesar. After his death, Caesar was deified as a god and Caesarian temples were erected in Rome. Not only Octavian the first emperor of Roman Empire chose “Caesar” as his imperial title, but the other emperors after him all followed suit. Even poets of the so-called Golden Age, such as Horace, Ovid and Virgil were demanded to eulogize Caesar. For instance, in his epic *Aeneid*, Virgil not only connects Caesar as the descendant of the hero Aeneas, the son of goddess Venus, but also describes Aeneas’s visit to the Underworld, where he is told by his father Anchises that the future rulers of Rome would be Julius Caesar and Augustus. “Now turn the twin gaze of your eyes this way, and look at that family, your own true Romans. For there is Caesar, and all the line of Iulus, who are destined to reach the brilliant height of Heaven” (Virgil 171). From late Antiquity to the thirteenth century, deification of Caesar continued and reached

its height in Francesco Petrarca and Dante Alighieri. For instance, as a poet who supported imperial government, Dante eulogizes Julius Caesar for his taking control of the Empire by both the will of God and the will of the Roman people (*Armour* 40), and he severely punishes Brutus and Cassius, the major assassins of Caesar, by making them suffer forever in the *Inferno*. However, since the publication of *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* in France in 1579, deification of Brutus as an anti-despotic hero and demythologization of Caesar happened in France and gradually spread in Great Britain, imperceptibly became the brain text of the British people, until they were transformed into out-open political principles of republicanism.

Fully aware of the brain text of the English people regarding metaphor of the queen's ageing body as a deteriorating nation-state and the brain text of anti-Tudor dynasty in his time, Shakespeare naturally did not forget to represent them in his drama, particularly his English and Roman historical plays. In Shakespeare's time, although the Tudor Dynasty was in its heyday, Queen Elizabeth I came into the twilight of her life, ageing and having no heir to her throne. The Queen's dotage and possible death with no lawful successor to her throne served as a vivid metaphor of the national morbidity at that time, "a moment of acute political turbulence; a period of social upheaval, often shorthanded by cultural historians as the crisis of 1590s" (Joughin 6). The whole nation was out of order and was prevalent with intellectual thinkers' heated discussion of republicanism, court factional struggles, political assassinations and aristocrat rebellions, among which the most famous event was Earl Essex's rebellion against the ageing Queen. Though an aristocrat rebellion, it was done under the banner of political ethics of republicanism, namely, the rebellion was for the sake of the English people. On the eve of rebellion, Earl Essex and his gang were said to have fervidly read the works written by Roman republican historians and regarded the Roman republicanism as the political ideal of the British aristocrats.

Though being merely an actor and playwright, Shakespeare harbored his own political ethics. "To Shakespeare, then, 'politics' signified the ethics and art of government, the moral management of civil affairs" (Friesner 166). According to Shakespeare, if a king or queen can not manage the state affairs because of his/her dotage or ill health, or if he/she manages the state affairs in immoral ways, then people has the right to overthrow him/ her. Shakespeare's such political ethics is in essence republicanism. Besides being influenced by the social brain texts of body politic and demythologization of Caesar, Shakespeare's republicanism also had something to do with the brain text of his family background. According to Richard Wilson, when Shakespeare was 19 years old, his family was "fatally entangled

with in a conspiracy to assassinate the Queen” (Wilson 2). John Somerville, Shakespeare’s cousin in his mother’s clan, was selected by the Throckmorton Plot to shoot the Queen, but he committed suicide after the failure of the assassination. Wilson further contends that “Shakespeare’s closeness to this suicidal conspiracy may explain how in his tragedy about assassination—Julius Caesar” (3). That means, the stories that Shakespeare heard about ancestors and relatives’ assassination of the Queen had, with time passing by, become the brain text of the bard, which was the direct cause of his political ethics of republicanism.

Metaphor of Body Politic and Shakespeare’s Political Ethics in *Julius Caesar*

As a tragedy about assassination, *Julius Caesar* implicitly expresses Shakespeare’s support of republicanism by dramatizing the great Caesar as an ailing protagonist. As a matter of fact, even before writing *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare had already dealt with the political imagery between institutional “disease” and social “disorder” (Charney 41). The principle of “the king’s two bodies” advocated by the Tudor Dynasty made the symbolic relevance between the physical body of the king and the body politic more clear. That is to say, the physical disease of the king directly metaphorizes the political disease and disorder of the monarchy. In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare particularly dramatizes Caesar’s three physical diseases—his sterility from his wife’s side, deafness on the left ear and epilepsy. Firstly, Caesar’s sterility, or his inability of fathering children is represented through his ordering Antonious to touch the hand of his wife Calpurnia during the Lupercal holiday: “Forget not, in your speed, Antonious, to touch Calpurnia; for our elders say, the barren, touched in this holy chase, shake off their sterile curse” (Shakespeare 7-8). In Plutarch’s account, Caesar did have two children: a daughter by his first wife Cornelia and a son by Cleopatra. Shakespeare chooses to ignore this historical fact for the purpose of highlighting Caesar’s physical sterility and undermining his dynastic ambition. If a dictator fails to produce an heir, his regime is doomed to ephemerality.

Secondly, Caesar’s deafness on the left ear is represented through his dialogue with Antonious. “I rather tell thee what is to be feared. Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar... Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf” (17). Caesar’s own mentioning of his left ear deafness can be regarded as Shakespeare’s another imaginative fabrication, since it nowhere appears in Plutarch’s *The Lives*. As a metaphor of body politic, Caesar’s deafness in the left ear signifies his political inability of listening to good advice and his vulnerability to flattery. He will just listen to what he thinks is right for him. To a despot, the right words are no more than the ones of servility and flattery, epitomized by Antonious’s saying “When

Caesar says ‘Do this,’ it is performed” (8) and Decius’ positive interpretation of Calpurnia’s nightmare of prophesying Caesar’s death at the Senate. If a political government fails to listen to both sides and only chooses to heed one side, then it will be benighted instead of enlightened.

Thirdly, Caesar’s possible suffering from epilepsy is dramatized through the dialogue between Casca, who says that Caesar “fell down in the marketplace, and foamed at mouth, at speechless” (18), and Brutus, who judges that Caesar “hath the falling sickness” (19). Since this disease is reported by Casca, a conspirator who harbors the same political hatred toward Caesar as Cassius does, its authenticity is subject to suspicion. As Shakespeare’s another sheer fabrication, the “epilepsy” helps to disenchant the Caesar myth that was prevalent since the Roman times. Viewed from a metaphor of body politic, Caesar’s epilepsy symbolizes that the dictator regime he pursued is vulnerable, easy to be physically and mentally destroyed. This metaphor is correspondently verified in the later process of assassinating Caesar. In Plutarch’s *The Lives*, the assassination of Caesar is breathtaking and terrifying. While in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, this action is done in an anti-climatic and ironic way. Before his being assassinated, Caesar delivers a speech about his powerfulness and invulnerability:

But I am constant as the northern star, of whose true-fix’d and resting quality there is no fellow in the firmament. The skies are painted with unnumber’d sparks...But there’s but one in all doth hold his place: So in the world; ‘t is furnish’d well with men. And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive: Yet in the number I do know but one that unassailable holds on his rank, unshak’d of motion: and that I am he. (60)

However, the words are hardly out of Caesar’s mouth, when he is stabbed to death by Marcus Brutus and the other conspirators.

According to Richard Wilson, this play “uses Roman history in order to hold a mirror up to the state of Shakespeare’s England, and in particular, to reflect and reflect on, to identify and provide terms for imaging [...] the crisis of the aristocracy” (49). Many anachronistic scenes in *Julius Caesar*, though violating the ethics of historical writing, are purposefully portrayed by Shakespeare to remind the English audiences of associating the play with the situation of the contemporary England, such as the clocks that strike the hour and Caesar’s night gown. As far as the infirmities of Caesar are concerned, Shakespeare mean them as an innuendo of the ageing Queen Elizabeth I and the political disorder of the late Tudor Dynasty.

Caesar is sterile, and the Queen is ageing without an heir; Caesar favours Mark Antonius, while the Queen trusts unduly Earl Essex. Caesar suffers from epilepsy, while the Queen is bedridden with small pox (Whitelock 68). By dramatizing Caesar's physical infirmities and the subsequent assassination and social chaos, Shakespeare not only implicitly reflects the brain texts of the English people at his era, expresses his political ethics of supporting republicanism, but also warns the Tudor Dynasty by innuendo that the English people's brain texts of regarding the ageing monarch as a deteriorating state and demythologization of Caesar, once transformed into public political ethics and concrete political movements, social rebellion is sure to happen.

Works Cited:

- Armour, Peter. "Dante and Popular Sovereignty." *Dante and Governance*, edited by John Woodhouse. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Barkan, Leonard. *Nature's Work of Art: Human Body as Image of the World*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1975.
- Cawthorne, Terence. "Julius Caesar and the Falling Sickness." *Laryngoscope* 8 (1958): 1442-1450.
- Charney, Maurice. *Shakespeare's Roman Plays—The Function of Imagery in the Drama*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1961.
- Chrysanthou, Chrysanthos S. "The Proems of Plutarch's *Lives* and Historiography." *Histos* 11 (2017): 128-153.
- Dobski, Richard J and Dustin A. Gish. "Shakespeare and the Body Politic." *Shakespeare and the Body Politic*, edited by Richard J. Dobski and Dustin A. Gish, Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2013. 1-29.
- Friesner, Donald Neil. "William Shakespeare, Conservative." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 2 (1969): 165-178.
- Javis, Simon. "Alexander Pope." *Great Shakespearians Set II*, edited by Adrian Pool, Peter Holland. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001. 68-116.
- Joughin, John H. "Introduction." *Shakespeare and Politics*, edited by Catherine M. S. Alexander, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge UP, 2004. 1-21.
- Jowett, John. *Shakespeare and Text*. New York & Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: the U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Nie Zhenzhao. "Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory." *Forum for World Literature Studies* 2 (2021): 189-207.
- . "Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism." *Arcadia* 1 (2015): 83-101.
- Olwig, Kenneth. *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2002.
- Plato. *Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Symposium, Republic*, translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Walter J.

Black, 1942.

Plutarch. "The Life of Julius Caesar." Translated by Thomas North. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare V The Roman Plays: Julius Caesar Antony and Cleopatra Coriolanus*, edited by Geoffrey Bullough. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964. 58-135.

Roe, John. "Character in Plutarch and Shakespeare: Brutus, Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony." *Shakespeare and the Classics*, edited by Charles Martindale. A. B. Taylor, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 173-187.

Rymer, Thomas. *A Short View of Tragedy*. London: Scolar Press, 1693.

Satin, Joseph. *Shakespeare and his Sources*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966.

Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Farraus, Straus and Giroux, 1978.

Schanzer, Ernest. "Thomas Platter's observations on the Elizabethan stage." *Notes and Queries* 201n.s (1956): 465-467.

Spencer, Terence John Bew, ed. *Shakespeare's Plutarch: The Lives of Julius Caesar, Brutus, Marcus Antonius and Coriolanus in the Translation of Sir. Thomas North*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare in Twenty Volumes, with Annotations and a General Introduction by Sidney Lee, vol. 15*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1908.

Stadter, Philip A. *Plutuch and His Roman Readers*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015.

—. "Plutarch and Rome." *A Companion to Plutarch*, edited by Mark Beck. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2014. 13-31.

Taylor, Myron. "Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the Irony of History." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3 (1973): 301-308.

Thompson, Dennis F. *Political Ethics and Public Office*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Ure, Peter. "Introduction." *Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, A Case Book*. London, Macmillan, 1969. 11-24.

Watts, Cedric. *Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar': A Critical Introduction*. Morrisville: Lulu Com, 2016.

Verbeeck, Georgi. "Anachronism and the Rewriting of History: the South Africa Case." *The Journal for Trans-disciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 1 (2006): 181-200.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*, translated by W.F. Jackson Knight. London: Penguin Books, 1968.

Whitlock, Anne. *Elizabeth's Bedfellows: An Intimate History of the Queen's Court*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

Wilson, Richard. "Introduction." *Julius Caesar, atlas*, edited by Richard Wilson. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 1-28.

Wzn, Aalders H. *Plutarch's Political Thought*. Amsterdam, Oxford, New York: North Holland Publishing House, 1982.