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*Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and  
Competition in Renaissance Theatre* by Janet Clare (review)

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***Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre.* By Janet Clare. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Cloth \$99.00. 318 pages.**

At the center of Clare's study are the allusive networks linked with William Shakespeare's plays, offering a theoretical framework to the processes of adaptation on early modern stages. Updating source-study methodologies that account for performance conditions and dating, she locates the commerce of theatre as a function of genre rather than authorship or playing company. In challenging critical norms that valorize his originality, Clare argues that Shakespeare systemically drew on materials that were already established in the dramatic tradition, molding them in the spirit of Renaissance aesthetic theories of appropriation.

The monograph opens with a detailed analysis of the competing theories of appropriation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: *imitatio*, extemporary, and patching. *Imitatio*, a Humanist principle, privileged the selection and replication of pre-existing rhetorical models. Extemporaneous writing denoted unpremeditated thinking, while patching suggested servile borrowing rather than an accomplished act of weaving. In tracing the adaptation practices of the period, Clare demonstrates that intertextuality was an essential condition for "good" writing in Renaissance drama. By prioritizing thematic conventions over dramaturgical ones as well as the singular authorial voice of Shakespeare, the efficacy of Clare's arguments is limited by an outmoded organization of research.

Troubling the textual hierarchies put in place by source studies, chapters three and seven take up debates around Shakespeare texts key to genre scholars. Echoing Leah Marcus, chapter three considers the editorial history of *The Taming of The Shrew* and *The Taming of A Shrew*, which together intervened in the popular troping of shrewish women. In a similar vein, *The Comedy of Errors* assimilates Plautus and the carnivalesque to mimic the experience of festive misrule. Chapter seven argues *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure* are emblematic of the changing method of Jacobean playwriting, appropriating royal festivity to underscore ideologies of political morality and civic responsibility latent in their hypotexts. While these readings put significant emphasis on the circularity rather than the linearity of adaptation, their conclusions (like the book's title) imply a privileged position in the marketplace of Shakespeare's versions without financial data, and so confusingly suggest he was both the norm and exception.

Chapters two, five, and eight orient the forces of intertextuality and borrowing. Engaging with the growing Queen's Men scholarship, chapter five indicates the continued presence of pre-Marlovian medley dramaturgy in Shakespeare's Henriad. Unfortunately, Clare mislabels generic elements and performative ones when demonstrating how the company's comedies depended upon the "disparate idioms" of "popular comedy and 'courtly' speech patterns" (155). Chapter two

assesses the matrix of print and performance texts of *Woodstock* and *Edward II*, from which Shakespeare presumably adopted a tragic inflection for his *Richard II*. Chapter eight looks forward to the “skeptical, ironic style” of the indoor Jacobean theatres with the political tragicomedies *Cymbeline*, *Philaster*, *Henry VIII*, and *When You See Me, You Know Me*.

Competition and methods for plot conversions are the center of chapters four and six. The former traces the influence of John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson, with specific attention to metatheatric claims, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. These plays are exemplum of “later comedy” in the Elizabethan playhouses, which eventually lost marketplace ground to the burgeoning boy companies. Competition from the boy companies, other revenge tragedies, and the complex bibliographic life of Q1 and Q2 suggest that for *Hamlet* “performance and publication were coordinated to an unusual degree” (194). In these two chapters Clare’s aim to link playtext formation with “the creative narratives of Shakespeare’s plays in relations to their theatrical dissemination” comes most clearly to the fore rather than examples from contemporaneous, noncanonical plays (267).

In her ability to speak in several registers of Shakespeare scholarship, Clare provides a productive summation of core source debates that have informed editorial praxis. A few terminological slippages reveal a lack of engagement, however, with theatre history and the recent uptick in company studies. It is the term “audience” which gives Clare the most trouble: often she collapses the experiences of readers and playgoers, attempting to be responsible for both reception contexts over a large swath of time. It is also problematically singular and homogenizing and so assumes a knowing spectatorship who regularly return to the theatre rather than leaving room for other possible models of attendance. When describing the social forces of intertextuality, there are no active agents—no playwrights, patrons, companies, or sociological frameworks—to which she ascribes the intentions implied by the general argument. Instead, to describe the phenomena of appropriation a great deal of passive voice is mobilized to substitute abstractions for agents, such as “stage traffic,” “theatrical energy,” and “ambience.” Therefore, this remains a study about the sources of Shakespeare’s plays rather than normal industry practices. While Clare convincingly contests the chronological hierarchization of versions, ultimately we will always have a skewed sense of the Renaissance theatre marketplace when Shakespeare—a second-generation playwright and relative latecomer to “the ‘shake-scene’”—remains the organizing principle (1).

Like Stanley Wells’ *Shakespeare and Co* (2007) and Bart van Es’s *Shakespeare In Company* (2013), this book is part of a wave of summary scholarship on the industry in which Shakespeare found success. The monograph is useful to genre theorists as it presents readings of noncanonical works to identify period-accurate ascriptions for conventions, and by extension, for those working to recover any-

mous plays, the history of theatre in England, and its intersections with early modern historiographical practices. In its own interdisciplinary aspirations, then, the volume questions the given methodologies for theorizing audiences and their subcultures. Identifying limitations provides a framework by which to articulate new ground in need of coverage—as Clare argues, certainly, traditional source study has had its day. Rather than as Shakespeare’s theatre or industry, is it possible to frame a methodology where we instead talk about the theatrical marketplace in which Shakespeare worked? Perhaps what is most courageous about Clare’s work then is her willingness to begin to contest using Shakespeare’s works as a principle of inclusion—and maybe someday taking him out of the equation altogether.

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***Coloring Whiteness: Acts of Critique in Black Performance.* By Faedra Chatard Carpenter. Theater: Theory/Text/Performance. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2014. Cloth \$80.00, Paper \$34.95. 312 pages.**

Faedra Chatard Carpenter’s *Coloring Whiteness: Acts of Critique in Black Performance* examines the manifold ways African American playwrights, performers, and visual artists have engaged signs and tropes of whiteness in their work to contemplate and interrogate the complexities of racial identities and conditions. Analyzing an impressive range of plays, comedy sketches, street theatre, visual art, film, and voice-over work from 1964 to 2008—a time period bookended by the passage of major civil rights legislation and the election of Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States—Carpenter sharpens particular focus on the strategies African American cultural producers have deployed to “(1) ‘color’ whiteness; (2) deconstruct notions of white superiority, privilege, entitlement, and purity; and, (3) complicate perceptions of blackness” (29). In question throughout this rigorously researched and compellingly written study are the dominant narratives and ideologies that continue to sustain whiteness as an unmarked norm while obscuring the capaciousness of other racialized identities. For many African American artists, a practice of defamiliarizing whiteness in their work has proven vital to exposing the “fallacies associated with racial designations” (3).

To carry out her close readings of expressions and enactments of whiteness in black performance, Carpenter employs a fresh, multifaceted methodology informed by her training and experiences as a scholar-educator and professional dramaturg. Accordingly, in addition to offering cogent textual and performance analyses, she brings critical attention to the creation, development, and production of the dra-