

Bloom's study is its own small gem, prompting readers to reconsider the influential role of d'Aulnoy's and Murat's fairy tales in the expansion of literary innovation, and in documenting seventeenth-century French society and its culture.

M. Vuillermoz, S. Blondet, eds. *Les idées du théâtre. Paratextes français, italiens et espagnols des XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Genève: Droz, 2020. 1384 pp. 98€. Review by DENIS D. GRÉLÉ, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

*Les Idées du théâtre* is a lengthy book that regroups many introductory texts of French, Spanish, and Italian plays from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The work of nearly 100 specialists, this volume includes introductory texts of 162 French, 37 Spanish, and 26 Italian plays. Ordered chronologically, the volume mixes all sorts of texts—compilation of prefaces, prologues, epistles, forewords, short introductory plays, poems—and exposes a rich body of texts placed at the beginning of plays by the authors in order to defend, explain, or justify their work. *Les Idées du Théâtre* is devised as a series of short articles that include a short introduction written by one of the many theater specialists recruited for this project and the various introductory texts accompanied by a solid system of footnotes. For the most part, each introduction limits itself to a commentary on the text chosen and not on the play that would follow. In many cases, these short introductions describe the context in which the play was written and present a short history of the various editions. They also offer explanations on the importance of these editorial, authorial, and dedicatory texts in the history of genre, focusing on the various aspects of the development of a theory of theatrical genre during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For the Italian and Spanish authors, the texts are translated into French. This volume replicates much of the content of the *I.d.T.* (Idées du Théâtre) website (<http://idt.huma-num.fr/>) which includes a larger number of introductory texts of the same period.

Marc Vuillermoz (the editor/director of the volume) and Sylvie Blondet (the coordinator) have chosen to include texts from France, Italy, and Spain exclusively and understandably, first because of the close relationships between these three countries, and second because

those three Latin countries tended to ignore what their northern neighbors were doing even though British theater was quite prolific during those two centuries. Useful for someone interested in the history of theater, the many introductions draw attention to the role and function of the dramatist in the context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout the major plays of this period. The chronological presentation is a judicious and convenient system of reference for a multitude of texts not always easily classified.

The value and importance of each introduction varies with the text presented. For example, the *Tragédie de Sophocle intitulée Electra* by Lazare de Baif or *L'Histoire de Tobit* by Gabriel Fourmennois are granted a few lines while, understandably, *La Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas or *Le Cid* by Pierre Corneille benefit from a more robust presentation. With the inclusion of many difficult-to-access texts, the notes are the most valuable part of this volume. These notes offer a large amount of information on the history of the plays as well as explanations of some difficult concepts as well as problematic vocabulary or sentence structures. The notes also help explain religious context such as the war between Huguenots and the Ligue or at a time of quarrel between Augustinians and Jesuits. They likewise enlighten the relationship between the texts, the authors, and the political power in place, explaining many subtleties that would be lost to the uninitiated reader. In the case of the Spanish and Italian plays, the notes are also where one can find comments on translation complexities or choices.

One of the many strengths of this volume is how it can enlighten the notion of authorship for playwrights who were very often, at that time, directors of their own plays. In addition, the numerous chosen texts emphasize a series of rich dialogues between the poet and many other institutions: the reader, a patron, a protector, or even the Theater itself in the case of Lope Felix de Vega Carpio. As one reads through the selection offered here, it is easy to understand the desire of many of the dramatic authors presented to control the understanding of their works and to reveal their own interpretation of theater. This volume is similarly a lesson in history. It exposes how those authors had to deal with major political and religious events such as wars between countries or religions as in France during the second half of the sixteenth century, ideological or literary conflicts such as Corneille and

his *Cid*, but also changing public taste from the biblical plays (with the Church control over religious plays especially after 1550) to the popular French model of comedies and tragedies with Corneille, Molière and Racine. The French plays of the seventeenth century reveal the constant debate over the classical rules, in particular concerning propriety (*bienséances*) and verisimilitude (*vraisemblance*). By reading through all those texts, it is clear how much authors had to constantly argue and defend themselves against their educated critics.

The only major issue that can be pointed out is that the book needs a more robust introduction than the few pages that are included in this current edition. A little more guidance would have been welcome at the beginning of the volume. The choice of texts as well as the time period is not really justified: why were these texts chosen in particular? Were there other texts that were excluded and why? Some choices may be challenging to understand such as the decision to include the entirety of the work of Corneille. Obviously, Corneille was an important voice in the making of French classical theater but most of his work is easily accessible and since this volume is a selection, some better options could have been made. While it is understandable that the website from which this current volume originates compiles text after text without too much guidance, in a book the reader would expect more order and meaning to what is presented. When the introduction roughly justifies the contents as well as the choices that have been made, it confers very little information on the various currents that may exist on the notions of authorship, staging or literary theory. In addition, there are a few issues regarding some of the choices, which is almost unavoidable given the ambition of this volume. For example, if the Italian and Spanish plays offer an evolutionary illustration of the theatrical practice at the time, the limited number of examples presented does not permit a real investigation of Spanish or Italian theater. It seems that the goal of this volume was more to give an understanding of French theater and to shed light on its relationship with the other two countries than to explore Italian and Spanish theater. In addition, a little more integration within a narrative of the various articles would have been desirable even if the notes help create a system of relationships between the various texts presented.

In short, this volume resembles more the website from which it comes—it is somewhat an abbreviated paper copy of the *I.d.T.* website—than a scholarly book. While it is regrettable that the introduction to the volume is rather succinct, the reader is guided by a rich system of notes that link texts with each other and can offer many ways of interpreting and understanding them. With almost 1400 pages, this volume is intended to be a work of reference for specialists.

Guillaume Chenu de Laujardière. Emmanuelle Duguay-Cobena, ed. *Relation d'un voyage à la côte des Cafres (1686–1689)*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2023. 124 pp. €22.00. Review by DENIS D. GRÉLÉ, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

Edited by Emmanuel Duguay-Cobena, *Relation d'un voyage à la côte des Cafres* is the latest book in Garnier's Collection *Géographie du Monde*. This short travel narrative, thirty-five pages in the present edition, is preceded by an enlightening foreword, preface, introduction to the text, with stimulating ethnological and historical specifics that help the reader understand the importance of the travel narrative presented. Following Laujardière's narration, the volume includes notes, illustrations, an afterword on the history of Laujardière and his family, a repertory of important names, a glossary, and a bibliography.

The only known literary work from Guillaume Chenu de Laujardière, *Relation d'un voyage à la côte des Cafres* retells the adventures of Laujardière, a French Protestant (Huguenot) from Bordeaux fleeing the kingdom of France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. To avoid abjuring his religion, Laujardière, aged fourteen, with the help of his family, decides to go to the state of Brandenburg via the Netherlands to rejoin an older brother. Unable to obtain direct safe passage, Laujardière goes first to Madeira where, shortly after his arrival, the Governor compels the Huguenots present on the archipelago to become Catholics or leave. Laujardière then decides to embark on the first ship exiting the island, a British vessel on the way to India. After various adventures, Laujardière finds himself abandoned on the coast of southern Africa with a few of his companions. Here, they meet the "Cafres," a Xhosa tribe purportedly notorious in Europe for its