
STETSON LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 39

FALL 2009

NUMBER 1

INTRODUCTION

LAW, LITERATURE, AND FILM

Robert Batey*

As this symposium demonstrates, to seek the law in literature and film is to cast a very broad net. The treasure recovered ranges from the sublime (Chekhov¹ and Sophocles²) and stunning (videotape of a 2003 capital sentencing hearing³ and the 2007 Swedish thriller “Solstorm”⁴), to the ridiculous (“The Mikado”⁵ and “My Favorite Martian”⁶) and beyond (John Waters’ “Trash Trilogy”⁷). The symposium also shows the variety of ways of writing about law, literature, and film, from the Ruthann Robson’s experimental musings on Antigone to Russell Murphy and Kate Day’s very practical applications of narrative to legal education.

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1. James D. Redwood, *Anton Chekhov’s Home and A Visit to Friends: The Dichotomy between the Personal and the Professional, or the Lawyer Subjectified and Objectified*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 47 (2009).

2. Ruthann Robson, *Demokratia and Antigone: Before and after Sappho*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 3 (2009).

3. Kate Nace Day & Russell G. Murphy, “Just Trying To Be Human in This Place”: *Storytelling and Film in the First-Year Law School Classroom*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 247 (2009).

4. Steve Greenfield, *Solstorm: Developing a Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Law Films*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 119 (2009).

5. Michael L. Richmond, *Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and the Illogic of the Law*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 85 (2009).

6. Christine A. Corcos, *Visits to a Small Planet: Rights Talk in Some Science Fiction Film and Television Series from the 1950s to the 1990s*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 183 (2009).

7. Taunya Lovell Banks, *Troubled Waters: Mid-Twentieth Century American Society on “Trial” in the Films of John Waters*, 39 Stetson L. Rev. 153 (2009).

The symposium begins with law in literature. Robson—a novelist and poet as well as national authority on lesbian law—speculates brilliantly on the multiple incarnations of Antigone over the centuries, as daughter, sister, rebel (and cat). Moving forward to the Nineteenth Century, James Redwood intriguingly juxtaposes the lawyers in two of Chekhov’s stories, and Michael Richmond finds a surfeit of humor in the law as portrayed by Gilbert and Sullivan.

The Twentieth Century brings us to the movies and television, and this section of the symposium begins with England’s Steve Greenfield, the author of several works on law and popular culture, who uses “Solstorm” as a platform for discussing the attributes of a “law film.” Several quite different films hold the attention of Taunya Lovell Banks, as she analyzes the attitudes toward law in the remarkable movies of Baltimore’s John Waters. Christine Corcos turns the symposium’s attention to television, looking at legal depictions in “My Favorite Martian,” “Aliens,” and “Third Rock from the Sun.”

The final piece in the symposium draws many of these threads together, as Murphy and Day describe how they use documentary films and nonfiction to enliven their law school classes. They also describe the theoretical underpinnings of these efforts “to be human in this place”—which on reflection, is the goal of all of the offerings in this symposium, and of the law, literature, and film movement as a whole.