Queen Elizabeth I was the Queen of England and Ireland who ruled for more than 44 years and is considered one of the greatest monarchs in the history of England. Elizabeth had a difficult childhood. Her mother was executed when she was less than three years old and she had to face abuse by the husband of her step mother. On May 19, 1536 Anne Boleyn became the first English Queen to be publicly executed. Elizabeth was two years and nine months old then. Illustration showing the execution of Elizabeth’s mother Anne Boleyn. At the end of her life, Elizabeth was also believed to speak Welsh, Cornish, Scottish and Irish. Elizabeth translated classical works and wrote poems throughout her life. She wrote her own speeches and letters. Queen Elizabeth I of England had a major effect on woman’s history from the time she was crowned, taking the place of her half-sister Mary in 1558. It was obvious that Elizabeth was going to learn many things about ruling a country from Mary, but it was unclear that she would take her strategies and make them her own. The repeated line is not indeed to end the stanza but rather a line to set the tone for the Queen’s internal feelings and it has a different meaning for each. In the first three lines of the poem she speaks of her power and of her heritage and how blessed she is. The stanza but rather a line to set the tone for the Queen’s internal feelings and it has a different meaning for each. In the first three lines of the poem she speaks of her power and of her heritage and how blessed she is.

From Dancing Queen to Plaster Virgin; Elizabeth and the End of English Heritage


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This is not the first essay to look at the film 'Elizabeth' (UK, Shekhar Kapur, 1999) but it is the first essay to link it up with the two other royal films which preceded it in the 1990s. It argues that these three films advance beyond the previously acknowledged confines of the ‘heritage’ film and so change the trajectory of heritage cinema.

By linking ‘heritage’ cinema with contemporary social and political events, these films take on a new significance and create a new climate for film-makers within this genre, rather than the previous tendency simply to idealize ‘the world we have lost’. The essay takes as its starting point Guy Debord’s famous polemic ‘The Society of the Spectacle’, and argues that now, as never before, the concept of ‘spectacle’ - and of culture as the star commodity of the ‘spectacular’ society - are not only central to any social critique but inform all cultural production. The essay draws on Regis Debray’s controversial article ‘Admirable England?’, delineating the social and political implications of Princess Diana’s funeral and the attendant public hysteria.

It concludes by suggesting that not only do the trilogy of films under scrutiny form a new strand within the genre - but that ‘Elizabeth’ goes further, making of itself the first postmodern heritage film, the first to jet-set period fidelity, to engage in ostentatious pastiche, and to open up new artistic and political possibilities for future ‘heritage’ cinema.