Preface

The present volume comprises the revised proceedings of the international conference “Theatre Cultures within Globalising Empires: Looking at Early Modern England and Spain” which was organised in November 2012 within the framework of the European Research Council Advanced Grant Project “Early Modern European Drama and the Cultural Net (DramaNet)” at the Freie Universität Berlin.¹

The DramaNet project investigates early modern European drama and its global dissemination through the theoretical conceptualisation of the “cultural net.” Understood as a non-hierarchical structure created deliberately by human agency for given purposes, the cultural net enables the multidirectional circulation of conceptual and material forms, while facilitating the withdrawal of floating material from the net, irrespective of its spatial or temporal origin. Taken as an analytical tool, the concept of the cultural net frees literary texts from the boundaries of national cultures and enables reflection upon common traits shared by spatially or temporally separated dramatic works, as well as regarding the reception of a particular work in a given time or place remote from its origin. Moreover, the project explores the role of theatre as a mass cultural phenomenon in social integration and, furthermore, examines the relationship of theatre to other phenomena of early modern culture, while considering the extent to which early modern theatre can be regarded as organically modern. In the first chapter of this collection, Joachim Küpper, Principal Investigator of the DramaNet research project, elaborates on his concept of culture as a net and describes the scope of the overarching research project’s aim.²

The conference hosted scholars from the US, the UK, Germany and India to explore the particular cases of drama and theatre in early modern England and Spain. These two European powers represented the only two competing “imperial” systems of the period, the former on the ascendant and the latter in decline, and they were also the two great theatre cultures of the time. By the late

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¹ This was the first of several international conferences organised by the DramaNet research group whose proceedings already have been or will be published as well: Katja Gvozdeva, Tatiana Korneeva, and Kirill Ospovat, ed., *Dramatic Experience: The Poetics of Drama and the Early Modern Public Sphere(s)* (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2016; Open Access); Sven T. Kilian, Toni Bernhart, Jaša Drnovšek, and Jan Mosch, ed., *Poetics and Politics: Net Structures and Agencies in Early Modern Drama* (Berlin/Boston, MA: De Gruyter, forthcoming 2018; Open Access); DS Mayfield, ed., *Rhetoric and Drama* (Berlin/Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2017; Open Access); Jan Mosch, ed., *History and Drama* (Berlin/Boston, MA: De Gruyter, forthcoming 2018; Open Access).

² For an extended presentation of this new approach to conceptualizing culture see Joachim Küpper, *The Cultural Net: Early Modern Drama as a Paradigm* (Berlin/Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2018).

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in both countries dramatic culture had been taken to the masses and, through public staging in stationary theatres for affordable prices, reached a broad, socially diversified audience. England and Spain were, moreover, globalising empires with wide-ranging cultural influence and growing multidimensional contacts with geographical spaces transcending Europe.

The articles gathered in the first section of this volume address phenomena of transnational transfer and travel in early modern European drama and theatre, considering questions of how and to what extent early modern Spanish and English theatre cultures interrelated with other European cultures (here mainly the Italian and German contexts are taken into account). M. A. Katritzky's "Stefanelo Botarga and Pickelhering: Fishy Italian and English Stage Clowns in Spain and Germany" investigates the important topic of Italian and English travelling actors; focusing on the shaping and diffusion of fish-related stage names, it shows, by means of transnational perspectives, that in this process literary, religious and cultural relations came into play that were relevant to the actor's home and host nations. Tatiana Korneeva's "The Art of Adaptation and Self-Promotion: Carlo Gozzi's *La Principessa filosofa* [The Princess Philosopher, 1772]" addresses the complex of Spanish Golden Age theatre culture's impact on late eighteenth-century Italian theatre. Taking the Venetian playwright's adaptation of Agustín Moreto's *El desdén con el desdén* [Disdain Meets with Disdain, 1654] as a case study, Korneeva investigates what is transferred and what is transformed in the transculturation process; and, furthermore, by raising the issue of the development of understandings of intellectual property and including the history of performance of Gozzi's play, the paper provides insight on the role of authorial agency concerning the circulation of artefacts in the cultural net and the specificity of theatrical works in this regard. Robert Henke's "From Augsburg to Edgar: Continental Beggar Books and *King Lear*" explores how the idea of the beggar that originated in late medieval/early modern southern German catalogues of beggars and vagabonds travelled to the early modern English stage, namely informing Edgar's performance as Poor Tom in Shakespeare's play. Henke shows that religious and social aspects, concepts of poverty and charity connected to and, in particular, theatrical notions and techniques thematised in the continental beggar catalogues meet in the figure of Poor Tom.

In the second section, aspects of "Intercultural Connections between English and Spanish Drama" are discussed. Leonie Pawlita's article "Dream and Doubt: Skepticism in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Calderón's *La vida es sueño*" considers the circulation of philosophical material put into dramatic form, considering these two dramas. It investigates the questions of why and how both plays dramatise the fundamental epistemological question of skepticism in early modern

Europe, the unreliability of sensory perception, and, taking into account the respective cultural-ideological context, discusses the different answers the two dramas give in the face of the challenges posed by this extra-literary discourse. Madeline Rüegg's "The Patient Griselda Myth and Marriage Anxieties on Early Modern English and Spanish Stages" focuses on a concrete narrative (linked to moral philosophical questions) available in the cultural net of early modern Europe and explores its use in Lope de Vega's *El ejemplo de casadas o prueba de la paciencia* [The Example for Married Women or the Test of Patience] (c. 1599–1603) and Dekker, Chettle and Haughton's *Comedy of Patient and Meek Grissil* (c. 1599). In her comparative analysis, Rüegg shows the changes that the Patient Griselda figure and her story, originally from Boccaccio's *Decameron* and made popular through Petrarch's Latin translation, underwent in its early modern English and Spanish dramatic adaptations. The similarities between these dramatisations (in purpose or rhetorical devices, for example) and the differences, as Rüegg argues, are connected with the plays' national-cultural contexts, i.e. the notions of marriage and virginity according to either Catholic or Protestant principles.

Ralf Haekel's and Saugata Bhaduri's studies address aspects concerning the "Images of Spain on the English Stage" in the light of the historico-political situation from the 1580s to the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1580 Portugal became part of the Spanish Empire (until 1640); tensions between England and Spain increased and ended in open military conflict, the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604), with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 as its peak—to mention just some of the most important events. Haekel's "Now Shall I See the Fall of Babylon': The Image of Spain in the Early Modern English Revenge Tragedy" focuses on Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, probably written between 1582 and 1587 and first published in 1592, and raises the question of why the image of Spain as it appears in Kyd's play, the model of a revenge tragedy and a most successful and influential drama throughout Europe, is one of the few aspects that did not have an influence on later Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies. As Haekel shows, *The Spanish Tragedy* (in its 1592 print version) is detached from the immediate political circumstances, lacks anti-Spanish propaganda and is rather centred on the political situation on the Iberian Peninsula itself (the play's setting thematises the annexation of Portugal and the unification of the Iberian Peninsula). He argues that the Spain of Kyd's play is more a general concept of an aspiring nation and empire, reflecting the tensions in England itself, and, moreover, pointing toward the insecurity of a society in transition. Saugata Bhaduri's "Polycolonial Angst: Representations of Spain in Early Modern English Drama" discusses representative English plays from the twenty-year period of the Anglo-Spanish War that mention Spain. These references to Spain in English theatre are not, however, as one might expect (given the actual conflicts

and the emergence of a discourse that came to be called “The Black Legend”), large in number nor marked exclusively by Hispanophobia, but rather by ambivalence and often even Hispanophilia. Bhaduri explains this characteristic with what he defines as “polycolonial angst,” the mutual anxiety of multiple European powers, primarily England and Spain, in the process of concurrently colonising parts of the world (Asia, the Americas) or also with regard to “proximal colonies” on the European continent. He recalls that when England entered the “colonial game” the Spanish(-Portuguese) empire was already a global power, a rival that the English may at the same time have admired. A similar admiration, as Bhaduri argues, may have been caused by Spain’s annexation of Portugal; England’s annexation of Ireland and unification with Scotland would be realised only in 1603.

Considering the over-arching transmissive impact of England and Spain upon the spaces they conquered, a closing section examines the cultural connections in terms of theatre “Between Europe and the Colonies” and the problematics such a cultural “export” entails. The first article, Barbara Ventarola’s “Multi-Didaxis in the Drama of Lope de Vega and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,” is dedicated to the Spanish and Hispano-American contexts, comparing Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna* (1619) and the *auto sacramental* *El divino Narciso* [The Divine Narcissus] by the Mexican nun Juana Inés de la Cruz, composed around 1688 and first published in 1690. The concept of “multi-didaxis” that Ventarola proposes as a theoretical framework for her comparative analysis is part of her “poly-contextural literary theory” (drawing on Gotthard Günther’s theory of poly-contextuality). It refers to the multidirectional potential of performed dramatic texts, being able to refer to a plurality of cultural contexts, to address a diversified audience and to evoke simultaneously imagined universal contexts, thus allowing a variety of combinations of pragmatic aims, ranging from propaganda to critical transgression. Lope’s critique aims at aspects of social hierarchy, while Sor Juana’s targets the hierarchy of cultures (Iberian and colonial). With regard to the relationship between the metropolitan and the colonial theatre cultures, Ventarola interprets Sor Juana’s dramatic writing as “independent and constructive *aemulatio*.” Jonathan Gil Harris’ “Tamburlaine in Hindustan” focuses on intercultural connections, travels, and transformations—linguistic, geographical, historical, imaginative and theatrical—concerning the English empire’s drama, shedding light on different forms of Western understandings of transcultural encounter. Harris considers in a first step of his analysis the historical figure on which the theatrical figure in Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587) is based, the medieval Turkic king Temür who at the end of the fourteenth century supposedly conquered Hindustan, setting up the Mughal dynasty, of which Temür/Timūr-e-Lang was later made the legendary founding figure, present in Mughal

literature and art. Narratives of Timur migrated westward (from Persia to Arabia, through Spain to England), as Harris shows, referring to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* as an example. The volume's concluding article, Gautam Chakrabarti's "'Eating the Yaban's Rice': Socio-Cultural Transactions on the Mid-Colonial Bengali Stage," broadens the perspective, as it considers a later period of the effects that had begun in the early modern age by focusing on nineteenth-century Indian drama. Chakrabarti investigates the 1860 Bengali play *Nil Darpan; or, The Indigo Planting Mirror* written by Dinabandhu Mitra, which, structured as a Shakespearean tragedy, dramatises exploitative and oppressive mechanisms, drawing on the Indigo Revolt of Spring 1859 in Bengal, when indigo farmers refused to sow indigo in their fields to protest against a system of enforced cultivation. Chakrabarti's study is about the circulation of cultural-ideological material, the material extracted from the net being the (European) ideological narrative based on Marxist and socialist ideas. Chakrabarti shows that, set in an Indian framework, the story presented in *The Indigo Planting Mirror* refers to Marx' *Communist Manifesto*. The play thus problematises the firm social hierarchy present in its contemporary context.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the institutions and individuals who made conference and volume possible. We are grateful to the European Research Council for its generous financial support and to the Freie Universität Berlin for hosting the conference. Our gratitude goes to the publisher DeGruyter who helped make the papers available to an international readership. And we would like to thank our contributors as well as all the participants in the conference for the inspiring academic exchange.

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