THE SPANISH ARMADA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ELIZABETHAN SELF
"HERE WE ONELY LESSE":
THE SPANISH ARMADA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ELIZABETHAN SELF
AS EXPRESSED THROUGH THE LITERATURE.

By

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Elizabethan Self as Expressed Through the Literature.

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Abstract

The attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the Armada's subsequent defeat was in many ways a turning point. Not just a turning point in Anglo-Spanish relations, but in the development of the English as a people. As victory literally transformed the Elizabethan world, the literature reflected and helped to create this metamorphosis.

The parameters of this study therefore extend to an examination of what influence the Spanish Armada exerted on English literature from the time of its conception by Philip II in 1576, to that monarch's death in 1598. In becoming the greatest crisis in such a protracted conflict, the first Armada became a focal point of the whole conflict. This period supplied England, as it does this study, with a consistency of purpose, and a foe by which the English measured themselves. The literary works focussed upon are examples of the 'main stream' printed texts and dramatic presentations of the period. The works have been chosen for their clear content and significance in light of the Anglo-Spanish conflict.

The Elizabethan self as depicted in Elizabethan literature undoubtedly changed as a reaction to the Spanish Armada. It was a change which granted the public self a sense of national unity and confidence, a sense of martial greatness, and a belief in the English as the chosen people of God. However, the new-found pride threatened to split the country once more as common men sought their own piece of national glory. The Armada period
therefore concludes with a sense of foreboding about the future, not because of Spanish ambition, but because of their own.
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Introduction

The Spaniardes are a warlike nation,
We are more warlike as they know and feare,
But they are strong to make inuasion.
But we more strong to chase them euery where,
But they haue multitudes to make supplye.
We are more peopled, fuller of fresh blood.
They loue their Prince and country zealously.
But we more zealous for our soueraignes good.
Yet we should feare them for our wickednesse.
They are more wicked, here we onely lesse.
(Bastard, Chrestoleros, VI, "Epigr.25")

The attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the Armada's subsequent defeat was in many ways a turning point. Not just a turning point in Anglo-Spanish relations, but in the development of the English as a people. As victory literally transformed the Elizabethan world, the literature reflected and helped to create this metamorphosis.

This transformation began as the conflict with Spain grew into an invasion. As will be seen in Chapter One, the English, who once prided themselves on their pursuit of peace and commerce, found themselves opposing an enemy far more powerful and skilled at war than they were. Curiously, the naval victory did not dispel this realization of inadequacy, even as it inspired them to boldness of action and an uneasy sense of English greatness. By examining the national sense of self as expressed by the literature of the day, it is the objective of this study to demonstrate that the Spanish Armada had a recognizable influence on Elizabethan literature.
The self is a simple notion -- one man's concept of what he is -- which is transformed into a tangled web by the complexity of human existence. Notions of self cannot exclude an individual's environment and personal experiences. Multiple selves can exist for an individual at the same time, as one assumes a public persona, a self often distinctively different from that of the private self. Attaining an understanding of self is compounded when someone else -- someone separated by time and environment -- tries to examine the self.

Such problems associated with the study of the self are also evident when one wishes to examine the collective self of a community, such as Elizabethan England. The scholar must find a means to reduce these obstacles to comprehension. The surest method is to examine the experiences of the collective self, and that self's impression of them, as expressed in the literature of the period. Or, as Lawrence Manley proposes in *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*: "The aim is to tell a large and complex story by clarifying the relations between a literature and its society and by eliciting from that literature its embodiment of a collective experience" (Manley, 2).

However, even through literature and an understanding of its corresponding history, the scholar is once again confronted with the web of self. It would be difficult at best to understand the entire web, and virtually impossible to relate it to others, so the scholar must instead choose a strand -- one concept of self -- and seek to understand this version of the self as best he can. Such a restricted examination is the focus of this paper.
The web of self being examined is that of Elizabethan Englishmen as a group, as expressed in their printed -- and thereby public -- literature. One may argue that the censorship of the period precludes any true grasp of the national self being witnessed in the literature; that propaganda and self-preservation would exclude all else. Such a false belief ignores the ingenuity and discretion of the period. As Annabel Patterson mentions (Censorship and Interpretation): "On the authorial side, censorship produced widespread use of cautionary and evasive tactics" (Patterson, 21). In other words, the writers still conveyed their intended message; they just did so without stating it as such.

Another excellent point mentioned by Patterson is also made by Daniel Balmuth (Censorship in Russia, 1865-1905): "one should not overestimate the cleverness of writers or the imperception of censors, who, as university graduates, were often as well equipped as other members of educated society to read 'between the lines'" (22). Such an awareness of censors is as true in Elizabethan England, as in Tsarist Russia. One, therefore, cannot claim that all works straying from the propagandistic image of Englishmen openly supported by censors were condemned. Far too many 'subtle' works (such as Gascoigne's Steel Glas) survived, or even thrived, to support such a draconian view of the censorship. The scholar is relatively safe to engage the literature with the assurance that he is not simply reading propaganda -- but the actual images and concerns of the Elizabethans.

The strand of the Elizabethan web of self examined in this paper is how the Spanish Armada -- as representative of the whole Anglo-Spanish conflict -- transformed
the Elizabethan perception of self and what that self was capable of. Such conclusions could of course be challenged by scholars such as Peter Lloyd (Perspectives and Identities) who argues the individual struggle with identity was caused not by external conflict, but by "doubts about the validity of inherited concepts [which] caused changes in perspective which in turn caused shifting viewpoints" (Lloyd, 6). Others, such as Claire McEachern (The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612), claim that "the proliferation of religious sectarianism and the spectre of an aging monarch may have done more to animate a language of national integrity than any number of Armadas" (McEachern, 194). Yet both of these scholars focus upon a different strand of the Elizabethan web of self and draw different conclusions. Lloyd examines the individual self and its interaction with its cultural inheritance, whereas McEachern examines the late Elizabethan self and its anxiety over the succession with the associated religious upheaval.

Like these other studies, this paper only examines one particular sense of the Elizabethan self as it experienced a very specific conflict, and any conclusions drawn about the Elizabethan sense of self are limited to the specific self examined. Such an examination could not possibly hope to fully explain the transformation in the Elizabethans at the time -- only propose a contributing factor.

Concepts of what constituted the English nation to the Elizabethans are also contested by critics. Some, such as Richard Helgerson (Forms of Nationhood), portray the Elizabethan concept of 'nation' as part of a great endeavor: "[English writers] all take
England... as their subject. [They] participated in what retrospectively looks like a concerted generational project" (Helgerson, 1), a project dedicated to creating a nation. Benedict Anderson (Imagined Communities) portrays an established English nation, "it is an imagined political community -- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 5-6). He defines a nation limited by borders and ruled by an English monarch supported by an English government.

The definition of nation assumed in this paper is a blend of both. 'England' and the 'English' are defined by their geography and their collective obedience to a common government. Religion does play a vital role since the largely Protestant England was threatened by the pre-eminent Catholic empire, but its role in defining what is 'English' and what is 'other' or 'foreign' varies in the literature according to the events that have taken place, as we will see. Also, the most basic premise of this study is that the Elizabethan concept of who they were as a collective, or nation, changed over time, so it is also true that the literature played a role in this national experience as surely as it was a product of it.

Yet, as seen in the epigraph to this introduction, and much literature written during the years leading up to 1598, the antagonism between England and Spain lasted far longer than this single campaign and had a profound influence on the English sense of self. The parameters of this study therefore extend to an examination of what influence the Spanish Armada exerted on English literature from the time of its conception by Philip II in 1576, to that monarch's death in 1598. Once committed to his course, Philip II
never admitted defeat. He launched a second, ineffectual armada in 1597 and was planning his third when he died.

In becoming the greatest crisis in such a protracted struggle, the first Armada became a focal point of the whole conflict. This period supplied England, as it does this study, with a consistency of purpose, and a foe, by which the English measured themselves. Taking such a tight critical focus into account, it must be understood that the vast majority of Elizabethan works do not concern themselves with or unwittingly display a national sense of self. Such works are instead concerned with more immediate and personal themes such as the trials and tribulations of love (as displayed in the sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser; and Shakespeare), the state of literature itself, English religion (the Marprelate Tracts), or the baseness of city life compared to the serenity of the country (as represented by the pastorals). Omitting these themes, the focus of this study is the public literature which does display an Elizabethan sense of self. Although such works are always a minority compared to the grand total of Elizabethan literature, the evolution seen in this comparatively small number of texts is telling. In addition to these limitations, I have avoided the innumerable ballads, broadsheets, and religious debates that flourished with the printing press. Once again, to critically engage these works would require a far greater examination than can be accommodated in so short a space.

What are focussed upon are the 'main stream' printed texts and dramatic presentations of the period. The works have been chosen for their clear content and
significance in light of the Anglo-Spanish conflict. This study is therefore partially dependent on a knowledge of the context in which an author is writing. The first chapter, "Pre-Armada England (1576-1586)", is concerned with the English sense of self dating from the time Philip II began the "Enterprise of England" to the Babington plot and Parliament's petitions for the execution of Mary. The second chapter, "England Faces The Armada (1587-1589)", focusses on the events concerning the Armada itself, as well as England's failure in its own Armada. The final chapter, "England Faces Itself (1590-1598)", is concerned with the aftermath, when the major actions of conflict had been fought and England examined its new place on the world stage. The study ends in the year Philip II died, even though the Anglo-Spanish conflict, as well as their rivalry, would continue for many more years. The Spanish King was the driving force behind the Armada, and his passing marks the end to one clearly delineated segment of the Anglo-Spanish conflict -- the Armada period.

\[1\text{Critically, the self is a complex and constantly redefined concept. For an introduction to the issues concerning the self, see James Miller Jr.'s Word, Self, Reality: The Rhetoric of Imagination.}\]
Chapter One: Pre-Armada England (1576-1586)

Some will sing the great feates of Armes
of Rome: some other the alarmes
of Thebs: and some other of Troye,
And both the siedge, and the efroye.
But what haue I to doo with warriers:
Meddle I then with those that fit:
No, no, I nere hurt any yet:
Nor nere men to come among soldiers.
(Southern, Pandora, "Odellet 2", 1-8)

"I will euer renowne your worship, and them whose seruisce for Country hath bene such as neuer English gentleman or other yet atchieued but you" (Wright, 178). These words, quoted by Louis Wright from Henry Robarts' pamphlet, "A most Friendly farewell" (1585), are in praise of Drake's great voyage. Robarts' hero-worship is certainly understandable given Drake's accomplishments, but the implication that such heroism is not commonly seen in England is an excellent point at which to begin an examination of the state of the English sense of self at the beginning of the Armada conflict (as opposed to how it will be in 1598).

Robarts bemoans the fact that Drake had received little public acclaim for his deeds: "then Englishmen what dishonour doe you our famous Drake, that you haue left his name so long vnwritten of" (178). Indeed, Wright confirms that: "For some curious reason, indeed, Drake's voyages did not receive the literary acclaim which their daring and significance warranted. To his credit, Robarts, at least, realized their value to English prestige" (179). One is left to ask why such an obvious candidate for heroic praise was
being ignored. Robarts provides a suggestion: Englishmen did not want to praise Drake's daring for he showed their own comparative lack of it: "O Lorde, what do these Gentiles [gentlemen] mean so to roome from home that enioye such wealth as they doe, and maye staye at their owne pleasure, but therein they shewe their baseness" (178). Robarts is condemning the weakness of his society (or at least those who are in the position to take action), even as he praises an example of what these nobles should strive to become. His low opinion of his fellow countrymen in feats of daring and arms was shared by many, and with good reason.

From 1576 to 1586, England found itself in an increasingly precarious position. Elizabeth I's diplomacy and domestic policies had saved the realm from any serious strife, but this could not last forever. Pressures built as England supported the Dutch against the Spanish and privateers discovered the wealth that could be seized from the new world, inspiring Philip II to plan his invasion. Yet in the face of these pressures England had little battle prowess and a questionable sense of national unity. These topics dominate the works produced in this period.

Before the Armada, England had little experience with war during Elizabeth's reign, apart from rebellions in Ireland and rural England. However, the Irish preferred irregular warfare and piracy to the battlefield, and English uprisings were rarely more than single battle affairs (as described throughout Fletcher's Tudor Rebellions). England was now facing an enemy who was taking years to plan a protracted campaign. England had not fought a war since the time of Mary I and the disastrous loss of Calais. One result
of Mary's failure to hold Calais was that it left England with little reason to send organized forces into battle. With the opportunity of war closed to them at home, individual adventurers would hire themselves to the Protestant Lowlands, or occasionally to the Spanish. The few times England was pressed into sending soldiers into the Netherlands resulted in embarrassing defeats or betrayal, depending on who was depicting the battle (see Dudley's *A Briefe Report*, in Chapter Two). The fact was that war was an expensive enterprise, and England could not afford to fight one for long, let alone raise an army capable of facing Spain, the military juggernaut of Europe.

Thus it is no surprise that most of the military reports circulated at this time consider England's ability to wage war to be seriously flawed. One such example is George Gascoigne's *The Spoyle of Antwerpe* (1576), which is an attempt by the author to faithfully describe the events he himself witnessed -- the heavy-handed and uncalled for attack on the port of Antwerp by Spanish forces in 1576. He attempts to report what 'actually' happened, without allowing personal opinions to cloud his observations (but of course this would be difficult at best given his experiences). Gascoigne claims impartiality since, as he explains, if he wanted to portray the Spanish forces merely as devils he would not even need to use his imagination: "for if I were disposed to write maliciously against the vanquisher: their former barbarous cruelty, intolerences, Rapes, spoyles, Incests, and Sacriledges" (Gascoigne, 9) would provide more than enough material without having to exaggerate or lie during his account. He also claims that if he only wanted to mourn the plight of the Lowlands he would describe their suffering at the
hands of the Spanish which "might enable a dome stone to talke of their troubles, and fetche brinysh teares out of the most craggy rocke" (9).

His work is intended as a warning to his readers, for he suspects that "It is then to bee understoode that the sackyng & spoyle of ANTWERPE hath been (by all lykelyhoode) longe pretended by the Spanyerds: And that they have done nothyng els but lien in wayte continually to fynde any least quarrell to put the same in execution" (10). Therefore who is to say which nation is safe from Spanish conquest.

Gascoigne demonstrates the superiority of Spain's army compared to the hastily prepared defenses of Antwerp, commenting that "Men wyll boast of the Spanierds that they are the best & most orderlye Souldiours in the world" (42). Their organization and experience made short work of their Dutch foes. Yet Gascoigne, in a moment of contemplation that contrasts starkly with the sureness with which Englishmen would claim God's favour over a decade later, wonders if Antwerp fell to the whim of an emperor, or the will of God: "But whosoeuer wil therein most extoll the Spanyardes for their vallure and order, must therewithall confesse that it was the very ordinance of god for a just plague and scourge unto the Towne: for otherwise it passeth all mens capacity, to conceive howe it should be possible" (34). The town, once reinforced by forces from throughout the Lowlands, prepared what Gascoigne considers remarkably strong defenses, only to be overrun by the superior Spanish war machine: "I must needs confesse, that it was the greatest victory, and the roundlyest executed, that hath bene seene, red, or heard of, in our age: and it was a thing myraculous, to consider, how
Trenches of such a height should be entred, passed over, and won" (33). Such awe for the enemy underscores the lack of confidence such a terrible defeat has instilled in the author: "let us also if ever we should be driven to like occasion.... learn to look better about us for good order & direction, the lack of which was their overthrow" (51).

One must surely consider such claims of divine wrath to be harsh, yet they are made in order to shock readers into comparing Antwerp's actions with what they themselves would do, and should do. Antwerp stood confident in its neutral attitude towards the Spanish. The town had even been accused by its neighbours of supporting Spanish armies. Gascoigne describes these traits as "the wickedness used in the said town... a sufficient cause of God's just scourge and Plague" (7). Many residents of Antwerp earn the author's scorn by refusing to defend their homes: "The chief rulers and people of Antwerp perceive thereby the cruel intent of the Spaniards... began to abandon the town" (15-16). Those who remain are also condemned, though not as cowards, but as fools for not having taken greater precautions for their defence. The siege, compounded by the unpreparedness of the defenders, resulted in the famine and disease which greatly contributed to the victory of the besiegers (Ramsay, "A Revolution in Trade", 1274-1275).

Yet awe of the enemy is tempered by a revulsion for their actions. The imperial army sacked the town, butchering the remaining inhabitants for daring to oppose them. The slaughter was terrible to behold: "they neither spared age, nor sex: time nor place: person nor country: profession nor religion: young nor old: rich nor poor.... they spared
neither friende nor foe" (35-36). Such a strong statement, followed by details of the butchery and torture endured by the inhabitants, certainly paints the Spanish army as being barbarously cruel. In addition to their barbarity, the invaders stripped the town of anything of value and transformed it into an infamous den of vice: "within three daies Antwarpe, which was one of the rychest Townes in Europe, had now no money nor treasure to be found therein, but onely in the hands of murderers and strompets" (42). The message, constantly reinforced, is that no country can stand complacent in the security of neutrality or even in an alliance with Spain. The Spanish cannot be trusted.

There was no way Gascoigne could know that this Spanish army had gone rogue under the temptation of the city's wealth and the slaughter was officially opposed by the Spanish government, so it is no surprise that he looks to his own nation and sees the danger Spain presents, "Let us also learne to detest the horrible cruelties of the Spanierdes in all executions of warlike stratagems, least the dishonour of such beastly deedes, might bedymme the honour wherewith Englishe Souldiours have always bene endowed in their victories. And fynally let us praye to God for grace to amend our lyues, and for power and foresyght to withstande the mallyce of our enemyes" (51-2). Gascoigne seeks to warn England not to make the same mistake as the fallen defenders of Antwerp and not to admire the Spanish martial abilities too strongly, for Spain's own pride will one day lead to its downfall: "I leaue the skanning oftheyr deedes unto God, who wyll bryddle theyr insolencie, when hee thinketh good and conuenient" (50). Looking ahead to a possible
confrontation with Spain, Gascoigne can only hope that England will win due to its higher moral stance (51).

Others sought a more consistent vision of how battles are won and lost. John Polemon, in his collection *All The Famous Battels That Have Been Fought In Our Age* (1578), attempts to give as accurate an account as possible of the battles as well as "the causes, with the fruities of them" (Polemon, 1). He attempts this by compiling and translating contemporary accounts of battles by noted historiographers or eye-witnesses. This use of eyewitness accounts does not, of course, prohibit the collection from having a cohesiveness in tone, style and purpose, as an Elizabethan 'translator' often rewrote works to suit his theme or tastes, adding or subtracting considerable embellishment as he saw fit. Full speeches by the (soon to be) victorious commander in the moments prior to an engagement make entertaining reading but are usually a convenient fiction created by the author. Polemon's accounts include a number of these speeches, and they are often vitally important as a means of studying the reaction of the author and translator to his subject, as personal opinion is inserted into a work apparently attempting to present 'facts'.

One example of such an opinion is found in the description of the naval battle of Orso, where the French Admiral wonders at the "arrogancie" (190-1) of the Spanish and "spake almost these words" (191) as he rates the prowess of his enemies as warriors: "Let our enemies in Gods name be, as they doe boaste of themselues, noble warriours by lande, doubtlesse they will not be able in conflicte by sea" (191). This of course takes place moments before the Spanish fleet is devastated as a result of incompetence. Such bold
assessments of Spain's abilities are important, for even though texts such as Gascoigne's *The Spoyle of Antwerpe* accurately portray the horror Spain's army instilled in Englishmen, England was above all an island, a realm whose first and foremost defense was the English channel. If Spain's navy was weak, then England should improve her naval abilities.

Yet national pride could not easily admit that England was inexperienced in war. Polemon's work has another important feature, for even though his chosen battles are roughly in chronological order, his selections are presented in such a way as to demonstrate the power of Spain and by comparison the power of England (at least during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI). The series of battles between France and Spain clearly demonstrates Spain's dominance on land, for even when they are defeated, as they are at "the Battell of Terranoua" (Polemon, 32-35), they quickly regain the upper hand, as Spain decisively does at the "Battell of Gioia" (35-37). Yet, by depicting Henry VIII's victory over France (64-7) immediately after the Spanish campaign, and then another against Scotland (67-77), Polemon implies that England is capable of equal achievements.

Of the three naval battles described in the book, the two battles involving the Spanish (189-195, 199-201) were unmitigated disasters for them. Even "miscreant Pirates" (199) crushed the imperial navy. These two battles are telling in the midst of an entire book generally dominated by Spain's military victory, for they stress a possible flaw in the Imperial military machine (possibly the only one in light of Spain's consistent
victories), a flaw that the printer, Henry Bynneman, would surely hope his target patron, Christopher Hatton, "Captaine of the Queenes Maiesties Garde... Vicechamberlaine to hir Highnesse" (Epistle, 2) would notice. The modern reader, fully aware of Spain's true naval might, can only conclude that Polemon decided not to focus on all the battles of his age, as Spain often won battles in the Mediterranean.

These themes, the might of England and its military weakness compared to Spain, appear again and again throughout the pre-Armada period. John Southern's Pandora (1584), a poetic miscellany concerned with topics as diverse as epideictic poems and love sonnets, contains little that interests this study. However, the poet discusses his disinterest in military affairs, and in doing so he quickly describes the major combatants of his age in a dismissive tone: "Of the pride of Spaine, or subtilnes of France:/ Nor of the rude Englishe, or mutine Almanes:/ Nor neither of Naples, noble men of armes" ("Sonnet to the Reader", 2-4). Militarily, England is indeed 'rude' compared to its neighbors, for a 'professional' soldier was often a liability in peacetime. Since England did not need to constantly oppose enemy invasions, she did not have a tradition of a standing army, nor could the nation afford one (Oman, 373-374). As seen in the epigraph to this chapter, Southern admits to a sense of complacency as he pursues political and scholarly goals instead. Indeed, Southern admits that:

"Some will sing the great feates of Armes
... But what haue I to doo with warriors:
... No, no, I nere hurt any yet:
..."
And with Bacchus, and Citherais,  
I meane to spend all my whole dayes.  
(Southern, "Odellet 2")

His admission that war is not for him is a symptom of the long peace Elizabethans enjoyed up to this point in Elizabeth's reign.

In W.S.'s A Discourse of the Commonweal of this Realm of England (1581), a series of debates argues such points as international mercantilism and the need for education. More important to this study, however, is the occasional mention of what the realm (clearly England) could do in the event of war. The knight claims that "we that be gentlemen will with oure pollicie in warre provide that we come not in subiection of anie other nation; and this stowtness of englishe hartes will never suffer that" (W.S., 22). This statement is soon proved to be hollow bravado, however, when the present state of defense is discussed: "we reckon here in Englonde our chief strengthe to be in servingmen and yomen... [who] are so tenderly vsed in time of peace that they can not awaie with anie hevie armor in time of warre" (84). The realm's weakness is once more hammered home -- the people themselves. The answer to these woes is to pursue wisdom, morality, and good government, "a kyngdome is not so muche wonne or kept by the man hoode or force of men as it is by wisdome and pollicie" (22). Not only is the mind seen as a requirement of government, it is seen to be superior to battle prowess: "Yea, amonge all nations in the worlde, they that be pollitique and civill doe maister the rest, though theire [forces] be inferior to the other" (23). This presents a distinct sense of the superiority of intellectual and spiritual matters over those of war -- exactly what one would expect to
find in a realm which had known relative peace for so long. The larger appeal of such a lifestyle, the confidence in peace, and with it the virtual neglect of the military is seen in these examples to be integral to the pre-Armada Elizabethan sense of self. It did, however, result in English soldiers becoming little more than armed rabble hastily conscripted in times of need (Oman, 368-389).

Such views are mentioned by other authors, but, like Gascoigne and Polemon, these authors hope to disrupt England's complacency. One example is found in Barnaby Riche's Riche His Farewell to Militarie Profession (1583). The title is misleading, for this collection of tales has nothing to do with any personal retirement. It is instead a collection of diverse works dealing with a wide variety of subjects. The most useful item for this study is one of his opening epistles, in which he briefly laments a soldier's life in Elizabethan England:

> the Militarie profession, by meanes whereof menne were aduaunce to the greatest renowne, is now become of so slender estimation, that there is no accompt neither made of it, nor any that shall professe it... Suche is the miserable condition of this our present tyme, this is the course of the worlde: but especially here in Eng lande... Where there is no advise allowed for good, but suche as tendeth more for gaine then for glorie. And what pinchyng for a penie, that should be spent in our Countries defence?... What small recompence to Souldiours, that-fightes with foes for their Countries quiet? (Riche, 12-14)

It is made perfectly clear to the reader that in Rich's opinion the soldier's life -- once considered the epitome of masculine excellence -- has been rejected by a society composed of greedy misers. Unfortunately for England, this rejection has left the nation with inadequate defenses and no great military reputation with which to fend off its foes.
The image of impending conflict creeps into the work, adding a sense of urgency to his message: "the Pope, the Turké, and the Deuill, & what frendship thei beare vs, I thinke evey one can Imagine" (17).

Challenged with the threat of war, England, now ruled by an excommunicated Queen, endured a gradual polarization of religious extremism as militant Catholics and Puritans sought to influence their society, while the Church of England tried to maintain the status quo (McGrath, Papists and Puritans, 1-26). This conflict inspired a barrage of religious tracts which were, inevitably, political tracts in a time when competing religions were so closely associated with competing countries. Two of the most influential and representative of the general movements -- Elizabethan Anglicanism and exiled Catholicism -- were responsible for the Execution of Justice, and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics.

The Execution of Justice (1583), attributed to William Cecil, was a widely circulated and translated text that found a readership throughout Protestant England and the Continent, making it a highly influential work (Kingdon, "Introduction" to Execution of Justice in England). Its argument is based upon two revolts against Elizabeth in 1569 and 1579 which, according to the author, were instigated and supported by the Papacy. The Execution seeks not only to justify the resulting executions and harsher treason laws (pointedly aimed at Catholic literature and devotional regalia), but also to praise the enlightened state of Elizabethan England and the mercy it demonstrates in torturing and executing its traitors. Where Mary burned heretics by the hundreds simply because they
were Protestant, Elizabethan justice is only concerned with a comparative handful of "seditious railers... [who] sought to discredit Her Majesty and her government... [which is] sufficient to justify Her Majesty's actions to the whole world" (Kingdon, 41).

However, these treasons are now placed in a far more sinister light, as an organized attempt by the Papacy to undermine England, perhaps in preparation for a more direct action, something the author can see but could not convince Elizabeth of: "she [Elizabeth] could not then esteem them to be very preambles or as forerunners of greater danger" (32). The awareness of a greater hostility between England and the continent is expressed in the "further increase of the Pope's malice" (33-34), as he supported "unnatural practices abroad" (40) -- sedition against England's lawful monarch -- by "seminaries, secret wanderers, and explorators in the dark" (40). Throughout The Execution of Justice the threat to the realm is increasingly personified by these 'aliens' to the Elizabethan state -- Catholics. The uneasy toleration of Catholicism that typified Elizabeth's earlier reign is obviously eroding under foreign pressures and the threat of war. These pressures would cause great unease in the people of England as the Armada came to be.

Not that papists did much to ease the tension. In 1584, William Allen, the leading English Catholic-in-exile, published a carefully written rebuttal to Cecil's claims, and in doing so demonstrated why Cecil was so concerned about a return to Catholic domination of England. In A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics (1584), Allen argues that England's claim that there was no specific Anti-Catholic legislation associated with treason is a fiction at best (devoting two convincing chapters to this premise).
Nevertheless, Allen then dedicates his remaining seven chapters to reiterating the claim that faithful Catholics do indeed believe the sources of Cecil's unease: that Catholicism is the only faith, and the Pope is the supreme governor of man and therefore may depose any prince. Most alarming in light of Cecil's text is Allen's claim that Mary's burning of heretics was wholly justified:

To which we say... that we measure not the matter by the number, nor by the severity of the punishment only or specially, but by the cause, by the order of justice in proceeding by the laws of God and all Christian nations, and such other circumstances. Whereby we can prove Queen Mary's doings to be commendable and most lawful, the other, toward us and our brethren, to be unjust and impious... Queen Mary against the Protestants executed only the old laws of our country and of all Christendom made for punishment of heretics, by the canons and determination of all Popes, councils, churches, and ecclesiastical tribunals of the world, allowed also and authorized by the civil and imperial laws and received by all kingdoms Christian besides. (Kingdon, 93-94)

Surely any English protestant who read this work would be terrified by the thought of men such Allen regaining the opportunity to dispense 'justice' in his homeland. Tracts such as this only served to steel the resolve of Englishmen to deny William Allen the opportunity. As the threat of invasion grew, so too did the polarization of English religion (and with it, public condemnation of Catholicism) as Jesuit missionaries, trained by Allen, were smuggled into England to arouse opposition to the heretic queen (McGrath, 161-204). One result of the polarization at this time was the sense that the English self is defined by religion. No true Englishman can be Catholic.

Allen's text was printed on the continent and smuggled into England, and any copies found were seized and destroyed (Kingdon, "Introduction" to Defense of English
Catholics). Yet many similar tracts, both Catholic and Protestant, such as the Marprelate Tracts, were published by underground or private presses, allowing the government little chance to intervene. Even these presses, however, had to be cautious, for Elizabethan censorship was unforgiving, and Englishmen were increasingly on the alert for such seditious traitors.

One excellent example of such censorship, and the change overtaking Elizabethan society, is John Stubbs' *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf* (1579). This is one of the most famous tracts of the Elizabethan period, not because it succeeded in any literary or political sense, but for the manner in which it failed. From 1578 to 1582, Elizabeth I entertained the suit of Alençon, the French prince and heir apparent to his brother, the King of France. She did this for very specific reasons; her realm was walking a knife-edge in an attempt to avoid war with either France or Spain, while at the same time trying to aid the Protestant Lowlands to focus the attention of the enemy realms elsewhere (Smith, 173-203). By entertaining the prospects of such a marriage, Elizabeth was playing the same game she had been pursuing since she was anointed queen. This time, however, the queen appeared to be seriously considering the match, for Spain was becoming far more hostile (Berry, "Introduction", Gaping Gulf). Unfortunately for the realm's stability, the marriage was facing serious opposition, and John Stubbs happened to put his objections in writing.

Stubbs, a staunch loyalist, could not be accused of subtlety in his work, and in one tract he seems to have inadvertently found every possible way of offending Elizabeth's
sensibilities and the personal reputations of the few members of the privy council that supported the marriage with "adverse or perverse reasons" (Berry, 5). In his opening page, he makes reference to how the French are too highly influenced by the likes of Machiavelli and the Turks, but expresses it in a manner sure to offend a Queen contemplating marriage: "This sickness of mind have the French drawn from those eastern parts of the world, as they did that other horrible disease of the body, and, having already too far westward communicated the one contagion, do now seek notably to infect our minds with the other" (3). His base description aside, the author expresses his own sense of self in this passage. Englishmen are purer of body and of spirit than others, more noble than their 'infected' neighbors. This notion of separation is an important feature of Elizabethan consciousness, and its varying expressions will often appear throughout the period of study.

Nevertheless, he believes and fears that the Protestant Church of England would be absorbed by the Catholic church as a result of a marriage with Alençon. To prove this he points out that Mary, Queen of Scots, "the most hidden and pestilent adversary creature" (78), as well as the "strange Papists and our rebels are in deep silence; not one opens his mouth against this marriage" (78). The implication is that if these unclean and almost subhuman enemies of the state do not oppose the marriage, they must want it, therefore: "this French marriage is the straightest line that can be drawn from Rome to the utter ruin of our Church" (93). This is above all his primary concern, and he devotes most of his book to its pursuit.
Stubbs concludes by criticizing the secret visits Alençon had been making to London in order to court Elizabeth, insinuating that the thought of a marriage to Elizabeth may be distasteful to the Prince: "as though he were loath to avow his errand" (93). In this fashion Stubbs made such a strong impression on his queen and her privy council that they ordered all copies of the work seized, going so far as to make the possession of a copy punishable as treason. She considered the book a "traitorous device to discredit Her Majesty both with other princes and with her good subjects, and to prepare their minds to sedition" (Berry, 152). With such a provocative book, Stubbs had inadvertently earned the wrath of the entire Elizabethan court. When Elizabeth discovered who was responsible, she re-enacted a harsh law that had died with her sister, ordering Stubbs' right hand to be chopped off at the wrist for writing his seditious book. Camden, as quoted by Berry, notes that this harsh judgement was strongly disliked and heralded as a throwback to the dreaded time of papist rule: "some lawyers murmured that the sentence was erroneous and void by reason of a false noting of the time wherein the law was made, and that the Act was temporary and died with Queen Mary. Of whom Dalton, who often spake it openly, was committed to the Tower" (xxxiv). The heavy-handedness of this ruling is stressed by Camden as he describes the reaction of the crowd witnessing the execution of the sentence: "The multitude standing about was altogether silent, either out of horror of this new and unwonted punishment, or else out of pity towards the man.... or else out of hatred of the marriage, which most men presaged would be the overthrow of religion" (xxxvii-xxxviii).
Stubbs and his book, as the most famous example of the opposition to the Queen's marriage, is a perfect demonstration of the increasing unease that gripped England at this time. Englishmen feared a war with a foreign, Catholic power, and thus they worked to oppose Catholics within the realm even as they tried to eliminate foreign influence. When Elizabeth considered a marriage with such a power they opposed Elizabeth's decision as never before -- as one. Elizabeth and her court were also in the grip of such anxieties, and the reenactment of such a harsh law, with its unpopular papist origins, is an excellent example of how they were growing more extreme in their desire to protect their realm and control the speech, if not the thoughts, of their subjects.

Stubbs' text also demonstrates the power of the written word in the Elizabethan world, for it rallied many members of Parliament against the marriage as well as almost toppling the balancing act of foreign policies Elizabeth had been using the marriage proposal to maintain (Berry, xviii). This disruption, combined with the public embarrassment of Elizabeth's suitor, required the most discouraging response possible in order to save face and prevent such dangerous interference in the future. The crown could not afford to allow opposition and debate of its policies, however well intentioned, to thrive at a time of growing crisis. As Winston Graham (The Spanish Armadas) describes the era: "the 1580s became the decade of the dungeon and the rack" (Graham, 53). This growing sense of desperation, as witnessed in the actions of the crown, only served to further disrupt English complacency and add to the sense of unease that gripped England.
The fear of such official reprisals only fuelled the growing conflict. Many authors, such as Anthony Munday, tried their best to steer clear of it altogether. Although Munday wishes to discuss many of the same issues as Stubbs, he does so by stressing exactly what the government would want to hear, even at the cost of his own craft. For instance, Munday's *Zelauto* (1580) contains nothing but praise for England, yet it is so contrived that one can easily read the almost satirical stress behind the words. The main character, a Venetian nobleman, visits Spain but when he hears of England gains little satisfaction from his surroundings, "but thought euery day a yeere vntill we myght come into England" (Munday, 33). When he finally arrives, he is full of wonder and admiration for everything, from the beer to the language. He soon finds himself unable to describe England's wonders:

> to recount the rare and excellent modestie, the vertuous lyfe adorned with ciuilytie, the hautie courage and Martiall magnanimitie, and their singular qualities in generall, though I had the gallantest memorie in the world, the pregnantest wit, and the rarest eloquence to depaynt them: I know my selfe were vnable to doo it. (Munday, 36)

An author may be forgiven national pride, but even by Elizabethan standards Munday is overdoing it. It is surely a fault of the text that a Catholic Venetian would be awestruck by an excommunicated monarch increasingly considered by Rome to be the most dangerous heretic in the world, but such a reaction had become a literary tradition and a political necessity, as Englishmen sought to create a sense of national pride under the pressures of foreign antagonism.
This sense of 'self-defense and enforcement seen in the ridiculous stresses in Munday's text is highlighted by his later work, demonstrating a clear awareness that foreign powers do not admire Protestant England, but seek its downfall. In The English Roman Life (1582), he examines "the lives of such Englishmen as by secret escape leave their own country to live in Rome under the servil yoke of the Pope's government. Also after what manner they spend their time there, practising and daily looking for the overthrow and ruin of their Princess and country" (Munday, 5). These expatriots seek to destroy England and subjugate it forever under Catholicism. The Catholics do not praise England, but revel in continental culture. In effect these Englishmen become alien to everything Elizabethans held dear. Yet the thought that they could become so enamored with a foreign culture suggests that England may not be everything the Venetian claimed. Such thoughts would come to the forefront as the Armada sailed from being a collective apprehension to a terrifying reality.

Thus, by 1586, pre-Armada England had become a pressure-cooker of religious and political uncertainty sparked by a growing awareness that the continent was becoming increasingly hostile, and that England might soon find itself in a struggle for its own survival. And this was a struggle they were well aware that they were ill-prepared to wage. Such awareness inspired a national self-examination, an examination that would have a tremendous impact on the decade to come. The Elizabethans would not have to wait long for the coming explosion of activity, for 1587 would see their fears become a
reality as civil disturbance, foreign aggression, and domestic enemies would all stand against them.

1See Lacy Smith, This Realm of England, pages 173-217 for a discussion of this period's political history.

2As seen and discussed in Oman's, A History Of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century.
Chapter Two: England Faces The Armada (1587-1589)

That they and we,
and all with one accord:
On Sion hill may sing the praise,
of our most mightie Lord.

(Deloney, "a ioyful new Ballad", 205-8)

The Armada experience would have a dramatic influence on Elizabethan society and its literature, but not before xenophobia reached a fever pitch. The steady evolution in the Elizabethan self witnessed in the previous decade would give way to violent shifts in attitude as the Armada passed by. Yet, in 1587, England still stood at the brink of catastrophe.

After a decade of growing tension and collective English self-examination, 1586 saw the culmination of events that led to the launching of the Armada. The Babington plot failed and the fourteen English Catholics connected to it executed amidst anxiety and debate as to what to do with Mary Queen of Scots. The Alençon affair was over and France once again erupted in civil war as the three Henrys fought each other for control, leaving England without her ally. The Lowlands reached a calm of sorts as Parma's massive invasion army fought its way through the States trying to capture a large enough port for the invasion plan. When it failed to do so, Parma had to settle with a position adequate enough for his needs but next to useless for the ships of the Armada itself (Parker, The Spanish Armada, 150-151). However, to resist these attempts at claiming a vital sea port, as well as any last minute attempts at one, the Lowlands were transformed
into a series of armed camps incapable of offensive action for fear of Parma's army, thus
denying England its other principle distraction to Spanish aggression. After Leicester's
armed intervention in the Lowlands (1586) and Drake's famous commerce raids (1577 to
1580, and 1585), Philip II of Spain saw no choice but to destroy the present English court
in order to protect his own empire from England's debilitating interference (Parker, 101-102). Spain had the will to defeat England, and Elizabeth I had run out of distractions.
The battle was now inevitable.

In the face of such naked aggression, Englishmen had found themselves sorely
lacking. Preferring the more profitable ventures of trade and learning (as seen earlier in
Southern's Pandora), Englishmen found themselves ill prepared to resist the might of the
Spanish army. Only at sea could England claim glory, as Elizabeth increasingly turned to
privateering as a means of hindering Spain's war machine. This instilled a sense of hero
worship for individuals such as Drake, but still left the collective English sense of self
untouched by fame. Besides which, a series of papist plots left Englishmen with a sense
that there was an enemy within far more insidious than that without -- English Catholics.
It was with this sense of insecurity that English writers now faced the coming conflict.

1587 was a year of extremes born of growing desperation. Religious intolerance
grew as Papists were viewed as a considerable threat to the entire realm (McGrath, 161-204). Spanish victories in the Lowlands forced Elizabeth to provide even more aid,
pushing Spain to redouble its efforts in forming an 'invincible' Armada. It was clear to
Philip II that the surest way to conquer France and the Lowlands was to cut off their
principal military and economic partner. A military option, however, was still a hideously expensive prospect, so several attempts were made to remove Elizabeth from power and place her closest heir, Queen Mary of Scotland, on the throne.

One such attempt in 1586 failed so dramatically that it forced Elizabeth, and particularly her ministers, to eliminate the threat that Mary posed once and for all. They saw no other alternative. Since 1580 conspiracies involving Mary had become almost incessant. Yet this time in the summer of 1586, when a new plot was hatched by Anthony Babington, Mary made the fatal mistake of expressing her support in writing. Babington's plan involved Elizabeth's assassination as a prelude to the invasion by a foreign, Catholic army. Neither conspirator suspected that their correspondences were being copied as evidence, eventually building an ironclad case against them. Babington and thirteen other conspirators were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death.

George Whetstone's *Censure Upon Notable Traitors* (1587), printed before Mary's execution, tries to deflect any criticism the public may have had for the gruesome deaths of the fourteen conspirators: "wherein is handled matter of necessarie instruction for all dutifull subiectes: especially, the multitude of ignorant people" (Whetstone, 1). Such a text was not necessarily only for domestic consumption, but, like Cecil's *Execution of Justice*, it was aimed at dispelling foreign cries of injustice and the mistreatment of English Catholics. For such a politically charged work, it is no wonder that it also contains "obseruances of certain noted speach and behauiors of those fourteene notable traitors" (4), including long and detailed speeches made by the conspirators shortly before
their deaths. In this way Whetstone is producing state propaganda even as he is reassuring his fellow Englishmen that they are still in 'the right' as they support the crown.

Unlike Cecil's broad and anti-Catholic text, the Censure is instead concerned with treason and its consequences. Whetstone portrays each man one at a time, from his involvement in the plot to his execution. The author takes care to depict these men in unfavorable terms, while praising the crown for the mercy it showed while the traitors were hanged, drawn, and quartered: "And truly the first seauen, as the most mallitious (if there be anye difference in treason) were executed somewhat neere the seuerity of their judgement: the other seauen were so fouourably vsed, as they hung vntill they were euen altogether dead, before the rest of their iudgement was executed" (Whetstone, 6). Based on this evidence, Whetstone, like Cecil before him, proclaimed that "There were neuer people gouerned with more mercie" (6). Through such grand statements of praise, Whetstone hoped to avoid civil disorder by stressing that the crown worked within the law. The reader is presented with an image of justice (7), even tenderness (8), sufficient to allow Englishmen to claim moral superiority over their enemies yet still make it clear that treason will be severely punished. This notion is stressed again and again as the text and the executions continue (10, 14, 20).

Regardless of the text's use as propaganda, the religious polarization which gripped England at this time is also apparent. Where Cecil claimed that Elizabeth's religious tolerance was the perfect balance of justice, Whetstone cries for intolerance (if only because of the probability of treason): "her maiesties mercie.... is verie daungerous
to the peace of England... it is to be feared they live.... to recover strength to persecute her maisties subiects... mercie breedeth presumption in the wicked" (7). Such a statement serves three purposes: to plead with Elizabeth to take stronger methods against Catholics; to further warn loyal Englishmen about the enemy within; and finally to underscore how Elizabeth has the incentive, opportunity, and support to persecute Catholicism within her realm but she refuses to do so. Elizabeth I and, since she represents the entire country, all her loyal countrymen are thus depicted as morally superior to the conspirators and their supporters, as they are far more merciful, and the "wicked" are their enemies.

Whetstone had many allies in his intolerance for Catholics. Protestant extremists rose to the challenge posed by a possible Catholic invasion, and their radical views found greater support than they had ever enjoyed since Elizabeth assumed the throne (McGrath, 205-252). Works such as George Gifford's Discourse of the Subtill Practices of Devilles (1587) tried to answer the question of how to discover Catholic spies and assassins, which he identifies with witches, "for our countrimen which greatly neede instruction in the same" (Gifford, 2). Once again a sense of an internal threat grips the writer as English Catholics are considered evil and foreign agents. This xenophobia is reinforced by a remarkable sense of Protestant superiority: "Seing we haue this aduantage, that wee are most sure... that al his [Satan's] doings are for naughty and wicked purpose, howsoever they may seeme to bee profitable" (3). This sense of superiority is backed by the claim that the Protestant writer has God on his side: "The holy Scriptures (which make the man
of God perfect... are for to judge and to decide all controuersie in this case. I will therefore onely sticke unto them for testimonie and proofe" (4-5).

Since, Gifford argues, all Catholics worship devils (possibly even unknowingly), what the loyal christian, that is, English Protestant, is truly searching for is a devil worshipper or witch:

This seemeth horrible and monstrous, that all nations of the world should worship the diuell: doubtlesse they neuer meant it, but when they forsooke the true worship prescribed in the holie word, and imbraced idolatrie, and woorship deuised by man, whatsoever intent they had, God laieth to their charge that they woorshipped diuels. (Gifford, 20)

Indeed, Satan's agents are actively working against Protestant England: "He hath raised up all kinds of heretikes, he hath stirred by sore persecutions against the Church, and caused the servants of God to be cruellie murthered" (20). Such a radical view of Catholicism would hammer home the notion that Protestantism was the one true faith and that God was on the side of the English, as well as present England as being in a conflict against "all nations of the world" as it attempts to "ouercome the new and fresh assalts of the deuill" (65). Through the fear of a coming conflict embodied by the Armada, Gifford expresses his growing sense of self through his literature. It is a self militant and xenophobic in nature, constantly fearful of attack by forces alien to itself. The initial English insecurity about their abilities is being transformed by the coming conflict into an intolerance of allowing 'others' to stand the comparison.

Unfortunately for Elizabeth's spymaster, Gifford's clues as how to find one of these witches include their possessing such traits as "a melancholike constitution of the
body... they be fell and given to anger... poverty will also help in some respect" (60), a description that could encompass virtually anyone. Other giveaway signs are the practice of sorcery, typified by such names as "Kosem Kesamim" (8) or "Megnonen" (10). Such clues reduce the strength of his arguments in modern eyes, but he does reinforce every claim with a biblical 'proof', which would grant him powerful authority in the sixteenth century.

The power of such biblically-supported claims cannot be underestimated. As Claire McEachern (The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612) states, this was "a culture which treated the Bible as a chief sanction of institutional apparatuses, and in which social and spiritual behaviour was shaped by application of the types of scripture both to the self and the community" (McEachern, 12). The use of such support granted immediate authority to the writer, even when he skews the text for his own purposes. The Bible was the word of God, and any argument supported by this word could not be ignored. In this way men such as Gifford sought to influence the national self to match their own.

The disturbing notion that Gifford embodies in the English sense of self prior to the conflict is how he advocates the active eradication of the base witches within England. He claims that "thou shalt not suffer a witch to liue" (14) and that "God commandeth in his law that all that haue familier spirits should be put to death " (60). The moral implications of genocide are assuaged by claiming that only people touched by witchcraft truly hate those who practice it. Indeed, true christians are above such base
hatred (60). Thus another self is revealed, a confusing blend of fanatical zeal and saintly forgiveness as traditional live-and-let-live national policies clash with the sense that England's back is finally against the wall in its conflict with Spain.

The radical interpretations being made by Gifford are seen more clearly when his work is directly compared to earlier tracts on witchcraft, such as Reginald Scot's The Discouerie of Witchcraft (1584). Scot's basic premise is that there is a dramatic difference between what is "popish and magicall" (82) and even the "heathen and papists" (529). Like Gifford, Scot admits that papists practise idolatry and have "popish provinciall gods" (526), but to Scot these saints are simply a symptom of the primitive nature of the Roman church. Unlike true heathen and witches, papists are christian, just uneducated in the true state of God's church. Such assessments would make English Catholics a tolerable, if deluded segment of society. Men such as Gifford threatened to transform a national crisis into an inquisition.

To return to Whetstone, he certainly is not as radical as Gifford, but his wrath is not limited to the fourteen traitors either, for the "bloodily infected" (Whetstone, 50) Mary is more guilty than her fellows. Her infection, be it an imbalance of humours, transubstantiation, the bloody stain of her victims, or all three, creates an image of something diseased and unclean, a cancer to be removed from the body of England. This is stressed by mentioning why she is in England in the first place: "the Scottes her own people pursued her life, and printed her defame" (49). Once again a foreigner is portrayed both as an enemy of the state and an example of everything true Englishmen should strive
not to become. Unfortunately for Mary's reputation, there seems to be overwhelming evidence that such an assessment was at least partly correct (Smith, 181-188).

From this Englishman's point of view, Mary's "unprincely heart" (49) is pure evil. She is a member of the Queen's family and has plotted against her kin. She has been "protected" by Elizabeth from her enemies for years and returns her love with treachery (50). Indeed, Mary should be delivered "unto the sword of her iustice" (51). This also proved to be a popular opinion amongst Elizabeth's councillors and other writers (see Aske, Elizabetha Triumphans, 7b). The task that remained, already begun by describing Mary using such terms as "unprincely", was to convince Elizabeth of the need to eliminate this menace, and foreign powers not to take drastic measures in response.

Regardless of the consequences, the incessant plots made Mary too dangerous to ignore any longer. By agreeing to the death of her cousin, Mary had demonstrated how little respect she and her allies held for Elizabeth's divine right as monarch. This disregard for the nature of royalty stripped Mary of her own royalty in the eyes of her captors, resulting in her death sentence. Initial fears that Babington's allies might invade England if Mary were to be killed were strong, but by late 1586 evidence of Spanish preparations for the invasion of England was irrefutable, and the conspiracy 'proved' that placing Mary on the throne was its objective. Elizabeth now had more to lose by sparing Mary than she had by executing her. It would not be until February, 1587, that Mary was finally executed. To deflect foreign wrath, Elizabeth claimed that she had tried to spare her cousin and that one of her ministers had taken matters into his own hands. In this way
Elizabeth attempted to exclude herself and her court from any political and social repercussions.

Thus 1587 began with the court taking every precaution to avoid disaster, yet a direct military confrontation with the most powerful Empire in the western world seemed inevitable. As a result, military strategy became a national obsession and a large number of authors sought to appease this frenzy (perhaps with the hope that their skills would be recognized and rewarded with patronage and position). John Polemon was one such author. His earlier work (discussed in Chapter One), which had demonstrated the power and determination of the Imperial war machine, was succeeded by The Second Part of the Booke of Battails, Fought In Our Age (1587).

The second “part” is significantly different from the first. In this second volume, Polemon takes pains to present himself as an impartial translator who has chosen and translated his battle reports carefully as he "would auoide confusion (for hardlie shall you finde two authors that doe agree in the description of one battaile)” (Polemon, The Second Part, ii). As his collection is arbitrary, his impartiality must be questioned, though to his credit his translations here are probably more accurate than those in his first volume, since this text contains a wide variety of writing styles and an aversion to the heroic speeches made by historical figures seen in the first volume. Some battles are described in general terms, others in far more detail, as opposed to the brief and uniform descriptions of the first Book of Battels. This variety of styles indicates a greater desire to
accurately translate his source material, or at least to appear that he is doing so, than is expressed in his first text.

The reason he chose to pay closer attention is most likely because his reader would be. With an impending invasion, such books could now be considered a matter of life and death, as the fate of England probably rested upon the skill and determination of its armed forces, which had long demonstrated that they needed all the help they could get. To safeguard himself from a possible attack as an authority, Polemon now highlights that "if any vntruth shalbe here found.... the fault is not mine" (iii). In doing so, he avoids the tactical debate that would destroy the reputations of 'authorities' for the next decade.

The battles themselves are also strikingly different from those published in Polemon's first book. Most of the battles now involve a Protestant victory over a Catholic adversary. From France to the Lowlands, Spain experiences defeat after defeat. This, of course, would certainly boost the morale of the English when they needed it most. "The Battaile of Langside in Scotland" (92b-95a), which forced Queen Mary into exile, is a well-timed inclusion, as it once again dwells on how unpopular she was with her own subjects and damages her public image by concentrating on her most undesirable features, as in the foolish decisions, treachery, and cowardice she reveals during this battle. She had to flee for her life when she lost. This reminder was important, since Mary's execution upset England's relations with Scotland and France, let alone with Mary's clandestine Catholic allies.
Most important in light of what was to come, however, is the inclusion of three very different battles, "The battaile of Couwenstein dike neere Antwerpe" (34b-35b), "The Battaile of Pescherias" (35b-63b), and "The Battaile of Saint Michaell, fought at the Iles of the Assores" (85a-92b). The first demonstrates the effectiveness of "certain ships set on fire" (34b) against a blockading bridge. The second, an incredibly detailed account of a major action in the Mediterranean between the Christian League and the Turks, demonstrates the power of Spanish Galeases against smaller or slower ships.

Such an account, conspicuous in its scope compared to Polemon's other selections, must have been chosen in order to show the strengths and weaknesses of the Spanish fleet in addition to its preferred order of battle. The third battle is concerned with the Spanish invasion of Portugal and the pursuit and defeat of King Antonio at the Portugese colony in the Azores. This battle serves to support Antonio's claim to the throne and the brutal effectiveness of the Spanish fleet if it manages to board its enemies or engage them at close range. In each case, the raw power of Spain is undeniable, yet, unlike the examples in Polemon's first book (which stressed Spain's near-invulnerability), here the Spanish vainly antagonize foes who defeat them (34b-35b), or who maul them so badly that they do not easily recover (35b-63b). The differences in Polemon's two volumes can be attributed to the approaching Armada and England's increasing concern with how it can be beaten. Works such as this also served as an important salve to the belittled English martial pride, for it demonstrated that even great powers like Spain suffered military disasters. Such a salve would become an important element in the post-armada period as
Englishmen sought to explain how they had acquired such a low reputation earlier in the century.

Some men shared their own martial experiences in print to benefit England's relatively inexperienced levy soldiers. Barnabe Rich, in *A Path-way to Military Practise* (1587), sets out to teach his fellow Englishmen the art of soldiering, "I have undertaken... to set down directions for younge Souldiours not yet fully perfected in Militarie Practise" (Rich, 1b). Indeed, Rich describes in easily understood terms how to maintain discipline and how to arrange the line of battle, as well as basic tactics, the most important being to remember "reuerently to giue thanks to the most high almightly God" (62) when a battle has been won, "for so sometimes from a victor he may become vanquisht" (62). No matter what a soldier does, his ultimate fate rests in the hands of God. Such a belief would certainly encourage religious devotion as England and Spain prepared for battle. It is also a warning against pride, for the soldier has not won the battle, God has granted it to him. This belief is a development of the power of personal morality expressed by such authors as W.S. in the hope of evading conflict in the first place. It is now transformed by the Armada experience into a sense that a moral self is favoured by God.

Even though "euery man is desirous to liue in peace" (8), Rich does claim that a worthy enemy can make a nation stronger (9). Lack of competition makes a realm complacent and doomed to destruction. Therefore Spain is making England strong by challenging her resourcefulness. In this way Rich expresses the notion that the coming
conflict should not be dreaded by Englishmen, but embraced as the challenge that it is. A challenge England is ill-prepared to face (as he spends the rest of the book explaining).

Rich sees serious flaws in the English military structure. He stresses again and again that a soldier must be paid on a regular basis in order to fight efficiently: "a Generall must especially bee well prouided for the payment of his retinewe" (34). Also, to minimize corruption and the dreadful misuse of English lives, officers should be chosen on the basis of merit, not patronage: "Our Captaines are appointed, more for favour then for knowledge" (18). In light of these claims, Barnabe notes that he is willing and available to take a commission. In this way the author transforms a criticism of the government and how it wages war into a challenge, subtly daring them to prove him wrong by granting him a commission. It is a brilliant piece of self-serving rhetoric morally justified by the claim that he would know what to do on the battlefield. The author presents himself as being capable of the task, morally aware of the superiority of peace (thereby granting him God's grace), and certain that the weaknesses of state may be disproven by a public acknowledgement of these virtues. In this way, the English rise to the challenge of the Armada.

Regardless of whatever action England might take to defeat a Spanish army on home soil, the overwhelming evidence was that the English were outclassed. Spain fielded the most experienced and best equipped army in Europe, and England's record in France and the Lowlands over the last fifty years was not going to increase morale
Once again English writers came to the defence of national ego and lied through their pens.

One example of such a fabrication, though not necessarily for such patriotic reasons, was Robert Dudley's *A Briefe Report of the Militarie Services Done in the Low Countries* (1587). Leicester, writing anonymously, defended his actions on the continent. He had much to defend. In 1585, Elizabeth I sent Dudley to aid the Protestant states in their fight against the Spanish. The States General of the United Provinces offered him the post of Supreme Governor in 1586, which he accepted even though Elizabeth had expressly forbidden it. Perhaps thequeen had realized that Leicester was completely unsuited for such a position. He had little military experience and few organizational skills. He soon fled to England leaving disorder and military disaster in his wake (Oosterhoff, *Leicester and the Netherlands 1586-1587*, 184-186). This disobedience coupled with his disgrace made him eager to seek absolution.

Dudley freely praises himself in the text, explaining that he is not only competent, but a national resource. Indeed, "it will appeere that in those few monethes" (29) the English forces captured over twenty cities, towns, and fortresses. Also, "the enimie neuer got one towne.... wherein any one english soldier was" (30). Any losses were a result of treachery or corruption on the part of the States (30). According to the 'anonymous' author, Leicester did not return to England leaving behind a crumbling Lowlands; he insists that he fashioned a collection of cooperative states that were now
fully capable of taking care of themselves (30). The author seeks his pardon by appealing to a sense of national pride in English military might and by defaming his allies. By calling upon national pride and xenophobia, Dudley recognizes the nature of the growing English self, as well as its exclusive nature. Yet the national self was not confident enough to recognize him, for when he died after the Armada in 1588, he was not praised as an English hero, but reviled as a power-hungry fool (Wheeler, "Robert Dudley the Queen's Favourite", 75-76).

The Armada was also increasingly seen as the personal mission of the King of Spain. His naked aggression had already been launched against Portugal, France, and the Lowlands, and was condemned as devilish greed. An excellent example of this is found in George Puttenham's Arte of Englishe Poesie (1589). Puttenham describes an image of Philip II found in the West Indies:

a king sitting on horseback upon a monde or world... with this inscription, Non sufficit orbis, meaning, as it is to be conceaued, that one whole world could not content him.

(George Puttenham, Arte of Englishe Poesie, 87)

It is an easy attack, as needless war and conquest were contrary to the accepted divine order of the world (Rivers, 79).

In Christopher Marlowe's plays, Tamberlaine I and Tamberlaine II (1587), raw aggression and the desire for power for its own sake is portrayed in an increasingly harsh light. Even though the character is based upon an actual historical figure, the conquering tyrant could only remind Elizabethans of Philip II. Like the power-mad warrior, who
means to "be a terour to the world,/ Measuring the limits of his Emperie/ By East and west, as Phoebus doth his course" (I.ii.38-40), Philip II certainly seemed to be a "fiery thirster after sovereignty" (I.i.20). Philip 'took' Portugal from King Antonio, was fighting a war in the Lowlands, and supported a puppet government that threatened to give him France. In addition to all this he was invading England. Such implied images of personal ambition and bloody revenge would grant the English a stronger determination to resist all tyrants. It would also give the English Catholics a moral escape for not opposing their excommunicated queen, for there could be no justifiable crusade simply to appease one man. Such perceptions would become stronger as the Armada was defeated.

Whether the Armada was launched for personal reasons or a true Catholic crusade, England was determined that Philip would not claim his next crown without a fight. In 1587, Drake was despatched and he once again made history at Cadiz. England was spared for one year, and Spain suffered a serious blow to its prestige. Meanwhile both sides prepared.

What happened the following year is the stuff of legend -- the guns of the better-armed and more mobile English fleet, commanded by the greatest sailors England had ever seen, Drake, Hawkins, and Lord Howard, hounded the Spanish fleet, denying it safe harbour. Yet what is clear to anyone who has studied the histories is that what saved England and destroyed the Armada was not so much heroism -- which was demonstrated by both sides -- but Spanish inexperience with the temperamental English Channel, the inability of Philip's fleet to make contact with Parma's army, and the stormy North
Atlantic, which swept away the wounded, sick, and demoralized Armada and dashed many ships against the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Of the one-hundred and thirty ships that formed the Armada, only sixty returned.

Although hesitant at first, England would explode in celebration of the victory (Smith, 208-209), and an overwhelming sense of national solidarity gripped the realm as innumerable broadsheets, ballads, and epideictic poems were printed. A typical example is Thomas Deloney's "A ioyful new Ballad" (1588), in which he proclaims a long list of atrocities planned by the Spanish and how disaster was averted by the grace of God. He thanks "you deare bretheren,/ which beareth Arms this day" (Deloney, 177-178) and God, "who doth encourage Englishmen, /he beat them from our shoare" (163-164). This poem praises the national effort taken to resist the Armada:

That they and we,
and all with one accord:
On Sion hill may sing the praise,
of our most mightie Lord.

(Deloney, "a ioyful new Ballad", 205-8)

Not only are Englishmen to be praised, but it is with God's support that England is victorious. The poem concludes with an image of England as another Jerusalem; and the English together as a people, as Israelites. For the blossoming sense of greatness found in the Elizabethan sense of self, the importance of such imagery cannot be ignored. The English, the new Israelites, are the chosen people of God. This conception of self -- that of the directly favoured of God -- combined with the virtually unstoppable reputation of the ancient Israelites, immediately catapulted England's accepted self-image from one of
peaceful scholasticism (as seen in Chapter One) to one of glorious self-confidence. Englishmen stood as one and stood triumphant, and this sense of a unified community would influence the literature of the rest of the Elizabethan period.

Another celebratory text, *Elizabetha Triumphans* (1588), by James Aske, depicts Elizabeth's arrival and subsequent speech at Tilbury. Images of Englishmen standing shoulder to shoulder in their determination to resist Spain and defend their queen make a powerful statement of national unity even as Aske cries: "Yet English-men Recusants, (as I greeve/ To tearme ye so because my Countrey-men,)... / And turne your hearts unto your sacred Queene" (Aske, 35). The despised Catholics are now seen as fellow Englishmen.

Other texts would create an image of national unity, but not necessarily praise it. Richard Leigh, a dissident priest executed for treason, apparently wrote *A Letter to Don Bernardin Mendoza* (1588), which described the English Armada experience from the viewpoint of the enemy. Leigh bemoans the total lack of English Catholic support for the Spanish Armada, even noting that many protested in writing that "they would adventure their liues in defence of the Queene, whom they named their undoubted Soueraigne Lady and Queene, against all forein forces, though the same were sent from the Pope or by his commandement" (9). He sought reasons for the defeat, blaming such diverse causes as allowing England too much time to prepare, to the notion that the fanatical promises of judgement and enforced conversion expressed in "Cardinall Allens bookes haue done much hurt to the intended inuasion and conquest" (5). Instead of convincing the English...
to support Spain, Leigh argues, Allen steeled England's resolve to fight. Also, the "multitude of bookes published to shewe the greatnes of the Spanishe Nauy, did also hurt" (5), again granting English strategists invaluable information with which to plan their defense.

The text was accepted by scholars as being genuinely written by Leigh until 1956, when a manuscript copy of the text was discovered in Cecil's handwriting, proving that Cecil either wrote the text or rewrote Leigh's original (Ungerer, 48). Perhaps this discovery is not so surprising. The text is an accurate assessment of how Englishmen reacted to the foreign invasion. Yet as a fabrication, what would the government hope to gain by publishing it? Further praise for its martial prowess from a source likely to be believed by the continent is one possibility, but the text has one overriding feature only just being introduced in other works. The sense of national unity which prevented English Catholics from supporting Spain was a complete surprise to a nation which had witnessed such radical suggestions of how to achieve unity as Gifford's call for witch hunts. This realization would shake the established self as seen in the literature up to this point. English Catholics were not the enemy; they were English. Another tract, supposedly written by D.F.R. de M., An Answer to the Untruthes (1589), seems to be another likely fabrication. It complains about Spanish pride and French ignorance, while praising the greatness and glory of the English.

Other texts, such as Richard Field's Advertisements Out of Ireland (1588), sought to capitalize on the martial glory by praising the defeat and capture of the Spanish forces
which survived shipwreck off the coast of Ireland. In one instance, "Sixe hundred Spaniards assaulted by one hundred and fifty Englishe, were vanquished & taken prisoners" (15). Once more, Field argues, Englishmen have defeated their foe, in spite of their superior numbers. The glory influenced much of the literature of this period. George Puttenham, in his *Arte of Englishe Poesie* (1589), could not resist an opportunity to praise England's victory, even in a text dedicated to another subject entirely:

This immeasurable ambition of the Spaniards, if her Maiestie by God's prouidence, had not with her forces, prouidently stayed and retraunched, no man knoweth what inconuenience might in time haue insued to all the Princes and common wealthes in Christendome, who have founde themselues long annoyed with his excessive greatness.

(Puttenham, 87)

In this way Puttenham praises Englishmen as the saviours of Europe, not just themselves. This image, combined with the "inconvenient" nature of the foe, maximizes England's accomplishment while minimizing Spain's. The Elizabethan self attains new heights of glory as Englishmen openly praise their own skills.

Yet in the midst of the English celebrations, several sour notes crept into the English gaiety. Such sour notes, however, rarely appeared in the literature directly, as they were understandably unpopular with an exultant public. Opinions contrary to England's celebratory exultation most often appeared in personal correspondences. Therefore, even though such sources are nominally outside the scope of this study, they are important in understanding the discordant notes that entered publically into the literature later in the period. Likewise, a closer examination of the history of the battle is also important to understand some of the literature which follows.
After the Armada, although neither side had made any formal declaration, there could be no denying that England and Spain were openly at war, and that the infamous Spanish pride would not allow Philip II to accept a peaceful conclusion to the conflict. More than the economic burden of war plagued the English Privy council. As quoted from State Papers Relating to the Defeat of The Spanish Armada, Anno 1588, master-gunner William Thomas complained in connection to his repeated requests for more shot and powder before the Armada appeared:

our sins and our unworthiness caused that suit so little to be regarded, as it may plainly appear at this day... What can be said but our sins was the cause that so much powder and shot spent, and so long time in fight, and in comparison thereof so little harm? (Laughton, ii, 259)

Even though most English ships fought until they were dangerously low on gunpowder, they failed to destroy the Armada in battle and convincingly prove their own superiority in battle. Throughout the Armada battles, the English fleet held every tactical advantage and had encircled a Spanish galleon on more than one occasion, but with few immediate results. To make matters worse, even though the Armada had been swept away in disorder, the English had no way of knowing that it would not soon return. As Howard reminds Walsingham in a letter:

For although we have put the Spanish fleet past the Frith, and I think past the Iseles, yet God knoweth whether they go either to the Nase of Norway or into Denmark or to the Isles of Orkney to refresh themselves, and so to return; for I think they dare not return [to Spain] with this dishonour and shame to their King, and overthrow of their Pope's credit. Sir, sure bind, sure find. A kingdom is a great wager. (Laughton, ii, 59)
England simply had no reliable intelligence of the Armada's whereabouts until Spanish galleons appeared on the coast of Ireland. Nor did the navy have the tangible trophies equal to the scale of their victory as proof that the Spaniards would not dare return. In short, the English lacked the offensive punch to destroy the Spanish fleet. To a cash-strapped nation now at war with an Empire, every pound counted. War booty had been anticipated to make up for the expenses, but very little had been seized. In the midst of their greatest victory the English seamen were feeling impotent.

Contributing to this bitter taste was the fact that the threat had not passed. Parma, the greatest general in Europe, waited across the channel with a massive army. No one knew what he would do. A man with his well-earned reputation for skill, valor, and deception was, to the Elizabethans, capable of anything. Parma was a General who displayed "powers of intellectual analysis and organization which lifted the art of war to a level which the sixteenth century saw but rarely", who would "seek all means to deceive" (Wernham, 9), and who would thereby win his objective. Even Drake feared what he might do: "I [Drake] take him to be as a bear robbed of her whelps; and no doubt but, being so great a soldier as he is, that he will presently, if he may, undertake some great matter" (Laughton, ii, 99). This caution was warranted, but it is also telling at a time when England is praising its military might and new-found confidence. The underlying fear and insecurity of the English is evident in these letters, as is their respect for the abilities of their foes.
Contrary to English fears, Parma chose to release his forces upon the Lowlands. Nevertheless, the threat of his attack cost more English lives than the Armada itself. To resist him, and the Armada, if it were to double-back from a North Sea port, the English fleet had to be maintained at full alert for months, even though many citizens complained that this was unnecessary (Wernham, 5). Disease spread even as ship-board supplies ran low and sailors began to die of starvation and disease.

This sorry fate was bemoaned by many in England. In one example, Howard wrote a letter to Walsingham, complaining about the mistreatment of the men who had so recently safeguarded the realm:

> It were too pitiful to have men starve after such a service. I know her Majesty would not, for any good. Therefore I had rather open the Queen Majesty's purse something to relieve them, than they should be in that extremity; for we are to look to have more of these services; and if men should not be cared for better than to let them starve and die miserably, we should very hardly get men to serve. Sir, I desire [but] that there may be but double allowance of but as much as I [give] out of my own purse, and yet I am not the ablest man in [the realm]; but, before God, I had rather have never penny in the world than they should lack. (Laughton, ii, 183-184)

In spite of a wide-spread desire to release the sailors and end their suffering, England could not risk a cross-channel invasion. In their ignorance of the fate of the Armada and Parma's plans, England was once again at the mercy of Spain. Instead of triumph, these letters signify the feeling of hopelessness that nagged at the edges of the Elizabethan's new, public image of strength. Yet publicly English writers such as Deloney praised
England (and God) for the glory of the victory. Against all expectations England defeated the Armada, but its aftermath would haunt Elizabeth's realm for the rest of her life.

England attacked Portugal in 1589, but because of conflicting priorities and a lack of an overall commander the English army and navy did not cooperate, resulting in the decisive defeat of both. Drake's reputation suffered and England faced a long war. Yet little was written about the defeat, as such things were contrary to the the new public image of England, an image of divine favour and martial glory.

The greatest public challenge to the new self appeared, innocently enough, in 1589. Sir John Smythe's *Certain Discourses Military* (1589) is a serious debate about the superiority of the longbow over the inaccurate arquebus (the most common handgun of the day). However, in addition to a long discussion of military merits, he also explores the social benefits of the weapon -- including a strong body, comradery, and morality (1).

Unfortunately, as the gun was the dominant battle-field weapon, Smythe felt the need to discredit it. He does so by belittling all of its accomplishments and the breed of soldiers who held it as superior to the bow, that is, virtually everyone in Elizabethan England (Oman, 285-392). He would have been dismissed as an eccentric if it were not for his decision to attack the new Elizabethan sense of self. In his blind pursuit of the superiority of the bow and all that was associated with it, he brought the private concerns expressed in 1588 into the light of public debate.

Smythe was as deeply disappointed with England's war effort as William Thomas the gunner or Drake, but his analysis reached the reactionary level of contempt. Smythe's
attack on recent military commanders (Smythe, 4-6) is remarkable considering how it dramatically opposes the public image of Elizabethan martial greatness. Smythe accuses the powers that be (excluding the crown (5)) of misplaced pride and inexperience. Both accusations are understandable in light of the Armada, but Smythe is not content with such excusable behaviour. Drawing upon the same images described in the private letters, Smythe points a condemnatory finger at both their competence and their morality:

> it hath been the use of all great captains... to provide plenty of victual... as also of great store and plenty of powder and shot... some of our such men of war... have provided plenty... only for themselves and their followers, suffering their bands and regiments to struggle and spoil... and sometimes to starve.

(Smythe, 18)

Instead of images of triumphant English brothers, Smythe depicts English incompetence and the callous waste of human life. Even though his remarks are directed at the earlier expeditions in the Lowlands, Smyth's images are too close to the 'unofficial' (but very real) Armada experience to simply be a coincidence.

Not only does he criticize English conduct in the Lowlands, but Smythe condemns the English preparations to repel the Spanish invasion (55-59). He even questions English bravery; "they would scarce abide the landing of the first boats full of sodiers without abandoning both sconce and shore to the enemy" (57-58). Indeed, Smythe directly challenges the popular visions of an Elizabethan self. Long held visions of English moral superiority, so recently enhanced by 'God's divine favour' during the Armada, are also contested:

> Certainly a wonderful pitiful case that any of our such men of war or nation, under the pretense of soldiery and warlike discipline, should nowadays
instead of praying to God... drink and carouse drunk to the health and properity of kings, kingdoms, and states, and that men that have been created by God to His own similitude and likeness should, contrary to His glory, by such filthy disorder make themselves far inferior to the most brute beasts. And this aforesaid detestable vice hath within these six or seven years taken wonderful root amongst our English nation... And this is one of the fruits and merchandise of their discipline that our such men of war have brought in among us.

(Smythe, 28)

This alternative vision of the Elizabethan self is coupled with allegations of deliberate murder and pillage (21), and renders the text's views of the superiority of the longbow as irrelevant. In his text, Smythe has publically brought England's carefully crafted greatness into question.

The court responded to this public criticism by banning Smythe's book as subversive (Hale, "Introduction" to Certain Discourses Military, lvi). Indeed, a concerted effort to discredit and belittle Smythe's opinions was eagerly begun by a number of authors (Hale, lvii). The court was not letting its new-found image as a military power slip away easily.

Yet the damage had been done. Even the plethora of texts concerning the art of war in England that Smythe inspired sought to address his accusation as best they could. In doing so, authors like Humphrey Barwick in A Breefe Discourse (1591); Mathew Sutcliffe in The Practice, Proceedings, and Laws of Arms (1593); and Robert Barret in The Theorike and Practike of Moderne Warres (1598), ensured that Smythe's claims of ancient greatness and modern iniquities would be a constant backdrop to the evolving Elizabethan sense of self.
Some writers sought to attain a happy medium between praise for England and acknowledging that England still was not the equal of Spain. Robert Greene's *The Spanish Masquerado* (1589) consoles Englishmen who were upset that the Spanish had not been soundly defeated in recent battles by mentioning that "the Israelites neuer subdued the Cananites" (256). Through this comparison, the 'new Israelites' are able to salve the wounds caused by their common experience and the realization that they were ill-equipped to deal with the Spanish. The chosen people of God do *not* have to be perfect. They do *not* have to win every battle, for the Israelites could not. All that matters is that the English are irrefutably the chosen people of God. Then, surely to praise England with the comparison, he admires Spain's great strength (Greene, V, 257-8) and discusses how competition makes a nation strong (258).

Greene therefore presents an English people who embody a mixture of every aspect of the dichotomy of public self that publicly emerged from their Armada experience. The English are mighty and moral, yet suffer human failings. This sense of self -- that to be English does not neccessarily mean to be perfect -- would once again be transformed as England settled into the long conflict ahead.
Chapter Three: England Faces Itself (1590-1598)

So should this great imperial Daughter now
Th'admired glorie of the earth, hereby
Haue had all this nere bording world to bow
To her immortalized Maiestie:
Then proud Iberus lord not seeking how
T'attaine a false-conceiued Monarchie,
Had kept his barrass boundes and not haue stood
In vaine attempts t'inrich the Seas with bloud.

(Samuel Daniel, The Civil Wars, Variations, 124)

With renewed confidence, Elizabethans ventured forth to oppose their Hiberian enemies, for Spain no longer left them any choice. This notion of being in a conflict against their will would have a profound effect on the continued development of the English self, as definitions of what it meant to be English once again began to polarize as the conflict dragged on.

The year 1590 saw the passing of the great crisis and martial actions of Elizabeth I's reign. England had emerged from the Armada with a stronger international position, in spite of the disastrous counter-Armada. She had overcome the mightiest fleet of the greatest empire that had been seen since Roman times. In their enthusiasm the Elizabethans attained a consciousness of their greatness and a welling up of national energy and enthusiasm for their new role as Spain's chief antagonist. Poets and courtiers alike paid their homage to the sovereign who symbolized the great achievement. An entire generation of Englishmen had grown up knowing only the Virgin Queen as their head of state, a Tudor monarch supportive of literature and the dramatic arts. As these
young men embarked upon their careers as poets and playwrights, Elizabeth I began to reap the benefits. These selfsame authors were influenced by the events leading up to and including the Armada. Their perception of their world was that of the 'new England' - - valorous in battle and united in the collective pride of being English.

As much as the radical Protestant elements influenced England during the time of crisis, Puritanism and its associated anti-theatrical movement were never popular in Elizabethan England. After the major conflict passed, England once again sought the stability of a religious status quo. No one was more supportive of this than Elizabeth herself. Her form of Anglicanism had served her well in the past, and she saw no reason to change it. Indeed, with the next generation of Anglicans coming to the fore, her Church of England was stronger than ever -- the religious division which so plagued her early reign was being bred out of the country. This did not mean that there were not substantial Catholic and Puritan factions in the country, just that the majority of her subjects were once again content to describe themselves as belonging to the Church of England (McGrath, 299-338).

The Catholic missionaries who descended upon England prior to the Armada were confident that they would be able to inspire the English Catholics to revolt in favour of their fellow Catholics. These men had not counted upon the growing patriotism of the English Catholics, or their distaste for another Spanish monarchy. Not a single Catholic rebelled on behalf of Spain. Instead of armed revolt, Catholic gentlemen made a
protestation of loyalty to the government in defiance of the exhortations of the Jesuit missionaries (McGrath, 161-204).

Such loyalty did not go unrewarded. The 1590s saw a slight relaxation of the penal laws themselves and a marked relaxation in their enforcement (McGrath, 253-298). These measures were in part a recognition of the Catholic loyalty shown, against all expectations, in 1588. In this way, another product of the Armada is revealed. The image of the sinister English Catholic was displaced -- 'evil' Catholicism largely became associated with 'foreign' Catholicism.

Such portrayals of foreign evil were reinforced by the experiences of those Englishmen who had been travelling abroad at the time of the Armada, and who witnessed first hand the foreign reactions to its failure. In one example, Edward Webbe provides an account of the treatment of the Englishman abroad in his autobiographical tale, Rare Things Seene In Jerusalem (1590). Having been captured and forced "to liue in greater slauery" (Webbe, 8) aboard a galley as a rower, Webbe proceeds to tell his amazing story of how he returned to his homeland. Throughout his journey he is constantly harrassed by foreign Catholics and occasionally aided by Englishmen, even Catholic ones. For instance, after being falsely accused of being "an heretike" (22) by Venetian authorities, he is released and meets with "a popish Bishop being an English man which shewed me great friendship, he is called Doctor Poole... with an English gentleman, named maister John Stanley...and the English Cardinal Doctor Allen... where I was often examined" (22). Throughout his account a recurring theme appears -- that
when abroad fellow Englishmen are the only people that an Englishman may expect to
display mercy or friendship. All others are hostile foreigners. This powerful judgement is
significant as it is representative of the strong image of the 'other', the 'non-English', or as
Robert Wilson called them in his play *The Pedlar's Prophecy* (1595): "Alians... of all
nations" (D2a). Such imagery became an increasingly forceful element in Elizabethan
society and literature.

In spite of his good treatment at the hands of English exiles, Webbe is shortly a
captive once more as a "Genowis.... apprehended me.... saying I was a man of great
knowledg and an English spie" (23-3). He is brutally tortured for "seuen monethes" (24)
in an attempt to force a confession, but his captors fail to elicit one. Instead he is released
and he boards a ship (captained by an Englishman) that eventually takes him to England.
Once again the difference in his experiences at the hands of Englishmen and foreign
Catholics is hammered home, even as his story becomes one of patriotic valour as he
endures terrible suffering in the name of his country simply because he was born there.

Webbe also describes the Armada experience from a 'foreign' point of view. Upon
his release from his imprisonment, he is taunted by the Italians around him: "that England
was taken by the Spaniards, and that the Queene of England (whome God long preserue)
was taken prisoner, and was comming towards Rome to doe pennisance: and that her
highnesse was brought thither, through desarts, moist, hilly, and foule places: and where
plaine ground was, hoales.... were digged in the way of her Maiesties passage" (25).
Being loyal to his "Prince and Countrey" (3), he did not believe them: "I trusted God
doubtlesse would defend my prince better, then to deliver her into the handes of her
enemies, wherefore they did greatly reuile me" (25). The Italians are portrayed as
taunting, spoiled children. They are quick to believe anything told to them as they
childishly imagine impractical annoyances for Elizabeth. Such an image is strongly
c contrasted with Webbe's resolute faith as he strives to return home. This comparison
could only serve to further glorify himself and the English nation, a nation protected by
God.

Not that he was the only devoted Englishman in those foreign lands; he describes
the "right honourable the Earle of Drenford a famous man for Chiualrie, at what time he
trauailled into forraine countries, being then personally present, made there a challeng
against all manner of persons whatsoeuer... to fight and combat with any whatsoeuer, in
the defense of his Prince and countrie" (25). This self-styled national champion had
boldly challenged all the Catholic world to personal combat; "for which he was very
highly commended, and yet no man durst be so hardie to encounter with him" (25);
instead they grant him the title of "Chiuallier and Noble man of England" (25). Once
again an Englishman surpasses his continental enemies, not just in compassion and
friendship, but in patriotism and bravery.

As English self-esteem reached new heights, the enemies of the state began to
become less and less impressive, eventually achieving the lowest stature associated with
characters such as Shakespeare's Joan of Arc. Since Joan was such a powerful foe, it is
telling how she is depicted in Skakespeare's play. She is both a "damnèd sorceress"
(1HenVI.III.ii.38), and a shockingly promiscuous one: "(There were so many) whom she may accuse" (V.iv.81). Just as Shakespeare transformed France's heroine into little more than a perverse witch consorting with demons, in the wake of the 'invincible' Armada, as the give and take of great battles once more settled into a proxy war, the Spanish king Philip II, the chief architect and driving force behind the 'Enterprise of England', became a figure of ridicule. Thomas Bastard's "Epigr.10 De Phillipo Hispaniae Rege", from his miscellany Chrestoleros (1598), describes how Philip II tries to secure heaven with his army: "Then he alone may purchase Paradise,../.../ With hired armes which renteth Christendome" (Bastard, IV, "Epigr.10", 4-7). Samuel Daniel's Philip II, as he appears in The Civil Wars (1595) is also a darkly comic figure: "interpos'd his greedit medling handes/ In othert affayres, t'aduance his owne" (Daniel, CW, 125).

John Lyly's play, Midas (1592), is certainly an extreme example of this tendency to belittle powerful foes. The character and story of King Midas is a thin veil for Philip II. In fact the entire parable is usurped by endless images of the Spanish King's greed and ambition in trying to rule the world: "My pride the gods disdaine; my pollicie men.... because of my ambition beyond measure" (Lyly, V. iii. 54-58). Greed and ambition were terrible sins in Elizabethan England (Rivers, 106-111), and 'Midas' takes them to such extremes that he is seen as satanic: "I haue written my lawes in blood, and made my Gods of golde" (III. i. 28). No longer just a tyrant, Midas corrupts everything he is associated with, and a note of authorial anti-Catholicism is noticeable, as his church worships the very same golden gods as he does, thoroughly corrupting his realm.
His greed knows no bounds, and he seeks more and more power to sate his appetites, using any means possible, such as assassination, to achieve his desires: "Haue not I entised the sucts of my neighbor Princes to destroy their natural Kings?" (III. i. 37-37). He even attempts an invasion of foreign shores; "Haue not I made the sea to groan under the number of my ships: and have they not perished... To what kingdome haue not I pretended clayne?" (III. i. 33-40). But every one of his bold claims is countered by failure or the sense of impending disaster. It is soon clear that the corruption of his spirit is destroying his empire, as he conquers regardless of the consequences it may have for his own people, or whether he can maintain control once he has captured a new realm: "all his Territories wauering.... hee that hath countcht so manie Kingdomes in one Crowne, wil haue his Kingdome scattered into as manie Crownes as hee possesseth Countries" (IV. iv. 19-21). Like Tamberlaine before him, his own obsessions will destroy him and bring misery to his nation. This belittling of a man so feared and reviled only a few short years before once again stresses how much confidence England reaped from her experiences with Spain. Tamburlaine has fallen to the level of a self-destructive fool, glorifying England all the more.

Given such a strongly negative image of Philip II in Midas, the just barely concealed identity and nature of the heroes as Englishmen comes as no surprise. They live "in that Iland where all my [Midas'] nauie could not make a breach" (III. i. 47). They resist him, and in so doing contribute to all the disruption and destruction that Midas feared. The play even alludes to Drake and Norrey's expedition to Portugal, "I see all his
expeditions for warres are laid in water... and suffers the enemies to bid vs good morrowe at our owne doores" (IV. iv. 10-14). In this way, even an English defeat is transformed into a victory as the heroes disrupt the realm. Their brave actions force King Midas to realize that he must change or face ruin. At the conclusion of the play, Midas seeks redemption as he discards immoral courtiers and "vow[s] to shake off al enuies abrode, and at home all tyrannie" (V. iii. 115-6). He is forgiven and peace reigns once more.

Yet the pre-armada peace did not return to England. The Virginia colony, having mysteriously disappeared, was no longer a priority in the face of Spanish aggression (Lacy, The Lost Colony, 4). Other enterprises, both financial and military, also seemed to be doomed to failure. The years of decline followed swiftly. The financial cost of the Armada campaign had been immense, and with no money to launch expeditions to take full advantage of the victory, England's naval war effort soon languished. Some thirty years had elapsed since Hawkins' first voyages, and now the Spaniards were no longer novices at true naval warfare. One by one the great men began to fall from the limelight. First came the disaster of the Battle of Flores in 1591, when Grenville died in the last fight of the Revenge. This was a great shock to the Elizabethans since the Revenge (Drake's flag-ship in the battle against the Armada) was the first English naval vessel ever to fall to the Spaniards. More importantly still, she had been the prototype of the galleons of Hawkins' new navy, and her loss caused grave concerns about the future balance of power on the seas (Kemp, 131).
This battle is recounted by Sir Walter Raleigh in *A Report of the Truth of the Fight About the Iles of the Acores (The Last Fight of the Revenge)* (1591). Raleigh naturally describes the action in the most flattering way possible. The *Revenge* probably could have escaped the ambushing Spanish fleet if Grenville had been willing to flee, but "Sir Richard utterly refused to turne from the enimie, alledging that he would rather chose to dye, then to dishonour him selfe, his countrie, and her Maisties shippe, perswading his companie that he would pass through the two Squadrons, in despight of them: and enforce those of Siuill to give him way" (Raleigh, 7). Engaging the entire Spanish fleet at point-blank range, Grenville had the misfortune of having a much larger Spanish ship sail windward of the *Revenge* which "becalmed his sailes in such sort, as the shippe could neither make way nor feele the helme" (8). The English then fought a desperate fifteen-hour long battle against fifteen Spanish warships, sinking two and severely damaging several others, before they ran out of powder and found themselves unable to offer further resistance. In spite of his intentions of scuttling the ship, Grenville offered to surrender to the Spanish so that his crew might survive. Raleigh describes Grenville's pride and his subsequent defeat in the most heroic terms possible, ensuring that the loss of his old flagship would be a glorious victory of the English spirit.

Compared to this display of valour, the rest of the English fleet seemed conspicuously absent, entirely inappropriate in a story of English heroism. To combat this, Raleigh continues at some length (often in technical naval terms) to explain why the rest of the English fleet did not rescue the *Revenge*. The most obvious and yet controversial
reason in terms of English naval pride was common sense. Howard, he says, wanted to turn back to the Revenge's assistance, but "the rest would not condescend" to commit the remaining five of the Queen's ships "to be a praie to the enemy... without hope or any likelihood of preuailing: thereby to diminish the strength of her Majesty's Nauy, & to enrich the pride & glory of the enemie" (16). The fact that England lost such a famous ship and that fellow Englishmen could not come to its aid was a terrible blow to the so far invulnerable English navy, and with it national reputation. However, to minimize this, Raleigh focusses upon the heroism displayed by the combatants, and the "verie hugeness" (15) of the Spainish fleet that was required to capture the Revenge. Englishmen still took pride in the fact that Grenville put up such a long and devastating attack in spite of overwhelming odds. Raleigh concludes with a warning against trusting the Spanish, "such a nation of rauinous strangers" (22), who wish to mislead Raleigh's reader as to the true events concerning the Revenge as much as they hunger for empire.

Nevertheless, the loss of the Revenge in many ways heralded the beginning of the end of naval glory for Elizabethan England, the principal source of English martial pride up to this point. Not that this loss marked an end to the increased opinions Elizabethans held of themselves. It instead forced writers to glorify the Armada and search further into the past for examples of English glory.

Frobisher died in 1594, mortally wounded on an expedition sent to help the Protestant French King Henry IV against Spain. Drake and Hawkins led a disastrous expedition to the Caribbean from which neither returned, Hawkins dying at Porto Rico in
1595 and Drake in Porto Bello in 1596. There was a last glimmer of glory the same year, when Essex and Raleigh sacked Cadiz, but it was England's last significant success in her long war with Philip II of Spain. Of all the great Elizabethan sailors, only Raleigh would live on into the Jacobean period, and he would be executed in 1618 -- a victim of political expediency as his Stuart monarch tried a different approach in coming to terms with the renewed power of Spain.

Raleigh's account of the death of the Revenge also includes a fascinating introduction in which he describes the actions of the English fleet as they opposed the Spanish Armada. There are a number of discrepancies, the most important being the number of ships Raleigh reports as being involved in the conflict. Two hundred and forty Spanish vessels, he claims, engaged thirty English defenders, assisted by "a few of our owne Marchants" (2), which is an excellent way of acknowledging participation without losing the dramatic effect of a valiant defence against superior numbers. Raleigh depicts a small number of valiant heroes who fight against overwhelming odds and succeed. English pride is stoked up before he discusses the capture of the Revenge, in order to minimize the disaster. Such a description is symptomatic of a trend in English literature that was approaching the point of becoming farce -- that of overstating England's famous victories. Writers seem to be stressing that not only has England been victorious against overwhelming odds, she always has.

Shakespeare certainly embraced this notion in Henry V (1598) when the battle of Agincourt is recounted. Historically, the battle was a disaster for France with a
surprisingly low cost for the English, yet Shakespeare takes this to an extreme; "ten thousand French/ That in the field lie slain" (Hen V, IV. viii. 72-73) compared to the loss of only twenty-nine Englishmen. In the pre-atomic age this number would be impossible. Shakespeare chose to use Holinshed's Chronicle as the source for his play, even though it had the most radical estimation of the losses taken by both sides of all Tudor chronicles. So why would the playwright choose to present such a disproportionate account of the battle at the risk of shattering the illusion of reality a play relies on for dramatic effect? The answer is simply that there was little chance of this happening as his audience was prepared to believe that an Englishman was capable of doing anything, particularly in battle. In works such as this, the Elizabethan self was now a thing of limitless potential, with the potential of a limitless ego. This ego, however, was necessarily tempered by the knowledge of the weak stature of England during the Armada, as discussed by Smythe and his fellow military theorists throughout this period (see Chapter Two).

This uneasy legacy is also seen in Henry V, when the French Dauphin comments:

  For peace itself should not so dull a kingdom,
  Though war nor no known quarrel were in question,
  But that defences, musters, preparations
  Should be maintained, assembled and collected
  As were a war in expectation.

  (Henry V, II. iv. 16-20)

Shakespeare avoids any audience discomfort that would be caused by this acknowledgement by having the foolish Dauphin speak the words, even though the message is reinforced when France loses the war.
Therefore, even though the English self-confidence admits no limitation, it cannot claim national perfection. For every English Henry V, there is often an English Falstaff to acknowledge social weakness. However, such an earthly character is (like Smythe himself) belittled, marginalized and clearly superceded by the moral English champion.

Agincourt, noticeably free of Falstaff, is therefore not presented as a twist of fate, but a consistent trait of Englishmen at arms; "he is bred out of that bloody strain/.../ Of that victorious stock, and let us fear/ The native mightiness and fate of him" (II. iv. 51-64). Indeed, throughout Shakespeare's history plays his audience is presented with an English legacy of glory, such as the Duke of Alençon recounts after the French are repulsed by the English with heavy losses:

Froissart, a countryman of ours, records
England all Olivers and Rolands bred
During the time Edward the Third did reign.
More truly now may this be verified;
For none but Samsons and Goliases
It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!

(1HenVI. I. ii. 29-34)

Or when Shakespeare praises Henry VI's lineage:

Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,
Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;
And, after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth
Who by his prowess conquerèd all France:
From these our Henry lineally descends.

(3HenVI, III. iii. 81-87)
And so, England has always conquered its foes whenever the people have rallied together to do so, with the Armada as the latest proof of this. Yet one common trait to each victorious example is always seen as key -- national unity. The Wars of the Roses and even Mary I's loss of Calais demonstrate that whenever England is locked in a domestic struggle she becomes vulnerable. In response to the praising of Henry VI's bloodline, one simple question is posed; "how haps it in this smooth discourse/ You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost/ All that which Henry the Fifth had gotten?" (3 Henry VI, III. iii. 88-90). The people of England cannot be beaten by foreign foes, but they can defeat themselves: "England is safe, if true within itself" (3HenVI, IV. i. 40). This theme was of great concern to the English as the conflict with Spain dragged on, and a number of works are dedicated to the subject. Thus the experiences of the Armada were once again brought to the forefront as Elizabeth aged and the possibility of a civil war loomed ever closer. If, as a united realm England is victorious, then as a divided people she could fall, as demonstrated by Shakespeare's first tetralogy and even Samuel Daniel's The Civil Wars (1598).

Indeed, according to Daniel, civil division has already cost England an empire. The price of the Wars of the Roses was a delay in England's naval exploration and associated conquest. It will be an empire which Henry Robarts ("The Trumpet of Fame") describes as having:

so much store of wealth,
That Phillips Regions may not be more stord,
With Pearle, jewels, and the purest gold.
(Wright, 187)
In short, the English would have had the Spanish empire for themselves: "About this quarrell, fatall to our land/... /Had ioynd the Westerne Empire to the same" (Daniel, CW, Variations, 123). Once again England's greatest enemy has been her own division.

Somewhat fancifully, Daniel then continues to describe a glorious image of such an imperial reversal:

So should this great imperiall Daughter now
Th'admired glorie of the earth, hereby
Haue had all this nere bordring world to bow
To her immortalized Maiestie:
Then proud Iberus lord not seeking how
T'attaine a false-conceiued Monarchie,
Had kept his barraine boundes and not haue stood
In vaine attempts t'inrich the Seas with bloud.
(Samuel Daniel, CW, Variations, 124)

Such a stark portrait hammers home the power of domestic unity. Also, by looking back to a past age of civil division, Daniel asserts that his England has finally attained this unity.

More noticeable still is the rhetoric Daniel uses to describe the two hypothetical monarchs -- they are described in terms already found in early modern English descriptions. Thus empire, Daniel is suggesting, or the lack of it, would not change either monarch (and by extension their subjects). Like Midas, Philip II is still a power-mad tyrant waging needless wars. Elizabeth, even as an empress, is still favoured by God.

Such consistent imagery praises the "natural", predestined natures of the two monarchs. They are what God willed them to be. This sense of predestination is an important one to
the English self, for even though English greatness was always in debate since the
Armada, if the English are great it is because it is God's will.

Thus, in spite of any melancholy over what might have been, these were still
works of triumph, of patriotism, of vital importance in understanding the direct influence
the Spanish Armada had upon the literature and people of Elizabethan England.
Englishmen had become proud of themselves.

However, such a reaction was not without its influences also. The rising national
pride, associated with the rise to prominence of essentially middle-class men as Drake,
caused unease in many sectors of society that feared a collapse of the traditional social
order. One such man was I.M., who wrote A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of
Servingmen (1598), a work strongly concerned with the disruption of the social order. He
sees the increased pride and its associated lack of humility as working to the dissolution
of the social order, as an unravelling of the entire social fabric; "how then commeth it to
passe that so many heresies are crept into one Religion, so many diseases into one body,
& so many aspyring mindes into this Commonwealth of England?" (I.M., 7). Just as in
1581 an author wrote that "in Englondeoure cheif streingthe [is] to be in servingmen and
yomen" (W.S., 84), so I.M. makes the same claim, though in his case he is discussing
social stability, not conscripted levies. In making the social order so pliable, I.M. claims
that the Elizabethans have set the trap for their own fall -- ambition. His opinion was,
perhaps, not widely shared, but it is still an important concern, since he wonders if
England will now suffer the same social discord that has ravaged her enemies by
becoming a country wracked by ambition. Such ambition is expressed in Robarts' poem, "Lancaster his Allarums" (1595): "He [Lancaster, who was once a merchant] is a lamp to light you one, / Fame pallace to attaine:/ whereby your names shall euer liue,/ if Fame you seeke to gaine" (Wright, 188). Where I.M. claims that there is strength in a highly regimented society, Robarts praises the opportunity for social advancement fame can bring. Thomas Heywood, in The Four Prentices of London (1594), depicts the story of the four sons of a former Earl who are made apprentices by their destitute father in order to improve their social status. The sons quickly become disenchanted with their lives and so they run away to join a crusade, resulting in chaos for the entire family. Thomas Bastard, in his miscellany Chrestoleros (1598), took I.M.'s fears to an extreme:

A wonderfull scarcey will shortly ensue,
Of Butchers, of Bakers, of all such as brewe.
Of Tanners, of Taylers, of Smithes and the rest.
Of all occupations that can be expres'd,
In the yeare of our Lord, six hundred and ten.
I thinke: for all these will be Gentlemen.
(Bastard, V, "Epigr.18")

Bastard's tongue-in-cheek opinion of I.M.'s fears does little to dismiss them, however, for ambition -- not just ambition fulfilled -- can greatly disrupt a society. Such differing interpretations of the value of England's new self would never be settled.

Although the typical English writer still was not a "bragging Spaniard" (2 Henry IV, V. iii. 125), the confidence and pride demonstrated in the literature in the post-Armada period evolved into widespread confidence in the English as a people and a
nation. Yet, as seen in works like Henry Robarts' "The Trumpet of Fame" (1595), the Elizabethans still had to define themselves by way of comparison. They had no better example than their continental enemies:

The Spaniardes are a warlike nation,
We are more warlike as they know and feare,
But they are strong to make invasion.
But we more strong to chase them euery where,
But they haue multitudes to make supplye.
We are more peopled, fuller of fresh blood.
They loue their Prince and country zealously.
But we more zealous for our soueraignes good.
Yet we should feare them for our wickednesse.
They are more wicked, here we onely lesse.

(Bastard, VI, "Epigr.25")

This poem, from Thomas Bastard's Chrestoleros, clearly demonstrates the evolved Elizabethan perception of a national self. For twenty years they had been at odds with the greatest Empire in their world and survived. As a community they had defeated the greatest efforts of their rival. They had endured religious extremism and chose moderation. The realm which had so feared war with Spain now publicly considered itself its military equal and its moral and religious superior. The English had gained a confidence in themselves and in the future, and a determination to protect it. It was a confidence that would carry the English nation through the perils of the decades to come.

1Patrick McGrath examines the Elizabethan religious settlement as well as the Catholic and Puritan influences on their society in his book, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I. He discusses the development and resolution of
particular periods in faith-specific chapters, such as "The Triumph of the Establishment 1590-1603: The Puritans in Disarray", pages 299-338.

Conclusion

It is doubtful whether the outcome of the campaign can have had a profound effect on either English or Spanish morale, when allusions to it in the literature of the time, outside propaganda and historiography, are so few, and when evidence of the abiding Spanish confidence and growing English unease is so plentiful in the 1590s.

(Fernández-Armesto, "Armada Myths: the Formative Phase", 26)

This paper has attempted to examine and assess the evolution of the Elizabethan sense of self as witnessed through the literature of the period. The Armada period represented a time of great strife, yet by 1598 the Elizabethan self had blossomed in ways unforeseeable before the conflict. Thus, after an examination of twenty-two years of Elizabethan self-evolution, one can only conclude that F. Fernández–Armesto -- the author of the epigraph to this conclusion -- is mistaken. Indeed, the tide of emotions and national sentiment the Armada inspired in the English is clearly seen in the literature.

In the decade prior to the Armada, Elizabethan England was inexperienced with war yet increasingly aware of the threat posed by Spain. The gradual intensification of the Anglo-Spanish rivalry heightened domestic tensions, as the Protestant majority gazed warily at their Catholic counterparts. One product of this foreign tension and domestic suspicion was a marked increase in religious and literary intolerance. Even as Zelauto praised England's "ciuilytie" (Munday, Zelauto, 36), John Stubbs lost his hand.

Other consequences are seen in the literature. Since the Elizabethans were so inexperienced in warfare, a large number of tracts were written so that lessons could be gleaned from previous battles -- most focussed on those involving the Spanish army.
Other texts complained about the generally poor condition of the Elizabethan army. Since Spain was such a militarily dominant power, authors such as Rich sought to make the army as efficient as possible. Meanwhile, literary references to English greatness were concerned with the long state of national peace, commonly assuming a stance of moral superiority over their continental neighbors based on this.

Some authors such as Henry Robarts sought to muster what glory England could garner from recent memory. Others, such as Gascoigne, Polemon, and Rich sought to stress the strength and prowess of Spain, or the virtues of such national heroes as Drake. All wrote in the hope that these examples would inspire their countrymen to follow them -- and better prepare themselves for the conflict. Many more, however, such as W.S., expressed their confidence in the tested ways of diplomacy and learning, mentioning that Englishmen were ill-suited for battle. All they could hope for was that their 'moral superiority' would prevail, a superiority based on religious grounds as well as the belief that Spain's aggression was unwarranted. Perhaps it was this belief which prompted the national rivalry to be seen as a conflict in which the most moral society (and therefore higher in God's favour) would win.

Immediately prior to the Armada, Elizabethan society suffered an upheaval as a result of the now desperate position it faced. Prior to the campaign, the generally religiously tolerant fabric of social unity, typifying England since Elizabeth's first religious settlements, frayed as Catholics were persecuted and radical Protestants gained
greater influence. Religious intolerance grew, eventually reaching its peak before the battle as Gifford recommended witch hunts to root out the Catholics.

The Armada immediately influenced the Elizabethan self. A new found confidence swept up the Elizabethans in the belief that they were the chosen people of God -- the new Israelites. Yet this belief in national superiority was eventually tempered by the knowledge that England was unprepared to have effectively defended itself, should the Spanish have landed their army. This awareness of weakness, publicly expressed by Smythe, compounded with accusations of military and political corruption and coupled with private disappointment over the naval actions, would form an undercurrent to future Elizabethan claims of greatness.

The religious intolerance which had marked the literature before the Armada refocussed itself. English Catholics had remained loyal and they gained status as Englishmen as their reward. The Elizabethans faced the Armada and it inspired them to greatness even as it reminded them of their inadequacies.

The decade following the Armada is a stark contrast to the pre-Armada period. The comparative religious tolerance that was inspired by the Armada at home allowed Englishmen to focus on their foreign foes. Writers who had been abroad at the time of the Armada told tales which made Englishmen distinctly aware that they were isolated in the world, as Englishmen decided that they could rely only on each other. The loss of the Revenge, coupled with lacklustre military achievements, did not stop the popular praise of Elizabethan military strength. Instead, the focus once again shifted towards the moral
superiority of the English people, citing the "fact" that they were the chosen people of God as proof of this. Indeed, the chosen people, who had beaten the mightiest Power in Europe, were now depicted in their literature as being capable of achieving anything on the battlefield, and indeed, perhaps they always had. All that was required for such a victory was social unity.

As the undeclared Anglo-Spanish war dragged on, national unity remained an important theme in Elizabethan literature. The civil paranoia which wracked the pre-Armada period as Englishmen turned on each other was now condemned as being as wasteful as a civil war. In the literature, the defeat of the Armada was depicted as a national event, an event every Englishman had participated in -- even the English Catholics helped by not assisting the Spanish. The result of this unity, to the writers of the time, was glaringly obvious -- the salvation of England.

Yet the new-found self-confidence still had to somehow acknowledge England's embarrassing state of unpreparedness and inexperience that she revealed in her military endeavors. Such military and social debate was continued by a long series of texts (inspired by Smythe) throughout the post-Armada period, and occasionally appeared in more popular literature. One product of this was the way debates about the art of war were changed by the Armada. Prior to the campaign, war and its pursuit were depicted as a series of battles dominated by tactics -- and best avoided. After the Armada this belief was constantly supplemented by a discussion of the morality of war and soldiering, and how to pursue them while maintaining or even improving the other.
This uncomfortable clash between Elizabethan glory and disturbing reminders of their own failures was solved by belittling the embodiments of English baseness, which was a concept found at the very heart of the dispute. In this way, characters such as Falstaff, who was physically and morally removed from his audience -- certainly more so than the glorious, soliloquy rich, but morally human, Henry V -- served to sway public perception of the Elizabethan self. If the average Englishman is closer to Henry V than Falstaff in temperament and physique, then it appeared that the English were more likely to perform his deeds than Falstaff's. In such ways the uncomfortable questions about England's military performance were avoided.

Others witnessed the pride with which the average Englishman looked upon the Armada and grew fearful. Pride begets the desire for recognition, and writers such as I.M. looked to the future with concern, as servants sought glory and social advancement. By 1598, England had faced itself in the penetrating light of the Armada and feared that the very same confidence it had gained from the Armada might shatter the nation that the Armada had sought to subdue.

After an examination of the Armada period, one is thus able to see a distinct change in the Elizabethan self and what it was perceived as being capable of. The scholars and merchants of the pre-Armada period, who would have nothing to do with battle, had learned from the Armada experience. The English self became confident, even to a fault, as a unified nation was depicted as being capable of anything with God’s grace.
The Elizabethan sense of the other, at first focussed squarely on religion and their fellow countrymen, finally rested on foreigners. Where the pre-Armada literature had been dominated by the national superiority of the Church of England as opposed to Catholicism, the post-Armada period concerned itself with depictions of England’s social superiority over their continental foes. Even depictions of their foes changed over time; the pre-Armada juggernaut of Europe was the post-Armada laughing stock. This was especially true of Philip II, who was ultimately depicted as a buffoon.

The Elizabethan sense of self as depicted in Elizabethan literature also undoubtedly changed as a reaction to the Spanish Armada. It was a change which granted the public self a sense of national unity and confidence, a sense of martial greatness, and a belief in the English as the chosen people of God. Yet the cost of these gains is also seen in the literature. England paid for its long conflict with Spain in blood, gold, and a potentially successful American colony. The Armada taught the Spanish that their ships were obsolete, and they quickly replaced them with English-style galleons -- denying England the easy piracy that had inspired pre-Armada England. The new-found pride threatened to split the country once more as common men sought their own piece of national glory. The Elizabethan self had gained so much from the Armada, but the cost was high.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly to the long-term development of the English self, was how the Armada-period would inspire the Elizabethans. Men such as Drake, who had been the object of increasing hero worship in the pre-Armada period,
unwittingly transferred their glory onto their fellow Englishmen by fighting among them against the Armada. As the Armada-period closed and the larger than life, national heroes passed away, their mantles were passed onto their comrades-in-arms -- the English nation. Englishmen, who were once content to hero-worship, looked to the future with a determination to ensure their heroes' glory -- and England's -- would live on undiminished by time:

*Indie* which so long fearde, now hath our *Drake*,
Her feare lyes buried in her golden sands.
Which we will oft reuisite for his sake,
Till we haue ransomde him out of her handes.
You which will venter for a goolden pray,
Go on braue lads, by *Water* is your way.
(Bastard, Chrestoleros, "Epigr.26")

Indeed, F. Fernández-Armesto could not be further from the truth.
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