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Review Essay: Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*

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leaves unexploited much of the potential of verbatim trial records documenting ordinary conversations and "remarks made in passing by accused and witnesses" (234). Other problems include a labored but somewhat unleavened prose style, an overreliance on English secondary sources, and a corresponding neglect of Italian scholars like Andrea Del Col, who have produced important work on the Venetian Inquisition in recent years. (However, it should be noted that articles published in local Italian journals can be somewhat inaccessible to foreigners.) Despite these reservations, Ruth Martin's study represents a solid and important contribution to the scholarly literature on patterns of European witch trials.

Mary R. O'Neil
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Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*, Routledge, 1989, 193 pp., xii, ill., biblio., index, \$35.00.

This dazzling study of the "literary" cult of Elizabeth the Virgin Queen sets out to revise both old and new orthodoxies. In the first two chapters Philippa Berry traces the genealogy of a female wisdom figure and the relationship of this figure to Petrarchan and Neoplatonic discourses of love, connecting these intellectual movements to the construction of an absolute state in which a male ruler governs a state that has been gendered female. These discussions serve as a context for her reexamination of the courtly cult of Elizabeth.

In chapter three Berry points out that modern interpretations of the courtly cult, deriving from Frances Yates, fail to take account of Elizabeth's gender. Likewise, recent criticism has depicted Elizabeth as a largely passive figure whose patrilineal descent alone establishes her authority. To offset the privileging of patriarchal views of Elizabeth, Berry dwells upon Elizabeth's ties to her mother and her bonds with female courtiers. In the next three chapters, Berry supplies a diachronic interpretation of the mythological imagery in entertainments, drama, and poetry as these metaphors changed between the 1570s and the 1590s. In these discussions, Berry focuses on the early courtly entertainments of the mid-1570s, the drama of John Lyly, and the poetry of George Chapman, William Shakespeare, and Edmund Spenser, although numerous other writers also receive commentary.

Highly influential studies by Louis Montrose and others of the complex power and gender relations in the Elizabethan court have stressed Elizabeth's lack of impact on her culture. Montrose, for example, comments that "because she was always uniquely herself, Elizabeth's rule was not intended to undermine the male hegemony of her culture. Indeed, the emphasis upon her *difference* from

other women may have helped to reinforce it." Berry takes issue with these views, emphasizing the far-reaching impact upon Elizabeth's subjects of having a female monarch mystically united with a state and church that had been gendered female. Making striking and thoughtful use of feminist theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Marina Warner, Berry also offers a number of compelling readings of specific texts. Her readings of the dramas of John Lyly are likely to inspire renewed interest in this neglected playwright. She convincingly points out the strangely sexual imagery in Raleigh's *Ocean to Scinthia*, and in a very brief number of pages shows how Spenser's verse reflects shifting attitudes toward gender and power, shifts that she demonstrates were related to Spenser's larger cultural context. Perhaps the most problematical aspect of modern analysis of Elizabeth's courtly cult is the assumption that it was static. Philippa Berry's study corrects this tendency to regard the courtly cult as one great unchanging fabric by astutely identifying changing fashions in the images associated with Elizabeth.

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Jean R. Brink, *Michael Drayton Revisited*, Twayne Publishers, 1990, xiv, 167 pp., ill., biblio., index, \$29.95.

In the spirit of the best volumes in Twayne's English Author Series, Jean R. Brink's study of Michael Drayton balances an accurate, current biographical survey of the author's work with a reassessment of its critical and historical importance. In the case of Drayton, this balanced approach calls for a major overhaul of deeply entrenched assumptions, for Drayton criticism carries with it generations of cultural prejudices that have influenced our understanding of the man and his work. Brink offers a revisionist reading framed largely in terms of Drayton's tenuous place in the Tudor and Stuart patronage system.

The early chapters of *Michael Drayton Revisited* chronicle Drayton's life and literary apprenticeship up to 1597 and complete most of the levelling in the demythologizing process begun earlier. Brink scrutinizes against the documentary evidence the sepia-tinted image often painted of Drayton's life in Sir Henry Goodere's household as well as accounts of his lifelong devotion to Anne Goodere. Brink shows us a Drayton who lacked both social connections and social skills and who struggled for patronage in a system he resented and felt vitiated the poetic tastes and moral fiber of James's and Charles's courts. Brink refers to Drayton's use of dedications and prefatory material and to his habits