

mean that it is harder to think of reasons why they should *not* be played by the same performer” (p. 140). I would counter this: Would the performance of two twin plays at a court festival not be more interesting if performed by two different actors?

In this book, Munro constructs an image of the King’s Men and Shakespeare’s continuing presence within the company – in a lively, elegant and feet-on-the-ground way. She offers a pristine view, devoid of mythological ballast (yes, Iago was probably played by a bulky man, probably bigger than Othello) and the picture we have obtained thanks to her is a major contribution to our knowledge of early modern theatre.

PAVEL DRÁBEK (HULL)

M. A. Katritzky and Pavel Drábek eds, *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. 320 pp. – ISBN 978-1-5261-3917-7 – £ 80.00 (hb.).

*Transcultural Connections in Early Modern Theatre* is a collection of essays written by members of Theatre Without Borders (TWB), a research collective that works to recast the history of early modern European theatre through a cross-cultural and comparative prism. Following the well-received and influential *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater* (2008) and *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater* (2014), both edited by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, the third instalment of TWB’s publications – edited by M. A. Katritzky and Pavel Drábek – consists of twelve chapters, organized into three geographical blocks of four entries each, in which the contributors systematically showcase the interconnectivity of early modern theatre-making across the European continent.

The first block of chapters, “Part I: West”, focuses on the theatrical cultures and dramatic output of England, Spain and France. Its opening salvo, Natasha Korda’s “If the shoe fits, or the truth in pinking”, begins by anecdotally discussing the discovery of a slip-on shoe among the rubble recently excavated at the Rose playhouse (pp. 23–24) as a point of entry to her exploration of footwork and the use of footwear in early modern theatre. In “Freedom and Constraint in Transnational Comedy”, Susanne Wofford compares the use of a specific plot device present in both Shakespeare’s *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Lope de Vega’s *El perro del hortelano* (*The Dog in the Manger*): a scene in which a woman of higher rank orders a male subordinate of hers to write a love letter which she later intends to give to the writer himself (p. 39). Barbara Fuchs further extends the

Anglo-Spanish comparison in her exploration of “the connections, both explicit and less so, between the lost and/or rediscovered texts of Shakespeare, Cervantes and Lope de Vega” (p. 58); that is, between Shakespeare and John Fletcher’s lost *Cardenio* – which they collaboratively wrote based on a short story Cervantes wove into his *Don Quijote* – and the recently unearthed *Mujeres y criados* (*Women and Servants*) by Lope de Vega. To conclude the “West” block, Noémie Ndiaye’s “The African Ambassador’s Travels” turns our attention to France, and in particular to *barbouillage* or blackface performances in French classical drama and its broader history in European playmaking, “an indispensable but troubling stage convention whose legacy, while theatrically inspirational, also bears witness as a haunting memento of the colonial past” (p. 10).

The next four chapters (“Part II: North”) deal with theatre-making in the Low Countries and German-speaking lands. Nigel Smith’s exploration of seventeenth-century Amsterdam illustrates how the literature and drama of the period mirrored the city’s diversity and multiculturalism, which frequently “overturns the customary resistance to migration in European cultural assumptions often reflected in literature as hostile stereotypes of foreigners” (p. 90). M. A. Katritzky follows with an analysis of the festivities surrounding the 1638 wedding of Jan Wolfert van Brederode and the Countess of Solms in The Hague, an event that “drew on an exceptionally wide range of European performance culture, resulting in several remarkable transnational performative connections” (p. 135). Pavel Drábek explores the notion of ‘Englische Comedien’, traditionally thought of as the plays English troupes performed while visiting the continent between 1580 and 1680, and probes it under a new light by re-examining it as a theatrical style with a series of specific and recurring features and dramatic devices. To close this block, Friedemann Kreuder traces the multiple early modern theatrical currents that coalesced in the dramatic production of eighteenth-century Viennese Joseph Felix von Kurz, a.k.a. Bernardon.

The last of three blocks, “Part III: South”, is primarily concerned with Italian performance practices. In “Northern Lights and Shadows”, Eric Nicholson discusses the depictions of Germanic, Scandinavian and English foreigners in early modern Italian theatre, highlighting how these representations often go beyond simple pejoration by offering instead nuance and analysis. Janie Cole’s chapter focuses on Maria de’ Medici’s active involvement in and patronage of theatrical spectacles at the French court, and how she sought to promote female iconography and imagery in these productions. Finally, Erith Jaffe-Berg reconstructs the history of performances in the Jewish and Turkish communities in Renaissance Venice and Mantua, while Jacques Lezra concludes the collection with an engaging transnational exploration of early modern piracy and how it correlates with

the birth of the European legal nation-state, with particular focus on the free city of Ragusa.

As is customary with Manchester University Press, the volume boasts a simple yet elegant format and presentation, and despite the breadth of languages and theatrical cultures discussed in the collection of essays – as befits the transnational scope of the volume – all non-English primary sources are offered in translation. *Transnational Connections*, much like the TWB releases that precede it, is a must-have for all Shakespeare and drama enthusiasts who wish to learn more about the broader theatrical landscape of early modern Europe, and a welcome reminder of the many ways in which the different cultures and peoples of a very fragmented continent still found ways to remain very much connected, regardless of at least some odds.

DAVID AMELANG (MADRID)

Penelope Geng, *Communal Justice in Shakespeare's England: Drama, Law, and Emotion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021. 280 pp. – ISBN 978-1-487-53743-2 – \$ 56.25 (hb.).

Stephanie Elsky, *Custom, Common Law, and the Constitution of English Renaissance Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. 240 pp. – ISBN 978-0-198-86143-0 – £ 55.00 (hb.).

Penelope Geng's *Communal Justice in Shakespeare's England: Drama, Law, and Emotion* and Stephanie Elsky's *Custom, Common Law, and the Constitution of English Renaissance Literature* are two new publications in early modern studies that place themselves at the interdisciplinary nexus of law and literature. Both books explore the constitutive relation of legal and literary discourses in the Renaissance. While Geng takes a look at the idea of communal justice, Elsky foregrounds the significance of the early modern conception of custom for both law and politics. These studies are great examples of excellent historical research and offer new insight into the relation between law and literature in early modern England.

Geng's monograph takes a look at historical practices of communal justice and shows the role of the theatre in such communities. The book postulates that the theatre could provide an emotional understanding of law, which draws attention to the common misapprehension of the law as only rational, not emotional. Geng explores what communal justice meant to Shakespeare's contemporaries and how it related to professionalized law. The study is an astute exercise not only