

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Elizabeth I in the Works of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-
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Queen Elizabeth I of England stands as one of the most prominent women in the history of Western Europe. She ruled England successfully for forty-five years during a period when relations between men and women at all societal levels were changing. Although Elizabeth did not mean to elevate the status of all women, her very position attracted the attention of female writers, as well as male. Because she was an unusually powerful and respected woman, women writers specifically have used the example of Queen Elizabeth to argue for an expanded position for women in society. Female writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used Elizabeth's image to represent the ideal monarch and ideal woman. During her reign and just following her death, writers including Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Aemilia Lanyer, and Esther Sowernam looked to Elizabeth as a patron

and as a strong influence, one to whom and about whom they could write without drawing negative attention to themselves as female writers. Later female writers used the memory of Queen Elizabeth more obviously for political reasons. In 1630, almost thirty years following the death of Elizabeth, Diana Primrose examined Elizabeth's virtues in order to criticize Charles I of England and highlight his shortcomings as a monarch, while Bathsua Makin, a seventeenth-century feminist, looked back to Elizabeth as a role model and as a positive example who could help advance the positions of women in society. Makin and other seventeenth-century feminists advocated education and the use of intelligence to draw women away from traditional domestic roles. Although Queen Elizabeth I did not intend to be an advocate for women but rather to secure her own position as ruler of England, many women writers looked to Elizabeth's life and reign for qualities of the ideal monarch and woman, qualities which they examined through literature even after her death in 1603.

"THOU ENGLISH GODDESSE, EMPRESSE OF OUR SEX": ELIZABETH I IN
THE WORKS OF SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY

WOMEN WRITERS

A Thesis

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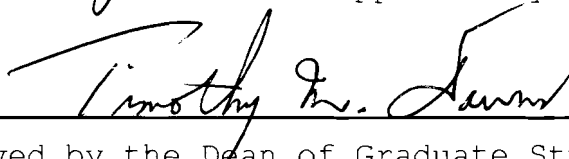
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Introduction

Queen Elizabeth I of England stands as one of the most prominent women in the history of Western Europe. Artists and writers have looked to her for inspiration and have depicted her positively and negatively.¹ From a very young age, however, Elizabeth was careful to take charge of fashioning her own image, especially once she took the throne. Learning from the women in her life and their fates, beginning with her mother, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth drew on her impressive intelligence to manipulate her image. In an era and country which did not respect women as leaders, she not only presented herself as a woman but learned to use her femininity as an advantage. She stressed her weaknesses and shortcomings as a member of the female sex, but displayed all the characteristics she admired in men. Alison Weir says, "She had wisdom, common-sense, staying power, integrity and tenacity [. . .] the ability to compromise, a hard-headed sense of realism, and a devious, subtle brain [. . .]" (17). But Elizabeth never intended to serve as a role model for women. Her focus rested on maintaining the throne, since the very legitimacy of her claim to it was questioned continually. Because she was a prominent figure who gained respect, however, women writers

have drawn from Elizabeth's example to support their arguments for a powerful position for women in society.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558 at the age of twenty-five she found a kingdom in religious turmoil. Many Roman Catholics had not acknowledged the divorce of Henry VIII from Katherine of Aragon nor his break from the Roman Catholic Church. Elizabeth's claim to the throne was questioned because she had at one time been declared a bastard.² The Roman Catholics viewed Elizabeth as a heretic because she chose the Protestant religion over Catholicism. For many Roman Catholics, Mary, Queen of Scots, held the rightful claim to the throne because she was a cousin to Elizabeth through Henry VIII, but most significantly because she ruled as a Catholic. Because Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary Tudor, had ruled England as a Roman Catholic monarch, the English people were unsure as to whether Elizabeth could turn the kingdom back into a Protestant nation with herself as the head of the Church of England. Since Elizabeth was a woman with no husband, her subjects also questioned whether she could provide the strong and steady leadership the country needed to settle the conflicts with neighboring European countries including France, Spain, Scotland, and Ireland.

Upon Elizabeth's ascension to the throne, she immediately faced suspicion and doubt, all of this

exacerbated by her sex. The English were concerned that as a female she would be "subject to male favorites and would be changeable and irrational" (Davis and Farge 170). The immediate legacy of Mary Tudor who, as queen, had been dominated by her husband, Philip II of Spain, also made people question whether a woman alone could be queen without a husband's guidance. Elizabeth began to fashion herself as the Virgin Queen who was married to her country, who was both wife and mother to the English.

While using the possibility of a political alliance through a royal marriage as a ploy, she became the Virgin Queen to her people.³ However, rumors of lovers and illegitimate children abounded that led to questions about her chastity.⁴ Elizabeth became an icon, a worthy replacement for the Roman Catholic image of the Virgin Mary. According to Christopher Hibbert, Elizabeth took on a supernatural status and celebrations of her "rivalled the feast days of the Christian Church" (67). Hibbert adds that those representations were propaganda, however, to disguise Elizabeth's womanliness, although behind those masks she was a monarch "of stern practicality if not always of sound sense, a woman of majestic hauteur whom weak men were reluctant to oppose" (68). On the whole, Elizabeth developed a style of "female self-mastery that sustained her

royal authority within the framework of sixteenth-century hierarchical thought" (Davis and Farge 171).

Writers, artists, and playwrights, as well as the English people, drew from fabled heroines of myth and scripture to create images of Elizabeth linked to the goddesses of Greek and Roman mythology and to biblical figures such as Deborah the lawgiver (What 42). Louis Montrose argues that Elizabeth mastered the transformation of her image to suit her purposes, representing herself as an "androgynous martial maiden, like [Edmund] Spenser's Britomart."⁵ According to Montrose, such was her appearance at a review of her troops at Tilbury in 1588:

On that momentous occasion, she rode a white horse and dressed in white velvet; she wore a silver cuirass on her breast and carried a silver truncheon in her hand. The theme of her speech was by then already very familiar to her listeners: she dwelt upon the womanly frailty of her body natural and the masculine strength of her body politic--a strength deriving from the love of her people, the virtue of her lineage, and the will of her God [. . .]. (79-80)

Montrose says that Elizabeth was a cultural anomaly, making her seem powerful and dangerous: "By the skillful deployment of images that were at once awesome and familiar, this

perplexing creature tried to mollify her male subjects while enhancing her authority over them" (80).

Montrose argues that Elizabeth's mastery of herself and others was enhanced by the "promotion of her maidenhood into a cult of virginity; the displacement of her wifely duties from household to nation; and the modulation of her temporal and ecclesiastical supremacy into a nurturing maternity" (80). By fashioning herself into a combination of maiden, matron, and mother, she in turn transformed the normal domestic life cycle of an Elizabethan female into what was at once "a social paradox and a religious mystery" (Montrose 80).

Nevertheless, Elizabeth's parliaments and counselors urged her to marry and produce a legitimate heir. According to Montrose, there was a great need to insure the Tudor succession for the welfare of the people and the nation. He also argues that the men in the political arena of Elizabeth's court found it "frustrating or degrading to serve a prince who was, after all, merely a woman" (81). A French ambassador once said that "her government is fairly pleasing to the people, who show that they love her, but it is little pleasing to the great men and nobles; and if by chance she should die, it is certain that the English would never again submit to the rule of a woman" (qtd. in Montrose 81).

But the fact is that Elizabeth, a female prince, did rule England successfully for forty-five years during a period when relations between men and women at all societal levels were changing. Margaret Ferguson argues that Elizabeth's own strategies of self-presentation "dramatize certain contradictions in patriarchal ideology that impinged on the lives not only of court women but of their lower born sisters" (xx). The very fact of Elizabeth's rule coupled with self-fashioning, although not meant to elevate the status of all women, attracted the attention of female writers as well as male.

Female writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries use Elizabeth's image to represent the ideal monarch and ideal woman. During her reign and just following her death, writers including Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Aemilia Lanyer, and Esther Sowernam looked to Elizabeth as a patron and as a strong influence about whom they could write without receiving negative attention as females. In 1630, almost thirty years following the death of Elizabeth, Diana Primrose published "A Chaine of Pearle, Or a memoriall of the peerles Graces, and Heroick Vertues of Queene Elizabeth of Glorious Memory" to examine what she names Elizabeth's ten ornaments in order to criticize Charles I of England and highlight his shortcomings as a monarch.⁶ Margaret Cavendish and Bathsua Makin also looked

back to Elizabeth as a role model and as a positive example who could help advance the positions of women in society. Both Cavendish and Makin advocated education and the use of intelligence to draw women away from traditional domestic roles. Although Elizabeth did not intend to be an advocate for women but rather to secure her own position as ruler of England, many women writers looked to Elizabeth's life and reign for qualities of the ideal monarch and woman, qualities which they examined through literature even after her death in 1603.

Chapter I: A Voice to Influence

Although women writers in the years and decades following Elizabeth's lifetime were looking to Elizabeth as a model for advancing the status of women in English society, women writers during the Elizabethan period were looking to Elizabeth to help them find a voice which they could use to make sacred and secular arguments veiled in praise to the queen. Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, Aemilia Lanyer, and Esther Sowernam were prominent writers during the late 1500s who first looked to Elizabeth as a muse, an inspiration to push their writing talents to the limits, and then as an acceptable model to praise and make their arguments heard.

In many of her writings, Sidney exalts Elizabeth's greatness as a monarch and Elizabeth's influence on the literary world. Sidney's family was part of the Elizabethan aristocracy, and "shared fully in that society's sense of national responsibility and boundless opportunity" (Freer 481). Sidney's position in Elizabeth's court gave her opportunities to observe personally Elizabeth's behavior as a queen. Sidney's mother was a descendant of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, an intimate of Elizabeth's and brother to Robert, Earl of Leicester, one of Elizabeth's closest confidants.⁷ Sidney's father, Henry, was of a

family who had served the monarchy in many capacities. Sidney herself went to live in Elizabeth's household at the age of fourteen as a member of the court. However, Sidney remained close with her brother Philip.⁸ Philip was well-known for both his position in Elizabeth's court and for his writings. Elizabeth called on Philip numerous times to support the Protestant cause and defend England. Philip also became famous for his writings including the poetic romance Astrophel and Stella and the theoretical The Defence of Poesy.

Sidney married Henry Herbert, the second earl of Pembroke, in 1577 and later had four children. During the years 1580 to 1582, Sidney spent much time with Philip. According to Coburn Freer, "[W]riting for the two must have been an easy and natural kind of transaction, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the older brother's example informed the later work of the Countess on every level" (482). Freer argues that Sidney's parents and the death of Philip Sidney in one of Queen Elizabeth's Dutch Wars probably influenced Sidney to pursue a literary career:

While it is always risky to guess at the source of any artistic motive, there is a good possibility that the deaths, within one year, of the Countess's father and mother may have determined her rather generally in her literary vocation; but

the death of her brother that same year of 1586
[. . .] could only have reinforced her sense of
the specific jobs she had to do. (482)

Sidney completed a translation of the Psalms she and Philip had begun, revised and expanded her brother's prose romance, The Arcadia, and translated several other pieces as well as creating her own.⁹ She became a patron to other writers including Edmund Spenser, Thomas Nashe, Ben Johnson, and John Donne (Freer 482). She also continued her place in Elizabeth's court, where she remained, Freer says, "a favorite of the queen" (483).

There is no doubt that Sidney would have wanted to remain in Elizabeth's good graces, but she also strove to influence through literature the choices Elizabeth made as a queen. Because Sidney was a woman, she had no voice in the court as an adviser to Queen Elizabeth, and speaking out might have offended her. Therefore, Sidney created her own voice that lifted Elizabeth in praise but yet contained underlying implications as to how Elizabeth should be handling herself as the queen. A short poem titled "Dialogue Between Two Shepherds in Praise of Astrea" was written by Sidney in 1599 to commemorate Elizabeth's visit to Wilton, the Pembrokes' country home (McGurr 1). The poem is written in the pastoral tradition: two shepherds having a conversation to praise "divine Astrea," a representation of

Queen Elizabeth. In Roman mythology, Astrea is the goddess of justice, innocence, and purity (Bulfinch's 887). This is a fitting representation for Elizabeth because as Queen of England she sat as judge over those who chose to do wrong against England. Elizabeth also was known as the Virgin Queen because she chose not to marry or bear children during her lifetime, although she may have had numerous affairs and most likely did not retain her virginity.¹⁰ Astrea was known in mythology as the last immortal to withdraw from the earth at the end of the Golden Age, an age known for innocence, happiness, truth, and justice (Ovid 31). The time of Elizabeth's reign was also referred to as a golden age for England as the country prevailed over Roman Catholic rule and won wars against many European countries.¹¹ With the death of Elizabeth in 1603 and the succession of James I, the triumphant Elizabethan age ended and conflicts that had been put aside under Elizabeth's rule began to resurface.¹²

Superficially, the two shepherds in Sidney's poem, *Thenot and Piers*,¹³ seem to be debating how best to celebrate Queen Elizabeth. Thenot makes a statement of praise, but then Piers rebuts it. In the beginning stanzas, Thenot heaps praise upon praise, calling for the Muses to "heave my Verses higher" (B5r). Piers is concerned that Thenot is overdoing the compliments and tells Thenot he is

straying from the truth: "I lookt to finde you lying" (B5). Thenot, however, is unmoved by Piers at this point, so he continues. He claims that Elizabeth is guided by wisdom and virtue and only good exists in her presence (B5). Thenot praises Elizabeth for being foremost in their happiness and protection. He also refers to Elizabeth as "Our chiefest wealth, our treasure" (B5).

Instead of agreeing with Thenot, Piers replies that although she is "chiefest" to them, "Where chiefest are, there others be" (B5). Piers seems to be implying that although Elizabeth is at the top now, others who have the same qualities may be waiting to take her place. Piers seems to reiterate his ideas that Elizabeth will not live forever. In reply to Thenot's praise of Elizabeth as being in her prime, Piers reminds Thenot "That spring endures but shortest time" and that not even Elizabeth can escape that law of nature (B5). He continues to accuse Thenot of telling lies rather than singing truthful praises.

As Piers becomes more adamant that Thenot is lying, Thenot begins to question Piers as to why he thinks the celebration of Elizabeth is in vain. At this point, it does appear that Piers thinks the opposite of Elizabeth and does not want to compliment her. In refuting Thenot's simple praises, however, Piers pays Elizabeth the ultimate compliment in the final stanza. Piers explains to Thenot

that Elizabeth, like Astrea, is a larger-than-life figure to which nothing is worthy of comparison: "Words from conceit do only rise, / Above conceit her honour flies: / But silence, nought can praise her" (58-60). Silence, therefore, is the best way to praise Elizabeth because words only amount to frivolity.

Melanie McGurr argues that Sidney has embedded a political tone into the poem and that the poem does more than simply praise Elizabeth as a goddess queen. This message is a reminder from Sidney as to how Elizabeth should be ruling England, especially involving religious matters. According to McGurr, Thenot, who is effusive in his praise of Elizabeth, represents the English who wavered in their belief in the Protestant religion (2). He represents those subjects who superficially practiced Protestantism to please Elizabeth. Piers, on the other hand, represents the steadfast Protestants who often disagreed with Elizabeth's permissive religious policies, McGurr says (2). Thus, Thenot could be viewed as praising Elizabeth so as not to be questioned about his political views. By praising Elizabeth, he aligns himself with her.

With the rebuttals by Piers, however, readers begin to question Thenot's motives. Piers is concerned with truth, a concern that aligns him with the steadfast Protestants who believed that the Protestant religion, as opposed to Roman

Catholicism, was the true religion for England. In the second stanza, Piers says, "Thou needst the truth but plainely tell, / Which much I doubt thou canst not well, / Thou art so oft a lier" (B5). Because Thenot's praises raise Elizabeth to the level of a goddess, it could be understood that he is equating her with the Virgin Mary as worshipped by the Roman Catholics. Elizabeth was the head of the Anglican Church and keeper of the Protestant religion in England, but was not worshipped as a goddess or deity by the English Protestants. Thus, it could be surmised that Sidney was veiling a message to Elizabeth that although she has goddess-like qualities and deserves overwhelming praise, she should maintain the Protestant idea that truth revealed through silent reverence reigns supreme as opposed to the effusive worship often associated with Roman Catholicism.¹⁴

Sidney also addresses Elizabeth in an untitled poem included in a manuscript of the Psalms. In this poem, Sidney draws many comparisons between Elizabeth as a ruler and David, the Hebrew king of Israel who was the author of the biblical Psalms. As in the "Dialogue," Sidney manipulates her perspective in the opening stanzas so that she does not appear to be criticizing Elizabeth's actions as a ruler. In the first stanza, Sidney offers the poem to Elizabeth out of respect for the queen: "And of respect to thee the line out

goes" (4). In the second and third stanzas, Sidney humbles herself as both a writer and a subject and hopes for Elizabeth's acceptance of the words: "Yet dare I so, as humblenes may dare / cherish some hope they shall acceptance finde" (9-10). Sidney also humbles herself by praising Elizabeth for handling her position with grace and intelligence, yet Sidney reminds Elizabeth that "heav'nly powrs" placed her on the throne and not those qualities (13). In the following stanzas, Sidney continues to place herself in an inferior position to both Elizabeth and King David as well as to her brother Philip, who had completed forty-three of the translations of the Psalms before his death. She says that her translation is not original because she only changed the language from Hebrew to English. She says, "but hee [David] did warpe, I weav'd this webb to end; / the stuffe not ours, our worke no curious thing" (27-28). Sidney offers the translation as a "small parcel of that undischarged rent" (35).

Although Sidney has given herself some credit in the endeavor, she pulls Elizabeth into the work as though it were of her hand: "For in our worke what bring wee but thine owne?" (41). Sidney has placed Elizabeth at the center of the piece using the logic that because the piece is written

in English and Elizabeth is the representation of everything English, then it is Elizabeth's work. Sidney says,

Thy brest the Cabinet, thy seat the shrine,

where Muses hang their vowed memories:

where Wit, where Art, where all that is divine

conceived best, and best defended lies. (45-48)

Sidney reminds Elizabeth that she is not simply a representative of England in the eyes of her subjects and other countries but she also embodies the country and all that it stands for. In the first stanza of the poem, Sidney alludes to the idea that European leaders looked to Elizabeth as the embodiment of a great ruler. Sidney extends the idea and raises Elizabeth to goddess-like status with reference to the Muses who inspire greatness: "where Muses hang their vowed memories" (46). Sidney also brings a religious tone to her message to Elizabeth. Sidney compares the Psalms to "holy garments" that fit only King David and Elizabeth (63). She explains that King David was "Gods loved choise" and it is only fitting that the writings go to a queen who is God's "chosen love" (54). Sidney is suggesting that Elizabeth has been put in her place by God; therefore, she should be revered with the same respect as God. Sidney also compares Elizabeth's reign as queen to David's reign as

king. She says, "For ev'n thy Rule is painted in his Raigne" (65). In referring to David's successful battles against the Philistines, Sidney alludes to the religious conflicts Elizabeth dealt with between the Protestants and Roman Catholics. Sidney assures Elizabeth that she, like David, will be successful: "The foes of heav'n no lesse have beene thy foes; / Hee with great conquest, thou with greater blest; / Thou sure to winn, and hee secure to lose" (70-72). Sidney alludes to Elizabeth's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 to illustrate that Elizabeth already has been successful in one major conflict: "Of thee two hemispheres on honor talke, / and Lands and seas thy Trophees jointly showe" (75-76).

In Sidney's concluding stanzas, she echoes the "Dialogue" in making the point that Elizabeth is responsible for restoring and maintaining the truth in England. Sidney says, "Men drawne by worth a woman to obey; / one moving all, herselfe unmov'd the while" (83-84). Sidney explains that Elizabeth is an inspiration and influences her subjects to complete great endeavors in her name. In the last stanza, Sidney sends a message to Elizabeth that she is expected by her subjects to be far greater than previous rulers. She says,

what wish shee may (farre past hir living Peeres
and Rivall still to Judas Faithfull King)

In more then hee and more triumphant yeares,
Sing what God doth, and doo What men may sing.

(93-96)

As in the "Dialogue," Sidney has created a veiled message of praise to Elizabeth that she should be upholding God's truth, the ideals of Protestantism, and using her intelligence and artfulness to maintain order and success in England over those enemies, the Roman Catholics, who might upset the peace. Through manipulation of perspectives, using male voices in the "Dialogue," and humbling herself before Elizabeth in the second poem, Sidney was able to comment on religious and political aspects of Elizabeth's rule without placing herself in a vulnerable position to ruin her own reputation as a member of Elizabeth's court and with Elizabeth personally as an outspoken female.

After Elizabeth's death, female writers were free to use Elizabeth directly in their writings. Unlike Sidney, who veils her ideas about Elizabeth in praise, Aemilia Lanyer and Esther Sowernam outwardly use Elizabeth as a model

to further their clearly polemical writings and to influence the social status of women.

Lanyer makes reference to Elizabeth in her volume of poems Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum¹⁵ in an introductory dedication entitled "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie." Biographers speculate that Lanyer lived from 1569 to 1640. She was the daughter of a court musician and eventually the wife of a court musician. Susanne Woods says that Lanyer's poems "sketch a portrait of an intelligent, attractive, strong-minded woman whose life on the fringes of Elizabethan and Jacobean court society gave her some opportunity for education and advancement" (xv). Because her "ambitions outstripped her social class and financial resources," Woods says Lanyer "may have been the first Englishwoman to publish a full edition of poems and to claim for herself a professional poetic voice" (xv).

According to Barbara K. Lewalski, Lanyer's poem creates a community of women and fuses "religious devotion and feminism so as to assert the essential harmony of those two impulses" (207). Unlike Sidney, Lanyer does not include any direct dedication in her poem to Elizabeth because writing a dedication in her honor thanking her for her patronage would have been fruitless since the publication date is eight years after Elizabeth's death. Elizabeth is mentioned

briefly by Lanyer early in the dedications, however. The dedications create a Protestant line of mothers to daughters,¹⁶ and making mention of Elizabeth, the mother of Protestantism in England, only solidifies the connection. Lanyer also uses Elizabeth as a reminder of better times in her own life. Lanyer spent her young adulthood as a member of Elizabeth's court, but she did not find the court of James I as fulfilling in her later adult years.¹⁷ Lanyer describes,

So I that live clos'd up in Sorrowes Cell,
Since great Elizaes favour blest my youth;
And in the confines of all cares doe dwell,
Whose grieved eyes no pleasure ever view'th:

But in Christs suffrings, such sweet taste they
have,

As makes me praise pale Sorrow and the Grave.

(109-114)

Lanyer looks back to her time in Elizabeth's court as a time of inspiration and happiness. Her current conditions, her sufferings, make her look toward death with happy longing. The mention of Elizabeth is brief, but the reflection on Elizabeth's inspiration gives Lanyer a sense of strength

that will help her continue. Thus, Elizabeth's influence on Lanyer in her youth gave her a voice to speak out on her own ideas of femininity and religion in her adulthood, despite the condition of the court to which she now belongs. Readers may also make the connection that Lanyer believes it was Elizabeth, as well as the women who follow in Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, and not the male rulers of England who made it possible for women to speak out on political and religious issues through poetry.

Esther Sowernam makes a brief reference to Elizabeth as well, but she uses Elizabeth as an influence and model to promote her ideas for the superiority of women and the better education of women.¹⁸ Sowernam makes the argument that Elizabeth should be imitated not only by women, but also by men. Sowernam draws upon Elizabeth's example in a 1617 pamphlet entitled "Esther hath hang'd Haman: or An Answere to a lewd Pamphlet, entituled, The Arraignment of Women." Sowernam was writing in response to a misogynist pamphlet written by Joseph Swetnam entitled "The araignment of lewde, idle, froward, and unconstant women." Sowernam's pamphlet was the second written in response to Swetnam's treatise. Sowernam attributes her disappointment in the first response written by Rachel Speght as the reason for writing her pamphlet. Sowernam sees Speght's argument flawed in that she "doth rather charge and condemne women"

(A2) rather than "defend women" (A2). Thus, Sowernam not only defends women, but also arraigns the men whom she describes as "lewd, idle, furious and beastly disposed persons" (A2).

Although Sowernam makes mention of Elizabeth only once in her defense of women, she clearly suggests that Elizabeth is a person to be imitated by all. Sowernam refers to Elizabeth as "the glory of our Sexe" (D2). Sowernam placed Elizabeth in the chapter titled "At what estimate Women were valued in ancient and former times" (C3), and Sowernam opens that chapter with a bit of philosophy she attributes to Plato. Sowernam says that Plato "estimateth of Women, which doe equall Men in all respects, onely in bodie they are weaker, but in wit and disposition of minde nothing inferior, if not superiour" (C3). Sowernam adds that Plato thought that women should be in positions of governmental authority whether by birth or by election (C3). Sowernam follows with examples of women, including Elizabeth, who had honorable qualities. It is Elizabeth, however, whom she says is "a patterne for the best men to imitate" (D3). Sowernam appears to be focusing on Elizabeth's role as monarch, like Sidney and Lanyer, who use praise of Elizabeth to give them voices in the realms of politics and religion. Sowernam refers to Elizabeth as "our late Sovereaigne" and does not analyze aspects of Elizabeth's life or career. Instead,

Sowernam concludes her brief discussion of Elizabeth with a thought that no one should forget the example Elizabeth set and that all should keep it alive by living it: "[W]hile she lived, she was the mirrour of the world, so then knowne to be, and so still remembered, and ever will be" (D3).

Queen Elizabeth becomes an important reference in the writings of women both during and following her death. As Sidney first examines Elizabeth as a monarch, Elizabeth becomes a role model for women. She is a figure who has proven that women can push the limits of sexual restriction placed on women by patriarchal society and succeed. Although Sidney had to be cautious and veil her ideas for desirable qualities in women in praise for the queen, Lanyer and Sowernam writing shortly following the death of the queen were freer to use Elizabeth as a model to support their polemical writings. In the years following, many other women writers continued to use Elizabeth as a role model for women for the same reasons these early examples--Sidney, Lanyer, and Sowernam--had in advancing the status of women in British society.

Chapter II: The Pearls of a Monarch and a Lady

In 1630, almost thirty years after the death of Elizabeth I, a poem titled "A Chaine of Pearle or a Memoriall of the peerles Graces, and Heroick Vertues of Queene Elizabeth, of Glorious Memory" was published in London. Information about the author, Diana Primrose, involves educated guesses at best.¹⁹ While the poem celebrates Elizabeth as a female prince who embodies both public and private virtues, its publication date is 1630, during the unstable reign of Charles I. This publication date suggests that "A Chaine of Pearle" most likely was meant as a commentary on the virtues that a monarch of either sex should embody in order to have a long and successful reign.

Primrose focuses her poem on what she terms Elizabeth's ten ornaments--religion, chastity, prudence, temperance, clemency, justice, fortitude, science, patience, and bounty. Primrose addresses the poem to "All Noble Ladies, and Gentle-women," inviting them to wear this "chaine" of virtues (A2r). In the induction, Primrose refers to Elizabeth as "Great Eliza, Englands brightest Sun, / The worlds Renowne and everlasting Lampe" and "English Goddess, Empresse of our Sex" giving her readers a clear indication that Elizabeth was a woman who had lit the way for other

women. Gim argues that Primrose's induction establishes the poem's two purposes, to praise Elizabeth and encourage other women to follow her example (189). Primrose asserts,

that by recreating Elizabeth's "Chaine" of virtues in this poetic catalogue, she will create not only a "Trophie" to the queen's name, but also will give to other women a gift, for by actively "wearing" this chain--that is, by imitating Elizabeth's intellectual and moral virtues--they, too, can crown themselves with acclaim. (Gim 189)

Primrose thus creates a chain of virtues using Elizabeth as a role model for women while setting many of her admirable qualities in contrast to the reign of Charles.

As noted above, the publication of the poem came at a time when the English people were becoming deeply dissatisfied with the actions of their current monarch, Charles I.²⁰ Charles had taken the throne in 1625 following the death of his father, James I, who had immediately succeeded to the throne following Elizabeth. Charles was the second son of James and his wife Anne of Denmark and became the heir to the English throne following the death of his older brother Henry. Charles married the sister of King Louis XIII of France, but still found himself at war with both Spain and France during the first year of his reign. He was greatly influenced by the Marquis of Buckingham, a

confidant of his father. Members of Parliament, however, greatly distrusted Buckingham, and Parliament's distrust of Buckingham furthered a distrust for Charles. On many occasions Parliament refused to support Charles's exploits financially, leading Charles to adjourn Parliament and rule without them for eleven years.²¹

Charles also caused upset in church affairs. As queen, Elizabeth had firmly situated the Protestant Church of England as the accepted denomination of England. After James came to the throne, he began to recognize the Puritan sects and offered them concessions. He also ordered a new translation of the Bible, which became known as the Authorised Version or King James's Bible. Antonia Fraser describes James's attitude toward religion as "fairly tolerant and eclectic" (Lives 220). However, James became intolerant toward his Roman Catholic subjects once the Roman Catholic Gunpowder Plot to blow up Parliament was revealed; he reimposed penalties for failing to attend Anglican church services. Charles, influenced by his French connections, did not carry on the legacies of his predecessors regarding the Church of England. Charles was "accused of promoting so-called 'Arminians' or high churchmen who believed in free will rather than predestination to achieve salvation and of appointing clergy who preferred the retention of Catholic ritual and rites in services" (Fraser, Lives 229). These

struggles continued between Charles and Parliament and civil war eventually ensued. Charles was found guilty of "waging war on his own people" and executed in 1649 (Fraser, Lives 233). Germaine Greer, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff, and Melinda Sansone suggest that "Diana Primrose's purpose in writing a panegyric on a queen dead twenty-seven years is clearly to criticize Charles I by implication" (83). Elizabeth's ten virtues might have been considered lacking in Charles I as he allied himself with Roman Catholic interests and thus alienated himself from a large number of his Protestant subjects. This poem provides a sharp contrast between Elizabeth's rule, which was long and successful, and Charles's rule, which was the opposite. The "pearls", or ornaments in "The Chaine of Pearle," that seem most obviously to draw a contrast between Elizabeth and Charles are religion, prudence, temperance, clemency, and justice.²²

Primrose examines religion as Elizabeth's first pearl, "the goodliest pearl in faire Eliza's Chaine" (Blr). Primrose asserts that Elizabeth brought England back to its "true religion" after her sister Mary Tudor ruled England as a Catholic nation (Blr). Primrose describes how Elizabeth invited hostility from other Catholic nations, including Spain and France, by turning England away from the Roman Catholic Church:

And though Shee found the Realme infected much
With Superstition, and Abuses, such
As (in all human judgement) could not be
Reform'd without domesticke Mutiny,
And great Hostility from Spaine and France;
Yet Shee undaunted, bravely did advance
Christ's Glorious Ensigne, maugre all the Fears
Or Dangers which appear'd [. . .]. (Blr)

In the battles Elizabeth fought in England over religion, Primrose says Elizabeth "swaid the Scepter with a Ladies hand," making stricter laws regarding worship and putting traitors to death (Blv). Primrose describes Elizabeth's tolerance of the Roman Catholics as a feminized strength. Elizabeth was tolerant but did not yield to the pressures of the constant threat of war with Roman Catholic countries, including France and Spain. She held them off with a power that Charles could not match in his reign. Charles yielded and moved toward the Roman Catholic religion rather than defending the Protestant faith. He became a traitor to his Protestant subjects whereas Elizabeth became the defender for her Protestant subjects.

Charles also proved that he lacked prudence in the management of England during his reign. He was frivolous in his spending of money on wars, and he and Parliament, when assembled, were two enemies pitted against each other during

his reign. He aligned himself with advisors who were distrusted by the English people, eventually causing the popular distrust of him. Fraser states,

[T]he King's government had employed a number of dubious methods of raising money. 'Ship money', a tax which had been used in Tudor times, was imposed on inland towns as well as ports to pay for the upkeep of the navy. Tonnage and poundage continued to be levied illegally. Various irritating medieval imposts, such as fines upon gentry who refused to accept knighthoods, were collected. Thus the whole of the House of Commons, consisting of country gentlemen, lawyers and merchants, were alienated from the King's government which they considered to be acting unconstitutionally. (231)

Charles's method of ruling was in direct opposition to the way Elizabeth reigned. Primrose discusses the pearls of prudence, temperance, clemency, and justice as illustrations of how Elizabeth chose to rule England. Primrose describes Elizabeth as ruling with prudence, consulting with her counsellors on matters of state. Primrose says that "this Gift in her was much more eminent, / In that it is so rarely incident / To our weake Sex" and that "This Pearle of Prudence then, Wee all should prize" (B3r). With the

pearl of temperance, Primrose again illustrates that Elizabeth ruled using strategy rather than passion and instinct to drive her decisions. As Primrose describes it,

Her Passions still Shee checkt, and still Shee
made

The World astonisht, that so undismaid

Shee did with equall Tenor still proceede

In one faire course, not shaken as a reed:

But built upon the Rocke of Temperance [. . .].

(B3v)

Primrose says Elizabeth took time to think through decisions rather than being rash and hasty with hope, fear, anger, or love. It is this virtue, Primrose says, that Elizabeth used to gain the love of her subjects so that "Prince and people mutually agree / In sacred Concord, and sweete Symphonie!"

(B4r). Charles, however, chose a different path. He acted with haste and force to satisfy his whims. He was not concerned with the wishes of his subjects, but rather with his own ideas as to how the country should be run. Thus, through examining the contrast between Elizabeth and Charles, Primrose plays against the period stereotype that women were fickle and easily changed.

Clemency and justice, the fifth and sixth pearls, also gained Elizabeth great fame and love from her subjects. In contrast, Charles created civil wars in England during his

reign. Primrose says that Elizabeth was "The Image of Her Maker" in that she had mercy on those who repented and were willing to pay for their sins (B4r). However, she also ruled with justice, "which did support Her Crowne, and was her Kingdomes strongest Fort" (B4v). Primrose says that although the punishments for disloyalty were often "Unfit for Feminine hands," Elizabeth doled out punishments for those who were threats to England to maintain her throne (B4v). Charles, on the other hand, met his demise at the hands of his subjects, who acted on their anger at Charles for bringing England far from the golden age it celebrated under Elizabeth's rule.²³

Primrose continues to discuss the virtues she views as admirable and necessary in a monarch of either sex, although she does draw on Elizabeth's femininity as a strength that lends itself to these virtues. Thus, Primrose also makes the poem one that celebrates Elizabeth as a role model for the female sex. Lisa Gim argues that the encomium to Elizabeth was written to portray her as "the most appropriate intellectual and ethical model for her sex, and to affirm conceptual connections between this powerful female authority and women who might follow her example" (188). Primrose traces Elizabeth's princely virtues and emphasizes her role as a gender model. She instructs other females to emulate the queen, who was celebrated for her

regal and righteous authority and autonomy. The ten virtues Primrose chooses to praise do not include beauty or other gender-specific categories. Instead, Primrose chooses intellectual and moral qualities to praise. For example, the poem does not include a blazon of the queen's physical appearance, which is traditionally included in an encomium. Primrose presents Elizabeth as having qualities that can be shared by all women.

Primrose discusses patience as the ninth pearl and reiterates Elizabeth's position as the head of the Church of England. Primrose describes how enemies of Protestantism thirsted after Elizabeth and how she spent time in prison for defending her faith.²⁴ However, Primrose describes how God prevented anyone from taking the life of the "Sacred Princesse" Elizabeth, "this sweete Saint" (C2r). Instead, her sacrifices were rewarded when she became queen:

[A]nd none but such attends,
As ready were with poison, or with knife,
To Sacrifice this Sacred Princesse life,
At bloody Bonners becke, or Gardiners nod;
Had they not bin prevented by that GOD
Who did Susanna from the Elders free,
And at last, gave her, her Liberty.
Thus by her patient bearing of the Crosse,

Shee reaped greatest Gaine from greatest
Losse. (C2r)

With this image, Primrose equates Elizabeth's burdens and her rewards with those of Jesus Christ, the right hand of God. This image further solidifies Elizabeth's place as the proper head of the Church of England.

The second pearl Primrose praises is chastity. She says that no other woman surpasses Elizabeth in her ability to keep her chastity and make it a tool of her autonomy rather than the possession of her father or of a husband. Primrose describes Elizabeth's choice to remain unwed and virginal as an assertion of her righteous power and a triumph over male domination:

How many Kings and Princes did aspire,
To win her Love? In whom that Vestall Fire
Still flaming, never would Shee condescend
To Hymen's Rihtes, though much Shee did commend,
That brave French Monsieur who did hope to carry
The Golden Fleece, and faire Eliza marry.
Yea Spanish Philip, Husband to her Sister,
Was her first Sutor, and the first that mist her:
And though he promis'd that the Pope by Bull
Should license it, Shee held it but a Gull
For how can Pope with Gods owne law dispence?

(B2r)

Primrose illustrates that it would have been subjugation for Elizabeth to marry and lose her virginity. Primrose uses an example of a lady in her court whom Elizabeth encourages to resist the advances of a Spanish noble, Don Taxis.

According to the account, the noble gives the lady a rare pearl from the Orient in hopes that she will return the favor with her virginity. However, knowing what he expects, the lady turns him down but keeps the pearl as a prize. Gim argues that this anecdote "echoes Elizabeth's repulsion on a national scale of the Spanish Armada, a metaphor of virginity retained that was employed in many representations of Elizabeth's and England's victory over Spain."

Furthermore, Elizabeth uses chastity as an "emblem for inviolability" (Gim 192) in her speech to her troops at Tilbury: "[I] think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my Realm, to which rather than any dishonor grow by me I myself will take up arms" (L12). The image of "invasion" becomes one of rape destroying chastity as the image of Elizabeth's realm is used in two ways--one as England and one as Elizabeth herself. Therefore, Primrose encourages women to protect themselves from such invasions.

Primrose also encourages other women to emulate this virginal behavior by not letting their virtue fall "Into the filthy durt of foule Desires, / Which Satan kindles with his

Hell-bred fires" (B2v). Primrose redefines chastity not only as a physical condition, but also as a spiritual and moral virtue that all women can attain, "[W]hether it be termed Virginal / In Virgins, or in Wives stil'd Conjugall, / Or Viduall in Widdowes" (B2v).

In her discussion of the pearls of fortitude, science, bounty, and chastity Primrose repeatedly discusses Elizabeth's actions as exceeding the same done by men. Primrose represents Elizabeth as an androgynous character withstanding threats to her throne:

Witness Her brave undaunted Looke, when Parry
Was fully bent Shee should by him miscarry:
The wretch confest, that Her Great Majestie
With stange amazement did him terrifie.
So Heavenly-Gracefull, and so full of Awe,
Was that Majesticke Queene, which when some saw,
They thought an Angell did appeare: Shee shon
So bright, as None else could Her Paragon. (C1r)

Primrose continues the theme of androgyny with a description of Elizabeth delivering a speech to the British troops at Tilbury "in most Princely sort" (C1r) and being exalted for her royalty "'Mongst all the Warlike Princes" (C1v).

Primrose uses the word "Prince" rather than "Queen" or "Princess" in several instances throughout the poem to emphasize Elizabeth's supreme power over England. According

to Gim, this usage echoes Elizabeth, who used "Prince" herself in situations which necessitated unquestionable authority (191). Primrose uses the eighth pearl, science, to praise Elizabeth's more masculine qualities of education including knowledge, intellect, and rhetoric:

Then did the Goddess Eloquence inspire
Her Royall Brest: Apollo with his Lyre,
Ne're made such Musicke; On her Sacred Lips
Angells enthron'd, most Heavenly Manna sips.
Then might you see her Nectar-flowing Veine
Surround the Hearers; in which sugred Streame,
Shee able was to drowne a World of men,
And drown'd, with Sweetnes to revive agen. (Clv)

Primrose discusses how Elizabeth manipulated her subjects with rhetoric. Primrose describes Elizabeth's rhetoric as sweetness, but not empty of substance. Her rhetoric was derived not only from female charms, but also from intelligence and education. She used these skills to handle matters of state in speaking with ambassadors from Parliament, academe, other countries, and her subjects. Gim notes that the verse focuses on Elizabeth's oratorical skills as a "rare talent that elevates the learned queen to a position of preeminence as a woman ruling and conquering men" (191).

In the tenth pearl, bounty, Primrose presents a final image of Elizabeth overthrowing Philip of Spain by bringing him to his knees:

Witnesse France, Portugall, Virginia,
Germany, Scotland, Ireland, Belgia:
Whose Provinces and Princes found her Aid
On all Occasions; which sore dismaid
Spaines King whose European Monarchy,
Could never thrive during her Sovereignty;
So did Shee beate him with her Distaffe, so
By Sea and Land Shee him did overthrowe;
Yea, so that Tyrant on his knees She
Brought [. . .]. (C2r)

Primrose does not present this image of female over male as unnatural in order, but as a "reaffirmation of the proper order that is specifically right for England" (Gim 193). Gim says, "Primrose graphically asserts Elizabeth's female ascendancy over men, which male writers carefully sought to avoid universalizing, as part of a cultural gender order" (193).

Primrose isolated aspects of education, character, and behavior for monarchs, male or female, and women in general to emulate. The poem's publication date suggests that Primrose herself or a publisher was trying to tell Charles I

that he was not living up to the expectations of a successful monarch. However, the poem transcends the level of criticism by also asking women to emulate these qualities that were embodied by a successful woman. By fixing upon Elizabeth's real and intellectual power, Primrose combines Elizabeth's authority and femininity as a strength that Charles did not and could not have. However, Primrose asserts that women, whether in positions of authority or not, could emulate the ten pearls. Gim says Primrose evokes Elizabeth as a "proven, historical model of both female authority and authorship" (194). Primrose forges a bond between Elizabeth and women across class and time by describing virtues in "Faire Eliza's Chaine" that all women can share to advance themselves in patriarchal societies and other monarchs can embody to rule successfully. Elizabeth thus serves as both a "historical paragon and the gender paradigm that other women should emulate" (Gim 190). The title, "A Chaine of Pearle," is a metaphor that reveals the poem's purpose--to describe Elizabeth's ten virtues--and its linked structure--to connect Elizabeth to female readers of the poem. The poem emphasizes the links between Elizabeth and contemporary women, a purpose which stands in contrast to the praise of male writers of the same time who were stressing Elizabeth as being unique to the female sex in her exceptionality and masculinity.

Chapter III: Elizabeth the Learned

Elizabeth I was not only admired in her role as a ruler, but she was also looked to as an example of how women should be educated. During the late seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century, women writers were becoming more outspoken about the treatment of women as merely wives and secondary members of society. Women writers including Hannah Woolley, Bathsua Makin, Jane Sharp, Elizabeth Cellier, Mary Astell, Elizabeth Elstob, Lady Mary Chudleigh, Anna Winchilsea, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Sarah Fyge Egerton, Margaret Fell Fox, and Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, voiced their criticism of the social restrictions placed on English women and their exclusion from educational institutions. Through their treatises, these writers encouraged women to use their minds to better their social positions rather than to be concerned only with the drudgery of domesticity. They looked to a better balance of power gained through social change.²⁵ Queen Elizabeth served as the most obvious example of a woman who had stepped outside the boundaries of the domestic capacity. She did not bring about social change, but she became a model for what could be possible for women. As Louis Montrose points out, "Within legal and fiscal limits, she held the power of life and death over every Englishman, the power to advance or

frustrate the worldly desires of all her subjects" (77). Seventeenth-century feminists²⁶ could use this idea to their advantage and strengthen their arguments because the possibilities that women were capable of being educated in scholarly subjects and using their intelligence and skills outside the domestic realm had become a reality in Elizabeth. Using this logic, Bathsua Makin refers directly to Elizabeth in her catalogue of educated and successful women. Makin uses Elizabeth as a model to support arguments for better education of women in the English society.

Katharina Wilson describes Queen Elizabeth as a multi-talented monarch who exemplified the humanist tradition of education: "[Elizabeth was a] humanist and monarch of remarkable intellectual and political talents [who] wrote orations, homilies, poems, and translations," (xvi). Wilson argues that Elizabeth "mastered the rudiments of humanist learning" (xvi). Although Elizabeth was declared a bastard by her father Henry VIII after he had Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother, beheaded for adultery, Henry saw to it that Elizabeth continued to be well educated. Alison Weir observes, "Henry VIII may have neglected his younger daughter in many ways, but he did ensure that from the age of six she should be educated as befitted a Renaissance prince" (13). Katherine Parr, Henry's last wife before his death, supervised much of

Elizabeth's education and hired tutors including William Grindal and Roger Ascham,²⁷ who was a well-known Cambridge scholar and humanist. Ascham and his colleagues were not only committed to the humanist tradition of educating people, men and women, through the study of classical rhetoric, but also to the Protestant religion. Weir argues that there is no question but that Elizabeth was "fired by their ideals at an impressionable age" (13).

Makin draws from Elizabeth's educational background and later use of those skills in her 1673 piece, "An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues, with An Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education." Arguing for the education of women, Makin refers specifically to Queen Elizabeth eight times throughout the piece in the areas of foreign languages, linguistics, oration, religion, poetry, mathematics, geography, history, music, and painting. Makin divides her essay into several sections, some of which specifically discuss subjects in which women were formerly educated and excelled in. The second half addresses the philosophical underpinnings of her ideas. Elizabeth is one of many women Makin uses as models for her argument. Others include women of Biblical fame and Greek and Roman mythology, leading female European monarchs and courtiers,

and female scholars. Makin uses Elizabeth as a link in her chain in advocating better education for all women.

Makin herself was a tutor and administrator of a girls' school during her adult life.²⁸ Apparently, she practiced her philosophies of education in these positions as she educated young women in religion, dancing, music, singing, writing, languages, mathematics, history, and many other subjects (Makin 27). This educational regimen was much like the education that Elizabeth and many upper class girls in Tudor England had had.²⁹ Thus, Elizabeth, a figure who reigned strong in the memories of the English, becomes an important figure in Makin's essay. Using Elizabeth as a model refreshed ideas that a woman, if properly educated, could be a valuable, contributing citizen. Gim says that Makin's use of Elizabeth goes beyond "the usual epideictic praise of a virtuous or admirable woman" (185).

Instead, Makin focuses on Elizabeth, as well as the other women, as figures to imitate. Makin sets up her argument as an answer to a letter written by a male objector to the education of women:³⁰

[This] pamphlet is not simply a philosophical treatise on female ability, but rather a pragmatic agenda for a return to a humanist classical education for women--the sort that Queen Elizabeth

and other Tudor women had received, and which she herself offers in her girls' school. (Gim 185)

Makin's representation of Elizabeth is important on two levels for her argument. Her repeated references to Elizabeth examine both her academic achievement as a student and her use of that education to strengthen her status as queen. In her introduction to the essay, Makin clearly states that, as she will go on to prove, women with strong educations can rise to great status:

I verily think, Women were formerly Educated in the knowledge of Arts and Tongues, and by their Education, many did rise to a great height in learning. Were Women thus Educated now. (sic) I am confident the advantage would be very great: The Women would have Honor and Pleasure; their Relations Profit, and the whole Nation Advantage.

(2)

Makin first refers to Elizabeth "as the Crown of all" (6) in regard to her multi-lingual talent. Makin addresses both Elizabeth's education and her use of her knowledge of Greek, Latin, and many other languages in foreign affairs. Makin states, "How learned She was, the World can testify. It was usual for her to discourse with Foreign Agents in their own Languages" (6). Makin adds that "Mr. Ascam, her Tutor, used to say, She read more Greek in a day than many of the

Doctors of her time did Latin in a week" (6).³¹ Although Makin did agree that Elizabeth was exemplary in her talents, she did not view those talents as masculine or feminine. Makin asserts that men and women alike can attain skill through the proper education to elevate their status. In her introduction she explains that men have used education as a weapon and kept it to themselves, leaving their wives defenseless. If educated, then husbands will "consult and advise" with their wives to make wiser decisions (2). Makin states, "The Tongue is the only Weapon Women have to defend themselves with, and they had need to use it dexterously" (6).

Makin continues to extend her use of Elizabeth as a figure to imitate, especially in education and skill. Makin cites Elizabeth as both a good linguist and as excellent orator. Makin also explains that women who spoke well also wrote well. Using Elizabeth as an example, Makin cites Elizabeth as having displayed both her speaking skills and depth of knowledge in languages well in speeches delivered at Oxford and Cambridge universities.³² Makin says, "The two Orations delivered at the Universities by Queen Elizabeth's own Mouth, give ample testimony of her Oratory" (12). Makin parallels Elizabeth's gift for languages with her talent for writing poetry: "Those ingenious Fancies,

and pleasant Poems, bearing her Name, show she was a good Poet" (12). As Makin discusses, Elizabeth demonstrated her knowledge of many subjects through spoken and written discourse.

In her last reference to Elizabeth, Makin seals Elizabeth's role in bringing England to greatness with a metaphor of Elizabeth as mother and protector to Protestant England. Makin states that the reform of religion in England was carried out by women, although the governmental policy began with Henry VIII. Makin suggests that the seed of reformation was planted with women such as Anne Askew and Lady Jane Grey.³³ However, it was Elizabeth who delivered: "[T]his stuck in the Birth til his Daughter Queen Elizabeth carried it to the height it is now at" (18). Gim says that Makin "emphasizes Elizabeth's contribution to the English Church in terms of her distinctly female power to create both biologically and intellectually" (186). With this metaphor, Makin uses Elizabeth's female abilities to procreate, though Elizabeth never exercises these capabilities, combined with her intellectual abilities received through education in many subjects to place Elizabeth above men who could only have the intellectual abilities and not the biological capabilities. Makin uses the idea of procreation in terms of Henry VIII's not being capable of solidifying the Church of England beyond the

planted seed. It was Elizabeth who had both biological and intellectual capabilities to bring the change from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism to fruition. Thus, Makin places Elizabeth in a position superior to men. Makin states, "By her Learning she was fitted for Government, and swayed the Scepter of this Nation with as great honor as any man before her" (17).

Makin's purpose for her treatise, however, is not to bring more glory to Elizabeth as a queen. Instead, Makin uses Elizabeth as one of many examples to support her arguments for bettering the situation for women in England, especially during the seventeenth century. Makin states, "My intention is not to equalize Women and Men, much less to make them superior. They are the weaker Sex, yet capable of impressions of great things, something like to the best of Men" (18). Makin explores alternative roles for women in a society that favors the wife who tends to domestic duties and entertainment. Education during the seventeenth century for most women was limited to domestic skills such as sewing, music, and etiquette.³⁴ Village schools, often run by a local widow as Hufton points out were "little more than a childminding service where a little literacy might be dispensed by a widow or other matron" (217). He continues, "Religious instruction with knowledge of biblical texts,

reading and writing and arithmetic, sewing at several levels--plain and embroidery--were what a girl might come by in a charity school" (218). Makin, however, disagreed with the social and intellectual restrictions placed on women during the seventeenth century. Gim argues that the role of women regressed as the presence of a strong female monarch disappeared:

Moreover, with Elizabeth's death, the regal presence of the 'exceptional woman ascendant' had vanished; James I replaced Elizabeth's flexible use of androgynous gender metaphors with distinctly paternalistic ones of his own. Undeniably, by the 1660s aristocratic women lost some ground in terms of the social view of female education. (186)

In Stuart England, women were limited for the most part to education in the domestic duties, which Makin viewed as a necessity only second to education in the arts and tongues. Makin states:

My meaning is, Persons that God has blessed with the things of this World, that have competent natural Parts, ought to be educated in Knowledge; That is, it is much better they should spend the time of their Youth, to be completely instructed

in those things usually taught to Gentlewoman at Schools, and the overplus of their time to be spent in gaining Arts, and Tongues, and useful Knowledge, rather than to trifle away so many precious minutes merely to polish their Hands and Feet, to curl their Locks, to dress and trim their Bodies; and in the mean time to neglect their Souls, and not at all, or very little to endeavor to know God, Jesus Christ, Themselves, and the things of Nature, Arts, and Tongues, subservient to these. (13)

Makin believes that emphasis on the body and domestic duties equates women with cattle, swine, and goats, animals which Makin describes as "devils" full of "lust" and "pride" (14). Makin argues that it is "Heathen and Barbarous People" who make "slaves" and degenerates of their women in such a way (14).

Throughout her essay, Makin calls for women to follow the lead of former female leaders, to follow their examples in education and behavior. Makin says,

I hope Women will make another use of what I have said; instead of claiming honor from what Women have formerly been, they will labor to imitate them in learning those Arts their Sex has invented, in studying those Tongues they have

understood, and in practicing those Virtues shadowed under their Shapes; the knowledge of Art and Tongues, the exercise of Virtue and Piety, will certainly say (let men say what they will) make them honorable. (13)

Makin calls directly on women to take charge of their status and make better use of their abilities by expanding their knowledge. By juxtaposing "Art and Tongues" with "Virtue and Piety," Gim argues, Makin has drawn from Elizabeth's example once again "as an orator who authorized her own public speaking with precisely such connections between her virtue and her right to speak publicly" (187). Elizabeth said in her "Golden Speech of 1601,"

Of my self I must say this, I never was any greedy, scraping grasper, nor a strict fast-holding Prince, nor yet a waster; My heart was never set upon any worldly goods, but onely for my Subjects good [. . .]. Since I was Queene yet did I never put My Pen to any Grant but upon pretext and semblance made Me, that it was for the good and availe of my Subjects in generally [. . .]. The zeale of which affection tending to ease my People, & knit their hearts unto us, I embrace with a Princely care farre above all earthly Treasures. I esteeme my Peoples love,

more then which I desire not to merit: And God gave me here to fit, and place mee over you, knowes that I never respected my selfe, but as your good was conserved in mee [. . .]. (A3-A3v)

With this speech, Elizabeth linked her right to speak and her right to use her pen in authority for the good of England with her pure and virtuous love for England and the Church of England. Gim adds that this is not merely a "demonstration of the trust given to her by God," but it validates the use of her position's power (187). This example strengthens Makin's point that women who are educated increase their virtue and piety because they can know themselves and God better, thus enhancing their lives and roles in society.

Makin's representation of Elizabeth as a model for the education of women differs from the usual praises of Elizabeth as a queen. She turns the focus from Elizabeth as a beautiful virgin queen to her skills in oration, linguistics, religion, and other subjects beyond the domestic skills in which most women of the seventeenth century were educated. Because the memory and glory of Elizabeth's reign remained fresh in the minds of English subjects, Makin could draw from her example to prove that women, if properly educated, could succeed in the public realm.

Conclusion

Although Queen Elizabeth I has been dead for almost four centuries now, her reputation has continued. In life, she was concerned with herself as the ruler and mother to her English subjects. Her motives were to maintain her position as England's monarch. Queen Elizabeth was very much aware of her precarious position because of her sex, but she used it as a tool to further herself as a queen by manipulating her image to suit the purpose of a situation. If the situation called for her to be a prince, then she dressed and presented herself as so. If the situation called for her to put forth her feminine qualities, then she did so. Elizabeth consciously shifted her image to suit her purpose.

Playing with the stereotypes about men and women, Queen Elizabeth fashioned herself as a woman who was frail in body but who had the intelligence, wit, and common sense of a man. She had no expressed intention of becoming a role model for her female subjects or for future generations of women. But women writers of her time began to look to her as a role model. When she was alive, women writers looked to Elizabeth as a voice through which they could speak out about religious and political ideals without compromising

their positions in society. The arguments, often veiled in praise and dedication, spoke to specific qualities of the queen that the writers addressed to promote particular ideas about religion, politics, and education.

Elizabeth seemed to gain more strength as a role model to women after her death because women writers could then speak more openly regarding qualities they viewed as desirable in women at all levels of society as well as in the ideal monarch. English subjects were becoming disillusioned as the kingdom that had blossomed under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I began to crumble into civil war under the succeeding monarchs. A strong female force was absent in the monarchy, so women writers looked back to Elizabeth as an example of a woman who had stepped outside the domestic boundaries into the patriarchal realm of politics and religion. Writers used Elizabeth as a model for what women could be if women were properly educated.

In the recent film titled Shakespeare in Love, an older Queen Elizabeth, played by Dame Judi Dench, says, "I know something of a woman in a man's profession." The living Elizabeth did know, as well as her subjects, that she was a woman in a man's job. But it was the qualities usually termed as masculine--wisdom, wit, common sense, integrity, power--that she displayed with a woman's touch that made her

an influence for change in the lives of women past, present, and future.

Writers including Mary Sidney, Aemilia Lanyer, and Esther Sowernam looked to the living Queen Elizabeth and recognized positive qualities including knowledge and strength in maintaining her authority. Through praise of her patronage and influence, these writers used Queen Elizabeth as a model woman. Writers such as Diana Primrose and Bathsua Makin continued to use Elizabeth as a role model for women, but from a different perspective. Because Elizabeth had died many years prior to their lives, Primrose and Makin could compare how life in England, especially for women, had taken a step backward. They, as well as many other seventeenth-century feminists, used Elizabeth as an example of female greatness who should be emulated.

The living Elizabeth had no intention of being a role model for men or women. She intended to be a great queen who deserved respect from everyone whether English or not. However, because Queen Elizabeth was a strong figure worthy of being remembered far beyond her living years, women writers used Elizabeth to their advantage to further the status of women beyond the domestic role. They encouraged a standard of positive qualities including knowledge, strength, and common sense that should be emulated by all

women of all times by looking to a queen who exhibited qualities that were encouraged only for men. Thus, Queen Elizabeth I became a noble figure who herself overcame the constraints of traditional gender roles to rule successfully in a man's world, and through women's literature, became a role model for women looking to do the same.

Notes

¹ Overviews which depict both positive and negative views of Elizabeth include books by Susan Frye; Carole Levin and Patricia A. Sullivan; Levin and Jeanie Watson; and Julia Walker.

² Elizabeth was declared a bastard by her father Henry VIII when her mother Anne Boleyn was charged and executed for adultery and plotting to murder Henry. Elizabeth's legitimacy as Henry's daughter and heir to the throne was restored during Henry's marriage to Katherine Parr. See Weir 12-15. Supporters of Roman Catholicism in England, however, continued to question the legitimacy of Elizabeth's succession to the throne based on Henry's early declaration that Elizabeth was a bastard. See Williams 27-28.

³ Because Elizabeth took no husband and had no children, she was considered a virgin. Elizabeth used this to her advantage by creating a Virgin Mary image as revered by the Roman Catholics for herself to be revered by the Protestants. See Frye 38-40, 77, 116.

⁴ See Weir 49-50.

⁵ Montrose compares Elizabeth to Edmund Spenser's Britomart, a princely female soldier who appears in Books III, IV, and V of The Faerie Queene. The image of Elizabeth dressed as a soldier reviewing her troops before a battle

with the Spanish troops in 1588 at Tilbury is used to illustrate how she fashioned herself to present a particular image. Montrose uses this image as a positive comparison that demonstrates Elizabeth's shifting body from that of a weak female to that of a male prince who is in a position of authority over an army (79-80). Mary Villeponteaux addresses the representation of Elizabeth in Spenser's *Britomart*, however, as one of a negative and contradictory representation in which Spenser was trying to "reconcile the idea of a monarch's rule with patriarchy's understanding of wife-and-motherhood" (222). Villeponteaux argues that *Britomart* embodies what Elizabeth refused, which was to produce an heir to her throne. See Villeponteaux 209-225.

⁶ Primrose names Elizabeth's ten ornaments as "true Religion," chastity, prudence, temperance, clemency, justice, fortitude, science, patience, and bounty.

⁷ See Freer 481 and Walker, Women Writers 72-73.

⁸ See Freer 481-482 and Walker, Women Writers 72-73.

⁹ Philip Sidney had translated only 43 of the Psalms before his death. Mary Sidney completed the translation. She also completed a revision and expansion of Philip Sidney's Arcadia, which had been published in an incomplete and unauthorized version in 1590. She completed translations of Philippe de Mornay's Discourse of Life and

Death, Petrarch's Trionfo della morte, and Robert Garnier's Marc Antoine (Freer 482). See Kimbrough xi-xxv.

¹⁰ This is speculative. See Weir 46-52.

¹¹ Christopher Hibbert cites Elizabeth's reign as a golden age and her as a genius because England saw many great achievements including "memorable naval victories, exciting discoveries, a wonderful flowering of art and literature, architecture, drama and music" (265).

¹² Another parallel between Elizabeth and Astrea is the way in which they have both been made immortal. Astrea became the constellation Virgo; therefore, she lives on by way of the stars (Bulfinch's 887). Elizabeth has been immortalized through literature such as that by Sidney in art, and, in the twentieth century, by way of motion pictures. Elizabeth still remains a prominent female figure and was most recently depicted in the movies Elizabeth, which focuses on Elizabeth's early years as queen, and Shakespeare in Love, which shows her later in life as a patron of the Shakespearean theater.

¹³ The name Piers is most certainly derived from the Middle English allegorical poem Piers Plowman by Langland. The poem is divided into eight visions as a pilgrimage to salvation through which the narrator is guided by a plowman named Piers (Drabble 774-775).

¹⁴ Melanie McGurr states that Thenot is "effusive" and that Piers "characterizes the Protestant ideal" (2). However, she does not give a reason nor support for this idea. The argument that Thenot represents Roman Catholicism and that Piers represents the Protestant ideals of the Church of England and Elizabeth is conjecture based on conclusions I have drawn from my research of the poem.

¹⁵ Lanyer's work Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum is preceded by dedicatory poems to women who were probably Lanyer's patrons. The poems are dedicated to Queen Anne; her daughter Princess Elizabeth; Lady Arabella Stuart; Susan, Countess Dowager of Kent; Mary [Sidney], Countess Dowager of Pembroke; Lucy, Countess of Bedford; Katherine, Countess of Suffolk; and Anne [Clifford], Countess of Dorset. Two prose dedications are addressed to Lanyer's chief patron Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland, and "To the Vertuous Reader."

¹⁶ Barbara Lewalski notes that most of the women to whom the dedications were addressed were related by blood or marriage with the Protestant faction of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, "which promoted resistance to Spain, active support of Protestantism on the Continent, continued reform in the English church, and patronage of the arts, especially Christian poetry" (207). She adds that Lanyer is

emphasizing the "descent of virtue in the female line from virtuous mothers to daughters" (207-208).

¹⁷ See Lewalski 205-206.

¹⁸ Esther Sowernam is a pseudonym for a writer assumed to be female. The name refers to Esther, a biblical heroine, and the name also is a pun on the name of Sowernam/Swe[e]tman (O'Malley 1).

¹⁹ "A Chaine of Pearl" most likely was written shortly after Elizabeth's death, but questions remain as to who wrote it and who decided to publish it in 1630. John Nichols published and attributed the piece to Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, in Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (1823), though he gave no justification for his connection between Primrose and Clifford.

²⁰ See Fraser, Lives 224-225, 229-233.

²¹ See Kishlansky 119-124.

²² Primrose's reference to the ten virtues as pearls is significant as it alludes to the biblical use meaning "beyond price." Literary scholars might also note the reference alludes to the Middle English poem Pearl, which is discussed by critics as both an elegy and an allegory. The poem discusses the restoration of the poet's faith in god following the death of his daughter (Drabble 758). However, because the Pearl poem exists only in one manuscript, it is

unlikely that Primrose would have been familiar with the poem or would have intentionally made the reference.

²³ Charles was found guilty of treason against his English subjects. His haphazard method of ruling led to a large financial deficit, rebellion, and civil war in England. See Kishlansky 134-186.

²⁴ Elizabeth was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1554 after Queen Mary suspected Elizabeth of treason and involvement in the rebellion led by Sir Thomas Wyatt. Little evidence existed to implicate Elizabeth at trial, but Mary remained suspicious. Eventually, Elizabeth was sent to Woodstock Palace in Oxfordshire, the royal home furthest from London (Williams 33). After accession to the throne, Elizabeth became the object of many plots devised by Roman Catholics including Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Duke of Norfolk, who wished to restore Catholicism in England.

²⁵ See Smith 3-17.

²⁶ Smith defines feminists as women "raising fundamental questions about social relationships, including relationships between the sexes" (xi) and feminism as "the understanding of women as a group with identifiable sociological characteristics" (x).

²⁷ For Ascham's often progressive views on education, see his The Scholemaster (1570).

²⁸ See Teague 285-291.

²⁹ See also Education in Tudor and Stuart England by David Cressy (1975).

³⁰ Makin structures her argument as a response to a fictional letter written by a fictional male objector to the education of women.

³¹ Neville Williams says that Ascham often had Elizabeth, whom he called his "brightest pupil," completing double translations in which she would translate a piece into Latin and then back into English (24). In her biography of Elizabeth, Weir reinforces Ascham's view of Elizabeth's talents:

Ascham declared he had never known a woman with a quicker apprehension or a more retentive memory. Her mind, he enthused, was seemingly free from all female weakness, and she was 'endued with a masculine power of application'; he delighted in the fact that she could discourse intelligently on any intellectual subject. There were many learned ladies in England, but Ascham was not exaggerating when he claimed that 'the brightest star is my illustrious Lady Elizabeth'. (14)

³² See Gim 185.

³³ Both Anne Askew and Lady Jane Grey were leaders in the Protestant reformation of England who were executed for their beliefs. See Travitsky 41 and 167-169.

³⁴ Hufton notes that daughters of literate mothers most likely were educated at home in reading and writing as well as domestic "survival skills" to help make them good wives. Many girls also were placed in village schools, if available. He adds that "it was probably through such establishments and by maternal efforts that literacy thresholds were crossed in Britain" (218).

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