



## Aspects of liberal feminism reflected by the character of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown Season 1*

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### ABSTRACT

Liberal feminism is the branch of feminism that believes that men and women are equal. It holds that women can act on the same level as men. It has been a recurring issue in various literary works that features a main female character, especially in film. In addition, liberal feminism can be observed in TV series. A series that portrays a female character is *The Crown*. This research seeks to investigate what aspects of liberal feminism are represented by the character of Queen Elizabeth II in the first season of the series. This research employed qualitative design due to the descriptive nature of the research that explores a social phenomenon. The theory of liberal feminism by Rosemarie Tong (2018) was also utilized to help analyze and describe Queen Elizabeth II's behavior which reflected the aspects of liberal feminism. The findings of this study revealed that Queen Elizabeth II in this series displays action that falls under the three aspects of liberal feminism, equal education, liberty, and rights. This shows that liberal feminism can also manifest in the behavior of a prominent female historical figure.

**Keywords:** Feminism; historical figure; liberal feminism; Queen Elizabeth II; *The Crown*

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### INTRODUCTION

In general, feminism refers to the belief that rejects any form of discrimination and marginalization toward women that includes traditional gender stereotypes, which view women as inferior to men. From its beginning as a human rights movement, feminism has developed into an ideology divided into multiple schools of thought. Rosemarie Tong (2018) classifies feminism into ten branches; Liberal, Radical, Marxist/Socialist, Women of Color, Global, postcolonial, and Transnational, psychoanalytic, Care-Focused, Ecofeminism, Postmodern, and Third Wave feminism. The most well-known is the 'Big Three, which consists of Liberal, Marxist/socialist, and radical. Among these, Liberal Feminism is the oldest (Maynard, 1995). More specifically, the premise of Liberal Feminism is focused on the promotion of equal opportunities and freedom between women and men in all aspects of life. For example, women also have the right to get an education and to freely pursue their dreams as men do. According to Septiana (2020), Liberal Feminism is different than other types in that it places emphasis on women's ability to maintain equality with men through their actions. Liberal feminists hold that one of the primary actions is to

encourage reform on policies and laws that restrict women, as Tong (2018) states, 'female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world', and strive for gender equality via political and legal reform.

Besides being perceived as a social and cultural phenomenon, the issue of feminism can be found in the world of literature as well. There are numerous literary works that put feminism as their main theme, ranging from novels to movies. For novels, one of the most notable works is *Little Women (1868)* by Louisa May Alcott which narrates the story of four sisters who strive to achieve their dreams during the American Civil War. This novel is rich in feminist values that can be explored and analyzed, notably liberal feminism through its female characters. As for movies, multiple titles that feature women as the leading characters/protagonists also easily come to mind. Some of them are *Wonder Woman (2017)*, *The Hunger Games (2012)*, *Lady Bird (2017)*, and *Arrival (2016)*.

As mentioned above, movies featuring women as the main character are abundant. As a result, there are considerable numbers of feminist studies conducted using films as the object of research. The

first is a study by Hastuti et al (2018) that focused on identifying liberal feminism through the film *North Country* directed by Niki Caro. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, this study found out that *North Country* is full of liberal feminist ideas, particularly those dealing with discrimination, workplace inequality, and harassment of women. These aspects are reflected through the struggle of its main female character, Josey Aimes. Another study by Puspitasari (2016) examines the reflection of liberal feminism through the characterization of Jane Smith, the female protagonist of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* movie. The result of this study found that Jane Smith reflects three liberal feminism values, namely equality in economy and politics, liberty, and education. As a woman and a wife, she is equal to her husband in these three areas. This is evidenced by having a job as a secret agent under the same organization as her husband, free from her husband's influence in making decisions, and possessing equal and even greater espionage skills as her husband due to her bountiful experiences.

Besides studies in novels and movies, feminist issues can be found in TV series. A study by Sanjaya (2020) focuses on explaining the resistance of Prince Philip as the husband of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown* from the perspective of traditional gender stereotypes using the theory of gender roles and the feminist approach. In this study, it is found that Prince Philip displays resistance to his wife in several sequences. The cause of the resistance is mainly due to their conflicting mindset of gender-based stereotypes. On the one hand, Prince Philip holds the patriarchal tradition that regards him as the leading figure in the family. On the other hand, his authority as the head of the family is challenged due to his wife's position as a sovereign being guided by the Royal Protocols. While this study focused on Prince Philip's masculinity which refused to be overpowered by his wife's authority, the current study explores the liberal feminist side of Queen Elizabeth II.

Compared to the previous studies mentioned above, there is a similarity to this study. Among them is the theme, which involved gender stereotypes that specifically emphasized feminism. Furthermore, all previous studies mentioned above mainly used fictional female characters in a fictional setting. The current study, however, is focused on analyzing liberal feminism by looking at the actions of a major historical figure portrayed in the format of historical drama.

Although studies on feminism are plentiful, little has been done with a focus on a fictional historical figure. A biopic or a TV series based on a historical figure, such as *The Crown*, is worth analyzing because it offers perspectives on how the historical figure lived his or her life. For this reason,

the researcher chooses to analyze the liberal feminism of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown* TV series as she began her rule and faces various challenges as a female monarch. Queen Elizabeth II as a female leader is interesting because when she ascended to the throne in 1952, it was the time when the 2nd wave of feminism occurred. Therefore, the analysis of how the Queen represents feminism is noteworthy.

The researcher has set limits on the scope of the research by choosing to observe the first season of the series. The first season was chosen due to its timeline being set during the early days of the Queen's reign after she ascended to the throne and the time setting coincides with the rise of the second feminism movement. To do so, the researcher utilizes the theory of liberal feminism proposed by Rosemarie Tong (2018). This theory is utilized to help the researcher better understand liberal feminism and its values.

#### **METHOD**

In order to conduct this study, the researcher employs qualitative design because the study aims to observe, analyze, and describe a social phenomenon, particularly liberal feminism. According to Williams (2007), an identifier of qualitative research is the social phenomenon being investigated from the participant's point of view. Liberal feminism as the main issue of this study is analyzed from the portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown* TV series. *The Crown* is a British historical drama aired by Netflix that takes the audience to the major moments in the life of Queen Elizabeth II that defines her reign. It also highlights The Queen's relationship with the other Royal Family members. This series has aired since 2016 and has had four seasons so far and each season takes the audience through the key moments in The Queen's life as she performs her duty as the monarch of Great Britain. For this research, however, the researcher only looked at the first season as the scope of the study because its timeline is interesting as it took place during the rise of the second wave of feminism and the end of the first. To help the researcher analyzes the representation of liberal feminism, the feminist approach along with liberal feminism theory is employed.

The data for this study are in the form of character dialogue taken from the series. To begin with, the researcher re-watched the 10 episodes of the first season thoroughly and carefully in order to well-understand which sequences/scenes performed by the character reflect the notion of gender equality. Secondly, when the appropriate scene is found, the researcher then analyzed the dialogue and actions of Queen Elizabeth II in accordance with aspects of liberal feminism theory proposed by Rosemarie Tong (2018). Lastly, the elaboration of liberal feminist

aspects reflected by Queen Elizabeth II is added along with some information on narrative aspects such as the plot in order to provide some background.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the aspects of liberal feminism reflected by the Queen Elizabeth II character in the TV series *The Crown*. The findings are composed of the characters' dialogue which shows the action and behavior of the main female character where the aspects of liberal feminism can be seen. The findings are grouped into three categories in accordance with the theory of liberal feminist aspects by Rosemarie Tong (2018), namely, Equal Education, Equal Liberty, and Equal Rights.

#### **Equal Education**

One aspect of equality that women strive to achieve is education. Liberal feminists believe that women should have the same opportunity as men in all areas of life, including being well-learned. Education is a fundamental right that is eligible for all humans, regardless of gender. Well-educated women will be a significant contributor to society's welfare. In line with this statement, Queen Elizabeth II's character in *The Crown* reflects the notion of equality in terms of education in three scenes.

The first scene which shows Queen Elizabeth II's action in terms of equality in education is the scene of the Commonwealth tour which takes place in Kenya. One day, the vehicle of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip's escort team breaks down and makes them stop on the savanna road. Seeing this, Elizabeth decides to take matters into her own hands. She informs the crew that the vehicle overheats and tells them to let the engine cool down. Before continuing the journey, she claims that she knows how to deal with such a problem because she was once a mechanic during World War II.

Elizabeth: "They keep trying to start the engine. All they have to do is to make sure the fan is off and wait."

Elizabeth: "No! Stop!"

Elizabeth: "She's just—She's just overheated. Can I have that? Thank you."

Elizabeth: "All you have to do... Is wait. It's all right. I was a mechanic during the war."

In this scene, Elizabeth is shown to be knowledgeable in the field of automotive in that she knows how to handle an overheating engine. This is possible since she once served under the woman's division in the British army during World War II. With her experience as a mechanic, she did not

hesitate to engage in an activity that is normally associated with men, fixing a vehicle. In the perspective of normal gender stereotypes, usually, it is the male who deals with many things such as repairing vehicles, but in this case, Prince Philip as the male and also head of the family did not engage in the matter. It is inferred that the role of gender, in this case, is reversed. Therefore, Queen Elizabeth is depicted as well-learned as males do, especially in the field of automobiles.

Another scene of equality in education is the scene where Queen Elizabeth is in a conversation with The Queen Mother. Elizabeth talked about her early education with her mother. Elizabeth complains she did not learn much about Literature, Philosophy, and Science during her childhood under the guidance of her tutor, the Vice-Provost of Eton College.

Elizabeth: "At the time of my education, I asked the Vice-Provost if we shouldn't spend a bit of time on Literature, Philosophy, Science. He felt I had enough on my plate as it was. But don't you think I should have learned about it?"

Queen Mother: "Why?"

Elizabeth: "Well, doesn't one have a duty to know certain things?"

Queen Mother: "You have a great many other virtues. You can't be expected to know everything."

Elizabeth: "Well, no, that's the point, Mummy. I know almost nothing."

Queen Mother: "You know when to keep your mouth shut. That's more important than anything."

Elizabeth: "And that would've been fine if I'd gone on to live a normal life. But now I spend so much time with politicians and statesmen. You know, I live in dread of being left alone with them."

Queen Mother: "Your dear papa was just the same."

Elizabeth: "Be nice to think that one could, if not hold one's own, then at least not have to steer conversation away to dogs and horses every time."

In their conversation, Queen Elizabeth II reveals her concern about not having a proper understanding of certain subjects that are supposed to help her in her duty. She worries about not being able to keep up with politicians and statesmen with superior knowledge of many issues. However, her mother does not see this as an issue because Elizabeth already has many other qualities and she does not have to know everything. Elizabeth is not content

with her mother's opinion and argues that such a case may work where she is not a monarch. By looking at Queen Elizabeth's argument in this scene, it is inferred that she still cares about her education despite being a sovereign who might not find much use in general education. Furthermore, she is also portrayed as a woman who regards education as an important quality that a woman must have, despite her being from a Royal Family who has privileges that facilitate her to have any type of education.

The third scene of equal education is seen after Queen Elizabeth's first meeting with her personal tutor, Professor Hogg. It leaves Queen Elizabeth with greater concern about her education. When asked by the professor if she has any degree of education to give him an idea of where to start her tutor, The Queen could not respond. Later, she visits her mother to talk about this matter.

Elizabeth: *"I came because I wanted to ask you about my education."*

Queen Mother: *"What about it?"*

Elizabeth: *"The fact that I didn't receive one."*

Queen Mother: *"You did"*

Elizabeth: *"Sewing, needlework, and saying poems with Crawfie. That is not an education."*

Queen Mother: *"Darling, you also spent years one-on-one with the Vice-Provost of Eton College."*

Elizabeth: *"Being drilled in the Constitution."*

Queen Mother: *"Which is far more than your sister ever got."*

Elizabeth: *"Mummy! I'm talking about a normal education. In normal subjects."*

Queen Mother: *"You received an entirely appropriate education for a woman of your background."*

Elizabeth: *"Which has entirely failed to prepare me for the life I lead now."*

Queen Mother: *"We taught you how to be a lady, a princess. What do you want? A degree? No one wants a bluestocking or a college lecturer as a sovereign. They want a queen."*

Elizabeth: *"Yes, a queen who is hopelessly ill-equipped to deal with the people she has to meet."*

The dialogue above shows another example of Queen Elizabeth II as a woman with a great will to learn. The Queen Mother's point of view is that a sovereign will find not much use in a degree or a high education because the quality that her daughter needs as a Queen is only the manners of ladies and princesses. Despite her mother who regards general education as unimportant to her, Elizabeth still sees herself as not well educated enough in various subjects, especially involving many latest issues when dealing with her officials. She also views her early education did not help her to be prepared for her current position as a monarch.

By looking at Queen Elizabeth's actions and behavior here, it can be inferred that she is a woman who carries one of the liberal feminism aspects, which is equality in education. She sees education as an important means to help her in her duty as a sovereign and a ruler of her people.

### **Equal Liberty**

Liberal feminism emerged to ensure that women have the same freedom as men. It is based on the same premise as that of liberalism, the moral and political philosophy which is aimed at preserving individual rights and maximizing freedom of choice (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics, 2009). One of the aspects of equality that liberal feminists fight to achieve is liberty, that is, the freedom that anybody deserves to freely make their own choice and pursue their desires without interference from others. Therefore women are also eligible to choose the best course of action for their lives free from the common gender stereotypes that limits them. In the category of equal liberty, there are two scenes taken from two episodes where the character of Queen Elizabeth II displays such aspects.

The first scene in this category can be found in the scene where Elizabeth argues with her Prime Minister concerning the family's surname. Previously, Prince Philip presented the matter of the surname of their children to Elizabeth. Philip expected that their children maintain his own surname Mountbatten in accordance with the patriarchal tradition in Europe, where the family name is based on the father. This matter is then discussed with the Cabinet represented by Prime Minister Winston Churchill in the official audience shortly after.

Churchill: *"I am an old man. Many has questioned my relevance, whether I still have something to offer in public life, the answer is I have. Which to leave in place a Sovereign prepared for office, armed for Her duty. Great things have happened to this country under the sceptres of her queens. And you should be no exception."*

## *Passage, 11(1), April 2023*

Elizabeth: *"Yes I am Queen, but I am also a woman. And a wife. To a man whose pride and strength were, in part, what attracted me to him. I want to be in a successful marriage. I would argue, stability under this roof might even be in national interest. Had you considered that?"*

Churchill: *"Very well. I will discuss it with the Cabinet."*

Elizabeth: *"No. You will inform the Cabinet, Prime Minister. That is the favour you will do me, in return for one I will be doing you. I know your party wants you to resign to make way for younger man, Mr Eden. I also know that no one will bring up your resignation while you are actively engaged in planning the coronation. So, by delaying my investiture, you are, in fact, holding onto power... in which case, I would suggest you are, somewhat, in my debt. So, if... I agree to the delay, perhaps you will consider supporting me in the matter regarding my husband's name."*

From the dialogue above, The Queen is shown to cleverly point her argument to Winston Churchill regarding this matter. When Churchill strongly advised her to comply with the Cabinet's instructions, Elizabeth spoke her mind. She in turn firmly remarked that while she is indeed a Queen, she is also a normal woman who is attracted to a man's strength and a wife who wants a successful marriage. She then reminds Churchill her family matters would also be highlighted by the public and media, which she would not allow. The prime minister, convinced by her arguments, agreed to further discuss this matter with the cabinet. This sequence shows that, despite her gender, Elizabeth is able to speak her mind unrestrainedly in order to secure what is best for her family and her nation. Regardless of her position as a sovereign with great authority, she did not see this as means to an end but simply spoke to avoid unnecessary commotion that could impact her family life.

Queen Elizabeth also shows cunning and cleverness in an effort to achieve what she wants. This is shown when she brought up Churchill's unwillingness to resign from his position as prime minister because he has become too old. Elizabeth sees this as an opportunity to exchange favor with Churchill to pass her demands, convincing that he is in a way in debt with her in that Churchill is delaying her coronation and thus clinging to power. Elizabeth utilizes this to her advantage and asked Churchill to consider her request. From her action, it is implied that Elizabeth represents a woman who breaks the stereotype that dictates women's role is limited to only listening and following men's directions. This

scene shows that The Queen is a formidable woman who is relentless in pursuing her wishes.

This scene depicts Queen Elizabeth II as a woman who demonstrates that women are also able to voice what they believe in and to freely make decisions without restraint. Furthermore, she also proved that women should also be capable of determining their own course and what is best for themselves.

The other scene of equal liberty is Elizabeth's decision about the coronation committee. Queen Elizabeth II gathered several men from the Cabinet along with her personal secretary, Alan 'Tommy' Lascelles to inform them of her decision to appoint Prince Philip as the head of the Coronation Committee.

Elizabeth: *"I have asked you to join me because I have made a decision regarding the Coronation Committee, which is that I would like my husband to be the Chairman of that Committee."*

Lascelles: *"That's impossible ma'am. There can only be one chairman."*

Elizabeth: *"As far as I'm aware, I only have one husband."*

Lascelles: *"And the Duke of Norfolk will be expecting it to be him. He is the Earl of Marshall."*

Elizabeth: *"That may be."*

Lascelles: *"And Chief Butler of England, he would be the 16th Duke of Norfolk to do it. He ran your father's coronation, his father ran your grandfather's. And running the coronation, it's what the Norfolks do."*

Queen Mother: *"Couldn't you give Philip some other job?"*

Elizabeth: *"Like what?"*

Queen Mother: *"Arrange the photographer?"*

Elizabeth: *"The Chairmanship is what he wants. With full autonomy. Therefore, it is what I want. Norfolk can be vice-chair."*

Queen Mother: *"Why don't you think about it?"*

Elizabeth: *"I have, and my decision stands. Thank you."*

Based on the above dialogue, it is shown that Queen Elizabeth II displays the quality of a woman who is capable of making decisions firmly. Similar to the previous finding, in this case, she is also portrayed

as a persistent and decisive woman who does not stop at anything to achieve her desires. In this sequence, Queen Elizabeth is very staunch in holding her decision that even her own mother, Elizabeth 'The Queen Mother', is unable to change her mind. When her mother asked her to at least think about it, she decisively replies that her decision is final and ended the discussion. By analyzing her action, the researcher determines the liberal feminist aspect that is represented by the action of Queen Elizabeth II in this case is equal liberty. The liberty being discussed here refers to the fact that she made her decision solely based on her own judgment without interference from anyone.

### **Equal Rights**

In the view of liberal feminism, men and women are the same human beings entitled to the same treatment. According to Tong (2018), a woman is not a "mere means", or instrument to a man's pleasure or happiness. Rather, she is a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity for self-determination. To treat a woman as a mere means is to treat her as less than a person, as someone who exists not for herself but as an appendage to someone else. This statement means that liberal feminists oppose the idea that women should only be a man's object of pleasure. This is because all throughout history women have always been oppressed and did not receive the same rights as men. Therefore, liberal feminism sought to make women and men equal in terms of rights because women are not worthless and capable of doing what pleases. There are three scenes from two episodes that show the category of equal rights.

The first scene that contains the aspect of equal rights can be observed as the day of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II approaches. The Queen asked her husband Prince Philip to be the head of the Coronation Committee that organizes the ceremony. Hearing this, Philip is left wondering because the ceremony is usually handled by the Duke of Norfolk. Elizabeth reasoned that she wanted to make a public declaration of trust for him and that she has cleared a room for him. However, Philip's response started an exchange of arguments related to gender roles between them.

Elizabeth: *"There was something I wanted you to help me with."*

Philip: *"It would've to be jolly important to distract me from getting my wings faster than anyone in British aviation history."*

Elizabeth: *"It is. I'd like you to come aboard my Coronation Committee."*

Philip: *"In which capacity?"*

Elizabeth: *"As chairman."*

Philip: *"But you already have one, Bernard."*

Elizabeth: *"I'd ask the Duke of Norfolk to make room for you. I want to make a public declaration of my trust in you."*

Philip: *"There's no need to matronize me."*

Elizabeth: *"I'm not matronizing you."*

Philip: *"Yes, you are. You're taking pity on me and giving me a job for appearances' sake."*

Elizabeth: *"No, it's not that. I was just thinking how I'd like us to spend more time together."*

Philip: *"What are you talking about? We spend all our time together."*

Elizabeth: *"No, we don't. You're always off flying, or lurching with strange men."*

Philip: *"A few hours a week, darling. Anyway, what am I supposed to do? Sit around and wait while you're Queening?"*

Elizabeth: *"Queening?"*

Philip: *"Yes, Queening."*

Elizabeth: *"Well, maybe I'd like your help with the Queening."*

In this sequence, Queen Elizabeth's intention is to provide a job for her husband because Philip's career as the Commander in the Royal Navy ended in July 1951. Philip however, sees this as an insult to his manhood and remarks that Elizabeth is taking pity on him because he is jobless and only doing his hobby of flying a plane. Prince Philip even used the term 'matronizing' to express his disappointment, to which Elizabeth reasoned that her only wish is for them to be together more often.

From this sequence, it is implied that what Elizabeth was doing as a woman and wife is viewed by Philip as overpowering him as a man, husband, and the head of the family. In this case, Philip still maintains a strong patriarchal notion within himself where the man should be the one who gives orders in a family, not the woman. It is also can be inferred that Philip's authority as the head of the family is challenged by his wife, who also happens to be The Queen of England. Based on this situation, Prince

Philip as her wife's subject has no choice but to follow his wife's order in her capacity as the Queen.

By analyzing this sequence, the researcher finds that the action of Queen Elizabeth II displayed the value of liberal feminism in the terms of equal rights. By her action which requests Prince Philip's support in a monarch affair, she indirectly shows that she is capable of standing on equal ground with her husband and it also shows that she has the same degree of authority in a family.

In this scene that takes place in Westminster Abbey, Prince Philip is engaged in another exchange of arguments about gender stereotypes with her wife Elizabeth, which about to be crowned Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain. The matter revolves around Philip's unwillingness to kneel before Elizabeth in the upcoming Coronation because he still sees himself as a husband in a Western patriarchal society that does not abide by such behavior. Nevertheless, the Royal Protocol requires Philip to set aside his pride and compels him to do so whether he like it or not.

Philip: *"I merely asked the question. Whether it was right in this day and age that the Queen's consort, her husband. Should kneel to her rather than stand beside her."*

Elizabeth: *"You won't be kneeling to me."*

Philip: *"That's not how it will look. That's not how it will feel. It will feel like a eunuch, an amoeba, is kneeling before his wife."*

Elizabeth: *"You'll be kneeling before God and the Crown as we all do."*

Philip: *"I don't see you kneeling before anyone."*

Elizabeth: *"I am not because I'm already flattened under the weight of this thing."*

Philip: *"Oh, spare me the false humility. Doesn't look like that to me."*

Elizabeth: *"How does it look to you?"*

Philip: *"Looks to me like you're enjoying it. It released an unattractive sense of authority and entitlement that I've never seen before."*

Elizabeth: *"In you, it released a weakness and insecurity I've never seen before."*

Philip: *"Are you my wife or my Queen?"*

Elizabeth: *"I'm both."*

Philip: *"I want to be married to my wife."*

Elizabeth: *"I'm both and a strong man would be able to kneel to both."*

Philip: *"I will not kneel before my wife."*

Elizabeth: *"Your wife is not asking you to."*

Philip: *"But my Queen commands me?"*

Elizabeth: *"Yes."*

Philip: *"I beg you make an exception for me."*

Elizabeth: *"...No."*

In this scene, it is shown that despite Philip's persistence that he is still a dignified male who sees

himself still above his wife, Elizabeth managed to resist him. In this scene, Philip desperately tries to defend his pride as a man by saying that he feels like an amoeba by kneeling to his own wife. When Philip asks Elizabeth to make an exception for him, that is, to allow him to stand beside her rather than kneeling to her in the Coronation, Elizabeth refuses. She simply said no because she knows she is in the capacity of a Monarch who represents the will of God and thus must be respected by her subject, and that includes her husband. What Philip does not realize in this situation, however, is that he does not kneel to his wife, but to his Queen and hence God Himself.

By analyzing Queen Elizabeth II's actions and in this scene, she clearly represents herself as a woman with a strong mind. When her husband Prince Philip persistently refused to follow the Royal Protocol in the event of her Coronation, Queen Elizabeth reminds him of the role and the position of a Monarch that cannot be bargained in any way. She is able to defend her stance multiple times against her own husband, who tries to assert his dominance as a male. At the end of their argument, when Philip conveys his final wish to be made an exception in this matter, Elizabeth with a firm look at her husband strongly says no.

Therefore, it can be inferred that Queen Elizabeth II as a woman demonstrates that she is capable of standing up to her husband who tries to protect his dominance over her by holding to her own reasons. She knows that if she grants Philip's request, it will cause a negative public reception and put her reputation as a monarch at stake. Similar to the previous findings, she is also portrayed as a woman who knows how to take the best course for the sake of her country and herself. Thus, in terms of liberal feminist aspects, the researcher finds that Queen Elizabeth II in this case displays values in equal rights for the fact that she has the same power as her husband and it was used not to realize her personal desires, but to secure what is best for her country.

The last scene that depicts the value of equal rights can be seen when The Queen is on a tour across Commonwealth countries accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip. They are on their way to Gibraltar aboard a plane while her personal secretary warns her to expect security issues should they continue with their schedule at Gibraltar. Philip states that their security will not be guaranteed by the government there and leaders of political parties in Gibraltar are threatened with death threats should they set foot there. However, Queen Elizabeth insists they must press on due to they almost arrived at Gibraltar, and canceling it at such a late hour would compromise Great Britain's name and their own reputation. Not to mention it would disappoint the people of Gibraltar.

Personal Secretary: “*Ma’am, there do remain some security concerns about Gibraltar.*”

Elizabeth: “*What concerns?*”

Philip: “*Death threats were sent to all leaders of the major political parties, telling them that, if our tour were to go to Gibraltar, our safety can’t be guaranteed. I told them we should pull out.*”

Elizabeth: “*Why?*”

Philip: “*What do you mean why? Because I don’t much fancy shuffling the streets of Gibraltar like a sitting duck.*”

Elizabeth: “*No. Pulling out at this late hour would make us look weak. And it would be a great disappointment to the people of Gibraltar. I say we go.*”

Philip: “*I say we don’t.*”

Elizabeth: “*I am aware that I am surrounded by people who feel that they could do the job better. Strong people with powerful characters, more natural leaders, perhaps better suited to leading from the front, making a mark. But for better or worse, the Crown has landed on my head. And I say we go.*”

By looking at Elizabeth’s response from the dialogue above, it signifies that she is able to defend her stance yet again against her husband. It can be seen that despite Philip’s reasoning that pressing forward could be dangerous for them, Elizabeth insists that their tour must continue for the sake of her country’s dignity. When Philip asserts his demand to pull off their agenda, Elizabeth replied decisively by remarking that anybody with a more powerful character and better leadership could do her job better as a monarch, however, the English Crown has, for better or worse, chosen her to be its wearer.

The message from this scene is similar to the previous findings in this category that Elizabeth is capable of standing on equal ground with her husband by resisting his power, naturally using her position as Queen of England. What can be inferred from this case is that Queen Elizabeth II is shown yet again to be as equal to her husband in terms of authority in determining the best decision for both of them.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings revealed that the three aspects of liberal feminism proposed by Rosemarie Tong (2018) are present in the first season of *The Crown*. The aspects of equal education, equal liberty, and equal rights are represented through the action and expressions of

Queen Elizabeth II as the main female character in the series. This indicates that this historical drama series contains feminist and gender issues despite its main genre as a biopic, historical drama.

In relation to previous studies about liberal feminism, the researcher finds certain similarities and differences. There is an interesting comparison between this study and the one conducted by Puspitasari (2016) and Hastuti et al (2018). Based on the findings, Queen Elizabeth displays her equality with her husband on several occasions, particularly when it is about making decisions, holding the same authority in a family, and resisting patriarchal power. Compared to the study by Puspitasari (2016), Queen Elizabeth is different from Jane Smith despite both of them being capable of maintaining equality with their respective husband. In Queen Elizabeth’s case, she displays her equality through the greater power granted by her higher position as sovereign of a kingdom. This left her husband, Prince Philip, with no choice but to follow and acknowledge his wife’s authority. Hence it can be said that Elizabeth’s equality with her husband comes naturally and without effort. It is unlike Jane who maintains equality with a notable effort by doing her job as an assassin and secret agent in order to obtain her own source of income rather than relying on her husband for example, despite sharing the same job with her husband John.

In comparison with the study by Hastuti et al (2018), Queen Elizabeth as the main female character in *The Crown* is similar to Josey Aimes from *North Country* in terms of fighting for what they believe they deserve as a woman. While Elizabeth displays a struggle to get proper education to assist her in her duty as a monarch, Josey fights to obtain equal rights, eliminate discrimination, and oppose sexual harassment in her workplace.

Therefore, it can be inferred that Queen Elizabeth II as the subject of this study shares notable similarities and differences with Jane Smith and Josey Aimes from two previous studies on displaying equality with men. Despite being a sovereign with great authority, it does not prevent her to fight to get what she deserves as a woman, education. Her authority is only used in state affairs even if it means she must stand against her husband’s power as the head of the family.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that *The Crown* season 1 reflects the value of liberal feminism through its main female character, Queen Elizabeth II. The first season portrayed her as a woman who displayed three aspects of equality that make her stand on the same level as men. The Queen’s actions and behavior are the main factors that fulfill the traits of an ideal woman in the view of liberal feminists. Her feminist



behavior can be categorized into three categories of liberal feminist aspects as proposed by Rosemarie Tong (2018), equal education, equal liberty, and equal rights. Furthermore, due to the limitation of this study, only season 1 of the series was analyzed for Queen Elizabeth's feminist characteristics. There are 4 seasons that follow which could be further analyzed to see whether her representation of liberal feminist values is consistently depicted. Therefore, further research into Queen Elizabeth II in the next seasons of *The Crown* is recommended.

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