Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
(Shakespeare, Hamlet, 1.5.100–2)

This volume is an outcome of intensive long-term academic and practice-based collaborations between members of the international research initiative Theater Without Borders (TWB), a global collective exploring transnational and intercultural aspects of early modern theatre, drama and performance. Arranged as a map of sorts, it presents twelve chapters, newly invited, researched and written to create this collection, divided into three sections, loosely cosmographically grouped into three parts: (I) West, (II) North and (III) South. A major focus of previous TWB collections is Venice and Italy (Henke and Nicholson 2008, 2014). While Italy also features strongly here, our omission of East maps a conscious decision to celebrate less familiar aspects of the broad geographical remit of the TWB collective, most particularly with a vigorous westward expansion into the Iberian peninsula. In an anthropomorphic conceit reminiscent of the head-to-foot arrangement of early modern medical treatises, and reflected in the map of Sebastian Münster discussed below (Figure 2), the chapters are both literally and metaphorically arranged, as it were, from foot to head.

Maps and theories
During the early modern period, engaging with and comprehending evolving perceptions of the world was greatly facilitated for those privileged elites and classes whose education or means granted them exclusive access to strategic material objects, such as atlases, maps or globes. As Brotton perceptively notes, ‘It was through both the image of the map and the globe and their existence as valued material objects that the astronomers, historians, lawyers, grammarians, travellers, diplomats and merchants… made sense of the shifting shape of their world’ (1997: 21). However, making sense of our world has always been a vitally necessary ontological activity for every individual. ‘To be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to
the rest of mankind’, writes Aristotle in his *Poetics*, when discussing the causes of the origin of poetry and the joy of knowing:

> though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art […] one’s pleasure will not be in the picture as an imitation of it, but will be due to the execution of coloring or harmony and rhythm. (Gerould 2000: 47)

In our ontological activities, we construct our own metaphorical, immaterial maps; we create images in our minds through which we understand the world around us. Before periodical media was made possible by cheap print, news of the world was circulated orally – through sermons and publicly proclaimed decrees, by word of mouth, and, very importantly, through performative genres such as songs, ballads and theatre. This last is the focus of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, in which he analyses drama as an imitation of the world we live in – its history and material reality, as well as the metaphysical narratives and wisdoms that we live by.

In the early modern period – perhaps even to a greater extent than before or after – theatre in its broadest sense represented a tool for making sense of the world. Legends and myths were retold and remembered through performance; histories were recreated in virtual reality, in the very presence of the spectator; and actors told fictional stories ‘to th’yet unknowing world’, playing out ‘how these things came about’. Perennially hungry for sensation, audiences could hear, and see:

> Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
> Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,  
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause. (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 5.2.331–5)

In doing so (‘in this upshot’), the bigger pictures of causes and consequences emerged: ‘purposes mistook | Fall’n on the inventors’ heads: all this’ could the stage ‘truly deliver’ (336–8).³

There are profound epistemological connections between early modern maps and theatre – both of which, in their own way, create physical representations and mental images of the world. This affinity was explicitly acknowledged by early modern cartographers – among them perhaps most famously by Abraham Ortelius, whose highly influential and magnificent atlas – a collection of seventy maps – was published in Antwerp in May 1570 under the title *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (A Theatre of the Terrestrial World). Theatre was a mode of display, presenting, narrating – and colourfully and tellingly imaging and imagining – the terrestrial world. Furthermore, early modern cartographers acknowledged the humanism and human dimension of their efforts. By charting and portraying not just places, but also their
inhabitants, habits and myths, their maps retained the human explorer at their centre: the spectator of the *theatrum mundi*, trying to make sense of its mysteries. Some of these maps acquired anthropomorphic features – as perhaps most explicitly with the 1570 *Europa Regina*, charting the European continent portrayed as a Queen (Figure 2).

Early modern cartographers were as yet uninfluenced by the paradoxical theoretical viewpoint of the natural sciences – which assumed and even imposed an objectivity onto the physical world: the dehumanised and dehumanising conviction that it is possible to measure or even discover the great divine, God-created mechanism of this universe as if it exists outside the individual’s mind. Of course, unprecedented discoveries were being made thanks to the new science, but eventually the notion of scientific objectivity had to be reassessed: yes, objectivity was possible, but only on terms created by human observers. This humanist corrective was already omnipresent in early modern maps – populated by inhabitants, travellers and human-related factual realities relevant to the routine lives of travellers: cities, routes, rivers, mountains, seas and winds.

In our approach to the understanding of early modern theatre and its world we retain the humanist corrective; this collection re-emphasises it in relation to previous generations of historiographers. The great philosopher of atomic physics Niels Bohr asserted that: ‘It is wrong to think that the task of physics is to find out how nature is. Physics concerns what we can say about nature’ (Lindley 2007: 196). In a similar vein, acknowledging our limitations as historiographers, rather than making statements about how early modern theatre actually was, we ask questions about what we are able to say and know about it. Our metaphorical, immaterial maps, the images of early modern theatre we create in our minds, are necessarily constrained by the available documentary evidence and material objects – a notorious problem of the theatre historiographer. On our maps of early modern theatre, there are blanks and *terrae incognitae*.

Additionally, we acknowledge our epistemological bias by reflecting on the basic concepts that we operate with – and which, in turn, direct our inquiries. One of the crucial concepts inherently relativised in our inquiries is that of theatre itself. What is theatre? Classically educated scholars of early modernity must have been aware of the word’s Greek origins, and perhaps deployed *theatrum* and its derivatives in the etymological sense in their disciplines – be they cartography, philosophy or medicine. The word originated in the ‘Greek *θεάτρον*, a place for viewing, especially a theatre’, itself derived from ‘*θεά* to behold (compare *θέα* sight, view, *θεατής* a spectator)’ (*OED*, ‘theatre | theater, n.’). Defining the theatre as a *place for viewing* in the broadest sense, was perhaps stretching terminological fixity to its limits. (The present discussion
Figure 2 ‘Europa Regina’ (Europe as the Queen) from Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographia* (1628), reproduced by permission of Universitätsbibliothek Basel (EU I 61a).
would need to be stretched even further to include the significant entrepreneurial and artisanal aspects of early modern theatre-making – the individual playing companies and troupes engaged in producing these viewings.) It is worth reminding ourselves that the root θε̱σθαι provides not only theatre but also theory:

ancient Greek θε̱ρπια action of viewing, contemplation, sight, spectacle, in Hellenistic Greek also speculation, theory < θε̱ρος (also θεορός; attested in an inscription) envoy, ambassador, spectator (< stem of θε̱σθαι to behold, view, contemplate (see theatre n.) (OED, ‘theory, n.’)

The observer, the spectator, the artist, the explorer and the theorist are profoundly connected through their shared endeavour of viewing and trying to understand what they see. These processes of making sense through the creation of images, maps and models are cognitive enquiries common to theory, science, art and theatre.

Philip Sidney, in his The Defence of Poesie, published in 1595, but written in the late 1570s, reflects on and compares the work of scholars and scientists, and argues for the unique position of the poet among them. Drawing, again, on Greek etymology (‘ποεῖν, ποιεῖν to make, create, produce, to compose, write’: OED, ‘poet, n.’), Sidney identifies the poet as the true maker among them. In describing the scholars’ activities, Sidney deploys theatrical terms – apparently as a rhetorical device for emphasising his points. Clearly, Sidney follows the Aristotelian tradition in thinking of poetry in the performative sense, as oral, dramatic poetry, delivered as live performance:

There is no Arte delivered to mankind, that hath not the workes of Nature for his principall obiect, without which they could not consist, & on which they so depend, as they become Actors and Players as it were, of what Nature will have set forth. So doth the Astronomer looke vpon the starres, and by that hee seeth, setteth downe what order Nature hath taken therein. […] The naturall Philosopher theron hath his name, and the Morrall Philosopher standeth vpon the naturall vertues, vices, and passions of man; and followe Nature (saith hee) therein, & thou shalt not erre. The Lawyer sayth what men haue determined. The Historian what men haue done. […] onely the Poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subiection, lifted up with the vigor of his owne inuention. (Sidney 1595: C1r–v, emphasis added)

Sidney then narrows down his debate of learning to a comparison of the philosopher, the historian and the poet. The philosopher dryly sets down ‘with thorny argument the bare rule’, while the historian is ‘tied, not to what should bee, to what is, to the particular truth of things’ (D2v–D3r). In contrast:

[T]he peerelesse Poet performe[s] both: for whatsoeuer the Philosopher sayth shoulde be done, hee gieuth a perfect picture of it in some one, by whom hee presupposeth it was done. So as hee coupleth the generall notion with the
particuler example. A perfect picture I say, for hee yeldeth to the powers of the minde, an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordish description. (Sidney 1595: D3’)

The poet is creating 'a perfect picture' for 'the minde, an image' by which even the dryest notion can be learned:

Poesie therefore is an arte of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in this word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfetting, or figuring forth: to speake metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight. (Sidney 1595: C2’)

In our historiographic investigations, we accept *theatre* in its broadest sense, comprising any performative activities that propound possible paths of human interaction – from court ballet, through festival entries, shows and displays, improvised routines, children's games, to theatrical practices proper. These are taken as historic realities, *facts*, informing and defining our open concept of the theatre, whose reality is diverse, and resists simple definition or coherent formulation. Defining this concept by its outward show or by its function would necessarily impose a restrictive view. While we aim to identify and present objective findings about early modern theatre, we are constrained by our recognition of the uncertainty, relativity and often frustrating fuzziness of the objects of our study. While we may have a playtext, an archival document, or even an eyewitness account of a performance, that does not allow us to make conclusive assertions. And yet, the indeterminacy and uncertainty of the material does allow us a quantum of knowability – through the concepts it evokes, which we can reflect on. Our collection does not narrow down the definition of *theatre* as a performative activity in the early modern world, but rather embraces different sorts of performative manifestations, and by contemplating (*theorising*) them, portrays the multiplicity of forms and shapes *theatre* could assume, before later eras compartmentalised and institutionalised them within specific, fixed architectural and social spaces.

Nonetheless, our inclusive notion of theatre is narrowed down by a specific agenda: we study theatre as a connective instrument – engendering, sustaining, shaping and cultivating connections between cultures, peoples and nations, and across borders. The early modern theatre we study *figures forth* – to use Sidney’s expression – people, behaviours, politics, places and worlds beyond the local. This theatre operates through transnational connections, encounters and networks. In keeping with the early modern notion of *poetry* – what we now think of as *theatre-making* – theatre is a social event in a particular, physical place and at a particular time. It is created in concrete material conditions; using, interrogating and innovating cultural conventions, and *figuring forth* images, ideas and concepts for the spectator to contemplate (*theorise*) and respond to. Viewed from this perspective, historiography is a set of equations
with many unknowns and variables – with theatre at its heart as its greatest unknown and variable. One possible and productive approach to exploring it is to focus on the connections – links, synapses, interstices, nexuses and networks – that theatre forges. This shift of attention from the nominal to the relational – a *dialogical turn* of sorts – is significant. We view current developments in philosophy, psychology, and the digital humanities relating to this shift, as a helpful contemporary theoretical framework, without allowing their agendas to restrict our wide-ranging studies into the interactions, encounters, points of contact and exchanges that enrich our understanding of the early modern world of theatre and its connections.

**Contexts and connections**

*Th eatrum mundi* is here understood not only as metaphor but even more as literal display; a viewing, performative model and speculative, inquiring image of how material practice, social reality, politics and, above all, individual perception can be mapped, viewed and theorised. We combine disciplines and methods for studying transnational connections in early modern theatre, approaching our subject as historians, philosophers and poets, and our collection as a whole represents an atlas of sorts, charting different, interconnected and complementary themes, from the material, concrete and foundational to the abstract and cerebral, or – if you prefer – from foot to head. The theoretical ‘maps of meaning’ (Peterson 1999) we offer are not simply metaphorical or rhetorical expressions of discoveries, realisations and assertions, but are always firmly grounded by a material foot on dry land. Our chapters are underpinned by an explicit methodological approach: we are methodical in linking abstract notions of wider theatre historical significance to concrete historical facts: archaeological findings, archival records, visual artefacts and textual evidence; we reference our generalised ‘mapping’ of early modern theatre historiography with verifiable specificities. Methodologically, this is a crucial feature of all the chapters in this volume: the systematic yoking of theories (views and maps) to surviving historical evidence for the performative event – whether as material object, text, performative routine, structural pattern (theatergram), social realities (rituals, festivities, genres), archival evidence or visual documentation. Each of our chapters has this fixed historical grounding: its own historiographical ‘footing’.

Given the foot to head arrangement of our collection, fittingly, Natasha Korda’s chapter on the early modern shoe opens our volume with a pleasingly firm historiographical footing in our exploration of transnational connections. Korda’s chapter developed from two of her TWB presentations: “‘The Sign of the Last’: Gender, Material Culture and Artisanal Nostalgia in Thomas Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*” (Wolfenbüttel, 2012) and ‘If the Shoe
Fits: The Truth in Pinking’ (NYU, 2013). Korda’s point of departure is the archaeological find of a shoe on the site of London’s Rose Theatre. Exploring connections between this significant and much-discussed artefact and early modern drama – specifically, Thomas Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday, or The Gentle Craft*, performed at the Rose Theatre in 1599, ‘around the time that this shoe might have trod the boards on the foot of an actor, or the pit or galleries on the foot of a spectator’ – Korda theorises the boundaries between artistry and art. While the artefact Korda analyses and theorises is, literally, firmly grounded in London soil, the ‘gentle craft’ of making and decorating early modern shoes was recognisably influenced by, and operating within, a network of transnational trade connections. Korda situates her explorations within this international context, not only documenting the links existing between artisans across Europe and beyond but also, more particularly, with drama and theatre. Trades of this kind – working with animal skins, whether for shoes, gloves or clothes – also establish transnational connections between the greatest playwrights of the early modern period: the shoemaker’s son Christopher Marlowe, the glover’s son William Shakespeare and embroiderer’s son Lope de Vega (on whom see Susanne Wofford and Barbara Fuchs, Chapters 2 and 3, below), the tanner’s son Pierre Corneille, the cobbler Hans Sachs, or the shoemaker’s son G. A. Bredero (on whom see Nigel Smith, Chapter 5, below). The particularity and materiality of the shoe, the centrepiece of Korda’s chapter, and her focused exploration of the labours, trades and professions associated with the theatre, are important reminders of the practical skills, crafts and artistry on which and from which theatre grew, in every culture of early modern Europe. Korda traces connections between everyday objects and crafts, and the more abstract and cerebral matter that also contributes to the fabric of theatre – from making a shoe and wearing it to treading the boards, and from the philosophical concepts of *pointure* (Derrida) to the ‘thiny aspect of the art work [as] something else over and above this thiny element’ (Heidegger 1971: 19, cited by Korda). In evidencing and reflecting on the scale between the mundanely material and the metaphysical, Korda not only raises and discusses an important methodological principle, but in many ways also lays out the model we follow throughout this volume.

Susanne Wofford bases Chapter 2 on her TWB presentation: ‘Freedom and Constraint in Courtship across the Boundary of Rank: The “Jest Unseen” of Love Letters in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Lope de Vega’s *The Dog in the Manger* [El perro del hortelano]’ (Madrid, 2011). The centrepiece anchoring it is the letter as an instrument of mobility, exchange and connection – explored as a dramaturgical pattern, or theatergram, through the letter scenes of these two great, near contemporary plays. Firmly rooted in rigorous textual analysis, Wofford analyses the dramatic potential of their letter scenes. Developing from her succinct formulation and meticulous exploration of ‘freedom and
constraint in courtship across the boundary of rank’, Wofford’s chapter proceeds to an argument that contextualises the theatergrams of letter-writing and misdirected letters within a thick network of early modern culture. This encompasses Italianate novellas, romances and plays, as well as the transnational relations between Spanish and English theatre. The letter as stage property and performance object has a universal performative potential, which creates its own specific realm of extra-textual connections between stage practices and conventions across cultures, be it on the stages of London, Madrid, or elsewhere in early modern Europe.

In Chapter 3, Barbara Fuchs draws on her TWB presentation on her staged translations and ‘Hispanic Classical Theater for New Audiences in Los Angeles’ (Paris NYU, 2015). Like Susanne Wofford, she examines the theme of cross-class, or mimetic desire (Girard), and compares two plays by the eminent contemporaries, Lope and Shakespeare. Fuchs builds her discussion on complex historiographical foundations. Capitalising on her own practical experience with staging early modern classics, and drawing on the current scholarly fashion for expanding the Shakespearean canon, Fuchs examines the global search for Cardenio, a lost play Shakespeare and John Fletcher wrote around 1611, apparently inspired by an episode in Cervantes’ Don Quixote (1607). There have been several attempts to revive Cardenio. Stephen Greenblatt tried to reinvent the play in thirty different countries with the help of local practitioners, in a scheme uncannily reminiscent of global corporate capital (Greenblatt et al. 2010). At the Royal Shakespeare Company, Greg Doran and Antonio Álamo reconstructed the play for Doran’s 2011 production (Doran 2012), from Lewis Theobald’s Double Falsehood, or The Distrest Lovers (1727), a problematic revival of Shakespeare’s lost Cardenio that Theobald probably wrote in a bid for notoriety. At around this time, Shakespeare scholars contributed to a collection of authoritative essays, in which they drew on their specific methodologies to ascertain all they could about this ‘unresolved mystery’ (Carnegie and Taylor 2012). This interrogation was closely followed by the publication of practice-based findings, drawing on Terri Bourus’ 2012 staging of Taylor’s ‘re-created’ Cardenio (Bourus and Taylor 2013). Cardenio was becoming, in absentia, a substantial presence in the Shakespearean canon, a problematic quasi-addition, as it were; accepted with surprisingly little dissent, given the dubious textual history of Theobald’s play. Following the play’s stage success, Theobald defended its provenance to Shakespeare in his editions of Double Falsehood of 1728, but did not include in his 1734 edition of Shakespeare’s works the (now lost) Cardenio script he allegedly worked from (see also King 2012; Kirwan 2015: 32). More historiographically rigorous, Roger Chartier attempted to affirm as much as could be learned of the lost play from a transnational literary context in the early modern period, extending the perspective from London to the widespread
community of readers and admirers of Cervantes; in this context, his analysis of the popularity of Don Quixotiadans in French theatre is particularly valuable (Chartier 2011). The original path proffered by Fuchs has sobering implications for Shakespeare-centric scholarship. In 2013, at the height of the Cardenio craze, the discovery of an unknown Lope play raised surprisingly limited international response. While unrelated to the Don Quixote plot, Fuchs argues that this play, Lope’s Mujeres y criados (Women and Servants), offers unprecedented performance material pertaining to gender stereotypes and social hierarchies, and explores issues that would have been at the core of Shakespeare’s lost Cardenio. In this way, Fuchs infers, Lope’s play can be regarded as a worthy surrogate, besides being a remarkable play in its own right. Her approach is all the more convincing in that it is supported by practice-based exploration: Fuchs has translated the play, produced a staged reading, and published the playtext in English (Lope de Vega 2016). Her chapter is an important contribution to Lope studies, and helps establish the newly discovered play alongside the playwright’s other masterpieces, such as The Dog in the Manger.

Noémie Ndiaye bases Chapter 4 on her 2015 TWB presentation of the same title at NYU Paris. The last chapter of the first section, it completes this volume’s cosmography of the West through an exploration of a French theatergram: the conventional routine of blackface (barbouillage) as a plot device in romantic comedy. This maps out another web of transnational connections—between France, Spain, Turkey, Africa and the Caribbean. Ndiaye breaks new ground by analysing a group of late seventeenth-century plays of predominantly French provenance, previously unexplored in English criticism. Besides making important contributions to our knowledge of French theatre, Ndiaye’s profound analysis takes the theatergram of blackface far beyond mere stage practice: it encapsulates fascinating realities of early colonial politics, transnational aristocracy, legacies of medieval theatre and iconography, and notions of race avant la lettre. The comical disguise in blackface may serve the needs of the romantic marriage plots. At the same time, it is indicative of the social aspirations (mimetic desire once more) of the stage characters; and although the blackface disguise of a Turkish or African ambassador may induce comedic mockery, infernal horror or the unsettling encounter with the cultural Other, characters engage in these exchanges and operate more or less effectively within a transnational perspective. Ndiaye also importantly fills in gaps in the performance history of blackface—an indispensable but troubling stage convention whose legacy, while theatrically inspirational, also bears witness as a haunting memento of the colonial past.

In Chapter 5 Nigel Smith, drawing on his TWB presentation: ‘International Politics and Drama in the Dutch Republic’ (Madrid, 2011), metaphorically shifts the ground of this volume’s explorations to the cultural North.
Rooted in Amsterdam and the Dutch region of Brabant, Smith’s chapter offers a detailed analysis of an undeservedly less well-known masterpiece of early modern drama – G. A. Bredero’s *The Spanish Brabanter (Spaanschen Brabander)* of 1617. Smith outlines the numerous national and transnational connections that form the bedrock on which Bredero created this remarkable stage adaptation of the great picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). The Dutch Republic had come into being in 1581, and its existence was frustrated by protracted wars and conflicts with Spain, aided and fuelled by the many allies of the House of Orange and Spanish Habsburgs. Bredero’s *The Spanish Brabanter* appeared at a crucial moment in history, in the heat of this transnational conflict, and Smith methodically identifies the many historical realities contributing to the play’s context. Seeing the world through the lens of Bredero’s characters – be it the eponymous Spanish Brabanter Jerolimo, a merchant who fell on hard times, his motley dual heritage servant, the picaresque trickster Robbeknol, church beadle Floris Harmensz, the boys who prank him, prostitutes Tryn Jans and Bleecke An, junk dealer and bawd Beatrice, or mean landlord Gierighe Geeraart – offers spectators of his play a view from an abyss. On the obverse side of this comedic tapestry is a harsh and disconsolate reality inhabited (in the words of King Lear) by ‘poor naked wretches’, brought to this place at this moment in time, and at the mercy of the ‘piteless storm’ of wars, cruelty and poverty which constitutes the ever-present challenge of early modern life. Smith presents the Amsterdam of 1617, the playground of *The Spanish Brabanter*, as a crossroads of these many transnational routes and lives – all accurately compressed into Bredero’s haunting comedy.

The memorable aristocratic wedding held at The Hague in 1638 – some two decades and two days’ walk from the Amsterdam of *Spaanschen Brabander* – is the focus of Chapter 6, which M. A. Katritzky bases on the TWB presentation: ‘London and The Hague – Performing Quacks in Antimasques of 1638’ (Paris NYU, 2015). As a major early modern court festival, this grand event at The Hague brought together, in the manner of an early festival of the performing arts, a great variety of performers and shows – some exclusively for the private entertainment of the wedding guests, others shared with the paying public. On a historiographic level, it is in many ways a catalogue of transnational theatre of the early modern age. Katritzky meticulously establishes connections between the individual acts of the festival programme, as documented by eyewitness accounts, and the many international traditions, renowned performers, writers and artists on which the event drew. Several remarkable connections stand out: The Hague saw the private staging of two recent hits of the Parisian stage: Charles de Beys’ *L’hospital des fous* (1636), an adaptation of Lope de Vega’s *Los locos de Valencia* (printed 1620), and Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid* (1637), itself based on Guillén de Castro’s play *Las
mocedades del Cid (1605–15). Conspicuous similarities between the final entry of the tournament parade presented at The Hague and several recent and subsequent London court masques, bear witness to considerable cultural contact between the two courts. In addition, the surviving details of the wedding festival allow Katritzky to identify influences on the stage names chosen by this entry’s noble participants, based on commedia dell’arte performers, itinerant physicians, charlatans, and quacks – among them the famous Parisian Mondor and the mysterious Zan Bragetta. Katritzky’s detailed analysis of the documents of this wedding festivity gives the 1638 wedding considerable historiographical significance, as a crossroads of transnational connections in early modern theatre.

In Chapter 7, Pavel Drábek extends his researches into the dramaturgical specifics of the English Comedy (Englische Comedie) in Germany, which he first explored in two TWB presentations: ‘Worlds-in-Between and their Inhabitants’ (Wolfenbüttel, 2012) and ‘Tricksters, Enchantment and Trance-mission in Early Modern Theatre in Europe’ (New York, 2013). English travelling actors on the European continent have often been studied as exporters of London plays, predominantly those of Shakespeare. Drábek argues that there is inconclusive evidence to support these traditional claims. Instead, he resituates the English Comedy as a distinctive genre, born on the road in mainland Europe as a performative rival of the Italian comedy – with its own specific ‘English’ style and dramaturgy, predominantly presenting plays with plots based on transnational (or specifically local) stories, and catering for local tastes and predilections. The specific style of the English Comedy is, Drábek argues, best symbolised by the English itinerants’ clown persona (most commonly called Pickelhering) – the trickster and border-crosser who uses specific English dramaturgical tricks to overcome the seeming alterity of ‘other heavens in other countries’. Tracing what the traveller Fynes Moryson called ‘peeces and patches of English plays’, Drábek establishes points of similarity between London plays, the scripts of the English comedians in mainland Europe, and the transnational culture from which both grew. His conclusions suggest that the phenomenon of English travelling actors is not an early instance of English colonial or religious propaganda and textual culture (Miller 2012: 107–57; Schlueter 2016), or of the influence of Shakespearean drama as a form of national culture (Cohn 1865; Chambers 1923; Limon 1985). Rather, it is an original theatrical style formed, existing and thriving within an itinerant, transnational context.

Pieces and patches of plays play an important part in Chapter 8, based by Friedemann Kreuder on his TWB presentation: ‘The Mask as the Other of the Bourgeois Self: Alternative Forms of Representation in the Early Wiener Volkstheater of Joseph Felix von Kurz’ (Wolfenbüttel, 2012). The international playwright, entrepreneur and comedian of the mid-eighteenth century, Joseph
Felix von Kurz, better known by his stage name of Bernardon, constructed his plays out of scenes, arias, songs, comedic routines (lazzi) and other short performative fragments, in the best tradition of early modern comedic styles – be it the Italian commedia dell’arte, the English Comedy, or their descendants. In so doing, Bernardon was wittingly or unwittingly shadowing the local contemporaneous practices of Baroque Italian opera in Vienna, which frequently (in opera pasticcios) brought together numbers from different works, composers, authors and styles. Kreuder revisits the traditional historiography, derived from Marxist dialectics, and offers a revised interpretation of the early modern self: a process by which ‘individuals negotiate their idea of the self in confrontation with the cultural memory of their time, their leading philosophical concepts, their mentality, and particularly with the existing contemporary ideals of behaviour in view’. Kreuder’s concept of the self, as shaped on the civic stage of early modernity, operates with Habermas’ notion of the public sphere (Öffentlichkeit), asserting that theatre plays ‘a crucial role in reformulating the ideal of the modern self’. The social aspirations of the middle classes were often played out in the theatre, which was an opportunity and instrument for self-presentation – in many ways a variant of the mimetic desire here interrogated by Fuchs and Wofford. For Kreuder, Bernardoniads are not only the documents of the birth of the modern self from popular comedy, but also historiographical treasure troves that conserve early modern transnational practices.

Eric Nicholson bases Chapter 9 on his TWB presentation: ‘Northern Lights and Shadows: Transcultural Encounters with Germans et alia in Early Modern Italian Theatre’ (Wolfenbüttel, 2012). Like Kreuder, Nicholson presents a long view of early modern transnational theatre – chronologically covering the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Geographically and thematically, it is also positioned as a transitional chapter, metaphorically spanning the Alps to link our volume’s cosmography of the North with the South. Portrayal of the cultural Other is a universal theme in its own right; Nicholson focuses on theatrical portraits of Northerners – themselves a transnational and heterogeneous assortment of regional types, from the English and Scottish, through the Dutch and the Poles, to the diverse cultures of the tedeschi (Teutons), or Germans. In Nicholson’s chapter, numerous examples of Northerners in Italian drama and theatre are read as catalogues of images of other northern cultures, cross-referenced with underlying realities that might have inspired those works. Culminating with a study of probably the last early modernist, Carlo Goldoni, Nicholson’s exploration expounds his late works, which were created from the venerable Italian tradition of the commedia dell’arte, but transposed into a new transnational setting – an imaginary cultural space situated somewhere between Venice and London. From a historiographical perspective, Nicholson’s chapter (like Kreuder’s) repositions the concept of
early modernity – as no longer purely temporal, but also aesthetic: a distinctive cultural mode surviving deep into the eighteenth century and beyond. Nicholson and Kreuder’s enquiries open new perspectives onto tracing and historiographically analysing early modern performative traditions, through the examination and interrogation of texts and practices that, in some cases, survive into our own times.

In Chapter 10, Janie Cole presents new information on Maria de’ Medici’s performative diplomacy during her ill-fated regency in France. Cole generously shared her discovery of invaluable and previously unknown archival documents on Maria’s ballets at two Renaissance Society of America conferences (Los Angeles, 2009; Washington, 2012), and in her TWB presentation: ‘Maria de’ Medici, the Italian Minerva of France: Music and Theatrical Spectacle between Florence and Paris during the Early Seventeenth Century’ (Madrid, 2011). Since then, her important Italian archival findings, notably including Traiano Guiscardi and Vittoria dalla Valle Guiscardi’s substantial eyewitness accounts to the Mantuan court, of Maria’s Paris performance of the 1609 Ballet de la Royne, have been extensively utilised by other scholars. Here in our volume, she first publishes these highly significant documents in full, and provides them with thorough contextualisation. Cole argues for a revision of the history of Maria’s usage of personal symbolism – the image of Minerva/Astraea adopted from Giambattista Guarini’s libretto Giunone e Minerva of 1600. Cole’s version of Maria de’ Medici’s theatrical presence in Paris asserts Maria’s much more profound and extensive impact on the arts, the patronage of a cohort of international artists, and the spread of the novel genre of Florentine opera in the early decades of its existence. Whether as sponsor, producer or participant, Maria’s direct involvement in hundreds of Italy-inspired Parisian court ballets served important political agendas. While several preceding chapters in our volume document the mimetic desire and social aspirations of characters, theatre practitioners or theatregoers, Cole’s chapter elaborates on an analogy from the highest tiers of the social hierarchy: aristocratic ambitions, dynastic and political power efforts, and expressions of establishment, by means of transnational theatre.

Although the confines of this volume could neither permit us to venture beyond Europe, nor even to accommodate a dedicated section addressing the theatrical cosmography of the East, chapters in every section pay attention to the influential presence of various ethnic, religious and social minorities, migrant or resident, in Europe’s everyday life or performance culture. Ndiaye contributes substantially to the portrait of early modern multicultural diversity in the West; Smith, Katritzky and Nicholson interrogate aspects of this in the North and South; our two final chapters look strongly towards the Orient. From their shared focus on the Mediterranean South, both Jaffe-Berg
and Lezra study connections and distinctions between wealthy and (notionally) civilised Western Europe, and the more elusive, inaccessible and even mystical East. Chapter 11, ‘Ebrei and Turchi Performing in Early Modern Venice and Mantua’, which Erith Jaffe-Berg develops from her TWB presentation: ‘The Circulation of Ideas and Performative Practices between the Jewish and Christian Communities of Mantua and Venice in the Early Modern Period’ (Cologne, 2017), documents the under-researched and only seemingly marginal performances of the Hebrew and Turkish communities in early modern Italy. Contributing significant knowledge to the history of performance in the sixteenth century, Jaffe-Berg proffers a crucial counterpoint that complements the picture of early modern cultural identity in Venice and Mantua. Marginalised minorities – not only Hebrew and Turkish, but also Greek, Albanian, Dalmatian, Armenian or (as also discussed by Nicholson) German – played a crucial role in annual, civic and court festivities and rituals confirming the status quo of the Italian majority. Through her groundbreaking investigation, Jaffe-Berg indirectly makes a fundamental point: the vital importance of the reverse side of the historiographical tapestry, and the need for historians to responsibly present inclusive and tolerant narratives, of the frequently troubled and disconsolate histories they investigate and uncover. While marginalised in, and often omitted from (Western) histories of theatre, minority communities – such as the Ebrei and the Turchi of early modern Italy – operated within transnational networks that were voluminous and influential, extending far beyond the borders of the known (historiographically mapped) world.

Chapter 12 stems from Jacques Lezra’s longstanding interest in early modern piracy and its role in constituting early modern polity. It developed from his paper presented at a TWB conference in Prague (Charles University, 2007) under the title ‘Hostis Humani Generis: Pirate Histories in the Early Modern Mediterranean (Braudel, Measure for Measure, Pericles, Henry VI, Scarron, Le Prince Corsaire)’. Combining the disciplines of theatre, history of ideas, and philosophy, Lezra traces the birth of the legal nation-state – with its codes, decrees and punitive measures – in the treatment of the ultimate social castaway – the pirate. Lezra’s exploration starts with an enigmatic moment in Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure, the quasi-beheading of ‘Ragozine, a most notorious pirate’ (4.3.54), and extends to early modern legal and philosophical tracts and royal decrees, on the treatment of pirates as the extremes of political abjection, the true hostis humani gentis: ‘enemies of humanity’. It is not incidental that the ‘most notorious pirate’, whose beheading is presented as a prime instance of exemplary punishment, is a Ragusan (Ragozine) – a toponym of the inhabitants of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), a maritime city in the Adriatic, beyond Venice, Gate of the East, and on the very fringes of the unruly Orient.
To continue our cosmographical metaphor, the argument made by Lezra may be deployed to infer that Western Europe shapes and uses its civic aspirations to define itself against and in contrast to the enemy beyond, so often associated in the early modern imagination with the East in the broadest sense of cosmography—be it the dangerous and wily Ottoman Empire, the Islamic world, African tribal kingdoms, or the enticing realm of the mystical Orient with the Holy Land at its heart. Ever since Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), the crusades to the Holy Land were inseparable from the allure of the forbidden fruit—the pleasure repressed in early modern civic codes of behavior. The emblem of this taboo and yet irresistible charm is Tasso’s Islamic princess, Armida. An early modern version of Medea, the sorceress from the East (Colchis), Armida enchants her Jason, the illustrious Christian knight Rinaldo. A desire to discover the unknown and the forbidden makes Rinaldo forget the grand and sacred design of his crusade mission. Originating with Tasso, and continuously adapted well into the twentieth century, Armida was a universal theme in transnational theatre—an emblem of the enigmatic and beautiful unknown. Although Rinaldo’s enchantment with Armida has often been portrayed as a passing lapse in the indomitable scheme of (Christian) teleology, the fascination with the ‘undiscovered country from whose bourn | No traveller returns’ kept ‘puzzl[ing] the will’ (*Hamlet*, 3.1.85–6) and inspiring theatre-makers, discoverers and cartographers of the early modern world to find new paths, territories, peoples and experiences, and to enrich and extend the known world by connecting it to as yet unknown worlds.

**Theatre Without Borders**

Unrestrained by the need to conform to traditional borders and limits, the twelve explorations of this volume revisit, rethink and problematise certain fundamental historiographic and theoretical concepts too often taken for granted and ossified in criticism. Most prominently, these include the terms used in our volume’s title. The notion of the *transnational* is addressed by members of the Theater Without Borders research collective, including our twelve authors, not merely as a mechanical transfer, traffic or bilateral exchange across national borders. Transnationality is a fundamental quality of the performances, works of art and events; in itself, it is a *lived culture* that is supranational, exceeding any notions of borders or delimitations. This holds true for all our chapters. Korda’s chapter is firmly rooted in a concrete physical and material moment, focusing on one specific archaeological item, from Elizabethan London. However, its analysis draws on and invokes practices and artisanal cultures that transcend one nation, let alone a single city. Wofford’s and Fuchs’ chapters compare dramaturgies, dramatic practices and motifs in early modern Spain and England. The connections and affinities they identify
likewise transcend national cultures, or any simple notions of intercultural binaries. While Ndiaye predominantly focuses on French drama of the late 1600s, her exploration evokes a cultural world extending far beyond France and Spain, towards a transmediterranean and transatlantic purview. Her discussion of dramatic portrayals of race conjures a map that radically contravenes assumed notions of national or cultural boundaries. Drábek's chapter analyses the English Comedy not as a national style, but rather as an aesthetic one, that assumed this name without providing any conclusive proofs of English provenance – as Italian ice cream or pizza has little in common with the Apennine Peninsula, the Italian nation or their culture. Concluding the volume, Lezra's chapter analyses the image of the national enemy as the legal and cultural basis on which the concept of statehood, and even nationhood, is formed. Lezra captures the national state in statu nascendi, in a discussion painstakingly evidencing the transnational dimensions on which these processes take place.

Analogically, our chapters reconsider the fundamental assumptions underpinning what is understood by early modernity. It is not a routinely, numerically determined epoch but a cultural type, symptomatic for its specific epistemologies and modes of operation. These encompass economic systems based on aristocratic status, theocratic models, mercantile practice and guild hierarchies, epistemic modes of textuality or residual orality (to use Walter Ong’s concept, 2012: 20, 168), nascent notions of authorship and art, as well as, self-reflectively, the existing historiographic traditions of textual and iconographic exegesis. If we abandon the received historiographic and methodological traditions and revisit the historical facts, the concept of early modernity becomes a terminological quicksand. By no means all recognisably or characteristically early modern practices can be limited to a particular historical epoch. Many are direct continuations from what we define as the medieval period, and many survive well into recent centuries, often lingering on in depleted or decrepit states ridiculed by progressive contemporaries. As historiographers, we try to avoid the progressive bias that frontlines trends in the ascendant, and ignores those on the wane. Revisiting ‘late’ styles or surviving rudiments of a phenomenon offers illuminating historiographic challenges, which may shed new light – provided we abstain from the traditional historiographic predilection for a chiliastic history of vanguards. So Nicholson’s and Kreuder’s chapters extend far into the eighteenth century to analyse the late stages of live and still thriving performative traditions. Their explorations contribute novel findings for the immediate artistic context of their times. In hindsight, they also trace important features of theatrical traditions that cannot be fully identified in the extant earlier evidence. Similarly, Jaffé–Berg’s chapter, while rooted firmly in the 1500s and early 1600s, is richly suggestive of surviving practices from earlier centuries. Smith’s analysis of Bredero’s The Spanish Brabanter focuses on Amsterdam in 1617, but his discovery of the
play’s microcosm – the dense description of this nodal point – opens up a window to a longer and profoundly transnational history of cosmopolitan migration, poverty and European warfare.

Explorations in this volume are also inclusive in relation to its understanding of theatre and performance. The broadest possible sense of performative activities is adopted, comprising the familiar public and private activities of professional acting companies; of institutional frameworks such as activities of guilds, academies, fraternities, schools or municipalities; and of cultural artefacts and events, from published playtexts and surviving material objects, to seasonal celebrations and festivals. Several explorations cover a range of practices that oppose a simple, standard definition of performances in traditionally recognised settings such as playhouses or courts, or in familiar methodological genres (playscripts, visual evidence, biographies). Rather than limiting its discussion to ballets or operas, Cole’s performative portrait of Maria de’ Medici expands the framework to explore ways in which her activities and efforts transcend performance, towards cultural diplomacy, artistic patronage and certain agency work _avant la lettre_. Katritzky’s chapter explores a 1638 festival in The Hague which defies conventional historiographical categories in multiple ways. At the height of the Thirty Years’ War, this festival was an epicentre of dynastic and political negotiations; it was also a commercial enterprise attracting paying visitors, as well as a showcase of new theatre trends from all over Europe, and a retrospective, a kind of pantheon of renowned European performers, combining numerous performative genres and modes of display.

Such terminological inclusivity crucially relates to the underlying _interdisciplinarity_ of this volume. While interdisciplinarity is a standard expectation of many ambitious research projects, its practical application is fraught with challenges. Our explorations acknowledge and embrace them, negotiating these challenges as the differing horizons of disciplinary expectations, methodologies and discourse styles, and disciplines’ differing individual stylistic rhythms, communicative densities or focal points. Our chapters cover a wide range of disciplines and fields of study: theatre history, cultural history, race studies, art history as well as other special histories, ethnography, imagology, iconography, musicology, literary studies, comparative literature, translation studies, philosophy, aesthetics and – very importantly – several artistic practices. Embracing such a variety of methodologies and disciplinary perspectives has its difficulties and demands: a reader may find themselves confronted with historical events, artefacts and practices that have never been explored in their own specialist disciplines. Some of these practices may well fall outside their definition of theatre or performance. Some of the works analysed may be unfamiliar or even obscure, despite their significance to a particular early modern culture. And, some of the critical or cultural perspectives adopted in these chapters may seem unsettling or counterintuitive. These
challenges constitute a crucial part of this volume’s novelty, and also represent its methodological and historiographic purpose: to explore the infinite variety and riches of early modern performance culture by expanding the discourse, questioning the received canon, and rethinking the national restrictions of conventional maps to more accurately reveal a theatre that truly is without borders.

Notes

1 The origins of this volume go back to presentations and discussions at the TWB annual workshop ‘Borders and Centres: Transnational Encounters in Early Modern Theatre, Performance and Spectacle’. Hosted by the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany, on 20–24 May 2012, and organized by Volker Bauer (HAB) and M. A. Katritzky, it was attended by eight of our contributing authors. Further chapter draw on research presented at the following TWB annual conferences: TransEuropa: Early Modern Drama between East and West (Charles University Prague, 2007); Mobility, Hybridity and Reciprocal Exchange in the Theatres of Early Modern Europe (NYU Madrid, 2011), Action, Language, Text: Crossing Translational and Transnational Boundaries in Early Modern Theater and Performance Culture (Gallatin School, NYU, 2013), Translation, Imitation and Boundary-Crossing in the Transnational Theatres of Early Modern Europe and Beyond (NYU Paris, 2015), Early Modern Theater as Transnational and Transhistorical Nexus: Performance/Text/Acting/Embodyment (Universität zu Köln, 2017).

2 On early modern news networks, see Raymond and Moxham (2016), and especially Ahnert (2016).

3 Unless specified otherwise, Shakespeare is cited from Bate and Rasmussen’s RSC edition (Shakespeare 2007).

4 Lindley draws on Peterson (1963); additionally, he is offering a parallel between Bohr’s assertion and Wittgenstein’s statement in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: ‘Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent’ (Lindley 2007: 196), another crucial impulse in our modern epistemology, relating to the knowability of our objects of study. David Schalkwyk explores Wittgenstein’s thought with reference to transnational early modern theatre in several of his presentations and publications for TWB (Schalkwyk 2014).
