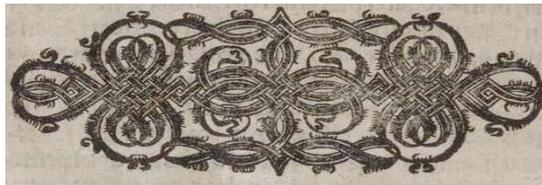


Elizabeth's Symbolic Marriage to England: A History of Lasting Union

Jill M. Hall

This paper examines the rhetoric of Elizabeth's speech about entering into a symbolic marriage with England from a religious studies perspective in order to investigate how the content of Elizabeth's speech utilizes a rhetoric of political theology about the king's two bodies. Via rhetoric, Elizabeth was able to enter into a symbolic marriage with England, which created a union between King Henry VIII and James I's Protestant goals, thus establishing a national identity in England.



Marriage and religion were issues of utmost priority during the Tudors' rule in England. Under King Henry VIII's reign his personal divorce from Catherine of Aragon resulted in England's national divorce from the Roman Catholic Church, enabling the creation of the Church of England. Scholars who address the reformation in terms of England's social and political history often credit King Henry VIII for his efforts to organize a Protestant religion by founding the Church of England and distinguish the Protestant King James I for his attempts to contain the religious fractures caused by England's reformation. Scholars have favored King James I with a significant reputation as an enforcer of the Protestant faith: while his religious doctrines sought to formalize Protestantism through the celebrated creation of the King James Bible, his court was endeavoring to legalize the faith by forcing England's Catholic priests to conform to Protestant practice.¹ Critics of England's social and political history note both Henry and James because their religious actions sought to legalize or formalize an intolerant national attitude towards other religions, particularly Catholicism. However, what resulted as England's lasting identity and history with the

Marriage

Protestant religion could not have been possible without King Henry's daughter—Queen Elizabeth I—the monarch who declared King James I as her successor. Theorizing that although King Henry made the break with the Catholic religion he failed to establish a “true” picture of Protestant faith for the Church of England and that, likewise, King James could not have legalized and formalized a Protestant nationality without Queen Elizabeth's construction of Protestant identity, I argue that Queen Elizabeth I made possible the union between the Protestant desires of King Henry VIII and the enforcement of Protestant nationality by King James I. Thus, I contend that the construction of Protestant identity as it was carried out by Queen Elizabeth I created a union between the Protestant goals of King Henry and King James.

In adding to this scholarly debate concerning who is responsible for England's social-political history with Protestantism, I must acknowledge that my argument arises out of the privileged position of our present moment in history. That is to say, my argument that Elizabeth constructed a Protestant identity that united the Protestant goals of both King Henry and King James comes from understanding history as a progressive narrative; and in so doing, this assessment reads the interpretations of history as a body of documented events claimed by societies and by which history is perpetually (re)sequenced and (re)cast to form a coherent narrative that increasingly leads us to our knowledge of the present. I approach Elizabeth's speech regarding her symbolic marriage to England through a lens that views history as a continuance of knowledge, suggesting that history can be read as narrative links that demonstrate a coherent sequencing of past events with its aims always towards the present. In other words, my reading of history as a progressive narrative theorizes that although Elizabeth may not have known the outcomes of her speech, present-day scholars can in hindsight attribute and infer a set of implications as foreshadowed in the rhetoric of her speech. I also examine the rhetoric of Elizabeth's speech concerning her symbolic marriage with England from a religious studies perspective in order to investigate how the content of Elizabeth's speech reveals a rhetoric that utilized the political theology of the king's two bodies.²

Elizabeth's speech is a response to the Commons' petition that she marry and illustrates how early in her reign she faced these demands: less than a year after she had given her first public speech as queen, she publicly addressed the marriage question. Her decision to confront this pressure directly gave her authority; additionally, the way in which her speech answered the Commons' petition that she marry set into motion the creation of a distinct English Protestant

Marriage

identity. For example, my objective suggests that Queen Elizabeth emphasized her Protestant religion as a claim to authority over her English subjects by aligning her monarchy with her father King Henry VIII's monarchy. Rhetorically associating her reign with her father's, she equally united her monarchy with King Henry's goal of moving the church into the power of the state. Utilizing her relationship with her father King Henry VIII had a twofold result: first, Elizabeth gained the attention of and assumed authority over her subjects; second, exemplifying her relationship with her father's goal allowed for the fostering of a national Protestant identity through rhetoric articulating a politicized religious identity, one which implies that the Protestant faith is upheld by the authority of the state by divine right. Accordingly, Elizabeth's rhetoric of the state's authority over religion directly opposed the Pope's authority over the state and its subjects. Elizabeth's religious rhetoric unified the people of England as a nation-state rather than a people unified under religious doctrine. Ultimately, by removing religion from the authority of the church and into the realm of English politics, Elizabeth's rhetoric created a discourse that led the English people to question and challenge the proper roles of politics and religion. Thus, when King James I took the throne, he sought, in reaction to the discourse created under Queen Elizabeth's reign, to pacify the discord among his subjects by taking legal action that formalized the state's authority over religion. I argue that because of the historical framework in which Elizabeth made her speech to the Commons in 1559 in response to the petition that she marry she was able to use the current ideologies to support her case against marrying, and these ideologies also allowed her entry into a symbolic marriage with England. Second, I contend that Elizabeth's symbolic marriage to England established a paradigm for Protestant England's identity, as the rhetoric in her speech fostered Protestant ideologies and sought to enforce an English nationality. This article examines Elizabeth's rhetoric in light of the political theology concerning the king's two bodies, theorizing that while she refused marriage in her body natural, her rhetorical marriage to England enacted a marriage in the monarch's body politic.³ Queen Elizabeth's symbolic marriage to England may be read as a union between King Henry and King James because, in terms of the body politic, her symbolic marriage paved the way to unite and articulate the personal efforts and desires of King Henry and King James.

To read Elizabeth's speech as a historical progressive narrative that relies on a set of chronological connections implied by her rhetoric, this article focuses on the version of her speech translated by William Camden and published in 1615, which has been most repeated, claimed, and popularized. *Elizabeth I Collected Works*

Marriage

includes two reported accounts of Elizabeth's response to the Commons' marriage petition. I will investigate the second account of her speech because it continues to be the most recognized by audiences, even though "it freely embroiders upon and condenses the speech...from the early sources."⁴ This version of Elizabeth's speech entitled "Her Answer to '[the Commons'] Petition that She Marry," was included in the printing of Camden's English retranslation of the *Annales: The True and Royal History of the Famous Empress Elizabeth*.⁵ The *Annales* sought to frame the Queen's reign historically and to perpetuate her reputation as Queen for a public audience, whereas the earlier speech was translated for an isolated printing or reading; thus, because the *Annales* places the speech in a historical context and framework that created a lasting impression on the audience and made it the most renowned of the various accounts, this version demonstrates the progressive narrative of history in that the audience determines which version of a story will be retold. Moreover, Camden's translation demonstrates how Elizabeth's speech fostered and developed a public sense of national identity as it continued to impact later audiences.

The historical framework in which this speech was given is important because it explains why Elizabeth's subjects were willing to unite and accept this unwed queen as their monarch. England initially wanted a male wearing the crown, but, with the recent threat to the reformation from King Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Mary, the people ascertained that the most desirable trait for an English monarch was the insurance that the monarch was Protestant. Moreover, our understanding of the historical and cultural milieu allows for an appreciation of how Elizabeth fostered Protestant ideologies that her father Henry VIII had initiated. The Pope had excommunicated Henry VIII after his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and Henry seized the church's assets in England, placing the church under the authority of the state; likewise, Henry declared that the king of England was the "supreme head of the Church of England," passing the Act of Supremacy in November 1534.⁶ Ethan H. Shagon argues that recent scholarship suggests that when Henry VIII passed legislation naming the king of England as the head of the church, the social impact of the reformation resulted in a reconstruction of political power. He notes that in the past historical scholars have argued that the reformation was primarily spiritual or religious in nature. However, Shagon avers that, although Henry VIII placed the king as the head of the Church of England, "in practice no one knew in 1534 what a 'Church of England' was."⁷ Shagon implies that the English reformation was centered in political reconstruction because the Church of England and the Protestant religion had yet to define themselves through a means of

Marriage

practicing faith; thus, the Act of Supremacy was the result of a "political process," not solely a reaction for a religious movement.⁸ Based on this recent scholarship characterizing the reformation as both religious and political, I suggest that because the Church of England lacked an identity in practicing faith as compared to the Roman Catholic Church, which they sought to define themselves against, the Church of England and likewise the state became increasingly vulnerable to Catholic takeover; the Church of England had an identity void that needed to be filled in order for it to exist. This vulnerability to Catholic representation became apparent when Catholic Queen Mary followed her Protestant father and brother on the throne and, in an effort to re-establish the Church of England's allegiance to the Pope, repealed the Act of Supremacy in 1555. It was not until Mary's death in 1558 that Henry's Protestant daughter Elizabeth took the throne, and a year later she restored her father's Act of Supremacy, making way for Elizabeth to exercise Protestant rule in England. However, the events leading up to Elizabeth taking the throne proved the reformation's vulnerability to Catholic influence, and as a result the Commons, who wanted a male monarch, had to come to terms with the risks England's throne faced.

Restoring the Act of Supremacy did not end the fear of foreign take-over, which suggests that the people, represented by the Commons, felt that there still remained an identity void in defining England as a sovereign Protestant kingdom. Consequently, during the Queen's first years as the ruler of England, particularly between 1556 and 1565, Protestant England stood on uneasy ground, seemingly in danger of a take-over by foreign monarchs seeking to bring England back under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1559 Europe had two queens: Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, who lived in France as the queen consort of Francis II.⁹ According to Anne McLaren the two queens had relatively equal blood claims to the English throne, and since there was no king the arrangement of a dynastic marriage was of utmost concern.¹⁰ Elizabeth was under enormous pressure to marry because the Commons feared a foreign takeover through Mary Stuart's claim to the throne. Thus, when Elizabeth was crowned, marriage negotiations were actively underway, and prior to Elizabeth's speech it seemed likely she would marry either James Stuart, the illegitimate but militantly Protestant son of James V, or the Protestant James Hamilton, the next in line to the Scottish throne. Although both men were Scots, they were also, and more importantly, Protestant.¹¹ The Commons' fear of foreign takeover and their need for England to establish its political self-sufficiency and authority over the church by having a male Protestant king created a paradox. In the event of successful marriage negotiations, Elizabeth would marry a foreigner, a Scot,

Marriage

which was potential risk to the autonomy of the kingdom of England, but successful marriage negotiations to a Protestant man would ensure the authority of a Protestant king would rule the kingdom. Consequently, at the time of Elizabeth's speech on her symbolic marriage to England, it appeared as though Scotland and England would unite. As a result, the Commons sought to prepare the public for such a merger with Scotland.

The public's reaction to Elizabeth's marriage negotiations can be read in the John Aylmer text *An Harborow for Faithful and Trew Subjects* of 1559. Scholars argue that the text was an attempt to calm the public's fears regarding a foreigner sitting on the English throne in the event of successful marriage negotiations; what is at stake in this argument is how the content of Aylmer's text addresses the people of England, his audience.¹² Aylmer's text depicts the attitudes of the people living in England but also reveals the fact that he addresses his audience through a nationalized identity as the people of the Protestant kingdom of England. Because Aylmer expressed a rhetoric of religion aimed at preparing the people of England for a union with Scotland, I argue that what united the people of England in identity was their common fear of a foreigner wearing the English crown. For example, Aylmer's text expresses a common bond among those of the Protestant faith, stating, "If you and we had joined together: it had made no great matter, on which side the King had been, so he had been religious ... It is religion and likeness of manners, that join men together ... Where there is one faith, one baptism, and one Christ: there is narrower fraternity then, if they came out of one womb."¹³ As McLaren theorizes, Aylmer's text was an attempt to refute the growing fear that a foreign marriage would hand over the English kingdom to a stranger. Aylmer first addresses this fear of an outsider ruling England (should Elizabeth marry a Scottish Protestant) by arguing that, because this would be a "godly marriage," the king's origin would not make a difference—as long as he shared in the Protestant faith. Aylmer's response to Elizabeth's marriage negotiations aimed at unifying Protestant believers because supporting a marriage between Protestants suggested a Scottish King wearing the English crown would not really be a foreigner if all shared in the same Protestant religious beliefs. Moreover, by attempting to unite two kingdoms based on a mutual Protestant faith, the religious rhetoric also implied that the peoples' fear of a foreign take-over was actually the fear of a Catholic take-over. McLaren further addresses the patriarchal ideologies developed in Aylmer's text regarding union based on Protestant faith: "Aylmer [establishes] that reformation in Britain has transformed the inhabitants of England and Scotland into 'brothers in Christ.' By this [statement], Aylmer identifies a relationship of spiritual

Marriage

affinity similar to, but more binding than, the blood bond joining earthly brothers."¹⁴ The phrase "brothers in Christ" characterizes the values and cultural milieu being created within Elizabeth's audience during 1559. In an attempt to ease the people's fears and to bring the English and Scottish together, Aylmer represents Elizabeth's Protestant audience as men united in the belief that the Protestant religion supersedes blood relations. Thus, before her speech, Elizabeth's audience had defined themselves as "brothers," not through blood, but through Christ. Elizabeth utilizes this characterization of people "united through Christ" in order to establish her authority as a ruler and to relate directly to her audience. Moreover, she uses this ideology of "faith over blood" to convey that marriage for the purpose of succession is futile in the Protestant faith. In the opening of her speech, Elizabeth states:

In a thing which is not much pleasing unto me, the infallible testimony of your goodwill and the rest of my people is most acceptable. As concerning your instant persuasion of me to marriage, I must tell you I have been ever persuaded that I was born by God to consider and, above all things, do those, which appertain unto His glory. And therefore it is that I have made choice of this kind of life, which is most free and agreeable for such human affairs as may tend to His service only.¹⁵

By stating, "I must tell you I have been ever persuaded that I was born by God to consider and, above all things, do those which appertain unto His glory," Elizabeth asserts that she, like the spiritual brothers, has an obligation to put God before all other matters of concern. The statement, "I was born by God," declares that the father (God), which the brothers share, also brought her into the world. Elizabeth then argues that because God brought her into the world she is obligated "to consider and, above all things, do those which appertain unto His glory." By stressing the importance of her relationship to God, Elizabeth places herself and her audience on equal footing; she claims that the sovereign shares in Protestant England's ideology of brothers in Christ. Elizabeth is able to use the fear that united her audience in English identity--the fear of a foreigner wearing the crown--by implying that, because she is born by God to be a Protestant monarch and she is the Protestant monarch of England, they should not fear a foreigner wearing the crown, for God ordains her both English and Protestant. Elizabeth's rhetoric denies the need for a Protestant English monarch, whether male or female in the natural body, to marry. Stating that she tends to God's service only, Elizabeth suggests that she serves as both the head of the kingdom and as a Protestant monarch, which further suggests that a self-sufficient Protestant kingdom denies the need for a foreign marriage.

Marriage

This rhetoric reinforces Henry's original Act of Supremacy, which placed the monarch as the head of the church, because Elizabeth stresses how her "choice of this kind of life" to rule England, is "most free and agreeable for such human affairs as may tend to His [God's] service only." Elizabeth asserts that she is only obligated to answer to God, that her affairs are most free and agreeable, so long as they tend to God's service; and, therefore, Elizabeth suggests that no one may speak before God. Here Elizabeth reiterates that the monarch is in unmediated contact with God's will and is able to dismantle any notion that a monarch must consult a spiritual advisor. She reminds her audience of the Protestant break from the Roman Catholic Church and that the state, through the monarch, does not have to conform to the will of the Pope before the will of God. In this way Elizabeth acts as the head of the church through the power of the state. She opens her speech by telling her audience that Protestant belief and ideology assert that the state is in direct communication with God's will. She also puts her audience at ease, suggesting that they share in the state's power, a power created by placing the monarch as the head of the church, and she illustrates that they share in a relationship of equal footing in which they all have access to a personal relationship with Christ; they are equal as "brothers in Christ."¹⁶ The circumstances that pressured Elizabeth to marry also created a Protestant rhetoric, and Elizabeth applies this rhetoric to illustrate that England already has a Protestant monarch; thus, she denies the Commons' reason for marriage, and her rhetoric fosters in England an ideology of autonomy.

The influence of Elizabeth's rhetoric that established England as a self-sufficient kingdom also denied a union between England and Scotland, and the impact of her rhetoric is illustrated during the rule of King James I. For example, when King James I took the crown of England, he was an advocate of uniting England and Scotland. In his attempt to merge the two kingdoms, he stated, "What God hath conjoined let no man separate. I am the husband. All the whole realm is my lawful wife," and "during October 1604 James assumed the title of King of Great Britain, [but] it was against the advice of his Council, for they considered the King's act as injudicious and provocative."¹⁷ The resistance to James' motion to unite England and Scotland is a consequence of Elizabeth's ability to persuade the Commons that she did not need to marry a Protestant Scottish king to protect England's autonomy. Because the Commons were persuaded by Elizabeth's rhetoric, which had created a sense of England's self-sufficient Protestant identity, they were able to protest James' proposal to unite England and Scotland. Since Elizabeth emphasized an ideology of brothers in Christ, she fostered England's identity as a people who

Marriage

shared in a common faith where the English monarch was the head; in so doing, she led the kingdom of England into believing that the monarch of England sat as the head of a independent kingdom, implying that the kingdom did not need the support or merger of a foreign kingdom to be recognized as autonomous. Thus, the problems James encountered as he entered his reign was a direct result of the Protestant identity Elizabeth fostered in her denial of a Scottish marriage.

Elizabeth relates to her audience through establishing a Protestant ideology of relationships through Christ; however, she also faces the paradoxical relationship of Protestant marriage and its place in the body politic. According to David Cressy's *Birth, Marriage and Death*, historical records concerning marriage ceremonies indicate that, although marriage was a personal choice made by the couple, there were three fundamental reasons people in England married, which were reiterated each time Elizabethan and Stuart ministers performed a marriage ceremony:

One was the procreation of children, to be brought up in fear and nurture of the lord and praise of God. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication that such persons as have not the contingency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body. Thirdly, for the mutual society, help and comfort that one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.¹⁸

These reasons for marriage illustrate the Protestant marital ideology during this period: marriage was a free choice as long as it sustained the three obligations. However, monarchs faced the additional challenge of reconciling marriage as a personal choice with the responsibilities associated with the body politic, which Mortimer Levine defines as follows: "The king had two bodies, namely, a mortal body natural and an immortal body politic. In his body politic his subjects, who [are of different] degrees and sorts, [are] his members...they [are] incorporated to him and he to them, and they both make a perfect corporation."¹⁹ Therefore, the monarch would have to consider the body politic in choosing a marriage partner because of the corporation's concern for the line of succession. The concern for the body politic allowed the Commons to petition for Elizabeth to marry. McLaren's argument also exemplifies how the body politic functioned concerning Elizabeth's marriage:

[When] nations were conceived of bodies politic, when monarchs were credited with two bodies in order to compensate for the deficiencies of their natural selves, marriage assumed an important ideological as well as dynastic significance. It featured as a powerful analogy for relations between monarchs and their realms, modeling

Marriage

how two distinct corporations, king and commonwealth, could enact a unitary identity after the example of Christ and his church.²⁰

In light of Protestant ideology, McLaren suggests that the body politic modeled Christ and the church. In so doing, the identification of Protestant England as a kingdom demonstrated that their sovereignty was different from the way in which the Roman Catholic Church defined Spain's national sovereignty. The monarch of England was dissimilar in that he or she communicated directly with God, rather than through the Pope, who communicated God's word to the Catholic monarchs. In stressing its faith concerning the body politic, Protestant England had begun to define its cultural identity as divergent from that of the Catholics, who used their priests as mediators between man and God. According to Alan Sinfield, the Protestant removal of the priest, or mediator between man and his spiritual life, left the "head of the household responsible for the spiritual life and devout conduct of the family."²¹ The removal of the priest becomes problematic for Elizabeth as the monarch because, Sinfield argues, such an act strengthens the patriarchal social structure by placing the male within the family unit as the religious head of the household.

The Commons had two objectives in entreating Elizabeth to marry; these two motivations illustrate England's fragile but growing sense of Protestant ideology. For example, in the Commons first point they felt Elizabeth required a spouse because husbands had taken over the role of mediating priest; this motivation demonstrates England's growing sense of Protestant identity. However, the Commons' second objective that Elizabeth must marry a Protestant to ensure Protestant rule and succession worked to complicate their first objective, illustrating the kingdom's delicate position as a Protestant nation. Elizabeth's speech focuses on the Commons' two motives and deals with them using the political theology of the king's two bodies, the result of this focus and application enables her to reject the Commons' insistence on marriage while still furthering Protestant ideology and solidifying England as autonomous Protestant nation. The Commons sought to convince Elizabeth to marry in order to secure England's future. Citing concern for England's welfare and the body politic, the Commons' petition refers to the Protestant belief that marriage is concerned with "the mutual society, help and comfort one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."²² Accordingly, during the Elizabethan reign the priorities for marriage placed the couple's mutual comfort in a first place position of importance; and, in terms of the king's two bodies, this transition of priorities stresses the Protestant concern for the body politic over the natural.²³ The Commons demonstrated this shift in marriage priorities as they argued

Marriage

that the body politic would benefit if Queen Elizabeth married a king; their insistence that the kingdom's well being depended on Elizabeth's marrying illustrates that she was faced with conveying to the commons that the body politic and mutual comfort between a couple in marriage would be better served by her not marrying a king so that she could enter into a symbolic marriage with England, thus allowing the kingdom to enjoy that relationship of mutual comfort with its monarch.

By utilizing rhetoric that focuses on the continuance of the body politic after the death of the monarch's natural body, Elizabeth reworks the Commons' concerns for the mutual society and the body politic, and in her speech Elizabeth uses these concerns to enter into a "symbolic marriage" with England. By relating to her audience in the opening of her speech as fellow brothers in Christ, she indicates that she best serves England by taking on the role of spiritual mediator. Already her own spiritual mediator, Elizabeth now opens the door to discuss the mediation between her natural body and the body politic. Elizabeth uses the images of the body politic and the natural body to her advantage when she states,

From which, if either the marriages which have been offered me by ... princes or the danger of attempts made against my life could no[t] divert me, it is long since I had any joy in honor of a husband; and this is that I thought, then I was a private person. But the public charge of governing the kingdom came upon me, it seemed unto me an inconsiderate folly to draw upon myself the cares which might proceed of marriage.²⁴

In this statement Elizabeth reminds her Protestant audience that marriage in England is a choice based on mutual affection between the couple, and her declaration that before taking the throne she had experienced personal desires affirms her natural body. She also acknowledges that her natural body has been threatened with death since she became queen, stating, "The danger of attempts made against my life could no[t] divert me." Here she suggests that the Commons' petition for her to marry is based on her natural body, but having now become queen she must also consider the death of that body, especially in light of death threats resulting from her public position as a monarch. Having considered the risks to her natural body, Elizabeth maintains that the welfare of the kingdom is of the utmost importance—more important than her natural life. Elizabeth implies that she places a higher value on the body politic than on her natural body; and in her symbolic marriage to England she places the welfare of the kingdom above all else. By placing the welfare of the kingdom in the primary position, Elizabeth maintains that she values the body politic, the corporation of people united by the crown, above

Marriage

her natural life. Just as the Commons' use two reasons to persuade Elizabeth to marry, the concern for body politic or the continued and lasting welfare of the kingdom and (primarily) that she marry a Protestant, Elizabeth uses these same concerns to highlight why she should not marry. For example, in her statement "But the public charge of governing the kingdom came upon me, it seemed unto me an inconsiderate folly to draw upon myself the cares which might proceed of marriage," Elizabeth refers to the Protestant ideology that allows couples to choose their marriage partners. However, having publicly acknowledged that she places a higher value on the preservation of the body politic and its relationship to the Protestant faith than on her own natural body, she suggests that her suitors all lack true Protestant qualities—qualities she would require them to have in order to marry into England's monarchy. In this way Elizabeth suggests that the Commons have lost sight of the body politic, arguing that England's monarch is already Protestant, which ensures that the body politic will remain Protestant; thus she implies that a marriage to a questionable Protestant proposes a risk to the autonomy of the kingdom. Stating that she will only marry a Protestant who values the kingdom's needs, she promises "to do nothing to the prejudice of the commonwealth, but as far as possible I may, will marry such a husband as shall be no less careful for the common good, than myself. And if I persist in this which I proposed unto myself, I assure myself, that God will so direct my counsels and yours."²⁵ Elizabeth uses tenets of the Protestant religion to imply that her suitors all lack true Protestant faith. She argues that when God provides a true Protestant king for her to marry, she will act according to God's will, further suggesting that God's will supports England as a Protestant kingdom. Elizabeth uses the rhetoric of the king's two bodies in stating that God directs her counsels, which refers to her body natural, and that God directs "yours," which refers to the Commons, as in the body politic. Thus, Elizabeth suggests that God's counsel or will directs the Kingdom of England, the corporation of people over which she sits as the head by God's authority.

In pointing to her natural and political bodies, Elizabeth asserts that she should not marry, but she is willing to offer herself in symbolic marriage to England. She states, "To conclude, I am already bound unto a husband, which is the kingdom of England, and that may suffice you. Makes me wonder that you forget, yourselves, the pledge of this alliance which I have made with my kingdom."²⁶ The editors of *Elizabeth I Collected Works* report that at this moment Elizabeth put forth her hand, showing her audience a ring—an action emblematic of the Protestant marriage ceremony. During this period, marriage was considered a union to be recognized and witnessed by

Marriage

the public and by God. A recognized union was culturally important to the Protestant faith because Protestants no longer considered marriage a sacrament, as did the Catholics.²⁷ Thus, by publicly showing the ring on her finger, Elizabeth dramatizes her support of English Protestant marital ideologies, and she demonstrates her regard for marriage as an action that the public confirms, rather than an action that must be condoned by a spiritual mediator. Moreover, by having the public acknowledge that her husband is England, Elizabeth invites her audience to share in a personal relationship with the monarchy. In affirming that she is "already bound unto a husband, which is the kingdom of England," she challenges her audience to define themselves as part of the kingdom, thus engaging them in this figurative marriage.²⁸ Elizabeth invites her audience to define their English identity and nationality through this intimate symbolic relationship between husband and wife, or in this case, between monarch and subject.

By aligning her monarchy with the goals of her father King Henry VIII, Elizabeth had previously established that the monarch has authority over both the nation-state and the Church of England; now, in a symbolic marriage between monarch and kingdom she establishes that the kingdom consists of an identity defined as a fusion of nation-state and church, creating a discourse that sought to define the roles and duties of English politics and religion and to unite the English people as a nation under Elizabeth. Her rhetoric illustrates how her reign created a bridge between the two kings Henry and James; by utilizing King Henry's goal that placed the monarch as the head of England's state and church her rhetoric allowed King James not only to inherit the position of head of the state and church but also to make use of her religious rhetoric in order to enforce a Protestant nationality. In King James' speech, "Kings are justly called Gods," he claims that "Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth." he argues that both God and king have the authority to "make and unmake their subjects."²⁹ James is able to claim that a king acts by God's authority, arguing that a monarch has the right to enforce law upon his subjects. James utilizes Elizabeth's deployment of Henry's goal, and in so doing he suggests that a king of England makes and enforces law over both the state and the church's subjects. Stating, "I will not be content that my power be disputed upon, but I shall ever be willing to the reason appear of all my doings, and rule my actions according to my laws,"³⁰ James employs a religious rhetoric that justifies his enforcement of Protestant nationality. His rhetoric demonstrates the values Elizabeth created, especially that a monarch had direct communication with God, and his speech demonstrates how Elizabeth prepared the way for the merging

Marriage

of the two kings' goals by establishing that, as the king of England, he was justified in enforcing law concerning both politics and religious practice in England. Elizabeth's symbolic marriage to the kingdom is also representative of a marriage of the policies of Kings Henry and James in that Elizabeth invited her subjects to define England's identity in the form of both politics and religion. Ultimately, Elizabeth's action created a lasting discourse between the king and the kingdom, which progressively worked to define the English nationality.

In her symbolic marriage to England, and with regard to her two bodies, Elizabeth emphasizes the Protestant belief in marriage, especially concerning "the procreation of children, to be brought up in fear and nurture of the lord and praise of God."³¹ Arguing against the demand that her natural body should bear children continue the line of succession, she states, "And reproach me so no more that I have no children: for everyone of you, as many as are English, are my children and kinfolds, of whom, so long as ... God shall preserve me, you cannot charge me, without offense, to be destitute."³² This statement structures the paradigm of English identity by implying that through her body politic she has given birth to England as a people. She does so by defining England as a sovereign nation, and her monarchy demonstrates that an English monarch wears the crown and that the crown of England encircles and enfolds the Church of England. Thus, this birthing of the English identity establishes the kingdom of England as both sovereign and Protestant. For example, when Elizabeth states, "As many as are English, are my children," she refers to her natural body and the body politic. Implying that her children are the English suggests that she is the Mother of English identity and that one who claims to be English claims a likeness to her, the Mother. This symbolic relationship structure of the mother of the English people also agrees with Aylmer's term for the union of faith as the "likeness of manners." Both Aylmer and Elizabeth place religious ties above blood relationships, an idea that works to invite Elizabeth's subjects to define themselves as English through a sharing in Protestant identity. Just as the "brothers in Christ" saw themselves as united by faith, Elizabeth uses the same rhetoric to solidify the kingdom through defining the English nation as a people united by their mother's Protestant religion. In her symbolic marriage to England, Elizabeth uses the body politic to foster her image as the mother of England's identity and thus denies the need for a natural birth of an English successor.

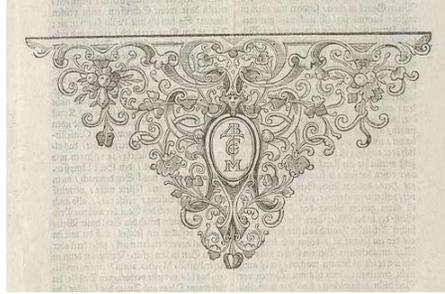
In her closing remarks, Elizabeth addresses a final obligation in marriage, which is to "keep oneself undefiled members of Christ's body [by avoiding] fornication." She addresses this obligation in both her body natural and body politic.³³ Fornication in the body politic

Marriage

reads as a monarch who engages with foreign kingdoms while disregarding the primary commitment to his or her own kingdom. Elizabeth responds to the third marriage obligation stating, "Lastly, this may be sufficient, both for my memory and honor of my name, if when I have expired my last breath, this may be inscribed upon my tomb: 'Here lies interred Elizabeth, A virgin pure until death.'"³⁴ By creating this representation of her natural body through her symbolic marriage to England, Elizabeth demonstrates her loyalty to the kingdom, implying that marriage to the kingdom keeps her from fornication—both in her body natural and body politic. She declares that she will be remembered as the "virgin queen" because of her devotion to the kingdom; claiming that England's monarch is a "virgin" in the body politic implies that the kingdom will not be seduced or taken over by foreign kingdoms, as the representation of a "virgin queen" suggests that Elizabeth refuses to comprise her primary obligation to England.

Thus, my argument suggests that reading history as a progressive narrative reveals a political restructuring found in Elizabeth's speech that aligned her body natural and body politic with King Henry's monarchy. In so doing she utilized her body natural's ability to rule by addressing her loyalty to her father's goals. In this alignment through the king's body politic, she articulated the state authority over the church. As a result, when Elizabeth declared the Protestant King James I as her successor, he inherited not only the throne but also the Church of England—as the king's body politic now included the positions of head of state and head of church. The effects of establishing a true picture of Protestant identity and creating a discourse that shaped the people's identity to England as a nation-state became apparent to scholars through King James I's reign. Under his Protestant monarchy, he was able to utilize the state's authority over the church, and he sought to legalize and formalize a Protestant English nation. However, the historical credit given to both King Henry and King James is enhanced by reading Elizabeth's reign as a progressive narrative that rhetorically establishes this union between the two kings. Examining the rhetoric of Elizabeth's rejection to natural marriage is also an examination of her symbolic marriage. This article concludes that her symbolic marriage to England has had great historical and social consequences to England's identity, because her symbolic marriage was a union of political and ideological beliefs; moreover that this union is one of historical continuance as it united the policies of the past and present kings.

Marriage



¹Michael Questier, "The Politics of Religious Conformity and the Accession of James I," *Historical Research* 71, no. 174 (1998): 1-30. Questier asserts that during King James I reign, Catholics feigned pacification in England by choosing to practice a "politics of conformity." Politics of conformity explains why "some people [Catholics] moved between nonconformity and compliance, and why strict recusancy might not always be an article of faith even for the most belligerent of Roman dissidents"(1). Questier theorizes that Catholics conformed to the King's James' legislation in, for example, the "Oath of Allegiance" and other legislation that sought to enforce intolerance for religious practices outside of the Church of England's Protestant faith because the Catholics believed that King James I marked the beginning of the Stuart Rule and the end of the Tudor rule in England, which suggested to them a change in political rule. Thus, the Catholics who practiced a politics of conformity did so because they believed King James' reign represented a period of transition that would offer them an entry back onto the political stage; therefore, they chose to conform to the state's church, as a way to wait out the Protestant rule without bringing attention to their plans of entering back into England's politics.

² Ernst H Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001). Although I do not cite Kantorowicz text directly, I could not have structured my argument that Elizabeth utilizes the political theology of the king's two bodies without Kantorowicz's historical research and text *The King's Two Bodies*. Kantorowicz's book offers a historical and theory based outline of political theology. For example, he illustrates that political theology began in the form of the Roman law concerning private inheritance, and then he depicts how the private law was transformed in the medieval ages into a law of public inheritance, highlighting the historical and social environment surrounding or causing the shift/change in the political theology. Furthermore, in Kantorowicz's book he dedicates a chapter that examines the role of the king's two bodies in Shakespeare's play *King Richard III*; the chapter demonstrates how one may read the political theology in literary works. My argument follows Kantorowicz's example as I read the king's two bodies in Elizabeth's speech.

³ Kantorowicz argues that the king or monarch had two bodies, a body natural and a body public. The body natural is the king's personality and physical

Marriage

being, the king's flesh and bones; whereas the king's body politic is the king's position as head of state, a position of continuance through the form of government.

⁴Elizabeth I, *Elizabeth I Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, et al, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 58. Although there are many other versions of Elizabeth's response to the Commons' marriage petition not provided in the text *Elizabeth I Collected Works*, I chose between the two accounts in this text, because, to date, *Elizabeth I Collected Works* provides the most extensive collection of Elizabeth's letters, poems, and prayers; moreover, the text is a comprehensive study of editorial practices and changes concerning Elizabeth's collective works. To read both accounts of Elizabeth's speech and editors notes see pages 56-60.

⁵ Ibid. For more information concerning Camden's retranslation (1615 speech), see *Annales: True and Royal History of the Famous Empress Elizabeth* (London: for B. Fisher, 1625), Book 1, pages 27-29.

⁶ Ethan H. Shagon, *Popular Politics and English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 29.

For more information concerning King Henry's break with the Roman Catholic Church see Part One, "The Break with Rome and Crisis of Conservatism" (1-89).

⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁶ Ibid.

⁹ Anne McLaren, "The Quest for a King: Gender, Marriage, and Succession in Elizabethan England," *Journal of British Studies* 41 (2002): 260.

¹⁰ Ibid., 261.

¹¹ Ibid., 260-261. McLaren notes that they were described as "godly and Scottish."

¹² McLaren's article suggests that Aylmer wrote his text under the assumption that Queen's Elizabeth I marriage negotiations would be successful; thus Aylmer's text illustrates his assumed audience because the text addresses the people of England as a people that were likely to be united with the Kingdom of Scotland in the event of the Queen marrying.

¹³ Ibid., 259, Aylmer quoted in McLaren.

¹⁴ Ibid., 260.

¹⁵ Elizabeth I, 59.

¹⁶ McLaren, 260. The term "brothers in Christ" is Aylmer's quoted in McLaren.

¹⁷ Bryan Bevan, "King James and the Union," *Contemporary Review* 268, no. 1561 (1996): 1-4.

¹⁸ David Cressy, *Birth Marriage and Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 269.

¹⁹ Mortimer Levin, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question 1558-1568* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 111.

²⁰ McLaren, 262.

Marriage

²¹ Alan Sinfield, "Cultural Materialism, Othello, and the Politics of Plausibility," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (UK: Blackwell, 2002), 754.

²² Cressy, 269.

²³ Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (New York: The Bath Press, 1986), 151. MacFarlane notes the shift in marriage priorities during Elizabethan England.

²⁴ Elizabeth I, 59.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 167.

²⁸ Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, 59.

²⁹ King James I. "Kings are justly called Gods." *Essential Speeches* (Great Neck Publishing, 2003), 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Cressy, 269.

³² Elizabeth I, 59.

³³ Cressy, 269.

³⁴ Elizabeth I, 60.