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The Body of the Queen and the Prize of Science

This presentation focus on the relationship between science and nation, class and gender in the televised Nobel Banquet, held after the Nobel Prize ceremony. The representation of the body of the Swedish Queen is used as a lens through which to view intersectional power dimensions. Drawing on cultural, media and gender studies, I will examine the mediated persona of the Queen in the televised Nobel Banquet via contextualised textual analysis. The purpose of the Nobel Foundation in inviting the royals is to enhance the social status of science. But it is the Queen who has received more TV time than anyone else – scientist or royalty – since her TV-debut in 1976. How can the camera focus on her silent body be interpreted in relation to science? I suggest that the meaning of the Queen's body also implies certain understandings of central power dimensions. The body of the Queen signifies that gender, heterosexuality, class affiliation, nationality and race are important and normative factors in scientific discourse. At the Nobel Banquet, the representation of her body identifies science as associated with the heterosexual, white elites, and reproduces a traditional, ideal femininity.