The Female Factor: Gender and the Problem of Stability in the Reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I

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Europe in the 16th century was a hotbed for religious discussion and persecution. England was not exempt from the tension. Emerging from a political and religious cauldron were two women who came to the throne of England taking a role no other English woman had ever assumed. Mary I and her sister Elizabeth I were the first women to assume full control of the monarchy in English history. With this unconventional circumstance, complications based on gender and social expectations, arose in these women’s attempt to create English stability in a climate of conflict. Mary I was a devout Catholic, Elizabeth a Protestant. In analyzing acts of parliament and other documents, this thesis discusses Mary’s personal and duty-bound desire to universally convert her subjects to Catholicism, eventually blinding herself to realistic solutions to obtain political stability. Elizabeth on the other hand utilized sagacious political artistry, recognizing it as ultimately more important in maintaining stability than the supreme imposition of religious doctrine upon her subjects.

All That We Don’t Talk About

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Last summer, I came back to my home country, Bosnia, five years since the last visit and eleven since my family and I left our home with just a gym bag. For the nth time, I came down with a severe case of culture shock. I will simply say that living in a rapidly changing culture, while desperately trying to hold on to the one I was born in, can be interesting. “All That We Don’t Talk About” is a reflective and inquisitive look at my dual citizenship and its complications, as well as a search for a balance between the two.

In this essay, I am allowed to think about how I truly feel about things: the Bosnian war, communism, my roots and my family, the skeletons in the closet. More importantly, I have the complete freedom to express these feelings in their rawness, untouched and unchanged for the purpose of pleasing others, being politically correct, or staying objective.

This essay, as choppy as it seems, even after detailed review by Matthew Batt and Francois Camoin and their guidance in revision, was a way for me to make sense of my own feelings for my own sake. It is an essay completely written for me.

I do not find answers in this essay. I simply transfer my questions and thoughts onto paper. But, every word and every thought is an attempt to get closer to the truth.