

the subject and God for the sovereign state. Mohamed concludes his wide-ranging book with the remark that both Hobbes and Schmitt “alert us to the core bargain of a politics attaching itself to the state, and to the nihilism lurking under modern political settlements. The ultimate message of these apostles of modern political thought is that we should, Uzzah-like, live enslaved or die trying” (193).

Finally, I would be remiss to neglect the humor sprinkled throughout the argument. For example, apropos the committee rooms in which Marvell spent so much time, Mohamed quips, “These are places where political life resembles a meeting of the associate vice provost’s subcommittee on revisions to section four of the campus strategic plan” (142). Enough said.

George Oppitz-Trotman. *Stages of Loss: The English Comedians and their Reception*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020. 310 pp. 19 illustrations. \$62.00. Review by J. P. CONLAN, UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, RIO PIEDRAS CAMPUS.

*Stages of Loss* is a valuable, archivally based inquiry into the material conditions inflecting performance and the reception of the traveling English playing troupes in the German-speaking Holy Roman Empire in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The reader is struck from the “Note on Textual Conventions” describing the nature of the transcriptions as semi-diplomatic, the use of punctuation, the disclosures on how the author approached the variations between the Gregorian and Julian Calendars and the currency conversion table that, regardless of whether or not the findings are comprehensive or complete, *Stages of Loss* strives to be not just a contribution to the field but a book that a professor can teach from. This emphasis on methodological soundness especially manifests itself in a discussion of whether or not a citation to a now not-extant unique manuscript source ought be trusted. In this section, Oppitz-Trotman says probably, and unpacks his reasoning at considerable length, speaking to the conditions of receipt of the book and light-fingered acquisition by scholars that might precede cataloguing, before supporting the reception evidence in the lost manuscript witness with other, extant

documentable fact. This discussion illustrates that archival research is a process that, in the absence of existing sources, often must combine citation, presumption, and reasonable inference to arrive at enthymeme that may be advanced in scholarship even as it admits to and allows for the existence of reasonable doubt.

*Stages of Loss* must address such matters. The project strives towards documenting material conditions of the English comedians' performance and their contemporaneous reception in the Holy Roman Empire, now Germany, where centuries of warfare and the passage of time have destroyed much of whatever ephemeral documentation might have once existed. As Oppitz-Trotman points out in the prologue and the epilogue, relying on past scholarship offers false leads: past literary studies of the English comedians in the German-speaking have typically framed the reception of the English comedians as part of an nation-building origin-story that presupposes that later German playwrights, influenced by or pushing back against the example of the English comedians, wrote native drama that contributed to Germany's cultural self-consciousness; or, relying on the example of the English comedians, they established the first permanent professional theater in the region, receiving Shakespeare's works within the specific lens of the English comedians who toured the Holy Roman Empire in Shakespeare's time.

According to Oppitz-Trotman, the contemporaneous reception of the English comedians in the Holy Roman Empire was ambivalent: on the one hand, native German-speaking commentators respected the professionalism of their clowning; on the other, native German-speaking elites bemoaned the alleged debasement of German culture that arose from commoners' contact with their antics. The watershed moment in which reaction to and differentiation from the English comedians' example served the German nation-building project is, in Oppitz-Trotman's eyes, the banning of the professional clown from the stage in the eighteenth century.

A prologue and an epilogue frame the volume, in between which are five chapters entitled "Into the Air," "Out of Time," "Moving Cloth," "Moving Coin," and "Out of Laughter." The chapters are so well-researched, well-documented, and well-cited that it is easy on the first or second reading to miss that Oppitz-Trotman's argument

is best supported when it focuses on the material conditions of playing, and is theoretically less analytical, and, indeed, presumptively celebratory of English playing when discussing the initial reception of the English troupes in the 1590s, their influence on freeing up the rhythms of civic festivity in the cities in which they played, and the antagonism of native German theater critics toward the project of the English comedians during the conduct and in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War.

Of the chapters with a materialist focus, "Moving cloth" is the most enlightening. It explores the much overlooked fact that the clothing purchased by the travelling troupes and worn by the actors in their performances constituted both in terms of price and cost of transport their greatest expense. Oppitz-Trotman documents that the cost of this clothing was cited in petitions for licenses to perform; moreover, when licenses were denied, the companies were often provided compensation for this loss. The material conditions of making such clothes—in particular, the multiple baths necessary to produce solemn blacks—give rise to questions as to whether the troupe's "moving cloth" to perform the roles of elite personages in them was thought of at the time as an effective means whereby quality clothes might be marketed abroad. Oppitz-Trotman documents anecdotally that this commercial purpose informed some English comedians' practice, and that several traveling English comedians served as agents of import of goods from England (183), including stockings and gloves and other goods. The illustrations supporting this chapter (152-53) are particularly useful in clarifying that the costumes worn by the English clowns looked like much like the "barbarous breeches" worn as Netherlandish slops. We can thus infer from such examples that the wearing of such clothes by the English clowns served the commercial purpose of putting traditional garb out of fashion and opening up a market for the newer style of silk hosiery.

The next of the chapters with a materialist focus, Chapter 4, "Moving coin," follows up on "Moving cloth," to the extent that it demonstrates that the travelling troupes were commercially successful abroad, in part, perhaps, because travelling away from accustomed sources of credit required them to exercise restraint in their expenses. A more nefarious source of income, however, is indicated by German

broadsides of 1620 and 1621 that indicted the English clowns for profiting at the expense of native German infighting: one source of their wealth, these broadsides implied, arose when the English clown Pickelhering left his clowning for the more lucrative profession of war profiteer. This profiteering, Oppitz-Trotman theorizes, was less likely the trafficking in barrels of spears and axes than the broadsides indict Pickelherring of carrying from place to place than the lending of money out at interest to factions of the religious wars with whom they came across. Oppitz-Trotman speculates from plaintive letters sent home to England that the sources of their capital were likely less coin that they carried with them than letters of credit from patrons that the traveling companies redeemed with moneylenders at fairs.

More celebratory than analytical is Chapter 2, "Out of Time," which argues that the English comedians played the part of "harbingers and catalysts" (114) to release German festive expression from the rigorously enforced rhythms of the Church calendar. Prior to 1593, Nuremberg city fathers had cited the Church calendar universally to deny licenses to performers who appeared there out of the festive season on the grounds of untimeliness. The argument and schedule of licenses provided on pages 86 to 89 is unquestionably useful and persuades this reader that English players played "out of time." However, Oppitz-Trotman gives in to celebratory enthusiasm when he credits the extraordinary granting of a week's license in 1593 to English comedians to perform in Nuremberg to the "unusual virtuosity" of the English company (102).

Oppitz-Trotman's implicit disavowal of political motives for these exceptional licenses does not seem warranted even by the evidence *Stages of Loss* provides. Among the German playwrights whose historical drama this second chapter demonstrates was influenced by the performance of the English comedians was Jakob Ayer the Elder (d. 1605). Trotman-Oppitz documents that the introduction of the messenger JAHN who "enters dressed like the English fool" (94) in the *Siege of Alba*, the second part of Jakob Ayer's cycle of Roman history plays, postdates his seeing Thomas Sackville's clowning performance. It is well known (but undocumented by Oppitz-Trotman) that, in the 1580s, Will Kemp carried letters to England for Sir Philip Sidney, under the command of the Earl of Leicester as Governor of the

United Provinces when Dudley had no access to official State department channels owing to Elizabeth's reluctance to wage outright war against Spain; it is equally well known that Will Kemp travelled to perform in Denmark during that same period. Ayer's characterization of the English fool as messenger may thereby reveal an open secret that the 1620 and 1621 broadsides reveal allegorically. The English comedians served the agenda of their masters in delivering messages, whether orally or as letters, and perhaps carrying letters of credit, that furthered England's diplomatic ends through informal, unofficial and plausibly deniable channels; in recompense, the City Fathers extended the English comedians a license to perform whenever they arrived.

Nor does it seem warranted to disavow that the performance of the English comedians released festive celebration from the watchful eye of the City Fathers. On the contrary, as Ayer represents it, the antics of the messenger when dressed like an English clown (as opposed to the English players who dressed in finery when they arrived) were to be rejected, not admired nor empathized with. What Oppitz-Trotman describes as "Nuremberg's [preexisting sixteenth-century] culture of pervasive surveillance and regulation" would be reinforced by a bifurcated reaction in the theater space to these antics, on the one hand, by groups of naïve knowers who empathetically laughed, and, on the other, by the censorious responses of the Nuremberg elite.

A cleaner interpretation of *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* in Chapter One, "Into the Air," might have helped Oppitz-Trotman reach this conclusion on his own. The chapter opens with a discussion of textual variation in lines 7-8 of the A-Text of the Prologue, that reads "Wertenburg" or "Witertenburg," identifiable in other English texts, according to Leah Marcus, as referencing the Duchy of Württemberg, a territory in the south of Germany where the University of Tübingen was situated. As thorough as Oppitz-Trotman is in documenting where the English comedians might have played this version, he neglects to note that, in the text of the pact, FAUSTUS identifies himself as "John Faustus of Wittenburg, Doctor." Like the mention of "Rhodes" as a city in Germany (rather than an island in the Levant lost to the Turks in 1521) the textual variation in the cities between the prologue and the pact would have clarified to the attentive German subject, familiar with the geography of the Holy Roman Empire, that the Prologue,

later identified as WAGNER, who was to receive FAUSTUS's goods (including his books), was a benchmark of imperfect understanding neither to be listened to nor trusted.

Similar audience differentiation would have occurred when witnessing FAUSTUS read out the “deed of gift” that Oppitz-Trotman erroneously claims is a “common law instrument which *immediately* (emphasis in the original) transfers title” (73). Individuals familiar with the *ius commune*, the *Lex Romana* redacted and Christianized under the supervision of Justinian that prevailed throughout the Holy Roman Empire, would have recognized the legal instrument that FAUSTUS writes in his own blood to be a last will and testament, which FAUSTUS fails to recognize as such because he stopped reading the *Institutes* at his first appearance. Such persons—had they spoken English—would also have noted that that FAUSTUS's bequest of the soul is not and cannot be final until his death, at which time would be subject to the five conditions precedent (called suspensive conditions in the civil law tradition), the fourth and fifth of which are contradictory; the second and third of which are not performed; and the first of which, impossible to perform, is evidence of Faustus's heresy. Further, those trained both in the *ius commune* and the English language would have known that the object to be received after twenty-four years of successful performance is phrased in the disjunctive as “full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood **or** goods, into their habitation wheresoever.” Those who wrote such last wills and testaments in England certainly knew that the first clause of such instruments typically bequeathed the soul either to Jesus alone, in the case of Protestant adherents, or to Jesus, Mary and the communion of Saints, in the case of Roman Catholic adherents. Indeed, Reformation historians rely on this evidence to determine the extent to which Roman Catholicism survived after the Act of Supremacy.

The dynamic where the English comedians performed such plays whose full comprehension depended on specialized knowledge and yet whose sinful clowning antics moved laughter in the commoners seems consistent with rather than contradictory of the stodgy gravity and censorious agenda that Oppitz-Trotman deems informed the attitude of the Nuremberg city fathers toward civic festivity decades before and up until the English comedians received license to per-

form. And so, there is no reason to believe that mere virtuosity—to the exclusion of the opportunity the English comedians offered upon arrival for message delivery, extensions of credit and supervision and censorious correction of audience response—moved the City Fathers to grant them license to play out-of-season in the town.

Understanding the political purpose of English clowning to the City Fathers' role of correction perhaps also sheds more light on the antipathy of native German theater critics to the English-style clown in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War. Chapter 5, "Out of Laughter," points out that, just at the time that the English comedians had persuaded the City Fathers to allow them to establish a permanent theater in the 1620s with the argument that their performances served as antidotes to the melancholy of the religious wars, native German playwrights rejected this offering as lacking the high seriousness expected of high art and advanced tragedy as a means of coming to terms with the residual national trauma of the Thirty Years War. Characterizing the contributions of the English comedians as both inappropriate and foreign in relation to the shared experiences that German subjects had passed through, the many prefaces that Oppitz-Trotman quotes from are exhaustive. Their proliferation of the same line of reasoning, however, raises the same sort of questions raised by Petrarch's many sonnets addressed to Laura, or the plethora of the anti-dramatic diatribes written in Shakespeare's time: to what extent did the project that these authors advanced in writing persuade the readers to whom they were addressed to embrace the authors' vision of a common future. Oppitz-Trotman does not address this question.

Insofar as the plays performed by the English, like *Doctor Faustus* or with irreverent clowns who misbehaved, included matter that divided rather than unified the aesthetic response to the play in the theater, it may be that it was not the clown as a comic figure so much as the clown as a means of creating class differentiation in the audience that caused these authors to privilege as a means of unifying a deeply divided Germany the common experience in sadness that a more simply written type of tragedy allows.

In sum, *Stages of Loss* is an admirable contribution to an understudied but important aspect of English theatrical performance in the Late Tudor and Stuart periods—the performance of English plays on

foreign soil—that, interdisciplinary, recognizes the limitations of past scholarship in its prologue and epilogues and advances the conversation on this subject, by way of the rehearsal of archival evidence, in very interesting ways. Oppitz-Trotman does not resolve every issue that he addresses to this reviewer's satisfaction. However, Oppitz-Trotman's recovery of evidence is so thorough and his discussion of the issues is so wide-ranging that *Stages of Loss* establishes itself as both a place of origin for the study of English troupes on the Continent and a guideline in methodology for a wide array of research questions that the next generation of archival scholars can address.

Ross Dealy. *Before Utopia: The Making of Thomas More's Mind*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020, xii + 400 pp. \$120.00. Review by M. G. AUNE, CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

The conventional understanding of Thomas More's intellectual development holds that in the early years of the sixteenth century, prior to his meeting Erasmus, he was unsure of his vocation and his own sense of his faith. This unease was, in part, the result of feeling caught in a binary sense of faith: either/or; contemplative/active. But through his exposure to Erasmus' adaptation of Stoic thought, More became more unitary in his approach to Christianity. According to Ross Dealy, this shift can be traced through More's *Lucian* (1506), Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (1511) and finally *Utopia* (1516). It is at this point in More's intellectual development that Dealy has located his most recent work of intellectual and philosophical history.

Ross Dealy, retired associate professor at St. John's University, has written several works on Christian thought of the early Renaissance. In his previous book, *The Stoic Origins of Erasmus' Philosophy of Christ* (2017), Dealy argued for a reassessment of Erasmus' theological writings, suggesting that he drew on a sophisticated knowledge of Stoic philosophy, in particular that of Cicero, in his interpretation of the life of Christ. For Dealy, Erasmus posited a novel understanding of intention—virtuous acts require a virtuous intention. And further, that Erasmus' sense of Stoicism is two-dimensional rather than a binary, either/or. His current book picks up where this study left off, continu-