

SHAKESPEARE, POPULARITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

JEFFREY S. DOTY



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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

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It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107163379

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First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc in 2017

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Doty, Jeffrey S., author.

TITLE: Shakespeare, popularity and the public sphere / Jeffrey S. Doty.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2016. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2016026913 | ISBN 9781107163379 (Hardback)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616—Criticism and interpretation. |

Public opinion in literature. | Politics and literature—England—History—16th century. |

Politics and literature—England—History—17th century. | Literature and society—England—History—16th

century. | Literature and society—England—History—17th century. | Politics in literature. |

BISAC: LITERARY CRITICISM / European / English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PR3017 .D68 2016 | DDC 822.3/3—dc23 LC record

available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016026913>

ISBN 978-1-107-16337-9 Hardback

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SHAKESPEARE, POPULARITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In late Elizabethan England, political appeals to the people were considered dangerously democratic, even seditious: the commons were supposed to have neither political voice nor will. Yet such appeals happened so often that the regime coined the word "popularity" to condemn the pursuit of popular favor. Jeffrey S. Doty argues that in plays from *Richard II* to *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare made the tactics of popularity – and the wider public they addressed – vital aspects of politics. Shakespeare figured the public not as an extension of the royal court, but rather as a separate entity that, like the Globe's spectators who surrounded the fictional princes on its thrust stage, subjected their rulers to relentless scrutiny. For ordinary playgoers, Shakespeare's plays offered good practice for understanding the means and ends of popularity – and they continue to provide insight to the public relations strategies that have come to define modern political culture.

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Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank Jacqueline Vanhoutte, Miriam Gilbert, and Huston Diehl, the incredible teachers who introduced me to Shakespeare and turned me into a scholar. Huston passed away in 2010. Her kindness was humbling and her intuition startling. She remains an inspiration to me. The *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe* project's 2008 seminar, "Making Theatrical Publics" – led by Paul Yachnin and Steven Mullaney, two scholars whose brilliance is matched only by their generosity – was a truly formative experience. Paul set this book on course when, in response to an early draft of the *Richard II* chapter, he asked me, "Where is the theater in this?" Steven pushed me to explore the affective dimensions of theatrical experience. Their influences permeate this book. I am also grateful to the Folger Shakespeare Library for a research fellowship. I received invaluable feedback and encouragement from a number of scholars, including Ari Friedlander, Valerie Dennis, Amy Rodgers, Joy Palacios, Katharine Craik, András Kiséry, Kathy Lavezzo, Mark Bresnan, and Tom Keegan. Musa Gurnis read it piece by piece, championed it when I hated it, and often explained to me what I was trying to say.

I can hardly imagine warmer, more supportive colleagues than those I had in my department at West Texas A&M University. In particular, Bonnie Roos and Andy Reynolds inspire me through their excellent work and boundless curiosity. Were it not for the course releases and research funding provided by the Marsh Professorship in Shakespeare Studies, and the unflagging support of my department heads – first Bonney MacDonald and then Steve Severn – I could not have finished this manuscript (nor have been able to hire the talented Jonathan Baker to copyedit it). Bonney and Steve's leadership and thoughtfulness made it a pleasure to work at West Texas A&M. Thanks to my friends in Amarillo, especially David Horsley, Amy and Roman Leal, Jessica and Coty Smith, and my in-laws, Mimi and Kevin McDowell, all who pretend to find my fussiness charming.

Thanks also to Alex Pettit for his encouragement and for keeping me in Dylan bootlegs. May every Shakespearean be so lucky as to have a Platonist right next door – especially one as witty as Daniel Bloom. My parents, Susan and Tim Doty, have always been examples to me of generosity, goodness, and wisdom. And so too has Amos Magliocco, whose friendship has been one of the great gifts of my life. Lesandra Botello has made me happier than I ever thought possible and made me feel at home in the world. I dedicate this book to her.

* * *

Earlier versions of Chapters 1 and 4 appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010): 183–205 and *English Literary Renaissance* 42 (2012): 32–57, respectively. Some ideas that first appeared in “Shakespeare and Popular Politics,” *Literature Compass* 10 (2013): 162–74, are scattered throughout. Thanks to these publishers for their permission for reuse here.

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Introduction

Popularity and Publicity in Early Modern England

I

The difference between *The Prince* and the tradition of political instruction that preceded it, according to Machiavelli, was his book's basis in reality. He explained that "because I want to write what will be useful to anyone who understands, it seems better to me to concentrate on *what really happens* rather than on theories and speculations."¹ Especially worthless were oft-repeated classical arguments that rulers should be exemplars of virtue. Shakespeare's characters sometimes rehearse arguments on the importance of honesty, generosity, and duty. But like Machiavelli, Shakespeare focused on "what really happens" in politics. Shakespeare's power players use inventive, often ruthless tactics to gain or hold power. They assassinate their kings (Claudius), murder rival claimants to the throne (Richard III), flatter the common people (Caesar), stoke factional conflict (Northumberland), sponsor diversionary rebellions at home (Richard, Duke of York), distract critics by waging war abroad (Henry V), counterfeit letters that stir others to political violence (Cassius), engineer ousters by allying with foreign heads of state (Antonio), offer treaties they have no intention of honoring (Octavius), suspend due course of law to eliminate enemies (Sicinius and Brutus), and frame nobles for capital treason (Wolsey). Some speak movingly about the very moral codes they violate; others rebel against their rulers to promote the common good. One of the pleasures of Shakespeare's plays is their insider perspective on political strategies and tactics.

In his attention to political actions over ideals, to "what works in political life and what doesn't," Shakespeare brought sixteenth-century "politic history" to the stage.² But critics have often seen the plays as

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 54; italics mine.

² Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare's Humanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 135.

doing more than reflecting intellectual currents of his own time.³ Hugh Grady argues that the plays of Shakespeare's middle period "take for granted a secular, realpolitik understanding of political power."⁴ Alex Schulman contends that Shakespeare "tell[s] a particular story" about "the rise of modern secular nationalism."⁵ Richard Wilson claims that by "dismantling sovereignty in all its forms," Shakespeare's "dramas rank among the foundations of modern critical thought."⁶ In this book, I argue that what makes Shakespeare seem so anticipatory of modern politics is not just his detailed attention to political techniques or to ruthless pursuits of power. Shakespeare goes beyond Machiavelli and Renaissance politic history by enveloping political action in publicity.⁷ Although his plays were staged with a small company of players, Shakespeare created the impression that politics were subject to mass scrutiny. His politicians rarely exercise unfettered sovereign power. Authority is often dependent upon, and sometimes originates in, the popular will. Although excluded from political participation on a national level, the English commons and Roman plebeians of Shakespeare's plays hold latent collective power. Shakespeare's effective politicians learn to address, persuade, and impress "the people." His plays dramatize the emergence of public relations.

In his attention to publicity, Shakespeare reflected recent developments in Elizabethan political culture. Making arguments directly to the people had become a common political practice. Political figures courted the people's favor for personal political gain or to bring the weight of "opinion" to their side of a controversy.⁸ Public opinion could help secure one's

³ Claims about Shakespeare's modernity originate with G. F. W. Hegel's *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*; such claims focus on his depiction of individuality and inwardness; see the excerpts reprinted in *Philosophers on Shakespeare*, ed. Paul A. Kottman (Stanford University Press, 2009), 57–85. The corollary political argument is that Shakespeare abandons the prevailing providential understanding of history in favor of a heavily secular one based on, as Hugh Grady puts it, "capitalism, instrumental reason, Machiavellian power, and autonomous subjectivity"; see Hugh Grady, "Introduction: Shakespeare and Modernity," in *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millennium*, ed. Hugh Grady (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 14.

⁴ Hugh Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 26.

⁵ Alex Schulman, *Rethinking Shakespeare's Political Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 1.

⁶ Richard Wilson, *Free Will: Art and Power on Shakespeare's Stage* (Manchester University Press, 2013), 4, 8.

⁷ The *OED* dates the earliest use of "publicity" to 1609 and defines it as "the quality of being public; the condition or fact of being open to public observation or knowledge" – but early modern writers often used the expression "being public"; "publicity, n. 1, *obs.*" *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸ Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 1–30.

title, diffuse political opposition, serve as a basis for opposing one's sovereign, or confer added influence in council or parliament. Elite appeals to "the people," however, violated – and sometimes happened right beside – denunciations of popular political participation. The commons were discouraged from expressing political views, and the views they did express were presumed to be shallow, perverse, and destructive. Their comments about public figures were punishable under defamation laws. They were nevertheless eager consumers and debaters of religious polemic and political news. In trying to win public opinion, elites contradicted their own prohibitions on who could think and speak about political matters. This created a number of unpredictable consequences. Attempts to generate tacit assent to particular positions often spurred public rebuttal. Others embarrassed themselves by failing to win the hearts to which they appealed. Most dangerously, some elites gained reputations for flattering the common people for political gain, which made them vulnerable to accusations of ambition and sedition.

Shakespeare's politicians, legitimate or not, are subject to publicity. His skillful princes win assent to their rule by calibrating their speech, images, and actions to popular reception. Because the mass culture of late modernity has made the relationship between politics and public relations nearly indivisible, Shakespeare's emphasis on the political value of public opinion may now appear inevitable.⁹ But Shakespeare's integration of publicity into political action has no precedent in early modern drama. In fact, a language of what we call publicity had only just begun developing in late Elizabethan England. It originated to identify (and condemn) how elites, by making political appeals to common people, broaden matters of state to public concern. The word "popularity" became a catch-all for political communication related to the commons. It was used in the 1570s to warn against addressing political or religious arguments directly to the people. By the 1590s, "popularity" could also refer to the tactic of ingratiating oneself to the people, the possession of popular favor, or the discussion of politics among the people. "Popularity" sometimes signified the act of publicity itself: Ben Jonson defined it as when people "are not content to be generally noted in court, but will press forth on common stages and

⁹ Michael Warner argues that "the major task of Western leaders has become producing popularity, which is not the same as being popular." In other words, producing mass desire – which feeds on itself, because people want what others want – has become the preeminent political capital of late modernity; *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 176.

brokers' stalls to the public view of the world."¹⁰ "Popularity" was usually a derogatory term, a warning against self-aggrandizement and democratic innovations. But political performance – from courteously mingling with citizens in the streets to sponsoring a pamphlet criticizing Elizabeth I's marriage negotiations with French princes – had become bound up with public opinion. "Popularity," then, was used to suppress the very acts of political communication that, over the long term, helped constitute a public sphere.

Jonson was hardly unique in connecting publicity to the "common stages." Queen Elizabeth and King James each likened monarchy to being "upon a publike stage."¹¹ Before that, Thomas More had characterized Buckingham and Richard as playing "Kynges games, as it were stage playes, and for the more part plaied upon scaffoldes. In which pore men be but the lokers on."¹² The stages that Elizabeth, James, and More evoked in these metaphors were not in silent, darkened rooms full of adoring and scrupulously respectful admirers. To be on a "publike stage" meant being surrounded by people poised to praise, criticize, or judge. Public performance could win assent and adoration; publicity could also stain, degrade, and produce resistance. Elizabeth and James used stage metaphors to underline how the publicity of their offices made them not powerful but vulnerable. Elizabeth noted that "the eyes of many behold our actions; a spot is soon spied in our garments; a blemish quickly noted in our doings."¹³ James explained that "all the beholders eyes are attentively bent to looke and pry in the least circumstance of their secretest drifts: Which should make Kings the more carefull not to harbour the secretest thoughts

¹⁰ Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, ed. Eric Rasmussen and Matthew Steggle in *The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. I, 4.3.94–96.

¹¹ James I, *Basilicon Doron*, reprinted in *King James I and VI: Political Writings*, ed. Johann Sommerville (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

¹² Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III*, ed. Richard Sylvester, vol. II, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 81. The homology between statecraft and stagecraft became a central trope of new historicist, cultural materialist, and revisionist Marxist scholarship of the 1980s and nineties, a period of rich work that explored the representational strategies of monarchs and the ideological positioning of the public theaters. See Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (New York: Methuen, 1986); Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹³ Elizabeth I, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 194.

in their minde.”¹⁴ These stage tropes emphasized a phenomenology of publicity: the *feeling* of those “pry[ing]” eyes that drilled into one’s “secretest thoughts.” The stage was only a space of “privileged visibility” if the performer-prince could ably handle the potentially withering critical scrutiny of the public.¹⁵

If Shakespeare treats politics in a way that seems modern, it is because he evoked the publicity – from subjects awed by their princes to these subjects’ illicit speculations into political motives – that is a fundamental condition of politics as we understand them. And the theater was the ideal space to explicate the vital role publicity played in contemporary politics. Because his fictional princes are surrounded by spectators, mostly commoners, who constitute a synecdoche of “the people,” his plays quite literally embody the statecraft-as-stagecraft homology. In Shakespeare’s theater, it is the playgoer rather than the prince who has “privileged visibility” – vision into the labor and tactics of power politics. Throughout this book, I investigate how the theater-of-state – in both senses of that phrase – affected the political subjectivities of “the people.” I am less concerned with questions of obedience and resistance than in how Shakespeare’s theater addressed audiences as a critical public and fostered political analysis. Shakespeare’s plays helped playgoers recognize, understand, and speak about the political techniques used by fictional and actual princes. His account of the political remains compelling because it anticipated a modern politics defined by popularity and publicity.

II

Cicero advised rulers to cultivate “the love of the multitude” which is “alltostirred with the fame, & opinion of liberalitie, bounteousnesse, justice,

¹⁴ James I, *Basilicon Doron*, 4. In early modern England, it was a transgression even to look one’s social superior in the face. As Thomas Wright explained in *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1601), “children and especially women, cannot abide to looke in their fathers, masters, or betters faces, because, even nature it selfe seemeth to teach them, that thorowe their eyes they see their heartes; neither doe we hold it for good manners, that the inferior should fixe his eyes upon his superiors countenance; and the reason is, *because it were presumption for him to attempt the entrance or privy passage into his superiors minde*, as contrariwise it is lawful for the superior to attempt the knowledge of his inferior” (29; italics mine).

¹⁵ Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 64. My argument follows David Scott Kastan’s argument that such displays “made power contingent upon spectators’ assent”; see *Shakespeare After Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 109–28, esp. 117–18. The source material for much of this drama – and the period’s major work of historiography – emphasized the need to negotiate with and persuade the commons; see Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 187–214.

faithfulness, & of al those vertues, which appertein to the myldenesse of maners, & gentlenesse.”¹⁶ Desiderius Erasmus counseled the Christian prince to “make every kind of effort to gain affection from the people in his turn, but in such a way that his authority among them is in no way diminished.”¹⁷ Thomas More believed that a monarch should “love his people and be loved by them; he should live among them, govern them kindly, and let other kingdoms alone.”¹⁸ These writers believed that good rulers promoted justice, protected the property and goods of their subjects, and avoided unnecessary war. If princes could be persuaded to value their subjects’ loves, and if public hatred or love were regarded as a means of self-evaluation, then princes would be more inclined to rule on behalf of the common welfare of their subjects rather than for their own glory. So when Cicero, Erasmus, and More encouraged princes to win the affection of their subjects, they were not advising princes to flatter and bribe the common people so that they would remain powerful *in spite* of their avarice, their abuse of their country’s laws, and their propensity to make war. (Machiavelli, however, recommends something close to this.¹⁹) Rather, the people’s love should grow as a natural consequence of just rule. For classical and early modern political thinkers alike, only corrupt or unwise rulers tried to win popularity as an end to itself. Because the people were inherently fickle, popularity won by flattery and gifts “is insincere and short-lived.”²⁰

The Tudors embraced and honed the arts of love and persuasion with an intensity unseen in medieval Christendom, and almost certainly did so for tactical reasons rather than heartfelt care of their people. As Kevin Sharpe showed in his aptly titled *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, the Tudors compensated for their weak claim to the crown by establishing broad support among the commons.²¹ Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary

¹⁶ Cicero, *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties, to Marcus his sonne, turned out of latine into english*, by Nicholas Grimalde (London, 1556), fol. 74.

¹⁷ Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. and ed. Lisa Jardine (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66.

¹⁸ Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams and George M. Logan (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 30.

¹⁹ In *The Prince*, Machiavelli writes that “it is necessary for a ruler to have the people well disposed towards him; otherwise, in difficult times he will find himself in desperate straits” (36), and he insists that a prince “need not actually possess [the virtues of generosity, mercy, loyalty, honesty, affability, temperance, and piety], but he must certainly seem to. Indeed, I shall be so bold as to say that having and always cultivating them is harmful, whereas *seeming* to have them is useful” (62, italics mine).

²⁰ Erasmus, *Education*, 66.

²¹ Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

I established a “new style of monarchy” by courting their subjects’ love.²² But it was the last Tudor who especially mastered the arts of popularity. Elizabeth I treated the love between her and her people not just as proof of her legitimacy but even as the very medium through which she exercised authority.

Historians agree that Elizabeth’s popularity bolstered her against critics of female rule, rival claimants to the throne, economic hardship, and foreign threats – especially Pope Pius V’s 1570 bull of excommunication and the intermittent dangers of Spanish invasion.²³ Elizabeth’s most enduring challenge was ensuring the allegiance of a populace roiled by confessional division. Many observers assumed that her Catholic subjects would rise against her in the event of an invasion.²⁴ Mutual suspicion abounded, especially as Catholic assassination attempts were uncovered (or fabricated), as thousands of French Huguenots were slaughtered in 1572, as priests were tortured and executed, as recusants were heavily fined or dispossessed, as puritans quarreled with the architects of the Elizabethan Settlement, and as Spain attempted to invade England. Elizabeth did not assume the loyalty of her subjects. She won it. Elizabeth’s avatar in John Lyly’s *Endymion* says “I have labored to win all [loves], and study to keep such as I have won.”²⁵ Sir John Harrington admired how “she did plaie her tables to gain obedience thus wythout constraint . . . We all did love her, for she said she loved us, and much wisdom she shewed in this manner.”²⁶

Elizabeth cultivated popularity from the first moments of her reign.²⁷ Richard Mulcaster marveled at her grace with the common people during her coronation procession through London:

²² Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1; Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy, 157–77*, 245–316; Kastan, *Shakespeare after Theory*, 117–20.

²³ For my purposes, the important point is Elizabeth’s embrace of a public relations strategy based on love; for thorough accounts that explore fissures and contestations in the production of her image, see Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 317–473; Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (University of Chicago, 2006); Julia Walker, ed., *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); and Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

²⁴ William Allen, *An Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland* (Antwerp, 1588), lvi.

²⁵ John Lyly, *Endymion* in *English Renaissance Drama*, ed. David Bevington, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Norton, 2002), 5.4.172–73.

²⁶ Sir John Harrington, *Nugae Antiquae, being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers*, ed. Thomas Park (London, 1804), vol. I: 357.

²⁷ Elizabeth prioritized the secular civic progress over the actual coronation service that followed it and took the unprecedented step of having an account of the progress published; see Richard C. McCoy, “Thou Idol Ceremony”: Elizabeth I, *The Henriad*, and the Rites of the English Monarchy,” in

How oftimes stayed she her chariot, when she sawe any simple body offer to speak to her Grace: A branche of Rosemary geven to her grace with a supplication by a poore woman about Fleet Bridge, was seen in her chariot til her grace came to westminster, not without the marveyulous wondring of such as knew the presenter, and noted the Queenes most gracious receiving and keping the same.²⁸

Other accounts similarly marvel at her ease in speaking with her subjects. For instance, in the Garter ceremony of 1595, "a great crush in the chapel [formed] as many of the common people had thronged together." Rather than flee this mob, Elizabeth "spoke most graciously to everyone; even to those who of the vulgar fell upon their knees in homage."²⁹ One of her courtiers recalled that she "was so great a Courtier of the people, yea, of the Commons, and that stooped and declined lowe in presenting her person to the publique view as she passed in her Progresse and perambulations, and in her ejaculations of her prayers on the people."³⁰ Her image was ubiquitously present through the realm on coins, paintings, miniatures, woodcuts in books and on broadsides, and on playing cards.³¹ In 1592, Elizabeth reflected that her subjects graced her with "a love that has never been heard nor written nor known of in the memory of man."³²

Elizabeth made a love she called "her greatest comfort" into a public discourse through which all her subjects, regardless of their religion, could pledge allegiance to England.³³ She evoked this bond of love most intensely during times of crisis or controversy. In response to demands that she marry, she reminded parliament that she was "already bound unto a husband, which is the Kingdom of England" and that she need not be pressured to bear children for "every one of you, and as many are are English, are my children and kinfolks."³⁴ Awaiting the Spanish Armada, she said, "I have placed my chieftest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects."³⁵ In response to parliamentary anger over royal grants of monopolies, Elizabeth issued a proclamation outlining reform. When she addressed the issue in the House of Commons, she

Urban Life in the Renaissance, ed. Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Wiessman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 243–45.

²⁸ Richard Mulcaster, *The Passage of Our Most Drad Sovereaign Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the Citie of London to Westminster the Day Before Her Coronacion*, 2nd ed. (London, 1558 [1559]), E3v.

²⁹ Quoted in Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 428–29.

³⁰ Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia* (1641), ed. John C. Cerooski (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1985), 44.

³¹ Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 401. ³² Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 327.

³³ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 186. ³⁴ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 59.

³⁵ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 326.

rebutted implicit charges of greed by reminding parliament that "above all earthy treasures I esteem my people's love."³⁶ She said that "though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown: that I have reigned with your loves."³⁷

No English person had ever courted popular favor on this scale or with such success.³⁸ Although the term "popularity" came into use during her reign, and came to describe the public relations strategies she deployed with matchless skill, no one in her lifetime applied the word to her. This term was reserved for illicit behaviors. In his 1601 essay "Of Popularitie," William Cornwallis implicitly excused the Queen's use of the tactics his essay condemned. "The love of the people" was a property "destinated onely to the Prince."³⁹ Her appeals to the people were wise policy; others' appeals constituted "sedition."⁴⁰ Those men in Elizabeth's regime who adopted "popularity" to police the boundaries of the politically speakable achieved something remarkable: They introduced a language that demeaned courting the commons *without* implicating the queen who made such courtship an art.

Elizabeth transformed how monarchs related to their subjects and how her subjects thought about monarchy. The crown became a key site of nationalist feeling, and expressions of love developed into a form of political participation. One difficulty of the popular strategy, however, was sustaining it in the face of a public that came to expect it. Another was that it subjected monarchs to "the investigative gaze of the audience" and made their authority "contingent upon spectators."⁴¹

Nonetheless, the Tudors' salesmanship worked so well that it was not until after her death that anyone recognized how central popularity had become to England's political culture. During her forty-five years of rule, Elizabeth encouraged her subjects to cheer her, to crowd around her, and most importantly, to feel gratified by her expressions of love for them. For many of her subjects, loving Elizabeth was a form of political participation. It did not take her successor, James I, long to grow irritated at the rowdy enthusiasm of his new subjects. Public expressions of reciprocal affection

³⁶ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 339. ³⁷ Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 337.

³⁸ Protector Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, attempted to ally himself with the people against rival nobles and king, though his tactics predate "popularity" as a political term of art; see Ethan Shagan, "Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives," *English Historical Review* 114 (1999), 32–36.

³⁹ William Cornwallis, *Essayes* (London, 1600–01), R6v.

⁴⁰ William Cornwallis, *Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian Essayes* (London, 1601), Fir.

⁴¹ Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 77.

grated on James' imperial style. Whereas Elizabeth sought favor with her subjects and concord with parliament, James displayed an absolutist conception of monarchy that was by definition opposed to seeking the consent of his subjects. Though in the daily business of governing James was constrained by law, custom, and parliament no less than Elizabeth, the outward form and rhetoric of how he embodied the office – that is, his monarchical style – was important to him, and his absolutist manner was most apparent in the distance and aloofness with which he treated the people. James only staged himself on a grand scale twice: first, in 1603, on his long progress from Edinburgh to London, and second, in 1604, during the official royal entry into London which preceded his coronation. Uncomfortable amongst cheering crowds, he spent his reign scrupulously avoiding the kinds of display and improvised interactions that Elizabeth had used to fortify herself.⁴² For James, popularity affronted not only the dignity of a king but also the foundation of the office: A free monarch was not dependent upon the favors of his people. But James did not pay any devastating costs for refusing to perform the “gracious affability” displayed by his predecessor.⁴³ That he arrived in England with two sons to whom he could pass the crown stabilized the monarchy. Though James was never loved, popularity did not vanish from the political culture. The people poured their affection onto the eldest, Prince Henry – usually to James's embarrassment, for the prince was publicly adored for the qualities of courtesy, martial valor, and Protestant conviction that were found wanting in James.⁴⁴ But James fostered public attention and political participation in other ways. He was an intellectual who enjoyed scholarship, debate, and disputation. James published his views on monarchy, the unification of the kingdoms, Puritanism, foreign policy, tobacco, and witchcraft. In pamphlets, pulpits, plays, and alehouses, his subjects directly and indirectly debated his arguments.⁴⁵

Attitudes toward popularity also shifted during James's reign. Queen Elizabeth's council regarded the winning of popularity by other nobles as a sign of dangerous ambition. Just thirty years later, the allies of George

⁴² See Chapter 4 for a detailed account of James's distaste for popularity.

⁴³ Quoted in John Nichols, *Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First* (London, 1828), vol. I: 188.

⁴⁴ For details about Prince Henry's enormous popularity, see Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 149–58.

⁴⁵ For James's inadvertent fostering of a public sphere, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 4.