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ERZSÉBET STRÓBL

A Monarch in Petticoat: Metaphors of the Body in Queen Elizabeth's Representations

In 1566 Queen Elizabeth used a striking image to describe herself in a speech in front of the joint delegations of the House of Lords and the House of Commons: 'I thank God I am indeed endured with such qualities that if I were turned out of the realm in my petticoat, I were able to live in any place of Christendom.'¹ Her words are remarkable as she consciously dons the role of a simple maid, whose social rank and standing was legally inferior to men in early modern England. Although Elizabeth's accession to the throne was justified by dynastic claims and by the Protestant discourse of a 'mixed polity' in which a ruler exercised their authority by the advice of godly councillors, her female body natural was a constant source of criticism throughout her reign. From time to time she was challenged by contemporary prejudice that claimed women were 'weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish: and experience hath declared them to be inconstant, variable, cruel and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment.'² In spite of this, courtly propaganda and Elizabeth's self-fashioning often utilized corporeal images and metaphors in order to emphasise her kinglike qualities and subvert anxieties about female rule.

The present paper will describe and analyse these strategies, and will argue that instead of avoiding hints at the gender of the monarch's body, the images and metaphors of the body—even allusions to its 'weakness'—were successfully incorporated into showcasing an authoritative public persona for Queen Elizabeth. Examples will be taken from the works of the Queen in the broadest sense, including her public speeches (some written by her, others outlined by her, and nearly all of them recorded after their delivery and existing in many versions), her autograph compositions of prayers and verses (some printed in her lifetime and available to her subjects, others existing only in a manuscript form), and her official portraits. Queen Elizabeth's forty-five year rule faced various challenges and threats, and the various reinventions of her image mirror the diversity of her long rule. The paper will expound upon how they were used to justify the Queen's rule, to emphasize her godly humbleness, her bodily fitness, and to hide her ageing body in the last decade of her reign.

¹ ELIZABETH I: *Collected Works*, Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, Mary Beth Rose (eds.), Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2000, 97.

² JOHN KNOX: *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, Geneva, J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558, 10^r.



Fig. 1. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *The Rainbow Portrait of Elizabeth I* (c. 1600–1602)

The Female Body in the Sixteenth Century

In early modern England the female body was still seen as largely inferior to the male body, an idea dating back to ancient Greek philosophical writing, where the principle of action is masculine and the material or body shaped by this activity is feminine. Thus the nature of women was considered to be soft, docile, apt to be despondent, quarrelsome, deceitful, lustful, and irrational. Next to classical writings, the early Christian Fathers introduced a further reason to discriminate against them: the accusation that women were the cause of the fall of man, and, consequently, the crucifixion of Christ. The early Christian author Tertullian condemns the female sex vehemently: ‘And do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? ... You destroyed so easily God’s image, man.’³ A further element within the Christian tradition appears with St. Paul, who explicitly forbids women to speak publicly (1 Cor 14:33–34, 1 Tim 2:11–12) and thus one of the recommended female virtues became silence.

The Aristotelian and Christian discourse about women was adopted by Scholastic philosophy too, and the official status of women in the Middle Ages was best defined as having ‘a private existence and no public personality.’⁴ In the sixteenth century leading humanists, such as Erasmus, Thomas More, Juan Luis Vives, and popular conduct books such as Castiglione’s *The Courtier* offered an enlightened view of the mental capacities of women, claiming that:

... the male kinde shall not be more perfect, then the female, as touchinge his Formall substance: for both the one and the other is conteined under the Species of *Homo*, and that wherein they differ is an Accidentall matter and no essentiall. . . . these accidentes must consist eyther in the bodye or in the minde: yf in the bodye, bicause the man is more sturdier, nimbler, lighter, and more abler to endure travaile, I say that this is an argument of smalle perfection: for emonge men themselves such as abounde in these qualities above other, are not for them the more esteamed: and in warr, where the greatest part of painfull labours are and of strength, the stoutest are not for all that the moste set bye. Yf in the mind, I say, what ever thinges men can understande, the self same can women understande also: and where it perceth the capacitie of the one, it may in likewise perce the others.⁵

³ TERTULLIAN, ‘On the Apparel of Women,’ transl. S. Thelwall. In: Alexander ROBERTS – James DONALDSON – A. CLEVELAND COXE (eds.): *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, IV, Buffalo, NY, Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885, 14.

⁴ Juan Luis VIVES: *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe)*, Charles Fantazzi (ed. and transl.), Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2000, xiii.

⁵ Baldassare CASTIGLIONE: *The Courtier*, transl. by Thomas Hoby, London, William Seres, 1561, CC3^{r-v}.

While similar apologies were common among the great thinkers of the age, the status of married women—and most were expected to marry—was subjected to men in legal matters, such as their rights to property or trading, and only those who were *feme sole* had equal rights to men.⁶ Throughout the sixteenth century legal distinctions as well as misogynistic prejudices against women prevailed and were unchanged even after the fifty years of female rule that stretched across the second half of the century. In 1598 the popular concept that women were inferior to men was still widely accepted, as it is testified by the commonplace book *Natural and Morall Questions and Answeres* that echoes the same discriminating opinion about women: ‘*Qu.* What is man? *Ans.* The image of Christ. *Qu.* What is a woman? *Ans.* The similitude of man, and a cabinet of much good and euill.’⁷

The social status of queens was different from other women, yet their legal independence formed a subject of several disputes. While in the fifteenth century Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench claimed that a woman could not become queen regnant, the political realities of the sixteenth century forced statesmen to re-examine their stance.⁸

The old beliefs about the suspicion of female governance surfaced in a pamphlet of 1532, where it was used to support the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon in order to secure a male heir to the throne. In *A Glasse of the Truthe* the author claims that female heirs ‘were daungerous, leste we shulde make them superiours to us, over whome we clayme superioritie, seyng the manne must rule the woman ... We think the establishment of titles is not so surely rooted nor yet so entirely maintained by the female as by male.’⁹ But by 1540 Thomas Elyot already put such words (‘in the partes of wisdom and civile policy they [women] be founden unapte, and to have litell capacite’) into the mouth of Caninius in *his Defence of Good Women*, one of the characters of the dialogue whose ideas were systematically refuted by his partner Candidus.¹⁰ Elyot’s pamphlet was originally dedicated to Anne of Cleves, fourth wife of Henry VIII, and published in 1540, but in 1545 a second edition came out without the dedication highlighting a significant change in the legal status of Mary and Elizabeth. In 1544 Parliament passed an act which restored to the line of succession the two royal princesses, who were previously declared illegitimate, and thus their legal standing as queens became a matter of high political importance, one that needed to be defended. Furthermore, in 1553 the Tudor dynasty’s male line became extinct and the official discourse about female rule had to be radically altered to accommodate the reign of women.

⁶ Sara MENDELSON and Patricia CRAWFORD: *Women in Early Modern England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2003, 34–58.

⁷ A. P. *Natural and Morall Questions and Answeres*, London, Adam Islip, 1598.

⁸ MENDELSON and CRAWFORD: *ibid.*, 350.

⁹ *A Glasse of the Truthe*, London, Thomas Berthelet, 1532, A3^{r-v}.

¹⁰ Thomas ELYOT: *The Defence of Good Women*, London, Thomas Berthelet, 1540, C6^v.

One of the most influential theories that emerged to justify the rule of women during the reign of Mary I, the first Tudor queen, was the view that defined the monarch as having two bodies: a body natural that could be weak, sickly, old or female, and a body politic, which was an abstract entity uncorrupted by such natural frailties.¹¹ Devised by Anthony Browne and Edmund Plowden the concept served to support the intactness of royal actions in legal cases of property. Queen Elizabeth made the theory of the king’s two bodies one of the cornerstones of her justification for female rule.

Female Body and Male Voice

Three days after ascending the throne of England, in her first public speech Queen Elizabeth adopted her sister’s strategy to deploy the theory of the king’s two bodies to define her position as the undisputed head of state: ‘I am but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern.’¹² The speech’s figure of contrasting a female body natural with a powerful male body politic recurred throughout the Queen’s self-fashioning. The conscious juxtaposition of the Queen’s two natures both acknowledges the common concept of early modern female social roles and underpins her absolute authority as monarch. Cristy Ann Beemer points out that ‘Elizabeth establishes power precisely by drawing attention to her female body’ in order to ‘reject, surpass, or comment’ on it.¹³

In a speech of 1563 she alludes to the difference in the decision-making process between her body natural and body politic (‘for though I can think it best for a private woman, yet do I strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince’)¹⁴ in order to underline the superiority of the latter. Elizabeth deemed her female traits less important than her male role as ‘being a woman wanting both wit and memory, some fear and bashfulness besides, a thing appropriate to my sex, but yet the princely seat and kingly throne wherein God [...] hath constituted me, maketh these two causes to seem little.’¹⁵ On the same note in 1566 she spoke about herself with an emphasis on her two different gender entities: ‘I care not for death, for all men are mortal; and though I be a woman, yet I have as good courage answerable to my place as ever my father had.’¹⁶ Elizabeth’s public rhetoric was often modelled on the image of her father, lending a definitely masculine identification to her role

¹¹ For the detailed discussion of the topic see Ernst H. KANTOROWITZ: *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957.

¹² ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 52.

¹³ Cristy A. BEEMER: “*Usurping Authority in the Midst of Men*”: *Mirrors of Female Ruling Rhetoric in the Sixteenth Century*, Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, Miami University, 2008, etd.ohiolink.edu (20 July 2019), 110, 85.

¹⁴ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 79.

¹⁵ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 70.

¹⁶ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 97.

as monarch. In the famous Tilbury Speech of 1588 she again contrasted her body 'of a weak and feeble woman' with the 'heart and stomach of a king' and elevated the status of the latter over that of the former.¹⁷ The theory of the king's two bodies enabled a double gender to be assigned to the Queen, and her public speeches equivocated about her gender identity by using both *king* and *queen* to refer to her persona. Even more often, her speeches used the gender neutral term *prince*.

While the public speeches obfuscated gender distinctions, the Queen's prayers are uttered by a pronouncedly weak feminine self, even if the prayer is about the burdens of governing. One may argue that prayers have a more private nature where there was no need to assert a public image of authority, yet one has to keep in mind that a collection of her prayers was published in 1563 by Purfoot as *Precautiones privatae*, and in 1569 by John Day in *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Latin*. In case of this latter collection Jennifer Clement emphasizes its direct international propagandistic nature, by connecting the language of the prayers with their discussed themes, which were chosen according to their envisioned continental audiences.¹⁸

Queen Elizabeth's prayers are based on the humility trope, in which the sinful undeserving self gives thanks to the special mercy and grace of God by adopting the lowest social rank and position of a simple handmaid from which to address God Almighty ('since I am feminine and feeble,¹⁹ 'hear the most humble voice of Thy handmaid'²⁰). Yet in this Biblical context the juxtaposition of the weakest physical condition and God's miracle of choosing 'the weak things of this world in order to confound and destroy the strong'²¹ gives a divine justification for Elizabeth's authority:

Thou made me not a worm, but a creature according to Thine own image: heaping all the blessings upon me that men on earth hold most happy; drawing my blood from kings and my bringing up in virtue; giving me that more is, even in my youth knowledge of Thy truth, and in times of most danger, most gracious deliverance; pulling me from the prison to the palace; and placing me a sovereign princess over Thy people of England. Above all this, making me (though a weak woman) yet Thy instrument to set forth the glorious Gospel of Thy dear Son Christ Jesus.²²

¹⁷ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 326.

¹⁸ Jennifer CLEMENT: "The Queen's Voice: Elizabeth I's *Christian Prayers and Meditations*." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 13.3 (2008): 1.1–19.

¹⁹ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 159.

²⁰ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 311.

²¹ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 157.

²² ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 312–313.

In the prayers composed in 1563 (the year following the near fatal sickness of Elizabeth) the exposure and weakness of the feminine body and God's special election of her to govern is an immensely powerful claim to authority:

... how much less am I, Thy handmaid, in my unwarlike sex and feminine nature, adequate to administer these Thy kingdoms of England and of Ireland, and to govern an innumerable and warlike people, or able to bear the immense magnitude of such burden, if Thou, most merciful Father, didst not provide for me (undeserving of a kingdom) freely and against the opinion of many men.²³

In this Protestant Christian context the body of the queen was conflated with the Protestant governance of the country and it became the only safeguard of 'true religion' and 'the happiness' of the country. In Elizabeth's third Spanish prayer of 1569, the ominous year of the Northern Rebellion against her rule, God is shown capable of making from a 'woman by nature weak, timid, and delicate, as are all women,' a warlike monarch 'vigorous, brave, and strong in order to resist such a multitude of Indumeneans, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Muhammadans, and other infinity of peoples and nations who have conjoined, plotted, conspired, and made league against Thee [God Almighty].'²⁴

Another Protestant device legitimizing the rule of a woman was a theory that grew strong among the exiled English Protestant community. Their belief in the concept of 'mixed rule,' a form of conciliarism where the monarch ruled with the counsel of wise men, meant that the problems posed by Elizabeth's gender could be avoided by the counsel of godly wise gentlemen.²⁵ While still in exile in 1559, John Aylmer wrote his apology for the Queen's succession to the throne of England and underlined the realm's stability even under a female ruler as:

the regiment of England is not a mere Monarchy, ... nor a mere Oligarchy, nor democracy, but a rule mixed of all these, wherein each one of these, have or should have like authority ... It is not she that ruleth but the laws ... she maketh no statutes or laws, but the honourable court or Parliament.²⁶

The same concept was visually expressed by the city of London at the Queen's coronation entry, where one pageant depicted her rule being supported by the three estates of the country: on the stage Debora, the Old Testament Judge was shown

²³ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 142.

²⁴ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 157.

²⁵ John GUY: "Monarchy and Counsel: Models of the State," in Patrick Collinson (ed.), *The Sixteenth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, 121–124.

²⁶ John AYLMER: *An harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subiectes, against the late blown Blast, concerning the Government of Women, wherein be confuted all such reasons as a stranger of late made in that behalf, with a brief exhortation to Obedience*, London, John Day, 1559, H2^v–H3^r, L1.

wearing a parliamentary robe and listening to the advice of six figures representing the Nobility, the Clergy and the Commons. In the mid-1560s Thomas Smith explained the principle of mixed monarchy and argued that

authoritie is annexed to the bloud and progenie, ... for the blood is respected, not the age nor the sexe ... for the right and honour of the blood, and the quietnes and suertie of the realm, is more to be considered, than either base age as yet impotent to rule, or the sexe not accustomed (otherwise) to intermeddle with publick affaires.²⁷

His idea was a far cry from the above quoted pamphlet of 1532 that claimed just the opposite. Smith continued his discussion by mentioning a safeguard of the system, the importance of counsel: 'such personages never do lacke the counsel of such grave and discrete men as be able to supplie all other defaultes.'²⁸

While the theory of the king's two bodies and belief in a mixed monarchy buttressed the Queen's position as monarch, the insistence on counselling the Queen often posed a threat to the authority of Elizabeth as head of her country. Unwanted counsel from the 'godly gentlemen' of the country, often irritated her, and while the importance of counsel was acknowledged several times by the Queen in her speeches and prayers (e.g. in her first speech as Queen in 1558 'I mean to direct all my actions by good advice and counsel'²⁹), she firmly rejected counsel on matters such as her marriage and succession in order to establish an absolute sovereignty over her people. The image she so often conjured to express her indignation for the disregard of her absolute power was the corporeal metaphor about the hierarchy of the human body, the relationship of the head to the feet.

In 1566 Elizabeth delivered a speech in front of the joint delegation of both Houses who tried to force an answer from her about the questions of marriage and succession. She asserted her kingly status by using the Pauline metaphor of the commonwealth, in which every member represented a part of the body with several functions, but was governed by the head (1 Cor 12:14–27). Thus she angrily claimed upon hearing the advice of the delegation that it is 'a strange thing that a foot should direct the head in such weighty a cause' and two months later dissolving the same Parliament she reminded her audience that 'a prince ... is head of the body' and is entitled to 'command the feet not to stray when they would slip.'³⁰

²⁷ Thomas SMITH: *De Republica Anglorum* (1583), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 64–65.

²⁸ SMITH: *ibid.*

²⁹ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 52. On the importance of counsel and unwanted counsel see also Erzsébet STRÓBL, "The Queen and Death: An Elizabethan Book of Devotion," in Kinga FÖLDVÁRY and Erzsébet STRÓBL (eds.): *Early Modern Communi(cati)ons: Studies in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, 10–31.

³⁰ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 96, 105.

In her last speech she used the same image to look back upon her reign when she claimed that she always aspired to be a 'careful head to defend the body.'³¹

Description of Queen Elizabeth's 'Natural Body'

While in her public speeches the Queen conformed to the widespread conception of female frailty and emphatically acknowledged her 'womanhood and weakness' on several occasions, her success as a ruler nonetheless depended on establishing an apology for her bodily traits in order to impress her court and justify her position.³² There is a rare instance in one of her prayers where she speaks about her body and offers posterity a glimpse into how she viewed herself in 1563 at the age of thirty:

When I consider how many—not only from among the common people but also from the nobility as well as royal blood, by Thy hidden but just judgement—some are miserably deformed in body, others (more miserably by far) destitute of wit and intelligence, still others (by far the most miserable) disordered in their mind and reason, and finally how many were and are, even today, insane and raging. Indeed, I am unimpaired in body, with a good form, a healthy and substantial wit, prudence even beyond other women, and beyond this, distinguished and superior in the knowledge of literature and languages, which is highly esteemed because unusual in my sex. Finally I have been endowed with all royal qualities and with gifts worthy of a kingdom.³³

In an earlier letter written to her brother Edward VI king of England at the time (15 May, 1549) she speaks less favourably of her physical appearance, yet praises her intellect in a similarly bold manner: 'the face, I grant, I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present.'³⁴ Her portrait sent as a present to accompany the letter shows a simple faced teenager with a book in hand and another book next to her lying open on a lectern. The strategy of Elizabeth and her tutors was from the earliest time on emphasizing Elizabeth's exceptional intellectual qualities. The young princess was encouraged to send New Year gifts to her father or stepmother that contained translations from French into English or from English into Latin. At the age of twelve she wrote a letter to her father Henry VIII which starts with lines that underline her understanding of the superiority of spiritual virtues over bodily ones:

³¹ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 348.

³² ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 329.

³³ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 141.

³⁴ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.* 9.

As an immortal soul is superior to a mortal body, so whoever is wise judges things done by the soul more to be esteemed and worthy of greater praise than any act of the body ... Nothing ought to be more acceptable to a king, whom philosophers regard as god on earth, than this labour of the soul, which raises us up to heaven and on earth makes us heavenly and divine in the flesh.³⁵

In shunning her appearance and emphasizing her intellect, Princess Elizabeth was not simply resorting to female modesty, but was adopting a strategy of survival at a time when her social status fluctuated from being a legitimate heir to the throne to being branded a bastard, and her role as a possible bride on the European marriage market was overshadowed by her dynastic importance and Protestant faith. Elizabeth's stance amid constant political insecurity was to achieve intellectual excellence, an aspect of her self-fashioning which became one of the strongest elements in her public image for years to come. Well into her sixties she boasted at court of her exercise of translating the verse sections of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*,³⁶ and managed to achieve the admiration of many with the impromptu Latin speech she gave to an insolent Polish ambassador in 1597. Thus her education and knowledge became forceful weapons to defend her body natural.

The gendered body of the Queen was also foregrounded in the symbolic act when Elizabeth claimed herself to be the mother of her nation ('Every one of you, and as many as are English, are my children and kinsfolk'³⁷). In this act she embraced a traditional female role that fitted her body natural without becoming a biological mother. The idea may have been inspired by her sister Mary Tudor's speech at the Guildhall asking for the help of London at the time of the Wyatt rebellion in 1553:

I can not tell how naturally the Mother loveth the Childe, for I was never the mother of any, but certainly, if a Prince and Governour may as naturally & earnestly love her Subiectes as the Mother doth the Child, then assure your selves, that I being your Lady and Maistres, doe as earnestly and as tenderly love and favour you. And I thus loving you, can not but thinke that ye as hartely and faythfully love me: & then I doubt not, but we shall geve these rebells a short and speedy overthrow.³⁸

This incident recorded by Foxe in *The Acts and Monuments* does not appear in the first edition of the book of 1563, but was only included in the second edition of 1570. By that time the caring and loving mother metaphor for the depiction of Queen

Elizabeth became a commonplace in her public speeches and thus the Mary incident may have been included precisely because Elizabeth was repeatedly using and quoting it herself. For instance, for the conclusion of her speech of 1563 she declared 'after my death you may have many stepdames, yet shall you never have any a more mother than I mean to be unto you all.'³⁹

Developing partly out of the Queen's preference for representing herself as natural mother of her country—and partly out of her role as the defender of the Protestant Faith—was Elizabeth's badge depicting a pelican feeding her children with her own blood. The mother (queen) sacrificing herself for her children (nation) was another image the Queen included in her public speeches, one outstanding example being the address to her troops at Tilbury: 'I am [resolved] to live and die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honour and my blood even in the dust.'⁴⁰ As a symbol of the Queen the Pelican appeared in other public media as, for instance, on the her portrait by her official court painter Nicholas Hilliard of c. 1572–76 in the form of a Pelican jewel on the breast of Elizabeth, or in the most complete pre-Armada list of the various complimentary metaphors about the Queen published in John Lyly's *Euphues and his England* (1580): 'this is that good pelican that to feed her people spareth not to rend her own person.'⁴¹

The pictorial representations of the Queen show an interesting distinction between the engraved images and the oil paintings. While the engravings—published and available for a wide audience—portray the Queen wearing a crown together with the sceptre and the orb, the oil canvases produced for the members of the court seldom depict her as a monarch; instead she is painted as an elegant lady with a glove, fan, book or a sieve in her hand. On the rare occasions where she is wearing a crown—as on the Ditchley Portrait (1592), Hardwick Portrait (1599) or the Procession Picture (1601)—the sceptre and the orb are missing and are replaced by the trappings of a society lady. The kingly royal sword that was a crucial element of the iconography of Henry VIII is never placed in the hand of the Queen, but lies untouched nearby, or is replaced by the olive branch, the symbol of peace, in a deliberate act of distancing her from her father's image. The difference between the oil and print images of the Queen underscores the importance of the strategy of the two separate bodies: the oil canvases render the more intimate look of the Queen's body natural while the prints show the unchangeable image of the monarch based on the traditional representation of sacred kingship as it is seen on one of the earliest English royal portraits, the Westminster Abbey panel of Richard II (c. 1390).

³⁵ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 9.

³⁶ Lysbeth BENKERT: 'Translation as Image-Making: Elizabeth I's Translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*,' *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 6.3 (2001): 1–20.

³⁷ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 59.

³⁸ JOHN FOXE: *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1570 edition), The Digital Humanities Institute, Sheffield, 2011, dhi.ac.uk/foxe (21 July 2019), 1618.

³⁹ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁰ ELIZABETH I: *ibid.*, 326. Further examples are her speeches of January 14, 1559; February 10, 1559; March 15, 1576; and November 12, 1586.

⁴¹ JOHN LYL: *Euphues: the Anatomy of Wit and Euphues and His England*, Leah Scragg (ed.), Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2003, 342.

Throughout the long reign of the Queen her pictorial images shifted gradually from simple likeness to allegorical complexity, from realism to symbolism, from spatial unity to diachronic multiplicity, yet the most significant aspect—comprising all of the previously mentioned features—was the way the aging body of the Queen was depicted.

The Aging Body of the Queen

The challenge posed by the common belief about the subordination of the female body to the male was resolved in the late 1570s—at a time when the age of the Queen rendered any further negotiations about a marriage in order to produce an heir to the throne irrelevant—by the establishment of the Virgin Queen epithet, which exempted Elizabeth from the requirements of her age to marry, and created a mystique around the elderly royal persona. Yet the Virgin image, with its associations of an eternally young maiden, was contradicted by the aging body natural of the Queen. Furthermore, the last decade of Elizabeth's reign was burdened by growing discontent caused by bad harvests, outbreaks of the plague, wartime taxation and a court torn apart by factions.⁴² The constant threat of Catholic invasion and the subversive influence of Catholic propaganda of slandering the Queen's morals—as epitomized in Cardinal Allen's *An Admonition to the nobility and people of England* (Antwerp, 1588) to prepare the favourable reception of an invading army—also aggravated the situation. The official reaction of the court was to introduce a more autocratic rule which ushered in a period of renewed impatience with female rule.

The general fears of the people are well comprised by the incident of John Felton who is reported to have said in 1591: 'The queene was but a woman and ruled by gentlemen ... so that poore men cold get nothinge ... We shall never have a merry world while the Queene lyveth.'⁴³ The last decade of Elizabeth's rule saw the rise of rumours, gossip and writings that challenged her female authority and undermined her moral reputation as a woman. Amid such circumstances the public appearances of Elizabeth, once an essential part of her style of government, became rare, and the accounts about her body contradictory.

To bridge the gap between the aging body of the Queen and the image of the Virgin Queen, a device for depicting her as an abstract concept or ageless maiden was invented in portraiture. Instead of the Darnley face pattern used for her portraiture for decades, a so called 'Mask of Youth' was propagated.⁴⁴ It meant

⁴² John GUY: 'The 1590s: The Second Reign of Elizabeth I', in John Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1–19.

⁴³ Quoted in Carole LEVIN: 'We shall never have a merry world while the Queene lyveth: Gender, Monarchy, and the Power of Seditious Words', in Julia M. WALKER (ed.): *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1998, 77–78.

⁴⁴ Roy STRONG: *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, New York, Thames and Hudson, 1987, 147–152.

the adoption of a face pattern—invented by Hilliard—that ignored reality and supplanted it with an idealized complexion of a girl of eighteen. This corporeal representation had no relationship to the real body of the Queen, and the portraits that used it were typically highly allegorical statements of Elizabethan propaganda. One of the last portraits of the Queen, the Rainbow Portrait (Fig. 1.) is especially interesting as it not just substituted the Queen's real face with the Mask of Youth, but it actually visualized her feminine body as a pure allegory of statecraft where the individual body parts of the theoretical body of the commonwealth appear. The gown of the Queen is littered with eyes and ears representing—according to contemporary emblem books—the vigilant councillors of the Queen who see, hear and advise the monarch on all matters.⁴⁵ A heart in the form of the jewel dangles from the mouth of a snake symbolizing prudence and love, and another jewel depicting a gauntlet in the ruff collar of the Queen represents the knights fighting for their country. Furthermore, this body of the state/monarch is illuminated by the only source of light on the canvas: the head (face) and heart (breast) of the Queen. Thus, it represents not the image of the body natural of the Queen, but the theoretical body politic of the 70 year-old Queen Elizabeth.

In these last pictorial images of the Queen the anxieties about the female body natural of Queen Elizabeth resurface, and instead of a real likeness of her royal body, we witness an alternative solution representing a fictive allegorical entity of the monarch.

Conclusion

The abundance of corporeal images and metaphors that appear in Queen Elizabeth's official rhetoric provide proof of the problem her gendered body posed throughout her reign. The supposed weakness of her female body and the Queen's ability to overcome it resulted in a unique construct of bodily metaphors that was formed out of the necessity to justify female rule because Elizabeth 'had literally to write her own text of rule or be subsumed within existing discourses that had a place for her only as a 'subject' or an 'object'.⁴⁶ By donning the feminine roles of being a daughter with references to her powerful father, and a loving mother of her country she managed to bypass discourses of being a wife. The strategy of deliberately drawing attention to her gendered body emphasized her capacities, both her physical fitness and mental abilities. Thus Queen Elizabeth created a rhetoric where she enjoyed and exploited her discourses about her gendered body in order to be both addressed a king or prince in the name of her body politic and adored as a lady for her body natural.

⁴⁵ STRONG: *ibid*, 158.

⁴⁶ Theodora A. JANKOWSKY: 'The Subversion of Flattery: The Queen's Body in John Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 5 (1991): 71.

Abstract

Queen Elizabeth's forty-five year reign is marked by refined representational strategies that aim to justify her rule as queen. One of the central issues she continuously addressed was female authority that defied traditional interpretations of the role of women within society. Instead of avoiding the question of her gender, Queen Elizabeth's speeches, prayers and portraits consciously included corporeal references both to refute misogynist arguments and to manipulate gendered references as validation of female power. The article will analyse the metaphors of body in the Queen's rhetoric and official representation in order to underline their significance as means to justify queenship in sixteenth-century England.

Keywords

Queen Elizabeth I, sixteenth-century England, female power, metaphors of the body, speeches, prayers

Rezümé

I. Erzsébet uralkodásának negyvenöt évében meghatározó jelentőségű volt az a propaganda, amellyel női uralmát körülvették. A reprezentációs stratégiák elsősorban az angol királynő hatalmának stabilitását kívánták megerősíteni és ezért állandóan szembe kellett nézniük a női hatalomgyakorlást támadó tradicionális illetve a radikális protestáns nézetekkel. Erzsébet nyilvános beszédeiben, imáiban és hivatalos portréin ahelyett, hogy került volna a női test gyengeségére vonatkozó utalásokat, tudatosan felhasználta és átformálta azokat, hogy a női hatalomgyakorlás igazolásául szolgáljanak. Hosszú uralma alatt retorikájának állandó elemei maradtak a testmetaforák, amelyekkel semlegesíteni igyekezett a nemét ért támadásokat. A dolgozat a királynő reprezentációjában a testre történő verbális és vizuális hivatkozásokat vizsgálja, és rámutat azok jelentőségére a 16. századi női hatalomgyakorlás kihívásainak kontextusában.

Kulcsszavak

I. Erzsébet, 16. századi Anglia, női hatalom, testmetaforák, beszédek, imák

FRAZER-IMREGH MONIKA

Robert Burton hivatkozásai Ficino *De vita-jára*
The Anatomy of Melancholy című művében

Robert Burton *The Anatomy of Melancholy* című olvasmányos stílusú, tudományos igényű (lábjegyzetelt) művében Ficinót is példaképei közé sorolja a melankóliát tárgyaló szerzők közül.¹ Burton (alias Democritus Junior) illusztrált, szatirikus bevezetése után gyakorlatilag mindent igyekezett könyvébe belefoglalni, amit valaha a hippokratészi nedvtan negyedik testnedve, a μέλαινα χολή (fekete epe) által okozott testi és lelki betegségekről (azok diétával és egyebekkel való gyógyításáról), s a melankolikus temperamentumról írtak.² A lenyűgöző műveltségről tanúskodó, latin és görög klasszikusok versrészleteivel jócskán megtűzdelt munka egyszerre akar szórakoztatni és tanítani. Befogadása történetében egyaránt jellemezték „az idézetek kincsesbányájának”, „közhelygyűjteménynek”, „tudományos enciklopédiának”, „orvosi kézikönyvnek”, „önsegítő olvasmányoknak” és „az egyik legzsúfoltabb könyvnek”.³

Az ókori szerzőktől a saját kortársaiig felsorakoztatott érvek és ellenérvek ismeretében a melankóliának ez az enciklopédiája hatalmasra duzzadt már az első, 1621-es megjelenése alkalmával is. A szerző azonban gyakorlatilag az 1640-ben bekövetkezett haláláig tovább dolgozott monumentális alkotásán. Az oxfordi Christ Church katedrálisban levő sírján szereplő sírfelirata is erre utal: *Paucis notus, paucioribus ignotus, / Hic jacet Democritus junior / Cui vitam dedit et mortem / Melancholia.*

¹ Első kiadása 1621-ben. Kritikai kiadása: Robert Burton: *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, I–VI. A scholarly edition in six volumes with commentary, edited by Thomas C. FAULKNER, Nicolas K. KIESSLING, and Rhonda L. BLAIR, introduced and commented by J. B. BAMBOROUGH. Oxford, Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1989–2001. A kérdéses hivatkozás Ficinóra: Part. I, Sect. I, Memb. 3, Sub. 3.; alcíme: „Of the matter of melancholy”: *Of the matter of melancholy, there is much question betwixt Avicen and Galen, as you may read in Cardan's Contradictions, Valesius' Controversies, Montanus, Prosper Calenus, Capivaccius, Bright, Ficinus, that have written either whole tracts, or copiously of it, in their severall treatises of this subject.* Az [1060] jegyzetszám után.

² A testnedvekről, a négy temperamentumról és a fekete epéről ld. tanulmányomat és Galénos-fordításaimat: FRAZER-IMREGH MONIKA: „Galénos, az orvos-filozófus a testnedvekről és a fekete epéről”, *Orpheus Noster*, X., 2018/4, Ókor és középkor, 73–97.; Galénos: „A testnedvekről”, ford. FRAZER-IMREGH MONIKA, *Uott*, 98–103.; Galénos: „A fekete epéről”, ford. FRAZER-IMREGH MONIKA, *Uott*, 104–118.

³ Vö. B. EVANS: *The Psychiatry of Robert Burton*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1944, 8.; Lawrence BABB: *Sanity in Bedlam. A Study of Robert Burton's Anatomy*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1959, 7.; J. R. SIMON: *Robert Burton et l'Anatomie de la Mélancolie*, Paris, Didier, 1964, 11.; Jean STAROBINSKI (curatore): *Anatomia della malinconia: introduzione*, ford. Giovanna Franci, Venezia, Marsilio, 1983, 9.; Mauro SIMONAZZI: *La malattia inglese. La melancolia nella tradizione filosofica e medica dell'Inghilterra moderna*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2004, 12.