

THE MONARCHY AS ELIZABETH'S DOPPELGÄNGER IN *THE CROWN* SERIES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the character of Elizabeth II in the series *The Crown* in relation to the myth of the double or doppelgänger through the series' narrative text. It

examines the first three seasons of the series and identifies three stages of doppelgängerism through which the character of the Queen passes from her accession to the throne in 1947 to the 25th anniversary of her coronation in 1977. We contend that, through this narrative device, the series transcends the individual and connects her to a broader vision encompassing the concept of the monarchy. To this end, the series presents "the Crown" as a character with its own identity, closely intertwined with that of the Queen, functioning as her double. From the internal division it causes within the Queen and the resulting identity struggles, a powerful reflection emerges on the coexistence of monarchy and modernity. From this perspective, both the structure of the series and the development of its characters acquire greater significance.

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1. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND REFERENCES

In November 2016, Netflix released the first season of *The Crown*, the popular series about the life and reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Seven years later, in December 2023, *The Crown* came to an end, with more than 60 episodes offering a total of around 60 hours of television over the course of six seasons. The series, which covers a period of nearly six decades (from 1947 to 2005), has been well received by critics and audiences alike, in addition to garnering numerous awards¹.

The historical biography genre has found in the lives of female monarchs a particularly compelling subject. Over time, cinema and television have immortalised figures such as Cleopatra VII of Egypt, Christina of Sweden, Joanna of Castille, Marie Antoinette, Mary Stuart, Catherine the Great, Queen Victoria, Elizabeth I, and, more recently, Elizabeth II. Biopics about female sovereigns have experienced a resurgence in recent decades, undergoing significant transformation as their character's lives are reinterpreted through contemporary perspectives that incorporate notions of gender, agency, and leadership (Ford and Mitchell 2009; Busni 2024).

The Crown is no exception to this phenomenon and has sparked a growing interest among scholars. The approaches are diverse: contextual analyses such as Lacey's (2017); narrative-rhetorical readings (Braga 2020, 2021); and with a more analytical approach (Pierini 2022; Pasetti 2022; Di Borgo 2023; Busni 2024). Taken together, these contributions highlight the complexity of the series and the rich layers of meaning it contains.

Our study, by focusing on *The Crown* as a work of fiction and on its internal narrative structure, deliberately sets aside—despite their relevance—certain aspects, such as the intricate relationship between historical fact and narrative fiction, the conventions it embraces as a female biopic² (including the relationship between leading actresses, their corps, and the characters), or its classification as a contemporary heritage drama³. Nor do we analyse *The Crown* as part of

the so-called complex television phenomenon (Mittell 2015), or dwell on its audiovisual codes in any detail.

Series creator and showrunner Peter Morgan has from the outset insisted that *The Crown* is a work of fiction, a dramatisation based on a true story.⁴ It would be fair to describe it as rather more like a painting than a photograph, closer to Shakespeare's historical dramas than to the news reported by the media since Queen Elizabeth II's coronation (Lajta-Novak and Huber 2015: 1-15). As a series belonging to the historical-biographical genre, its purpose is to introduce the people in question into the pantheon of mythology and demonstrate why they merit inclusion therein (Bingham 2010:10) Accordingly, this article analyses *The Crown* strictly as a fictional series. We maintain that it is based on the doppelgänger or the double myth⁵, as a universal motif of split identity. This myth guides the whole series, but manifests most clearly in the first three seasons, as it is these that pivot around the central character of Queen Elizabeth II, who is the real focus of our analysis.

Over the course of the 30 episodes that comprise the first three seasons, the protagonist is depicted as split into two halves. One half is Elizabeth Windsor (the ordinary woman), while the second is created with her proclamation as Queen (her alter ego). These two selves and the tension they create in the character facilitates the development of a storyline that is primarily psychological, tracing the character's gradual transformation from the moment of the initial internal split in the first season to the stabilising of her personality in the third. It is also argued here that this identity crisis unfolds in three stages, each one associated with a season, culminating in Elizabeth's full identification with the Crown.

This duality or internal struggle in the character of Elizabeth has been pointed out by various authors, although none refer explicitly to the doppelgänger motif nor examine it through detailed narrative analysis (Braga 2020, 2021; Pierini 2022, Pasetti 2022, Tutan 2023, Pozzo di Borgo 2023, Busni 2024). Paolo Braga, for example, argues that each episode explores the irreconcilable conflict 'between Elizabeth

1 The Rotten Tomatoes website gives the series a critics' rating of 86%, while Metacritic gives it a score of 80 points (see https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_crown and <https://www.metacritic.com/tv/the-crown/>). The IMDb platform indicates that *The Crown* has received 141 awards and 334 nominations to date, including BAFTAs, Golden Globes and Primetime Emmy awards (see https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4786824/awards/?ref=tt_awd).

2 On this particular point, the works of Custen (1992) and Bingham (2010) are especially relevant.

3 It introduces new characteristics to the 1980s heritage film, as described by

Monk (2011) and Vidal (2012).

4 The series originates both from the stage play *The Audience*, also written by Peter Morgan (whose main contribution lies in the conversations Queen Elizabeth II holds with successive Prime Ministers throughout the series), and from *The Queen* (Frears, 2006), in which Morgan, as screenwriter, fictionalised Queen Elizabeth II for the first time.

5 Although some authors distinguish between these two terms (suggesting that the double is a more general concept of which 'doppelgänger' is a specific subcategory), in this study they are used interchangeably.

the wife, mother and sister, and Elizabeth the Queen' (2020: 230). For Braga, this conflict between the two dimensions of the character forms the very heart of the series and highlights a crucial theme: the challenging—if not impossible—reconciliation between the realms of desire and duty (2021: 186). Tutan similarly asserts the opposition between love and duty that Elizabeth must constantly wrestle with (2023: 81). Pozzo di Borgo delves further into this question, exploring them in terms of the concepts of freedom and duty in the existentialism of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. The monarch in *The Crown*, he explains, has to struggle with two freedoms (her own and the monarchy's) to be able to truly exercise them. This idea is summed up in the internal dichotomy between 'who I am' and 'what I am' (2023: 340-1). Generally speaking, as Gyori points out, this idea of a division between the private image and the public image of the ruler is common in more recent stories about British monarchs, often portrayed from a psychological perspective (2014: 192-4).

Our research delves into the historical and narrative roots of this duality in the portrayal of monarchs. Historically, the origin lies in the mediaeval and modern conception of the power of the crown, known as the theory of 'the king's two bodies' (Kantorowicz 1957). This states that by divine right, the king has two bodies: a 'body natural' and a 'body politic', the latter being the more important of the two. The first refers to the mortal, human quality of the king as a man, while the second is a symbolic body that represents the timeless, eternal nature of the monarchy. The 'body natural' is prone to human frailties such as sickness and death, and it is therefore vulnerable. Conversely, the 'body politic' is deemed continuous and immutable, representing the idea of royalty as an institution. In other words, the king is at once an individual with personal limitations and an embodiment of the State or Kingdom over which he reigns (Kantorowicz 1957: 3-6). It was precisely this conception of two separate bodies that made it possible for Mary I to ascend to the English throne in 1553 as the first female sovereign in the country's history. In 1558, Elizabeth I became the second. The monarch's symbolic body allowed this because it was split from the body of a woman, who would otherwise have been considered unfit to reign by reason of her sex. While the theory of the king's two bodies has been secularised in our era, it continues to sustain the idea that royal power has a symbolic component that transcends the individual ruler.

Narratively, this theory perfectly fits with the universal myth of the double or doppelgänger, which has its roots in antiquity and has survived in numerous art forms, includ-

ing painting, literature and cinema, through the ages to the present day. As Živković (2000) and Danišová (2023) have explained, the splitting of a single character into two distinct personalities already existed in legends and magic tales of classical antiquity. Despite having evolved in accordance with the cultural codes of each era, it remains as a basic narrative archetype. Bargalló will even say that it is a structural element of all Western literature (1994: 11). In essence, it is associated with the theme of identity, whereby 'one and the same individual can exist in two discrete embodiments' in the same fictional world (Dolezel 1985: 96). Primarily, it is an expression of the duality experienced by every human being between identity and alterity, manifesting the profoundly deep-rooted need we have to explore the self and reflect on our own identity (Danišová 2023: 96).

2. THE DOPPELGÄNGER MOTIF AND THE CROWN

Particularly in *The Crown*, as a work of fiction, the internal division of the Queen's character fits into a category of the doppelgänger that Herrero Cecilia has defined as 'internal subjective double'.⁶ This consists of the split character experiencing a fragmentation of the self into two opposing entities. It implies "the disintegration of the unifying consciousness of the individual self, both as a subject (in relation to the self) and as an object (in relation to others)" (2011: 26). This could be applied to the ballerina dissociating her role in the play from her own persona in *Black Swan* (2010), or to the superheroes adopting two different identities (Superman, Spiderman, etc.). In the case of *The Crown* series, decoupling is due to the 'weight of the Crown', the duty to identify and act as Queen. Elizabeth the woman and Elizabeth the queen share the same outward appearance but exist separately on the internal level, where different needs, intentions, goals and obligations come into conflict in what can be defined simply as the aforementioned opposition between desire and duty. Thus, the crown in the show is not merely a symbol of the monarchy but a character in its own right. In particular, it becomes a leading character, split off from the person crowned as monarch, constituting her *alter ego*.

6 The subjective double may be 'external', where the self is split into a different being external to the individual identified with the character; this kind of double can be found in novels such as Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Double* or Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

This hypothesis is further reinforced by looking at the filmography of the series' screenwriter and showrunner Peter Morgan. He uses two-way conflicts based on universal narrative motifs in many of his works. In an interview published in 2015 (Lajta-Novak and Huber: 1-15), Morgan acknowledges that his script for *The Deal* (dir. Stephen Frears 2003) creates a conflict between Gordon Brown and Tony Blair based on the foundational motif of the Cain and Abel story. Another example he mentions is his script for *Frost/Nixon* (dir. Ron Howard 2008), which features a clear conflict between the journalist David Frost and former US president Richard Nixon. In this case, the source is another Biblical story: David and Goliath. A third example he refers to is the script for *Rush* (dir. Ron Howard 2013), which uses a universal narrative of rivalry to depict the conflict between the Formula 1 champions Niki Lauda and James Hunt.

In *The Crown*, the use of the doppelgänger motif allowed Morgan to explore another two-way conflict, except that in this case the battle is waged within a single character. Morgan seems to follow the double or doppelgänger dramatic path pointed out by Živković. According to the latter, the dramatic tension experienced by the split cannot be resolved until one of the two parts of the person takes possession of the other, either by dominating it or destroying it. The two parts may alternatively be integrated into a single person, thereby bringing an end to the division between them. In short, the split personality triggers a kind of war between duality and unity because "the double pursues the subject as his second self and makes him feel as himself and the other at the same time" (2000: 122).

In order to illustrate these dynamics, the next section offers a detailed analysis of the development of the doppelgänger motif in the first three seasons of the series. Methodologically, the procedure has been as follows. The scripts (or transcripts, when necessary) were searched for the words 'Crown', 'Monarchy', 'King', and 'Queen', identifying over 50 references. These references enabled the identification of key scenes in each script, from which the three narrative phases of the doppelgänger motif were examined. In Season 1, the initial split between Elizabeth Windsor (the woman) and Elizabeth Regina (the Queen); in Season 2, the struggle between the two halves, almost to the point of the disappearance of the original self; and finally, in Season 3, the stabilisation of her identity as Queen, with the harmonious integration of her personal life. This last stage of Elizabeth's doppelgänger experience will establish her attitude and behaviour in the following seasons of the series (although this question is beyond the scope of this article).

5. THE CROWN AND THE INDIVIDUAL WOMAN

5.1. The weight of the Crown

The conflict of the doppelgänger is symbolically represented in *The Crown* right from the opening credits, comprising a series of detail shots of a crown being forged. The liquid gold spreads out through the lines of a mould, solidifying until it takes its final form: a heavy crown designed to rest on a monarch's head. The soundtrack that accompanies this image, composed by Hans Zimmer, introduces a melody that combines a dramatic tone with a regal touch. It is interesting to note that Zimmer took inspiration for this opening theme from the aria "What power art thou, who from below" from Henry Purcell's opera *King Arthur* (Sire 2017; Wise 2017), creating a connection with British mythology that adds to the expressiveness of the image. Although they are not heard in Zimmer's composition, the lyrics to the aria establish some suggestive associations with the series. "What Power art thou, Who from below, Hast made me rise, Unwillingly and slow, From beds of everlasting snow!" These are the words of the Cold Genius in Purcell's opera, protesting against the demands of the supernatural Cupid. On a symbolic level, the human character faced with the prospect of assuming the throne makes a similar complaint. The responsibility it demands exceeds the bounds of her nature. This evokes the classical theme of the weight of the crown, found in so many historical dramas of Elizabethan theatre: "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown", remarks King Henry in the second part of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* (Act III, Scene 1).

In *The Crown*, the theme of the weight of the crown is also present, interwoven with the doppelgänger motif. This weight rests mainly but not solely on the Queen. Other characters appearing in the series also bear the burden of having to protect the monarchy and refrain from actions or decisions that might tarnish it: The Duke of Windsor (the former King Edward IV, Elizabeth's uncle), Margaret (Elizabeth's younger sister), Philip (Elizabeth's husband), and young Prince Charles (Elizabeth's first-born son) in the final episodes of Season 3. Within their own roles in the series, these characters establish contrasts or symmetries with the Queen and suffer because of her divided identity, thereby contributing to the doppelgänger theme in connection with the Crown.

These first three seasons cover a period from the Queen's early adulthood through to maturity (from the ages of 21 to

51). Over this thirty-year period, Elizabeth's doppelgänger experience evolves through three stages, as described below.

5.2. Stage One. The Split

The split itself occurs in Season 1, which is the season that has been the subject of the most scholarly research. It covers the period from 1947 to 1955 (from the ages of 21 to 29 in the Queen's life). In the first episode and the beginning of the second, Elizabeth still has a single, integrated identity. Scenes depicting her wedding to Philip, with whom she is clearly in love, her close relationship with her father, King George VI, the birth of her first two children, and happy moments at the beginning of a tour with her husband to different countries of the Commonwealth all serve to reveal her stable personality. Only her father's illness foreshadows an impending rupture of this equilibrium. That moment comes in the last part of "Hyde Park Corner" (1.02), when she receives the news of her father the King's death while she is still on tour in Africa. On her return to England, as she gets ready to get off the plane, she reads a letter from her grandmother, Queen Mary:

(...) And while you mourn your father, you must also mourn someone else. Elizabeth Mountbatten. For she has now been replaced by another person, Elizabeth Regina. The two Elizabeths will frequently be in conflict with one another. The fact is, the Crown must win. Must always win.⁷

Queen Mary's advice here expresses a key theme of the story and echoes throughout the series. It also foreshadows the emergence of Elizabeth's doppelgänger, which appears explicitly in a scene almost immediately afterwards. In mourning dress, Elizabeth leaves the room where she has said her last farewell to her father, holding back the tears and exhibiting the composure expected of a monarch. She is now Elizabeth Regina. In the hallway, Queen Mary appears as a black veiled figure, mourning not just her son but also Elizabeth as she walks solemnly before her.

In "Windsor" (1.03), the conflict between the two Elizabeths begins to take dramatic effect. She must learn how to reign, but to do so means giving up the life she has had up until this moment. An example of the resulting tension in her identity can be found in the conversation she has with Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Elizabeth insists that as a

married woman, she will continue to use her married name (Mountbatten) after her coronation, and she will continue living at Clarendon House to keep Philip happy. "Yes, I am Queen, but I am also a woman. And a wife," she explains to Churchill. "I want to be in a successful marriage. I would argue, stability under this roof might even be in the national interest". Despite her desire to be a good wife, Elizabeth ends up giving in, on Churchill's advice, deciding she cannot prioritise her personal life over the Crown. Thus, Queen Mary's warning that "the Crown must win" begins to become a reality.

Another example of the split can be found in the same episode, when Elizabeth asks her uncle, the Duke of Windsor, to explain to her why he abdicated. If he had not given up the throne, she would never have become Queen: "You don't think I would have preferred to grow up out of the spotlight? Away from Court? Away from the scrutiny and the visibility. A simple life. A happier life. As a wife, mother. An ordinary English countrywoman". ("Windsor" 1.03)

These two moments (with Churchill and with her uncle) express the aforementioned conflict between desire and duty. As Elizabeth experiences the splitting of her identity when she is a young adult, in this first stage the doppelgänger narrative also functions as a coming-of-age story. As Braga explains (2020: 230), Elizabeth takes a learning pathway "from adult to leader" with a high personal cost, as she is shaped into a new identity. Two other characters, both aligned with Elizabeth Regina, will be the main ones responsible for imprinting the features in her that will determine her role as monarch: Queen Mary and Winston Churchill. Both can be described as "the voice of duty". These mentors are reflection characters,⁸ mirroring what Elizabeth is called upon to be as Queen.

Queen Mary is the embodiment of royal tradition. In "Act of God" (1.04), she will remind her granddaughter that her role as queen is a sacred mission, as the monarchy is "A calling from God. That is why you are crowned in an abbey, not a government building". She will also instruct the young monarch in the need to be impartial and politically neutral at all times: "To do nothing is the hardest job of all. And it will take every ounce of energy you have. To be impartial is not natural, not human (...)." Elizabeth will then reply: "Well, that's fine for the sovereign. But where does it leave me?"

7 All underlining in the quotes has been added for emphasis.

8 A reflection character (or mirror character) is one who is most closely aligned with the protagonist – the best friend, partner, mentor, spouse, etc., whose primary function is to help the protagonist achieve the outer motivation and to urge them toward transformation. See Tabb, Michael. 2019. *Prewriting your Screenplay*. New York: Routledge.

Meanwhile, Churchill guides Elizabeth in the proper use of the royal prerogative.⁹ In “Smoke and Mirrors” (1.05), Churchill questions Elizabeth when Philip tries to change the coronation ritual, explaining that the monarch must make the decision after responsible consideration of what the institution means:

This isn't a business. It's the Crown. And one has to ask oneself... What is the purpose of the Crown? What is the purpose of the Monarchy? Does the Crown bend to the will of the people to be audited and accountable? Or should it remain above temporal matters? (...) The decision is yours to make, we will take our lead from you.

In this first season, the respect that the Queen has for these two mentor characters is obvious. At the same time, she has close relationships with other characters who place demands on her as a woman, wife, sister, niece, etc., who embody the voice of love and desire in opposition to her duties as monarch. The most important of these characters are her husband Philip and her sister Margaret. Both these characters act as foils¹⁰ to Elizabeth Regina, while reminding her of her original identity as Elizabeth Windsor. Philip, as the Queen's consort, must protect and support her, but he also wants to find his own place in the marriage. His demands intensify the conflict between Elizabeth's two personalities, as is made clear in two key scenes. The first is in “Smoke and Mirrors” (1.05), when, after learning that ritual requires him to kneel before his wife on the day of the coronation, he requests a change to the ceremony so that he need not submit to something he finds humiliating. When Elizabeth—on Churchill's advice—denies his request and insists that he must kneel before the Crown like everybody else, he rebukes her, suggesting that she has two identities and doesn't know which

one is the real Elizabeth: “Are you my wife or my Queen?” Besides, in the second scene of “Gloriana” (1.10), Philip opposes her decision to forbid Margaret's marriage to Townsend. He cannot understand how his wife can act so coldly. Their conversation on the subject once again triggers the conflict between Elizabeth's two halves:

PHILIP: *Well, in the name of the people that live with you and love you, might I suggest not being Head of the Church for a minute. Or Head of State, or Head of the Commonwealth of Nations, or the Army, or the Navy, or the Government, or the Fount of Justice, or the whole damn circus, frankly.*

ELIZABETH: *And be what?*

PHILIP: *A living, breathing thing, a woman. A sister. A daughter. A wife.*

Margaret is the character in the series whose personality is the most diametrically opposed to Elizabeth's. While the Queen is restrained, Margaret is brazen; while the Queen is level-headed, Margaret is rash; while the Queen is disciplined, Margaret is rebellious. Added to this clash of personalities is the authority that Elizabeth Regina has over Margaret, who must submit to that authority if she wants to preserve her relationship with the Crown. When Margaret announces to her sister that she wants to marry Captain Peter Townsend, Elizabeth is faced with a war between her two halves. On one side, as Queen and Head of the Church of England, she cannot consent to her sister's marriage to a divorced man. On the other hand, as her sister, she wants to hear Margaret's reasons and to allow her the freedom to choose. Thus, in “Gelignite” (1.06) she asks her sister to wait a year before making the decision, and in the meantime she sends Townsend away. Later, in “Gloriana” (1.10), she corners her sister with her final decision:

I was prepared to go through it all and support you, as a sister. Because I'd given you my word. But... (...) But I realised... as Queen... that I have no choice. I cannot allow you to marry Peter and remain part of this family. That is my decision.

Margaret chooses to end her engagement to Townsend in favour of the Crown, but the decision opens up a rift be-

9 The royal prerogative or royal powers assumed by the monarch of the United Kingdom include aspects such as convening, proroguing or dissolving Parliament, enacting laws proposed by Parliament, appointing and dismissing ministers and private advisors (on the advice of the Prime Minister), and declaring war, as well as other domestic matters. In foreign affairs, the monarch has the power to negotiate or ratify international treaties, alliances and agreements, to appoint high commissioners and ambassadors, to issue passports, etc. The monarch is also the fount of justice and honour and the head of the Anglican Church. See Bogdanor, V. 1995. *The Monarchy and the Constitution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

10 A foil character (or contrast character) is a character whose actions and traits contrast with those of another character—often the protagonist. See Glatch, Sean. “What is a foil character? Exploring contrast in character development.” Writers.com. August 2, 2022.

tween the sisters that will continue to grow in the subsequent seasons.

Finally, there is the Duke of Windsor (David), a complex character (part reflection character and part foil) who serves to remind both Elizabeth and the spectator of the doppelgänger motif. As a reflection character, David understands the implications of the Crown and defends its existence even though he himself has renounced it: "But there is also the other great love of my life... The Crown," he confesses to Elizabeth in "Gloriana" (1.10). Also in "Smoke and Mirrors" (1.05), while watching Elizabeth's coronation, David explains to his party guests the meaning of the ritual of anointing the monarch with sacred oil at the ceremony: "Pull away the veil and what are you left with? An ordinary young woman of modest ability and little imagination. But wrap her up like this, anoint her with oil, and hey, *presto*, what do you have? A goddess."

On the other hand, in his role as a foil character, David will be the one who best expresses Elizabeth's split identity. As monarch, he once had the same experience, although in his case it was his original identity that destroyed the *alter ego*, i.e., the monarch. In "Gloriana" (1.10), he is sympathetic when his niece tells him of her mixed feelings over his sister Margaret's relationship with Captain Townsend. At the same time, he gives her the following warning, making explicit reference to the myth of the double:

And I imagine you find yourself in a difficult position now. Split down the middle. One half is sister. One half is Queen. (...) A strange, hybrid creature. Like a sphinx or Gamayun. As I am Ganesha or Minotaur. We are half-people. Ripped from the pages of some bizarre mythology, the two sides within us, human and crown, engaged in a fearful civil war, which never ends. (...) I understand the agony you feel and I am here to tell you, it will never leave you. I will always be half-King. My tragedy is that... I have no Kingdom. You have it. And you must protect it.

The Duke of Windsor's description of "two sides within us, human and crown, engaged in a fearful civil war" sums up the identity crisis that Elizabeth has been wrestling with throughout the first season. In the final scene of "Gloriana", which is the last of the first season, we find the point the protagonist has reached in that crisis, with the introduction of a new stage of the split that will unfold in the second sea-

son. Elizabeth is no longer a young woman coming of age. She has become a Monarch with a personality of her own. In the scene, a photographer is preparing her for a picture that will become her official portrait as Queen. Wearing the crown, sash and royal jewels, she listens with serious attention to the photographer as he speaks: "All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle hath blessed. Not moving, not breathing. Our very own goddess. Glorious Gloriana. Forgetting Elizabeth Windsor now. Now only Elizabeth Regina. Yes." Elizabeth's efforts to comprehend her *alter ego* have led her to identify increasingly with Elizabeth Regina, which from this point on will be her dominant side.

5.3. Stage Two. Elizabeth Regina vs. Elizabeth Windsor

In the second season, Elizabeth Regina will continue to displace Elizabeth Windsor, increasing the tension between "who I am" and "what I am". This season covers the period from 1956 to 1964 (from the ages of 30 to 38 in Elizabeth's life), in what could be described as her early adulthood. She now feels more comfortable in her role as monarch and less certain in her private life. Tensions mark her efforts to harmonise her duty as Queen with her roles as wife, mother, sister, etc. The dominant tone of her behaviour as monarch is rigidity.

The two mentor characters from the first season, Churchill and Queen Mary, are now gone. Elizabeth has learned what she needed to learn to fulfil her role as Queen. In numerous situations in this second season, Elizabeth Regina exercises many of the royal powers at her disposal, generally with successful outcomes. For example, she has to deal with international issues such as the Suez Canal crisis, which would trigger a war during Anthony Eden's term as prime minister. The clarity with which she expresses her disagreement with the poor decisions made on this issue strengthens Elizabeth's status as monarch ("Misadventure" 2.01, "Lisbon" 2.03). Another event highlighted in the series is Elizabeth's trip to Ghana, as head of the Commonwealth, to stem the growing Soviet influence in the country. It is a mission that she accomplishes successfully, despite the risk it entails ("Dear Mrs. Kennedy" 2.08). She also intervenes in the negotiation and ratification of the 'special relationship' between Britain and the United States, which will yield benefits in the future ("Beryl" 2.04). In domestic affairs, the series shows Elizabeth accepting Eden's resignation and confirming Macmillan's appointment in his place ("Lisbon" 2.03). Later, when Macmillan himself

proposes to resign she will ask him to wait, invoking her royal prerogative ("Mystery Man" 2.10). Another of her successful interventions is her rejection of the appointment of her uncle (the Duke of Windsor) as British ambassador to France after discovering his past sympathy and collaboration with the Hitler regime ("Vergangenheit" 2.06). Although each of these situations entails a conflict, the Monarch's deliberation and sound judgement effectively expands the power of Elizabeth Regina at the expense of Elizabeth Windsor.

However, intertwined with these issues are situations pertaining to Elizabeth's private life. In these situations, the series' foil characters become ongoing reminders of her split identity in this season. They call up Elizabeth the wife, mother, sister or niece, and call out her lack of humanity when she puts the Crown first in her decisions. As Elizabeth becomes an increasingly successful monarch, the crises and failures in her personal life begin to pile up. Her husband, for example, complains that she has pushed him into the background. Philip feels as if he were living in a 'prison', and he is constantly being 'infantilized' by the palace staff ("Misadventure" 2.01). During the second season of the series, Elizabeth has to deal with a crisis in her marriage, epitomised in Philip's wild behaviour and alleged infidelity during his five-month royal tour after attending the Olympic Games in Melbourne. Philip will finally accept the rules of the game, although he will also confide in his friend Mike, his companion in debauchery: 'There is no room for mistakes. There is no room for scandal. There is no room for humanity' ("Lisbon" 2.03). In the same episode, Elizabeth's dual identity is made visible once more when Philip returns to London. In front of the photographers and their cameras, she tries her best to save the Crown, feigning a normal relationship with Philip in an orchestrated performance; however, in the privacy of the palace she reproaches him and asks him to put the welfare of the Monarchy above his personal desires, even telling him to name price for this submission.

With her sister, Margaret, Elizabeth also suffers the consequences of the inflexible decisions she has made as Queen. Having become aware that Margaret is drinking too much, Elizabeth tries to warn her to restrain herself. Margaret's reply is a bitter pill for the Queen to swallow: '[I drink more] because I am unhappier than I used to be. And why is that? Because I am still unmarried. And why is that? Because you denied me my perfect match.' Elizabeth responds to this with reference to her two identities: 'That's not fair. As your sister, I would have been perfectly happy for you to marry Peter. (...) It was the Crown that forbade it.' ("Misadventure" 2.01).

Elizabeth's response here makes it clear that she is well aware of her doppelgänger, and she blames it for her duplicity.

In addition to Elizabeth's troubled relationships with these two characters, there is also tension with her uncle, the Duke of Windsor. As noted above, David has requested a posting as British Ambassador to France. However, some compromising papers exposing his sympathy and even collaboration with the Hitler regime compel Elizabeth Regina to deny his request. Her uncle reproaches her: 'Who has done more damage to the Monarchy? Me, with my wilfulness, or you lot, with your inhumanity?' ("Vergangenheit" 2.06).

In this way, over the course of the second season, which mixes storylines depicting her actions both as a monarch and as a person, Elizabeth shifts from a clearly defined "position A" to a "position B" that is made especially clear at the end of the season. In 'position A', Elizabeth still identified herself as Elizabeth Windsor, a woman struggling with the *alter ego* of her role as monarch, which was gradually displacing her. In 'position B', we find an Elizabeth who increasingly identifies as Elizabeth Regina, but who is facing a crisis with her original identity. In "Paterfamilias" (2.09), there is a conversation between the Queen and Philip that serves as an example of this shift. The two are arguing about the education of their first-born son Charles, who is being bullied at the Scottish school he is attending. Elizabeth wants to bring him home, while Philip is opposed to the idea. "But Charles is the future of the Crown," reasons Elizabeth. "And in the Name of the Crown and as his mother, I have decided to take him home, to Eton, to Windsor, where he belongs." Philip retorts: "You can't always fall back on the Crown." But Elizabeth declares: "Oh, yes, I can. And I will."

Elizabeth's internal division thus continues and will not end until, as Živković puts it, one of the two parts takes possession of the other, either by dominating it or destroying it. Season 2 concludes with the birth of Elizabeth's fourth and final child and a photography session to take an official portrait of the Royal Family. At this point, the Queen enters mature adulthood.

5.4. Stage Three: Towards an integrated Elizabeth Regina

The final embodiment of the doppelgänger motif in the character of Elizabeth is presented in Season 3, when she enters the final stage of her identity crisis. This season covers a period of 13 years, from 1964 to 1977 (from the ages of 37 to 51 in Elizabeth's life, the latter year also being the

25th anniversary of her coronation). Over the ten episodes of this season, the protagonist will shift towards a “position C”, where her identity crisis will stabilise and her-self-as-monarch will win out over her original self, while integrating a part of that self to achieve a degree of balance. Of course, she will continue to confront compromising situations in her personal life, but these will no longer cause conflict between the two identities. And at the same time, another character will take over from Elizabeth as representative of the doppelgänger motif: Charles, the heir to the throne, who comes of age in this season and rebels against the constraints that the Crown imposes upon him. Clashes between Mother/Queen and Son/Crown Prince become a recurring feature of the last few episodes of this season. These thorny conversations touch on the question of the future of the Crown (‘the Hollow Crown’ in Shakespearean terms). This season thus constitutes a transition for the doppelgänger myth, as while Elizabeth’s identity conflict comes to an end, it is passed onto her son Charles, who will continue to struggle with it in the following seasons.

There are two types of scenes that illustrate this transition. The first type consists of scenes that underscore the idea that Elizabeth’s doppelgänger (the Crown) has won the battle and now rules over her original self. The second type comprises scenes that suggest that Elizabeth’s human side (her individual personality traits and frailties) are still present in her new, unified self.

Scenes of the first type of course include Elizabeth’s actions and triumphs as a monarch. However, the most interesting of these scenes involve her relationships with family members and confidants. For example, in a scene in “Olding” (3.01), Elizabeth comforts Winston Churchill on his deathbed and acknowledges that it was with his help that she came to accept that she is, first and foremost, the Queen. “You were my guardian angel, the roof over my head, the spine on my back, the iron in my heart. You were the compass that steered and directed me”. Another example can be found in “Margaretology” (3.02), in which Elizabeth orders her sister, Margaret, to attend a dinner at the White House on behalf of the Crown, taking advantage of the trip she has made to the US with her husband, Tony. In her letter she makes explicit reference to her role as queen, leaving aside their family relationship: “(...) I have asked you this once as a sister, and now I must command it as your Queen (...). And I would urge you, for once, to play things by the book”. However, Elizabeth Regina’s dominance over Elizabeth Windsor is revealed most clearly in her relationship with the Crown Prince. In “Tywysog Cymru” (3.06), after Charles has come back from Wales and

from receiving his investiture as Prince of Wales, the Queen welcomes him coldly and treats him more as an heir than as a son. She admonishes him for having offered personal opinions and feelings in his speech in Welsh: “We have all made sacrifices and suppressed who we are. Some portion of our natural selves is always lost.” Her son argues: “That is a choice,” but Elizabeth corrects him: “It is not a choice. It is a duty (...)” In the conversation that follows, Elizabeth’s identification with the Crown (her dominant side) is accentuated all the more through the negative reaction of Charles, whose identity is only just beginning to be split in two.

CHARLES: *But doing that is perhaps not as easy for me as it is for you.*

ELIZABETH II: *Why?*

CHARLES: *Because I... have a beating heart. A character. A mind and a will of my own. I am not just a symbol. I can lead not just by wearing a uniform, or by cutting a ribbon, but by showing people who I am. Mummy, I have a voice.*

ELIZABETH: *Let me let you into a secret. No one wants to hear it.*

CHARLES: *Are you talking about the country... or my own family?*

ELIZABETH: *No one.*

(“Tywysog Cymru” 3.06)

Scenes of the second type present Elizabeth as a queen, but also as a woman approaching middle age who is suffering a typical mid-life crisis. Her fragile feelings are signalled in “Olding” (3.01), when she reacts to a set of new postage stamps bearing her image, brought to her for her approval. Her private secretary explains that the image is intended to reflect “Her Majesty’s transition from young woman to (...) mother of four and a settled sovereign.” Elizabeth’s reaction, with references to her physical appearance, suggests that she is in a period of personal reassessment and self-acceptance. It is precisely this psychological condition that will lead her to the aforementioned unification of her split identities. Various episodes in this season contain scenes showing Elizabeth looking back on her life and taking stock, pondering the loss or constraint of her personal self since her coronation. An

example of this can be found in “Aberfan” (3.03), when she reflects on her ability to feel emotion and empathy, analysing her initial reaction to a massive human tragedy. A fatal accident has occurred in Aberfan, a mining town in southern Wales, where an avalanche of coal slurry destroyed a school full of children. Elizabeth Regina rejects the idea of visiting the site of the disaster, insisting that the standard procedure is to offer her condolences in a letter. However, on advice from the Prime Minister, she changes her mind and travels to Aberfan, initially for the purpose of silencing public criticism. While there, she pretends to weep. Later, she will confess to the Prime Minister that her tears in Aberfan were merely a premeditated act, and that in fact ever since she was a child she has been incapable of crying. But afterwards, when she is on her own, we see real tears on her face, as her human side reveals itself. This image portrays her struggle to integrate and recover her human self.

The second significant scene is in “Bubbikins” (3.04), in which a documentary on the everyday lives of the Royal Family is being made with the aim of bringing the monarchy closer to the people. For Elizabeth, the filming represents a quest for balance between the ritual and mystery of Elizabeth Regina and the normal humanity of Elizabeth Windsor. However, as Prime Minister Wilson remarks in a conversation with her, what the people really look for in the Royals is “an ideal” that involves a certain degree of mystery and protocol. Elizabeth herself then understands that the symbolic side of the monarchy is “not there to keep us apart. It is there to keep us alive.”

Later, “Coup” (3.05) features another event that prompts her to reassess her married life. While travelling in the United States, her old friend Porchey takes her to various ranches to learn about new methods of training racehorses. She enjoys these days enormously and they prompt her to reflect on the life she might have had if she hadn’t become Queen: “Owning horses; breeding horses, racing horses (...) I actually think it’s what I was born to do,” she confesses at a dinner with Porchey. And she concludes: “On days like today... in places like this, in company like this... you get a glimpse of what it all might have been like. The unlive life... and how much happier it might have made me.” However, back at the palace, Elizabeth will show with her actions that Philip comes first, and that the life she has as Queen is the life she wants to live.

But the scene that perhaps most clearly shows that Elizabeth’s doppelgänger experience is coming to an end is her final meeting with her Uncle David, the Duke of Windsor, in “Dangling Man” (3.08). He is dying, and Elizabeth visits him

in Paris for the first time in many years. He asks her to forgive him for his abdication, and she responds by expressing her gratitude to him:

What you did, your abdication of the Throne, did change my life. Forever. But I want you to know it’s not always a curse. And I haven’t always been cross with you. That there are days... in fact, more and more the older I get... when I consider it to be a blessing. I’ve even on occasion found myself... wanting to thank you.

In summary, the conflict between Elizabeth’s two identities thus comes to an end in this third season. She is above all the Queen of the United Kingdom, although she also manages a degree of coexistence and integration between the two parts of her split self.

6. CONCLUSION

This article has sought to show that the central character of the first three seasons of the series *The Crown* suffers an identity crisis that evokes the myth of the double or doppelgänger. When her father dies and she inherits the throne, her identity is split into two halves: Elizabeth Regina (the Queen) and Elizabeth Windsor (the woman). Her doppelgänger, the Crown, evolves over three stages, each one associated with one of the three seasons. At first, in Season 1, Elizabeth is a young woman who struggles against the duties as a monarch that separate her from her husband, her sister, or her children. However, her mastery of her role as Queen grows in Season 2, and Elizabeth Regina thus gradually displaces Elizabeth Windsor, despite reminders from those close to her that she is becoming dehumanised. In Season 3, it has become clear that Elizabeth’s doppelgänger has won and now dominates her personality. This does not mean that Elizabeth Windsor has disappeared or been destroyed altogether, as certain elements of her personality have been integrated into her new identity. With the unified self of Elizabeth Regina, the doppelgänger motif no longer applies to this character. However, the same motif effectively becomes the main conflict of another character: her son Charles. This explains why in the following seasons (4, 5 and 6) the focus of attention will shift towards the Prince of Wales and the characters who interact with him most (Elizabeth, Camilla, Diana, his sister Anne, his children, etc.). The doppelgänger will thus continue

to be an ongoing theme in *The Crown*. By using this myth as a chief source of conflict, Peter Morgan seems to be identifying the monarchy with the shadow, the *alter ego*, a menacing figure that puts the various protagonists of the series on their guard. The institution of the monarchy might thus be classified as an antagonist in the story, although further research is needed to support such an assertion.

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