THE CLASH BETWEEN PRIDE AND JOY, FORM AND ECSTACY IN *THE CROWN*: APOLLONIAN ELIZABETH AND DIONYSIAN MARGARET

THE CROWN *DİZİSİNDE GURUR İLE NEŞENİN, BİÇİM İLE COŞKUNUN ÇATIŞMASI: APOLLONCU ELİZABETH VE DİONYSOSÇU MARGARET*

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Abstract

This article offers a Nietzschean interpretation of Netflix's historical drama The Crown, focusing on the dialectical tension between Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret as dramatised in the show's first two seasons. Drawing on Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles from The Birth of Tragedy, it argues that Elizabeth and Margaret function as symbolic embodiments of two opposing yet interdependent forces: the Apollonian drive for order, restraint, and institutional continuity, and the Dionysian impulse toward passion, rebellion, and ecstatic self-expression. While Elizabeth's Apollonian temperament sustains the dignity and discipline of the monarchy, Margaret's Dionysian vitality introduces the emotional complexity and subversive energy that threaten its decorous façade. Through detailed close readings of key episodes, the article traces how The Crown stages this philosophical and aesthetic clash as both a personal sibling rivalry and a broader ideological struggle between tradition and transformation within a postwar constitutional monarchy. The article situates this dynamic within the broader cultural and symbolic economy of royal representation, demonstrating how the series employs mythic archetypes to interrogate the psychic and political costs of sovereignty, gendered authority, and national symbolism. It also engages with existing scholarship on The Crown's visual politics, gender dynamics, and historiographical approach, while extending the conversation by introducing a classical philosophical framework that has been largely absent from critical analyses of the series. Ultimately, this study proposes that The Crown not only reflects contemporary anxieties surrounding monarchy and modernity but also enacts a televisual tragedy in Nietzschean terms: a sustained dramatisation of the fragile equilibrium between form and chaos, discipline and desire. By reading Elizabeth and Margaret through the Apollonian and Dionysian lens, the article offers a fresh contribution to media studies, cultural theory, and modern receptions of classical philosophy.

Öz

Bu makale, Netflix'in tarihsel drama dizisi The Crown'ı Nietzscheci bir perspektiften ele alarak, dizinin ilk iki sezonunda Kraliçe II. Elizabeth ile Prenses Margaret arasında dramatize edilen diyalektik gerilimi analiz etmektedir. Friedrich Nietzsche'nin Tragedyanın Doğuşu adlı eserinde ortaya koyduğu Apolloncu ve Dionysosçu ilkelere dayanarak, Elizabeth ve Margaret'in birbirine zıt ama karşılıklı bağımlı iki kuvvetin, Apolloncu düzen, itidal ve kurumsal süreklilik arzusu ile Dionysosçu tutku, başkaldırı ve coşkulu kendilik ifadesi arzusunun simgesel tezahürleri olarak kurgulandığını savunmaktadır. Elizabeth'in Apolloncu mizacı monarşinin vakarını ve disiplinini sürdürürken, Margaret'in Dionysosçu canlılığı bu düzenin görgü kurallarına uygun dış görünüşünü tehdit eden duygusal karmaşıklığı ve yıkıcı enerjiyi temsil eder. Makale, The Crown dizisinin önemli bölümlerine dair detaylı yakın okumalar aracılığıyla, bu felsefi ve estetik çatışmanın hem kardeşler arası kişisel bir rekabeti hem de savaş sonrası anayasal monarşi içinde gelenekle dönüşüm arasındaki daha geniş ideolojik mücadeleyi nasıl sahnelediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Makale bu dinamiği, kraliyet temsiline dair kültürel ve simgesel ekonomi bağlamında değerlendirmekte, dizinin mitik arketipleri kullanarak egemenliğin, toplumsal cinsiyet temelli otoritenin ve ulusal sembolizmin ruhsal ve politik bedellerini sorguladığını göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda The Crown üzerine yapılmış mevcut çalışmalardaki görsel temsil, toplumsal cinsiyet ve tarih yazımına değinirken, eleştirmenlerce çoğunlukla göz ardı edilen klasik felsefi bir çerçeve sunularak tartışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, The Crown dizisinin yalnızca çağdaş monarşi ve modernlik kaygılarını yansıtmadığını, aynı zamanda Nietzscheci anlamda, biçim ile kaos, disiplin ile arzu arasında sürdürülen kırılgan bir dengeyi sahneleyen bir televizyon trajedisi sunduğunu öne sürmektedir. Elizabeth ve Margaret'in Apolloncu ve Dionysosçu bakış açıları aracılığıyla okunması yoluyla makale, medya çalışmaları, kültürel kuram ve klasik felsefenin modern yansımaları alanlarına yeni bir katkı sunmaktadır.

Introduction

In our contemporary world, where most monarchs maintain a low profile, the British royal family continues to attract intense public attention. The royal family has preserved its iconic image, reinforced the monarchy's lasting allure and cultural importance, while it has been upholding a sense of mystery that sustains public intrigue (Coghlan, Hackett & Nolan, 2025). Presented as "*a fictionalized view of historical events*" (Gambarato & Heuman, 2023, p. 807), Netflix's series *The Crown*, created by Peter Morgan (2016-2023), offers a dramatised yet psychologically nuanced portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret, two royal sisters whose temperaments seem destined to collide. This historical drama is adapted from *The Audience* (2013), Peter Morgan's West End and Broadway play, where the Queen is engaged in private discussions with various prime ministers (Singh, 2015). While Queen Elizabeth's antagonisms with several prime ministers over decades remain central to the series, one of the most compelling tensions in *The Crown* is the contrast between the composed, duty-bound Elizabeth, and the passionate, often rebellious Margaret. Ben Pimlott states in his biography of Elizabeth II that "*Elizabeth, the introvert, had been brought up to be responsible; Margaret, the extrovert, to be pretty, entertaining and fun*" (1996, p. 109). This difference between the royal sisters is regarded as a fundamental distinction that has shaped their respective personalities. Likewise, Princess Margaret tells her friend, writer Gore Vidal: "*When there are two sisters and one is the queen who must be the source of honour and all that is good, the other must be the focus of the most creative malice, the evil sister*" (as cited in Morton, 2021, p. 3). This discrepancy between the sisters seems to be a well-known narrative that one may stumble upon in the biographies that concentrate on them. Even though it is a fictionalised account of the royal family, *The Crown* appears to utilise this narrative in its representation of Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret. Hence, this study explores the portrayal of these sisters and their relationship in *The Crown* through the lens of Nietzsche's clash of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles representing order and reason versus chaos and emotion. It argues that *The Crown* dramatises their sibling dynamic through this philosophical framework: Elizabeth embodies the Apollonian drive toward restraint, decorum, and stability, while Margaret represents the Dionysian urge for freedom, sensuality, and self-expression. Consequently, this article claims that the dialectic between these characters does more than fuel their personal rivalry; it serves as a nuanced allegory for the ideological contestation within the monarchy itself, embodying the

institution's fraught negotiation between entrenched tradition and progressive modernity.

Since its debut in 2016, *The Crown* has been widely praised for taking "*its viewers on an enticing journey through the British monarchy*" (Arias, 2021), and its rich characterisation of the royal family. Central to its narrative is the complex relationship between Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret. Their contrasting temperaments and conflicting desires, besides propelling the drama, symbolise a deeper ideological tension. Elizabeth emerges as the quintessential Apollonian sovereign, embodying restraint, duty, and the preservation of institutional authority; conversely, Margaret is portrayed as a Dionysian figure, whose emotional intensity and quest for personal freedom disrupt and challenge the monarchy's prescribed order. This conflict provides a critical lens for examining the series' engagement with issues of personal identity, institutional power, and the burdens of symbolic authority in a contemporary monarchy.

Several studies underscore the show's engagement with the complexities of royal personas, particularly through gendered lenses, and analyse the media-driven visual representations of the royal family in *The Crown*, emphasising how the series shapes public perceptions of monarchy through its character portrayals. For instance, Kark and Cohen employ the concept of authentic leadership to explore the series' depiction of Elizabeth II, Princess Diana, and Margaret Thatcher, highlighting gendered dimensions of authority within the royal context (2024). Lacey reflects on how *The Crown* influences global perceptions of the monarchy, demonstrating the show's powerful role in shaping contemporary understandings of royal history and family dynamics (2019). Lacey also reminds the audience that *The Crown* is "*an artfully arranged assemblage of pixels whose purpose is to entertain, to explore great characters and themes in the life of a nation*" (2017, p. 10). Together, these works situate *The Crown* within broader discourses on media representation, authority, and monarchy. However, while existing scholarship richly examines character psychology, gender, and media impact, few studies have applied classical philosophical frameworks to these portrayals. Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* provides a rich framework for understanding cultural and psychological tensions in Western art and life. The Apollonian and Dionysian duality has been widely applied to literary and cultural studies, but its application to contemporary televised drama, and particularly royal biographical narratives, remains underexplored. This article fills this gap by applying Nietzsche's dialectic to *The Crown*, enhancing critical

discourse on both the series and the monarchy's mediated image. Hence, this article addresses this gap by framing Elizabeth and Margaret as embodiments of Apollonian and Dionysian principles respectively, providing a fresh interpretive lens to understand their sibling rivalry and the ideological tensions it dramatises. By doing so, it advances existing scholarship in three significant ways: firstly, by introducing Nietzschean philosophy into the analysis of contemporary televised historical drama and bridging classical theory with modern media, secondly by offering a deeper exploration of power dynamics within the monarchy through symbolic archetypes of order and rebellion, lastly, by enhancing cultural studies discourse by demonstrating how *The Crown* mediates societal anxieties about tradition and change through its central characters. Therefore, in positioning the sisters as Apollonian and Dionysian forces, this article adds an original theoretical framework that enriches both *The Crown* scholarship and broader conversations on monarchy, identity, and mediated history.

Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian Principles

Since the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1872, Nietzsche's work has positioned Dionysus as "*the dominant Greek deity in the imaginations of scholars*" (Easterling, 1997, p. 36). This book was "*massively influential in the twentieth century*" and its echoes are still reverberating in the twenty-first century (Goldhill, 1997, p. 324). In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche explores the conflict between Apollonian and Dionysian forces to explain the emergence of Greek tragedy. He associates these opposing drives with two Greek gods: Apollo symbolises reason, structure, and order, while Dionysus represents instinct, emotion, and the breaking of boundaries. The Apollonian principle reflects conscious forces of logic and rationality, discipline and control. Apollo also signifies "*the drive toward distinction, discreteness and individuality, toward the drawing and respecting of boundaries and limits*," leading Apollonian art to focus on idealised representations of individuals and events (Geuss, 1999, p. xi). In contrast, the Dionysian impulse embodies contrasting forces of instinct and passion, encouraging an ecstatic push beyond limits, breaking down boundaries, and dissolving the sense of individual self. Dionysian art manifests in ecstatic, collective expressions such as music, choral singing, and frenzied dancing. Nietzsche presents tragedy as a synthesis of these two forces, Apollonian form and Dionysian energy, which together create a profound artistic experience, positing that Greek drama arises from the dynamic clash between these two forces.

While Nietzsche's writing leans toward an exaltation of the Dionysian, he maintains that tragedy emerges from their tense interplay. He asserts that Greek tragedy is "*bound up with the duality of the Apolline and the Dionysiac*," with these two principles locked in continuous strife, only occasionally finding moments of harmony (1999, p. 14). This occasionally achieved harmony resolves in a productive union, generating new and potent artistic forms. Accordingly, Apollo and Dionysus symbolise contrasting artistic expressions, whereby the Apolline is tied to the visual arts, such as sculpture, while the Dionysiac is linked to "*the imageless art of music*" (p. 14). These forces "*exist side by side, mostly in open conflict*," yet their friction fuels creativity, producing "*ever-new, more vigorous offspring*" that sustain their inherent opposition (p. 14). This perpetual struggle leads to revitalised and transformative artistic outcomes. Nietzsche further frames these drives as "*dream and intoxication*" (p. 14). The Apollonian, associated with dream, manifests in structured, visual forms, and images, whereas the Dionysian, linked to intoxication, expresses itself through ecstatic, formless music. Together, they shape the essence of tragic art.

Nietzsche argues that the Dionysian "blissful ecstasy" emerges from "*the innermost ground of man, indeed of nature itself*" when the principle of individuation collapses (1999, p. 17). In this state of intoxicated rapture, all boundaries dissolve, allowing individuals to transcend their isolated selves in ecstatic unity. The true nature of the Dionysian reveals itself when subjectivity fades into "*complete self-forgetting*" (p. 17). Through the dissolution of ordinary perception, Dionysian wine fosters communal bonding, particularly during collective wine festivals. This reunion is achieved through a sense of "*universal harmony*" and a return to "*the mysterious primordial unity*" (p. 18). Dionysian revellers, through song and dance, express their longing for this primal oneness, dissolving their individual identities to merge into a higher collective. To join this transcendent community, the mundane self must be obliterated, limits transgressed, boundaries erased. The Dionysian man stands "*on the brink of flying and dancing, up and away into the air above*," possessed by an almost supernatural enchantment (p. 18). In his ecstatic movements, he mirrors the divine motion once glimpsed in dreams. Nietzsche observes that such a man "*is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art*," as nature's creative forces manifest through him in "*shivers of intoxication*" (p. 18). Subsequently, the Dionysian dancer overwhelms the Apollonian artist, disrupting the latter's drive for order, distinction, and the preservation of boundaries. This Apollonian drive seeks to erect enduring forms, to affirm the principle of individuation, and to transform the chaotic terrors of existence into intelligible, beautiful representations. The Apolline artist strives for

sublime self-control, crafting the dreamlike illusion of the individual who stands firm against the primordial chaos. Thus, the Dionysian impulse does not merely disrupt but fundamentally threatens to annihilate the very foundation of the Apollonian world, revealing its carefully constructed order to be a fragile veil over an abyssal truth.

Nietzsche posits that all artists fundamentally align with one of the two creative impulses: "*either an Apolline dream-artist or a Dionysiac artist of intoxication*," though some, like Greek tragedians, synthesise both modes simultaneously (1999, p. 19). In the Dionysian state, the artist surrenders completely to ecstatic abandon, collapsing into drunken rapture. Yet through the Apollonian dimension of dream, this dissolution into primal unity becomes intelligible as it manifests symbolically in visionary imagery. Here, the artist's mystical union with existence's core reveals itself not through formless ecstasy alone, but through the dream's representational power.

This dynamic is vividly illustrated in the Dionysian festivals of ancient Greece, which Nietzsche characterises as periods of transgressive excess and "*sexual indiscipline, which flooded in waves over all family life and its venerable statutes*" (1999, p. 20). During these celebrations, traditional familial structures and societal norms were temporarily shattered by the unrestrained behaviour of Dionysian revellers, whose ecstatic dancing and singing rendered them uncontrollable. These events were perceived as "*days of transfiguration*" (p. 20), in which participants transcended their ordinary selves, abandoning bodily limitations and assuming new identities. The festivals unleashed "*the very wildest of nature's beasts," including the disturbing fusion of "sensuality and cruelty*" (p. 20), which are impulses typically suppressed by the ordered framework of Apollonian society. Apollo's influence, Nietzsche suggests, shielded the Greeks from these "*feverish stirrings*" and the "*crude, grotesque manifestation of the Dionysiac*" (p. 20). Functioning as a societal safety valve, the festivals provided a sanctioned space for the release of repressed desires, acting as a pressure-relief mechanism for collective tension. The Apollonian system permitted this temporary Dionysian chaos within controlled boundaries, thereby preventing its unchecked disruption of social order. By allowing periodic, localized eruptions of disorder, the structured Apollonian world maintained its stability, integrating the Dionysian impulse without being overwhelmed by it.

Nietzsche reveals that Apollonian existence fundamentally depends on "*a hidden ground of suffering and knowledge which was exposed to his gaze once more by the Dionysiac*" (1999, p. 27). This demonstrates their essential interdependence: Apollo's

ordered world cannot sustain itself without its Dionysian counterpart. The very concept of Apollonian discipline requires the chaotic Dionysian element to give it meaning and purpose. Their relationship is fundamentally dialectical since the Apollonian principle derives its identity through opposition to the Dionysian threat it seeks to contain. The rational Apollonian order establishes itself precisely by defining and excluding its irrational Dionysian other. Through this process of demarcation, Apollonian culture reinforces boundaries of reason, law and structure by projecting all that threatens them onto the Dionysian realm. Thus, the Apollonian constructs its identity through what it denies; it becomes order by demonising Dionysian disorder, becoming rational by excluding Dionysian irrationality. The stability of Apollonian civilisation paradoxically depends on the Dionysian chaos it struggles to suppress.

Nietzsche describes how the Dionysian impulse violently disrupts Apollonian order, as "*the ecstatic sounds of the Dionysiac festival, with its ever more seductive, magical melodies, penetrated this carefully constructed world built on illusion and moderation*" (1999, p. 27). The flood of Dionysian energy overwhelms the fragile barriers of Apollonian restraint. The Dionysian impulse invites one to reflect on the limits of the rational (Birler & Türk 2022, p. 183). These primal melodies give voice to "*nature's boundless excess through ecstasy, agony and profound insight"* (Nietzsche 1999, p. 27), completely dissolving the Apollonian individual who becomes "*engulfed in the self-annihilating rapture of the Dionysian state*" (p. 27). In this transformative moment, the Dionysian force temporarily overwhelms and neutralizes the Apollonian principle of order and individuation.

Nietzsche argues that Dionysian tragedy's primary impact transforms social structures, as "*all divisions between individuals dissolve into a powerful sense of unity that returns humanity to nature's core*" (1999, p. 39). He contends that tragedy's decline coincides with the rise of Apollonian rationality during the Enlightenment, as the systematic rejection of irrational elements ultimately proves fatal to tragic art. The Dionysian impulse, when unleashed, obliterates all artificial boundaries and distinctions. Through tragic drama, Nietzsche suggests we find profound comfort in recognising that "*at life's fundamental level, despite surface transformations, existence remains indestructibly powerful and joyful*" (p. 39). This consolation manifests vividly in the satyr chorus, representing "*nature's eternal beings whose vitality persists relentlessly beneath civilisation's veneer*" (p. 39). The appearance of these unrestrained Dionysian figures provides cathartic relief for audiences, who witness

the inseparable fusion of reason and instinct in human nature. The theatrical presentation of this perpetual tension between Dionysian and Apollonian forces offers an enduring vision of human existence in its complete, dynamic wholeness.

In essence, Nietzsche's framework presents the Apollonian and Dionysian not as mere aesthetic categories but as fundamental, antagonistic, and interdependent psychological and cultural forces. *The Birth of Tragedy* posits that true artistic profundity, epitomized by Greek tragedy, emerges not from the victory of one principle over the other, but from their dynamic and volatile synthesis. The Apollonian impulse, with its drive for order and form, constructs the beautiful illusion of the individual and the stable state. Conversely, the Dionysian impulse, with its ecstatic dissolution of boundaries, threatens this very order, revealing the terrifying yet exhilarating primal unity at the heart of existence. Crucially, these forces exist in a dialectical relationship: the Apollonian defines itself against the Dionysian chaos it seeks to contain, while the Dionysian continually challenges the fragility of Apollonian order, ensuring it does not become stagnant and lifeless. This perpetual tension is not a flaw but the very engine of cultural vitality and profound art.

Consequently, it is this powerful Nietzschean dialectic that provides a sophisticated heuristic for interpreting the modern tensions within the British monarchy as depicted in *The Crown*. The institution itself, embodied by Elizabeth II, operates on strictly Apollonian principles such as tradition, ritual, rational duty, and the subjugation of the individual to a symbolic role. In contrast, Princess Margaret personifies the Dionysian threat through the forces of her emotional expressiveness, personal desire, and rebellious spontaneity that constantly challenge the monarchy's rigid formality. Their interaction is more than mere familial conflict; it dramatises the eternal and necessary struggle between the structure required for permanence and the chaotic, vital energy that prevents it from becoming obsolete. Thus, the monarchy, like Greek tragedy itself, can be seen as a perpetual site of negotiation between these two primal forces, striving for a balance that ensures both its survival and its relevance.

Apollonian Elizabeth versus Dionysian Margaret

The Apollonian force stands for law, order, restraint, form, and the principle of individuation. Elizabeth's characterization throughout *The Crown* consistently aligns with these qualities. From her early assumption of the throne in the first season, she is portrayed as someone who must sacrifice personal desire for public duty. Elizabeth firmly asserts the crown as *"a symbol of strength and stability"* cannot *"be swayed by*

personal whims" (Morgan, 2016). This resolute commitment encapsulates the Apollonian ideal of self-mastery and sublimation. The visual language of the series reinforces this, too, as Elizabeth is often framed symmetrically, surrounded by the austere geometry of palaces, emphasising control and order. Her costumes, which are usually monochromatic and structured, visually reinforce her self-discipline. Moreover, her interactions with several prime ministers of the years further showcase her Apollonian restraint and her adherence to law and order. For instance, When Churchill advises caution, Elizabeth listens with measured composure, embodying the rational authority Nietzsche describes (Morgan, 2016). Additionally, Elizabeth's Apollonian nature manifests starkly in her tensions with Margaret. When Margaret's reckless behaviours threaten the monarchy's public image, Elizabeth acts not from personal spite but out of institutional necessity. For instance, in the seventh episode of the first season, Elizabeth admonishes Margaret: "*You must understand the crown is bigger than both of us"* (Morgan, 2016). This statement epitomizes the Apollonian subordination to form and tradition. Margaret "*chafe[s] at the restraints of royal life"* whereas Elizabeth *"dutifully embrace[s] them*" (Morton, 2021, p. 4). Her restraint is not mere stoicism but a conscious performance of Apollonian control necessary for maintaining the monarchy's legitimacy.

On the other hand, Princess Margaret epitomizes the Dionysian force characterized by intoxication, ecstasy, and dissolution of boundaries. By means of "*collapsing the conventional boundaries of perception*," the Dionysian force "*tends to unite individuals, especially at a wine festival of the whole community*" (Seaford, 2005, p. 32). Margaret's intense emotional life, rebellious spirit, and yearning for freedom sharply contrast Elizabeth's composure. For instance, in the fourth episode of the second season, Margaret dances at a nightclub, immersed in a vibrant atmosphere filled with jazz music and flashing lights, a visual metaphor for her Dionysian nature. She confesses to her lady-in-waiting: "*I want to be happy, even if it means breaking the rules"* (Morgan, 2017). This deep yearning signals her resistance against Apollonian restraint. Yet, Margaret's Dionysian excess leads to personal tragedy, too. Her romance with Peter Townsend is doomed, and her later struggles with alcohol and mental health dramatise the Nietzschean insight that the Dionysian impulse is essentially tragic. Margaret herself laments, as her entrapment captures the tragic tension of the Dionysian spirit confined by rigid structures.

Having briefly introduced the conflict between Apollonian Elizabeth and Dionysian Margaret, it is necessary to focus on the first two seasons of *The Crown* and to explore the dialectical clash between the two sisters in detail, concentrating on the embodiment of the Nietzschean temperaments, examining the representation of their personalities and discussing the tension between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces.

The Clash of the Two Sisters in the First Season of *The Crown* (2016)

The premiere episode of *The Crown* constructs Elizabeth as an embodiment of the Apollonian principle that corresponds to the human impulse toward order, reason, and structured harmony in contrast to the Dionysian forces of chaos and passion. The episode's opening scenes emphasise meticulous attention to detail and precision, which could be regarded as hallmarks of Apollonian aesthetics. From the carefully choreographed movements of royal attendants to the ceremonial preparations for King George VI's breakfast, the visual composition evokes a world governed by rules, tradition, and formalized order. Elizabeth's comportment within this space is measured and composed; she is presented as reflective, observant, reticent, and restrained, which are certain qualities associated with the Apollonian drive to impose structure on the chaos of life.

To begin with, Elizabeth's intimate exchange with her husband Philip captures the tension between personal feeling and duty. When Philip laments having "*signed himself away*," Elizabeth reframes the sacrifice as winning "*the greatest prize on Earth*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E1, 04:04). This response reveals her rational acceptance of personal loss in service of an orderly ideal, her duty to crown and country. Elizabeth's insistence on retaining the traditional vow to obey Philip during her wedding ceremony illustrates her commitment to established structures and roles. Despite her impending accession to the throne, she embraces the symbolic order of marriage and monarchy, exemplifying the Apollonian tendency to uphold and perpetuate social cohesion.

The episode's final scenes, wherein Elizabeth physically occupies her father's desk, symbolise the Apollonian notion of continuity, the transfer of power as an orderly process within a defined social hierarchy. This moment encapsulates the series' portrayal of Elizabeth as a rational sovereign, poised to impose structure upon the uncertainties of monarchy and family life. By framing Elizabeth as the Apollonian counterpoint to the Dionysian, the episode lays the groundwork for a broader dialectic that unfolds through the series, especially in her dynamic with Princess

Margaret, who often represents unrestrained passion and rebellion. This Nietzschean reading illuminates the ideological tensions that underpin *The Crown*'s narrative, revealing how Elizabeth's Apollonian qualities are both a source of strength and a site of conflict.

The second episode dramatises the death of King George VI and the ensuing transition to Elizabeth's reign. This episode deepens the series' portrayal of Elizabeth II as an embodiment of the Apollonian principle. Through its narrative and visual elements, the episode frames Elizabeth as the personification of calm control and rational order, emphasizing her role as the stabilizing axis of the monarchy amid upheaval and loss. Elizabeth's role as the Apollonian successor is foregrounded throughout the episode, particularly in the scenes set in Nairobi where she and Philip are largely unaware of the approaching tragedy. Elizabeth's interactions with the environment, her awe at the wildlife, and her careful use of the video camera underscore a composed engagement with the natural world, which demonstrates that Elizabeth inhabits "*the domain of the Apollonian, with its rational knowledge, moderating limits, formal pleasures and beautiful unities*" (Eagleton, 2003, p. 55). Her measured demeanour contrasts with the emotional turbulence surrounding the king's death and anticipates her future responsibility to maintain equilibrium within the monarchy and the nation.

The episode also traces the gradual dissemination of news regarding the King's death, juxtaposing public rituals of mourning with Elizabeth and Philip's isolated experience abroad. This dual narrative structure highlights the tension between private grief and public duty, a central Apollonian theme of managing inner emotions through external order. Elizabeth's poised response upon finally learning of her father's death, marked by a silent exchange with Philip, further manifests the Apollonian ideal of self-control and composed rationality in the face of devastating personal loss. Upon returning to England, Elizabeth encounters the symbolic and literal imposition of monarchical order. The replacement of her personal attendant Martin with Tommy Lascelles, a more official and rigid figure, signifies the increasing constraints and formalization that will define her reign.

Another crucial moment that encapsulates Elizabeth's Apollonian identity is her receipt of her grandmother Queen Mary's letter, which delineates the fundamental conflict between the personal and the sovereign selves. Defined as "perennial matriarch of the House of Windsor," (Aldrich & Cormac 2021, 309)**,** Queen Mary explains the tension between a private self and a public persona: "*While you mourn*

your father, you must also mourn someone else: Elizabeth Mountbatten, for she has now been replaced by another person, Elizabeth Regina" and she reminds her that these "*two Elizabeths will frequently be in conflict with one another,*" adding that "*the crown must win, must always win*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E2, 52:45). The letter's tone and content emphasise the supreme importance of duty, the suppression of personal indulgence, and the ascendancy of the crown. Elizabeth's silent acceptance of this message conveys a profound internalization of the Apollonian ideal that prioritizes order, responsibility, and the continuity of the institution over individual desire.

This episode also depicts the early manifestations of Elizabeth's isolation within the monarchy's rigid hierarchy. The enforced precedence of the crown over familial affection is evidenced by Philip's exclusion from escorting her off the plane and justified by "*the crown takes precedence*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E2, 53:31), illustrates institutional dominance over personal relationships. Queen Mary insists that she "should be the first to kiss the hand of the new Queen"; upon seeing her, the "*old Empress launche[s] into a deep curtsey*" (Hardman, 2022, p. 118). Likewise, the deference shown by her mother and sister reinforces the strict social order and hierarchies. These ceremonial practices highlight the sacrifices inherent in upholding order and tradition, underscoring Elizabeth's role as the personification of monarchical discipline.

In the third episode, the drama around royal names and family tensions offers a fertile ground for exploring the Apollonian temperament of Elizabeth. She emerges as the Apollonian figure that embodies commitment to duty, although she confesses her longing for "*a simpler life, happier life, as a wife, a mother, an ordinary English* countrywoman" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E3, 51:10). The episode opens with a flashback to the 1936 abdication crisis, when Edward VIII chose personal desire over duty, setting the tone for a narrative about the tension between free will and institutional order. Elizabeth's later confrontation with Edward's legacy, especially the ongoing conflicts around funeral arrangements and family estrangement, foregrounds her commitment to upholding the crown's order despite emotional complexities. Elizabeth's demeanour throughout the episode is characterized by a poised and calculated engagement with the political and familial challenges that she faces. From her measured negotiation with the prime minister Winston Churchill over the coronation timeline and the question of her children's surname to her sharp, controlled exchanges with Edward, who dismisses the royal family as "*a bunch of ice-flamed monsters*" (22:04), Elizabeth consistently demonstrates the Apollonian virtues

of discipline, rationality, and adherence to tradition. Her insistence on maintaining the Windsor name for her family signals a protective impulse to preserve monarchical continuity and social stability.

The familial conflicts such as the sharp exchanges between Queen Mary and her son Edward and his vitriolic letter further underscore the Dionysian disruptions that challenge Elizabeth's Apollonian world. Queen Mary scolds her son for choosing his personal life over his duty as a king; she reminds him that no one in Britain wants to hear anything from a private individual and tells him to disappear into the night (Morgan, 2016, S1:E3, 12:50). This clash between the mother and the son demonstrates how one is chastised should they abandon their royal duty, and, by extension, their Apollonian self, and seek after their personal pleasure and indulge their Dionysian self. This tension illustrates the interplay of passion and order within the royal family, where Elizabeth strives to impose control and harmony, the Dionysian forces of resentment, mockery, and emotional volatility threaten to unravel the facade. Therefore, the episode's exploration of the former King Edward, who abdicated for love, resonates as a Dionysian counter-narrative to Elizabeth's Apollonian path. Edward's rejection of the crown in favour of passion and personal freedom contrasts sharply with Elizabeth's acceptance of duty and order, embodying the eternal conflict between rational control and chaotic desire. This episode further shows Elizabeth growing in her Apollonian capacity by means of her negotiation with Churchill, which once again crystallizes the Apollonian tension between duty and desire. She asserts her identity not only as sovereign but also as a wife and woman who values her husband's pride, recognising the emotional realities that complicate her role while maintaining a disciplined public front. She reminds Churchill that she is "*also a woman and a wife to a man whose pride whose strength were in part what attracted me [her] to him*," adding that she wants "*to be in a successful marriage*", which, she argues, will provide "*stability in the national interest*" (38:53). Her attempt to bargain for Philip's name and their residence at Clarence House exemplifies her strategic navigation of constraints, balancing personal desires with institutional demands.

In contrast, Margaret operates as the Dionysian foil to her sister. Her presence is felt through the emotional undercurrents and family tensions that ripple through the narrative. The Apollonian recognises the Dionysian as "*the occluded foundation of the calm and beautiful image world*" (Burnham & Jesinghausen, 2010, p. 50). Margaret's rebelliousness and emotional openness reflect the Dionysian embrace of

chaos, desire, and the dissolution of rigid boundaries. Her youthful irreverence defies the strict decorum that Elizabeth embodies. Margaret's Dionysian role is implicit but crucial; as Elizabeth's counterpart, she embodies the emotional costs of royal duty such as the temptations to rebel, the yearning for personal freedom, and the refusal to fully submit to Apollonian restraint. This dynamic enriches the narrative by exposing the duality inherent in monarchy: the coexistence of public order and private chaos, rational governance and emotional tumult.

The fourth episode dramatises the devastating 1952 London smog through the prism of political inertia and personal power struggles. Within this setting, the episode highlights the stark contrast between Apollonian order and Dionysian chaos, most notably through Elizabeth's embodiment of measured, rational governance versus the disruptive emotional forces that ripple beneath the surface of royal and political life. Faced with a crisis precipitated by governmental denial and complacency, Elizabeth assumes the mantle of reason and order. Her measured concern for public welfare, her strategic decision-making, and her deft political manoeuvring reveals her commitment to maintaining social stability amid chaos. To illustrate, she confronts Churchill about his reckless dismissal of the meteorological warnings and takes steps to challenge his authority; she tells him that there is "a delicate matter" concerning his position as prime minister, and he understands that she has summoned him to "*haul me [him] over my [his] handling of the fog*", which has "*disarmed*" him (Morgan, 2016, S1:E4, 51:52). In this scene, Elizabeth shows how she has become tactful as she has learned to rein in her feelings and not to disclose any hasty judgements. She exemplifies Apollonian qualities such as clarity, discipline, and a focus on structure and responsibility; she is depicted as "*the guardian of moral responsibility*" (Clancy & De Benedictis, 2021, p. 123). The smog itself is a potent symbol of Dionysian chaos: a thick, all-encompassing fog that suffocates, blinds, and disrupts the normal order. It exposes societal and governmental vulnerabilities, forcing characters to confront mortality and disorder. The overwhelmed hospitals and the paralysis of transport all signify the breakdown of rational control and the eruption of uncontrollable natural forces. Yet even in this disorder, Elizabeth's calm leadership acts as a stabilizing force.

While Elizabeth's "*dazzling, mercurial younger sister*" (Hardman, 2022, p. 161) is less foregrounded in this episode, her Dionysian spirit echoes in the background tensions and frustrations with established order. The mounting public health crisis and the political paralysis symbolise the eruption of repressed chaos challenging the

old order, a chaos that Margaret, as a figure associated with emotional candour and rebellion, would naturally resonate with. Her presence can be felt as a latent force questioning the rigid structures Elizabeth defends, highlighting the costs of excessive repression and the limits of Apollonian control. Finally, the episode's conclusion, with the smog lifting and sunlight breaking through, metaphorically signals a temporary restoration of order after a period of Dionysian turmoil. Yet Elizabeth's lingering concern about what might have happened had chaos persisted underscores the fragile balance between these forces, between the necessity of Apollonian governance and the inevitability of Dionysian disruption.

The fifth episode centres on the momentous occasion of Elizabeth's coronation, a ritual steeped in tradition, symbolism, and the solemn exercise of sovereign power. Within this spectacle of order and ceremony, Elizabeth emerges as the ultimate Apollonian figure. She carefully prepares for the coronation, practices with the symbolic crown, navigates the logistics of the ceremony, and seeks control over her husband's involvement, telling him to rein in his wild ideas, which accentuates her Apollonian devotion to order and ritual. Known to be "*on the side of modernity*" Pimlott, 1996, p. 191), Philip, as the chairman of the coronation committee, is allowed to televise the coronation ceremony, yet the Queen gets anointed with holy oil off camera. She follows the tradition since the charm of royalty is its mystery, as Walter Bagehot claims in *The English Constitution* that "*[i]ts mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic*" (2009, p. 50). The crown itself, heavy in physical weight yet immeasurably laden with symbolic authority, reflects the burden of responsibility she willingly accepts. Her composure and focus highlight a figure who embraces structure and discipline to define and legitimize her sovereignty.

The sixth episode of season one, which is entitled "Gelignite", is where the contrast between Elizabeth and Margaret is emphasised. The title of this episode refers to a kind of dynamite, so it signifies the explosive content of this episode; Princess Margaret's relationship with Peter Townsend is an issue regarded as a political dynamite. The simmering scandal of Princess Margaret's romance with Peter erupts shortly after Elizabeth's coronation, highlighting a stark contrast between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces embodied by the two sisters. Margaret and Peter's relationship, clandestine and intoxicating, unfolds as a fiery expression of Dionysian freedom and desire, set against the backdrop of Elizabeth's poised and controlled public life. The episode opens with the lovers savouring the joy of their union while Elizabeth performs her sovereign duties with a composed, almost ritualistic grace.

Margaret's nervous anticipation before the dinner where she reveals her intent to marry Peter signals the tension between personal longing and institutional restriction. When Margaret asks for Elizabeth's permission to marry Peter, her words carry the raw vulnerability and rebellious passion characteristic of Dionysus; she is young, full of life, and yearning to break free from constraints. This portrayal of the royal sister in the series aligns with Princess Margaret, who says to Jean Cocteau that "*[d]isobedience is my joy*" (as cited in Aronson, 1997, p. 174). Elizabeth's response, while gentle and sisterly, is firmly grounded in Apollonian rationality and adherence to protocol. She stresses the practical complications of Peter's divorced status and the need to follow legal and royal procedures.

The sixth episode deepens this opposition as the Queen Mother and royal advisors enforce the rules, demanding a two-year wait until Margaret turns twenty-five to bypass the need for royal approval. This imposition of order is a direct attempt to suppress Dionysian chaos, to contain the scandal within the rigid boundaries of tradition and decorum. Margaret's pain and frustration boil over during the episode's emotional climax, marked by the heated phone confrontation with Elizabeth, where she accuses her sister of jealousy and betrayal. Elizabeth says to her sister that "*things got out of hand*"; in response, Margaret tells her that she has been against her relationship with Peter since "*you [she] can't bear to be eclipsed, can't bear to be outshone by your [her] younger sister*"; Margaret is blurting out whatever pops into her mind; she blames Elizabeth for hating and trying to destroy their relationship because it has caught "*the popular imagination*", yet Elizabeth, astonished to hear this, claims that it is "*madness*", which evokes Margaret's association with the Dionysian force; Margaret even threatens her sister: "*You reap what you sow, sister*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E6, 52:25). This interaction perfectly captures the clash of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. This outburst epitomizes Dionysian revolt against the Apollonian order that Elizabeth represents. The breakdown of their sisterly alliance signals a fracture between passion and reason, emotion and control. The episode closes with Margaret's anguished cry and Elizabeth's steadfastness, marking a dramatic symbolic division between the Dionysian spirit of passionate freedom and the Apollonian demand for order, sacrifice, and self-restraint. While Elizabeth embodies the reasoned face of monarchy, upholding tradition and stability, Margaret's fiery challenge exposes the emotional costs and human struggles that lurk beneath the crown's polished surface. A newspaper article of the time asserts that the conflict between the two sisters "*has jeopardized the future of the monarchy in Britain*" (54:54).

The seventh episode of the first season encapsulates the Apollonian journey of Elizabeth as she struggles to master the demands of her reign, while the Dionysian sister is quite invisible in this episode. The whole episode is dominated by the Apollonian demand for knowledge and power to maintain order and to ward off chaos; hence, the title of the episode is "*Scientia Potentia Est*", which translates to "*Knowledge is power*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E7). Accordingly, Elizabeth's path is marked by a quest for order, discipline, and rational control amid a world fraught with uncertainty and emotional complexity. From childhood lessons at Eton to the present day, Elizabeth embodies the Apollonian ideal of measured restraint and self-mastery. Early on, her private tutor instructs her on the delicate balance between monarchy and government: the "*efficient and dignified*" exercise of power (Morgan, 2016, S1:E7, 02:10). The notion that Elizabeth must avoid undignified subjects underscores the Apollonian focus on form and decorum. Yet Elizabeth's self-confessed feelings of ignorance and inadequacy reveal the tension within her Apollonian role. She is painfully aware that she lacks the comprehensive knowledge required to wield power effectively. This vulnerability is compounded by her fraught relationship with her mother, whose pragmatic insistence on accepting limitations challenges Elizabeth's resolve to rise above them. Elizabeth's willingness to seek help from a professor signals her commitment to cultivating rational knowledge as a foundation for effective leadership. Elizabeth's invocation of the dignity of her office over the limitations of age and gender asserts the supremacy of order and reason in governance.

The eighth episode of the first season is entitled "Pride and Joy", which refers to Elizabeth and Margaret, respectively. This episode dramatises the tension between the two sisters as it explores not only their personal rivalry but also the symbolic struggle between order and chaos, restraint and passion. Elizabeth's character consistently reflects the Apollonian qualities of rationality, discipline, and measured control. From the outset, she upholds her position as the head of the family, calmly asserting her role in delivering the speech at her father's statue unveiling despite Margaret's challenge. Margaret feels that she is "*unanchored*", a state of mind which is utterly opposed to that of her sister, who is positioned as the queen of the country (Morgan, 2016, S1:E8, 10:10). Margaret accuses her sister of attempting to dissolve her relationship with Peter; in response, Elizabeth tells Margaret that she is "*imagining things*", which once again communicates the message that she drifts without a sense of reality (13:30). On the other hand, Elizabeth, seeking to never lack a grounding in reality, embodies order and decorum. Her meticulously planned royal tour exemplifies Apollonian order. Elizabeth's self-consciousness about her stoic and

impassive facial expression and her refusal to drop any engagements during the royal tour despite exhaustion accentuate her commitment to duty over personal comfort. Her meetings with Churchill, who advises her to "*never let them see the real Elizabeth Windsor*" further highlight the Apollonian ideal (Morgan, 2016, S1:E8, 16:15). She must embody the eternal, idealised image of the monarchy, masking private vulnerabilities and emotions behind a polished exterior. Even in moments of private emotional upheaval, like her furious outburst at Philip, throwing objects and chasing him outside, Elizabeth's public persona remains unflappable and controlled. Her mercy toward the press who filmed her fight, negotiating the exchange for the film reel, reveals her savvy management of appearances, a crucial element of Apollonian governance. The Apollonian principle represents "*the realm of clear and luminous appearances, plastic images, dreams, harmless deception*" (Porter, 2005, p. 72). Correspondingly, the Apollonian image is maintained if "*the costumes are grand enough, if the tiaras sparkle enough, if the titles are preposterous enough, the mythology incomprehensible enough*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E8, 07:30).

In stark contrast, Margaret embodies the Dionysian spirit, associated with emotion, instinct, freedom, and the breakdown of boundaries; she is driven by a desire to claim space and recognition beyond her sister's shadow. Her desire to give the speech at their father's statue unveiling, rooted in a personal claim as "*his favourite*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E8, 01:10), introduces an emotional and disruptive force to the royal family's rigid structure. The tension between the two sisters escalates as Margaret rehearses the ceremonial act of bestowing an accolade, which is a queenly responsibility she will assume during her sister's absence, with Elizabeth cast in the role of the recipient. The following dialogue evinces how the scene thickens with tension:

> Margaret: On your knees.
>
> Elizabeth: Is that absolutely necessary?
>
> Margaret: Of course! I want to be sure I know what I'm doing before you go.
>
> Elizabeth: All right. I hope you have a steady hand.
>
> Margaret: You seem uncharacteristically jumpy. Guilty conscience, perhaps?
>
> Elizabeth: Why should I have a guilty conscience?
>
> Margaret: Have a think (Morgan, 2016, S1:E8, 12:45).

The discrepancy between having a steady hand and being jumpy, ironically mismatched with the wrong sister in this scene, clearly shows the tension between the Apollonian demand for restraint and the Dionysian desire for spontaneity. When Margaret puts the sword on her sister's shoulder, Elizabeth says, "*that's a little firm*" and reminds Margaret that it must be "*the flat edge*" (13:10). Following this tense scene, Margaret tells her sister that she will not "*upstage*" he when she will be deputising for her during her absence, yet teasingly adds that she cannot "*promise I [won't] bring my [her] own character to it*"; in return, Elizabeth warns her about the hazards of being "*a showgirl*" and having "*too much character, an excess of character*" (14:06). Transgressive excess is what distinguishes the Dionysian sister from the Apollonian one. While she fills in for the queen, Margaret's approach to royal duties, such as rewriting her speech to include jokes and personal touches, reveals her resistance to the Apollonian script of careful calibration and control. She injects spontaneity into her public role, a direct challenge to Elizabeth's restrained formality. Margaret's dismissive retorts and taunts toward her sister reveal her refusal to accept the strictures that bind Elizabeth, even while she herself remains constrained by the monarchy's expectations. Margaret's shining in the public eye, particularly when she is praised as a dazzling host, contrasts with Elizabeth's quiet endurance and duty-bound performance. Moreover, Margaret's vivacity and charm during public engagements is framed as a strategic asset to the monarchy. Her joyfulness and vitality are both a source of charm, and a liability, as Churchill quickly reprimands her, warning that such breaks with tradition can lead to the disaster of abdication. In light of this, Margaret's personal relationship with Peter Townsend, which has caused scandal and family strife, further cements her Dionysian association with passion over protocol. Her final confrontation with Elizabeth, where resentments boil over, encapsulates the elemental conflict between the two: Margaret's free spirit against Elizabeth's iron will. Margaret thinks that her sister enjoys "*admonishing your [her] unruly sister*" and complains about being "*the overlooked one*"; the tension escalates with Margaret's reminder of their father's words: "*Elizabeth is my pride, but Margaret is my joy*" (52:30). This dichotomy perfectly captures the Apollonian-Dionysian divide: the pride of order and control versus the joy of passion and freedom. While Elizabeth's royal tour is deemed an unqualified triumph, Margaret's resentment festers, illustrating that these two forces cannot be easily reconciled within the confines of the royal family or the monarchy itself. Besides, their struggle reflects a microcosm of the eternal tension between the need for structure and the impulse for liberation.

The ninth episode continues to explore the contrasting energies embodied by Elizabeth and Margaret. From the outset, we see Elizabeth's Apollonian composure tested. Her relationship with Philip is fracturing, revealing the cracks beneath her calm exterior. Elizabeth's late-night phone call to Porchy about horses, and the subsequent interactions between the three, are telling. Elizabeth remains measured and composed; she treats Porchy as a stable presence, much like the ordered world she strives to maintain. Her love for horses, with their disciplined breeding and care, further symbolises her commitment to tradition. In contrast, Margaret's taunting of Elizabeth about Porchy and her reckless desire to unsettle the carefully constructed royal order reflect the disruptive power of Dionysus, as Margaret's presence constantly threatens to unravel Elizabeth's Apollonian facade of regal poise.

The season finale demonstrates the enduring tension between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces embodied by the royal sisters. This episode reminds us of the sacred childhood promise to always prioritize sisterhood above all else. Yet, this promise becomes increasingly fraught, especially with Margaret's desire to marry Peter Townsend, a desire that brings to the fore the irreconcilable conflict between Dionysian freedom and Apollonian restraint. Margaret bursts onto the scene as a true Dionysian figure: passionate, impulsive, and willing to defy rigid social and political conventions for the sake of love. She embodies the "*god of the most blessed ecstasy and the most enraptured love*" (Otto, 1965, p. 49). Her announcement that she will marry Peter after years of waiting is an act of emotional rebellion against the stifling structures that govern the monarchy. Her yearning for personal happiness, even at great cost, embodies the raw energy of Dionysus.

In contrast, Elizabeth remains the epitome of Apollonian discipline and control. When the hidden clause of the Royal Marriages Act emerges, requiring parliamentary approval, Elizabeth's response is cautious and pragmatic. She attempts to delay and manage the crisis, not out of coldness, but because she inhabits the realm of order where rules and appearances govern reality. She acts as the mediator between chaotic passion and political necessity. She asks the prime minister to advise her about this issue, and he promises to "*take the temperature of the Cabinet*", saying that "*times are changing*" and "*morality is changing*", yet he finds the members of the parliament "*violently opposed*" to Margaret's marriage to Peter, a divorced man, since they argue that it is "*a subversion of the Church's teachings*" (Morgan, 2016, S1:E10, 20:03). Later, Elizabeth asks the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to advise her, but they are also opposed to the idea of Margaret marrying Peter, pointing out that

"*[m]arriage is a sacrament of God*" and the rock and foundation of the Church, and that the Church cannot "*permit of the remarriage of divorced persons*" (33:00). Elizabeth submits to the authority of the Church, too. As Philip says to her, she cannot be a "*living, breathing thing, a woman*" (35:00). Furthermore, Elizabeth asks her uncle, Edward VIII, who abdicated the throne for love, to advise her. He understands that she is in a very difficult position, "*split down the middle*" like a "*strange, hybrid creature*"; he understands the agony she feels, yet tells her to protect the Crown (36:00). Elizabeth wants to help her sister, yet she eventually yields to the authority of the monarchy. Elizabeth's capitulation to forces beyond her control further illustrates her Apollonian nature. She is the figure forced to sacrifice personal desires to preserve the greater structure of the monarchy, maintaining composure even as her personal world unravels. Margaret's Dionysian spirit, however, refuses to be contained. Her refusal to forgive Elizabeth and her vow never to marry another man dramatise the explosive emotional fallout that erupts when Apollonian order suppresses Dionysian desire. Margaret's passionate rebellion threatens to destabilise the royal family's carefully maintained facade. Elizabeth's portrait session at the end, smiling and pretending all is well, symbolises the Apollonian mask, the disciplined surface hiding inner turmoil. Her smile is the ordered facade required of a monarch, even as Dionysian chaos threatens from within.

The Clash of the Two Sisters in the Second Season of *The Crown* (2017)

The premiere of the second season continues to explore the complex dynamics between order and chaos through the contrasting figures of Elizabeth and Margaret. This episode opens with a flashforward to 1957, where Elizabeth and Philip sit in cold silence aboard the royal yacht, surrounded by intrusive paparazzi. Their strained marriage reflects Elizabeth's Apollonian burden, that is her disciplined, controlled exterior forced to endure internal emotional fracture. Her measured attempt to communicate with Philip and the heavy silences reveal the queen's perpetual effort to maintain order amid personal and political chaos. The rigid constraints of monarchy leave little room for emotional spontaneity or open vulnerability. Flashback to five months earlier reveals a brief window of warmth and affection, but even here Elizabeth's Apollonian need for control is evident. When she gifts Philip a video camera, symbolic of her desire to capture and preserve moments, her discovery of a ballerina's photo triggers suspicion and emotional withdrawal. Her silent composure masks the inner turmoil caused by doubts about Philip's fidelity. Elizabeth's restraint

and stoicism reflect the Apollonian quest to contain disruptive passions and maintain societal order at all costs.

Meanwhile, Margaret enters the narrative as a potent Dionysian force. Her increased drinking and sharp wit embody the unruly, rebellious spirit of Dionysus, the god of intoxication, unrestrained emotion, and social disruption. Her sardonic amusement at Elizabeth and Philip's marital strife, and her provocative revelations about Philip's fidelity fuel the emotional and social turmoil surrounding the family. Here, Margaret's defiance and indulgence contrast sharply with Elizabeth's self-control and obligation. As the episode closes, Elizabeth's final act of shutting Philip out, closing the door to his room, visually symbolises her attempt to contain the disruptive Dionysian elements threatening both her marriage and her realm.

In the second episode, Elizabeth stays at home, maintaining the steady, orderly centre of the monarchy as her husband embarks on a royal tour. Her world is one of careful management and control, where every detail is measured and every public moment choreographed. Elizabeth's attempts to connect with her husband over poor telephone lines underline her persistent effort to bridge emotional distance through controlled communication, which could be seen as an attempt to impose order on the unpredictable nature of their relationship. Elizabeth's Apollonian nature is further reflected in the behind-the-scenes management of the royal image. Elizabeth's radio message is especially telling; it symbolises an Apollonian attempt to impose harmony through structured, mediated communication. Through her speech, she channels personal longing and familial unity into a public, carefully controlled performance, embodying the Apollonian drive to shape chaos into form and meaning. The ever-present, volatile Dionysian undercurrent threatens to overturn the calm surface Elizabeth strives to maintain. The intertwined yet opposing dynamics remain central to the emotional and political drama of the series. Similarly, in the third episode, Elizabeth's Apollonian nature is on full display as she dutifully manages the machinery of the monarchy amid the personal and public turmoil. Her composure, reserve, and self-control stand in sharp contrast to the unravelling personal dramas. The scene where Elizabeth reads her husband's letters aloud, her voice tender yet restrained, highlights her role as the rational centre who must process and contain the emotional upheaval around her. Even as she learns of her husband's infidelities, her response is measured, calculated, and reflective of her role as the stoic guardian of the Crown's dignity. The Dionysian presence is felt powerfully in the atmosphere of emotional chaos and rebellion that simmers beneath the surface. Because these

two episodes are concerned with Elizabeth's relationship with her husband, Margaret's presence, and her Dionysian nature is largely eclipsed, only to resurface in the following episode.

The fourth episode centres on Margaret, revealing her as a Dionysian force in stark contrast to Elizabeth's Apollonian presence. Margaret's life has increasingly embodied the Dionysian archetype: she is untethered from order, driven by passion, and caught in cycles of emotional chaos and rebellion against the rigid confines of royal protocol. This episode opens with Margaret at a wedding, physically and emotionally exhausted, engaging in excessive drinking and chain-smoking, which signify her unrest and refusal to submit quietly to the strictures imposed on her. Her reluctant, almost defeated acceptance of an engagement to Billy Wallace emphasises her restless nature; she is not willing to embrace stability but is weary of constant battle with the constraints of her role. Billy Wallace's ineptitude and weakness vividly highlight Margaret's disgust with empty traditions, as well as her growing disdain for the hollow rituals that govern royal life. Margaret's nearly breaking down under the watchful eyes of her lady-in-waiting further conveys the Dionysian undercurrents of emotional intensity and vulnerability beneath the royal mask. She even asks her lady-in-waiting to help her "*climb over the wall to escape*" because she "*can't bear it anymore*" (Morgan, 2017, S2:E4, 28:00). She searches for human connection at a dinner party and attempts to reach out to real, "*normal*" people none of whom "*breeds horses, owns land or knows my [her] mother*" (28:30); this is of course a rebellion against the order she is trapped within. This quest introduces Antony Armstrong-Jones, an "*impertinent*" photographer who does not curtsy to the princess, one of the "*dabblers and freaks*" as he styles himself, whose own blending of intimacy and intrusion, tradition and modernity, mirrors Margaret's Dionysian complexity (30:09). Their initial encounters, charged with sexual tension and defiance of convention, underline Margaret's embrace of the chaotic and sensual forces the Dionysian represents. Margaret acts as if she wants to be "*caught off guard*" as Anthony, who hates "*posturing and pretentiousness and humbug*" and likes to get behind "*facades*" is taking a picture of her (33:33). He says to Margaret that he is interested not in the "*dreary*" surface but in "*what people hide*" (34:10). He asks her to "*leave the titles and princess outside*" when she comes in his studio (35:38). Through his talent in photography, he shows her "*a Margaret*" whom no one has ever seen before; he calls her image "*Beryl*" that rhymes with "*peril*" (51:21). By marrying him, Margaret thumbs "*her nose at tradition, underlining her reputation for being rebellious, emancipated, individual*" (Aronson, 1997, p. 174). Antony's attitude, marked by both deference and

contempt for the royal institution, resonates deeply with Margaret's ambivalence toward her status; she craves the power and significance the monarchy bestows but rejects its cold, restrictive veneer. The scenes in his studio, charged with intensity and provocative intimacy, embody this collision of order and chaos.

This episode encapsulates the tension between the Apollonian ideal and Dionysian reality by means of the photo session with Cecil Beaton. His idealised royal portraits symbolise the rigid, polished image which the monarchy demands, the Apollonian mask of order and decorum, while Margaret's visible frustration and discomfort reveal the destructive toll of these abstractions on her authentic self. According to Beaton, Princess Margaret cannot appear like "*a commonplace creature*" who "*sits in her drab little scullery*" because she represents an ideal that all the other women of the country aspire to (Morgan, 2017, S2:E4, 12:30). This scene also gestures toward the broader social critique of monarchy's illusory glamour, exposing how the demand for perfection and control suppresses individuality and emotional truth.

In the fifth episode, Elizabeth navigates her royal responsibilities with calm rationality and control; Margaret, by contrast, bursts with Dionysian energy. Her desires lead her into reckless decisions and confrontations, embodying chaos and instinct. This episode highlights Margaret's yearning for liberation from royal constraints and her pursuit of pleasure, even at great personal cost. Her defiance exposes the underlying tensions between personal freedom and institutional expectation. The interplay between the sisters reveals a fundamental tension: Elizabeth's Apollonian order seeks to suppress and contain the Dionysian force Margaret represents. Elizabeth even defines her new haircut as "*tidy and sensible*", which are adjectives, which, her husband claims, do not "*stir the loins*" (Morgan, 2017, S2:E5, 15:30). Furthermore, Elizabeth's speech at the Jaguar car factory, where she praises "*the steadfastness and ability to withstand the fatigue of dull, repetitive work*" on which "*in great measure the happiness and prosperity of the community as a whole*" depends, demonstrates the Apollonian principle which gives priority to stability, rigidity and immutability (18:08). Her style of speech is called "*a pain in the neck*", "*bland and ineffectual*" and found unnatural and contrived; a journalist remarks that she "*sounds strangled*" and is "*horrified by the indifference and inertia with which the speech was greeted*" by people (31:10). She is criticised for lacking vitality and naturalness in her speech besides reducing workers to the status of marionettes, a charged word that fittingly gives the title to this episode. One should

also bear in mind that the Crown has changed her into a marionette, as well. The journalist advises Elizabeth to "*open up*", "*lower the drawbridge*", be "transparent and accessible" (46:00); she is taking note of the journalist's advice, yet she is meeting with him behind closed doors. Embodying the Apollonian principle of order, she feels she must maintain the façade of stability and firmness as opposed to the changing times. On the other hand, Margaret appears to be full of vitality, in tune with the changing times, transforming her hair style, which is very "*unregimental*" as opposed to her sister's haircut (55:15). Yet, Margaret's vitality and passion highlight the limits of control and the human cost of repression. Together, the two sisters embody the dynamic duality between reason and emotion, stability and chaos, that underpins the drama of *The Crown*.

The seventh episode, entitled "Matrimnoium", dramatises the marriage of Margaret, a watershed moment that also crystallizes the enduring tension between two siblings. Elizabeth's pregnancy, her careful navigation of royal "*protocol*" issues, such as delaying announcements, balancing public image, and her stoic demeanour at Margaret's engagement party all highlight her dedication to maintaining decorum and tradition (Morgan, 2017, S2:E7, 29:00). Even her pregnancy is employed as a metaphor in this episode to refer not only to her conventional domestic personality as a mother and wife, as opposed to her unconventional sister, but also to her feeling of being overwhelmed and crushed underneath the symbolic weight of the crown and her unbending character: she feels "*cumbersome*" and "*tired*", and she cannot "*bend down*" (33:00). Her white dress at the engagement event, where Tony's bohemian friends make fun of the obsolete rituals and trappings of the monarchy and loathe the "*hideous, redundant relics and spectres*" (36:36), symbolises purity, order, and the bright light of Apollo's sun, everything Margaret's vibrant, risky choices and her dark Dionysian sense lack. Elizabeth's calm and restrained approach contrasts sharply with the chaotic emotional turbulence in her sister's life. When confronted with the scandalous revelation of Tony Armstrong-Jones's bisexuality and multiple lovers, Elizabeth processes this information with gravity, immediately moving to gather facts through discreet channels and maintain royal stability; she keeps quiet, though shocked, about Tony's "*appetite to break barriers and conventions*" not only in his art and his life as well, as he pushes photography to "*its boundaries*" and "*is currently conducting three intimate relationships*" with both men and women, as opposed to the "*natural*," "*narrow*," "*straight, Christian path*" that the holy matrimony celebrates in the eyes of the Crown (39:00). This scandalous revelation about Margaret's future husband is undercut by another scene, where Elizabeth is giving

birth, which is even celebrated and consecrated by a prayer recited by the prime minister on behalf the government to glorify Queen Elizabeth, "*our most gracious Sovereign Lady*" who has been replenished "*with the grace of thy Holy Spirit*" who has endowed her with "*heavenly gifts*" (44:50). The divine image of the queen emblazons the Apollonian force of order, stability and continuity.

In stark opposition, Margaret bursts through the episode as a Dionysian figure. Her stormy reaction to Peter Townsend's marriage and her subsequent rush to marry Tony Armstrong-Jones are driven by jealousy and a fierce desire for personal freedom. Margaret's breaking of the vase upon hearing Townsend's news (Morgan, 2017, S2:E7, 04:00) is symbolic, a shattering of Apollonian order in her life. Her insistence on eclipsing Elizabeth and shaking the place to its very core (27:47) channels the disruptive, intoxicating energy of Dionysus, the god of wine, who represents "*the sap of life and ecstatic experience*" (Halleran, 2005, p. 199). She revels in the glamorous but unstable life she leads, from bohemian art circles to scandalous love affairs, embodying the Dionysian dissolution of boundaries, both moral and social. Tony's erratic, nonconforming character, as opposed to a boring "*pajama man*" who is "*straight-backed, obedient, decent*" and characterised by "*missionary fashion, three quick minutes*" in bed (Morgan, 2017, S2:E7, 06:00), with his promiscuity and disdain for tradition, further amplifies Margaret's Dionysian world. She wants to marry him at "*the Chelsea's Registry Office, with a local drunk as witness*" (50:55); she is delighted by anything that disrupts her sister's divinely ordained magnanimity, shatters the dignity and reputability of the family. Margaret says to her sister that she finally knows what she represents: "*A woman in my own right. A woman for the modern age. And, above all, a woman who is free. Free to live, to love, and free to break away*" (51:10). She seeks to shatter her sister's image as happily married and divinely ordained as the Queen; she tries to communicate the message that her sister is not free and has become invisible, simply no one behind the crown.

The episode stresses the siblings' fundamentally opposed approaches to identity and duty. Elizabeth views royal responsibility as a form of sacred order that requires sacrifice, whereas Margaret craves visibility and disruption, unwilling or unable to sacrifice personal desire for the sake of the crown; she despises "*any objections or obstacles*" to her doing whatever she feels like doing, even if it is marrying a bohemian, promiscuous photographer (22:54).

This dialectic, "*like an eagle with two heads, facing in opposite directions*" (27:40), reflects the broader cultural shifts of the 1960s, as opposed to the 1950s, caught between the receding old world and the emerging new world, tradition and rebellion, order and liberation, Apollo and Dionysus. The episode also reflects the broader tension within the British monarchy and society at large during this era of rapid change. Elizabeth's Apollonian steadiness represents continuity and the old guard, while Margaret's Dionysian excess hints at the emerging counterculture's challenge to established norms. Dionysus symbolises "*change and dynamism, in contrast to the calm, still serenity of Apollo*" (Daniels, 2013, p. 47). The contrast exposes how these opposing forces coexist uneasily within the royal family and perhaps within all institutions and individuals. The final scene of the wedding, with its cold formality and layered social complexities, suggests that Dionysian rebellion can never fully escape Apollonian order, for the marriage is both a spectacle of wild passion and a ceremony bound by centuries-old ritual.

The season finale highlights the enduring tension between Elizabeth's Apollonian order and Margaret's Dionysian impulses. The episode culminates in a poignant clash between these two forces: Elizabeth's calm, controlled exterior shields deep sacrifices, while Margaret's raw emotionality threatens to upend the ordered world her sister maintains. Together, they embody the eternal tension between reason and passion, order and chaos, that defines both the monarchy and their personal lives. The episode ends with the family gathered for a christening photo, a symbolic moment of unity amidst tension. Elizabeth once again embodies Apollonian control and restraint. Despite personal hurt, political scandal, and deep-seated suspicion toward Philip, she maintains a composed exterior. Her insistence on stability and her ability to compartmentalize emotion, which is evident when she stands stoically in the snow (Morgan, 2017, S2:E10, 34:40), highlight her Apollonian role as the sustaining pillar of monarchy and national continuity. She says to her husband that she is "*strong*", "*can cope with the truth*" and "*look the other way*" but that she hates being kept in the dark, being denied the truth, referring to her husband's extramarital affairs; she says to her husband that she is a realist and she may ignore when he sometimes goes away to "*let off steam*" in order for him to "*stay in*", remain married (49:00). She labours to maintain order and stability among chaos and change.

Margaret, by contrast, remains the chaotic emotional foil as a "*high-spirited*" figure of Dionysian impulse and sensuous modernity (Morgan, 2017, S2:E10, 10:00). While Elizabeth broods over duty, Margaret basks in luxury and social drama. Her

home is literally under "*unbearable*" loud construction, described as unending noise of "*banging and hammering and drilling*," symbolizing her inner unrest and craving for self-definition (10:20). Her irritation at being censured by Elizabeth as head of the family only fuels her rebelliousness. She thinks that the family members are infuriated not because of the "*inconsiderate, selfish and deafening*" noise, as Elizabeth points out, but due to the renovation work that "*represents rejuvenation, modernisation and change*" (17:00). Margaret spitefully introduces the "Mystery Man" photo, stirring emotional chaos. Her marriage to Tony is built on absence and volatility, not stability. Her glamour, sharp wit, and emotional candour contrast starkly with Elizabeth's poise. Even pregnant, she radiates Dionysian glamour, unwilling to be domesticated by tradition or maternal ideals. Where Elizabeth represses her desires to protect the monarchy, Margaret expresses hers openly, even destructively. Margaret thus continues to personify the unchecked emotionality and unruly desires that Elizabeth must suppress for the sake of institutional order.

The sisters' interaction in this episode is brief but loaded. Elizabeth visits Margaret to chastise her for the renovation noise, which is a moment that could be trivial but becomes emblematic of their deeper rift. Elizabeth, the enforcer of boundaries, asks for order. Margaret retaliates by weaponizing knowledge, showing Elizabeth the photograph, introducing doubt into Elizabeth's Apollonian world. The power dynamic here flips momentarily; Margaret becomes the truth-teller that unleashes hidden passions, disrupting Elizabeth's carefully curated illusion of marital stability. In Dionysian fashion, she pulls the veil back, even if her motives are laced with resentment. The Apollonian queen must preserve form even as the Dionysian sister threatens to unmask the fragility of that form. Yet, as the final scenes suggest, neither principle fully triumphs. Elizabeth allows a moment of emotional reconciliation with Philip. Margaret, despite her rebellion, remains ensnared in an unhappy royal life. The episode leaves viewers with the sense that the monarchy survives only through the constant, painful negotiation between Dionysian truth and Apollonian illusion, a negotiation mirrored in the complex bond between the two sisters.

Conclusion

The tension between Elizabeth and Margaret drives the narrative conflict in *The Crown*, dramatising Nietzsche's dialectic of Apollonian order versus Dionysian chaos. Their relationship is never simply antagonistic but dialectical: Margaret's passion exposes the emotional costs of Elizabeth's restraint, while Elizabeth's composure

contains the potential destructiveness of Margaret's impulses. Apollo and Dionysus are not simply antipodal, but "*extreme ends of a continuum*" and their relationship is far from "*a simple, logical antinomy*" (Lenson, 1987, p. 46). Elizabeth chastises Margaret after a social faux pas, saying that the world is watching them and their actions have consequences beyond themselves (Morgan, 2016). This reflects the Apollonian concern for form and public order. Conversely, Margaret's defiant response underscores the Dionysian rejection of repression; she declares that she will not live in her sister's shadow. Their rivalry also symbolises the monarchy's existential struggle. Elizabeth's realisation that the crown must adapt acknowledges the need to integrate some Dionysian vitality without sacrificing order. This unresolved tension is Nietzsche's tragic insight into human culture, where Apollonian and Dionysian forces exist in a necessary but precarious balance. The narrative tension between Elizabeth and Margaret personifies Nietzsche's tragic conflict. Elizabeth's Apollonian self-sacrifice secures the monarchy's survival, but at the expense of personal fulfilment. Margaret's Dionysian vitality threatens that order, illustrating the challenges of integrating emotional authenticity with institutional demands. Elizabeth's rebukes highlight the necessity of formality and discretion, while Margaret's resistance challenges the constraints imposed by tradition. This dialectic reflects the monarchy's broader existential dilemma, balancing the preservation of legacy with the pressures of social and cultural modernization.

This Nietzschean reading offers insight into *The Crown*'s engagement with monarchy as a symbolic institution and the psychological complexity of its key figures. The Apollonian versus Dionysian framework reveals how the series navigates themes of power, identity, and sacrifice. Elizabeth's embodiment of order and restraint legitimizes her authority but isolates her emotionally. Margaret's Dionysian resistance, though compelling, underscores the tragic costs of emotional excess within constraining social roles. Moreover, this analysis contributes to scholarship on royal representation in media by highlighting how *The Crown* uses mythic-philosophical archetypes to explore contemporary questions about tradition, change, power, authority, and the negotiation of private and public selves. It suggests that the sisters' clash is not simply familial but emblematic of the monarchy's ongoing negotiation between tradition and transformation.

To conclude, this article explores the sisters' relationship as a dramatisation of Nietzsche's conceptual opposition between the Apollonian and Dionysian principles representing order, rationality, and individuation versus chaos, passion, and

communal ecstasy. *The Crown* uses this Apollonian and Dionysian dichotomy not merely as an aesthetic device but as a profound framework for understanding the personal and political tensions within the royal family. Elizabeth's Apollonian self-control is essential for her role as sovereign but exacts an emotional cost. Margaret's Dionysian passion offers vitality and challenge but courts destruction. Their tragic sibling rivalry symbolises the monarchy's broader challenge: balancing timeless order with necessary change. The Apollonian principle, devoid of Dionysian vitality, would stagnate into sterile formalism, while the Dionysian impulse, lacking Apollonian structure, would devolve into formless anarchy; Nietzsche views Dionysus "*the force behind form*" while he thinks that Apollo embodies "*the contrary principle that gives form to force*" (Poole, 2005, pp. 63-64). The portrayal of Elizabeth and Margaret dramatises this eternal human tension with elegance and emotional depth. The clash between Elizabeth and Margaret in *The Crown* dramatises Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian duality, offering a profound meditation on the tensions inherent in monarchy, family, and identity. Elizabeth's Apollonian order and Margaret's Dionysian passion, while oppositional, are mutually dependent forces shaping the narrative's emotional and symbolic power. Through this lens, *The Crown* transcends mere historical drama to become a tragic exploration of power's demands and the human cost of symbolic sovereignty.

Summary

This article presents a Nietzschean reading of Netflix's historical drama *The Crown*, concentrating on the complex dynamic between Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret as portrayed during the series' first two seasons. Using Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles from *The Birth of Tragedy* as a theoretical framework, the study argues that these two sisters symbolise two opposing yet interdependent forces fundamental to both human culture and the monarchy itself. Elizabeth represents the Apollonian principle, which emphasises order, rationality, restraint, and the maintenance of institutional stability. In contrast, Margaret embodies the Dionysian principle, which prioritizes passion, emotional intensity, rebellion, and the dissolution of rigid boundaries through ecstatic self-expression.

Through close textual and visual analysis of key episodes, the article shows how the series employs mythic archetypes grounded in classical philosophy to illuminate the psychological and political struggles surrounding sovereignty, gendered authority, and national symbolism. This approach adds a new dimension to existing scholarship on *The Crown*, which has mostly focused on its visual aesthetics, gender politics, and historiographical strategies, by introducing a philosophical lens that has been largely absent from critical discussions of the show. By situating the narrative conflict between Elizabeth and Margaret within Nietzsche's conceptual framework of Apollonian and Dionysian forces, the article argues that *The Crown* functions not just as historical drama but as a televisual tragedy, dramatising the fragile balance between form and chaos, order and desire, that defines human culture and political authority.

The relationship between Elizabeth and Margaret embodies Nietzsche's dialectical opposition. Their interactions are never purely antagonistic but rather illustrate a complex interdependence: Margaret's passionate Dionysian impulses expose the emotional and

psychological costs of Elizabeth's Apollonian self-restraint, while Elizabeth's disciplined composure serves to contain and regulate the potentially destructive force of Margaret's rebellion. This aligns with Nietzsche's view that Apollo and Dionysus are not absolute opposites but rather "extreme ends of a continuum" whose dynamic interplay produces the richness of human experience (Lenson 1987, 46). For instance, Elizabeth reprimands Margaret after a public social mistake, reminding her that their conduct is always under public scrutiny and has consequences beyond their personal lives (Morgan 2016). This moment highlights the Apollonian imperative for maintaining public form and decorum. Margaret's defiant retort, declaring her refusal to live in her sister's shadow, powerfully illustrates the Dionysian rejection of repression and the desire for autonomous self-expression.

This sibling rivalry symbolically reflects the existential challenge faced by the monarchy itself. Elizabeth's recognition that the institution must evolve demonstrates the necessity of integrating some Dionysian vitality—passion, innovation, and emotional authenticity—without sacrificing the order and continuity the crown represents. This unresolved tension exemplifies Nietzsche's tragic insight into human culture: that Apollonian and Dionysian forces coexist in an uneasy but essential balance, and that the health of any cultural or political system depends on managing their interplay rather than eliminating one or the other. Elizabeth's embodiment of the Apollonian principle involves significant personal sacrifice; her self-discipline and devotion to duty secure the monarchy's survival but isolate her emotionally. Meanwhile, Margaret's Dionysian energy injects life and challenge into the royal family's otherwise rigid order, but her passionate rebellion risks destabilizing the institution. Elizabeth's insistence on formality and discretion contrasts with Margaret's resistance to tradition's constraints, encapsulating the monarchy's broader dilemma of preserving legacy while adapting to social and cultural change.

This Nietzschean analysis sheds new light on *The Crown*'s treatment of monarchy as a symbolic institution and on the psychological complexity of its central characters. The Apollonian-Dionysian framework clarifies how the series explores themes of power, identity, and sacrifice: Elizabeth's order and restraint legitimize her authority but generate emotional loneliness, whereas Margaret's passionate resistance underscores the tragic consequences of unrestrained emotional excess in a socially restrictive environment. Furthermore, this reading contributes to existing scholarship on royal representation in media by highlighting the series' use of mythic and philosophical archetypes to interrogate ongoing contemporary questions about tradition versus innovation, authority versus individuality, and the negotiation between private desires and public roles. The conflict between the sisters is thus not simply a familial drama but emblematic of the monarchy's broader struggle to reconcile its historical role with the demands of a changing society.

In conclusion, the article positions the relationship between Elizabeth and Margaret as a dramatisation of Nietzsche's fundamental opposition between the Apollonian and Dionysian principles—order, reason, and individuation versus chaos, passion, and communal ecstasy. *The Crown* employs this dichotomy not simply as a stylistic or aesthetic choice but as a substantive framework for understanding the deep personal and political tensions within the British royal family. Elizabeth's Apollonian self-control is indispensable for her role as monarch, though it exacts a significant emotional toll. Margaret's Dionysian vitality brings necessary challenge and dynamism but also risks destruction. The sisters' tragic rivalry encapsulates the monarchy's wider existential challenge: how to balance enduring order and stability with the vital need for change and renewal. Nietzsche's philosophy warns against an Apollonian order without Dionysian vitality, which leads to sterile rigidity, as well as a Dionysian impulse without Apollonian form, which descends into chaos. By dramatising Elizabeth and Margaret as personifications of these forces, *The Crown* elegantly and poignantly captures this eternal human tension. Ultimately, the series transcends its historical narrative to become a tragic meditation on power, identity, and the costs of symbolic sovereignty. Elizabeth's Apollonian order and Margaret's Dionysian passion, while seemingly opposed, are mutually constitutive, shaping the emotional and symbolic core of the narrative. This Nietzschean lens enriches the critical understanding of *The Crown*, revealing how it reflects not only contemporary cultural anxieties about monarchy and modernity but also the universal, timeless dialectic between order and chaos that defines the human condition.

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