

cultural e histórica española en sus múltiples manifestaciones y modalidades actuales.

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HARLEY ERDMAN AND SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA, EDS. *Remaking the Comedia: Spanish Classical Theater in Adaptation*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2015. xix + 303 pp.

This volume of twenty-six extremely short, almost completely non-annotated essays in English may be seen as the sequel to Susan Paun de García's and Donald R. Larson's *The Comedia in English: Translation and Performance* (Tamesis, 2008). The major difference between the two books - aside from a new co-editor - is that the current one includes translations into languages other than English. The editors do not say anywhere that this is a volume of conference proceedings, but the papers included are of the type often presented at the Chamizal (Texas) and Almagro (Spain) theater festivals, which combine a scholarly conference with a veritable feast of actual performances of plays that were first written and performed during Spain's Golden Age (1550-1700). The fact that most of the essays are roughly of conference-paper length makes one suspect that one or several of these festival symposia may have been their original context(s). Indeed, here we find a history of "Four Decades of the Chamizal Siglo de Oro Drama Festival and the Evolution of *Comedia* Performance" by Jason Yancey (chapter eight) and a brief history of how the Almagro festival started, contained within Robert Bayliss' "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally, and Performing Nationalism" (chapter seven). It is clearly within this sort of hybrid event that the conceptualization for the volume finds its roots.

The book in question is in fact the textual equivalent of one of these hybrid symposium/performance events, in the sense that many of the contributors are themselves the translators of plays or the directors of these modern productions. As such, they are not remotely academics. Mixed in haphazardly with these "performance notes," for lack of a better term to describe the genre, are a few more-erudite essays - some by renowned scholars - which rise considerably far above the level of discourse characteristic for the rest of the volume. Normally I would not complain about the overall level of discourse for a heterogeneous essay collection, but upon reading such sentences as "In photographs of Paris Hilton's home I noted the animal skins and decided to bring this to our

production" (186), or "As a woman herself, Ana Caro knew how capable women could be" (189 - this in a chapter by a different author), one starts to wonder whether this book deserves to be taken seriously by the scholarly community. In their brief preface, the editors acknowledge that they have provided no glossary of terms; the list of play titles cited is less useful than it might have been if page numbers had been provided (they do appear in the index, which employs a format this reviewer has never seen used for titles in a scholarly index, namely "*curioso impertinente, El*" instead of "*El curioso impertinente*"). The sort of impressionistic criticism given currency here is the very antithesis of philology.

It is hard to escape the overall assessment that this is "lightweight" scholarship, designed to meet the minimum bar for research productivity expectations at the contributors' respective institutions, but without any of the bother and hassle of documenting their assertions with actual research. As a written record of live performances now lost to the viewer, perhaps this sort of project has its place; but would not a video archive of these performances serve the purpose equally well? The advantage of this volume and others like it in what is apparently now a booming industry is that they offer an outlet for artistic directors' commentaries on their own creative decisions. But again, it seems like interviews with these plays' directors might have been preferable to the directors' themselves taking a stab at "scholarship" when that is not their real area of expertise or even interest.

A positive assessment of this volume would accept this project on its own terms, but in order to do that readers would need more guidance than they currently receive. The division into four parts - "Theorizing," "Surveying," "Spotlighting," and "Shifting" - only provides a minimal framework to gesture in the direction of letting us know that individual play productions will be discussed primarily in the "Spotlighting" section, for example. The "Surveying" section would seem to boast a broader focus, with those essays examining a corpus of works by a specific playwright instead of only one of his plays. "Shifting" implies a displacement of conventional boundaries of genre to include studies of film and puppet adaptations as well as *novelas* and lyrical opera. The "Theorizing" section is even lighter, containing only four essays compared to at least six in each of the other three sections of the book.

One positive aspect of this volume is that it contains contributions from Spanish scholars appearing in English translation. The perspectives represented are thus not limited to an exclusively Anglophone orientation. The most fascinating elements to make their appearance between this book's covers are political: here we find Franco-era adaptations of *comedias* in Spain along with a Russian film version of Lope and a Chinese

production of Cervantes' *Pedro de Urdemalas*. And yet the political angle is not foregrounded at all by the book's editors either in its organization/division into sections or in their brief commentary appearing at the outset. It might have been interesting to collect these disparate studies into a section on "Politicizing," to stay with the designated *gerund* form for section titles.

The best essay in the book is Bruce R. Burningham's "Corpus Lorqui: Transformation and Transubstantiation in Los Barracos de Federico's *El caballero de Olmedo*," which is specifically rich in its theoretical engagement with the nature of ritual as formative of ideological communities. Harley Erdman's "The Dramaturgy of Absence: Minding the Gaps in Tirso de Molina, Ana Caro, and Feliciano Enríquez" also offers a good comparative angle. The fact that the editors engaged in weekly Skype sessions for three years in the process of collaboration makes one wonder whether all that effort was worth it for such relatively meagre output. As the editors themselves point out, all *refundiciones* of plays are hybrids, and some hybrid creations work better than others. In my opinion this volume itself is one hybrid production that, unfortunately, just doesn't quite work.

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DOROTA HENEGHAN. *Striking Their Modern Pose: Fashion, Gender, and Modernity in Galdós, Pardo Bazán, and Picón*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2015. ix + 155 pp.

As indicated in the title, this book studies the intersection of fashion, gender, literature, and modernity in nineteenth-century Spain. Under consideration are canonical authors Benito Pérez Galdós and Emilia Pardo Bazán, as well as the lesser-known Jacinto Octavio Picón. The focus is on narrative, specifically the four novels *La desheredada* (1881), *La de Bringas* (1884), *Insolación* (1889), and *Dulce y sabrosa* (1891). The book, therefore, examines a ten-year period in which fashion (*la moda*) was not simply described in literature, but rather, as argued by the author, a series of sartorial signs that explored questions of femininity and masculinity. Heneghan brings to the forefront the idea that the fashionable female and male protagonists in these novels not only challenged the conventional gender order, but also presented important alternatives. Clear throughout is the argument that Spain's transition to modernity required a reconsideration and reconfiguration of both feminine and masculine roles.