

Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance. Edited by Scott L. Newstok and Ayanna Thompson. Signs of Race. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; pp. xvii + 288, 12 illustrations. \$100.00 cloth, \$29.00 paper.

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Reviewed by Victoria P. Lantz, Franklin & Marshall College

One of the newer books in Palgrave's Signs of Race series, *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance* is an anthology that both defies convention and reinforces current academic trends. Its contributors offer a wide variety of perspectives on how Shakespeare's Scottish play informs, creates, and confronts racial dynamics in antebellum to present-day America. By focusing on examinations of race in *Macbeth*, the book rejects the assumption that we must limit our conversations about racial identity in Shakespeare to only a handful of plays. By offering thorough examinations of *Macbeths* in America, the book bolsters a growing area of research in both Shakespeare and theatre studies. Following *Macbeth: New Critical Essays*, edited by Nick Moschovakis (who is among the contributors to *Weyward Macbeth*), editors Scott L. Newstok and Ayanna Thompson further *Macbeth*-specific studies with this expansive collection.

The volume breaks down into seven parts: "Beginnings," "Early American Intersections," "Federal Theatre Project(s)," "Further Stages," "Music," "Screen," and "Shakespearean (A)Versions." Covering a range of subjects, from antebellum political history to Welles's "Voodoo" *Macbeth* to *Grey's Anatomy*, the book presents work that is interdisciplinary and will appeal to a variety of scholars. "Weyward" is the anthology's key term; according to Thompson in her introduction, "'Weyward'—as weird, fated, fateful, perverse, intractable, willful, erratic, unlicensed, fugitive, troublesome, and wayward—is precisely the correct word for *Macbeth's* role in American racial formations" (3). The volume's essays illustrate the fateful and troublesome narrative of race in America, along with the weird (in the best sense) narrative of *Macbeth* in America, and how often the two coincide. Perhaps the best explorations of this dual narrative appear in contributions from Heather S. Nathans, Joyce Green MacDonald, and Lisa N. Simmons. Nathans offers a provocative account of how pre-Civil War politicians, in the North and South, used lines from *Macbeth* to emphasize their stances on slavery. MacDonald and Simmons focus respectively on *Macbeth* performance histories in minstrel shows and on a pre-Welles Federal Theatre Project all-black *Macbeth*.

In attempting to include so many perspectives on *Macbeth* and race, on race in America, and on *Macbeth* in American theatre, history, music, and film, the book does read at times as both thorough and ambiguous: thorough in the sense that the collection covers a range of subjects, but ambiguous in the sense that some essays, though strong examples of scholarship, feel out of place. This placelessness is no more evident than in Celia R. Daileader's essay on the etymology of the word "witches" in *Macbeth*. Daileader's essay is, in and of itself, a wonderful

discussion of post-Shakespeare transformations of the play, but it falls outside the very clearly defined Americanness of the collection. The same can be said for Francesca Royster's essay on Polanski's 1971 *Macbeth* (again, an essay worthy of note for film studies and for those exploring racial ideas of "whiteness").

One of the most interesting parts of the book is also one that felt to me slightly out of phase with the rest of the collection. "Further Stages" includes five essays that move the discussion of *Macbeth* away from political and theatrical histories to an examination of more current performances. Four of the five chapters in this part offer analyses of Native American, Asian American, Latino, and Hawaiian productions of *Macbeth*; out of these narratives emerge questions of how language and culture relate in performance, how multilingualism creates theatricality, and how *Macbeth* reads in minority cultures. These chapters are among the only ones in the book to discuss the relationships of non-African American minority cultures to the play; they thereby illustrate necessary and important points of view, and yet simultaneously feel out of place given the collection's inherent focus on African American political/performance history and black theatre aesthetics.

Harry J. Lennix's essay, "A Black Actor's Guide to the Scottish Play, or, Why *Macbeth* Matters," is the chapter that best ties "Further Stages" to the collection as a whole. It highlights one of the most important aspects of the book, the balance it strikes between practice and theory. Lennix details a 2007 production from the point of view of an actor and producer of an all-black *Macbeth*, while examining the theoretical question of how Shakespeare fits into the cultural discussion of the African diaspora. He challenges the reader to question whether artists can "produce the classics without serious consideration of the times in which we live, including contemporary issues of race" (115). Lennix's is the most successful of the book's production-oriented essays, as it provides both a practical recounting of producing an all-black *Macbeth* and a critical assessment of race in contemporary American theatre. Including performance accounts alongside essays focusing on in-depth cultural analysis allows *Weyward MacBeth's* editors to engage theatre scholars and practitioners interested in how the historical informs present performance.

Many of the volume's essays address the relationship of historical sociopolitical dynamics to contemporary theatre/literary trends, and its last part does so with particular care. All three of the collection's final chapters highlight how, as Philip C. Kolin states, "*Macbeth* has haunted the African-American presence and in a sense helped define it" (22). It is not surprising that many of the book's contributors discuss the nature of haunting, given the storyline of the play; however, the collection as a whole forces readers to confront how deeply American society is informed by the ghosts of race relations, and to acknowledge the power performance exerts on shaping cultural ideas that continue to haunt America.

Weyward Macbeth is a far-reaching anthology, well worth a read for scholars of Shakespeare, cinema, literature, and music. As a theatre text, it is particularly useful. Among its benefits are its comprehensive historical accounts of post-Civil War American *Macbeths*, its thorough discussions of the Federal

Theatre Project and Welles, and its extensive, well-researched appendix of *Macbeths* with nontraditional casts. *Weyward Macbeth* emphasizes how strongly theatre reflects and informs America's political history; the book enhances both American theatre and Shakespearean scholarship.

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No Safe Spaces: Re-casting Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in American Theater. By Angela C. Pao. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010; pp. 305, 12 illustrations. \$80.00 cloth, \$32.50 paper, \$29.95 e-book.

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Reviewed by Tiffany Noell, independent scholar

Nontraditional casting practices have been a subject of discussion and controversy for several decades, yet Angela Pao's *No Safe Spaces: Re-casting Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in American Theater* is the first to examine these practices across a wide range of theatres and texts, from an all-black production of *Hello, Dolly!* (1967) on Broadway to the National Asian American Theatre Company's production of *Othello* (2000). Nontraditional casting is not just a point of historical discussion but is still a navigation among vehement positions that may change according to the production in question. Pao's book does more than present some examples of nontraditional casting and the arguments both for and against the practice; she interrogates as well the subtle nuances of nontraditional casting, the effects it can have on a play, and how it is received by audiences and critics. Pao argues that nontraditional casting, in many situations, can call into question perceptions of race, ethnicity, and nationality while using the existing text to manipulate an audience's semiotic interpretations. Additionally, she provides an extensive bibliography that is a wonderful scholarly resource.

While Pao purports to explore a wide range of nontraditional casting practices, the main flaw I found with this book is that the sources on which it draws—interviews, statistics, and reviews, for example—almost entirely relate to African American, Latino/a, and Asian American performers, while neglecting other groups of actors, such as Native American, Arab American, and Persian American. There may be less information about these latter groups; however, I felt that their absence from the book (apart from mention in the book's introduction) reifies the hegemonic erasure of these groups from societal narratives and, ultimately, undermines Pao's arguments, which in large part I found convincing and well supported.

Early in the book, Pao clearly defines multiple terms collected under the umbrella concept of "nontraditional casting," including color-blind casting, conceptual casting, cross-cultural casting, and societal casting. Having fully explored these terms, Pao interweaves them in later chapters to illuminate her arguments about the effects that casting has on productions. She also explores the slippage