

Each of Raffield's six chapters is devoted to a different play and to its law-minded motifs: Chapter 1 is "'Terras Astraeva reliquit': Titus Andronicus and the Flight of Justice"; 2, "*The Comedy of Errors* and the Meaning of Contract"; 3, "Reflections on the Art of Kingship: *Richard II* and the Subject of Law"; 4, "The Poetic Imagination, Antique Fables, and the Dream of Law," regarding *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; 5, "The Ancient Constitution, Common Law and the Idyll of Albion: Law and Lawyers in *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*"; and 6, "The Congregation of the Mighty: The Juridical State and the Measure of Justice," which deals with *Measure for Measure*. Raffield begins each chapter with a brief discussion of the play in question and its legal themes, and then proceeds into law-centered sketches relatively contemporary to the play's writing and performance that illuminate these themes. Though this approach seems solid, Raffield's enthusiasm for legal scholarship often results in a failure to return to the play at hand. This creates great gaps between anecdotes and plays, leaving the reader to forge connections between the two without authorial assistance. Raffield's volume will likely prove more useful to individuals looking for information on Elizabethan legal practices than to individuals looking for explicit Shakespeare scholarship.

What Raffield does do—very effectively—is establish that Shakespeare's theatre is saturated with law. He paints a picture of a world in which theatre was an extremely powerful political force, a force made for (and often by) individuals educated in the law and legal matters. In doing so, Raffield also establishes the sociopolitical importance of his own work; that is, he demonstrates both why a political Shakespeare is representative of early modern England and thereby why a political Shakespeare should be represented today.

Whether examining "Our Willy, American Icon," or "William Shakesper, Elizabethan Poet and Playwright," scholars seem to agree that Shakespeare cannot be confined to the "wooden O" of the theatre. If we are to uncover the full implications and potential of his work, we must be willing to take pages from Albanese and Raffield. Both *Extramural Shakespeare* and *Shakespeare's Imaginary Constitution* indicate that Shakespeare, perhaps now more than ever, benefits most from being a free-range playwright.

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***Lady Macbeth in America: From the Stage to the White House.*** By Gay Smith. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; pp. 252. \$89.00 cloth.

doi:10.1017/S0040557412000245

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During the final months of the 1992 presidential campaign, *The American Spectator* published an article titled "The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock." Drawing distinct parallels between Hillary Rodham Clinton and the politically ambitious Lady Macbeth, the article vilified Clinton and implied that she, like

Lady Macbeth, had goaded her husband into achieving great political power. Using this anecdote as a jumping-off point, Gay Smith considers in *Lady Macbeth in America: From the Stage to the White House* how Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth entered American politics—how she “crossed the Atlantic to America, to enthrall American audiences and reflect their fears of a political wife” (6).

Smith grounds her study in theatre history, examining the prominent actresses who played the role of Lady Macbeth, and each actress's particular approach to the role; however, Smith does not stop there. Rather, she broadens her analysis to include American political history, drawing illuminating parallels between the actresses' portrayals of Lady Macbeth and the American public's perception of its first ladies. Well-researched and readable, Smith's text provides a fascinating look at the historical development of Lady Macbeth on American dramatic and political stages.

Following a concise introduction, the book's opening chapter, “Lady Macbeth in the White House,” provides the foundation for Smith's study. Through thoughtful close readings of *MacBird!*—a 1967 satiric play featuring a bumbling Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson as the Macbeths—and *The American Spectator* article, Smith makes a persuasive argument regarding the ways Lady Macbeth has frequently been linked to American political life, and particularly to first ladies. Moreover, Smith also posits that the connection between Lady Macbeth on the stage and in politics occurs more frequently during times of war. While this wartime connection could stand more explicit explanation throughout the text, it provides an effective organizing structure: Smith chronologically links the performances of Lady Macbeth by prominent actresses during the Revolutionary period, the Civil War, World War I, and World War II to their corresponding first ladies.

The second chapter, “From Shakespeare's Stage to America's,” makes the necessary leap from the play's British origins to its place on the American stage and in the public consciousness. Here, Smith employs rhetorical, semiotic, and cultural analyses of playtexts, historical documents, and paintings to trace Lady Macbeth's literary development. Smith provides a lively account of the character's origins as an eleventh-century Celtic queen, Gruoch Macbeth, whose story Shakespeare modified to comment on his own leaders' ruthless political ambitions, and who eventually arrived in America by way of the witch-hunting Puritans.

Chapters 3 and 4, “Politicianess” and “Playing for Revolutionaries,” discuss First Lady Abigail Adams and the little-known Lady Macbeth of the revolutionary period, actress Charlotte Melmoth. These chapters are perhaps best understood if read together. In Chapter 3, Smith notes that, like Lady Macbeth, Abigail Adams significantly influenced her husband, President John Adams. Dubbing her a “politicianess,” Smith argues that Abigail Adams possessed extremely high expectations of her husband and took action (perhaps more effectively than he did) to ensure their party's political gains. Meanwhile, Smith states at the outset of Chapter 4 that Melmoth's history will receive “a longer treatment” than those of the other actresses in the book (63), for despite her forty-year career

Melmoth has received little scholarly attention. Thus, although the entire study is a significant contribution to Shakespearean studies, the wealth of information Smith provides about Melmoth is invaluable. First performing in America as Lady Macbeth in 1794, Melmoth became the “leading Lady Macbeth on the American stage during the years Abigail Adams attended theatre in New York and Philadelphia,” and is credited with establishing the “pattern of older Lady Macbeths playing to young Macbeths in America” (64, 85). As in the rest of the book, these chapters are bursting with rich historical detail; however, at times—particularly in Chapter 3 on Abigail Adams—the historical facts are overwhelming, pushing the otherwise easy-to-follow narrative somewhat off track.

Chapters 5 and 6, “Yankee” and “‘Hellcat,’” consider the “Lady Macbeths” of the Civil War: actress Charlotte Cushman and First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln. While Cushman’s Lady Macbeth was “strong, definite, bold and free,” First Lady Lincoln was viewed as a “hellcat,” and Smith presents in these chapters a very persuasive comparison between the lives of Mary Lincoln and Lady Macbeth (112, 125). Called “my dearest partner of greatness” by her husband (quoting the thane’s letter to his wife), Mary Lincoln was well-read, articulate, and ambitious (116). However, amid the stress of the Civil War, she began to unravel, prompting the American public to deem her “bad tempered” and “insane,” much like Lady Macbeth (118).

Perhaps the most coherent chapter of the book is Chapter 7, “‘Innocent Flower’ and ‘Serpent Within,’” which combines a discussion of the actresses Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry with their corresponding first lady, Edith Wilson. Smith paints a vivid picture of Bernhardt’s sensuously dangerous Lady Macbeth in contrast to Terry’s wifely, deferential portrayal. Smith then suggests that Wilson combined both actresses’ characterizations; her adoration for her husband made her the innocent flower of wifely duty, but when a stroke rendered him unable to govern, “Mrs. President” took over, ultimately causing the public to view her as a dangerous serpent masquerading as an innocent flower.

Chapter 8, “Vampira,” takes a decidedly evil turn, looking at Judith Anderson’s Lady Macbeth on the American stage and screen during World War II and the McCarthy witch hunts of the 1950s. While not as connected to the portrayal of first ladies as the book’s other chapters, Chapter 8 does provide a fascinating commentary on women’s roles in American society and, as seen through the treatment of Ethel Rosenberg, the cultural fear of a woman’s power.

Part of Palgrave’s *Studies in Theatre and Performance History* series, Smith’s text complements existing works such as Phyllis Rackin’s *Shakespeare and Women* (Oxford University Press, 2005). Artfully weaving together American political and theatrical history, Smith offers scholars of Shakespeare as well as theatre and political historians an engaging and thorough account of how “actors interpreting Lady Macbeth in America have reflected audiences’ questions about powerful political wives in their times” (185).

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