



# **Europe's Languages on England's Stages, 1590-1620 (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama)**

*Marianne Montgomery*

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Though representations of alien languages on the early modern stage have usually been read as mocking, xenophobic, or at the very least extremely anxious, listening closely to these languages in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, Marianne Montgomery discerns a more complex reality. She argues instead that the drama of the early modern period holds up linguistic variety as a source of strength and offers playgoers a cosmopolitan engagement with the foreign that, while still sometimes anxious, complicates easy national distinctions. The study surveys six of the European languages heard on London's commercial stages during the three decades between 1590 and 1620-Welsh, French, Dutch, Spanish, Irish and Latin-and the distinct sets of cultural issues that they made audible. Exploring issues of culture and performance raised by representations of European languages on the stage, this book joins and advances two critical conversations on early modern drama. It both works to recover English relations with alien cultures in the period by looking at how such encounters were staged, and treats sound and performance as essential to understanding what Europe's languages meant in the theater. Europe's Languages on England's Stages, 1590-1620 contributes to our emerging sense of how local identities and global knowledge in early modern England were necessarily shaped by encounters with nearby lands, particularly encounters staged for aural consumption.

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