monology (1597). Clark sets this in a context of contemporary witchcraft beliefs and trials and of King James' own view of the monarch as religious teacher and patriarch. Clark concludes by relating beliefs in witchcraft to the Renaissance idea of contraries in which disorder or chaos was seen as the inversion of order, maintenance of which was accepted by King James as the sacred duty of monarchs.

In the other chapters, Peter Burke gives a good discussion of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, M.W. Thomas discusses Cotton Mather, and Christina Lerner discusses two late Scottish tracts. All in all, *The Damned Art* is a stimulating contribution to this field. Its major weakness is that several of its authors do not sufficiently relate the works they discuss to the social and legal situation of the 16th and 17th centuries. Ignoring these factors can give a distorted view of the effect of the learned literature, exaggerating its importance. Greater understanding of this complex and contentious field will not be presented by any one "school" of historians. Many viewpoints and approaches are needed. It is hoped that we can look forward to more high-quality contributions to the study of European witchcraft.

JONATHAN PEARL, *University of Toronto*

Pearl Hogrefe. *Women of Action in Tudor England: Nine Biographical Sketches*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1977. \$10.50.

As little as five years ago, one could receive a doctorate in Renaissance drama without quite knowing whether the depictions of women and the issues concerning women in those plays — the forced marriages and tyrannical fathers, the escapes in disguise — were grounded in reality or merely flights of fancy. Virtually all primary sources on women were inaccessible, few secondary sources were available, and no one raised the questions anyway.

But the emergence of Women's Studies as an academic discipline has highlighted the need for answers; and Pearl Hogrefe's two recent books on women of Tudor England bring within the grasp of every teacher of Shakespeare a resource to supply this background. Not studies of the drama, like Juliet Dusinberre's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (1975), nor serious inquiries into the issues concerning women that dominated their contemporaries (their education, matrimony, their autonomy within the family, their role in the church), Hogrefe's books nevertheless show the range of activities women engaged in — from virtually the only role previously studied in depth, that of queen, to artisan, translator, and even highway robber.

This collection of short biographical studies of nine real women supplements Hogrefe's earlier *Tudor Women: Commoners and Queens* (1975), a discussion of varied aspects of women's culture of the period. Six of the figures, in relation to their impact on religion, have also been treated by Roland H. Bainton in his *Women of the Reformation in France and England* (1973) and *Women of the Reformation from Spain to Scandinavia* (1977). Three, by virtue of their positions in the royal

family, had power to influence major events. But all nine were noteworthy in the sheer force of personality.

Of these, Catherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, comes closest in the details of her life to the romantic heroines of drama: a marriage at 14 to her 47-year-old guardian, a second marriage to her untitled gentleman usher, a flight in disguise to the continent during Mary's reign to escape persecution. But one could imagine Shakespeare's Portia developing into the kind of serene, intelligent helpmeet that Lady Burghley must have been.

Hogrefe is meticulous in all her portraits. She draws no conclusions not supported by documentary evidence; and because she conceptualizes these figures in real contexts, she corrects errors of more careless researchers. About Lady Burghley she reminds us that "it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that Mildred Cooke married a great statesman. But at the time of their marriage William Cecil was an unknown young man of twenty-six. . . ." Hogrefe gives us also, through the documented actions and writings of these nine women, some sense of their personal quirks and private bents. About the over-solicitous Lady Bacon, Hogrefe notes that "her mature sons may have wished for neglect at times," a speculation justified by Lady Bacon's letters of advice to her 37-year-old son Anthony.

What kinds of sources has the author used to lead us into the real lives of these women? Samples are marriage settlements; house plans and account books concerning staff, purchases of supplies, and disbursements (like the records of Lord Burghley's steward concerning official entertainment at their home); charitable bequests; original writings (from letters to devotional works like Catherine Parr's *Lamentations of a Sinner* to the Countess of Pembroke's translation of a French tragedy); references in wills to specific articles of clothing and jewelry; contemporary portraits; family tombs.

In some ways the life of Bess of Hardwick is most instructive of the group of nine, epitomizing the possibilities for upward mobility for a woman of assurance and energy through a succession of increasingly prosperous marriages. Near the end of her life this woman of relatively humble birth could cherish aspirations (through the pretensions of Arabella Stuart) of becoming grandmother of the ruler of England. Bess's skills as a builder of genius (she supervised construction of three great houses, most notably the handsome Hardwick Hall) are thoroughly detailed in Hogrefe's portrait.

To recapture the quality of experience for any group of human beings in the past, the biographical method seems to me fruitful. It is resonant in a way impossible to the topical approach. A work like Carroll Camden's *The Elizabethan Woman* (1952), which treats separately of such aspects of women's lives as cosmetics, clothing, and marriage customs, inevitably loses the sense of the human reality.

Although the chapters in Hogrefe's book are unrelated and can be read in any order, the editorial principle escapes me by which these chapters have been arranged. Those who may hope to develop some sense of the changes in cultural opportunities for women over a 180-year period (from Margaret Beaufort's birth in 1443 to the Countess of Pembroke's death in 1621) will have to reorder the chapters chronologically. Yet taken as a group, these active women make believable Kate, Portia, Beatrice, and — yes, Lady Macbeth.