

Elizabeth I

Always Her Own Free Woman

Edited by

**Carole Levin,
Jo Eldridge Carney and
Debra Barrett-Graves**



ELIZABETH I:
ALWAYS HER OWN FREE WOMAN

This book is dedicated to

Bill

DB-G

My wise women friends – they know who they are

JEC

Elaine, Lena, Mary Ann, and Pamela – wonderful friends and
extraordinary women

CL

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Introduction

Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney and Debra Barrett-Graves

Recent scholarly discourse focusing on Elizabeth I and her reign as England's monarch has explored her life, her role in politics, and her impact as a cultural icon both during her reign and after her death. As the four hundredth anniversary of her death approaches, in the year 2003, it seems hardly surprising that interest in Elizabeth and her reign has intensified. Her father Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church and turned the world of England upside down when he divorced his first wife Catherine of Aragon to marry Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. Because Elizabeth was Anne's only living child during her brief marriage to the king, Anne was beheaded on charges of adultery and incest before Elizabeth's third birthday. Before she became queen, Elizabeth had led a life of danger and intrigue; she had even spent time in the Tower of London during her sister's reign, suspected as a traitor. Although few thought that Elizabeth would survive to become queen, she did, and with great ability. Elizabeth, one of England's few queen regnants, demonstrated just how capable a monarch she was by ruling successfully as an unmarried woman for nearly half a century.

The following interdisciplinary collection of essays, by historians, cultural critics, and literary scholars, examines a variety of the political, social, and cultural forces at work during the English Renaissance, and beyond. Articles in the collection discuss Elizabeth's relationships, investigate the advice given to Elizabeth, explore connections between Elizabeth I's court and the arts, and consider the role of Elizabeth's court in the political life of the nation. Each contributes to a collective understanding of the wealth of artistic, literary, and historical impressions of Elizabeth, her court, and the time period that has been given her name, the Elizabethan age. Some of the ways in which Elizabeth was understood and represented demonstrate the fear and ambivalence in which early modern women in power were held, while others celebrate her unqualified success as England's first and only unmarried queen regnant.

Recent scholarship on Elizabeth I continues to broaden thinking about England's most famous queen. The wider, multidisciplinary perspective of such feminist scholars as Susan Frye and Helen Hackett has focused attention

on Elizabeth's agency. Susan Doran has provided scholars with new perspectives on Elizabeth's diplomatic negotiations and her views on marriage. The superb collection of Elizabeth's own writings, recently edited by Leah Marcus, Mary Beth Rose, and Janel Mueller, has provided new insights as to how Elizabeth presented herself.¹

Although recent scholarship eagerly celebrates the extraordinary achievements of Elizabeth during her long reign, it does not ignore the occasionally contentious relationship between the queen and her court. Indeed, the success of Elizabeth's reign depended greatly on her many loyal councilors and courtiers, but critical decisions about matters of state were ultimately made by Elizabeth herself, either to the dismay or the admiration of her followers. In this collection, the essay by Michael Brennan, Noel Kinnamon and Margaret Hannay describes the troubled career of Robert Sidney, who devoted his life to serving his queen, even though Elizabeth purposely limited Sidney's rise up the courtly ladder. Sidney's voluminous correspondence helps us understand how his thwarted attempts to advance at court were intertwined with his dynastic connections; it also reveals Sidney's understanding that for a man in his position, Elizabeth's control over his fortunes was omnipotent. Jacqueline Vanhoutte examines what has been considered Elizabeth's particularly violent reaction to John Stubbs' pamphlet, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, which outlined his opposition to her proposed marriage to the Duc d'Alençon. Looking carefully at the popular metaphor, 'mother England,' used by Stubbs and others, Vanhoutte argues that the phrase becomes subversive in its anti-monarchical stance. The nationalistic implications of Stubbs' analogy would not have been lost on Elizabeth, and the punishment exacted on Stubbs may have been a gruesome attempt to remind the people of her uncontested authority, even as her own choices in marital matters were influenced by the will of the people.

Debra Barrett-Graves also considers the controversy surrounding the marriage negotiations with Alençon. She argues that by utilizing her characteristic tools of unpredictability, reserve, and shrewd use of her councilors, Elizabeth emerged from this political tempest with her honor intact.

The court revolved around the throne of Elizabeth, but the epicenter of power was not always physically static. Elizabeth was not content to exercise power from London alone; her many progresses away from court were far more than recreational; they allowed the queen the opportunity to establish relationships with her subjects beyond the immediate court circle. Mary Hill Cole describes how Elizabeth's peregrinations enabled her to promote her political agenda, specifically in the area of religious conformity. A careful examination of the queen's sojourns in the homes of both Catholic and Protestant hosts is indicative of Elizabeth's shrewd ability to negotiate the *via*

media between the complex labyrinth of opposing religious groups. Elizabeth traveled to the universities as well as the countryside; Linda Shenk analyzes the university orations delivered by the queen at the end of her progresses to Cambridge and Oxford. Elizabeth's learning, Shenk argues, was more than a means to political power, it is a part of her carefully articulated political self-representation. In her Latin orations, Elizabeth used her learned persona to circumscribe the power humanism gave to educated men and to establish her own undisputed political authority. Other scholars have argued that the queen was not always in control of her own image; Matthew Woodcock's essay focuses on the problematic use of the fairy queen image in the mythologizing of Elizabeth, an image initiated in the entertainment at Woodstock during her summer progress of 1575 and appropriated in numerous literary and dramatic contexts.

Just as the fairy queen comparison was fraught with multiple and complex meanings, other analogies and comparative sites that contributed to the representation of Elizabeth could be ambiguous and multivalent. Several of the essays explore the ways in which Elizabeth was viewed through the lens of other figures, both religious and political. Michele Osherow considers the ways in which Elizabeth was associated with King David, who was noted for his faith, loyalty, and divine selection. The Davidic comparisons, however, are not entirely favorable, since David is often defined by his weakness and reliance on divine intervention. Craig Rustici examines the ways in which Elizabeth was associated with the legendary medieval figure, Pope Joan, in print and on stage. Detractors of Elizabeth who questioned both her religious authority and her moral reputation would have found many opportunities to exploit the analogy, which may account for the reluctance of Elizabethan printers to publish texts on the popess. Turning to a contemporary figure, Brandie Siegfried explores the relationship between Elizabeth and the fascinating Grace O'Malley, a sixteenth-century Irish leader who emerged as a figure of considerable authority in the midst of England's colonial enterprise. Siegfried's analysis of the politically canny O'Malley and her strategic similarities with the English queen reveals the extent to which gender and authority intersected for both women. Even though their situations, positions, and politics were radically different, they were both rhetorically brilliant and politically shrewd; they ultimately collaborated in a way that was mutually beneficial.

The last three essays are all concerned with Elizabeth and her popular audience, both during her reign and after – right to the end of the twentieth century. Ilona Bell points out that throughout Elizabeth's reign she represented herself, not as a confirmed virgin, but as a queen who would make her own decisions about marital matters. Bell argues that Elizabeth's unconventional position on conjugal choice and her rhetoric of courtship

influenced the broader popular debate on marriage negotiations, as manifest in three fascinating texts from the period. Sara Mendelson analyzes ordinary people's responses to Elizabeth both during her reign and afterward. She examines the ways that people of her own time could know about their queen, and what sources about Elizabeth were publicly available after her death. Mendelson argues that there is much evidence that the vast majority of her subjects loved Elizabeth even to the end of her reign and that afterward she was perceived as a champion of the people. While Bell and Mendelson discuss Elizabeth as queen through much of her reign, Carole Levin and Jo Carney focus on the limitations of both sixteenth-century and contemporary popular representations of Elizabeth as princess and in the early years of her reign. Martyrologist John Foxe and playwright Thomas Heywood depict a young Elizabeth in heroic and hagiographic terms, but they ignore the complexities of her personal, emotional life. Twentieth-century films, on the other hand, portray an extremely romanticized and sexualized young princess but neglect her shrewd political judgment and her political prowess.

By examining Elizabeth from a variety of perspectives, this collection of essays provides detailed analyses of the rhetoric of both Elizabeth and others who spoke about her in very specific situations, such as when Elizabeth on progress spoke at the universities. Other essays approach Elizabeth from the background of cultural studies to examine representations of Elizabeth and the ideology about women and the roles that they developed. This collection, which also examines current views of the Elizabethan age four hundred years later, also furthers our own understanding about the concerns of the Elizabethan era.

Note

1. See, for example, Susan Doran (1994), *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558–1603*, London and New York: Routledge, and (1996) *Monarchy & Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I*, London and New York: Routledge; Susan Frye (1993), *Elizabeth I: the Competition for Representation*, New York: Oxford University Press; Helen Hackett (1995), *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London: Macmillan; Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (eds) (2002), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

PART I
ELIZABETH AND A PROBLEMATIC COURT



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Queen and Country?: Female Monarchs and Feminized Nations in Elizabethan Political Pamphlets

Jacqueline Vanhoutte

Because of the extent to which it aroused Elizabeth I's anger, John Stubbs's *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is Like to be Swallowed* (1579) is something of a cause célèbre in Elizabethan studies. The pamphlet presents a series of closely argued objections against a proposed match between the queen and François, Duc d'Alençon.¹ While the aging Elizabeth professed herself enthusiastic about marrying her 'very dear Frog', and was supported in this by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the marriage was violently opposed by several other privy councilors, including Sir Francis Walsingham and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.² These recalcitrant courtiers 'mobilized' what Susan Doran calls a 'widespread propaganda campaign' against the controversial match.³ Of the works contributing to this campaign, only the *Gaping Gulf* provoked a drastic governmental retaliation: immediately upon its appearance, the pamphlet was recalled, a proclamation against it issued and its author incarcerated.⁴ The queen's displeasure found a fuller expression still in the punishment visited on the unfortunate Stubbs and his printer, whose right hands she ordered removed.⁵ According to Ilona Bell, Stubbs' misogyny and paternalism occasioned the vehemence of the royal response, so uncharacteristically in excess of the offense.⁶ No doubt the fact that Stubbs referred to Alençon as a 'venemous toad' did little to help his case.⁷

By casting the pamphlet not just as a polemical treatment of a specific topic but also as a broad attack on Elizabeth's authority, the royal proclamation suggests an additional explanation for the queen's intemperate reaction. Charging that Stubbs attributes a lack of 'motherly or princely care' to Elizabeth herself and a superabundance of 'unnatural intentions' to her counselors, the proclamation claims that his 'popular libels' grant 'authority' to the 'meanest person of judgement ... to argue and determine ... of the affairs of public estate'.⁸ These accusations raise a number of interesting questions: how does the queen's alleged lack of maternal care lead to a

redistribution of authority among her subjects? And in what sense are the counselors cooperating with the queen in supporting the French match ‘unnatural’? What sort of ‘authority’ has Stubbs made available to the ‘meanest person’?

What the proclamation appears to single out for reprimand is the *Gaping Gulf*’s reproduction of the conventional images and assumptions of emergent nationalism. Indeed, the allegedly ‘popular’ nature of Stubbs’ libels results from his tendency to judge behavior according to nationalist criteria that challenge the queen’s dynastic prerogative. His strategic reliance on maternal tropes permit him to label as ‘unnatural’ men who act in accordance with the queen’s desires, and so to imply that the queen’s desires might themselves pose a threat to the nation. In its censure of Stubbs’ presumptions of authority, the royal proclamation draws attention to his preoccupations with what constitutes a ‘natural’ Englishman and what makes for a loving mother. The two are closely related issues, as the *Gaping Gulf*’s first direct address to the queen demonstrates. Stubbs reminds Elizabeth that ‘a senseless and careless foreigner cannot have the natural and brotherlike bowels of tender love towards his people which is required in a governor, and which is by birth bred and drawn out from the teats of a man’s own mother country’ ([1579] 1968, p. 34). The biological attributes mentioned by Stubbs correlate to specific cultural meanings, invoked for rhetorical purposes: as the spleen is the site of envy, the liver of lechery, so the bowels host the affection between parents and children.⁹ The allusions to the ‘bowels’ of Englishmen, just like the emphasis on England’s ‘teats’, sanction a particular version of the bonds among nationalist subjects and between these subjects and the nation. As Deborah Shuger notes, during the early modern period the term ‘natural affection’ refers to ‘the bond between child and parent that transgresses status distinctions and creates the depoliticized space of bodily and emotional intimacy’.¹⁰ By calling attention to his countrymen’s bowels and to England’s breasts, Stubbs creates a sense of such ‘bodily and emotional intimacy’, and evokes what Benedict Anderson calls the ‘horizontal comradeship’ of the nation.¹¹

Although the comment on the nation’s ‘brotherlike bowels of tender love’ apparently aims only at the foreign Alençon’s exclusion from the position of ‘governor’, it thus achieves a number of other ends. Most obviously, Stubbs establishes a ‘natural and brotherlike’ standard of behavior for Englishmen against which the queen’s pro-French counselors, and the queen herself, may be measured; again and again, he accuses these counselors of lacking in ‘natural sense’ and duty to England (e.g. [1579] 1968, p. 58). The ‘tender love’ that is ‘by birth’ bred into the English subject authorizes these unflattering characterizations, since presumably any son of England, even the ‘meanest’, should protest when ‘the affairs of public estate’ endanger the

welfare of the 'mother country'. Stubbs' depiction of England is democratizing, or, as the proclamation puts it, 'popular', in its implications: at the breast of the mother-nation, all Englishmen are created equal. By urging the claims of this 'fraternity of equals',¹² the pamphleteer discriminates between the 'sweet Englishmen' such as himself, who 'reason of the dishonor and servitude which comes to the nation', and those who consider merely 'the honor that comes to the prince' ([1579] 1968, p. 53). In other words, the idea of 'the mother country' generates a distinction between nationalist and dynastic allegiance and legitimizes the privileging of the one over the other. Implicitly, Stubbs encourages readers to view Elizabeth I's own behavior as 'natural' only insofar as it coincides with the nationalist sentiments that he expresses.

Although this in itself might have inflamed the queen's wrath, the impact of Stubbs' invocation of the motherland can only be measured by considering the history of this rhetorical trope in sixteenth-century English culture. As Victor Turner emphasizes, symbols are contextual as well as textual: they are 'social and cultural dynamic systems, shedding and gathering meaning over time and altering in form'.¹³ By the time Stubbs wrote his pamphlet, his appeal to mother England is distinctly subversive; however, this symbolic embodiment of the national community first served a mediating function during the Henrician reformation. Pro-government writers like the pamphleteer Richard Morison and the dramatist John Bale used maternal representations of England to argue for a transfer of allegiance from Pope to monarch and from Rome to England.¹⁴ In doing so, Morison and Bale contributed to what Liah Greenfeld has called 'the birth of the English nation', which she argues persuasively occurs around this time.¹⁵ But Morison and Bale also promoted a royal agenda: they personified the nation to justify Henry VIII's appropriation to himself of powers once vested in the Pope. In her earliest incarnation, mother England served the interests of dynastic power.

Henrician writers brought the feminized country under proper masculine and monarchical control through the metaphoric marriage of king to nation. This solution to the potential conflict between dynastic power and emergent nationalism no longer obtained when a female monarch occupied the throne. During the reign of Mary Tudor, accordingly, maternal representations of England began to signal a divergence of national and monarchical interests. One of the most striking examples of this trend is an anonymous pamphlet printed in 1555 and entitled 'Certayne Questions Demanded and Asked by the Noble Realme of Englande, of her true and naturall chyldren and Subiectes of the Same'. The 'questions' demanded by 'Englande' are rhetorical; all attack Mary specifically and dynastic power generally in the name of the nation. Indeed, the pamphlet suggests that 'ther be two kynd of

tresones, one to the kynges persone, [and] another to the body of the realme'. Having redefined treason to compass crimes against the nation, the pamphlet implicitly charges Mary with that crime on the grounds that she married a 'straunger' and handed over English goods, lands, and people to the Spaniards. It concludes by inciting the English to rebellion, asking them to consider 'whether the Realme of England belong to the Quene, or to her subiectes'. Thus, mother 'Englande' takes an anti-monarchical position, insists on a radical re-definition of national sovereignty and authorizes a distribution of authority away from the queen to the meanest of her 'subiectes'.¹⁶ It is within this radical context that the subversiveness of Stubbs' 'popular libels' becomes more apparent.

Mary may have encouraged such innovative use of nationalist rhetoric by espousing the religion against which Henrician writers had first deployed the persona of 'mother England' and by insisting on the view that the country was her own personal patrimony.¹⁷ In any case, during her reign, 'mother England' continued to function as a Protestant alternative to what John Bale had called the 'mother of whordom', the Roman Catholic church,¹⁸ and the queen's Catholicism allowed pamphleteers to extend their critique to dynastic authority. Feminine embodiments of the nation became entangled in issues of female governance and monarchical succession, a process facilitated by Mary's unpopular marriage. Among the questions 'demaunded' by Englande of her 'naturall chyldren' in the 1555 pamphlet is, for example, 'whether the Quene may marrye' someone who poses a 'daunger to the realme' and 'whether that man that maryeth the Quene' would not in fact assume authority over the country – a question that leads the anonymous writer to conclude that, to avoid the charge of treason, the queen should have married 'within the realme'.¹⁹ The pamphlet thus introduces the idea that, to ensure the health of the nation, a queen ought to be properly mastered by and married to an Englishman.

When Elizabeth I came to the throne, the 'mother England' trope had already been developed to address and criticize the authority of female monarchs. The queen's status as a marriageable virgin enhanced the trope's power because discussion of the royal marriage became one of way of talking about who should have authority over the nation. Predictably enough, throughout her reign, the possibility of a foreign marriage gave rise to nationalist diatribes ranging from Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton's controlled and manipulative *Gorboduc* (1561) to Stubbs' uncontrolled and vituperative *Gaping Gulf*. Although Elizabeth's sex ensured that she shared Mary's vulnerability to certain types of nationalist critique, the new queen was Protestant. Thus, her relation to the central symbol of sixteenth-century nationalist discourse was perforce ambiguous: 'mother England' might serve equally to buttress and to undermine the queen's authority. This ambivalence

made the nationalist images a potent tool in the hands of Elizabeth's male subjects. Where the 1555 pamphlet placed England and Mary in opposition to one another, Elizabethan writers frequently identified queen and country. Such identifications could strengthen dynastic authority through the infusion of nationalist sentiment, even while imposing male control (at least rhetorically) on the queen by conflating her with a vulnerable and threatened nation in need of male assistance and management. The competitive aspect of the relationship between monarch and nation, meanwhile, was projected on a series of monstrous female rulers like Mary or Catherine de Médici, who serve as reminders of what might happen were Elizabeth to refuse the identification with 'mother England'.

John Aylmer's *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects* (1559), a treatise written in response to John Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), exemplifies this tendency. Although *An Harborowe* ostensibly rises to the defense of female rulers, its immersion in nationalist rhetoric indicates an anxiety regarding the potentially disruptive effect that such rulers might have on the nation.²⁰ Aylmer palliates fears about monstrous female regiments by pointing out that 'it is lesse daunger to be gouerned in England by a woman then anywhere els' since English government is not a 'mere Monarchie' but also an 'Oligarchy' and a 'Democratie', the last two referring to the governmental control exerted respectively by the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Even when it comes to the judgment of individual crimes, there can be no 'daunger in [the queen's] womanish nature' since the verdict reflects the decisions of '12 mennes'. The queen can 'ordein nothing' without these governing structures, so that England remains firmly under the control of men.²¹ Aylmer's argument leads to a distribution of power away from the monarchy towards the 'executors' of the 'lawes': members of parliament, judges, magistrates and even jury members.²² *An Harborowe* thus paradoxically converts England's suitability for gynecocracy into a testament to the singular powers of its male population. Denying Knox's claim that 'men' willing to tolerate queens retain only 'the owtwarde form of men', Aylmer proposes instead that in England's case, the management of a female monarch leads to the development of a self-governing male élite.²³ If the right to political participation is an index of membership in the nation, as Greenfeld argues it is, then Aylmer emphatically includes male commoners, who were allowed to serve on juries.

Aylmer's emphasis on the singularity of England and his anxiousness to subject the queen to the authority of Englishmen partake in a more general investment in nationalist ideology. *An Harborowe* invokes the persona of mother England briefly in the beginning, when Aylmer comments that 'Englande is of late both in honour and possessions, not a lytle maymed' in part through 'the negligence of the Nurce'. He then associates Mary with

monstrous female figures guilty of perverting maternal love, like Hippolytus's 'Stepdame Phaedra' ([1559] 1972, pp. Br–Bv). The attacks on Mary produce an opposition between the neglectful 'Nurce' who had been so detrimental to England's health and the current 'mother and mistres of [the] country'. Inviting his readers to 'compare' Elizabeth with 'others', Aylmer concludes that she 'commeth in lyke a lambe, and not lyke a Lyon, lyke a mother, and not lyke a Stepdame' ([1559] 1972, pp. M4v–N4v). By means of this double analogy, he makes Elizabeth a natural 'mother' as long as she conducts herself 'lyke a Lamb'; were she to act more like 'a Lyon', she might become instead a 'Stepdame', a version of that hated, neglectful and monstrous 'Nurce', her sister Mary. In effect, Aylmer sets up the sisters as foils for one another, using their relation to the nation as a basis of comparison. He defines the ensuing triangulation by constructing a series of 'maternal positions', ranging from natural to monstrous. While Elizabeth manages to remain a natural 'mother', those of 'true Englyshe heart' should 'esteem, and honour' her as their 'naturall and lawful soueraigne' ([1559] 1972, p. M2r).

Elizabeth's position as 'louing Quene and mother' ([1559] 1972, p. Q3v) entails a reciprocal (as opposed to competitive and hierarchical) relation to the nation. Officially, Aylmer supports the queen's right to arrange a foreign marriage, and his support seems to ally him with defenders of dynastic power rather than proponents of national sovereignty. However, he also warns Elizabeth that she should privilege the duty 'she oweth to the commonweale' over what she owes to her husband; otherwise, 'she is a louing wife to him and an euel head to the country' ([1559] 1972, p. G3r).²⁵ The reminder of Mary's unfortunate marriage works more to discourage than to encourage marriage, as does the emphasis on the role conflict that would inevitably accompany a marriage. And despite his reference to the queen as 'head', Aylmer's parallelism reformulates monarchical function in terms of a duty owed to the country by suggesting that as husband is to wife, so queen is to country.

A marginal note near the end of the pamphlet assures readers that 'God is English' ([1559] 1972, p. P4); it captures perfectly the tone of Aylmer's closing exhortation. As *An Harborowe* reaches its conclusion, its rational notes make way for the vituperative crescendos of nationalism. Where Aylmer had criticized Knox's use of the word 'nature' early in the pamphlet, he now applies it repeatedly, uncritically and emphatically to nationalist allegiance. He constructs a long list of English manly behavior, contrasts Englishmen favorably to 'effeminate Frenchmen' and other 'straungers' and reminds his countrymen that the key to preserving this masculinity is to work for the 'sauegard of your country' ([1559] 1972, P4v–Q1v). His rhetorical *coup-de-grace* brings forth this 'natural mother your country of England'. Reminding her 'dear children' of the many years she has 'lyke a faithful mother nourished

you', England claims to have ever 'spued out and cast from' herself all foreigners. She can 'brooke none of them for the tender love' she bears the English:

Oh God graunt that I neuer se the day that the basterdly brode of ambytious
frenche men, eate and enioy the frutes whiche I prepare for you my deare
chyl dren: Lette me rather satisfie my thirste with their effeminate bloud, then
they should pluck from you my motherly breastes: Sticke to youre mother, as
she sticke to you. ([1559] 1972, p. R1v)

While she explains her children's duties, England directs their masculine aggression towards 'effeminate' foreigners. Having established through her lactation metaphor that national allegiance is necessary, natural, nourishing and emotionally legitimate, England then proceeds to equate herself with Elizabeth. 'You can not be my children', she informs the readers, 'if you be not her subiectes: I wyll none of you, if you will none of hir. If you loue me you cannot hate hir' ([1559] 1972, p. R2r). Aylmer intimates that English subjects' tolerance for Elizabeth's rule derives directly from, and is therefore dependent on, their love for mother England. The implication that the queen draws her authority from the country violates traditional conceptions of divine right monarchy; after all, as Anderson notes, unlike nations, dynastic realms do not depend on 'populations' or on 'geographical demarcations'.²⁶ Yet Aylmer's England argues precisely for the integrity and sovereignty of such 'populations' and 'geographical demarcations'. Urging Englishmen to 'knyt [them] selues together with brotherly loue', she requires them to show 'vnfained obedience' but also to 'defende me and my gouernesse agaynst those your auncient enemies'. Through her rhetorical appropriation of Elizabeth, England equates safeguarding the mother queen from foreigners to safeguarding the mother country. Both enterprises guarantee the integrity of English manhood.

Aylmer thus defines nationalist affiliation as a gendered performance: true Englishmen are those who 'playe the men, and honour [their mother] with the sacrifice of [foreign] heads and carcasses'. In defending '[their] mothers honour', these sons prove themselves not to be 'mungrelles' but 'the trewe posteritie of [her] auncient children the olde English men' ([1559] 1972, p. R2r). The queen, meanwhile, is reduced to identifying with the object of all this masculine activity, the necessarily passive and vulnerable motherland whose 'honour' needs defending. Elizabeth can 'playe' mother England while her subjects 'playe the men'. In the representational system defined by Aylmer's use of the 'mother England' trope, moreover, for Elizabeth to reject the identification with the nation would be to risk demotion to a mere 'Nurce' or, worse still, a 'Stepdame'.

Initially, Elizabeth did 'playe' the mother in response to challenges to her

authority. She relied on metaphorical motherhood as a way of deflecting various attempts to control her on the difficult issue of marriage and the succession.²⁷ In her reaction to the 1559 parliamentary petition that she marry, for example, she made it clear that she saw any attempt to limit to English subjects her choices of husband or heir as infringing on her authority, declaring it 'altogether unmeet' for her subjects 'to require them that may command, or those to appoint whose parts are to desire, or such to bind and limit whose duties are to obey'.²⁸ Even as she defined her subjects' 'parts' clearly in terms of their obligation to 'desire' and 'obey', and thus underlined the tendency of absolute monarchy to infantilize its subjects, she promised to function 'as a good mother to [her] country'.²⁹ Far from creating the 'depoliticized space of bodily and emotional intimacy', the queen's maternal tropes confirmed hierarchies typically elided by nationalist ideology.

Despite Elizabeth's attempt to appropriate maternal rhetoric for her own purposes, her subjects continued to use it to make nationalist arguments. *Gorboduc*, for example, urges the queen to accept parliamentary advice by marrying, providing an heir and ensuring the stability of the country. As a recently discovered eyewitness report suggests, despite the queen's assertion that attempts to limit her choice were 'unmeet', Sackville and Norton propose Robert Dudley as her consort because the 'chosen king' should be 'born within [the] native land'.³⁰ They render this inflammatory advice emotionally legitimate by advancing the claims of England, 'the common mother of us all'.³¹ Moreover, *Gorboduc* follows Aylmer's pamphlet in developing the persona of this 'common mother' in contrast to that of an evil mother figure, Queen Videna.³²

In the years after the publication of Aylmer's pamphlet and the production of *Gorboduc*, Elizabeth abandoned the maternal rhetoric that characterized her early speeches.³³ Significantly, a 1566 speech on the ever-thorny issue of marriage and the succession relies for its rhetorical effectiveness not on metaphorical motherhood but on an appeal to the authority of the nation: 'Was I not born in the realm? Were my parents borne in any foreign country? Is there any cause I should alienate myself from being careful over this country?' The queen capitalized on the emotive spell of nationalism by becoming the first English monarch to turn her Englishness into a source of authority. But if Elizabeth continued to invoke certain aspects of nationalist imagery in her own defense, she became increasingly unwilling to countenance the masculine control that it implied. Indeed, the 1566 speech denounces parliamentary attempts at interference as 'monstrous', noting that it is a 'strange thing that a foot should direct the head'.³⁴ The queen's reliance on this more conventional, stratified model of the body politic reinforced the hierarchies effaced by the 'brotherly' rhetoric characteristic of sixteenth-century motherland tropes.

Although Elizabeth abandoned maternal rhetoric, Stubbs' *Gaping Gulf* shows that her subjects continued to make use of the metaphor and continued, specifically, to do so within a nationalist context that allowed them to compare and contrast the queen-as-mother to monstrous women and to the country-as-mother. Acting in accordance with Aylmer's definition of the 'trewe posteritie' of England, Stubbs argues against Elizabeth's proposed marriage to Alençon by reminding her that she had thus far governed England as 'a natural mother' but that marrying a Frenchman would be quite against 'English nature' ([1579] 1968, pp. 34, 47–9). As might be expected given the history of motherland tropes, his pamphlet devotes conspicuous attention to a number of 'unnatural' mothers who have endangered the English nation (e.g., Rome, p. 6; Catherine de Medici, pp. 25, 85, 89; Eleanor of Aquitaine, p. 42; Margaret of Anjou, p. 45). Prominent among these references is the story of King Asa, who punished his mother for her idolatrous and unnatural behavior. Stubbs' lavish praise for Asa is closely followed by his likening those that support the French marriage to 'unkind mothers, [who] put (as it were) their own child, the Church of England, to be nursed of a French enemy' ([1579] 1968, pp. 18–20). Although Stubbs never specifically charges Elizabeth with being an 'unkind' mother, he repeatedly infers that, if she favors the French marriage, she will become one and that, were she to become 'unkind', her subjects might, like Asa, punish her. Officially he advises 'the meaner sort' only to pray to God but unofficially his argument, 'written, as it were, with the tears of an English heart' and reflecting the most virulently anti-monarchic strains of nationalist ideology, has radically subversive implications ([1579] 1968, p. 92). The violence of Elizabeth's reactions to the pamphlet suggests that she understood these implications and did not much care for them.

By holding that 'the true and natural old English nation never esteemed nor loved the French' ([1579] 1968, p. 37), Stubbs makes Elizabeth's membership in the nation contingent on her rejection of Alençon's proposal. In pursuing the match, the queen endangers England and English subjects alike, for 'in this marriage our Queen is to be married, and both she and we poor souls are to be mastered, and which is worse, mistressed too'. Alençon would thus become not only Elizabeth's consort but also, bizarrely, 'our husband' ([1579] 1968, pp. 58–61). In her role as a 'natural mother' Elizabeth does not violate 'English nature' or manhood; she does not 'mistress' English men but nurtures them, much like England does. Her marriage to a foreigner threatens to dissociate the queen from England, a potential rupture that Stubbs, following the logic of Aylmer's connection of nationalist and gendered identity, reads as a prostitution of England and an unmaning of the English. The French marriage threatens to transform the English queen into a monstrous and emasculating inversion of mother England. The evident anxiety about emasculation reveals that, for Stubbs as for Aylmer, masculinity involves

keeping both queen and country free of the contamination of foreigners. Although Stubbs casts himself as 'a true Englishman' who must 'love' both '[his] country and Queen', the 'tender jealous love' that he bears Elizabeth appears conditional on her submission to a nationalist agenda ([1579] 1972, p. 91). Bell argues perceptively that the 'Gulf' in which England is to be swallowed is the gulf of Elizabeth's desire.³⁵ I would add that the *Gaping Gulf* construes the queen's dynastic powers to be quite as problematic as her feminine desires. Stubbs finds the queen's sex rhetorically convenient for the incitement to nationalist fervor but he seems to fear that Elizabeth, far from being like the motherland, may instead become like her sister, a potential cause of England's destruction.

Certainly Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, identified the conflict between national sovereignty and dynastic power as central to the Stubbs controversy. He begins his response to the *Gaping Gulf* by noting his own 'dutifull affection to my native country' and his interest in working in 'her service' and for 'her benefit'.³⁶ But the bulk of his argument is a defense of dynastic prerogative in the matter of marriage; again and again, Northampton demonstrates that in insisting on her right to choose a husband Elizabeth has not gone about creating any new world or custom. The problem with Northampton's rebuttal is that in the sixteenth century nationalism was creating a new world and custom; although Northampton correctly points out that Stubbs' objections have no historical precedent, his objection is irrelevant. Northampton's reasonable propositions were no more effective than the queen's excessive punishments against emergent English nationalism. After his right hand was removed, the unfortunate Stubbs raised his remaining hand and loudly exclaimed 'God save the Queen!' William Camden reports that 'the Multitude standing about was deeply silent: either out of an Horrore at this new unwonted kind of Punishment; or else out of Commiseration towards the man, as being of an honest and unblameable Repute; or else out of Hatred of the Marriage, which most men presaged would be the Overthrow of Religion'.³⁷ The queen had always insisted on having her will in the matter of marriage; however, the Stubbs controversy made it clear that she would have to bow to popular opinion. 'Regardless of what Elizabeth may have privately desired', Bell notes, 'public opposition ... made the French marriage so unpopular as to be ultimately inconceivable' (1998, p. 113).³⁸ Years of arguments against foreign suitors ensured that Elizabeth would not risk her sister's fate: she could not afford to let Alençon be another Philip. She did not marry her frog.³⁹ The 'unwonted kind of Punishment' meted out to Stubbs was probably a compensation for the unwonted powers that her subjects had exercised over her.

Notes

1. For a description of these arguments, see Wallace MacCaffrey (1993), *Elizabeth I*, London: Edward Arnold, pp. 201–3.
2. On the conflict generated by the Alençon affair, see MacCaffrey (1993, p. 199), who argues that it is the queen's own 'ardour' which sparked the courtship; Christopher Haigh (1988), *Elizabeth I*, London and New York: Longman, pp. 75–6; Lloyd Berry (1968), 'Introduction', in John Stubbs' *'Gaping Gulf' with Letters and Other Relevant Documents*, ed. Lloyd Berry, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, pp. xv–xviii; and Susan Doran, (1998), 'Why did Elizabeth Not Marry?', in Julia Walker (ed.), *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 47–9. For Cecil's thoughts on the Alençon proposal, see his 1579 letter 'to the queen's majesty. Advice about her match', in Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (eds) (2000), *Elizabeth I: The Collected Works*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 240–2. For Alençon as Elizabeth's frog, see 'Queen Elizabeth to Monsieur, circa December 1579–1580', in Marcus, Mueller and Rose (2000), pp. 243–4.
3. Susan Doran (1998), p. 49.
4. Proclamation 642 ([1579] 1969) 'Denouncing Stubbs' Book, The Discoverie of the Gaping Gulf', in Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (eds), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, vol. 2, pp. 445–9. Among the works in the campaign against Alençon was Sir Philip Sidney's 'A Letter to Queen Elizabeth' (1579), which closely follows Stubbs' arguments in content but not in tone: in Katherine Duncan-James and Jan van Dorsten (eds), *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 46–58. Sidney's letter, though strongly anti-Catholic, is neither nationalist nor xenophobic. On the government's reaction to Stubbs' pamphlet, see Doran (1998), pp. 49–51; MacCaffrey (1993), pp. 202–5; Haigh (1988), pp. 76–7.
5. On Stubbs and Elizabeth, see also MacCaffrey (1993), pp. 202–5; and Ilona Bell (1998), "'Souereaigne Lord of lordly Lady of this land': Elizabeth, Stubbs, and the *Gaping Gulf* in Julia Walker (ed.), *Dissing Elizabeth*, pp. 99–117. Doran notes that the draconian measures taken by Elizabeth against Stubbs were widely unpopular: Susan Doran (1996), *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 167.
6. Ilona Bell (1998), p. 101.
7. John Stubbs ([1579] 1968), *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Where into England is like to be Swallowed*, in Lloyd E. Barry (ed.) (1968), pp. 3–93, p. 67 (further page references to this work are cited, within brackets in the chapter). On literary frogs and toads as covert allusions to the Alençon match, see Doris Adler (1981), 'Imaginary Toads in Real Gardens', *English Literary Renaissance*, 11 (3), 235–60.
8. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (eds) ([1579] 1969), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, vol. 2, p. 449.
9. See for example, Lancelot Andrewes (1854), who muses about that 'tender-bowelled father', God, and notes that His *viscera miseracordiae* are like 'the bowels or vessels near the womb, near the loins; in a word, not *viscera* only, but *parentum viscera*, the bowels of a father or mother ... *O paterna viscera miserationum!* when we have named them, a multitude of such mercies as come from a father's bowels, we have said as much as we can say or can be said'. *The Works of Lancelot Andrewes*, Oxford: Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, vol. 4, p. 272.