Why do authors, producers, and directors keep recreating the story of Elizabeth I of England? When creators make Elizabeth a character in their works, they are not simply attempting to tell her story. On top of portraying the life of Elizabeth, creators both consciously and subconsciously use her character to reflect their own modern world. She falls into genre conventions and behaves in ways that may not be true to the actual, historical Elizabeth. The creators of the works also change and create events that involve Elizabeth in order to portray her in certain circumstances that emphasize her traits that they want foregrounded.

In my thesis I look at four popular culture depictions of Elizabeth and analyze the way the creators of the works use Elizabeth as a character. The first piece I analyze is Philippa Gregory’s novel *The Virgin’s Lover*, a historical romance surrounding Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley. Next I look at a CW network show titled *Reign*, in which Elizabeth is a secondary character to her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. Third, I analyze *Elizabeth*, an independent film directed by Shekhar Kapur. Lastly, I discuss a BBC biographical miniseries titled *The Virgin Queen*, the only piece which shows Elizabeth from her ascension to the English throne to her death at age of sixty-nine. Each work that I analyze targets a different audience and fits into a different genre than the others. For each piece, I argue how I believe the creators are using Elizabeth as a character and how this reflects the genre and audience of that piece.