

Queen Elizabeth's Language of Clothing and the Contradictions in Her Construction of Images*

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Abstract

This article considers the Renaissance “fashion queen,” Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558-1603), and how her policy of dress compared with the general construction of her political images. Several scholars have investigated her dress from portraits or the inventories of her Wardrobe of Robes. Nevertheless, most of the study of her costume has dealt with the cuts and textiles, that is, the materiality of actual garments; Elizabeth's own attitude towards clothes, her policy of clothing and its connection to her political image, have not yet received their due. In addition, few scholars have located Elizabeth's clothing policy in the context of her overall images, and even fewer have noted the antithesis between her clothing and her dominant representations.

This article approaches those questions through the connection between language and dress. At one level, it interprets the messages expressed by Elizabeth's attire that appears in her portraits, the inventories of her Wardrobe of Robes and textual records. At another level, it considers how she referred to garments or used

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them as metaphors in her verbal communications. These two strata together constitute Elizabeth's political discourse through clothing. Moreover, this article compares her clothing language with her political speeches and other representations to better understand the role clothing played in her overall policy of image-making. It argues that Elizabeth's highlighted femininity through clothing and her favour of foreign fashions and textiles were not in accord with her dominant image of androgyny and of Englishness. Thus, the perspective of clothing reminds us that the study of Elizabeth's representations finds contradictions and ambiguities

Key words: Queen Elizabeth, Image-making, Clothing, Language

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1. Introduction

In the early modern period, when most people could not “touch” monarchs, but could only “see” how the kings and queens appeared, as noted by Machiavelli,¹ monarchs' clothing, along with their palaces, armour, tapestries, and other visual images, played a large part in maintaining their fame and authority. This article considers the Renaissance “fashion queen,” Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558-1603), and how her policy of dress compared with the general construction of her political images. Several scholars have investigated her dress from portraits or the inventories of her Wardrobe of Robes, especially, Janet Arnold's *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (1988).²

¹ “Men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few. Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not to oppose the opinion of many” Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 71.

² Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd: The Inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes Prepared in July 1600* (Leeds: Maney, 1988). Also see her ‘Lost from Her Majesties Back’: *Items of Clothing and Jewels Lost or Given away by Queen Elizabeth I* (Cambridgeshire: The Costume Society, 1988).

Nevertheless, most of the study of her costume has dealt with the cuts and textiles, that is, the materiality of actual garments;³ Elizabeth's own attitude towards clothes, her policy of clothing and its connection to her political image, have not yet received their due. In addition, few scholars have located Elizabeth's clothing policy in the context of her overall images, and even fewer have noted the antithesis between her clothing and her dominant representations.

This article approaches those questions through the connection between language and dress, following Fernand Braudel's suggestion from the 1960s that investigation of material things, including clothes and fashion, be carried into the world of "words," by which he meant "*languages* with everything that man contributes or insinuates into them."⁴ Some scholars of fashion, such as Alison Lurie, Mary Ellen Roach and Christopher Breward, have chosen a stance similar to Braudel's and have worked to read meanings and symbolism of dress in its overall cultural contexts.⁵ Generally, they treat garments as "a form of communication," capable of sending messages to others and therefore creating images of the wearer. In recent years, Arthur Asa Berger continued this linguistic analogy of dress, suggesting that clothes can operate within an emotive register to represent moods and feelings.⁶ Going beyond this, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass treated dress as material mnemonics in Renaissance Europe, where clothes were "persistent material reminders of status and of incorporation."⁷

There should be little controversy in the claim that clothing functions as a form of communication, akin to language, or as a form of material memory, both evincing the

³ This is part of the "traditional" histories of dress. A discussion of the tradition can be found in Catherine Richardson's "Introduction" in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 5.

⁴ Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 333.

⁵ Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Mary Roach and Joanne Eichler, "The Language of Personal Adornment," in *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, eds. Justine Cordwell and Ronald Schwarz (The Hague: Mouton, 1979); Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁶ Arthur Asa Berger, *Reading Matter: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Material Culture* (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 2003), pp. 103-104.

⁷ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 11.

importance of clothing in the construction of one's identity and subjectivity. Establishing the communicative significance of clothing can connect clothing with many other types of visual communication, such as emblems, portraiture, processions, and ceremonies. However, this line of scholarship had neglected how the connection between language and dress can operate in a different area; that is, to understand the meaning of clothes in verbal communications. We may speak of clothing in our daily life, not as trivial matter, but as a serious expression of our imagination and aspirations. We may also use it as a metaphor in our spoken language to convey many kinds of judgments. For instance, John Aylmer proposes, in his *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Svbiectes* (1559), the impropriety of applying Roman law to England since it offends “*justitia distributiua* as Cyrus in Xenophon did beinge a childe: whiche finiding a great boy to haue a little coate, and a little boye a great coate.”⁸ Here he employs the metaphor of a coat to accentuate the higher authority of English common law by which a female heir such as Elizabeth may succeed to the Crown when there is no male alternative.

Observing the ways of people's speaking of clothing is useful to understand the significance they attach to garments, their self-perceptions and their conscious image-making through clothing. This approach provides an understanding different from a material reading of dress in our study of the meanings and functions of clothing, and this article accordingly considers Elizabeth's clothing from a combination of the visual and the verbal levels. At one level, it interprets the messages expressed by Elizabeth's attire that appears in her portraits, the inventories of her Wardrobe of Robes and textual records. At another level, it considers how she referred to garments or used them as metaphors in her public speeches and private conversations. These two strata together constitute Elizabeth's political discourse through clothing. Moreover, it is necessary to compare her clothing language with her political “speeches” and other representations to better understand the role clothing played in her overall policy of image-making.

⁸ John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Svbiectes* (Strasbourg, 1559, STC 1005), sig. K4r.

In the following sections, Elizabeth's own consciousness of utilizing costume for her self-fashioning is first investigated through her speeches and activities concerning clothing. Then, this article considers the characteristics of Elizabeth's dress, and the three main messages they convey: majesty, magnificence, and the femininity that tellingly set her apart from male rulers. Finally, this article discusses an overview of Elizabeth's representations in order to compare her policy of clothing with her dominant construction of her public images.

2. Clothing in Elizabeth's Political Rhetoric

When we ask about Elizabeth's clothing policy, an inevitable question is: to what extent did she consciously speculate on her way of using dress to legitimize her rule and thereby reinforce people's obeisance? Elizabeth often seemed fascinated with fashion, from time to time requesting the new foreign styles or luxurious materials from her tailors, courtiers, and even courtiers' wives. Portraits and dolls she received as gifts from foreign countries also kept her informed about the latest foreign fashions.⁹ Apart from her interest in new fashions, Elizabeth dealt with clothes in her daily life in other ways. She gave her ladies-in-waiting livery, and sometimes used clothes as payment for services to her (or to the state). Among her serving men and women, the staff relating to her clothes most frequently received clothes as part of their fees. For instance, Ralph Hope, the Yeoman of the Robes in Clothes, Arthur Middleton who made many alterations to the Queen's clothes in 1574, and Elizabeth Smithson and Anne Twiste, the Queen's laundresses, all received gifts of clothing from the Queen.¹⁰ Apart from that, she gave and received gifts of clothing from her Maids of Honor, certain gentlewomen, and foreign rulers and nobles, as a display of mutual goodwill or reverence.¹¹

Costume was also crucial to her political game of matrimonial alliances with

⁹ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 157-158.

¹⁰ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 105-106.

¹¹ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 93-108.

foreign princes, as Jane Arnold suggests.¹² In this game, the Elizabethan government sent the Queen's portraits abroad several times, though no surviving portrait can be linked to any of her specific suitors. In this sort of portraiture, there were at least two aspects to the images she needed to cultivate. The first was to display the wealth of her crown and she hence required precious jewelry and rich embroidery on her gowns. The second was to increase the attractiveness of her own person, and therefore she had to create the illusion of eternal youth and to emphasize her virginity, which could be projected by dresses made of white velvet with an open ruff, or sometimes with her hair flowing loose.

Indeed, the clothes she wore played an essential part in her image-making, along with other resources such as speeches, letters, printed texts and woodcuts. Especially for visual representations, a large part of political message in her reign was conveyed by her costume as it was painstakingly drawn in her portraits.¹³ Depending on what Christopher Breward identifies as "the recognition and comprehension of a complex set of formal visual codes," well-trained eyes could construe in them a list of virtues, such as prudence, wisdom, chastity, justice, and so on.¹⁴ Jewelry and embroidery with symbolic items or emblems decorating her hair and garments in her portraits also helped Elizabeth to identify herself with the Moon goddesses, Diana or Cynthia, or as Astraea, the Just Virgin of the Golden Age.

Generally speaking, Elizabeth dealt with issues regarding clothing on a daily basis, and there is little reason to assume that she would ignore the value of clothing as a

¹² Janet Arnold, *Lost from Her Majesty's Book*, p. 9.

¹³ Elizabeth's faces in her portraits were often sketched in haste or followed the face patterns, whereas the clothes, jewels, fans, gloves, and other accessories were sent to the studio or worn by her ladies-in-waiting in order to give a minutely detailed portrayal. Therefore Jones and Stallybrass suggest that Renaissance portraits "are as much the portraits of clothes and jewels as of people—mnemonics to commemorate a particularly extravagant suit, a dazzling new fashion in ruffs, a costly necklace or jewel." See Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, p. 35.

¹⁴ Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, p. 65. Influential studies of Elizabeth's portraits include Frances A. Yates, "Queen Elizabeth I as Astraea," "The Triumph of Chastity," and "Allegorical Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I at Hatfield House," in her *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Pimlico, 1975); Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977; London: Pimlico, 1999), and his *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987; London: Pimlico, 2003).

vehicle of expressing her identity and power. Clothing might also enter into her daily language, although there are few records of her discussion of these affairs. There are even less sources that directly present Elizabeth's perception of the meaning and utilization of clothing. One of the unique cases is a story told by Sir John Harington in his letter to Mr. Robert Markam in 1606. It says:

It happenede that Ladie M. [Mary] Howarde was possesede of a rich border powered with golde and pearle, and a velvet suite belonginge thereto, which moved manie to envye; nor did it please the Queene, who thoughte it exceeded her owne. One daye the Queene did sende privately, and got the Ladies rich vesture, which she put on herself, and came for the chamber amonge the Ladies; the kirtle and border was far too shorte for her Majesties height; and she askede every one, How they likede her new-fancied suit? At lengthe she asked the owner herself, If it was not made too short and ill-becoming?—Which the poor Ladie did presentlie consente to. “Why then if it become not me, as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee, as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well.”¹⁵

Harington's record shows that Elizabeth “did love rich cloathyng, but often chid these that bought more finery than became their state,” especially when the dress outshone the Queen's own. Lady Howard was sharply rebuked in front of other Maids of Honor, and never put on that beautiful gown again.¹⁶ This record exemplifies how Elizabeth employed clothes to speak a language of status and power. The idea that clothing served to distinguish social classes was generally upheld by social elites during this period. Elizabeth's perception of the connotation of degree and order in clothing was also corresponded to humanist and Puritan literary works, from Erasmus (1469-1536) to Philip Stubbes (b. 1555).

¹⁵ Henry Harington ed., *Nugae Antiquae: A Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers in Prose and in Verse* (London, 1792), vol. 2, pp. 139-140.

¹⁶ Henry Harington ed., *Nugae Antiquae*, pp. 139-140. Lady Howard's loss of the Queen's favor was partly due to her flirtation with Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, since another letter written by Sir John Harington in 1597 points out that “she . . . be less carefull in attiringe her own person, for this seemethe as done more to win the Earl, than her mistresse good will.” Henry Harington ed., *Nugae Antiquae*, p. 235.

Erasmus discusses dress and decorum in several of his *Colloquies*, especially in the *Well-to-do Beggars* (1524) where distinctions in dress are sharply sensed by the speakers. They are convinced that clothing should mark the difference of age, gender, social roles, and wealth, for “a poor man to ape the dress of a rich man would be unseemly.”¹⁷ Stubbes, living in Elizabethan England, even more strongly insists on a fixed dress code for different social classes than the humanists in his *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583). He maintains that “it is lawfull for the nobilitie, the gentry and the Magistery, to weare rich attire, euey one in their calling. . . . And as for priuate subiectes, it is not at any hand lawfull that they should weare silkes, Veluets, Satens, Damaskes, golde, siluer, and what they list . . .”¹⁸

Since Erasmus and Stubbes were seeking to preserve the function of clothing as a marker of social rank, they also deplored the confusion of clothing and its related disorder. In Erasmus’s satirical dialogue *The Council of Women* (1529), the primary speaker Cornella complains that “nowadays you can hardly tell a noblewoman from a commoner, a married one from an unmarried girl or widow, . . . Decorum is so far gone that women of every class put on whatever airs they please.”¹⁹ Stubbes, again more blatantly, criticized that “now there is such a confuse mingle mangle of apparel in England, and such horrible excesse thereof, . . . So that is very hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a Gentleman, who is not.”²⁰

Both writers witnessed the increasing development of costume as a medium for social advance, since more and more commoners could afford to dress in the clothes assigned to the gentry or nobility in order to move up into elite society. This sort of anxiety seemed to prevail over early modern European countries, as confirmed by more stringent sumptuary laws in this period than before.²¹ Though they were not drawn by

¹⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, “The Well-to-do Beggars,” in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 203-217, p. 212.

¹⁸ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, ed. Margaret Jane Kidnie (Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), pp. 70-71.

¹⁹ Desiderius Erasmus, “The Lower House, or the Council of Women,” in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 445.

²⁰ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, 71.

²¹ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 28-34.

her own hands, Elizabeth presented the same concern in her royal proclamations against the “excess of apparel.” She and her Privy Council regulated dress chiefly through proclamations, issuing a total of 12 from 1559 to 1597.²² Almost every proclamation articulated the fear that “a great number of her subjects are grown by excess in apparel, both contrary to the laws of the realm and to the disorder and confusion of the degrees of all estates.”²³ This concern was also related to deeper worries of national wealth and of the moral danger to young gentlemen, as the Proclamation of 1574 declared:

*The excess of apparel and superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares thereto belonging now of late years is grown by sufferance to such an extremity that the manifest decay not only of a great part of the wealth of the whole realm generally is like to follow. . . but also particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of young gentlemen, otherwise serviceable, and others seeking by show of apparel to be esteemed as gentlemen, who, . . . run into such debts and shifts as they cannot live out of danger of laws without attempting of unlawful acts, whereby they are not any ways serviceable to their country as otherwise they might be . . .*²⁴

The linkage with morality, social order and health of the national economy came to be the main message of clothing conveyed by the government in sixteenth-century England. But Elizabeth also used clothing in more subtle ways, presenting a metaphorical employment of clothing in her political rhetoric. At least three of Elizabeth’s parliamentary speeches are noteworthy. First, a speech she delivered on 5 November 1566 clearly declared her absolute power through her inalienable possession of clothes:

As for my own part, I care not for death, for all men are mortal; and though I be a woman, yet I have as good a courage answerable to my place as ever my

²² A recent contribution to the study of Elizabeth control of apparel, see Susan Vincent, “None Shall Wear,” in her *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 117-152.

²³ Proclamation 12 February 1566, 8 Elizabeth I (542), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, eds. Paul Hughes and James Larkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 278-279.

²⁴ Proclamation 15 June 1574, 16 Elizabeth I (601), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, p. 381.

*father had. I am your anointed Queen. I will never be by violence constrained to do anything. I thank God I am indeed endued with such qualities that if were turned out of the realm in my petticoat I were able to live in any place of Christendom.*²⁵

This speech was delivered to a delegation of 60 Lords and Commoners who met with the Queen to urge her marriage and limitation of the succession. Elizabeth was infuriated by Parliament's interference with her prerogative, and in one of the two versions of this speech, she compared those members of parliament to unruly animals: "I marvel not much that bridleless colts do know their rider's hand, whom bit of kingly rein did never snaffle yet."²⁶ She also angrily referred to parliament's request as "a strange thing that the foot should direct the head in so weighty a cause."²⁷

Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass splendidly connect this passage to Boccaccio's tale of Gualtieri and Griselda in *The Decameron*. Boccaccio's Griselda receives her clothes from her husband, Gualtieri, the Marquess of Saluzzo, and she is therefore stripped of her original identity as she is re-clothed by her husband's livery. She is then banished by her husband and stripped bare. Before she is sent away, Griselda can only beg for a smock from her husband. In contrast to Griselda, Elizabeth, by subtly referring to this tale, rejected any implication of her dependence on a superior, since she did not need to ask for a petticoat. Her petticoat in this speech thus became an "emblem of her inalienable self-possession."²⁸ In one sense, Elizabeth in this speech underscored her status as an "anointed Queen," endowed with royal authority equal to that of her father, through a statement of property: her own petticoat. However, her meaning might be deeper than the analysis of Jones and Stallybrass. Not only did she have her own clothes, but also she possessed some inner qualities such as dignity, endurance, and other virtues that would permit her to retain her status in any European

²⁵ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 97.

²⁶ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 93.

²⁷ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 96.

²⁸ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 239.

country. Those inner qualities, as the inner layer of her dress (petticoat), would not be lessened by lack of a beautiful gown.

Elizabeth's consciousness of utilizing dress to speak of her rule and virtues can be further demonstrated by two other speeches. On 15 March 1576 when the parliamentary again petitioned the Queen to marry, Elizabeth told its members (this time in much more conciliatory mood) that:

*Yet for your behoof there is no way so difficile that my touch my private, which I could not well content myself to take, and in this case as willingly to spoil myself quite of myself as if I should put off my upper garment when it wearies me, if the present state might not thereby be encumbered.*²⁹

Before this speech, Elizabeth had delegated the Lord Keeper to state her assurance of willingness to get married, "albeit of her owne natureall disposition shee is not disposed or inclined to marriage, neither would shee ever marrie if shee weare a private person."³⁰ In her own speech, Elizabeth emphasized again the discrepancy of English public welfare and her private inclination, and she analogized the personal free choice of marital state with the autonomy of changing dresses. But, she understood very well that the body she dressed did not belong to her alone, and there was another *body politic* she had to clothe. Both the choices of marriage and garments were not speculated only in respect of her *body natural*.³¹

Another occasion when Elizabeth utilized the metaphor of garment was her speech delivered to the Parliament in 1586. She said:

For we Princes are set as it were upon Stages in the Sight and view of all the World: the least Spot is soon spied in our Garments, the smallest Blemish

²⁹ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 170.

³⁰ T. E. Hartley ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, vol. 1 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981), p. 464.

³¹ The idea of king's two bodies see Ernst H. Kantorowics, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977).

*presently observed in us at a great Distance. It behoveth us therefore to be carefull that our Proceedings be just and honourable.*³²

This speech was delivered to answer parliamentary apprehension over the treasonable activities of Mary, Queen of Scots. What is interesting here is not Elizabeth's use of the early modern English metaphor: "all the world's a stage," as Shakespeare had done in his *As You Like It*, but her use of clothing as a metaphor for cautious behavior. Elizabeth revealed her understanding that a small error when made by a prince could be amplified to be a great mistake, and therefore virtuous demeanor was quintessential to a queen regnant like her. Furthermore, the metaphor of clothing provided her with a way of imagining that she was wearing an unspotted garment, one that denoted a clean and virtuous self.

From direct references to clothes to their use as metaphors, the appearance of clothing in Elizabeth's everyday speech suggested that it was not just a thing of everyday life, nor was it simply to mark social distinction and clarify the separation between the ruling and the ruled classes. She wove clothing into her political rhetoric, and thus made use of it to transmit political messages. Moreover, clothing, for Elizabeth, was strongly connected with her spiritual imagination of the self. She associated clothing with her contemplation of marriage, virtues and self-identification. In other words, clothing came to be a medium, upon which she considered her status and behavior, and through which she spoke the meanings of her life.

3. Political Language of Elizabeth's Clothing

(1) Majesty and Magnificence

Those speeches manifested Elizabeth's daily concern of dress and her sense of how it related to her image. Well aware of the connection between clothing and self-fashioning, she dressed carefully during her reign. Mostly, she followed the

³² William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth*, ed. Wallace, T. MacCaffrey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 262.

injunction of Renaissance “mirror-for-princes” to pursue magnificence: this was a princely virtue linked to royal rule since “a prince must have no equal in his apparel.”³³ A great part of Elizabeth’s virtue of magnificence was built upon her use of rich gowns in public processions and ceremonies. For ceremonial purposes, Elizabeth, as her sister Queen Mary (r. 1553-1558), borrowed traditional regal symbols from their male counterparts, such as the crown, the orb, the scepter, the sword, and the coronation robes, known as the “Robes of Estate,” to denote the person of a queen regnant.

At her entry into London on 14 January 1559, an Italian visitor, Il Schifanoia, recorded that “Her Majesty was dressed in a royal robe of very rich cloth of gold, with a double-raised stiff pile, and on her head over a coif of cloth of gold, beneath which was her hair, a plain gold crown without lace, as a princess, but covered with jewels, and nothing in her hands but gloves.”³⁴ The next day, in her procession from Westminster Abbey to St. Paul’s for the coronation, Il Schifanoia told us that three swords, three scepters, and three crowns signified England, France and Ireland, appeared in the procession, moving along with a sword of royal justice in scabbard loaded with pearls, and with the orb. Then after all the ceremonies had concluded in St. Paul’s, Elizabeth changed her dress twice, “carrying in her hands the sceptre and orb, and wearing the ample royal robe of cloth of gold.”³⁵

Elizabeth’s coronation robes were in fact inherited from Mary and included an ermine trimmed mantle and kirtle, but she had a new bodice and pair of sleeves made for the kirtle (this may have been the regalia she wore for the “Coronation Portrait” [c. 1600] stored in the National Portrait Gallery, London).³⁶ Elizabeth also retained Mary’s Parliament robes, comprised of a crimson velvet kirtle and mantle; though she

³³ Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London: Seaby, 1992), p. 7.

³⁴ “Il Schifanoia to the Castellan of Mantua, 23 January, 1559,” *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice* (abbreviated as *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*), ed. Rawdon Brown (London: HMSO, 1864-1974), vol. 7, p. 12; “Il Schifanoia to Octaviano Vivaidino, Mantuan ambassador with King Philip at Brussels, 30 January, 1559,” *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. 7, pp. 22-23.

³⁵ *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. 7, pp. 16-17.

³⁶ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*, pp. 52. This paper mentions several Elizabeth’s portraits without giving their illustrations since they are quite famous and easy to view online.

had them refurbished.³⁷ She wore them in the commencement ceremony of her first parliament on 25 January 1559 in Westminster Abbey, recorded also by Il Schifanoia, who noted that the Queen's garment was "a royal crimson robe lined with ermine, but not with the hood, as generally worn by former [sovereigns]. The robe fitted close to the body, and was high up to the throat, with a lace trimming at the top, and a round cape of ermine like the one worn by the Doge of Venice, with a cap of beaten gold covered with very fine oriental pearls on her head, and a necklace, from which was suspended a most marvellous pendant."³⁸

Il Schifanoia's record illustrated how splendidly and bountifully Elizabeth dressed herself in those royal spectacles. Her clothing came to be the external sign of her princely power, perfectly combining the idea of magnificence with that of majesty. Apart from the ceremonies of coronation and parliamentary commencement in 1559, Elizabeth's royal magnificence was continuously emphasized by her rich gowns in public processions and ceremonies, or in receiving foreign ambassadors. Her expensive gowns enchanted many of her subjects and visitors. For instance, Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, the Venetian ambassador, was impressed by Elizabeth's dress and its richness, when he met the Queen at the Presence Chamber at 16 February 1603. He described that:

The Queen was clad in taffety of silver and white, trimmed with gold; her dress was somewhat open in front and showed her throat encircled with pearls and rubies down to her breast. Her skirts were much fuller and began lower down than is the fashion in France. Her hair was of a light colour never made by nature, and she wore great pearls like pears round the forehead; she had a coif arched round her head and an Imperial crown, and displayed a vast quantity of gems and pearls upon her person; even under her stomacher she was covered with golden jewelled girdles and single gems,

³⁷ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 58.

³⁸ "Il Schifanoia to Octaviano Vivaidino, Mantuan ambassador with King Philip at Brussels, 30 January, 1559," *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. 7, p. 22.

*carbuncles, balas-rubies, diamonds; round her wrists in place of bracelets she wore double rows of pearls of more than medium size.*³⁹

The rich garment and accessories of Elizabeth on this occasion expressed similar languages of majesty and magnificence to those in her early reign.

In terms of royal majesty and magnificence, Elizabeth employed her manner of dressing much the same as had preceding English kings or contemporary European male monarchs on those highly ceremonial and theatrical occasions.⁴⁰ Precious fabrics together with complicated designations and decorations supported their royal status. However, as we have seen in the ceremonies of Elizabeth coronation and opening of parliament, the expression of her status was achieved by putting symbolic items and garments, previously used only for the kings, upon a female dress and a female body. This was a sort of sartorial amalgamation, instead of a true and complete appropriation of kingly attire, but only showing a kingly veneer. In all other occasions, Elizabeth wore distinctive female garments similar to other high-ranking noble women, though the Queen's were more extravagant. How, then, could Elizabeth enunciate their kingly rulership while mostly wearing female clothes? Or, could she define her rule, beyond majesty and magnificence, by developing a language of clothing different from that of male monarchs?

(2) Femininity

Perhaps, the most straightforward and simplest tactic for a female ruler to set herself apart from male monarchs in her language of clothing was to emphasize her femininity in contrast to the king's virility. However, an expression of a queen's femininity might seriously undermine her rule in traditional society. By this reason, Hatshepsut (r. 1479-1458 B. C.), the female pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty of Ancient Egypt, was shown dressed completely in the likeness of a male pharaoh, and

³⁹ "Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli to the Doge and Senate," in *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. 9, pp. 531-532.

⁴⁰ For the use of clothing by Henry VIII and other European monarchs, see Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds: Maney, 2007), chapter 2.

even with a false beard.⁴¹ Similarly, Empress Wu (c. 623-705), the only female ruler in China ever to proclaim herself emperor, adopted a complete set of emperor's garments in all the visible layers (and she even kept male concubines in her palace).⁴² Furthermore, Razia, the Saltana of Delhi (r. 1236-1240), the first female ruler in India, also led her army unveiled and in a full male costume.⁴³ These three female rulers assumed all the regalia and symbols of male rulership, and clad their bodies in official occasions almost completely in men's dress. By that means, they kept the female image, with its general connotation of weakness and timidity, away from people's view, and stressed that their authority was as high as that of a male ruler.

Clearly, Elizabeth did not adopt sartorial policies as extreme as those of Hatshepsut, Empress Wu, or Saltana Razia. She dressed as a female, in a style which emphasized her femininity, except on the rare occasions where she wore ceremonial robes used also for kings. The kernel of her femininity was virginity. First and foremost, the motif of virginity underlined the colors she wore most frequently, which were black and white. Gowns that were black or white indeed dominated her wardrobe: there are 23 white and 22 black loose gowns in the Stowe inventory of the Wardrobe of Robes, while there were only 9 tawny and 8 ash gowns; and gowns in other colors are even fewer.⁴⁴ The number of black and white garments is also impressive in all of Elizabeth's extant portraits.

Black and white dresses were popular in Renaissance Europe. White cloth was particularly appreciated by aristocratic English women for its brightness and cleanness. Fine black cloth was similarly welcomed because it was a perfect foil for jewelry and embroidery.⁴⁵ But beyond the practical aspects of black and white clothes, Elizabeth was highly sensitive to the symbolic meaning of colors and perfectly perceived their use

⁴¹ Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 45-52.

⁴² Jo-shui Chen, "Emperess Wu and Proto-Feminist Sentiments in T'ang China," in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, eds. Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-Chieh Huang (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp. 77-116.

⁴³ Satish Chandra, *History of Medieval India, 800-1700* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007), p. 100.

⁴⁴ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 90.

⁴⁵ Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, p. 11; Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 1.

to express intricate political messages. For example, when Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador, visited Elizabeth at court in 1564, the Queen invited him to see a comedy that dealt with marriage. In the masque that followed there were several gentlemen dressed in black and white, which “the Queen told me were her colours.”⁴⁶ During the Renaissance, colors were part of the clothing language and combinations of colors could express certain abstract ideas. Although people had different interpretations for the meanings of colors, black and white were widely conceived to indicate constancy and chastity.⁴⁷ The combination of black and white gradually became the personal colors of Elizabeth as her reign progressed, and men wore black and white garments at court masques, tiltyard and her progresses, in tribute to the Queen.⁴⁸ Elizabeth’s talk of colors in her conversation with Guzman de Silva was not accidental; her words came just after her enquiry on the marriage negotiations of Spanish’s Prince, Don Carlos, with her and with Mary, Queen of Scots. She was in fact articulating a strong image of everlasting virginity by the colors of black and white, even though her willingness to marry was still uncertain at this stage.⁴⁹

Another intriguing example is the gift of clothing she sent to Mary, in 1568, when the Scottish Queen had fled Scotland and was in captive in Carlisle. Mary appealed to Elizabeth through Sir Francis Knollys for some of her used gowns and shoes. According to a warrant for the Wardrobe of Robes dated 16 October 1568, Elizabeth gave “Sixtene yerdes of blak vellat: Sixtene yerdes of blak Satten: and tenne yerdes of blak taphata Delyvered by our Commaundement to our trustie and right welbeloved Counsailor Sir Fraunces Knolles knight vice chamberlen of our Chamber, for the Quene

⁴⁶ “Guzman de Silva to the King of Spain, 10 July 1564,” in *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers Relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas* (abbreviated as *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*), ed. Martin A. S. Hume (London: HMSO, 1892-1899), vol. 1, p. 368.

⁴⁷ Maria C. Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 17-18. There were some treatises particularly on colour symbolism in the Renaissance, such as Sicile’s *Le Blason des Couleurs en Armes, Livrees et Devises* (1526), see Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1988), p. 102.

⁴⁸ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 71-74.

⁴⁹ In another meeting of Elizabeth and Guzman De Silva, in March 1565, De Silva told the Queen that he supposed that she would not wish to marry, but the Queen answered that “For my own part I do not think such a conclusion is so clear as you say” See “Guzman De Dilva to the King, 24 March 1565,” *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. 1, p. 409.

of Scottes, of our great guarderobe.”⁵⁰ These three pieces of black material sending to the Queen of Scots actually contained an implicit message: admonishing her to go into deep mourning in order to rescue her reputation and throne. Elizabeth’s action perhaps resulted from the report that Mary did not properly mourn for her late husband, Lord Darnley, up to 40 days in accordance with “the ancient custom,” and hastily married Earl of Bothwell, which gave rise to a rebellion.⁵¹

This perception of the symbolic meaning of black and white was current among Elizabethan courtiers and artists. Of the numerous extant portraits of Elizabeth, several aimed at glorifying her virginity by the use of these two colors, as well as by embroidery designs of flowers and animals, and by her jewellery. The most obvious one was the “Sieve” portrait (c. 1580), where the Queen wears a good black French gown and a fine white silk wired veil.⁵² Moreover she holds a sieve on her left hand and exhibits a great pearl on her left breast. The sieve is a symbol of chastity, alluding to the Roman Vestal Virgin. The pearl, which was one of the most-used jewels on Elizabeth’s gowns, is also a symbol of virginity. According to Frances A. Yates and Roy Strong, this portrait was inspired by Petrarch’s *Triumph of Chastity* and John Dee’s *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* with an imperial theme, and thus cast the Queen as an imperial virgin who would bring a golden age to the land of England, as an Astraea, the virgin of justice.⁵³ Hence, Elizabeth’s personal virtue of chastity is intertwined with her political virtues of justice and peace in this portrait.

Another example is the “Ermine” portrait (1585), where Elizabeth displays a rich black Polish gown, with decorative fastenings in gold thread and enriched with jewels

⁵⁰ Egerton MS 2806, fol.11, British Library, cited in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*, p. 98.

⁵¹ According to John Knox’s *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, Mary “should have kept herself 40 days within, and the doores and windowes should have been closed in token of mourning; but the windowes were opened, to let in light, the fourth day. Before the twelfth day, she went out to Seatoun, Bothwell never parting from her side. There she went out to the fields to behold games and pastimes.” See John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1845; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1966), vol. 2, p. 550.

⁵² Various ‘Sieve’ portraits exist. The earlier versions dated from 1579, and the later versions dated from about 1580 to 1583. See Roy Strong, *Gloriana* (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. 95-107.

⁵³ Yates, *Astraea*, 114-115; Roy Strong, *Gloriana*, 95-99.

and a superb jewel hanging from the collar of state.⁵⁴ This portrait also illustrates a wide hairstyle, elaborate pearl-trimmed head-dress, and a closed cartwheel ruff, which was popular after 1580.⁵⁵ On the Queen's left arm, an ermine rests and is encircled with a golden collar as a crown, which gives the portrait's title. The ermine is a traditional symbol of purity and virginity because of its white coat. Moreover, a sword of *justitia* is put on the table, which signifies Elizabeth's sovereignty. This portrait is thus designed in a formula similar to the "Sieve" portrait, using a symbol of virginity and correlating it with imperial power.⁵⁶ Both the "Sieve" portrait and the "Ermine" portrait use costume and accessories to express the Queen's superior authority, together with her virtues of justice and virginity.

We have examined Elizabeth's language of clothing in the preceding paragraphs according to what covered her body. However, what she left uncovered is also significant. According to several eyewitnesses, the Queen on some occasions intentionally left her "bosom" or "breast" (the area below the collarbone and above the breasts) uncovered, even in her later years.⁵⁷ The agent of Duke Frederick of Württemberg, for instance, had an audience with Elizabeth in 1595, when she was 62. He reported that the Queen "dressed in a red robe interwoven with gold thread . . . Over her breast, which was bare . . ." ⁵⁸ Two years later, André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, Ambassador Extraordinary from French King Henri IV, gave us much more detailed description of Elizabeth's body and dress after meeting the Queen several times in the Privy Chamber during December of 1597. At his first audience, he noted that "she was strangely attired in a dress of silver cloth, white and crimson . . . Her bosom is somewhat wrinkled as well as [one can see for] the collar that she wears round her neck, but lower

⁵⁴ More see Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, pp. 23-26, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁵ C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp. 167-168; pp. 179-180.

⁵⁶ Francis Yates, *Astraea*, pp. 215-216; Roy Strong, *Gloriana*, pp. 113-115.

⁵⁷ In the Renaissance, both "bosom" and "breast" are used interchangeably for men and women.

⁵⁸ Victor von Klarwill ed., T. H. Nash trans., *Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners: Being A Series of Hitherto Unpublished Letters from the Archives of Habsburg Family* (London: John Lane, 1928), p. 394.

down her flesh is exceeding white and delicate, so far as one could see.”⁵⁹ Then, at his third audience, the Queen “was clad in a white robe of cloth of silver, cut very low and her bosom uncovered.”⁶⁰

Again in 1598, Paul Hentzner, another foreign visitor to the Queen’s court at Greenwich, wrote a similar description, which I quote at length since it gives us the overall appearance of the Queen:

*. . . Next came the Queen, in the 65th year of her age (as we were told), very majestic; her face oblong, fair but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow, and her teeth black, (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar); she had in her ears two pearls with very rich drops; her hair was of an auburn colour, but false . . . her bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry; and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her hands were slender, her fingers rather long, and her stature neither tall nor low; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk shot with silver threads.*⁶¹

This description might be exemplary of the image which Elizabeth presented from the 1590s to the end of her reign: dressing in the colors of black and white, with her bare bosom. Fashioning her appearance thus, Elizabeth successfully made her perpetual virginity noted not only by the combination of black and white colors, but also tellingly by the display of her bosom which signified her status as a maiden.

In fact, the bared breast was not only a symbol of virginity, but also of the maternal

⁵⁹ André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, *A Journal of All that Was Accomplished by Monsieur de Maisse, Ambassador in England from King Henry IV to Queen Elizabeth, Anno Domini 1597*, trans. and eds. G. B. Harrison and R. A. Jones (Bloomsbury: Nonesuch Press, 1931), p. 25.

⁶⁰ André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, *A Journal of All that Was Accomplished by Monsieur de Maisse*, p. 55.

⁶¹ William Brenchley Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First: Comprising translations of the Journals of the Two Dukes of Wirtemberg in 1592 and 1610* (London: John Russell Smith, 1865), pp. 104-105.

sustenance.⁶² She was projecting double images of a maiden and a mother by that sort of attire. This presentation of her maternity was echoed by her “Pelican” portrait, made around 1574-75. Her clothes and jewels are beautifully and bountifully arranged in this portrait, while her motherly love towards her subjects is ardently shown by the popular emblem of the life-rendering pelican which the Queen wears as pendant upon her bosom. Both Elizabeth’s images as a virgin and a mother converged in a cult of heightened femininity, which was evidently connected with the Virgin Mary. Even the accessories used in Elizabeth’s costume, such as pearls, roses, and the pelican, were also traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary.

It is not surprising at all to find that Elizabeth’s language of clothing had so much to do with the Virgin Mary. Actually, many aspects of “the cult of Elizabeth”⁶³ were aimed at identifying her as a second Virgin Mary, and many panegyrics to the Queen glorified her virginity as well as her maternal qualities. In these ways, Elizabeth used her costume to define the aspects to her rule of majesty, magnificence and femininity. By the last of these, she created a type of clothing language far different from that of male monarchs, tactically avoiding the disadvantage of the weaker image associated with a female costume by combining the virtue of virginity with those of justice and peace.

⁶² Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, p. 64. Like her bosom, Elizabeth’s belly also figured her political motherhood. The French ambassador, André Hurault, at his second audience with the Queen, noticed that “she had a petticoat of white damask, girdled, and open in front, as was also her chemise, in such a manner that she often opened this dress and one could see all her belly, and even to her navel . . . when she raises her head she had a trick of putting both hands on her gown and opening it insomuch that all her belly can be seen.” André Hurault, De Maise, *A Journal of All that was Accomplished by Monsieur de Maise*, pp. 36-37. An analysis of this passage, see Louis Adrian Montrose, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream and the Shaping Fantasies of Elizabethan Culture: Gender, Power, Form,” in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 67.

⁶³ The term comes from the study of Elizabeth’s representations, which was pioneered by E. C. Wilson’s *England’s Eliza* in 1939 and succeeded by Francis Yates and Roy Strong. The Wilson-Yates-Strong tradition led to the so-called “cult of Elizabeth,” which has become very popular in recent works in this field. The idea of “the cult of Elizabeth” suggests that there was a cult of the new Protestant Queen to replace the psychic and spiritual vacuum left by the Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary. See Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, p. 16.

4. Contradictions in Elizabeth's Representations

Clothing certainly was part of the means by which Elizabeth constructed her public images over her long reign. But how well did the messages conveyed by her clothes work together with those of other resources? This article does not intend to rewrite Elizabeth's political images in all respects since this topic has been thoroughly considered by many scholars, such as Roy Strong, John King, Carole Levin and Kevin Sharpe.⁶⁴ Instead, this article looks at the overall formation of Elizabeth's representations and categorizes them into two types of images: the first was composed of images manufactured to illustrate her female virtues, while the second was composed of images to claim her manly and kingly prowess. The two aspects taken together justified Elizabeth's legitimacy of being a true English/Protestant queen. They jointly celebrated Elizabeth's androgyny, and at the same time, portrayed Elizabeth as an icon of Englishness.

The combination of the two reveals a significant facet of Elizabeth's art of image-making: the fusion of male and female identities, or androgyny.⁶⁵ Some works written by Elizabeth's supporters transparently celebrated her combination of traditionally masculine and feminine qualities. John Stubbs's *Gaping Gulf* (1579), for instance, identifies Elizabeth as "our Eve" and also "our Adam and sovereign lord or lordly lady of this land," in order to oppose Elizabeth's marriage with the French Duke of Anjou.⁶⁶ Also, Edwin Sandys's sermon preached in York in 1585 represents the Queen as "the spouse of Christ," as well as "Christ himself."⁶⁷ In the manipulation of

⁶⁴ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*; John King, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of A King: Elizabeth and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁶⁵ This is particularly emphasized by Carole Levin in her *The Heart and Stomach of A King*, chapter 6.

⁶⁶ John Stubbs, *John Stubbs's Gaping Gulf with Letters and Other Relevant Documents*, ed. Lloyd E. Berry (reprinted, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1968), 3.

⁶⁷ Edwin Sandy, "A Sermon Preached in York, at the Celebration of the Day of the Queen's Entrance into Her Reign," in *Sermons Made by the Most Reuerence Edwin, archbishop of York* (London: H. Middleton, 1585, STC 21713), reprinted in *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for Parker Society, 1842), p. 69.

the idea of the Queen's androgyny, Elizabeth was even more blatant than her supporters in playing up the ambiguity of her gender roles. For instance, according to the Spanish ambassador's report in 1587, "the Queen was raving about the [Spanish] seizures in France, saying that although she was a woman and her profession was to try to preserve peace with neighbouring princes, yet if they attacked her they would find that in war she could be better than a man."⁶⁸ Moreover, in one of her conversations with the Swedish ambassador, Elizabeth states that "I have the heart of a man, not a woman, and I am not afraid of anything;" and with the French ambassador, she declared that "I suffer neither the King of Spain or Guise to mock this poor old woman, who, in my female form, carries the heart of man."⁶⁹

Furthermore, both sorts of Elizabeth's representations in combination advocated England's independence, and thus allowed the Queen to be fulcrum upon which the English sense of nationhood hinged, a view that was especially appealing to her Protestant apologists. Elizabeth herself also articulated her Englishness strongly, as she displayed in 1566 by asking Parliamentary delegates in 1566 that "Was I not borne in the realm? Were my parents born in any foreign country? Is there any cause I should alienate myself from being careful over this country? Is not my kingdom here?"⁷⁰ Elizabeth was very proud of the fact that both her parents were English, unlike her sister, Queen Mary, who was half-Spanish. Her pure English blood was then further connected with her virginity by her supporters, for its connotation of the independence of England from foreign disturbance and contamination. As Helen Hackett suggests, "Elizabeth's bodily intactness can be used to figure the inviolability of the English nation state."⁷¹ Along with this, Elizabeth's masculinity or androgyny was celebrated

⁶⁸ "Sampson's Advices from England, 26 February 1587," *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. 4, pp. 17-18.

⁶⁹ Frederick Chamberlin ed., *The Sayings of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1923), p. 16, p. 18. Her Oration at Tilbury Camp in 1588 is another more obvious example of this strategy, see Janet M. Green, "'I My Self': Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28-2 (1997), pp. 421-445.

⁷⁰ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, p. 95.

⁷¹ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p. 127.

to suggest the Queen's self-sufficiency, which implied the perfect independence of England and her Church.

Upon such an overview of Elizabeth's representations, we should not assume that the Queen and her supporters orchestrated them well without contradictions, or that various resources (oral, visual or textual) were manipulated by various agents in the same tone.⁷² Garments, as one of the resources for creating Elizabeth's public images, were particularly important for her visual representations. This silent language needed to work together with speeches, texts, emblems and portraits, to magnify the effect of its symbolic meanings, deep into the people's hearts and minds, especially into those of English and foreign elites. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Elizabeth confined her use of clothing to the first sort of her representations which illustrated her femininity. She accepted her female body and beautifully highlighted her femininity by her dress. She was successful to the point that she smartly deflected the weakness of showing her femininity, which instead was turned to evoke her likeness with the Virgin Mary. Under the support of her own rhetoric and the multiple panegyrics, Elizabeth extended her personal womanly virtues of virginity and maternity as political virtues, thus reinforcing the sanctity and legitimacy of her governance.

However, she did little to cultivate the other face—being a virile and courageous ruler of the country—by her costumes; nor did she play up her androgyny through wearing masculine costume in place of more feminine attire. Elizabeth is often said to have worn a steel corselet upon a gown of white velvet and a helmet with white plumes, while bearing “in her right hand a silver truncheon chased in gold,” riding a white horse, bareheaded, to give a rousing speech in July 1588 when she visited her troops at Tilbury.⁷³ Elizabeth's appearance at Tilbury became a myth of nationalist sentiment

⁷² Actually, the Queen and her supporters were not necessarily a unanimous entity, nor did all supporters manufacture Elizabeth's images solely according to her interest or self-perception. Elizabeth occasionally felt irritated by her subjects' elaborately devised representations of the Queen, where she sensed a sort of rudeness or challenge to her power, as Susan Frye argues in her *Elizabeth: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. Chapter 2.

⁷³ Garrett Mattingly, *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 295. Mattingly's complete description of Elizabeth's appearance at Tilbury is: “All eyes were on the Queen. She rode a white gelding with a back like a barn-door, and, if one may trust a portrait, a benignant rather simpering expression.

and her image of an androgynous martial maiden uniting her army has persisted from Thomas Cecil's *Truth Presents the Queene with a Lance*, produced in about 1625, to the movie *Elizabeth: the Golden Age* (2007). However, as Susan Frye indicates, "no reliable eyewitness account exists of what Elizabeth I wore or said," when she visited Tilbury,⁷⁴ and there are no records or images produced in her reign showing the Queen wearing Amazonia attire or men's clothes.

It is true that Elizabeth did spend a great deal of time on horseback, but mostly she wore beautiful gowns, instead of martial attire, when mounted. Janet Arnold tells us that the Queen wore "safeguards with doublets, jupes and cloaks, for riding," from the 1570s onward, and she suggests that the introduction of the masculine style of jupes gave the impetus for "the adoption of other masculine fashions of doublet, jacket and jerkin."⁷⁵ Indeed, there are 85 doublets listed in the Stowe Inventory of 1600, and at least two of Elizabeth's portraits show the Queen clad a bodice similar to a man's doublet, painted about 1571-75 (the "Darnley" portrait [c. 1575] is one of them). However, the word "doublet" seems to have been used for the "square bodies" by the 1590s, since the latter followed the style of the former with tabbed skirts.⁷⁶ Elizabeth's garment in the "Darnley" portrait is clearly still cut for women's figures, only with limited alterations of form and decoration to resemble male doublets. It is worn to display the novelty of high fashion, instead of disguising the Queen's gender or illuminating her masculinity. Therefore, it seems unlikely that such "masculine" attire detracted from her femininity.

Elizabeth's avoidance of male dress perhaps derived from the Deuteronomic

She was clad all in white velvet with a silver cuirass embossed with a mythological design, and bore in her right hand a silver truncheon chased in gold. Like the cavaliers on either side of her she rode bareheaded, and there was a tuft of plumes, the sheen of pearls and the glitter of diamonds in her hair." But this description is not based on any specific sources. Both Winfried Schleiner and Susan Frye consider it to be fiction. See Winfried Schleiner, "Divina virago: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon," *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978), pp. 163-180; Susan Frye, "The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23-1 (1992), pp. 95-114.

⁷⁴ Susan Frye, 'The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury,' p. 94, p. 96.

⁷⁵ Janet Arnold, "Dashing Amazons: the Development of Women's Riding Dress, c. 1500-1900," in *Defining Dress: Dress and Object, Meaning and Identity*, eds. Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 11-12.

⁷⁶ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, p. 143.

injunction: “The woman shal not weare that which perteieth unot the man, nether shal a man put woman raiment: for all that do so, are abominacion unto the Lord they God.”⁷⁷ However, transvestism was not unthinkable for a ruler in this age, and secret sartorial disguise was indeed rather tolerable and culturally acceptable for middling and upper classes.⁷⁸ For instance, Elizabeth was once encouraged by Sir James Melville, Scottish ambassador to England, to disguise her gender and rank, and be “clothed like a page” in order secretly to meet Mary, Queen of Scots. Sir Melville offered another example for this encouragement, saying that “James V [of Scotland] had gone in disguise to France with his own Ambassador, to see the Duke of Vendom’s sister, who should have been his wife.”⁷⁹ Elizabeth appeared to appreciate this suggestion, though she did not put it into action.⁸⁰

Since she had been reluctant to adopt men’s clothing in secret, public transvestism would be certainly far too radical for Elizabeth to follow. If she appeared cross-dressed in public actions, a more serious danger might damage her rule: the accusation of hermaphroditism. In the Renaissance, as Ruth Gilbert advocates, a distinction was made “between hermaphroditism and androgyny; sexual ambiguity was represented as a transcendent ideal in some contexts and a sexual or social horror in others,”⁸¹ although the words androgyny and hermaphrodite were often used interchangeably in this period. The contrast between androgyny and hermaphrodite in the Renaissance was one between the abstract and concrete, and the latter, physical androgyny, was overwhelmingly detested. For instance, Philip Stubbes objected to women’s wearing of the doublet in his *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) since “this be a kind of attire, proper onely to man, yet they [women] blush not to wear it: and if they could as wel change their sexe, and put on

⁷⁷ Deu. 22:5, *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison, London: University of The Wisconsin Press, 1969). The Deuteronomic injunction is the earliest Christian dress code.

⁷⁸ Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, pp. 179-180.

⁷⁹ James Melville, *Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill 1535-1617*, ed. A. Francis Steuart (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929), p. 97.

⁸⁰ Melville recorded that “She [Elizabeth] appeared to like that kind of language, only answered it with a sigh, saying, Alas, if I might do it thus.” James Melville, *Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill*, p. 97.

⁸¹ Ruth Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 4. More see, Kathleen Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

the kind of man, as they can weare apparel assigned only to man, I thinke they would as verily become men indeed.” He further accused women who wore doublets “may not improperly bee called Hermaphroditi, that is Monsters of both kindes, halfe women, half men.”⁸²

Masculinity in one’s own language or representations through literature was considered as a kind of ideal androgyny in this age, but physical androgyny (including transvestism) was treated as hermaphroditism, a term expressed with fear and contempt. By this reasoning, Elizabeth could gain great political advantage by her fusing of male and female identities in language since that presented a spiritual transcendence of sexual difference. But, if she deployed her composite identity in reality, attired in actual male dress, there would be the danger of being denounced as a hermaphrodite. Shakespeare’s Joan of Arc in his enormously popular *Henry VI, Part 1* (1592) had set a mirror of a cross-dressed woman warrior on stage for Elizabeth.⁸³ Joan, the peasant girl who dressed as a man in all her public actions, functions to some degree as a warning to the prospect of a cross-dressed English Queen. Both in official records and in Shakespeare’s play, Joan was condemned as monstrous and burned to death not only under the charge of heresy, but also because of her male dress which was seen as a unforgivable challenge to social and political order.⁸⁴

Furthermore, “a woman on top” itself had been an image associated with riot and disorder in early modern Europe, and John Knox’s *First Blast of the Trumpet against the*

⁸² Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, p. 118. His accusation was widely used by Puritan polemicists against cross-dressing in Elizabethan theatres. See Lesley Ferris ed., *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (London: Routledge, 1993); Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁸³ Leah S. Marcus suggests that Joan of Arc in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part 1*, is evidently analogized with Queen Elizabeth, in his *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 53. Although Marcus accepts the myth of Tilbury as a truth, he correctly indicates that Joan is an incomplete analogue of Queen Elizabeth, since Joan never presents herself as anything other than a woman, while Elizabeth never dressed herself as a man. He also noticed that Queen Elizabeth almost never allowed her composite identity to be portrayed; the pictures of Elizabeth as an Amazon are mostly dated from after her death. Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare*, p. 62.

⁸⁴ Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Woman and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 156-157; Susan Crane, “Clothing and Gender Definition: Joan of Arc,” in *Inscribing the Hundred Years’ War in French and English Cultures*, ed. Denise N. Baker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 195-220.

Monstrous Regiment of Women (1558) had directly condemned female rule as monstrous, just before Elizabeth succeeded to the throne.⁸⁵ If Elizabeth dressed like a man, she would represent a “double disorder” or “double monstrosity” which would have been too disquieting for her subjects. It was perhaps in consideration of these dangers that Elizabeth never violated sexual boundaries through her actual attire, but only through the language by which she fashioned herself as the husband and father of the country, and declared in ringing tones that “I have the heart of a man, not a woman,” or “in my female form, carried the heart of a man.” She continued to dress in a female style through her whole reign, even during its late period, when her own rhetoric and that of her panegyrists increasingly highlighted her masculinity.

Elizabeth’s avoidance of male dress demonstrates that the very strategy which she perceived as valuable and acceptable in one way became dangerous and inconceivable in another. This fact also reveals how Elizabeth’s clothing and her representations in other forms are at odds in some respects. Another antithesis between Elizabeth’s clothing and her dominant policy of image-making lies in her love of foreign fashion. Although she was ardently identified as an icon of Englishness, Elizabeth rarely promoted English styles of dress for herself in order to advocate her association with the realm or England’s uniqueness and supremacy. Similar to the reign of her father, Henry VIII, the Elizabethan court was tremendously influenced by Spanish and French styles of dress. King Henry had garments in a range of foreign styles, including the French, Spanish, Italian and even Turkish modes, which could help the King to express a sense of cosmopolitanism.⁸⁶ Likewise, Elizabeth was proud of her collection of foreign styles of dress. In her conversation with Sir James Melville in 1564, she said that “she had clothes of every sort.” Then Sir Melville noticed that “every day thereafter, so long as I was there, she changed. One day she had the English Weed, another the French, and

⁸⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe,” in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 124-151; John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. 4.

⁸⁶ Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, p. 12.

another the Italian and so forth. She asked me which of them became her best. I answered, In my judgement the Italian dress, which answer I found pleased her well; for she delighted to show her golden coloured hair, wearing a caul and bonnet as they do in Italy.”⁸⁷

From the inventories of the Queen’s Wardrobe of Robes, we can also find that Elizabeth had several foreign gowns, including a black taffeta Flanders gown, a Dutch gown of black velvet, a Polish gown of the same, a Venetian gown of crimson velvet, two French gowns, five Italian gowns and four Spanish gowns.⁸⁸ Her rich wardrobe of foreign styles is further confirmed by the letter of Dr. Wilson, the English agent to the court of Don John of Austria. He told Don John in June 1577 that Elizabeth “used divers attires, Italian, Spanish, and French, as occasion served and as she pleased.”⁸⁹ He also reported to the Queen that Don John greatly admired the Spanish attire and earnestly desired to see her wearing dress in that style, “the sooner the better.”⁹⁰ Elizabeth might have followed this suggestion, wearing in the Spanish style of dress for a portrait sent to Don John, since clothes of a particular style could be worn as an expression of good will and familiarity with a specific country. Though that gesture did not appear to yield results, we at least know that Elizabeth paid attention to this consideration, since later in 1581, she utilized the French fashion for her portraits sent to the French Queen Mother, Catherine de’ Medici, in her marriage negotiations with Anjou. Catherine and other French princesses “did note and weare very muche satisfied to see her Majestie apparelled and attired all over alla francoyse.”⁹¹ Therefore, adopting these foreign fashions could not only satisfy Elizabeth’s vanity for high fashion, but also help her to make friendships or alliances with other continental rulers, and were particularly useful for her marriage negotiations.

⁸⁷ James Melville, *Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill*, p. 95.

⁸⁸ Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁹ “Wilson to the Queen, 11 June 1577,” *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1575-77*, ed. Allen James Crosby (London: Public Record Office, 1880), pp. 596-597.

⁹⁰ “Wilson to the Queen, 11 June 1577,” *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1575-77*, p. 597.

⁹¹ “Henry Cobham’s letter, 22 January 1581,” cited in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*, p. 122.

Nevertheless, the considerations of diplomacy diminished Elizabeth's Englishness to some extent, as there was a prevalent idea in early modern Europe that clothes distinguished one nation from another.⁹² To some writers of this period, national identification could be marked by the visible medium of garments, and wearing foreign clothes not only interrupted the way of knowing one's country of origin, but also meant putting one's country into a position of servitude, an act of treason. Castiglione, for example, deplors the Italians' interest in foreign styles of dress through the words of Messer Federico, saying that

*The Italians are so fond of dressing in the style of other peoples, I think that everyone should be permitted to dress as he pleases. But I do not know by what fate it happens that Italy does not have, as she used to have, a manner of dress recognized to be Italian: for, although the introduction of these new fashions makes the former ones seem very crude, still the older were perhaps a sign of freedom, even as the new ones have proved to be an augury of servitude, which I think is now most evidently fulfilled. . . Just so our having changed our Italian dress for that of foreigners strikes me as meaning that all those for whose dress we have exchanged our own are going to conquer us: which has proved to be all true, for by now there is no nation that had not made us its prey.*⁹³

In early modern England, there were also loud voices lamenting the importation of foreign fashions and textiles, such as silk, satin, and velvet, claiming that they disrupted the notion of what it meant to be English and hurt the domestic wool industry and social morality.⁹⁴ Thomas Dekker in his *Seven Deadly Sins of London*, published in 1606, compares wearing foreign fashions to treachery:

⁹² Ulrike Ilg, "The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in the Sixteenth-Century Europe," in *Clothing Culture*, ed. Catherine Richardson, pp. 29-47.

⁹³ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier: an authoritative text*, trans. Charles S. Singleton and Edgar de N. Mayhew, ed. Daniel Javitch (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 88-89.

⁹⁴ See Roze Hentschell, "Treasonous Textiles: Foreign Cloth and the Construction of Englishness," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32-3 (2002), pp. 543-570.

*An English-mans suite is like a traitors bodie that hath beene hanged, drawne, and quartered, and is set up in severall places: his Cod-peece is in Denmarke, the collar of his Double and the belly in France: the wing and narrow sleeue in Italy: the short waste hangs ouer a Dutch Botchers stall in Vltrich: his huge slopes speaks Spanish: Polonia giues him the Bootes.*⁹⁵

Moreover, English writers of the late sixteenth century associated continental fashion with moral decadence and dissolution, alleging that their importation into England infiltrated English virtues connected with English textiles. That is the key issue of Robert Greene's *A Quip for An Upstart Courtier, or A Quaint Dispute between Velvet Breeches and Cloth Breeches* (1592). In this satiric pamphlet, the pair of velvet breeches represents the importation of foreign fabrics and the accompanying degradation of morals, while the other pair of cloth breeches stands for domestic wool cloth and a symbol of English moral superiority.⁹⁶ Wearing foreign clothes thus meant treachery to English industry and English identity. By this reasoning, it seems odd that Elizabeth manifested herself as a true queen of England, while she dressed with lavish foreign textiles.

Valerie Cumming, in her study of royal dress, maintains that "Tudor grandeur consisted of bulky, swaggering, and highly decorated clothes in which imported luxuries, although present, did not swamp or undermine a strong sense of national identity."⁹⁷ Nevertheless, there is little evidence to show that the English in that period clearly established any part of their national identity in dress. A popular image of the Englishman shows him either naked, as the one depicted in the first chapter of Andrew Borde's *First Booke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (1542), perplexed at "all new fashions," or adopting the variety of dress styles from all over Europe as William

⁹⁵ Thomas Dekker, *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Alexander Grosart (London: Printed for private circulation, 1885), vol. 2, pp. 59-60.

⁹⁶ Robert Greene, *A Quip for An Upstart Courtier: Or, A Quaint Dispute between Velvet Breeches and Cloth Breeches*, in *Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. Alexander Grosart (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), vol. 11.

⁹⁷ Valerie Cumming, *Royal Dress, the Image and Reality 1580 to the Present Day* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989), p. 17.

Harrison comments in his *Description of England* (1577).⁹⁸ In addition, Magnifico Giuliano, a speaker in Castiglione's *The Courtier*, lists a range of popular European fashions, pointing out that "some dressing after the French manner, some after the Spanish, some wishing to appear German; nor are those lacking who dress in the style of Turks."⁹⁹ English dress does not appear on the list.

It is often said that the English had a strong sense of nationhood and there was a rising spirit of patriotism in this period, especially the gentry and nobility, but they were not interested in developing their own style of dress. They rather were keen on assuming the exotic styles of other European countries.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the culture of the English elite's clothing in this period did not follow the rhythm of the development of national identity. Their consideration of rank, to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, overwhelmed the sentiment of Englishness. Elizabeth's government did discern the necessity of prohibiting the use of foreign fabrics in order to protect the domestic wool industry and to maintain social morals, as shown by royal proclamations against "the excess of apparel."¹⁰¹ But the royal house and higher rank of peers were not restricted by the law, continuing to purchase expensive foreign materials. Moreover, no evidence suggests that Elizabeth and her courtiers consciously wore black and white garments from a desire to promote national identity, although Jane Schneider argues so.¹⁰² Their adoption of black and white dress was primarily related to the expression

⁹⁸ Andrew Boorde, *The First Book of the Introduction to Knowledge* (London, 1542). Sig. A3v; William Harrison, *The Description of England*, ed. Georges Edelen (New York: Dover Publications and the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1994), pp. 145-146.

⁹⁹ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, p. 89.

¹⁰⁰ A. Ribeiro, "On Englishness in Dress," in *The Englishness of English Dress*, eds., C. Breward, B. Conekin and C. Cox (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 17-18.

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth and her government issued a total of 12 royal proclamations against "the excess of apparel" from 1559 to 1597. Some of them restricted certain foreign fabrics in details to some specific higher classes. For instance, the Proclamation of 1574 regulated that "satin, damask, silk, camlet, or taffeta, in gown, coat, hose, or uppermost garments; fur whereof the kind of growth not within the Queen's dominions, except foins, gray genets, and bodge: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, and men that may dispend £100 by the year, and so valued in the subsidy book." See "Proclamation 15 June 1574, 16 Elizabeth I (601)," in *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, p. 384.

¹⁰² Jane Schneider argues that the popularity of black and white clothes in Elizabethan court displays "a commitment to their own identity and industry—a refusal to become addicted on other's terms, above all the terms of Italian artisans and merchants," since the dying skills of brilliant reds, and bright colours in general was monopolized by the Italians. See Jane Schneider, "Peacocks and Penguins: the Political Economy of European Cloth and Colors," *American Ethnologist* 5 (1978), pp. 413-438, and her "Fantastical Colors in

of personal virtues, such as chastity and gravity.¹⁰³ After all, the need for creating an image of royal magnificence dominated Elizabeth's choice of foreign extravagant fabrics; moreover, the need for sustaining foreign alliances motivated her to wear diverse foreign styles of dress.

5. Conclusion

This article has shown that Elizabeth had a strong idea of how clothes related to her image-making through her verbal and symbolic use of dresses. Clothes were integral to the creation and maintenance of her public images; and she was particularly successful in making use of her dashing gowns to deliver the messages of majesty, magnificence, and virginity. Nevertheless, clothes, as a material thing, seemed to be more difficult for Elizabeth to use as flexibly as she manipulated her rhetoric. In her speeches and conversations, she displayed contrasting but interchangeable identities: king and queen, father and mother, wife and husband. She could even use clothing in her speeches as a metaphor to illustrate her political virtues. But, she limited her use of actual clothing particularly to transmitting the notion of her female virtues; the concentration on femininity by her dress showed little sense of trying to be a masculine or androgynous ruler of the realm. At the same time, the necessity of luxurious textiles and dazzling foreign styles for enhancing her royal status and the alliances with foreign rulers took precedence over her concern for English identity and independence. In sum, Elizabeth's clothing language was not in accord with her primary policy of image-making. Moreover, the perspective of clothing reminds us that the study of Elizabeth's representations finds contradictions and ambiguities: not only might the Queen contradict her supporters, but divergent resources for the Queen's representations manipulated by her or her supporters could also contradict each other. 

Foggy London," in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 109-127.

¹⁰³ Grant McCracken, "Dress Colour at the Court of Elizabeth I: an essay in historical anthropology," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 22-4 (1985), pp. 515-533.

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伊莉莎白女王的服飾語言及其形象塑造中的矛盾

林美香*

摘要

本文探討十六世紀英格蘭「時尚女王」—伊莉莎白一世 (Elizabeth I, r. 1558-1603) 的服飾特色，並與其整體形象塑造相對照。伊莉莎白女王形象的研究早已有深厚的傳統，但既有的作品多忽略服飾的重要性；雖然有少數研究服飾的學者注意到伊莉莎白的穿著，卻又多偏重物質面，即服裝的剪裁、用料、風格等。本文企圖矯正這兩種研究的不足，亦試圖建立起兩者間溝通的橋樑，以期能更深入瞭解伊莉莎白本人對服飾的想法、她如何利用服飾傳達政治訊息，以及服飾在她整體形象塑造中所扮演的角色。

人類學家或社會學者常將服飾比擬為一種語言，或一種溝通的模式，具有傳遞信息與情感的功能，並可用以塑造穿者的形象。此理論固然有助於本文主題的研究，但它忽略了另一種形式的服飾語言，即在日常對話或正式演說中，我們如何訴說與服飾相關的話語，或利用服飾作為隱喻傳達訊息。本文的研究方式將涵蓋這兩種不同的「服飾語言」，第一種是透過伊莉莎白的肖像、服飾清冊 (inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes) 及相關文字記載，來瞭解伊莉莎白透過服裝所要顯現的政治形象；第二種是從伊莉莎白的談話與演說內容，特別是她曾提及與服飾相關的話語中，來分析服飾對她個人的意義、對她形象塑造的重要性。這兩個層次，前者是視覺上的傳達，後者是語彙上的傳達，共同構成了伊莉莎白藉由服飾所訴說的「政治論述」。此外，本文將在這兩種研究的基礎上，將伊莉莎白的服飾形象與其主體形象相對照，並指出其中矛盾或為難之處。

關鍵詞：伊莉莎白女王、形象塑造、服飾、語言

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