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978-1-107-04003-8 - Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre

Janet Clare

Excerpt

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Introduction

THE 'SHAKE-SCENE'

Shakespeare's Stage Traffic explores the interplay of imitation, borrowing, and competition in the ambience of Shakespeare's theatre, focussing on the exchange of theatrical energy – to adapt a phrase of 1980s new historicism¹ – as the matter and practice of plays were trafficked amongst playwrights and amongst communities of spectators. In a culture in which oral, memorial, and literary dissemination co-existed, histories, narrative patterns, and dramatic scenarios were circulated on the stage with little regard to origins or originality.² Dramaturgy passed from one play to another. Yet it is often forgotten that a Shakespeare play, studied in isolation, or in relation to other plays written by him, was once part of the give-and-take of theatre traffic, as well as other popular media. Plays successful in their own time with which Shakespeare engaged are now comparatively neglected or confined to the margins of Shakespeare studies, usually in the function of 'source', and are rarely discussed in their own right. Shakespeare's unique status ensures that, despite the evidence that certain of his plays are the outcome of adaptation, they are seldom treated as such. At the beginning of his career he was using already existent plays as models, with *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew* as particularly salient cases. Even in mid-career, in plays that some critics would identify as the apogee of his art, *1* and *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare was adapting an early form of folkloric history associated with the Queen's Men. When

¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 4–8.

² See Lene B. Petersen, *Shakespeare's Errant Texts: Textual Form and Linguistic Style in Shakespearean 'Bad' Quartos and Co-Authored Plays* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3–60. I agree with Petersen that the versions and types of story communicated in plays resemble the narrative dispersal of ballads and folk tales. However, I disagree with her argument that memorial narrative transmission – implying derivation from printed media – contributes to the variant texts and so-called Shakespearean 'bad quartos'. The variant editions or plays using the same story seem to me far more deliberately composed and marketed. See Chapter 6.

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King Lear was published in 1608 the title page proclaimed the work as Shakespeare's – 'M. William Shak-speare: HIS True Chronicle History of the life and death of King Lear, and his three Daughters' – apparently to differentiate this version from the Queen's Men's play – *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella* – published in 1605. Even though Shakespeare, in the process of borrowing, had radically converted the play, neither author nor publisher attempted to re-title it.

Shakespeare's well-known metaphor, 'the two hours' traffic of our stage' from the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*, evokes the mercantile nature of play-writing as does Jonson's more disparaging evocation in *Poetaster*; Ovid Junior denies that he writes for the stage: 'I am not known unto the open stage, / Nor do I traffic in their theatres' (1.2.64–5). While Jonson's Ovid is disdainful of the social and transactional nature of theatre traffic, the Prologue's phrase captures another sense of traffic, the dynamism of events unfolding in time and place. Drawing on this connotative nexus, I use the term 'theatre traffic' as a simultaneously competitive and interactive process, illustrated through attention to plays that variously interlock in narrative or dramaturgy or genre, aware that – like all investigations into early modern theatre practice – the resultant picture is necessarily incomplete. Only recovery of lost plays could reveal the full extent of theatrical borrowing and exchange. Even when the playscript has not survived, recorded titles suggest that trends in dramatic preoccupations could lead to one play stimulating another. The existence of two now-lost plays on Cardinal Wolsey³ did not prevent Samuel Rowley from foregrounding the character of Wolsey in *When You See Me, You Know Me*, nor did the existence of other plays on Richard III preclude Jonson from beginning *Richard Crookback* for Henslowe.⁴ Besides those that are extant, records indicate that there were several plays dramatizing the reigns of Richard II and Henry V. There were at least two revenge plays with a protagonist named Hamlet. How these plays imitated, borrowed from, or radically challenged one another we can never know; nevertheless, there is evidence enough of intertextualities, not simply and only at the level of story. For Elizabethan audiences, *Richard II* would have engaged as much with the dramaturgy of *Edward II* and *Woodstock* as it would have done with what

³ Named in *The Annals of English Drama* as *The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey* and *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*. See also Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd edn, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 171, 183.

⁴ See Henslowe, *Diary*, 203. Henslowe uses the spelling 'crockbacke'. In the same entry, he records payment to Jonson for the revision of *The Spanish Tragedy*: 'new adicyons for Jeronymo'.

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are now regarded as the canonical histories, while Jacobean spectators of *Cymbeline* would most likely have responded to it in the context of tragedy's innovations exemplified in *Philaster*.

Attention to such theatrical negotiations moves towards a perception of plays in dialogue with one another as they dipped into a pool of histories, myths, and folklore, or adopted and adapted dramatic strategies. In lifting the layers of interaction between plays and configuring the patterns of theatrical exchange in so far as they tangibly affect Shakespeare's work, this book attempts to re-vision and re-situate Shakespeare's dramaturgy within the flourishing theatrical trade of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This is not in any way to deny or diminish Shakespeare's extraordinary gifts but to see his plays as part of the dynamics of early modern theatre nurtured by a responsive theatre-going public.

Imitation and borrowing: conversion and plagiarism

The verbal connotations that constitute the notion of stage traffic – competition, trade, exchange, and negotiation – are economic, consonant with the commercial practice of early modern theatre. Writing was sustained by theories of composition as understood in Renaissance poetics and taught in the grammar schools, in which quite different metaphors of imitation, conversion, and invention are invoked. While such ideas are associated with high culture, they feed into the less lofty craft of theatre. That all art is imitation, not only in the Aristotelian sense of mimesis, was a key concept of the European Renaissance.⁵ In poetics, imitation was the method whereby the novice writer learned his craft, famously crystallized in Jonson's reflections on the requisites of a poet as one who can 'convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use'.⁶ A favourite metaphor for literary conversion, culled from the Younger Seneca, which Jonson uses in the above exposition, was of the bee selecting from the 'choicest flowers' and turning the nectar into honey.⁷ Bad poetry, on the other hand, in the words of Lorenzo Junior in *Every Man in His Humour*, is 'patched up in remnants and old worn rags' and 'half-starved' for want of 'sacred invention' (5.3.268–70). The bad poet lacks invention, the skill

⁵ The key work here is Thomas Greene's *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).

⁶ Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, ed. Lorna Hutson, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 2012), Vol. VII, 481–596 (582). Jonson's commonplace book was first printed in the Second Folio of 1640.

⁷ Jonson, *Discoveries*, 582–3.

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in finding the materials to mould or convert to his own purposes. In his discourse on the heroic poem, Tasso had recommended that Greek, Latin, and Italian poets should be imitated, claiming that the newness of a poem is not in the originality of the fabricated subject, but in the organization and development of plot. Imitation involves the careful selection of models, followed by a personal interpretation. According to Tasso, an old subject is made new by a distinctive weaving of elements: that is, skilful adaptation. Conversely, he argues that a poem in which characters and subject matter are invented but merely replicate patterns and structures is not new.⁸

The practice of imitation began in the schoolroom. Humanist pedagogy was based on the selection of a model, and the replication of its argument and rhetorical strategies. Erasmus had recommended the emulation of 'a passage from some author where the spring of eloquence seems to bubble up particularly richly', and advised the student 'to equal or even surpass it'.⁹ Roger Ascham, in his manual *The Schoolemaster*, had emphasized the desirability of imitation as one of the processes of learning to write Latin, and prescribed the classical writers who should be followed. In aiding pupils to appreciate the value of imitation, Ascham put forward a methodology suggestive of comparative literature. Writers such as Plato and Cicero; Virgil and Homer; Horace and Pindar; and Seneca, Sophocles, and Euripides should be studied alongside each other with the express purpose of discovering how each had altered, adapted, or made omission from the work of the other.¹⁰ In thus studying classical imitation, Ascham contends, pupils will be inculcated with good writing practice. For boys with a grammar school education imitation would have been not only completely valid, but second nature in terms of literary creation. Several critics, mostly recently Lynn Enterline, have placed the origins of Renaissance drama in the rhetorical training of the dramatist.¹¹ Examining

⁸ Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico* (Bari: Laterza, 1964). The work was composed c. 1562–6 and first published in 1587. I am grateful to Selene Scarsi for help with translation.

⁹ Erasmus, *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style*, trans. Betty I. Knott, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, 86 vols., Vol. XXIII (University of Toronto Press, 1978), 303.

¹⁰ Roger Ascham, 'The second Booke, teaching the ready way to the Latin toong', in *The Schoolemaster* (London: Abell Jeffes, 1589), 'Imitation', 39–58 (40–4). See also Roger Ascham, *The Schoolemaster* (1570), ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 'Imitatio', 114–53 (124–30); and Brian Vickers (ed.), *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 140–61.

¹¹ Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). See also Charles O. McDonald, *The Rhetoric of Tragedy: Form in Stuart Drama* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966); and Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1978).

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classical texts, rhetorical techniques, and school disciplinary practices, Enterline argues that Shakespeare effectively translated pedagogical practices – specifically, the aim of rhetoric to move the audience – to theatrical performance. This stress on the emotional register of Shakespeare's plays as stemming from a training in *imitatio* indicates just one manifestation of the dramatic skills formed on rhetorical training, imitation, and conversion, which were filtered through from schoolhouse to playhouse.

As distinct from the other arts, there were no theories of play-writing that legitimated imitation or distinguished between it and servile borrowing. John Florio's defence of the art of translation, though not specifically directed at playwrights and their practices, nevertheless appeals to a consensus that extends beyond genre. In the address to the reader prefacing his translation of the *Essays of Montaigne*, he argues that it is little different from the work of writers who copiously borrow from others. Nothing can be said, claims Florio, that has not been said before:

If nothing can be now sayd, but hath beene sayde before (as hee sayde well), if there be no new thing under the Sunne. What is that that hath beene? That that shall be: (as he sayde that was wisest)[.] What doe the best then, but gleane after others harvest? borrow their colours, inherite their possessions? What doe they but translate? perhaps, usurpe? At least collect? if with acknowledgement, it is well; if by stealth, it is too bad: in this, our conscience is our accuser; posteritie our judge[.]¹²

Here Florio is giving eloquent voice to a theory of intertextuality. Everything that is will become something else in the composition of another and still be nothing new. Creativity, in this account, amounts to no more than collecting and translating, even scraping together the residue of what others have left. For Florio, translation is no less 'original' than other modes of writing that necessarily depend on borrowing. Borrowing is treated as an ethical issue, as it was to be in subsequent decades, but only in so far as it attracts disapproval if it is not acknowledged. This is hardly surprising, since on this view borrowing is the premise of all writing and, for that matter, of all speech. Even so, usurping – taking over what is not one's own – is introduced, hinting at a concept of plagiarism, but the term is offered tentatively and is promptly modified by 'collect'.

Since the matter of literature was considered common property, originality in the Romantic sense did not exist as a literary ideal, although the affiliated concept of 'invention', in the sense of converting and

¹² Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes, or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses of Lord Michaell de Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (London, 1603), A5r–v.

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re-interpreting for one's own purposes, was in circulation. An Elizabethan concept closer to originality was that of extemporal, newfangled writing and speech although, again, their value was much contested. In a general sense, the charge of being extemporary denoted an unpremeditated act, but it also carried suggestions of being free from the limitations or constraints of classical imitation. For Gabriel Harvey, extempore writing – 'monstrous new fanglednesse' – carried a purely negative connotation, an act akin to the clowning without script of the Queen's Men's comic actor, Richard Tarlton.¹³ On the other hand, much of Thomas Nashe's 'Preface' to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* was predicated on the superiority of extempore writing over rhetoric and convention. Nashe deplores, or affects to deplore, 'the servile imitation of vain-glorious Tragedians' and the prevalence of imitating oratory and eloquence:

... either they must borrow invention of *Ariosto*, and his Countreyemen, take up choyce of words by exchange in *Tullies Tusculane*, and the Latin Historiographers store-houses; similitudes, nay whole sheetes and tractates *verbatim*, from the plentie of *Plutarch* and *Plinie*; and to conclude, their whole methode of writing, from the libertie of Comicale fictions, that have succeeded to our Rethoritians, by a second imitation; so that, well may the Adage, *Nil dictum quod non dictum prius*, bee the most judicall estimate, of our latter writers.¹⁴

The Latin tag – 'Nothing said that has not been said before' – echoes Florio's 'no new thing under the Sunne', but then radically shifts the emphasis to derogate current writing practice. In his diatribe, Nashe includes playwrights who possessed 'no more learning in their skull, then will serve to take up a commoditie' and, unable to read anything but the vernacular, 'feed on nought but the crummes that fal from the translators trencher'.¹⁵ In contradistinction, Nashe praises Greene for his invention and extempore wit, proposed as the opposite of rhetoric, proclaiming 'give me the man, whose extemporall vaine in anie humor will excell our greatest Art-Masters deliberate thoughts'.¹⁶ *Menaphon*'s ironic allusions to

¹³ See Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters, and Certaine Sonnets: Especially Touching Robert Greene, and Other Parties by Him Abused* (London, 1592). In the second letter, Harvey says he was 'altogether unacquainted' with Greene but asks who in London has not heard of 'his vaine-glorious and Thrasonicall braving; his piperly Extemporizing and Tarltonizing' (B2r). In the third letter, Harvey attacks Greene for 'monstrous new fanglednesse' and at the same time claims that Greene should thank others for his 'borrowed and filched plumes' (D–D2v).

¹⁴ Thomas Nashe, 'To the Gentlemen Students of both Universities', in Robert Greene, *Menaphon, Camillas alarum to slumbering Euphues, in his melancholie Cell at Silixedra* (London: T. O[rwin], 1589), ** – **2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, **v. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, **v.

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Sidney, Lyly, and Marlowe create a playful intertextuality, and no doubt this dexterity was included in the inventiveness that Nashe extols in singling out Greene amongst translators and imitators.¹⁷

More prevalent than any debate on imitation and extempore writing were ideas of good and bad imitation and – more significant here – acceptable and unacceptable borrowing. The openness of borrowing offers an in-built defence; in Florio's view borrowing 'by stealth' would be judged by posterity. Nonetheless, in prefaces and the paper wars of late Elizabethan England there are signs of anxiety about the practice and how it may lead to accusations of misappropriation. In his dedication of *The Myrroure of Modestie* (1584) to the Countess of Derby, Robert Greene is defensive about his borrowing of the story of Susanna from the Apocrypha, employing the image to be used against Shakespeare, of Aesop's crow who decked himself in others' feathers:

But your honor may thinke I play like Ezops Crowe which deckt hir selfe with others feathers or like the proud Poet Batyllus, which subscribed his name to Virgils verses, and yet presented them to Augustus: In the behalfe therefore of this my offence, I excuse my selfe with the answere that Varro made, when he offred Ennius workes to the Emperour: I give quoth he another mans picture, but freshlie flourished with mine owne coulours.¹⁸

Greene cites Virgil's protest against plagiarism quoted by other English writers, including George Puttenham in his *The Arte of English Poesie*. Virgil attached an anonymous couplet in praise of Augustus to the palace gates that was appropriated by 'a saucie courtier', Batyllus; Virgil retaliated by placing in the same place verse lines: 'I made those verses, others bear the name.'¹⁹ Authorship is here associated with originality in the sense that Virgil identifies himself as the originator. Greene is not claiming anything of the kind for himself. Like Florio in his prefatory address to his translation of Montaigne, he acknowledges that he is borrowing from others, at the same time impressing his authorial individuality – stressing that in his presentation he uses his own colours, thus making a story different from what it was before.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Greene's engagement with his precursors see Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives: Euphuus in Arcadia* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ Robert Greene, 'To the Right Honorable and Vertuous Ladie, the Ladie Margaret, Countesse of Darbie, Robert Greene wisheth happie health, with increase of Honor and vertue', in *The Myrroure of Modestie* (London: R. Warde, 1584).

¹⁹ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Richard Field, 1589), Book 1, Chapter 27, 44–5. Puttenham does not give the name of the plagiarist, only Virgil's response.

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As Richard Peterson and Joseph Loewenstein have amply demonstrated, it is in Jonson's writing that ideas on true and slavish imitation and claims to literary ownership are most fully articulated, interrogated, and differentiated.²⁰ In *Discoveries*, Jonson analyses differences amongst 'wits' and derides those who vindicate their work as original ('their own naturals'); he describes this as a means of covering up 'their own fox-like thefts',²¹ a practice that he exposes in *Poetaster* in Crispinus's theft from Horace: 'Why, the ditty's all borrowed / 'tis Horace's! hang him, a plagiary!' (4.3.82–3), intervenes the poet Tibullus, introducing the word into English. The false claim to the work of one author by another – encapsulated at the time in Virgil's riposte to Batyllus, quoted by Greene and others – rather than the appropriation of ideas or expression, is the dominant idea of early modern plagiarism. At the same time, the interfaces between borrowing and imitation and creativity were sites not only of productivity but also of anxiety. In *Poetaster* Horace's detractors try to turn imitation against him. Demetrius and Crispinus accuse Horace of being a 'translator', an ironic misappropriation of assimilative art that prompts Virgil's defence of translation 'as a work of as much palm / In clearest judgements, as t'invent or make' (5.3.360–1). Charges of slavish imitation, mere translation, or borrowing were accusations to be levelled at opponents or rivals. As Richard Terry has observed, before the standing of imitation dwindled in the eighteenth century, allegations of plagiarism are often part of a wider rhetoric of literary detraction.²² Such a charge of plagiarism appears in Thomas Lodge's riposte to Stephen Gosson's anti-theatrical polemic, *The School of Abuse*. Lodge searches for ammunition to fire against his adversary. He cannot use Gosson's earlier play-writing career against him with a view to charging him with hypocrisy, since Gosson had anticipated such criticism in *The School of Abuse* by insisting that he had turned his back on his former profession and repented of it. Instead, Lodge alights on one of Gosson's plays performed at The Theatre, a lost play apparently dramatizing Catiline's conspiracy, and, again, with recourse to Virgil and Batyllus, accuses Gosson of plagiarism:

Tell me Gosson was all your owne you wrote there? did you borrow nothing of your neyghbours? Out of what booke patched you out Cicero's

²⁰ Richard S. Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson*, 2nd edn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); and Joseph Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²¹ Jonson, *Discoveries*, 525.

²² Richard Terry, *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

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Oration? Whence set you Catulin's Invectiue. Thys is one thing, *alienam olet lucernam, non tuam*; so that your helper may wisely reply upon you with Virgil: I made these verses, others bear the name.²³

Lodge's rhetoric builds up from localized instances – 'was all your owne ...?' – to a charge of full-blown plagiarism: composing a play purloined wholesale from others. It was not uncommon for a dramatist to have a 'helper', to use Lodge's term; this is, indeed, implied in the notion of imitation. Thus, in his version of *Catiline*, Jonson, following common practice, also extracted from Cicero's orations. Here, though, Gosson's practice is presented as an ignominious act of patching. In short compass, Lodge raises moral and aesthetic issues against Gosson; he has failed to assimilate his borrowing and so may be deemed to have stolen his material: an accusation that is served by the pejorative term, 'patched'. Patching, as opposed to weaving, was a familiar Renaissance trope in discussions of the arts of imitation, the one carrying connotations of servile borrowing, the other of accomplished adaptation. The polemical and adversarial character of such rhetoric is illuminated incidentally by Douglas Bruster, who re-conceives patching or something closely akin to it as a salient characteristic of early modern drama: 'the heterogeneity of early modern plays owed its diversity to borrowings from many sources', and plays should be approached 'with a strong concern for the *bricolage* by which they were originally fabricated'.²⁴

Imitation invariably carries a positive charge and is associated with high culture, primarily in relation to classical models,²⁵ whereas in some contexts the less lofty 'borrowing' veers towards a negative register. Popular theatre practice – as opposed to academic drama – was routinely dependent on borrowing rather than on imitation, although 'imitation' would appear to be the most appropriate term to describe the practice for taking over blank verse and dramatic patterns. Indeed, with playwrights appropriating materials, wholesale and local, the habit of re-cycling was so commonplace that it was rarely commented upon. In Shakespeare's work, for instance, Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra in her barge on the river Cydnus in *Antony and Cleopatra* is a near versification of Plutarch;

²³ Thomas Lodge, *A Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage-Plays* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1853), 28.

²⁴ Douglas Bruster, *Quoting Shakespeare: Form and Culture in Early Modern Drama* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 11–15.

²⁵ Besides Greene's *The Light in Troy* see George W. Pigman, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33:1 (1980), 1–32; and A. J. Smith, 'Theory and Practice in Renaissance Poetry: Two Kinds of Imitation', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 47:1 (1964), 212–43. As Richard S. Peterson has demonstrated, it was Jonson's achievement to make 'the much-buffed idea of *imitatio* into a personal doctrine of great force', Peterson, *Imitation and Praise*, 1.

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Gonzalo's lines in *The Tempest* on an ideal commonwealth are closely adapted from a passage in Montaigne's essay, 'On Cannibals'; similarly, in *King Henry VIII*, Queen Katherine's defence in court and the King's speeches are fairly close versifications of passages in Holinshed,²⁶ though in this case keeping close to what was held to be the historical record may have been a bid for accuracy or authenticity.

One of the earliest references to Shakespeare as a playwright attacks him as a poor imitator and carries a taint of plagiarism as the term is now understood.²⁷ The often cited and much contested passage appears in Robert Greene's epistle to gentlemen acquaintances 'that spend their wits in making plays', appended to his *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592), which is now thought to have been composed by Henry Chettle.²⁸ Greene, on his deathbed, allegedly attacked the actors, 'those Anticks garnisht in our colours', and singled out one in particular for turning from actor to playwright:

Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions ... for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such rude groomes.²⁹

In the course of this general warning against the parasitic nature of actors who live off and debase the playwright's 'inventions', Shakespeare is invoked twice, as 'Shake-scene' and in the misquotation of the line from *3 Henry VI*, 'O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!' (1.4.138). With 'upstart Crow' he is accused, at best, of imitation – though bereft of the positive sense it has in Renaissance theory – at worst, of theft. In contrast to the image of the bees, which transformed nectar into honey, classical and Renaissance theory presented the crow as a superficial imitator.

²⁶ *Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.2.198–225; *The Tempest*, 2.1.149–70; *King Henry VIII*, 2.4.11–55.

²⁷ For a discussion of the diversity and changes that accompany the use of the term 'plagiarism' in the early modern period, see Paulina Kewes (ed.), *Plagiarism in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Kewes refers to 'translation' and 'imitation' as legitimate counterparts to plagiarism (4).

²⁸ Henry Chettle and Robert Greene (attrib.), *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*, ed. Daniel Allen Carroll (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994). For discussion of authorship see 1–22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 84–5.