

PREFACE

In November 2016 I attended the In the Light of Gloriana Conference arranged by the Gloriana Society, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603). On this occasion I also made a visit to Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, a short trip by train north of London. It is a lavish estate owned by the Marquess of Salisbury who is kind enough to open his home for especially interested visitors outside of season. You may have seen the exterior or interior of the house unknowingly as it is a popular location spot for filming. It has appeared in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), *The Golden Age* (which happens to be about Elizabeth I, 2006), and *Paddington 1* and *2* (2014 and 2017), amongst many other films. My reason for visiting was that I knew they were in possession of at least two portraits of Queen Elizabeth I of England: The *Ermine Portrait* (1585) and the *Rainbow Portrait* (c. 1600-03). This was before I had decided on my thesis or which painting to focus on. When I observed the *Rainbow Portrait* hung up on one of the walls of the great Marble Hall, I felt a bit star struck. Seeing this royal figure depicted like a goddess, surrounded by a historic environment with original interior from 1611, convinced me that I wanted to know more about this painting and the subject therein.

During my time of working with this thesis, I have had great help and support from different parties whom I would like to give thanks. I am most grateful to the Marquess of Salisbury and his staff at Hatfield House for letting me visit and observe the *Rainbow Portrait*. Special thanks to the different people and institutions who have aided me in my search for information and assisted me with digital photographs of the selected illustrations which I am allowed to print in my master thesis: curator Eleri Lynn and Historic Royal Palaces, the Gloriana Society, Royal Museums Greenwich, the National Portrait Gallery in London and the Heinz Archive & Library, as well as Dr Laura Popoviciu, curator at Information and Research (Historical) with the Government Art Collection in London, thanks to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Royal Collection Trust, Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Walker Art Gallery in London, the Boston Public Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the National Maritime Museum in London, and finally Getty Research Institute. An additional thanks to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) for allowing me to print this text, to Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen, my supervisor and mentor, as well as to Julia L. McArthur for proofreading the language. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their moral support.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Before heading on to my thesis, I would like to present the setting of which Elizabeth's reign was a consequence. The decades leading up to her own coronation were a turbulent time, which hardened and prepared her for how to deal with difficult tasks during her rule. When Henry VII (1457-1509), the first ruler of England of the Tudor lineage, died in 1509, he left behind a fortune built upon an efficient tax politics. However, his successor, Henry VIII (1491-1547), was very fond of living the good life of eating and drinking, and occasionally declaring war on France to show who was most powerful. When he died in 1547, his son Edward VI (1537-1553) was left ruling a country in economic distress. He was young and of a poor health, so he had councillors and an eager uncle on his mother's side, the appointed Lord Protector Edward Seymour (1506-1552), to rule in his stead. Because of this and of the continuous discussion of having a Catholic opposed to a Protestant England, Edward VI left the kingdom in political difficulties when he died in 1553. The religious quarrel was a continuation of a discussion which started with Henry VIII. He had turned Protestant to be able to divorce Katherine of Aragon (1485-1536) in favour of Anne Boleyn (1501-1536), the mother of Elizabeth I. Edward VI followed in his father's Protestant footsteps. His sister Mary I (1516-1558), the first Queen of England and a Catholic like her mother Katherine of Aragon, managed to quiet down the situation by executing Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554), who had a Protestant claim to the throne. Mary I again made England Catholic and did so efficiently through the prosecution and execution of the Protestant citizens. Because of this she decreased in the affection and popularity of her people and was famously nicknamed "Bloody Mary". When Mary I died in 1558, presumably of uterine cancer, Elizabeth I was made Queen of England as the true heir, continuing the Protestant reign of her father, Henry VIII.

1. THESIS

During her reign, innumerable images of Elizabeth I were created. I am going to concentrate on one of them, which is the *Rainbow Portrait* (c. 1600-03). I am curious about the staging of Elizabeth in the portrait and how it was inspired from contemporary beliefs, practices and politics. Relevant themes in relation to this are the Medieval Period's belief in the "king's two

bodies”, the “mask of youth”, and the power of representation in royal portraits. Another crucial aspect to the understanding of the image design is related to any documentary evidence of two entertainments of 1602. Both primary and secondary sources have been actively exploited in my research to understand the historic Elizabeth as well as the politics behind the depiction of this queen regnant in the *Rainbow Portrait*. Which leads me to my thesis:

I argue that the *Rainbow Portrait* is a true representation of Elizabeth in her position as the Queen of England, based on the allegorical and symbolical elements therein. As it was painted at the end of her lifetime, or maybe even after her death, and based on the iconography and all the allegorical details as well as on the fact that it was arguably commissioned by her Secretary of State, Sir Robert Cecil 1st Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612), I would dare to suggest that this very portrait sums up the reign of Elizabeth and that it in itself is a symbol of her rule as the “golden age” of England. This rises some additional questions: How can the *Rainbow Portrait* be considered as a true representation of Elizabeth even though it is not a naturalistic “likeness”? Why are contemporary sources like the Bacton Altar Cloth (c. 1590s) and the poems by the poet Sir John Davies (1569-1626) relevant to the interpretation of the portrait? What does all this tell us about the staging of Elizabeth as Queen of England? I hope that through this text I answer these questions in a way that enlightens our understanding of the *Rainbow Portrait*.

This is not the first time this portrait has been taken apart to be analysed and then put together in different contexts. A new interest in this portrait has occurred regarding the bodice Elizabeth wears in the painting. Historic Royal Palaces is presently renovating a piece of fabric known as the Bacton Altar Cloth, which has long been identified as having belonged to Elizabeth. However, Eleri Lynn, fashion curator and historian at Historic Royal Palaces, has recently identified it as the same fabric as the bodice worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait*, and writes about this in her book *Tudor Fashion* (2017). This identification has reengaged the discussion of the importance of dress as shown in historical paintings and their significance in real life. If the Bacton Altar Cloth really is of the same fabric as Elizabeth’s bodice, the image is being pulled into the real world using existing objects. This is contrasting with what has previously been stated about the portrait as a complete allegory of the queen. The rediscovery of the fabric adds to the authenticity-question of the portrait’s iconography. I have been informed by Lynn herself that the Bacton Altar Cloth is to be displayed sometime during 2019.

2. RESEARCH HISTORY, SOURCES, AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The article *Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth* (1987) by Mary C. Erler introduced me to two entertainments of 1602 which are believed to be relevant to the understanding of the iconography of the *Rainbow Portrait*. This inspired how I chose to structure my own thesis, so I consider my text as an extension of Erler's article.

The two entertainments of 1602 were held in honour of Elizabeth, and she herself was the main guest. The first was arranged by Thomas Egerton (1540-1617), the Lord Keeper, and his wife Alice Spencer (1559-1637), Countess of Derby, at their country estate Harefield in Middlesex, between 31 July and 2 August. The second event, which happened to be the last entertainment given for Elizabeth during her reign, was held by Cecil on 6 December at his new house in the Strand, Salisbury House. I believe that the various symbols within the portrait can be better understood through looking at these two entertainments. They are relevant to the *Rainbow Portrait* because of the shared or similar elements. On both occasions, Davies was asked to write the script of the entertainments which included allegorical figures exchanging words, gifts to the queen, songs, speeches, lotteries and feasts.¹ Additionally, there is the relationship between Davies and Cecil, the possible patron of the painting, which is worth considering in the analysis of the portrait as Davies could be a direct influence on the iconography of the painting.

In addition to Erler, I have relied upon two writers who are considered as the two most acknowledged researchers on Elizabeth's portraits: historian Dame Frances A. Yates and art historian and curator Sir Roy C. Strong. Yates gives a thorough analysis of Astraea, an allegory associated with Elizabeth, in her text *Elizabeth as Astraea* (1947). Strong's book *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (1987) is a collected work describing many of Elizabeth's portraits. As pointed out by Erler, Yates was the first to connect the *Rainbow Portrait* with *Hymnes of Astraea in Acrosticke Verse* (1599) by Davies through observing the bodice covered with the flowers of springtime symbolizing the return of Astraea. Erler adds that Strong builds on Yates' research and reaffirms the connection between Davies' poems and the iconography of the last years of Elizabeth's reign. Strong was the one to suggest Davies' work as "court pageant poet" under the patronage of Robert Cecil, who Erler adds might have been the

¹ Mary C. Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", *Modern Philology*, vol. 84, no. 4 (1987), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/437767>, 359.

mastermind behind the development of the public image of the queen towards its highpoint at the end of her reign.² While Strong first saw a connection between the *Rainbow Portrait* and the entertainments at Salisbury House, Erler adds the possible relevance of the preceding entertainment at Harefield House and that both events may have inspired the iconography of the portrait.

It is the symbolism of dress that has helped bringing forward these discoveries and as such have been able to connect the portrait with the two entertainments of 1602. In the more recent present time, the rediscovery of the Bacton Altar Cloth as a possible garment owned by Elizabeth and as being of the same fabric as that of the bodice in the *Rainbow Portrait*, as hypothesised by Lynn, adds to the developing of theories concerning the meaning of said painting. I have therefore considered theories on dress as relevant to the interpretation of the portrait as well as to my thesis. While Anne Hollander explores the theory of dress in her book *Seeing Through Clothes* (1978), it is the work of one of the leading authorities on the history of dress, Janet Arnold, which has greatly influenced others' as well as my own work. Her book *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (1988), is a republished edited book including the Stowe and Folger inventories of Elizabeth's Wardrobe of Robes from the year 1600, when Elizabeth ordered Sir John Fortescue (1531-1607) to organise her clothes and accessories to get an overview of what she possessed.³ This is the first full transcript of the inventories of Elizabeth's clothes preserved in the British Library and the Public Record Office in London, and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC.

Arnold's work has made it possible for me to compare the details of the costume worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait* to the entries in the Stowe and Folger inventories. As with this example, I have gathered information through an empirical approach of observation. By searching for contemporary details descriptive of the different elements of the portrait's iconography, I have found evidences to support my arguments within the analysis. However, this is not original on my part, as I follow in the footsteps of my sources, the abovementioned, as well as Daniel Fischlin (1997), and Louis A. Montrose (1999), both of which concern themselves with the reading of allegories and symbolism in Elizabeth's portraits. As do the additional texts by Erna Auerbach and Charles K. Adams (1971), Mary E. Hazard (1990), and Anna Riehl (2010). I observed the details of the Bacton Altar Cloth in relation to Elizabeth's

² Ibid., 359-61.

³ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (United Kingdom: Maney Publishing, 1988), xiii.

bodice in the portrait, and with John Gerard's *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* (1597). There are also similarities between the symbolism of the *Rainbow Portrait* compared to illustrations of allegories of virtues, vices, arts, and others, from the highly influential book *Iconologia* (1603) by Cesare Ripa. These allegories can therefore allude to an analogous meaning to the iconography of the portrait. Furthermore, in Jean Jacques Boissard's book *Habitus Variarum Orbis Gentium* (1581), a collected work showing costume prints from different parts of the world, there are a couple of engravings depicting women with similar headdress to that of Elizabeth in the portrait. This was first discovered by Yates and is explored in her text *Boissard's Costume-Book and Two Portraits* (1959). These contemporary evidences prove the relationship between text and image in Renaissance England, and how allegories of political virtues, every day dress, and naturalistic illustrations of flowers added to the creation of the fantastic iconography within Elizabeth's state portraiture.

Additionally, I have explored other primary sources which are written accounts of the entertainments of 1602, or speeches and letters said to have been uttered and written by Elizabeth herself, as well as Davies' poems and dialogues, which were uttered during the events. Many of Elizabeth's speeches were written down by the queen's auditors after she performed them, as well as having been produced in collaboration or with the consultation of officials of her government before the oral presentation.⁴ Most of my primary sources are obtained from collected works and republished editions of original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, and others, from the 19th century, like *The Commentaries or Reports* (1816) by Edmund Plowden, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (1823) by John Nichols, *The Egerton Papers* (1840) by John P. Collier, *Diary of John Manningham* (1868) by John Bruce, and *The Complete Poems of Sir John Davies* (1876) by Alexander B. Grosart. Closer to our time, a letter to Cecil is procured from a collection from Hatfield House (1906) by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), and Elizabeth's letters and speeches are quoted from *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (1999), edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose. I have also looked to William Camden's work *Annales Rerum Gestarum et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha* (published in two parts, the first in 1615 and the second in 1625). Camden was Elizabeth's earliest biographer.

⁴ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), xii.

As of my secondary sources, Susan Bassnett (1988) and Tracy Borman (2016) have added to my historical perspective. In the chapter on theories related to the *Rainbow Portrait*, Ernst H. Kantorowicz' (1957) discussion on the king's two bodies, as well as theories on portraiture introduced by Marianna Jenkins (1947), Louis Marin (1988), and Richard Brilliant (1991), have been crucial to my approach to a contemporary understanding of the iconography of Elizabeth's portraits. The same can be said of the more philosophical perspectives on gesture and performativity as presented by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1986) and Judith Butler (2011, first published in 1993), as well as Ernst H. J. Gombrich's (2000, first published in 1960) thoughts on visual representations of likeness and identity.

Regarding my academic affiliations, this is an entirely art historical text. I do not claim to partake in any other disciplines. However, I have added some feminist perspective, which I believe neutralises previous prejudices against Elizabeth with some scholars, as well as political theories on state and kingship, which is relevant as Elizabeth indeed was a Queen of England and therefore was represented as such in her state portraits, and some theories on gesture and performativity, as this is relevant to any academic subject where an intention or meaning is expressed between performing parties. There are so many factors to consider when analysing the different allegories and symbols in the *Rainbow Portrait*. An analytical approach in the tradition of Panofsky has therefore been my main perspective, where I present the said allegories and symbols individually, analysing their significance, and observing them in relation to each other, to get an idea of the meaning of the iconography in its entirety. Additionally, I would prefer a greater perspective on the theory of dress within this thesis regarding the possible connection between the portrait and the Bacton Altar Cloth. However, as there is a lack of previous research on Elizabethan dress, at least which are accessible to me, this would be too great of a task to incorporate into my thesis with my present qualifications.

3. METHOD AND STRUCTURE OF TEXT

The *Rainbow Portrait* is not only my object of study, but also my main contemporary source. I do not only analyse it as an object by itself, but I also use it as a source to explain contemporary views and political beliefs as well as allegorical interpretations. My analysis follows the traditional three levels of iconographic and iconological analysis of Erwin Panofsky (1892-

1968), though freely employed across three chapters. I have chosen to structure the text into six chapters in total.

After this first introductory chapter, presenting thesis, theory, and method, I continue with the second chapter which concerns the theories worth exploring to get a better understanding of the purpose of the portrait and the iconography in relation to Elizabeth herself. These theories are that of the king's two bodies, on how Elizabeth represented herself, on state portraiture in general as well as in regard of Elizabeth, and the mask of youth as a political tool of representation. By connecting all these different elements, I wish to get a better understanding of the staging of Queen Elizabeth I in her portraits and how they are not entirely representations of her identity, but rather representations of her as a figure of power. The third chapter is a short introduction to the factual and more material existence of the portrait as in the collection of the Marquess of Salisbury at his estate, Hatfield House. There is the additional chapter section where I discuss the artist of the painting. I chose to add this discussion here as it should be viewed in relation to the patron of the portrait. It is also an introduction to the style of the painting which is relevant to the later analysis. The fourth chapter describes the entertainments at Hatfield House and how it is relevant to the *Rainbow Portrait* in the shared use of allegories and symbolism: the rainbow in her hand, the bodice covered in flowers of spring, the moon on top of the crown, and the jewellery group consisting of the snake with the ruby heart and the celestial sphere. The fifth chapter concerns the entertainments at Salisbury House and, like the previous chapter, observes the shared elements of the portrait: the headdress, the mantle covered in eyes and ears, as well as the jewelled gauntlet. The sixth chapter is the conclusion to this text. Here I make a short summary of my research, I conclude my argument on my hypothesis, and answer the questions in my thesis based on the gathered information from the previous chapters.

As will be proved throughout this text, there are several theories on what the iconography of the portrait is telling us. The ambiguous interpretations occur when reading the portrait in different contexts, as for instance as dissimulative rather than allegorical, or regarding the dating of the portrait as painted before or after the death of Elizabeth.⁵ There is also the contextual ambiguity of the nuance of the painting, as in the relationship between picture and

⁵ Daniel Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 1 (1997), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3039333>, 198n25.

text or as intended by a political subject, patron, artist, or a combination of these.⁶ In my reading of the portrait I again place it within a new context. This implies that the painting itself creates its own context when reading its iconography.⁷ Meaning that the assemblage of images will always be the same in the painting, but the different rules of understanding depends on the observer's knowledge and interpretation of the iconography. However, I try to recreate an understanding within the general historical context of Elizabethan portraiture, like that of the contemporary viewer, even though it might have been as difficult for them to read the *Rainbow Portrait* as it is for us today.

I hope that with this thesis, I have contributed to the research on Elizabethan portraiture in general and the *Rainbow Portrait* in particular. Even though there has been done a lot of research on Elizabethan portraiture and on Elizabeth herself, there is curiously enough a great lack of depth into specific objects, theories, and events regarding her reign, compared to for example the reign of her father, Henry VIII. When I started searching for bibliography, I had a hard time finding relevant sources to build my thesis on.

Now, let us move on to the theory-based chapter concerning the staging of Elizabeth in her state portraiture as the Queen of England.

⁶ Mary E. Hazard, "The Case for 'Case' in Reading Elizabethan Portraits", *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1990), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1300042903?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:primo&accountid=12870>, 79.

⁷ Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 199n25.

CHAPTER II - STAGING A QUEEN

When looking at the portraits of Queen Elizabeth I of England produced during her reign (1558-1603) there are numerous semiotic elements such as allegories, symbols, signs and gestures to observe. The images themselves are constructed in a more historical accurate setting, showing contemporary dress, accessories, architecture and furniture. Nevertheless, the face and body of the queen does not always seem to have been recreated naturalistically. We see rather a tendency in her portraits of her face getting younger with age instead of older, breaking the rule of nature. Additionally, Elizabeth is not ultimately recognisable in many of her representations as they disassociate themselves from producing the characteristics of her face, such as her hooked nose, sharp eyes and tall forehead. However, because of the details which we associate with this most famous historical figure is repeated through many of her portraits, such as her reddish blonde hair, the white painted face and her extravagant dress accompanied by a huge, white encircling collar, she can still easily be identified. What I am interested in with this chapter is the contemporary theories surrounding the staging of the queen in her portraits, more specifically the *Rainbow Portrait* (Figure 1), to create a theoretical foundation for the proceeding analysis of said painting.

To get a better understanding of the production of Elizabeth's royal image, I begin by looking at the contemporary view on the king's "body natural" and "body politic", as elaborated on in Kantorowicz' book *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). Next, I discuss how Elizabeth established her self-image through the building of her character and power in the name of the Crown of England. Followed by a chapter section where I consider theories on portraiture, both in general and regarding state portraiture. Finally ending with a case study on the mask of youth, a tool utilised during the later decades of Elizabeth's reign when reproducing her image. This being in accordance with the theory of the king's two bodies, thus completing the circle of thought on the theories relevant to my analysis of the *Rainbow Portrait*.

1. THE KING'S TWO BODIES

Kantorowicz looks to Plowden (1816) when exploring the theories around the king's two bodies: the body natural and the body politic. In Plowden's text there is an account of what Kantorowicz calls a *cause célèbre* concerning the Duchy of Lancaster, which was tried in the fourth year of Elizabeth's reign.⁸ This private property of the Lancastrian kings was not part of the property of the Crown. Edward VI, Elizabeth's predecessor, made a lease of some of the land of the duchy while not yet being of age. This led to the discussion between Elizabethan crown jurists (lawyers working in the interest of the Crown) on the legitimacy of Edward VI's action in his "nonage". While assembled at Serjeant's Inn in Fleet Street, they all agreed "that by the common Law no Act which the King does as King, shall be de-feated by his nonage. For the King has in him two Bodies, viz. a Body natural, and a Body politic".⁹ The body natural being described as mortal, it can be affected by youth and old age as well as by natural events and accidents. The body politic however cannot be seen or touched and was defined as "consisting of Policy and Government, and con-stituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public-weal [commonwealth]".¹⁰ In contrast to the body natural, the body politic could not be affected by any natural causes, like old age, and it was considered immortal. Therefore, it was argued that what the king did in his body politic was in separation to the disabilities of his body natural. In the words of Plowden, the crown jurists concluded as follows:

For although he [the king] has or takes the Land in his natural Body, yet to this natural Body is conjoined his Body politic, which contains his royal Estate and Dignity, and the Body politic includes the Body natural, but the Body natural is the lesser, and with this the Body politic is consolidated. So that he has a Body natural, adorned and invested with the Estate and Dignity royal, and he has not a Body natural distinct and divided by itself from the Office and Dignity royal, but a Body natural and a Body politic together in-divisible, and these two Bodies are incorporated in one Person, and make one Body and not divers, that is the Body corporate in the Body natural, *et e contra* the Body natural in the Body corpo-rate.¹¹

⁸ Ernest Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 7-9.

⁹ Edmund Plowden, *The Commentaries, or Reports of Edmund Plowden* (London: S. Brooke, 1816), <https://archive.org/details/commentariesorr00plowgoog>, 212a.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 213.

We see here, not only the juridical opinion, but what would probably have been the general understanding of the body natural and the body politic. There was this common idea of the body politic as opposed to the body natural. However, they were still united in the same person. A union which could only be separated by death.

To the regular person death would be the end of his or her existence. When a sovereign died, the body politic was still considered alive, as it was immortal, continuing in the body natural of the successor. The death of a ruler is therefore considered as his or her “demise” rather than “death”, as the power is transferred rather than ceasing to exist.¹² This concept of the demise of the king is what Kantorowicz believes to be one of the essential theories on the king’s two bodies.

The term body politic was often also called “mystical body”, *corpus mysticum*, as transferred into the juridical sphere from the Christian teaching of Christ as the head of Christian society. Similarly, the king was considered as head of state. The body politic was also called the “public body”, like the body natural was also called the “private body”. It is easy to see how the Elizabethan view on the king’s two bodies got its inspiration from a Medieval Period theological theory on the “Two Natures”, that is of Christ’s human and divine natures. This way, the sovereign was defined with semi-religious terminology where the jurists, whose roles as “Priests of Justice” under Roman law, created a legal field within a “Theology of Kingship”.¹³ This was also the tradition on the Continent. As England was an absolute monarchy which worked to establish an English Church based on Protestant belief in accordance with the laws and policy of the sovereign, and with the proclamation of an Act of Supremacy where the sovereign took the position as head of the English Church, as I discuss further in the “Astraea-Virgo” subsection, there was little that separated the English Church and State. The king’s two bodies of Renaissance English politics were a concept derived from a Christian political theology. Based on St. Paul’s definition of the Church as the body of Christ, it developed into the Tudor thought of the king’s immortal body politic. As Kantorowicz describes it: “[...] the change from the Pauline *corpus Christi* to the *corpus reipublicae mysticum* which was equated with the *corpus morale et politicum* of the commonwealth [...]”.¹⁴

¹² Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 13; Plowden, *The Commentaries, or Reports of Edmund Plowden*, 233a.

¹³ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 506.

What distinguished England from the rest of Europe was its parliamentary institution. In England, “‘Sovereignty’ was identified not with the King alone or the people alone, but with the ‘King in Parliament’”.¹⁵ Because of this relationship between the king’s body politic and the English Parliament, we can understand how the Parliament had the power to abdicate or even execute the king, as when Charles I’s body natural was executed for high treason in 1649. This did not exceed the body politic as it was considered as immortal and would transfer to the succeeding sovereign.¹⁶ Kantorowicz believed that the theory of the king’s two bodies is mainly an English historical phenomenon and that Parliament “was [...] the living ‘body politic’ of the realm”.¹⁷ It was a concept that partook in the development of English constitutional thought and practice of Parliament.

The king was not alone in power, as he was assisted by his court and council. This is important to keep in mind when I later in the analysis look at the relationship between Elizabeth and her, at the time, Secretary of State, Robert Cecil. It is this composite power that resides in the Crown. The Crown as “representing the fundamental rights and claims of the country”, where the sovereign as head of the Crown is bound by oath to protect these interests.¹⁸ The body politic does therefore not only consist of the body natural of the sovereign, but is simultaneously an embodiment of Parliament, councillors and other magnates. The Crown can be considered as *universitas* (the lawful aspect of the state as a whole), where the sovereign is the head conjoined with the magnates as the members of the body politic, a description that Henry VIII is known to have uttered.¹⁹ Or as was supposedly stated by Aristotle: the Prince has many eyes, ears, hands and feet amongst his subjects, who in their participation and their work in the interest of the state functions as co-rulers.²⁰

However, in relation to the Crown and the sovereign’s body politic, there is a third concept to consider: *Dignitas* or “dignity”. That is the succeeding power of the body politic. Though it derived from Roman tradition on the dignity obtained through a man’s life, Tudor lawyers used the expression as interchangeable with the body politic of the Crown, creating the mystical body of the body politic as opposed to the body natural.²¹ A step that moved the body politic

¹⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁷ Ibid., 447.

¹⁸ Ibid., 347.

¹⁹ Ibid., 381-82.

²⁰ Ibid., 367.

²¹ Ibid., 382-83.

phenomenon towards a greater supernatural being, than was previously perceived by the Medieval Period of England. In addition to this fusion of Crown and Dignity, there is the idea of the king as “corporation sole”, which is king as corporation or sole ruler. As we recall, the Crown did also consist of Parliament. Kantorowicz elaborates on how these two quite contradictory concepts coexisted in English politics of the sixteenth century:

With this organic-corporational concept of Crown and body politic, however, there interfered the concept of Dignity, that is, of a “corporation by succession.” Whereas the Crown could appear “corporate” because it encompassed all the members of the body politic living at the same time, the Dignity was a Phoenix-like one-man corporation encompassing in the present bearer of the Crown the whole *genus*, the past and future incumbents of the royal Dignity.²²

The phoenix-comparison mentioned here is an allusion to the duality of the ruler. As a bird of only one in existence, which regenerates by going up in flames and being reborn from its own ashes, it became a symbol of immortality and rebirth, as well as virginity. The phoenix disclosed a duality comparable to the king’s two bodies: being the only specimen existing at one time it was considered as a mortal individual but also immortal in that it represented the whole of its kind, this way being both individual and collective.²³ The phoenix symbol was adopted by Elizabeth. I return to this in chapter section “The Bodice Covered in Flowers of Spring”, regarding Elizabeth as the reviver of English power in her reign. The phoenix became synonymous with the royal body politic, which together with the Crown constitute the *genus* of the State of England. Kantorowicz continues:

What apparently happened was that the English jurists failed to make a clear-cut distinction between the corporate body of the Crown and the supra-individual personage of the Dignity, and instead equated each with the body politic [...] That is to say, they fused two different concepts of the current corporational doctrines: the organic and the successional. And from this fusion of a number of interrelated corporational concepts there originated, it seems, both the “King’s body politic” and the king as a “corporation sole”.²⁴

There were therefore two concepts for Tudor lawyers to consider regarding the politics of the sovereign and the politics of the Crown. While not having thoroughly defined any of the

²² Ibid., 449.

²³ Ibid., 389-90.

²⁴ Ibid., 449.

concepts, we can understand how, during Elizabeth's reign, there was a tradition for contemplation on the more mystique aspects of English power.

In conclusion, the body natural and body politic of the sovereign became the basis of understanding of political theological theories encompassing the laws of the Crown as well as the rights of the state and its subjects. From observing written as well as visual descriptions of Elizabeth from her contemporary sources, we can see how there are clear distinctions between the accounts focusing on her body natural and those exploring her body politic or mystical body. An interesting note in this regard is that most of the contemporary evidence on her body natural comes from foreign observers, while the ones celebrating her body politic were mostly made by her English subjects. I come back to this later. In the next chapter section, I explore Elizabeth's struggle of staging herself as she had the body of a woman and at the same time was the queen regnant of England, a position meant for males. In a way she had to create her own persona that both incorporated her body natural of a woman and her body politic of a king.

2. THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION

For Elizabeth her body was not only that of a private or a public one, but a tool to express her intentions and to handle her surroundings. With the theory of the king's two bodies, which she probably was familiar with, she could validate her reign as female ruler, a queen in her own right, in the position of a man and that of a king of England.

Her tactic for surviving different issues is described brilliantly by Bassnett: "If she gave no direct answers, made so specific statements, kept silent on controversial issues and generalised when asked hard questions, she could keep the good will of different factions and keep her head into the bargain".²⁵ While some historians see this as a devious characteristic of Elizabeth, Bassnett perceives it as "her skill in dodging and weaving and refusing to be pinned down".²⁶ When she became queen and steered both her public and private life, she seldom made decisions wholeheartedly and often used this tactic to see if the problems would solve themselves before deciding on her next move.

²⁵ Susan Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1988), 121.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

Elizabeth's charisma when meeting with her subjects and other visitors proved her stately qualities and sharp wit, convincing her observers of the body politic as reconciled with the body natural in her being.²⁷ She consciously used her face as an instrument in social and political situations. For instance, with just a smile she could gather information from her eager subjects who wanted to please her, creating an air of comfort when she really was manipulating them.²⁸ She played a game of concealing as well as of revealing her intentions. In Renaissance England they would have believed in physiognomics, which is the pseudo-science of face-reading. By looking at a face and reading physical traits and expressions, the person's true character was supposedly to be understood.²⁹ We know today that physiognomy is an unreliable science. However, we may safely assume it was considered as fact at the Elizabethan court and that she used it in her favour, changing her facial expressions according to the situation. The physical characteristics of her face has been described in various accounts, accentuating parts in accordance with the ulterior motives of the observer. Some criticised and some praised. As André Hurault de Maisse (1539-1607) who described her face as very long and aged with yellow and missing teeth.³⁰ In contrast, John Hayward (1564-1627) observed her forehead as large and fair and of princely grace, with lively but short-sighted eyes and a long figure which all in all showed admirable beauty, not of youth but of combined majesty and modesty.³¹

In her book *The Face of Queenship* (2010), Riehl makes a short and to the point summary on such "verbal portraits", as she calls it:

Despite their apparent unreliability, descriptions of Elizabeth by her contemporaries constitute important documentary evidence of how she appeared in life. However, [...] these accounts are far from objective attestations of Elizabeth's looks; instead, they register the mixed signals whirling around the queen's physical and metaphorical person, and thus should be read with an eye for politically charged signs that transpire in their rhetoric.³²

There are several contemporary accounts on meetings with the aging queen, describing her features, mostly made by foreigners such as travellers and ambassadors. Riehl explains this in her text. Foreign observers were detached from the politics of the English court and were rather

²⁷ Anna Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 77.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁹ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 38.

³⁰ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 8.

³¹ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 71-72.

³² *Ibid.*, 77.

inflicted with other political games of their own countries, where Elizabeth was not the main figure of power, or they were just sightseeing at their leisure. Nevertheless, they were not as such inflicted with the “Cult of Elizabeth” as was the Englishmen, and therefore did not idealise her body natural to fit the body politic. Riehl believes that the lack of more realistic portrayals from local witnesses can be explained by their willing, or maybe even unwilling, involvement in the Cult of Elizabeth as the queen of Love and Beauty. The Cult of Elizabeth is discussed in greater detail following the analysis of the crescent moon symbol and the imperial image of the queen. A fictitious depiction in verse or visually would therefore be preferred when portraying the queen regnant in her position as the ruler of England. Therefore, it seems that the descriptions of Elizabeth made by her subjects are neutral or praising while those of the foreigners seem more objective or unmodified.³³

Knowing that she was constantly being watched, she put on a show often emphasising her female gender and at the same time emanating her “inner man”.³⁴ A good example of this is from the “Tilbury Speech”. When addressing her troops, she reassures them of her competence within her body politic that she can lead them into battle, as summed up in this famous sentence: “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too”.³⁵ Elizabeth often utilised this sentence when her authority was questioned, as a way of silencing critical voices.³⁶

In Renaissance England, women were advised to remain chaste, silent and obedient. Elizabeth’s dualistic body of a queen regnant was an exception and she could therefore be considered as an anomaly. Having a female body and being in the position as an equivalent to a king of England, meant that she in her body politic also harboured the male traits of dominant thought and belief. With her motto “*Video, Taceo*”, which translates to “I see, yet say nothing”, she expresses the female virtue of silence. At the same time, it can be interpreted as her ruling with the advice of her council and evaluating her possibilities before making up her own mind. These qualities of “prudential reservation of judgement, a strategic keeping of one’s own counsel”, was a given for any politic prince. This melding of the kingly power with mystical feminine powers is by

³³ Ibid., 72.

³⁴ Ibid., 79-82.

³⁵ It is here quoted from the British Library manuscript Harley 6798, art. 18, fol. 87; copy: “Queen Elizabeth’s Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588; [*Subscribed*] Gathered by one that heard it and was commanded to utter it to the whole army the next day, to send it gathered to the queen herself”. Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 326.

³⁶ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 74.

Montrose understood as a strategy to enhance her personal authority to secure the obedience of her subjects. Having a female body, Elizabeth actively expressed herself in relation to the theory of the king's two bodies in her effort to manipulate the perception of her person. By describing herself as a weak and feeble woman, she appeared as less of a threat. By adding her capability of ruling like a king of England, she reminds her subjects of her body politic and that she in her body maintains the power to rule wisely.³⁷

In the world she lived in of religious and geo-political strife, Elizabeth, as an unmarried queen regnant, was constantly attacked and often on the bases of her gender.³⁸ For example, offensive images of her and the English state were passed around, which was fought off with unsuccessful attempts. I elaborate upon this in relation to the mask of youth. With a temporal body which started to look more and more haggard, her power to rule was continuously being questioned, both by her enemies and even by her loyal subjects. As there was considerable power through representation, Elizabeth was very conscious of her appearance. She did not eat much and exercised regularly by striding around in her private gardens or going out riding and hunting. However, she was very fond of sugar which she put in her food and drink, and soon her teeth would feel the consequences. There is an account of her having a rotten tooth which she refused to get pulled out, as she was afraid of any form of surgery to her body. It was not until Bishop John Aylmer (1521-1594) volunteered to remove his own tooth to show her that the pain was durable, that she agreed to the procedure.³⁹ Her teeth became after a while black and fewer in number, despite her attempts to maintain good mouth hygiene: she would rinse her mouth every morning with water fragranced with cinnamon and myrrh, she used disposable toothpicks, her ladies of the Privy Chamber would clean her teeth with soot, sometimes salt, and a concoction of white wine and vinegar boiled up with honey.⁴⁰ The honey would probably only worsen the teeth.

With great makeup and dress, she could still appear somewhat youthful. She only revealed her true appearance in front of her gentlewomen when in her Privy Chamber. However, there is a *cause célèbre* where the queen happened to be seen unmasked. When her favourite at the time,

³⁷ Louis A. Montrose, "Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I", *Representations*, no. 68 (1999), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902957>, 145.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 117-18.

³⁹ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 13; Tracy Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2016), 333.

⁴⁰ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 332-33.

Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565-1601), returned unexpectedly early from campaigns in Ireland in 1599, he went straight to Elizabeth's bedchamber. There he found her newly up and they exchanged pleasantries. Not being satisfied, and maybe having some ulterior motive in his mind, Essex returned to Elizabeth later that day, where "he found her much changed".⁴¹ Essex was banned from court soon after. We do not know exactly what happened behind those closed doors, but it has inspired a lot of speculation. Some say that he was horrified by her unmasked appearance and fled, leaving her in shock and refusing to see him again because she was ashamed.⁴² Others believe she might already suspect Essex' treacherous plan to overthrow her (the plot of 1601), but that she proceeded with caution as she might have loved him as the son she never had. Or, what is more likely, she waited to act until she was certain of his behaviour.⁴³ This shows her cunning and controlled self as acting in a conciliatory manner when confronted with a private, as well as public, issues.

Elizabeth's actions can be viewed within the theories of gesture and performativity. Everything she did and said was calculated according to the situation. Even when she threw fits of temper, Elizabeth arguably had the situation under control. As when her female attendant Elizabeth Throckmorton got married to Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) in 1591, the queen's favourite at the time, without asking for her permission, or when she despaired openly over the death of her cousin and rival Mary Stuart, also known as Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), whom she herself had allowed to be executed.⁴⁴ She had to since she was constantly observed for signs of reaction, both in private and in public.⁴⁵ With this last example, she did not want to be known as a "kin-slayer", as a murderer of her own blood, nor did she want to initiate a new religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics. She had a breakdown from the stress of making a decision. In the end she had to listen to her councillors, and Mary was decapitated on the 8th of February 1587. Elizabeth is said to have put on a show of sorrow for the public so not to seem tyrannical. Nevertheless, Elizabeth was probably truly horrified, as she is said to have whispered Mary's name on her deathbed.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 102-03.

⁴² Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 1-2.

⁴³ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 103.

⁴⁴ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 46; 362-63.

⁴⁵ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 86.

⁴⁶ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 347.

This performance as a remorseful sinner can also be interpreted as a gesture. Gadamer defines gesture as a language of signs which is expressed through physical actions which reveal the meaning of the gesture.⁴⁷ It is substantial rather than subjective, expressing a language-like system that can be understood by individuals of this same “gesture-language”, within a sphere of cultural relativity. What Elizabeth gestured in her performance when hearing the news of the death of Mary, was the regret of having to make the decision to execute her, as well as gesturing to her own innocence in the matter as the death of her cousin was not her wish.

We can understand how Elizabeth’s behaviour at court gestured her (not so) hidden meanings. She was not the only one acting at court. Montrose suggests that what he calls a “cultist” perspective on the “courtly game”, had an instrumental efficacy: “It was a medium through which court society manifested its ethos and the channel through which those within the orbit of the court pursued and negotiated their individual and common interests”.⁴⁸ There was a calculated performativity of behaviour and dress amongst the people at court, acted out within a sphere of shared gesture language. Gadamer calls this “human play” or “acting as if”.⁴⁹ This does not include instinctual behaviour, but one that intends something.

To Butler, performativity is not a singular or deliberate “act”, but rather reiterated norms which are acted out in the present whilst it conceals or dissimulates the original repeated acts.⁵⁰ She argues that such norms of performativity of a subject is not performed or acted out, but form the subject as constructed bodily life.⁵¹ Rather than “construction”, which is a process of reiteration of both “subjects” and “acts”, Butler prefers the word “materialisation” to describe the performativity as it operates in the body.⁵² The act or “play” constructs the subject’s character, its bodily life, as materialised performativity. In the performative body, materiality is rethought as the effect of power.⁵³ Power orchestrates the subject’s bodily life in its materialisation. “There is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability”.⁵⁴ Thus, Elizabeth in her staging of self, constructed a body that

⁴⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 79.

⁴⁸ Montrose, “Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I”, 133.

⁴⁹ Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, 124-25.

⁵⁰ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ntnu/detail.action?docID=683946>, xii; xxi.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xviii-xx.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii.

fitted the cultural intelligibility of the body politic, through acting the part. She did not undermine her female gender, but rather emphasised her combined male and female virtues, as she did in the famous “Tilbury Speech”. She created her own performative body, exceeding the set gender norms, where the body politic became materialised in herself.

Elizabeth really had to work hard to convince her subjects of her body politic harboured in her body natural of a woman. She staged herself through physical appearance and the construction of character. Her performative powers were crucial to the political play at court. Next, I look at the theories of portraiture and consider how she visually expresses her two bodies within the iconography of her state portraits.

3. THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER

Brilliant defines portraits as “art work, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience”.⁵⁵ He adds that he concerns himself with representation in Western art, looking at the changes in the perceived nature of the individual. As do I. The physical appearance is the first thing we notice when meeting face to face, either physically or in some other perceived form, like in a painting. We may identify a person through recognising physical traits, as with Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965) and his bulldog-like features. We may also recognise someone through the way they stage themselves in dress and with accessories, like Churchill holding his famous cigar and wearing a bowler hat. However, as Brilliant explains, the physical appearance can be unstable as it constantly changes. The artist’s job is therefore to express symbolically the identity of the subject and to conceptualise the subject’s signified character through representation.⁵⁶

The relationship between artist and subject, or artist and the patron of the object (which is more relevant to my thesis), could be a struggle between the artist’s conception and the patron’s will. Even when these two parties have agreed upon the imagery, there is always a third party involved: the viewer who has not been involved in the dialogue between the artist and the subject or patron. Every portrait tells something of the subject who is perceived differently by

⁵⁵ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

a historical person or by a viewer residing in today's space and time. This way, the portrayed individual may keep his or her prominence, lose it, or get a renewed significance.⁵⁷

It is therefore not only the subject in real life who expresses performativity. Also, the object, in this case the painting, partakes in a performance when in dialogue with an observer. It is within this meeting between subject and object, within the reading of a work of art, where the play occurs. "Art" as "human production" has a nature of its own, Gadamer explains, in that it "'intends' something, and yet it is not what it intends".⁵⁸ He adds that a work of art with its intention also has something of the acting as if, a feature of play. Therefore, a painting is not only a canvas with colours and paint, it has an almost linguistic meaning to itself as well. It is not just itself, but expresses something else through itself, exactly like a symbolic gesture.⁵⁹ Elizabeth's portraits are therefore themselves gestures as they with the representation of her body becomes symbolical gestures of the English power.

Additionally, in their representations of the real world, here not necessarily meaning "real" as in "true" or "realistic", they become mimetic images. Gadamer explains the concept of *mimesis*: "The very idea of mimicry implies that one's own body is a vehicle for imitative expression and that, in the case of art, it represents itself as something that it is not".⁶⁰ A work of art plays its role through its representation and how it is understood from what it intends. Even though they are imitations they are not false, but true in their own show, their own appearance. Such imitations will enable us to see a bigger picture than what is reality: an "ideality".⁶¹

A portrait can only be viewed as a likeness of the portrayed person. The subject cannot entirely be represented as he or she truly is. The artist would therefore follow an established or invented schema, or pattern, to create the recognisable identity of the subject. With this sort of manipulation of representation, or a staging of character, there occurs the discussion on what a true representation is, of its "correctness", and the judgement of the portrait's quality.⁶²

Gombrich reflects on this in his work *Art and Illusion* (2000). He writes that: "All art originates in the human mind, in our reactions to the world rather than in the visible world itself, and it is

⁵⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁸ Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, 125-26.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁶¹ Ibid., 129.

⁶² Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 38.

precisely because all art is ‘conceptual’ that all representations are recognizable by their style”.⁶³ By organising and categorising the world around us into schemas we can present the impressions we conceive visually. A portrait is therefore a schema set to represent the distinctive features of the subject, which he or she, or the artist or the patron, wishes to express. Gombrich continues by determining that there is no such thing as an objective likeness.⁶⁴ A likeness is perceived by the individual in his or her relative *habitus*. This way, a picture cannot be either true or false. He concludes that “the correct portrait [...] is an end product on a long road through schema and correction. It is not a faithful record of a visual experience but the faithful construction of a relational model”.⁶⁵ Brilliant believes that if it is so, if the correctness of representation is determined by aesthetic criteria of a given period, then the contemporary viewer is arguably more likely to be able to read the portrait compared to a viewing at some later period of time.⁶⁶ Instead, Brilliant introduces the term “faithfulness”, as in the portrait’s representation of the subject as most like the original, or as in the best portrait to represent the subject.⁶⁷ With the three terms “likeness”, “correctness” and “faithfulness”, we can continue the endless discussion on the true representation of a subject in portraiture.

However, a true likeness is not necessary to identify the person within a portrait. As Brilliant writes: “[...] theoretically a portrait can be freed from all forms of descriptive reference to physical appearance without losing its categorical status as an intentionally exclusive sign of a named individual”.⁶⁸ To continue, we must therefore look to the intention of the portrait. The intention being told using allegories, symbols, signs and gestures. In allegorical portraiture, what we see is no longer the “who” which is represented, but the “what” surrounding the portrayed subject. Here the substance of a person is transmuted into “ideas, words, and conceits, gathered around a named persona”.⁶⁹ An example of such portraiture is the state portraits of kings and queens as personifications of the ruling power:

For kings and queens, identity was tied to their work, and artists portrayed them in their roles as personifications of the ruling power, and only incidentally as persons of flesh and blood. In this

⁶³ Ernst H. J. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Millennium ed. with a new preface by the author. ed., vol. 35.5, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000), 87.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁶ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 39.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

swift passage from the physical body to the metaphysical king, the typological representation of royalty predetermined the viewer's cognitive response to the individual ruler portrayed. Thus the general propositional attitude took precedence over the particular, even if the king or queen had a face and a name that could be recognized.⁷⁰

In short, the purpose of the state portrait is to represent the body politic of the ruling state, not the body natural of the ruler.

Jenkins discusses this in relation to sixteenth century state portraits. It is from this period of time that the modern representations of power in portraiture developed. Through incorporating styles from secular portraiture, like the standing full-length figure, the Renaissance state portraits took a turn away from the Medieval Period's focus on monumental or heroic depictions.⁷¹ Still, there is an evident unbroken line from the Roman state portraits to those of the Renaissance. The sixteenth century state portraits were a result of political needs and social, stylistic, and aesthetic trends, to depict the official character of the people of high standing.⁷² As the ruler was regarded as a symbol of the state, he or she had to be represented as befitting their status. The ruler was to "be projected into the realm of the ideal and the perfect".⁷³ This preceded the need for a naturalistic record of the subject's features. Idealised portraits filled with allegorical elements were constructed by the artist to tell the viewer of the subject's almost supernatural qualities.

As explained by Jenkins, the English Renaissance paintings were not considered as of the same technical quality as Italian or Spanish court paintings. England shared more in common with the Germans in favouring native tendencies instead of linear forms. It was more important to show the person's character rather than a naturalistic representation. Therefore, the expression of the Elizabethan state portraits was, as Jenkins describes it, of "a seemingly archaic formalism whose effects are almost non-human".⁷⁴ This way of avoiding naturalism, and rather leaning towards a Mannerist or a flat expression, may have been intentionally wished for by Elizabeth herself. This can be gathered from looking at the only existing account made by the painter Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) in *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* (c. 1598),

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Marianna Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution*, vol. 3, Monographs on Archaeology and Fine Arts (New York: The College Art Association of America, 1947), 9.

⁷² Ibid., 1.

⁷³ Ibid., 38.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 24.

describing a sitting with the queen. Here he tells of how Elizabeth did not much care for the use of shadow. She therefore requested to be painted in “the open light” where no trees could cast any shadows.⁷⁵ This account describes Elizabeth’s personal taste in portraiture, wanting her face to be painted with no shadow so as “best to showe ones selfe”, in this case the queen regnant, though this was also the artist Hilliard’s own convictions.⁷⁶ It must be mentioned that this account was written more than twenty years after the sitting, making it more of a description of Hilliard’s relationship to painting and to his patron, the queen, rather than making it an account on Elizabeth’s true personality. Jenkins argues that Elizabethan state portraits sometimes even surpasses the Italian and Spanish styles in this icon-like interpretation of a human being.⁷⁷

In Elizabeth’s state portraits there is not only the blatant display of royal symbols: the crown and sceptre, a chair of state, a sword of justice, or a coat of arms. There is also the more uncommon display of more cryptic allegories of power: like Elizabeth standing on a map of England as can be seen in the *Ditchley Portrait* (Figure 2) (1592) by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (c. 1561-1636), or the many symbols of the *Rainbow Portrait* such as the eyes and ears on the mantle and the rainbow held by the queen. Thus, Elizabethan portraits contributed to the field of state portraiture and a succeeding tradition of representing power in the visual arts.⁷⁸ “As a political phenomenon they [the portraits] are therefore a clear and often fine expression of the dignity and power of a ruler”.⁷⁹ Jenkins concludes that the state portrait cannot be judged on aesthetic standards alone, as they are of a political and social, as well as stylistic phenomenon. They show an idealised person by representing them as some other-worldly being who was considered “little less than God”. The state portrait must not be interpreted literally or as realistic representations.⁸⁰

Additionally, the state portrait became a medium for the ruler to express power. In his book *Portrait of the King* (1988), Marin defines the representation of power as such:

⁷⁵ Fischlin, “Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the ‘Rainbow Portrait’ of Queen Elizabeth I”, 198; Roy C. Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (German Democratic Republic: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 16.

⁷⁶ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 137.

⁷⁷ Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution*, 24.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

Power is the tendency toward the absolute of the infinite representation of force, the desire for the absolute of power. From then on, representation (whose effect is power) is at once the imaginary satisfaction of this desire and its real deferred satisfaction. In representation that is power, in power that is representation, the real – if one understands by “real” the always deferred satisfaction of this desire – is none other than the fantastic image in which power will contemplate itself as absolute.⁸¹

In short, the representation of power in state portraits is the showing of the absolute monarch as he or she desires to be. They are icons showing the true character of the ruler, as the body politic. Marin states that through such representations, the king’s body is visible in three senses: as sacramental, as historical, and as political body.⁸² The sacramental body is the mystical aspect of the theological-juridical embodiment within the ruler, which is celebrated through the multiple presences in the lasting portraits.⁸³ The historical body of the king is its body natural, where the portrait becomes the meeting with the subject when reading the narrative therein.⁸⁴ The political body is, as we already know, the absolute power as symbolised with the iconography of the king in the state portrait as personification of the state.⁸⁵ All together they (the sacramental, the historical, and the political body) represent the king as present, fictitious, and as a symbol. In a performative sense the portrait does not only represent the ruler and his or her qualities, but it becomes the ruler itself. Marin calls this the “portrait effect”, where the effect of representation “makes the king” in that the portrait is the king’s image. This way, the king is nothing more than his image, and beyond the portrait he is not a king, but a man. Marin calls this the “secret”.⁸⁶ Therefore, Marin concludes that the ruler’s true state is only within the representation of his or her state portraits, when he writes:

[...] if the monarch is absolute only in the official portrait that his subjects draw of him and that they present him in order to draw from him what they desire and what he alone possesses, if the king is only King in his portrait and if his secrecy, the secret thought of his secrecy, so secret that he does not think it, is that he is not what he is [absolute], the presence of his absence from himself, then this conjunction of portrait and secrecy which is that of infinite representation

⁸¹ Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 121-23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

and absolute power signifies that the king in his portrait, the absolute monarch, is an empty monument, a cenotaph, a tomb that shelters no body but that is royal body in its very vacuity.⁸⁷

The representation of power is therefore not of the ruler but of the idea of the absolute power, of the body politic. The abstract idea is visualised through the state portrait and within the tool of representing it through the body of the king, of the body natural.

However, as we observed in the beginning of this chapter, in Elizabethan England the king's two bodies were in theory inseparable. Elizabeth was nonetheless a target of misrepresentation as her body natural in many ways was victimised. The state portrait of the queen was not only a tool for the representation of power, but also a medium to show the world her legitimate right to rule. Montrose summarises the purpose of Elizabeth's state portraits:

Elizabethan royal images were employed in a wide range of cultural work, which included enhancing and subverting the charisma of the Queen; legitimating and resisting the authority of her regime; seeking to influence royal sympathies and policies in matters religious, civic, and military; and pursuing personal advantage by means of royal courtship and celebration.⁸⁸

The state portraits can be interpreted as propagandistic messages, celebrating the rule and politics of one person or nation. They also contributed to the mimetic qualities of rewriting the reality of corporeal function, like changing the face of a woman in her sixties to look like an ever-youthful goddess. Basing himself on this, Fischlin believes that the "reader" gets ensnared by these portraits because of two aspects: the deception of the represented reality, and the conviction of the metaphysical dimension of the absolute monarch in the sustained fiction of Elizabeth's character, through literary, and public representations of her body and will.⁸⁹ Fischlin concludes:

Thus, the very premises of the portrait ensure that the covert political foundations of absolutist ideology engage the viewer much in the same way that the words Elizabeth is said to have spoken to her troops prior to the Armada enable the potent association between the literal and figural body of the monarch: "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too" [...]. The ineluctable political logic underlying the portrait is that the Queen possesses unseen powers over all acts of

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁸⁸ Montrose, "Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I", 109.

⁸⁹ Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 180.

representation, powers that fly in the face of even the most egregious distortions of reality relating to her body and what it represents.⁹⁰

Elizabeth's portraits are a message to her subjects of her power and character. By looking at her allegorical portraits, we can clearly see how the theory of the king's two bodies was of common knowledge and how this concept influenced the creation of the state image of a ruler, as seen in the *Rainbow Portrait*. Before making any form of conclusion on the staging of a queen in Elizabeth's state portraits, there is one more aspect to consider. That is of the mask of youth.

4. THE MASK OF YOUTH

The conflict of the royal image intensified as the "Queen of Love and Beauty" started to show signs of old age. As the body politic was considered immortal and powerful, the body natural was not. Being an aging woman as well as a queen, questions on her capability to rule and issues of succession challenged the last decades of her reign.⁹¹ This was understandably a source of great anxiety for her. As we have seen in chapter section "The Power of Representation", appearance played a huge role in the depiction and perception of a person's character, and the face was the focus of observation. That is, apart from dress.

In Medieval Period theories, facial expressions were believed to show signs of the soul, as it was in direct connection with the body. In contrast, Renaissance theory distinguished the human body as divided between the exterior and the interior.⁹² Elizabeth actively separated her body and mind, even from an early age as seen in a letter to her brother, future Edward VI of England. The letter discusses her appearance in a painting she sent him as a gift. The painting is believed to be *Elizabeth I when a Princess* (Figure 3) (c. 1546) by William Scrots (active 1537-1553), as argued by Arnold and agreed by Strong.⁹³ In this portrait Elizabeth is shown as a young princess in a robe of crimson cloth of gold, holding a book in her hand and showing her as a learned young woman. In the letter she writes: "For the face, I grant, I might well blush to offer,

⁹⁰ Ibid., 180-81.

⁹¹ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 72.

⁹² Ibid., 79.

⁹³ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 18; Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 52.

but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present”.⁹⁴ This quote also shows her confidence in her own way of thinking, a valuable quality for her future role as a wise queen.

Elizabeth created a self-representation on how she wished to appear rather than showing as she was in real life. Riehl concludes on Elizabeth’s staging of herself:

Concealment and display are intertwined in virtually all of her moves; at times, the concealment itself is deliberately exhibited while at others it is only implicitly present in the apparently sincere show. For this reason, the politics of veiling and masking in various representations of Elizabeth as she appeared in person are always infused with the possibility that the mask, at least partially, may be truthful.⁹⁵

As Elizabeth’s body natural started to show aging, a sign of weakness, she turned to several visual effects to underline the strength and immortality of her body politic. In her portraiture, a visual change in the facial representation of the queen can be observed from the mid-1580s. Hilliard developed a face pattern showing an ever-youthful Elizabeth with more round and softer feminine features. This was not a naturalistic representation as she would have been in her fifties at the time. Strong proposes the term “mask of youth” for this phenomenon in Elizabethan portraiture, a term continuously utilised by later researchers.⁹⁶

As we have seen in the chapter section on state portraiture, a naturalistic representation of a ruler was not the preferred way in the sixteenth century. In her later portraits, Elizabeth is not only accompanied by symbols, she herself becomes the personification of the English power. It was therefore important to depict her as such, transforming the body natural into the body politic. Jenkins addresses this when examining how the abstracting of the face of the sitter was done in order to express something grander:

The very act of trans-forming the likeness of a given individual into a personification of certain abstract concepts is such that some basic constants must be recognized no matter when or by whom the transformation is wrought. [...] the symbolic character of the work should exact a note of abstraction and impassivity in the rendering of the face of the sitter.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ It is here quoted from the British Library manuscript Cotton Vespasian F.III, fol. 48; in Elizabeth’s hand: “Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, with a present of her portrait, May 15, 1549”. Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 35.

⁹⁵ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁹⁷ Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution*, 7.

Adding that unless the sitter was a beauty, it was meaningless to depict physical defects as they would remove the purpose of purity desired in a symbol, so the artist would therefore remove the depiction away from the humanity of the being and rather stress “the remoteness of a superior being”.⁹⁸

Riehl explains that for the contemporary viewer, the many faces of Elizabeth in her portraits showed her potential likeness. The conveying of the symbolical connotation of Elizabeth as the Queen of England was a greater way of showing her identity rather than a naturalistic representation would have done, as “likeness is not equivalent to identity”.⁹⁹ These portraits did not only function as depictions of the sitters but also as their substitutes, incorporating the sitter’s self into the object, like a voodoo doll. Those who partook in the Cult of Elizabeth wore her royal portrait as a talisman, while those who opposed to her or her Protestant rule tried to get rid of her through destroying her images by for example stabbing or burning them.¹⁰⁰ This way, official portraits may be compared to religious images with their mystical themes, though in a sphere of private devotion. To convey such a devotional them in state portraiture, the artist should use a proper schema in the presentation of the subject which bypasses the allegorical portrait, and rather work with the “idea of kingship”, or in this case “the idea of queenship”. This abstract idea can be described as a reflection of Neoplatonic doctrines.¹⁰¹

The development of the mask of youth for the public image of Elizabeth can be traced back to the 1590s, when a decision on governmental level to restrict the reproduction of her portraits and to control her image was decreed in order to prevent depictions that were “to her great offence”.¹⁰² Elizabeth’s official image was to show her as “a legendary beauty, ageless and unfading”, that is the qualities of the body politic.¹⁰³ With the political handling of her body, dressing her up in a lavish wardrobe, she could still be perceived as a goddess by the outside world. As it became a fashion owning and carrying a picture of the queen, so increased the production of her image. However, not every artist or workshop had been allowed to make her portraits and did not have an officially recognised face pattern. They would therefore copy

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 169-70.

¹⁰⁰ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 40.

¹⁰¹ Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution*, 39-40. In Neoplatonic philosophy mindful consciousness is considered as of higher value than the physical realm (Mind over Matter). Their understanding is based on a divine single cause of the “One”. This correlates with the body politic of the king and the absolute monarch.

¹⁰² Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 147.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 20.

illegally from other works or create an image themselves, which sometimes showed Elizabeth in an unflattering way as old and wrinkled. This led to the Privy Council's decision of July 1596 to aid the Queen's Serjeant Painter, George Gower (1540-1596), in seeking out and destroying these counterfeits, as they were called.¹⁰⁴ We know that these illegal images did not stop being produced, which only shows the increasing demand for owning her likeness.

Strong explains the production of the face pattern in his book. A face pattern or a face mask was a design for an artist or studio from which drafts were made. Elizabeth did not have to sit for her portraits, allowing her image to be reproduced in greater numbers. A draft proclamation of 1563, by Sir William Cecil (1520-1598), father of Robert Cecil, was the first attempt of controlling the production of Elizabeth's image. It was designed to limit the copying of the official pattern to artists recognised and accepted by "the hed officers".¹⁰⁵ As previously stated, this was not effective. No studio had one exclusive face mask, rather there were several patterns in circulation between the different studios simultaneously. There are no certain patterns for Elizabeth that we know of that exists today, but by looking at other surviving examples there is an understanding on how the pattern process was achieved. With a cut-out head, pins pierced the pattern along the features to make little holes, then the face pattern could be transferred onto another surface by rubbing coloured chalk over the holes, creating a print.¹⁰⁶ An example of this, which Strong believes to be a face pattern for the queen, is *Pattern Miniature of Elizabeth I* (Figure 4) (c. 1592) by Isaac Oliver (c. 1565-1617). It shows Elizabeth in an oval frame, like a sketch in black and white on a blue background. Only her facial features are defined, while her dress and accessories seem unfinished. This might be a hint that it was a face pattern where dress and jewellery could be added later and with different designs. The pattern miniature is a rare portrait as it might have been painted from life. However, it was not a successful pattern as there are only one existing finished miniature which followed its design, and even in this portrait Elizabeth's features have been softened.¹⁰⁷

Strong adds that in the case of Elizabeth, there were probably pattern books for the artists to draw upon, both for the facial features and maybe also for certain dresses and jewels, while allegorical portraits were designed in collaboration with a poet or writer.¹⁰⁸ This is relevant to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 16-17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 17.

the *Rainbow Portrait*. Face patterns were copied both officially and unofficially, but the clothes and jewels were reproduced otherwise. This is evident as sometimes the scale of the head does not fit the bodies.¹⁰⁹ Arnold suggests that many of the portraits of Elizabeth show dress and accessories in such detail that they must have been painted from life and borrowed from the staff of Elizabeth's Wardrobe of Robes. Probably not with the queen present, but maybe with a lady-in-waiting as a stand-in or just organised in a studio.¹¹⁰

There is documentary evidence that proves that Elizabeth was painted from life, by Federigo Zuccaro (c. 1540-1609) in 1575, Cornelius Ketel in 1578 and a French painter in 1581. Strong also believes she did a sitting for one of the *Armada* portraits in 1588, previously attributed to Gower, and the *Ditchley Portrait*.¹¹¹ The *Ditchley Portrait* together with a miniature by Oliver, also from approximately 1592, was probably the last sittings Elizabeth ever did, as argued by Strong.¹¹² In addition, there is the only existing account by Hilliard on a sitting with Elizabeth, as mentioned in the previous chapter section. In the 1590s Elizabeth was in her sixties and would have avoided any depiction of her aging face, promoting rather the fabricated mask of youth in the interest of the state and her body politic. In this regard, Hilliard was called upon to create this formalized mask of Elizabeth's face, removed from reality and rather showing a visual expression with mystic tendencies, befitting her royal image.¹¹³ This mask of youth face pattern by Hilliard is therefore an important element in the reading of Elizabeth's body politic in the *Rainbow Portrait*.

The portraits of Elizabeth from the early years of her reign shows her feminine character. It was not until the mid-1570s and 1580s that she incorporates characteristics of power and authority, usually preserved for adult males. Riehl argues that the mask of youth of the last decade was a tool of staging Elizabeth as youthful and feminine as well as presenting her as fully empowered.¹¹⁴ Adding that the mask of youth also reflects a new beginning, distancing herself from her difficult period of life prior to ascending the throne, simultaneously rewriting the face of an aging woman at the end of her reign. Thereby creating an amalgam of the beginning and the end of Elizabeth's power in one and the same representation.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 14-15.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹¹ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 16.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹¹⁴ Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, 150.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Hazard gives a summary of the relation between the mask of youth and the king's two bodies in her text *The Case for "Case" in Reading Elizabethan Portraits* (1990). Here she writes that the mask of youth is a good example of the legal fiction in the visual depiction of the body natural together with the body politic.¹¹⁶ This removal from realism strengthens Elizabeth's image, as Hazard continues: "If the king never dies, by the same logic the queen never ages: the body of the monarchy lives in a perpetual present".¹¹⁷ This is also argued by Brilliant as he connects this relationship to the Cult of Elizabeth and the staging of her as the Virgin Queen:

For Queen Elizabeth, the masque (or mask) is all. No other access to her exists, not just because majesty keeps its distance but as if to suggest that in her the ruler's two bodies – one temporary, the other temporal – have joined together in this image of the untouchable Virgin Queen.¹¹⁸

By removing the sovereign's body from the normative conception of time, an ageless image would allude to absolute or divine power. By subjecting the sovereign to time would undermine the divine authority as symbolically invested in him or her. In this case, such portraits like the *Rainbow Portrait* rewrites reality by achieving a mimetic dimension for political advantage, even though it is not a representation of the real world.¹¹⁹

To conclude this chapter, the king's two bodies was not only a theory. It was considered as practiced in the united body of the ruler. This was visually represented in the iconography of the state portrait, where Elizabeth's body natural is transformed into the personification of her power of state. Therefore, based on Marin, it can be argued that the *Rainbow Portrait* is a better representation of Elizabeth as Queen of England than what her physical being, her body natural, ever could be. In her struggle to maintain power, it was important to control her appearance and representation in imagery. The mask of youth was developed as a schema for such use. A naturalistic representation was not important as it was the idea of the absolute power that was to be defined in the iconography of state portraiture. Therefore, the mask of youth was a more effective tool in the staging of Elizabeth's character, her body politic, in her portraits, rather than trying for a realistic recreation of her body natural.

¹¹⁶ Hazard, "The Case for 'Case' in Reading Elizabethan Portraits", 79.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 103. This quote is about an engraving attributed to Crispijn van de Passe (1564-1637) from 1596, however I think it is just as descriptive to the *Rainbow Portrait*.

¹¹⁹ Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 180.

I presently give an iconographic observation of the *Rainbow Portrait* before turning to the description of a couple of events that are important to consider when reading the imagery of the painting. An imagery probably designed under the guidance of the proprietor, Robert Cecil, as discussed in the proceeding chapters.

CHAPTER III - THE RAINBOW PORTRAIT

The painting shows an ageless woman standing in front of a dark archway. Her three-quarter length figure is turned slightly to the left, her eyes gazing towards the spectator. Clothed in a lavish costume, a white bodice and sleeves embroidered with English wild flowers are revealed underneath an orange mantle. The mantle is decorated with painted eyes and ears, its borders lined with pearls. The way it is draped around the female figure, hanging over her left shoulder and slithering down her back around to her front, covering her lower body from the left, creates several shadowy folds in the orange fabric. Her left arm is pointing downwards and holds on to the border of the mantle. On the sleeve of this arm there is a bejewelled, meandering snake. A ruby heart is hanging in a chain from its mouth and above its head balances a celestial sphere encircled by a zodiac belt. The female figure's right arm is slightly bended upwards, holding a pale rainbow in her hand. Above the rainbow is written in golden letters: "NON SINE SOLE IRIS". The Latin words translates to "no rainbow without the sun". There is no source of light visible, but it seems like the body itself is illuminating the painting. Around her wrists, bracelets of pearls and rubies can be seen. The low neckline of the dress reveals much of her chest, framed by the lace borders of the bodice. The lace borders connect with an open standing ruff in two layers, going around her neck. On the ruff to the left there is an attached jewelled gauntlet. A transparent veil bordered with pearls and jewels hangs over her shoulders and down her back. A piece of it is also stretched out behind her like two wings supported by a frame. Beneath her chin there is a smaller ruff circling her neck, as well as three pearl necklaces. Hanging from the middle one, there is a pendant with three rubies and a big pearl. The lower necklace is in a knot below her chest and hangs all the way down to her crotch. From her left ear hangs an earring matching the pendant. Her red, curly hair is covered in more pearls and jewels and encircles her head. A few strands of hair run down her shoulder and chest. On top of her head is placed a sumptuous headdress. It has an incorporated crown with a crescent moon and feathers or rays of light beaming out in an arch, mirroring the rainbow.

1. AT HATFIELD HOUSE

Before moving on to the analysis of the *Rainbow Portrait*, I would like to present what we know of its existence as part of the collection at Hatfield House. The house was erected in 1611 on the wishes of Robert Cecil, the assumed patron of the painting.

Hatfield House is situated approximately 35 km North of London. A stone's throw away lies the remains of the previous main building of the premises, the Royal Palace of Hatfield (built in 1497) and the first home of Queen Elizabeth I. It is said to have been one of the queen's favourite residences together with Richmond Palace. Her successor James VI of Scotland and I of England (1566-1625), the son of Mary Stuart, did not share the love for the building, and in 1608 he exchanged it for Cecil's home Theobalds Palace. Cecil in return, used the bricks from the old Royal Palace of Hatfield to build his own residence in a Jacobean style. The perhaps most impressing room of this new building is the Marble Hall. With a chess-tiled marble floor, a ceiling covered in intricate woodworks and plasterworks, heavy wooden structures along the walls decorated with tapestries and portraits on one side as well as rows of two-storey bay windows on the other side, the room can really take the breath away from any spectator. In the middle of the Eastern wall is placed the portrait of Elizabeth, famously known as the *Rainbow Portrait*.

The portrait has been referenced amongst the paintings of the queen in the inventories from 1611 in Salisbury House and later in Hatfield House, where it today is listed under No. 50. There are several observers who have mentioned the painting, as in 1720 by George Vertue (1684-1756), the antiquarian known as the father of English art history, and in 1780 by the naturalist and antiquarian Thomas Pennant (1726-1798). It was described more individually in the inventories of Hatfield House in 1823 and 1868, when even the rainbow and the motto was remarked on.¹²⁰ Because of this, we know the whereabouts of the painting throughout the ages. What we do not know for sure is the circumstances around the execution of the painting and the reason for its existence. We can only make assumptions based on the existing facts that are deemed relevant by the individual researcher.

¹²⁰ Erna Auerbach and Charles K. Adams, *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House* (London: Constable & Company Limited, 1971), 61.

2. WHO IS THE ARTIST?

Who the artist might be is not of great importance to this thesis in general, but it can give us an idea on when the portrait was painted and why it looks as it does in an iconographic sense. Auerbach and Adams believe Oliver to be the painter. They disclaim theories that looks on Zuccaro as the creator of the portrait, as was previously believed by scholars of the nineteenth century.¹²¹ It has since been discovered in Italian documents that Zuccaro travelled to England at the end of 1574, returning to Italy during the autumn of 1575. Therefore, only two drawings from this period can be ascribed to him, one of Elizabeth and the other of Sir Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1533-1588), Elizabeth's favourite and close friend until his death.

This information does not fit with the execution of the portrait, as the style and costume dates it to the period of around 1600. Strong reflects on the style of the execution of the painting and how chiaroscuro, and other Renaissance effects such as linear and aerial perspectives, had yet to be adapted into the queen's portraits.¹²² The painting has been executed in a Flemish style and with Italian Mannerism. All together the portrait expresses the tradition of depicting Elizabeth as a queen regnant of divine power in her body politic, removed from a naturalistic representation, as have been explained by Jenkins. The style followed suite. "Styles, like languages, differ in the sequence of articulation and in the number of questions they allow the artist to ask; and so complex is the information that reaches us from the visible world that no picture will ever embody it all".¹²³ With this in mind, the style of the *Rainbow Portrait* can be interpreted as the language of the painting telling us what sort of character is being depicted, in this case a being more than a secular human.

John de Critz the Elder (c. 1551-1642) was also considered as the painter because of a bill from 1607 noting that de Critz altered a painting of Elizabeth for the Earl of Salisbury.¹²⁴ However, Auerbach and Adams do not believe there has been any alterations to the *Rainbow Portrait*, except for the possible later addition of the golden letters. Strong attributes the painting to Gheeraerts on grounds of style. Both de Critz and Gheeraerts are of the Franco-Flemish school, suggesting similar styles. So was Oliver who may have worked in the same studio as the other two, as he was the brother-in-law of Gheeraerts.

¹²¹ Ibid., 60.

¹²² Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 44.

¹²³ Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 90.

¹²⁴ Auerbach and Adams, *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, 60.

There are two reasons for believing Oliver to be the painter of the *Rainbow Portrait*, as argued by Auerbach and Adams. Firstly, the stylistic use of symbolism and the staging of the subject can be compared to miniatures by Oliver, like *Lady in Masque Costume* (Figure 5) (1609). Here the female figure is comparable to Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait* as they both share the curly strands of hair, pearl jewellery, and an elaborate headdress as well as a similar see-through veil. Furthermore, the face of Elizabeth is inspired by Hilliard's mask of youth. As Oliver was the student of Hilliard and was taught in his *oeuvre*, it can be assumed that Oliver is the creator of the portrait.¹²⁵ The second reason is based on some documents from Hatfield House of a payment of debt from the Earl of Salisbury to "Oliver the painter". The debt of 200 pounds with interests was first listed on 18 November 1611 and last mentioned on the 18th April 1613.¹²⁶ We do not know the reason for the debt or when it originated, but it can be surmised that Robert Cecil owed Oliver a debt because he did not have the means to pay him for his work as an artist. He had already spent a lot of his riches on building the new Hatfield House. Oliver had also been employed to paint "a picture for my Lady Clifford" in 1611 for the price of six pounds, probably a miniature according to its value (object unidentified). Knowing of this previous employment, it is therefore more likely that the earl owed Oliver for his work as a painter rather than having lent him the money.

Can we therefore conclude that the payment of debt to Oliver is due to him having painted the *Rainbow Portrait*, or another painting worth 200 pounds? Even though the execution of the portrait can be associated with all the artists mentioned above, there is still a visible individuality to the style of this painting which makes it exceptional compared to other paintings ascribed to these artists. I will therefore conclude, like Arnold, that the portrait was painted by an unknown artist yet to be identified.

As mentioned, both Hilliard and Oliver were familiar with the practice of the mask of youth. Why Hilliard has not been discussed as the artist behind the *Rainbow Portrait*, I do not know. What we do know is that Hilliard left England to search for money and knowledge in France between 1576 and 1578-79 but failed and had to return to England.¹²⁷ There is also evidence of Hilliard being in contact with Cecil as he wrote a letter to Cecil dated 28 July 1601, preserved at Hatfield House. He writes:

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

¹²⁷ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 80-81.

[...] it may please you to understand that (of a dutiful and loving mind) hoping to bring up others also for her Majesty's better service, I have taught divers, both strangers and English, which now and of a long time have pleased the common sort exceeding well, so that I am myself become unable by my art any longer to keep house in London without some farther help of her Majesty, which I cannot hope (though a very small matter would help me) considering how lately her Majesty of her most gracious goodness, that rather for your sake, granted me an annuity of 40*l.* [pounds] per annum, which will be a good stay and comfort unto me, sojourning with my friends in the country, at house rent and table free.¹²⁸

He continues by asking Cecil to plead for his sake to the queen, if she would allow him to go abroad for a couple of years with her support, and if Cecil could take his son into his service. It is not clear what this payment of forty pounds per annum was intended for, his work or just as a symbolic salary proving Elizabeth's affection for her limner¹²⁹ of many years. An argument that disclaims Hilliard as the painter of the *Rainbow Portrait* is that even though he was excellent at painting miniatures, his portraits in bigger scale were only considered as adequate, as described by Strong.¹³⁰ The two larger scale portraits that most likely can be attributed to him are the *Pelican* and the *Phoenix* portraits (Figure 6 and 7) (c. 1575). They were painted around the same time, sharing a face pattern but mirrored, and show the native preference for line and colour, and two-dimensional flatness. However, if we consider Jenkins' reflections on this style in Elizabeth's state portraits, these traits do not necessarily define bad representations. Nevertheless, Hilliard kept to producing miniatures in service of the queen, adapting his mask of youth in the 1590s.

It is most probable that an unknown artist painted the *Rainbow Portrait*. This could be researched in greater detail by looking at surviving primary sources from Hatfield House and other collections. I will not continue this road, as this is a job by itself. Instead, I move on to the analysis of the painting, beginning with observing the similarities between the entertainments at Harefield House and the *Rainbow Portrait*, before following up with the same method regarding the entertainments at Salisbury House.

¹²⁸ *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury*, ed. Historical Manuscripts Commission, vol. 11 (Dublin: John Falconer, 1906), <https://archive.org/details/calendarofmanusc11grea>, 306.

¹²⁹ A limner in Elizabethan England was a painter of portrait miniatures.

¹³⁰ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 79.

CHAPTER IV - THE ENTERTAINMENTS AT HAREFIELD HOUSE

The first event at Harefield House, between 31 July and 2 August 1602, has been described in various manuscripts and in Francis Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody* (1608). The scattered details have been reconstructed by Erler with the intention of clarifying the order of the events.¹³¹ It began with the arrival of Elizabeth on Saturday, 31 July 1602, with an opening dialogue between a bailiff and a dairymaid. The queen's entrance to the house itself was marked by a second dialogue between a person dressed as Place, in a robe covered in bricks like the ones on the house, and Time dressed in a green robe with a stopped hourglass. Place presented the queen with a heart shaped diamond followed by the words: "I found this Hart, which, as my daughter *Truth* tould mee, was stolne by owne of the Nymphes from one of the seruants of this Goddesse; but her guiltie conscience enforming her that it did belong only of right vnto her that is Mrs. of all harts in the world".¹³² The evening continued with the song "Cynthia Queene of Seas and Lands", performed by a mariner. A speech was held connecting the song to the entertainments, followed by the drawing of prizes by the women present, accompanied by a rhyming couplet¹³³ called "The Lottery". The day ended presumably with a feast. What happened next on Sunday is unknown. However, on Monday 2 August, upon Elizabeth's departure, she was given a rainbow robe accompanied by the verses "Beauty's Rose and Virtue's Book". Then she received an anchor jewel with a following speech of farewell delivered by Place, this time dressed in a black robe like a widow in mourning.¹³⁴

Carrying on, I break down the different elements at these entertainments and consider them in address to the symbolism of the *Rainbow Portrait* as well as other contemporary written sources, such as verses, letters, speeches and the accounts of the contents of the Wardrobe of Robes from 1600.

¹³¹ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 361.

¹³² John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, (Burt Franklin, 1823), <https://books.google.no/books?id=XvpVAAAAYAAJ>, 590.

¹³³ A rhyming couplet is a rhythmic verse consisting of two lines.

¹³⁴ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 361-62.

1. THE RAINBOW IN HER HAND

There is a general agreement that the verses from this occasion, “Cynthia Queene of Seas and Lands”, “The Lottery”, and “Beauty’s Rose and Virtue’s Book”, can be attributed to Davies, as stated by Erler based on Davies’ earliest editor, Grosart, as well as his more recent editor Robert Krueger (1975, not referenced in this text). What is interesting here is the similarities between the poems, the event and the *Rainbow Portrait*. The verses of “Beauty’s Rose and Virtue’s Book” and the presentation of a rainbow robe, namely a robe covered in rainbows, associates Elizabeth with the rainbow goddess Iris. The poem reads as follows:

Beauties rose, and vertues booke,
Angells minde, and Angells looke,
 To all Saints and Angells deare,
Clearest Maiestie on earth,
Heauen did smile at your faire birth,
 And since, your daies have been most cleare.

Only poore St. *Swythen* now
Doth heare you blame his cloudy brow:
 But that poore St. deuoutly swears,
It is but a tradition vaine
That his much weeping causeth raine,
 For S^{ts} in heauen shedd no teares:

But this he saith, that to his feast
Commeth Iris, an vnbidden guest,
 In her moist roabe of collers gay;
And she cometh, she ever staies,
For the space of fortie daies,
 And more or lesse raines euey day.

But the good St., when once he knew,
This raine was like to fall on you,
 If S^{ts} could weepe, he had wept as much
As when he did the Lady leade
That did on burning iron tread:
 To Ladies his respect is such.

He gently first bids Iris goe
Unto the Antipodes below,
 But shee for that more sullen grew.
When he saw that, with angry looke,
From her her rayneie robes he tooke,
 Which heere he doth present to you.

It is fitt it should with you remaine,
For you know better how to raine.
 Yet if it raine still as before,
St Swythen praies that you would guesse,
That Iris doth more robes possesse,
 And that you should blame him no more.¹³⁵

However, as discussed by Erler, Iris in the poem, opposed to the rainbow in the portrait, describes the rainbow goddess as a weather figure. In the portrait the rainbow is Iris' attribute held in the hands of another divine figure, who like the sun, casts light on the rainbow. Therefore, Elizabeth is not represented as Iris in the portrait. She is the majestic figure receiving the attributes of the rainbow goddess. The fifth stanza of the poem describes the presenting of the robe to Elizabeth herself, as she was given a rainbow robe on the last day of the entertainments at Harefield House, presented by Lady Walsingham.¹³⁶ The sixth and last stanza states that the rainbow robe befits the queen better than Iris because, as is written: "for y[o]u know better how to raine", playing with the double meaning of the sound of the word "rain" to that of the word "reign".¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Alexander Balloch Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Sir John Davies*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), <https://archive.org/details/completipoemsofs02davi>, 253-54.

¹³⁶ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 83.

¹³⁷ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 362-63.

The rainbow robe from the entertainments was ordered by Egerton for the occasion. William Jones, the queen's tailor (from 1582 by replacing Walter Fyshe), made it so to be sure it was the right size. It is written in Sir Arthur Mainwaring's (1580-1648) accounts the expenses of the entertainments at Harefield House, here referenced from *The Egerton Papers* (1840). Apparently, he oversaw the paying of the fees from Egerton's household at the time. Mainwaring had received "£553. 6s" (553 pounds and 6 shillings) to disburse to the labourers, including himself. Amongst the accounts is noted a payment on 10 August 1602: "Payde to mercers, the imbroderer, silkeman, and the Queenes taylor, lxxv^{li} xv^s [£75. 15s]".¹³⁸ Arnold believe this payment was for the rainbow robe.¹³⁹ The rainbow symbol was a common embroidery image on Elizabeth's gowns, as can be observed in the Stowe Inventory from the Wardrobe of Robes. An example of such an embroidered rainbow is: "[f.61^v/81] Item one Peticote of watchet Satten embrodered allover with Rainebowes and cloudes with a broade border embrodered like pillers and grapes wyndinge upon braunches".¹⁴⁰

Because of the similarities between the portrait and the entertainments at Harefield House in 1602, Arnold suggests that the portrait was painted as a commemoration to the event and that it was commissioned by Egerton himself. She adds that he may have been the one who gave Elizabeth the jewelled serpent, further analysed in a later chapter section, however there are no existing records of it.¹⁴¹ I admit to disagreeing with Arnold on this account, considering the possible tracing of the *Rainbow Portrait* at Hatfield House and in the care of Robert Cecil's descendants. Therefore, it is also important to consider the entertainments at Salisbury House, 6 December 1602, the Cecil residence in London. However, I will not disclaim the possible effect the entertainments at Harefield House might have had on the portrait, based on the shared similarities which I discuss in greater detail within the following chapter sections.

The execution of the rainbow in the portrait is curious in itself because of the lack of colours (Figure 1, a). This may affect how to interpret this rainbow, as the rays seem quite faint in the hands of Elizabeth. Fischlin rejects the theory that the lack of colour is because of fading or chemical changes in the pigments used to paint, as the other colours in the portrait are still very clear. Instead he presents two contradictory readings of this symbolism. The first is that the lack

¹³⁸ John Payne Collier, *The Egerton Papers*, (London: J. B. Nichols and son, 1840), <https://archive.org/details/egertonpaperscol00ellerich>, 343.

¹³⁹ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 94.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

of colour in the rainbow is due to the lack of a light source. The rainbow does not shine because there is no sun, alluding to the queen's fading power and the decline of her reign. Fischlin finds this interpretation contradictory to the account made by Hilliard describing the sitting where Elizabeth prefers to be painted in "the open light" (see chapter section "The Representation of Power"). Here she is arguably in control of the creation of her image. Additionally, it is unlikely that the painter would create an unflattering or subversive image of the queen, knowing that the portrait would be viewed by the sitter and other contemporary spectators.¹⁴²

The second interpretation is that Elizabeth outshines the rainbow with her own brilliance. This is even described in the dialogue between Place and Time at the first day of the entertainments:

Our entertainment of this Goddess [Elizabeth] will be much alike; for though her selfe shall eclipse her soe much, as to suffer her brightnes to bee shadowed in this obscure and narrow *Place*, yet the sunne beames that follow her, the train I meane that attends vpon her, must, by the necessitie of this *Place*, be deuided from her.¹⁴³

Elizabeth is not only followed by light, as the light shines out from her. She is a force that exceeds even the natural world. Her authority is therefore that of a divine power. Fischlin concludes that how we interpret the rainbow in the portrait as absent or present in the way it attributes Elizabeth, is significant to our understanding of the portrait. Though ambiguous as it may be, the different interpretations of the symbols in the portrait, the rainbow is clearly alluding to Elizabeth's power.¹⁴⁴

The rainbow itself in, biblical tradition, is the symbol of peace. God showed Noah a rainbow after the flood as a sign of the bond between heaven and earth. Catherine de Medici (1519-1589), the queen consort of France, used the symbol of the rainbow together with the motto: "ΦΩΣ ΦΕΡΟΙ ΗΔΕ ΓΑΛΗΝΗΝ". The motto is quoted by Strong as "le vray signe de clere serenité, & tranquillité de paix", and Erler translates it to "it brings light and serenity".¹⁴⁵ Here the rainbow is the true sign of peace and serenity, and Catherine is the bringer of it. In the *Rainbow Portrait* the allusion to peace is taken a step further. Elizabeth holding the rainbow in her right hand accompanied by the words "no rainbow without the sun", indicates no peace

¹⁴² Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 197-98.

¹⁴³ Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 589.

¹⁴⁴ Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 199-200.

¹⁴⁵ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 158; Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 359.

without Queen Elizabeth I. She is not only the bringer of peace, but also the reason for its existence. Although the golden letters possibly are of a later date, they help emphasise the message of the rainbow.¹⁴⁶

To better understand the importance of the rainbow symbol in context of contemporary understanding, I would like to explain the Astraea-Virgo phenomenon in relation to the Cult of Elizabeth.

ASTRAEA-VIRGO

Fischlin explores further the religious aspect in relation to the rainbow as a symbol. The rainbow is a reminder of God and the covenant between heaven and earth, where Elizabeth becomes the mediator as the upholder of the rainbow and peace. This places Elizabeth on top of the hierarchy, next to God, with both divine as well as monarchic power. The rainbow was also used at the time as an attribute to the Virgin Mary, as Fischlin observes in Henry Hawkins' work *Partheneia Sacra, or, the Mysterious and Delicious Garden of the Sacred Parthenes* (1633).¹⁴⁷ It contains a series of Marian devotions, wherein the Iris is used to reinforce the concept of the ultimate virgin. It is an emblem of "Mary's virginity, allure, and beauty, her ability to mirror and astonish, her queenliness and capacity to reconcile and protect", as Fischlin describes it.¹⁴⁸

Fischlin bases himself on Yates, who proposes that many of Elizabeth's symbols can be translated to Virgin Mary's symbols as a way of replacing the cult of the Virgin with the cult of the Virgin Queen, Astraea-Virgo.¹⁴⁹ Symbols such as the rose, the star, the moon, the phoenix, and the pearl. Yates elaborated on this in her text *Queen Elizabeth as Astraea* (1947), in perspective of Elizabethan Imperialism, the English Renaissance, and the Royal Supremacy over Church and State. As previously stated, visual aids of semiotic images were tools in the representation of Elizabeth as the absolute monarch. "Elizabethan Protestantism claims to have restored a golden age of pure imperial religion", as Yates puts it.¹⁵⁰ This golden age was

¹⁴⁶ Auerbach and Adams, *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, 59.

¹⁴⁷ Fischlin, "Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the 'Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I", 193.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 193-96.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁵⁰ Frances A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 10 (1947), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/750395>, 38.

arguably achieved through different reforms or changes within the English Church and the state politics, as presently explained.

From the beginning, Elizabeth wanted to have an open mind about the religious freedom in her country, herself being a practicing Protestant. Her experience with the religious turmoil in England made her aware of the dangers it could inflict on her people as well as on herself. This way of thinking coloured her politics throughout her reign, as we can see with the following example. In 1559, the year of her coronation, Elizabeth's great religious compromise was decreed by the Parliament as the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity. The Act of Supremacy made the monarch head of Church, and clergy had to swear allegiance to the queen. Instead of being called "Supreme Head", she changed her title to "Supreme Governor" of the church, so to adapt it to the concept of having a woman instead of a man as head of Church. As Supreme Governor she could with greater ease be accepted as a regent or substitute as ruling in God's or man's place, rather than being the Supreme Head as the ruler on top of the hierarchical ladder of the Church, a position reserved for males. The Act of Uniformity resulted in a common Book of Prayer of 1559, telling how to practice Protestantism in England through Church attendance, prayers and rituals. Elizabeth had a tolerant view on religion and wanted peace in her reign. It seems she wanted to establish a state religion as a formality, though did not mind her people practising their different beliefs in private. She did not like the extreme piety of Protestantism in the Low Countries and of her brother Edward VI and preferred rather a more relaxed one where there was room for a rich religious culture including music and art.¹⁵¹ She was open to incorporating some of the "old faith" (meaning Catholicism) into her own religion. However, as the story goes, when she was given a picture of a saint by the Dean of St Paul's as a New Year's gift¹⁵² in 1561, she got very angry. Though she did not mind a little bit of both the Catholic and the Protestant faith in her private practices, it was not proper in a public context.¹⁵³

Elizabethan imperialism is defined through its religious aspect together with a beginning nationalism and a universalism associated with the Medieval Period, which are combined and inhabit her body politic. The Divine Right to rule over both Church and State during Tudor,

¹⁵¹ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 82-4.

¹⁵² New Year's gifts of clothing and jewellery were given to the queen on 1 January each year and entered in the New Year's Gift Rolls. Not all the New Year's Gift Rolls have survived. Some are incomplete or exists in other printed versions, like various entries in the Wardrobe of Robes.

¹⁵³ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 312-13.

and Stuart, times was derived from the tradition of the Roman Emperors in councils of the Church.¹⁵⁴ This was in conflict to the Papacy which saw itself as the universal authority. With the reformed Church of England, the Elizabethan Anglicanism, the Crown was free from papal shackles, returning to a pure religion like that of a Constantinian, imperial Christianity. Yates writes about this while referring to John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563), more known as "Fox's Book of Martyrs", one of the most important works of the English Reformation.¹⁵⁵ In this sense, the ruler is accepted as a universal ruler.

This is where Virgo-Astraea comes in. It was important for the Tudor rulers to validate their claim to the throne as they were of Welsh decent. Their claim came through the family ties to both the Lancasters and the Yorks, which are commonly known as the opposing parties of the War of the Roses.¹⁵⁶ The two houses merged together through the marriage of Henry VII Tudor, as he had a Lancastrian claim, and Elizabeth of York (1466-1503). Their symbol is known as the Tudor rose, the union of both the red and the white rose as one flower, as seen in the top left corner of the *Pelican Portrait* (Figure 6). This is considered as an imperial theme as it is establishing the peace represented by the monarch of a union which ended a war. Worth mentioning is that the pelican in this painting symbolises redemption and charity, alluding to Elizabeth's relationship to her subjects. As the pelican plucked its chest to feed its children with its own blood, so the queen too showed her love for her people.¹⁵⁷ A second imperial theme validating Tudor rule in England was based on classical myths. It was commonly accepted that the Tudors descended from a Trojan called Brutus, a relative to Aeneas, who in the myth is said to have founded London as Troynavant (New Troy). Though the Tudors were of course Welsh, as they were of ancient British descent, they were accepted as the Trojan-British race of monarchs and the bringers of a golden age of peace and plenty.¹⁵⁸ As the rule of Emperor Augustus was considered the golden age of Rome, so was Elizabeth's rule. Symbols of classical culture was therefore naturally adapted into the English Renaissance. The Greek goddess Astraea became a symbol representing both the Augustan reign as well as the golden age in Elizabethan England. Astraea is described as the virgin Justice and is said to have gone to heaven during the Iron Age, turning into the celestial constellation Virgo, prophesying her

¹⁵⁴ Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", 40.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁵⁶ The War of the Roses (1455-1487) was so named because of the flower symbols of the two families involved. The red rose represented the House of Lancaster and the white rose represented the House of York.

¹⁵⁷ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 83.

¹⁵⁸ Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", 48-49.

return as a sign of a golden age. This prophesy was adapted into the Christian belief, and the virgin Astraea was translated into being the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.¹⁵⁹

Elizabeth as Astraea is not only visually evident. It is also evident in celebratory texts, like this exemple: Davies' "Hymnes of Astraea" is a series of 26 poems of 15 lines where the first letter of each line together spells out ELISA BETHA REGINA. Poems built this way is called acrostic verses.¹⁶⁰ "Hymnes of Astraea" is a celebratory work dedicated to Elizabeth as Astraea, the bringer of a golden age, as told by the first poem titled "Hymne I. Of Astraea":

E arly before the day doth spring,
L et vs awake my Muse, and sing;
I t is no time to slumber,
S o many Ioyes this time doth bring,
A s time will faile to number.

B ut whereto shall we bend our Layes?
E uen vp to Heauen, againe to raise
T he Mayde, which thence descended
H ath brought againe the golden dayes,
A nd all the world amended.

R udenesse it selfe she doth refine,
E uen like an Alchymist diuine,
G rosse times of Iron turning
I nto the purest forme of gold:
N ot to corrupt, til heauen waxe old,
A nd be refin'd with burning.¹⁶¹

These objects of both visual and textual tributes to Elizabeth really emphasise how the Cult of Astraea and of the Virgin in a way was transformed into the worship of Elizabeth, known as

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶⁰ An acrostic verse consists of lines where the first letter in each line together forms one or several words, like in the verse on this page which types out ELISA BETHA REGINA.

¹⁶¹ John Davies, *Hymnes of Astraea in Acrosticke Verse*, (London: [by R. Field] for I. S[tandish], 1599), http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=config.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99840931, 1.

the Cult of Elizabeth. We may wonder how deliberately Elizabeth intended to replace Virgin Mary as the subject of devotion. The Virgin became a logical allegory for herself and her politics as she did not marry or had any children. This topic is discussed in the subsection “To Marry or Not to Marry”. She devoted her body and soul to England and her people. As the imperial image of Elizabeth and English power grew, so the people became more devoted to her image. Yates tells how the lavish images of the Virgin Mary had been cast out of the churches and was replaced by the bejewelled and painted image of Elizabeth, which travelled through the country for her subjects to adore.¹⁶² In the end of her text, Yates describes the Elizabeth-Virgo symbol as flexible and writes: “From the blatantly Protestant anti-Papal Virgin, she could become a more elusive goddess, not altogether remote from that Reformation-hating mystic, that curious combination of Gothic revival and incipient baroque”, referring to Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), an Italian observer of the English Renaissance (see chapter section “The Moon on the Crown”).¹⁶³ She adds: “This ambiguity of the Virgo served the double purpose of keeping foreign powers at bay, and confusing the religious issue in the minds of her own subjects”.¹⁶⁴

An interesting parenthesis to the subject is that the title of “Beauty’s Rose and Virtue’s Book” is referring to the Virgin, the maiden and maidenhood. This can be gathered from another of Davies’ texts, “A Contention between a Wife, a Widowe, and a Maide for Precedence at an Offringe” (see chapter “The Entertainments at Salisbury House”), where the maiden describes her state as “Beauties fresh Rose, and vertues liuing booke”.¹⁶⁵ This must have been a favoured way of alluding to the Virgin state by Davies, also maybe common during the English Renaissance.

To sum up this subsection, Astraea-Virgo was an image adopted by Elizabeth and her devotees from classical tradition to describe and validate her rule as Queen of England. The *Rainbow Portrait* indicates this via the rainbow symbol, a symbol of peace which exists in the light of Elizabeth, who like Astraea and Virgin Mary was considered as the Virgin of the golden age.

¹⁶² Yates, “Queen Elizabeth as Astraea”, 75.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁵ Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Sir John Davies*, 85.

Returning to the entertainments at Harefield House between 31 July and 2 August 1602, *Astraea* was a well-known allegory in celebration to Elizabeth. Continuing this line of thought, the concept of *renovatio* is further discussed vis-à-vis the floral design of the bodice.

2. THE BODICE COVERED IN FLOWERS OF SPRING

Astraea was from the beginning of her reign used as an allegory on Elizabeth. This allegory on the coming of a golden age, the imperial *renovatio* or rebirth of the state, was from classical times represented by a phoenix.¹⁶⁶ Elizabeth can be seen with this symbol in the *Phoenix Portrait* (Figure 7), where she wears a phoenix jewel at her chest. It hangs from a Tudor rose which is part of a heavily jewelled collar. As explored by Kantorowicz, the phoenix was a symbol of the duality of the king's body, creating a more mystical connotation to the body politic. The phoenix as a bird which only regenerated through rebirthing itself, became an obvious allegory to *renovatio*. This symbol, like that of *Astraea*, stood for Elizabeth and the imperial rebirth, "[...] implying the return of the best rule under the One, when the world is most at peace, and justice, together with all other virtue, reigns".¹⁶⁷ *Renovatio* became a common theme, closely connected with the phoenix symbol as well as other allegories associated with the three theological and four cardinal virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, and Prudence. They are all related to the virtues of *Astraea*, and therefore also Elizabeth. As *renovatio* was associated with rebirth, it was also identified with spring, the season where nature itself is going through a cycle of rebirth. Flowers were therefore a natural representation of the imperial *renovatio*.

In the *Rainbow Portrait* Elizabeth wears a wonderfully decorated bodice and sleeves, covered in flowers of spring. Arnold describes it briefly as "a fairly long-waisted jacket embroidered with flowers".¹⁶⁸ She tells of how embroiderers made the designs based on flowers from the English garden as well as from illustrated books showing plants and flowers, as from the influential book *The Herball* (1597). They most likely chose flowers according to their symbolism, like the Tudor rose.¹⁶⁹ Elizabeth's favourite flower was pansies, according to Lady

¹⁶⁶ Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as *Astraea*", 37.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁶⁸ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 81.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Sussex, which symbolised “thoughts”.¹⁷⁰ As we remember, dominant thought and belief were male traits which Elizabeth incorporated into her motto “*Video, Taceo*”. Even in her letter to her brother Edward VI she mentions how she values her thoughts, or mind (see chapter section “The Mask of Youth”). By looking closely at the bodice in the *Rainbow Portrait* (Figure 1, b), and comparing them to flowers from Gerard’s *The Herball*, you can clearly see pansies (Figure 8) together with flowers such as honeysuckle (Figure 9), gillyflowers (Figure 10), and cowslips (Figure 11). These flowers are extraordinarily alike the flowers on the Bacton Altar Cloth. I have picked out four flowers from the fabric (Figure 12, a-d) which I believe are the same kind of flowers like the ones from *The Herball* and the portrait.

Arnold does not seem to have made the connection that the Bacton Altar Cloth (Figure 12) and the bodice worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait* share similar embroidery. She even describes the different objects, the cloth and the painting, on only one page apart in her book. Either she recognised them as being of a familiar theme of embroidery and nothing else, or she accidentally did not notice the apparent likeness between the cloth and the bodice. She mentions in relation to the robes of ceremony as an exception that one cannot with certainty connect Elizabeth’s wardrobe from the Stowe and Folger inventories with any of the clothes she is wearing in her portraits, as numerous alterations have been done to them.¹⁷¹ It has not yet been discovered if the Bacton Altar Cloth can be traced to one of the entries in the Stowe or Folger inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes.

Of the Bacton Altar Cloth, Arnold writes that it dates from the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, and that it might originally have been a petticoat or a forepart, now taken apart and pieced together as a communion table cover.¹⁷² It has been preserved behind glass at the Bacton Parish Church in Hereford, until recently when taken to Hampton Court for restoration by Historic Royal Palace. It is believed that the embroidered cloth may have belonged to Blanche Parry (c. 1507-1590), one of the queen’s gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber, whose place of birth was Bacton, Herefordshire.¹⁷³ Gifts of clothing from Elizabeth’s wardrobe to her women, servants and people of high ranks was very common during her reign.¹⁷⁴ They were either given in their entirety, in pieces, or altered. Because of the valuable

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 79, 95.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁷² Ibid., 79.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 80.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 98-99.

fabrics, jewels and metalwork, Elizabeth's robes were worth fortunes. As Parry had been in service to Elizabeth since her infancy, she had received many gifts from the queen making her a wealthy woman. After her death in 1590, the parish of Bacton has received £14 annually, as stated in her will, which is still honoured today.¹⁷⁵ The embroidered cloth was probably donated by to the church after Parry's death, and even after the death of the queen, though there does not exist any documentary evidence of this as of yet.¹⁷⁶ With the dating of the fabric based on the style of embroidery as well as assuming that it is the same fabric or embroidery pattern to that of the bodice as seen in the *Rainbow Portrait*, we may more or less conclude that both the cloth and the painting dates to 1600-03.

The embroidered cloth itself is a "silver chamblet", to use a sixteenth century term, with a secondary weft of silver metal strip. Chamblet or "camlet" is the name for a ribbed weave, which like plain weave has the weft thread going over and under the warp thread in a pattern of one under and one over and so forth. Ribbed is different from plain weave in that it uses a thicker thread for either the weft or the warp thread. This way, the fabric will get raised ribs horizontally or vertically across the surface. In a silver chamblet, an additional metal thread lies on top of the silk ribs in the weft, held with an extra binding warp of silk.¹⁷⁷ The cloth is made of white ribbed silk with silver thread added to the weft. The embroidery is constructed in a way so that it seems like the flowers are growing upwards in the same direction towards one selvedge. Based on this, Arnold speculates that the selvedge would have to be long enough to circle the body if the fabric was that of a petticoat. As the cloth is only in pieces, it is missing the amount of fabric needed for a potential petticoat.¹⁷⁸ The cloth may therefore have originated from a smaller piece of clothing. Lynn agrees and observes that the shaped panels and seams of the Bacton Altar Cloth imply that it might have originated from a court dress, as a forepart, and later reshaped into an altar cloth used for church ceremonies.¹⁷⁹

Both Lynn and Arnold suggest that the fabric of the Bacton Altar Cloth originates from Elizabeth's wardrobe. The silver chamblet of this high quality, both in fabric and embroidery, makes it a high-status fabric for garments only accessible to the Royal Family or the highest

¹⁷⁵ Eleri Lynn, *Tudor Fashion* (London: Yale University Press, 2017), 168.

¹⁷⁶ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 80.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁷⁹ Lynn, *Tudor Fashion*, 169.

level of aristocracy.¹⁸⁰ There is also the additional evidence of the Tudor rose amongst the different flowers as seen on the pieces of fabric (Figure 12, e), which was the personal badge of the Tudor house and represented the queen herself.¹⁸¹ However, Lynn also mentions the lack of documentary evidence to either connect it to Elizabeth or Blanche Parry. She nevertheless believes there to be a high possibility for such a princely fabric to be safeguarded for centuries at Bacton Parish Church, based on it being such a high-status gift or in memoriam of Parry.¹⁸² Tudor dress and accessories have had a hard time surviving history, as they in domestic care most likely would be altered again and again to benefit from the value of the objects. Because the Bacton Altar Cloth had a sacred opposed to a profane function, it has persisted through history.

If the cloth was indeed a forepart, it could still have been part of the dress Elizabeth wears in the *Rainbow Portrait*. Except we do not see it because the orange mantle with eyes and ears covers up the lower part of her body. In the way the cloth has been cut up, it does not seem likely that it was the bodice of the painting, as there would not be enough fabric for the altar cloth. Even though we cannot with absolute certainty verify that the Bacton Altar Cloth has originated from Elizabeth's wardrobe, it is today celebrated as the only surviving piece of clothing worn by the queen, according to popular belief.

Looking at the bodice in the portrait as well as the Bacton Altar Cloth, assuming this has belonged to the queen, Elizabeth is clearly associated with springtime as the bringer of a golden age. This can be seen in the third hymn from Davies' "Hymnes of Astraea" titled "Hymne III. To the Spring" reflects the flowery symbolism of the imperial *renovatio*, as is especially evident in the last verse:

E arth now is greene, and heauen is blew,
L iuely Spring which makes all new
I olly Spring doth enter,
S weete young Sun-beames do subdue
A ngry, aged winter.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 96.

¹⁸² Ibid., 171.

B lasts are mild, and Seas are calme,
E uery medow flowes with Balme,
T he earth weares all her riches,
H armonious birdes sing such a Psalme
A s eare and hart bewitches.

R eserue (sweete Spring) this Nymph of ours
E ternall garlands of thy flowers,
G reene garlands neuer wasting;
I n her shall last our *states* faire spring,
N ow and for euer flourishing,
A s long as heauen is lasting.¹⁸³

Yates adds an interesting observation here in relation to Elizabeth as Astraea as well as the Virgin. The relationship of Elizabeth and the zodiac Virgo can be understood from Camden's remarks upon the death of Elizabeth in 1603. He writes:

The 24th of March, which was the Eeve of the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin, she (which was borne on the Eeve of the Nativity of the same blessed Virgin) was called out of the prison of her body unto an everlasting Country in heaven, most quietly departing this life by that manner of death which Augustus wished, in the 44th yeere of her reygne, and of her age the 70th.¹⁸⁴

As we know the Virgo is an autumnal sign, bearing the harvest in a cornucopia. Simultaneously, Astraea is spring as the bringer of a golden age and *renovatio*. Yates justifies the coexistence of both allegories by arguing that Astraea's spring is the eternal spring of the golden age. Therefore, the flowers of spring and the fruits of the autumn harvest are interconnected.¹⁸⁵

With the rainbow and flowers being symbols of nature, so there is a third such symbol associated with the *Rainbow Portrait*. Moving on, though within the subject of the Cult of Elizabeth and the staging of her as several virginal goddesses, the next topic of discussion is

¹⁸³ Davies, *Hymnes of Astraea in Acrosticke Verse*, 3.

¹⁸⁴ William Camden (Dana F. Sutton), *Annales Rerum Gestarum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha (1615 and 1625)*, (Irvine: The University of California, 2000), <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/camden/> (accessed 03.11.2017), "Anno Domini 1603": 4.

¹⁸⁵ Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", 64.

the crescent moon jewel in the headdress. It appears in both the painting and more indirectly in the entertainments.

3. THE MOON ON THE CROWN

The moon as a symbol can be paralleled to the virgin goddess Cynthia in the poem “Cynthia Queene of Seas and Lands”, here quoted from a republication of documents describing public and private events attended by Elizabeth, collected in *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (1823):

Cynthia, Queene of seas and lands,
That Fortune euery where commands,
Sent forth Fortune to the sea,
To try her fortune euery way:
There did I Fortune meet, which makes me now to sing,
There is no fishing to the Sea, nor service to the King.

All the Nymphes of Thetis’ traine,
Did Cynthiae’s Fortune entertaine:
Many a iewell, many a iem,
Was to her Fortune brought by them.
Her Fortune sped so well, as makes me now to sing.
There is no fishing to the Sea, nor service to the King.

Fortune, that it might be seene
That she did serue a Royall Queene;
A franke and royall hand did beare,
And cast her favors euery where.
Some toies fel to my share; which makes me now to sing,
There is no fishing to the Sea, nor service to the King.¹⁸⁶

In this verse, Elizabeth as Cynthia controls Fortunes travels over sea who brought fortune to the mariner who performed the song during the entertainments at Harefield. Elizabeth as

¹⁸⁶ Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 570-71.

Cynthia is the goddess who commands Fortune. After celebrating the queen, the mariner held a speech explaining the gifts he brought from Fortune to be given to the ladies, each prize accompanied by one couplet amongst the 34 couplets (though the couplets 30-34 gave no prizes) of “The Lottery”. The first prize was drawn by Elizabeth:

1. *Fortune's Wheeles.*

Fortune must no more on Triumph ride;
The wheeles are yours that did her chariots guide.¹⁸⁷

Cynthia's symbol is the crescent moon and her name is another name for the Greek goddess Artemis, known as Diana in Roman mythology. The moon symbolism and its associative allegorical figures were the most popular imagery of Elizabeth employed by her devotees: as Cynthia, Diana or as Belphoebe (the beautiful Phoebe), a name given to the character portraying Elizabeth in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* (1590). Yates reminds us that the moon is a symbol of empire, and the sun of papacy, again observing the imperial validity of Elizabeth, and she adds: “The virgin of imperial reform who withstood the claims of the papacy might therefore well become a chaste moon-goddess shedding the beams of pure religion from her royal throne”.¹⁸⁸

The moon, like other classical symbols, replaced religious symbols as popular jewellery design presented by the courtiers to the queen at the end of the 16th century.¹⁸⁹ This can be observed in the portraits of Elizabeth as Diana or Cynthia, as well as in the *Rainbow Portrait* (Figure 1, c). An example of such a jewellery can be found in the Stowe Inventory from the Wardrobe of Robes. The jewell is noted as: “[f.102^v/12] Item one Jewell of golde like a halfe Moone garnished with sparkes of diamon-des and over it a Crowne and one verie little pearle pendaunte”.¹⁹⁰ This was a New Year's gift of 1587 from an unknown donor. It coincides with the earliest reference of a moon in a portrait of the queen from c. 1586, *Portrait Miniature of Elizabeth I with a Moon Jewel in her Hair* (Figure 13) by Hilliard.¹⁹¹ Here the moon adorns Elizabeth's reddish blond hair, accompanied by jewels of arrows, probably alluding to Diana,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 571.

¹⁸⁸ Yates, “Queen Elizabeth as Astraea”, 72.

¹⁸⁹ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 71.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 333.

¹⁹¹ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 125.

goddess of hunting. Curiously enough, the crescent moon was never explored in a greater iconography of Elizabeth.

The origins of such iconography can be traced back to earlier in the 1580s. Raleigh, who was a celebrated adventurer as well as Elizabeth's favourite for a short period of time, was known to use nicknames such as Diana and later Cynthia for her. At the same time Bruno arrived in England and observed the beginning of the development of "Dee's 'imperial' cult of the Queen", as celebrated in Bruno's work *La Cena de le Ceneri* (1584).¹⁹² John Dee (1527-1608) was an astronomer, mathematician, a philosopher of the occult, and an advisor to Elizabeth on more than one occasion. He had great influence within everything ranging from maritime enterprise to applied sciences in Elizabethan England. Dee sometimes also contributed as a spy in foreign countries.¹⁹³ He actively proclaimed his imperial vision of Elizabeth's reign at court. Strong believes that he must have been a great influence on the development of the imperial image and the cult of Elizabeth, as such portraits of imperial pretensions first occurred in 1579 as seen in *The Plimpton Sieve Portrait* (Figure 14) by Gower.¹⁹⁴ In the portraits of Elizabeth holding a sieve, she is represented as the Roman Vestal Virgin, Tuccia. According to myth, Tuccia was accused of impure conduct. To prove her chastity, she filled a sieve full of water from the Tiber River and carried it to the Temple of Vesta without spilling one drop. The sieve itself became a symbol of virginity, chastity, and purity. Here again we see a virgin iconography which both alludes to the queen's maiden state as well as Elizabeth as the bringer of peace, like the *Astraea-Virgo* iconography. Strong therefore confidently states how Dee's imperial vision is interlocked and inseparable to Elizabeth's virginal state, both literally and figuratively.¹⁹⁵

Dee is known to have consulted Elizabeth in 1577 and in 1580, on her legal claims to other countries. He actively encouraged her expansion of the English empire through maritime power, validating this through her Tudor descent from Brutus the Trojan, as well as from the legendary King Arthur, whom he described as a conqueror "of twenty Kingdomes".¹⁹⁶ Tudor rule over other dominions was therefore considered as righteous.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 313. When spying, John Dee signed his letters to the queen with the numerals "007". Dee might have been the inspiration for Ian Fleming's character, James Bond, whose agent number is also "007".

¹⁹⁴ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 91.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 107.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 91-93.

In this concern, Elizabeth was also advised by Dee to reinforce her navy which was limited and in bad shape. She took it to heart, and it benefited England during the war of the Low Countries. The most important trading route connecting England with Northern Europe was through the Low Countries. From the 1560s the Protestants of the Low Countries rebelled against Philip II of Spain (1527-1598), a war that has become known as the Eighty Years' War. This affected the English economy drastically as several important trading ports were closed off. Elizabeth did not want to enter the conflict as she did not consider herself a warrior queen. She looked to the west for the possibility of finding other ways of stabilising the English economical state. She sent ships to explore the world and find new trade routes. One of her most successful sea captains and privateers was Sir Francis Drake (c. 1540-1596). Drake is known for having managed to circumnavigate the World, he claimed the area of California in the name of Elizabeth and pillaged Spanish ships on his way back to England. The English navy expanded during Elizabeth's reign, and it is considered as the beginning of the English Empire. Philip was embarrassed of his ships continuously being attacked by English pirates, as he called them. In 1585 Spain captured English ships and Elizabeth was forced to take a public stand in the conflict of the Low Countries. She sent an army of 7000 men, but the English involvement failed. Soon the Spanish threat would come closer to home. Walsingham kept Elizabeth informed of the Spanish movements, so she was prepared for the Spanish Armada when it sailed for England in 1588.¹⁹⁷

The victory over the Spanish Armada is considered as one of the greatest victories in English history. This was a turning point of Elizabeth's rule, awakening the prophecy of Astraea and triggering the Cult of Elizabeth to celebrate her reign as the golden age of English history, as it is still being considered today. Elizabeth herself was not present during the battle. She arrived at Tilbury soon after, when they still did not know if the peril had passed and held the "Tilbury Speech" to her army. Though noted down the day after, there is no doubt that the content reflects Elizabeth's own spirit and care for her subjects, as shown in this citation from the speech:

Let tyrants fear: I have so behaved my-self that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. Wherefore I am come among you at this time but for my recreation and pleasure, being re-solved in the midst and heat of the battle

¹⁹⁷ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 71; 72-3; 78.

to live and die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honor and my blood even in the dust.¹⁹⁸

After the victory over the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth was considered by her devotees as the ruler of seas as well as lands. The Cult of Elizabeth and related imagery really escalated after this. In the several *Armada* portraits we can see a collective imperial image of the queen and her power (Figure 15). This popular iconography shows the queen flanked by the crown and the chair of state, while resting her hand on a globe. In the background a window to the left reveals the English fire ships setting out in the calm weather, and to the right a window shows the wrecking Spanish fleet in stormy weather. The victory over the Spanish Armada was not only the defeating of a national enemy, but also a spiritual victory. Elizabeth's political and spiritual power was proven before her court and her people. Though not expecting a world empire, as Yates states, there was still the belief "that the world is at its best and most peaceful under one ruler and that then justice is most powerful", to validate Elizabeth's rightful rule.¹⁹⁹ This thought being in the spirit of Dee. Elizabeth now truly became an allegory of the English empire, as established in the poem "Cynthia Queene of Seas and Lands". Strong gives a conclusion, which I think is a fitting résumé on the use of imperial symbolism in Elizabeth's portraiture:

Although her role as the moon goddess was so little elaborated in terms of the portraits, it heralded one significant development which made possible the extraordinary imagery of the post-Armada images. The moon goddess role as Diana or Cynthia assigned to the monarch, for the first time, cosmological powers, albeit if only poetic fancy. Without it neither the 'Ditchley' nor the 'Rainbow' portrait could ever have been painted.²⁰⁰

In the painting, the moon is placed on top of the crown on the headdress of Elizabeth. The crown which obviously represents the head of England and a ruling power, becomes an imperial symbol when placed together with the moon. I observe more intimately this combined symbolism in chapter section "The Headdress of a Bride".

Now proceeding to the last group of symbols that are both visible in the *Rainbow Portrait* as well as having played a part at the Harefield entertainments: the heart, the snake, and the sphere.

¹⁹⁸ Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 326.

¹⁹⁹ Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea", 56.

²⁰⁰ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 128.

4. THE HEART, THE SNAKE, AND THE SPHERE

Going back to the entertainments at Harefield, an additional likeness to the *Rainbow Portrait* is the heart shaped jewel given to Elizabeth on the first day of the entertainments. In the painting a ruby heart hangs in a chain from the mouth of a snake which has a celestial sphere encircled by a zodiac belt above its head (Figure 1, d). Strong interprets the serpent as a symbol of wisdom, as it is a creature to beware of, and it is the attribute of Prudence as well as of the goddess Minerva.²⁰¹ Arnold defines the snake symbol as the lurking of danger or treachery, reasoned judgement or wisdom, according to different sources.²⁰² The snake reminds us to beware of danger and to confront it with wisdom. Arnold believes that the snake jewel may be found in the Stowe Inventory from the Wardrobe of Robes, listed as “[f104/29] Item one Jewell of golde like a Snake wounde together garnished with small Opalles and Rubies”.²⁰³ She adds that the snake jewel was most likely given away after it was last checked in the Stowe Inventory in 1604, to an unknown lady.²⁰⁴

The celestial sphere, or armillary sphere, represents the heavens.²⁰⁵ It is a religious symbol with Protestant connotation. It can in short be described as the maintenance of the reformed faith as well as of Elizabeth’s earthly right to rule in the guidance of the Word of God.²⁰⁶ The snake and the celestial sphere can be observed together in Ripa’s *Iconologia*, the illustrated edition of 1603, though it was first printed in 1593 with written descriptions rather than with the additional engravings from the 1603 edition. Here a picture of *Intelligenza* (Figure 16) shows her holding a snake in her left hand and a celestial sphere in her right. Both Arnold and Strong looks to Yates and her interpretation of the symbols from Ripa’s work, when deducing that the symbols together reflects Elizabeth’s heavenly wisdom to rule on earth.²⁰⁷

Strong looks to Pierio Valeriano’s (1477-1558) *Hieroglyphica* (1556) when describing the heart at the end of a chain as symbolising “the words of a good man” and adds that “the heart alone

²⁰¹ Ibid., 159.

²⁰² Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 372.

²⁰³ Ibid., 334.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 82.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 81.

²⁰⁶ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 139.

²⁰⁷ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 81; Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 160.

symbolizes Counsel”.²⁰⁸ He references Davies’ “Hymnes of Astraea”, “Hymne XX. Of the Passions of her Heart”, for the best interpretation of the heart symbol in a Renaissance setting:

E xamine not *th’inscrutable Hart*,
L ight *Muse* of her, though she in part
I mpart it to the Subject;
S earch not, although from heau’n thou art,
A nd this an Heauenly obiect.

B ut since she hath a hart, we know
E uer some passions thence do flow,
T hough euer rul’d with Honor;
H er Iudgement raignes, they waite below,
A nd fixe their eyes vpon her.

R ectified so, they in their kind
E ncrease each Vertue of her mind,
G ouern’d with mild tranquillitie;
I n all the Regions vnder Heau’n,
N o State doth beare it selfe so euen,
A nd with so sweet facilitie.²⁰⁹

Erler adds that the heart shaped jewel may further have a courtly meaning. On more than one occasion, Elizabeth was given such a jewel by subjects who wanted to appease the queen or to gain her favour.²¹⁰ This, as well as the giving of the heart shaped jewel to the queen at the entertainments at Harefield House, shows the popular symbol representing good counsel. Both as a virtue of Elizabeth as well as of the courtiers, who probably wanted to promote their own good counsel to the queen. Altogether the heart, the serpent, and the celestial sphere represents her wisdom in stately affairs, through ruling with the passion of her heart and guided by good counsel.

²⁰⁸ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 159.

²⁰⁹ Davies, *Hymnes of Astraea in Acrosticke Verse*, 20.

²¹⁰ Erler, “Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth”, 364.

Progressing to the next chapter, I continue by describing the second relevant entertainments in connection to the *Rainbow Portrait*, which is that arranged by Robert Cecil at Salisbury House, 6 December 1602. In this regard I observe the remaining elements of the portrait: the headdress, the orange mantle covered in eyes and ears, and lastly the jewelled gauntlet hanging from her ruff.

CHAPTER V - THE ENTERTAINMENTS AT SALISBURY HOUSE

The second event in 1602, at Salisbury House on 6 December, has only two remaining contemporary mentions that can be studied today. One is a short note in a letter from John Chamberlain (1553-1628) to Dudley Carleton (1573-1632). Here he writes that the queen was invited to “Mr. Secretary’s new house”, mentioned as Cecil House (that is Salisbury House), on 4 December 1602. Mr Secretary being Robert Cecil, was Secretary of State from 1596 to 1612. Because of cold and foul weather, the visit was delayed by two days. Chamberlain notes: “The Queen dines this day [6 December] at the Secretary’s; where, they say, there is a great variety of Entertainment provided for her, and many rich jewels and presents”.²¹¹

The other mentioning of the entertainments is a more detailed description from the diary of John Manningham (died 1622). He refers to Davies’ poem “A Contention between a Wife, a Widowe, and a Maide for Precedence at an Offringe”, written for this occasion. It mentions that the widow wore black, the wife wore purple, and that the maid was dressed in white.²¹² As it is written in the poem it was most definitely acted out in real life as well, during the entertainments. The allegorical figures debate on which one of them has precedence to be the first in line to present Astraea, the queen, with the gifts.²¹³ While doing so, they praise their own state while ridiculing the others. In the end the maid is preferred. There is no description on what the gifts would have been in neither the poem nor the diary. However, Manningham does describe the event in a few words: “Shee [Elizabeth] was verry royally entertained, richely presented, and marvelous well contented, but at hir departure shee strayed hir foote”.²¹⁴

Another dialogue by Davies for an entertainment in honour of Elizabeth exists. It is referred to as “A Conference betweene a Gent. Huisher [Usher] and a Post, before the Queene, at Mr. Secretary’s House. By John Davies”.²¹⁵ Though undated, Nichols placed the dialogue with other documents of 1591, assigning it to Cecil’s entertainments of the queen at Theobald’s that

²¹¹ Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 601.

²¹² Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Sir John Davies*, 81.

²¹³ Erler, “Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth”, 365; Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Sir John Davies*, 72-86.

²¹⁴ John Bruce, *Diary of John Manningham*, (Westminster: J. B. Nichols and sons, 1868), <https://archive.org/details/diaryofjohnmanni00mannrich/page/99-100>.

²¹⁵ Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 76.

year.²¹⁶ As Cecil did not become Secretary until 1596, this event cannot be assigned to that of 1591 and must therefore be the one on 6 December 1602, as described in Manningham's diary. Erler argues this based on Richard W. Bond (1902) and Sir Edmund K. Chambers (1923), as well as an earlier source from 1887.²¹⁷ However, there is one detail from Manningham's accounts that does not match entirely. Manningham describes a Turkish post (courier) who presents the queen with a rich mantle, writing:

[...] an other [in addition to the wife, the w dow and the maid], on attired in habit of a Turke desyrous to see hir Majestie, but as a straunger without hope of such grace, in regard of the retired manner of hir Lord, complained; answere made, howe gracious hir Majestie in admitting to presence, and howe able to discourse in anie language; which the Turke admired, and, admitted, presents hir with a riche mantle, &c.²¹⁸

However, in Davies' dialogue the post mentioned is from China rather than Turkey, and he does not bring any gifts.²¹⁹ This does not mean that just because the queen received "letters from the Emperor of Chyna" she did not also receive a mantle from a "Turke" on the same occasion. Either Manningham mistook the identity of the post, or the Turke was not the post mentioned in the dialogue. Or, the reference to "A Conference betweene a Gent. Huisher [Usher] and a Post, before the Queene, at Mr. Secretarye's House. By John Davies" may have come from an unknown event. There is an insufficient existence of documents to shed lights on the entertainments at Salisbury House in 1602.

Still, with the lack of documentary evidence of this event, I argue that the *Rainbow Portrait* are connected to the entertainments at Salisbury House rather than to those of Harefield House, based on the analysis of these final elements. Beginning with the headdress before moving on to the mantle covered in eyes and ears and ending with the jewelled gauntlet.

1. THE HEADDRESS OF A BRIDE

Considering the wife, the widow and the maid mentioned in Davies' poem, these figures were most likely known by the contemporary Renaissance Englishman. This can be deduced from

²¹⁶ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 369.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Bruce, *Diary of John Manningham*, 100.

²¹⁹ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 369.

looking at the illustrations from Boissard's *Habitus* (1581). Here the figures wear headdresses like the one worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait* (Figure 1, e). Amongst the images are four illustrations of brides that Erler argues are suggestive to the *Rainbow Portrait*.²²⁰ *Plate 5* and *Plate 6* shows Venetian brides, where the bride in the former plate wears jewellery and a veil in a similar fashion to that of Elizabeth. *Plate 9* (Figure 17) shows a Roman bride in a dress design most alike that of the *Rainbow Portrait*. Also, the pearls on her head and the curling strands of hair resembles that of Elizabeth. *Plate 38* (Figure 18) shows three female characters depicted in dress from the Greek city of Thessaloniki. The first is described as "Sponsa Thessalonicensis", the second "Foemina Thessalonicensis" and the third "Virgo Thessalonicensis": a wife or bride, a woman, and a maid.

Strong does not mention Boissard or his work, but rather believes that the headdress is inspired from Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi e moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (1593).²²¹ As this is a more recent source than Boissard, I will continue to look at Boissard as the original source even though Vecellio's work might have been used for the entertainments at Salisbury House.

Just by looking at the different three stages of womanhood in Boissard's work, we can see the close association to Davies' "A Contention between a Wife, a Widowe, and a Maide for Precedence at an Offringe". The wife, the widow and the maid would probably have been dressed up in costumes that would tell them apart, as seen in Boissard's illustrations. Erler emphasises the victory of the virgin state over the wife and the widow as read in the poem. After the widow agrees with the maid's statement that the wife waits in Purgatory (for her husband), the widow believes herself to "liue in bliss" and "a state of glory" which the maid can never reach. So, the maid answers with the decisive evidence of her superiority:

Maid. Not Maids? To spotlesse maids this gift is
giuen,
To liue in incorruption from their birth;
And what is that but to inherit heauen
Euen while they dwell vpon the spotted earth?

²²⁰ Ibid., 367.

²²¹ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 161.

Yates focuses on the first of these figures when analysing the headdress in the *Rainbow Portrait*. She makes the apparent connection between the two up-turned headdresses, with a striped rim and an aigrette of feathers ascending from it. Though the headdress itself represents a wife or bride, in the portrait it is assembled together with several other elements, like that of a court dress. As the headdress is accompanied by a crown and a crescent moon, it cannot be interpreted alone, but together with the whole costume.²²⁴ Therefore, the headdress does not only inform us of Elizabeth as the Virgin Queen, but also of Elizabeth as the Virgin Bride, married to England. This is confirmed by Montrose who believes that this marriage is not one to Christ or to any of her rejected suitors, but a marriage to her people of whom she is the protector.²²⁵

To get a better understanding of Elizabeth as the Virgin Queen and why she chose to stage herself as such, I believe that it is relevant to give a thorough insight into the contemporary discussion on her unmarried state. This therefore occupies the following subsection.

TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY

With the backdrop of the uncertainties of the rule left to her by her predecessors, Elizabeth had to face many difficulties. She inherited a poor crown, however her wealth and security in the beginning of her reign were placed in the affection of her people. When there again was a Protestant ruler, the refugees who had fled to the Low Countries during Mary I's reign, returned to England. As the charismatic person she was, Elizabeth's popularity was palpable. Camden describes how the people rejoiced when Elizabeth was proclaimed queen:

[...] that with happy acclamations and most joyfull applause of the people, and certainly with a most prosperous and auspicious beginning; neither did the people ever embrace any other Prince with more willing and constant mind and affection, with greater observance, more joyfull applause, and prayers reiterated, whensoever she went abroad during the whole course of her life, then they did her.²²⁶

²²⁴ Frances A. Yates, "Boissard's Costume-Book and Two Portraits", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 22, no. 3/4 (1959), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/750700>, 366.

²²⁵ Montrose, "Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I", 139.

²²⁶ Camden, *Annales Rerum Gestarum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha (1615 and 1625)*, "Anno Domini 1558": 1.

She had the heart of her people but needed to convince the parliament that she could rule England with the same force as a man. The fact that there again was to be a ruling woman after the unsuccessful reign of Mary I, had many people doubt her potential from the start. Her sex, her status as an unmarried woman, and her relationship with several men at court, has been highly discussed during her reign and in the centuries following. During the ups and downs of her rule, we can establish that Elizabeth prioritised her own reputation and her crown before anyone or anything else.²²⁷

Elizabeth's coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on the 15th of January 1559. A month later she faced her first parliament and spoke of her intentions and wishes to establish herself as the new Queen of England. Here she tells of how she would sacrifice her body and soul for the realm and rule as an unmarried queen with no king at her side, but with God in her heart and with the wisdom of the parliament. "And in the end this shall be for me sufficient: that a marble stone shall declare that a queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin".²²⁸ Borman believes that Elizabeth's ministers took this message with good humour, not trusting that she would never marry.²²⁹

The Parliament continually pressured the queen to marry and to produce an heir. In answer to this, Elizabeth held several speeches to her Lords and Commons of Parliament between 1559 and 1567, trying to reassure them that she would marry for the reason to have children.²³⁰ The birth of a prince to Mary Stuart on 19 June 1566 forced a greater discussion on whom was to be Elizabeth's successor. Mary's son, James I, was an obvious successor to the English throne as he was also Elizabeth's first cousin twice removed. However, the Parliament at this time feared that he would be brought up a Catholic, which would make him a threat to the Protestant Crown. That same year, Elizabeth had had enough of her Parliament and held a thundering speech to a joint delegation of Lords and Commons on 5 November 1566. It was followed by a "gag" order "forbidding debate on the succession on the pretext that the House [of Parliament] had already come into conformity with her wishes".²³¹ The order was quickly revoked after

²²⁷ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 45; Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 273-75.

²²⁸ It is here quoted from the British Library manuscript Lansdowne 94, art. 14, fol. 29; copy: "Queen Elizabeth's First Speech Before Parliament, February 10, 1559; Speech 3, version 1 [Headed] Friday the 10th of February. The answer of the queen's highness to the petitions proponed unto her by the lower house concerning her marriage". Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 58.

²²⁹ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 272.

²³⁰ Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 95.

²³¹ Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 101n1.

much protest by the House defending their traditional liberties, though Elizabeth argued that the previous order was no longer needed as Parliament would not pursue the question of succession any further.²³²

As the Queen of England, she was considered as the protector of the realm. She was required to produce an heir, without which made the rule a fragile one. Having an heir would secure the Tudor line and the continuity of a stable politics. She was therefore required to marry. There are numerous theories on why Elizabeth never married. Borman and Bassnett have additional thoughts on the matter. In Renaissance England it was expected of women to marry. Unmarried women were considered as “freaks”. By having a husband, women were not only secured practically and spiritually, but also sexually. It was believed that women who stayed virgins would suffer from physical and mental illness. As a Tudor, Elizabeth believed that a married woman should submit to her husband in any ways, even as a queen. She did not disagree with the contemporary opinion of marriage, but personally she was still a conservative believer in the Catholic view of the Medieval Period that virginity was a higher state than that of matrimony.²³³ As Borman states, Elizabeth had several political reasons not to find herself a husband. By staying single she would not only remain Queen of England, but also King of England. She even famously admitted this to her council when provoked by the subject of marriage, that there was to be one mistress and no master.²³⁴ She ultimately was not willing to gamble her throne on marriage.

Bassnett adds that even though Elizabeth never wished to marry, it did not mean that she did not entertain the idea of marriage. She enjoyed the game of courtship and of being the object of desire, both for her own entertainment and as a political necessity. “The game of promising and refusing”, as Bassnett calls it.²³⁵ She received several marriage proposals during her reign despite of rumours saying she was barren, or even of being a man. Modern historians have even speculated in her suffering from Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome. A woman with this condition has a female exterior, but also male XY chromosomes which obstruct the development of female reproductive organs. This can make reproduction difficult or even impossible.²³⁶ Such women are often described as slender and tall with an enduring physical

²³² Ibid., 94n3.

²³³ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 124.

²³⁴ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 273-74.

²³⁵ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 50.

²³⁶ Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 292.

activity, a description that fits Elizabeth. However, as Borman writes, Elizabeth might just as well have inherited these traits from her parents: her father was tall and had the same restless energy as her, and her mother had a slender figure, and both had the reputation of being quite hot-headed.²³⁷

Her bed sheets were daily inspected, and her bodily functions were publicly affirmed. Philip II, previous husband to Mary I of England, had considered Elizabeth as a potential bride and ally against France, even before he married her sister. He was not put off by the slandering rumours, but when he realised he was part of Elizabeth's marriage game, he turned from being a suitor to becoming an enemy.²³⁸ Additional suitors who are worth mentioning are King Eric XIV of Sweden (1533-1577), Henry III of France when duke of Anjou (1551-1589), and his brother François Hercule duke of Alençon when duke of Anjou (1554-1584). François, "her Frog" as she nicknamed him, became a close friend and her last chance to marry, as she in 1581 was in her late forties, an age where childbirth could prove fatal.

Even though she never married, she liked the attention and the excitement of flirtation. She had several favourites at court throughout her reign. Being a favourite came with many perks, like being given grand gifts of land and titles. Her favourite and closest friend for many years was Dudley. There most certainly was a physical attraction between herself and Dudley, but it was more likely a companionship with mutual interests in conversation, hunting and entertainment. We will never know if Elizabeth truly was a "Virgin Queen". However, both Borman and Bassnett believes that Elizabeth never risked having sexual intercourse because of the possible consequences of doing it. She would never risk her crown for an illicit affair.²³⁹ Borman and Bassnett are convinced that the relationship between Elizabeth and Dudley was mainly platonic because of a confession Elizabeth made. In 1562 she contracted smallpox, a disease that claimed many lives of the 16th century. Believing their queen regnant to be on her deathbed, Elizabeth's councillors wanted her to name her successor, and she herself wanted to confess her sins. She had two things to say about Dudley, that nothing improper happened between them and that she wanted him as her successor. In this God-fearing age, it is not likely that Elizabeth would lie when so close to death.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Ibid., 293.

²³⁸ Ibid., 290.

²³⁹ Ibid., 279.

²⁴⁰ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 46; Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 280.

For Elizabeth, her virginity was a statement of her power as equal to that of a king. As the Virgin Queen, she elevated herself to the top of the hierarchy believing in a Machiavellian system where there was a divine order of things. Her right to rule was put on to her by God's will, and she therefore had to rule according to God's ordinance, not abusing her position of supreme responsibility.²⁴¹ This right was not only given her by a divine power, but it was inhabiting her and her body politic from the day she was crowned Queen of England. By establishing herself as such, her voice was superior to anyone else. Nevertheless, she had a constant struggle throughout her reign trying to uphold her authority over her male subjects. With a strong voice, education and opinion, she often disagreed with her councillors and the parliament. In return, they repeatedly kept information from her and sometimes made decisions about state affairs behind her back. As she was a woman, they did not believe they did anything wrong since they thought of women as inferior to men, even though she was their queen. Here we clearly see the problematic aspect of having a female body with the body politic during Renaissance England.

Borman states that there were two events that strengthened Elizabeth's growing confidence as a female monarch. The first was the victory over Mary Stuart. Mary had fled to England in 1568 to escape Scottish lords who wanted to seize power. When she asked her cousin for help, Mary was instead put in house arrest. Elizabeth took responsibility for Mary's son and allowed him to be crowned King of Scotland and had him raised as a member of the Protestant Church of Scotland.²⁴² The second was the victory over the Spanish Armada. With this, the golden reign of Elizabeth began, and her virginity became something celebrated, as Astraea, Gloriana, Diana, Cynthia, and Belpheobe.²⁴³

We can observe from Elizabeth's speeches that, even from the very beginning of her rule, she defined herself as a bride of England and a mother to her people. She made the decision to remain the Virgin Queen to keep her power. Her unmarried state became a symbol of her reign. By using iconography to feed the Cult of Elizabeth, she was able to validate her power and right to rule as Queen of England. This staging of her as the Virgin Queen married to her people was not merely a political tool, but also a way of surviving the world of men by ruling as a king, but

²⁴¹ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 77; 97.

²⁴² Borman, *The Private Lives of the Tudors: Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*, 341-43.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 347-49.

with the body of a woman. Now I continue by exploring the orange mantle decorated with eyes and ears.

2. THE MANTLE WITH EYES AND EARS

Arnold describes the mantle in the *Rainbow Portrait* as being made of two layers: one side made of a fine woven silk of silver stripe and the other side woven in orange-gold silk, probably satin, stained (which means painted) with eyes and ears (Figure 1, f). The detail of the eyes and ears might seem theatrical, however as explored by Arnold, Elizabeth had other possessions with similar imagery not necessarily meant for a masque.²⁴⁴ There are many mantles described in the Stowe and Folger inventories, but none of them resembles this orange mantle decorated with eyes and ears. Strong calls it a cloak that could be a *sbernia* (a very long cloak-like garment) or Irish mantle.²⁴⁵ The contemporary English dress in “maiden white” contrasts to the orange mantle in a sun-like colour, playing on Elizabeth’s role as the sun that shines so that the rainbow can exist. The way the mantle hangs around the figure, in a toga-like way, calls attention to it as a costume.²⁴⁶ Together with the headdress, the iconography in the portrait again associates it to that of a masque.

The symbolism of the eyes and ears have by many been interpreted in relation to Ripa’s *Iconologia*. Yates relates it to the description of *Fama* as carried by speech and, if so, would be an allegory to the queen’s celebrity as spoken by many mouths. However, Strong and Arnold denies this, as there are no mouths on the mantle of Elizabeth.²⁴⁷ The folds in the fabric have often been misinterpreted as mouths, and even by some as vaginas, which does not correspond with the rest of the portrait’s iconography of the queen as a chaste, virginal figure.²⁴⁸

Fischlin argues that the portrait still shows the eroticised body of Elizabeth as well as being primarily a political allegory. He sees the folds in the mantle, the slightly phallic shaped

²⁴⁴ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 81-82.

²⁴⁵ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 161.

²⁴⁶ Erler, “Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth”, 369-70.

²⁴⁷ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 81; Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 158-59.

²⁴⁸ Fischlin, “Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the ‘Rainbow Portrait’ of Queen Elizabeth I”, 184.

rainbow and how the string of pearls falls and points to her lower body, as erotic signs complicit to the sovereign symbolism. He writes:

The portrait's compositional balance entails an erotics in which the queen exerts control over the masculine, a control that *may* in fact be further heightened by the sexual autonomy suggested in the positioning of her left hand. A further possibility is that the Rainbow emblematically endows her with masculine attributes and that, in a sense, she becomes male by virtue of her grasp of its cylindrical shape as it descends into and merges with her anatomy.²⁴⁹

I agree with the reading of the portrait as an amalgam of both male and female virtues of Elizabeth's sovereign body. However, I would not go so far as to call it an erotic representation of the queen. Elizabeth was very proud of her hands as they were slender with long fingers and often made a display of them, as can be seen in many of her portraits.²⁵⁰ She would often wear gloves which she took on and off while conversing with her subjects. This might seem like a nervous habit, but we must consider it in relation to a period with different idiosyncratic mannerism than today, and it can therefore be interpreted otherwise, as for example just wanting to show off her hands.²⁵¹ Also, as we have seen in previous chapters, the pearls represent virginity and the rainbow tells of peace and tranquillity in the new golden age of Elizabeth. The mask of youth should likewise not be mistaken as adding to an erotic imagery. I would therefore rather interpret the *Rainbow Portrait* as an allegory of Elizabeth and her rule, in a Renaissance tradition of depicting female allegories: often as youthful women in revealing classical dress.

Arnold proceeds with writing that the painting could still represent Elizabeth as *Fama* but looks to another illustration as a possible symbol of Elizabeth, also seen in Ripa's *Iconologia*. That is of *Ragione di Stato* (Figure 19), which can be translated to "The Art of Government".²⁵² According to Strong, the symbolism of the mantle can easily be assigned to *Ragione di Stato*.²⁵³ Here the state appears as a female warrior accompanied by a lion and a book of laws, dressed in a robe covered in eyes and ears. Ripa's accompanying text says that the eyes and ears of *Ragione di Stato* represents the power of surveillance exercised by her councillors and agents. This was summarised into the term "intelligence", that is confidential information of strategic

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 187.

²⁵⁰ Bassnett, *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, 14.

²⁵¹ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 9-11.

²⁵² Ibid., 81.

²⁵³ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 159.

import.²⁵⁴ As the eyes and ears give intelligence in political service, this reinforces the political statement of the painting.²⁵⁵ This is also represented through the symbolism of *Intelligenza*, as discussed in chapter section “The Heart, the Snake, and the Sphere”. These symbols together with the eyes and ears on the mantle makes a combined reading of the intelligence as a wise political rule with the assistance of the queen’s subjects.

Arnold believes that the mantle might have been a gift to the queen bearing a symbolical message from a devoted subject.²⁵⁶ She is right in assuming this if we are to agree with Strong, who credits Robert Cecil as the patron who commissioned the painting.²⁵⁷ As Cecil was the chief of Elizabeth’s servants and her master of intelligence, we can perceive how both the mantle with eyes and ears as well as Davies’ dialogue between the usher and the post reveal the patron’s (Cecil’s) hand. In the dialogue, the post wants to deliver the letters from the emperor of China to the queen via Mr Secretary:

U[sher]. Art thou a Post, and hast ridden so manie myles, and met with so many men; and hast thou not hard that which all the world knows, that shee speakes and understands all the languages in the world which are worthy to be spoken or understood?

P[ost]. It may bee shee understands them in a sort well for a Ladye, but not soe well as Secretarye’s should doe, that have been greate travaylers; and it is the parte of every Secretarye’s possession to understand so mane languages.

U. Tush, what talkest thou of Secretaryes? As for one of them whome thou most askest for [Cecil], if he have any thinge that is worth talking off, the world knows well enough where he had it, for he kneles every daye where he learnes a newe lesson: goe on, therefore, deliver thy letters; I warrant thee, shee will read them if they be in any Christian language.²⁵⁸

Here, the usher convinces the post of the queen’s qualifications to receive foreign post. This way, the queen’s great international talents are revealed and praised, while also mentioning Cecil’s traits and value to the queen as her intelligence.

Also Kantorowicz explores the intelligence of the ruler. He looks to Peter of Auvergne (died 1304), the continuator of Thomas Aquinas’ (1225-1275) commentary, who discusses the “Third Book” of the *Politics*. Here Aristotle (4th century BCE) states, in the words of Kantorowicz,

²⁵⁴ Montrose, “Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I”, 140.

²⁵⁵ Fischlin, “Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the ‘Rainbow Portrait’ of Queen Elizabeth I”, 183.

²⁵⁶ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 82.

²⁵⁷ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 157.

²⁵⁸ Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, 77.

that “a Prince had in his officers and friends many eyes and ears and hands and feet, but that those men had really the function of co-rulers”.²⁵⁹ Thus, the eyes and ears become a symbol of the shared power within the body politic which not only consists of the ruler, but also of her loyal and trusted advisors. This wish for collaboration is expressed in Elizabeth’s accession speech at Hatfield House in 1558, when she also applies the doctrine of the king’s two bodies in her politics to rule:

And as I am but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern, so I shall desire you all, my lords (chiefly you of the nobility, everyone in his degree and power), to be assistant to me, that I with my ruling and you with your service may make a good account to almighty God and leave some comfort to our posterity in earth. I mean to direct all my actions by advice and counsel.²⁶⁰

In addition to *Intelligenza* and *Ragione di Stato* from Ripa’s *Iconologia*, there is a third image that Montrose believes may have inspired the iconography in the *Rainbow Portrait*. That is the illustration of *Gelosia* (Figure 20). Here again a female figure is dressed in a robe covered in eyes and ears. This engraving has the accompanying text telling that jealousy is both a passion and a fear.²⁶¹ By interpreting the eyes and ears on the mantle in this way, Montrose believes that the symbolism alludes directly to Elizabeth’s reign. A reign marked by relationships with her male subjects and prince suitors as an unmarried regnant, based on an “eroticized discourse of desire”, as Montrose calls it.²⁶² By looking at these three allegories as assembled in a portrait of a female prince, he concludes that Elizabeth becomes the incarnation of statecraft.²⁶³ I can see how the queen’s wisdom (*Intelligenza*) together with the surveillance of her subjects (*Ragione di Stato*) and the power of play at court (*Gelosia*) can be summed up as the rule of Elizabeth. Nonetheless, I would like to emphasise Cecil’s part in the design of the iconography of the *Rainbow Portrait*. Together with the dialogue between the usher and the post, it can be conceived that only the engravings of *Intelligenza* and *Ragione di Stato* inspired the portrait, and not so much *Gelosia*, as they are more in direct relevance to the relationship between the queen and her secretary.

²⁵⁹ Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 367.

²⁶⁰ It is here quoted from Public Record Office, State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth 12/1/7; copy: “Queen Elizabeth’s first speech, Hatfield, November 20, 1558; [Endorsed] *Queen Elizabeth’s speech to her secretary and other her lords before her coronation*”. Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 52.

²⁶¹ Montrose, “Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I”, 142.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 142-43.

Arnold mentions that the mantle, together with the headdress discussed in the previous chapter section, may have been accessories at the entertainments at Harefield House in 1602 arranged by Egerton, considering him also as the giver of the gift of the jewelled serpent, though no record of this exists.²⁶⁴ However, Arnold did not consider the entertainments at Salisbury House that same year. I argue, based on the few documentary evidences that can be ascribed to the entertainments at Salisbury, that the mantle and the headdress seem more likely to be related to this event rather than to the former. Strong dated the dialogue 1600 instead of 1602, and therefore ignored the presentation of the mantle to the queen in connection to the entertainments at Salisbury House.²⁶⁵ If he had seen the connection, he, like Erler, might also be positive of the fact that the mantle from the entertainments is the same as worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait*.

As Ripa's *Iconologia* from 1593 is without illustrations, though with detailed descriptions, it is more likely that the painter of the *Rainbow Portrait* got his inspiration from the illustrated edition printed in Rome in 1603.²⁶⁶ If this is the case, the painting can be dated to 1603, and probably after the death of Elizabeth, as she died in March that year. Therefore, the portrait could be a devotional picture of Elizabeth, commissioned by Cecil in respect to his dear departed queen, with iconography inspired from the last entertainments he had arranged for the queen at his home in London. Devotional images of the queen were still common in the years after her death. Especially with the decline in popularity of the Stuart rule as well as with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, Elizabeth became celebrated as the ruler of the golden age and protector of the Protestant faith.²⁶⁷

Before moving on to the final chapter section of this chapter, I would like to present a bigger theoretical field on the use of dress as seen in the *Rainbow Portrait*. As many of my sources comment on the costume consisting of the visible bodice, the headdress and the mantle with eyes and ears when interpreting the painting, I also believe dress to play an important part when analysing the iconography.

²⁶⁴ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 83-84.

²⁶⁵ Erler, "Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth", 370.

²⁶⁶ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 81-82.

²⁶⁷ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 164.

THE POWER OF DRESS

Many of my sources, including Strong and Jenkins, stress the significance of dress in sixteenth century portraiture.²⁶⁸ Dressing accordingly could reflect political alignments, like when Elizabeth dressed in the French fashion during the negotiations of marriage between her and François, or when her champions and subjects dressed in black and white, Elizabeth's colours.²⁶⁹ Throughout the Tudor rule, there was always the fear that someone would claim their throne. The Tudors would therefore try and manifest their power through both political conflicts and through the patronage of art and architecture. This included "the creation and projection of majesty through dress".²⁷⁰ Lynn stresses that there were two primary reasons why dress was of such importance at court. Firstly, it was expected of a monarch to dress befittingly their position, according to the contemporary concept of magnificence. It was believed that how you dressed showed how virtuous you were, so the more magnificent you dressed the more virtuous you appeared.²⁷¹ Secondly, fine dress was of great value as it consisted of materials such as cloth of gold and silk velvets, furs, jewellery, and other expensive details. To try and get a perspective on the value of the Renaissance wardrobe, Dudley is said to have paid more for one suit than William Shakespeare (1564-1616) spent on a house in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1597, less than a decade later.²⁷² Dress showed status as the richer you were the finer you dressed and could show off your wealth at court.

Elizabeth's extravagant wardrobe became famous during her reign and she became an English fashion icon. However, she was of an economical mind, as she stated on several occasions, like in the account of her most celebrated parliamentary speech known as the "Golden Speech". Elizabeth is to have said: "[...] I never was any greedy, scraping grasper, nor a strait, fast-holding prince, nor yet a waster. My heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good".²⁷³ To make a comparison, Elizabeth's wardrobe expenses each year during the last four years of her reign shows that she spent £9,535, while James I spent during the first five

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 21; Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution*, 41.

²⁶⁹ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 21.

²⁷⁰ Lynn, *Tudor Fashion*, 14.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 14-15.

²⁷² Ibid., 15.

²⁷³ It is here quoted from Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, manuscript Rawlinson A 100, fols. 97v-101r; a full transcript by one of the members of Parliament in attendance: "Elizabeth's Golden Speech, November 30, 1601; Speech 23, version 1 [*Commons journal of Hayward Townshend, MP for Bishopscastle, Shropshire*]" Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 337-38.

years of his reign £36,377, annually.²⁷⁴ According to the Stowe and Folger inventories, Elizabeth apparently asked for her clothes to be altered after new fashions and fixed if they got torn, instead of constantly ordering new clothes. Additionally, one attire consisted of several pieces which could be mixed and matched into new attires. The different New Year's Gift Rolls shows that Elizabeth were given many of the dresses and jewellery which were in her possession. She also donated pieces of her wardrobe to her ladies, amongst others, as payment or to show her affection for them. Her wardrobe shows careful budgeting and good organisation, something which can be assigned to her rule as well.²⁷⁵ How the dress is put together in the *Rainbow Portrait* can therefore be a collection of different pieces from Elizabeth's wardrobe.

Strong believes that the whole attire seen in the portrait is that of a costume, based on the combination of the embroidered bodice, the mantle, the chin ruff, and the enveloping veil. He notices the abandonment of a farthingale, which, as he describes, anticipates the fashion of the next reign of the Stuarts.²⁷⁶ Arnold also observes the absence of a farthingale to support the petticoat concealed beneath the mantle. She thinks this might have to do with the fact that it was indeed a costume designed for a masque, or that the painter did not have access to all the pieces of the costume. Furthermore, Arnold reflects that the painting cannot have been painted after the farthingale went out of fashion, as it was still a popular fashion in the beginning of the 17th century (until around 1610), and that there are no evidence of any alteration to the garments by the waist.²⁷⁷ Strong concludes: "The costume, therefore, is an amalgam of contemporary dress with symbolic features of the type worn in the early Stuart court masques".²⁷⁸ Additionally, he mentions that the dress is something the queen would have worn around the year 1600 and that embroidered jackets similar to the embroidered bodice are mentioned in the Stowe and Folger inventories of the same year. An example found in the inventories is of a doublet listed as "[f81^v/26] Item one Dublet of white Satten embrodered allover with flowers flies and wormes of golde silver and silke of sondrie colours [...]".²⁷⁹ This description is very similar to the appearance of the bodice in the portrait and the Bacton Altar Cloth, however it is not made of a satin weave.

²⁷⁴ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 1.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

²⁷⁶ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 161.

²⁷⁷ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 82.

²⁷⁸ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 161.

²⁷⁹ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 317.

Hollander explains that clothes may seem like costumes in the way we wear them for show, meant for a relatively theatrical way of display. However, she adds that: “Clothes cannot be altogether dramatic *or* theat-ric because people are not always acting or performing, even though they are always appearing”.²⁸⁰ In the Neoplatonic Renaissance, there were two kinds of truths that were depicted in allegorical pictures: the nude (heavenly) and the dressed (earthly). This earthly dressed figure rose above the primitive animal form, enrobing the human with its distinctive, creative qualities: “knowledge and language, art and love, time and death”.²⁸¹ This way, clothes can be interpreted in an allegorical sense, adding to a symbolic meaning. Clothes as medium of social communication reveals the wearer’s private self-awareness in a worldlier way than art can ever do, as clothes have more of an aspect of utility connected with their existence. However, dress resembles pictorial art, maybe more than any other art genre, in the way that they must look like something: “They must submit not just to mental and behavioural conventions but to visual ones”.²⁸² Additionally, clothes perceived in visual arts give the image the aspect of naturalism, showing something real in a truthful representation. As we know, an image does not have to be naturalistic to show a true or realistic representation, but the showing of clothes helps the observer’s “hopeful, appreciative, idealistic eyes” in the acceptance of the truth.²⁸³ It can be easily understood how clothes may be thought of as metaphors or illustrations, how they are objects which express something about something else. However, as Hollander states: “[...] just as with art, it is in their specific aspect that clothes have their power”, and adds that “Clothes make, not the man but the image of man”. As we have observed, clothes were to Elizabeth a tool in her representation of self. They were such an important part of her representation, to the extent that she is more identifiable in her portraits because of her dress rather than through the recognition of facial features.²⁸⁴ Her face was constantly changed throughout the years of reconstructing her facial features into an accepted representation of a queen regnant of England, like the development of the mask of youth is an example of, and as seen in the *Rainbow Portrait*.

Coming back to the portrait, Yates writes that it may have been a record of a feast or assembly filled with allegories celebrating Elizabeth, based on all the virginal symbols and the different

²⁸⁰ Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (New York: The Viking Press, 1978), 451.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 448.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 452.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

pieces of clothing combined in this one portrait.²⁸⁵ Arnold does not deny this, but writes that the queen may as well have worn parts of the ensemble, instead of the whole costume, in her ordinary attire.²⁸⁶ It can be argued that the portrait therefore may not be depicting a masque. Rather it is an allegory of the political state and power of Elizabeth. As Montrose concludes:

Perhaps more explicitly and thoroughly than any of the other Elizabethan allegorical royal portraits, the “Rainbow” portrait constitutes not merely a representation of Elizabeth Tudor but a symbolic personification of the Elizabethan regime; it incorporates not only the person and office of the prince but also the offices and institutions – and the shared political imaginary – of those who constituted the political nation.²⁸⁷

As the pieces of clothing worn by Elizabeth in the *Rainbow Portrait* is not only representative in themselves, but are also decorated with individual symbolism, they partake in the representation of the queen through the allegorical reading of the painting. As an allegorical painting, it is not likely that it is an historical account of a masque event. It is rather an assembly of Elizabeth’s character. I therefore believe that it is important to consider the different pieces of clothing as well as the attire as a whole worn in this painting, and in any other Renaissance portrait for that matter, as dress adds to the interpretation of a painting’s iconography.

Moving on, the next and final symbol that I explore regarding the painting, which is also a descriptive element of the relationship between queen and subject, is the jewelled gauntlet hanging from the ruff.

3. THE JEWELLED GAUNTLET

The gauntlet may be associated with the champion of the queen (Figure 1, g). Arnold references Yates who suggests that the portrait may have been related to a ceremonial tilt, or joust, where her knights celebrated the queen through showing their skills.²⁸⁸ However, if we are to believe that the *Rainbow Portrait* is connected to the entertainments at Salisbury House on 6 December 1602, where there is no mentioning of a tilt, this deduction must be considered as incorrect.

²⁸⁵ Yates, “Boissard's Costume-Book and Two Portraits”, 366.

²⁸⁶ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 82.

²⁸⁷ Montrose, “Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I”, 146.

²⁸⁸ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 84.

Arnold adds that the jewelled gauntlet could be a New Year's gift of 1581-82. This jewel was given by Sir Thomas Perrot (1553-1594) and entered as: "Item, one gauntlet of golde, garnished with smale seede perles, and sparcks of dimounds".²⁸⁹ It is difficult to find out if the jewelled gauntlet in the portrait is indeed the same as given by Perrot, as the visual differences to the written description could be because of the artist's choice or because there is another jewelled gauntlet that we do not know of as of yet. Maybe Robert Cecil considered himself as the champion of the queen and presented a jewelled gauntlet representing his fidelity towards her, adding this little detail to his portrait of Elizabeth.

Strong thinks that the gauntlet itself "is an allusion to the Queen's chivalrous cult, epitomized in the Accession Day Tilts".²⁹⁰ It is therefore an image of chivalry rather than as a symbol of Elizabeth's role as *Defensor Fidei*, the defender of the Protestant faith, as argued by some.²⁹¹ The gauntlet as a symbol of the queen's champion can be seen in the bottom left corner of a portrait of George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland (1558-1605), who preceded Sir Henry Lee (1533-1611) as Elizabeth's champion in 1590 (Figure 21). As the gauntlet is an accessory to the champion, it makes it a symbol of chivalry rather than anything else. The gift from Perrot was given as a New Year's Gift following a tilt for the queen and the French ambassador in April 1581, which he attended, as we know through his giving of a speech while dressed in armour.²⁹² The gauntlet can again be associated with tilts and chivalry. It is therefore understandable how Strong explains the gauntlet in a portrait commissioned by Cecil based on his position at court and his function in relation to the tilts.

Cecil's position at court increased in the aftermath of the execution of Essex. Essex had replaced Raleigh as the queen's favourite but proved false and was executed for treason in 1601 after an unsuccessful *coup d'état*. Cecil became responsible for several major entertainments for the queen, as well as being in control of the Accession Day Tilts. There are documentary evidence of Cecil's involvement on two occasions: in 1600 Cecil was pressured to retrieve Essex' fortunes, and in 1602 he was asked by Cumberland to relieve him from his position as the

²⁸⁹ John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 2, (Burt Franklin, 1823), <https://archive.org/details/progressespublic02nich>, 389.

²⁹⁰ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 161. The Accession Day Tilts was an event celebrating the accession of Elizabeth on 17 November, arranged annually during her reign.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁹² Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 2, 320n2.

queen's champion. Strong emphasises therefore that the context of the *Rainbow Portrait* should be viewed regarding Cecil's place at court in the aftermath of the execution of Essex.²⁹³

As we have observed in this chapter, the connection between the entertainments at Salisbury House and the *Rainbow Portrait* may open to a greater understanding of the symbols and the iconography of the painting. Cecil, being the patron of the portrait, proves his devotion to Elizabeth and stages her with attributes and in a costume that mystifies her being. She is depicted as he saw her, like a powerful queen regnant who ruled wisely with the assistance of her loyal subjects, as invested in her true body, her body politic.

²⁹³ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, 157.

CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSION

Throughout this text I have observed the *Rainbow Portrait* in relation to two entertainments which Elizabeth attended in 1602, namely that at Harefield House and that at Salisbury House. These entertainments with the accompanied verses by Davies illuminates the iconography of Elizabeth's portrait, as the portrait most likely was inspired by selected details that also appeared at these events. There is not enough evidence pointing to whom the artist might be, so an artist-object relation was never considered in this analysis of the painting. However, in my conjecture that Robert Cecil was its patron, I have relied on the importance of a patron-object relation in my interpretation of the portrait. Cecil's esteem for the queen and his position as Secretary of State is therefore most likely reflected in the *Rainbow Portrait*, which gives it a political edge in addition to the political aspect of the representation of the queen's power in her state portrait.

By observing the different symbolical and allegorical elements of the iconography, I have been able to "paint a picture" of how Elizabeth was perceived by her contemporaries. The elements that I observed was the rainbow in her hand and her association with Astraea-Virgo, the bodice covered in flowers of spring and *renovatio*, the moon on the crown and the imperial image, the heart, the snake, and the sphere as representative of Elizabeth's virtues, the headdress of a bride and her marriage to England as the mother of her people, the mantle with eyes and ears showing that she was assisted by the intelligence of her loyal subjects, and the jewelled gauntlet as a symbol of loyalty towards the queen. All these elements combined stages Elizabeth as a divine figure with almost supernatural powers who ruled her country wisely with the love of her people and the support of her subjects. Though not removing her entirely from the earthly sphere as attributes such as dress and jewellery, which were probably painted from life, influence the observer to accept the portrait as a realistic depiction of the queen.

Additionally, the theories that I present in Chapter II help explain the contemporary understanding of the imagery design as representative of Elizabeth as the Queen of England. These theories concern the king's two bodies and Elizabeth's staging of herself to express power, as well as theories on state portraiture and the development of the mask of youth as a visual tool in her portraits from the last decades of her reign. The *Rainbow Portrait* is a representation of Elizabeth's body politic rather than her body natural. It can be read as a

physical manifestation of Elizabeth's power invested in her as the rightful ruler of England, as the power of the absolute monarch. Even though it is an unrealistic image in itself because of the lack of naturalistic physical features, it can nevertheless be interpreted as a true representation of Elizabeth identified as the Queen of England. In a way, Elizabeth controlled her image in her staging of self, as evidenced by her famous words from the "Tilbury Speech": "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too". This sentence summarises how Elizabeth viewed her role as queen regnant, a position like that of a King of England, but at the same time not effacing her gender. Defining herself as the Virgin Queen was not merely a political tool, but also a way of surviving the world of men by ruling as a king, but with the body of a woman. The mask of youth became a tool of representing the queen as befitting her royal person. With both her personal and public victories, like those over Mary Stuart and the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth was finally accepted as the absolute monarch, celebrated as Astraea, Gloriana, Diana, Cynthia, and Belphoebe. This was popularly expressed in poems and paintings, and as part of public processions and entertainments, like those at Harefield and Salisbury House in 1602.

Thus, the *Rainbow Portrait* summarises Elizabeth's reign and becomes a symbol of her rule as the golden age of England. The way the portrait has incorporated almost every possible allegory and symbolism in one great amalgamate representing the queen's body, politics, and reign, makes it the ultimate state portrait. With the use of the mask of youth as well as depicting Elizabeth like a goddess, any temporal trace is removed so that the portrait in a way shows both the beginning and the end of her reign simultaneously. Compared to her other state portraits which arguably focus on a more historic and direct representation of the queen, the *Rainbow Portrait* with its mystical iconography and the strange combination of costume elevates Elizabeth into a fantastic figure worthy of worship.

The significant relationship between text and image was of great importance in the construction and design of Renaissance painting. As texts, paintings were supposed to be read rather than just viewed. Cecil's relation with Davies and the use of his verses as inspiration to the *Rainbow Portrait* proves a common composition between text and image. The text in this circumstance aids the linguistic story, the meaning, within the painting.

Furthermore, the depiction of actual dress in painting can tell us something more about the subject and the iconography, as well as showing evidence of historical fashion and knowledge

of dress. Painting can give us more information on this than the few pieces of clothing from this period of time which exists today, as they are mostly incomplete, or the colours have faded. The Bacton Altar Cloth, if it indeed is the same fabric as that of the bodice in the portrait, can add to the research on Elizabeth's wardrobe as this is the only existing piece of clothing possibly worn by the queen herself that we know of. This piece of fabric is therefore an extraordinary and valuable insight into dress at Elizabeth's court and dress in portraiture. Its symbolism makes it the only earthly element in the painting with its flowers of springtime, though still representing the coming of Astraea and the golden age. This way, the bodice in the *Rainbow Portrait* expands our interpretation of Elizabeth's character. With the rediscovery of the bodice as the Bacton Altar Cloth, and therefore as physical evidence of the painting's iconography, it emphasises the idea of a true likeness of the queen.

On this note, I would like to finish by encouraging further research on the topic of dress in Elizabethan portraiture. There is a lot yet to explore in this regard, which could add to our understanding of Renaissance portraiture in a way like that of a contemporary viewer. As dress has been considered as crafts and fashion, it has been neglected in the study of art history as compared to architecture or other visual arts. It is easy to forget that even though dress is created on the idea that it is supposed to be functional as something we wear to conceal our nakedness, to protect ourselves from the weather, or according to social norms, there is also the visual aspect of dress and the individual meaning that it inhabits, like any other visual arts of human creation from idea to physical object. I wish therefore that dress and fashion would be allowed a "renaissance" in the field of art history.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1: Unknown artist, the *Rainbow Portrait*, c. 1600-03.

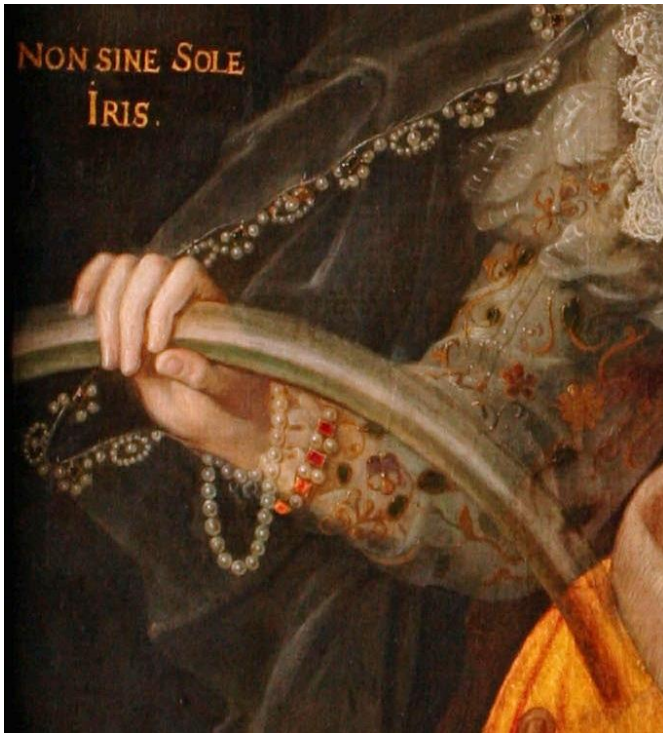


Figure 1, a: The rainbow in her hand.



Figure 1, b: The bodice covered in flowers of spring.



Figure 1, c: The moon on the crown.



Figure 1, d: The heart, the snake, and the sphere.



Figure 1, e: The headdress.



Figure 1, f: The mantle with eyes and ears.



Figure 1, g: The gauntlet.



Figure 2: Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, the *Ditchley Portrait*, 1592.



Figure 3: William Scrots, *Elizabeth I when a Princess*, c. 1546.



Figure 4: Isaac Oliver, *Pattern Miniature of Elizabeth I*, c. 1592.



Figure 5: Isaac Oliver, *Lady in Masque Costume*, 1609.



Figure 6: Nicholas Hilliard, the *Pelican Portrait*, c. 1575.



Figure 7: Nicholas Hilliard, the *Phoenix Portrait*, c. 1575.



Figure 8: Unknown artist, Pansies from John Gerard's *The Herball*, 1597.



Figure 9: Unknown artist, Honeysuckle from John Gerard's *The Herball*, 1597.



Figure 10: Unknown artist, Gillyflower from John Gerard's *The Herball*, 1597.

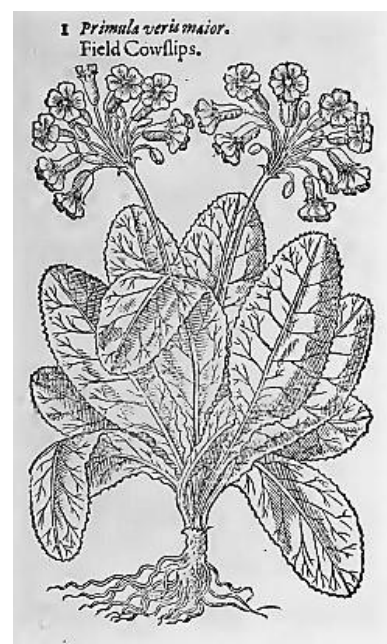


Figure 11: Unknown artist, Cowslips from John Gerard's *The Herball*, 1597.



Figure 12: The Bacton Altar Cloth, c. 1590s.



Figure 12, a:
Pansies.



Figure 12, b:
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Figure 12, c:
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Figure 12, e:
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Figure 13: Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait Miniature of Elizabeth I with a Moon Jewel in her Hair*, c. 1586.



Figure 14: George Gower, the *Plimpton Sieve Portrait*, 1579.



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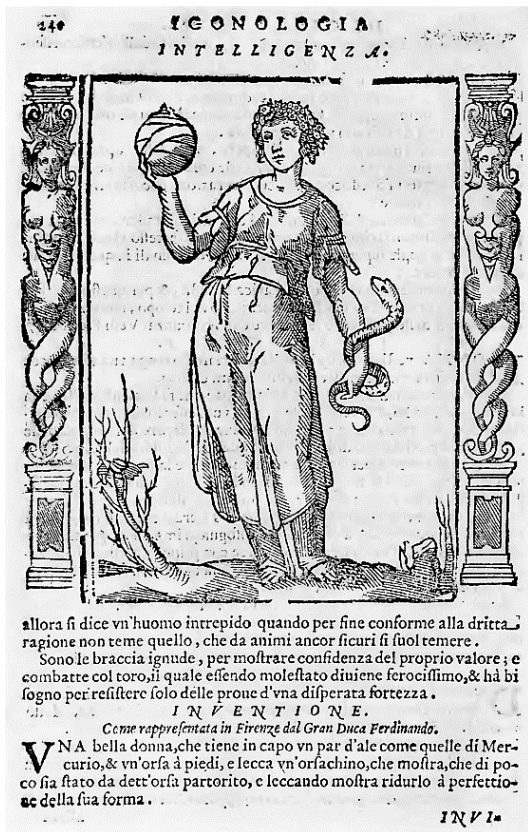


Figure 16: Unknown artist, *Intelligenza* from
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Figure 17: Unknown artist, *Plate 9* from Jean Jaques Boissard's *Habitus*, 1581.



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Figure 19: Unknown artist, *Ragione di Stato* from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, 1603.



Figure 20: Unknown artist, *Gelosia* from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, 1603.



Figure 21: Nicholas Hilliard, *George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland*, 1558-1605, c. 1590.

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© National Portrait Gallery, London 2018
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Oil on panel, 108.5 x 81.8 cm
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<https://archive.org/details/iconologiaouerod00ripa>: 427.
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Figure 20:

Unknown artist, *Gelosia*

Engraving

Ripa, Cesare. *Iconologia, Ouero, Descrittione Di Diuerse
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Figure 21:

Nicholas Hilliard, *George Clifford, 3rd Earl of Cumberland,
1558-1605*, c. 1590

Watercolour on vellum, 25.8 x 17.6 cm

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