

ABSTRACT

Le roi est mort, vive le roi! – The King is dead, long live the King! The symbolism of the King, living despite the death of the King is combined with the most notable example of royal duality – the rite of prayer initiated in France for the deceased king along with the simultaneous proclamation of the continuity of the royal throne. The lapidary proclamation expressed a complex legal and theological doctrine of Tudor-era jurists formed in 16th century England, namely the doctrine of the King's Two Bodies, which Ernst Kantorowicz thoroughly analyzes in his reflections.

The concept of the ruler's dual essence inspired an attempt – albeit in a different context – to depict the king's communal body with his physical body, i.e. an image that is a carrier of what is immortal and beyond time, in such a way that it can exist in a mortal, human body. Commemoration of the presence of absent: *What is absent from the very beginning is precisely the subject*^[51] – Lacan claimed. Can the portrait, as a form that directly expresses the subject's presence, fully correspond with the doctrine of the king's two bodies? Building images of rulers based on the foundations of physiognomy, as a tool in an attempt to capture the duality of the human person, not only to keep the portrayed person alive, but to capture in the form of an image the relationship between soul and body. Based on the legal and mystical theory of English jurists, an attempt is made to change the medium and mode of communication by transferring the unobservable layers of personality, disposition, temperament or mental state of Polish rulers to the visual arts. To create a spiritual image of monarchs.

Ambiguity. Can history really be considered to consist only of homologous events and characters? Is it possible to achieve complete historical truth? What criteria should be used to indisputably determine whether a given historical figure was a negative or positive figure in the context of his time? Is it possible to unquestionably assess which monarch deserved to have his image included in textbook, postings of great rulers?

The phenomenon of creating portraits as a form of commemoration and confirmation of presence has decades of tradition. The visual representation of the figures of crowned heads within a portrait, visible in a historical and identity context, characteristic of the peculiarities of official royal portraits, covers a wide range of approaches to this field of art as well as to the way and form of

[51] J. Lacan, *La logique du fantasme*, quoted in J. Sowa, *Phantom Body of the King. Peripheral struggles with modern form*, TAIWPN Universitas, Cracow 2011, p. 351.

depicting the figures. The paper analyzes the history of Polish monarchs, challenging one-sided and simplistic evaluations of their figures. I argue that history consists of complex characters and events that cannot be clearly classified as exclusively positive or negative. Based on the theory of the King's Two Bodies, it is presented that monarchs are dualistic figures, possessing both a physical and a symbolic body. The evaluation of their actions requires consideration of the context of their era, culture and environment. An analysis of royal biographies indicates the existence of both positive and negative traits in their characters and conduct, which is consistent with the universal human nature attributed to the existence of a natural body in the dualistic incarnation of the King.

Precisely in this two-layered perspective it is necessary to consider the figures of Polish-Ruthenian-Lithuanian history. The paper addresses the human dimension of the royal figures, their emotions, weaknesses and problems, which are often overlooked in official historical narratives. Physical condition, mental health, education, interests and private life, shows them as a complex, multi-dimensional characters. The need to avoid simple evaluations of their characters and actions is pointed out, instead offering a more nuanced, multi-layered analysis. Indisputably, it is possible to conclude that they are not persons directly drawn from the painting reproductions of the Matejko's royalty of Polish magnates. The analysis of selected issue of the royal portrait focuses on the demythologization and objective representation of monarchs, breaking with the stereotyped, mythical images of rulers representing us successively. The dissertation required an analysis of various historical sources in order to create a more balanced and critical perspective on key moments and figures in Polish monarchical history from the first of the Piast dynasty to the last on the throne by decision of the noble assembly of the elected king Stanisław August Poniatowski. The aim of this paper is to analyze the real contribution of historical figures to history, taking into account their motivations and actions in light of the legal fiction of the King's Two Bodies. It is an attempt to capture in a drawing form the revision of historical images and judgments dedicated to Polish rulers and persons claiming royal dignity, analyzing their authenticity and values in the context of former times and current knowledge. In an effort to build a new layer of interpretation, it expands and reshapes the historical narrative to better understand and portray the complexity of Polish monarchs. The paper is not an exemplification of conventional, superficial historical representations, but creates an artistic "negative" that, when fixed on paper, reveals new layers of meaning of historical interpretation. Based on authentic royal archaeology, an interpretive layer is created, forming phantasmagorical portraits of rulers and royal infants, reflecting my perception of the past. The combination of real and imagined narratives allows for a deeper understanding of history, while creating a new story about it. Drawing as a medium is used to expand and transform the historical narrative, being a reflection on the contemporary understanding of the past.

[...] I am only a portraitist, i.e., I use the means of painting to depict human psychology [...]^[52]. The words of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz fit perfectly – changing only the craftsman's tool – into the process of creating portrait studies, where the draughtsman develops a unique relationship between sensibility and its materialization. Drawing is more than a representation of reality. It is a combination of perception, emotion and skill. Rather than focusing only on lines, it is to penetrate the inner essence of the drawn figure, creating an image im-

[52] S. I. Witkiewicz, *Matter of a continuity of painting-critical nonsense. The voice of a "visual artist" crying in the wilderness* [1932], "Artistic Review," R. 4: 1949, 7-9, p. 13.

mersed in imaginative space. As a result, multi-layered portraits are created that reflect both the perceived subject and my personal experience and knowledge. By drawing the image of the portrayed through my imagery, I externalize the character. The importance of unique relationship between sensibility and its materialization in the creative process is emphasized. Hence, the royal portrait is not perceived as a record in a strictly historiographical canon. The focus is on interpreting the emotions and mental reality of figures, rather than strictly historical reproductions. Therefore, I have tried to avoid studying historical similes in order to better understand and depict the complex personalities and histories of the people portrayed, and not fall unwittingly into an interpretive carbon copy. The basic issue in the study of drawing portraits is the principles of physiognomy and the relationship of appearance to the personality and character of the subject. Using the externalization through the face of the inner subject and the observation of this phenomenon already described by Darwin to better understand the portrayed persons, a specific form of presence of the portrayed is identified. In *facie legitur homo* – the face is a sign of man. Distortions appearing in historical representations of crowned heads are the result of idealization and the creation of an unreal image, creating a “phantom” of the actual figure. In the context of creating portraits, special attention is paid to the importance of thinking in black and white. For me, the absence of color does not mean getting rid of it, but instead allows for a deeper understanding of the world of colors and a focus on what is in between. The face is a key means of communication, being a form of presence of the absent. It is the central element that tells the story of a person, allowing a multi-layered interpretation of facial expressions, emotions and character of the portrayed subject. Here in a conscious manner, the story of God’s governor is told as an ordinary man. The royal *corpus mysticum* is abandoned to deal with the mortal subject, in this mystical dualistic body of the King. Therefore becoming the author of another layer of the story of people who came to rule our country.