

DISPLACING MOTHER, FASHIONING FATHER:
ELIZABETH, SPENSER, AND THE
POLITICS OF PARENTHOOD

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Ryan S. Paul, B.A.

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ABSTRACT

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SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: DANIEL LOCHMAN

A study of the Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene and how it both affects and reflects early modern conceptions of parenthood, with special emphasis on the presentation of Queen Elizabeth I as a figurative and political mother.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a historical document, Edmund Spenser's epic poem The Faerie Queene possesses an almost encyclopedic quality. In Spenser's letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, annexed to the 1590 edition he declares his intention that his poem "giueth great light to the Reader" (Title). Spenser exhausts a great "variety of matter," historical, political, and poetic, in his attempt "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (8, 10). A cursory glance through the text demonstrates the poem's variety. In Book 1, canto 10, Spenser describes the process of religious education that the Redcrosse Knight experiences in his path to grace. In Book 2, canto 9, the description of Alma's Castle encompasses both architecture and numerology. The next canto contains a history lesson, as Arthur and Guyon read chronicles of the kings of Briton and Faerie. Book 4, canto 11 contains a fanciful geographic description of the rivers of the British kingdom. Artegall's journeys in Book 5 explore different aspects of law and justice, including equity, distributive justice, and absolute justice.

The Problem of Family

In nearly every "Legend" family emerges as a subject that Spenser addresses. He presents the reader with a variety of familial structures. The majority of these families are

made up of at least one parent and child. For example, Book 1 contains Una and her aged parents, Error and her monstrous children, Caelia and her three daughters, and the youngest, Charissa, a mother as well. Spenser also suggests certain alternatives to the blood-related family: Amoret and Belphebe are each raised by the goddesses Venus and Diana, respectively, rather than their natural mother, and as this paper shall discuss in Chapter IV, the Palmer of Book 2 acts as a father-figure for Guyon. Finally, Spenser reaches into more abstract concepts of family, traversing both the past and the future. Arthur, Guyon, and the Redcrosse Knight all interact with their families through their historical lineage, rather than through a personal, physical relationship. In many ways, the central narratives of the poem concern the future families of Britomart and Arthur, each searching for the destined love with whom they will start a family of monarchs.

Spenser explores possible ideas of the family through these different structures, just as he explores the different possible notions of justice in Book 5. Part of Spenser's project was to fashion the ideal family, and just as he juxtaposes examples of the holy and the unholy, the temperate and the intemperate, Spenser compares the godly family with the ungodly. His discussion of family, however, ranges across the entire text, and while never explicitly named as a subject of study, as the virtues of each Book are, it influences much of the text. Lawrence Stone defined some of the familial structures extant in Spenser's time, and one can find examples of many of them in The Faerie Queene. The term "family" encompassed a wide variety of meanings "from the conjugal pair to the 'family of man'" (28). On one level, the poem includes what the modern reader would identify as the nuclear family: the married couple and any children they might have living under a single roof. Examples of married couples appear in the text, such as Charissa, her unseen

but "louely fere," and their "many pledges dere" (1.10.4). Spenser also depicted certain real-world problems faced by families in his time. Amavia and Ruddymane, wife and son respectively of the deceased Mordant, reflect the impact of high mortality rates on families in the sixteenth-century. In the upper-classes "one in three children had lost one parent by the age of fourteen," and the rates were likely higher among the poorer classes (Stone 48).

In addition to the nuclear core, broader and less defined groups also existed under the heading of "family." "Kin" included all "persons related by blood or marriage" and extended the family beyond the domestic walls to in-laws, cousins, adult siblings, and other distant relations (Stone 28). The two groups of brothers -- Sansloy, Sansfoy, Sansjoy and the three sons of Agape -- and the sisters Amoret and Belphoebe are examples of this familial system; they are definitely part of a "family" despite physical separation. The concept of the "household," in contrast, was organized around physical rather than blood connections. All those living under a single roof, including servants, apprentices, and even lodgers, were part of the household. One can see the master/apprentice relationship, a bond that carried a strong paternal overtone (Bernthal 45), between Guyon and the Palmer of Book 2 as an example of this type of family. The family even transcended its present incarnations to encompass one's "lineage," the "relatives by blood or marriage, dead, living, and yet to be born" (Stone 28). Lineage was particularly important to the upper classes: the relation to one's lineage provided a sense of identity within a society organized along lines of descent (29). Lineage is important to Spenser's knights, as well. The Redcrosse Knight does not learn his true name, St. George, until he learns of his royal Saxon heritage; Guyon and Arthur read their family

histories in Book 2 to understand their own place within those histories; Merlin foretells Britomart's destiny as the founder of a line of monarchs, culminating in Queen Elizabeth herself.

Patriarchal Authority

Spenser's representations of family have a profound influence on the nature of his work. The keystone in the typical early modern familial structure was the patriarch. He was the crucial and dominant entity within the household, and English law bolstered his legal authority (Stone 21-22). A man's wife and children were almost completely subjected to his rule; in fact, marriage combined husband and wife into a single legal entity, that of the husband (136). Under common law, a woman became a *feme covert*, literally a "hidden woman." She had no rights separate from her spouse in the traditional English court system (Cioni 161). As the female disappeared into the male, so too did her property, and the husband usually gained full control over any real estate or other valuable goods the woman brought into the marriage. The Statute of Wills, passed in 1540, removed almost all restrictions on the head of the family, usually the father, regarding the distribution of property, further buttressing his legal dominance (Amussen 198). Thus, the patriarch's authority extended from one generation to the next, from one male to the next. As Lawrence Stone noted, seemingly contradictory movements in the legal sphere augmented the family patriarch's power over inheritance. For example, entails had ensured a strict succession of property from a patriarch to his eldest son, with the father having little power to divest himself of family holdings as he saw fit (71). In the 1530s lawyers developed ways to break entails, and courts enacted new legislation

that weakened the centralized, trans-generational control of property. The head of the family now had greater leeway to reward and punish his children through his control of inheritance (112). Children were even more beholden to the head of the household when making marital and vocational choices (113).

Religious doctrine also supported a strong patriarchy, and the shift to Protestantism helped enforce the father's authority. Theologians stressed St. Paul's injunction to wives to submit to their husbands as to God, and many Protestants interpreted this to mean total subordination (Houlbrooke 96, 138). The 1559 Book of Common Prayer provides a key example of just such ideology: the marriage rite in this text enjoins wives, after the commands of both Peter and Paul, to "submit youre selves unto youre owne housbandes as unto the Lorde [...] lette the wyves also be in subjection unto their owne housbandes in al thinges" ("Fourme"). The Protestant rejection of a clergy with a special spiritual relationship to God also increased the patriarch's religious dominance in the family. Since all believers were now "priests," the father usually became the spiritual as well as legal head of the household (Stone 111). The ideal wife was submissive and weak, and children were to be deferent and obedient (125, 138).

The maintenance of this system was of utmost importance to the power structures of early modern England. The family was central to the state's authority and was considered one of the fundamental supports of the ideal commonwealth (Bernthal 44). The source of the father's authority was believed to descend from Heaven, just as the power of the monarch descended from God the Father (Houlbrooke 21). Both infinitely loving and infinitely powerful, the comparison of the father to God reinforced the need for the household patriarch to hold near complete power over the family. Patriarchal

power over the family served as an example of and the basis for the sovereign's power, and as such was encouraged and supported by the state (Stone 110).

These relationships – between God and Christian, monarch and citizen, father and family – reinforced one another in what Foucault called the "rule of double conditioning" (99). Yet the place of family with regards to the commonwealth was not simply one of analogy. While, as Craig Bernthal writes, theoretically the family "was to reproduce in miniature the social structure of the Tudor body politic" (44), in fact "the family does not duplicate society, just as society does not imitate the family" (Foucault 100). Rather, the two exist as mutually reinforcing structures of control. When this theory is applied to the early modern era, an analogy of power emerges: the father stood in for the king, the family submitting to the former as all citizens should to the latter, and the king stood in for the father, the commonwealth paying him the respect and deference they would to the head of their family. Because of this intimate link between family and society, disturbances in one sphere had a profound resonance in the other:

Patriarchal authority within the family was the cornerstone of Elizabethan and Jacobean political theory, the ultimate, "natural," justification for obedience to the state: to reject either was to threaten the entire social and political order. (Underdown 117)

Foucault theorized that such "natural" justification was in fact a construction, but one so fundamental to the existence of early modern power structures that Underdown's point accurately reflects the interrelatedness of family and politics: rebellion in one is rebellion in the other.

Women's Rights

The total dominance of male authority was in some ways more theoretical than actual. Although a husband and wife became a single person upon marriage and the husband gained power over his wife's property, she could assert some limited property rights. In most marriage contracts, brides were guaranteed a "jointure" or annuity to provide for her should she be widowed (Stone 72). If widowed, women could become much sought after commodities on the marriage market. If they had valuable property and/or extensive social connections they would often be wooed by many suitors, giving them a certain amount of leverage in marriage negotiations. Depending on the strength of a widow's position, part of her property could, by contract, be reserved for her control (136). Despite their status as non-persons under the law, married women in the propertied classes often wielded significant influence in matters of property and finance. When a husband was away, a wife would manage his financial affairs, stepping into his place as the governor of the home (Houlbrooke 106). William Gouge, author in 1622 of the first comprehensive treatise on family matters, granted women a great deal of independence: when a husband is attending to business away from home, he says "there is no question, but that the wife hath power to dispose matters without her husbands consent" (288). In addition, in the late sixteenth-century the Chancery court began, to afford women greater levels of financial security and a wider range of rights than existed in common law courts (Cioni 159). Some wives, primarily among the non-propertied classes, would even supplement their husbands' income with other work, such as cleaning, minor physical labor, or even wet nursing, although exactly how this might have affected their status is unknown (Stone 140).

Women also possessed a great deal of authority within the household. Gouge declared wives to be equal to their husbands in domestic management: "the wife is by Gods prouidence appointed a ioynt gouvernour with the husband of the familie" (253). Generally speaking, women had responsibility and control over most domestic concerns, including food management and the education of young children (Stone 139). Considering the large number of dependents in a noble household, governing foodstuffs and meal preparation could be quite time-consuming and involved tasks. Health care, primarily consisting of homemade remedies and superstitious lore, was usually included in these domestic matters, putting it under the purview of the family matriarch (Travitsky 86). Among health care concerns, childbirth trumped all others in the consideration of female authority. Gail Paster considers the arena of childbirth as the zenith of women's autonomy in early modern England, describing the birthing chamber as one of the most mysterious spaces to Renaissance men precisely because of the dominance of women within it (185). Women possessed a unique power based on the sexuality of their bodies. A woman could withhold or give sexual favors as she saw fit, and the status of women as sole authorities during childbirth gave them a certain amount of control over the all-important lineage when the results of those sexual favors came to fruition. Women controlled both how and when heirs could enter the family. As shall be discussed later, this formed an important part of Renaissance conceptions of motherhood.

The position of women on moral and religious fronts was also less firm than Pauline doctrine might suggest. Neo-Platonists had revived questions about woman's capability to reason, some even doubting whether women had souls. Lawrence Stone listed such writers as John Smith of Nibley, the playwright George Wilkins, and Joseph

Swetman as expressing such anti-feminist sentiments (137). Humoral theory insisted that women were physically inferior and underdeveloped when compared to men, and that women were unable to control the flow of bodily fluids, and thus the passions that were connected to these humours (Houlbrooke 99). However, Houlbrooke also notes that humanists such as Erasmus and Castiglione expressed the opinion that women were capable of the same intelligence and virtue as men (98). Despite the theological insistence on the subjugation of wives to husbands, the Protestant "belief in the spiritual equality of the elect existed in tension with assumptions about social hierarchy" (Amussen 201). One can witness just such tension in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century family manuals, most written by puritan clergymen. The issue of wifely obedience often becomes vague when the possibility of a "godly" wife and an "ungodly" husband arises. While the wife is generally instructed to obey, much of the writing on this topic is equivocal and self-contradictory (Houlbrooke 113). Gouge declared that even "if a man of lewd and beastly conditions [...] be married to a wise, sober, religious Matron," still "the euill qualitie and disposition of his heart and life, doth not depriue a man of that ciuill honour which God hath giuen vnto him" (273). Even while propounding the submissiveness of wives, religious doctrine enjoined husbands to treat their weaker halves tenderly, with love rather than harsh discipline (Houlbrooke 97-98). The 1559 The Book of Common Prayer provides an excellent example, instructing husbands to treat wives as companions rather than servants: "So men are bounde to love their owne wyves, as their owne bodies. He that loveth his owne wife loveth hym selfe. For never did any man hate his owne fleshe, but nourisheth and cherisheth it" ("Fourme").

Finally, one of the most striking arenas in which assumed patriarchal dominance was subverted was in the sphere of education. Lawrence Stone noted a short-lived but "vigorous drive for female classical education" in the early and middle decades of the sixteenth-century, supported by such important humanists as Thomas More, Juan Luis Vives, and Erasmus (142). Richard Hyrde, translator of Vives's Instruction of a Christian Woman, gives many of the standard arguments of the women's educational movement in his preface to A Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster, an English translation of Erasmus's Precatio Dominica. First, he argues against the idea that "it is not only neither necessary nor profitable, but also very noisome and jeopardous" to educate women in the classics (80). Men who affirm such views are either "unlearned," or they "envy" women's equal abilities to learn such difficult subjects. He even suggests that women, often criticized for their "instability and mutable nature" are in fact "more steadfast and sure to trust unto than" men:

[I]f both their vices were all open and showed, the man should have much more that he ought to be ashamed of, saving that he is also in that point worse than the woman, inasmuch as she is ashamed of her fault, be it never so small, and he is so far from that virtue, that when he hath done naught, he rejoiceth of it. (80-81)

Rather than increasing woman's tendencies to "peevisch fantasies," a classical education "showeth the image and ways of good living, even right as a mirror showeth the similitude and proportion of the body" (82).

Elizabeth

One female who received a most impressive education in the humanist vein was Queen Elizabeth I (Marcus xi). Fluent in many languages, both modern and classical, Elizabeth composed poems, prayers, and speeches, and translated works from Latin and French (xv). Elizabeth deserves special note because she illustrates profoundly the conflicts inherent in the patriarchal society outlined above. Mary Villeponteaux states the importance of Henry VIII's second daughter in no uncertain terms: "the most potentially disruptive challenge to the patriarchal ideology of sixteenth-century England was the presence of a powerful and successful queen on the throne" (53).

A central figure in sixteenth-century, Elizabeth compounded a vast set of contradictory and competing meanings. She existed as a female monarch, the ultimate authority and representative of God the Father, in a patriarchal society. Her sex conflicted with the nature of the political role she held. The traditional theory of the king's two bodies, one mortal flesh and one an immortal political being, took on special meaning with Elizabeth, who explicitly combined her feminine body with her position of masculine authority. Finally, the competing representations of her, as mother, virgin, lover, wife, existed in an irresolvable tension, making it impossible for any writer, politician, or citizen to reduce Elizabeth to a single figure.

The ideas that maintained the structure of masculine authority, religious, moral, and economic, also contained within them their own contradictions. Yet these contradictions and exceptions are also innately unstable. Although women may have wielded authority in the birthing chamber, this space was one of few islands of female power in a patriarchal system. Richard Hyrde's defense of a woman's right to education,

"which Plato the wise philosopher calleth a bridle for young people," extended not from a desire to improve the lot of women, but to make them more tractable to the structures of power: "she that will be good, learning shall cause her to be much the better" (82-83). In Hyrde's opinion, a woman should read and study rather than have "leisure to muse or delight in other fantasies" (82).

This cultural tension over a woman's, and especially a mother's, role in society forms the foundation for this study. Spenser realized its existence, perhaps instinctively, perhaps explicitly, and grappled with it in his epic Faerie Queene. His exploration of familial structures, in particular the roles of mothers and fathers, fashioned one aspect of his attempt to resolve the contradictions within political and domestic spheres. As such, Spenser's work both reflects prevailing cultural attitudes of sixteenth-century England and affects contemporaneous conceptions of parenthood. This paper will explore Spenser's interactions with competing cultural ideas of the proper roles of mothers and fathers, and in particular how these roles affected the political realm. Chapter II discusses the idea of Elizabeth as a mother, contrasting her self-perception and the perceptions of her subjects with negative literary representations of maternal figures. Chapter III examines mothers in The Faerie Queene, juxtaposing Spenser's "good" and "bad" mothers and studying the political implications of the way he fashions maternal characters. Chapter IV turns to fathers, noting their particular absence from Spenser's poem, and analyzing his attempts to substitute for and recreate figures of paternal authority. Chapter V concludes this study by examining the effect Spenser's parental representations had on the cultural and political realm after the death of Elizabeth. It suggests how the political and literary spheres might have been informed by The Faerie

Queene and continued Spenser's reconstitution of male authority in the period following Elizabeth's reign. Finally, the study ends with a consideration of Spenser's impact on the idea of motherhood.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER ELIZABETH

The concept of motherhood was the focal point of various discourses in early modern England. Protestant theologians such as Thomas Gouge defined the proper role of women within the family. Medical authorities examined the nature of childbirth and women's role in conception. Elizabeth I used the motherhood trope as metaphor for her rule intended to normalize the situation of a female in a position of authority normally reserved for a male. However, her intentions were complicated by the overdetermined meaning of motherhood, and her status as a political mother was caught up in a confused mixture of competing ideas about the nature of maternity. The complicated nature of motherhood, especially as it related to Elizabeth, was reflected in domestic writing, political language, and popular literature.

A Mother's Work

As a position of authority within the family, motherhood was the major, and perhaps only, powerful role a woman could have, but the acknowledgment of maternal authority and its public and social implications were slow to develop (Rose 298). The changing nature of the family brought questions of parental authority and power to the

forefront (296). Among the aristocracy and wealthy classes of early modern Europe, family structures had traditionally been organized around arranged marriages and property-based alliances. In such a system, power tended to concentrate in the hands of the oldest males within the system (Stone 73). Large aristocratic families were almost independent governments under the rule of the family patriarch or manor lord, especially in locales where the authority of the state was weak (74). However, the rise of a stronger central political authority in the early sixteenth-century coupled with the Protestant emphasis on the sanctity of marriage increased the importance of the "nuclear" family (93). These developments had the paradoxical effect of increasing the authority of the patriarch while also increasing the importance of the mother, who had previously been relegated to the private world of the home (Rose 300).

Acknowledgment of maternal power came, even if it might have been reluctantly given. Two decades after Elizabeth's death, William Gouge wrote extensively on the relationships between parents and children in his treatise Of Domesticall Duties, the first comprehensive work on the family in Renaissance England. He declares that children should feel a "louing-feare" toward their parents, showing affection and following parental commands (428). Gouge takes great pains to indicate that as parents women and men are essentially equal: "The first point to be noted is, that children beare an equall respect to both their naturall parents, and performe duty to both alike" (484). He counters the objection that the wife is necessarily subordinate to her husband and should be regarded with less respect by stating that "[b]oth parents are vnder God a like meanes of their childrens being. Children come out of the substance of both alike. [...] in relation to their children they are both as one, and haue a like authority ouer them."

Using many examples from Scripture, Gouge details the duties a child holds to parental authority. He begins by discussing the attitude of "louing-feare" and how it should be manifested. He emphasizes a child's duty to remain silent, refrain from speech while the parent is speaking, and patiently listen to the parent's instructions (431-32). When a child does have occasion to speak, his or her words must be "meeke and humble" (434), and the child should always address parents with "reuerend and honourable titles" (433). Speech, however, plays a small role in showing reverence to parents and must be coupled with actions in order to truly prove one's fear and love (436). Gouge places heavy emphasis on following orders: "The obedience of children doth most proue the authoritie of parents, and is the surest euidence of the honour a childe giueth to his parent" (441). In turn, disobedience is "the greatest impeachment of parents authoritie that can be."

Obedience extended over a number of areas of a child's life, reflecting the hierarchical, authoritarian familial organization described by Lawrence Stone and discussed in the previous chapter. Gouge asserts that parents have complete control over children, who "differ nothing from seruants": "Children are as the goods of their parents, wholly in their power, to be ordered and disposed by them" (442). This order includes both a child's choice of careers and spouse (443, 446). In return, parents bear responsibility for ensuring that a child is provided for, in both "temporall" and "spirituall" spheres (526). The father is responsible for a child's baptism and naming (519, 522), but for most of early childhood "the dutie lieth principally vpon the mother" (505). The early spiritual and moral education of the child was among the most important parental duties; Solomon, says Gouge,

implieth that mothers should teach their children especially while they are young [...]. To this purpose is it, that the particular names of the mothers of the kings are recorded in Scripture: intimating thereby that mothers were a maine cause of the piety, or impiety of such children. (546)

Not all duties were of an emotional or intellectual nature. Many were physical in nature, and a mother's body was imbued with both mystery and authority. By suppressing Catholic reverence for the Virgin Mary, the Protestant Reformation had stripped virginity of the power and status that it had once possessed in English society. Married chastity took the place of virginity as the highest aspiration for a woman, and with the role of wife came also the role of mother. The 1559 Book of Common Prayer demonstrates the centrality of childbirth to marriage: "the procreation of children, to be brought up in the feare and nurtoure of the Lorde, and praise of God" is listed as the primary purpose for a couple to marry ("Fourme"). Later in the ceremony, the minister is to call upon God to bless the newlyweds:

O MERCIFULL Lorde, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gifte mankynde is encreased, we beseche the assiste with thy blessing these two persones, that they may bothe be fruitfull in procreation of children, also live together so long in godly love and honestie, that they may see their childers children, unto the thirde and fourthe generacion unto thy praise and honour [...]. ("Fourme")

Louis Montrose exposes the "characteristically Protestant notions about the virtue of virginity" voiced by Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream ("Shaping Fantasies" 66). The Athenian Duke describes "maidenhood [as] a phase in the life-cycle of a woman who

is destined for married chastity and motherhood" (67). In and of itself virginity is "mere sterility" (67). Gouge too declares that the first end of marriage is "[t]hat the world might be increased: and not simply increased, but with a legitimate brood, and distinct families, which are the seminaries of cities and common-wealths" (209). His statement gives childrearing central importance in society's existence.

Elizabeth as Mother

Elizabeth used these attitudes regarding virginity and marriage to her own advantage. Though insisting that choosing the single life was her prerogative, the queen balanced her virginity against the Protestant focus on procreative marriage. In the early years of her reign, she tended to discuss her virginity, in speeches and letters, in roundabout ways to downplay her youth. Until marriage negotiations with the Duke of Alençon broke down, Elizabeth deflected requests made by Parliament for her to marry by presenting herself as a virgin who would marry, should God provide her with a suitor whom she liked (Bell 179). Yet her virgin status also served to underscore her marriageability, and she made certain that people knew that her single life was not necessarily a permanent state (180-181). In 1563, she responded to a petition urging marriage made by the House of Lords by writing that any who believed "that I am, as it were, by vow or determination bent never to trade that kind of [single] life--pull out that heresy, for your belief is there awry" (Collected Works 79). Ilona Bell claims that the use of the word "heresy" evoked fears of Catholic invasion and revolt in Elizabeth's Protestant Parliament and would reassure her subjects that she held marriage and procreation in the same light they did (181). Perhaps most important to Elizabeth was that

such deflections of public interest in her personal affairs helped her to retain her power as monarch (Heart 46). By remaining single, "Elizabeth avoided the role of wife and the risk of being perceived as the inferior partner in the marriage relationship" (65). Still, the potential for marriage existed long into her reign.

From this state of potential motherhood, it is only a small step to motherhood in a more realized though still symbolic form. Like her predecessor and sister Mary I and the eventual heir James I, Elizabeth portrayed herself as married to her kingdom (Heart 41-42). William Camden's version of Elizabeth's 1559 speech to Parliament, her first speech before them as monarch, reads,

[W]hen the public charge of governing the kingdom came upon me, it seemed unto me an inconsiderate folly to draw upon myself the cares which might proceed of marriage. To conclude, I am already bound unto an husband, which is the kingdom of England, and that may suffice you.

(Collected Works 59)

Mary and James actually married, so their use of the marriage metaphor was a rhetorical flourish intended to demonstrate their concern for their country. This metaphor took on stronger implications for Elizabeth's reign. Elizabeth herself takes the next logical step, from being spouse of the kingdom to being mother of its subjects. Camden writes,

'And reproach me so no more,' quoth she, 'that I have no children: for every one of you, and as many as are English, are my children and kinsfolks, of whom, so long as I am not deprived and God shall preserve me, you cannot charge me, without offense, to be destitute.' (59)

While Mary and James compared their rulership to their personal marital relationships, Elizabeth had no such marriage for comparison. When she used the marriage and mother tropes, she erased the distance between public and private, making them essentially the same. Again in 1563, in a response to a petition from the Commons that she should marry, Elizabeth responds with the maternal metaphor: "though after my death you may have many stepdames, yet shall you never have any a more mother than I mean to be unto you all" (72). She further encouraged her maternal image by sponsoring over a hundred godchildren during her reign, a number that Montrose implied was out of the ordinary ("Shaping Fantasies" 78).

Elizabeth was not the first to compare the role of ruler with the role of parent; her father and sister, among others, had made similar remarks during their reigns. However, Elizabeth did not merely compare the two but united them in a single image. Replacing biological maternity with metaphorical and political maternity, Elizabeth "arrogate[d] the mother's cultural authority to her throne" (Coch 424). As has been already discussed, motherhood was the primary paradigm of female authority. Through this representation, Elizabeth offered love and protection for her subjects/children in return for their respect, filial devotion, and obedience (424).

A particularly interesting exercise of her authority came in response to the possibility of marrying Robert Dudley. In 1562 prior to the Queen's contracting smallpox, Katherine Ashley, a lady of Elizabeth's bed chamber and one of her close confidantes, recommended that the Queen marry Dudley. Elizabeth angrily responded, "Dost thou think me so unlike myself, and so unmindful of my Royal Majesty, that I would prefer my servant, *whom I myself have raised*, before the great princes of Christendom, in

choosing of an husband?" (qtd. in Heart 73; emphasis added). This quote emphasizes the distinction that Elizabeth created between herself and her subjects through the motherhood trope; a marriage to Dudley, or any Englishman, would be almost incestuous. By taking advantage of one of the few positions of power for women in English culture, the Queen had "naturalized the anomaly of female rule" (Coch 425). Elizabeth demanded of her subjects the same loyalty they were to show their biological parents: "What lawfull *commandements* soeuer parents giue to their children, they must be ready to the vttermost of their power to obey" (Gouge 457; emphasis original). The queen reinforced the hierarchy between prince and subjects, and transformed the political landscape into one that she could manipulate: maternal "love redefined political exigencies as voluntary acts of generosity, each reinforcing a larger system of affectionate reciprocation" (Coch 446). Children, love and obey your Mother, and she shall love you.

Presenting her motherhood in political rather than biological terms also allowed the Queen to preserve her physical body. She avoided the dangers of childbirth and the cultural constraints regarding pregnant woman while retaining the political benefits that joined her to her subjects in a strong bond (Coch 425). Elizabeth also avoided the embarrassment that her sister suffered because of her false pregnancies. These failures had caused a widespread lack of respect for Mary I; not only did publications mock her inability to conceive, but others called for outright revolt, viewing her reproductive failure as a curse from God (427-428). In fact, Elizabeth's family had been dogged by procreative difficulties. She was surely aware of the health risks that pregnancy would bring, as her stepmothers Jane Seymour and Katherine Parr had died of complications

due to childbirth (Heart 65). Perhaps the worst outcome that could befall Elizabeth was the one faced by her own mother, Anne Boleyn, who had suffered a series of stillbirths. Some scholars theorize that the last of these had been a deformed male fetus, a sign perhaps interpreted by Henry and his ministers as divine punishment and leading directly to her trial and execution for adultery and incest (Coch 429). Even if Elizabeth had successfully conceived and borne children, the confinement imposed upon all pregnant women, usually beginning in the last month of the pregnancy and lasting one to three months after birth, could prove disastrous (430). An extended period of time out of the public eye could mean a loss of public support, and she would be required to cede part of her authority to men in the public sphere, potentially opening the way for other powers or rivals to assert themselves (434). Elizabeth must have been well aware of the repercussions such difficulties could have on her reign, and her decision to remain a mother in theory but not body reflects a savvy navigation of political and personal pitfalls.

Negative Consequences

Despite the many positives the maternal metaphor offered Elizabeth, it also exposed her to manipulation and criticism. The role and status of a mother were difficult for many Renaissance thinkers to define, encompassing as they did both biological and social duties (Coch 425). Gouge unconvincingly attempted to reconcile the apparent contradiction between a mother's body, considered inferior compared to a man's, and her equal power within the family by simply saying to ignore it: "Children ought rather to looke vpon their mothers place and authority, then their person and infirmitie" (486). The

natural "infirmities" of all mothers, Elizabeth included, caused some to use the metaphor of motherhood to limit rather than confirm the Queen's power. Such limitation becomes apparent in the manner that many Elizabethan writers discussed their monarch and their state as mothers in need of defense (Vanhoutte 11). During the reign of Elizabeth's father, political thinkers had developed the common trope of "Mother England" into a rallying image for nationalist sentiment and a means to draw allegiance away from Rome, the Whore of Babylon (9). The marriage of king to country indicated the proper control and protection of the feminine state by the masculine monarch. However, the succession of two female monarchs destabilized such a simple identification, and "maternal representations of England began to signal a divergence of national and monarchical interests" (9). During Mary's reign many questioned the influence of her husband Phillip II of Spain, whose missionary Catholicism represented a danger to Protestant England. Militant Protestants and nationalists, primarily among the gentry and aristocracy, introduced the idea that "to ensure the health of the nation, a queen ought to be properly mastered by and married to an Englishman" (10).

Elizabeth likely understood that discussions of her marriage were, in effect, a coded way of talking about who should have authority over the nation (Vanhoutte 10). In her first speech before Parliament, she praised the Lords for not presuming to advise her specifically about a mate, indicating that she would think any such recommendation "a very great presumption, being unfitting and altogether unmeet for you [...] to bind and limit whose duties are to obey, or to take upon you to draw my love to your liking or frame my will to your fantasies" (Collected Works 57). This statement politely yet clearly demarcated boundaries of authority over which she would tolerate no incursions. Despite

her authoritative stance on the marriage issue, manipulation of the wife/mother trope continued, even by those such as John Aylmer who claimed to support her reign.

Aylmer's attempts to naturalize female authority in An Harborowe reveal the anxiety of a patriarchal society under female control. Rather than affirm her power outright, Aylmer instead "converts England's suitability for gynecocracy into a testament to the singular powers of its male population" by pointing to the latter's influence over and management of the queen (Vanhoutte 11). Aylmer calls upon masculine Englishmen to defend their Mother Queen and country against effeminate foreigners, making Elizabeth merely "the object of all this masculine activity, the necessarily passive and vulnerable motherland whose 'honour' needs defending" (13).

In addition to political manipulation of the motherhood trope, Elizabeth faced an eruption of anxiety of a much more visceral kind, concerned directly with her body. The concept of the king's two bodies had existed for many years, but it took on new importance during Elizabeth's reign. Because of her gender, it became particularly important to separate "the individual sovereign from the ideal of king," preserving the status of the position despite the sex of the person who held it (Heart 122). As early as her first speech as queen, Elizabeth referred to herself as "but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern" (Collected Works 52). Years later, in preparation for battle with the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth made her most famous statement about her two selves: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too" (326). These speeches acknowledged the limitations of her feminine body while simultaneously attempting to reduce it to secondary importance when compared with her "body politic"

and kingly "heart and stomach." However, the image of Elizabeth as a mother focused attention on her physical sex, especially on her capability to bear actual and not just metaphorical children. In the early years of her reign, the details of Elizabeth's bodily functions were much sought after, and foreign ambassadors even bribed her personal attendants for information on the young queen's menstrual cycle (Heart 86). In a broader cultural context, obsession with the threatening aspects of motherhood was also on the rise. Stories of so-called "monstrous births" were popular throughout the sixteenth-century, but published reports of these legends exploded in the 1560s (85). Whether anxiety over Elizabeth's body caused the boost in popularity of such folktales or whether the folktales caused the populace to worry about the childbearing capabilities of their monarch is uncertain, but certainly both reflect a general apprehension towards the maternal body.

These apprehensions covered a wide range of subjects. For one, mothers had exclusive access to the truth of paternity (Coch 426). The woman's desire and sexuality, therefore, were potential threats to succession and maintenance of the patriarchal order. Seemingly in response to this threat, medical theories prevailing at the time held the woman to be physically inferior to the man. For example, common Aristotelian theory viewed a woman's body as composed of imperfect matter and determined that as a vessel it was of secondary importance to the perfected male seed that actively produced childbirth (Rose 299). This tended to minimize the mother's role in conception, reducing the threat posed by her power and control over the child's paternity, and served perhaps as a coping mechanism to comfort an insecure patriarchal authority. Under the widely accepted humoral theory of the fluid body, the female body appeared not only inferior,

but grotesque as well. Gail Paster summarizes one of the basic principles of humoral medicine:

Galenic physiology proposed a body whose constituent fluids, all reducible to blood, were entirely fungible. Not only did blood, semen, milk, sweat, tears, and other bodily fluids turn into one another, but the processes of alimentation, excretion, menstruation and lactation were understood as homologous. (9)

The woman, with her monthly menstrual cycles and capability for lactation, was seen as a faulty, leaky vessel, her body beyond her own control, and potentially even threatening to the family (24-25). Emblems and other popular representations of independent women, especially those considered "gossips," frequently depicted them as leaking containers and bodies (46-47).

The leaky female body presented a unique problem "[f]or a society in which the systems of alliance, the political form of the sovereign, the differentiation into orders and castes, and the value of descent lines were predominant" (Foucault 147). "[B]lood constituted one of [society's] fundamental values" (147), and a woman's blood was her seed and also her milk. Safeguarding the family's lineage meant controlling these blood lines, ensuring their preservation and careful management. With multiple potential locations for leakage, the female body threatened the orderly conservation of these important fluids. It is no wonder that female chastity and control of the female body was an obsession (Paster 66). One can see examples of this obsession throughout the sixteenth-century, beginning as early as Henry VIII's divorce of Catherine of Aragon and execution of Anne Boleyn, both ostensibly in part on the grounds of female promiscuity,

although also probably related to their status as failed mothers, at least according to Henry's desire for a male heir. Similar slander would later be leveled at Elizabeth concerning her supposed sexual exploits, including rumors of numerous illegitimate children (Heart 83). According to Levin, concern with Elizabeth's sexual activities exposed "Elizabeth's gender as the most salient aspect of her entity as ruler" in the minds of her subjects (76).

Male attempts to control the female body even extended to the female-dominated sphere of the birthing chamber. During the last month of pregnancy, the bedchamber, closed for use by the pregnant mother and her attending midwives, became a mysterious space to the men who were absented from it (Coch 433). The bond between women in the chamber disrupted the social order (433), alienating the father from his heir and blood, the child who would continue the lines of social alliance in the father's name. Unable to enter this room physically, male authority attempted to enter it through intellectual discourse. All medical texts during Elizabeth's reign were written by men. The first text on childbirth written by a woman was not published until the mid-seventeenth century. Male discourse on the womb made the birthing process known to men as well as women, giving men a measure of control over it they had not possessed before (Paster 175). Even though this control was more conceptual than practical since midwives continued to monopolize power in the birthing chamber, "textualizing birth during a time when literate men far outnumbered literate women [...] neutralizes its strong genderment as female" (188).

Hamlet's Dangerous Mother

Some of the most powerful expressions of this obsession with the female, and specifically maternal, body came not from medical texts or political rumors, but from the literature of the time, such as Shakespeare's plays. As Mary Beth Rose notes, few mothers appear in major roles in Shakespeare's plays; that is, few female characters are important *because* they are mothers (292). This general maternal absence points to the particular importance of mothers in those dramas where their maternal status *does* dictate their roles. In Janet Adelman's view, Hamlet especially, but not exclusively, bears witness to a cultural fear of the maternal body's power and sexuality and an attempt by the protagonists to control, or more likely, escape it. As Shakespeare's most famous play, Hamlet has garnered a great deal of attention and critical commentary. The breadth of this study does not allow for a complete reading of the play or a full survey of criticism surrounding it. Instead, I use Hamlet and Adelman's interpretation as particular example to illustrate the contention over motherhood in early modern England.

According to Adelman, Hamlet deals explicitly with mothers, a subject that was often only covertly addressed in Shakespeare's earlier plays. As noted previously, Renaissance physiology believed breast milk and blood to be different forms of the same liquid, and excess fluid from a leaky maternal body threatened to effeminize young men. Becoming a man meant establishing a separate masculine identity differentiated from the mother's body (Adelman 7). In England, witches functioned as demonic, parodic maternal figures, as witnessed by "the almost obsessive attention that English authorities paid to the presence on the witch's body of a 'bigge,'" a teat from which the witch's familiar sucked her blood for payment and sustenance (Paster 247). For example, the

witches in the Henry VI plays offer a satisfaction to hunger similar to that provided by the maternal body and threaten to erase the distinction between the male child and his mother's body (Adelman 8).

According to Janet Adelman, Shakespeare's pre-Hamlet plays deal with the subject of mothers in a variety ways. Comedies attempt "to deflect attention away from female sexuality," looking forward not to the consummation of the sex act, and thus procreation, but instead to male control of the female body in marriage (14). The histories, on the other hand, often enact oedipal dramas in which the maternal figure is removed or displaced to a lower status, and thus the action of the play takes place in the political realm rather than the domestic (11). The sons must choose between two fathers, one true and one false, and by siding with the true father and becoming the embodiment of his spirit, the young men emerge into manhood. Thus, in the Henry IV plays Hal "becomes himself in effect by choosing to become his father" (12). However, when a mother explicitly enters the action of the play, as Gertrude does in Hamlet, "her presence makes the father's sexual role a disabling crux in the son's relationship with his father" (11). She initiates tragedy through her sexuality, which, since it fails to distinguish between the true father of Old Hamlet and the false father of Claudius, threatens to collapse the two into one, thus making young Hamlet's need to differentiate and choose between the two almost impossible (12-13, 15).

In Prince Hamlet's first major soliloquy, he establishes one of the problems he is to face throughout the play: his mother's sexual body and its power to contaminate. He compares the world to "an unweeded garden / That grows to seed" (1.2.135-136). The image brings to mind a scene of uncontrolled reproduction, and the Biblical reference

equates Hamlet's world, where his father is dead and his uncle has married to his mother, to post-lapsarian Eden. This comparison of Eden and Denmark implies a cause shared in both cases: female sinfulness. Hamlet identifies the origin of the world's corruption in his mother's body and her fallen sexuality (Adelman 17). Notably, he attributes agency to his mother: "she [...] married with mine uncle" (149-151) and moved with "most wicked speed, to post / With such dexterity to incestuous sheets" (156-157). Unlike the ghost, who later blames the "witchcraft of [Claudius'] wit" (1.5.43) for the marriage, Hamlet blames his mother. He continues this trend in his alterations of the players' performance, wherein the player Queen's role becomes more important than the murderer's, and her remarriage is figured as murder in itself (Adelman 25). According to Adelman, the Queen's statement, "A second time I kill my husband dead / When second husband kisses me in bed" (3.2.166-167) conflates the old and new kings, thus making her sexuality the agent of murder: "when her husband kisses her, she kills him" (25). The grammatical ambiguity erases the distinction between her two husbands; she commits two murders, her sexuality threatening both of her spouses. Hamlet completes the transfer of guilt from Claudius to his mother when he confronts her in her bedroom, saying that his murder of Polonius is "almost as bad, good-mother, / As kill a king and marry with his brother" (3.4.27-28).

This moment should come as a shock to spectators and readers, considering Hamlet's father never implicated Gertrude in his murder, specifically telling the prince, "Taint not they mind, nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught" (1.5.85-86). He only names Claudius as an actor in his murder and accuses his brother of seducing Gertrude. Hamlet, however, attributes guilt to his mother because his exposure to her

sexuality has weakened his idealization of his father, killing him, in a sense, as a perfect father (Adelman 14). In his first soliloquy, Hamlet describes his father: "So excellent a king, that was to [Claudius] / Hyperion to a satyr" (1.2.139-140). Describing his father as a sun god, Hamlet "makes him benignly and divinely distant, separate from ordinary genital sexuality and yet immensely potent," capable of impregnating a pure mother as God did the Virgin Mary (Adelman 19). Separating his father from Gertrude's sexuality, Hamlet purifies him, eliding any notions of parental sexuality (20). Paradoxically, this characterization of his godlike father also serves to reveal Old Hamlet's vulnerabilities to the prince. The father's absence looses Gertrude's sexual voraciousness, indicating, in Adelman's reading, that its potential had always existed and threatening the image of his father's godlike control (20). "Why, she would hang on him / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on" (1.2.143-145); by conceiving of his father as sustenance for Gertrude's appetite, Hamlet implicates his father in his mother's sexuality just as much as his uncle Claudius, the "satyr" (Adelman 21). Perhaps even worse, as a satyr Claudius at least has some agency in sexuality. According to his son's description, Old Hamlet becomes merely an object of Gertrude's sexual hunger, a creature willing to be devoured for her pleasure.

This implication carries grave consequences for Hamlet. With both Claudius and Old Hamlet tainted by sexuality, "the gap between [...] Hyperion and satyr, on which Hamlet's defensive system depends" threatens to dissolve, weakening Hamlet's ability to identify with his father, against his uncle (Adelman 20). Gertrude is the agent that erases that distinction: "what they [Claudius and Old Hamlet] have in common is an appetite for Gertrude's appetite; and her appetite can't tell the difference between them" (21).

Hamlet's tortured imagination begins to conjure up vile pictures of sexuality as diseased and debased flesh: "the sun breed maggots in a dead dog" (2.2.182). If his father is the sun god, then Gertrude becomes the carrion, and thus Hamlet is a mere maggot feeding on his corrupted mother's body (Adelman 22). In his speech Hamlet has attempted to deify his father, but instead has succeeded only in implicating both Hamlets in the debased flesh of his mother Gertrude.

This feminine corruption is inherently connected with maternal sexuality throughout Hamlet, as can be seen in the prince's dealings with Ophelia, whom he views as potentially infected insofar as she is capable of becoming a mother (Adelman 14, 27). His advice to Polonius about Ophelia comes immediately after the previous image: "Let her not walk i'th' sun" (2.2.185). Hamlet's pun declares that if Ophelia "walks" with the "sun" or his son, she risks becoming corrupted by the maternal sexuality that exists within her, a sexuality that threatens fathers and sons. When Hamlet confronts Ophelia later, he can only imagine her as "a breeder / of sinners" (3.1.122-123). Hamlet cannot imagine marriage with his former love, because the revelation of his parents' sexuality would make him nothing more than the son/sun breeding maggots in the contaminated flesh of Ophelia's motherly body. He becomes increasingly desperate to establish a distinction between Claudius and Old Hamlet, a distinction that will displace the corrupting sexual influence of Gertrude and allow both Hamlets to return to a pre-sexualized existence. In his mother's bedchamber, Hamlet insists that Gertrude recognize the difference between the two brothers:

Look here upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

[.....]

This *was* your husband. Look you now what follows.

Here *is* your husband [...].

[.....]

what judgement

Would step from this to this? (3.4.52-70)

Hamlet leaves thinking that he has reformed his mother and separated her from her sexuality, as his actions reveal (Adelman 32). Only after he believes she has acknowledged the difference between the two men does Hamlet express affection towards his real mother or love for the potential mother in Ophelia. By purifying Gertrude, he has also in turn purified his father and himself.

Despite Hamlet's newfound confidence in his mother's purity, the play seems to harbor a fear of the maternal body. In the final scene, Gertrude's uncontrolled and quite literal appetite leads to her death as she "carouses" to Hamlet's "fortune" (5.2.232). Claudius attempts to stop her, but he cannot control her, and she satisfies her thirst despite his protests. Old Hamlet had not only been protective of Gertrude, but had protected others from her, and his absence has loosed sexual voraciousness that had formerly fed on him alone (Adelman 20). It is this sexual appetite that leads to her and her new husband's death, just as it had tainted the memory of the idealized Old Hamlet. She becomes the carrion of Hamlet's imagination, no longer ordered like Eden, but rotting and rank like the wild garden. Punning on "union" as both the poisoned pearl and the marriage to Gertrude, Hamlet formulates Claudius' subsequent death as the result of his incestuous coupling (38). The poison, "tempered" by Claudius and like the "mixture

rank" that killed Old Hamlet, and sexual union are conflated in a series of metonymic identifications, all rooted in the dangerous appetite of the sexualized mother (28).

Shakespeare's focus in Hamlet upon Gertrude's appetites draws upon cultural understandings of female reproductive physiology regarding the maternal body's corrupting and consumptive nature. Renaissance medicine understood the physical and mental states of the parents to be critical in determining the health of their newly conceived child; an imbalance of humours caused by improper desires was capable of causing "disastrous obstetrical consequences" (Paster 168-169). In the male, moderation of bodily fluids was fairly easy to monitor, as the male body was not "open" in the way that the female body was. The chief difficulty, and the source of most abnormalities in childbirth, was thus located in the womb. Because of its leaky nature, expelling both menstrual fluid and the female seminal fluid physicians believed necessary for conception, most medical authorities thought of the womb as "suspect and unstable," even dirty (174). Popular and scientific mistrust of the womb did not stop there:

[T]he womb was also suspect as an obstetrical environment because of its odd capacity to house other things besides babies (such as the 'false conceptions' called moles), its susceptibility to effects of the psyche, and its threatening association with bizarre longings. (180)

Even in the seventeenth-century and beyond, writers such as John Sadler and Jane Sharp -- the latter the first female author to publish a text on midwifery -- identified the womb as a potential locus of disease and corruption. Sharp wrote, "It is subject to all diseases, and the whole womb may be taken forth when it is corrupted" (63). Sadler explained the common belief that coition during menstruation causes deformed births by locating the

fault in the womb: "for the woman, wanting native heat to digest this superfluity, sends it to the matrix, where [...] it becomes corrupt and venomous" (66).

Not only was the womb potentially unclean and corrupting, but it was viewed as an almost independent organ within the female body (Paster 175). Sharp attributes its actions not to the mother, but to its own volition: "It opens naturally in copulation, in voiding menstuous blood and in child-birth, but at other times [...] it shuts so close that the smallest needle cannot get in" (61). This strange organ created a profound difficulty for a patriarchal society; it was difficult, if not impossible to control, susceptible to disease, and yet it "housed and accountable for the production of a baby in whom patriarchy claimed the presiding interest" (Paster 182). Capable of either good or malevolence, of a healthy heir or a monstrosity, the womb thus came to represent metonymically that maternal power which was viewed so ambivalently (175).

Stubbs and Maternal Desire

In The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf John Stubbs exploited cultural ambivalence towards the maternal body and maternal authority in his critique of Elizabeth's proposed union with the Duke of Alençon, and once again turns the maternal trope against her. Stubbs attempts through his argument to establish a distinction between, on the one hand, what is natural and proper, and on the other, what is unnatural and, therefore un-English. In particular, he applies this criterion to Elizabeth. She functions as a mother to her subjects and in doing so creates a potential dichotomy in her image, similar to the conflicting images with which Hamlet struggled of the pure mother of his youth and the sexualized mother who had married the satyr Claudius. Throughout much of his work,

Stubbs discusses unnatural mothers who had threatened England in the past (Vanhoutte 15). As other writers including Aylmer had done, Stubbs sets up a potential conflict between Elizabeth's desires and the good of England (8). Stubbs "establishes a 'natural and brotherlike' standard of behavior for Englishmen" (8), that they cannot be ruled by a foreigner: "it agreeth not with this state or frame of government to deliver any trust of undergovernment to an alien, but is a poison to it" (Stubbs 34). Nor can a foreign ruler "have the natural and brotherlike bowels of tender love towards this people which is required in a governor," an emotion naturally nursed "from the teats of a man's own mother country" (34). Stubbs' argument allows him to both praise and censure Elizabeth. She has, to this point, been a natural mother, like England itself, nurturing and loving her subjects, but marriage to Alençon would prove her unnatural as a Queen, a mother, and an Englishwoman by subjecting her people to the rule of an "alien" (Vanhoutte 15).

Stubbs locates in Elizabeth that same tendency towards corruption that physicians found in the maternal body in general, and Hamlet had found in Gertrude specifically. Stubbs repeatedly uses language of infection and disease to describe the potential effects on England and Elizabeth that a French marriage would have: through the proposed union, the French "do now seek notably to infect our minds" with their "sickness" (Stubbs 3). He views this corruption as inevitable should Elizabeth accept Alençon's proposal: "everywhere it is set down how the wicked perverted the good, but nowhere that the better part converted the wicked" (11). However, Stubbs fears not just moral degradation of the Queen; he also worries about potential harm to, or even destruction of, Elizabeth's body through venereal disease and childbirth (Coch 430). As her mind may be particularly apt to perversion, so too may her womb, and while Stubbs locates the source

of the corruption in the French Duke, Elizabeth's gender and status as a potential mother creates the difficulty. Like Hamlet, Stubbs fears queenly desire that may not be in step with the national interests of a "natural" Englishman like Stubbs, desire that forms the "Gulf" that threatens to swallow England (Vanhoutte 16). Like Hamlet, Stubbs fears the potential division created within the Queen should she exercise her desires:

Her marriage to a foreigner threatens to dissociate the queen from England, a potential rupture that Stubbs [...] 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. (15)

Elizabeth's reaction to Stubbs' pamphlet demonstrates an awareness of Stubbs' intentions. The royal proclamation against Gaping Gulf characterized it "as a broad attack on Elizabeth's authority" (Vanhoutte 7). In particular, it notes that Stubbs declares her to be without "any motherly or princely care" (Proclamation 151).

Presenting herself as a metaphorical mother had obviously earned Elizabeth many benefits, as discussed above. Yet it brought many difficulties. Although Elizabeth had presented herself as two bodies -- one kingly and powerful, one female and frail -- in order to divert attention away from her sex, the maternal trope focused societal anxiety on her feminine body. No wonder, then, that she eventually abandoned explicit mentions of motherhood in her later political speeches in an attempt to free herself from cultural associations with motherhood while retaining authority already built upon that image (Coch 450). In 1576, at the close of Parliament, Elizabeth goes so far as to claim that her

relationship with her subjects is, in fact, superior to and more stable than the mother-child bond:

One special favor yet I must confess I have just cause to vaunt of: that whereas variety and love of change is ever so rife in servants to their masters, in children to their parents, and in private friends one to another [...] yet still I find that assured zeal amongst my faithful subjects, to my special comfort, which was first declared to my great encouragement.

(Collected Works 168)

However, the maternal image remained current despite Elizabeth's abandonment of it and a growing cultural emphasis late in Elizabeth's life on her virginity as a source of her power and of national security -- what John King calls "The Cult of the Virgin Goddess" (58). Stubbs published his tract in 1579; Hamlet was most likely first performed in the very last years of Elizabeth's reign. Between these two works, Edmund Spenser's epic The Faerie Queene was published in two editions and shares in the same ambiguous attitudes towards female authority, the mother's role, and the maternal body.

The next chapter will discuss the ways in which Spenser attempts, although ultimately fails, to reconcile the conflict between the virginal and sexualized maternal bodies experienced by Hamlet and Stubbs by populating his narrative with conflicting female figures split along the lines of their authority, sexuality, and maternity.

CHAPTER III

SPENSER'S MOTHERS

The Faerie Queene emerged in 1590 marked anxieties about motherhood such as the ones discussed in the previous chapter. Fears of the female body and of maternal corruption, however, created difficulties for the patriarchal society of which Spenser was a part because of the structure of power within that society. In an economic system based largely upon primogeniture and a social system based upon lineage, the thought that all were of necessity corrupted by contact with the maternal body threatened the very structures upon which authority was built. Reproduction and maternity, especially in the royal family, were necessary to the very existence of England in order to maintain lines of influence and control. The rhetoric of this excerpt from the 1563 Commons' Petition to the Queen at Whitehall demonstrates just how central motherhood was in early modern England:

[Y]our said subjects see nothing in this whole estate of so great importance to your majesty and the whole realm, nor so necessary at this time to be reduced into a certainty, as the sure continuance of the governance and th'imperial crown thereof in your majesty's person and the most honorable issue of your body. (Collected Works 73)

This importance of motherhood conflicted with anxieties over the mother's body. In order to resolve the tension and make motherhood safe, Spenser enacted a variety of strategies in order to contain the threat of the maternal body, from simple elision, to creating what Joanne Craig terms an alternative "masculine order of origins" (17), to the most complex technique to be discussed here: attempting to create binary oppositions in which the threat posed by a contaminating, dangerous female is eradicated by her opposite.

Strategies of Avoidance

In the Letter to Raleigh, Spenser declares that he intends in his epic poem to represent "glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine" (32-34). One of the two figures he explicitly names as analogues for Elizabeth is Belphoebe, the virgin huntress, who represents the queen in her private, non-political life as "a most vertuous and beautifull Lady" (35-36). However, in the poetic blazon describing this Elizabethan avatar Spenser omits important physical details. Belphoebe

was yclad, for heat of scorching aire,

All in a silken Camus lylly whight,

[.....],

and all the skirt about

Was hemd with golden fringe

Below her ham her weed did somewhat trayne,

And her streight legs most brauely were embayled

In gilden buskins of costly Cordwayne,

[.....]

they fastned were vnder her knee

In a rich iewell, and therein entrayld

The end of all the knots, that none might see,

How they within their fouldings close enwrapped bee. (2.3.26-27)

Louis Montrose remarks of this passage that "the narrator's gaze skirts the fringes of Belphoebe's secret parts, displacing any allusion to her genitals" to the "knot" under her knee ("Political Imaginary" 919). In effect, by ignoring her womb, Spenser makes her "safe": he frees Belphoebe, and by extension Elizabeth, from the taint of the female body by erasing the site of corruption. It displaces the threat of female power through maternity by turning the source of that power, a potentially grotesque and leaky part of the body, into a knot discreetly placed out of sight.

However, the placement of the knot where "none might see" does not necessarily eliminate the source of maternal power. Her knot's hidden status evokes the unknown and mysterious nature of the female body and echoes the realm of the birthing chamber, unseen and un-seeable by male eyes. Joanne Craig thinks that Belphoebe still functions as a threatening figure of maternity in more active ways. Rescuing the wounded Timias, she effectively gives him life (20). Near death after his battle, he is reborn to her: "By this he had sweet life recur'd agayne" (3.5.34). Yet she is also the focus of Timias' erotic impulses, combining maternal and sexual power in a way that sustains and threatens him (Craig 18): "She his hurt thigh to him recurd againe, / But hurt his hart, the which before was sound" (3.5.42). Craig notes in particular the Petrarchan mode of Timias' suffering,

in which Belphoebe is both an object of desire and a source of emotional pain, and reads his laments as a combination of lover's complaint for a cruel mistress and oedipal craving for a mother's affection (17-18). Belphoebe possesses such power that her rejection of Timias drives him mad: "the displeasure of the mighty is / Then death it selfe more dread" (4.8.1). Only after Belphoebe realizes the error of her ways -- accepting the "fowle rebuke and shame" (4.8.15) she herself declares is due to the one who has caused Timias' madness -- does the squire regain his sanity. As an analogue of Elizabeth, Belphoebe not only mimics the Queen's banishment of Raleigh, but also excites the same Petrarchan tropes in her subjects (Craig 17). By placing the blame on Elizabeth's avatar Spenser not only critiques the Queen's actions in the specific case of the Raleigh-Throckmorton marriage, but also condemns the Petrarchan relationship between Elizabeth and her subjects wherein the infant/mother and lover/mistress relationships converge in a complex, dangerous erotic desire (17), one that brings "no ease of grieffe, nor hope of grace" (4.7.38) to the men under the rule of a powerful female.

The relationship between Belphoebe and Timias serves as a covert way for Spenser to fashion an escape from maternal power -- through the mother-figure accepting guilt -- but this solution still relies on maternal agency: Belphoebe is the one who must recognize and accept her error in banishing Timias. An alternative strategy employed throughout the narrative presents fantasies of origin that exclude or minimize the mother's role in procreation (Craig 16). This maneuver functions in a variety of ways throughout the narrative, but is ultimately unsatisfying in displacing maternal power. Some of the more heroic characters, including Arthur, Redcrosse, and Pastorella, are foundlings. Their history is lost in a fantasy of asexual reproduction that protects them

from the corruption of the maternal body, and even when the subject is broached, such as when Arthur reads his history and Redcrosse speaks with Contemplation, only their fathers are mentioned, and the mother is elided completely.

In the case of Arthur, however, this serves also to isolate him. The history of Arthur's lineage ends "As if the rest some wicked hand did rend, / Or th'Author selfe could not at least attend to finish it" (2.10.68). Not only is Arthur separated from his past, but the pun on his name (68n) implies also that he cannot finish it; that is, he cannot complete his lineage. The Prince embarks upon a quest to find Glorianna, but his only image of her is mysterious and insubstantial; he knows not "whether dreames delude, or true it were" (1.9.14) that he had met her. His vision of Glorianna gives little reason for the reader to believe that their union will ever be fulfilled: "So fayre a creature yet saw *neuer* sunny day" (13; emphasis added). Arthur's phantasmal relationship with the Faerie Queene, "neuer" to be consummated, echoes the barren relationship with Guinevere any contemporary of Spenser would have known from Arthurian legend (Hadfield 29-30). Spenser's Arthur exists in a stagnant, non-reproductive state, ignorant of his past and unable to craft a true future.

In addition to sometimes eliminating the mother, Spenser also attempts to limit the mother's role in conception. Agape, Cymoent, and Satyrane's mother all conceive their children as a result of rape, minimizing their implication in sexuality (Craig 18). Perhaps the most abused female in the entire epic is Mother Earth. While epithets of fruitfulness are assigned to the Earth, it remains ambiguous as a figure, never assuming an explicit role as an active character (Kendrick 534). She brings forth fruit and flowers as well as monsters, such as Ollyphant, Argante, and Orgoglio. However the narrative

never indicates that she is a malevolent matriarch. Rather, she is abused and victimized repeatedly. The three monsters mentioned are all products of rape; Mother Earth plays no active role in creating them. Nor does she play any role in the lives of some of her other "children" -- Gerioneo, Grantorto, and Disdaine. Her maternity is incidental, only mentioned when they die and fall upon or bite their "mother." Earth represents, in the words of Walter Kendrick, a "vast amoral potential" (535). In minimizing the mothers' agency in procreation, Spenser to a certain extent redeems them, especially in the case of Earth and her monstrous offspring. She is innocent of her children's evil. At the same time, however, Spenser creates another difficulty: the fecundity of these mothers, again especially Earth's, represents life without spirit, a formless existence without thought or reason (544). Because she is equally capable of birthing good as well as evil, a mother's power to procreate either must be managed or purged of its contaminating potential.

Strategies of Opposition: Charissa and Errour

Stubbs had feared the "gaping gulf" created by the sexuality of Queen Elizabeth, and Shakespeare, the last chapter argued, dramatized the same fear through Hamlet. In order to reign in the threat of maternal sexuality, Spenser populated the land of Faery with female characters set in opposition to each other, either through the action of the narrative, such as Britomart and Radigund, or through similar description, such as Charissa and Errour. Not all of the women in The Faerie Queene are specifically mothers, but many of them display maternal characteristics, whether positive ones such as nurturance or negative ones such as overweening control. The sets of opposing female figures function as an attempt to resolve the conflict that Stubbs and Hamlet cannot

resolve; the positive figure, or one of her associates, usually eradicates or contains the threat posed by the disruptive or sexualized maternal figure. However, because of the allegorical nature of Spenser's epic, the distinctions between these binary pairs continually dissolve. Spenser's symbolism continually evolves, and various characters and symbols return in different form (Hadfield 41). Aspects of one figure bleed into the opposite, and, despite appearances, the negative figure is rarely, if ever, fully erased from the text.

The first canto contains the first appearance of a mother in The Faerie Queene: the demonic Error. In fact, the first mother and the first monster are one and the same, revealing, perhaps, what Joanne Craig terms Spenser's "deep anxiety about women's sexuality" (16). At the outset of his quest, the Redcrosse Knight's first task is to defeat a monstrous, threatening mother. As with Hamlet's fear of the all-consuming womb, the anxiety toward Error focuses on her body. She threatens with the same kind of indiscriminate appetite, swallowing her own offspring as the light from Red Crosse's armor falls upon them. However, the narrative focuses not on what goes in her body, but what comes out: "Of her there bred, / A thousand yong ones, which she dayle fed, / Sucking vpon her poisonous dugs [...] all ill fauored" (1.1.15.4-7). One of the ways in which Error poses a danger is in her ability to infect through the flow of her body, which comes out in her "filthie parbreake" (20.9), her breast milk, and her blood. As noted previously, breast milk and blood were believed to be essentially the same substance, merely changed in appearance. The deadly effect of Error's bodily fluid is revealed as she dies and her infants feast upon her:

They flocked all about her bleeding wound,

And sucked vp their dying mothers blood,
 Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

[.....]

Hauing all satisfied their bloody thirst,
 Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
 And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
 Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst. (25-26)

Popular and medical opinion in England on nursing included a complex and somewhat contradictory mix of discourses. Most religious sources encouraged maternal breastfeeding, declaring it one of the duties of mothers (Paster 198). Gouge, for example, assigned the duty of caring for an infant to the mother, declaring that she should provide "all things needful for a childe" (507). He admits ignorance regarding the particulars, only naming one explicitly: "Among other needful things, the milke of the breast is fit for young babes, and with it they are to be nourished" (507). He then goes on at some length, nearly ten pages, citing both historical and Biblical authority on why a mother should nurse her own children rather than send them out to a wet nurse. In addition to the religious argument, most physicians of the time recommended maternal breastfeeding not only for health reasons "but also on the grounds that maternal suckling promoted infant-mother bonding" (Paster 199). Breast milk was also used in a number of other situations: as food for the elderly or sick, as an ingredient in various medicines, and even as a topical ointment (197).

Yet the lactating mother was also looked upon with suspicion. Again, one of the main concerns surrounded the body's openness: "Even more than the suspiciously effluent female body in other states, the parturient body flowed--with the fluids released at birth, after birth, and in lactation" (Paster 192). Some of these fluids were thought to be waste products, including colostrum, or the first milk produced by the mother after childbirth. This was believed to be impure and potentially dangerous to the newborn, and thus the child was usually fed some other food, often the milk of a wet nurse (194). But breast milk was, in general, a very complex issue. "[B]y virtue of its great 'sympathy' with the womb," the breast and its products carried potentially negative attributes (207). A mother's or nurse's milk not only fed the infant but transmitted moral character from woman to child, making it a potentially contaminating substance. The grotesque description of the exploding children of *Error* bears witness to an extreme version of this contamination.

In response to this scene of negative maternal contamination, Spenser presents the audience with *Error*'s opposite, Charissa, nine cantos later. In contrast to the animalistic, sagging "dugs" of *Error*, Charissa's bodily display is beautiful, ordered, and nurturing:

Her necke and brests were euer open bare,
 That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill;
 The rest was all in yellow robes arayed still.

A multitude of babes about her hong,
 Playing their sportes, that ioyd her to behold,
 Whom still she fed, whiles they were weakn and young,

But thrust them forth still, as they wexed old. (10.30-31)

In many ways, Charissa appears here as the paradoxical Virgin Mother that Hamlet so wished for in Gertrude. Her bare breasts evoke the traditional image of the virgin, while her yellow clothing represents "marriage, fertility, fruitfulness, and maternity" (30.9n). She is "Full of great loue, but *Cupids* wanton snare / As hell she hated, chaste in worke and will" (30.5-6; emphasis original). There is also an issue of appearance. "[T]he beautiful breast throughout the Renaissance [...] was always 'delicate and minimal'" while large, sagging breasts were shameful, unattractive, and often associated with old women and witches (Paster 205). One cannot help but imagine Errorr's "dugs" as hideous and sagging, but Charissa seems to be the opposite. As Paster notes, "[i]t is hard to imagine that such impossibly bountiful breasts would *not* sag" (206; emphasis original), but Spenser's description of Charissa portrays her as the very epitome of youth and beauty:

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare. (30)

As this perfect mother, one could argue that Charissa is an extremely flattering portrait of the aging Queen Elizabeth, "mother" of England. Like Charissa, Elizabeth often wore clothing that revealed her bosom, in the traditional manner of a virgin, throughout her reign. The emphasis on Charissa's youthfulness mirrors a tendency in portraits of the aged queen to present her in youthful bloom (King 43). Also, Spenser focuses attention on Charissa's regal nature: "And on her head she wore a tyre of gold, / Adorn'd with gemmes and owches wondrous fayre" (31). As the "chiefest founderesse" (44) of the

"holy Hospitall" (36) where Redcrosse learns the ways of charity, Charissa evokes the perfect ideal of queenly authority.

Duessa's Contaminating Body, Una's Ethereal Body

Although it appears that the chaste yet fruitful Charissa opposes and nullifies the threat of the contaminating Errour, Spenser's narrative cannot sustain this simple opposition. Returning to the subject of breasts, Paster states that

by denying them [Charissa's breasts] the particularity of description he devotes to Duessa's 'bad' breasts, Spenser effaces the issue altogether and allows Charissa's breasts to be beautiful, and maternal, and perhaps even erotic. (206)

However, I argue that relationship between the two is reversed. Duessa's unveiling in canto 8 serves not as a counterpoint to the description of Charissa, but rather acts to undermine it. Spenser pays special attention to Duessa's breasts, and Paster argued that "[m]etonymy transfers these breasts into the lower parts, an oozing, excretory bladder-womb, an image of disease" (206): "Her dried duggs, lyke bladders lacking wind, / *Hong downe*, and filthy matter from them weld" (1.8.47; emphasis added). Duessa's grotesque body is more akin in its description to Errour's than to Charissa's, or even to the beautiful façade Fidessa she had worn before. Spenser's focus in this passage is on the act of unveiling, the revelation of a body so hideous it must not be described, but so powerful in its very repulsiveness that it cannot be denied; he declares of her true nature, "Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told" (46) and then devotes two stanzas to detailing her body. In addition to her deformed breasts, Spenser makes note of "Her

neather parts, the shame of all her kind" (48), an ambiguous remark that could conceivably include not just all witches, but all women, or even all humankind (48.1n). The connection of shame with her reproductive parts further emphasizes the disgusting nature of Duessa's maternal grotesquery.

This uncovering of the beautiful Fidessa as hideous, parodic maternal body continues the theme in Book 1 of deceptive appearances: Archimago in the guise of the old sage, the false Una, Archimago again disguised as Redcrosse. The repeated image of "poisonous dugs" is then contrasted by the seemingly nurturing breasts of Charissa, and the reader faces a conundrum. By this point Spenser has trained his audience to be wary of appearances, as they have so often proven deceptive, yet he carefully avoids too much description of Charissa's maternal characteristics. Furthermore, both Duessa and Charissa bear the outward appearance of royalty. When Duessa is forcibly disrobed, Redcrosse and Arthur rob her "of roiall robes, and purple pall, / And ornaments that richly were displaid" and she is shown to be merely "A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill fauoured, old" (1.8.46). Given Elizabeth's penchant for ostentatious display, the stripping of Duessa sets up the reader for a similar stripping of Charissa to reveal the truth of her appearance, and by implication the truth of the aged Queen Elizabeth behind her "mask of youth." An earthly mother, Charissa partakes of the same physicality as the corrupt Error and Duessa, creating an expectation of an exposure of maternal deformity that, strangely, never comes.

This expectation taints Charissa's apparently perfect maternity, undercutting her representation as a truly positive mother figure. Her perfect breasts, which distinguish her so noticeably from Duessa and Error, also inescapably implicate her in the same

corruption because of the potential for and expectation of their corruption. While this expectation is never fulfilled, a grotesque body lurks just beyond the narrative, and by threatening to reveal the truth of Elizabeth's avatar of unified maternity and royalty, it threatens to reveal her "true" body, aged and corrupting, as well. The truly perfect mother in Book 1, then, is only revealed after another unveiling, one which counters Duessa's in its very lack of physicality. When Una finally reveals her beauty in canto 12, Spenser humbly declares that "My ragged rimes are all too rude and base, / Her heauenly lineaments for to enchace" (23). Unlike his description of Duessa, where he detailed her physicality after saying that he should not, Spenser fulfills his words here. His description of Una's true appearance is noteworthy in its very insubstantiality. He says more about what she does *not* look like than what she does show:

And on her now a garment she did weare,
 All lilly white, withoutten spot, or pride,
 That *seemd* like silke and siluer wouen neare,
But neither silke nor siluer therein did appeare. (22; emphasis added)

What, then, is she wearing? Redcrosse too is stymied in his attempt to comprehend his love's appearance:

for her own deare loued knight,
 [.....]
 Did wonder much at her celestiall sight:
 Oft had he seene her faire, but neuer so faire dight. (23)

Redcrosse sees her yet he does not see her. Una's "heauenly beautie" (22) defies attempts to capture it in words, and the insubstantiality of Spenser's poetic blazon mirrors an

insubstantiality within Una herself. She is "withoutten spot," "heauenly," and "celestiall"; the narrative places Una beyond the physical world of Duessa, Errour, and Charissa, into a heavenly existence where the fleshliness of motherhood is absent. Una is the perfect mother because she is not maternal at all; in her description, she shares none of the physical attributes of the other mothers of Book 1. Her body has been excised, leaving only a pure being akin to Hamlet's fantasy of the ideal mother.

Further separating her from any possible taint of physicality, Una's marriage to Redcrosse is deferred, never to be achieved in Spenser's poem. Even though Spenser apparently never completed his ambitious project for The Faerie Queene, the narrative itself gives little reason to expect that the two ever wed. Contemplation, the hermit of the mount beyond Caelia's House of Holinesse, elides Redcrosse's marriage to Una in his prophecy:

But when though famous victory hast wonne,
And high emongst all knights hast hong thy shiled,
Thenceforth the suitt of earthly conquest shonne,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field:

For blood can nought but sin, and wars but sorrows yield. (1.10.60)

Redcrosse then rejects both "deeds of armes" and "Ladies loue" because "they'are vaine, and vanish into nought" (62). By conflating battle and love this way, Redcrosse combines the sinful blood of the battlefield with the blood of the consummated wedding bed, the menstrual blood of the fertile woman, and the blood-turned-milk of the nursing mother. Only by rejecting this blood can man remain untainted by female corruption, corruption that Hamlet had seen within his father and himself. Thus, the lines from canto 1 regarding

the death of Error's children take on new meaning: "well worthy end / Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst" (26). The rather vague language here applies the taint of the female body to any "such" as feed upon "her [...] which" nurses them, just as the "shame" of Duessa's genitalia could extend perhaps to all humankind. Una can only remain "withoutten spot" as long as she remains a "goodly royall Mayd" (12.33), never implicated in the sexual, physical nature of the other females of Book 1, and thus never a mother.

Strategies of Opposition: Britomart and Cymoent

Within The Faerie Queene another female character exists for whom the possibility of motherhood cannot be erased: Britomart. In Book 3, canto 3, Merlin relates to Britomart her destiny, and her role as mother takes central focus:

For from thy wombe a famous Progenee
 Shall spring, out of the auncient Troian blood,
 Which shall reuiue the sleeping memoree
 Of those same antique Peres, the heuens brood
 [.....].

Renowmed kings, and sacred Emperours,
 Thy fruitfull Ofspring, shall from thee descend;
 [.....]

Till vniuersall peace compound all ciuill iarre. (22-23)

Her purpose in the narrative is to fulfill this destiny, to seek out her future husband Artegall and bear his children, becoming a mother. Even though this has been decreed by "heuenly destiny" (24), the narrative still registers some unease. Glauce, Britomart's maid, refers to the young woman's desire for Artegall as

This sad euill, which doth her infest,

[.....]

That either seemes some cursed witches deed,

Or euill spright, that in her doth such torment *breed*. (18; emphasis added)

Her sexual love is both heavenly fortune as well as an infesting, "breeding" evil, and needs to be purified as the female body was in Book 1 with the apotheosis of Una.

Britomart's purification is significantly different, though. Unlike Una, she cannot remain a "royall Maid" forever, but rather than just juxtaposing her with opposing figures, as in Book 1, Spenser instead grants Britomart the agency to effect her own cleansing. In her quests she confronts and defeats, among others, figures of monstrous femininity, excising the "sad euill" from her own body, a process that culminates in her confrontation with the Amazon Radigund.

Of course, designating Britomart as an avatar of Elizabeth becomes problematic because the former "is destined to marry, and in history her importance will lie [...] in her 'wombe's burden,'" while the latter was, by 1596, still unmarried and long past childbirth (Villepontaux 54). Julia Walker called Britomart "the greatest portrait of Elizabeth's reign" (72), while Bruce Boehrer stated unequivocally that "Britomart is not Elizabeth" (559) but rather a "refiguration" (555) of the Queen. Knowledge of just how much of Elizabeth exists in Britomart is less important for this study than simply acknowledging

that similarities between the two exist. While Spenser never names Britomart as an allegorical representation of Elizabeth, lineage connects the two, as Britomart's destiny is to found the royal line that one day will lead to Elizabeth. One difference between the two lies in "the quality of their sexuality" (Boehrer 559). While it may have been too late for Elizabeth to marry and reproduce, for Spenser "it was not too late to insult her" by providing the example of a proper mother in Britomart (Villeponteaux 54). By writing a powerful female destined to be a famous matriarch and questing to find her husband, Spenser puts maternity at the forefront of his narrative, but he must also rewrite his earlier discussions of maternity. At the culmination of Book 1, the maternal body remained corrupted, while the pure female form was (dis)embodied in the ethereal, heavenly Una. Spenser begins his self-editing by crafting a woman who "has the paradoxical advantage of being both virginal and fruitful" (Boehrer 561). Spenser develops the meaning of her chastity by combining these aspects: virginal in the present-tense of the narrative, destined to reproduce in the future, Britomart journeys to eradicate the forces that threaten to turn her impossibly pure maternity into the degraded sexuality Hamlet witnessed in Gertrude.

In Book 3, canto 4, Britomart encounters and defeats the knight Marinell, nearly killing him. The true cause of his injury, however, is not the "mortall stroke" (17) dealt to him by Britomart; his mother Cymoent's overbearing maternal power, intended to protect him, has nearly destroyed him (Craig 21). Knowing the prophecy that "A virgin straunge and stout him should dismay, or kill" (3.4.25), Cymoent had intended her love for her son "to haue arm'd him, [but] she did quite disarm" (27). Spenser's portrait of Cymoent and Marinell reflects a concern in early modern England with immoderate maternal affection.

Excessive shows of love and indulgence towards children "meant making them physically and morally soft, prone to sickness and vices" (Houlbrooke 140). William Gouge declared such love unnatural: "The extreme in the excesse is too much *doting* vpon children [...]. Is not this meere apish kindesse? for Apes kill their young ones with hugging" (500; emphasis original). He repeatedly states the danger that "excesse breedeth diseases both in body and minde" (528) and claims that in matters of excessive love "Mothers for the most part offend herein" (557). Separating from the mother and her love was an essential step for a son to mature and become an individual in the public sphere (Rose 301). This came rather early by most modern standards. At the age of seven, a child was considered able to tell right from wrong. Boys began dressing in adult clothes, and passed "from the tutelage of women to that of men" (Houlbrooke 150).

Cymoent's surfeit of love has weakened Marinell by keeping him in a childlike state (Craig 22). In effect, she has kept him from truly becoming a man, the comparison made between Marinell and "a castrated bull is a fitting simile for the consequences of Marinell's mother-dominated state" (3.4.17n). The danger posed to Marinell by his mother also causes a reconsideration of Proteus' prophecy about Marinell's destiny. According to Jonathan Goldberg, through her defeat of Marinell Britomart "effects [his] release [...] from maternal domination" (9). Rather than being the agent of Marinell's doom, Britomart's quest is life-producing: she gives him life through his wound and frees him from his mother's death-in-life (10). By making Marinell independent of Cymoent, Britomart serves as a good mother, rather than a domineering one. Perhaps then the "virgin straunge" of the prophecy is not Britomart but in fact Cymoent. Of course, she is not strictly speaking a virgin, but Spenser has minimized her role in the sex act. Like

Agape, she was taken without her consent, and like Chyrsogene, she conceived in her sleep. Marinell's release from her domination is completed when the narrative transfigures Cymoent into Marinell's new wife, Florimell. The Argument to Book 4, canto 12 announces

Marin for loue of Florimell,
 In languor wastes his life:
 The Nymph his mother getteth her,
 And giues to him for wife.

Through marriage, the threatening, domineering maternal power of Cymoent becomes the life-giving yet manageable power of Florimell, whom the argument describes almost as a commodity, something to be gotten and given away. She too becomes a mother of sorts to Marinell, granting him life: "as he beheld that angels face, / [...] His cheared heart eftsoones away gan chace / sad death" (34). As Marinell's wife, however, Florimell's maternity is, at least theoretically, under his control.

Strategies of Opposition: Britomart and Radigund

In Book 5, Britomart engages in a similar quest to free a knight from female domination, only this time the knight she frees is not a stranger but her own love Artegall. Britomart's defeat of Radigund is a defeat of her own dangerous feminine authority, and as such functions as a way for Spenser to narratively refashion maternal and political authority so as to be safely managed by masculine power. Even prior to learning of her destiny from Merlin, Britomart has been characterized as a mother. When she gazes into

her father's mirror and sees her future spouse, her vision of Artegall "takes the form of a mental pregnancy" (Eggert 30). She sees her love

To her reuealed in a mirrhour playne,
Whereof did grow her first engrafted payne,
[.....]
That but the fruit more sweetnes did contayne,
Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote waste [...]. (3.2.17)

Katherine Eggert calls Britomart's suffering a type of "visionary lying-in" (30), comparing Britomart's "dolour" to the birth-pangs experienced by the pregnant mother. When Redcrosse relates to Britomart the heroic virtues of Artegall, Britomart experiences a rush of happiness: "The louing mother, that nine monethes did beare, / [...] Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare, / Doth not so much reioyce" (3.2.11). Spenser's language recalls Elizabeth's speech in which she declared her love for her subjects even greater than a mother's. Jonathan Goldberg, however, argues that Britomart's joy is greater than a mother's because it combines both maternal and erotic love, and that "Britomart gives birth to Artegall [...] [H]is appearance [in the narrative] represents the manifestation of what had only been an image in Britomart's mind" (7). Birthed from Britomart's mind, Artegall's ultimate destiny is "reentrance into Britomart" (8), but in order to do that, she must be converted from powerful mother to submissive spouse and mother-to-be, just as Cymoent's maternity was transfigured to Florimell's manageable fecundity.

The destined lovers eventually meet in Book 4, canto 6, and engage in a vicious battle. When Britomart is revealed to Artegall, he experiences a remarkable change of heart:

His powrelesse arme benumbd with secret feare

From his reuengefull purpose shronke abacke,

And cruell sword out of his fingers slacke

Fell downe to ground, as if

[.....]

[His hand and sword] did thinke, *obedience*

To doe to so diuine a beauties excellence. (21; emphasis added)

Britomart's beauty has such power over him to reduce him to a worshipping follower, obeying her as if she were a "heauenly goddess" (22). After the two have expressed their love for each other, Artegall takes his leave immediately to pursue his previous quest. According to Katherine Eggert, the threat of Britomart's "emasculating" power causes Artegall to leave (35). After Artegall had unhelmed Britomart, "trembling horror did his sense assayle, / And made ech member quake, and manly hart to quayle" (4.6.22). Union with Britomart at this point would mean a loss of his manhood, "a kind of suspended animation" (35), a state of submission to a powerful maternal figure similar to Marinell's subjection to Cymoent. If, as in Goldberg's theory related above, Britomart is in some sense mother to Artegall, he must separate from her in order to establish his own identity. His encounter with, and defeat by, the Amazon Radigund dramatizes the dangers Artegall would face in marrying a powerful female such as Britomart, or, as Eggert writes, "externalizes what might be Artegall's nightmare of marriage" (38).

The similarity between Artegall's battle with Britomart and his battle with Radigund encourage the reader to draw parallels between the two (5.5.12n). "Artegall's identical reaction to the two beautiful faces" creates the parallel between the scenes,

while the difference arises from "the different attitudes of the two women themselves" (Bowman 512). His action once he has seen Radigund's face -- "his sharpe sword he threw from him" (5.5.13) -- echoes his similar emasculation at the sight of Britomart a book earlier (Eggert 39). The power and authority of Britomart that had threatened to unman Artegall have been embodied in Radigund (Bowman 512), and the Amazon's subsequent domination of him mirrors the political and personal control exerted by a powerful matriarch. Radigund's first action as Artegall's mistress is to make him her political subject:

Tho with her sword on him she flatling strooke,
 In signe of true subiexion to her powre,
 And as her vassall him to thraldome tooke. (5.5.18)

She displays her maternal power by stripping him of his armor and dressing him in "womans weedes" (20). The feminine clothing recalls the early years of youth when boys would wear dress-like frocks, before they had graduated "into the breeches and sword-carrying of the adult world" (Stone 258).

In order to free Artegall, Britomart must destroy the maternal power that dominates him, which means excising what is threatening to her future husband about her own nature. In the battle between Britomart and Radigund, "the two women warriors are scarcely distinguishable" (Eggert 41). The poem compares them to "a Tygre and a Lionesse," each battling over Artegall "with equall greedinesse" (5.7.30). Britomart's task, according to Eggert, is "to subdue herself" (41). Britomart wins by decapitating the Amazon, symbolically destroying her royal power: with no head, one can wear no crown. She continues to dismantle female authority: "The liberty of women did repeale, / [...]"

and them restoring / To mens subiection" (5.7.42). Finally, she promotes Artegall to the position of highest authority. In doing so, Britomart "effac[es] her own power," granting Artegall control over both the Amazon state of Radigone and herself, signaling the eradication of the threatening political and maternal authority embodied in Radigund (Bowman 510).

The Mask of Masculinity

The question must be raised why Britomart possesses the ability to conquer dangerous figures female and male. Even Belphoebe, a mighty huntress and symbol of the powerful Elizabeth, flees rather than fights when assaulted by Braggadocchio in Book 2, canto 3. Belphoebe is not weak, though; she defeats Lust in Book 4, canto 7, a scene that allegorically relates the power of virginity, the huntress' defining characteristic, to triumph over base passions. Britomart's abilities, however, come not necessarily from any innate talent but from her masculine disguise. In her conflict with Guyon "The secrete vertue of that weapon keene, / That mortall puissaunce mote not withstond" enables her to defeat the Knight of Temperance (3.1.10). Although she declares to Redcrosse "that from the howre / I taken was from nurses tender pap, / I haue beene trained vp in warlike stowre" (3.2.6), in truth she only first took up arms as a disguise in order to find Artegall. As Mary Villeponteaux notes, when she removes her knightly accoutrements "authoritative Britomart, characterized as 'masculine' by her armor and spear, is displaced, her invulnerability questioned when she is wounded by Malecasta's knights" (54). Just as the revelation of Duessa's true self exposes her grotesque femininity, the removal of Britomart's male garb exposes her femininity. This femininity makes her both

vulnerable to injury and dangerously emasculating, as witnessed by Artegall's reaction to her unmasking. Like her future offspring Elizabeth, Britomart possesses two bodies, one male, one female, and the male is the more powerful.

Spenser's portrayal of Britomart parallels Elizabeth's sometime self-portrayal in masculine terms. Mary Bowman notes that

Elizabeth [...] through the way in which she was presented as an *exceptional* woman, acted more to reinforce than to challenge the attitudes and social structures that limited women's ability to act autonomously and effectively. (520; emphasis original).

Spenser notes Britomart's status as exceptional amongst women, both past and present, for her unique combination of warlike ability and female virtue:

all that else had puissaunce,
 Cannot with noble *Britomart* compare,
 Aswell for glorie of great valiaunce,
 As for pure chastitie and vertue rare [...]. (3.4.3; emphasis original)

There are other women in The Faerie Queene who possess feminine attributes similar to Britomart's: Una, Florimell, Amoret, and Belpheobe, for example. None, however, possess the masculine "puissaunce" that she has -- none except Elizabeth. Carole Levin noted that Elizabeth often "used male analogies with which to compare herself" (Heart 131) in speeches and letters, and in correspondence with her cousin Mary Stuart, Elizabeth referred to herself as a "prince" and Stuart as a "princess" (132). In her speech at Tilbury, Elizabeth called upon the masculine part of her as a source of strength to rally her troops: "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and

stomach of a king [...] rather than any Dishonour shall *grow* by me, I myself will take up Arms, I myself will be your General" (Collected Works 326; emphasis added). In the prelude to one of Elizabeth's most triumphant moment, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, she expurgated shameful femininity that might "grow" dishonor and took instead the mantle of male warrior. Britomart makes the ultimate gesture of abandoning femininity for masculinity when she turns control of the Amazon city over to Artegall. By fashioning Britomart as an example for Elizabeth, Spenser's advice sounds remarkably similar to the words of John Aylmer in defending the rule of Elizabeth:

For first it is not she that ruleth but the lawes, the executors whereof be her iudges [...]. 2. she maketh no statutes or lawes, but the honorable court of Parliament [...]. 3. If she shuld iudge in capitall crimes: what daunger were there in her womannishe nautre? Not at all. For the veredict is 12 mennes, whiche passe vppon life and deathe, and not hers [...]. (H3v)

There is no danger in woman's authority if the power actually rests in the hands of men. By "handing over to [Artegall's] authority [...] all she has won with her own strength" (Bowman 518), Britomart does what Elizabeth should do for the safety of her country and her subjects: cede her power to men.

Spenser's Failure

Are Britomart's actions truly effective in transforming dangerous female authority into managed female authority? Judging by Artegall's actions, they are not. Upon Radigund's defeat, Artegall again leaves Britomart, and the narrative contains no mention of the two reuniting. Britomart's visions at Isis Church reveal that despite the beheading

of Radigund and the subjection of the Amazon's to Artegall's rule, the assertion of male power over maternal authority is merely a fiction. In her dream, Britomart witnesses herself "doing sacrificize / to *Isis*, deckt with Mitre on her hed" (5.7.13; emphasis original). Presumably *Isis* wears the crown, but the ambiguity of the feminine pronoun confuses the difference between Britomart and the Egyptian queen (Eggert 40). The "she" of the dream subdues the male crocodile and after "accepting" his "grace and loue," she "soone enwombd grew," birthing a mighty Lion (5.7.16). Her subjection of her lover and her maternity are interconnected, the former causing the latter.

Eggert notes that this vision at first echoes "the state of overwhelming feminine power in which Artegall still lies languishing," but claims that "this moment of feminine governance and of feminine conception is safely framed" by the priest's interpretation of the dream (40). The priest's "reading" elides the forcible subjugation of the crocodile: "that same Crocodile doth represent / [...] thy faithfull loue, / [...]. That vnder *Isis* feete doth sleepe" (5.7.22; emphasis original). Instead, he focuses on her future husband's deeds, and her eventual marriage and children, reading their union as an equal partnership:

That Knight shall all the troublous stormes asswage,
 And raging flames, that many foes shall reare,
 To hinder thee from the iust heritage
 Of thy sires Crowne, and from thy cuntry deare.
 Then shalt thou take him to thy loued fere,
 And ioyne in equall portion of thy realme:
 And afterwards a sonne to him shalt beare [...]. (23)

This cooperative, voluntary union is a far cry from the violence with which the crocodile was subdued in stanza 15: "with her rod him backe did beat." The dream has more in common with Radigund's encounter with Artegall, where she "With huge redoubled strokes she on him layd" (5.5.14) subduing him with force of arms, than with the more peaceful resolution to Artegall and Britomart's battle. The priest's interpretation is merely wishful thinking, a narrative fiction that does not conform to the reality that even though Britomart may willingly cede power to Artegall, her body, which birthed the "powre extream" of her "Lion-like" son (23), is the ultimate source of that authority. Katherine Eggert provided a useful insight into the way Spenser utilizes his source material, Plutarch's "Of Isis and Osiris": "Unable to find Osiris's penis, Plutarch's Isis replaces it with a consecrated replica; and so too does Britomart reerect her husband's phallic power" (41). Artegall's power is also a "replica," ultimately exposed as false when the knight is forced to answer the call of his sovereign Faerie Queene:

He through occasion called was away,
 To Faerie Court, that of necessity
 His course of Iustice he was forst to stay [...]. (5.12.27)

Freed from Radigund, ruler of Radigone, and separated from the woman destined to forcibly subdue him prior to conceiving their child, Artegall still finds himself subject to the rule of a woman.

Britomart's failure to excise female authority and make herself safe and manageable for Artegall reveals the failure of Spenser's project to eliminate the threat of female contamination and female authority through the juxtaposition of opposing versions of mothers. In Book 1, the difference between the figures of Error and

Charissa, supposedly representing opposite views of maternity, eroded through the interpolation of Duessa, whose grotesque body threatened to uncover hidden contamination within Charissa's. Maternity could only be made safe by being erased completely in the indefinitely deferred union of Redcrosse and the ethereal Una. The narrative of Britomart exposed the political dangers of maternity. The solution offered to the tensions created by maternal authority was to cede that authority to men, as witnessed in Cymoent's "giving" Florimell to her son and Britomart's promoting Artegall to ruler over a land of Amazon. However, the ultimate authority of the Faerie Queene, the unseen analogue for Elizabeth's political self, reveals that solution to be insufficient, as the original authority still rests with the mother.

The next chapter will close the discussion of Spenser by examining the absence and presence of paternal figures in The Faerie Queene. It will focus on Spenser's most ambitious attempt to eradicate female power: the recreation of a powerful father to fill the absence caused by an unwed female ruling in a patriarchal society.

CHAPTER IV

SPENSER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ALLEGORY

As previous chapters have discussed, issues of family recur throughout Spenser's The Faerie Queene. Spenser populated his land of Faery with numerous siblings, mothers, and children, and, as this study has shown, mothers in particular have played an important role specifically through their maternal power. As such, his poem reflected and shaped the world in which he lived, a world where a single female, sometimes characterized as a mother, ruled a society used to a patriarchal authority figure, a king. Spenser represented the absence of a king in England with an absence in the family: The Faerie Queene contains few fathers. Those fathers who do appear within the poem are usually of minimal importance or seen only briefly. Una's parents are imprisoned "off-screen" for most of Book 1, and her father makes only a brief appearance in canto 12. Caelia, of the House of Holinesse, has three daughters, but their father is not named, and the father of her daughter Charissa's many children is only mentioned in passing and never seen (10.4). In Book 2, Guyon discovers Amavia and her child Ruddymane. The father, Mordant, was absent at the time of Ruddymane's birth, and has already died before Guyon's arrival (1.53). The madman Furor has a mother, the hag Occasion, but again no father is mentioned (4.10). In Book 3, Britomart encounters the six brothers of Castle Iloyeous, all of whom are "borne of one parent," though whether it was a father or mother

is left unsaid (1.44). Britomart herself has abandoned her father -- who is never an explicit part of the narrative -- choosing instead the maternal Glauce as her guide. Belphoebe and her sister Amoret were conceived without a father by the "play" of the sunlight upon their mother's womb (6.7). Even the paragon of Knighthood, Prince Arthur, remains fatherless. In Book 2, he reads the history of his ancestry, and as he reads mention of his father "Vther Pendragon," the page "abruptly it did end, / [...] As if the rest some wicked hand did rend," separating Arthur from knowledge his family and lineage, and specifically, from knowing his own father (10.68). Arthur's own quest to find Gloriana similarly ends incomplete in The Faerie Queene, as he never locates Gloriana and remains only potentially a father.

The Problem of the Absent Father

Political theory in Elizabethan times held the patriarchal family as the model and building block of the commonwealth at large. The familial structure, with the father at the top of the hierarchy, "was to reproduce in miniature the Tudor body politic" (Bernthal 44). The theorists of the time "described the king as a father, and located the origins of political power within the family" (Amussen 197). Thus, the families of The Faerie Queene, without fathers, suggest a political order without a king. However, the land of Faery, like its real-world analogue England, did possess a ruler, the queen Gloriana, who according to Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh" represented the English monarch Elizabeth (33-35). The cultural fears of corruption and emasculation associated with motherhood made the rule of a queen dangerous to some, so various parties in the political realm attempted to reconcile the fact of a queen regnant with patriarchal attitudes. Parliament

attempted one method of reconciliation in 1553 by legislating the legitimacy of a queen regnant during the reign of Mary, an act that then applied to her sister and successor Elizabeth (Levine 109). Although in one sense, the law merely "confirmed" the reality of Mary's (and subsequently Elizabeth's) authority as equal to that of a man, in another the law rewrote the gender of the monarch; in Mortimer Levine's opinion it asserted that "Mary and Elizabeth were legally kings, that is, males, for the purpose of ruling" (110). However, such legalistic claims were hardly satisfactory, as attested by the complaints of writers such as John Knox, who outright rejected the notion of a female monarch. Even defenders of the rule of women like John Aylmer could not ignore the monarch's gender and needed somehow to defuse the issue in their arguments, as Aylmer did by suggesting that it was not the queen but her male advisors who truly ruled.

As a poet, Spenser did not possess the luxury of governmental fiats, so he employed allegory and narrative in his attempt to reconcile the disjunction between family and politics. Power wielded by mothers in The Faerie Queene threatened masculinity both physically and politically, and Spenser's attempts to fashion positive mothers, uncorrupted and under the control of men, were largely unsuccessful. The agency involved in the ceding of power always rested with the female, and Gloriana's recall of Artegall at the end of Book 5 reveals that any male authority in a queen's domain was essentially fictional. In order to counter the threat of maternal authority, Spenser would have to construct an alternative figure of power, one who filled the empty space at the top of the patriarchal family. To do so, Spenser substituted other figures representative of paternal authority to assume the power of the powerful matriarchs in the poem. Most of the substitute fathers appear only briefly in the narrative, but the Palmer of

Book 2 functions as Spenser's most sustained attempt to create a powerful figure of fatherly authority.

Minor Patriarchs: Contemplation and Bruin

At the end of his long education in the House of Holinesse, Redcrosse Knight encounters the first of Spenser's new "fathers," the hermit Contemplation. The hermit functions as a father to Redcrosse by naming him, by granting him knowledge of his lineage, and by setting him forth to fulfill his destiny. According to Gouge, the responsibility for naming a child was the father's, usually taking place at the time of baptism, a ritual which was also to be organized and arranged by the father (519, 522). Until he meets Contemplation, Redcrosse is known only by the markings on his armor, and Spenser describes him in the "Letter to Raleigh" as "a tall clownishe younge man" (53), indicating a rustic upbringing. Contemplation, however, calls him by his "true" name: "thou Saint *George* shalt called bee, / *Saint George* of mery England" (1.10.61; emphasis original). In doing so, the old man also reveals the knight's heritage. Redcrosse is not a lowly farmer born in Faery land; instead he "springst from ancient race / Of *Saxon* kinges [...] in *Britans* land" (65; emphasis original).

Through Contemplation, Redcrosse connects to his family history, the "lineage which provided a man of the upper classes in a traditional society with his identity" (Stone 29). In a sense, Contemplation has granted the knight his inheritance, placed him in the line of kings whose authority he could normally expect one day to receive. Contemplation's prophecy, though, makes no mention of Redcrosse becoming a king or continuing his royal line. As discussed above, the old man leaves out any mention of

marriage to Una, instead predicting a "pilgrimage / To yonder same *Hierusalem*" (1.10.61; emphasis original). Eliding matrimony was a way of avoiding the corruption of the maternal body, but at the same time Contemplation has bequeathed to Redcrosse a static, un-kingly life. Contemplation may be able to grant Redcrosse cleansing "from guilt of bloody field" (60), but neither the old man nor his erstwhile son Redcrosse will ultimately dwell in the public world or hold the power held by Gloriana, Elizabeth, or any of the other powerful matriarchs, including Una, Redcrosse's supposed future wife and the inheritor of Eden. Contemplation's prophecy allows Redcrosse to escape the contamination of the mother and grants him a life of religious and spiritual glory. Yet at the same time, Redcrosse's future is one in which he will never ever achieve political power.

Joanne Craig notes another attempt to replace maternal power with paternal power in Book 6. In the story of Matilde and Bruin, Craig finds Spenser indulging in a complex fantasy of parthenogenesis in which maternal childbirth is displaced. The two lovers, Calepine and Serena, are separated when Calepine departs to chase "A cruell Beare, the which an infant bore / Betwixt his bloodie iawes, besprinckled all with gore" (6.4.17). He then discovers Matilde, who laments her inability to bear a child to inherit her husband Sir Bruin's lands. Calepine delivers the child to Matilde who "bore it thence" (37) to her husband, whom "She made [...] thinke it surely was his owne" (38). Craig dissects this complex give-and-take to point out how it attempts to hide the mother's role in childbirth and replace it with fatherly creation. Calepine's discovery of the child "coincides neatly with his loss of Serena" (Craig 24). The bear's mouth also recalls the threat of maternal engulfment discussed earlier in Hamlet and Gaping Gulf: "Gaping full

wyde, [the bear] did thinke without remorse / [...] to deuoure [Calepine's] corse" (6.4.20). Craig describes the animal's maw as a "monstrous vagina dentata" (24). After rescuing the child, Calepine becomes "Much [...] encombred" (6.4.25), as though he is prepared to give birth to the infant. Finally, the name of the child's new father, Bruin, "which means 'bear,'" associates him directly with the narrative of the baby's origin" (Craig 24). Despite the shell game played with the child's origins, the scenario's very complexity works against any intent to displace female origins. While the name "Bruin" links the new father to the discovery of the child, it also recalls the genital-mouth of the bear, confusing rather than clarifying the child's paternity. Craig also notes that the argument to canto 5 calls Serena "Matilda," a narrative slip implying that "the baby [was] Serena's and had been hers all along" (24). The maternity that Calepine, and Spenser, tries to replace with a new father returns unbidden through the poem's own internal logic.

The Palmer as Superego

Apart from these two minor examples, Spenser's most ambitious attempt to create a substitute "father" is the creation of the Palmer in Book 2. The Palmer exists not only as a figure of external patriarchal authority, but also as a manifestation of the internal psychological effect of the patriarch. The application of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to Book 2 reveals the Palmer's patriarchal nature and demonstrates the Palmer's inability to perform as an effective figure of paternal authority. In this reading, Book 2 functions as a record of Guyon's psychological development, a mental allegory that reflects Tudor anxieties about the absence of a strong political patriarch and the presence of a maternal figure of authority, Queen Elizabeth I.

Some critics have already examined the Palmer in psychological terms, specifically noting his connection to morality. Judith Anderson discussed Book 2 as the narrative depiction of a fragmented human mind. While Guyon is the central character, other facets of his psyche exist allegorically as independent physical beings, with the Palmer chief in importance among them (161). She defines the Palmer as "reason," an element of contemporary faculty psychology with which Spenser would have been familiar, and examined the interactions of two characters (160). The old man repeatedly acts in response to or as a result of Guyon's deeds. His pronouncements stem not from any knowledge of his own but from interpretation of Guyon's actions. In the initial contact with the Redcrosse Knight, Guyon's recognizes his fellow knight and avoids combat. The Palmer, as reason, confirms Guyon's belated recognition (162). Likewise, the Palmer does not recognize Occasion and Furor until Guyon interacts with them. He depends on the knight's experiences, for which he constructs explanations (163).

Other critics define various aspects of Guyon's psyche that the Palmer personifies. Merritt Hughes notes the Elizabethan tradition, developed from medieval morality plays, of portraying the conscience as a "personal essence, a spirit articulate and sometimes incorporate" (152). The Palmer is one such incarnation, a representation of Guyon's morality (157). The human mind is imperfect and clouded by passions that oppose the conscience, and these passions are manifested in Spenser's poem as well in the form of characters such as Cymochles and Pyrochles (160). Maurice Evans elaborated on Spenser's emphasis on the Palmer as a moral guide, and defined him as "reason in its special capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, [...] that knowledge which comes from an authentic glimpse of the divine truths" (216).

Similarly, in twentieth-century psychology the father plays a role specifically connected to morality. According to Freud, the father becomes the key figure in the establishment of morality within the child through the drama of the Oedipus complex. The child, specifically the male child in Freud's theory, "represses his incestuous desire" and "submits to the father" in a process which results in the emergence into manhood and the larger framework of society (Eagleton 134). At this moment of submission, Freud locates the "beginnings of morality, conscience, law and all forms of social and religious authority," authority which is concentrated in the superego (136). The superego is, in fact, the voice of the father, internalized by a child envious of the authority and power the father represents (Church 213, 217).

The mental conflicts narrated throughout Book 2 represent this process of internalization. The desires manifested in the child's personality clash with the edicts of the internalized father's personality, as in the case of the Oedipal desire of the son and the father's taboo on incest. The initial conflicts create the classic three-tiered structure of id, ego, and superego. The id, or unconscious, is the realm of desires repressed in the clash of personalities, while the superego, a second order of desires associated with power and authority, remains apart from the ego or its consciousness. This second order becomes the voice of morality, the sense of right and wrong, the guide for the child's ego (Church 213-216). In this reading, the Palmer, already established as both a psychological entity and moral guide by other critics, functions specifically as Guyon's superego, the internalized voice of the father, manifested as a character in the narrative.

Although no biological link is implied, a relationship of fatherly guidance clearly exists between Guyon and the Palmer. Their relationship resembles that between master

and apprentice, a legal relationship that Craig Bernthal notes carried strong filial connotations in Tudor England as the master functioned as a substitute patriarch for the apprentice (45). Their introduction in the narrative establishes the authoritative position of the Palmer by subverting the expected relationship of knight and servant. Examine the contrasting arrival of Britomart and Glauce in Book 3, in which the latter is described as "an aged Squire" (1.4). The title declares Glauce the servant of, and lesser in rank than, Britomart. In contrast, Guyon is "als accompanyd" by the Palmer, suggesting equality (2.1.7). The narrator then hints that the Palmer may be the superior of the two: "He [The Palmer] seemd to be a sage and sober syre, / And euer with slow pace the knight did lead, / Who taught his trampling steed with equall steps to tread" (7). This grammatically ambiguous phrase indicates Guyon's skill with his horse (7.8-9n), but also suggests that the Palmer "leads" the group. A few stanzas later, the Palmer is explicitly named Guyon's "aged Guide," a term used repeatedly to describe him (31). Throughout Book 2, the Palmer's numerous instructions to and reprimands of Guyon demonstrate both his moral guidance of and fatherly authority over the knight.

The supposition that the Palmer represents Guyon's superego, an incarnated voice of the father's authority, becomes more interesting and complex when one considers notions of subjectivity. According to Freud, one must erect boundaries between the self and external objects in order to attain status as an individual (Church 212). These boundaries are not absolute, and the process of defining oneself as an individual is "complicated and ongoing," a series of interactions, beginning with the absorption of the father's personality into the superego, in which the individual incorporates and repulses the perceived characteristics of various objects and people (Church 213). Lacan's concept

of "the mirror stage" complicates the Freudian idea of the superego and boundaries between self and other. In his explanation of the "mirror stage" Lacan develops the theory that the unified self perceived by the individual as its own identity is false, an unachievable singular being (4-5). The initial identification of the child with its reflection is an attempt "to establish a relationship between an organism and its reality," a relationship which will always be disharmonious to a certain extent because of the "primordial Discord" inherent in human beings because of a "*prematurity of birth*" (6; emphasis original). The mirror stage does not simply end after the child has recognized his or her reflection, nor must the mirror be literal; it may be the figure of the mother or father that the child recognizes as somehow "like" itself. The mirror stage continues throughout the child's life. The "I" formed at the first reflection will always be "mediated by the other's desire"; that is, the "I" will continue to identify with others, adopting some traits it sees reflected back and rejecting others, always seeking to fulfill the unity of the other it witnessed in the "mirror" (7). Because of this constant process of integration and repulsion of personalities, underneath the illusion of a single entity the unconscious always remains an aggregate of heterogeneous identities, amassed from various sources, and competing for dominance (Payne 31).

Still, the Palmer seems indeterminate in some way. He is never named, nor is it clear exactly why he serves as Guyon's guide. The fact that he is not the actual father of Guyon would seem to undermine any conception of him as superego, a psychological construct Freud attached specifically to the father (or his proxy). At this point Lacan's elaboration of Freudian theory makes another impact on the current reading. While Freud defined the Oedipus complex as a literal event, Lacan used it as a metaphor. The

authority of the father represents the authority of society as a whole. The Palmer functions not as the literal father, but as the "law of the father," the abstraction of what the father signifies (Lacan 66). He is an embodiment of the order and law within which Guyon exists, and as such exercises the power of law upon the knight.

The application of contemporary psychoanalytic theory to The Faerie Queene might appear ahistorical. However, modern theories of the mind do not obscure the psychological contexts in which the poem was written, but rather allow the twentieth- and twenty-first-century reader to understand early modern psychology in modern terms. As the theoretical summaries provided above show, Freud's and Lacan's theories on the formation of the self depict a constant balancing wherein the individual alternates between accepting and rejecting the characteristics of others in the outside world. Similarly, the cardinal virtue of Book 2, temperance, can be defined according to early modern thought as "a physiological and psychological state achieved through proper humoral balance" (Schoenfeldt 43). The primary difference between early modern psychology, as allegorized in Spenser's poem, and Freudian and Lacanian psychologies is that the latter focus on the mind, while the former concerns itself with "the relationship between physiology and morality, between matters of the body and conditions of the spirit" (40-41). What occurs only in the mind according to present-day theories occurs in both the flesh and the spirit according to discourses of Spenser's time. In addition, like Lacan's analogy between the father's authority and society's authority, individual temperance has repercussions in the political realm as well. Through his analysis of Thomas Wright, author of an early modern treatise on the mind, Schoenfeldt concludes that "self-rule at once mimics and epitomizes the rule of kingdoms" (49). The struggles of

the Palmer to impose order on Guyon reflect the difficulties of patriarchal authority to impose order upon the commonwealth, and as this chapter shall demonstrate, these difficulties are directly related to the exercise of maternal power.

Guyon in the Mirror Stage

The events of Book 2 follow Guyon through a series of identifications like those that occur during the mirror stage over which the Palmer attempts to assert his own dominance as the patriarchal superego, the law of the father. Because of the interconnectedness of body and mind, these identifications play out not just in Guyon's psyche but in his flesh as well. Spenser allegorizes the apparent unity of Guyon's identity in a description of his physical appearance: "A goodly knight, all armd in harnesse meete,/ That from his head no place appeared to his feet" (5.8-9). His armor bespeaks a unitary, stable being, a person whose identity is rigidly separated from the outside world by a sturdy protective shell. However, Lacan specifically describes the "imago," or imaginary self-perception, of the individual first formed during the mirror stage as "donned armor" that the ego creates in an attempt both to distinguish itself from others and to contain the discordant drives of the id (6). Similarly, the singularity and unity of self attested to by Guyon's armor is a deceptive image. The balance that characterizes Guyon's identity as Knight of Temperance must be carefully maintained, and Spenser often dramatizes the physiological side of this maintenance through what Michael Schoenfeldt calls "the decidedly intemperate act of fighting" (43).

The stability of Guyon's armored identity comes into question during Guyon's first major encounter. The patriarchal authority of the Palmer is immediately threatened

when Guyon is tricked by Archimago and follows his lead into conflict with the Redcrosse Knight. This event demonstrates from the very start not only Guyon's need for guidance, but the Palmer's inability to fully maintain control over the knight as father-figure and guide. On the psychological level, the knight has allowed Archimago's influence to alter his identity, and this change manifests itself in Guyon's physical reaction of violence towards Redcrosse. Guyon's subsequent recognition of Redcrosse is the first of many identifications he makes with others, the first event in his dramatized mirror stage. As Judith Anderson points out, Book 1 is about unity. Redcrosse is the Knight of Holiness/wholeness (160). At the moment of recognition, Guyon looks into this "mirror" and sees the fictitious unified identity reflected back as Redcrosse, an identity that he strives to emulate. The Palmer makes this identification explicit: "where ye [Redcrosse] haue left your marke, / [we] Must now anew begin, like race to ronne" (2.1.32). This moment is the starting point within the narrative for Guyon's attempted journey to establish his identity as Knight of Temperance, a journey that becomes increasingly more difficult as the Palmer is unable to assert successfully his authority as patriarch.

Guyon's next encounter is with Sansloy and Sir Huddibras. Entering Castle Medina, he sees them fighting, at which sight he "began / With goodly meanes to pacifie [them], well as he can" (2.21). He tries to quell their passions and exert the force of temperance over them, mimicking the role of the Palmer. Instead, he is drawn into their conflict (22-26). Without the direct intervention of his guide, he is unable to maintain his separate identity as the Knight of Temperance: "Straunge sort of fight, three valiaunt knights to see / Three combates *ioine in one*" (26; emphasis added). Guyon temporarily

assumes the violent aspects of the identities of Sansloy and Huddibras, mirroring their actions and internalizing their personalities as the three become a single entity through their violence. In another sign of the Palmer's ineffectiveness as patriarchal authority, he makes no attempt to intervene on Guyon's behalf. Instead, Medina establishes her moral restraint over the violent passions of the three combatants. She represents an alternative parental authority to the Palmer, the authority of the matriarch. She successfully urges them "by the womb, which them had born" to come to a peaceful agreement (27.5). The Palmer's authority over Guyon is temporarily usurped by Medina, the first of several figures of maternal power that Guyon and the Palmer encounter.

While it may seem that temperance, no matter who it is established by, is still temperance, Spenser seems unsatisfied with the situation. He insists on commenting on the peace established between the three knights, and the poem makes clear that it is not a truly effective agreement. At the feast, Medina's two sisters "*fained* cheare" (34.3; emphasis added). Nor do the former combatants seem happy. Huddibras behaves "more like a Malecontent" as he watches Sansloy and Perissa's amorous play (37.6). The reader, therefore, has little reason to believe that Medina's agreement will last. Spenser here reveals a discomfort with the idea of female authority, characterized first through Medina as matriarchal authority. Her imperfect application of order signals the inability of motherly power fully to rule the self, and by extension, to rule a kingdom. This feeling of discomfort recurs throughout Book 2 as Guyon and the Palmer face and defeat other powerful mothers, but it becomes even more critical as maternal power becomes a force not only unable to order society but also one actively working against temperate rule.

Binding Mothers

In Canto 4 Guyon encounters a violent madman and a hag abusing a young man. As at Medina's castle, Guyon attempts, initially without the help of the Palmer, to act as an enforcer of Temperance, but he is drawn into the conflict that he seeks to quell. As he struggles with the madman, the knight begins to assume the qualities of his foe, and his separate identity begins to dissolve. The madman's rage is so wild that "oft himselfe he chaunst to hurt vnwares" (4.7.6). When Guyon becomes "enfierced" from the conflict, like his opponent he injures only himself: "To ouerthrow him strongly did assay, / But ouerthrew him selfe vnwares" (8.8-9). Falling prey to rage, Guyon seems on the verge of abandoning his identity as Knight of Temperance completely as he draws his sword and prepares to act because of the same wild anger as his assailant. His emotions have directly affected his behavior, causing him to act in the manner of his opponent. At this moment, the Palmer successfully intervenes in his role of patriarchal authority. He recognizes the madman as Furor, a personification of the irascible passions, and the hag as Furor's mother Occasion (Anderson 165). The Palmer advises Guyon to bind the mother, identifying Occasion as the cause of Furor's senseless rage:

First her restraine from her reprochfull blame,
 And euill meanes, with which she doth enrage
 Her frantick sonne, and kindles his corage,
 Then *when she is withdrawne, or strong withstood,*
 It's eath his ydle fury to aswage [...]. (2.4.11; emphasis added)

Unlike the encounter at Castle Medina, the Palmer here asserts his power against the threat of the matriarchal figure's authority. In fact, curbing her power is necessary in

order to control Furor who had threatened to overtake Guyon. The Palmer describes the rule of the "affections" through political metaphor, noting their negative effect: "Strong warres they make, and cruell batty bend / Gainst fort of Reason, it to ouerthrow" (34). To quote Schoenfeldt again, "self-rule at once mimics and epitomizes the rule of kingdoms" (49); the rule of a mother is perceived as particularly dangerous because of cultural fears about the natural incontinence of the female body and mind. In contrast to his prior inaction in the face of maternal power, the Palmer from this point forward seeks to enact his patriarchal role by negating the authority of the matriarch whenever possible.

The efficacy of the Palmer's strategy to bind this dangerous mother is witnessed in Guyon's subsequent battle with Pyrochles, another incarnation of rage, in Canto 5. Guyon remains "wary wise," controlling his own violence without the help of the Palmer, "Tempring the passion with aduizement slow" (5.13). Without the threat of Occasion's corrupting maternal influence, Guyon defeats Pyrochles and avoids succumbing to his fury. But even here, the Palmer must eventually intervene. Although victorious, Guyon bows to the will of Pyrochles, allowing his defeated foe to free Occasion and Furor. Even in his moment of apparent triumph, Guyon is pulled in differing directions by the will of the Palmer to bind Occasion and the desire of Pyrochles to free her. When he fulfills the desires of Pyrochles rather than adhering to the dictates of the Palmer, Pyrochles tellingly suffers for releasing the dangerous matriarch, who directs the rage of Furor on her savior: "Him [Furor] all that while *Occasion* did prouoke / Against *Pyrhochles*" (21; emphasis original). The contrast seems obvious: Guyon, who had followed the dictates of his patriarchal guide, defeats the incarnations of violent passion; Pyrochles chose instead to

ally himself with the maternal Occasion, and became her victim. Speaking in paternal tones, the Palmer explains the justice of the situation to Guyon:

Deare sonne, thy causelesse ruth repress,
 Ne let thy stout hart melt in pittie vayne:
 He that his sorow sought through wilfulnesse,
 And his foe fettred would release agayne,
 Deserues to taste his follies fruit, repented payne. (24)

Yet that Guyon allowed his foe to free Occasion suggests the looming danger of the matriarch to those like Pyrochles who are under her governance, a danger that the Palmer's paternal authority cannot fully eradicate.

In canto 6, Guyon finds himself separated from his Palmer and faces another female figure, Phaedria. Her concupiscent behavior and fertile, flowery island represent a different threat than Occasion's: dissolution of identity through pleasure, not rage. The text does not describe Phaedria specifically as maternal, but she resembles other mothers in the poem through certain characteristics. Her lush island possesses the fecundity of Mother Earth, and her seductiveness foreshadows the sexualized maternity of Acrasia, to be discussed later in the chapter. In addition, the way she exercises control over Cymochles and Guyon, as I shall discuss momentarily, echoes the appeal to maternal authority made by Medina early in Book 2.

Before Guyon meets Phaedria, the narrative follows Cymochles as he loses himself in her "false delights" and "pleasures vayn" (14). The poet describes Phaedria in terms indicating a lack of order: she engages in "loose dalliaunce" (8) and Cymochles lays "his head disarmd / In her loose lap" (14). Where Occasion and Furor had violently

attacked the temperate body and mind, Phaedria erodes it through a return to the fertility of the maternal body that unmans Cymochles and destroys his memory or "souenaunce" (8). After disarming Cymochles, Phaedria "with liquors strong his eies did steepe, / That nothing should him hastily awake" (18), placing him in a literal version of Marinell's state of arrested development discussed in Chapter III.

Unlike Cymochles, Guyon at first rejects Phaedria's advances: "Her dalliance he despisd, and follies did forsake" (2.6.21). However, upon encountering Cymochles and engaging him in battle, Guyon finds his identity once again threatened. A possessive rage for Phaedria consumes Cymochles, and he challenges Guyon for her: "soone thy selfe prepaire / To batteile, if thouh meane her loue to gayn" (28). Although he apparently had no desire for Phaedria before, by battling with Cymochles Guyon tacitly accepts and imitates his foe's motivation. During combat, Guyon's identity begins to mimic his opponents. The indefinite use of the pronouns "he" and "him" in stanza 29 makes it impossible to tell the difference between the two. Their battle is described as series of complimentary actions stressing the similarities between the combatants in their moment of anger as each to the other "with equall valed counteruayld" (29).

In a scene remarkably similar to Medina's intervention in canto 2, Phaedria steps "atweene" the combatants and stops the battle. While Medina had appealed to Guyon, Sansloy and Huddibras' respect for their matriarchs, Phaedria appeals to these two combatants' desire for her: "sith for me ye fight, to me this grace / Both yield, to stay your deadly stryfe a space" (33). Again, though he had expressed no desire for her, Guyon accepts her terms by relenting in combat. Without his Palmer, Guyon has allowed Cymochles and Phaedria to define him by attributing lustful motivation to his actions. In

addition, Phaedria and Medina, who possess similar maternal qualities, appeal to different emotions; the latter appeals to respect for maternal authority, while the former appeals to sexual desire. Phaedria's success suggests the triumph of oedipal desire -- the erotic longing Freud theorized of the son for the mother (Freud 256) -- over Guyon and Cymochles. The fact that Guyon ceases his battle does not mean that he has mastered his passions, but merely that he moves from one desire to another. His irascible impulse, exhibited in his combat with Cymochles, has been transformed by his concupiscible, oedipal impulse to a sexual desire, embodied in Cymochles. This transformation exemplifies Freud's concept of the repression and substitution of desires. When one desire is seen as improper or its object deemed unattainable, the mind displaces it into a different desire, directed towards a different object (Church 210). Of course, the key agent of this repression of the original longing is usually the second order of desires, the superego, but Guyon's superego, the Palmer, is absent in this scene. Instead, Phaedria acts as the agent of transformative change. Rather than restraining Guyon's intemperate impulses, as the Palmer had in the conflict with Furor and Occasion, Phaedria has redirected and perhaps even intensified them.

Mammon the False Patriarch

Cut off from his superego, his "stedfast starre" (2.7.1) Guyon has only "his own virtues" (2) to resist the passions he will now confront. With the paternal authority exemplified by the Palmer gone and no force to repress them, these impulses, stirred by Phaedria, rise up from the physical underworld of The Faerie Queene in the form of the false patriarch Mammon. Guyon ventures down into Mammon's house "through the

hollow grownd" (20), the physical descent paralleling his mental journey into the deepest levels of the psyche, his unconscious. First he confronts a series of violent, irascible emotions, allegorized as Revenge, Despight, and Hate. Guyon has already faced these emotions in his conflicts with Furor and Pyrochles, but they continue to exist hidden under the surface, just as Occasion, the mother who urged on the rage of Furor, roams free on the surface. Because Guyon passes by them without being overtaken, the reader may conclude that the knight has successfully internalized the Palmer's lesson from the earlier conflict with Pyrochles and can now successfully manage his violent impulses. However, Guyon seems less able to manage his concupiscent desires. As Mammon tempts Guyon first with wealth then with his own daughter, an "vgly feend" follows Guyon, waiting for "couetous hand, or lustfull eye" to reach for one of the temptations so he may "rend [him] in peeces with his rauenous pawes" (26-27). The "feend" embodies the danger Guyon's ego faces should he fulfill his concupiscent desires: such an indulgence would destroy his identity as the Knight of Temperance.

When read psychoanalytically, this description of potential physical mutilation mirrors Lacan's concept of the dismembered psyche. Lacan stated that the unity of the ego, or self, is a "fiction," a façade imposed on the inherently fragmentary unconscious in the process of the mirror stage and its series of identifications (Payne 31). The human is born without mastery over its physical body, and as the ego develops through the mirror stage, the fear of losing control over the self remains repressed but alive in the unconscious, compounded by the strain of competing desires subsumed in the quest for unity (28-29, 32). As Lacan notes, the "fragmented body [...] is regularly manifested in dreams," the site of the Freudian id (6). Guyon may have bested Furor, Pyrochles, and

Cymochles, but the drives they represent remain a threat to his Temperance, the ideal that should give him his identity as knight. Occasion, the matriarch who urged on both Furor and Pyrochles, and Phaedria, the sexualized mother who exercised her erotic power over Cymochles and Guyon, remain free to wreak havoc. The scene in the Cave dramatizes a direct conflict between Guyon and his repressed drives that threaten, in the form of the "feend," to rend him limb from limb, a mutilation of his physical and psychic identity.

Guyon manages to escape without succumbing to Mammon's temptations, but as he leaves the Cave at the close of canto 7, he collapses in a coma-like sleep. The Palmer returns at the beginning of canto 8, but even he is unable to wake Guyon or protect him from the raging passions that return in the forms of Pyrochles and Cymochles. The Palmer is relatively powerless at this moment because Mammon has threatened to undo the distinction between maternal and paternal power. A patriarch in his own right, Mammon is also strongly tied to the maternal power of the earth. The earth, as discussed in the previous chapter, is characterized in The Faerie Queene by mindless fecundity. The villains and monsters that spring from the earth represent baseness and physicality not tempered by rationality or spirituality. Living inside of her, his mining of her riches signifies, in Walter Kendrick's opinion, a turn toward the lowest physical aspects of humanity (541). It also signals a return to the womb and the corrupting aspects of the maternal body as he draws his power from her unthinking fecundity. Mammon even describes himself in terms that recall the free-flowing, uncontrolled female body: "all this worldes good, / [...] Fro me do flow into an ample flood, / And in the hollow earth haue their eternall brood" (2.7.8). Mammon offers power, but he derives his power and wealth

from the maternal earth, and Guyon's acceptance of Mammon's gift would imply a submission to female authority.

Guyon recovers from his sleep only after Arthur arrives and defeats the representatives of intemperate passion, Pyrochles and Cymochles. Whereas Redcrosse was the initial identification of what Guyon should be, Arthur represents a more complete ideal. The Palmer has corrected, restrained, and guided Guyon as his patriarchal superego. Arthur represents the ideal knight under the paternal values of the Palmer. He represents everything Guyon aspires to be, the goal the superego drives him towards (Church 218). He is an alternate figuration of the superego, the ego ideal. In particular, Arthur functions as a focus for cultural desires for a patriarch. In the context of Arthurian legend, he is destined to become king, and in the context of The Faerie Queene, he seeks to wed Gloriana. Theoretically, such a wedding would entail Arthur becoming king of her domain, and as wife she would be subject to his rule, at least according to writers such as John Aylmer. As Gloriana also represents Elizabeth, one can also read this as a covert expression of a desire for mastery over the Queen, a confluence of erotic and patriarchal longing for control over the most powerful female, and mother, in England.

Arthur succeeds in battle against the intemperate impulses where Guyon could not. He slays Cymochles and Pyrochles, and even does so with Guyon's sword. In a remarkable Freudian slip, the text confuses the two Knights, referring to Arthur by Guyon's name in stanza 48, seemingly a sign of wishful thinking on the part of the narrator in identifying Guyon with the superior Arthur. With the defeat of Guyon's chief opponents by the idealized concept of his own personality, Guyon finally awakes to continue his quest, the juxtaposition of the battle and Guyon's awakening suggesting a

causal relationship between the two. One patriarch in the form of the Palmer has protected and guided him through his early trials, and another as the ideal Prince Arthur has subdued his passions. Lacan again proves useful here, noting that "the 'ideal-I' [...] will forever remain irreducible for any single individual" (4). The image of the perfect, unified self inevitably multiplies and can be perceived in numerous ways by any individual. Arthur is another "imago," another vision of the self-as-other that Guyon cannot attain because of the inherently fragmented nature of his ego (7-8). As the final journey to Acrasia's Bowre demonstrates, neither the example of Guyon's ego ideal nor the continued guidance of the Palmer can fully control the heterogeneous impulses within him.

Alma Managed

However, before Guyon travels to Acrasia, he sees one final "imago," one last example of temperance in its ideal form: the Castle of Alma. Whereas the Palmer and Arthur represented temperance under patriarchal authority on an individual level, the Castle presents it on a larger societal scale. The Castle allegorizes the well tempered body and the well tempered mind, ordered to ensure proper nutrition, proper digestion, and proper waste management. Guyon and Arthur are led through the castle on a tour through the bodily functions up to the mind without any disjunction between the physiological and the psychological. As Schoenfeldt notes, "knowledge of physiology is knowledge of psychology," and "the discrimination of noxious from nutritious matter in digestion is a physiological version of the discrimination of good and evil" (52). Both the body and the mind must be managed properly to ensure temperance. Schoenfeldt also notes that the

castle, while probably supposed to represent a masculine body, combines both masculine and feminine traits (57). With the female Alma as its mistress, the castle as a triumph of temperance would seem to belie gender as a determining factor in virtue. However, one must look at who actually does the work of maintaining the castle. The Porter and guards at the mouth-like gate, the steward Diet, the marshall Appetite, the cook Concoction, the clerk Digestion, and the three sages of the mind who sit in the highest levels of the castle: all are men. The nine ladies who wait on Alma represent the "affections or moods" (2.9.35n), and as passions, they are to be ordered in order to maintain temperance of mind. As a model of temperance, the castle exemplifies Aylmer's idea of the English commonwealth; Alma may rule in name, but the wise men of her household provide good government.

Acrasia's Sexual Maternity

In canto 12, Guyon finally travels to Acrasia's Bowre. This canto reads almost like a summary of Guyon's journey through the events of Book 2. The Palmer again acts as guide for the knight through the waters (3). He leads them "in safetie past" the treacherous representations of passion that block their travel (9). He rebukes Phaedria, whom Guyon could not rebuke in canto 6, and restrains Guyon from sympathy with a false maid (16, 28-29). When they finally arrive at the Bowre, Guyon at first, just as in Mammon's cave, overcomes the passions that tempt him. He holds nothing but disdain for those who greet him in the garden, casting aside their proffered gifts (49, 57). As he journeys farther, however, he again starts to succumb to the passions that dwell in the Bowre.

When he views the wrestling maidens, he feels "secret pleasaunce" and is "desirous" of them (65-66). Again, Guyon becomes captivated by the images, and finds the "wanton Maidens" lustfulness answered by his own desires. One of the maidens draws his gaze with her physical display:

And her two lilly paps aloft displayd,
 And all, that might his melting hart entyse
 To her delights, she vnto him bewrayd:

The rest hidd vnderneath, him more desirous made. (66)

Her seductive teasing of Guyon draws his thoughts and his eyes lower, to the site of the female genitalia and the entrance to the womb. The Palmer must reproach Guyon for his "kindled lust" (68) in order to draw him away from their "many sights" (69). The focus of erotic longing on the site of the female body's reproductive organs recalls Phaedria's sexual and maternal control over Cymochles, and it also announces the entrance of Acrasia to the poem, the powerful woman who rules over her realm as sexualized matriarch. The description of Verdant, Acrasia's lover, echoes that of Cymochles: "her louer lose, / Whose sleepe head she in her lap did soft dispose" (76). Spenser focuses on her breasts as a site of feeding, reminding the reader of Errour and Charissa from Book 1:

Her snowy brest was bare to ready spoyle
 Of hungry eies, which n'ote therwith be fild,
 And yet through languour of her late sweet toyle,
 Few drops, more cleare then Nectar, forth distild,
 That like pure Orient perles adowne it trild [...]. (78)

Unlike Errour's breasts, which overfeed her children, or Charissa's, which provide nutritional bounty, Acrasia's breasts arouse only more hunger in her subjects, further subjecting them to her will. Verdant lies, disarmed and unmanned, an infantilized knight under the power of Acrasia, a fate that Guyon just escaped when the Palmer had restrained his lust towards the maidens.

The repression of Guyon's desire by the Palmer transforms the Knight's impulses. Before, the Palmer had guided Guyon away from excesses of sexual or destructive impulses. Now Guyon's lust becomes "wrathfulness," and in a fit of patriarchal rage, the two destroy the feminine Bowre (2.12.83). As in their encounter with Occasion in canto 4, the two cannot eradicate Acrasia, but only repress her. She remains alive, as do all the powerful women of Book 2, "strongly bound / In captiue bandes" (12.82). However, given the fate of most of the evil women thus far in The Faerie Queene, the reader has little reason to believe that Acrasia will remain bound. Duessa, Occasion, and Phaedria all remain free at this point in the narrative; why should Acrasia be bound permanently? Also, the first canto of Book 3 acts as a coda to Guyon's tale, and suggests that Guyon and the Palmer's quest to bind maternal power will remain unfulfilled. Echoing his first conflict in Book 2, Guyon meets and assaults a fellow knight. However this time, he fails to recognize his opponent, and clashes against him in violent combat:

Guyon droue so furious and fell,
 That seemd both shield and plate it would have riu'd;
 Nathelesse it bore his foe not from his sell,
 [.....]
 But *Guyon* selfe, ere well he was aware,

Nigh a speares length behind his crouper fell [...]. (3.1.6; emphasis original)

When referring to Guyon and his foe, the narrative emphasizes the difference between the two; for once in combat Guyon does not engage in some form of mirrored identification. His foe turns out to be Britomart, who, as described in the previous chapter, functions as a symbol of powerful maternity. Guyon cannot "identify" with her in the Lacanian sense because she possesses power that he cannot control. The Palmer notes "The secrete vertue of [her] weapon keene, / That mortall puissaunce mote not withstond" (10). For the first time since the encounter with Medina, Guyon faces a strong (potential) mother and the Palmer does not advise him to fight or contain her. Instead "he him discourseled, / From prosecuting his reuenging rage" (11). When faced with a mother that they cannot bind, the Palmer's patriarchal power is exposed as unable to displace matriarchy.

Because his personal family lineage remains unknown, Guyon functions less as an individual than as an allegorical representation of the universal, or more specifically, Elizabethan man. In canto 10, Arthur reads a detailed history of his own family lineage, while Guyon reads a broad history of his Elfin kingdom told up through the reign of Gloriana. The former, though incomplete, culminates in Arthur, while the latter ends not with the birth of Guyon but of Gloriana. It is a history more political than personal. The Palmer's struggle to establish patriarchal authority over Guyon exists as more than just a personal psychological drama. It extends into the realm of Faery, the political realm of Elizabeth. Without a strong father, Guyon, the Elizabethan man, is instead menaced by powerful mothers. Book 2 narrates the perceived dangers of feminine rule, realized most fully in the moral degradation of men within Acrasia's Bowre. The violence that the

Palmer repeatedly directs towards women represents the anxiety of a patriarchal society under feminine rule that Guyon cannot escape, despite the binding of Acrasia. Lacan and Freud tell us that the instability of the ego is an inescapable fact of human psychology, but for the Knight of Temperance it is also a fact of politics. He struggles between extremes and ultimately fails to uphold his ideal of Temperance when he violently displaces lust because his superego, the patriarch, the law of the father, cannot fully exercise its power in a world filled with strong matriarchs such as Medina, Occasion, Acrasia, and, ultimately, Gloriana.

In the final chapter, I will explore how Elizabethan and Stuart politics reflected Spenser's attempt to reinstate patriarchal power. Through rumor, political writing, and drama, late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England saw an increase in patriarchalist sentiment. James I and Shakespeare both made their own attempts to fashion fathers to take the place of the deceased Mother Elizabeth, continuing a project that Spenser had begun in his epic. However, as a brief examination of Milton will show, maternity remained among the discourses of power, and despite the cultural anxieties witnessed so far, mothers, and Elizabeth, retained positive connotations for their children and subjects.

CHAPTER V

RETURN OF THE KING

Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene, although dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, reflected early modern England's discomfort under the rule of a powerful female. By 1590 Elizabeth was past her childbearing years, but the maternal metaphor for the Queen's rule, used by many including the Queen herself, continued to resonate with the population. The concept of motherhood was infused with concepts from discourses on morality, sexuality, and physiology. Although the motherhood image allowed Elizabeth to normalize her rule by comparing herself to the most acceptable position of authority for a woman, it also made her vulnerable to cultural fears of the open female body and emasculation by an overbearing matriarch. In addition to arousing fears to the extent that she was considered maternal, Elizabeth also drew criticism to the extent that she was not truly maternal. Elizabeth's advanced age and virginity meant that she had failed in the primary role of a mother: to provide children. With no heir to the throne, England was threatened with specters of religious and political violence upon Elizabeth's death. Spenser's poem allowed him to comment covertly on Elizabeth through his female characters. He attempted to reconcile negative and positive images of the maternal body, in effect, to purify Elizabeth as a mother, and at the same time to limit and make safe her female authority. At the same time, Spenser's epic attempted to fashion new figures of

patriarchal authority to displace Elizabeth and arrogate her royal power. In doing so, Spenser not only reflected the cultural fear of an England without a king, but anticipated a strategic movement that others in the political and literary fields would follow. The concluding pages that follow suggest areas, beyond the breadth of this study, fit for exploring the ways that cultural desires for a patriarchal ruler mimicked Spenser's project of recreating paternal authority.

Rumors of a Father

The desire for a king appeared among other places in the arena of public rumor. In times of doubt regarding succession or the legitimacy of the monarch, rumors of "true" kings in hiding and imposters claiming title to the throne often proliferated throughout England. Carole Levin claimed that "[g]iven sixteenth-century beliefs in the sanctity of the king, the fact of a queen regnant was in itself enough" to cause widespread insecurity about the stability of the throne that led to an upsurge in rumors about lost kings and secret heirs (Heart 93). Levin discussed one such rumor concerning Edward VI, deceased younger brother to Elizabeth and her sister Mary. During their reigns, both sisters were heavily pressured by Parliament to provide an heir to the throne. Mary tried and failed, while Elizabeth "refused even to attempt to accomplish the most obvious function of a queen, that of bearing an heir" (93). Elizabeth also refused to name a successor until, as some stories claim, the last days of her life.

During Mary's reign, and in the late years of Elizabeth's, rumors began to circulate that Edward VI had survived and was waiting to reclaim the throne. According to Levin, rumors about Edward that spread during Mary's reign were related primarily to religious

insecurities. When news of her engagement to Philip of Spain began to circulate by November 1553, fears of Catholic repression of Protestantism led to the spread of wishful rumors that Edward still lived (Heart 96). Levin identified these rumors as one sign of a loss of confidence in Mary's rule that included anti-Marian pamphlets, ballads, and mob violence against Catholic preachers (97). Rumormongers like Robert Tayler, Edmonde Cole, and Thomas Wood were brought before the Privy Council and could be ordered to pay fines, exiled, or even imprisoned for spreading rumors about Edward's return. Such punishment was an attempt by the government to limit the spread of a belief that was "a fundamental attack on Mary's legitimacy. If Edward were still alive, she had no business claiming to be queen" (97).

After the initial outbreak of discontent over Mary's Spanish husband, the rumors died down for about a year, possibly due in part to the strict punishments (Heart 97-98). However, around May 1555 two men in Essex were arrested for gossiping about Edward's survival, and a young man named Edward Featherstone was imprisoned and later banished from London for claiming to be Edward. According to Levin, the reason for this new spate of rumor mongering was the revelation that Mary was not pregnant, as had been supposed (98). The rumors spread quickly, and in early 1556 Featherstone gathered supporters and distributed pamphlets in and around London urging a public show of support for "King Edward" against the usurping Mary (99). Mary and her supporters had little patience for this second public disturbance by Featherstone, and he was arrested and on March 13 executed for sedition (100).

Levin proposed that Mary's failed maternity directly affected her perceived legitimacy as a monarch and led to the rumors about Edward and pretensions of the

imposter Featherstone. While motherhood was potentially threatening for a variety of psychological and physiological reasons that have been discussed in earlier chapters, it was also necessary for the stability of the commonwealth: a queen was needed in order to produce a king. Certainly religion played a large role in public dissatisfaction with Mary; many no doubt would have preferred a Protestant ruler to a Catholic queen and her Spanish consort. Perhaps just as important, however, was Mary's failure to provide an heir, a failure that threatened the continuity of the English monarchy. Although Elizabeth had been restored to the succession by the 1543 Act of Parliament, her strained relationship and religious differences with Mary I made her own accession to the throne uncertain. If Mary had a male heir, succession of the Tudor line would be more secure. No wonder, then, that rumors about Edward's survival would resurface twenty years later when the future of the Tudor line again came into question.

In the 1570s with Elizabeth nearing the end of her childbearing years and no successor named, stories and impostures again began to appear. Robert Blosse, also known as Mantell, claimed to be Edward VI and was successful in attracting a fair number of supporters, mostly women (Heart 101-102). After many years of spreading rumors about his kingly pretensions, he was finally executed in 1581 (103). As the threat of Spanish invasion grew in the late 1580s, rumors of Edward's survival emerged yet again. Another man named Miles Fry, using the name Emanuel Plantagenet, claimed to be Elizabeth's son, but seems to have been ignored by Elizabeth's Council and never faced any punishment, probably due to the fact that the Queen's advisors considered him to be delusional and no threat to her authority (104). "The rumors and pretenders of the 1580s and 1590s," says Levin,

reflect the people's sense of instability over not only the rule of a woman but over the rule of an elderly, childless woman who refused to name a successor, a woman without a direct heir, ruling at a time of great change and potential crisis. (119)

Like Spenser's attempts to recreate patriarchal authority in a female-ruled country through characters such as Contemplation and the Palmer, wishes for Edward's return manifested a cultural desire for a male to displace the authority of maternal, or unsuccessfully maternal, queens.

James I: Reconstructing Patriarchy

While Edward's return turned out to be a false hope, Miles Fry's possibly delusional behavior provided a model for a more successful strategy of supplanting the Queen. Fry of course had little impact on Elizabeth or the political landscape of England, but another who fashioned himself as the Queen's son manipulated her image as a mother and quite literally inherited her power: King James VI of Scotland. In their correspondence Elizabeth and James regularly use terms of family relation both to reflect their familial and political congeniality and to display affection; they most often refer to each other as "cousin" and "brother" or "sister." As Elizabeth grew older, James sometimes addressed her as a mother, in what Christine Coch claims was a play on family rhetoric in order to articulate Elizabeth's responsibilities to James and to have himself named her successor (449). In *Of Domesticall Duties* Gouge describes the relationship between parents and children as one of mutuality. Children had numerous duties to follow, and in turn parents were responsible for the "temporall" and "spirituall"

care of their children: the "Care to bring them vp" and "Care to place them forth" (526). While Gouge spends much time condemning excesses of affection, he also condemns those parents lacking in filial love: "There is not only want of charity, but plaine vnnaturalnesse in such parents: euen more then in the most cruell beasts" (527). By portraying himself as a good "son," James established a figurative relationship with Elizabeth in which the terms of political and familial relation seemed to require a return of affection on the Queen's part.

In a letter dated August 19, 1585, James writes about a league between England and Scotland, requesting that it be not just a bond of religion, but mutual defense as well. He closes his letter with a blessing upon Elizabeth's safety: "Thus praying to appardon this scribbling in haste and to continue still my loving mother, as I shall be your devoted son, I commit you, madame and mother, to God's holy protection" (Collected Works 266). In a similar tone, he writes on August 1, 1588,

I sent you this present hereby to offer [...] all that I may command [...] as may best serve for the defense of your country. Wherein I promise to behave myself [...] as your natural son and compatriot of your country in all respects. (357)

With such rhetoric, James cleverly works to advance his political ambitions on multiple fronts. A league of mutual defense between England and Scotland would place James politically close to Elizabeth's throne (Coch 449). Also, by relying on a tradition of familial affection, James makes it clear that he is fulfilling the duties required of him as a "son" to Elizabeth. He places himself, as Gouge would say of children, "wholly in [her]

power, to be ordered and disposed by [her]" (442) while implicitly demanding that she care for him as a good mother would a dutiful son.

Even though James fashioned himself a son to Elizabeth, once king he would recreate himself as a father of the commonwealth. James lived his early life under the influence of two powerful matriarchs: his biological mother Mary, Queen of Scots, and Elizabeth I. While psychoanalyzing James is beyond the limits of this study, one could surmise a connection between the powerful females of the king's youth and his obsession with and fear of witchcraft. As discussed in Chapter III, witches were often described in terms suggesting grotesque parody of the maternal body. James' fear of witchcraft could have reflected his reaction to the maternal power of Mary Stuart and Elizabeth. In Daemonologie, he describes one symptom of demonic possession as a devilish pregnancy: "the boldening vp so farre of the patients breast and belly, with such an vnnaturall sturring; and vehement agitation within them [...] so mightily workes the diuell in all the members and senses" (130). James allows for the possibility of male witches, but claims that women outnumber them twenty-to-one. To explain this ratio, he offers a conventional argument for women's inferiority: "as that sexe is frailer then man is, so is it easier to be intrapped in these grosse snares of the diuell, as was ouer-well prooued to be trew, by the Serpents deceiuing of *Eua* at the beginning" (116; emphasis original). These words echo the fears John Stubbs' voiced in The Gaping Gulf regarding Elizabeth's propensity towards sinfulness because of her gender. Perhaps Daemonologie reflects an extremely personal version of the cultural anxieties toward matriarchy experienced by one who might have felt himself dominated by mothers for much of his life.

More important than this displacement of maternal authority was James' project, similar to Spenser's, to reassert patriarchal authority. In his political writing, James returned to the parental analogy for monarchy that Elizabeth had largely abandoned in her later years. James stressed his status as a parent to his subjects to a degree far more than Elizabeth ever had, invoking the "law of nature" to support his position as ruler and father of his country (Williamson 117). He names as the king's primary concern "to procure the weale and flourishing of his people [...] as a louing Father, and careful watchman, caring for them more then for himselfe" (Trew Law 196). In a passage comparing monarchy to fatherhood, he enumerates a king's duties:

By the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation: And as the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and vertuous gouernment of his children; euen so is the king bound to care for all his subiects [...]. As the fathers wrath and correction vpon any of his children that offendeth, ought to be by a fatherly chastisement seasoned with pitie [...] so ought the King [behave] towards any of his Lieges that offend [...]. (195)

In return his subjects are to give him obedience and fealty -- to love "him as their father" (200). James focuses on one aspect of this obedience: no matter what indignities they suffer, children -- and by extension royal subjects -- should never rebel against their fathers. At length he discusses the unnaturalness of political rebellion, saying it can only be condoned "if the children may vpon any pretext that can be imagined, lawfully rise vp against their Father, cut him off, & choose any other whom they please in his roome" or "if the body for the weale of it, may for any infirmitie that can be in the head, strike it

off" (205). These passages demonstrate how James took advantage of the parenthood metaphor far more explicitly and purposefully than Elizabeth in order to solidify the duties of the subjects to their leader in a strict relationship of deference.

Appropriating Motherhood

In Basilicon-Doron James writes "A good King [...] as [the people's] naturall father and kindly Master, thinketh his greatest contentment standeth in their prosperitie" (155). He writes of being a "nourish-father," a source of succor both physical and spiritual to the commonwealth (161). By declaring the king a provider of nourishment to the people, James adopts a traditionally maternal role but places it under the banner of kingship, divorcing the idea of nourishment from the contaminating female body. He takes a compelling element from Elizabeth's self-image as mother but removes what makes her motherhood dangerous, her female sex, and claims that element for fatherhood. Marilyn Williamson argues that Shakespeare's late plays, the romances, make a similar attempt to appropriate the procreative capacity of the mother under the father's authority. Williamson and Janet Adelman each have discussed certain aspects of The Tempest that suggest an attempt by Shakespeare similar to Spenser's project to replace matriarchs with patriarchs. As in the earlier discussion of Hamlet, the emphasis here is not on developing a new or comprehensive reading of The Tempest, but rather on focusing on particular elements in the play that prove fruitful in the context of this study's examination of father- and motherhood.

The island where the action of the play takes place has been ruled by both mothers and fathers. The play takes place after the dangerous mother, here the witch

Sycorax, has been banished by the powerful father Prospero (Adelman 237). In her place, Prospero has become ruler of the island, bringing order to unordered savagery and becoming both mother and father. Speaking to Miranda, he describes his fatherly duties in words that echo James' description of kingly nurturance. Like James, Prospero emphasizes his fatherly care for his child: "I have done nothing but in care of thee, / Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter" (1.2.16-17). As her sole living parent, he has become a mother as well as a father to her, describing their journey to the island in parthenogenetic terms: "Thou [Miranda] didst smile, / [...] which raised in me / An undergoing stomach, to bear up / Against what should ensue" (1.2.153-158). Prospero "remakes her wholly her father's daughter" (Adelman 237).

Although he takes on the maternal roles of birthing and nourishing Miranda, Prospero does not also take on the threatening nature of mothers. In The Faerie Queene Acrasia's maternal control over her lovers transformed them into brutish animals. Similarly, Prospero relates Caliban's hideous appearance to his mother, the witch Sycorax: "This misshapen knave, / His mother was a witch" (5.1.271-72). In contrast, Miranda appears like a goddess to Ferdinand. Another of Spenser's maternal characters, Cymoent, retarded the development of her son Marinell through her motherly domination. Prospero's power at first seems to threaten a similar kind of control. He uses his magic to enslave Ferdinand, his charm turning Ferdinand into a child again: "Thy nerves are in their infancy again, / And have no vigour in them" (1.2.488-89). Ultimately, though, Prospero exercises his power for the purposes of freeing those under his control. In a speech to Ariel, for instance, he recalls how he had freed the spirit from Sycorax's imprisonment: "It was mine art, / When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape / The

pine and let thee out" (1.2.293-95). Having in effect given birth to Ariel before the play, freeing him from the deforming maternity of Sycorax, Prospero frees him again at the end of the play, setting him forth in the world as a good parent should (Adelman 237). Likewise, Prospero charms and enslaves Ferdinand only temporarily in order to manage the young man's courtship with Miranda, and once Prospero has completed that task, he "begins to relinquish his control of them" (Williamson 156). Prospero even indicates that he will free Caliban and leave the island to him when Prospero returns to his dukedom.

Milton and Hermaphroditic Desire

These examples from James and Shakespeare appear more successful than Spenser's in controlling the maternal and appropriating its powers for masculine usage. However, to evaluate the lasting influence of their patriarchal themes, they must be placed in a larger context that questions what the ultimate purpose of the various strategies of displacing and replacing maternal power actually was. Stevie Davies suggests such a context. "[M]an's affinity with woman, along with a high valuation of the feminine and a wish to incorporate and emulate it" marked the literature and philosophy of Renaissance England (1). Spenser displays such an affinity at the close of the 1590 Faerie Queene when Britomart gazes upon the reunited Amoret and Scudamour:

Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought,
 That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite*,
 [.....]
 So seemd those two, as growne together quite,
 That *Britomart* halfe enuyng their blesse,

Was much empassiond in her gentle sprite,
 And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse [...]. (3.12.46; emphasis
 original)

The proposal that these writers wished not to expurgate femininity but to incorporate it into masculinity redefines the anti-maternal maneuvers discussed in this study. Through his attempt to purify maternity, Spenser instead effected an indefinite postponement of union between man and woman; the 1596 Faerie Queene removes the blissful reunion of Amoret and Scudamour, and as has been discussed previously, the unions of Una and Redcrosse, Britomart and Arthegall, and Gloriana and Arthur are deferred beyond the bounds of the extant text. James, while seemingly more successful at incorporating maternity within his patriarchal discourse, still conceives of the female body, particularly that of the mother, at least in part as a demonic other, as witnessed in his treatise on witchcraft. Shakespeare perhaps goes one step further in The Tempest. At the close of the play, Prospero acknowledges some form of kinship with Caliban, the demonic mother's son: "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (5.1.278-79). However, Adelman notes that Prospero fails to integrate Caliban or what he represents, the power of the mother, into the patriarchal world: "in the end, he is banished like his mother, left alone on her island when Prospero leaves" (237).

Milton stands at a chronological remove from Elizabeth's reign and thus allows a more expansive view of the impact of the cultural tensions surrounding motherhood and the various strategies to contain and replace it. Of course, critical opinion on Paradise Lost and Milton varies widely, and discussing his portrayal of women presents certain difficulties. Many scholars have claimed that Milton displayed misogynistic opinions in

his personal life, his poetry, and his prose, while others have taken the opposing argument. Without attempting to ignore this critical debate, I will focus here on Milton's poetic discussion of maternity, a specific area of femininity on which he seems to offer a positive view. In Paradise Lost Milton's treatment of motherhood, in so far as Eve is characterized as maternal, appears to reveal a faith in maternity as a redemptive force rather than discomfort or fear. Unlike Spenser and Shakespeare, Milton does not try to eradicate or control the maternal body. Instead, he attempts to integrate femininity within masculinity as part of the Renaissance project Davies described as an attempt to unify the sexes and "ascend to the divine One" (4). Milton condemns not femininity but instead the fear of femininity that caused Spenser to attempt to excise the maternal body from his epic. Eve serves as the key for humanity's eventual apotheosis and reclamation of paradise precisely because of her status as a mother.

Gordon Teskey claims that "Milton's epic turns on one catastrophic act of negation," a moment when Adam makes the choice to eat the forbidden fruit (9). However, one can argue that even before Adam's sin, another "act of negation" has occurred that truly precipitates humanity's fall: the "event perverse," Adam and Eve's separation (Paradise 9.405). Milton seems not to object to separation per se (Pruitt 133). Eve and Adam have separated at least twice prior to Book 9: first when Raphael arrived in Book 5, and then when Raphael and Adam begin to speak of "studious thoughts abstruse" (8.40). Instead, Milton objects to the acrimonious nature of their separation in Book 9, the cause of which, as Deborah Interdonato argues, is as much Adam's fault as it is Eve's. Interdonato proposes that Eve's desire to separate arose from "a seemingly genuine sense of incompleteness and inferiority," a feeling caused in part by Adam (95).

In Book 8, Adam reveals to Raphael a view of Eve that he has not previously articulated. He states that she is "th' inferior, in the mind / And inward faculties," and that he fears the loss of his powers of reasoning in her presence (541-42). Raphael responds harshly, telling Adam that Eve deserves "they love, / Not thy subjection" (569-570) and advising him to "weigh with her [Eve] thyself" (570), and speaking of Reason, that "she [wisdom] deserts thee not, if thou / Dismiss not *her*" (563-64; emphasis added). Milton's ambiguous pronoun implies that this second "she" is not just wisdom, but Eve as well.

The debate in Book 9 reveals that Adam has not weighed Eve with himself and that he has, in fact, dismissed her. Eve's proposal to separate is notable for its practicality, as Adam admits. Her ability "to recommend and then to defend her proposal [...] shows her to be as capable of withstanding temptation as her male counterpart" (Pruitt 134-135). Both possess equal powers of reason regardless of their sex, and, since Adam has correctly (and with foresight) noted that reason can be fooled, both are equally susceptible to temptation. However, Interdonato suggests that Eve is also "trying overhard to prove herself as more than a decorative (and consequently inferior) partner" (97). Adam's response in part acknowledges "their *mutual* vulnerability" (98; emphasis original), but he also suggests that she is the weak link in their partnership, urging her to stay "lest harm / Befall *thee* severed from *me*" (Paradise 9.251-52; emphasis added). In announcing his change of tone to the tragic at the beginning of Book 9, Milton spoke of "foul distrust," and it is distrust that Adam displays here towards Eve and her abilities (6). Eve perceives this, and takes offense at Adam's doubt in her loyalty and ability (Interdonato 98). Even when Adam acquiesces, he almost commands Eve to leave, still appropriating authority over her, still dismissing and doubting her. Uneasy with Adam's

final words, Eve emphasizes "that she goes with Adam's (coerced) permission, rather than secure in the conviction of the rightness of *her* decision," revealing that "her desire is not so much to be away from a dominant Adam as to be with an egalitarian one" (103; emphasis original). In effect, Adam's mistreatment of Eve has driven her away, and Satan plays upon it perfectly. After she has eaten, she reveals her wish

to add what wants

In the female sex, the more to draw his love,

And render me more equal, and perhaps,

A thing not undesirable, sometime

Superior. (821-825)

In this view, Adam's failure to heed Raphael's command to "weigh" Eve equally leads directly to the Fall.

To emphasize Eve's importance for redemption Milton drew upon Biblical typology, linking the Old Testament Eve to the New Testament Mary, often explicitly (Danielson 122): "On [her] the angel [Raphael] 'Hail' / Bestowed, the holy salutation used / Long after to blest Mary, second Eve" (5.385-87). Common interpretation of Mary regarded her as the one who brought salvation and grace to those damned by the Fall. Eve fulfills this same role in Paradise Lost, acting as both Adam's redeemer and the eventual redeemer of all humankind. Milton establishes this link early; the narrative describes Eve as full of "sweet attractive grace," a play on both her physical beauty and her spiritual role (4.298). "Even after her fall, however, Eve retains something of Mary's nurturing and redemptive role," witnessed in her intention to bear the blame for both Adam and herself (Danielson 122). Eve unknowingly duplicates the offer of sacrifice made by Christ in

Book 3, pledging to pray to God "that all / The sentence from thy head removed may light / On me" (10.933-35). By duplicating for Adam individually what Christ offered for humanity generally, she becomes the instrument of her husband's redemption. She quite literally leads him back to God, as her suggestion inspires Adam to beg for God's forgiveness. However, in a much larger sense, Milton emphasizes Eve as the redeemer of all of humankind. He repeatedly notes her maternity, calling her "The mother of mankind" (1.36), "Mother of human race" (4.475), "our general mother" (492), "our credulous mother" (9.644), "mother of all mankind, / Mother of all things living" (11.159-160), and finally, "our mother Eve" (12.624). In Book 11 God foretells the eventual salvation of humanity through Eve's maternity: "My cov'nant in the woman's seed renewed" (116). God makes Eve as a mother absolutely crucial to the salvation of humanity. Eve speaks the last line of dialogue in the poem: "By me the Promised Seed shall all restore" (12.623). This "Seed" is not only God's, but Eve's as well, and only through this woman can man be saved and renew his relationship with God.

The last lines of Paradise Lost show Adam and Eve united in love, as they begin the long journey of humankind's eventual re-ascension to paradise: "They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way" (12.648-49). "They" are now "solitary": not "deprived of the society of others" but "standing alone," "single," the two sexes having become a single being ("Solitary," def. 1a, 1c, 1d). In this final scene of hermaphroditic union, Milton has, in a sense, completed Spenser's project. He has, through Eve, made maternal power safe and non-threatening, not by erasing it or controlling it but by acknowledging it as different but not inferior to male authority and

making space for the two to coexist. Eve only became threatening when Adam imagined her so by doubting her abilities relative to his own.

Milton exposes the fears expressed by Spenser and the others discussed in this study as self-fulfilling constructions. Elizabeth's maternity appeared dangerous because Spenser and others during her reign imagined their masculinity endangered. The more that Spenser tried to control and purify the maternal body, the more it became something in need of purification and control, as demonstrated by the wedding of Britomart and Arthegall -- repeatedly deferred so that Spenser could make another attempt at making her power acceptable to Arthegall. The more he tried to reconstruct patriarchal authority, the more it became apparent that the new patriarch was merely a fiction, as demonstrated by the shifting paternity of the child Calepine rescued from the bear. The most effective way, then, for Spenser, Shakespeare, Stubbs, James and the other patriarchalists of early modern England to manage the threat of Elizabeth and other mothers to the traditional male power structures would have been to accept motherhood as an essential component, politically and domestically, of society. Rather than fearing it and attempting to control maternity, integrating it in society, creating a space within the masculine world for it to exist without fashioning anxieties over the female body, female authority, and female desire would best avoid the perceived threats of mothers simply by virtue of not constructing them.

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VITA

Ryan Singh Paul was born in Orange, California, on September 26, 1976, the son of Janet Paul and Rajender Paul. After graduating from St. Thomas High School, Houston, Texas, in 1994, he entered The University of Texas at Austin. He graduated with a degree of Bachelor of Arts in May 1999. During the following years he was employed as an instructor for Kaplan Test Prep, Inc., an editor and writer for PopMatters.com, and a Writing Counselor for The Writing Center at Texas State University-San Marcos. In August 2002, he entered the Graduate College of Texas State University-San Marcos.

Permanent Address: 6205 Belfast Drive
Austin, Texas 78723

This thesis was typed by Ryan Singh Paul.

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