

Musa Gurnis, *Mixed Faith and Shared Feeling: Theater in Post-Reformation London*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. vii + 257 pp. \$59.95. Review by SARAH K. SCOTT, MOUNT ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY.

Mixed Faith and Shared Feeling explores the interplay of diverse religious life in Post-Reformation London and the commercial theater to argue for a fuller understanding of the complex imaginative processes that Londoners brought to their theatergoing experiences. Gurnis follows a cultural materialist approach that recognizes a “dense, formative matrix” to the human condition. She acknowledges that while some may find the theory out of fashion, it has remained culturally relevant and is essential to challenging the “creeping neoliberalism” of our time: “A country that elects a billionaire, reality television star as president cannot dispense with Marxist cultural studies” (6). Throughout the work, the author invites readers to re-envision the religious diversity of early modern English people as something far more nuanced than the too-often utilized binary of Protestantism and Catholicism. Early modern English playwrights wrote for their audiences, and their plays invited and responded to their polyvocal, confessional (religious) milieus. Dramatists encouraged audiences of mixed faith to share in theatrical experiences that produced affective piety and invited study of predestinarian issues from divergent points of view. Gurnis’s work is thoroughly researched, incorporating the work of theatre practitioners, reception theorists, cultural materialists, gender theorists, and scholars of early modern drama and religious studies.

In chapter one, “Mixed Faith,” Gurnis breaks down monolithic conceptions of religious identity of the theatergoing audience to suggest that scholars of the period recognize the multivalent confessional identities of individual playgoers. She argues that religious differences within individuals is similar in nature to variations of gender identity as expressed by Judith Butler, and, true to the theoretical position Gurnis utilizes, she emphasizes that what one professes in terms of their religious faith depends upon a variety of forces that are in constantly shifting positions. Numerous studies on playgoers and their families follow a general discussion. For instance, readers are encouraged to imagine theatergoer Sir Humphrey Mildmay’s reac-

tions to watching *Volpone* along with those imagined by his brother Sir Anthony Mildmay and cousin Sir Francis Wortley as Puritan actor John Lowin performed the title role and as actors playing Nano and Androgyno discuss a Pythagorean approach to the transmigration of the soul. The discussion serves as an object lesson on the complexity of the spectator's experience to show that "real-world religious positions of audience members were part of the generative, confessional polyvocality of the commercial theater scene" (14). Gurnis's coupling of playgoers' social, political, and religious complexes, such as that of Lady Anne Clifford, help to illustrate the "unstable processes of cross-confessional appropriation" to further illustrate the problems created by present-day oversimplifications of audience beliefs and the meaning of a play, scene, or speech. Highly useful to navigating the complex of material within the chapter are subject divisions that describe various playgoers' confessional intersectionalities: "Mixed Audiences, or, People are Different"; "Playgoing Puritans"; "No One Is Normal"; "Catholics, Church Papists, and the Curious"; "Conversion and Mixed-Faith Families"; "Ungodly, Occult, Foreign, and Urban"; and "Shared Theatrical Experience of a Mixed Religious Culture." Such divisions appear in subsequent chapters, as well, and lend a reference-work quality to *Mixed Faith and Shared Feeling* that many scholars may find helpful as they navigate the volume.

The second chapter, "Shared Feeling," examines how post-reformation theater invited mixed audiences to "cross confessional boundaries" by reshaping religious discourses and theatergoers' experiences of their faiths (39). Here, Gurnis discusses the transformational and transactional power of theater through its multiple forms and levels of representation (costume, stage properties, performance gestures, speech acts). The author provides historical accounts from the period, including Barnabe Riche's pamphlet *Greenes Newes both from Heaven and Hell* to demonstrate ways in which dramatic performance can disrupt normative religious and cognitive mindsets. Especially illuminating is her discussion of Nathaniel Tomkyn's account of *The Late Lancashire Witches*. She then moves to discuss the role of scripts in performance and the collaborative dynamic between audience members and the dramatic experience, with an emphasis on emotional reaction. A case study on Spanish Match plays concludes the

chapter with a treatment of anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish types that are figured and reconfigured through such tropes as the calamitous wedding in dramas including *The Noble Spanish Solider*, *Match Me in London*, and *The Spanish Gypsy*.

“In *Mixed Company: Collaboration in Commercial Theater*,” the third chapter, examines the diverse faiths of theater practitioners, beginning with a discussion of the varied religious positions of playwrights. Just as audiences were known to possess a range of confessional positions, so too do the dramatists who created their entertainments. Playwright’s personal beliefs do not seem to have significantly impacted their professional collaborative practices or other conditions of production. Gurnis finds that this conception of professionalism extended to the King’s Men performers, as well. She illustrates the point by observing the religious associations of Edward Alleyn, Nathan Field, John Lowin, Eyllaerdt Swanston and the confessional characters they played, which, for instance, included Alleyn’s Marlovian atheists. Later in the chapter, Gurnis observes how Will Kemp’s roles of Sir John Falstaff and Sir John of Wrotham create a “shared personhood” (82). Especially noteworthy in the chapter is the author’s examination of the hot Protestant play *I Sir John Oldcastle* (a collaboration of at least four playwrights—Michael Drayton, Richard Hathway, Anthony Munday, and Robert Wilson) and the hagiography of Catholic martyr *Sir Thomas More* (Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Munday, and William Shakespeare). Chapters four and five turn to extended discussions of ways in which two plays operate within the mixed-faith worlds Gurnis has foregrounded to this point. Chapter four, “Making a Public Through *A Game of Chess*” investigates how Thomas Middleton’s King’s Men play utilizes action, dialogue, props, humor, staging, and stage directions to create a self-consciousness in its Protestant audience for the purpose of challenging their positions on religion and politics to yield a tangible cultural response. The author’s careful exegesis is especially well-informed by her use of contemporaneous reports as it explains how mixed-faith playgoers’ cultural and religious positions are shaped through shared experience. “*Measure for Measure: Theatrical Cues and Confessional Codes*,” chapter five, complements the work of the previous chapter by showing how theater can interrogate religious habits-of-thought

by inviting audiences to reimagine their assumptions about other's beliefs through the lens of drama. Once more, Gurnis challenges monolithic conceptions as she carefully articulates how Shakespeare's play provides multiple perspectives on predestinarian positions. Her movement through literal, metaphorical, and anagogical levels of the play's interrogations serves as a model for articulating affective piety in early modern scholarship.

Mixed Faith and Shared Feeling deftly challenges oversimplified confessional assumptions about people of the period by demonstrating through a wide array of lenses and perspectives the nuances of post-Reformation political, social, and religious practices. Through meticulous, sophisticated study, the author details how the power of theater shapes and is shaped by audiences of the time to reveal "a way of moving around, inside and out of, between, or aslant of rigid confessional binaries" (154). This volume requires careful reading for students and scholars of drama. It is a remarkable resource for our time.

Arran Johnston. *Essential Agony. The Battle of Dunbar 1650*. Warwick, England. Helion and Company, 2019. xxx + 220 pp. + 59 illus. + 12 maps. \$37.95. Review by EDWARD M. FURGOL, MONTGOMERY COLLEGE.

Johnston presents a masterful analysis of how the terrain dictated and impacted the armies' maneuvers and positions in a campaign that decided the fate of Great Britain and Ireland for a decade. Although based only on printed primary sources (and secondary ones) this work adds to our understating of what the author rightly calls a battle whose "outcome changed the course of British history" (198). The battle is hardly understudied, being analyzed in numerous accounts since W.S. Douglas' *Cromwell Scotch Campaigns* (1898). Johnston manages to contribute to the subject in a work of eight chapters, plus an epilogue, and appendices.

While the English events of the period from December 1648 through June 1650 are readily accessible, the Scottish developments are less well known. In first two chapters Johnston remedies that lacuna. He sets the scene of growing political divisions in Scotland, and the