ASSIGNMENT 5: DETERMINING SOURCE USEFULNESS

Assignment Purpose: To help you assess what kinds of sources are useful for research projects on various topics.

Assignment Details:
Think of a topic relating to Elizabeth that interests you. You might consider the EEBO assignment and the readings we’ve done so far in class. Use the Harvest catalog to find a book in Shields Library about this topic. It should be a secondary text published in the last ten years.

Go to the library and find the book on the shelf. Don’t read the book. Examine the table of contents and the index, and skim the introduction. You shouldn’t spend more than 30-40 minutes looking at the book.

Based on this cursory evaluation, write a 1-2 page paper describing what kinds of projects would this book be useful for. You might consider the primary texts, the methodological approach, and the topic(s) covered. Please also include a brief narrative of how you chose and found this book, and what problems, if any, you encountered with this assignment.

Some questions to consider as you determine how a researcher might use the book:
• What is the discipline? Is it about history? Literature?
• What are some primary texts the book will discuss?
• Was the introduction approachable and well-organized? If so, can you summarize the book’s main argument in 1-2 sentences? If the book is a collection of essays, what is the main theme all the essays address?
• Use your imagination. What kinds of projects, different from this book, can you imagine using this book for? For example, a book on Elizabeth and sovereignty with one chapter on A Midsummer Night’s Dream might be used in a research project on Midsummer. A book with one chapter on Elizabeth and the rhetoric of motherhood might be useful for a project on early modern motherhood more generally.

Finally, upload your paper to the course Smartsite to share with your classmates. As a class, you will have compiled an initial bibliography of the library’s holdings on Elizabeth II! You might consult your classmates’ papers later as you begin your research project.