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Revising Mary Queen of Scots: from Protestant Persecution to Patriarchal Struggle

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Revising Mary Queen of Scots: from Protestant Persecution to Patriarchal Struggle

Abstract

Since Mary Queen of Scots' execution in 1587, she has become a symbol of Scottish identity, failed female leadership, and Catholic martyrdom. Throughout the twentieth century, Mary was regularly depicted on screen (Ford, 1936; Froelich, 1940; Jarrott, 1971) as a thrice-wed Catholic queen, unable to rule her country due to her feminine nature and Catholic roots. However, with the rise of third wave feminism and postfeminism in media, coupled with the increased influence of female directors and writers, Mary's characterization has shifted from portraying female/emotional weakness and religious sacrifice to female/collaborative strength in hardship and a struggle against patriarchal prejudice. Josie Rourke's film *Mary Queen of Scots* (2018) and CW's *Reign* (2013-2017) present a queen who is no longer limited to her religious identity as a Catholic martyr, and consequently a weak ruler. Instead religious division is mostly sidelined, and gendered politics is the central struggle, highlighting similarities between Mary and Queen Elizabeth I of England, where previous films presented opposites. Together, these two productions transform Mary's narrative from fragility and religion, into a struggle against misogynistic control of powerful women.

Keywords

Mary Queen of Scots, martyrdom, Catholicism, feminism, Josie Rourke

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From her execution in 1587 by Elizabeth I, the Protestant queen of England, Mary, Queen of Scots (also known as Mary Stuart), has been an emblem for the Catholic resistance to Protestant rule, the inherent weakness of queens, and latterly of Scottish subordination to English politics. In the subsequent centuries, Mary has appeared in broadsheets, paintings, film and television series, sculpture, operas, plays, and novels. Deviation from the tragic stereotype of a betrayed and deposed ruler is rare. As recently as 2016, Andrew Bretz reviewed films by Charles Jarrott and Thomas Imbach (1971 and 2013), and found them to “repeat a disabling narrative of tragic feminine power that seems at odds with today’s cultural and social norms.”¹ By privileging a love story between Mary and Lord Bothwell, and suppressing the historical narrative of religious conflict, gender inequity, and sexual violence, Jarrott, Imbach, and other directors eliminated feminine agency, ignored an established feminist discourse in filmmaking, and relied on a misogynistic trope that authority is undermined by femininity.² Mary’s martyrdom became her narrative anchor and cipher for her reign’s weakness and religious division. Fortunately, this common characterization is now shifting.

Using recent film and television presentations, which are geared towards younger female audiences and influenced by third wave feminism and a postfeminist sensibility, this article charts the past incarnations and recent development of Mary’s character on screen. Two new and very different depictions currently occupy the popular imagination. Josie Rourke’s film, *Mary Queen of*

Scots (2018), presents a strong-willed queen returned to her homeland, while the CW television series *Reign* (2013-17) follows a younger queen finding her feet at the French and later Scottish courts. Together these vehicles mark a departure from Mary's traditional depiction as a Catholic martyr, of firm affiliation but only intermittent religiosity, and signal a new interpretation crafted by feminist writers and directors. Whereas Mary continues to be identified as a Catholic queen, and finds herself in political conflict with Protestant factions, only at her weddings and execution does she interact with Catholic priests, invocations, or rosaries. In her most recent incarnations Mary does not engage in spiritual activities of prayer, sacraments, or theological debate, which otherwise might signal a willingness to sacrifice her life for her religious identity. Mary's identity as a Catholic queen is a detail reinforced by environment – schooling at a convent and dialogue set in a palace chapel – rather than her own activities. The continued use of religious props and spaces maintains a Catholic identity that is fundamental to the larger narrative of political conflict, even as Rourke's film and the CW series reduce Mary's displayed Catholicism to an affiliation with little spiritual activity.

The most recent productions present Mary's execution as the end of a life spent fighting against narrow political and gender expectations, highlighting the challenge of being a queen regnant, rather than a Catholic queen.³ In *Mary Queen of Scots* the rhetoric of sisterhood struggles against the vulnerability of all queens dependent on male noble support. *Reign* presents Mary surrounded by more (and

stronger) female characters, who bolster her in the face of critical male figures aiming for her removal and execution. This reconfiguration of Mary's world, from one of weakness to one of striving amid gendered support, coincides with de-emphasizing her identity as a Catholic martyr, which was central to her traditional narrative and character. In these new productions gender politics surpasses religious politics, framing Mary as a political martyr whose execution results from dislike of female rulership and religious freedom.

These productions chart a difficult course through the rhetoric of divinely appointed female subordination that existed alongside the theory of divine right of rulership in the sixteenth century. As David Grant Moss has shown, modern audiences associate early modern queenship with an indomitable exceptionalism that is exemplified by Queen Elizabeth I's speech at Tilbury (1588).⁴ Elizabeth's "heart and stomach of a king" may transgress gender bounds, but the phrase reflects the fortitude that modern (broadly feminist) audiences expect to see in early modern women raised to be queens regnant. As Elena Woodacre has shown, "each generation has overlaid its own interests and values on the lives of queens, reinterpreting them to fit in with societal values and preoccupations of their era."⁵ Indeed, the rise of queenship studies mirrors the widespread acceptance of feminist values and elite women's political achievements.⁶ Following the devolution of Scotland's parliament (1997-99) and the divided Brexit vote (2016), which resulted in a resurgent Scottish national feeling, Mary is more popular than ever.⁷ Yet,

almost two decades after the attacks of September 11, 2001, in the West support for religious war has plummeted. The minimal role of religion in these two new depictions reflects the more inclusive nature of third wave feminism that presents frank discussions of gender inequities and embraces sexual, religious, and racial diversity. As Mary, Queen of Scots, slowly loses her identity as a thrice-married Catholic martyr, Rourke and CW's productions present her as an independent Scottish queen fighting misogyny and patriarchy.

Remembering Mary as a Queen and Martyr

For centuries there has been a fluid relationship between political, popular, and scholarly representations of Mary Queen of Scots. The placement by King James VI and I (of Scotland and England respectively), Mary's son, of both his mother's and his godmother Elizabeth I's tombs (1606 and 1612) in Westminster Abbey epitomizes the ongoing public access to their entwined narratives.⁸ The Abbey's accessibility to tourists in central London and renown as a site for remembering English rulers and national heroes means that Catholic Mary's memory has been elevated and maintained, much as Protestant Elizabeth's has been.⁹ This is borne out by Mary's continued appearance in popular literary works, as well as academic studies that reflect popular influence, but also impact the queen's on-screen persona.

The last half-century has shown that Mary's historical character is still subject to debate by both historians and directors. In 1969, as British women went on strike over equal pay and remained rare at Oxbridge colleges, Antonia Fraser published a popular biography, *Mary Queen of Scots*, that appealed to readers seeking women's history.¹⁰ In reviewing Fraser's well-researched book, Professor J.P. Kenyon noted that up to that point the general opinion of Mary was consistent with S.T. Bindoff's statement that she was "a vain, artful, bewitching creature, [who] played at being queen as she played at nearly everything" and ended up no better than she deserved.¹¹ While he did not necessarily share Bindoff's opinion, in evaluating Fraser's account of the queen's possible rape by Bothwell, Kenyon wondered: "but surely this is not so, since the rape was never publicized [...] Did she like being forced? Certainly all the evidence put before us here suggests a normally frigid woman."¹² Perhaps to justify these bizarre comments, Kenyon continued dismissively: "Mary is one of those characters who encourages prurient speculation, and this may be why she is unloved by prudent and sober historians."¹³ Kenyon's comment echoes the earliest Protestant commentators on Mary's life, John Knox and George Buchanan, whose works critiqued the queen's politics, religion, and sexuality to undermine her public authority.¹⁴ Moreover, it shows how far removed Mary's life was from the interest of academic historians in the 1960s and 1970s. Nonetheless, under Fraser's direction, all of the queen's disadvantages – her gender, her Catholic faith, and her French upbringing – combined with an

examination of external factional pressures, established Mary as an important historical figure worthy of reevaluation. However, in the last fifty years, Mary's counterpart Elizabeth became the chief beneficiary of enthusiasm for queenship studies,¹⁵ while many people know Mary best from her regular appearance in films and documentaries about Elizabeth.¹⁶

In 2004, John Guy's biography updated the depiction and identified William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief Protestant advisor as the architect of Catholic Mary's downfall, eclipsing but not exonerating Mary's Guise relatives and the Scottish Lords. In the same vein as Fraser, Guy's biography situates Mary as a young woman, a political pawn, and a struggling ruler. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly considering his expertise in studying the English Privy Council, Guy considered Mary only from the perspective of politics and diplomacy, offering a cursory discussion of gender.¹⁷ This limitation left the door open for a more robust, revisionist interpretation of Mary as an early modern queen. In 2006, Retha Warnicke published the most recent academic biography with a distinct emphasis on early modern gender and cultural analysis. From this perspective, Warnicke's book is the most consciously "early modern" study. In contrast to Guy and Fraser's beliefs, Warnicke concluded that Mary "was not the open, trusting, uncomplicated woman described by some," while judging the better-known biographies as distractingly "romantic," and overall more concerned with British politics than the full picture.¹⁸

Crafting Mary as a Queen and Martyr

In addition to tomb building, James I reinforced Mary's place in British history by patronizing the historian William Camden. In 1624, Camden published *The historie of the life and death of Mary Stuart, Queene of Scotland*.¹⁹ This document-based research undermined the writings of George Buchanan that had earlier destroyed Mary's reputation and urged her final trial.²⁰ Camden's rehabilitation laid the foundation for Mary's subsequent reputation as a pious Catholic, generous, and beautiful, while tragically "tossed and disquieted" by Fortune.²¹ Parallel with Camden's tragic vision is an equally popular characterization stemming from the Scottish preacher John Knox, whose pamphlets and sermons dismissed ruling queens and demonized Mary as a French heretic led by her libidinous heart.²² Historians agree that Mary's contemporaries were divided by religious affiliation in their support or criticism of her. When the Calvinist author Buchanan circulated *Detection of the Douings of Marie* (1567) following her forced abdication, John Leslie, the Catholic Bishop of Ross, wrote *Defence of the Honour of [...] Marie* (1569) in response.²³

Figure 1, the so-called *Memorial Portrait* (c.1604-1618, The Blairs Museum, Aberdeen) illustrates the martyr's character that Mary Queen of Scots and her supporters constructed. Commissioned by Elizabeth Curle, Mary's lady-in-waiting for eight years, the portrait presents a full-length queen surrounded with

blocks of text and images that narrate her execution at Fotheringhay. On Mary's right is her execution scene, and on her left stand two women identified as Jane Kennedy and Elizabeth Curle ("Ioanna Kennethie | Elizabetha Cvrle."), who attended the queen on the Fotheringhay execution platform. Mary is shown dressed in black with a white lace cap and a large, plain wheel ruff. A crucifix hangs around her neck on a black ribbon, and in her hands, Mary holds a prominent ivory and ebony crucifix and a small vellum-bound prayer book.²⁴ In the top-left corner, the royal arms of Scotland assert the subject's rank, while the inscription in the top-right corner elaborates her identity as the hereditary queen of Scotland and England, the once queen-consort of France, and mother of the legitimate king, James of Great Britain. This inscription also lays the blame for her long captivity and execution on religious grounds, squarely with "perfidious Elizabeth and the cruelty of the English Parliament."²⁵ This portrait is likely the last authentic likeness of the queen, a conscious contribution to Catholic martyrology, and has influenced filmic versions of Mary's execution.²⁶



Figure 1: Unknown artist, *Memorial Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots* (after 1603/c.1604-1618), The Blairs Museum, Aberdeen, Scotland. Reproduced by permission of the Scottish Catholic Heritage Collections Trust.

To prevent precisely this sort of depiction, most of the queen's household was barred from the execution hall in February 1587, then kept at Fotheringhay for six months and further delayed in London. Only in November 1587 did a few attendants arrive in Paris where their testimony contributed to Adam Blackwood's biography, *Histoire et Martyre de la Royne d'Ecosse* (1587), and account of the execution, *La Mort de la Royne d'Ecosse* (1588).²⁷ While Cecil worked to prevent accounts of the execution being printed, Mary's former brother-in-law, King Henri III of France, instructed the archbishop of Bourges to proclaim a funeral oration in Mary's honor at the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris in March 1587, while John Leslie, living in exile in Rouen, published a second oration.²⁸ Many other pamphlets, poems, songs, and placards advocated war with England and publicized Mary's martyrdom.²⁹ Alexander Wilkinson has calculated that one-fifth of all printed Catholic polemical tracts in 1587-1588 referred to Mary Queen of Scots.³⁰ Richard Verstegan's *Theatre of the Cruelty of Heretics in Our Time* (1587) even included a woodcut showing the queen at the block, designed to imprint the scene of martyrdom on the reader's imagination.³¹

Although her correspondence with the king of Spain was pivotal to her execution, and as Anne Dillon argued, hastened the Spanish Armada (1588), Philip

II rarely appears in films about Mary.³² Instead, Queen Elizabeth I of England remains an important part of Mary's presentation, equally to entrench the theme of martyrdom and elaborate her character.³³ For centuries Mary and Elizabeth have existed in history and popular culture as a dyad: the thrice married and martyred Catholic queen who ruled from the heart and the famously celibate and long-lived Protestant queen who ruled with her head. As Kenyon's earlier comments show, the debate over Mary's decision to wed has prolonged the analysis of the queen as a sexual being and overshadowed her political achievements. Far from accepting that Mary wed in response to contemporary society's overwhelming belief that she should do so – in order to produce heirs, secure the succession politically, and fulfill a woman's social role – historians and directors have repeatedly identified passion and romance, as key to her weak character, which then led to unfortunate marriages, conflict, murder, and abdication.³⁴ In contrast, Elizabeth rebelled against gender norms, continuing to attract and invite suitors but accepting none of their offers.³⁵ In the end, she constructed an identity as a Virgin wed to England, with no chosen successor. Her commitment to a model of Protestant monarchy ruling with parliament, which kept England out of most wars and substituted male advisors like Cecil for a foreign consort, prevented outrage at this social rebellion.³⁶ Many comparisons of the two queens ignore Elizabeth's continued support by male nobles, which Mary's more conventional behavior did not maintain. This issue

appears foremost in Rourke's presentation of Mary's struggle, while most twentieth-century films present Elizabeth dominating her Privy Council.

Changing Representations of Mary Queen of Scots in Media

While the belief that Mary and Elizabeth were opposites makes for accessible characterization, it was born of gendered political rhetoric describing their vastly different experiences as rulers. The dramatization of an ahistorical meeting between the two queens originated with Friedrich Schiller's play *Mary Stuart* (1800) and grew roots with Gaetano Donizetti's opera *Maria Stuarda* (1835). Because the meeting visualizes the dyadic relationship between two popular historical figures, dramatizes their stereotypes, and reduces their religious and diplomatic conflict to a personal one, it has become a mainstay of films about Mary.³⁷ This makes complex personalities and histories accessible to audiences, and initially aligned with the romantic sensibilities of nineteenth-century audiences that favored the feminine model of motherhood, while grappling with their own queen regnant (*i.e.*, Victoria of England, r. 1837-1901). The apocryphal meeting continues to appear in films, even as recently as Josie Rourke's 2018 biopic, illustrating its central place in Mary's mythology and the extent to which authors and filmmakers are willing to sacrifice historical accuracy for narrative affect.³⁸

However, the visualization of a false dyadic model encourages repeating larger social prejudices, rather than presenting more complex historical truths. Indeed, some directors easily elide victory and power with virtue, while condemning protests by minority groups as subversion. This casts a shadow on early modern Catholic martyrdom. As Shekhar Kapur's two films about Queen Elizabeth I show, the persistence of these reductionist stereotypes is due to their simplicity, alignment with good/familiar *versus* bad/threatening, and apparent completeness. In *Elizabeth* (1998), the young princess ascends and keeps the throne, but only after dodging threats from Catholic assassins and arresting Catholic nobles involved in a conspiracy to end her reign. In *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007), the queen leads a naval defense against the Spanish Armada launched by Catholic Philip II, who is shown conspiring with Mary Queen of Scots and the Jesuit Order. As Vivienne Westbrook has argued, Kapur portrays Catholic characters as extremists, while downplaying religion in Protestant characters, in order to construct the ethical polarities that lead smoothly to a battle between good and evil.³⁹ A similar application of values and contextualizing narrative takes place when the theme of martyrdom is invoked. As Elizabeth Castelli has shown, “[m]artyrdom always implies a broader narrative that invokes notions of justice and the right ordering of the cosmos.”⁴⁰

Thus, martyrdom requires the dyadic relationship that structures many of Mary's filmic and literary interpretations. As Jayne Elizabeth Lewis noted, “Mary

was essentially invented by sixteenth-century political propaganda,” and has remained in the British and Continental European popular imagination for centuries.⁴¹ Appearing first as Elizabeth’s “Other,” just as Scotland did for England, Mary became a necessary Catholic sacrifice that reinforced the righteous fiction of Great Britain as a unified, homogenous, Protestant entity.⁴² While historians agree that only later in life Mary crafted a martyr’s identity, many twentieth-century filmmakers have accepted this identity, thereby privileging her execution as a pivotal moment, even while religion occupies an ambivalent spot in the filmic Mary’s life.⁴³

In *Mary of Scotland* (dir. Ford, 1936) viewers see a weak and emotional Scottish queen opposed by a strong and politically savvy English queen.⁴⁴ Initially, Mary establishes her Catholic identity by praying when she arrives in Leith. This adherence to “the old faith” reinforces her as Scotland’s rightful ruler by lineage. Although Mary, Moray, and the Scottish lords present religious choice as a conscientious right, the lords view conversion to Protestantism as politically expedient. After noting Knox’s popularity, they describe Elizabeth as “[b]orn in the other faith, milady. But she gets off a ship when it sinks.” Thus, Mary’s steadfast, but rarely seen on screen Catholicism is elided with political opposition to the Scottish lords. They target the cross-wearing Rizzio, who represents the queen’s foreign connections and begs Mary to wed a Catholic suitor in an effort to preserve Scottish Catholicism. Once imprisoned in England, Mary prays again, this time

wearing a crucifix and kneeling before a cross, to remind the audience of the religious difference separating her and her cousin Elizabeth. In Ford's film, religion appears intermittently to identify factions and nuance conflict, but Mary faces execution for actions that entwine politics, religion, and romance.

In *Das Herz Der Konigin* (*The Heart of the Queen*, dir. Carl Froelich, 1940), text at the film's start and finish present the insurmountable challenge that the Scottish queen faced: "When Mary entered Scotland she encountered hate and repulsal everywhere. She wanted to conquer the peoples' heart, but the resistance of the Scottish nobility, the fanatic struggles with the medieval Church and the English queen's hostility prevented her." This Scottish queen shows little religious interest, beyond wearing a cross and advocating for freedom of religion alongside abolition of serfdom and preservation of justice. The Scottish lords deride these efforts, framing Scotland as a wild land needing a master – not a loving mother – while Knox demonizes the queen as a Catholic whore in opposition to a virtuous Protestant populace. Problematically, the film's acceptance of Mary's love for Bothwell and the forged Casket Letters as true evidence of her adultery and collusion in Darnley's murder, subverts the narrative of English victimization and the queen as a religious martyr. As she goes to her execution, Mary states: "Riccio and Olivier and Henry's deaths I caused myself. Today I atone my former debts." Above the execution block, viewers see a stone relief of Jesus in judgement,

suggesting that Mary's death was not quite martyrdom, nor exclusively political, but punishment for sins of passion.⁴⁵

More than the previous films, *Mary, Queen of Scots* (dir. Jarrott, 1971) foregrounds religious division, while entrenching the queens' dyadic relationship even further. The film's opening text states: "England and Scotland are torn apart by family and religious wars. [... Catholic Mary finds] a fight for power with Elizabeth, the Protestant queen of England. This is the story of the fierce struggle between... the rival queens."⁴⁶ Yet among Jarrott's characters, religion inspires uneven concern. While Elizabeth and Cecil repeatedly discuss the reactions of Catholic ambassadors and noblemen, and Mary's Guise uncles send a Jesuit confessor and a papal agent with her, in Scotland Mary shows little interest in religious practice or debate. In a confusing exchange with Knox, the queen shouts that Catholicism is the true Church, but "like all of my subjects, you [Knox] will have the free use of your conscience." This scene underscores Mary's religious ambivalence and greater investment in love, loyalty, and political stability. Only at the film's close is Mary recast as a fervent Catholic and possible religious martyr. In emulation of Curle's portrait, Mary carries a rosary and prayer book to her execution, prays constantly, and wears a martyr's red dress. Yet, this final framing of Mary is less convincing since throughout the film politics and romance repeatedly trump religion as animating concerns.

Thomas Imbach's film, *Mary Queen of Scots* (2013) presents a psychological rather than chronological portrait and transforms Mary's martyrdom into something new. Drawing heavily on Stephan Zweig's biography (1935), which applied Freudian theory to cast Mary as an amalgamation of Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth, Imbach's Mary is consumed by her passions and their repercussions. For decades, feminists have attacked Freud's misogynistic models, which contrasts with Imbach's self-stated desire to present Mary as a post-modern European heroine who strives to balance love, motherhood, and work.⁴⁷ Yet Mary's psychological collapse at the film's end subverts this balance, reasserts the weak queen model, and reflects what Imbach calls "a modern woman, passionate and fragile."⁴⁸ In this film, Elizabeth only ever appears as a scolding puppet, but nevertheless looms as a shadow over Mary, who can never measure up.⁴⁹ As Mary's execution approaches, instead of a martyr, viewers see a captive who welcomes death.⁵⁰

As these films show, martyrdom is an important, but uneven, aspect of Mary's filmic identity. While it has always competed with her characterization as a poor political operative and a weak queen led by love, recently it has become even less important. Jarrott's film depicted Mary as a martyr to emphasize her emotional transformation and achieve verisimilitude at her execution, and forty years later Imbach's film did the same. In the recent productions by Josie Rourke and the CW, religion is a cover used by ambitious noblemen to attack an inconvenient queen.

Although Elizabeth continues to appear in these productions, she no longer stands opposite Mary, but as a queen regnant, shares her gendered struggles.

Third Wave Feminism and Postfeminism in Film and Television

During the 1990s, the television and film industry began to shift, finally acknowledging the interests of women in the entertainment and advertising markets and the emergence of a younger female demographic.⁵¹ These cultural and market developments coincided with increased public interest in History, through specialty television channels and a boom in popular history writing. While these developments certainly encouraged the study of elite women, from the late 1990s Anglophone costume dramas found new popularity by dramatizing Tudor England.⁵² Shekhar Kapur's films about Elizabeth I have used the filmic queen as a canvas for contemporary concerns about female leaders and religious extremism.⁵³ Similarly, Showtime Network's series *The Tudors* (2007-2010) has expanded discussions of public narratives, visualization, and engagement with the past. Many other productions, from the filming of Philippa Gregory's novel *The Other Boleyn Girl* (dir. Chadwick, 2008) to the musical *Six* (Marlow and Moss, 2017), are female-focused and explore current cultural preoccupations through the early modern past, in particular the collision of modern gender models with religious reform narratives.

At approximately the same time that Tudor history recaptured public attention, feminism moved in new directions resulting in third wave feminism and postfeminism. Notably, in the last forty years as feminist social and political gains have become widespread in the West, Christian church attendance levels have been dropping.⁵⁴ In North America, the movement away from a primarily institutional form of religious or spiritual expression (as seen in weekly church attendance) may also reflect forces that have encouraged a broader definition of the idea of martyrdom and the expectation that gender, sexual, and racial identities can be equally fraught. Generation X (born *c.* 1965-1980) grew up enjoying and expecting gender equality based on the achievements of second wave feminism, but in light of the conservative backlash that emerged in the 1980s, this group has developed an activism focused on eliminating gender, sexual, and racial inequality. Often called “third wave” feminism, it is characterized by “the influence of poststructuralist theory on its notions of identity and subjectivity; an interest in consumerism; a postmodernist orientation toward popular culture; and a focus on sexuality.”⁵⁵ Diversity and hybridity sit at the core of third wave identity, along with a deep awareness of sexual politics, identity, and display. While third wave feminism grew out of anger and frustration with misogynistic politics and culture, its offshoot postfeminism rejects victimhood and anger, while choosing to embrace sexual power. As Rosalind Gill argues, the postfeminist sensibility is deeply entrenched in modern media culture, and particularly applied to women and female

adolescents, who historically form Mary Queen of Scots' traditional audience. This sensibility is characterized by the idea that femininity is read in the body; subjectification rather than objectification; submission to self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; an emphasis on individualism, choice and empowerment; and a belief in natural sexual difference.⁵⁶ As both these cultural modes have been reluctant to account for religion's role in feminist society, media productions that pivot around narratives of religious difference, like the life of Mary Queen of Scots, are critical to understanding the application of these modes.⁵⁷

The concurrent presence of both these modes in media productions has substantially impacted the depiction of women in historical films. Two recent productions exploring the Scottish queen's life show how differently third wave feminism and the postfeminist sensibility affect her depiction. Where Josie Rourke's film *Mary Queen of Scots* applies a third wave lens that emphasizes struggle against patriarchy, sisterhood, and tolerance of sexual diversity, CW's *Reign* first uses a postfeminist sensibility that portrays inter-generational conflict, 'emphasized femininity,' and self and group-monitoring to maintain the authentic self. Religion appears as an affiliation that feeds into powerful political factions, rather than as a set of beliefs or behaviors. In both productions, as Mary's confidence, autonomy, and expressed authority increases, her role as a model of tragic sacrifice decreases, along with discussions of religion.

From Postfeminism to Third Wave in Reign

The CW's *Reign* (SenGupta and McCarthy, 2013-2017), an historical romantic television drama, combines a postfeminist sensibility that becomes a third wave character. Although reviewers have criticized the series for its consistent disinterest in the historical record and modern costume choices,⁵⁸ over four seasons the show presented plotlines focused on a strong female cast to attract a young female audience and explore power and gender dynamics, alongside historical events.⁵⁹ While Season 1 presents Mary and her ladies-in-waiting with a postfeminist lens, chasing love and court positions, Seasons 2-4 articulate the third wave difficulties they face as women seeking respect as autonomous and influential agents and rulers.

With plots that weave romantic relationships with European politics, and to a far lesser degree religion, *Reign* meditates on the challenges facing young postfeminist women: how to achieve love and independence, maintain same-sex friendships, and preserve an authentic self. In Season 1 *Reign*'s female ensemble cast project a sort of Renaissance girl power based on same-sex friendships that offer protection, rather than pressure to change.⁶⁰ As they arrive at the French court, Lady Greer states their purpose: "Make no mistake, we are here now to get our young queen in the game."⁶¹ While Mary frequently seeks political, social, and romantic advice from her ladies, she also offers them support and protection. When

Lady Lola finds herself pregnant with Francis's child after a one-night stand, Mary helps her find a husband and live respectably at court.⁶² This support in the face of crisis, whether historically accurate or not, depicts a strong sense of sisterhood among these ladies, which values the authentic self predicated on firm friendship.⁶³ The postfeminist influence also appears in the group's consistent encouragement to uphold standards and self-discipline, thereby preserving their authentic selves. When Mary unknowingly puts her ladies in danger and they confront her, she reassures them of their safety and her ability to protect them, stating: "I'll do better. I promise."⁶⁴ This emphasis on same-sex friendship as a communal support system speaks to *Reign's* young postfeminist audience and presents a new Queen Mary who is empowered by and for the women around her, rather than as earlier films depict, by her role as a Catholic ruler.

Although Ginia Bellafante has noted that other early modern costume dramas are rife with scenes of sex and nudity that minimized otherwise strong female characters,⁶⁵ *Reign* uses sex in a less explicit way that gestures to its younger female audience. Gill has argued that postfeminist women "are portrayed as active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so."⁶⁶ *Reign* highlights women's freedom of choice, encourages fashionable dress, and presents sex as pleasurable, but it does not obfuscate sexual violence or threats. In Season 2 Mary is raped by a Protestant attacker, which shines a new light on sex, power, and

access to women's bodies, but does little to explain religious tension.⁶⁷ Rather, this plotline spotlights gender inequality and signals a shift in *Reign* from a postfeminist to a third wave perspective. Seasons 2-4 follow a more mature Mary, who understands the challenges and limitations of female rulership. Arguably, gender inequality obscures religion to become the show's central theme. Plotlines that incorporate Queen Elizabeth and Catherine de Medici, as well as other female characters, all speak to the challenge that patriarchy posed and still poses to *Reign*'s viewers. While this movement from a postfeminist sensibility towards third wave feminism reflects Mary's increasing understanding of a precarious political life, it also signals the public willingness to discuss sexual harassment and gender inequalities. As Seasons 2-4 were in production, the UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson gave her *HeForShe* speech (September 2014) and the #MeToo movement grew, returning feminism and global gender inequities to the news.⁶⁸

Just as earlier films used religion and emotion to build Mary's identity, Elena Woodacre has cited early modern queens' sexuality as a strategy to create a humanized and relatable queen.⁶⁹ However, Mary's struggle against male prejudice is equally affecting. In positioning *Reign*'s women as models for modern viewers, Mary becomes an empowered and independent queen, only to be destroyed by patriarchal challenges to abnormal 'female' authority. As she is imprisoned in England, Mary proclaims: "The only crime I have committed that you care about

is that I am a woman, a woman who wears a crown.” John Knox responds that “a woman in power goes against Nature. Men will never willingly bow to the weaker sex.”⁷⁰ Knox’s comment affirms that misogyny, rather than religion was the greatest threat to Mary’s life.

A Martyr to Patriarchy: Mary Queen of Scots (dir. Rourke, 2018)

In contrast to *Reign*’s younger and maturing Mary, Josie Rourke’s queen stands steadfast in character and changes little over the film’s course, even as her circumstances change drastically. In the “Tudor Feminism” featurette, included with the *Mary Queen of Scots* DVD, screenwriter Beau Willimon notes that the film depicts the two queens within a “vortex swinging back and forth between sisterhood and rivalry.” As befits a third wave interpretation, the film explores political survival, sisterhood, and sexual freedom within a personalized female-centered story. Rourke banishes the usual dyadic model to explore a strong Mary, whose choices are constrained by misogynistic geopolitics. In contrast, Elizabeth’s vulnerability stems not from a Catholic plot, but from her own male nobles’ expectations. By mirroring Elizabeth and Mary’s reigns, viewers see that the queens faced similar pressures, even though they met different outcomes. As the film makes clear, noble support was essential, but only lasted if the queens accepted noble counsel. Each queen vocalizes her awareness of this precarious situation and

their shared vulnerability. When encouraged by Darnley to “not be Elizabeth [...] always suspecting intrigue or fearing revolt,” Mary responds flatly: “Her fears are wise. We both have nobles who would have us deposed.” Later, Elizabeth describes the reality that both she and Mary face: any man she marries might plot to overthrow her, much as Darnley and Bothwell do to Mary. As if foreshadowing these acts, Lord Maitland asserts that no man wishes to settle for being king-consort.

As they struggle to negotiate peace, the queens adopt the rhetoric of sisterhood, which resonates in both the premodern and modern periods. Mary’s first letter to Elizabeth describes a gender-based cooperation that excludes male nobles and would be familiar to modern female audiences:

We are two sisters bound by womanhood. Two princes on the same island. Ruling side by side we must do so in harmony, and not by a treaty drafted by men lesser than ourselves. I wish us to make a treaty of two queens.

This harmonious vision of sister-queens collaborating to rule Britain scaffolds a political rapprochement activated by Prince James’ birth. This expectation of sisterhood is directly influenced by third wave feminism, which produced a basic understanding of gender-related issues facing women in a working environment or women holding positions of power. Modern viewers expect that both Mary and Elizabeth could survive as rulers with support from other women, who recognize the systemic disadvantages that they face. An early modern king, on the other hand,

might view the queens as his unequal allies.⁷¹ Collective understanding of these obstacles leads the audience to assume that Mary and Elizabeth will form a sister-like relationship in order for each to maintain her throne.

Yet, as the film progresses, both queens recognize that they reign only so long as they can mollify or outmaneuver the lords who either protect or usurp their authority. The rhetoric of sisterhood falls on deaf male ears. Speaking with Dudley after Mary's abdication, Elizabeth asks: "Are we to do nothing as my sister is deposed?" Dudley responds dismissively: "She is not your sister. Nor can she be your successor." Warily, Elizabeth acknowledges that the true dividing line in politics is gender: "How cruel men are." Later, knowingly, Mary tells her lady-in-waiting: "A queen has no sisters. She has only her country." Both English and Scottish noblemen strive to constrain the queens, forcing one to capitalize on the other's weakness. To survive in England, Elizabeth must withhold from Mary information she needs to survive in Scotland. Eventually, this strategy escalates, and Elizabeth must acquiesce to the lords' demand for Mary's execution or risk their revolt.

Rourke's film depicts a constructed persecution based on gender, not religion. The English ambassador Lord Randolph's comment underlines noble discomfort with the gendered political caste: "How did the world come to this?" Maitland responds disparagingly: "Wise men servicing the whims of women?" This exchange ignores the queens' blood rights and dismisses their skills. To restore the

patriarchal balance Moray, Maitland, Cecil, and Randolph conspire to remove Mary from the throne in order to preserve Protestant rule in Scotland and England, and their own power. Thus, there can be no solidarity between queens when noblemen express solidarity across borders. The Scottish lords leverage English fear of Catholicism to produce an English army, imprisonment, and execution order, which ensures their continued rule under Moray's regency. Although Mary kneels before a cross in her cell and reveals her red dress at the block, an observer dismisses her, saying: "She thinks herself a martyr." Rather, this Mary is a martyr to patriarchy, not Protestantism.

Warrior Queens

While patriarchal structures apply increasing pressure over the course of Mary's narratives, within the last two decades certain films have complicated and pushed back against the traditional gendered depictions by increasing early modern queens' involvement in war. In 2007, Kapur's film *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* presented an otherwise traditional Queen Elizabeth sheathed in silver armor atop a white horse and urging courage against the Spanish Armada with a version of her famous Tilbury speech. While she is clearly masculinized, this image of a "kingly" Elizabeth is undermined by her long wind-swept hair and quick separation from her soldiers. Chiefly, her appearance is inspirational, as Walter Raleigh and his sailors

appear engaging and defeating the Armada at sea. Instead Elizabeth remains in a white nightgown on a promontory, watching the distant battle. Aidan Norrie has questioned this vision of unfulfilled queenly power: “Is she a queen encouraging her troops? Is she a queen trying (unsuccessfully) to play the part of a medieval warrior-king? Or is she a woman who believes in her kingly authority and is attempting to wield it at the opportune time?”⁷² Like other directors, Kapur struggled to present Elizabeth as anything other than feminine, and so the queen defeated England’s enemies only via proxy. *Reign* presents Mary in a similar situation: deeply engaged in negotiation and strategy, but rarely on the front line. Her mother Marie de Guise, her uncle the duke de Guise, and her brother James, all fight on her behalf in Scotland, while Mary remains secure at the French court. Not only is Mary, as a queen regnant without an heir, too precious to send to the battlefield, but as a woman she is untrained in this crucial role. As each proxy is revealed to strategize for their own benefit, Mary’s limitations become more clear and her independence seems hollow. Unlike Kapur’s Elizabeth, who at least appears costumed for war, *Reign*’s Mary uses elaborate court gowns to make political statements, which also emphasizes her distance from the battlefield.⁷³ Only men wear armor in *Reign*, asserting Mary’s acceptance that femininity is read in the body.

In contrast, Josie Rourke’s film presents Mary as a full participant in the Chaseabout Raid (1565) that unified Scotland against her brother Moray’s

rebellion. As Figure 2 shows, these scenes open with Mary confidently shooting a handgun. Unlike the armored Elizabeth with fly-away hair, Mary wears an unadorned blue dress with a muddy hem, an armored bodice, and pulled-back hair that reveals a resolute face. Mary's weapons and practical, understated clothing reflect her determination to work alongside similarly dressed soldiers to bring Moray to heel and enforce her authority. When her armored husband Darnley seems weary she reminds him: "our swords are not just for show." Likewise, the queen's actions provide a parallel to her costume, underlining her fully participant role. Mary rides with Bothwell, leading her soldiers, discussing strategy, and always using "we" and "us" to indicate their group movements. No one tells Mary to retreat, as Elizabeth's advisors do. When Moray and his troops come into view Mary stands amid her soldiers and gives the signal to attack. Although she does not strike any blows, she is close enough to decide if Moray lives or dies, and her decisions are responsible for the royal victory. Spatially, Mary always appears ahead or above male leaders, positioned in the traditional place of authority and leadership. On horseback she mingles with her soldiers, emphasizing their shared community, instead of being relegated to the rearguard or a spectator role. This activity contrasts with the way that twentieth-century films have portrayed Mary and Elizabeth as passive, separated from the action, and impacted by men's deeds. Unlike Kapur's Elizabeth, who is bound by patriarchal gender roles, Rourke's Mary

defies gendered expectations and is equally capable of ruling at court and on the battlefield.



Figure 2: Saoirse Ronan as Mary Stuart in *Mary Queen of Scots* (dir. Rourke, 2018). Photograph courtesy of AA Film Archive / Alamy Stock Photo.

Conclusion: Patriarchal Persecution

In a 2019 lecture, Josie Rourke noted that “any representation of the past is an index to how we feel in the present,” highlighting historical drama as a mirror for current concerns.⁷⁴ With this in mind, the diminished role of religion in both *Reign* and Rourke’s film is striking. Not only do both Marys rarely pray, attend Mass, or wear crosses, they also advocate religious tolerance repeatedly. This is consistent with third wave acceptance of diverse lifestyles and mirrors the modern Western separation of religion from politics and civil rights. Instead of becoming an emblem

for Catholic conspiracy and loss, as in earlier films, *Reign* and Rourke's Marys are victims of misogynistic prejudice, which continues to preoccupy modern society. In *Reign*'s series finale Queen Elizabeth identifies this widespread persecution, describing Mary as "besieged on all sides by a world of men, who seek to tear her down because they cannot control her. Somehow I understand her predicament."⁷⁵

While most productions present the queens' lives as intertwined, *Reign* and Rourke have replaced the dyadic model of religious and character difference, with a shared gender-based struggle. Writing in 2012, Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir noted that little about Mary had altered in two centuries of popular presentations, even though second wave feminism had brought wide-ranging changes to women's lives and self-perception.⁷⁶ As this article has shown, more recent productions have embraced a third wave inflected queen, who mirrors the popular expectation of gender equality and struggle against continuing misogynistic patriarchy. Much as global Catholic-Protestant tension has subsided, Mary has abandoned religious martyrdom, and instead, queens' lives have become lightning rods for misogynistic concerns about powerful women. Together *Reign* and Rourke show how Mary's legacy can shift discussion from political division and religious sacrifice to female strength in adversity, struggle against patriarchal prejudice, and models of strong female leadership.

¹ Andrew Bretz, "Imposing Romance: Cinematic Representations of Lady Jane Grey and Mary, Queen of Scots," *Early Modern Women* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 114, <https://doi.org/10.1353/emw.2016.0006>.

² Bretz, "Imposing Romance," 111, 113-114.

³ Jolyon Mitchell has described how the modern definition of martyr is contested. No longer is a martyr solely one who is killed for their religious beliefs, as in the sixteenth century. Now martyrdom can encompass individuals who embrace wrongful executions in a non-violent fashion, as political martyrs; Jolyon Mitchell, *Martyrdom: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2-3; Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 3.

⁴ David Grant Moss, "A Queen for Whose Time? Elizabeth I as Icon for the Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 5 (October 2006): 808-812, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2006.00306.x>.

⁵ Elena Woodacre, "Early Modern Queens on Screen: Victors, Victims, Villains, Virgins, and Viragoes," in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, eds. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad and Elena Woodacre (Cham: Springer, 2018), 27.

⁶ Although the scholarship on queenship is ever-increasing, these studies offer a good sense of the field: *A Companion to Global Queenship*, ed. Elena Woodacre (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018); Theresa Earenfight, "Medieval Queenship," *History Compass* 15, no. 3 (March 2017): e12372, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12372>; *Queenship, Gender, and Reputation in the Medieval and Early Modern West, 1060-1600*, eds. Zita Eva Rohr and Lisa Benz (Cham: Springer, 2016); Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁷ Michael S. Bowman, "Tracing Mary Queen of Scots," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, eds. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 191-215.

⁸ Peter Sherlock, "The Monuments of Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart: King James and the Manipulation of Memory," *Journal of British Studies* 46 (April 2007): 265, <https://doi.org/10.1086/510888>; John Guy, *'My Heart is My Own' The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004), 504-505.

⁹ The Marie Stuart Society (est. 1992) coordinates activities at Westminster Abbey and elsewhere that keep her memory alive; <http://www.marie-stuart.co.uk>.

¹⁰ Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

¹¹ S.T. Bindoff, *Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 1951), 206; J.P. Kenyon, "A Discordant Queen," *The New York Review of Books* (November 6, 1969), 41.

¹² Kenyon, "A Discordant Queen," 42.

¹³ Kenyon, "A Discordant Queen," 42.

¹⁴ See Buchanan's *Ane detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes...* (London: John Day, 1571), STC (2nd edition) 3981; Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots: romance and nation* (London: Routledge, 1998), 31-34; Retha M. Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

¹⁵ Lois L. Huneycutt, "Queenship Studies Comes of Age," *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 51, no. 2 (2016): 9-16, <https://doi.org/10.17077/1536-8742.2046>.

¹⁶ Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir, "Mary Queen of Scots as Feminine and National Icon: Depictions in Film and Fiction," *Études écossaises* 15 (April 2012): 75-92, <http://journals.openedition.org/etudeseccossaises/603.78>; Armel Dubois-Nayt, "Thomas Imbach's Marian Biopic: Postmodern Period Drama or Old-Fashioned Psychogram?" in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, eds. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad and Elena Woodacre (Cham: Springer, 2018), 239.

¹⁷ Michael F. Graham, "Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart by John Guy," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 1173; Sarah Gristwood, "This ill-fated queen," review of *My Heart Is My Own: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, by John Guy, *The Guardian*, January 13, 2004; John Goodare, reviews both Guy and Warnicke, *English Historical Review* 121, no. 493 (September 2006): 1120-1125.

¹⁸ Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 3-6, 15.

¹⁹ William Camden, *The historie of the life and death of Mary Stuart, Queene of Scotland* (London: Printed by John Haviland for Richard Whitaker, and are to be sold at the signe of the Kings head in Pauls Churchyard, 1624), STC 2nd edition, 24509a.

²⁰ George Buchanan, *History of Scotland (Rerum Scoticarum Historia, 1582)*; Guy, 'My Heart is My Own,' 505-506.

²¹ Guy, 'My Heart is My Own,' 505; Camden, *The historie of the life and death of Mary Stuart*, 236.

²² Knox wrote *The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (1558), which he directed initially at Queen Mary Tudor, but also succeeded in angering her younger Stuart cousin. Later he disseminated his criticisms of Mary Queen of Scots and her second husband, Lord Darnley, through the final installment of *History of the Reformation of Religion in the Realm of Scotland* (Book 4, 1565-1566). See Robert M. Healey, "Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, no. 2 (1994): 371-386, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2542887>.

²³ Jayne Lewis, "The reputations of Mary Queen of Scots," *Études écossaises* 10 (2005): 45; Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 255-257; John Leslie, *A treatise tovching the right, title, and interest of the most excellent Princess Marie...* (Rouen: Printed by G. L'Oyselet, 1584), STC (2nd ed.) 15507.

²⁴ In this portrait Mary carries items similar to those the real Mary did to her execution; Marguerite A. Tassi, "Martyrdom and Memory: Elizabeth Curle's Portrait of Mary, Queen of

Scots,” in *The Emblematic Queen: extra-literary representations of early modern queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 102.

²⁵ Lionel Cust and George Scharf, *Notes on the Authentic Portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots* (London: John Murray, 1903), 106-107.

²⁶ Cust and Scharf, *Notes on the Authentic Portraits*, 102-103.

²⁷ Tassi, “Martyrdom and Memory,” 103; John D. Staines, *The Tragic Histories of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560-1690: rhetoric, passions, and political literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 90-91.

²⁸ Renaud de Beaune, *Oraison Fenebre de la très-chrestien, très-illustre, très-constante Marie Royne d’Escosse* ([Paris: Guillaume Bichon], 1588); [John Leslie], *Oraison funèbre sur la mort de la Royne d’Escosse. Traduicte d’Ecossois en nostre langue François* (Paris: Jean Charron, 1587); [John Leslie], *Oraison funèbre sur la mort de très-heureuse mémoire, Marie stuard, Royne d’Escosse de son vivant fille, femme & mere de Roy* (s.l., 1587).

²⁹ Staines, *The Tragic Histories*, 119-122.

³⁰ Tassi, “Martyrdom and Memory,” 113-114; Alexander S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Opinion, 1542-1600* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 128, 141.

³¹ *Theatrum Crudelitatum Haereticorum Nostri Temporis* (Antwerp: Apud Adrianum Huberti, 1587, 1592).

³² Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, 276.

³³ Susan Doran, *Mary Queen of Scots: An Illustrated Life* (London: The British Library, 2007), 6.

³⁴ Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 3-6, 11-12, 14-15; Guy, ‘*My Heart is my Own*,’ 10, 64, 512; Anne McLaren, “Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 739-767, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/107.3.739>.

³⁵ The last suitor to court Elizabeth, François, the duke of Anjou and Alençon, abandoned the suit in 1581, when he was twenty-six and the queen was forty-seven years old. Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: the courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996), 154-194.

³⁶ Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 19-20, 21. Elizabeth’s longevity also contributed to the stability that characterizes her reign as successful; Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 254.

³⁷ Elizabeth A. Ford and Deborah C. Mitchell, “Mary, Queen of Scotland” in *Royal Portraits in Hollywood: filming the lives of queens* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 143, 153-155.

³⁸ In the “An Epic Confrontation” featurette released on DVD with Rourke’s film, Guy states that the meeting scene “deviates from history, but theatrically and dramatically, it needs to happen, because the infinite curiosity for those two women for each other has to be satisfied.”

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- ³⁹ Vivienne Westbrook, “Elizabeth: The Golden Age: A Sign of the Times?” in *Tudors and Stuarts on Film: historical perspectives*, eds. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 167, 170-172.
- ⁴⁰ Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 34.
- ⁴¹ Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 10.
- ⁴² Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 1-2, 4, 11.
- ⁴³ Guy’s book begins with a nine-page account of her execution, which precedes even the account of her birth. Thomas Imbach follows a similar route in his film, *Mary Queen of Scots* (2013). Guy, ‘*My Heart is My Own*,’ 1-9, 58, 498-502; Warnicke, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 255-258.
- ⁴⁴ The film was based loosely on Maxwell Anderson’s 1933 Pulitzer Prize-winning play; Ford and Mitchell, *Royal Portraits in Hollywood*, 128.
- ⁴⁵ This ending reflects the transition of Mary’s character from a distressed but sensible heroine to a “romantic guilty grande dame”; Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson, *England’s Elizabeth: An Afterlife in Fame and Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 100.
- ⁴⁶ Scholars agree that Jarrott likely drew inspiration from Fraser’s recent and immensely popular biography; John Guy, “*Mary Queen of Scots* (1971),” in *Tudors and Stuarts on Film: historical perspectives*, eds. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 149; Bethany Latham, *Elizabeth I in Film and Television: a study of the major portrayals* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011), 147.
- ⁴⁷ Dubois-Nayt, “Thomas Imbach’s Marian Biopic,” 240, 242, 244, 246-247.
- ⁴⁸ Dalya Alberge, “Mary, Queen of Scots captures the fascination of film-makers,” review of *Mary, Queen of Scots* (2013) dir. Thomas Imbach, *The Guardian*, August 17, 2013, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/aug/17/mary-queen-of-scots-films-exhibition>.
- ⁴⁹ Yet Elizabeth is ultimately a part of Mary, as they never met, says Imbach; Thomas Imbach, “Thomas Imbach Interview – Mary Queen of Scots,” interview by Bonnie Laufer, *tribute.ca*, accessed May 26, 2020, audio, <https://www.tribute.ca/tiff/index.php/2013/09/10/thomas-imbach-interview-mary-queen-of-scots/#.Xs1WKS2ZMcg>.
- ⁵⁰ Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir, “Marginalised Monarch: Mary Stuart and the Cultural Supremacy of Gloriana as Manifested in Film and Television,” *Milli mála* 7 (2015): 190-191, <https://ojs.hi.is/millimala/article/view/2173/1127>.
- ⁵¹ Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, “Scream, Popular Culture, and Feminism’s Third Wave: ‘I’m Not My Mother,’” *Scream* 38 (2003), https://cdn.atria.nl/eazines/IAV_606661/IAV_606661_2011_53/genders/g38_rowe_karlyn.html.
- ⁵² Jerome de Groot, “Slashing History: *The Tudors*,” in *Tudorism: Historical Imagination and the Appropriation of the Sixteenth Century*, eds. Tatiana C. String and Marcus Graham Bull (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 243-45, 247-50.

⁵³ Vivienne Westbrook, “Elizabeth: The Golden Age: A Sign of the Times?” in *Tudors and Stuarts on Film: historical perspectives*, eds. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 164-77.

⁵⁴ Chaves reports that in the United States of America, liberal Protestant churches are declining, conservative Protestant churches are holding steady, and the number of people who identify as irreligious is growing; Mark A.A. Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, second ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 88-100.

⁵⁵ Karlyn, “Scream, Popular Culture, and Feminism’s Third Wave.”

⁵⁶ Rosalind Gill, “Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2007): 149, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549407075898>.

⁵⁷ Sarah Page, “Feminism and the Third Wave: Politicising the Sociology of Religion?” *Conference Proceedings – Thinking Gender – the NEXT Generation* (2006), e-paper No. 17: <https://gender-studies.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2013/02/epaper17-sarah-page.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Lacy Baugher, “The Most Important Thing That The CW’s *Reign* Got Right: Its Women,” *The Mary Sue*, May 10, 2017, <https://www.themarysue.com/what-reign-got-right/>.

⁵⁹ Chiefly, this includes Mary and her ladies-in-waiting (Kenna, Lola, Aylee, and Greer), Marie of Guise, Princess Claude, and Queens Catherine de’ Medici and Elizabeth I of England. Tim Goodman, “*Reign*: TV Review,” *Hollywood Reporter* (October 14, 2013), <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/reign-tv-review-648214>.

⁶⁰ Melanie Kennedy, *Tweenhood: Femininity and Celebrity in Tween Popular Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 32-34.

⁶¹ *Reign*, Season 1, episode 1, “Pilot,” directed by Brad Silberling, written by Laurie McCarthy & Stephanie Sengupta, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows, and Toby Regbo, aired October 17, 2013, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010500?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Ca9114ecc-6f9f-459b-b452-cefcd9724ccb-168324081%2C62c427cdf1648a9b8a5d1bf2e8ebf9e1ba83cbd1%3Aaa309e3f1e4aaae3c88936909c645db60f8c284a%2C%2C>

⁶² *Reign*, Season 1 episode 14, “Dirty Laundry” directed by Norma Bailey, story by Drew Lindo, teleplay by Edgar Lyall, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows, and Toby Regbo, aired March 13, 2014 on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010513?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C13%2C9ca47b1d-3664-4a62-b326-c31ea143fbd4-3598401%2C%2C%2C>; *Reign*, Season 1 episode 15, “The Darkness,” directed by Steve DiMarco, written by Charlie Craig, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows, and Toby Regbo, aired March 20, 2014 on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010514?trackId=200257858>.

⁶³ Kennedy, *Tweenhood*, 32.

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- ⁶⁴ *Reign*, Season 1, episode 1, “Pilot,” directed by Brad Silberling, written by Laurie McCarthy & Stephanie Sengupta, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows, and Toby Regbo, aired October 17, 2013, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010500?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Ca9114ecc-6f9f-459b-b452-cefd9724ccb-168324081%2C62c427cdf1648a9b8a5d1bf2e8ebf9e1ba83cbd1%3Aaa309e3f1e4aaae3c88936909c645db60f8c284a%2C%2C>.
- ⁶⁵ Ginia Bellafante, “A Fantasy World of Strange Feuding Kingdoms,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/arts/television/game-of-thrones-begins-sunday-on-hbo-review.html>.
- ⁶⁶ Gill, “Postfeminist Media Culture,” 151.
- ⁶⁷ *Reign*, Season 2, episode 9, “Acts of War,” directed by Fred Gerber, written by Laurie McCarthy and Nancy Won, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows, and Toby Regbo, aired December 4, 2014, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80061051?trackId=14277281&tctx=0%2C8%2C9ca47b1d-3664-4a62-b326-c31ea143fbd4-3598401%2C%2C%2C>.
- ⁶⁸ “Emma Watson: Gender inequality is your issue too,” *UNWomen*, accessed June 30, 2020, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/emma-watson-gender-equality-is-your-issue-too>.
- ⁶⁹ Woodacre “Early Modern Queens on Screen,” 40.
- ⁷⁰ *Reign*, Season 4, episode 16, “All it Cost Her...,” directed by Holly Dale, written by April Blair and Laurie McCarthy, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows and Rachel Skarsten, aired June 16, 2017, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80082030?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C15%2C9ca47b1d-3664-4a62-b326-c31ea143fbd4-3598401%2C%2C%2C>.
- ⁷¹ Ilona S. Koren-Deutsch, “Feminist Nationalism in Scotland: *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*,” *Modern Drama* 35, no. 3 (1992): 431, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mdr.1992.0004>.
- ⁷² Aidan Norrie, “A Man? A Woman? A Lesbian? A Whore?: Queen Elizabeth I and the Cinematic Subversion of Gender,” in *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, eds. Janice North, Karl C. Alvestad and Elena Woodacre (Cham: Springer, 2018), 325.
- ⁷³ *Reign*, Season 1, episode 17, “Liege Lord,” directed by Allan Kroecker, written by Laurie McCarthy, Stephanie Sengupta, Doris Egan, and Wendy Riss, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows and Torrance Coombs, aired April 10, 2014, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010516?trackId=13752289&tctx=-97%2C-97%2C%2C%2C%2C>; *Reign*, Season 1, episode 22, “Slaughter of Innocence,” directed by David Frazee, written by Doris Egan, and Laurie McCarthy, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows and Torrance Coombs, aired May 15, 2014, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80010521?trackId=13752289&tctx=-97%2C-97%2C%2C%2C%2C>. When Mary meets the Scottish lords she wears a black and white tartan

dress, while to indicate her claim to the English throne, she wears a red dress adorned with three golden lions rampant, as on the royal arms of England.

⁷⁴ “*Mary Queen of Scots*’ director Josie Rourke talks gender politics, ‘Me Too’ and telling stories of women in power, in gripping NFTS master class,” *National Film and Television School*, accessed on May 9, 2020, <https://nfts.co.uk/blog/‘mary-queen-scots’-director-josie-rourke-talks-gender-politics-‘me-too’-and-telling-stories>.

⁷⁵ *Reign*, Season 4, episode 16, “All it Cost Her...,” directed by Holly Dale, written by April Blair and Laurie McCarthy, featuring Adelaide Kane, Megan Follows and Rachel Skarsten, aired June 16, 2017, on The CW, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80082030?trackId=14277283&tctx=0%2C15%2C9ca47b1d-3664-4a62-b326-c31ea143fbd4-3598401%2C%2C%2C>.

⁷⁶ Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir, “Mary Queen of Scots as Feminine and National Icon: Depictions in Film and Fiction,” *Études écossaises* 15 (April 2012): 77, <http://journals.openedition.org/etudeseccossaises/603.78>.

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