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## "Prudence even beyond other women" : the rhetorical maneuvers of Elizabeth I

Samantha A. Morgan-Curtis  
*University of Tennessee*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Samantha A. Morgan-Curtis entitled ""Prudence even beyond other women" : the rhetorical maneuvers of Elizabeth I." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

Linda Bense-Meyers, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Allen Carroll, Laura Howes, Thomas Broadhead

Accepted for the Council:


Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School




(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Graduate Council:

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Linda Bensel-Meyers, Major Professor

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and recommend its acceptance:

  
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Accepted for the Council:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate  
Studies





"PRUDENCE EVEN BEYOND OTHER WOMEN": THE RHETORICAL  
MANEUVERS OF ELIZABETH I

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Samantha A. Morgan-Curtis  
December 2002

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughters

Fea Katherine Morgan-Curtis

and

Nemain Matilda Morgan-Curtis

who remind me every day that the success of the future  
depends upon the work of today.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No deity I, my creation of order from chaos was not a solo project. The people who have assisted me at various points in this long process are far too numerous to cite specifically (they themselves would constitute a second dissertation). Thus, I must begin with a broad thank you to library personnel at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Belmont University, and Tennessee State University. Beyond that, thanks are due to the numerous friends and colleagues who have lent their support, encouragement, prayers, and ears/shoulders (one for listening and the latter for leaning and crying). The Department of Languages, Literature, & Philosophy at Tennessee State University (actually huge junks of the entire College of Arts and Sciences) gave me the time and incentive to finish. Here at TSU, I found where my vocation was leading me.

More specific thanks rightfully go to the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Allen Carroll, Dr. Laura Howes, and Dr. Thomas Broadhead are all recipients of my eternal gratitude for their patience, tolerance, hard work, and insights. They (and Dr. Mary E. Papke, Director of Graduate Studies) had the faith to let me finish.

At Tennessee State University, Dr. Gloria Johnson, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, first gave me an adjunct position and then pushed, cajoled, and encouraged me into applying for and eventually attaining a tenure track position. However, without my "conscience", my "prompt", and, some days, my "tormentor", Dr. Helen R. Houston, Acting Head of my department, I might still not have succeeded.

Of course, without the work ethic and "strong will" given me by my parents, Mark and Shirley Morgan, I would not have made it to the point where a dissertation was even an issue. My little battle goddesses Fea and Nemain both slowed and compelled my progress; to them, this work is dedicated.

Additionally, I have neither the space nor the words to convey my love for and gratitude to my soulmate, my David Curtis. I shall spend the rest of my life thanking him for pushing me to finish and assisting me in finding the time to do so. Marriage slowed the progression of my career, yet it also enriched my life so that my ultimate achievement had more significance.

Finally, I come to the person who I really do owe the most in this process. She has been my mentor, my guide, my prompt, my exemplum. I am the teacher I am because of Dr.

Linda Bensel-Meyers. Without her fierce dedication, tolerance, and overall morality, I would not have learned the value of carrying forward my ethos into the larger world. I shall spend my career attempting to "pay forward" all that she has taught me. Thank you, dear LBM.

## ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Tudor (1533-1603) did not set out to better the status of women; as queen, she wanted to neither overturn nor disrupt the very system that authorized her position. Though later generations have anachronistically read her as a type of protofeminist, she saw herself as trying, within necessary constraints, to fulfill simultaneously her roles as both woman and ruler, which meant fitting into the expectations of her society in order to rule and function. However, her society found the very nature of female rule problematic and contradictory to its vision of the "natural order." To accomplish this task, Elizabeth used her extensive Humanist training in rhetoric to turn the stations of woman into a series of socially acceptable metaphors. I argue that rather than wishing to step outside of her gender Elizabeth actually immersed herself in the language of gender the better to subvert expectations and create space for her to rule.

Beginning with Stephen Greenblatt's concept of Renaissance self-fashioning, but also using the works of contemporary feminist critics such as Janel Mueller, Constance Jordan, and Julia Kristeva, I investigate the recurrent metaphors of woman to which Elizabeth both

constructed and had recourse. To that end, my chapters roughly divide along the five stations of women as I focus primarily on Elizabeth's letters, prayers, and meditations to highlight and analyze her redefinitions of these positions. The study concludes with an analysis of why we continue to need her model during our own time, in order to see what Elizabeth Tudor has to teach us about imagistic rhetoric in the political sphere, then and now.



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Chapter 1 "One Woman in Her Time and Ours: 'Answer  
answerless'"

In her second reply (this one dated November 24, 1586) to her Parliament's petitioning with regard to the proposed execution of Mary, the exiled Queen of Scots, Elizabeth Tudor continued her seeming life-long task of frustrating and thwarting those who attempted to control and demand her acquiescence:

But now for answer unto you, you must take an answer without answer. For if I should say I would not do it, I should peradventure say that which I did not think, and otherwise than it might be. If I should say I would do it, it were not fit in this place and at this time, although I did mean it. Wherefore I must desire you to hold yourselves satisfied with this answer answerless. (Collected Works 199-200)<sup>1</sup>

This remark exemplifies Elizabeth's ability to evaluate, respond to, and control her rhetorical situation.

Elizabeth's rhetorical sophistication was the result of an extensive Humanist education (she shared tutors for many years with her younger, half-brother Edward, the heir

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<sup>1</sup> Herein, Elizabeth Tudor's Collected Works will be demarcated as CW.

apparent), natural ability, sharp mind, and extensive experience. Alas, Elizabeth's ability to adapt her speech grew from situations where her words not only influenced people but actually decided whether or not she herself would be put to death; her lessons came from this ultimate trial-by-fire.<sup>2</sup> However, the frustration of her Parliament resonates through the centuries as subsequent readers also attempt to uncover the "answer" to the questions posed by this woman's rhetorical savvy and ultimate influence.<sup>3</sup>

#### Defining the Issue

In her own words, we can possibly begin to understand this woman who lent her name to (perhaps) the most important and most studied literary and cultural period in British history. With regard to Elizabeth's texts,<sup>4</sup> the biggest body of work is and remains determining how to define what these include. A major step forward was made with the 2000 publication of an edition of Elizabeth's works (edited by Leah Marcus, Mary Beth Rose, and Janel Mueller).<sup>5</sup> Yet as good as it is, a quick perusal of the

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<sup>2</sup> Since one of the charges often levied against her was heresy, perhaps I should say trial to avoid fire.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Starkey asserts that from her early life Elizabeth "learned distrust, double-dealing and a swirling obfuscation of language in which the more she said the less her meaning was clear" (x).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth's writing encompassed not only the general political documents that bore her name, but letters, poems, prayers, speeches, and translations. Her letters and prayers will be most central to this study with some discussion of speeches and poems; however, much work exists on her translations as well.

<sup>5</sup> An original spelling edition of this collection is due late fall 2002 or early 2003.

edition quickly reveals the cause of the tardiness of the volume (almost 400 years after her death, nearly a quarter of a century since the beginning of the movement to "recover" texts by women, and many months after the initial intended publication date of this particular tome): the reader finds documents that were not physically penned by Elizabeth, letters to her, texts about her, and other works of disputed authorship.

Thus, the most obvious question becomes how could such a public figure, both in her own time and ours, leave items of such nebulous authorship? The simplified, reductive answer for this continued debate is because we continue to attempt anachronistically to separate the personal from the political. We ourselves have very current and specific definitions of what individual production is--we want items written by the individual with no intermediary or collaborator.<sup>6</sup> Though unrealistic, this is our idealized vision: we want a clear evidentiary trail that leads directly from the pen of the author to the text in our hands. That we do not have this requirement (or at least have it to a far less stringent degree) with male canonical

figures is an issue that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Parodying Virginia Woolf's voice in A Room of One's Own, Domna Stanton looks at a similar paradoxical expectation for and judging of women's writings when she notes that in searching for critical texts that discuss women's autobiography, the reader "would be forced to conclude that women had written virtually no autobiographies [. . .]", but yet then Stanton simultaneously notes, "How could this void be reconciled with the age-old, pervasive decoding of all female writing as autobiographical?" (4). Thus, we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century want Elizabeth Tudor's texts to be cleanly separated into what she wrote for public consumption as the queen and what she wrote as a private woman. However, Elizabeth has a much more complex vision of both her self and her position.

In a paper presented before the Modern Language Association in 1999, Leah Marcus detailed just a few of the difficulties in attempting to define Elizabeth's body of work: "As queen of England, she was responsible for thousands of letters, legal writs, ambassadorial

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, the continuing problem of defining and "policing" plagiarism and "excessive collaboration" in Composition Studies and even with certain high profile scholars demonstrates that our expectations are not

instructions, and the like" (1073). In simultaneously explaining the editors' selection process and attempting to head off some of the criticism of this volume, Marcus went on to explain that "We reproduce these poems of hers along with the poems that are part of the same 'conversation' to give readers a sense of their immediate rhetorical and social contexts" (1074). Thus, Marcus here comes to the very heart of the problem in considering Elizabeth:

"Elizabeth's identity as princess and monarch cannot be separated from her identity as author" (Marcus et al. xiii). Because Elizabeth Tudor, at least as we have access to her, can be viewed as fulfilling a complex series of social roles throughout her life, we cannot examine either her or her writings as separate from her rhetorical situation. We must take this farther, though, to understand that this contextualized process was exactly how Elizabeth perceived herself.

Marcus, in defining the problematic nature of recording Elizabeth's speeches, describes the situatedness of Elizabeth's rhetoric:

Rather, [Elizabeth] appears, in common with a usual practice of the period, to have planned the main

"heads" she wished to include and had those firmly in mind as she spoke but not the actual language of her delivery, which was often witty, spontaneous, and alive to the rhetorical potential of the immediate situation. She practiced *memoria ad res*, not *ad verba*. (1074)

Thus, Marcus asserts Elizabeth's preference for structuring what she needed to cover in terms of her subject while simultaneously creating space in which to respond to the needs/demands of her specific audience. Wilbur Samuel Howell found three types of theorizing concerning the nature or office of rhetoric in England during the Renaissance period: Ramus' privileging of style and ornament, the Ciceronian five-part structure,<sup>7</sup> and formulary (Lanham 133). Marcus here posits Elizabeth as adhering to this Ciceronian style which "held that the orator had three 'offices' or main functions: to teach, to please, to move" (Lanham 131).

Mary Beth Rose supports Marcus' vision of Elizabeth as speaker by observing about her speeches that we can study them

either as one genre among others in which she wrote or



as a growing and evolving body of work, with issues, rhetorical strategies, and self-representations that change considerably over the forty-five years of her reign. (1077)

I would contend that this dual-positioning of her writings is how Elizabeth viewed all of her constructions, both written and oral, and, in fact, her very life. Rose's comment emphasizes how Elizabeth viewed herself and her works simultaneously, synchronically and diachronically: as answering the questions of the moment (in terms of subject, audience, and her own voice), while also constructing how history would view her.

Much of the debate about the nature of Elizabeth's writing springs from our inability to credit Elizabeth's conscious manipulation of her words.<sup>8</sup> Our anachronous reasoning in demanding this public and private split pushes us to attempt to recover a private self that never existed. Thus, we need to access Elizabeth on her culture's terms of selfhood and identity. One way to begin this exploration is through Stephen Greenblatt's concept of Renaissance "self-fashioning" using the age's new meaning for *fashion* "As a

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<sup>7</sup> The five parts of an oration are exordium, narration, proof, refutation, and peroration (Lanham 171).

term for the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern"

(2). For Greenblatt, then, "fashioning may suggest the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving" (2):

self-fashioning acquires a new range of meanings: it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions. (3)

In reviewing the various scholarship that has been applied to study of Elizabeth and in observing other disciplines that could prove beneficial, we can here look to rhetorical theory. The possibility of hypocrisy likewise lends itself to a consideration of Elizabeth's use of casuistry. Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin discuss at length how this process of rhetorical reasoning eventually falls into ill repute as being associated with sophistry

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<sup>8</sup> Though work by scholars such as Peter Mack and others is going a long way to prove this type of interpretation.

and "case ethics" (12) (what we would most likely call situational ethics), for in its heyday it was most commonly associated with the Jesuits. The period of "high casuistry" between 1556-1656 coincides with Elizabeth's dates of 1558-1603 (Jonsen and Toulmin 137). And as Elizabeth lived through the reign of her sister, Mary Tudor, known as "Bloody Mary," she would have needed recourse to this practice in negotiating the religious quagmire necessitated by Mary's Counter-Reformation. One of the most famous examples of Elizabeth's "defense of self" under Mary's reign is her claim that (as described by David Starkey) "She acted as she did [. . .] not out of obstinacy but ignorance, 'having been brought up in the creed which she professed, without having ever heard any doctor who could have instructed her in any other'" (120).<sup>9</sup> This response exemplifies Elizabeth's rhetorical maneuvers: the fact that she can claim ignorance is a dichotomy,<sup>10</sup> since to claim ignorance requires knowledge of the existence of more

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<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Starkey continues his misunderstanding of Elizabeth as he makes observations such as the following: "Edmonds [a servant] had the gift of the blarney (perhaps learned from Elizabeth, who was no mean mistress of the art)" (157) and "Perhaps only Mary, who had known her half-sister from precocious infancy, really had the measure of her" (158). Also, a good example of Elizabeth's reasoning occurred in defending to Mary her use of the Litany and Suffrages in English as "because it was used in the king [her] most noble father's days" (see Starkey 162-63).

<sup>10</sup> Ignorance, like innocence, is a state that can only exist as being unaware of itself. Thus, a truly innocent person cannot know that s/he is innocent, because to recognize such would mean that s/he knows there is something beyond the current state, which ends the purity of innocence.

information. Moreover, this appeal falls into the very stereotype of feminine weakness: the plea of the poor, effeminate student seeking the well-versed male teacher, or, in this case, her "prince," her sister Mary who had already assumed the role of monarch.<sup>11</sup>

Our anachronistic reasoning and unrealistic expectations are part of the desire and enterprise that Julia Kristeva describes in anthropologists' attempts to enter the societies of antiquity:

[We] think that by codifying them [the societies] we can possess them. These static thoughts, products of a leisurely cogitation removed from historical turmoil, persist in seeking the truth of language by formalizing utterances that hang in midair, and the truth of the subject by listening to the narrative of a sleeping body—a body in repose, withdrawn from its socio-historical imbrication, removed from direct experience. (14)

Kristeva's argument parallels Greenblatt's assertion that "There is no such thing as a single 'history of the self'

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<sup>11</sup> Very little literary or psychoanalytic work has yet to be done on Mary Tudor's rule; thus far, only historians have taken a stab at this. More work is currently being done on the writings of Mary Stuart (see Peter C. Herman's and Lisa Hopkin's essays in Reading Monarchs Writing: The Poetry of Henry VIII, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth I, and James VII), and I hope that scholars will soon follow suit on her cousin.

in the sixteenth century, except as the product of our need to reduce the intricacies of complex and creative beings to safe and controllable order" (8). Thus, to understand Elizabeth, we must consider her within her own historic moment and social setting, rather than force her into the patterns so readily available in our own time.

#### Constructing the Method

At the time of her coronation, Elizabeth faced a social and political situation that no one would have envied her: her government was nearly bankrupt; her kingdom was in religious turmoil; civil war was possible; external war was eminent; her own legitimacy (in terms of birth and right to succession) was questionable; and her very sex seemed to unbalance the natural order of things.<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth had a very delicate and intricate balancing act to achieve. She had to be a king who was actually a queen, which required recourse to her education in rhetoric. In fitting into the constraints of her moment, Elizabeth was meeting the requirement that "[s]elf-fashioning [. . .] involves submission to an absolute power or authority situated at

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<sup>12</sup> Though not taken completely literally by this time, the people of England still used the Great Chain of Being metaphor to understand the organization of the universe. From this, since the ruler was God's anointed on earth, the king was analogous to God. A woman, being always and everywhere lesser than men, could not naturally occupy this position nor be equated to a man. From this metaphor, we get the

least partially outside the self [. . .]" and "is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile" (Greenblatt 9). Thus, Elizabeth, as this strange, alien, female creature who sought to rule while simultaneously fitting into her society's absolute and authoritative demand with regard to her "natural" role(s), embarked on a lifelong, ever dynamic self-fashioning. Though using this vision of self-fashioning seems to run contrary to Greenblatt's masculine and mainly middle class strictures in his own use of this concept, the variations in Elizabeth's status throughout her early life make her experience analogous to the male writers that Greenblatt examines. For, at various times in her life, Elizabeth had been poorer than the meanest members of the "middle class," or as historian David Starkey notes, "from her birth in 1533 to her accession in 1558, she had experienced every vicissitude of fortune and every extreme of condition" (ix).

In order to fulfill all of these socially-defined characteristics of woman while ruling the self-same society, Elizabeth had to use what David Starkey, in a

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whole notion of a man is "king" of his "castle," with his wife always secondary. This reasoning also arises from the Early Modern interpretation of God's edict about Eve's subordinate position to Adam.

bookstore question-and-answer session, termed Elizabeth's "exaggerated femininity"<sup>13</sup>; though slightly reductive, Starkey is highlighting one of Elizabeth's modes: in order to legitimate her rule and be successful, Elizabeth had to "be more than a man and less than a woman" (an apocryphal quotation attributed to either Robert Cecil or Francis Bacon depending upon the source). Through her construction of self, Elizabeth had to enact her position of being "king" by over-fulfilling her allotted role of woman. As Rose asserts,

Elizabeth creates herself as *sui generis*, an exceptional woman whose royal station and unique capabilities make her inimitable. Her rhetorical technique involves appeasing widespread fears about female rule by adhering to conventions that assert the inferiority of the female gender only to supersede those conventions. (1079)

In analyzing the metaphors for "woman" which Elizabeth used throughout her reign, we can perhaps come to see how she inadvertently and anachronistically opened a space from which later women writers could use her model far more

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<sup>13</sup> Starkey, in reaching his intended modern, popular audience, sometimes oversimplifies his reading of Elizabeth.

aggressively than she would have intended during her own time.

Elizabeth's personal and family life were political from the moment that her sex was announced and beyond: every facet of her life resonated with political implications for an entire nation. Thus, we cannot cleanly excise and sequester the private Elizabeth from the public one. Because she understood this, her very existence became a series of tableaux: the tension of being God's anointed laid against the "Monstrous"<sup>14</sup> reign of a woman; a bastard whose mother was both the savior of the Protestant movement and the pariah of papal powers; a king trapped within the confines of a weak, female vessel. These paradoxes would later lend themselves to feminist works that spoke of the marginalized madwoman, the sex that is not one, speaking from the gap, eruptions of the chora into the symbolic. However, Elizabeth could not enjoy the luxury of madness, so she had to find a series of subject positions from which to speak, but because of the very nature of her gender and vocation, she was not allowed the convenience of a single

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<sup>14</sup> See Figure 1. This emblem exemplifies the monstrosity of woman and how she lacks any sort of head and thus can neither reign nor lead.



## EMBLEME XVI.

*Search for strange monsters farre or wide,  
None like the woman wants her guide.*



Great monsters mentioned are in stories found,  
As was *Chymera* of a shape most wondrous,  
*Girion*, *Pisbon*, *Cerbrus* that hel-hound,  
*Hydra*, *Medusa*, with their heads most hideous,  
Satyres and Centaures; all these same were found  
In bodies strange, deformed and prodigious:  
Yet none more marvellous in stories read,  
Then is a woman if she want a head.

Figure 1. Monstrous Woman, emblem from Thomas Combe, *A Theater of Fine Deuises* (London, 1596). Image 13 in *Early English Books Online*.

position (which most of us find difficult enough) but was forced into multiple ones that she had to posit as being neither exclusionary nor irreconcilable. To this end, she used the realm of linguistics and rhetoric. She accomplished this by living her life through a series of emblems of woman, but instead of these following in a strict chronological order (as is the case with the "common" woman), Elizabeth necessarily had to have recourse to these positions at different moments in her life. Thus, there is no simple one-to-one relationship between Elizabeth and a specific role at any given moment, but rather a series of these allocated roles where Elizabeth creates an enabling tension, so that she could both fit the mold and reshape it. In this way, Elizabeth provided a lesson for women that can only be conceived with understanding of this contextualizing device.

We must carefully unpack how Elizabeth constructed herself as woman, in a manner analogous to reading an emblem which consists of words, designs, allusions that all must be read together--not individually--in order to be interpreted and achieve meaning. Elizabeth also took linguistic advantage of the concept of emblem as both noun and verb. As the OED notes, emblem as a noun means "A

picture of an object (or the object itself) serving as a symbolical representation of an abstract quality, an action, state of things, class of persons, etc.", and as a verb, the term becomes "To be the emblem of (something); to express, symbolize, or suggest by means of an emblem." As Linda Bense-Meyers notes, many scholars have dismissed serious study of emblem books because they "were not worthy of scholarly investigation because they were no more than conduct books, self-evident arguments for the moral training of the less literate" (99). Yet, it would be precisely this audience that would make this rhetorical maneuver so appealing to Elizabeth: through this construction, she could reach the common people.<sup>15</sup> Bense-Meyers also highlights how the emblem possessed a "tripartite form" wherein its meaning was generated by the very tension among the multiple parts (98-99). We can then look at the issue of Elizabeth's metaphoric use of the emblem: how she balanced her words (which we will be specifically addressing here) with her actions and her position. One example of this can be seen in Starkey's discussion of Elizabeth's early "reformation" of the

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<sup>15</sup> I will argue in Chapter 5 that it was this very quality that also both tempted and allowed women to use Elizabeth as an authorizing icon.

Church, when he observes that "Ordinary people noticed visible facts rather than theological niceties; if things look pretty much the same, perhaps they were the same" (285). Starkey then continues to argue that "She was convinced that her 'mean' or middle way was 'golden,' not 'leaden,' and that it promised the precious metal of inclusiveness and unity, rather than the base of clerically inspired extremism" (286). Thus, Starkey desires us to understand that Elizabeth did all of this knowingly, but not for artificial or hypocritical ends; rather, "She loved the people, and [. . .] the man in the street to whom she played and for whom so much of her policy was designed" (297). Starkey goes on to observe that "Her *metier* was queen and queenship [and] had ceremony as its essence" (Starkey 298). Starkey's post-Enlightenment phrasing, however, seems to indicate his anachronistic conception that this was all mere form which was necessarily and consciously separate from the "true" content of Elizabeth's self. However, this was far from the case.

Elizabeth actively believed that which she did and used the Renaissance self-fashioning in which appearance was indicative of substance. For example, one characteristic that Elizabeth would want attributed to her

was prudence. Elizabeth would have had knowledge of one of the standard Renaissance icons of prudence, which Benschel-Meyers describes:

Prudence, defined as "wisdom applied to practice," wore a helmet to signify Minerva's wisdom, carried an arrow, "to denote the discreet performance of prudent actions," entwined by a serpent (the symbol of prudence) and gazed in a mirror, which "alludes to the reflection of the mind upon itself" (Bath 23).

("Just Rhetoric" 4)

And though prudence is represented as female,<sup>16</sup> it was not a trait commonly attributed to women. A pertinent example for our purposes is when John Knox, in his complaint against female monarchs, The First Blast of the Trumpet, asserts that women are so commonly deceived by false prophets because "they [women] are easily persuaded to any opinion, especially if it be against God, and because they lack prudence and right reason to judge the things that be spoken" (53). Here Knox correctly observes that Prudence was a product of an education that was not usually allowed to women. Though Janel Mueller asserts that Elizabeth wished to step outside of her gender ("Virtue and

Virtuality" 222), we can see how Elizabeth (always good at exploiting what was given her) actually immersed herself in her gender, the better to subvert expectations and enable her space to rule. Her published prayers reveal how heavily she felt the burden, yet placed herself within the female gender: "prudence even beyond other women, and beyond this, distinguished and superior in the knowledge and use of literature and languages, which is highly esteemed because unusual in my sex" (CW 141). Here, Elizabeth locates herself very firmly within the confines of "my sex" while simultaneously showing how she goes beyond them and it. This quote also indicates, for the purposes of this study, Elizabeth's valuation of her own writing.

Moreover, Elizabeth did possess some positive images with regard to her own sex, for when speaking to Parliament in "justifying" acting against Mary Stuart, Elizabeth repeated her astonishment at being so treated by "one not different in sex, of like estate, and my near kin" (CW 192). The listing of the likeness in sex here reveals that such perfidy does not coalesce with her vision of her own gender.

As previously stated, to begin to understand Elizabeth, we must look at her words in the context of her actions, but the words are the key for they are the "evidence" that we materially possess and that were used to create the emblem from her iconographic image. Greenblatt's self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life. It invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one's own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control, the attempt to fashion other selves. (3)

Therefore, it is through her words that Elizabeth as woman makes an emblem out of herself.

To begin this study, we must accept that Elizabeth did not set out to better the condition or status of women (though this is how she was later partially used). She most likely saw herself as trying, within necessary constraints, to fit into the very expectations of society in order to rule and function and, thus, fulfill her destiny. Therefore, she did not want to overturn or disrupt the very system that gave her the authority that she possessed. Did

Elizabeth fit into the notions of the time, or did she explode them? One can only explode from the inside. Yet she was not a "feminist"--she believed in the socially-allotted position of women in late sixteenth-century English culture: daughter, sister, beloved, wife, mother, matron, widow (similar to the seven ages in man in Shakespeare's As You Like It). She felt that she had been specifically ordained by God to lead England. However, later generations have anachronistically read her as a type of protofeminist. Authors such as Anne Bradstreet and Jane Austen used her to authorize their own speech as they both wrote history--an enterprise doubly contrary to their gender. And numerous other women later wrote both in her praise and to her damnation. Which stance is correct? Perhaps it is this very binary system of either/or, this fallacious reasoning without recourse to the subtleties of Renaissance rhetoric that is blinding us, and it is within these issues that I want to situate my own work.

In 1977, Roy Strong wrote The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry, which though now viewed as slightly oversimplified and reductive, works as a predecessor to Stephen Greenblatt's Renaissance Self-Fashioning. Strong's arguments also lay much of the



groundwork for our consideration of Elizabeth, since he focused on reading Elizabeth within the context of her actions and words, and also in considering her control of her image for both public and historic consumption. For example, in discussing her death, Strong writes,

But the fact that no one in 1603 seemed able to refer to her as a human being is indicative of something else. Three days after her death John Hayward preached at Paul's Cross, celebrating her who was 'by many names most dear to us' [. . . .] Some call her Pandora: some Gloriana: some Cynthia: some Belphoebe: some Astraea: all by several names to express several loves: Yet all those names make but one celestial body, as all those loves meet to create but one soul. I am of her country, and we adore her by the name of Eliza. (15)

Strong goes on to question, "Is this garland of names woven around the Queen merely a rhetorical device, or did these various 'loves' express a reality, something deeper, images, potentially meaningful for those who lived through the reign?" (16). Here, we see the plurality of Elizabeth, and how her contemporaries recognized this.

In his text, Strong then goes on to discuss the central "devices" that Elizabeth used to convey meaning as evidenced in several famous portraits from her reign. Strong reads the portraits as "allegorical and emblematic" and suggests that "perhaps Elizabethan portraiture is better regarded as a branch of the study of emblematics," and that "Ideas and emotions are not expressed through the mask of the face, but transmitted by means of motto and symbol" (111). Again, Strong's argument in his analysis of her portraiture fleshes out consideration of Elizabeth from passive icon to active creator, which we will investigate through her words.

Strong goes on to assert that each painting achieves its effect by using a multiplicity of images to construct for its "subject a three-dimensional world in which the third dimension is that of time rather than space [. . .]. So too was the pageantry of Elizabeth's court [. . .]" (112). Thus, Strong argues that the portraiture privileges diachronic valuations over synchronic ones, which is, again, one of Elizabeth's own conscious rhetorical maneuvers, though with an emphasis on balancing the conflicting demands.

Discussing Ascension Day and many other of the "festivals" that became common and mandatory during Elizabeth's reign, Strong, three years before Greenblatt but many years after Pope, asserts that "What started as propaganda became, in time, a reality" (115) for "In the celebration of 17 November each year they were recognizing such a *renovatio*. By the close of the reign, history for most of them really began on 17 November 1558, and all lines of thought and action converged toward it and diverged from it" (128). This assertion, though a bit hyperbolic, presents a very interesting and fecund vision: Strong asserts that Elizabeth began in action and later became in truth. However, what if her truth was the action? Again, why the split?

#### Exploring the History

As asserted previously, this study's structure cannot be entirely chronological because Elizabeth had to have recourse to different and multiple constructions at differing and simultaneous moments. And we can turn to the most canonical of Elizabethan poets to give us the metaphor for precisely not viewing Elizabeth's metaphors of self in a linear fashion. Jaques, the melancholy gentleman, in As You Like It notes:

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

(2.7.143-70)

Here, Shakespeare appears to be summarizing the lot of many with the different roles that he or any man must play in a lifetime. Most readers see this as a narrative of life, with one part sequentially following and replacing the previous, but some also see this a circular path, a wheel, where the turning wheel of fate brings mortals back to the spot they started from. However, I look at this a bit differently: Shakespeare is, after all, a playwright and is here using the image of a crafted play. Thus, these seven ages should be read as simultaneous: at any given moment, one part contains both the previous role and the substance or potential of the next, so that they are not discrete, separate entities: each character is the same one at a different moment.

Here, also, Shakespeare outlines the life of a man who is defined by his role to society: how he interacts with different people. During Shakespeare's day, women were also

defined in this way; however, their status was defined exclusively by their interaction with certain specific men in their lives, namely father, brother, possible and future husband, and son. But what happened to a woman who did not or possibly could not have recourse to these relationships? How was her place in society defined? Since the roles of daughter, wife, and mother were the secondary parts required by the natural order, a woman standing outside of this system would have been seen as a pariah, outcast, or even a threat to the very structure of society. Now, what if this anomalous woman were then also to try to lay claim to the Divine Right to command and lead this society? What would result: Civil war? Chaos? Bloodshed? All of the above?

This, of course, is exactly the predicament that Elizabeth Tudor found herself in throughout the course of her life. Naturally, she began with a father, but her very paternity was questioned, and the father she claimed was highly volatile and had concerns concerning her mother, her gender, and her very legitimacy. Elizabeth also had a younger brother, but by right of primogeniture, he eventually became her king with whom she would unintentionally face a major crisis that could have

resulted in her being found guilty of treason. She had neither husband nor son, so what did she do? How did she survive the edicts of her society and keep her very prominent place in history? Elizabeth Tudor has been the subject, if sometimes indirectly, of reams of paper. After all, as Elizabeth herself asserted, "Princes, you know, stand upon stages so that their actions are viewed and beheld of all men" (CW 189). And as male actors took the parts of women in female roles upon the Elizabethan stage (because of concerns about the immodesty of a woman putting herself forward so aggressively), it is perhaps appropriate that the leader of this nation-building and art-creating society should be a woman taking a man's role which included "his" staying true to female stereotypes and expectations. As Marcus has remarked, "Her writings present an interesting and valuable example of the ways in which individual agency intersects with various cultural domains in the creation of literary texts" (xiv).

The position of the monarch at this time in England's history was already highly problematic and symbolic in that the King occupied two positions: physical body of a man and incarnation of the body politic. Thus, Elizabeth's gender only further problematized an already highly symbolic

masculine role. In discussing this phenomenon, Stephen Greenblatt states that "The notion of 'the King's Two bodies' may [. . .] have heightened Elizabeth's conscious sense of her identity as at least in part a *persona ficta* and her world as a theater" (167). Greenblatt then goes on to discuss Elizabeth's almost "religious conviction" towards "display, ceremony, and decorum, the whole theatrical apparatus of royal power" (167). And it is with Greenblatt's discussion that scholars like Katherine Eggert and Susanne Scholz begin their own work. Of course, Greenblatt's discussion of Elizabeth is his laying of groundwork to go on to discuss such accepted canonical texts as The Faerie Queene. Eggert and other more recent scholars seemingly chide Greenblatt for being too focused on male identity; yet, they, too, use their discussions of Elizabeth to move into arguments based more squarely in the conventions of Renaissance texts. Scholars such as Carole Levin deal more specifically with Elizabeth, but from a predominantly historical perspective. Recently, however, yet more scholars, such as Janel Mueller, have moved to begin consideration of Elizabeth as author.

Elizabeth has, due to the aforementioned Collected Works, become a "hot commodity" in critical circles and



sparked increased interest in Early Modern women's writing. A very recent collection of essays edited by James Daybell takes up the consideration of Early Modern women's letter writing as a specific genre. Though focused more on recovery of these texts as historical documents, this volume opens for consideration the literary tropes and construction of self in a previously disregarded arena. Given that most of the surviving letters came from women in the noble and moneyed classes, we have, much as we do in the consideration of Elizabeth, the issue of whether the letters were physically penned by the women or whether an intermediary was used. On writing one's own letters versus using an amanuensis, Erasmus taught,

If you dictate verbatim, then it is goodbye to your privacy; and so you disguise some things and suppress others in order to avoid having an unwanted confidant. Hence, quite apart from the problem of the genuineness of the text, no open conversation with a friend is possible here. (qtd. in Daybell 67-68)

In Elizabeth's case, her entire life was open to such consideration. Daybell applies these standards of the material considerations of composition to a valuation of the content and message of the written text: "Documents

produced in a person's own hand were apparently considered more binding than those that were merely signed; they were also regarded as better witness of an individual's intentions" (69). The sheer volume of Elizabeth's duties and required writings carries both considerable weight (increasing the value of documents penned in her own hand) but also problematizes the entire notion of ascertaining the value of the numerous other documents that Elizabeth could not conceivably have borne the tedium of writing even if they did bear her name. Our analysis of Elizabeth's letters and other writings may eventually serve to reveal that women of this period were far more copious and more able rhetoricians than had previously been admitted. Wall summarizes this position in her reading:

Clearly, some women could write remarkably potent persuasion, affection, as well as chiding insult [. . .]. And these letters can help to answer some of our questions about how relatives viewed and wrote to each other. They referred overtly to social status. Words may sometimes be manipulated to produce effects, not necessarily to express actual feelings, and modes of expression alter according to the recipient. They alter with change of circumstance and of course with

quarrels and reconciliations. The women knew their place (although they did not necessarily keep it), and they could use words passionately, to lash, as well as to love. They lived complicated emotional lives with a range of distance and closeness to different family members. In relationships with them they were certainly not cold and unfeeling, and they could express themselves powerfully: sometimes in deference and, despite the precepts, sometimes in defiance.

(Wall 90)

Therefore, these new studies begin to expand our vision of exactly what it meant to hold the position of woman at this time in history and remove much of the taint of the anomaly from Elizabeth's abilities and manipulation of the trope of woman.

One of Elizabeth's own kinswomen, Lady Arabella Stuart, James VI/I's cousin, who herself has become the focus of much recent scholarly attention, provides some insight into our understanding of women writing at this time and into Elizabeth's position as well (given Arabella's proximity to the throne). Like Elizabeth, Arabella was known for having "convenient" bouts of illness during stressful periods which thus pre-empted actions

against her. Steen notes in her consideration of Arabella that

In the reading of illness, and thus of Stuart's life and letters, one seemingly small adjustment can make an enormous difference in interpretation. Some of her contemporaries viewed the Lady Arabella Stuart with compassion, even though they saw her as a royal melancholic who needed more self-control; others considered her a political manipulator, an actor, a willful woman, eventually a madwoman in the Tower. Insanity has long been the diagnosis for women who do not conform to their culture's definition of modest womanhood [. . .]. The evidence suggests Stuart's understandable need, in extraordinarily difficult circumstances, to take charge of her own life. If those circumstances were complicated by a recurrent illness, as they probably were, an intelligent woman coped impressively in the face of continual suspicion and scepticism. Reading Stuart's illness through the lens of acute intermittent porphyria means reconsidering her words and those of her readers.

(123)

Here we see the antithesis of what could have happened with Elizabeth had she not "by Grace of God" gained the throne. Her position, though more problematic, gave her more room to maneuver than her cousin had.

Eales, discussing another important noblewoman of the period, Lady Brilliana, states that she was part of an older tradition of political action undertaken by elite women, which was rooted in the patronage of networks of late medieval and early Tudor society, and which had been further stimulated by the continued disputes of the Reformation in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. (156)

Here Eales's consideration of this woman's writing shows how Elizabeth's use of the trope of woman was not necessarily outside the accepted definition but rather a reworking of it. Walker too notes that

Early modern women<sup>17</sup> could exercise influence in the public domain by their participation in patronage networks. Through kinship, social intercourse and positions in high ranking households, aristocratic and gentry women had access to powerful people whom they

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<sup>17</sup> The term "Early Modern" is here used to demarcate the Renaissance redefined as a historic period more related to our own.

could lobby on behalf of family and acquaintances.

(170-71)

Given Elizabeth's contention (which will be discussed at length in later chapters) that she stood as wife and mother to the English nation, then her political activities fall into this socially-approved arena of woman's influence.

Besides negotiating the terrain of what it meant to be a woman at this time, Elizabeth's situation was further complicated in that she also had to represent and define England as a nation, a concept only really just emerging at that historical moment. Susanne Scholz, in discussing the creation of the English nation, contends that it "[. . .] was articulated within the confines of a dynastic, quasi-absolutist state, with specific implications for its distribution of political agency as well as its forms of representation" (5). Scholz then goes on to discuss exactly how the "medieval model of the King's Two Bodies" functioned in this formation; she asserts that it

[. . .]retained a prominent place, but was reworked to match the requirements of the current situation. In its Elizabethan use, it merged the juridical fiction of the "crown," which comprised the synchronic, horizontal dimension of the corporation, head and body

of the body politic in the present, with the notion of "royal dignity," conceived as a diachronic, vertical, one-man corporation which guaranteed dynastic continuity. The union of these two concepts in the person of the monarch enabled an appropriation of the traditional organological body metaphor, but with an absolutist bias: in the Elizabethan body politic, the head had absorbed the body. In its conjunction with images of the Queen's virginity, it linked a fiction of continuity through time with an image of territorial integrity; it envisaged synchronic and diachronic stability in the image of the Queen's inviolate body [. . .] [worked] only if the body of the ruler could be metonymically linked to the universe could it symbolize divine order on earth. As such, the ruler's body is different in kind from the bodies of his or her subjects, and gender is of no consequence here. (5)

While Scholz's argument offers solid insight into how the cult of Elizabeth I contributed to the process of nation-building, she oversimplifies the role of gender in the process. Neither Elizabeth nor her contemporaries ever erased her gender, but rather focused on it.

However, Scholz is accurate in her claim that "the English nation in the sixteenth century came into being not as a conscious political concept, but in the form of cultural productions, and pre-eminently of texts"(5). Her argument complements the argument herein concerning Elizabeth's creation of herself as a "cultural production" to be read and consumed.

Finally, Scholz observes that the nation-building itself was carried out by the Elizabethan writers, such as Edmund Spenser, Walter Raleigh, and Philip Sidney (6), but if we must discuss a "'nationhood' as being constituted primarily through language," then why not consider the language of Elizabeth herself as much as that of the poets who wrote to and about her since public perceptions were central? By focusing on these canonical male writers, Scholz fails somewhat to carry through with her own arguments concerning the most visible of texts having the most impact<sup>18</sup>; however, Scholz's analysis does lay a

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<sup>18</sup> A study of how much more widely copies of Elizabeth's speeches and public documents were circulated over the longer texts of Sidney, Shakespeare, and Spenser would bear much fruit.



valuable foundations for investigations of how Elizabeth's own writing carried on this project of nation-building.<sup>19</sup>

However, even with these starts and stops, the tide of scholarship continues to move into further valuation and consideration of women writers of this period. In addition, many of the observations made about these women can be applied to Elizabeth as well. As Lisa Hopkins observes concerning the writing of Mary Stuart, "the *kind* of poetry which she had been trained to write was consciously artificial" (35). Hopkins goes on to assert that for Mary Stuart writing remained "the one area where she can exercise queenship and control" (50). As Peter C. Herman wryly notes in his reading of Mary Stuart's sonnets, her "sex precedes her political position" (57), and she "'subjectifies' herself," which translates to "she grants herself the subjectivity, the agency, to challenge the inferior position of women" (68). Here, of course, Herman makes a distinction between personal subjectivity and political subjectivity (77), which does not entirely apply to Elizabeth. The argument could be made that Mary's segregation of these two sides of herself accompanied by

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<sup>19</sup> I currently have an abstract under consideration with the Tennessee Philological Associations 2003 conference, which, if accepted, will allow me to be fleshing out even more my view of Elizabeth as

her over-valuation of herself as woman is precisely the reason that she was less successful as a ruler than Elizabeth.

In discussing various Early Modern women writers, Anne Rosalind Jones notes that "gender expectations" formally impacted a female author's "choice of genres and [her] sense of audience" (299). Jones is entirely correct in her assertion, but could not the same be said of any author? Also, Elizabeth's gender did not preclude her from being recognized as a gifted poet, even during her own time. George Puttenham in The Arte of English Poesie names Elizabeth as the greatest poet "that haue written before her time or sence" (77). Jennifer Summit begins with Puttenham's statement, which she notes has usually been viewed as mere flattery (80), to argue for the learnedness and artistry of Elizabeth's poetry. As Summit argues, "Elizabeth cultivates a poetic persona that is notable for its femininity" (83). With this statement, Summit undercuts her own argument. Given the examples of female transvestitism practiced by many of the male poets of the

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nation-builder.

time,<sup>20</sup> Summit's observation that Elizabeth's poetry is notable for the femininity of the speaker's voice should be seen as an example of her poetic ability, not necessarily as a reflection of Elizabeth herself. Again, given her situation, Elizabeth's intent was probably to construct an overly femininized voice in order to surpass the male courtiers writing verse.

Summit does end her argument by recognizing that enough evidence exists to discredit the contention that Puttenham was merely flattering Elizabeth in his writing. To this end, Summit asserts that

In Elizabeth I we find a female poet who is neither silenced and marginalized nor oppositional in her writing; rather, she occupies the central position within Elizabethan culture. While the queen was hardly typical of women writers in her day, she sheds important light on the cultural meanings that attached to and defined the figure of the woman writer in her age, at the same time that she endows this figure with more cultural authority than has been previously

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<sup>20</sup> Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply," and all of the male-constructed voices of women in Christopher Marlowe's Hero and Leander, in Edmund Spenser's Amoretti and The Fairie Queene, and William Shakespeare's female characters like Juliet, Rosalind, and others immediately come to mind.

believed possible. In crafting herself as a female poet Elizabeth called on a set of tropes and postures that were conventionally identified with women writers—in particular, the privacy and enclosure that humanism famously assigned to women. But by cultivating the persona of the female poet as a representation of her royal authority, she also employed that personal toward decidedly public ends.

(84)

Again, Summit's insistence on differentiating Elizabeth's personal concerns from her public ones constitutes the most common flaw in the work done on Elizabeth thus far. Even as Elizabeth's unique situation is recognized and named, the critics typically attempt to make her fit into the rest of the women of her time, in this one central consideration at least.

However, as noted earlier, Summit finishes her argument strongly by noting that

What the emblem signifies matters less than the way in which it signifies, producing a public, disciplinary effect by enlisting each subject as a private viewer and reader. Horace sees such a production of the private on behalf of the public as germane to the art

of poetry: "In private sort the common thing declare," he instructs the poet, in lines that Queen Elizabeth herself would translate into English: "General matter shall be made thy private part." This Horatian model of public knowledge made private informs what we might call Elizabeth's poetics of queenship [. . .]: it continually stages matters of public policy as the stuff of secrets. This register is appropriate to the queen whose motto was "*video et taceo*," "I see and hold my tongue."<sup>21</sup> The queen who sees everything displays her omniscience by withholding expression of the full extent of her knowledge: but by calling attention to the hiddenness of that knowledge she delivers messages more piercing and arresting than she might by open proclamation[. . .]. The queen is the most important poet in English literary history for the same reason that allegory is the most important figure in The Arte of English Poesie: both use language to the greatest effect by withholding meaning. (92)

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<sup>21</sup> See Figure 2. This emblem demonstrates the image of the idealized woman as being one who holds her tongue.

**EMBLEME XVIII.**

*Within this picture are displaid,  
The beauties of a woman stayd.*



**This picture here doth lively represent  
The beauties that may best make women proud;  
First by the Torresse at her feete is meant,  
She must not gad, but learne at home to shrowd;  
Her finger to her lip is vpward bent,  
To signifie she should not be too lowd:  
The key doth note, she must haue care to guide  
The goods her husband doth with pain prouide.**

Figure 2. Idealized, Silent Woman, emblem from Thomas Combe, *A Theater of Fine Deuises* (London, 1596). Image 14 in [Early English Books Online](#).

By using a specific reading of Puttenham and the criteria for excellence that it lays out, Summit effectively demonstrates how and why Elizabeth with her poetry operate as Puttenham's ideal.

Summit then takes this evidence to assert that Elizabeth's use of poetry suggests that the covert terms and restricted circulation associated with coterie manuscript poetry offered a means of manipulating the privacy that humanism famously demanded of women in order to produce the public effects on which the queen's authority as a monarch depended. (108)

Summit's closing statement and summation of Elizabeth's poetry is "two-pronged: first, that as a queen she framed herself as a poet, and second, that as a poet she framed herself as a woman" (108). Summit exemplifies the critic who must see Elizabeth as being one self and just fitting the one she possessed at home" (110). Jordan goes on to note that "In her official pronouncements, Elizabeth troped regularly on her identity as woman and 'prince', her into her roles rather than being all simultaneously: it is her audience who decides which she is at a given moment.

Another critic reads her prayers as being closer to this vision of audience awareness and manipulation of the rhetorical situation. Constance Jordan in her essay "States of Blindness" evaluates Elizabeth's prayers as both demonstrating her ability as "a good linguist" and also as "demonstrations of a certain kind of political power, one that sought to comprehend a wider sphere of influence than complex gender testifying to a range of affect to which no male monarch could lay claim" (111). Jordan explains Mueller's position: "Elizabeth infused her body politic with the emotions animating her body natural: her life in both bodies 'was replete with the mutual love between subjects and sovereign in which, from first to last, she constitutes her life and identity as Queen'" (note 3 111). Jordan argues that "her prayers depict what might be called her lively faith, particularly as it informed her decisions as head of state. Historians have stressed her investment in religion as an instrument for maintaining public order" (111).<sup>22</sup> Jordan's work provides an excellent analysis of Elizabeth's authentic belief in religion, while,

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<sup>22</sup> Henry VIII had been named the "Defender of the Faith" before his break with Rome. In 1534, Henry assumed the title "Supreme Head of the Church." Elizabeth, because of her "secondary" gender, would never take this title, but instead she styled herself "Supreme Governor of the Church" (see Weir, pp. 59-63, for a more specific discussion of this distinction).



simultaneously, understanding how this area can be used, and perhaps manipulated, to the good in her role as queen.

Likewise, Marcus, in "Elizabeth I as Public and Private Poet," suggests that Elizabeth kept translating texts after her coronation in order "to be publicly known to be translating [. . .]. For Elizabeth I, translation was not the virtuous womanly service it might have been for some others,<sup>23</sup> but a form of political assertion" (143). Thus, Elizabeth's act of translating also served double service. Marcus also observes that the questioning of Elizabeth's authorship stands in ironic parallel to the construction of a recognized/canonical author of the period, Sir Walter Raleigh. Marcus astutely notes that

Many of Raleigh's verses also circulated anonymously, and the canon of his work is equally vexed in terms of certain attribution, as we would expect of a courtier poet of the period. But Raleigh has been turned into an "author" through a series of scholarly editions, while Elizabeth has not. (151)

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<sup>23</sup> See Kenneth Charlton's essay "Women and Education" for a discussion of translation as an area of accomplishment for young women of the noble classes at this time, especially p. 13.

As noted earlier, the difference between Elizabeth and Raleigh<sup>24</sup> as author is, of course, that station is exacerbated by that of gender. As an audience, we too focus on this aspect of Elizabeth. Carole Levin notes that Elizabeth's education was not, however, intended to

befit her for ruling should this event take place.

Unlike her brother Edward, she never received a course in the problems of practical politics given by the Clerk of the Council, William Thomas. After she became Queen, Elizabeth told her Parliament that she had studied nothing but divinity until she herself became a ruler, "then I gave myself to the study of that which was meet for government." In fact, however, the dangerous political waters Elizabeth successfully navigated in the reigns of Edward VI and Mary were excellent training for her. (The Reign of Elizabeth I 8)

Thus, it was in Elizabeth's necessary interactions that she learned to use her education in terms of rule.

In consideration of the family relationships that structured Elizabeth's precoronation life, Starkey claims

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<sup>24</sup> Given the non-standardized state of the English language during Elizabeth's reign, there is disagreement over spelling, especially of names. However, "Raleigh" has generally supplanted "Raleigh."

that our understanding of Elizabeth's personality as a result of her "fractured relationships of a broken family" are "Too often [. . .] understood in terms of the *a priori* assumptions of pop-psychology or proto-feminism" (xi). Then, he attempts to "revaluate them against the evidence of Elizabeth's own words and behaviour" (Starkey xi). However, given Starkey's intended twenty-first century audience, he falls into some anachronistic readings and oversimplifications. For example, on the role of women in the period of Elizabeth's childhood, Starkey observes,

Women schemed and plotted with the best, and the ones who took most risks were those who had already thrown over the restraints of marriage and family responsibility. For them, Elizabeth, unwed and already ambivalent about the whole idea of marriage, was a model and patroness and her household a refuge from the world of men and masculine domination. (xi)

This idea that Elizabeth somehow promoted or encouraged other women to act as she did runs completely contrary to her understanding of the uniqueness of her position. As Starkey implies, to encourage overtly other women to act as such was to chip away at her own primary image of exception to the rule.

Starkey's misapprehension of Elizabeth's education is seen in the claim that "For with Elizabeth style was everything" (80). Here, Starkey misses her Renaissance or Erasmian training and typical doubling.<sup>25</sup> He exemplifies this further in statements such as

her later letters and speeches are filled with saws, phrases and fables culled from her reading. Bearing in mind how much and how widely she had read, her repertoire is rather small and conventional: [. . .] For her, as for Ascham, repetition held no disgrace: if a thing had been said once supremely well, why ever say it differently? (82).

Starkey's failure to recognize the purpose and use of copia and his misreading of Elizabeth's later writings indicate the problem with creating texts for diachronic audiences: there will invariably be extensive misreading. Starkey remains consistent in his misreading by noting that "the tortuous prose of Elizabeth's maturity, of which the mosaic of allusions is a part, does present a difficulty. For it

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<sup>25</sup> As Mary Jane Barnett correctly notes, "[. . .] an Erasmian curriculum created a [. . .] speaker qualified to interpret texts, produce commentary, translate, and speak and write extemporaneously—a man (usually) of considerable linguistic action" (1). Barnett continues on in her analysis of the ethical end of Erasmian copia by stating that amplificatio "has a profoundly persuasive effect" and that "the rhetorical force that Erasmus aims at here if not the same as representation understood as a straightforward rendering of res through verbum. Linguistic variety in both secular and sacred discourse may have the inevitable consequence of generation additional meaning [. . .] its primary role is to effect change" (3-4).

is contrary to Ascham's stated preference for a plain, elegant, unforced style" (82). Here, Starkey fails to recognize that this was a movement in the slow rise of the New Science but by no means dominant at the time.

For a counter-reading we can look at a contemporary, though possibly biased reader, teacher Roger Ascham, who describes Elizabeth as possessing a "style that grows out of the subject" and "with respect to personal decoration she greatly prefers simple elegance to show and splendour, so despising the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing gold" (qtd. in Starkey 83). Thus, looking at these extremes of opinion presented by Starkey and Ascham, we can perhaps begin to form our own, contextualized readings of Elizabeth's writing.

#### Establishing the Form

The rest of the chapters in this document divide roughly along the five stations of women.<sup>26</sup> Thus, chapter 2 considers Elizabeth's literal and metaphoric constructions as daughter and sister in her pre-coronation period and beyond. Chapter 3 moves into her post-coronation uses and redefinitions of the positions of lover and "wife." Chapter

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<sup>26</sup> Though Elizabeth had recourse to all of these role at various and sometimes simultaneous times, this dissertation does note a pattern of roles over time.

4 contains consideration of Elizabeth's later use of "sister" (which she redefines) and the positions of "mother" and "widow". The issue of Divine Right dialectic runs throughout all of the chapters as the foundation for Elizabeth's justification for all that she does. Finally, Chapter 5 (by using Elizabeth's relationship with James Stuart as the transition) considers her legacy and the women who utilized her model as icon, focusing primarily on poet Anne Bradstreet but also including Jane Austen and Margaret Fuller, who has an interestingly unfavorable reading of Elizabeth in Woman in the Nineteenth Century. In this last chapter, I begin addressing the tantalizing question of why, seemingly, the more "feminist" the later author, the more negative her opinion of Elizabeth. And in my conclusion, I lay out my plans for where I want to go next with my scholarship, which include into the popular culture constructions of Elizabeth and why women continue to need her model during our own time.

We can never fully know Elizabeth I, Tudor, Regina, nor hope to actually recreate her moment. However, I do believe that my work can continue our consideration of this important and enigmatic figure who has and continues to mean so much to our history in general and as a

"foremother" specifically. Also, I believe that this work can constructively move our consideration of Elizabeth into a higher estimation of her as writer. I know of her influence from both my use of her in the classroom and my own life.

Chapter 2 Daughter and Sister to Kings Temporal and  
Divine: "The lion's cub" and "Sweet Sister  
Temperance"

This chapter will consider Elizabeth's literal and metaphoric constructions as daughter and sister in both her pre-coronation period and after. It was as daughter and sister that Elizabeth began her lessons in how to construct herself as a socially-accepted woman while simultaneously accommodating her unique situation as barely acknowledged daughter to a king and sometimes problematic, second sister to a boy-king. Additionally, as will become apparent, these two positions create spaces later for her authentic relationships with other men, relationships that allowed her to "fit" societal expectations for a woman.

After causing great consternation at her birth,<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth's life, status, and position were further complicated by her mother's fall from favor and eventual trial and execution. This resulted in Elizabeth being declared a bastard who also had the taint of possibly not

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<sup>1</sup> Astrologers had assured Henry that Anne was carrying and would bear a boy child. Henry had even had the birth announcements pre-written, so that surviving manuscripts show where they had to be altered to read "Princess Elizabeth" instead of "Prince Edward." For further details, see Starkey pp. 4-5, Erickson pp. 18-21.



being Henry's own spawn.<sup>2</sup> However, Elizabeth demonstrated herself to be a precocious child who exhibited many of the characteristics that Henry would have more readily accepted and even desired in a male offspring. For instance, Thomas Wriothsesley, one of Henry's royal Secretaries, noted of the then six-year-old Elizabeth that "If she be no more educated than she now appeareth to me she will prove of no less honour and womanhood, than shall beseem her father's daughter" (qtd. in Starkey 26), and this type of statement was Elizabeth's most beloved praise: "For to be her father's daughter was her proudest boast" (Starkey 26).

Historians disagree with how Elizabeth viewed her father while he still lived (and like that of any child,

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<sup>2</sup> With the assistance of his Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, Henry VIII brought treason charges against Anne for adultery (which was treasonous in a pre-DNA test world, to give birth to a child that was not one's husband's was tantamount to usurping a rightful child's inheritance, and, obviously, the very nation of England and wielding of Divine Right of kings were at issue here). Hints of Anne having actually bewitched Henry were bandied about but never brought to formal charges. Anne was found guilty of having had sexual relationships, with several men, including her own brother (his wife was one of the witnesses for the prosecution). Most historians generally accept that Cranmer created the charges to alleviate Henry's guilt for being punished by God and to free his path for union with Jane Seymour. Henry, whose capacity for self-delusion is the only part of this case which remains truly debatable (Did he really believe Anne had been unfaithful, even though there were moments wherein she was actually with him when she was supposedly with one of her lovers?), had been released to make an acceptable union by the fortuitous death of Catherine of Aragon (her demise coupled with Anne's miscarriage of a male child sealed Henry's second wife's fate). Besides the immediate reduction in status wherein she went from Princess Elizabeth, the heir apparent (thanks to an Act of Succession passed when she was a year old) to the Lady Elizabeth, bastard daughter to the King and the loss of her separate household, the rumors surrounding Elizabeth's possible sire as being court musician Mark Smeaton (though he had confessed to adultery with Anne while being tortured, but later recanted) were to come up throughout her life. Her elder, half-sister Mary Tudor was especially pleased to note Elizabeth's supposed likeness to Smeaton. For further details on this issue and Elizabeth's shift in circumstances and continued questioning of her paternity, see Starkey pp.23-25, 121; Erickson 31-39, 112-13; Weir's The Children of Henry VIII pp. 7, 13, 215; and Neale pp. 6-8.

this vision probably varied over the period). However, Starkey's argument is that Elizabeth's positive vision of her father was cemented by his behavior towards both herself and his last wife Katherine Parr in the mid-1540s:

for her, he was not a wife-murdering monster, but a loving parent, a formidable ruler and model to which she aspired. Fortunately for her country, she would emulate only the form and not the substance: [. . .] she would bite men's heads off; [. . .] she would rarely cut them off. (32)

This recognition of Elizabeth's early appreciation of her father lends credence to her near deification of him after she comes to the throne.<sup>3</sup> She did not merely use him as a way to legitimate her own claim to the throne. She had a real and authentic love and respect for her father, even as she learned the history of her mother's fate. Perhaps, on some level, Elizabeth appreciated the problematic and unpopular decisions her father had made because she would later feel pressed by her position as prince into making hard and problematic decisions where others questioned her ethical stance. Maria Perry records and observes that "She

had referred to her father (in a similar dedicatory letter) as 'a god upon earth'; now her little brother was next to Christ 'in position and dignity'" (73-74). This perception of her father and, later, her brother provided for her that "In the fullness of time she would inherit their throne and, in her own eyes at least, their quasi-divinity" (Starkey 86). The fact that she would inherit and have recourse to the same Divine Right was to make her feel closer to them--not to discredit her feelings about them.<sup>4</sup>

In looking at Elizabeth's written work on and to her father that has survived, we must consider how to read her texts. Starkey, in discussing Elizabeth's first surviving letter (to Queen Catherine<sup>5</sup> Parr in 1544), asserts that "the letter, like much of her subsequent correspondence, is difficult to interpret" (35) and that "[l]ike most of the letters of royal children, it is only secondarily a vehicle of communication. Its primary purpose, instead, was to show

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth liked to receive ambassadors, emissaries, and other male officials in a great hall which featured a much larger than life portrait of Henry, in front of which she would strike a mirror pose of intimidation with feet widespread, hands on hips, and head tilted back (Weir 241-42).

<sup>4</sup> Obviously, our understanding of Elizabeth's so-called "true" feelings come from our consideration of her rhetoric, whose interpretation is the focus of this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> Note here that I use Starkey's spelling of Catherine Parr's name because I am quoting him. However, because of the non-standardization of spelling during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the spelling of her name varies. To keep the three women of the same name to whom Henry was married separate in my own mind and written work, I have adopted (from numerous fanatics and scholars on the era) the practice of distinguishing the women in spelling by naming them as Catherine of Aragon, Kathryn Howard, and Katherine Parr.

off the latest of Elizabeth's scholarly attainments" (35).<sup>6</sup>  
 In discussing the translations of this letter (which was written in Italian), Starkey drolly asserts that

Modern commentators have fared even less well [than Catherine Parr], for they have difficulties not only with the language Elizabeth deployed but with the conventions that both the contemporary writer and the addressee took for granted. (35)

Elizabeth's only known letter to her father, Henry VIII, is a prefatory one accompanying her translation of Katherine Parr's Prayers or Meditations<sup>7</sup> and dated December 30, 1545 (Collected Works 9). In the letter, she addresses Henry formally "as lord and father by the law of nature" (CW 9). In the letter, Elizabeth asks that she be allowed to demonstrate that she is "indebted to you [Henry] not as an imitator of your virtues but indeed as an inheritor of them" (CW 10). This letter is quite fascinating and symbolic in the fact that the then barely twelve-year-old

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<sup>6</sup> Starkey then continues with his "newly interpreted evidence" (xi) to argue against the standard reading of this letter (and also to critique the available translations of the letter). He argues that "sentimental" historians have misread Elizabeth's use of the words "exile" and "dared" as indicating that she was in Henry's disfavor and living a miserable, isolated childhood. Starkey claims that historians are missing the conventions and etiquette which Elizabeth is following (Starkey 35-36). However, Starkey's discussion of this particular letter foregrounds the difficulties of reading such a highly conventionalized genre from a historical distance of over 400 years.

<sup>7</sup> This translation was from French to English. For a specific discussion of the translation, see note 1 on p. 6 of The Collected Works.

"illegitimate" child who stood a far-placed third in line to the throne could make a statement that would resonate with most of the issues of her adult life. Here Elizabeth lays claim to the legitimacy of her inheritance from Henry in terms of biology and cosmology: she is the "inheritor" of his "virtues."

Later in the letter, she goes on to express again her two-part appreciation of Henry with "your fatherly goodness and royal prudence" (CW 10). These are both characteristics that Elizabeth would demonstrate in herself and to her subjects. Thus, though limited to one letter, Elizabeth's textual communiqué with her father demonstrates all of the components of her later use of him to authenticate her own position. Elizabeth closes this dedicatory letter with a direct allusion to the functioning of Henry's Divine Right: "May He who is King of kings, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, so govern your soul and protect your life that in true piety and religion we may live under your majesty's dominion" (CW 10). In the space of one text, Elizabeth establishes her understanding of the two components of Henry's self, his two bodies, one "real"<sup>8</sup> and one "virtual"; and is able to simultaneously lay claim to both and "prove"

her right to do so; and to demonstrate her own comprehension of the traits of goodness and prudence.

Far more records remain of Elizabeth's textual interaction with her brother Edward, who was younger by three years, but who, of course, trumped her in matters of primogeniture. Part of the reason that more letters remain is, of course, because Elizabeth was older,<sup>9</sup> and because Elizabeth was "much closer as a sister to a clever little brother" (Starkey 25). Also, as Starkey goes on to observe, "Elizabeth got on well with her half-brother and was sympathetic to the religious radicalism of the new régime" (64). It was the very fact that Elizabeth shared Edward's particular vision of religion that further enhanced her role of sister and, until he married and produced offspring, the preferred Protestant heir. It is with this situation in mind that Starkey asserts the following:

Elizabeth might have proclaimed herself "the King's Protestant<sup>10</sup> half-sister"—as opposed to Mary, the King's Catholic half-sister and, as the law had been left by Henry VIII, heiress presumptive to the throne.

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<sup>8</sup> The quotation marks here mark my own questioning of the definitions of these terms.

<sup>9</sup> Henry died early in 1547, before Elizabeth's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her correspondence with Edward dates from soon after Henry's death.

<sup>10</sup> This is Starkey's use of italics.

The council's principal motive in facilitating Elizabeth's enrichment was to build her up as a rival to Mary; Elizabeth—as greedy for applause as for cash—was probably playing at the same game of sisterly rivalry. (100)

Starkey's observation makes clear the fact existed that Elizabeth was becoming very conscious of her position as a political player. Her very existence had been a political issue since her birth, but during Edward's reign, she was learning how to be an active as opposed to passive participant in the world around her and in her own destiny. In the early part of Edward's reign, she demonstrated this in negotiating for the most favorable terms and monetary proceeds of her inheritance from Henry's estate.<sup>11</sup> Her economic savvy as a sixteen-year-old boded well for her later ability to helm a tight ship of state.

However, her affection for Edward was real, not merely posturing upon her part, which can readily be seen in the surviving letters Elizabeth wrote to her brother the king, for, as Starkey so aptly notes, "it was to Edward that

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<sup>11</sup> Starkey has an excellent chapter entitled "Property" on Elizabeth's acumen in maintaining her monetary rights; see pp. 92-99.

Elizabeth wrote perhaps her most natural and human letter" (105). All of Elizabeth's surviving letters to her brother occur after he has already assumed the throne. Her closings to him afford the traditional forms but simultaneously signify her multileveled relationship with him, varying between "Your majesty's most humble servant and sister, Elizabeth" to "Your majesty's most humble sister," depending upon which role she is attempting to foreground in the body of the letter: subject or sister (CW 14-15). As a sister, she "perceive[s] your brotherly love most greatly inclined towards me, by which I conceive no small joy and gladness" (CW 16), but as a subject earlier in the same letter, Elizabeth thanks him for "your love towards me no more numerous or illustrious proofs can be given, king most serene and illustrious, than when I recently enjoyed to the full the fruit of a most delightful familiarity with you" (CW 15). Thus, she thanks him for allowing her access to his kingly personage, for physical proximity to his physical/temporal body, and equates this to access to the power of his body politick; therefore, her real biological relationship with Edward cannot be totally taken for granted because of the non-biological function and role that he performed.



The tone of Elizabeth's relationship with Edward in the post-Edward Seymour affair alters dramatically.<sup>12</sup> For example, the opening of her letter to Edward dated May 15, 1549, which accompanied the present of her portrait,<sup>13</sup> uses a parable-like structure:

Like as the rich man that daily gathereth riches to riches, and to one bag of money layeth a great sort till it come to infinite, so methinks your majesty, not being sufficed with many benefits and gentleness showed to me afore this time, doth now increase them in asking and desiring where you may bid and command, requiring a thing not worthy for your highness' request. (CW 35)

We, of course, see the humility in presenting him with the unworthy portrait, unworthy because it is her shadow taken.<sup>14</sup> She goes on speaking to the image that Edward would be left with her, and we, too, can see in the famous

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<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth was held in suspicion of planning to wed Edward's uncle Thomas Seymour, the widower of the Dowager Queen Katherine Parr. See Sheila Cavanagh's "*The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident*" in *Dissing Elizabeth* for further details. Starkey also has a chapter on this event (65-75). In addition, J. E. Neale, in *Queen Elizabeth I*, covers this incident (19-27). Likewise, Alison Weir, in *The Life of Elizabeth I*, presents her argument in this matter (15-17). Carolly Erickson spends several chapters on this matter in her biography of Elizabeth (52-96).

<sup>13</sup> See figures 3 and 4.

<sup>14</sup> The term *shadow* is used in its Early Modern synonym for portrait.

portrait of her dated from around this time,<sup>15</sup> that of the sweet, quiet, very Protestant sister of the plain clothes. She reinforces that image further in the prose of her letter:

For the face, I grant, I might well blush to offer,  
but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. For  
though from the grace of the picture the colors may  
fade by time, may give by weather, may be spotted by  
chance, yet the other nor time with her swift wings  
shall overtake, nor the misty clouds with their  
lowerings may darken, nor chance with her slippery  
foot may overthrow. (CW 35)<sup>16</sup>

The body is imperfect and will fall prey to time, age, and infirmity, but her Humanist-educated mind is tied to her soul and thus cannot be tainted by worldly concerns. Elizabeth's manipulation of this standard conceit is clever and well done.

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<sup>15</sup> The portrait is entitled Elizabeth I when princess by an unknown artist. It is part of The Royal Collection 2000, owned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It is usually dated around this time when Elizabeth was 16, and there exists the possibility that this is the portrait that Elizabeth sent to her brother. Alison Plowden in Marriage with My Kingdom describes how

The portrait [. . .] shows a pale flat-chested girl in a red dress. Her carrot-colored hair is parted in the middle and tucked smoothly under a French hood. Her eyes, dark and watchful in the immature but unmistakably Tudor countenance, give nothing away. She holds a book in her incredibly long fingers. Beside her another book lies propped open on a reading-stand. She looks the very image of the studious young lady whose "maiden shamefastness" was considered so praiseworthy by sober Protestant divines like John Aylmer. She looks, in fact, as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. (29)

See figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3. The Princess Elizabeth, aged about 13 (1546). Sometimes attributed to William Scrots. The Royal Collection; On Display at Windsor Castle. (Eakins 1)



Figure 4. A close-up of Elizabeth's face from the above portrait

Elizabeth continues in this vein in an attempt to procure an invitation for a visit with the young king, to gain more proximity to him:

I shall most humbly beseech your majesty that when you shall look on my picture you will witsafe<sup>17</sup> to think that as you have but the outward shadow of the body afore you, so my inward mind wishest that the body itself were oftener in your presence. (CW 35)

In this troubled time where others have had control of Edward's perception of the image of his sister, Elizabeth seeks to regain control of the metaphors<sup>18</sup> that Edward associates with her. The portrait and words both construct the image of herself that Elizabeth wishes to foreground in the mind of her young king and brother (and also as he who can and will decide her fate in terms of marriage and inheritance). Elizabeth also attempts to construct a physical meeting wherein she can reinforce the image that she presents in both the portrait and the pages of her letter.

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<sup>16</sup> The imagery here is familiar to readers of Renaissance literature.

<sup>17</sup> The editors' gloss here states that this is a synonym for *vouchsafe*. See *Collected Works*, n. 4, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth wishes to focus on the commonality of their Humanistic education which values mental rather than physical pursuits to purify the soul.

This letter's subscription reads "Your majesty's most humbly, sister and servant, Elizabeth" and exists in her own hand (CW 36). The fact that Elizabeth wrote in her own hand, as has been mentioned before, highlights the intimacy of the letter, her concern in making it a representative of her to Edward. Also, the closing puts first her position as his sister who thus by blood can claim her place in his heart and regard. However, the boldness of this claim is tempered by the subservience that she promotes in placing the word servant immediately before her name. In an image created with her pen, Elizabeth has thrown herself and her name onto Edward's mercy as her brother and king, who should be doubly concerned with each.

It is in this stage of their relationship when Edward begins to refer to Elizabeth as my "Sweet Sister Temperance": "In so describing his sister, Edward was not only praising her taste and life-style but her religion. Or rather, he was praising her life-style as the consequence of her religion" (Starkey 85). Edward's reaction to Elizabeth's more visible piety at this time (in terms of dress and behavior) results in her increased visibility and attendance upon Edward. For instance, in describing the festivities attending the Twelve Days of Christmas of 1551,

Starkey observes that "Elizabeth was the King's half-sister; now she appeared as a sort of consort" (102). Thus, history shows us the effectiveness of Elizabeth's linguistic control of her own image.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, the aforementioned letter exemplifies the tone and constructs the format that Elizabeth would take with Edward in most of her subsequent letters, such as her response to his letter following a bout with what was diagnosed as smallpox and then measles, dated April 21, 1552. She opens the letter expressing her sorrow over his illness: "What cause I had of sorry [sic] when I heard first of your majesty's sickness all men might guess but none but myself could feel" (CW 36).<sup>20</sup> She goes on to compare his letter telling of his recovery as "a precious jewel [that] at another time could not so well have contented as your letter in this case hath comforted me" (CW 36). The emphasis here on her preference for the "jewel" which is Edward's health and continued reign further supports her image of piety without ornament.

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<sup>19</sup> Of course, the one letter under discussion was not the only factor in this development; however, it does function as an excellent example of Elizabeth's rhetorical control of her relationship with Edward.

<sup>20</sup> Considering that Henry's will specified that Mary should follow Edward as monarch if he died without issue and lacking the 20/20 vision of hindsight on the events of Mary's subsequent reign, this passage assumes an irony that Elizabeth could very possibly have intended.

This letter also, however, contains another Humanistic teaching story:

Moreover, I consider that as a good father that loves his child dearly doth punish him sharply, so God, favoring your majesty greatly, hath chastened you straitly; and as a father doth it for the further good of his child, so hath God prepared this for the better health of your grace. (CW 37)

Perhaps reminding Edward subtly of their age difference, she tempers her didactic tone with her closing of "Your majesty's most humble sister to command, Elizabeth" (CW 37). Of course, the construct here of Edward as God's child is fairly commonplace in English society; however, given Edward's anointed position as God's chosen representative, the phrasing here takes on additional resonance. Also, in constructing Edward as God's divinely chosen child, she makes a metaphoric construction of herself as sister to the divine. Again, though one monarch's death (in both historical terms and those of her father's will) away from being queen, Elizabeth here embellishes herself with, at the very least, authentic access to the Divine Right which Edward wields.

In Spring 1553 (mere months before Edward's death), Elizabeth opens her letter, whose main discussion is Edward's poor health, with another didactic conceit:

Like as a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails, tarrying for better wind, so did I, most noble king, in my unfortunate chance a Thursday pluck down the high sails of my joy and comfort, and do trust one day that as troublesome waves have repulsed me backward, so a gentle wind will bring me forward to my haven. (CW 38)

Elizabeth is upset here because she was prevented from having an audience with Edward because of his ill health and the intrusive presence of Henry Grey, third marquis of Dorset (CW, n. 3 38).<sup>21</sup> Starkey delegates this letter into the category of being "the sort of letter that you might write to an invalid who is not expected to live long" (106). However, we may note several significant aspects of this text. First, it is one of Elizabeth's earliest uses of her favored water imagery that she would have recourse to

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<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth here reveals her unease with this man who was related to her by marriage. He had taken power in Edward's government after the execution of Edward Seymour, Edward's uncle and Lord High Protectorate. Grey would eventually manipulate Edward into setting his daughter, the Lady Jane Grey (who would later be known as the "9-days queen"), on the throne. See Starkey pp. 113-17, and Weir, in The Children of Henry VII, pp. 147-91.



throughout her writing career.<sup>22</sup> This image, of course, makes perfect sense since Elizabeth's birthplace and home was an island. Moreover, this image clarifies further Elizabeth's vision of herself as the strong, constant isle/rock in the center of the turbulent political waters. Read from this perspective, the image is completely consistent with her motto *Semper eadem*.<sup>23</sup> This letter also acts as a closing chapter onto Elizabeth's historical correspondence with her brother Edward VI while revealing the maturity that she has gained over the period of his reign. She comments sagely on the problems of who has physical access to the monarch, especially one who does not have natural heirs, and given the political chaos that followed Edward's death,<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth's misgivings were entirely accurate.

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<sup>22</sup> The significance of water imagery in the writings of numerous historical and literary figures has been researched and discussed extensively by scholars of varying insight and ability. In the case of Elizabeth, the water imagery is to be expected since she spent her entire life on a relatively small island. In her own type of agoraphobia, Elizabeth even chastised James Stuart for venturing off the isle to the continent to fetch his bride. A very interesting psychoanalytic evaluation of Elizabeth's identification with the virgin isle (the greatest international fete of her reign was the defeat of the Spanish Armada wherein the good English Drake with divine providence protected the shores from violation and rape by the Spanish fleet) could reveal much about Elizabeth's choice of metaphors.

<sup>23</sup> Of course, as with most aspects of Elizabeth, this motto can also be read ironically considering Elizabeth's use of and recourse to multiple "selves," depending upon the rhetorical situation.

<sup>24</sup> In the final moments of life, Edward's hopes for the continuance of the Protestant Reformation were played upon to induce him to name his cousin Jane Grey successor to the throne. Mary's Catholicism and the problematic nature of Elizabeth's legitimacy were used to entice him to go against his father's will. This resulted in the nine days of Jane's reign which was ended by Mary Tudor riding into London with Elizabeth at her side to claim her throne with an army behind her. For a more detailed discussion of this, see either Starkey pp. 89-91 and 107-17, or Weir's The Children of Henry VIII pp.137-53.

Further examples in comprehending Elizabeth's role as sister survive with some of her letters to Queen Mary Tudor. The tone in these letters exhibits some desperation because of Elizabeth's immediate and very problematic circumstances which accompanied each occasion for composition. There are parallels to her letters to Edward, but the situations and voice are very different. To Mary, Elizabeth pays the deference of the subject, but the argument stands out as to whether she felt the same sort of filial connection<sup>25</sup> that she shared with Edward. This particular letter was written from the Tower, March 16, 1554. Her examples refer to recent historical events with Mary, as she begs for her life, making an argument for seeing parallels between her situation and a then very recent case by citing the execution of Thomas Seymour by his brother Edward and how Thomas was not allowed to speak with Edward: "I heard my lord of Somerset say that if his brother had been suffered to speak with him, he had never suffered" (CW 41). Here she draws her indirect reference to their familial link: "Though these persons [the ones who prevented Seymour from speaking with both his brother and

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<sup>25</sup> For Mary certainly did not. She believed that Elizabeth was not only a bastard in the eyes of the Catholic Church (having been born to Anne Boleyn while Mary's own mother Catherine of Aragon still lived) but

the king] are not to be compared to your majesty, yet I pray God as evil persuasions persuade not one sister against the other" (CW 42). However, since she is arguing for Mary's faith that she was not involved in the Wyatt Rebellion, this reference to another man deemed a traitor to the throne comes across as rather problematic. Her closing here places herself squarely in the role of subject: "Your highness' most faithful subject that hath been from the beginning and will be to my end, Elizabeth" (CW 42). The Christ imagery, with the seeming allusion to the alpha and omega, here of the innocent offered for sacrifice is far more consistent with Elizabeth's rhetorical education and abilities. Elizabeth constructs herself as the totality, the emblem of what it means to be loyal to her sister and prince.

The problematic relationship with Mary over the course of her reign, which resulted in imprisonment in the Tower and an extended house arrest, authenticates and explains much Elizabeth will later speak of her sister. In Elizabeth's first speech to her lords upon being informed of Mary's death, she emotes that "the law of nature moveth me to sorrow for my sister" (CW 51). However, she quickly

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also not the daughter of Henry. See earlier discussion of Mark Smeaton in note 2 of this chapter.

progresses to "and yet [. . .] I am God's creature, ordained to obey His appointment" (CW 51-52). This statement effectively begins her metaphoric use of her position as daughter of God, while also alluding to her specific access to Divine Right.<sup>26</sup> She emphasizes this image by noting her re-birth as the monarch in stating "And as I am but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern" (CW 52). She establishes her earthly ancestry and further legitimates her position later in the speech with a direct reference to the lords' prior service to "my father of noble memory, my brother, and my late sister" (CW 52). The linear equation here parallels the succession made into law by Henry before his death.

Thus, having enacted the roles of daughter and sister in her pre-coronation life, Elizabeth turns back to them and makes them anew, redefines them, for use in her post-coronation life and roles. In reading one of Elizabeth's private prayers from 1563, we see the co-option of the divine authority with the opening of the Collect:

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<sup>26</sup> Of course, Elizabeth's answer can also be read as a formula in the language covering the Divine Right of Monarchs, for the human body dies, but the body politic is immediately and simultaneously passed onto the designated heir. However, as with all else, considering the sexes of the monarchs involved, Elizabeth's statement carries additional resonance.

"Sovereign Lord, omnipotent God, Father of mercies, God of all grace, who has made me according to Thine image so I might praise Thee" (CW 135-36). Obviously, Elizabeth demonstrates here the standard sort of copia when discussing her Creator as God the father. However, given her history, this posturing resonates more emphatically and symbolically. Left fatherless, and with her very paternity questioned, her construct of God the Father works in conjunction with her position as God's anointed.

In her prayer for "Thanksgiving for Benefits Conferred," Elizabeth makes this connection even more explicitly:

Thou hast willed me to be not some wretched girl from the meanest rank of the common people, who would pass her life miserably in poverty and squalor, but to a kingdom Thou has destined me, born of royal parents<sup>27</sup> and nurtured and educated at court. When I was surrounded<sup>28</sup> and thrown about by various snares of

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<sup>27</sup> This phrase comes as close to a direct mention of her mother as Elizabeth ever made. However, she did have a miniature of Anne contained within her private room, so her omission is not necessarily indicative of not having an attachment to her mother. Rather, most critics, myself included, feel that to speak too frankly with regard to the fate of her mother would have necessitated speaking too ill of Henry, the man who had written the law that put her on the throne. Also, to question Henry's authority as God's representative on earth would be likewise to call into issue her own power, and Elizabeth's unwillingness to do this is what kept Mary Stuart's head attached to her shoulders for far longer than Elizabeth's nobles were comfortable with. See Starkey pp. 319-23, Weir in The Life of Elizabeth I pp. 360-83, Erickson

enemies, Thou has preserved me with Thy constant protection from prison and the most extreme danger; and though I was freed only at the very last moment, Thou hast entrusted me on earth with royal sovereignty and majesty. (CW 141)

Here, Elizabeth links her earthly parentage with her heavenly father to lend even greater credence to the divine decree of her position: she is queen both because of her biological father who died in her youth and her heavenly father who took over the job of "raising" her.

Elizabeth makes an analogous argument in one of her later prayers. "The First English Prayer" in Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book, circa 1579-82, contains the acknowledgement that

Of nothing hast Thou made me not a worm, but a creature according to Thine own image<sup>29</sup>: heaping all blessings upon me that men on earth hold most happy; drawing my blood from kings and my bringing up in virtue; giving me that more is, even in my youth knowledge of Thy truth, and in times of most danger,

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pp.360-63, Neale pp. 265-92, and Plowden's text which is completely on this subject Two Queens in One Isle: The Deadly Relationship Between Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, especially pp. 201-17.

<sup>28</sup> One of many times that Elizabeth succumbs to use of imagery equating her with Daniel in the lions' den.

<sup>29</sup> A textual note here points out that is an inversion of Psalm 22:6 (Marcus et al. n. 2 CW 312).

most gracious deliverance; pulling me from the prison to the palace; and placing me a sovereign princess over Thy people of England. And above all this, making me (though a weak woman) yet Thy instrument to set forth the glorious Gospel of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ. (CW 312-13)

Here again, Elizabeth has the opportunity to construct parallels between her own trials in coming to the throne and Christ, but also to lay claim to her position as prophet to her country. She is not only divinely anointed but also ordained.

In this same prayer from her 1558-1572 period, Elizabeth counts herself as receiving a preferential destiny:

[. . .] I am unimpaired in body, with a good form, a healthy and substantial wit, prudence even beyond other women, and beyond this, distinguished and superior in the knowledge and use of literature and languages, which is highly esteemed because unusual in my sex[. . .] . I perceive how much I owe to Thy goodness, most merciful Father, for other things that are from Thee, even though of these other things I have not at all been deserving beforehand. (CW 141)

Here, Elizabeth uses the perceived lowliness of her sex as being even more a testament to the power of God, the same creator who brought a king forth from the lowly womb of a peasant girl, could likewise lift up a poor woman to the seat of power and authority. And not only did God raise her up Phoenix-like, he also enabled her with the capacity for just and divinely-inspired rule.

In the closing of this prayer, Elizabeth asks for further insight so that she "may frankly acknowledge [. . .] as my Author" he who is "the Author of all gifts" (CW 142). In another reference to God as her father/creator, Elizabeth also uses the moment to deify and sanctify the creation of her as text. Again, this image of author as creator (and Creator as author) was commonplace in Renaissance literature<sup>30</sup>; however, Elizabeth's use of the metaphor here is far more self reflexive as she, prophet-like, creates this written praise in imitation of her divine Father who "wrote" her into being.

In the next prayer in this same grouping, which is "Prayer for Wisdom in the Administration of the Kingdom," Elizabeth again accentuates the divine authority by which

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<sup>30</sup> See Katherine Eisaman Maus' "A Womb of His Own: Male Renaissance Poets in the Female Body."



she reigns as she notes, while comparing herself to Solomon,

how much less am I, Thy handmaid, in my unwarlike sex and feminine nature, adequate to administer these Thy kingdoms of England and of Ireland, and to govern an innumerable and warlike people, or able to bear the immense magnitude of such a burden, if Thou, most merciful Father, didst not provide for me (undeserving of a kingdom) freely and against the opinion of many men. Instruct me from heaven, and give help so that I reign by Thy grace, without which even the wisest among the sons of men can think nothing rightly. (CW 142)

In this prayer, Elizabeth criticizes and demarcates her critics as being non-believers who must be further shown God's greatness through her ability and success. Again, the idea that all that she does from the confines of her womanly body actually acclaims God and further authenticates her position rather than troubling the "natural" order, foregrounds Elizabeth's awareness of the roles she had to play and balance.

Again in this same grouping of prayers, specifically "Prayer to make before consulting about the Business of the

Kingdom," Elizabeth refers to the shared "paternal love towards the people whom Thou hast given into our charge, we may with prudence and wisdom treat of things that now will be propounded" (CW 151). In this passage, Elizabeth seems to be sharing this nurturing position with her divine father, while simultaneously laying claim to the attributes of prudence and wisdom. Her society may have been more comfortable with the analogy of Elizabeth as the biblical Deborah, but Elizabeth herself felt confident enough to use Solomon, the epitome of the wise ruler, to construct her own parallels to.

In the second prayer of The Spanish Versicles and Prayers,<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth pointedly refers to herself as a poor, sinning daughter of Adam, an instrument of Thy glory, an instrument with which Thou mayst be glorified in constituting me as head and governess of Thy wealthiest kingdom in these most unhappy times in which Thy church, Thy only spouse, is in so great a manner oppressed by the tyranny of Satan and his ministers, be willing to assist me with Thy Holy Spirit, He who is the Spirit of wisdom and of

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<sup>31</sup> "These prayers constitute Elizabeth's only known composition in the Spanish language, which she had learned but deliberately avoided later in her reign for political reasons" (Marcus et al. n. 10 CW 155).

understanding, the Spirit of knowledge and of Thy  
 fear, by whom I Thy maidservant, may have a wise heart  
 that can discern between the good and the bad. (CW 156)

She is not a daughter of Eve, the woman who cost humanity  
 its Edenic existence, but of Adam,<sup>32</sup> sinning but trying to  
 learn and use what little wit he has. Also, the fact that  
 this discussion of the Church is conducted in Spanish, a  
 "Popish" tongue, is very telling, given the fact that  
 Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn had succeeded the Spanish  
 Catherine as Henry's wife.<sup>33</sup>

In the third prayer from this same grouping, Elizabeth  
 makes explicit her metaphoric link with the "good" biblical  
 women as opposed to the Mother of the Fall: "giving me  
 strength so that I, like another Deborah, like another  
 Judith, like another Esther, may free Thy people of Israel  
 from the hands of Thy enemies" (CW 157). Elizabeth's more  
 conventional use of female biblical parallels foregrounds  
 her argument against the enemy Catholic states, the foreign  
 "Gentiles" which she is here to combat. She does not want  
 to muddy her metaphoric waters by taking on the gender

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<sup>32</sup> In prayer 24 of The Latin Prayers, Elizabeth again constructs herself as one of the "rest of the descendants of Adam," who "was most worthy of miscarriage" for she experienced "in my mother's womb, a fall into sin stained me" (CW 158). Here, another oblique reference to Anne Boleyn but one where she is seemingly conflated with the original mother, Eve.

issue here, but focuses rather on the "us" versus "them" mentality: she is of her people, while the enemy is not. She also constitutes herself here as the logical inheritor of the role of liberator: she creates space for herself in drawing attention to the biblical-like times in which she and her new nation exist, like Israel of old.

Yet again in a "Prayer to God for the Auspicious Administration of the Kingdom and the Safety of the People," Elizabeth plays upon being perceived as a stereotypical woman: "in truth, [. . .] I am feminine and feeble," so that "only Thou art worthy to sit in governance of this kingdom and this administration" (CW 159). The crux of the matter here is that though only God is worthy, yet he has placed Elizabeth, "Thy daughter," in his stead (CW 159). Elizabeth's use of God's authority to authenticate her place and speech follows a pattern similar to that of many early women writers.<sup>34</sup>

Later in her reign, Elizabeth seems less proud and more tired as she makes these same sorts of connections in her so-called "Golden Speech" of 1601:

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<sup>33</sup> Catherine was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was the Pope's refusal to grant Henry an annulment which helped initiate Henry's break with Rome.

<sup>34</sup> Examples here are too numerous to list completely, but, of course, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe spring instantly to mind.

To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it.<sup>35</sup> For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God had made me His instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe anything of this to myself, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live [. . .] . (WC 342)

This powerful statement emphasizes Elizabeth's awareness of and adversarial position to her gender. She continues to lay claim to her abilities and victories, but also, almost contritely, emphasizes that none of this was due her but rather to the role assigned her by God and his continued intervention.<sup>36</sup>

We see these same sentiments more heartily illuminated in her prayer celebrating the defeat of the Spanish Armada, where Elizabeth praises

[m]ost humbly with bowed heart and bended knees, do

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<sup>35</sup> It would be interesting to parallel this speech with that of Shakespeare's Henry V the night before the Battle of Agincourt, a comparison which is typically drawn between Elizabeth's Speech to the Troops at Tilsbury and Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech. Of course, dating Shakespeare's plays is difficult, with most scholars placing this history play's composition around 1599.

render my humblest acknowledgments and lowliest  
 thanks; and not the least for that the weakest sex  
 hath been so fortified by Thy strongest help that  
 neither my people might find lack by my weakness nor  
 foreigners triumph at my ruin. (CW 424)

Thus, Elizabeth's use of the stations of woman as daughter  
 and sister slide across signifiers over the course of her  
 life. Even as Elizabeth retains recourse to Henry as her  
 biological father, she simultaneously uses his two,  
 metaphoric bodies as "king" to justify not only her two  
 bodies as "prince" but also combines this with the cultural  
 standard of seeing all human beings as children of God. In  
 Elizabeth's case, however, her equation results in being  
 the preferred child of God and also further reinforces and  
 alludes yet again to her Divine Right.

Throughout her life, Elizabeth's recourse to the  
 position of sister is reworked in her use of kinship  
 rituals; for as will be discussed in later chapters, she  
 will be "sister" to other kings as the need arises. As has  
 already been discussed, her reliance on the role of  
 daughter to both her earthly father and her heavenly one

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<sup>36</sup> Again, this speech bears interesting parallel to Henry V's speech upon learning the results of the day of battle at Agincourt.

permeates her entire reign. It is this role which above all others constitutes and legitimates her use of Divine Right. While confronting the issue of her sex in full frontal manner, she uses her society's very negative vision of woman to glorify and accentuate all that she does. She not only agrees with her society's socially-ordained view of the weakness of womankind, but she glories in and embraces it because it makes her ultimate triumphs as both God's anointed and as historical figure gleam even brighter.

### Chapter 3 "Ah, silly Pug": Wooing and Wedding

Elizabeth's post-coronation uses and redefinitions of the positions of lover and "wife" reflect the centuries-old discussion surrounding Elizabeth's avoidance of marriage.<sup>1</sup> This issue has been the source of much critical fodder and debate (a separate book could be written about the nature of the debate itself and the various camps of devotees that it has given rise to--ranging from the pop-psychologists to those who actually argue that Elizabeth was secretly married to Robert Dudley).<sup>2</sup> However, Elizabeth's metaphoric progression into these two stations of woman reveals how she was able to create a space for herself in both these supposedly "natural" realms of woman without physically following them through to their ultimate conclusion.

The argument for Elizabeth's lifelong seeming aversion to marriage is based in no small part by the generally recognized statement wherein "Dudley was reported as saying: 'I have known her, from her eighth year, better than any man upon earth. From that date she has invariably

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<sup>1</sup> For a specific chronology of Elizabeth's life and times, see Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> In the collection Dissing Elizabeth, see Susan Doran's essay "Why Did Elizabeth Not Marry?." Allison Plowden has an entire book on this matter entitled Elizabeth R: Marriage With My Kingdom. For additional discussion of this topic see Allison Weir's The Life of Elizabeth I pp. 45-47, 80-93, 107-13, and 45-51, and Elizabeth Jenkins' Elizabeth and Leicester pp. 11, 46-56, 76-82, 92-93, 119-24, 133-47, 172-77, 227-28, 239-45, and 268-70.



declared that she would remain unmarried.'" (Starkey 87). However, Dudley would have had his own reasons for wanting to dissuade foreign suitors. Also, this statement probably belongs to the schema of "justification after the fact," wherein after Elizabeth reached an age where all likelihood of marrying had evaporated, then the historicization of this being a conscious, calculated choice could and did begin.

One fairly original and interesting argument for Elizabeth's conscious early decision to maintain her "virgin" throne is put forth by historian David Starkey, who asserts that Elizabeth might first have considered ruling alone when she observed Katherine Parr acting as Queen Regent during Henry's French campaign of 1544:

And is there really all that much difference, she might later have reflected, between a distant king, who sends his orders from beyond the sea, and a dead one, who rules from the grave? (41)

The fact that here Starkey makes an argument, which focuses on a positive reason rather than a negative one, makes him rather unusual and atypical in this regard. Most writers focus on Elizabeth's early models of marriage provided by her father or her fear of death during or because of

childbirth or her distaste for sex because of its associations with death and/or her sexual abuse at the hands of Thomas Seymour. The idea that Elizabeth's choice to rule alone because she had seen a positive model in her well-loved and regarded Katherine Parr is refreshing.

Another argument, of course, centers on Elizabeth's relationship with the men of her court, of whom she could be jealously possessive, as evidenced by her reaction to their unapproved marriages.<sup>3</sup> In discussing Elizabeth's relationship to her courtiers and favorites, Starkey asserts that "her love was to be not parental but sexual—or at least that's what it pretended to be" (58). Another view of this had to do with Elizabeth's Privy Council "'like so many kings', as a ruffled ambassador noted. Indeed it is possible to argue that they were a sort of collective king, with Elizabeth, not so much a queen regnant, as a mere consort of her council" (Starkey 309), and he cites other historians and misogynist Protestants of her own time. An example of Elizabeth's ministers acting as a communal husband was first imagined at the start of her reign.

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<sup>3</sup> Examples here include Raleigh (who was the "Silly Pug" of this chapter's title until his fall from grace caused by a secret marriage) and Leicester in terms of courtiers. As monarch, Elizabeth also wielded the power of marriage for her royal cousins such as the remaining Grey sisters and Darnley; this role was especially important in terms of the dynastic issues. Again, see Starkey pp. 112-14, 216, and 319; Plowden

Starkey describes Elizabeth's First Parliament where Lord Keeper Bacon spoke for her as "the mission statement of her government and her reign. So she nodded and smiled and lent a pretty feminine emphasis to Bacon's clumping masculine prose" (306). Thus, from the start of her reign, Elizabeth constructed herself as "mistress" to her Parliament and government.

Another argument about Elizabeth's unwillingness to enter the bonds of marriage focuses on the fallout, both mental and physical, from the situation that arose with her stepmother's husband. In discussing the Thomas Seymour affair, Starkey notes that the greedy gallant was used to women "gladly" surrendering "religion, learning and prudence at his beck and call," but Elizabeth "did not quite sacrifice her prudence" (66). Here Starkey does rather pruriently suggest that not all Elizabeth's protestations of physical innocence in this matter were one hundred percent accurate. Scholarly opinion varies on this event<sup>4</sup>; the "adults," including Katherine Parr herself and

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in *Marriage With My Kingdom* pp. 125-28, 136-38, 147-50, and 157-58; Weir in *The Life of Elizabeth I* pp. 41-43, 115-17, 121-23, 131-43, 150-99, 210, 215, 260, 409, and 478; and Wormand pp. 151-64.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Seymour, who had previously been a suitor to Katherine Parr, wasted no time after Henry's demise in marrying her. Elizabeth, who remained in Parr's household, received early morning visits from Seymour, sometimes before dressing. He also romped with her on her bed. Parr, reportedly, took part in an encounter where Seymour used his sword to cut the (outer at least) clothes from Elizabeth's body. Elizabeth was sent from Parr's household after Parr, who was then pregnant, came upon Elizabeth and

Kat Ashley, come off the worst in this regard. It was Elizabeth who maintained her instincts for self preservation in this matter. Whatever the exact details of this "affair", Elizabeth could not, yet again, have come away with a positive image of marriage and men.

As we examine Elizabeth's decades-long, highly intricate dance through the political proposals, we must begin with the knowledge that the assumption that Elizabeth never considered marriage is flawed. She would have had much to gain in terms of freedom by marrying, like other women of her period. For example, in discussing Elizabeth's endowment as stipulated by her father's will, Starkey notes that it applies only until a "suitable marriage" should occur: "In short, marriage for Elizabeth was like the stroke for Cinderella: with the sound of wedding bells, her principality would vanish. Is it any wonder that she viewed marriage with such mixed feelings?" (94). Though Starkey's imagery here is problematic, his argument is well-founded: the worst argument to make about Elizabeth's relationship to the institution of marriage is an overly-simplified one.

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Seymour in some sort of embrace. The extent of Elizabeth's relationship with Seymour is unknown, though this lack of fact has not stopped the rise of conjecture. For instance, though most credible scholars discredit such arguments, there is a recent text entitled Oxford: Son of Elizabeth I by Paul Streit which argues that Edward de Vere was actually the child which resulted from Elizabeth's liaison with Seymour. For further

Unlike her sister Mary who "seems to have felt that her queenship itself was defective without a king" (Starkey 122), Elizabeth's choice was not to immediately marry upon her ascension. Actually, it was Mary's example which further pushed Elizabeth towards careful consideration of marriage. Mary's foray into marriage had set the tone and form for what the English public would see as the role of a King to their "natural" queen. There were aspects of the kingly role, as it had been defined by her father, that Mary realistically could not perform:

She could not—at least under sixteenth-century conditions—command in the field or joust. But the rest were symbolic functions, symbolically discharged. By delegating even the dubbing of knights, Mary was saying she could not do these either. The effect was to declare a central part of monarchy out of bounds to a woman. Instead, the functions of her future husband would have to expand to fill the vacuum. (Starkey 124)

And though Mary had promised to Parliament, "We have not forgotten our coronation oath. We shall marry as God shall

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discussion of the impact that this event had on Elizabeth's image, see Sheila Cavanagh's "*The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident.*"

direct our choice, to his honour and to our country's good" (qtd. in Starkey 126), her marriage to Philip II of Spain provided nothing but distress to the nation in terms of the fear of a foreigner reigning: England was involved in foreign wars (including the loss of Calais) and political machinations it otherwise would have avoided. Also, Mary's Counter-Reformation became more violent because of the Spanish presence; after all, it was Mary and Philip's common ancestors, Ferdinand and Isabella, who initiated and defined the terms of the Spanish Inquisition. In analyzing the end of Mary's reign and its fallout, Starkey asserts that "A woman could take power. But the greatest risks to her holding of it would come from the fulfillment of her ordinary, womanly functions of wife and mother" (184). It was with this vision of Mary's foray into marriage and its consequences for both herself and the nation, that Elizabeth began her reign. The fact that soon after Mary's demise Philip proposed to Elizabeth did not alleviate her misgivings.<sup>5</sup> This understanding complicates Rose's contention that one of the two primary ways that scholars

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<sup>5</sup> See Weir in *The Children of Henry VIII* pp. 211-361, Erickson pp. 101, 113-20, 137-58, and 297-311; and Starkey pp. 123-252 for details on the unhappiness of Mary's married life and Philip's pursuit of Elizabeth, which many argue actually began before Mary's death and contributed to her ill will towards Elizabeth.

have explained Elizabeth's dealing with the "problematics of her gender" has been to contend "that Elizabeth identifies herself strongly and frequently with the traditional roles of virgin and mother" (1077). Thus, we see the truth in this statement but understand that it is not so simple: Elizabeth's very image of mother was a troubled one.

Elizabeth's first speech to Parliament, which exists in two versions,<sup>6</sup> dated February 10, 1559, begins the three-decade discussion of her marriage plans as Queen:

[. . .] I may say unto you that from my years of understanding, sith I first had consideration of myself to be born a servitor of almighty God, I happily chose this kind of life in which I yet live, which I assure you for mine own part hath hitherto best contented myself and I trust hath been most acceptable to God. From the which if either ambition of high estate offered to me in marriage by the pleasure and appointment of my prince [. . .] ; or if the eschewing of the danger of mine enemies; or the avoiding of the peril of death, [. . .] ; or if the whole cause were in my sister herself [. . .] . If any

of these, I say could have drawn or dissuaded me from this kind of life, I had not now remained in this estate wherein you see me; but constant have always continued in this determination [. . .] . With which trade of life I am so thoroughly acquainted that I trust God, who hath hitherto therein preserved and led me by the hand, will not now of His goodness suffer me to go alone. (56-57)

Elizabeth justifies and defends her unmarried state as being of her choice. However, the direct reference to her sister in the preceding quote augmented by her later comment of "to take upon you to draw my love to your liking or frame my will to your fantasies" (CW 57) delineates one of the primary issues of Elizabeth's possible marriage: Whom to marry? Mary's foreign marriage to Philip II of Spain led to the persecution and martyrdom of English Protestants, the loss of Calais (England's last possession in France), and the near bankruptcy of the Treasury, whose coffers were all but empty when Elizabeth assumed the throne. During Mary's reign, the Providential hand seems to have assured a negative vision of the marriage of a queen by birth. Besides posing this conundrum of whom to marry,

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote discussion of the variants of this speech in Collected Works, pages 56-58.



Elizabeth's speech also seeks to assure both the Parliament and the populace that she would not rush into an ill-advised marriage.

She proceeds in this speech to assure the members of the lower house that unlike her sister,

I will never in that matter conclude anything that shall be prejudicial to the realm, for the weal, good, and safety whereof I will never shame to spend my life. And whomsoever my chance shall be to light upon, I trust he shall be as careful for the realm and you—I will not say myself, because I cannot so certainly determine of any other—but at the leastways, by my goodwill and desire, he shall be as careful for the preservation of the realm and you as myself. (CW 57-58)

Here Elizabeth concludes and solidifies her argument that any betrothal that she entered into would be for her nation and divinely guided, as was her right, not for the woman whom they saw before them.

Her promise made, Elizabeth ends this speech:

And albeit it might please almighty God to continue me still in this mind to live out of the state of marriage, yet it is not to be feared but He will so

work in my heart and in your wisdoms as good provision by His help may be made in convenient time, whereby the realm shall not remain destitute of an heir that may be a fit governor, and peradventure more beneficial to the realm than such offspring may come of me. (CW 58)

Contained within her closing, Elizabeth presents a subtle Divine Right argument: she focuses here on the fact that she possesses the throne because of God's will and that likewise her successor will be chosen by the same Divine Force. This allusion gently reminds her audience who might be questioning her legitimacy that her physical body is now combined with a symbolic one and God alone has the power to divorce her from her seat.

Reinforcing and clarifying this allusion, Elizabeth then continues her argument:

For although I be never so careful of well-doings, and mind ever so to be, yet may my issue grow out of kind and become, perhaps, ungracious. And in this end this shall be for me sufficient: that a marble stone shall declare that a queen, having reigned such a time, and lived and died a virgin. (CW 58)

Elizabeth's use of virgin imagery here focuses on the holiness of the state. She also alludes to the ingratitude of offspring, perhaps a reference to her older sister who sought to "mend" the breach with Rome that their father had created.

Following up in yet another reply to a Commons' petition with regard to her marriage (this one in April of 1563), Elizabeth uses similar reasoning: "For though I can think it best for a private woman, yet do I strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince. And if I can bend my liking to your need I will not resist such a mind" (CW 79). Here not only does Elizabeth meet the inherent gender conflict constituted by her position but actually plays upon it: if she does not marry, then it is because the state of marriage is not suitable for a ruler. However, if she does marry, it is only because it would benefit her country and thus enhance her role as ruler. This contention is further highlighted in a variant of this same answer from a different manuscript which uses the phrase "my will to your need" (CW n. 9 79). In this manner, Elizabeth uses her rhetorical savvy to create a win-win situation for herself and for others' vision of her rule: if she does not marry, it is for the good of the realm; and if she does

marry, again, it is for the good of the realm.

Additionally, we note here that Elizabeth resists creating any sort of precedence for future female monarchs (having felt the bite of such a legacy herself, as has already been discussed): rather, she continues to acknowledge willingly the "unnaturalness" of her position as woman and prince simultaneous. Elizabeth throughout retains the right to decide what is best for the English nation as part of her Divine Right and, thus, divine duty.

In a 1566 joint address to Parliament, Elizabeth again repeats that "of mine own disposition I was not inclined thereunto" in regard to the matter of marriage (CW 95). She states that "I hope to have children; otherwise I would never marry" (CW 95); thus, she makes the direct link between projected progeny and marriage, further reinforcing her argument that she only considers marriage as an outgrowth of her duty as queen.

Elizabeth varied the emphasis of her argument depending upon her audience and situation. For example, in a conversation with the Scottish Ambassador William Maitland, soon after Mary Stuart's return to Scotland, dated in September and October 1561, Elizabeth boldly asserted that "Once I am married already to the realm of

England when I was crowned with this ring, which I bear continually in token thereof" (CW 65). This is after she has expounded on her argument that she fears the "controversy" attendant to any marriage she might consider (CW 65). Her verbal maneuvering here provides a two-pronged argument: one assuring the widowed queen that Elizabeth has made a conscious decision not to marry, not that she does not have the beauty and accomplishments to achieve such a union; and two, this statement serves as a subtly unsubtle caution to the newly repatriated queen that her focus should be on her own country of Scotland and not on pursuing her supposed interests in Elizabeth's crown.<sup>7</sup>

In yet another response to a Commons' petition that she marry (dated January 28, 1563), Elizabeth plays upon both aspects of her body politic:

The weight and greatness of this matter might cause in me, being a woman wanting both wit and memory, some fear to speak and bashfulness besides, a thing appropriate to my sex. But yet the princely seat and kingly throne wherein God (though unworthy) hath

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<sup>7</sup> Upon the death of the Catholic Mary Tudor, her cousin Mary Stuart, who at that point was married to the Young Dauphin Francis, had added the royal arms of England to their own. This action was a symbolic reminder that Catholic Europe would not immediately, if ever, recognize Anne Boleyn's spawn as rightful queen. For more discussion of this matter, see Weir p. 25.

constituted me [. . .] . (CW 70)

This allusion to the Divine Right of her position creates for Elizabeth the space from which to speak. For here Elizabeth chides her Parliament by admitting that the question of marriage, with all of its attendant considerations, might necessitate advice being given to a mere woman; however, she is no mere woman, but the personage chosen by God to lead and command them. Elizabeth "proves" her ability to handle such weighty considerations later in the same speech, as she uses both philosophic and biblical references to further authorize her to speak against the apparent and expected "bashfulness" of her sex.

Besides relying on her linguistic acumen to dissect her Parliament's none too gentle urging towards the wedded state, Elizabeth also chose to use the stereotypical attributes of her gender to enable her to make seemingly unpopular decisions. For instance, in one version of Elizabeth's November 24, 1586, reply to Parliament's lobbying for the execution of Mary Stuart, she notes that "What will they not now say when it shall be spread that for the safety of her life, a maiden queen could be content to spill the blood of her own kinswoman?" (CW 201). Having relied upon the definition of Divine Right to assure and

protect her own status and power, Elizabeth understood the paradox of undercutting this very right by ordering the death of another monarch. Thus, Elizabeth, seeking to distract the people's attention from how fragile and conditional a prince's absolute recognition and throne really are, maneuvers the debate into the realm of gender considerations: she cannot order Mary's death because she is a holy, virginal woman who has lived her life as sacrifice to her people and nation; thus, she as a being is not important enough to necessitate the killing of another fragile woman who shares her blood (notice the emphasis here on kinship in terms of sex and family, not position and throne). Elizabeth's recourse to her own virginity as an enabling rhetorical position might be one of the most persuasive arguments as to why she finally did not marry.

This reliance on the "weakness" and other socially-mandated characteristics of her sex permeated Elizabeth's utterances, particularly when irony seemed to be her intent. For example, in a speech to her Privy Council, also in 1586, Elizabeth notes that "I will not boast; my sex doth not permit it" (CW 204). Of course, after making this humble assertion, Elizabeth goes on to discuss how her reasoning, insight, and judgment work as effective

counterbalances to her advisors in the matter of Mary Stuart.

In another version of the same speech, Elizabeth describes her relationship with her people with imagery reminiscent of either that of a lover or a mother, especially a virgin one:

[. . .] I must needs confess that there were never prince more bound to his people than I am to you all. I can but acknowledge great love and exceeding care of me to be such as I shall never be able to requite, having but one life, except I had as many lives as you all[. . .] . And though I may want the means and the wit, yet surely I shall never want the will to requite it. (CW 198-99)

Elizabeth is here again using the supposed inherent weaknesses of her sex to validate further her own power and the goodness of her people. She also emphasizes the mutuality of her relationship with her people.

The year 1572 saw the beginning of Elizabeth's last turn and dip in the marriage dance. Her final and, some would argue, most serious suitor was the young Monsieur d'Alençon, son of Catherine de Medicis, and younger brother of the King of France, Charles IX. In a letter to her



French ambassador of the time, Sir Francis Walsingham,<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth sought to convince the French that she was in fact serious about this match, asking Walsingham to “assure themselves [Charles and Catherine] that there is no lack of desire in us to continue—yea, if it might be, to increase—this amity” (CW 207). In this passage, Elizabeth’s marked use of the “us”, the royal plural of her two bodies, highlights the fact that she is viewing this marriage negotiation both as woman and prince. In the same letter, Elizabeth uses the perennial pestering of her Parliament to her advantage by grounding the sincerity of her argument upon it:

[. . .] although we ourselves were of this mind [. . .] to think the match inconvenient for his age, yet at the being here of the ambassadors we continually labored by our Council and also by our estates then assembled in Parliament, in laying before us the necessity of our marriage, both for our own comfort and also for the weal of the realm. (CW 208)

In this speech as was her general wont, Elizabeth seeks to unnerve her audience by seemingly making explicit all of

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<sup>8</sup> To add to the authenticity of this sought-for intimacy, it is carefully noted that Elizabeth’s letters to Walsingham on this matter are “By the queen” or in her own hand (CW 203, 209+).

the supposedly unspoken considerations. Elizabeth foregrounds the issue of age (at this point she was 38 and he but 17), her past "dalliances" into marital proposals, and the role of her government and throne in such negotiations. Elizabeth effectively undercuts all of these concerns while simultaneously and seemingly disingenuously "revealing" her womanly desires in this matter. The fact that this letter ostensibly addressed to Walsingham appears so ready-made to be read aloud to the French monarchy is, of course, a mere happy coincidence.

In writing directly to Alençon<sup>9</sup> in 1579 on the occasion of some supposed slight from her, Elizabeth begs as any artful lover would that "you always hold me as the same one whom you have obliged to be dedicated to you. And that I can only be she who has lodged you in the first rank of what is dearest to me, as God can best witness" (CW 239). Here, Elizabeth easily slides into the role necessitated by the demands of her audience and circumstance: she becomes the contrite lover who earnestly desires only to be recognized as she who loves him best and truest. Yet, even in this instance, Elizabeth alludes to her divinely-

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<sup>9</sup> Most of Elizabeth's letters to Alençon were originally in French. See CW p. 237 and subsequent notes in the letters exchanged between the two.

ordained position in suggesting that only God himself can judge such as she is and her motives. Though such invocation to God in this context is commonplace, given Elizabeth's situation in that this courtship carried political implications for two of the most powerful nations in her world, it cannot be discounted.

Elizabeth's linguistic constructions of self, echoing her use of casuistry to survive her Catholic sister's fiery reign, found use again in her wooing of and by the Frenchman. In blunting the blow of her continued concern over Alençon's Catholicism, Elizabeth states, "I confess that there is no prince in the world to whom I would more willingly yield to be his, than to yourself" (CW 243). Putting aside the "confessional" tone of this utterance, the possibility of multiple readings exists since this is at the point in Elizabeth's life when she has previously turned down more than half a dozen marriage proposals from suitors covering two continents.<sup>10</sup> However, there also exists the reading of the authentic interest of a woman in wedding and living out the rest of her life with her "very dear Frog" (CW 244). Though Elizabeth's choice of pet name

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<sup>10</sup> Ivan the Terrible at one point sought Elizabeth's hand in marriage. Thus, she has suitors from both Europe and Asia. See Weir in The Life of Elizabeth I, p. 261.

could be argued to diminish her lover, this would be a decontextualized reading. First, Elizabeth invariably gave pet names to her closest confidantes (for example, Dudley was "her eyes"); these pet names carried with them the mark of intimacy with and access to the Queen that not all of her ministers could claim. Second, her choice of pet name in this regard was Elizabeth again confronting the most contentious of arguments: yes, he was short and French, but he was "her Frog" and thus not to be questioned or ridiculed (as John Stubbs so painfully discovered).<sup>11</sup>

As a matter of fact, Elizabeth's letters to Alençon bear the most sincere and "personal" voice of any of her surviving documents. She addresses him as "my dearest" and relates to him details of her night musings, "dreaming, not having slept well" (CW 245). She comments in the same letter on "where the love I bear you carries me—to act against my nature" as she offers unsolicited advice on the course of action he should pursue in his battles in the Netherlands (CW 246). The fact that she embeds her sweet nothings into a discussion of his political actions (in

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<sup>11</sup> See Ilona Bell's "*Souereaigne Lord of lordly Lady of this land*"; Elizabeth, Stubbs, and the *Gaping Gulf* for a more specific discussion of Elizabeth's response to a subject's negative commentary on her marriage negotiations in this matter and the punishment visited upon the aptly named Stubbs who reportedly,

which he sought to involve her and thus England) authenticates Elizabeth's speech rather than undercuts it. Elizabeth cannot and never could be separated from her role as queen and seat of power and authority.

Falling back on some of her favorite imagery, Elizabeth compares the faithfulness of her feelings to Alençon "to such a rock, all the tempests of the sea will be far from shaking it, nor will any storm on the earth turn it aside from honoring and loving you" (CW 249-50). That Elizabeth opted to use the same metaphors in describing herself in relation to the Duke that she had earlier in her life used when writing her beloved younger brother (a fact that her Frog could not have known) goes far to support the interpretation of the genuineness of her regard for the Frenchman.

As she textually woos him, Elizabeth still maintains enough vanity to ask him to "grant pardon to the poor old woman who honors you as much (I dare say) as any young wench whom you ever will find" (CW 251). In another letter she talks about being ashamed that his noble kin will see her "for such a one as goes a-wooing, which will always be

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moments after having his hand chopped off and his right wrist gushing blood, doffed his hat with his left hand, and uttered, "God save the Queen" (112).

a fine reputation for a woman!" (CW 255). Elizabeth's coyness is further apparent in this letter as she seeks to distract Monsieur from his petitioning to her for moneys to conduct his war with the disingenuous statement that "If you bring up the subject of money, I am so poor an orator for my profit and like so little to play the housewife that I give charge of this to such as are wiser than I" (CW 255). Exploiting the stereotype of her gender here, this comment assumes a humorous tone when contextualized by others' views on Elizabeth's handling of the Exchequer: in discussing the queen's control of the budget, Starkey, like many other historians, observes that

Elizabeth had learned early on to run a tight ship in her household. In the fullness of time, she was, Thatcher-like, to apply these same techniques of good housewifery to the finances of her kingdom. As with Thatcher, the consequences were mixed. (Starkey 97)

Of course, the question comes here as to the level of Elizabeth's manipulation of her Monsieur: is she being tight with her money, or is she "playing" (in both senses of the term) the coy, female lover, or both? Given Elizabeth's rhetorical ability, she most likely here is performing all of these possibilities simultaneously.

Continuing on in this vein, she assures her beloved that "I will make comparison with whomever it may be in having no less affection for you than if the little priest had already performed his office" (CW 255). As with most of Elizabeth's utterances, the words here open themselves up to a variety of interpretations, depending on what Elizabeth hopes to gain with respect to various audiences. This statement can be read as a pledge to marry her Frog, especially in a society where a formal betrothal stood for enough assurance for consummation to occur.<sup>12</sup> However, her words can also be read as a religious allusion and commentary on Alençon's Catholicism as Elizabeth diminishes the priest and his role. Again, depending upon what parts of her audience she would have glossed this statement for, Elizabeth has constructed an utterance whose meaning can slide across various signifiers depending upon circumstances and audience requirements.

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<sup>12</sup> According to the report of Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador at the time, in a letter to Philip II dated 11 November 1581, while walking with Alençon in the gallery at Whitehall with numerous courtiers in attendance, Elizabeth, in response to nettling by the French ambassador, said,

"You may write this to the King [of France]: that the Duke of Anjou shall be my husband," and at the same moment she turned to Anjou and kissed him on the mouth, drawing a ring from her own hand and giving it to him as a pledge. Anjou gave her a ring of his in return, and shortly afterwards the Queen summoned her ladies and gentlemen from the Presence Chamber, repeating to them in a loud voice, in Anjou's presence, what had previously said. (qtd. in Weir 339-40)

Of course, the next morning, Elizabeth recanted what "constituted a formal betrothal" (Weir 340).

Elizabeth's mutual wooing with Alençon is most notably (at least for 20<sup>th</sup> century readers and beyond)<sup>13</sup> documented in her courtier-inspired poem "On Monsieur's Departure" (circa 1582).<sup>14</sup> In this poem, Elizabeth demonstrates her full comprehension and ability to use the love language of her day. She has recourse to the oxymoronic language of "I freeze and yet am burned" and "Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind" (ll. 5, 15). The standard reading of this poem is that of a woman torn between her duty and her desire, the political Elizabeth in open and defiant but ultimately doomed conflict with the private woman: "Since from myself another self I turned" (l. 6). Yet this type of composition would be exactly the sort of mental exercise associated with a woman in a doomed relationship, not necessarily a queen per se.

A far more interesting (but also more controversial in terms of authorship) poem is "When I was Fair and Young."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Because most of the previous consideration of Elizabeth's writing has focused on her poetry, I have attempted to limit my own analysis of it. Despite the fact that this poem has appeared in the last several editions of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, most of the critical work on it has focused on its historical rather than literary merit.

<sup>14</sup> In her essay "Elizabeth I as Public and Private Poet," Marcus describes this poem as being "a political poem uniformly attributed to Queen Elizabeth I" (146). However, Marcus does point out that this Petrarchan poem does not exist in any 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts but only in ones that postdate Elizabeth's reign (146-47). John N. King, in his essay "Representations of the Virgin Queen," does a far more standard reading of this poem, where he argues that it is specifically about Elizabeth's last effort at marriage (31+).

<sup>15</sup> Marcus in "Elizabeth I as Public and Private Poet" discusses the debate over the authorship of this poem (148-53). She, however, ultimately comes down on the side of it being Elizabeth's work, despite the



In this text and genre, the bittersweet nostalgia here is of one who "Of many was I sought unto, their mistress for to be" (l. 2) stands as the female counterpart to the speaker in Wyatt's "They Flee from Me." The speaker here seems to be coming to terms with choices previously made as she "straightway {feels} a change within my breast" (l. 8). However, "fair Venus' son" has already deserted her, left alone with only her regrets and repentance (ll. 5 and 12). Having failed to play the love game to its supposedly ultimate conclusion by choosing a mate to accompany the speaker into old age, she is left alone. Therefore, with the death of Alençon on June 10, 1584, as Mueller so aptly summarizes, "Thus ended, definitively, all prospect of Elizabeth's marrying and bearing children. She was in her fifty-first year" (1065).

In all aspects of courting and marriage and non-marriage negotiations, Elizabeth availed herself of these iconic roles wherein the flighty young woman, previously daughter and sister, is transformed into respectable matron. For with Elizabeth's position within the Doctrine of Divine Right, the stakes were the future of her nation

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arguments of Leicester Bradnor, the previous editor of Elizabeth's poems, to the contrary. Bradnor asserts that the poem is too polished to be Elizabeth's work.

not of her life. Thus, as she vacillated as needed between the metaphors of Virgin Mother versus coquettish pawn, Elizabeth "the prince" remained constant and focused on the outcome she desired: effective and lauded rule of her beloved England.

Chapter 4 "'Your most loving and devoted brother  
and son' quoth James to Elizabeth"

This chapter examines Elizabeth's later use of "sister" (which she redefines)<sup>1</sup> and the positions of "mother" and "widow." As noted previously, Elizabeth continues to have recourse to the term sister in her kinship situations. In addition, she constructs herself as both widow and mother, the latter on several different metaphoric levels. For besides the metaphoric maternity that she shares with God as his anointed, Elizabeth set forth to cede her Divine Right to the heir of her choosing, James Stuart. It is in this dialectic<sup>2</sup> form that Elizabeth finally constitutes her own legitimacy as she simultaneously creates James' authority in England.

In one of the stages of her courtship with Alençon, Elizabeth was asked to be "godmother to the infant" daughter of Charles IX (CW 215). The function of "godmother" at this time was rather nominal and used to reinforce kinship bonds.<sup>3</sup> This was a common practice, and

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<sup>1</sup> The role of "sister" is discussed in Chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth's approach is dialectical in that she constitutes this legitimacy simultaneously rather than linearly.

<sup>3</sup> In discussing the symbolic necessity of godparenting and wardships in Elizabethan England, Patricia Fumerton argues that "In freely giving children, that is, the English aristocracy generated social bonds that communicated a mystical force to sustain life even in the face of death" (42). Fumerton argues that this is

Elizabeth served as godmother to numerous children, for like so-called "political" marriages, this created a series of dependencies and relationships, familial obligations. Moreover, this act of standing as a godparent serves an essential function in Elizabeth's construction of herself as mother to her English men and women. As Patricia Fumerton argues, the circle of exchange "had a center: Elizabeth" (39). For a god-parent promised to oversee not merely a child's physical well-being and maturation process (that was usually left to biological and/or foster parents) but more primarily the spiritual development of the child. Thus, while Elizabeth constructed herself as God's anointed who had been chosen to lead her Christian nation, she had symbolically assumed the position of godmother to her nation.

It is in her stance as "godmother" to her people that Elizabeth writes to various nobles who have lost children. For example, in January 1579, Elizabeth wrote consoling Sir Amyas Paulet, then ambassador to France:

And considering that my lady your wife, as a tender  
and loving mother, hath an equal portion of sorrow

with you in this temporal death of your said dear son,  
 our meaning is that she be also like partaker with you  
 of the comfort we send you here. (CW 232)

Elizabeth's comfort is shared equally between the biological or "temporal" parents. However, she stands outside of their limited and limiting family circle to recognize that this death is of the merely temporal.

Likewise in a letter to George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, on the death of his son in late 1582, Elizabeth constructs herself as kin ("right well-beloved cousin") and commiserates with a father who has lost "a comfortable staff unto you in your old years and a profitable pillar unto this our estate in time to come" (CW 256-57). She moves into her stance of shared Protestant belief when she notes that "we as his prince and sovereign and you as a loving and natural father, for we both be interested in the loss [. . .] are to lay aside our particular causes of grief and to remember [. . .] God" (CW 257). In this quote, she equates her position as sovereign with that of his natural parent: she is the "god" parent who has actually succeeded in moving the son into unity with the Divine.

Besides using her position as god- and foster mother to various subjects, Elizabeth also used her rhetorical

maneuvers to move into the next station of woman: following the sad death of a beloved husband, a woman of this period assumed simultaneously the most powerful and thus most problematic position open to women—widowhood. Even Starkey wryly notes that “Religion was one of the few areas where late-medieval women were allowed a high degree of autonomy and initiative—even while they were married but especially in widowhood” (42). And it is in writing to Catherine de Medicis on Monsieur’s death in 1584 that Elizabeth constructs herself as widow: “For insamuch as you are his mother, so it is that there remain to you several other children. But for me, I find no consolation except death, which I hope will soon reunite us” (CW 261). In this statement, Elizabeth establishes a link between herself and the Duke’s mother, the only woman who, in Elizabeth’s reasoning, has the right to such grief as she feels. However, unlike the Dowager Queen who has other children, Elizabeth does not have another beloved: her only conciliation is to wait for the time when she will be reunited with her Frog, in death. Here, Elizabeth alludes to the notion that she is married to her beloved and will still be united with him in Heaven where surely both of them shall meet, separate from Man’s idiosyncratic

definitions which separated their two like minds and souls on earth.

Falling into one of her favorite metaphors, Elizabeth continues in her letter of pain and condolence with the claim that "Madame, if you were able to see the image of my heart, you see the portrait of a body without a soul" (CW 261). Again, Elizabeth foregrounds this idea of Anjou as her soulmate who in dying has actually stolen her soul away. Elizabeth next presents herself as true "daughter-in-law" or at least in sorrow by vowing:

[. . .] I will turn a good part of my love for him towards the king my good brother and you, assuring you that you will find me the most faithful daughter and sister that ever princes had. And this for the principal reason that he belonged to you so nearly, he to whom I was entirely dedicated. He to whom, if he had had the divine favor of a longer life, you would have sent more help<sup>4</sup>[. . .] . And believe that I will fulfill them faithfully as if I were your daughter born. (CW 261)

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<sup>4</sup> This statement implies that the fault of his death rests with inadequate support from his mother and brother, the king of France (Marcus et al. n. 2 CW 261). Whether this implication is meant to assuage Elizabeth's own guilt with regard to her failure to marry and more fully support Monsieur or merely to project guilt and annoyance or both remains ambiguous.

Thus, Elizabeth has achieved her status of widowhood without the necessary step of marriage.<sup>5</sup> In establishing with certainty that she would have married him had he only lived, Elizabeth seems to be returning here to her promises and semi-betrothals with Alençon. Considering the debate that erupted over Henry VIII's argument for annulling his marriage to Catherine was that she actually had consummated her betrothal to his elder brother Arthur, it seems that Elizabeth is situating herself in that same nebulous region wherein she was promised to her Frog and only the actual consummation was lacking. Instead of a virgin mother at this point, Elizabeth has constructed herself, linguistically at least, as a virgin wife and widow.

Of course, a widow must continue her duty by passing on the family fortune to her heir, her son. After the death of her Monsieur, Elizabeth, ever cognizant of time's movement, turns her attention to the training of her successor. As Mueller notes, "One year later [after the death of Alençon], [. . .] 1585, Elizabeth began a correspondence with James VI of Scotland" (1065). Previously, they had communicated through messengers and ministers: now they wrote directly to one another and

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter 2, note 8, for specifics on this witnessed "betrothal" between Elizabeth and her Frog.



continued to do so until shortly before her passing (Mueller 1065). Mueller's reading of this relationship revolves around her vision of the commonplaces used:

Friendship roles in the Elizabeth-James correspondence ramify, for the most part, through their discursive cultivation of two entirely commonplace themes of the Renaissance: (1) that each is as watchful and caring for the other as for a second self and (2) that each will neither flatter nor mislead but only speak the truth to the other. However, one unusual development of the friendship-between-equals relation as articulated in these letters is that Elizabeth begins quite early to analogize herself to a king—thus drawing her self-representation into near identity with that of James. (1066)

Mueller goes on to describe Elizabeth's metaphors in the correspondence as "friendship-kingship-kinship" (1067). However, Mueller slightly overstates James' allegiance to his mother (1070-71). Mueller notes that subsequent to Mary's death, the "unhappy fact" that James must deal with, the exchange between James and Elizabeth continues with her "mainly, as the dominant party and him, mainly, as the

submissive one" (1070, 1071). Mueller ends her argument by observing that

Having innovated by using the familiar letter as an instrument for securing the successor to her throne, Elizabeth contented herself with turning the familiar letter to a more ordinary generic purpose, that of the Renaissance manual of advice to a prince. One way or another, throughout this correspondence, Elizabeth staked, protected, and cultivated her momentous investments in James. (1071)

As Mueller seems to underplay the innovation of Elizabeth's political maneuver, it is still apparent that even as she "orphaned" James, rhetorically, Elizabeth simultaneously adopted him as son.

So Elizabeth constructs the very fulfillment of the necessary successor that she had previously assured her February 1559 Parliament of:

And albeit it might please almighty God to continue me still in this mind to live out of the state of marriage, yet it is not to be feared but He will work so in my heart and in your wisdoms as good provision by his help may be made in convenient time, whereby

the realm shall not remain destitute of an heir that may be a fit governor, and peradventure more beneficial to the realm than such offspring as may come of me. (CW 57)

Here, Elizabeth has foreseen a successor more beneficial to England because he will have been more providentially provided than merely via her womb, the means for lesser women to gain progeny. Just as all else in Elizabeth's life has been outside of the so-called norm of womankind, Elizabeth, who unlike other women, needs an heir, not someone to care for her in her old age, finds him by wielding the same Divine Right that necessitated him in the first place. In addition, unlike Sarah, who bore an heir to the Hebrew nation in her old age for Abraham, Elizabeth has instead taken Ishmael and effectively raised him as her own.

Long before Elizabeth begins the correspondence with James which culminated in her choice of him as successor, she had been laying the groundwork for this relationship and interaction. In a conversation with the Scottish Ambassador William Maitland soon after Mary Stuart's return to Scotland, dated in September and October 1561, Elizabeth wryly noted that "Princes cannot like their own children,

those that should succeed unto them" (CW 65). Elizabeth then goes on to elaborate on this with her own experience of courtiers fleeing from Mary's deathbed to begin courting her favor.

In a 1563 reply to a Commons' petition concerning her marriage, Elizabeth, perhaps rather petulantly, noted that "that though after my death you may have many stepdames, yet shall you never have any a more mother than I mean to be unto you all" (CW 72). A variant to the last line is even more affective in this reading, using the phrase "more natural mother" (CW n. 7 72). Elizabeth highlights her image that her people are her natural children and that her reign has succeeded in providing as its progeny the first great English nation state. Thus, instead of needing to produce an heir of her body, she must now appoint one divinely chosen who will be but a stepparent to her nation.

Mary Beth Rose asserts that, "Other than some veiled allusions, after 1563 direct references to the queen's motherhood disappear from her speeches, even when, as she does frequently, she presents herself as nurturer and caretaker" (1078). Rose's assertion, though specifically true, is still rather problematic. In the first case, "mother" cannot be automatically and unequivocally equated

to “nurturer” and “caretaker,” especially in a culture where children were regularly fostered out and used as objects of exchange among the noble classes.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, Elizabeth’s references to her own possible maternity do appear in various other texts from her hand.

For example, in “The French Prayer” of Queen Elizabeth’s Prayer Book, circa 1579–82, Elizabeth offers

[. . .] my God and Father, I render Thee everlasting thanks that Thou has given me the honor of being mother and nurse of Thy dear Children. Surely it is Thou, O my Savior, who has given me, with the power, the will to do things by which Thou hast confirmed Thy holy promises and hast made the effects of Thy singular goodness felt by Thy servants and Thy people. Therefore continue, Lord, to make use of me, rendering me willing to advance Thy kingdom. (CW 314)

Herein, Elizabeth draws a clear parallel to the Virgin Mary,<sup>7</sup> whom God had previously made the mother and redeemer of his people.

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<sup>6</sup> For more on this issue, see Fulmerton, especially pp. 29-66.

<sup>7</sup> See Helen Hackett’s full-length text, Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen : Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary, for the most sustained, positive argument with regard to Elizabeth’s use of the Virgin Mary iconography. John N. King provides an opposing reading in his essay “Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen,” pp. 30-74.

Also, in her speech closing Parliament, April 10, 1593, Elizabeth asserts to her people and their representatives that

This kingdom hath had many noble and victorious princes. I will not compare with any of them in wisdom, fortitude, and other virtues; but (saving the duty of a child that is not to compare with her father) in love, care, sincerity, and justice. (CW 329)

Elizabeth goes on in this speech to defend her seeming inability to "advance my territories", by saying

I acknowledge my womanhood and weakness in that respect, but it hath not been fear to obtain or doubt how to keep the things so obtained that withholden me from these attempts; only, my mind was never to invade my neighbors, nor to usurp upon any, only contented to reign over my own and to rule as a just prince. (CW 329)

Here, Elizabeth takes the masculine concept of conquest and expansion as a negative in terms of family; as a woman, she has "stayed at home" to tend to, nurture, and strengthen the unity of her children, her people.

In a variant of this same closing speech, Elizabeth claimed that of the princes who have ruled over England, there were "none more careful over you" (CW 331). Thus, like the foster or godmother, though she may not have given physical birth to "her children," she has given them the necessary nurturing in order to strengthen and advance them.

Elizabeth's estimation of her own performance in serving mother to her people stands in marked contrast to that of her cousin, Mary. In a letter to Mary Stuart dated June 23, 1567,<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth offers political advice on how Mary should proceed concerning her relationship with her Scottish people. The most notable portion of Elizabeth's speech (at least for this study) is concerned with Mary's infant son James:

And next thereto, to be careful how your son the prince may be preserved, for the comfort of yours and your realm, which two things we have from the beginning always taken to heart, and therein do mean to continue. (CW 118-19)

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<sup>8</sup> This is after Mary's marriage to Bothwell, her supposed co-conspirator in the death of her husband Darnley, which led to her fleeing from Scotland. See Plowden's Two Queens in One Isle pp. 120-28 and Worman pp. 165-81.

Elizabeth concludes this letter speaking to Mary's proposed "comfort and tranquillity of your realm" and naming her "good sister" (CW 119). The inference here to Elizabeth's interest in the baby is clear and twofold: not only does she have the concerns of a fellow monarch at hand, but also those of a possible heir.

In a 1570 letter to Mary during her imprisonment,<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth notes that she has "forborn to fortify your son's title by open act" (CW 124). Here she still hopes to return Mary to her son and throne. However, by 1585, Elizabeth's tone in her letters to James, her justification and authority for writing even, seems to construct their relationship as mother offering advice to son in using such phrases as "I recommend you to God's safe tuition, who grant you many gladsome years" (CW 264). And James responded in kind to this older female figure, addressing her almost commonly as "Madame and mother" and signing letters with the signature of "Your most loving and devoted brother and son" (CW 265-66). In commenting favorably on one of James' decisions in government, Elizabeth falls

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<sup>9</sup> See Wormand pp. 170-92; Weir's Life of Elizabeth I pp. 270-83 and 360-83; Erickson pp. 235-60 and 354-63; and Plowden's Two Queens in One Isle pp. 141-221 with regard to the particulars of Mary's imprisonment in England. At this point, the infamous "casket letters" have already been found and



readily into her water imagery with "Since God hath made kings, let them not unmake their authority and let brooks and small rivers acknowledge their springs and flow no further than their banks. I praise God that you uphold ever a regal rule" (CW 268). Her comments here also resemble those of the justifiably proud mother comparing the abilities of her own beloved son with those less able offspring of other women. Also, we see how metaphorically Elizabeth has used divine right to make natural an "unnatural" parent-child relationship.

In acknowledging with all sincerity James' somewhat lukewarm complaints with regard to the execution of his mother, Elizabeth calls him "like a most natural good son" (CW 295). In a later letter, Elizabeth seeks to repair and rebuild her relationship with James, assuring him that "you have not in the world a more loving kinswoman nor a more dear friend than myself" (CW 296).<sup>10</sup>

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publicized, and James Stewart, earl of Moray, regent of Scotland, Mary's half-brother, and thus, James' uncle has been assassinated.

<sup>10</sup> By March of 1587, James was conceding that

[. . .] ye purge yourself of your unhappy fact, as on the one part—considering your rank and sex, consanguinity, and long-professed goodwill to the defunct, together with your many and solemn attestations of your innocence—I dare not wrong you so far as not to judge honorably of your unspotted part therein; so on the other side, I wish that your honorable behavior in all times hereafter may fully persuade the whole world of the same. And as for my part I look that ye will give me at this time such a full satisfaction in all respects as shall be a mean to strengthen and unite this isle, establish and maintain the true religion, and oblige me to be as of before I was, your most loving [. . .]. (CW 297)

By 1593, Elizabeth's epistolary relationship with James has progressed to the point that she confides, "You know my dear brother, that since you first breathed I regarded always to conserve it as mine own it had been you bare" (CW 366). In textually rewriting their relationship, Elizabeth has moved to the point of "erasing" Mary even from the act of giving birth to James and to substitute her own image even into that moment. To authenticate her "birthing" experience of James, Elizabeth asserts that much as a labouring woman risks her life (particularly during this period in history), she even "withstood the hands and helps of a mighty king to make you safe" (CW 366). With this, Elizabeth constitutes herself as the "mother" of James' crown even more than of his physical body.<sup>11</sup> Thus, she has claimed him on both levels: insinuating herself into the physical component of his birth and then solidifying her claim on maternity by re-birthing him into monarchy. Of course, the concept that she, the Virgin Mother, has given birth with the assistance of God the father places a heavy burden upon James: she has

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Here we see that James, in the name of their common interests, is ready to accept Elizabeth's explanation of the necessity of Mary's execution and move forward as previously in their relationship.

figuratively constructed him as the new Christ to lead her great Protestant state.<sup>12</sup>

Having achieved authentication in her maternity, Elizabeth's communiqués with James from that point forward take this relationship as a major premise. In a letter later in 1593, Elizabeth asks James to excuse her excessive advice and meddling in his affairs as being a result of her care and concern for him: she tells him "blame my love if it exceed any limits" (CW 374). Much like a mother, if she sins, it is the sin of caring too much. In a 1602 letter, Elizabeth returns to her use of the perception of her own sex's susceptibility to witty and sly discourse when making a point to James concerning the French, noting that even as a member of the "weakest sex, I should condemn my judgment" had she fallen for the French Henry IV's persuasions. Here, Elizabeth follows up on a comment that she had made to the French king in regard to her ideal in a son: "For as to my son, if I had had one, I would rather have seen him dead than a coward" (CW 363). Adapting this to the circumstances

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<sup>11</sup> The irony here is that in signing Mary's death warrant, Elizabeth was the physical and material agent in finally settling the issue of the Scottish crown, for while Mary lived, she could make claim to James' throne just as she did Elizabeth's.

<sup>12</sup> The image of London as the New Jerusalem rhetorically eliminated Rome from the history of Christianity.

that she set forth to James, we can also replace the word coward here with either fool or womanly.

Thus, Elizabeth, like other parents, bequeaths her experience and knowledge to her "son" as she teaches the fine art of kingship to the young James: "For your own sake play the king, and let your subjects see you respect yourself, and neither to hide or to suffer dishonor" (CW 374). Elizabeth continues in this letter by explaining that she is sending a trusted ambassador to James so that he might "know my opinion, judgment, and advice," because James is the one for whom she "wish{es} many years of reign" (CW 374). Given our historic perspective, this statement resonates with the history that was to follow. For it would be the House of Stuart who would ultimately empower Parliament at the price of the monarchy and begin the final dissolution of the Divine Right doctrine on English soil.<sup>13</sup>

Returning to her metaphoric use of the role of sister, Elizabeth constructed relationships with kings of France and Scotland. She then levied this construct into a virgin widowhood. From her position as "widow," Elizabeth secured

an heir and successor that would, hopefully, carry forward with her lessons and her care for her subjects of England. Also, in choosing James for her successor, she expanded England's borders without bloodshed or cost of war—two coins Elizabeth was loath to spend during her lifetime. Her acquisition of James as “royal” and natural son complemented her construction of herself as mother to a nation.<sup>14</sup> She had taken the roles that her society had allocated to women and followed them through to the next degree: she was wife and mother while maintaining the inviolate and holy position of virgin. Her authentic use of her Divine Right allowed her to mother a strong nation, which she left in far better condition than she found it.

Her legacy, however, would not all be within her immediate and physical control. With Elizabeth's death in 1603, an era ended. Because of this paradigm shift in terms of the monarchy (the end of the House of Tudor with the ascension of the House of Stuart), the careful reins that she had held on her image and the metaphors that she had so

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<sup>13</sup> See Julia Walker's discussion of James' interactions with Parliament in her essay “Posthumous Images of Elizabeth,” pp. 267-69. Also see the discussion of the Stuarts in The Oxford History of Britain, pp. 327-72.

<sup>14</sup> One interesting note here is that in choosing James, Elizabeth actually went against her father's will in that he had eliminated the line of his sister Mary from which James sprang. An argument could be made here that Elizabeth actually undercut one of the establishing texts of her own throne. However, given her

tightly built with her presence and linguistic ability would now have to adapt to new situations and changing audience without her conscious ethos to guide the interpretation of exactly who and what was the great Elizabeth Regina. Elizabeth's words would now be truly tested as their interpretation would cease to be synchronic and would slide into a diachronic audience.

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reliance on constructing her Divine Right as springing from God's choice even more so than her father's loins, and her reinvention of James, this argument is lessened.

Chapter 5 Elizabeth's Continuing Legacy: "Neither  
do I desire to live longer days than that I may see  
your prosperity"<sup>1</sup>

She hath wiped off th'aspersion of her sex,  
That women wisdom lack to play the rex.

-Anne Bradstreet, "In Honour of that High and  
Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory"  
(1650)

Queen Elizabeth reigned long and happy; and though she  
cloathed her self in Sheeps skin, yet she had a Lions paw,  
and a Foxes head; she strokes the Cheeks of her Subjects  
with Flattery, whilst she picks their Purses; and though  
she seemed loth, yet she never failed to crush to death  
those that disturbed her waies.

-Margaret Cavendish, The World's Olio (1655)

During her reign, Elizabeth kept the tightest control  
on her image, especially with regard to what was said about  
her in print. After her death, however, Elizabeth's image  
and legacy moved beyond her physical control. It is a

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<sup>1</sup> A portion of this chapter was originally presented as a paper at the 2001 International Aphra Behn Society

testimony to her consideration of the diachronic portion of her image that so many positive images remain when the talented and responsive speaker's literal, controlling presence was removed.

The foremost agent, at least initially, in control of shaping consumption of Elizabeth's image was, of course, her heir, James Stuart. After spending years in instruction at the hands of Elizabeth, James, much like a natural born son seeking to distance himself from the legacy of his parent and establish and authorize his own position, sought to "erase" Elizabeth as "mother." After having been wont to sign his letters to Elizabeth as "Your most loving and devoted brother and son" (CW 263), upon her death, as Mihoko Suzuki notes,

James's fashioning of himself as a patriarch—in implicit repudiation of his predecessor who constructed herself as a wife and mother of the nation—was itself called into question by the nostalgia for Elizabeth during his reign, perhaps most notably by the publication of Elizabeth's Armada speech and by Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra which celebrates Elizabeth in the guise of Cleopatra over



the colorless bureaucrat Octavian, who represents James. (232)

This nostalgia for Elizabeth was almost immediate and seemed to follow as a natural fashion the discontent that had marked and defined her last decade.<sup>2</sup> This development was the result almost directly of the entrance of the outsider, the Scottish James VI. Perceived as being exactly what the English had most resented in Philip II, James entered England as a "foreigner," and was, thus, immediately suspect.

In his quest to rewrite his own ascent to the throne, James' actions can be scrutinized using Constance Jordan's<sup>3</sup> theory where she observes that "To question history [. . .] is to begin by regarding the historian himself as suspect, as one who is trying to acquire power by defending a particular party or cause" (75); or that, conversely, at least for our purposes, "The use of history to invalidate the concept of type and typology in general often results in a challenge to authority" (n. 19, p. 79). Thus, to achieve his own voice, James actually had to attempt to "erase" Elizabeth from his history (James' task was almost

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<sup>2</sup> See the collection Dissing Elizabeth for more on negative visions of Elizabeth during her reign.

the exact opposite of that which Elizabeth faced at the beginning of her own reign).

Soon, however, after he had finally inherited the throne from her, James quickly moved to establish himself in his own right and thus write, in his domain of conquering male, His-story. Prior to her death, the relationship between Elizabeth and James had, obviously, been fraught with some degree of tension: as Carole Levin states,

Elizabeth was sensitive about any references to what her father had done to her mother. When in late 1586 James VI tried to convince Elizabeth not to execute his mother, he had his envoy William Keith tell Elizabeth that "King Henry VIII's reputation was never prejudged but in the beheading of his bedfellow." Elizabeth was furious that James would imply a parallel between Mary Stuart and Anne Boleyn, and would raise a subject she considered taboo. Keith told James that Elizabeth took such "chafe as ye would wonder." (87)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models: she is writing about Christine de Pisan and others.

<sup>4</sup> See "Gender, Monarchy, and the Power of Words" in Dissing Elizabeth.

The fact that James would make such a verbal assault is understandable: if he had made no objection to the intended execution of his mother, history and Elizabeth would have thought him unnatural and weak. Whether or not this was the most effective choice of metaphor at James' disposal is, of course, open to debate.

Reeling from negative comparisons to Elizabeth on every level, James sought to separate his reign and its attendant culture from hers in every way. As a result of this move, the culture's regard for women shifted. As Barbara Lewalski demonstrates in her excellent tome Jacobean Women Writing, women under James did not completely lose their voices or right to education. However, women writers during James' reign did not enjoy the same education as they had during the late Tudor period--a circumstance which would ultimately further gild perception of Elizabeth's dynasty. Feeling confined by the cool reception to women's voices, these young writers would invariably look longingly and idealistically back to Elizabeth and her reign.

In discussing the impact that Elizabeth had on later women writers, Suzuki draws clear class distinctions between Early Modern women by observing that

During her reign [. . .] Elizabeth was not always seen as an empowering exemplar for ordinary women; in fact, Carole Levin has unearthed statements of ordinary women that Elizabeth was promiscuous and had illegitimate children, statements that led to charges of treason. We can extrapolate from Levin's findings that these women sought to bring Elizabeth down to their own level by sexualizing and hence disempowering her. These women shared with Elizabeth a subject position as women subordinate to men—for example, Elizabeth's own ambassador to France, Sir Thomas Smith in De Republica Anglorum (1565) concedes that an "absolute queene" who inherits the title has the right to rule, but only because she would "never lacke the counsell of such grave and discreete men as able to supplie all other defaultes"; yet they did not agree on how to interpret that subject position. Thus Levin's research supports Allison Heisch's argument that Elizabeth's rule did not affect women's position in patriarchy. (233)

And, of course, this is exactly as Elizabeth herself had constructed her role/rule: as the exception, not the standard. However, to ignore completely the model that she

had provided is to oversimplify several very complex equations. In addition, the example that Elizabeth constructed through her very being would have had the least impact on the women of the lower classes. Here, as in other instances, we must remember not to be too anachronistic: social class was as much if not more of a determinant than gender in the Early Modern period.

In explaining this seeming inconsistency, Suzuki asserts that

The contradiction of a woman on the throne in a strict patriarchy proved to be—at least in retrospect—an enabling condition for women who sought to overturn gender norms by asserting a woman's right to inherit titles and estates, by contesting orthodox interpretations of the Bible that justified the subordination of women, and by intervening in the public sphere and participating in political discussion. (233-34)

Thus, Suzuki here admits that Elizabeth's very being caused disruptions to the previously unquestioned societal norms in regard to women, whether Elizabeth had intended such or not.

Suzuki uses the example of two women writers from the Jacobean period to make her case concerning Elizabeth's unintentional influence on women, their place, and their valuation of self, namely Anne Clifford and Aemilia Lanyer. With regard to Clifford, Suzuki notes, she

[. . .]evidently found an inspiring model and example in Elizabeth, who suffered years of adversity under Mary Tudor's rule and who eventually triumphed to assert the inheritance of her title and crown from Henry VIII. (235)

Whereas in the case of Lanyer, "Clifford's middle-class contemporary," Suzuki observes that

Lanyer, also cites Elizabeth's example in her prefatory appeal to Anne of Denmark for patronage. Although Clifford was one of the most prominent aristocrats in her own right and through her two marriages, and Lanyer was a middle-class daughter of a court musician, both celebrate Elizabeth in their writings. Lanyer, like Clifford, recalls how "great Elizaes favour blest my youth," in bidding for similar patronage from Anne of Denmark, the "Glorious Queene," one of her dedicatees. Addressing Anne, she writes, "Let your Virtues in my Glasse by seen" (90), echoing

Spenser's well-known exhortation to Elizabeth in The Faerie Queene: "Ne let his fairest Cynthia refuse, / In mirrours more then one her selfe to see"

(III.Proem5). By referring to Anne in terms that inevitably recall Elizabeth as Gloriana, Lanyer seeks to persuade Anne to heed her predecessor's example, just as she invokes Elizabeth's memory in addressing Anne's daughter, another Elizabeth. Praising the steadfastness of Anne Clifford's mother, the Duchess of Cumberland, Lanyer refers to Elizabeth's motto:

"Still to remaine the same, and still her owne: / And what our fortunes enforce us to, / She of Devotion and meere Zeale doth do" ("To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie," 117-20). In fact, Lanyer makes this connection between Elizabeth and Cumberland explicit in the opening stanzas of "Salve Deus" itself:

Sith Cynthia is ascended to that rest  
 Of endlesse joy and true Eternitie,  
 That glorious place that cannot be exprest  
 By any wight clad in mortalitie,  
 In her almightie love so highly blest,  
 And crown'd with everlasting Sov'raigtie;

Where Saints and Angells do attend her Throne,

And she gives glorie unto God alone.

To thee great Countesse now I will applie

My Pen, to write thy never dying fame. (1-10).

Here and in the various dedications, Elizabeth functions as an exemplary model of a female patron and a female monarch who represented herself as forging a special relationship with her people. In appealing to the patronage of a female readership headed by the Queen, Lanyer calls upon gender interests that cut across class divisions between the aristocratic patrons on the one hand and the middle-class author and readership on the other: "vertuous Ladies" and "Vertuous Reader." Lanyer thus writes both the prefaces and "Salve Deus" under the assumption that despite class divisions, of which she is painfully aware, women nevertheless constitute a social and political category of subjects with common collective interests.

The double register of Salve Deus that aligned it within acceptable genres, as epideictic poetry of aristocratic patrons and as devotional poetry, gave Lanyer's text license to enter into the debate



concerning women's place in the social order. Lanyer's care to justify her work and its publication, even claiming that the Latin title came to her in a dream, suggesting divine inspiration, reveals the difficulty faced by women authors seeking to publish a work especially on the volatile issue of gender relations during this period. Following the dedicatory poems exclusively addressed to female patrons, with Elizabeth as the repeatedly invoked historical model of political empowerment and patronage, Lanyer turns in the body of Salve Deus to enter into the contemporary debate concerning women's place in the social order. (236-37)

Thus, Lanyer not only used Elizabeth as exemplum for what the role of powerful noblewoman's ability to act as patron should be and encompass, but she also moves into consideration of Elizabeth's impact on the role of women in general. In Elizabeth, Lanyer sees literal proof to discredit many of the stereotypes with regard to the weaknesses and inability of women.

Another poet, now considered even more important, to use Elizabeth Tudor as source material was she who was dubbed "The Tenth Muse." In Anne Bradstreet's reading of

Elizabeth, she seeks to acquire the power to speak, while at the same time challenging the political authority that she finds herself controlled by. Thus, in her poem "In honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth, of most happy memory," written circa 1643, Bradstreet salutes the Virgin Queen by writing

Who was so good, so just, so learn'd, so wise,  
From all the Kings on earth she won the prize;  
Nor say I more then duly is her due,  
Millions will testifie that this is true;  
She hath wip'd off th' aspersion of her Sex,  
That women wisdome lack to play the Rex. (156)

And though much work has been done on Bradstreet's use of the elegiac form in discussing Elizabeth and other dignitaries of her time,<sup>5</sup> only Carrie Galloway Blackstock has really discussed Bradstreet's praise of Elizabeth as part of her larger "self-cultivation" and even then only in limited terms.

Much like Elizabeth's situation, Bradstreet herself helped to shape the creation of her texts in terms of content, tone, subject, and voice. Bradstreet is writing in 1643, after civil war has broken out in 1642 (Charles will

be executed in 1649), and between 1643-5, more than one in ten adult males were in arms.<sup>6</sup> The Stuart Monarchy was in a shambles, and many in England believed that perhaps monarchy as a form of government had outlived its usefulness. Thus, those loyal to the idea of the crown and finding fault with the new governmental order (or lack thereof) looked to the Golden Age of the English Monarchy—namely, the great Virgin Queen. Bradstreet, daughter of Thomas Dudley and, thus, related both by blood and inclination to Robert Dudley and the Sidneys of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, would acutely feel this pull. As Elaine Beilin observes, “Women [. . .]wrote noble lives to articulate political ideology” (74). Here Bradstreet would find her use of Elizabeth doing double service: first as counterbalance to the ignoble Stuarts, and secondly, as representative of erstwhile denied feminine capabilities.

By the time that Bradstreet is writing her early, overtly political works, several waves of pro-Elizabeth nostalgia have come and gone. As Julia Walker notes in her aptly named edition Dissing Elizabeth, the tensions and

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<sup>5</sup> See Jennifer Waller pp. 445-48 and Stephanie Jed pp. 114-18.

<sup>6</sup> P. 364 The Oxford History of Britain

unrests brought about by the last decade of Elizabeth's childless reign had begun to dissipate and be replaced by nostalgia as early as 1607, and there was a complete pro-Elizabeth movement by the 1620s (257+). Further, as Beilin observes, Bradstreet had already used her history The Four Monarchies to condemn "Stuart absolutism and divine right" (74). In her discussion of past, pagan governments, Bradstreet praises "Thalestris, queen of th' Amazons" (l. 2149, p. 136), Cleopatra (152), and others. Using this history as her base, Bradstreet turns to her iconization of the last Tudor monarch.

In using Elizabeth as a text upon which to comment and thus authorize her voice, Bradstreet, like other authors including Jane Austen, continues a tradition that began almost simultaneously with the Queen's death. James Stuart, who Elizabeth named as her heir, initially began by idealizing the Virgin Queen to solidify his own authority and legitimacy through his relationship to her. However, whereas James quickly shifted his reading strategy, Bradstreet consistently uses Elizabeth's model as an enabling and authorizing icon.

Diverse authors beyond Bradstreet and Jane Austen, both of whom used her to authorize their own speech as they

wrote history—an enterprise doubly contrary to their gender--during her own time and later, wrote both in her praise and to her damnation, including Margaret Fuller, who has an interestingly unfavorable reading of Elizabeth in her section on Minerva and the Muse in Woman in the Nineteenth Century. A tantalizing question remains as to why, seemingly, the more "feminist" the later author, the more negative her opinion of Elizabeth.<sup>7</sup> So, though Elizabeth herself felt, as did her contemporaries, that women's ability was and should be limited, by her very existence and example, she established herself as an iconic figure that later women could take and respond to, much as earlier female writers had used the authority of God to speak and write.

As was discussed earlier,<sup>8</sup> the characteristic of prudence was one that Elizabeth would have desired to have attributed her; yet, prudence, though represented as a female icon, was not an attribute typically perceived in women. The gendered personification of Prudence (as with many other metaphysical traits) occurs, as Joan M. Ferrante

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<sup>7</sup> Fuller actually misreads Elizabeth by arguing that she pretended to something other than a woman. Fuller focused on Elizabeth's references to having the "heart and stomach of a king" and failed to read more of her writings. Additionally, Fuller was located in her own time and anachronistically using the standards of her own American society.

discusses in Woman as Image in Medieval Literature, because "the gender of an abstract noun determines the gender of the personification" (5). Ferrante goes on to discuss how this Realistic vision of symbolism would indicate that since an "attribute was represented as a woman meant that it must have female characteristics [. . .]that there was something essentially female about it" (6).<sup>9</sup> However, paradoxically, women were denied attribution of this trait that was identified as feminine. One justification for this paradox, as discussed in the Introduction, can be seen in John Knox, in his complaint against female monarchs The First Blast of the Trumpet.

In Bradstreet's estimation, however, Elizabeth had more than successfully managed the difficult rhetorical maneuvering of achieving this attribute. Bradstreet was thus able to use her as authorizing device in her own writing. For example, in her "Proem," Bradstreet goes so far to contend "That men account it no impiety, /To say thou wert a fleshly deity" (155). Though in speaking of her own voice, Bradstreet does contend that hers is but a "bleating," like a lamb, in the midst of the "roaring

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<sup>8</sup> See Introduction.

verse"; yet Bradstreet ladles praise on Elizabeth, echoing her praise of the earlier queens (and, thus, effectively erasing the examples of Mary Tudor and Mary Stuart that had so enraged Knox and others). Bradstreet calls her a dread virago, as she had Cleopatra, thus taking the negative associations off the virgin position (the most troubling condemnation from the 1590s as the succession had been left conspicuously unsettled). Giving Elizabeth her earned acclaim of prudence, Bradstreet compares her to Minerva, the Pallas queen, and further solidifies her praise of Elizabeth by saluting her as "Our Amazon in th' Camp of Tilbury"—thus leaving open the possibility that had Elizabeth been less (that is, the consort of Phillip II), then the English defeat of the Spanish Armada might not have occurred, an interesting "What if?" proposition.

Bradstreet begins to wind down in the poem proper by invoking many of the images that Elizabeth herself used while simultaneously completing her argument for Elizabeth's abilities and, by association, her own: "Yet for our queen is no fit parallel./ She was a Phoenix queen, so shall she be,/Her ashes not revived, more Phoenix she"

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<sup>9</sup> Since Ferrante is dealing with medieval literature, this quote is somewhat anachronistic; this is an area where far more work needs to be done.

(157). Interestingly, Strong argues that the so-called Phoenix portrait is probably the most realistic representation that we have of Elizabeth.

Bradstreet continues on

Her personal perfections, who would tell  
 Must dip his pen in th' Heleconian well,  
 Which I may not, my pride doth aspire  
 To read what others write and so admire.  
 Now say, have women worth? Or have they none?  
 Or had they some, but with our Queen is't gone?  
 Nay masculines, you have thus taxed us long,  
 But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong[. . .].

(157)

Here Bradstreet seemingly conjures Elizabeth (the idea of witchcraft fittingly having been such a worry to James) to defend women in general (something Elizabeth would not herself have done, except in Bradstreet's construction). Bradstreet then goes on to suggest that Elizabeth is the new Arthur (Bradstreet's revision of Spenser): "If then new things their old forms shall retain,/Eliza shall rule Albion once again" (158).

Yet Bradstreet, though commenting positively upon Elizabeth's rule and the legacy she leaves, ultimately



places her consideration of Elizabeth's abilities within the aspect of her gender by asserting that Elizabeth's political abilities seem to run contrary to the accepted vision of women's leadership capabilities. Bradstreet, of course, does this to cement and authorize her own position as daughter of Elizabeth.

Scholarship done on Austen's discussion of Elizabeth has focused more on her reconstruction of history and not specifically on her use of and response to the Tudor Queen as authorizing icon.

It was the peculiar Misfortune of this Woman to have had bad Ministers—Since wicked as she herself was, she could not have committed such extensive Mischeif, had not these vile & abandoned Men connived at, & encouraged her in her Crimes." -Jane Austen in The History of England from the reign of Henry the 4<sup>th</sup> to the death of Charles the 1<sup>st</sup> (1791)

Inherent within her caustic statements regarding Elizabeth's moral character, Austen suggests that she achieved all that she does only because powerful men surrounded her. Thus, Austen suggests not only that Elizabeth lacked real ability to rule, but was merely an evil figurehead, who, lacking moral capacity herself,

compounded this deficiency by allowing herself to be led and manipulated by far worse men—a charge that Bradstreet directly addresses in her poem: “Had ever Prince such counselors as she?/ Herself Minerva caused them to be.” So though taking opposite stances in their regard of Elizabeth, Austen and Bradstreet address the same issues: critiquing Elizabeth’s leadership abilities with regard to her gendered sex.

However, Bradstreet’s epitaph added at the end of her poem does move beyond this. In the epitaph, Bradstreet appears to be writing in seemingly conscious reaction to James’ construction of Elizabeth through his own epitaph to her. James, in his own revisionist history and against the explicit wishes of Elizabeth herself, had relocated Elizabeth’s body from the Henry VII chapel in Westminster Abbey to the marginal space of the north aisle (Walker 253). Adding insult to injury in 1606, he placed her remains with those of her sister Mary in a joint grave; thus, James did after Elizabeth’s death what many had attempted in her life: equates her rule/role of queen with the image of an ineffective woman. Meanwhile he erected a massive monument for his mother Mary Stuart and later had himself buried under the altar with the first Tudor, Henry

VII, as if in death reasserting the legitimacy of his Tudor heritage while simultaneously finalizing his erasure of Elizabeth's portion in securing him the English crown.

James's inscription to Elizabeth begins, "An eternal memorial/Unto Elizabeth Queene of England, France, and Ireland,/Mother of this her country, the Nurse of Religion and/Learning" (qtd. in Walker 256). Thus, James's textual imaging of Elizabeth begins by placing her specifically in the female gender who is defined and constituted only by her relation to men. The inscription goes on to read, "For a perfect skill in very many languages,/ for glorious Endowments, as well of minde as body, and /for Regall Vertues beyond her Sex a Prince /incomparable, James, King of Great Britain" (qtd. in Walker 256). Here we note James' different naming of self, as ruling over a unified island, not the piecemeal composition allocated to Elizabeth.<sup>10</sup> Also, again, even his praise of her virtues is squarely located in how exceptional she was as a woman.

In stark contrast, Bradstreet eulogizes Elizabeth with the affirmation "Here lies the pride of queens, pattern of kings, [. . .]/Here lies the envied, yet unparalleled

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<sup>10</sup> England did not unify with Scotland until 1707, partially because James was so poorly regarded by Parliament and also because he could not handle them.

prince, /Whose living virtues speak (though dead long since).” The fake king then here becomes James and the Stuarts that followed him, not the woman acting as king.

Elizabeth once wryly noted to James Stuart that “Neither do I desire to live longer days than that I may see your prosperity” (CW 383); however, her model as enabling icon has not yet ended. Even in current United States and world political considerations, Patricia Sullivan and others note the continued questioning of women in the political realm, ranging from Madeline Albright, Janet Reno, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Margaret Thatcher, and beyond (“Politics, Women’s Voices, and the Renaissance” 6-7). As long as such issues and questions remain, Elizabeth’s image and legacy will, likewise, be necessary as an exemplar.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion: "Prayer of the Queen to God"<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Tudor began life already situated in a problematized and problematic position: having entered as a she instead of a he, Elizabeth began six decades of defying expectations of and roles projected upon her. Rather than failing because of her sex, she became the most successful of Henry VIII's heirs.<sup>2</sup> Using her natural skills, her Humanist education, and numerous "tests" of both of these, Elizabeth successfully manipulated her society's definitions by simultaneously (over-)fulfilling the roles of woman while enacting alterations in these very expectations. She used the doctrine of Divine Right to legitimate her rule and create a new Protestant nation.

Elizabeth's successful accomplishment of her goals are foreshadowed in one of her prayers from early in her reign,<sup>3</sup> as Elizabeth requests,

Father most high, who hast laid out the universe with  
Thy Word and adorned it with the Holy Spirit, and who  
hast appointed me as monarch of the British kingdom,  
favor me by Thy goodness to implant piety and root out

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<sup>1</sup> This is the title of one of Elizabeth's Greek Prayers. I will further discuss this particular prayer in this chapter. See Collected Works, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Given the lengths that Henry went to in gaining his loan, legitimate male heir, this observation demonstrates the irony of history.

impiety, to protect freely willed religion, to destroy superstitious fear by working freely to promote divine service, and to spy out the worship of idols; and further, to gain release from the enemies of religion as well as those who hate me—Antichrists, Pope lovers, atheists, and all persons who fail to obey Thee and me. With all these things, omnipotent Lord, favor me, and after death my kingdom will be the kingdom of heaven, amen. (CW 163)

This prayer contains many of the themes that have been discussed here, especially Elizabeth's full belief in and reliance on her Divine Right and appointment to the throne. This prayer also epitomizes Elizabeth's belief in her role: to lead her nation in such a way as to please God and result in her own salvation. However, Elizabeth's goal was also to gain the approval of her human father, Henry VIII, in maintaining the integrity of her shores and protecting the nation from debilitating civil war.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, Elizabeth did just this through her recourse to rhetoric and the metaphors available to her.

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<sup>3</sup> This prayer is specifically from the period 1558-1572.

<sup>4</sup> Preventing the sort of civil wars that had rocked England's foundations prior to the ascendance of Henry's father, Henry VII, was his primary reason for seeking a legitimate male heir.

The fact that continuing disagreement concerning what Elizabeth achieved and arguments as to her effectiveness serve as testimony to her enduring rhetorical ability as each successive generation looks to her model and debates her choices and influence. Her awareness of the diachronic component of her legacy allowed her use of metaphors to slide symbolically from one audience to another, losing only portions of their meaning.

By using as her controlling metaphor the image of God's power and ability in raising such a lowly creature as herself (emphasis here on the "her"), Elizabeth managed to balance the seemingly conflicting requirements of such divergent roles as virgin,<sup>5</sup> mother, ruler, daughter, sister, wife, and widow. In simultaneously using and redefining these terms, Elizabeth manages her most far-reaching redefinition: that of queen. When Elizabeth came to the throne, her immediate predecessor, her own half-sister, "Bloody" Mary Tudor, had been the only individually ruling by right of birth monarch who also happened to be a woman.<sup>6</sup> As has been previously discussed (see Chapter 1), Mary's

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<sup>5</sup> After having completed this study, I am also ready to add my argument to the substantial literature with regard to why Elizabeth opted to never marry. Put simply, sacrificing her unmarried position would have limited Elizabeth's ability to use and manipulate the allotted roles of women as metaphoric.

reign had been less than successful on many levels. Besides Mary, the role of "queen" had been limited to that of consort to the king, and Henry VIII himself had devalued this position even further from "overuse," having provided six queens during his reign. Thus, when Elizabeth assumed the throne, the role of queen was a weak, secondary position that existed at the whim of a king (or, as in Mary's case, answered to the whim of a king). In all of her reconstructions of her roles and position, Elizabeth's most compelling addition to the lexicon of our cultural history is the image of what a queen could and should be. The ongoing pressure on women to live out the roles of wife and mother while choosing whether or not to pursue a career epitomizes why, in only one of many ways, Elizabeth as emblem is still valuable and necessary.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the writing of this dissertation has already begun to reveal the many possibilities for building onto past scholarly work that can and needs to take place. More material on Elizabeth will explode into the scholarly world

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<sup>6</sup> The Empress Matilda, the only legitimate child of Henry I, had claimed the throne, but her coronation never took place as she was ousted by her cousin Stephen. See The Oxford History of of Britain, p.p. 136-39.

<sup>7</sup> Irony exists in comparing and contrasting the debate over whether or not Elizabeth chose not to marry because she feared being unable to bear children (we have various accounts as to the type and regularity of her menstrual cycles) and the current firestorm over whether or not an infertility crisis actually exists for the women of today.



from numerous people already cited and incorporated into this dissertation. Melinda Alliker Rabb has recently published the first article to propose and begin the dialogue towards answering exactly how new media have changed the literary canon with regard to Early Modern writing. From the extensive work on the dissertation and the process followed and learned, we now see what can and needs to be done, where critical voices need to be inserted and developed. Following up on the discovery of the veiled and sometimes indirect comments and allusions that Elizabeth makes about her mother Anne Boleyn in several of her prayers, we need to reconfigure some of our assumptions about that relationship.<sup>8</sup>

During the time that the dissertation (certainly an excessive number of years) was being composed, an overwhelming and inundating wealth of new material has been generated. We now must look forward to producing and contributing further to this developing body of scholarship. The dissertation itself becomes the rough draft for this contribution. So at the end, we must, much like Shakespeare's stages of man, return to the beginning

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<sup>8</sup> Afterall, Anne was so atypical as mother in her own time that she actually wanted to breastfeed Elizabeth herself, much to the horror and chagrin of both Henry and the ladies at court. See Weir's The Life of

and Elizabeth's quote that names the introduction: "But now for answer unto you, you must take an answer without answer at my hands" (CW 199). And though many new insights have been garnered, there can be no final, singular "read" on Elizabeth and what exactly she means to any given time period. For just as scholars make generalizations about her, new insights become available through her texts and our understanding of the period. As Elizabeth's argument concerning her roles is transmitted to new generations and audiences in new mediums, we need to pursue what other research needs to be done.

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APPENDIX

## Appendix 1

Adapted from Thomas, Heather. "Chronology." The Life and Times of Queen Elizabeth I. 31 May 2002. 1 November 2002. <<http://www.elizabethi.org>>.

**1533 25 January** - Henry marries Anne Boleyn.

**1 July**- Henry VIII is excommunicated.

**7 September** - Elizabeth is born.

**10 September** - Elizabeth is given a magnificent christening at Greenwich.

**1536 19 May** - Execution of Anne Boleyn.

**30 May** - Henry marries Jane Seymour.

**1 July** - Both Mary and Elizabeth are declared illegitimate by Parliament.

**1537 12 October** - The birth of Prince Edward, the "boy King" Edward VI.

**15 October** - Edward VI is christened.

**24 October** - Death of Jane Seymour, Edward's mother.

**1540 6 January** - Henry marries Anne of Cleves. The marriage is soon annulled.

**28 July** - Henry VIII marries Kathryn Howard, Anne Boleyn's cousin.

**1541 9 November** - Kathryn Howard is sent to the Tower of London.

- 1542 13 February** - Kathryn Howard is executed on charges of adultery.
- 8 December** - Birth of Mary, soon to be Mary, Queen of Scots.
- 1543 12 July** - Henry VIII marries Katherine Parr.
- 1544 31 December** - Elizabeth's first surviving letter accompanies her New Year's gift to her stepmother, Queen Katherine Parr.
- 1545 30 December** - Only surviving letter of Elizabeth to her father, Henry VIII, written on this day.
- 1547 28 January** - The death of Henry VIII, aged 55. Edward becomes King at the age of only nine.
- Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, becomes protector of England as Edward is too young to rule all by himself.
- 14 February** - Elizabeth begins her correspondence with her brother, the King.
- 20 February** - Edward is crowned King of England.
- 1548 5 September** - Katherine Parr dies.
- 1549 20 March** - Execution of Thomas Seymour, Edward Seymour's brother, for treason. His execution brings disgrace upon Edward Seymour, and he is replaced as Protector by John Dudley.

**15 May** - Elizabeth's letter to her brother accompanied by her portrait.

**1550 4 June** - Robert Dudley married Amy Robsart. Princess Elizabeth was among the guests.

**1552 22 January** - Execution of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset.

**1553 6 July** - Death of Edward VI.

**21 May** - The arranged marriage of Lady Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley took place.

**10 July** - Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed Queen.

**20 July** - Mary Tudor proclaimed Queen.

**3 August** - Mary rode in triumph into London, her half-sister Elizabeth with her.

**30 October** - Coronation of Mary I.

**1554** Thomas Wyatt's rebellion.

**12 February** - Execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband Guildford Dudley.

**16 March** - Elizabeth's letter is written to Queen Mary.

**18 March** - Elizabeth is sent to the Tower for supposed complicity with Wyatt and his followers.

**11 April** - Execution of Sir Thomas Wyatt.

**19 May** - Elizabeth is taken from the Tower to be

closely confined at Woodstock Manor, Oxfordshire.

**25 July** - Queen Mary marries Philip II.

**1555** The famous burning of Protestants by Mary I begins.

**16 October** - Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley  
are burned at the stake at Oxford.

Elizabeth is released from Woodstock after a year's  
captivity and allowed to return to her childhood home  
of Hatfield.

**1556 21 March** - Archbishop Thomas Cranmer is burned at the  
stake.

**1557 7 July** - Mary Tudor declares war on France in support  
of her husband.

**1558 7 January** - England's last dominion in France, Calais,  
is lost to the French.

**17 November** - Queen Mary dies. Elizabeth becomes  
Queen (Ascension Day).

**24 April** - Mary Queen of Scots marries Francis, heir  
to the French throne.

**14 December** - Mary I is buried at Westminster.

**1559 15 January** - Coronation of Elizabeth I.

**10 February** - Elizabeth's first speech before  
Parliament.

**2 May** - John Knox returns to Scotland.

**8 May** - Elizabeth's Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity are passed, implementing the Elizabethan Religious Settlement.

**10 May** - John Knox incites the Scottish Lords of the Congregation to rise against the regency of Mary Queen of Scots' mother. They seize Edinburgh, destroy religious houses, and subsequently approach Elizabeth I for aid in their cause.

**10 July** - Henry II dies. His son, Francis, becomes King. Mary Queen of Scots declares herself Queen of England.

**18 December** - Elizabeth I sends aid to the Scottish Lords by land and sea.

**1560 6 July** - Peace with Scotland in The Treaty of Edinburgh. Mary's claims to the throne of England are annulled, but Mary refuses to ratify the treaty.

**8 September** - Robert Dudley's wife, Amy Dudley (or Robsart as she is also known) is found dead in mysterious circumstances.

**5 December** - The death of Mary, Queen of Scots' husband, Francis, King of France. Charles IX becomes King, with Catherine de Medici as Regent.



- 1561 19 August** - Mary, Queen of Scots returns to Scotland.
- September-October** - Elizabeth's conversations with the Scottish Ambassador, William Maitland.
- 1562 22 September** - Elizabeth signs the Treaty of Hampton Court, which gives assistance to the French Huguenots.
- October** - Elizabeth is seriously ill with small pox.
- 1565 29 July** - Mary Queen of Scots marries Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley.
- 1566 9 March** -The murder of David Rizzio by Darnley and his friends.
- 19 June** - James VI (and later I of England) is born.
- 10 November** - Robert Devereux, the future Earl of Essex, is born.
- 1567 10 February** - Darnley is murdered at Kirk O Field, Scotland.
- 24 April** - Mary Queen of Scots is "abducted" by James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell.
- 15 May**--Mary, Queen of Scots, marries James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, after his marriage is annulled.
- 24 July** - Mary is forced to abdicate. Mary's son, James, is proclaimed King of Scotland.
- 1568 2 May** - Mary Queen of Scots escapes from Lochleven.

**16 May** - Mary takes refuge in England, but her relief is short-lived, as she is imprisoned.

**1569 9 November** - The Northern Rebellion against Elizabeth breaks out.

**1570 20 February** - Northern Rebellion finally defeated completely.

**23 January** - James Stewart, Earl of Moray, (Mary Queen of Scots' half brother and Regent in Scotland for her son) is assassinated.

**25 February** - Elizabeth is excommunicated by the Pope. (The Papal Bull)

**1571** The Ridolfi plot to assassinate Elizabeth.

**1572 16 January** - Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, is tried for treason for conspiracy in the Ridolfi Plot.

**22-24 August** - The Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve, in which over 6,000 French Protestants are murdered.

**2 June** - Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk becomes the first nobleman of Elizabeth's reign to be executed for treason.

**1577 13 December** - Sir Francis Drake sets out on the first English voyage around the world.

**1578 12 March** - James VI takes over the reigns of

government in Scotland, with the Earl of Morton resigning the Regency.

**1579** Simier comes to England in an attempt to negotiate a marriage between Elizabeth and Alençon.

**1581** Francis, Duke of Alençon, himself comes to England to further the negotiations for the Queen's hand in marriage.

**7-11 November** - Marriage treaty is signed between Elizabeth and Alençon.

**1582** Probable composition of "On Monsieur's Departure."

**1584** **9 June** - Death of Francis, Duke of Alençon.

**July** - Elizabeth's correspondence with Catherine de Medici.

The Bond of association is formed, in which loyal subjects of the Queen pledge allegiance to her, and promise to avenge her murder if it takes place.

Sir Walter Raleigh sails to Virginia.

**1585** **7 June** - First English colony in America is established at Roanoke Island, Virginia.

**June-July** - Beginning of regular correspondence with James VI of Scotland.

The English expedition to the Netherlands under the

leadership of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

Start of the war with Spain as a result.

**1586 1 July** - Treaty of Berwick, in which Elizabeth I and James VI form a league of amity.

**17 July** - The Babington plot to assassinate Elizabeth and place Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne is revealed by Francis Walsingham.

**20 September** - Anthony Babington and fellow conspirators are executed.

**11-14 October** - The trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, for her supposed complicity in the Babington plot.

**25 October** - Sentence is pronounced against Mary, Queen of Scots.

**21 November** - Elizabeth's famous reply to Parliament with regard to Mary, Queen of Scots.

**1587 1 February** - Elizabeth signs the death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots.

**1 February** - Elizabeth's letter to James where she "adopts" him.

**8 February** - Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots at Fotheringay.

**14 February** - Elizabeth's letter to James to reopen their correspondence.

**March** - James resumes his correspondence with Elizabeth.

**19 April** - English attack Spanish fleet triumphantly at Cadiz.

**1588 8 August** - Defeat of the Spanish Armada.

**4 September** - Death of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

**1589 5 January** - Death of Catherine de Medici.

**1597** Second Spanish Armada is defeated by bad weather.

**1598 4 August** - Death of William Cecil.

**13 September** - Deaths of Philip II of Spain.

**1599 25 April** - Birth of Oliver Cromwell, future Protector of England following the English Civil War of the seventeenth century.

Essex is made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and sent there. He returns without the Queen's consent and is imprisoned.

**1600** English East India Company is founded.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex tried for misdemeanors after his return from Ireland and sentenced to lose his offices at court

**5 August** - Gowrie Conspiracy in Scotland - James VI is seized by Lord Gowrie, but later rescued.

**1601 7-8 January** - Essex Revolt against the Queen.

**19 February** - Essex is tried for treason.

**25 February** - Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, is  
executed.

**20 November** - Queen Elizabeth delivers her "Golden  
Speech."

**1603 24 March** - Death of Elizabeth I. James VI of Scotland  
also becomes James I of England.

## VITA

Samantha A. Morgan-Curtis was born at the county hospital in Sevierville, TN, January 4, 1969, during an ice storm. Because of this meteorological phenomenon, two nurses, rather than a doctor, delivered her. Such single-mindedness marked the rest of her life, as she set her sights on attending law school. Along the way, however, she backed into the Master's program in English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she heard the calling of her vocation—teaching. Samantha went on to pursue her Doctor of Philosophy in English to better enable her to have a voice in administration and pedagogy and to allow her to pursue her scholarship focusing on women's voices (and gaining more knowledge about Elizabeth Tudor than any "normal" being should possess). From there, she took a tenure track position in Rhetoric and British literature at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she resides with her beloved husband and two daughters.

