

D'Souza

Private Honour and Noble Masculine Image in Early Modern England

Sir Robert Sidney and His Contemporaries

Robert Sidney, the first Earl of Leicester (1563–1626), serves as an exemplar of an Elizabethan nobleman who had in his collection a body of work pertinent to the subject of masculine honour in the private realm. Understanding the nuances and evolution of the term private honour as it is represented in Sidney's artefacts, as well as in the public discourse of the era, is the work and contribution of this book. The permeability between the private and public spheres led to an emergence of new forms of masculine representation. In a time when manhood was intertwined with militaristic qualities (such as courage, strength and fortitude), my investigation shows that in the domestic sphere, a gentler version of masculinity, encouraging humility, constancy and modesty, was fostered amongst the nobility. While worries of effeminacy certainly existed, there also was a strong discourse that encourage men to adopt so-called feminine virtues within the private sphere.

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