

THE BOOK REPORT

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'Macbird' Satire Teeters on Edge of Tastelessness

BY ROBERT R. KIRSCH
Times Book Editor

The Paperback Scene:

Political satire has not exactly flourished in the United States, at least in recent years. MACBIRD by Barbara Garson (Grove Press: 75 cents) may not be the augury of a biting new spring of the form but it is not without its moments.

Miss Garson has taken the broad outlines of the plot of Shakespeare's Macbeth, adjusted its iambic pentameter to a combination of hip language, Elizabethan conceits and New Left sloganry. The result is a savage commentary, teetering on the edge of tastelessness, but redeemed by Miss Garson's imagination and the categorical imperative of her idea.

Seen through the lens of parody, the distortions are obvious. No one can take seriously the imposition of the Macbeth plot on recent political events in Washington. But there is a suggestion of the hunger for power, the cynical faith in manipulation, the raw image-making which have become the hallmarks of recent politics. There are no heroes here: Miss Gar-



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son curses both their houses.

This is the first full text of the play published by a major publisher, although it has been published by Miss Garson's husband, and has appeared in excerpts in Ramparts magazine and City Lights Journal No. 3. Last month the play opened in a Greenwich Village theater, aroused considerable stir. This is an opportunity to judge it for yourself. I have a hunch that it does not come off as well in reading as in performance

★ e.v.d.