

Natasha Anne Bowles

Costume Interpretation: Costume for Theatre and Screen

How power is expressed through the use of dress within the portraits
of Elizabeth I during her reign.

Abstract

This study investigates and interprets the symbolism of dress in terms of power and how Elizabeth I used dress to express themes of power within her portraits. Research and investigations into context were conducted alongside analysis of portraiture and an in-depth look into three case studies. Interviews were also conducted with leading historians to gain opinions and outlooks. This analysis shows that Elizabeth used many different methods including; rich fabrics, large silhouettes, and grounded symbolism to portray different ideas of power from ideas of motherhood and virginity to wealth and strength over other sovereign nations. The dress within her portraits also reflects gender iconography, which changes from masculine when she is trying to assert herself as being as good as a man to feminine once she has established herself. These interpretations cannot be construed as fact as we cannot definitively answer how they were viewed and the affect they had on the public; however, they can be analysed as we see them now, using the historical research and dress history that is available. Further research could look into the effect this new idea had on future monarchs and Queens, and also how the power portrayed within the dress has formed specific opinions of the success of Elizabeth I. I conclude that the main and most effective method used to portray her power was the use of gender iconography. Not only did she use masculine silhouette and symbolism to appear as a man, but she also managed to establish a new idea of power that was linked to more feminine aspects. The *Rainbow* portrait, in particular, captures the moment the Queen started using feminine iconography to show that a woman can be desired, strong, and all-powerful.

Contents

Introduction	5
The Darnley Portrait.....	6
The Armada Portrait	10
The Rainbow Portrait	15
Conclusion.....	22
Bibliography	24
Appendix	27

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Queen Elizabeth I</i> by an Unknown continental artist, c.1575, source: National Portrait Gallery (n.d.)	6
Figure 2. <i>Portrait of Henry VIII</i> by an unknown artist following Holbein housed at Hampton Court Palace, c1550 – 1590, Photo: my own	7
Figure 3. <i>Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester</i> , ca. 1564. Anglo-Netherlandish School. Waddesdon: Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, source: Waddesdon (n.d.)	8
Figure 4. <i>Elizabeth I when a Princess</i> , attributed to William Scrots, c.1546, source: Royal Collection Trust (n.d.)	8
Figure 5. <i>The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I</i> at Woburn Abbey, formerly attributed to George Gower, c.1588, source: Royal Museums Greenwich (n.d. b)	9
Figure 6. <i>The Ermine Portrait</i> by Nicholas Hilliard at Hatfield House, 1585, source: Grand Ladies (2009).....	11
Figure 7. <i>Portrait of a Lady</i> (said to be Elizabeth Throckmorton), by Robert Peake, c.1551–1619, source: ArtUk (n.d.)	13
Figure 8. <i>The Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I</i> , attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger at Hatfield House, c.1600-1602, source: Wikipedia Commons (n.d.)	15
Figure 9. <i>A Sheet of Studies of Flowers</i> : a rose, a Heartsease, a Sweet Pea, a Garden Pea, and a Lax-flowered Orchid by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, French, 16th Century, source: The Met Museum (n.d.)	17
Figure 10. <i>Anne Boleyn</i> by an Unknown English artist, based on a work of c.1533-1536, late 16th Century, source: The History Press (n.d.)	19
Figure 11. Close up of <i>The Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I</i> , attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger at Hatfield House, c.1600-1602, source: Wikipedia Commons (n.d.)	20

Introduction

Portraiture has been a heavy part of identification and communication since the beginning of our modern history. In England, it was normal for the monarch to have a distinctive portrait made and Queen Elizabeth was no exception. Ambiguity surrounds the true number of these portraits as her likeness was used as the basis for so many that there's no way of discerning the total. Riehl mentions that the Tudor dynasty "paid close attention to the royal face and its idiosyncratic representation" (2010) compared to earlier portraits which instead conceptually represented the monarch. Her portraits still dazzle and amuse the general public today as, rather than just being a depiction, they were used as carriers of information.

By an examination of three different portraits, I aim to analyse and interpret through a feminist lens the way the preeminent Queen used dress (apparel/clothing worn) within these portraits to express and show power as a female, solo monarch. Elizabeth was known for setting trends and dressing well, and through the use and progression of Sumptuary Law she was able to "control female rivals who challenged her place as the best-dressed woman in England" (Riello and Rublack, 2019, p.g.118).

As monarch, Elizabeth would not have seen many of her subjects in-person, with her portraits, hanging in "Guildhalls, Livery Halls, and Universities" (National Portrait Gallery, 2013), far more accessible than the Queen herself. This meant they would have been carefully planned and manipulated by Elizabeth or her Council to ensure the right image and message was portrayed; once commissioned, it would have to be permitted before being made public. They would also be presented as gifts to please and entertain her, and therefore would have been an outlet for performance and exhibition. Every image of the Queen that has been identified has a clear display of symbols and hidden messages in the foreground and background with

an overwhelming message of power. Although we can never truly know the original intentions, through exploration and analysis I aim to provide arguments for how dress is used to convey and express this power within her portraits, and wish to examine the intelligence and diplomacy of this dress and the agency of the female monarch.

The Darnley Portrait



Figure 1

Strong (1987) writes that the *Darnley* portrait [Figure 1] is the origins of the famous monarchs 'face-pattern', which was a way the government could control the royal image and did so till the 1590s, therefore it is most likely they also controlled the dress and fashion at her request. In this early portrait from her reign, there is clear evidence that she is trying to consolidate her power on the throne of England through use of her dress. The concept of power relates to the concept of gender, and when Elizabeth was crowned it was

deemed more suitable to have a son as heir and a male monarch as the ideas of power and strength are heavily related to the masculine image. In this portrait from 1575, the cut of the bodice mirrors a man's padded doublet popular in the 1560s. By using a doublet cut, she is bearing resemblance to masculine dress and could be declaring herself to be equal to her male counterparts. Along with this powerful connotation, Strong (2019) describes the dress to be made of white fabric decorated with gold and crimson with frogging described as "à la polonaise" (Strong, 2019, pg.45). This is enhancing the notion of strength by use of a Polish

decoration to proclaim her dominance in Europe, although one must keep in mind the idea that she was following trends and styles that were popular. When viewing the portrait on display, one gets an overruling sense of assertiveness and command, much like one would when viewing a portrait of Henry VIII at Hampton Court Palace [Figure 2]. Nevertheless, she is not demanding attention through stance but rather is standing patiently for you to bow and respect her. The clothing aids in this sense of power by subtly protecting her body and moulding her



Figure 2

chest into a male shape, covering any basic identification that she is a woman.

To view this in a modern design perspective, Elizabeth's assertion within the *Darnley* portrait is very similar to the semiotics of modern-day design and interpretation. When designing for a female role that has a masculine aspect or portrayal, one would look at the male figure and fashions of the era to influence the character's aesthetic development. To demonstrate an example of this within this portrait would be to reference Robert Dudley, a close confidant and suitor of Elizabeth I, who can be seen in Figure 3 wearing a similar style and cut. Due to the importance of the man in the image, Elizabeth I was clearly knowledgeable of the statement she was conducting when she decided to be painted in a masculine style bodice. Being a director of her portraits and appearance, either personally or through her Council, the Queen must have considered this herself, knowing that by adorning masculine apparel many would have associated her with the more archetypal masculine traits and thought her capable of doing the job to which she was assigned. Although when viewed from a modern perspective this idea seems valid, it could be scrutinised as overreaching and

fantastical. Even though it seems to be a modern artistic approach, there is evidence from July 1588 that Elizabeth was at least conscious of the effect of wearing male clothing. When standing before the troops at Tilbury affirming herself to be both woman and man [Appendix A], it was “the only recorded occasion on which Elizabeth went to the extremes of adopting male attire” (Marcus, 1988, pg. 55,). She was noted to have worn a silver-cuirass, a typical male armour plate



Figure 3

usually worn into battle. In response to Marcus, Fyre (1996, p.g.3-4) offers the argument that, if it were so, she was conscious of the effect of cross-dressing and therefore was epitomising her self-representation. By dressing in male attire at Tilbury and in the Darnley portrait, Elizabeth is directly denouncing her feminine traits on the outside to reflect the kingly strength and power within by appearing more masculine to her subjects.



Figure 4

An earlier portrait of Elizabeth demonstrates the change in power and responsibility of the Queen. The image [Figure 4] was most likely painted at the command of her father, Henry VIII, and lures the viewer into a calm and gentle state as her dignity, beauty, and kindness are expressed (Royal Collection Trust, n.d.). The dress is very typical of the later Henrician styles and uses colours that express grace and royalty. During the time of this portrait's

commission, Henry was nearing his death and about to be succeeded by his male heir, Edward

VI. Faraday observed “at this point her expected role was to marry and form alliances for the good of the dynasty. Her crimson dress and exquisite jewellery reveal her royal status... while her neat figure and self-possessed stance allude to her potential as an attractive bride.” (Faraday, n.d.) Building on this, the immaculate embroidery and rich velvet fabric with a pomegranate motif may be Henry’s attempt to show the world his blood line is rich, pure and fertile. This image, in comparison to later portraits, shows Elizabeth to be a weak and consenting woman on auction in the European marriage market. The clothing is also a major contrast to the *Darnley* portrait where her clothing covers her head to toe and expresses no will or want to be seen as gentle and kind. With the understanding of the many years between the portraits, the change in style is also due to fashions and trends developing. However, I believe Elizabeth knew she did not want to be seen as a princess on the market, but rather a Queen whose loyalty and hand were to be earned and thus had the knowledge and intelligence to use these clothes to manifest a new image and representation of herself.

This image shows the Queen’s intelligence as she used the cut and style of masculine clothing, along with a less flirtatious and feminine look, to control the opinions of the public, ensuring they saw their new Queen as a masculine figure who was strong in both governing and leading. By referencing male attire, she has been able to label herself as a man and holds the power that a male monarch would have, creating this new image of herself as a king instead of a princess. By curating an image of herself as a man, she set a precedent for the rest of her reign; that she is a King and will perform as one.

The Armada Portrait



Figure 5

Masculine iconography is also very dominant in the 1588 *Armada* portrait and I believe it is very important to examine the comparison of the gender identification within this portrait. The *Armada* portrait was commissioned to commemorate the victory over Spain after a fleet of 132 ships threatened the South-East coast of England (National Archives, n.d). The essence of this portrait is well known as a display of strength and dominance over her Spanish contenders. Therefore, I believe she was very knowledgeable and agreeable of the cut and shape of her own gown that reflected a typical male construction design. “Note that the largest baroque pearl, topped by a large pink bow, ...[is] as blatant as a codpiece in the portrait of a man.” (ArtFund, 2016). The codpiece was a male garment that originated as a flap to

close the gap in male stockings and soon turned into “a statement of high fashion” (Glover, 2019) that showed off and exaggerated one’s genitals in a show of strength and virility. The location of the pearl and bow, just hanging at the hips and in front of the genitalia, make this a statement in her portrait similar to her father’s, who’s clothing always acted as an imperceptible guide towards his codpiece. The meaning of this can be condensed down to a simple thought of Elizabeth wanting to prove she shared many of the same qualities as a man and was able to perform like one. Furthermore, through the same symbol she was able to indirectly tell her Spanish opponents that her reign and legacy will be fruitful and long.

The image is large, sitting at 38½” by 28½”, and therefore would have been rather spectacular to view as a servant or contender. Upon viewing a version of this portrait, myself, my obsession with her reign began and I became enticed by the elements of fashion and dress, each with their own subtle meaning. The decoration on the garment is incomparable to other fashions of the time which involved a French farthingale shape [Figure 7]. The black and white colours of the dress highlight Elizabeth into the foreground, almost off the page entirely into the room in which you are sitting. The ruff shines around her face and frames her with a divine, elegant glow, the meanings of which I discuss further later. There is a clear resemblance to Henry’s portraiture again which can be seen in the sheer size and width of her dress, making this slender woman take up nearly the whole width of the frame. Lynn mentions that during Elizabeth’s reign, “the most notable element of Elizabethan fashion is the ever-expanding female silhouette” (2017, p.g.51). She also notes that there is no corresponding enlargement in the male silhouette, which became far more modest than in previous eras. One would believe the enlarging of the dress is to make the wearer appear more commanding and acquire more space, thus become more important in the room in which they stood; Historical Interpreter Mark Wallis confirms this idea in a dressing video with

Historian Dr Lucy Worsley (*Tales from the Wardrobe with Lucy Worsley*, 2014). Within the video, the large bum roll, farthingale, petticoats, forepart, and skirt - all modern replicas of the *Armada* dress - are all methodically placed upon Worsley, slowly broadening her size with each layer. Elizabeth I may have adopted this attire within this portrait to express her ever-growing strength within Europe and over her male counterparts, displaying an active queenship and possession of her role as monarch.



Figure 6

In July 1564, Elizabeth “announced to the Spanish ambassador... that black and white were ‘my colours’” (Lynn, 2017, pg.88). This has some certain relevance to the *Armada* portrait, which was, as previously noted, in celebration of the victory against Spain in 1588, where she is seen to be wearing black and white. The direct correlation may or may not have been a coincidence as she also wore these colours in other portraits, however I would like

to address it for the purpose of discussion. Lynn (2017, p.g.88) mentions that white was the show of purity and black expressed constancy, thus her choice of colour in this portrait was to announce how she was both pure within her role as a woman and stable within the role as monarch. With the threat of Spain being very real due to religious and political differences, this was of great significance as the Queen would have been seen as unstable without an heir and weak as a woman lacking traits more commonly attributed to the male sex. Therefore, the choice of colour could be directed to the Spanish who had been notified of the importance of these colours years before, with a clear message that she was able to withstand any attack or war as a pure female monarch, consolidating her stance and quashing any doubts of her

capability. This analysis, and the notion of the queen being proficient in the composition of these hints, could be lessened to coincidence when one considers the natural interference of human emotion and preference. For example, in Janet Arnold's comprehensive accounts of Elizabeth's 1578 inventory, it recalls "...Satten blacke at xiiij s iij yardes... Satten white at xvj s iij yardes... Taffata blacke at xvj s iij yardes... Sarcenet Blacke at ix s vj yardes... Sarcenet White at ix s x yards..." (Arnold, 1988). By recalling the earlier analysis of the comment to the Spanish Ambassadors, we can use this inventory and the statement as fact that she simply enjoyed these colours due to personal preference. Even though the colours may have "served a broader purpose, as Elizabeth became an icon of stability and national independence" (Royal Museums Greenwich, n.d. a), like the aforementioned face pattern, the Queen may have chosen items of dress because of the appeal and overall effect on her vanity, without any thought for symbolic representation. Her vanity was profoundly noted with court and even with family: "Her godson, Sir John Harrington, wrote that she 'left no doubting's who daughter she was'." (Stewart, 2003). This egocentric character must have been apparent when choosing clothing in daily life and for portraiture as the many jewels, rich cloth, and fabrics would have protected her stance as the most important and sought-after woman in England. Using the colours black and white not only represented her strength but showed off her ability to afford such colours "as true black dye was very expensive" (Grueninger, 2013) with white also being hard and laborious to keep clean. It's prudent to note that, even if it were fuelled by vanity, the preference was for the colours outwardly meanings and representations, leading to the use of them in the *Armada* portrait, for her want to appear important.

The silhouette and the style of dress within this portrait are very simple and plain in comparison to other portraits as shown in Figure 7, the fabric is not embellished or made of cloth of gold but instead is more decorated with pearls and ouches. Lynn mentions that during



Figure 7

the time of war from “September 1587 to March 1588, William Jones, her tailor, altered forty of her gowns” (2017, pg.108). In discussion with Lynn (2021) [Appendix B] she noted that Elizabeth would want to be very secretive about her alteration of clothing with the philosophy that the more the clothes were altered the more her subjects and ambassadors would believe she could afford and own so many different gowns. This outward protection would make Elizabeth seem powerful as it

would be a sign of weakness to wear the same thing twice, unlike today’s standards and expectations. Whilst this use of alterations may be seen in today’s society as progressive due to the frugality and minimising of waste, it however was simply a way of showing off. I consider Elizabeth to be intelligent in her understanding of these alterations, as the appearance of an endless wardrobe would have made her seem rich and powerful - a note that ambassadors would have taken back to their respective masters. The dress within this portrait could express this idea greatly as the gown is made of different parts instead of sewn as one. This meant that each part (the overgown, forepart, and jewels) could be taken off separately and worn with other items, which is evidence of her active involvement in how she dressed and appeared in every image. It not only shows her human intelligence and operation but also her power through dress by managing to direct herself so highly within a portrait that the truth of her altered wardrobe can be hidden.

Although there are many elements of this dress that allude to a masculine personality, the pink bows offer a subtle reminder of her feminine and soft nature, which has not yet been seen in this image. With this, there is a union between female and male iconography as she is displaying her agency and strength as a woman whilst also exhibiting her intelligence and level of diplomacy equal to that of any man's. There is a change in the symbolism of her dress as she starts to use female fashion instead of male to connote her strength which is demonstrated in this image, as the dress starts to demonstrate both woman and monarch, contradicting the medieval view of women entirely.

The Rainbow Portrait

The last study is the *Rainbow* portrait, where the Queen is seen wearing a richly embellished 'masque' style costume, unlike anything seen in normal fashions at the time. Marchant (2022) mentioned that she believes this portrait was commissioned by Robert Cecil, and contains a message about government, morality, and how good she was for the nation. She is depicted alone, with a simple background forcing all the symbolism usually portrayed in props into the dress. With the knowledge that masque costume was not worn daily at court, this image clearly shows Elizabeth dressed in costume and character, perhaps in an attempt to fantasise her and create a legend. I believe that because of this the portrait is a celebration of her intelligence and knowledge which Elizabeth would have endorsed and approved. During a reign of uncertainty, Elizabeth instructed Sir Francis Walsingham to become her spy master, leading to an increased trend of symbolism and secret messages within portraits, letters, and even clothing at court. "At court, symbols and codes became a sophisticated puzzle to challenge and delight the viewer, and to demonstrate learning and culture." (Lynn, 2020, pg.62). The most eye-catching and discussed puzzle in this area is the mantle painted with

eyes and ears. Upon first glance, there also seems to be mouths however Strong writes that “a detailed examination of this garment shows no signs of the mouths read into it by scholars so that it could signify the Queen’s fame ‘flying rapidly through the world, spoken by many



Figure 8

mouths, seen and heard by many eyes and ears” (Strong, 1987, pg.158-159). Strong (1987, pg.159) later mentions that the eyes and ears show a representation of her being all-seeing and all-hearing expressing her knowledge and power over her subjects, an analysis with which I agree as she became a sort of omnipresent being with knowledge of any plots. We can also tie this in with Marchant’s idea of the intention that she deserves the title of being good for the nation as she is an all-

loving and listening mother of her nation - either way, they are both rich displays of power.

This idea of motherhood and godly presence is apparent in the celestial imagery built within the portrait. This is also seen in the *Armada* portrait, where she is surrounded by a number of circles: pearls, ouches, and the ruff, which orbit her body as if she is the universe herself. With the introduction of Digges, Dee and Harriot into the common thought and education, towards the end of Elizabeth’s reign England was invested in advancing science with “...best-sellers included almanacs, collections of alchemical and household ‘secrets’ and vernacular mathematical textbooks...” (Rampling, 2014). This image not only shows their achievements

on sea, but references her ever-expanding intelligence and the exploration of the stars, moon, and sun. The black fabric offsets the pearls and makes them stand out (Lynn, 2021) creating this depth of nothingness and making her body and the jewelled decoration an image of the celestial world, with her face the centre of it all representing the sun. The sun is a very important notion in the *Rainbow* portrait with the Latin phrase 'Non Sine Sole Iris' which translates to 'No Rainbow without the Sun', which presents the Queen as the sun itself. Both the *Armada* and *Rainbow* portraits display the same ideas however they are more developed within the latter. Marchant (2018) mentions that the addition of the moon brooch hints to Elizabeth's divine right and her purity as a woman through its links with the goddess Cynthia, who represents virginity and purity. I propose that these ideas, along with the hints to celestial being, are Elizabeth's way of persisting with the idea that she is now not just a Queen and woman, but also a goddess, proclaiming herself to being omniscient and all powerful, much like a god.

Other symbols within this gown can be seen in the bodice and sleeves, where there is a rich embroidered garden of English flowers. "The flowers that were most regularly associated with Elizabeth were roses, as well as violets, pansies, honeysuckle, daises, lilies, iris, and carnations. These are predominantly English flowers that blossom in the spring and early summer and were to be found in the royal gardens of the palaces" (Walsh, 2015). Heartsease,



Figure 9

Elizabeth's favourite and more commonly known as pansies, can clearly be seen on the dress. I found the significance of the heartsease on this dress fascinating as they represented chastity, which was an important message and symbol of the renowned 'Virgin Queen'. In my

opinion, the inclusion of this flower shows that she wanted to uphold an image of purity which contrasts the overall sexual appeal of this portrait. Her chastity and virginity made Elizabeth famous throughout the Empire and European courts; it made her powerful and the repetitive use of this idea was one way for Elizabeth to maintain a hold of that power. Natural world symbols were a popular artist stroke with Elizabeth's portraits; *A Choice of Emblems and Other Devices* (Whitney, 1586) contains an illustrated guide to symbols and their meanings by author Whitney, who dedicated his writing to close confidant of the Queen, Robert Dudley. An example of Whitney's interpretations includes a serpent, which can also be seen embellished onto Elizabeth's sleeve in the *Rainbow* portrait, which he addresses as a sign of intelligence and wisdom. During the same year, 1586, another author, Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, published a similar book which included detailed information and the symbolic meaning of English flowers and foliage. The Queen was most likely very aware of the simple and elegant power the foliage represented and I believe this portrait used the flowers to show more than her feminine chastity. It was not the direct symbolism of the flowers which demanded attention and projected power but also the fact they were natural symbols. At this point, Elizabeth had no heir as was engaging in the last stage of her life and I believe she would have wanted to venerate and endorse any image of herself that displays a will and way to produce an heir as many were fearful of civil war. Marchant (2022) [Appendix C] describes Elizabeth as having two states of body, with one being her physical body and the other the regnant body of state, whereby having a fruitful and lush garden upon her physical body displays a productive and blossoming reign, in harvest especially. Elizabeth may have been agreeable to this symbolism as it presented an image of a monarch who was fertile and healthy rather than powerful, as power now seemed attributed to a wealthy and prosperous country instead of a victorious and conquering one. Along with the idea that after the

reformation natural world symbolism was “seen as a way to venerate God’s creation” (Lynn, 2020, pg.62) the combination of meanings behind the natural elements suggest that Elizabeth is ‘mother nature’; the face of England and the world, and commanding of its seasons and environment. These natural world symbols, including the snake and human features, place this image as powerful and almost godly in its depiction of the Queen.

Even though the dress is a costume piece, “Janet Arnold demonstrates that what we see in various versions in terms of dress is not invention but observed by the artist from actual pieces of her clothing, either worn by someone or laid out before the painter”. (Strong, 2019, pg.52). Although there is symbolic representation within the embroidery and art, there is also clear meaning in the cut and style of the gown itself. Elizabeth is depicted wearing a low-cut, square neck bodice similar to those seen in her earlier portraits and a famous depiction of her mother [Figure 10]. The uncovered low-neck is a first for Elizabeth, displaying her in a seductive and feminine way, in contrast to the *Darnley* and *Armada* portraits in which she is fully covered. This element of dress is contradictory to the earlier depictions of a virgin who is loyal to only her country, with her now flirting with the audience. According to Karim-Cooper, this portrait was a prominent display of Elizabeth as a woman during a time when “women were seen as weak, biological mutations of nature and as inferior intellectually, biologically and socially.” (2020). I agree that within this image Elizabeth is making a strong feminist statement and acknowledge Karim-Cooper’s later statement that the mythic and divine quality within these images “mask a messiness of an aging woman and desirous one, and that is where her real power resides.” (Karim-Cooper, 2020). The flirtatious imagery, by virtue of the cut of the dress, suggest that Elizabeth was trying desperately to make herself immortal in the eyes of her subjects towards the last few years of her reign. In addition, the ruff would be an extension to this idea. A ruff was an important symbol of wealth due to the



Figure 10

white colour and intense, skilled process of starching, which started as a small collar around the neck and grew later to become an open garment around the shoulders which exposed the woman's bosom. The ruff therefore was used as a "seduction principle... an attempt to exploit the wearers charms as a woman, as, for example by the use of décolletage" (Laver, 1983, pg. 92,). This style change is seen in the comparison of the *Armada* portrait and

the *Rainbow* portrait. As with the ruff in Figure 5, which frames only her face in an attempt to draw one's focus to it, the framing in the *Rainbow* portrait of her neck and bosom by the ruff could be an intelligent way of informing the audience that Elizabeth's womanhood is a critical part of her role as Monarch.

I am aware that within Elizabeth's portraits there is an element that relates to Judith Butler's (2011) modern idea of gender being something that is performed. It is visible in her portraits that Elizabeth uses gender iconography to declare herself as whichever gender she wishes to be, even before doing so was a social construct. In previous portraits this has been portrayed through the concept of masculine power, whereas in the *Rainbow Portrait* she is connecting with more feminine tropes to advance the idea of power into a more feminine notion. My interest in researching this portrait further was sparked by the research of gender studies scholar Valerie Traub who assessed the emblematic role of decoration to represent

Elizabeth's sexual desires and ambition. Traub suggests that within the *Rainbow* portrait "Elizabeth's metaphorical embrace of the phallus, whether construed as an assimilation and erasure of masculine power or a prosthetic supplement to her own body confirms her status as actively desiring, erotically commanding and self-pleasuring" (Traub, 2002, pg.137). This analysis is in relation to the parallelism between the painted eyes and ears and a woman's genitalia, and the organisation of the beads into a phallic emblem at the sitter's hips. Upon reviewing the other two portraits, I discern that at this point in her life the Queen had no intention to be or be seen as a man and I disagree with Traub's statement that it could a



Figure 11

"prosthetic supplement", as we cannot with certainty say that it is meant to be representative of male genitalia. It is worth, however, exploring the idea that she wanted to be portrayed as a woman who could pleasure herself without a man, as this is consistent to the way she wanted to be viewed as Queen without a husband. Her confidence and sexuality see her renouncing men, and any idea of power coming from a masculine concept. The painter's commissioner, the Secretary of State, would have used this

portrait to portray an air of security surrounding the Monarchy and quash concerns of succession. Phallic emblems, although entertaining, would distract away from the womanhood and femininity of the Queen, who is shown here to be flirtatious, powerful and intelligent, a superior tool in showing any subject that the monarchy is stable and durable. Although I disagree with Traub's assessment, it is definitely an image that includes subliminal sexual images that display her extreme power on her own as a woman.

The collective displays of womanhood in her dress in the *Rainbow* portrait prove that she could be recognised as both woman and Monarch together. With this painting there is a pride in her dress as she has now established herself, has consolidated her power, and is confident enough to present herself as a woman instead of a man. She is no longer covering up what makes her feminine but is instead using a flirtatious style of dress that advocates her right to rule as a woman. Although this portrait is known as an untrue depiction that creates a mythological caricature of the Queen, it does however, unlike earlier portraits, use artistic symbolism in the dress and cut to convey her power as a woman, with her womanhood and femininity being the portrait's core elements which communicate her power.

Conclusion

By analysing changing portraits of Elizabeth I throughout her reign, this dissertation has shown how stereotypical iconography associated with gender was the main article to convey themes of power in the representation of her dress. This research illustrates that Elizabeth portrayed herself as both genders to portray power; in the *Darnley* we see her appearing in much more masculine attire, the *Armada* uses masculine symbolism with feminine dress, and the *Rainbow* portrait's flirtatious and seductive style embraces a more common feminine ideology. Towards the beginning of her reign, she endorsed the use of masculine iconography in dress to display power and then slowly moved, to include more feminine associated imagery as her reign developed, which developed a new idea of power in femininity. Although other elements of the dress assemble to display other ideas of power and strength, the primary way of expressing power is through gender identity as her dress and style change. To further this field of research, future studies could address the influence of these portraits and the gender performance within them upon future female leaders and how the power

portrayed formed specific opinions into the success or failure of the Tudor Queen. This analysis fully endorses the idea that Elizabeth not only adorned original imagery of power within her dress using common symbolism such as fabrics, religious and celestial imagery, and educated images, but was able throughout her reign to change the perception of dress to highlight gender roles, and reflect her womanhood and her right to rule. She was able to overcome pre-existing stereotypes and create a new image of power that was repeatedly used within her portraiture.

Bibliography

- Arnold, J. (1988) *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*. Taylor and Francis Group.
- ArtFund. (2016) *The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I*. Available at: <https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/13343/the-armada-portrait-of-elizabeth-i> (Accessed: November 2021)
- ArtUK. (n.d.) *Portrait of a Lady*. Available at: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/portrait-of-a-lady-3028> (Accessed: November 2021)
- British Library. (n.d.). *Elizabeth's Tilbury Speech, July 1588*. Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item102878.html> (Accessed: March 2021)
- Butler, J. (2011) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Taylor and Francis
- Faraday, C. (n.d.) *Portraits of Elizabeth I: Fashioning the Virgin Queen*. Available at: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/northern/england/a/portraits-of-elizabeth-i-fashioning-the-virgin-queen> (Accessed: December 2021)
- Fyre, S. (1996). *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Glover, M. (2019). *Thrust: A Spasmodic Pictorial History of the Codpiece in Art*. David Zwirner Books.
- Grand Ladies. (2009) *1585 "Ermine" Portrait by Nicholas Hilliard*. Available at: https://www.gogmsite.net/the_late_farthingle_era_fr/minialbum_queen_elizabeth_o/1585_ermine_portrait_by_nic.html (Accessed: October 2021)
- Grueninger, N. (2013) *What Did a Noble Tudor Lady Wear?* Available at: <http://onhetudortrail.com/Blog/2013/12/09/what-did-a-noble-tudor-lady-wear/> (Accessed: September 2021)
- The History Jar: Heartsease (viola tricolour) – Elizabeth I's flower* (2020) Available at: <https://thehistoryjar.com/2020/03/24/heartsease-viola-tricolour-elizabeth-is-flower/> (Accessed: December 2021)
- The History Press. (n.d.) *Portrait of a Queen: Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour*. Available at: <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/portrait-of-a-queen-anne-boleyn-and-jane-seymour/> (Accessed: November 2021)
- Karim-Cooper, F. (2020) *The Sun Queen: Elizabeth I*. Available at: <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/blogs-and-features/2020/03/24/the-sun-queen-elizabeth-i/> (Accessed: December 2021)
- Laver, J. (2012) *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*. Thames and Hudson.
- Lynn, E. (2017). *Tudor Fashion*. Yale University Press/Historic Royal Palaces.
- Lynn, E. (2020). *Tudor Textiles*. Yale University Press/Historic Royal Palaces.
- Marcus, L. (1988) *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents*. University of California Press

The Met Museum. (n.d.) *A sheet of studies of flowers: a rose, a Heartsease, a Sweet Pea, a Garden Pea, and a Lax-flowered Orchid*. Available at:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/364533> (Accessed: November 2021)

National Archives. (n.d.). *Drake and the Spanish Armada*. Available at:

https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/museum/item.asp?item_id=16 (Accessed: November 2021)

National Portrait Gallery (2013). *Encountering the Queen: Portraits of Elizabeth I*. Available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzbmwGcrMWk> (Accessed: October 2021)

National Portrait Gallery. (n.d.) *Queen Elizabeth I*. Available at:

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw02075/Queen-Elizabeth-I> (Accessed: September 2021)

Ramplng, J. (2014) *Tudor Technology: Shakespeare and Science*. Available at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/508039a> (Accessed: November 2021)

Reading the Past (2018). *Dr Kat and the Rainbow Portrait*. Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84tAGtJh3qw> (Accessed: January 2021)

Riehl, A. (2010). *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Riello, G., & Rublack, U. (2019). *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, C.1200-1800*. Cambridge University Press.

Roller, S. (2021). *10 of Elizabeth I's Key Achievements*. Available at:

<https://www.historyhit.com/elizabeth-i-key-achievements/> (Accessed: November 2021)

Royal Collection Trust. (n.d.) *Elizabeth I When a Princess*. Available at:

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/404444/elizabeth-i-when-a-princess> (Accessed: November 2021)

Royal Museums Greenwich. (n.d. a). *Elizabeth I with the cardinal and theological virtues*. Available at: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/elizabeth-i-cardinal-theological-virtues> (Accessed: September 2021)

Royal Museums Greenwich. (n.d. b) *Spot the Difference*. Available at:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/why-are-there-three-versions-armada-portrait> (Accessed: September 2021)

Steinburg, S. (2019) *The Rainbow Portrait and A Lover's Complaint*. Available at:

https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/the-rainbow-portrait-a-lovers-complaint-more-evidence-of-the-catastrophic-failure-of-professional-elizabethan-scholarship/#_ftn9 (Accessed: December 2021)

Stewart, D. (2003) *Reign On!* Available at: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/reign-on-82958484/> (Accessed: November 2021)

Strong, R. (1987). *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. Thames and Hudson.

Strong, R. (2019). *The Elizabethan Image*. Yale University Press.

Tales from the Wardrobe with Lucy Worsley. (2019) [Film] Directed by Nick Gillam-Smith. London: BBC.

Traub, V. (2002) *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge University Press

Waddesdon. (n.d) *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester*. Available at: <https://waddesdon.org.uk/the-collection/item/?id=3289> (Accessed: September 2021)

Walsh, A. (2015) *Elizabeth I: Mother Nature*. Available at: <https://blog.hrp.org.uk/curators/elizabeth-i-mother-nature/> (Accessed: December 2021)

Whitney, G. (1586) *A Choice of Emblems and Other Devices*. Leiden.

Wikipedia Commons. (n.d.) *File: Elizabeth I Rainbow Portrait*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Elizabeth_I_Rainbow_Portrait.jpg (Accessed: November 2021)

Willet, C., & Cunnington, P. (1992). *The History of Underclothes*. Dover Publications, Inc.

Interviews

Lynn, E. (2021). Interview with Eleri Lynn. Interviewed by Natasha Bowles on Zoom Online, 26th November.

Marchant, K. (2022). Interview with Dr Katrina Marchant. Interviewed by Natasha Bowles on Zoom Online, 9th January.

Appendix

Appendix A

Transcript of Elizabeth I's Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, July 1588. In her own hand-writing. British Library, [Harley 6798, f.87]

My loving people,

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit our selves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust.

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, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm: to which rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

I know already, for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and We do assure you in the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the mean time, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.

Appendix B

Extract of transcript of Interview with Eleri Lynn. Interviewed by Natasha Bowles on Zoom Online, 26th November 2021.

Eleri Lynn	<p>So, I think there's two things going on... There's the outward projection of herself and in portraiture, the that projection is at its, you know, ultimate, it's at its zenith. Everything in the portrait is idealized and symbolic. At the same time, even in that year, though, she was sending a lot to be altered back at the, the great wardrobe. That's a very, I think that's almost secrets. That is not so you know, how in for modern day Royals, recycling and being thrifty is seen as a bit of a strength. It's seen as a kind of way of being in touch with the people and, you know, not being wasteful. But there was a completely different perception of that in Elizabethan times, and repeat wear was not something that was expected or probably accepted of a Monarch, because they weren't supposed to be thrifty, are frugal. They were supposed to be magnificent. And if they weren't magnificent, that reflected, almost an unworthiness to rule. So, I think, at the beginning of Tudor fashion, I go into it a little bit about this kind of renaissance idea that magnificence is virtue made tangible. I mean, relative to her father and her grandfather, she didn't have the funds to maintain a lavish wardrobe to build the palaces. And to be honest, around the time of the Armada, she didn't have the funds to even pay her sailors particularly well. So, there's this idea of her as the kind of figurehead for the, for the fleet. But actually, she didn't pay them. And they, a lot of them got ill, and died because they weren't looked after. So, she was having to be frugal. But at the same time, she was trying to do this ultimate kind of case of propaganda to really shore up her kingdom and shore up the will of the nobility around her after this great victory. So, she probably, that's why she was sending so much back so that they could recycle and reuse it. So, she never looked as though she was wearing the same thing twice. They'd always adapt it.</p> <p>It's all in pieces, as you know. So, the sleeves are detachable, and the foreparts and the skirts, they're all different bits. But as you know, she'd send those back and they'd be reassigned, or the pearls would be put on a different place and re-finished so that they looked different each time.</p>
Natasha Bowles	<p>I mean, I honestly completely that completely went over my head, that sort of view of it. Yeah. So, it's, was to make sure that she never looks. Yeah, the same thing twice. Like that's quite interesting.</p>
Eleri Lynn	<p>It's really different from now, where you've got, you know, the Duchess of Cambridge actively wearing the same the same thing. So, it would have been a case it would have been something that the ambassador's would have written home about if she would have been seen in the same thing too often, they would have written back to their masters their princes about that because it would have demonstrated that she wasn't that she wasn't rich enough to afford a constantly changing wardrobe.</p>
Natasha Bowles	<p>And yeah, I've written that the dress in the Armada most likely one that has been recycled. And stuff like that. I mean, from a, I've been looking at it from a modern perspective of you know, it shows that she was very good with trying to conserve money. And that within itself is a power is a power push that it's not particularly the portrait itself is everything behind the dress. Yeah. You know, she was good at saving money she knew what was needed instead of Henry just going right. Maybe something? No, because I want to prove it like behind the scenes. She's reused.</p>
Eleri Lynn	<p>I think you might be right, in the sense that she, you know, the black and whites and the pearls, there's some there is something in in the projection of her image that is constant, and reliable. So black is for constancy and white is purity. So, there's something there, which is reliable and constant in the way that Henry definitely wasn't. So, she's almost projecting stability with the, with the black on the white and the pearls. So, you kind of know, that's a feature of her image. But no, I don't I don't think that her being frugal is what is what that's about. She doesn't she doesn't want people to know, she's having to be frugal, in a way.</p>
Natasha Bowles	<p>Of course. I've got to break down power and what power is and what intelligence is? Yes. Now, it might not have been her goal. Doing this was quite a powerful trait in how to be intelligent to save money. Yeah, we as modern people go, that's a very clever thing to do, from a modern perspective, but yes, I do see her as that. Maybe she herself didn't think of that. I mean, that is a lot of what this essay really is about, is me just going. Would she have thought of that?</p>
Eleri Lynn	<p>Yeah. Yeah. No, you're absolutely right. Yes. Down the line. This is a consequence of it that she didn't think about. Yeah, no, you're absolutely right. It does demonstrate the fact that she thought about</p>

	she thought about her clothes. She thought about how she needed to look. She knew she needed to look magnificence. Yeah. So yes, that is, you know, her sending things back to be altered. Is definitely evidence of her very active involvement in making sure that she had a wardrobe fantastic wardrobe on a budget. I would certainly say that, that that supports the end of the argument for her intelligent, active and intelligent creation of her wardrobe.
Natasha Bowles	Yeah, and because the other thing is as well is, the fabric in it is actually quite plain. For sort of this regal gown that she is displayed its heavily decorated ouches, and jewels. There's not much actually in the textile itself and plain velvet, which in itself is an expensive fabric back then. But it's one of these masterfully patterned velvets with gold and she gone so much bigger in the fabric. And I think that sort of backs up my view of it she hasn't got the money for this beautifully expensive fabric so she's decorating herself with jewels and these might have been things the artist put on or over exaggerated. I mean, you never know, but they most likely were things that were pooled and put together and yeah, and that I do so I think that as well sort of backs up that intelligence of her just right okay, my fabric doesn't show this but what can I do? What can I put there? So that people get distracted from it really.
Eleri Lynn	Yeah, no, I think you're right I think I mean, there's tons of embroidery in the portraits you know, there's a chair of a state and there's a tablecloth and there's the fantastic crown and so there's tons of textile in it there's you know, there's very little isn't textile really Yeah, I think the black is a deliberate choice. For sure. And I think it's to set off the white I think it's there's a there's this such a statement, isn't that because she's got her hands on the world. And she you know, she is basically the world like every bit of her it's like you know, the rough is basically she's the centre of the world in her amazing rough and everything is yeah, she's basically like a globe in it.
Natasha Bowles	I found it strange that the rough isn't it doesn't go round her neck it go ahead. Like if you think about as a costume maker doesn't work. No. Like it's a bit like she really was trying to make a statement with that.
Eleri Lynn	Yeah, she was and I think the black I think it's all deliberate I think the black is to set off the pearls. It to really bring home that purity. I think this is where you know, this is the this is the kind of Legend of the Virgin Queen.

Appendix C

Transcript of Interview with Dr Katrina Marchant. Interviewed by Natasha Bowles on Zoom Online, 9th January 2022.

Natasha Bowles	So yeah, just to get straight into it, basically, I'm doing my dissertation on the portraiture of Elizabeth first. And specifically looking into the dress of like what she's wearing cuz I'm a costume student, I really want to look at why she's wearing a specific style of dress, the cut of dress, just those little those little itty bitty things. Instead of looking at the significance of, you know, the world or the globe and portray, or you know why there's ships behind her, so I've looked at the Darnley, and the Armada portrayed as studies. And I'm now looking at the rainbow portrait. And I really wanted to sort of get into this discussion of the embroidery and the significance of the like the flowers especially I really, it's not something I can find much information like actually on that. There's a lot of information, English flowers, you know, from Jaques de Moynes, but I basically wanted to ask your opinion and ask like, what do you believe is the significance behind the flowers on the bodice like, specifically the flowers and the foliage?
Dr Marchant	<p>I mean, I, I'm not sure what those flowers are supposed to represent. So, I don't know which particular species. But broadly speaking. I think we have to look at the fact that this is a portrait that's being painted, probably circa 1600. So, we're looking at an Elizabeth, who is very much at the twilight of her life. And I think those flowers on the bodice are about that mask of youth and notions of fertility. I think that having her aligned with living foliage, and I'm sure there are people who can, who will who can tell you what those plants are actually supposed to be. And I do not pretend to be somebody who knows what flowers look like, I am terrible at keeping plants alive. But I think it's something that I think is interesting is the way in which the regnant body maps over a kind of notion of a body of state.</p> <p>And I think that's particularly interesting when we think about the understanding of the world in a humoral way, and the physical body in a humorous way. Because when you have a king or a queen, but I think it's particularly interesting, when it's a regnant queen, you have both her physical real body, and then you have the body of her as something other. Something changed and transmuted by the process a correlation almost. And on both of those bodies. It's indicative of the state. So, if we, if we travel back in time to her sister, Mary, I see in Mary's failure to produce an heir. Having thought she was that actually there's something that can be connected to the floods and famine that her nation was suffering at the time that a barren queen is a barren nation.</p> <p>And so, a queen covered in blossoming flowers, despite the fact that she's knocking 60 is a symbol of her physical fertility, but also the fertility of her nation.</p> <p>Is that helpful?</p>
Natasha Bowles	That's I've never looked at it like that before. That is incredible.
Dr Marchant	Oh, thank you. I'm sure that the flowers probably have meanings themselves.
Natasha Bowles	<p>I'm quite close with one of the makers from past pleasures. So, when they recreated the rainbow dress I was like, right tell me everything.</p> <p>So, Louise Baldock, sent me every single one of those flowers and I looked up all the meanings. Because the pansy is on it, which represents, I've forgotten the word but like basically virgin. So, there's loads of different flowers on there with loads of different meanings. But the one I've specifically looked at because I want to look at this through a feminist lens is, you know, virginity and because this is a very sexy portrayal.</p>
Dr Marchant	<p>I mean, there's a lot of Clues going on there, for sure. And I mean, I don't know how I, what whether I buy into the notion that on the orange garment that you've got eyes, ears, and that the creases are supposed to be labia. I don't know how much I can kind of see.</p> <p>Yeah, I don't buy into the fact that's meant to be because like, as a designer, or designer, I'm not anymore. Like that is that is just something you do to sort of connect creases and identify creases.</p>
Natasha Bowles	Yeah, but the eyes and the ears, you know, there's a historian Valerie Traub, who's basically said, you know, they're very vaginal in their look, I'll look into that, but I'm not sure how I feel about that. Yeah, yeah, I mean, the thing is that virginity in this portrait is just is just writ large, um, you know, the, the pearls that are just all over her.

Dr Marchant	<p>They are symbolic of just virgin, virgin, but also being quite like, because Christ is part of the world. And then also, you've got rubies. And rubies are a symbol of a virtuous woman, as well as potentially passion. So, they have those that have that, that double meaning.</p> <p>But also, and also the kind of the white linen all around her back to humours.</p> <p>There is a kind of morality that's displayed in having these really white linens. Because, as well as like your humours, being about physical health, there's also an element to which it's about moral health, because humours are instructed by behaviour, and they also instruct behaviour. So, if you are a leaky vessel, and human bodies are seen as being leaky vessels permeable, if you like, if what you are, if what's spilling out of you, stains, the whites of your linens, if you can't keep them clean, then that could be potentially indicative of moral failing. So, um, physical feeling as well. So having this capacity to have all of this white around is cleaning it for you. So that's well, but also, it's a sign that your body isn't leaking something unpleasant.</p>
Natasha Bowles	<p>Why do you why do you think in particular that Elizabeth liked to use symbolism within a portrait and that she couldn't just have a portrait that just was a portrait of her? Why did she start using what traits as a way of displaying messages instead of telling people things?</p>
Dr Marchant	<p>I think there's a lot of potential answers to that.</p> <p>She has the almost genetic heritage of doing it. So, it's something that her father does.</p> <p>It's also very tellingly, something that her final stepmother Katherine Parr does.</p> <p>I think that we learn a lot from the way that Katherine Parr chooses to be painted. And you can see the very foundations of what Elizabeth ends up doing. If you if you look at that full length of Katherine part where she stood on that Turkish carpet.</p> <p>And it's, for a start, she's one of the first European Queen consorts to be painted full length, she makes that choice, but have it herself placed on that took Turkish carpet, she is connecting herself with images of the Virgin Mary, in European art. So, it's this kind of faith-based things.</p> <p>Turkish carpets are extraordinarily expensive. They usually found on tables or on walls, not on the floor. She's also wearing a brooch, that's a crown. So, she then becomes the first Queen Consort in Europe to be painted wearing a crown, even though it's a badge.</p> <p>All of this is messaging, messaging, messaging. And as she is Henry's final wife, and she's aware of how sick he is, she also starts producing miniatures</p> <p>leading up to and in the aftermath of Henry's death, where she has herself painted, and Edward painted and Henry painted. She is creating a visual connection, because I think she was making a play to be region.</p> <p>And I think that this kind of image making Elizabeth learns from her.</p> <p>I also think that in a post reformation, England, where the images of saints and the paintings on church walls, this incredibly rich visual culture has been whitewashed, there is a gap into which a court of monarchy can quite happily slip, right.</p> <p>Yes, I think it's also important though, to remember that these this painting, for example, we don't think it's commissioned by Elizabeth. So, it's, she permits it to happen. And she presumably likes it has not destroyed but this is also about complimenting her. So, whether it's the digital portray or the Amada portray or the rainbow portray, somebody has paid to have this made as a compliment to her. It's their love letter to her.</p> <p>And clearly one that she enjoys, you think then she understood all the meanings in it and omitted all those that literally all the symbols to be in there? I I believe so. I believe, I think unless somebody is commissioning portray, and they have their own private code that isn't a common meaning.</p> <p>Certain certainly the kind of the classical references the Latin.</p> <p>I mean, Elizabeth is a linguist she is she is she has this incredible capacity for translation.</p> <p>And she is incredibly well read. So, when she's being painted as Diana, or whomever else, she knows those stories intimately.</p>
Natasha Bowles	<p>Yeah, because I need to be very careful because I've realized in my dissertation, I've gotten to the words of Elizabeth wanting to this and Elizabeth knew that this was going like, this is what she was trying to portray. But actually, it's the fact that she was doing that. But it wasn't her that was physically painting the portrait. It wasn't her that was the start with the artists going, I want that there. And I want that there it was. I like this. I like what it represents. I like what it means. I permit this. I like this is more than I want a portrait with this and this and this in it. And yeah, I mean, but there was a course there was of course government control over what paintings could be produced. Yeah. Might be commissioned by somebody who's like, I want these things. But it also has to, essentially passed muster through a system that ultimately Elizabeth is, at the very</p>

least the nominal head, but I think, also the actual casting her eye over things, if they get it wrong. If they miss judge what she wants, there's going to be problems.

And just a final question, sorry to cut this short, I don't want to take up your whole Sunday! And so, what do you believe is the overall message of the portrait? What is Elizabeth's sort of? I know, it's not her intention. But what would you say? Sort of wise she likes it? Or what was the what was the overall message of the portrait base? In your opinion?

Dr Marchant

So I think what I think that this is, this is commissioned by Robert Cecil.
And I think it is a message about Elizabeth's attitude to government, morality and her nation. I think it's telling us that she is the loving listening ever watched for mother of her nation. Alternatively, there are eyes and ears everywhere. It's a, I suppose, a love song to her love of knowledge.
It's about how good she's been for the nation. In many ways. This is the real golden age. portray that? No rainbow without the sun. That she is the literal golden sun over her nation, this perpetual youthful virgin.
And, you know, I, for me, the, if you just look at the headwear, this sort of Cornucopia with a moon in it.
She is Diana.
But also, I think the other thing is that you look at these materials. And it's quite obvious that that orange is some sort of silk taffeta, this, it can't be anything else. This is also a message about the capacity for England to have developed trading networks. And we're talking like 1600 here.
So, Elizabeth has been in the 1580s. She's involved in this conversation with the Ottoman Empire. She's constantly sending people out to try and get some kind of trading deal with China. She is She is somebody who is as parsimonious as she is. Her nation and its trading relationships instead of trying to subvert Catholic control has done incredible things. Because she is very keen on the on the profit of it. And I think she leaves her country better than she finds it. Definitely.
And this is I think something that's being celebrated here the kind of versatility the learning the trade and also potentially the ultimately the piece that despite not producing an air Elizabeth is this rainbow after a storm? Yeah.
And there is hope for what comes next and as it turns out, that hope is not misplaced because despite not producing in there, there isn't a civil war where they could easily a bit yeah.

Natasha Bowles

Well, thank you so much.
I hope that's useful is I feel like the normally on like when I have meetings with people, I like format as a discussion, but today I was like, I really just want to learn a lot like I don't feel like in this process.
I've been so analytical with all the portraits I've been looking at that I think I've just I've missed, sort of actually the sort of the context behind it and, and actually really using this to learn something.
Thank you, I'll just stop the recording.
