

tion to the absolutism of the Stuart monarchs; her speeches to Parliament were republished at strategic moments to criticize the Stuarts' reluctance to deal with Parliament. I discuss the early-seventeenth-century example of Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* and, from the Restoration, John Ayloffe's "Britannia and Raleigh," which represents Elizabeth as the patron saint of parliamentary preeminence and an alternative to Charles II. The male republican writers confirm Heisch's assertion, in that while they promote the idea of Elizabeth as a monarch sympathetic to their positions and interests, they are decidedly unsympathetic to or-

dinary women's claim to participate in politics and public discourse.

I conclude with a brief look at the opposing constructions of Elizabeth by historians from the eighteenth century such as John Millar and David Hume and contemporary historians such as Christopher Hill and J. P. Kenyon. It is telling that the revisionist historian Kenyon, who denies that an English revolution occurred at mid-century, calls Elizabeth a "sluttish housewife, who swept the house but left the dust behind the door," and labels her reign a "petticoat government" characterized by "female tantrums, sulks, and irrationality."

THE FINAL YEARS OF CHARLES II'S REIGN saw something new in the history of Elizabeth I's reputation. While many writers continued to celebrate her as a defender of the Protestant establishment, certain novelists and translators abandoned her public accomplishments and focused instead on her imagined interior life. Although long ignored by scholars, *The Novels of Queen Elizabeth*, *The Secret History of the Most Renowned Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex*, and *The Secret History of the Duke of Alançon and Q. Elizabeth* rank among the most popular works ever written about Elizabeth.

The first part of the paper examines how these works situated Elizabeth among a specific cast of stock characters and in a set of recurrent plots centered on the conflict between arranged and affective marriages: a pair of young, attractive aristocratic lovers; a jealous, typically older woman who orchestrates their downfall; a corrupt minister who manipulates the ruler he ostensibly serves; and a libidinous monarch who desires one of the young lovers. Elizabeth's complex and

conflicted role in the history of affective marriage allowed her to play several of these roles.

Almost all the secret histories about Elizabeth were translations of French originals. My talk concludes by exploring the ramifications of their appearance not only in different languages but in different social and political environments. The same texts that served a conservative social function in France by asserting noble prerogatives served a potentially radical one in England. For a first-generation urban readership, the secret histories contributed to an emergent middle-class suspicion of monarchs and to an increasingly rigid restriction of female agency to the private sphere.

Abstract of "Gloriana's Secrets: The Restoration Discovery of Elizabeth's Private Life"

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