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HERITAGE AND POST-HERITAGE: INVESTIGATING THE STYLE, FORM AND GENRE OF PERIOD DRAMA IN 2010s BRITISH TELEVISION

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—————————————ABSTRACT—————————————

This project analyses six period drama productions in British television of the 2010s, expanding Claire Monk's term of 'post-heritage' into a critical framework. Its case studies establish a cycle of progressive representations of the past in recent television drama, which operate against the assumptions of 'heritage' nostalgia forwarded by earlier scholars. The post-heritage framework consists of five guiding elements: interrogation, subversion, subjectivity, self-consciousness and ambiguity. These inform the analysis of the project's case studies, while also allowing the existence of post-heritage elements to be recognised in earlier period drama productions. The thesis is split into three distinct parts, which allow the heritage and post-heritage elements of the case studies to be associated with the characteristics and theoretical concepts of television drama. The first chapter of each part evaluates the institutional context of its case study, identifying its impact upon production through textual examples from the programme. The second chapter of each part focuses on close analysis, demonstrating the extent to which post-heritage elements can assist innovation in television drama. Part I focuses on televisual style, identifying the naturalist, realist and modernist aesthetics of television drama. Scholarly sources are used to connect these with periods of British television history. This aesthetic discussion leads to theoretical concepts of identity and culture, which informs the case study analyses that follow in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 concerns the BBC/Masterpiece revival of *Upstairs Downstairs* (2010-12), identifying its more developed post-heritage point of view in comparison to *Downton Abbey* (ITV/Masterpiece, 2010-15) and the original *Upstairs, Downstairs* (ITV, 1971-75). It also considers the circumstances that hindered the production of the BBC series' second season and contributed to its cancellation, establishing the impact of these on the programme's representation of the past. Chapter 2's case study is *Dancing on the Edge* (BBC, 2013), the interwar narrative of which allows the part's themes of identity and culture to be explored. The project's second part analyses televisual form, assessing the increasing hybridity between series and serial forms in twenty-first century television. The theoretical focus of part II is narratives of trauma, influenced by the dichotomy between Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra's concepts of the traumatic experience. Chapter 3's analysis of *The Crown* (Netflix, 2016-present) reveals a Caruthian approach to trauma, its narrative impact recurring endlessly and allowing the British monarchy's tenuous position from the 1950s to reflect upon the present day. Chapter 4, meanwhile, considers the LaCaprian trauma expressed in *The Living and the Dead* (BBC/BBC America, 2016), suggesting a process of 'working through' that can find a resolution. These diverse approaches to trauma are connected to *The Crown* and *The Living and the Dead*'s grounding in serial and series form respectively, asserting the continued importance of this distinction. The third and final part of the project turns to the analysis of television genre, with innovative works of literary adaptation used to explore the relationship between generic hybridity and a post-heritage approach to depictions of the past. The introduction to part III outlines the history of 'classic serial' adaptations on the BBC and the innovations to the genre apparent since the 1990s. Following this, chapter 5 uses the case study of *Dickensian* (BBC, 2015-16) to identify the potential of soap opera characteristics in establishing a work of adaptation. *Dickensian* takes advantage of the soap genre's economies of scale, while also establishing the difficulties this creates at a narrative level. Lastly, chapter 6 analyses the generic features of comedy within *Parade's End* (BBC/HBO, 2012), asserting its use of televisual features to offer both a revised reading of Ford Madox Ford's novels and a realisation of their literary characteristics on screen. The thesis concludes by placing the post-heritage critical framework in the context of broader trends in television drama of the 2010s, justifying its place in the field of television studies.

Cover image: The nineteenth-century residents of Shepzoy look on as a twenty-first century car is unearthed on their land (*The Living and the Dead*, BBC/BBC America: episode 6)

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REFERENCE NOTES

Throughout this thesis, "season" is used in place of the British term "series". "Series" and "serial" are used to refer to a production's entire output.

All television productions are cited with their commissioning network(s) and years of original release. Episodes, including those with individual titles, are cited by season (where applicable) and episode numbers.

Quotations from published scripts are used where available and reflective of their screened iterations, unless otherwise noted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION
HERITAGE AND POST-HERITAGE

> The image of the past in the heritage films has become so naturalised that, paradoxically, it stands removed from history: the evocation of pastness is accomplished by a look, a style, the loving recreation of period details – not by any critical historical perspective. The self-conscious visual perfectionism of these films and their fetishisation of period details create a fascinating but self-enclosed world. They render history as spectacle, as *separate* from the viewer in the present, as something over and done with, complete, achieved.
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> --- Andrew Higson (2006b: 96, emphasis in original)

This epigraph, originally written in 1993, displays the view of period or 'heritage' screen drama that has dominated critical discourse in the subsequent decades. Under the framework pioneered by Higson, the illusory histories presented by heritage productions are constructed as an escape from contemporary troubles. A heritage viewpoint sees the past as a time of stability, its societal structures offering a surety lacking in the present. However, looking beyond this vision of heritage illusion allows the past to appear as more reflective of the contemporary era. As Higson also states, heritage films display the past as "visually spectacular pastiche, inviting a nostalgic gaze that resists the ironies and social critiques so often suggested narratively" (2006b: 91). The dichotomy between spectacle and narrative critique in period drama forms the starting point of this thesis, which investigates the diverse points of view from which period dramas have been considered by both creators and scholars. This is expressed through the interplay of heritage and an alternative approach, delineated as 'post-heritage', which challenges rather than venerates the inequalities of the past. The potential for increased risk-taking and innovation in television productions of the 2010s presents a context in which post-heritage approaches have achieved a new prominence, making this a crucial time to challenge the critical assumptions around period drama.

The 2010s was a transitional decade for television, although it is still too soon to assert precisely what the medium is transitioning to. Recent developments continue the era of 'plenty' in television, conceptualised by John Ellis as following the eras of 'scarcity' and 'availability':

> The third era, the era of plenty, is confidently predicted by the television industry itself. It is foreseen as an era in which television programmes (or, as they will be known, 'content' or 'product') will be accessible through a variety of technologies, the sum of which will give consumers the new phenomenon of 'television on demand' as well as 'interactive television'. The era of plenty is predicted even as most nations and individuals are still coming to terms with the transition to the era of availability. (2000: 39)

Written at the turn of the century, Ellis' remarkably accurate assessment of the following decades reveals several important considerations. The era of plenty is defined through technological developments, anticipating online catch-up services such as BBC iPlayer (launched in December 2007) and premium internet-distributed television services such as Netflix (which began releasing original drama productions in 2012). However, these innovations also affect the output of traditional television. While the sophistication of high-end drama in the twenty-first century was developed by US premium cable networks, these have nevertheless had a wide-reaching impact on television productions; as Robin Nelson notes, "the testing of boundaries by the subscription channel output gradually pushes the envelope for all television in terms of what is deemed culturally acceptable, and the range of possible content and forms is consequently broadened" (2007: 76). Although the infrastructure behind their commissioning and distribution differs, internet-distributed television has maintained the characteristics of high-end television established by subscription cable dramas. Fundamental to this is the increased afterlife of television productions. Jason Mittell establishes this with reference to DVD and video recording technology, allowing viewers to "rewatch episodes or segments to parse out complex moments" (2006: 31). As Trisha Dunleavy identifies through an analysis of *Stranger Things* (Netflix, 2016-present), internet-distributed television fulfils the potential of television to allow repeated viewings: "the distinction of *Stranger Things* is not only that it constructs the kind of complexity that invites and rewards this re-watching, but also that Netflix's online platform opens the text fully to this very activity" (2018: 149). Ellis' notion of television productions as 'content' suggests the increased importance of the networks and services behind the programming, which has become prominent with the rise of subscription services on both linear television and online. Equally importantly, Ellis' description identifies the overlap between eras of television, being written at a time when availability was gradually transitioning towards plenty. The exponential increase in television production throughout the 2010s (Koblin, 2020) presents a further transition, even while scholars and commentators continue to grapple with the consequences of the era of plenty.

Various significant milestones in the present era of transition have been posited by television scholars. In the context of US business practices, Amanda D. Lotz identifies 2015 as a pivotal year for longstanding television networks: "in 2015, it became clear that the legacy industry[1] did not have its head in the sand. It was preparing – or even was already prepared – to

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[1] Referring to linear US television networks.

pivot into internet distribution. The industry was on the precipice of change" (2018: 159). Lotz pinpoints the launch of HBO Now and CBS All Access – standalone internet subscription services established by existing linear networks – as significant developments that allowed 2015 to act as a turning point for the television industry (ibid.: 160-1).[2] Although the similar Now TV subscription service was launched by the UK's Sky network in 2012, these US services remain an important milestone in the trajectory of internet-distributed television, being created as a direct response to Netflix and Amazon's move into commissioned dramas (ibid.: 160). Mareike Jenner, meanwhile, identifies 2016 as a turning point for internet-distributed television, identifying Netflix's increase in sitcom commissions as a sign of the service's shift towards a global, populist and thus more traditional outlook (2018: 148-9). These two junctures show the practices of old and new networks moving closer together, suggesting an increasing uniformity between television platforms of the 'past' and the 'present'. The characteristics of period dramas, the production of which displays a meeting of the past and the present, can therefore be seen as analogous to the transitional era of 2010s television.

HERITAGE AND POST-HERITAGE STUDIES

David Lowenthal pioneered the field of heritage studies, exploring the causes and consequences of the late twentieth century's predilection for the past through literature, art, architecture, exhibitions and screen representations. Lowenthal establishes the unavoidable changes to history instigated by its depiction in the present:

> We cannot avoid altering our inheritance; modern perspectives are bound to reinterpret all relics and recollections. Seeing the past in our own terms, we necessarily revise what previous interpreters have seen in their terms, and reshape artifacts and memories accordingly. But beyond involuntary alterations, explicit aims prompt us to replace or add to an inadequate past. (1985: 325)

He also discusses the further significance of physical artefacts of the past, asserting the limited scope provided by their "tangible heritage" (ibid.: 243). Ultimately, Lowenthal argues that "memory, history, and relics offer routes to the past best traversed in combination" (ibid.: 249). Additionally, a distinction is made between the experiences of history and memory: "whereas the past that I remember is partly shared with others, much of it is uniquely my own. But historical

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[2] More recently, the establishment of HBO Max (launched in May 2020 in the US) and Disney+ (launched in multiple territories from November 2019) display the increased importance of media conglomerates to the transition away from linear scheduled television; HBO Max combines the various networks owned by WarnerMedia, potentially eroding the premium brand value of HBO in the process (Gillette, 2020), while Disney+ consolidates the various acquisitions and mergers of its parent company through a single online portal.

knowledge is by its very nature collectively produced and shared; historical awareness implies group activity" (ibid.: 213). John Corner and Sylvia Harvey's theoretical analysis of heritage and enterprise allows the dichotomy between individual and collective experiences to be applied to the political context of the 1980s, particularly the ideologies of the British government under Margaret Thatcher: "heritage and enterprise form together a key mythic couplet for preserving hegemonic equilibrium and momentum during a period of major national reorientation" (1991: 46). Heritage is aligned with individual enterprise, connecting it to the values espoused by Thatcherism and restricting Lowenthal's historical awareness. Ultimately, Corner and Harvey assert that "if the spirit of enterprise offers itself as the motor of change, innovation and development, the spirit of heritage offers the reassurance of continuity with a shared past" (ibid.: 72). The focus of Thatcherite ideology on individual enterprise guides heritage representations to similarly assert the power of the individual to overcome structural inequalities, without the need to change them.

Raphael Samuel expands upon the theoretical concept of heritage, furthering its connection to political ideology. Samuel's view of heritage is summarised as follows: "in essence it is conservative, even when it takes on, or co-opts, popular themes. It brings the most disparate materials together under a single head" (1994: 243). Positing a "sociological perspective on heritage", Samuel identifies heritage's continued popularity in later twentieth century Britain, despite the "deliberate de-gentrification of the Conservative Party" under Thatcher and decline in the "near-religious veneration" of the monarchy (ibid.: 246). Samuel reconciles this apparent contradiction by characterising heritage as "an attempt to *escape* from class", through which a "romance of otherness" can be experienced (ibid.: 246-7, emphasis in original). Under this definition, heritage representations construct an idealised past that is appealing through its difference from the present. Despite the appeal of heritage, by the 1990s Samuel identifies a backlash against its tenets: "heritage is accused of wanting to turn the country into a gigantic museum, mummifying the present as well as the past, and preserving tradition in aspic" (ibid.: 260). Ultimately, Samuel suggests, the heritage movement is divisive rather than unifying, revealing the need for alternative approaches: "so far from heritage being the medium through which a Conservative version of the national past becomes hegemonic, one could see its advent as part of a sea-change in attitudes which has left any unified view of the national past – liberal, radical or Conservative – in tatters" (ibid.: 281). This notion is not unfamiliar to the latter years of the 2010s, when the tensions around the UK's departure from the European Union similarly deconstructed notions of a unified British cultural identity.

In accordance with the wider field of heritage studies, 'heritage drama' has been characterised as ideologically conservative. According to Higson, this has led to leftist critics dismissing productions "on class grounds" (2003: 46). This dismissal is particularly apparent in Cairns Craig's analysis of heritage cinema, which he describes as "situat[ing] us firmly in the barricaded room of an English identity from which the outside world is viewed from above and without, not engaged with" (2001: 5). The lack of engagement Craig describes allows an illusion of authenticity to be achieved in heritage drama, giving its idealism a mythic quality or, to adopt Higson's term, a "fantasy of Englishness" (2006b: 96). Period detail in costume and mise-en-scène allows this mythic past to operate as visual spectacle, as Higson's work identifies. Responding to Samuel, Higson argues for a more nuanced consideration of heritage: "the national heritage is a rich, and richly hybrid, set of experiences and should not be reduced to the apparently singular experiences of elite, conservative patriotism; nor should it be reduced to the values of consumerism" (2003: 35). Screen productions can be interpreted through the social context of their creation, but they do not necessarily subscribe to the dominant ideology of their time. Likewise, period dramas do not necessarily support heritage values. Furthermore, the emergence of screen heritage scholarship within film studies has seen period drama's relation to television's development marginalised. A more nuanced critical approach is required to address these critical imbalances.

Higson identifies the traditional aesthetics developed by heritage spectacle:

The heritage films[…] work as pastiches, each period of the national past reduced through a process of reiteration to an effortlessly reproducible, and attractively consumable, connotative style. The films turn away from modernity toward a traditional conservative pastoral Englishness; they turn away, too, from the hi-tech, special-effects dominated aesthetics of mainstream popular cinema. (2006b: 95)

This raises questions around period drama's relation to the spectacular, as well as the significance of the perspectives it explores. Helen Wheatley defines spectacular television as "the image on the television which holds the viewer's gaze, and which, if only for a moment, can be appreciated outside of the drive of the narrative" (2016: 2). While the function of spectacular television has developed with the advent of high-definition technology (ibid.: 123-4), Wheatley's study asserts its significance throughout television's history. Wheatley considers the spectacle of 'classic serial' adaptations (see part III), tracing this back to the pioneering colour broadcast of 1967's *Vanity Fair* (BBC) (ibid.: 70-1). Wheatley describes the primacy of colour itself in *Vanity Fair*'s representation of the past, displayed independently of any narrative referent:

> This novel, chosen for adaptation for its series of balls and gatherings of men in colourful military uniform, offers the programme makers ample opportunity to *showcase* colour, with a parade of contrasting costumes running through the entire colour spectrum[…] An array of colour is offered but without any obvious sense of symbolic meaning: it is colour to be looked at, to be enjoyed, rather than to be understood. (ibid.: 72, emphasis in original)

This description accords with Tom Brown's identification of the 'decor of history', a category of spectacle that displays detail "excessive to the requirements of historical verisimilitude" (2008: 159). Foregrounded visuals can be analysed, per Wheatley, as a display of television's aesthetic potential, but can also be identified as asserting heritage ideals, as indicated by Higson.

The viewer's gaze holds a more complicated function than revealed by the notion of spectacle alone, as John Urry and Jonas Larssen's theory of the 'tourist gaze' indicates. Urry and Larsen assert that "the concept of the gaze highlights that looking is a learned ability and that the pure and innocent eye is a myth" (2011: 1), establishing the importance of subjectivity to visual interpretation. The tourist gaze, according to Urry and Larsen, "varies by society, by social group and by historical period", but is always "constructed through difference" (ibid.: 2-3). In period drama this difference is primarily temporal, with viewers gazing upon the past from the vantage point of the contemporary moment. As Brown identifies, this allows the 'historical gaze' to function through anachronisms, with the heroes of historical films "often shar[ing] our values, our understanding of the world, in contrast to the ignorance and *outdated* attitudes of the historical characters who surround them" (2008: 164, emphasis in original). Belén Vidal considers the historical gaze in the film biopic *The Queen* (2006), which concerns the aftermath of Diana, Princess of Wales' death. The film incorporates brief archive footage from news reports of Diana 'looking back'; according to Vidal, "the representation of the Queen's gaze clashes with this figuration of a different type of look that arises from television's role in constructing the Diana myth" (2012b: 45). This analysis acknowledges the media's function in understanding the historical gaze, with the Queen's fictionality in the film acknowledged by the presence of television screens and non-fictional archive images of Diana. The significance of intermedial representation is also acknowledged by Urry and Larsen, who apply the tourist gaze to the postmodern era: "in postmodernity, tourists are constantly folded into a world of texts and images – books, magazines, paintings, postcards, ads, soap operas, movies, video games, music videos and so on – when gazing in and upon places" (2011: 116).

Historical novelist Hilary Mantel outlined the stakes of depicting the past through fiction in her 2017 BBC Reith Lecture. Mantel describes her approach to writing history as follows:

> Facts are strong, but they are not stable. Soon you find your sources are riddled with contradiction, and that even when the facts are agreed, their meaning often isn't. At this stage, you will want to seek out the earliest evidence you can get. If your story tracks real events, you will spend a lot of time sifting versions, checking discrepancies, assessing the status of the evidence: always asking, who is telling me this, and why does he want me to believe it? The contradictions can be fertile. If you can locate the area of doubt, that's where you go to work. (2017: 3)

The "area of doubt" that Mantel exploits resonates with a wide gamut of historical fiction, encompassing real and fictional figures and diverse media. Historical accuracy is of vital importance to Mantel, although she also identifies the possibilities that are not open to historians:

> Sometimes you have a straight choice of what to believe, with no evidence you can rely on. Here, the historian can state the problem to the reader, and back off. But sometimes a novelist must jump – guess if she needs to[…] The novelist works in a world where choices are still open. (ibid.: 6)

Historical fiction therefore holds the potential to explore its own inauthenticities, acknowledging the acts of speculation inherent to its depiction of the past. Jerome de Groot acknowledges this characteristic in his discussion of Mantel's introductory note to *The Giant, O'Brien* (1998):

> In Mantel's combination of self-conscious untruth (the recounting of narrative) and an appeal to trust lies the aesthetics of historical fiction, constantly striving for a 'reality' while acutely aware of fiction. The contract made with the audience is one of trust, the reader or viewer allowing the untruths that are being presented. The reader acknowledges their fictive quality while, at some level, 'believing' in the realism and authenticity of the text. (2016b: 13)

Mantel's note acknowledges the fictional nature of the story that follows it, demonstrating what de Groot elsewhere calls "the need to navigate a line between authenticity and emotional truth" (2012: 14). This also negotiates the otherness of the past, as his further analysis of Mantel's work reveals: "historical fiction[…] might be a way of both acknowledging the powerful emotions experienced in the past[…] while similarly attempting to smooth over this 'shock', to disavow the effect and affect that the past might have upon those in the present if not properly, formally controlled" (2016b: 19). Historical fiction can therefore be both reassuring and troubling to its contemporary audience. The possibilities and potential contradictions of these negotiations are relevant to television period dramas as well as historical novels, where they operate alongside the institutional specificities of the televisual medium.

Claire Monk coins the term post-heritage to consider the critiques enacted by period drama, identifying in the 1990s "an emerging strand of period/literary films with a deep self-consciousness about how the past is represented" (2001: 7). This initial categorisation allows Monk to not only identify recent developments in period drama films, but also to offer a re-

reading of earlier films and rescue them from critical dismissal (ibid.: 9-10). Subsequently, Monk criticises the general application of 'heritage cinema', displayed by critics such as Higson[3] and Craig to collectively denounce the approach of a diverse group of films (2002: 177-8). Monk thus shifts the emphasis of the term 'heritage' from production to criticism: "heritage-film criticism[…] needs to be understood as a historically specific discourse, rooted in and responsive to particular cultural conditions and events" (ibid.: 178). Similar to the connection between Thatcherite politics and the 1980s heritage film cycle, the success of *Downton Abbey* (ITV/Masterpiece, 2010-15) can therefore be understood in the context of the austerity era of the 2010s (Monk, 2015: 4-5). Monk's later work indicates the developments in screen heritage since the 1990s, with institutional shifts allowing television to fully enter the picture:

> What *is* new about post-1990 developments in British TV period drama is that these have been shaped, institutionally, by the arrival of a deregulated, commercially focused commissioning and production culture even within the BBC; the complex fragmentation and specialization of TV audiences; and the increasingly slick and efficient commercialism of the twenty-first century globalized entertainment industry, in which culturally and financially British period dramas (for many decades, stereotyped as the preserve of a 'discerning,' culturally conservative niche audience) are marketed and sold as aggressively as any other genre worldwide. (ibid.: 4, emphasis in original)

Monk's analysis suggests that, alongside heritage-leaning productions such as *Downton Abbey* (discussed further in chapter 1), the fragmented audiences and consequent need for distinctive concepts in twenty-first century television offer the potential for productions that challenge the assumptions of heritage criticism, alongside the continued existence of more commercial 'heritage' impulses. The case studies of this project indicate a post-heritage cycle in 2010s television, following the 1990s film cycle that Monk establishes. As with the film cycle, the 2010s cycle does not negate the post-heritage elements that exist in earlier television productions (despite their critical neglect), but hypothesises that they have reached a new prominence in recent years. This indicates the ideological and institutional developments of the transitional decade of the 2010s.

METHODOLOGY AND CONTEXT

This thesis comprises six case studies, each an example of period drama from 2010s television, which together argue the relevance of period drama to broader trends and developments in contemporary television. It also asserts the usefulness of post-heritage considerations to

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[3] Higson's later work rejects the notion of 'heritage' as a genre, however, as discussed below and in the introduction to part III.

delineate the ideologies of period drama productions, establishing it as a critical term rather than a generic category. The critical framework used to pursue this analysis will be outlined in the following section, after its context in the wider development of television studies is acknowledged. The selection of dramas for their textual features constitutes an aesthetic approach, which has been subject to methodological debate in recent years. Sarah Cardwell, a major proponent of the aesthetic analysis of television drama, argues that "the aim is not to 'apply' a theory to a text, using the text as case study, but to examine and explore the text in itself, and to investigate what broader questions arise from that process of examination and exploration" (2006: 73). Although each chapter in this thesis is described as a case study within the post-heritage critical framework, their theoretical considerations are guided by textual exploration, as advocated by the aesthetic methodology.

Cardwell also posits that "television aesthetics does not assume any particular hierarchy of texts or agreed canon, but it does address questions of value, critical judgement and the selection of criteria for evaluation" (ibid.: 76). However, there are substantial difficulties in establishing such universal criteria, as acknowledged by Jason Jacobs (2006: 24). According to Matt Hills, the value judgements of aesthetic approaches involve the devaluing of an implicit 'Other' (2011: 114).[4] James Zborowski intervenes in the debate between aestheticians and scholars grounded in media and cultural studies, arguing that "to analyse a text for its representations of particular dimensions of sociocultural identity and to treat it as an aesthetic object are different activities, but not necessarily mutually exclusive ones" (2016: 18). Zborowski also challenges Hills' assertion of a devalued 'Other', suggesting that "a charge of a lack of innovation[…] only really sticks, and matters, if what is discerned is a *failure* of innovation – something an object has striven for, or, as an instance of a particular kind of thing, ought to have striven for, but not achieved – as opposed to its mere absence" (ibid.: 11, emphasis in original). This helps to justify post-heritage elements as indicative of a production's ideological focus and intentions, without devaluing productions that hold a heritage emphasis. The post-heritage framework of this thesis nevertheless allows for the identification of institutional factors that may prevent productions from realising their innovative intentions, utilising methodologies from both media/cultural studies and television aesthetics.

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[4] This methodological debate connects to questions around what constitutes British 'quality' drama, as discussed by Charlotte Brunsdon (1990), Christine Gergahty (2003, 2006), Nelson (2007: 161-88), Catherine Johnson (2007) and Elliott Logan (2016). Elke Weissmann further establishes the importance of notions of quality in a transnational marketplace (2012: 164-85).

The six case studies analysed in this thesis are, in chronological order of their debuts: *Upstairs Downstairs* (BBC/Masterpiece, 2010-12), *Parade's End* (BBC/HBO, 2012), *Dancing on the Edge* (BBC, 2013), *Dickensian* (BBC, 2015-16), *The Living and the Dead* (BBC/BBC America, 2016) and *The Crown* (Netflix, 2016-present). Five of these dramas were commissioned or co-commissioned by the BBC, a public service broadcaster; commercial networks such as ITV (who commissioned a significant number of period drama productions in the 2010s), alternative public service broadcaster Channel 4 and premium channels such as Sky Atlantic are unrepresented. The selectiveness of this project's case studies therefore reveals the continuing distinctions of British television networks, particularly between public service and commercial television. It can be hypothesised that public service television continued to facilitate a distinct approach to period drama throughout the 2010s. The matter is complicated, however, by the continued significance of co-productions, increasingly realised between public service and premium networks in the latter years of the decade.

Michele Hilmes' exploration of transnational television elaborates on the tensions apparent in co-production arrangements:

> Transnational coproduction in the current era includes not just cofinancing or presale of distribution rights (i.e., putting money into a series upfront, but contributing very little creatively to the production): it also involves a creative partnership in which national interests must be combined and reconciled, differing audience tastes considered, and, often, the collision of public-service goals with commercial expectations negotiated. Historically, the issue of creative control has been a touchy one since nationally-funded producers like the BBC insist that their coproduction partnerships involve no compromise with public-service goals[…] Meanwhile, commercial partners assure their investors that, in fact, the program made with their public service coproducer has broader audiences firmly in mind and will not be held captive to a narrowly national address. (2014: 12)

This negotiation between national (public service) and international (commercial) imperatives, according to Hilmes, can be found in "research that looks not just at political-economic conditions but that examines texts, production practices, critical discourses, and audience uses as well" (ibid.). Lotz, meanwhile, identifies the commissioning imperatives of subscription networks, beginning with US premium cable network HBO:

> HBO's revenue model encouraged it to produce distinctive series because it needed to convince audiences to pay to receive its service. To attract those willing to pay for a television service, subscriber-funded channels must provide programming unavailable elsewhere and be of a quality worthy of the fee. When HBO attempted to distinguish its brand with the slogan 'It's Not TV. It's HBO', it relied on the boundaries created by advertiser support that limited notions of what television could be. (2017a: 12-3)

As Lotz has established, the distinctive productions pioneered by subscription cable networks have impacted broadcast networks and, subsequently, internet-distributed television, resulting in an "abundance" of distinction: "just as the conditions that led to the emergence of distinction as a strategy can be mined for insight into how creative industries both experience and resist change, so too will the transition part of this evolution be full of lessons about how changing industrial norms allow for and encourage adjustments in creative products and the conditions for those making them" (ibid.: 19).

Alongside the range of co-commissioning imperatives, the threat to public service media presented by television's increasingly international ecology must be considered. Jeanette Steemers identifies this threat from a European perspective, concluding that while "existing pay, free-to-air and publicly funded broadcasters are likely to remain the dominant providers of television and VOD [video on-demand] services for some time to come", a long-term threat remains "for public-service broadcasters in some countries, who have insufficient political, financial and, crucially, public support" (2015: 77). The recent moves against the BBC by the UK government under Boris Johnson (Taylor and Waterson, 2019) suggest that even the most established of public service broadcasters are not immune to a deterioration of support that threatens their future. Ib Bondebjerg et al. further analyse the precarious position of European public service broadcasters:

> Many public service broadcasters find themselves in a situation where they not only have to figure out how to address an audience that is increasingly turning its back on traditional television but also how to redefine their role and legitimacy in a new, more complex media system. At the same time, public service channels need to accomplish this without losing sight of the public purposes they are expected to fulfil. (2017: 64)

Although Bondebjerg et al. outline the potential role of online services in mitigating this issue, transnational co-productions present another such possibility. As Ruth McElroy and Catriona Noonan argue, public service broadcasters – not merely international productions mounted in diverse nations – remain a vital part of the media landscape: "without broadcasters committed to the public interest, we risk eroding our democracy turning opinion into nothing more than a unit of economic value" (2019: 150). Co-production between public service broadcasters, invested in the cultural requirements of their nation, and premium subscription networks, financially powerful and able to distribute production to an international audience, therefore holds the potential to beneficial to partner networks and audiences alike. This project will consider the textual features of its case studies in their diverse commissioning contexts, apparent despite the dominance of BBC productions. It will therefore indicate the impact institutional

factors have on a drama's representation of the past, while testing the hypothesis that public service networks maintain a unique capacity to explore matters of nationhood in the 2010s media landscape.

A POST-HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

This thesis establishes a critical framework to investigate the post-heritage elements of period drama, which has not been formalised in the years since Monk's coining of the term. Approaching post-heritage as a critical framework, rather than a generic subcategory of period drama, avoids the evaluative implications a binary between 'heritage drama' and 'post-heritage drama' would introduce; as Monk establishes, "the post-heritage films revel in the visual pleasures of heritage, even as they seem to distance themselves" (2001: 8). Recognising the co-existence of heritage and post-heritage elements also reflects the tension between spectacle and narrative critique identified by Higson. This accords with Higson's more recent admission, which directly responds to Monk's intervention, that heritage films are "ambivalent enough to be read in both ways, perhaps even at the same time" (2003: 85). The post-heritage framework provides a methodology through which revised readings of earlier period dramas can be pursued, as well as identifying the cycle of post-heritage dominated productions in 2010s television. This does not aim to suggest the inherent superiority of dramas with more dominant post-heritage elements, but it does assert the divergence of their approach to the past from the assured tenets of period drama. The post-heritage critical framework is guided by five central elements: interrogation, subversion, subjectivity, self-consciousness and ambiguity. These characteristics are interrelated and often overlap; some productions embed a particular element within their concept, allowing others to emerge from this central focus, whereas others address multiple elements to more equal degrees. However utilised, the consistent deployment of these five elements to investigate British cultural history enacts a sustained challenge to the assumptions of heritage criticism, revealing a production's post-heritage point of view.

Interrogation constitutes a critique of the ethos and value systems of heritage drama, questioning the social structures and hierarchies of the past, and prioritising this over visual spectacle. Whereas a heritage approach sees an "emphasis on spectacle rather than narrative" (Higson, 2006b: 100), a post-heritage point of view foregrounds the "more liberal-humanist visions of social relations" (ibid.: 93). A production whose concept is grounded in interrogation is able to assert more progressive intentions than other period dramas, challenging the dominance of heritage viewpoints. The use of serialised televisual forms permits interrogative narratives to

be sustained over multiple hours of drama (although not indefinitely), allowing broader societal issues to be explored alongside storylines that resolve within a single episode. Interrogation will be recognised through the core concepts of the project's case studies, providing a foundation through which other post-heritage elements can be pursued.

Subversion directly confounds traditional expectations around period drama, both visually and narratively, allowing innovative concepts to be realised. The visuals of heritage drama are associated with distinct iconographies, foremost among them the 'heritage' household of the country manor or grand townhouse. Higson again outlines this characteristic:

> Almost all of these films contain a recurrent image of an imposing country house seen in extreme long shot and set in a picturesque, verdant landscape[…] In what is both a bid for historical realism (and visual pleasure) and a function of the nostalgic mode (seeking an imaginary historical plenitude), the past is delivered as a museum of sounds and images, an iconographic display. (2006b: 97)

Vidal further asserts that "the house represents, quite literally, the home and hearth of modern period drama", combining the intimate and the spectacular and evoking "both generic predictability and contested heritages" (2012a: 65). The heritage household is therefore of central importance to period drama, allowing the social hierarchies of the past to be depicted in microcosm. The familiarity of period drama characteristics allows their deployment in unexpected ways to subvert heritage assumptions. Additionally, Higson describes how the heritage pastoral landscape allows the dramatic 'space' to become a recognisable and visitable historical 'place' (1987: 7-8). *Brideshead Revisited* (ITV, 1981), for example, impacted significantly upon tourism at its primary filming location, Castle Howard in North Yorkshire (Higson, 2003: 58). Subverting heritage iconography reverses this movement from space to place, returning the production to a dramatic space while allowing familiar heritage elements to remain within the drama. Subversion also allows the dramatic space to be inhabited by a wider range of identities than the hegemonic upper-middle English classes. For instance, Richard Dyer (2001) and Julianne Pidduck (2001) consider diverse sexualities in period drama in relation to clothing, establishing the symbolic function of subverting the heritage preoccupation with dressing to that of undressing. Subversion may also combat the reduction of British culture into a mythic past, dominated by the privileged; as Vidal establishes, subversion prevents other nations and cultures from being subsumed by "homogenous images of class, gender and nation" (2012b: 12). Subversion can therefore establish space for marginalised and oppressed voices, both in the societies depicted and the category of period drama itself, potentially moving "marginalized social groups from the footnotes of history to the narrative centre" (Higson, 2003: 28). The capacity for more diverse representation can also

be recognised at a conceptual level; this is demonstrated by the recent example of *Gentleman Jack* (BBC/HBO, 2019-present), which reveals the life and experiences of the non-fictional nineteenth-century lesbian Anne Lister. Subversion will be shown to facilitate the realisation of post-heritage points of view in *Upstairs Downstairs*, *The Living and the Dead* and *Parade's End*, often by deconstructing the iconography of the heritage household.

Subjectivity in period drama involves the psychological investigation of character, facilitating the exploration of cultural identities. Mimi White establishes televisual subjectivity as referring "to the understanding of individuals as a composite effect of forces and structures that constitute them as individuals, centrally including language, social (class) organization, and family relations" (1992: 166). In other words, subjectivity connects individual characters to the broader contexts and cultural significance of a production. This is primarily indicated by the use of style, through which the perspectives of central characters are revealed and often contrasted with their outward, public personas. Arguing the "essentially hybrid and impure nature of the heritage film texts", Monk asserts that these films offer "spaces in which identities[…] are shifting, fluid and heterogeneous" (1995: 122). Subjectivity takes advantage of these spaces, facilitating an intensive exploration of identity that challenges the rigidity of social hierarchies. While subjective approaches were previously the preserve of cinema, as indicated by Troy Kennedy Martin's suggestions for a 'New Drama' through the television camera's objectivity (1964), technological developments mean that this element may now be cultivated in television productions. According to John Caughie, to negotiate the tension between objectivity and subjectivity the viewer becomes "active as a producer of meaning, working to produce her own understanding of the relationship between the elements of the drama" (2000: 114). As recognised by Kristyn Gorton, emotional responses to television texts require such active viewership: "a text's ability to move us emotionally is not simply an aesthetic value but also a political one. The presence of emotion in popular television moves its viewers to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging that is repeated in each episode" (2009: 94). This is not restricted to contemporary-set drama, as Vidal's identification of the historical gaze in *The Queen* indicates. The psychoanalytical approach adopted by Caroline Bainbridge's analysis of *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007-15) indicates subjectivity's ability to engender deep understanding of the past: "viewers move back and forth between the dramatic time and the contemporary moment and, in doing so, a personal connection to historical and fictionalised events can evolve" (2019: 302). Subjectivity in period drama allows the past to be depicted as impactful on the present, with the active viewer able to apply narrative critiques

to contemporary issues through empathy with the drama's central characters. This will be shown most centrally in the case studies of *Dancing on the Edge*, *The Crown* and *The Living and the Dead*.

Self-consciousness directly acknowledges a screen production's historiographical role, establishing the significance of contemporary attitudes to its representation of the past. This adheres to Monk's initial description of post-heritage, as well as Vidal's suggestion that the term best refers to "the changes in our affective relation with the past in ways that appeal directly to our present experience" (2012b: 104). Accordingly, the use of self-consciousness acknowledges the impossibility of total authenticity; as Lowenthal asserts, "the past we know or experience is always contingent on our own views, our own perspective, above all our own present" (1985: 216). The effect of self-consciousness can be found in the direct use of anachronistic phrases, or more subtly in characters who display attitudes that align them with the twenty-first century viewer. 2010s period dramas display self-consciousness through innovative devices such as the twenty-first century framing narrative of *The Village* (BBC, 2013-14) and the anachronistic popular music of *Vanity Fair* (ITV, 2018). Within the category of self-consciousness lies postmodern self-reflexivity, which refers to the specific recognition of a production's status as a media text. Self-reflexivity may be achieved through intertextual references to earlier period dramas, or by representing diverse media texts within the space of the drama. A range of self-conscious demonstrations will be identified within the case studies of this thesis; this will include the awareness of prior television traditions in *Upstairs Downstairs*, the recurring motif of the media in *The Crown* and the re-workings of Dickens' works in *Dickensian*.

Lastly, ambiguity evades definitive responses to the pervasive societal questions presented, narratively acknowledging the inherent ambivalence of period drama. Productions with a post-heritage emphasis may foreground this inherent ambiguity, allowing multiple interpretations to remain valid and denying the catharsis of narrative resolution. This prevents the structural deficiencies in society exposed by the drama from being resolved, even when individual storylines reach their conclusion. A question posed by Monk finds new relevance in relation to post-heritage ambiguity:

> Do [*Chariots of Fire* (1981) and *Maurice* (1987)] really make us nostalgic for a past in which British Jews were expected to live with anti-Semitic abuse and gay men could be sent to jail for kissing, or does our pleasure derive from cathartic indignation at the injustices of that past and the satisfaction of distancing ourselves from these prejudices in the present? (Monk, 1995: 122)

This ambivalence is made explicit by the narratives of productions where ambiguity plays a central role, suggesting a third interpretation: that the injustices of the past remain prevalent in

contemporary society. Ambiguity may also be pursued in tandem with subjectivity, allowing the psychological investigation of characters and their predicaments to remain unresolved along with wider societal questions. Robert A. Rosenstone's theorisation of the depiction of history on film sheds further light on the function of ambiguity in television drama, suggesting that "the best of [historical] films present the possibility of more than one interpretation of events – they render the world as multiple, complex, and indeterminate, rather than as a series of self-enclosed, neat, linear stories" (1995: 37). Ambiguity will be seen as central to *The Crown*'s post-heritage approach, while being used in a more supplementary manner in other case study productions.

The establishment of this critical framework will allow the thesis to explore the hypothesis that a post-heritage cycle arises in television period drama of the 2010s, partly in response to the popular and commercial success of *Downton Abbey*. In the years following *Downton*'s genesis, multiple productions have emerged that either seek to emulate its success or react against it (Byrne, 2015a: 2). This has contributed to what de Groot terms as a more "flexible and innovative" approach to the past in recent television drama (2016a: 223). Through the identification of the post-heritage elements outlined above, this project connects innovations in period drama to the broader contexts of 2010s television. The use of the post-heritage critical framework will display a methodology through which the complexities of representations of the past can be acknowledged, arguing that close attention to textual features can illuminate the position of period drama within the broader institutional developments – and the scholarly field – of television.

The following chapters are organised into three parts, allowing the five post-heritage elements to be considered through three distinct conceptual lenses. Each of these leads to a theoretical concept, which establishes the wider significance of the analysis undertaken. Part I focuses on televisual style, considering the development of naturalism, realism and modernism over British television's history in conjunction with the evolution of period drama. This reveals the considerations of identity and culture that are vital to a post-heritage approach. Part II considers televisual form, particularly the trend towards serialised narratives in the twenty-first century. This is shown to facilitate narratives of trauma alongside sustained psychological investigation of character, connecting individual experiences to the societal structures they exist within. Part III acknowledges the importance of genre on television, exploring how diverse generic characteristics can be utilised within period drama to meet both creative and institutional imperatives. Scholarship on literary adaptations is used to pursue this analysis, identifying the recent post-heritage innovations taken in this sub-category of period drama. Each part begins

with a short introduction, which outlines the contexts and theoretical concepts that inform the case studies that follow. Together, the analyses of these three parts will reveal the post-heritage potentials of period drama and its position within the transitions of 2010s television.

PART I

TELEVISUAL STYLE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

This part will use the post-heritage critical framework to consider aesthetic innovations in period drama productions of 2010s television. These will be situated in the context of television drama aesthetics, which holds a rich history and has been subject to significant scholarly engagement. The following introductory material will outline this critical context, establishing the medium-specific conventions that the case studies of the following two chapters will be seen to operate within and innovate from.

The earliest television drama adheres to the conventions of naturalism, which Dunleavy outlines as "distinguished by a multi-camera, studio-shot mode of production and a consequent stage-like approach to performance" (2018: 134). It is the dominance of this style that Kennedy Martin notably objected to, identifying the need for "something which can provide, for the first time, an area of theory, experiment and development" (1964: 21). Caughie delineates the aesthetic features of naturalism criticised by Kennedy Martin, namely the "privileging of dialogue at the expense of action" and "strict observance of natural time" (1981: 338). Naturalist dramas are based in zero-degree style, described by John Thornton Caldwell as an "abhorrence of style" with a conservative impetus (1995: 56).[1] Caldwell associates this with the influence of theatre on television drama, which saw a resurgence in the early 1970s in the US: "the reemergence of serious drama and writing as center stage in television brought with it a renewed and dominant preoccupation with zero-degree studio style in television" (ibid.). Kennedy Martin objects to the influence of US television's naturalism on UK productions, which resulted in television being perceived as a "writer's theatre" (1964: 22). Although it continues to be found in soap opera (Dunleavy, 2018: 135-6) and sitcom (Caldwell, 1995: 59), the technological and institutional developments of the ensuing decades mean that zero-degree style is rarely used in high-end television drama of the twenty-first century.

Following naturalism is realism, which remains the dominant aesthetic in contemporary television drama and is grounded in first-degree style (Dunleavy, 2018: 136). Caughie indicates the accordance of realism with the post-heritage potential of period drama, describing its capacity to take its characters "out of the drawing-rooms and their comfortable communities, out through the French windows, and [place] them in a social context which was ordinary, determining, and characteristically hostile to the ideals of an emancipated and self-determining humanity" (2000:

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[1] While naturalism and zero-degree style are used synonymously in British and American scholarship respectively, this thesis utilises both terms to differentiate between a production's aesthetic basis and the varying styles that can be adopted within it. Its uses of realism/first-degree style and modernism/second-degree style follow this precedent, as outlined below.

95). Responding to Kennedy Martin's polemic, Caughie also indicates the potential of realism to stimulate a subjective response, even while television technologies prohibited the subjective camera from being established: "the 'nats' who are sent home by Troy Kennedy Martin are those who are content to dramatize content; the directors of the New Drama are those who seek through objective form to dynamize and agitate the subjectivity of the viewer" (2000). According to Dunleavy, realism presents an authoritative verisimilitude that "constructs a *preferred* meaning and reading on the basis of its ability to privilege particular ideas about and constructions of 'the real'" (2018: 137, emphasis in original). Colin MacCabe establishes this as "a hierarchy among the discourses which compose the text[...] defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth" (1981c: 217). In accordance with Kennedy Martin's recommendations, the realist camera therefore remains objective but eschews the impartiality of naturalism. Kennedy Martin's particular recommendation is the use of montage, which allows "total involvement of an emotional kind", allowing meaning to be found "not within the objects pictured but in the space between them" (1964: 31). John Fiske expands upon the significance of this, asserting that realism "imposes coherence and resolution on a world that has neither" (2011: 131).

The long history of realist television drama has seen its characteristics developed into multiple sub-categories, most notably 'classic' and 'progressive' realism (Dunleavy, 2009: 79-83), each of these spurring substantial critical debate. As defined by Caughie, classic realism is grounded in an "invisibility of form, and on a spectator who forgets the camera" (1981: 343), while the progressive realism exemplified by documentary drama has "a consistent televisual style, a visual appearance and a relationship to narrative space which is particular to it" (ibid.: 341). Ien Ang's analysis of *Dallas* (CBS, 1978-91) finds such paradigms insufficient, positing an 'emotional' realism that abandons "'objective' social reality" in favour of "a subjective experience of the world" (1985: 45). Glen Creeber allows this concept to be extended to a wide range of televisual genres, facilitating narratives that eschew closure:

> Newer forms of realism have tended to reflect a less optimistic belief in the power of political and social changes as a whole, forcing a shift towards narratives of a more 'psychological' rather than overtly 'political' nature[...] In this context, the 'soap opera-isation' of long-form television drama should not be conceived purely as a move away from the 'social' and the 'political' towards the 'personal' and the 'trivial', but as a gradual progression towards newer forms of representation which offer an arguably more contemporary articulation of present social experience. (2004: 13)

The potential for subjectivity as television technologies evolved therefore creates possibilities for cultural representation through first-degree style.

Modernism represents the third aesthetic development in television drama history, although its existence as a televisual movement remains a contentious matter. Caughie asserts the worth of establishing modernist television drama, the term allowing him "to claim a place for television drama in the understanding of the wider culture, and to give it a wider frame of reference within aesthetics" (2000: 155). According to Dunleavy, modernism in television can be broadly defined as a rejection of realism, through both the exposure of its constructedness and the eschewal of commercialism and commodification (2018: 139). Frederic Jameson complicates the dichotomy between the concepts of realism and modernism, however, asserting that "genuine realism, taken at the moment of its emergence[…] is a discovery process, which[…] is in fact itself a kind of modernism" (2012: 476). This notion helps to explain how modernist television dramas can incorporate first-degree style while also rejecting the tenets of realism. Second-degree style, in which modernism is grounded, is first identified in television by Pierre Barrette and Yves Picard (2014), through an analysis of *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008-13). As defined by Dunleavy, second-degree style "requires viewers to weigh up the alternative depictions of reality and truth that the text offers, which in screen drama may arise, for example, from the divergence between the revelations of dialogue as opposed to those of mise-en-scène and/or camerawork, or between different (juxtaposed and contiguous) story strands" (2018: 144). Caughie aligns Kennedy Martin's posited 'New Drama' with modernism, albeit "a popular modernism for a mass medium" (2000: 156), in accordance with Jameson's later positioning of "genuine realism" within modernist impulses. This is in many ways exemplified by Kennedy Martin's landmark achievement, *Edge of Darkness* (BBC, 1985). However, by the 1980s technological developments permitted a subjective television camera to incorporate second-degree style, exploring the psychological state of Craven (Bob Peck) and thus connecting "the experiences of its central character to the politics of the time" (Lavender, 1993: 103). Consequently, *Edge of Darkness* is a realist drama that includes "additional poetic qualities" (Lavender, 1993: 104) by incorporating second-degree style and subjectivity, most significantly through Craven's visions of his murdered daughter Emma (Joanne Whalley and Imogen Staley) (ibid.: 112-3). While modernist productions remain rare, features of second-degree style are therefore increasingly identifiable in innovative television dramas.

The case study analyses of this part will demonstrate how innovations to televisual style can open up questions of identity and culture in dramatisations of the British past. Stuart Hall asserts that "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (1996: 4). Under this framework, the past is one

facet through which collective identities and human potentiality can be explored. Hall further associates 'identity' with "the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (ibid.: 5-6). When its post-heritage function in television drama is considered, subjectivity therefore represents the "temporary attachment" of character to a shared, contemporary cultural identity. In constructing or negotiating such identities, period narratives confirm Chris Weedon's assertion that "history matters [and] is important both to our sense of who we are and to our understanding of the present" (2004: 29). Weedon further establishes that "through processes of empathy and identification with fictional characters, novels, life stories and other such texts can initiate the development of new forms of identity for readers. They are important sources of ways of understanding both contemporary society and history and serve as repositories of social and cultural values" (ibid.: 62). The case studies of this part display this function in television drama, revealing the significance of post-heritage elements to the exploration of cultural identities.

Despite this potential, John Corner sounds a cautionary note concerning television's political and cultural role. Characterising television as "the primary focus of anxiety about the discursive power of the media" (2011: 34), Corner assesses how the medium's "availability and charm, with its unprecedented social reach, has frequently been regarded by some social groups and commentators as a key part of the problem of fitting television 'properly' into politics and into culture" (ibid.: 36). The possibilities of the media's political function are summarised as updating knowledge, supporting the dominant viewpoint, reflecting wider cultural viewpoints and increasing commodity values (ibid.: 42). These are of particular importance to this project, suggesting the potential to challenge the dominant political point of view of the period represented and the contemporary moment. Corner concludes that "the ethical impact of our mediated seeing of various 'others', and the extension or holding back of forms of empathy, together with the consequences this carries for social action, are becoming questions of growing importance within the context of convergent television/new media settings" (ibid.: 82). The 'others' of period drama are those outside the dominant socio-cultural status of the white British middle- and upper-classes; the exploration of their identities and subjectivities encourages empathy for the repressed and oppressed, potentially redressing the marginalisations of recorded history.

Ellis' concept of 'working through' offers a useful framework through which to explore the complexities of televisual identity. According to Ellis, "working through is a constant process of

making and remaking meanings, and of exploring possibilities. It is an important process in an age that threatens to make us witness to too much information without providing us with enough explanation" (2000: 79). Television's "multiple stories and frameworks of explanation" thus allow its viewers to "work through the major public and private concerns of their society" (ibid.: 74).[2] Considering the genres of news, talk, soap, leisure, documentary, comedy, sport and fiction, Ellis concludes that these "more mundane of television's genres" are most centrally concerned with the working through process (2000: 125). However, the significance of 'working through' to drama productions requires reconsideration in light of the institutional developments of twenty-first century television. Multiple scholars have applied Ellis' term to a range of television drama productions in recent years (Wheatley, 2005: 149; Nelson, 2007: 175-6; Weissmann, 2012: 120-1). Most usefully, Jimmy Draper and Lotz suggest working through as a critical methodology in their assessment of the complex exploration of homophobia in *Rescue Me* (FX, 2004-11), arguing that "working through is a component of the narrative that allows for contradiction and instability with regard to an aspect of ideology that is conceivably being 'worked through'" (2012: 521). The process of confronting cultural identity is therefore crucial to understanding television drama. De Groot expands upon the particular working through process of historical fiction, acknowledging the challenge this presents:

> All historical texts enact a desire for truth that is leavened with a fundamental understanding that it is not there; there is nothing innately real in an encounter with it. 'History' is the attempt at reconciling the unseen other of the past with contemporary fractured identity; as in all attempts at such psychic healing of trauma, it is doomed to failure. (ibid.: 7)

The post-heritage elements of period drama emphasise this doomed process of reconciliation by recognising the ambiguities of the past. The self-consciousness of period drama, where a production's fictional status can be acknowledged by the text and interpreted by media-literate viewers, is therefore crucial in exploring the diverse identities and subjective experiences presented by television period drama.

The case studies of this part will identify an increased visual primacy in 2010s television drama, establishing innovations in style as a realisation of post-heritage viewpoints. Chapter 1 will discuss the BBC's revival of *Upstairs Downstairs*, analysing its conceptual history and evocation of the earlier LWT series through both its narrative and style. *Downton Abbey* will also

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[2] In a recent interview, Ellis emphasises the importance of generic and formal familiarity in exploring these concerns: "the characters, settings, and scenarios are familiar, so that it is possible to concentrate on what is unfamiliar in a nonthreatening way[…] it is as though there is already a level of acceptance or acclimatization within the fictional universe" (Ellis and van den Oever, 2018: 157). Parts II and III of this thesis explore these matters further.

be considered as a counterpoint to *Upstairs Downstairs*' post-heritage inclinations. *Upstairs Downstairs*' failure to continue beyond its second season, in contrast with *Downton*'s international success, will be evaluated to identify the extratextual factors that impacted its production and limited the success of its post-heritage project. Following this, chapter 2 will analyse Stephen Poliakoff's *Dancing on the Edge*, a product of the BBC's public service imperatives to a greater extent that *Upstairs Downstairs*. The serial's distinctive use of jazz music and pursuit of heterotopic space will be considered, identifying the creative freedom afforded by Poliakoff's cultural status and the drama's consequent ability to emphasise its post-heritage features. Together, these two chapters will reveal the post-heritage possibilities afforded by stylistic innovation, as well as institutional factors that may hinder their realisation.

Same Address, Different Doors: *Upstairs Downstairs* on the BBC

> We have experience, you and I; we are what that house requires.
> --- Maud, Lady Holland (*Upstairs Downstairs*: season 1 episode 1)

Katherine Byrne's analysis of Edwardian period drama in the twenty-first century identifies the double nostalgia it evokes: "these historical fictions are not only nostalgic for this golden era of British history[…] but also for the 'golden age' of period drama on television: the 1970s" (2015a: 36). Nowhere is this more relevant than in the BBC's revival of *Upstairs Downstairs*, a sequel to the London Weekend Television series of the same name (ITV, 1971-75).[1] Like the 1930s society it depicts, the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* strives to recreate past glories but is ultimately confronted by the impossibility of its task. Two other productions will serve as counterpoints to this chapter's analysis of *Upstairs Downstairs*: LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and the BBC series' broadcast competitor *Downton Abbey*, which debuted three months prior to *Upstairs Downstairs*. It will be shown that all three productions continually negotiate heritage and post-heritage elements; their dominant ideological points of view, differ, however, despite what Monk calls their similar "generic models" (2015: 4). LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* is grounded in a heritage approach, which Colin McArthur identifies as the 'archetype' of "nostalgia for an earlier period" (1980: 40). Nevertheless, the series does develop significant post-heritage elements over the course of its five seasons. *Downton Abbey*, meanwhile, retains a heritage and conservative-leaning viewpoint. June Deery articulates this through her identification of *Downton* as a melodrama, arguing that despite its acknowledgement of class issues "it still focuses on individual stories and intimate emotions and is safely contained within fiction and the past" (2017: 62). The LWT and BBC iterations of *Upstairs Downstairs* will be established as naturalist and realist dramas respectively, the later series taking advantage of the aesthetic developments of 2010s television. This allows the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* to introduce post-heritage elements, most significantly through its self-consciousness of its televisual history. The institutional pressures that impacted the BBC series' second season will be shown to affect this ideological positioning, destabilising the post-heritage project its first season establishes.

This chapter is comprised of five sections. Firstly, the concepts, commissioning contexts and critical histories of all three series will be summarised, establishing the aesthetic

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[1] Following the typography commonly used by production and promotional materials, this chapter refers to the LWT series as '*Upstairs, Downstairs*' and the BBC series as '*Upstairs Downstairs*', with the latter used when referring to both series.

characteristics of period drama and the possibility for both heritage and post-heritage readings of these productions. The following section will explore the evolution of *Upstairs Downstairs*' concept through the characters who inhabit 165 Eaton Place in both the LWT and BBC series, considering the range of perspectives introduced to its microcosm of society. The third section will focus on the war season of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs*, assessing its impact upon both the culmination of the LWT series and the post-heritage establishment of the BBC series. The fourth section will investigate the turbulent production of the BBC series' second season to indicate how external factors can affect the tension between heritage and post-heritage points of view, before offering a close analysis of the episode "A Perfect Specimen of Womanhood" (season 2 episode 3). The final section will consider the legacy of 1970s television period drama on the BBC series' aesthetics, evaluating its construction of a self-conscious dramatic space that threatens the stability of the heritage household even while it is being rebuilt. The BBC series' efforts to evoke the style of the LWT series will be shown to mirror the aspirations of its characters to recreate the Edwardian era, the narrative of which reveals the barriers to achieving these post-heritage intentions.

CONCEPTION, COMMISSIONING AND CRITICAL HISTORY

The premise of *Upstairs, Downstairs* was devised by actors Eileen Atkins and Jean Marsh, who both had parents in domestic service (Marson, 2011: 12). The series' concept evolved from Atkins and Marsh's desire to foreground the servant's experience, a perspective absent from other Edwardian dramas (ibid.: 13), making subversion a significant factor in its creation. Expecting the idea to be dismissed by production companies without a male name attached (Itzin, 1972: 26; Marson, 2011: 17-8), Marsh approach the Sagitta agency's John Whitney, who in turn involved his business partner John Hawkesworth (Marson, 2011: 18-9). After buying the concept from Atkins and Marsh, Hawkesworth and Whitney secured a commission from London Weekend Television, with Rex Firkin (LWT's Head of Drama) and Alfred Shaughnessy joining the project and developing the initial idea towards a more equal exploration of 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' (ibid.: 30-1). This shift in emphasis established the series as a renewable drama, utilising familiar heritage values alongside its conceptual innovation; as Carl Gardner and John Wyvner acknowledge, series dramas of this era tended to "opt for the safe, the predictably popular, the tried-and-tested", with period dramas particularly representing "values of confidence and stability" (1983b: 118; 119). As the series entered production, the figures involved in its inception took on ongoing roles in the series: Hawkesworth served as producer, with Shaughnessy as script

editor and Firkin as executive producer, while Atkins and Marsh were contracted to play the primary servants' roles (ibid.: 30). This period also saw the series' premise evolve further under the practicalities of 1970s television drama. Most fundamentally, the dominance of interior scenes and the central Eaton Place household was established, with Shaughnessy's insistence that television should be "electronic theatre" rather than "second-rate film" (quoted in Marson, 2011: 38) placing the series firmly in the studio space.

McArthur's analysis of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* as a nostalgic archetype does not leave room for a post-heritage perspective; her argues that the series enacts a process of "cannibalising history, by taking particular historical events and offering ideological guidance by refracting them through the on-going, well-signified, and well-understood value-system of the series" (1980: 41). The aspects of the LWT series that McArthur identifies point towards a heritage return to the past, where Richard Bellamy (David Langton) operates as an "ideological force" and "everyone (certainly the regular 'characters') knows his/her place, accepts it and is treated with 'dignity' and 'kindness'" (ibid.). However, when he turns to a specific analysis of "The Nine Days Wonder" (season 5 episode 9), which concerns the 1926 General Strike, the fixity of 165 Eaton Place's social structure seems less clear. McArthur notes that James Bellamy (Simon Williams) uses the phrase "hold the country to ransom", familiar to 1970s viewers from the recent miners' strike: "the use of this phrase signals to us that the central ideological project of the programme has to do with attitudes[…] to working class militancy in our society here and now" (ibid.: 42). When considered under a post-heritage framework, this is an example of self-consciousness, indicating the production's awareness of its historiographical role. This reveals the series' negotiation between the critique of post-heritage elements and the structural imperatives of a long-running series drama.

Edith P. Thornton's intervention also suggests the tensions between heritage and post-heritage elements in the LWT series, identifying ideological shifts across its five season existence. Thornton considers the series through its response in the US media, following its broadcast on WGBH's *Masterpiece Theatre* strand (which would later co-produce the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs*). She posits a shift in narrative focus "from a female-centred, comedic, ensemble piece to a male-centred character study" (1993: 27), from 'downstairs' to 'upstairs' (ibid.: 28), and implicitly from post-heritage to heritage. However, Thornton suggests that the overlap between the series' US broadcast and UK production "reveals a space in which American corporate pressure, American popularity, and the limitations of 1970s American public television combined to alter the course of the text in midstream" (ibid.: 39-40). This assertion, hindered by early

television scholars' inability to re-watch the productions under consideration, does not hold much credence. Firstly, recording for the fourth and penultimate season of *Upstairs, Downstairs* began only a few months after the series' US debut,[2] leaving only a very slight window through which US reception could possibly impact its production. Furthermore, Thornton's analysis places significant emphasis on James' increased narrative dominance to support her assertion of an American influence (ibid.: 37-8); as the analysis below will show, however, it is the third season, produced before the series began its US broadcast on *Masterpiece Theatre*, where James' story most dominates. While Thornton's identification of the literariness of *Upstairs, Downstairs'* war season (ibid.: 37) is useful, her assessment neglects to recall the dominant female-focused narrative arcs that exist concurrently; the series' negotiation of heritage and post-heritage is more complex than she suggests.

The BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey* undertook markedly different commissioning processes before their respective broadcasts in 2010. The idea to return *Upstairs Downstairs* to television came from Heidi Thomas, who became the BBC series' lead writer and executive producer (Marson, 2012: 2). A complicated legal process to secure the series' rights ensued from early 2008 (ibid.: 2-3), before the first season of three episodes was finally able to enter production in time for broadcast over Christmas 2010. As part of these protracted negotiations, Atkins and Marsh both agreed to appear in the new episodes: Marsh reprises her role from the LWT series, Rose Buck, and Atkins (who did not ultimately appear in the LWT series) plays the newly created matriarch Maud Holland. Characters and actors thus become conflated, particularly as Maud and Rose are respectively positioned as ideological guides to the 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' of the restored 165 Eaton Place. The BBC's incentive to revive *Upstairs Downstairs* in 2008 was to offer a distinctive concept to viewers unfamiliar with the LWT series, while simultaneously utilising nostalgia for the latter in the UK and internationally. It thus aimed to balance the BBC's public service requirements with the increased need to conform to the wider television marketplace in the twenty-first century (D'Arma, 2018). *Downton Abbey*'s creation, meanwhile, was a more straightforward process, free from the need to secure the rights to a decades-old brand. Although *Downton* was an original concept, its premise, characterisations, setting and temporality are strongly evocative of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* – more so, in fact, than the BBC series that shares its name. *Downton Abbey* can therefore be considered to take a heritage approach, recapturing the success of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* without substantially

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[2] The series began its US *Masterpiece Theatre* broadcast on 6 January 1974 (Marson, 2011: 259), and the first studio day for season 4 took place on 2 April of the same year (ibid.: 271).

challenging the fundamentals of the heritage household. *Downton*'s aesthetic realisation, with its country estate setting facilitating more location filming than either iteration of *Upstairs Downstairs*, contributes to its heritage concept; the series incorporates the iconography of idealised English landscapes that was the preserve of cinema in previous decades.

Both *Downton Abbey* and the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* are co-productions with the *Masterpiece* strand of WGBH in the US, known for its "safe and non-controversial" UK imports (Weissmann, 2012: 105). Simone Knox, however, identifies a concurrent strand of more innovative (and, implicitly, post-heritage) *Masterpiece* dramas that complicate such assessments, asserting a longstanding tension "between the homogenous/homogenising heritage brand shorthand and the diversity of its programming" (2012: 34). It is in this space that the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* operates. *Downton*, meanwhile, embeds transnational mass appeal into its concept, allowing it to meet the commercial imperatives of ITV and the Anglophilic public service aims of *Masterpiece*. *Downton* was publicly announced around two months after the BBC secured the rights to *Upstairs Downstairs* (Marson, 2012: 12), although *Downton*'s executive producer Gareth Neame has described being unaware of *Upstairs Downstairs*' return until later (quoted in Eaton, 2013: 235). Regardless of the possible coincidence, *Upstairs Downstairs* was pre-empted by *Downton*'s autumn 2010 scheduling and the former's success was hindered as a result.

Katherine Fusco outlines *Downton Abbey*'s tendency towards the tenets of heritage drama through her explanation of Cora, Lady Grantham's (Elizabeth McGovern) underdevelopment. Summarising Cora's narrative function through her use of the phrase "shall we go through?", Fusco explains how *Downton* "goes through with amazing rapidity, throwing forward plot twist after plot twist, the bulk of which are resolved neatly by banishing a rude interloper from the great house, or easing over unpleasantness[…]" (2017: 107). This assessment indicates *Downton Abbey*'s ability to evade intensive engagement with subversive elements, persistently returning to the "barricaded room of an English identity" (Craig, 2001: 5) through the heritage household of the Abbey. Additionally, as an anglicised figure whose assimilated role in the household alludes to the transnational co-production of the series (Eaton, 2013: 56; Wehler, 2018), Cora's narrative function of smoothing over difficult topics signifies the series' aim to appeal to a wide, international audience. The engagement with the past in *Downton Abbey* can be evaluated by contrasting Cora's "shall we go through?" with Ellis' theorisation of 'working through' (see part I introduction), the latter exemplified by the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs*. In conjunction with this dichotomy, a distinction between the assimilation and incorporation of subversive elements can be identified in the series' distinct approaches. Assimilation, favoured by *Downton Abbey*, results

in the effacement of cultural and class identities in pursuit of a unified national identity; this is best shown through Tom Branson (Allen Leech), whose transition from chauffeur to son-in-law necessitates the abandonment of his socialist politics (Deery, 2017: 64). This facilitates a theme of adapting to survive cultural shifts and structural changes, which in turn allows the privileged class the drama focuses on to be shown in a positive light. Caldwell's description of the accommodation of Black culture within television acknowledges the insufficiency of assimilation, arguing that "television caricatures dangerous forms of race and sexuality into adoptable aesthetic forms" (1995: 70). Incorporation, on the other hand, allows the characters of *Upstairs Downstairs* to retain their diverse cultural make-ups within the microcosm of 165 Eaton Place.

While scholars have noted the progressive attitudes adopted by many of *Downton*'s characters (Fitzgerald, 2018; Harrison, 2018; Morrow, 2018; Suhren, 2018; Gullace, 2019; Taddeo, 2019), from the vantage point of the twenty-first century the display of modern values allows the class system of the past to appear familiar and unthreatening. Furthermore, although later seasons indicate structural threats to the Edwardian way of life, these developments are an exception to the series' dominant focus on heritage ideologies. Byrne's assessment of *Downton Abbey* recognises the narrative's inability to fully challenge the gendered social system (2015a: 72), its assimilation of ideologies (ibid.: 75) and its use of paternalism "to justify the class system" (ibid.: 74). Alongside this, however, post-heritage aspects of the series are identified through its "pastiche of other classic heritage productions" (ibid.: 71) and acknowledgement of contemporary society (ibid.: 87). Byrne negotiates these diverse elements by terming *Downton Abbey* 'post-post-heritage' (ibid.: 88). Under the post-heritage critical framework, which acknowledges the co-existence of heritage and post-heritage elements in all period drama productions, such a term is not required; additionally, the notion that post-heritage drama had been established to the extent that it could be departed from by 2010 is insupportable. Byrne has also analysed how the *Downton* "fantasy has become more problematic and less rosy in the third and fourth seasons" (2015b: 179). She places great significance on the deaths of Lady Sybil (Jessica Brown Findlay) and Matthew Crawley (Dan Stevens), seeing the former as a "breakdown in the security offered by the Crawley household" and the latter as part of the downfall of the patriarchy that sees Lord Grantham (Hugh Bonneville) become "ineffectual" (ibid.: 180-1). Both deaths, however, were instigated by the actors' choices to leave the series rather than a creative decision (Furness, 2012). Byrne's account neglects to acknowledge the infrequency of *Downton Abbey*'s post-heritage elements, or its continual return to heritage security and conservative values. Furthermore, individual acts remain the cause of resolution, aligning *Downton Abbey* with the

conservative ideologies familiar to heritage drama; Deery describes *Downton*'s emphasis "on interdependence and people being measured by their worth as individuals" (2017: 63). The foregrounding of individual values over the attitudes of society writ large helps explain the presence of modern, progressive values within the series' structurally conservative narrative.

Unlike *Downton Abbey*, the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* has received minimal scholarly engagement; when referred to at all, it tends to be in the context of its failure to match *Downton Abbey*'s popular success (Brown, 2015: 272; Leggott and Taddeo, 2015: xviii). Giselle Bastin begins to suggest a more rewarding critical approach, establishing *Upstairs Downstairs* as a "fascinating departure" from the LWT series due to "the ways it engages in contemporary debates about historiography" (2015: 165). According to Bastin, history in the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* "moves away from being a backdrop to the story and becomes instead a structuring principle of the main plot" (ibid.: 168) displaying "an awareness that the social and ideological structures embedded within the narrative structure of the 1970s 165 Eaton Place are no longer viable" (ibid.: 167). This reveals the BBC series' self-consciousness, indicating the validity of a post-heritage reading of the revived series. While Bastin's reading is selective, eliding the more traditional heritage elements of the second season, it nevertheless identifies the important role post-heritage aspects play in the revived series, suggesting that its evocation of 1970s period drama has more at stake than nostalgia.

CONSTRUCTING A MICROCOSM

Although Thornton's analysis misremembers details of the LWT series, the Bellamy household of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* does experience shifts in its ideological point of view; these impact the representative functions of the figures within the microcosm of 165 Eaton Place. The developing positions of the series' characters reveals the co-existence of heritage and post-heritage elements, as well as the influence of external factors on their realisation. The initial downstairs staff is somewhat transient, exemplified by the character of Sarah (Pauline Collins). This role (originally named Mary) was written for Atkins, who did not wish to appear in the series long-term; the character was therefore scripted to depart in the first season's third episode (Marson, 2011: 41). However, Atkins' withdrawal from the role meant that Collins' Sarah was able to return towards the end of the first season (season 1 episode 10). From this point until her final appearance at the end of season 2, Sarah's character is built around her frequent departures and returns to Eaton Place, embodying the female oscillation "between positions of liberation and recuperation" identified by Wheatley in the LWT series (2005: 152). This exemplifies the tensions

between heritage and post-heritage that exist within the series' early years, with Sarah continually disturbing the heritage household and yet continually returning when life outside it becomes too much to bear. The initial upstairs family, meanwhile, is simple and nuclear: Richard, a Conservative MP, and Lady Marjorie Bellamy (Rachel Gurney) appear alongside their army captain son James and debutante daughter Elizabeth (Nicola Pagett), each family member embodying a societal archetype of the Edwardian era. Elizabeth in particular disproves Thornton's assertion that the first two seasons are dominated by downstairs stories: while the first three episodes do revolve around Sarah's experience as a new servant member of the household, Elizabeth's introduction in the fourth episode sees the focus shift upstairs and the series' even-handed approach to the class strata continues thereafter.

From this starting point, the first three seasons of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* display a gradual movement towards the typical heritage household, where the family unit comes to be defined by shared heritage values rather than blood. This is indicated by the increased stability of the downstairs staff, finalised during season 3. Of the downstairs staff established at the opening of the series, chauffeur Pearce (Brian Osborne) makes his only significant appearance in the first episode, footman Alfred (George Innes) soon absconds after his homosexuality is exposed (season 1 episode 5), and kitchen maid Emily (Evin Crowley) commits suicide following a rejected love affair (season 1 episode 8); the inconstant Sarah, meanwhile, permanently departs at the end of season 2. Butler Hudson (Gordon Jackson), Rose and cook Mrs Bridges (Angela Baddeley) remain permanent fixtures downstairs, gradually joined by replacement footman Edward (Christopher Beeny), kitchen maid Ruby (Jenny Tomasin) and parlour maid Daisy (Jacqueline Tong). These newcomers fulfil the dramatic function of their predecessors, but eschew the disruptive influences that threatened the heritage household and necessitated the original characters' departures. Season 3's core staff all remain until the final episode, an improbable state of affairs considering the series' narrative concludes nearly twenty years after Daisy's arrival. While a newfound stability is established downstairs, upstairs the nuclear family is dissolved, instigated by the decisions of both Gurney and Pagett to leave the series (Marson, 2011: 199-201). The extra-textual circumstances of these departures, similar to the deaths of Sybil and Matthew in *Downton Abbey*, indicate that the shift towards male-centred storylines noted by Thornton was motivated by necessity rather than ideology.[3] Nevertheless, the third season's renewed heritage point of view is confirmed by the introduction of two new upstairs characters: Hazel (Meg Wynn Owen)

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[3] Having appeared in only two episodes of season 2, Williams has acknowledged that the loss of the two female upstairs leads resulted in James' role in the third season becoming more substantial (quoted in Marson, 2011: 203).

enters the house as Richard's secretary and is soon raised up from the middle classes to become James' wife, while Marjorie's orphaned step-niece Georgina Worsley (Lesley-Anne Down) is later taken in by Richard. The assimilation of these characters establishes Eaton Place as a welcoming environment, with Richard (despite his financial difficulties resulting in the house's legal ownership passing to James) remaining the embodiment of patriarchal benevolence. Following Marjorie's death on the Titanic, elements that threaten the social order are now largely confined to figures from outside the household, who disturb the harmony of the heritage household but are invariably banished without any long-term impact on the ideological core of the series. Examples of this include a returning Alfred, who is eventually hanged after becoming a murderer (season 3 episode 5), and Gregory Wilmot (Keith Barron), who proposes marriage to Rose but is unable to overcome her sense of duty to the household (season 3 episode 11). Transgressive and subversive behaviour is thus punished and removed under the framework of heritage drama.

Establishing the 1930s-era Eaton Place, the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* places its characters in similar positions to its predecessor series, but with crucial distinctions that indicate the revived series' post-heritage approach. Sir Hallam Holland (Ed Stoppard) inherits 165 Eaton Place after his father's death, re-opening the building after six years of neglect and moving in with his wife Agnes (Keeley Hawes). With Rose's help, the Hollands set about attempting to re-establish the household as an embodiment of Edwardian, heritage security. Like Richard, Hallam moves in political circles, but as a civil servant in the Foreign Office rather than an MP. This allows him to be privy to the turbulent politics of the 1930s, working directly for Anthony Eden and Lord Halifax in their tenures as Foreign Secretary and even being present at the signing of the Munich Agreement in 1938 (season 2 episode 1). As Bastin identifies, Hallam is a vocal opposer of appeasement with Germany at this time, allowing the series to "engage with some of the complexities of the debate about prewar appeasement" (2015: 170). This anachronistic perspective informs Hallam's protection of marginalised figures within Eaton Place (ibid.: 171), apparent to a greater degree than in the LWT series and liable to cause conflict within its walls. Hallam is also close friends with the Duke of Kent (Blake Ritson), the brother of King Edward VIII and George VI, who appears as a regular character in the BBC series. This allows the 1936 abdication crisis to impact upon the household at a personal level.[4] The background of Agnes and her sister Persie Towyn (Claire Foy), meanwhile, signifies the decline of the aristocracy since the First World War: "the Towyns are old money," Persie says of her aristocratic status, "and that

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[4] Had the series continued, Hallam's new role as the Duke of Kent's equerry (season 2 episode 6) promised to bring the role of royalty in the Second World War to the fore, as well as depicting the Duke's 1942 death.

means there's none" (season 1 episode 1). Persie's self-perception of poverty, notwithstanding her privileged position in Eaton Place, leads her towards fascist politics, positioning her as a subversive influence within the walls of the household. Despite the historical foresight of his anti-appeasement stance, Hallam's affair with Persie in season 2 sees him susceptible to her simultaneous 'domestic' and 'foreign' treacheries (Bastin, 2015: 169). The direct role of political history on this affair implies the dangers of the close connection between household and nation. Completing the new upstairs family is Lady Maud Holland (Atkins), Hallam's mother. Maud represents the Edwardian era of the LWT series, through both her traditional attitudes and the self-consciousness of Atkins' casting. However, Maud is also seen to hold more progressive views, stemming from her extensive travels abroad, allowing her to become "something subtler and more complex" than a generic "battle-axe" mother-in-law (Thomas, quoted in Marson, 2012: 5). Maud introduces to the house emblems of a more multicultural outlook, namely an Eastern décor for the LWT series' iconic morning room set, a Sikh private secretary and a mischievous pet monkey. Maud therefore embodies the duality of looking to both the past and the future, which takes place in the fictional household and through the recreated *Upstairs Downstairs* itself.

The new downstairs staff at Eaton Place establish the Holland household as open to those that would have remained outsiders in the LWT series, with both positive and negative results. Most evidently, Maud's secretary Mr Amanjit (Art Malik) sees a person of colour enter the household. Although Mr Amanjit's intermediate place within the binary class system sometimes causes him difficulty, he is able to function in Eaton Place as a practising Sikh, providing an alternative cultural perspective while simultaneously acting as a physical reminder of "the remnants of empire" (Bastin, 2015: 167). Later, the household is joined by maid Rachel Perlmutter (Helen Bradbury) and her daughter Lotte (Alexia James), who are German Jewish refugees. Rachel's refugee status brings the European political context into the confines of the household, revealing the tensions caused by the ascendance of right-wing ideologies prior to the Second World War; simultaneous to her arrival, chauffeur Spargo (Neil Jackson) joins the British Union of Fascists. Lotte, Mr Amanjit, and eventually Hallam's sister Pamela (Sarah Gordy), who has Down's syndrome, are incorporated rather than assimilated into the household, allowing their socio-cultural perspectives to remain intact within its microcosm.

The delicate balance of the past and the future in Eaton Place is sustained by the centrality of Maud and Rose, as both characters and symbols of the series' origins in television history. Atkins and Marsh are self-consciously positioned as the ideological centres of upstairs and downstairs respectively, maintaining the order of the social hierarchy despite the frequent failure

of those around them to live up to their nostalgically remembered predecessors. This is made explicit in the first episode, which reveals Agnes to be well-meaning but naïve, treating her household arrangements in a carefree manner that Rose is evidently wary of. Agnes performs the role of lady of the house, rather than embodying it as Marjorie Bellamy once did. The episode culminates in a dinner party debacle that subverts the iconic 'King comes to dinner' episode of the LWT series (season 2 episode 5), where the household expects to be honoured by a visit from Edward VIII but is instead presented with the Fascist Joachim von Ribbentrop. In the wake of this event, Maud convinces Rose to return to Eaton Place as its housekeeper, speaking the words used as the epigraph to this chapter and allowing Rose's permanent return to provide an optimistic end to the first episode. Through their characters' matriarchal presences both upstairs and downstairs, Atkins and Marsh are self-consciously positioned as vital to the series' success. However, their importance quickly becomes detrimental when neither actor appears regularly in the second season. Before this situation can be assessed, however, it is important to establish the ideological positioning the BBC series inherited from its predecessor, and how this helps develop its self-conscious style.

THE DECLINE OF THE HERITAGE HOUSEHOLD

LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* depicts the First World War's disruption to Edwardian social hierarchies through the serialised narratives of its fourth season, allowing post-heritage elements to take on a renewed focus. This war season functions as the pivotal point of *Upstairs, Downstairs*' narrative, where the social structures of the Edwardian era irrevocably break down along with the series' established episodic form. An individual episode of *Upstairs, Downstairs* usually focuses on between one and three members of the ensemble cast, with other regular characters appearing in a supporting capacity or absent altogether. This approach is conducive to the production context of 1970s television, allowing an episode to be recorded each week and cast members (both regulars and guests) to be contracted as required (Del Valle, 2008: 149-53). Where multi-episode story arcs exist, they nevertheless progress in distinct episodic instalments: for example, the arc involving Lady Marjorie's death and James' courtship of Hazel takes place over the first four episodes of season 3, each of which pursues a self-contained narrative that contributes to the arc's trajectory. Season 4 disrupts this routine by favouring extensive story arcs, displaying an early example of the blended forms that emerged fully in the subsequent decades (see part II). This shift in form allowed the LWT series to employ more sophisticated storytelling and adopt a post-heritage point of view as the Edwardian social order breaks down.

The season's serialisation also facilitates a subversion of season 3's dominance of male characters, opening up the narrative to Eaton Place's female occupants and drawing parallels between their experiences. Thornton maintains that *Upstairs, Downstairs*' First World War narrative is focused on James as a hegemonic masculine figure, associated with the great war poets of literature (1993: 37-8). However, the series never follows James to the front line, allowing the domestic focus to be maintained. Although this focus is in part necessitated by the practical constraints of television drama in the 1970s (Marson, 2011: 262), season 4 nevertheless includes the LWT series' most extensive location filming, including scenes set in France (season 4 episode 7; season 4 episode 11) and even a model effects shot (Marson, 2011: 294). These expensive elements display the possibilities afforded by the series' established commercial success, but they are deployed to depict the personal impact of the war rather than in a limited attempt to realise the spectacle of the battlefield. As the most predominantly serialised episodes of the season commence, it is therefore the stories of Rose and Daisy downstairs, and Georgina and Hazel upstairs, that dominate, accumulating a theme of female identity across multiple episodes while James remains mostly off-screen.

"Women Shall Not Weep" (season 4 episode 4) is the first *Upstairs, Downstairs* episode to eschew the usual episodic form, introducing the theme of female identity in conjunction with the most extensive location filming in the LWT series' history: almost the entire second act (around fourteen minutes in length) is dedicated to a sequence set at Charing Cross, filmed at Marylebone station (Marson, 2011: 281-3). As well as being visually spectacular, this sequence pivots the episode's focus. The episode's first act concerns Daisy's marriage to Edward before he departs for the front, with the frivolity of Georgina and her upper-class friends serving as an ironic counterpoint to the newlyweds' anxieties. On the basis of the series' established format, it is expected that this narrative hierarchy will be maintained throughout the episode. Following the soldiers' departure, however, the camera fails to return to Daisy amongst the throng: the shot remains with Georgina, who watches as a second train alights, carrying a group of wounded soldiers. This moment breaks from the series' usual naturalist aesthetic, adopting first-degree style through the camera's selective movement from Daisy to Georgina. The final act of this episode combines Georgina's decision to train as a VAD nurse with the sudden departure of Ruby, who finds her own work in a munition factory. The multiple competing narratives mean a clear resolution is not reached: Georgina is only at the start of her struggles as a nurse in the episode's final scene, Ruby does not return until much later in the season, and Daisy's own pursuit of war work continues in the next episode. "Women Shall Not Weep" therefore finds cohesion in the

unstated connections between its stories, as signalled by its title, favouring socio-cultural themes over episodic closure.

The subsequent episodes continue the serialised theme of female identity through their overlapping storylines. In "Tug of War" (season 4 episode 5), after Daisy decides to become a bus conductrette, Rose convinces her that her duty remains to the household before, in a highly out of character act, she steals the newspaper advert and secures the job for herself. While Daisy's anger at this betrayal is assuaged by Georgina in the same episode, Rose's motivations are left unclear. In the following episode, "Home Fires" (season 4 episode 6), it is Rose's conductrette role that allows her to reunite with her former fiancé Gregory Wilmot, whom she now agrees to marry. In retrospect, it is possible to read Rose's earlier betrayal of Daisy as heralding this development: she is now willing to explore a life beyond domestic service, which she was unable to do before the war. Meanwhile, the 'upstairs' narrative of "Home Fires" is a seemingly perfunctory subplot, concerning the planning of an officers' tea party. This event does not occur until the next episode, "If You Were the Only Girl in the World" (season 4 episode 7), where Hazel embarks upon her own love affair with Lieutenant Jack Dyson (Andrew Ray), furthering the use of serialisation in the season. The concurrent female narratives of the two preceding episodes reach a climax in "The Glorious Dead" (season 4 episode 8), where Rose and Hazel learn that both Gregory and Jack have been killed.

A disillusioned James also returns on leave in this episode, reluctantly comforting Rose by describing Gregory as a war hero. James propagates the heritage values that he no longer believes in to comfort Rose, his paternalistic role allowing Rose to resume her former contentedness with her subjugated position. James' change in attitude represents a viewpoint that was controversial in 1917 but accepted by 1974: that the war was a futile waste of life. Similar to Hallam in the BBC series, this characterises James as holding modern values through his rejection of the dominant ideology. His performance of heritage values to Rose nevertheless reveals the power of their illusion, curtailing her newfound independence and maintaining her place in the household. Post-heritage self-consciousness is thus combined with the requirements of a long-running series, retaining heritage stability while also acknowledging its injustices. Following the war, however, heritage values cannot sustain indefinitely; while the fifth season spans the 1920s and sees a return to episodic narratives, James' lack of purpose permeates the season until he finally commits suicide in the wake of the Wall Street Crash (season 5 episode 15). As *Upstairs, Downstairs* writer Jeremy Paul outlines, following a near-death experience in the war James, representing the heritage ideology, is "in a sense[…] already a dead man" throughout the fifth

season (quoted in Marson, 2011: 296). His narrative arc thus emphasises the series' "self-awareness that the liberal England which it idealizes is certainly doomed" (Freedman, 1990: 83-4). James' death causes 165 Eaton Place to be sold and its remaining inhabitants to separate (season 5 episode 16), confirming the dissolution of the heritage household and the hierarchical structure it represents.

The trajectory of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* reveals that the Hollands' attempts to recapture the Edwardian past in the BBC series are destined to fail. The heritage values Hallam and Agnes seek to re-establish are those that were seen to expire in the LWT series, which also represent the archetypal heritage period drama. Agnes' excited first assessment of Eaton Place as a "ghastly old mausoleum" (season 1 episode 1) rings true on more than one level: it is a mausoleum of the Edwardian class structure and simultaneously a mausoleum of the 1970s period drama 'golden age'. This dual reflection is acknowledged by the revived series' self-conscious elements, used in its first episode to justify its legitimacy through connections to the series' history on television. Amongst several examples, including the 'King comes to dinner' subversion discussed above, Rose's return to Eaton Place is particularly illuminating. This dialogue-free sequence sees Marsh simultaneously representing Rose and herself; the distinction between the fictional and non-fictional becomes blurred in her instinctive reactions to the recreated studio sets. When Rose/Marsh reaches the iconic staircase, she reprises her habitual gesture of wiping the bannister with her hand from the LWT series.[5] As she leaves her hand on the bannister, sunlight streams through the entrance hall window, and the blemishes of age on Rose's hand vanish momentarily (season 1 episode 1), briefly mimicking the high-key lighting of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* and other television dramas of its era. The sequence's sonic characteristics also contribute to its nostalgic function: the soundtrack's "Rose Returns to the House"[6] evokes the LWT series' familiar theme tune (retained for the BBC series),[7] while a sparkling sound effect adds to the sense of heightened reality. While providing the spectacle of heritage drama, the stylistic heightening of this moment exposes its fictionality and thus the unattainable nature of the pasts (televisual and historical) being evoked. The self-consciousness

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[5] This gesture originates in the LWT series' "The Path of Duty" (season 1 episode 4), where it represents Rose's affection for Elizabeth Bellamy, and is reprised during her survey of the house in the final episode (season 5 episode 16). As the audio montage that accompanies the latter sequence does not include Elizabeth, it is possible that this reference – and perhaps even that in the BBC series – was instigated by Marsh herself, further conflating the identities of character and actor/co-creator.

[6] All track references in this chapter refer to the season 1 soundtrack (1812 Recordings/BBC, 2010), composed by Daniel Pemberton, unless otherwise noted.

[7] Composed by Alexander Faris.

reminds us that the society depicted is predominantly fictional, with Marsh's return to Eaton Place seemingly more important than Rose's.[8] The moment of de-ageing also draws attention to the dissonance between the two iterations of *Upstairs Downstairs*: as Thomas acknowledges, Rose has appeared to age over thirty years between 1930 (recorded in 1975) and 1936 (recorded in 2010), although this can be mitigated by the LWT series' characters lack of ageing over twenty-seven narrative years (quoted in Marson, 2012: 4-5). Rather than showing Rose as returning to her youth, however, this sequence gives the impression that time has caught up with her at last, emphasised by the neglected state of the hallway itself. The scene's wistful nostalgia cannot be a permanent state; inevitably, the sunlight fades, Rose remains visibly aged, and even the music cue withholds resolution into the main theme's motif. The sequence breaks the suspension of disbelief required to accept Rose's aged presence in the re-established Eaton Place, emphasising the series as a work of fiction in conjunction with Rose's subjectivity. The brief incorporation of second-degree style in this moment, with Rose's de-aged hand – and, in all probability, the conveniently timed sunlight – existing from her perspective only, contributes to this effect.

Thus established through its televisual history, the Eaton Place of the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* is able to subvert the characteristics of heritage drama by bringing marginalised figures into the heart of its microcosm. Lotte and Pamela's incorporation necessitates an ideological shift among the occupants of Eaton Place, achieved through the investigation of the household's various perspectives. Following her mother's sudden death, Lotte remains mute and suffers from night terrors, becoming the focus of Agnes' maternal anxieties during her long-awaited first pregnancy; she describes how Lotte "makes me feel something is circling my house, tapping on the window like a bird's beak or a branch" (season 1 episode 3). Agnes ultimately bids her mother-in-law to remove Lotte from the house, mirroring the choice Maud herself made to institutionalise Pamela decades earlier. The climactic moment of Lotte's departure displays the BBC series' realist aesthetics, with a montage of preparations for her departure accompanied by the mournful strings of the soundtrack's "Lotte Sent Away" and a typewritten letter from Mr Amanjit narrated over the sequence:

> Your name is Carlotte Marganit Perlmutter. You were born in Frankfurt in 1929. You are a Jewess. Your father is called Avram Perlmutter. In August 1936, he was known to be alive. After your mother's death on the fourth of October, you were removed to 165 Eaton Place, Belgravia. You were cared for by the staff. They remembered your mother, and they loved you. (season 1 episode 3)

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[8] As Rose never directly addresses her history in Eaton Place, self-conscious moments such as this are only fully comprehensible through prior knowledge of the LWT series.

The use of montage here allows an association between the marginalised identities of Lotte and Mr Amanjit to be established, its importance asserted despite Lotte's minor narrative role in the series. It is this connection that allows the injustice of her dismissal to ultimately be resolved, and Maud and Agnes to recognise their errors of judgement; Mr Amanjit is instrumental in helping Hallam discover where Lotte has been taken, where Pamela (another marginalised figure) is also found. They are therefore both able to return to Eaton Place, the household's newfound capacity for incorporation rather than assimilation allowing their distinct identities to remain uncompromised.

A POST-HERITAGE HOUSEHOLD?

Although the first season of the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* was deemed successful enough to warrant the commission of six further episodes, the pre-production of its second season faced difficulties from the outset. By this time, Danny Cohen had succeeded Jay Hunt as Controller of BBC One (Midgley, 2010), while Faith Penhale replaced Piers Wenger as BBC Wales' Head of Drama shortly after the series was recommissioned (BBC Press Office, 2011). The management turnover at the BBC thus left Thomas to continue without the figures who had initially supported the development of *Upstairs Downstairs*. The series, intended to offer distinctive programming in the 2010s television landscape, was also unexpectedly pre-empted by *Downton Abbey*, limiting its potential impact and apparently causing Cohen to adopt a cautious attitude to its recommissioning; although he did allow the series to return, under Hunt season 2 was projected to span 13 episodes (Marson, 2012: 3), as opposed to the six that were ultimately ordered.

In addition to its tepid network support, other extratextual circumstances contributed to the severe difficulties faced by *Upstairs Downstairs'* second season, resulting in the absences of both Marsh and Atkins. Firstly, the previously productive working relationship between Thomas and Atkins[9] appears to have deteriorated during production of the first season, resulting in the latter leaving her role six weeks before filming for the second season began (Lampert, 2012). Atkins' subsequent comments suggest that the practical difficulties of filming with Solomon the monkey were the source of the communication breakdown (ibid.), undoubtedly compounded by her initial dissatisfaction with Maud's character (Eaton, 2013: 235-6). While Atkins is a co-creator of the *Upstairs Downstairs* format and may have felt a degree of proprietorship over the revived series, she was employed as an actor only and therefore had no official creative control over the

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[9] Atkins had appeared in Thomas' three major BBC dramas preceding *Upstairs Downstairs*: *Madame Bovary* (BBC Two, 2000), *Ballet Shoes* (BBC One, 2007) and *Cranford* (BBC One, 2007-09).

production. The timing of her eventual departure, however, suggests that she had negotiated an unusual option to resign with minimal notice, leaving the series with little time to remove the character of Maud from the second season. Consequently, the character of Maud's younger half-sister Blanche Mottershead (Alex Kingston) is introduced to take her place. The cast of season 2 consequently skews towards a younger age-range; the production also took advantage of Kingston's emerging popularity among a younger audience demographic due to her concurrent recurring role as River Song in *Doctor Who* (BBC, 2005-present), in which she appeared intermittently between 2008 and 2015. Kingston's presence in *Upstairs Downstairs* is another example of an actor competing for prominence with their character, as emphasised by Blanche's profession: like River Song, she is an archaeologist. Further to this significant late change to the series, shortly before filming was due to start Marsh suffered a stroke during a public appearance (Wigg, 2012). With no prospect of delaying filming at this late stage, Rose was hastily written out of the majority of season 2, ultimately appearing in two brief scenes (season 2 episode 3; episode 6). The two figures self-consciously placed at the heart of the revived series were thus absent from Eaton Place when *Upstairs Downstairs* returned in 2012.

Substantially rewritten on two occasions mere weeks before filming, season 2 of *Upstairs Downstairs* is unable to sustain its post-heritage point of view. This is particularly apparent in its first episode; the struggle to continue life in Eaton Place without Rose plays out in a manner analogous to the production's tumultuous period, with characters and actors alike attempting to fill the void left by Rose/Marsh's absence. Equally reflective of the production difficulties, the first episode expediently dispatches Solomon the monkey: footman Johnny (Nico Mirallegro) uses the monkey to test a gas-proof pram, resulting in a domestic farce where the downstairs staff attempt to resuscitate the animal and then conceal his body. This in turn leads to the revelation of butler Pritchard's (Adrian Scarborough) past as a conscientious objector,[10] causing a division amongst the household's staff that suffers from the lack of Rose's ideological function; Mr Amanjit and cook Mrs Thackeray (Anne Reid) take on the unsympathetic attitude of the older generation, he having served and she a war widow, while the younger Johnny and Beryl (Laura Haddock) are more sympathetic to Pritchard's decision. Rose's perspective is lacking in this conflict, especially when recalling her loss of Gregory in the war; this divests her of the opportunity to finally reject the 'glorious dead' myth James Bellamy convinced her of decades earlier. As the staff are unable to resolve their differences themselves, it is left to Agnes to smooth things over:

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[10] See Brown (2018) for a full analysis of this development.

> We all fit into this household in a different way. We come and go through different doors. We eat our meals at separate tables. But we all give 165 Eaton Place as our address, and that means we're on the same side. From now on, I expect your behaviour to reflect that, or how else will we survive a war? (season 2 episode 1)

This overtly heritage statement, which lacks the self-conscious vulnerability of Agnes' earlier performances of lady of the house, does not carry the post-heritage significance it would hold if spoken by Rose. The season's troubled production thus leads it to reinforce rather than challenge heritage perspectives.

Production constraints also undermine the first season's post-heritage incorporation of marginalised figures, as both Pamela and Lotte appear only occasionally in season 2. Lotte is now separated from the household at a boarding school and, despite the character no longer being mute, is not given any significant dialogue. With Hallam occupied by his personal and political affairs, it is only Mr Amanjit who continues to take an active interest in the young girl, allowing their shared otherness to remain apparent despite its reduced prominence. Lotte is also shown to retain a strong connection to her Jewish lineage, continuing to sing the song her mother used as a lullaby (although now in English)[11] and later greeting the Jewish children rescued from Germany by the Kindertransport (season 2 episode 2). Pamela is also cared for elsewhere for the majority of season 2, undermining her previous return to the family home and preventing *Upstairs Downstairs* from achieving the socially progressive impact of featuring an actor with Down's syndrome in a regular role. These two marginalised figures may have found acceptance during season 1, but as fictional characters they still struggle to find a place within the household.[12]

The third episode of season 2, entitled "A Perfect Specimen of Womanhood", allows the series' post-heritage elements to re-emerge through its subjective consideration of female roles across the class divide; in this it is similar to the LWT's series' war season. The episode's central plot concerns the revelation of Blanche's lesbian affair with Lady Portia Alresford (Emilia Fox), depicting the various reactions to this scandal within the household. Meanwhile, Agnes' naivety as mistress of the house causes Beryl and Eunice (Ami Metcalf) to recognise their rights as workers, and Persie (recently returned from Nazi Germany) attempts to abort an unwanted pregnancy. These narratives complement each other under the loose theme of social progression. Agnes' deficiencies in running her household expose the hollowness of her earlier rallying speech to the staff, confirming that an individual's kindness is not enough to resolve inequality. After

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[11] "O Ladybird", in *The Music from* Upstairs Downstairs*: Series Two* (Carl Davis Collection, 2012).
[12] This echoes the LWT's series inability to realise initial plans to include a third Bellamy child, a thirteen-year-old "cripple", in its construction of the heritage household (Marson, 2011: 24).

Agnes switches Beryl and Eunice's duties on a whim, a brief montage betrays the gap between the classes: while Agnes participates in gentle calisthenics as part of the Women's League of Health and Beauty, Eunice's struggles with her new duties undermines the League's message of "equality for women from every walk of life". When Agnes subsequently signs Beryl and Eunice up for the class under the same misguided notion of equality, their inability to decline the offer is made clear. Surprisingly, it is learning of Blanche's sexuality that allows Agnes to realise her ignorance, encouraging her to move beyond her performative Edwardian benevolence and embrace a changing world. Given her actions in the episode (and indeed the series) so far, it seems likely that Agnes will disapprove of Blanche's sexuality, with Hallam's earlier empathy for Lotte (season 1 episode 3) and Pritchard (season 2 episode 1) suggesting he will be the more understanding of the couple. However, their reactions confound these expectations, establishing the trajectories of their characters across the remainder of the season. Hallam is the first to learn of Blanche's affair through the Duke of Kent, the political intuition that aligned him with anti-appeasement now manifesting as prejudice: his objections are summed up by declaring Portia's position as an MP's wife. The breakfast table scene that follows sees opinions diverge in Blanche's absence, allowing Agnes to assert a sympathetic attitude towards the situation. While Hallam maintains his focus on the political, bemoaning that the story is "in *The Express*", Agnes' response is to ask her husband "is this in any way likely to affect the current state of play in European politics?" This appears at first to be a genuine question, borne from Agnes' presumed ignorance of public affairs; she quickly, however, reveals a more worldly attitude, aware Blanche's situation only threatens "social humiliation" that can be weathered. Agnes' priorities are now placed more appropriately than her husband's, and by, as she puts it, "learning that others are entitled to respect", she is growing able to recognise the needs of her staff as well.

Hallam's surprisingly intolerant response to Blanche marks the beginning of his ideological downfall; by the end of the season he has conducted an affair with Persie, turning his staff against him and leaving his marriage on the brink of collapse. This challenges the heritage notion of patriarchal benevolence, in stark contrast to Robert's consistent reliability in *Downton Abbey*. Byrne identifies a decline in Robert's effectiveness as Lord Grantham, stemming from his inadequate medical judgement at the time of his daughter's death: "by series 4, Robert is able to be absent from Downton for months on end without being greatly missed (by family or indeed by viewers). Even when home, he is largely ineffectual: it is Mary and the former chauffeur, Branson, who plan for the future of the estate" (2015b: 180-1). This assessment exaggerates Robert's ineffectiveness; while his narrative absence in season 4 does span months, he continues to appear

in every episode and remains willing and able to provide for his servants and tenants throughout. Downton is therefore able to continue functioning with minimal disruption while many other great estates are sold off, the series ending with the happiness of all the household's members achieved through employment or marital fulfilment. Kindness and mutual respect between classes are thus enough to overcome the inadequacies of society and achieve closure. *Downton*'s numerous happy endings, as indicated by David Hinckley (2018: 106), are framed as 'rewards' for each character's good deeds and constancy throughout the series, confirming the emphasis on individual worth.

INDOORS, OUTDOORS

In addition to the ideologies of its central characters, a heritage framework may be indicated by a drama's negotiation of space and place. LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* makes use of limited location filming, increasingly taking advantage of its commercial success to push the technical boundaries of 1970s series television. Typical of the time, use of expensive 16mm filmed inserts among studio tape recordings results in an aesthetic dissonance, with the two recording techniques producing noticeably different visual results (Mills, 2013: 60). More cumbersome outside broadcast video cameras were sometimes used in *Upstairs, Downstairs*, reducing this aesthetic dissonance (Marson, 2011: 99-100) but also proving inflexible (ibid.: 139-40). The production constraints of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* therefore result in a clear distinction between indoors and outdoors, operating alongside the class divide of the series' narrative concept. Technological developments since the 1970s meant that the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* could be made entirely on film, removing the aesthetic dissonance between interior and exterior scenes; despite this, the revived series chooses to maintain the balance between indoors and outdoors found in the LWT series. This acknowledges the double nostalgia inherent in twenty-first century period drama, evoking the 'golden age' of the earlier LWT series through a self-conscious style.

The distinction between narrative space and historical place, as identified by Higson (see Introduction) is apparent in the settings of *Upstairs Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey*. While *Downton Abbey* presents its titular location as a visitable place through the use of Highclere Castle as its principal filming location (Samuel and Stoddart, 2018: 25-6), Eaton Place (despite being situated in a real London street) is depicted as a dramatic space through its construction in the television studio. Recognising that LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey* "actually 'feel' nothing alike", Tom Bragg interprets the studio-bound aesthetics of 1970s period dramas as a

liberating feature (2015: 23). Studio-based dramas are, according to Bragg, "free to engage historical *chronotopi* ['time-place'], processes, and meanings more considerately via patently artificial spaces" (ibid.: 24). The studios of 1970s period drama thus function as a space for post-heritage investigation, inviting self-consciousness by "emphasizing their unrealistic qualities" and "engag[ing] viewer interaction with the camera's exploration" (ibid.). Building upon this, the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* aims to create "a balance between the old and new" (Thomas, quoted in Marson, 2012: 3) through its self-conscious aesthetics, taking advantage of the post-heritage possibilities of the studio space. This allows it to continue to operate as what Wheatley, describing the LWT series' aesthetics, calls "an expressive and coherent dramatic space" (2005: 146).

Eaton Place is re-established as a self-conscious space in the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs*, acknowledging its televisual construction and function as a socio-historical microcosm. This is apparent from the initial return to the entrance hall, which alludes to the final sequence of the LWT series. LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* ends with Rose surveying the empty household, while archival audio recalls its various occupants over the years (season 5 episode 16). As it forms the final moments of the LWT series, this sequence was freed from some of the usual production restrictions and utilises first-degree style as a result: allocated an additional studio day (Marson, 2011: 356), it features rarely seen rooms and passages, and atypical camera angles captured by a single camera. As the sequence culminates in the entrance hall, the single camera also allows the hitherto unseen 'fourth wall' – adjacent to the main doorway and opposite the staircase – to be

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Figure 1: Rose (Jean Marsh) takes a final look up the staircase before leaving Eaton Place (*Upstairs, Downstairs*, LWT: season 5 episode 16)

visible (figure 1); in regular recording sessions, the multiple studio cameras occupied this space. While there is perhaps disappointingly little floor space on this side of the hallway, the viewpoint from the top of the stairway makes for a striking final image of Eaton Place due to its unusual position. The scene is effective due to Rose's subjectivity rather than the space she explores, which is rendered unfamiliar due to the unusual filming techniques. This sequence is mirrored twice in the BBC series' first episode: in Rose's return to the house, as analysed above, and also in Hallam and Agnes' earlier re-opening of Eaton Place. As Hallam and Agnes enter the main doors for the first time, the entrance hall is seen from the same angle as at Rose's departure (figure 2), its use as an establishing shot implies that it is a viewpoint will now be implemented regularly. The widescreen aspect ratio and advances in production quality over the decades also allow the hallway to overcome its underwhelming 1970s character. The heritage household, having literally gathered dust over years of neglect, is revived through reference to the televisual style of its past.

In addition to the technical style of scenes within the household, Thomas reveals the negotiation between interior and exterior scenes through which the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* balances its televisual heritage with new possibilities: "a great deal of the power of the original [series] stemmed from the fact that so much of the drama was sparked by, and played out within, the walls of 165. We set strict limits on the amount of time we spent outside the house, and made sure that any exterior scenes[…] were justified" (quoted in Marson, 2012: 3). In other words, the style borne from technological and budgetary restrictions in the LWT series was now a creative

Figure 2: Hallam (Ed Stoppard) and Agnes (Keeley Hawes) re-open 165 Eaton Place, their return marked by a reprise of the camera angle the hallway was last seen from (*Upstairs Downstairs*, BBC/Masterpiece: season 1 episode 1)

choice, made to evoke televisual nostalgia and sustain the series' domestic focus. In the most significant deviation from interior scenes, the second episode of season 1, "The Ladybird", includes exterior filming to depict the Battle of Cable Street (a violent clash between police and anti-fascist protestors, which occurred in October 1936. However, the importance of this cultural moment becomes apparent in an earlier scene that takes place within the household, adhering to Thomas' intentions for the series.

In this domestic scene, which takes place around the servants' dinner table, the representative function of *Upstairs Downstairs*' characters within the microcosm of Eaton Place becomes clear as the Jewish Rachel is confronted by Spargo in full British Union of Fascist uniform. This scene, directed by Euros Lyn, develops the style established in the first episode of the LWT series, "On Trial". Lez Cooke's analysis of the first dinner table scene establishes the LWT series' naturalist style (2013: 71), as well as its framing of characters through medium close-ups and two-shots (ibid.: 75). The newly arrived Sarah in "On Trial" is met with similar suspicion to Spargo's Fascism in "The Ladybird", though the charged political context allows the scene from the BBC series to pursue a post-heritage function: "The Ladybird" shows Spargo's presence subverting the familiar period drama scene, while "On Trial" establishes its characteristics in spite of Sarah's disruptive presence. The scene in "The Ladybird" begins with a medium long shot of the servants' hall, which under the BBC series' reconfigured floorplan is the first room accessed from the stairway. The hall is shot predominantly from the stairway/entrance end, with Mrs Thackeray's kitchenette visible on the right of the shot, evoking the setup of the LWT series' servants' hall. However, with more fluid camera movement possible in the 2010s, it is no longer necessary for the kitchen and dinner table to be fitted in a single frame, demonstrated as the establishing shot pans across with Rachel's movement from the kitchenette to the table. This movement reveals the full length of the table, with housemaid Ivy (Ellie Kendrick) approaching from the opposite side and Mr Amanjit, Pritchard and Rose already seated, the latter two in the positions of authority previously occupied by Hudson and Mrs Bridges (Cooke, 2013: 71). When Rose asks Ivy about Spargo's whereabouts, Mrs Thackeray returns into the shot to add her own question, allowing all the characters present to be visible around the table. The scene cuts to a two-shot of Pritchard and Mr Amanjit (roughly from Rose's seated position) as the butler asks Mr Amanjit to fetch Spargo himself, stating "I'd listen to a man." This injunction is responded to by Rachel in medium close-up, smiling slightly towards Mr Amanjit. In the preceding scene Mr Amanjit discovered Lotte's existence and gained Rachel's confidence; although this development is not directly referred to here, Rachel's brief reaction alludes to the newfound closeness between these

two marginalised figures. While the naturalism of "On Trial" dictates that the camera moves along with the conversation (Cooke, 2013: 71), "The Ladybird" displays the BBC series' grounding in realism, allowing non-dialogic expression to be focused on and the narrative's point of view to be sustained.

The stylistic features of the scene establish its significance, foregrounding Rachel's subjectivity and the power dynamics around the dinner table. Spargo's explanation for his BUF uniform is first reacted to by Rachel, now in close-up, her continued silent disgust prioritised over Pritchard's concurrent expositional dialogue. As Spargo responds, the picture cuts to a medium shot from behind him, framing Rachel on the left of the screen. This pre-empts her voiced response ("I won't eat with him if he's dressed like that") before it is spoken, again privileging her perspective over Spargo's. The camera returns to Spargo as he dismisses Rachel's distress ("You won't eat oxtail anyway") but again moves away before he finishes, this time to a two-shot of Ivy and Rose's reactions. Rose speaks in Rachel's defence, but her ideological authority is compromised by her inability to find words to match the seriousness of the situation: "that's enough, Harry; your outfit has upset Rachel and I don't think that's very nice". Rose is of the Edwardian era of the LWT series, where such dangerous ideologies would never find their way into the household; she is therefore not equipped to deal with such tensions. The direction of the scene also undermines Rose's authority, as the shot again moves back to Spargo (unfazed by Rose's criticism) before she finishes speaking. After Spargo describes his legal right to wear his choice of clothes, Pritchard attempts to hand control back to Rose: "it is not the law at 165 Eaton Place. Sir Hallam and Lady Agnes make the law upstairs, and Miss Buck makes the law down here". When Spargo still refuses to relent, Mrs Thackeray approaches the foreground of his medium close-up, telling the group to "ignore him" and continue with their meal. As she sits to Spargo's right, the camera pans left to reveal Rose, still standing and visibly distressed at her lack of control over the situation. The close-up of Rachel, who has been out of shot for around 40 seconds, is now returned to, showing her look of disbelief at Mrs Thackeray's tacit acceptance of the situation. The medium long shot of the full dinner table, a reverse shot from Rachel's perspective, follows, showing her view of Ivy and Pritchard relenting and sitting at the table before she flees from the room.

This scene lasts 100 seconds exactly, comprising 23 shots: its average shot length is therefore 4.35 seconds. The much longer scene in "On Trial" has an average shot length of 5.8 seconds, which is in turn significantly shorter than the single plays Cooke analyses in the same study (2013: 77). By the time of *Middlemarch* (BBC/WGBH, 1994), however, Cooke notes a trend

towards average shot lengths nearer 4 seconds (ibid.: 103). The continuing trend towards a faster pace influences *Downton Abbey*, where the first servants' dinner scene (season 1 episode 1) also contains 23 shots but in just 65 seconds, resulting in an average shot length of 2.83 seconds.[13] This fast pace is pursued despite the scene containing only expositional dialogue, unlike the pivotal moment of "The Ladybird". Its position between the shot lengths of *Downton Abbey* and the LWT series further indicates the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* negotiation of a style between 'golden age' period drama and contemporary television; while faster paced and more attuned to action than the LWT series, it nevertheless maintains a slower pace than other contemporary dramas through lengthier shots that evoke the television of the 1970s. These hybrid aesthetics also facilitate subjectivity, as demonstrated by the elements of first-degree style that allow Rachel's perspective to be understood.

As season 2 of *Upstairs Downstairs* reaches its climax, the breaking point of the class structure can be recognised spatially as well as narratively. This is particularly apparent in the season's fourth and fifth episodes, both directed by Brendan Maher. The first of these episodes, entitled "All the Things You Are", displays 165 Eaton Place as a liveable and lived-in space. While it may not be a visitable historical place like Downton Abbey/Highclere Castle, its construction, and binding to its characters' fates, allows it to feel at risk from the narrative and historical tensions exposed within. Accordingly, the episode situates many sequences in and through the house's liminal spaces, with dialogue taking place between rooms, on the main staircase and across corridors throughout. The fluidity between rooms implies that the narrative is moving beyond the point where delineated spaces can contain the multiple ongoing storylines, which at this point include Hallam helping Persie during her secret abortion and the growing tensions in the Hollands' marriage. On two occasions, the camera pans between the entrance hall and the first floor corridor that overlooks it, revealing Persie overhearing information that allows her to come between Agnes and Hallam. As well as displaying the connectedness of the household, this foreshadows the overheard political information that Persie later relates to the German intelligence services, and her fatal fall from the same passageway at the end of the season (season 2 episode 6). The episode's final scene, where Hallam and Persie begin an affair, encourages a spatial reading of events, beginning as a frustrated Hallam sees Blanche walk past both open

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[13] Eva N. Redvall identifies *Downton*'s fast pace as a US influence, combined with "the UK tradition of heritage drama and its European 'auteur' sensibility" to "give the past a contemporary feel". Redvall associates this with the creation of post-heritage drama, suggesting the importance of transnational influences in introducing post-heritage elements to a familiar dramatic framework (2019: 131-2).

drawing room doors. Stepping out onto the first floor corridor to intercept her, Hallam confronts Blanche about her perceived influence over Agnes, demanding that she move out of the house. This argument takes Blanche down the staircase and out through the main entrance, the camera picking up her momentary discomposure at Hallam's demand while the latter remains above. As Blanche exits, Persie appears in the passage with Hallam, the two looking at each other in incriminating silence before Blanche is safely out of earshot. Persie enters the left-side door to the drawing room, and, while the camera completes a rotation around her, Hallam enters through the other doorway. As they begin to kiss passionately, Hallam kicks the door shut and the camera retreats, ending the episode with a gradual zoom out across the empty entrance hall. The danger to the household presented by Hallam and Persie's affair is thus understood spatially, concealed at the heart of Eaton Place and stripping it of any remaining sense of heritage security. Accordingly, Blanche and Agnes are mostly absent in the following episode, while the mutual respect between master and servants is eroded.

In "The Last Waltz" (season 2 episode 5), the final collapse of the divide between upstairs and downstairs takes place outside Eaton Place, in the auspicious setting of the Royal Albert Hall. It is here, during a mass servants' ball, that the Duke of Kent's careless attitude towards the lower classes, and Mrs Thackeray's inability to refuse his offer of cocktails, instigates a chain of events that sees Pritchard relapse into alcoholism. The deference the servants show the Duke is belied by his immaturity, shown by the exaggerated dance moves he performs even as Mrs Thackeray valorises his "dignity". The camera follows the Duke outside to where he encounters Hallam, before remaining with the latter as he is intercepted by Spargo. This transition reflects the decline of the upper class through both comic and tragic means, the Duke's flippancy contrasting with Hallam's anxieties over politics and his personal life. Spargo now wishes to emigrate to America after marrying Beryl, using his knowledge of Hallam and Persie's affair to blackmail his master into funding his passage. The scene is shot from low angles behind Hallam and high angles behind Spargo, emphasising the latter's height and physical dominance. Spargo's threats therefore expose Hallam's inadequacy as an employer, a diplomat and a man through both its narrative content and aesthetics. The heritage household is compromised by this moment, undermining the security of its delineated spaces. These developments cannot be resolved by the elements of closure at the end of the season: while Persie dies, Pritchard and Blanche return to Eaton Place and Rose is on the path to recovery, the Hollands' marriage continues in name only and the Second World War presents an ominous future. The first air raid siren rings out as the series ends, causing Agnes and Blanche to seek shelter via the servants' entrance (season 2 episode 6); it is

clear that "the old world order has altered irrevocably" (Bastin, 2015: 174), and Eaton Place will never again provide a space for traditional heritage values.

WITHER SHALL I WANDER?

The diverse representations of the past explored in this chapter, indicated through the analysis aesthetic features, have revealed the complex interaction of heritage and post-heritage characteristics in period drama. Both iterations of *Upstairs Downstairs*, and *Downton Abbey*, consider the end of the 1920s as a turning point in British social history, their various ideological points of view demonstrated by the handling of this pivotal time. LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs* meets the future head-on, accelerating its final season to advance through the entirety of the 1920s; the post-war attempts to sustain the heritage household finally fail in the aftermath of the Wall Street Crash (season 5 episode 15). *Downton Abbey* moves in the opposite direction, only reaching the end of 1925 over four post-war seasons. This results in what Hinckley terms an "indefinite pause", ending in a "magically frozen time before the country would have to face an economic depression, a second catastrophic world war, and the collapse of a way of life embodied in great estates such as Downton Abbey" (2018: 105). In its latter stages, *Downton Abbey* has been said to operate as nostalgia for the first season of *Downton Abbey* more than its historical period (Schmidt, 2015: 223), its cyclical narrative structure never permitting the future to arrive and neglecting to substantially challenge the Edwardian social hierarchies. Its final season accordingly deploys a melodramatic strand of self-consciousness, emphasising the focus on individual worth by directly rewarding characters for their goodness of character.[14] Set after the fall of the heritage household, the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* uses self-consciousness to recognise that the ordered world it evokes is little more than a fantasy, despite its own appeals to televisual nostalgia through stylistic allusions to the LWT series. By its premature end, the start of the Second World War in conjunction with Hallam and Agnes' *de facto* separation and Hallam's failure as an employer has confirmed that heritage aspirations are unsustainable in the 1930s. While the planned developments of its post-heritage elements in a third season are unknown, it is hard to imagine *Upstairs Downstairs* existing in any guise after the Second World War; its attempts to recapture the ordered past have only led to its destruction being confirmed by another epochal global event.

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[14] The film iteration of *Downton Abbey* extends the drama's tendency to evade interrogation, set in 1927 and thus circumventing the possibilities of the May 1926 General Strike (Moulton, 2015) in favour of a continued heritage point of view.

The positioning of Rose and Maud, played by the LWT series' co-creators, at the centre of the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs*' narrative represents a self-conscious strategy to legitimise the revived series through direct connection to its on- and off-screen pasts. The revived series is established through recognition of its televisual heritage, emphasised by its realist aesthetics. This post-heritage structure takes on a different character in the second season, where Rose and Maud's absences reflect the institutional pressures that were exacerbated by its troubled pre-production period. The initial use of the *Upstairs Downstairs* brand to legitimise the series is thus itself subverted, with the narrative disruption caused by the characters' absence now negatively affecting the series' nostalgia for its televisual legacy. The BBC series' inability to control its self-consciousness prevents it from sustaining a post-heritage point of view, inadvertently mirroring the narrative's inability to recreate the past. Notwithstanding these challenges, the series' self-conscious realism still allows it to explore the identities of its characters and their representative roles within the microcosm of 165 Eaton Place, as "A Perfect Specimen of Womanhood" and the use of the studio space display. Despite its shortcomings, therefore, the innovations of style found in the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs* display the potential for a post-heritage approach within a traditional dramatic format. Accordingly, the following chapter will establish the possibility of a more developed realisation of post-heritage aesthetics where institutional conditions are favourable.

—————————————*Chapter 2*—————————————

"Anything is Possible Now": Aesthetics of the past in *Dancing on the Edge*

> Maybe things are about to change. Despite all the hardship there is, I feel – and I hope this is not too optimistic Mr Lester – but I do feel anything is possible now.
>
> --- Donaldson (Poliakoff, 2013: 57)

Dancing on the Edge, a five-part serial written and directed by Stephen Poliakoff, is a product of very different institutional conditions to *Upstairs Downstairs*, despite both being made for public service broadcaster the BBC. Telling a finite story with a fixed length, *Dancing on the Edge* is not required to establish characters or situations that can be extended beyond its six-hour duration.[1] It also benefits from the creative freedom afforded by Poliakoff's cultural reputation (Holdsworth, 2011: 114-6); facilitated by his combined roles of writer, director and executive producer, this allows him to establish a "resistance to contemporary cultural and televisual trends" (Nelson, 2007: 174). The BBC's motivation in commissioning Poliakoff's dramas is to display the Corporation's public service function, rather than to achieve specific viewership aims or critical success.[2] This chapter will identify the impact of Poliakoff's creative freedom on *Dancing on the Edge*'s style and exploration of cultural identity, recognising through this its post-heritage approach to the British past.

Dancing on the Edge follows the fictional Louis Lester Band, a Black jazz band in 1930s London, depicting their entry into high society and the tribulations caused by their social advancement. Through its original jazz music compositions (by Adrian Johnston), *Dancing on the Edge* portrays "an art created largely by African Americans who flourished on the margins of the official culture" (Pells, 2011: 130); this music sonically reflects the social position of Louis (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a Black British man, and his African American bandmates, which is explored by the drama's narrative. Focusing on Louis' cultural identity allows the drama to fulfil the subversive potential of period drama, moving characters of colour from a marginal position "to the narrative centre" (Higson, 2003: 28). Although there is no genuine improvisation in the drama's pre-recorded musical numbers, and the central performance scenes make no attempt to affect an improvised style, the editing of the musical sequences visually approximates the "sensual,

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[1] There is a seventh hour of *Dancing on the Edge*, an auxiliary episode titled "Interviewing Louis", which takes place during the events of the main serial. This is, however, more indicative of the structural potential of Poliakoff's television dramas than their capacity for continuations; similar peripheral episodes were produced alongside *Shooting the Past* (BBC, 1999) and *Capturing Mary* (BBC, 2007).

[2] This does not necessarily align with Poliakoff's own intentions: Nelson identifies his wish for his work to find a wide audience, and attention to audience research (2011: 215).

impulsive, uncerebral" (Pells, 2011: 138) aspects of jazz. This allows music and subjectivity to guide the arrangement of shots and construct meanings not apparent in Poliakoff's published script. The implicit freedom offered by jazz music is undermined, however, by the serial's use of space to maintain divisions between its characters. Most centrally, the hotel where the band lives and performs represents the pursuit of a space where social change can be enacted, but ultimately reveals the impossibility of achieving such a space at this moment of history. Under the constraints of these aesthetics and the narrative's crisis, the Louis Lester Band's music develops beyond its diegetic origins, used non-diegetically in the serial's later episodes to further represent the subjectivities of its central characters.

In conjunction with the narrative themes of race and identity, *Dancing on the Edge*'s interwar period allows the serial to interrogate the socio-political moment preceding the Second World War. Poliakoff's introduction to the serial's published script outlines the importance of capturing this liminal historical period:

> Of course, this glimpse of a more tolerant society, apparently moving towards being free of prejudice, where penniless musicians were welcomed into wealthy homes and became the lovers and friends of the aristocracy, was not destined to last. In reality, it was a total illusion soon to be violently obliterated by the rise of fascism in Europe and the build-up to war in Britain. But it did happen, and some of these brief, intense relationships that occurred across the class divide lived on in the participants' memories for many decades. (Poliakoff, 2013: viii)

Poliakoff's retrospective insight into the 1930s impacts the serial's characters, who ultimately face a "moral choice" about whether or not to help Louis when he faces a false murder charge; according to Poliakoff, this approximates "the sort of choice our forebears would certainly have been compelled to make if[…] Britain had been invaded like the rest of Europe" (ibid.). While positivity is expressed through the vitality of the Louis Lester Band's music, *Dancing on the Edge's* viewer never loses sight of the social and political tensions that will ultimately lead to the Second World War. The sense of foreboding experienced alongside the optimism of the 1930s is emblematised by the serial's title: society is dancing on the edges of progression and regression, of tolerance and intolerance. Through this central binary, the serial foregrounds the conflict between spectacle and narrative critique inherent to period drama and invites engagement under the post-heritage framework.

This chapter will assess *Dancing on the Edge*'s liminal socio-cultural moment, establishing the drama's use of subjectivity alongside the central role of its music. The identities foregrounded by the serial display the importance of diverse perspectives in screen drama; it presents an example of what Hall describes as the constitutive role of representation, giving "questions of

culture and ideology, and the scenarios of representation – subjectivity, identity, politics – a formative, not merely an expressive place in the constitution of social and political life" (1997: 165). The chapter consists of three sections. The first will analyse a key sequence from episode 1 of *Dancing on the Edge*, where the Louis Lester Band's musical performance is intercut with a scene showing their manager's deportation. The dissonance between these two scenes will be shown to reveal the serial's negotiation of the spectacle of the interwar years and the troubling circumstances beneath its optimism. The second section will consider the drama's 'Poliakovian' use of space, with particular focus on the search for a heterotopic space enacted through the central location of the Imperial hotel. Lastly, the third section will place *Dancing on the Edge*'s musical innovations within the tradition of postmodern television music, exploring the development of the serial's jazz music and development of subjectivity as the narrative reaches its climax.

PLAYING FOR THE PRINCES

The performance sequence that ends the first episode of *Dancing on the Edge* combines music and imagery to foreground the narrative tensions that have built throughout the episode. The sequence shows the Louis Lester Band's performance to the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VIII) in London's Imperial hotel, intercut with their manager Wesley (Ariyon Bakare) being deported to America. The diegetic jazz music played by the band reveals the genre's cultural significance, bringing together the central characters of the drama through what Ernest Ansermet in 1919 called the "irresistible force" of jazz music (in Albright, 2004: 369). Jazz music has the potential to open "a powerful social space through which fundamental problems of equality, difference, desire, reason, authority, self and language" can be "questioned and negotiated" (Schleifer, 2011: 1). Even while the band play, however, Wesley's concurrent situation reveals the limits of this power. The central binary of the serial, articulated through its title, is thus exposed.

The performance to the Prince of Wales is imbued with significance through the vulnerability of the band's marginalised position: the episode's narrative revolves around their precarity, their hard-won contract with the Imperial hotel now threatened by Wesley's arrest for stealing food. The Prince's approval promises to both secure their position at the hotel and assert a place in 1930s high society for their progressive music. As Louis enters the ballroom, Arthur Donaldson (Anthony Head), one of the band's wealthy supporters, reassures him that he has used his influence to locate Wesley's British birth certificate and thus avoid his deportation. This circumstance is layered with ambiguity: in addition to the remaining doubts over Wesley's actual

place of birth, it is never clear whether Donaldson made his promised phone call. The situation demonstrates the mistrust that accumulates over the course of the serial, which culminates with Louis being accused of murder and forced to flee the country. Donaldson embodies the ideological uncertainties of the interwar period: his wealth and connections to the establishment make his enthusiasm for the band beneficial – it is at his garden party that they are first noticed by royalty – yet he also looks back fondly at the pre-war era when "you could go absolutely wherever you fancied without a passport" (Poliakoff, 2013: 309). Freedom is Donaldson's desire, though who he is willing to sacrifice in its pursuit remains unclear.

After speaking to Donaldson, Louis takes to the stage while a sequence of shots emphasises the delineation of space in the Imperial hotel. Firstly, the Prince of Wales (Sam Troughton) and Prince George (John Hopkins) are seen in conversation with a woman just outside the ballroom entrance, framed by the doorway. The next shot shows Louis sitting at the piano, followed by the ballroom as seen from outside an adjacent doorway, the view of Louis and the band obscured by distance as they begin a piano-led version of the instrumental "Blue Sky in Bermondsey".[3] Louis' subjectivity is also established in the sequence, with wider shots of the princes from his perspective introduced after he looks up to assess the situation. As Pamela (Joanna Vanderham), one of the band's young supporters, approaches to encourage the Prince to remain, Louis also takes action by breaking off "Blue Sky in Bermondsey" and introducing the more up-beat "Dead of Night Express". As Nicolas Pillai identifies in jazz film *Young Man with a Horn* (1950), the improvisational quality of the musical genre is here approximated "by a sequence of reactions" rather than by the music itself (2014: 11); while continuing to emphasise the Prince's actions by returning intermittently to the doorway, the camera also cuts briefly to the reactions of Stanley (Matthew Goode), Julian (Tom Hughes), Sarah (Janet Montgomery) and Donaldson as the song begins. The Prince finally enters the ballroom as Jessie (Angel Coulby) begins to sing, the scene continuing without further dialogue as the music plays. Against the invigorating soundtrack, the editing of the performance reveals the drama's post-heritage aspects. First, maintaining both the perspective of Louis on-stage and the "sequence of reactions", the camera seeks out American mogul Masterson (John Goodman) with his young acquaintance Hannah (Katherine Press), as he presents her with a necklace and kisses her hand. Prior to this, Louis was involved in rescuing Hannah after she was left beaten and possibly drugged in Masterson's hotel suite; their presence in this scene, drawn attention to through its editing,

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[3] All track references refer to the official soundtrack, released as an album by 'The Louis Lester Band' on Decca Records (2013).

therefore undermines the music's optimism. "Dead of Night Express" transitions into an instrumental fill between its first and second verses, pursuing the momentum of its titular train. As the music crescendos, the scene cuts to the Immigration office where Wesley is detained, its dark colour palette contrasting with the brightness of the ballroom. While the music continues uninterrupted, its function is altered by the change of scene, the track's irrepressible movement now used to underline the dramatic tension as Wesley is led away. Back at the ballroom, further sinister undertones are implied: after the Prince of Wales openly expresses his admiration for Jessie, the camera cuts to Julian watching the singer with similar earnestness. Julian's obsession with Jessie continues in the following episode, culminating in his brutal murder of the singer. The performance of "Dead of Night Express" therefore presents the drama's central binary through the centring of music and its dissonance with the perspectives foregrounded as it plays.

The second number performed to the princes is entitled "Dancing on the Moon". This piece almost serves as a title track to the serial, but using "the moon" in place of "the edge" conceals the drama's dichotomous nature. The song thus represents the positive side of the serial's central binary only, alluded to through editing as Louis introduces it to his audience. As he speaks the title, the camera cuts to the Prince of Wales and Pamela as the latter looks towards Louis, recalling a sexually charged moment between Pamela and Stanley earlier in the episode:

> PAMELA: Oh, is this some of the strange cartoon you have in your magazine, Farquhar and Tonk? I rather like that!
> *We see part of a new strip in her hand.*
> They went on an ocean liner last week, didn't they, and met a jazz band? So Mr Lester is having an effect on your strip cartoon, Stanley!
> [...]
> And you can send your Farquhar and Tonk wherever you want in the world just like that, to the moon even?! (*She smiles, she is very close to him.*) And we could all follow them there…
> *Their lips close.* (Poliakoff, 2013: 58-9)

Pamela and Stanley's relationship is consummated through this discussion of limitless possibilities; Louis has opened up a new world to the group, symbolised by his entry into the fictional world of Stanley's cartoon. When Louis speaks the title of "Dancing on the Moon" and the camera, in another visual equivalent to jazz improvisation, finds Pamela, the band's success is further bound to hopes for British society. Concurrently, the cutaways to Wesley's plight challenge this hope.

The culmination of the sequence confirms the band's music as a structuring element of the drama, above dialogue or visual spectacle. Jessie does not sing the second verse of "Dancing on the Moon" (as heard on the soundtrack recording), allowing the band's music to serve a non-

diegetic function alongside the dialogue of Wesley's narrative. As Wesley is told that "there has been no telephone call" (Poliakoff, 2013: 101), inviting doubts over Donaldson's integrity, the instrumental break continues at a reduced volume and is also modulated to produce an echo effect, as if it is being played in the cavernous offices rather than the Imperial hotel. Wesley's final scene immediately follows this in the published script (Poliakoff, 2013: 101-2), but in the episode itself the sequence returns to the ballroom as a saxophone melody begins the track's true instrumental section. This reorganisation indicates the primacy of the soundtrack recording in the serial's editing process, the visuals arranged around the musical performance. The scene returns to Wesley as he boards a night bus, where the soundtrack introduces a further innovation: the classical orchestration of the serial's non-diegetic music (also composed by Johnston) fades in alongside "Dancing on the Moon", their co-existence sonically representing the tension between the two scenes. As the bus departs and the two musical sources continue to compete, the framing of Wesley's image in its back window underlines his departure (figure 3). Visual and sonic elements combine to heighten the emotion of this moment without the incursion of dialogue: Wesley's final scripted line of "we could almost be going on a trip to the country" (Poliakoff, 2013: 102) is not used, its function instead communicated through the meeting of disparate musical styles and framing imagery. There is no doubt over the troubling aspects that lie within this era of ostensible optimism, even as the scene returns to the ballroom and "Dancing on the Moon" reasserts its dominance on the soundtrack.

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Figure 3: Wesley (Ariyon Bakare) is framed by the night bus' back window as he is deported to an uncertain situation in America (*Dancing on the Edge*, BBC: episode 1)

At the end of the episode, in response to the sight of the princes dancing with the band in the hotel's kitchens, Donaldson enthuses to Louis: "You see I was right, anything is possible now…" (Poliakoff, 2013: 104). This refers to his conversation with Louis earlier in the episode, part of which is used as the epigraph to this chapter, in which Donaldson asks about the band's experiences of prejudice and expresses his belief that things could be about to change (ibid.: 56-7). Although still scripted, this moment outside the performance space displays another representation of jazz improvisation and spontaneity: the band's instruments, now seemingly played live in the scene as opposed to the pre-recorded tracks used in performance scenes, echo around the basement corridor, with percussion improvised on a silver service trolley. Following this, the camera finds Masterson standing separately[4] with Hannah, and Stanley (aware of Louis' rescue of Hannah) is troubled upon noticing them behind him. A joyous moment is once again compromised, challenging Donaldson's positivity and placing the future in an uncertain light. With Wesley already cast out, his fate following his deportation never revealed, at what price does a future where "anything is possible" come?

POLIAKOVIAN SPACES

Nelson recognises the importance of subjectivity in Poliakoff's television dramas, arguing that "Poliakoff initially adopts a direct, visceral dramaturgy aimed at drawing audiences to share the lived experience of the characters under challenging circumstances" (2011: 69). Although Poliakoff's television dramas in the period Nelson considers are mostly set in the contemporary period,[5] their thematic resonances with period drama introduce a post-heritage point of view: "Poliakoff does not subscribe to the heritage drama nostalgia of 'romance in bonnets', but access to his more complex work is nevertheless afforded by its visual style" (ibid.: 19). Subsequent to Nelson's analysis, Poliakoff's three television dramas of the 2010s are all set in the British past, forming a loose continuity from the interwar years (*Dancing on the Edge*), to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (*Close to the Enemy*, BBC, 2016), to the Cold War (*Summer of Rockets*, BBC, 2019). These period narratives allow the conventions of heritage drama to be more directly subverted. All three dramas consider the cultural impact of their historical moments, strengthening the post-heritage tendencies of Poliakoff's work while also addressing

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[4] On the episode's DVD commentary, Poliakoff reveals that Masterson is frequently shot apart from groups of people due to Goodman's limited filming availability. Nevertheless, this practical necessity is suited to the character's sinister ambiguities: the script here describes him as "standing in the shadows" (Poliakoff, 2013: 104) regardless.

[5] In Poliakoff's television dramas between 1999 and 2007, only *The Lost Prince* (BBC/WGBH, 2003) takes place entirely in the past.

the limitations of his contemporary-set dramas. These 2010s dramas are also united by the theme of mistrust: both *Close to the Enemy* and *Summer of Rockets* are concerned with military intelligence and government surveillance, while *Dancing on the Edge* explores Louis' mounting mistrust of his associates as it becomes clear that, as a Black man in 1930s London, innocence and truthfulness cannot secure his safety. Louis' subjectivity allows the cultural significance of this narrative to be asserted, allowing the drama to establish the troubling aspects of its society alongside the spectacle created by the band's performances. The development of 'Poliakovian' characteristics, as outlined by Nelson, in *Dancing on the Edge* allows the drama to further explore the subjectivities and cultural identities of its characters.

Framing, as demonstrated by Wesley's image in the bus' back window, is identified by Nelson as a significant Poliakovian characteristic (2011: 71).[6] Stephen Harper accordingly considers Poliakoff as a "metaphysical dramatist whose elaborate and delicate evocations of place and space are unparalleled in contemporary television drama" (2017: 56). However, metaphysical aesthetics hold their own limitations. Harper concludes that Poliakoff's "prescriptions for social and political change are largely moralistic and idealistic in character" and privilege white middle-class males (2017: 56), while Nelson claims that "the intense focus on core characters and the foreground of the built environment tends on occasion to isolate individuals in non-places rather than intermingling them with broader society" (2011: 216). *Dancing on the Edge* addresses these issues head-on, foregrounding a Black, working-class perspective and the difficulties of combatting Louis' social marginalisation. The images both within the central hotel setting and elsewhere frame its characters, establishing their socio-cultural positions through delineated spaces. As musicians, Louis and the other Black characters are part of the performance scenes, yet their racial segregation is sustained by their position on stage, presented as a spectacle for the other characters as well as the drama's audience. Expanding upon Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, Ronald Schleifer identifies the desire for "a new sense of wholeness which[…] encompasses audience as well as performer" in 1930s popular music (2011: 18). This wholeness is pursued by the Louis Lester Band, while their continued spatial separation indicates the limits of their music's power.

Although Poliakoff does not share Louis' Black perspective, according to Nelson his oeuvre is informed by "a sense of the Russian Jewish outsider" (2011: 1). His empathy for Louis' position therefore comes from a shared cultural marginalisation, rather than specific lived experiences.

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[6] Framing within a vehicle's back window has itself become a recurring feature in Poliakoff's television dramas, appearing in very different contexts in *Capturing Mary* (BBC, 2007) and *Summer of Rockets*.

Additionally, as writer-director Poliakoff's unusual level of control over the production process allows his point of view to permeate his dramas. His central characters thus represent Poliakoff's position, as well as their own socio-historic perspectives.

Poliakoff's approach to European history and the role of Johnston's music[7] in its exploration can be established through two memorable sequences in his earlier television serials. First is Lily's story, told in the first episode of *Shooting the Past* (BBC, 1999), in which the tale of a Jewish girl in Nazi Germany is told through Marilyn's (Lindsay Duncan) narration and a series of black and white photographs. Caughie identifies this scene's creation of a "reflective dramatic space":

> We hear the click of the camera shutter from shot to shot, and crucially, we hear background sound and music appropriate to their place and time: crowd noises, a military band. Though the images themselves are flat, black and white, and static they are accompanied by an affective soundscape which draw us into their history, an acoustic history heard only by us. (2006: 16)

Another part of this "affective soundscape" is Johnston's non-diegetic music, here a single exposed piano line with sparse accompanying strings. The combination of this haunting soundtrack with the echoes of an "acoustic history" produces an overwhelmingly emotional effect; the weight of history is understood through the individual's story and the resonances between sound and image. An equivalent sequence[8] takes place in the second episode of *Perfect Strangers* (BBC, 2001) where Daniel (Matthew Macfadyen) relates the story of his elderly relatives Edith and Violet, who lived wild in the English countryside during the Second World War. In this "memorable and haunting" story (Hockenhull, 2012: 628), told in a scene of over sixteen minutes in length, it is again "the sonic and visual treatment which shifts the focus[...] to the lived experience of its impact" (Nelson, 2011: 31). Eschewing the still photographic device of *Shooting the Past*, Edith and Violet's story is visualised through filmed flashbacks. At crucial moments, the two girls look directly to the camera in close-up, as if disturbed by the discovery of their story, intercut with flashes of the present-day elderly women as Daniel's father Raymond (Michael Gambon) processes the story. The images of this story are thus positioned as from Raymond's subjectivity, aligned with the viewer's perspective. Stella Hockenhull further connects the sequence's "dream-like visuals" to the dramatist's point of view: "the displacement of the evacuee, told from Poliakoff's exilic perspective, indicates the anxieties of an outsider, an

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[7] Johnston has composed the music for all of Poliakoff's television dramas since 1999.
[8] In addition to their functional and stylistic similarities, the connection between the two scenes is self-consciously highlighted by Emma Sackville's roles as both Lily and the young Edith in the narrated stories.

interloper with a yearning for a sense of permanence and the past" (2012: 633). Johnston's string-led music contributes to both the cognitive processing and sense of yearning, its layers of instrumentation and looped, syncopated rhythms encouraging an emotional response through its restlessness. The stories of Violet and Edith, and Lily, show individuals operating within "a broader socio-historical structure" (Nelson, 2011: 17), their unique perspectives on history informing their respective contemporary narratives and revealing Poliakoff's cultural point of view. They are also transformative, teaching the characters at which they are directed the Poliakovian lesson of "how to care" (Harper, 2017: 50). This is exemplified by Raymond, who begins the scene of Violet and Edith's story by announcing "I want to kill myself", and at its conclusion gleefully suggests "let's have lunch". In *Dancing on the Edge*, however, the past is not related second-hand but lived by the central characters, making the transformative process harder to realise. Louis' perspective precedes the Second World War, allowing the historical context to be understood through his inability to overcome the prejudices of society. The lack of "suggestions for the structural redress of social iniquities", which Harper negatively associates with Poliakovian narratives of individual transformation (ibid.: 51), therefore places Louis in direct peril. *Dancing on the Edge*'s earlier time period thus allows the restrictions of the Poliakovian style to be foregrounded and interrogated, recognising the barriers to transformation and cultural change that it entails.

The hotel can now be recognised as a recurring Poliakovian setting, having been used as the locus of drama in *Perfect Strangers*, *Dancing on the Edge* and *Close to the Enemy*. The distinct characteristics of the hotel allows these dramas to enact a challenge to the dominant social structures through the pursuit of a heterotopic space. Heterotopias are described by Michel Foucault as "real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, of effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements[...] are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned" (1997: 352). When represented through television drama, these spaces operate as microcosms with a greater potential for consistently challenging the social order than that of Eaton Place (see chapter 1). Poliakoff's hotel spaces allow a cross-section of characters to facilitate such a "counter-arrangement", while the narratives pursued within them investigate the limits of achieving heterotopias at a specific moment of history (ibid.: 353). Edward W. Soja evaluates Foucault's six heterotopic principles, some of which can be usefully applied to *Dancing on the Edge*'s hotel space and its dramatic function. First, Soja establishes that the juxtaposition of different spaces "charges the heterotopia with social and cultural meaning and connectivity" (1995: 15), as occurs in the division of spaces within the Imperial hotel. Additionally, the temporal

aspect of heterotopias – termed heterochronisms or heterochronies – enacts a "periodization of spatialities" (ibid.), which "appear somehow to be both temporary and permanent" (Soja, 1995: 16). The fictional spaces of television drama can be understood in these terms, depicting a distinct moment in time preserved through the act of its portrayal. The Poliakovian recurrence of framing images, corridors and tunnels, along with the repeated motifs of Johnston's soundtracks (Nelson, 2011: 71), allow the search for heterotopia to be pursued in Poliakoff's dramas.

The hotel space of *Dancing on the Edge* formally divides its characters and establishes their cultural positions. In addition to the ballroom, with its designated spaces for performance, dancing and dining, areas of the Imperial hotel are reserved for high-status guests, management and even a Masonic chapter. Louis and his band also experience success through increased access within the hotel: at first restricted to the basement area when not performing, the band are later granted accommodation at the hotel (episode 1) and eventually use of the front entrance (episode 2). The boundaries imposed by the hotel space can be transgressed, however, facilitating the pursuit of a heterotopia. This is seen in the sequence that precedes Wesley's arrest in episode 1, where he flouts the hotel's spatial boundaries in desperation at his plight. Poliakoff's stage directions indicate his intention for this scene: "in one continuous shot we follow them through the doors and onto the grand main staircase, as they hurtle past people. The shot is fast, powerful, the dialogue overlapping, and the scene happens in full view of people in the lobby" (Poliakoff, 2013: 89). Separate filming locations necessitate an early cut in the otherwise continuous shot as Wesley, Stanley and Louis move through the hotel,[9] disrupting the serial's flow but further delineating the hotel's class divides: in an interruption absent from the published script, hotel manager Schlesinger (Mel Smith) emerges and emphasises that the passage in which the scene begins is "management only" before the action moves to the hotel's public spaces. In the hotel lobby, Wesley's frustration drives the scene forward and back across the hallway throughout the now-unbroken shot; he eventually moves into the dining area itself, where short cutaways to the hotel's watching patrons are introduced, underlining the intrusion upon the privileged classes. The fluidity of this scene's spatial transgressions presents Wesley as another Poliakovian exile inhabiting "an interstitial place, which is often a site of struggle" (Hockenhull, 2012: 637); the hotel space allows his turmoil to be highlighted.

At the end of *Dancing on the Edge*'s second episode, Louis discovers Jessie in the hotel after she is attacked and left for dead by Julian. While Julian's guilt is not confirmed until the end

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[9] As described on episode 1's DVD commentary.

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Figure 4: Shortly after his attack on Jessie, Julian (Tom Hughes) is seen exiting the hotel from Louis' perspective (*Dancing on the Edge*, BBC: episode 2)

of the serial, there is very little doubt that he is Jessie's attacker: not only did we last see him luring Jessie through the hotel under the promise of meeting a movie producer, Louis encounters him in the hotel directly before finding Jessie in a linen closet. Poliakovian framing allows this encounter to make use of second-degree style: Julian appears from Louis' perspective, obscured in the middle-distance, framed by the hotel's doorway and the archway around it (figure 4). The framing of this image creates a tunnel through which the opulence of the hotel's décor recedes into shadow, the darkness gathering around Julian. As the most overtly enthusiastic of Louis' supporters, Julian has transgressed the propriety dictated by the hotel space, with evident consequences for the drama's characters and the optimism the band's music represents. His extreme enthusiasm for the Louis Lester Band, and Jessie in particular, displays the ardour frequently shown by Poliakoff's characters; this is seen, for instance, in the investment of the hitherto cynical listeners in Lily's, and Edith and Violet's, stories. *Dancing on the Edge* interrogates this Poliakovian characteristic through Julian, most explicitly when he encourages the band and its supporters, including the two princes, to dance outside in a hailstorm, uttering "it's amazing being here tonight" (Poliakoff, 2013: 148). Prior to Julian's attack on Jessie, his overt attentions to her also become sinister: Jessie's head is turned by his elaborate descriptions of her imminent fame, and his sister Pamela becomes distressed over where his obsession will lead. Although Louis' subjectivity at the time of Jessie's attack could introduce uncertainty over the identity of the obscured figure, a doubt later exploited by the police (episode 4), this is mitigated by Julian

talking to Louis at length before exiting through the doorway behind him. When Julian returns to the narrative in the following episode, he is framed similarly to the time of Jessie's attack, this time by archways outside a large country house as he approaches the assembled group. Although seemingly shot from Louis' position, this view of Julian appears before Louis looks up and notices him; the visual parallel is constructed to illustrate the significance of his transgressions, highlighting the disruption his presence now entails. As in the hotel itself, the presentation of space here signifies the tensions encountered in the drama's search for a heterotopia.

TOWARDS A POSTMODERN SOUNDSCAPE

Lawrence Kramer asserts that "music has generally operated on the basis of a series of contradictory tendencies: on the one hand toward the projection of autonomy, universality, self-presence, and the sublime transcendence of specific meaning, and on the other hand toward intimations of contingency, historical concreteness, constructed and divided selfhood, and the intelligible production of specific meanings" (2002: 2). The ambiguity between autonomy and contingency can be negotiated by the intervention of the listener: "musical meaning consists of a specific, mutual interplay between musical experience and its contexts; the form taken by this process is the production of modes or models of subjectivity carried by the music into the listener's sense of self" (ibid.: 8). The contingencies of television music include the specifics of the story and its characters, especially relevant where the music is originally composed for the production. Its autonomies, meanwhile, can be read through the universality of a drama's themes and narratives, including the empathy viewers have for its characters. In *Dancing on the Edge*, this is found through the connection between contemporary socio-cultural issues and those of the past. The autonomy of *Dancing on the Edge*'s subjectivities gives Poliakoff the authority to tell the drama's story through his familial connection to the moment of European history. The serial's music plays a key role in exploring its subjectivities, fulfilling a postmodern function; as Jonathan Kramer establishes, postmodern music incorporates "a plethora of signs adding up not to communication but to a multifaceted context that encourages listeners to form their own narrative paths through the thicket of references" (2016: 15).

Dancing on the Edge's simulacrum of the past displays an awareness of its fictionality, but avoids the Jamesonian "depthlessness" or "waning of affect" of the postmodern social condition (Jameson, 1991: 9-10). Instead, the layering of diverse elements creates a depth of meaning and encourages empathy from the serial's viewers. The mise-en-scène of the Imperial hotel evokes Art Deco, a visual movement that is itself "a curiously wonderful mixture of several contemporary

styles" (Bletter, quoted in Benton and Benton, 2003: 16). The music of the Louis Lester Band is injected into this space, jazz music's "emphasis on the innovative" (Pells, 2011: 130). The serial's visual spectacle and music are therefore grounded in 1930s populism, together presenting the "wholeness, decomposition, and montage" of jazz (Schleifer, 2011: 22) and resonating with the hotel's heterotopic potential. Additionally, *Dancing on the Edge*'s music itself develops a postmodern function; the Louis Lester Band's songs migrate from diegetic to non-diegetic as the narrative intensifies, their mimesis of the 1930s sound ultimately converging with the subjectivity of the drama's characters.

Dancing on the Edge's central use of musical performances connects it to Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective* (BBC, 1986), another BBC public service drama written by a dramatist with a significant cultural reputation. The parallel between Poliakoff and Potter's status is drawn by Nelson: "both men have something of a fractious relationship with the television medium but ultimately undermine their predictions about the inexorable diminution of its drama output by producing extraordinary work of a singular character" (2011: 220). Expressing his personal distaste for much of Potter's work, Caughie further argues that "the BBC needed Dennis Potter as a testimony to its boldness, and, more than any other writer, Potter was given the right to fail" (2000: 172). A similar assertion can be made concerning Poliakoff's work; Nelson identifies his "resistance to contemporary cultural and televisual trends" (2007: 174), and the control he exerts over every element of his productions (2011: 6). Poliakoff, like Potter before him, is able to avoid responding to the institutional demands of a competitive televisual climate, continuing to innovate and challenge audiences.[10] The cultural reputations of Potter and Poliakoff have also been beneficial to the BBC, allowing the corporation to justify its public service function through its commissioning of their works. This allows Poliakoff and Potter to make substantial use of second-degree style, within which the characteristics of jazz music play a central role in *Dancing on the Edge* and *The Singing Detective*.

The Singing Detective's musical numbers are not composed for the serial, instead appropriating music hall standards from the 1930s and 40s into the fantasy noir thriller imagined by Philip Marlow (Michael Gambon), which in turn bleed into the three other narrative strands through Marlow's subjectivity. This narrative structure is very different from *Dancing on the Edge*, but the latter nevertheless resonates with Caughie's description of *The Singing Detective*: "at its core is the characteristically modernist figure of the creative artist who tries *and fails* to use art

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[10] Establishing this allows Nelson to consider whether Poliakoff can be considered a television auteur (Nelson, 2006; 2011: 6-7; 221-2), a question beyond the scope of this chapter.

to sublimate pain and order a disordered reality" (2000: 173-4, emphasis in original). Caughie establishes *The Singing Detective*'s 'classicist' modernism, where "the fragments and fractures" of the narrative "are organically unified in the consciousness of the surrogate author who seeks meaning and redemption" (ibid.: 176). Music plays a key role in this unification process, binding the drama's disparate narrative elements (Hunningher, 1993: 248) and acting as a counterpoint to Marlow's childhood trauma. Just as Marlow is unable to alter his medical condition or past experiences through his noir fantasy, the Louis Lester Band's music is unable to solve the socio-political issues of the 1930s or even allow Louis to remain safely in the country.

As Anthony Enns (2012) has established, twenty-first century technological developments mean that television no longer needs to use dialogue to, as Ellis influentially describes, "drag viewers back to looking at the set" (1992: 128). As dialogue recedes in the hierarchy of aspects through which television's meaning is constructed, music can ascend, potentially even becoming the structuring element of drama. This can be seen in the "Dancing on the Moon" sequence of *Dancing on the Edge*, where the two scenes are edited to fit around the uninterrupted musical number. The increased primacy of music in television drama can be understood through Ronald Rodman's concept of postmodern 'relativized music'. Rodman adapts Michel Chion's theory of relativising speech in film, transforming Chion's seven techniques from verbal to musical functions (Rodman, 2009: 262-3); particularly important to *Dancing on the Edge* are the techniques of 're-centering' and 'multilingualism'. Re-centring inverts Chion's concept of 'decentering' speech, where "none of the filmic elements[…] are centered around speech, and therefore they do not encourage us to listen to the dialogue" (2019: 165). *Dancing on the Edge* utilises this in scenes where music is either the structuring element, or the foremost aspect through which the drama's socio-cultural meaning can be established. Wesley's deportation also demonstrates multilingualism, the mixing of classical orchestration with the band's diegetic jazz music realising "a postmodern tendency toward diversity and eclecticism while at the same time creating a modern uniqueness within the text itself" (Rodman, 2009: 266). The use of these postmodern musical techniques reveals *Dancing on the Edge*'s interrogation of its historical moment, allowing the tensions expressed through imagery to impact the spectacle of the band's performances.

Chion additionally posits a 'verbal chiaroscuro', or speech "in which we can understand what is said at one moment and at another understand less or even nothing at all" (2019: 159). The notion of a musical chiaroscuro, where the score's meaning is at times either apparent or obscure, can be suggested in relation to the postmodern use of television music and *Dancing on*

the Edge's post-heritage approach. Rodman pursues his framework of relativised music through a case study of *Twin Peaks* (ABC, 1990-91; Showtime, 2017),[11] which sets a critical precedent through which *Dancing on the Edge*'s techniques can be considered. Rodman establishes *Twin Peaks*' adherence to multilingualism and occasional re-centring, incorporating "a bricolage of musical style topics" that "reflects the genre hybridization of the show" (2009: 284). He also develops Kathryn Kalinak's earlier analysis, which establishes how the repeated music cues of "Audrey's Dance" and "Laura's Theme" become disassociated from their titular characters (Kalinak, 1995: 87) and can even transgress the narrative diegesis (ibid.: 85-6). Rodman suggests that "through the migration of the leitmotifs, Badalamenti [composer] and Lynch [co-creator/writer/director] decouple the denotative aspects of the leitmotifs from single characters" (2009: 286), their meanings "no longer signif[ied] through characters or narrative but through the *conventions* of television itself" (ibid.: 287, emphasis in original).[12] The concept of decoupling music from its initial referent will be useful in tracing the shifting uses of the Louis Lester Band's music in *Dancing on the Edge*, and is also developed further in *Twin Peaks*' 2017 season. Now in a markedly different televisual landscape, *Twin Peaks*' familiar music cues are used sparingly in 2017 "to shift tone and create unease, as if our nostalgia is misplaced" (Burt, 2019: 258). The final migration of "Audrey's Dance" exemplifies this approach: the piece returns to Audrey (Sherilyn Fenn) herself, diegetically performed for her in the Roadhouse bar before it is revealed that the scene is imagined by a hospitalised Audrey (season 3 episode 16). This revelation may, depending on the viewer's inclination, extend to the Roadhouse's frequent musical performances throughout the 2017 season, problematising its space through the final decoupling of "Audrey's Dance" from the narrative's reality. This reveals the significance of what Kingsley Marshall and Rupert Loydell call "the interconnectivity between[...] liminal and or threshold places" (2019: 270) in the recurrent musical performances of the 2017 season, indicating the serial's achievement of a musical chiaroscuro.

The Louis Lester Band's music is likewise decoupled from its diegetic, performative origin as the narrative of *Dancing on the Edge* intensifies, presenting a musical chiaroscuro and facilitating second-degree style. This is demonstrated by the scene where Jessie regains consciousness in the presence of Donaldson (episode 3). Donaldson urges Jessie to wake by evoking the memory of the band's performance at his garden party; as he speaks, the brushed

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[11] Rodman's analysis predates the 2017 season of *Twin Peaks*, whose use of music is discussed below.
[12] This approach is partly necessitated by the economical requirement to use a small number of composed pieces throughout *Twin Peaks* (Donnelly, 2005: 122), but its effect is nonetheless notable.

cymbal introduction to "It's Got a Grip on Me" fades in on the soundtrack, followed by a visual flashback to its performance at the party. Poliakoff's script describes the remembered song mixing with the band's present performance (2013: 216), but the broadcast episode rejects this temporal convergence in favour of a focus on the power of memory. Both music and image are distorted in the process of recollection, the picture's colour saturated and the sound once again modulated with an echo effect. The latter allows each instrument's introduction, with saxophone and then brass and finally Jessie's voice joining the percussion rhythm, to represent another stage of Jessie's gradual return to consciousness. As Donaldson continues to describe the party, the echoing "It's Got a Grip on Me" is mixed with and eventually superseded by a non-diegetic string music cue, its long vibrato notes building in a crescendo and breaking off just before Jessie opens her eyes. This scene uses the band's music as memory, allowing it to fulfil a similar binding function to the music of *The Singing Detective*. The serial's music is inscribed with new meaning through its decoupling; the multilingualism of jazz and orchestral arrangements even holds the power to bring Jessie back from the brink of death. The hopefulness of this scene is again short-lived, however, as Jessie suddenly dies shortly after her apparent recovery.

The following episode features a further innovative use of the Louis Lester Band's music, where the serial's most significant use of second-degree style is deployed to investigate Louis' subjectivity. Now under suspicion for Jessie's murder, Louis is waiting in Donaldson's house for the arrival of a lawyer where, under the stress of his situation and a sleepless night, he experiences a vivid dream that reveals his increasing mistrust of the band's supporters (episode 4). The transition into this dream is effected sonically and with a distinct strangeness: Donaldson's young house guest Emily (Isabella Blake Thomas), dressed in Louis' top hat and cape, whistles along to a boiling kettle, before the tandem whistles segue into the whistle of a steam train and an instrumental "Dead of Night Express", modulated in a similar way to "It's Got a Grip on Me" previously, bursts onto the soundtrack. In the sequence that follows, non-diegetic use of the band's music is combined with a succession of subjective spaces explored through Louis' first-person perspective. The image first cuts to an alternative version of a scene from the first episode, where Sarah is photographing Louis outside a steam train. Next, Pamela's voice is introduced, before the scene cuts to her talking directly to the camera, surrounded by black and white photographs of Louis and the band.[13] Although he is not seen, Louis' continued subjectivity in the

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[13] The sequence from this point deviates considerably from the script's stage directions, where the settings and characters described here are not stipulated and none of the final dialogue is included (Poliakoff, 2013: 311-2). This discrepancy indicates the importance of visual and sonic elements to the sequence's construction of meaning.

dream sequence is clear from the narrative context of the train scene and Pamela's direct address to him in dialogue. Louis, his perspective still shared with the camera, next follows Sarah through the hotel's basement passageway, where Sarah's reason for leaving Louis at Donaldson's house is replayed briefly as voiceover, and the band's other singer Carla (Wunmi Mosaku) and Julian are found sitting on a kitchen table. These elements display Louis' mistrust of all his friends, whether justified or not; while Sarah and Carla remain true to Louis throughout, Louis has recently discovered that Julian's Masonic connections provided him with an alibi for Jessie's murder, and he is dressed in his Mason's uniform within the dream.

The dream sequence suddenly cuts to the Immigration Office, where Sarah leads a still off-camera Louis before leaving the frame to reveal Wesley, waiting despondently before his deportation. Concurrently, the lyrics of "Dead of Night Express" are added to the modulated soundtrack, contributing to the multisensory confusion of the sequence. Wesley looks up to the camera/Louis and says "she wants to go for a spin", prompting the image to spin around to find Jessie's prostate body lying on a table. Louis suddenly emerges to lift Jessie up, although his face remains partly out of frame and the camera retains its focus on Jessie. This spatial dislocation suggests Louis' own disorientation; the viewer both shares his perspective of the dream and sees him within it. As Louis carries Jessie's body up the stairway to where Sarah waits, the camera overtakes him and merges with Louis' perspective once again, before an unknown man covers Louis' head with a hood and blackens the camera's viewpoint. The image then cuts to Louis waking in Donaldson's kitchen, the music of "Dead of Night Express" cut off mid-lyric. The fears suggested by Louis' dream are seemingly confirmed as the kitchen is now shrouded in shadow, Louis has been left alone and Emily refuses to unlock the door for him. This prompts his escape through a window and subsequent flight across London, which continues in the final episode. A musical chiaroscuro is pursued through this sequence, with the sonic connection between the whistling sounds and the train scene, followed by the thematic link to the musical number the scene prompts, the referent distorted and obscured through the ensuing barrage of scenes and signifiers, epitomising Jonathan Kramer's "thicket of references". Louis' dream visualises the narrative's search for a heterotopia, emphasising the difficulty of achieving such a space through its disorienting style. With performance scenes no longer possible as Louis' troubles intensify, the band's music continues to be deployed through the remembrances of multiple characters in the final episode, extending its disorienting function when used non-diegetically.

In *Dancing on the Edge*'s final scene, Louis, having eventually escaped the country, makes a brief phone call to Stanley at the Imperial hotel (episode 5). The failure to achieve heterotopia

is made clear through Stanley's description of the hotel's reduced circumstances and the return of the pre-Louis Lester Band music to the ballroom. However, a glimmer of hope remains: the serial closes with Clara returning to the stage with a rendition of "Lead Me On". The balance between optimism for the future and foreknowledge of history has now been reversed: Louis' fate has proved that the vision of equality promoted by his music could not be attained, yet the final moments allow its possibility to remain in the future. Poliakoff's authorial presence in the 2010s thus operates in tandem with the 1930s socio-cultural moment depicted, the diverse functions of music and imagery throughout the serial representing the potential – both positive and negative – of the two periods.

ON THE EDGE OF HISTORY

The analysis of this chapter has demonstrated how post-heritage style can facilitate a sustained investigation into cultural identity. *Dancing on the Edge*'s use of music (diegetic and non-diegetic) and space, and the subjectivities developed through these aspects, allows the serial to connect its elements of spectacle to the fragility of the interwar years. The social progression achieved by the Louis Lester Band is therefore mitigated by subtle foreshadowing of the war to come,[14] in addition to the imminent danger represented by Jessie's murder. Pillai argues that "to depict jazz onscreen is to enter into a complex negotiation between music and the materiality of its medium", asserting that "the nature of the transformative process is largely dictated by the economic, sociological and technological landscape pertaining to the historical moment of creation and consumption" (2017: 118). Establishing *Dancing on the Edge* as part of a "resurgence of interest in jazz on the screen" (ibid.: 128), Pillai's analysis indicates the role music can play in constructing and developing a screen drama's perspectives. This allows Poliakoff's serial to establish Louis' subjectivity as a marginalised figure in 1930s society. Martin Orkin and Alexa Alice Joubin identify the significance of this investigation in their discussion of the film *12 Years a Slave* (2013), which coincidentally also stars Ejiofor as an African American slave. Orkin and Joubin assert that although director Steve McQueen is not of African American heritage, "one's blood relations should not have any bearing on the scientific and intellectual inquiry into any particular culture" (2019: 237). On the other hand, bell hooks asserts the importance of Black voices telling their own stories: "postmodern critiques of essentialism which challenge notions of universality[...] can open up new possibilities for the construction of self and the assertion of

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[14] This is made more explicit in the supplementary narrative of "Interviewing Louis", where Louis is told of a direct premonition of the Second World War (Poliakoff, 2013: 473).

agency" (2014: 28). The "authority of experience" (ibid.: 29), which the perspectives of Poliakoff and Johnston (a white British man) do not provide in *Dancing on the Edge*, therefore remains paramount. However, in the collaborative medium of television the performances of Poliakoff and Johnston's material must be considered through the central acting role of Ejiofor as Louis Lester, the sung voices of Coulby and Mosaku, and the professional jazz musicians who perform the soundtrack pieces and appear on-screen as Louis' band.[15] This allows *Dancing on the Edge* to echo the influence of American "black-inflected modernist concert music", which according to Lawrence Kramer "produced a site at which dominant white cultures were unusually hospitable to African-American cultural energies" in the early twentieth century (2002: 195-6). As Orkin and Joubin assert, "reading histories of race may be a passive act, but if it leads to recognition of one's self in others, then our job as critical analysts is done" (2019: 239). By foregrounding Louis' subjectivity, his growing mistrust and the "moral choice" (Poliakoff, 2013: viii) forced upon the other characters, the socio-political context of 1930s Europe can be understood by the twenty-first century viewer. The binary evoked by the serial's title is embodied by the Louis Lester Band's integration into British society, their irrepressible jazz music's existence alongside the emotive orchestral score, and the exploration of the hotel space as a potential heterotopic site. In addition to its post-heritage approach towards period drama, these aspects allow the serial to subvert Poliakovian characteristics, redressing the limitations of Poliakoff's earlier television serials.

Kramer also establishes the notion of musical 'revenants', spectral recurrences of variations and themes, which help to explain the significance of *Dancing on the Edge*'s decoupled music:

> Musical revenants throw into question the romantic and modernist ideal of originality. They suggest that there is no need to seek difference from the past because that difference is always already present, in the present. The sameness of the revenant is the form in which that difference is overcome, the form in which the past lives on – but not as it was, not exactly. The same returns in order to live on – differently. (2002: 263-4)

The music of *Dancing on the Edge* is original to the production, but it is not original to the 1930s setting. The past has returned, but in a different guise. Musical revenants draw attention to the serial's construction of the past, experienced with the retrospective knowledge of the political events of subsequent years. This knowledge undermines the optimism of the band's performances and the spectacle they create. Where the band's music is modulated to produce

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[15] Similar distinctions in the "registers of performance" are identified by Pillai in *Young Man with a Horn* (2014: 8). In the DVD "Making Of" feature for *Dancing on the Edge*, Poliakoff explains that he envisaged casting professional singers as Jessie and Carla but ultimately cast two actors who had never previously sung, causing a shift in their registers of performance.

an echo effect (as heard during Wesley's deportation, when Jessie regains consciousness, in Louis' dream sequence and throughout the fifth episode) it echoes across history towards the twenty-first century, binding the narrative to cultural memory in conjunction with the characters' own subjectivities. The binding function of music, as pioneered by *The Singing Detective*, is also apparent in the montage sequences that serve as recaps at the start of each episode, facilitating the transition from the opening flashforwards (which take place at the beginning of the final episode's narrative, showing Louis at his most desperate) to the main chronology. The band's music (played diegetically on a record player in the first episode, but otherwise remembered by Louis) converges with Louis' subjectivity, its musical revenant sparking his memory of recent events. In these embedded recaps, the inherent spontaneity of jazz music contributes to the effect of the fast cutting between reprised scenes, fulfilling their structural function while simultaneously representing Louis' troubled state of mind at the story's climax. The musical revenants undermine the spectacle and positive energy of the band's performances, alluding to the societal disruption the Second World War will inevitably enact.

Dancing on the Edge's status as a public service television drama allows it to develop its post-heritage innovations to a greater extent than productions commissioned to fulfil competitive aims, including other BBC productions. The drama's public service intentions are realised through Poliakoff's cultural status, his dual writer-director role, and the drama's closed serial form. Although still finite in length, Polaikoff's 2010s serials are notably longer than his previous television dramas, lasting between six and seven hours each. This allows them to present a sustained investigation of the British past while retaining a close focus on specific identities. The post-heritage potential allowed by this can be seen in comparison with *The Halcyon* (ITV, 2017), set in another London hotel in the British past, which even features its own alliterative house jazz band (the Sonny Sullivan Band). *The Halcyon* follows the lives of the staff, owners and guests of the titular hotel during the Second World War itself, the time period allowing a greater focus on specific historical events than *Dancing on the Edge*.[16] Although *The Halcyon* was not renewed for a second season, the impact of its concept as a returning drama for a commercial network is apparent in the deployment of its characters: in *The Halcyon*, the jazz band's experience is just one facet among its large ensemble cast, which allows different perspectives to be foregrounded in each episode and the potential (had the series continued) for actors to leave and new characters to be introduced. Despite this, as its title indicates, in its own way *The Halcyon* also

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[16] Most prominently, *The Halcyon*'s only season ends with the hotel being struck by a German bomb.

enacts a search for a heterotopic space. The contrast between the two dramas, despite their similar concepts, reveals the significance of the institutional contexts that gave *Dancing on the Edge* the freedom to develop its post-heritage elements. These allow for a distinctive point of view on the British past to be established, asserting the social function of both the serial and Poliakoff as a dramatist.

PART II

TELEVISUAL FORM AND TRAUMATIC NARRATIVES

The relationship between series and serial forms in television drama has developed significantly in the transitional period of the 2010s. This part aims to connect this evolution to the post-heritage developments in television period drama over the decade. A focus on representations of trauma will allow the sustained psychological investigations of high-end television drama to be evaluated alongside the socio-historical concerns of period drama, revealing the capacity for post-heritage engagement with the past in television narratives of the last decade.

The advent of internet-distributed television services has continued the shift towards serialised narratives, though this trend began around the turn of the century with high-end dramas originated by US cable networks. Hybridised forms are now familiar in television narratives; series dramas routinely incorporate story arcs and cumulative storylines, while serials utilise episodic techniques and self-contained elements. This part will demonstrate the wide-ranging influence of formal innovation on contemporary television, which crosses distribution platforms, national borders and generic categories. Period dramas are no exception to this trend, with serialised dramas such as *Mad Men*, *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010-14) and *Peaky Blinders* (BBC, 2013-present) having been subject to scholarly consideration in recent years.[1] Before outlining television's recent formal innovations, it is important to briefly establish the traditional series and serial forms that these dramas depart from.

Fiske identifies the core distinction between traditional series and serial televisual forms in the following terms:

> A series has the same lead characters in each episode, but each episode has a different story which is concluded. There is "dead time" between the episodes, with no memory from one to the other, and episodes can be screened or repeated in any order. The lead characters appear to have a life only in each episode, not between them, and do not grow or change as episode follows episodes. Serials, on the other hand, have the same characters, but have continuous storylines, normally more than one, that continue from episode to episode. Their characters appear to live continuously between episodes, they grow and change with time, and have active "memories" of previous events. (2011: 150)

This strict delineation is read by Fiske in light of the scheduling "routine" of linear television, displaying the "commercial intentions" designed to "get people into the habit of viewing a particular program at a particular time each day or week" (ibid.: 149). Series forms are also designed with the intention to maximise viewership, as described by Dunleavy: "it is the story-of-the-week that ensures the accessibility of a long-running series to occasional or entirely new viewers[…] this kind of accessibility is as important today to the commercial value of drama's

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[1] For example, de Groot (2011), Sandberg (2017), Bainbridge (2019) and Smith (2016) consider these dramas in ways that resonate with the case study analyses of this part.

series form as it has ever been" (2009: 55). Dunleavy also expands upon the distinctive features of serial forms:

> Their overarching story has no prescribed length and can be either 'open' (potentially never-ending) or 'closed' (resolving within a limited number of episodes). An important facet of drama serial episodes and one that continues to distinguish them is that – although they do include secondary sub-plots, which begin and conclude at different points to the main story – they are not required to resolve any of their stories at episode's end. (ibid.: 51)

This definition adopts Robert C. Allen's terms of 'open' and 'closed' serials, the former exemplified by the Western soap opera that will be the focus of chapter 5 in this thesis (Allen, 1995: 18). Closed serials, which are not devised as renewable formats, are represented by what is commonly termed the mini-series (Dunleavy, 2009: 51).

By the 1990s, increased hybridisation between series and serial forms had become apparent, prompted by the increase of channels and competition (ibid.: 132-44). Operating in conjunction with the accessibility of the episodic structure are story arcs, continuing storylines that exist alongside self-contained narratives (ibid.: 54). Sarah Kozloff argues that the shift towards more prominent serialisation was a gradual progression rather than a pivot in US television, beginning early in its history:

> Even in a "classic" series like *I Love Lucy* [CBS, 1951-57], some storylines – such as Lucy's pregnancy – necessarily carried over week to week. And many series have always evinced nonreversible changes over the years: within a given season, each episode of *M*A*S*H* [CBS, 1972-83] may be freestanding and all episodes may be watched in any order, but the shows dating from the years after Colonel Blake's departure necessarily represent narrative development over those made before he left. (1992: 92)

As the analysis of LWT's *Upstairs, Downstairs*' war season in chapter 1 has suggested, serialised story arcs are a long-standing feature of series dramas, although it is noticeable that Kozloff's examples were both instigated by circumstances external to the creative process (Lucille Ball's real-life pregnancy and McLean Stevenson's departure from the *M*A*S*H* cast). Ellis identifies the genesis of the serialised form that came to dominate premium cable and later internet-distributed television in US broadcast television of the 1980s, pioneered for commercial purposes (Ellis and van den Oever, 2018: 159).

Following Fiske, the concept of television memory is useful in considering a production's grounding in series or serial form at a time when increased hybridisation may make this distinction harder to recognise. Jeffrey Sconce considers the notion of 'amnesia television' in series narratives, "where characters carry no serial memory of the previous episode's events" (2004: 101). This lack of memory, according to Sconce, stems from the narrative repetition inherent in

the series form. Sconce's analysis connects with Ellis' description of the series problematic, described as facilitating a narrative formula:

> The series, then, relies on repeating a basic problematic which is worked through on each occasion without a final resolution. In a police series, the police catch the criminals in each individual instance of the series, but two things still remain: criminality itself (the episode ends with another call, a trivial assignment, etc.) and the particular relationship between the police involved (*Starsky and Hutch*'s [ABC, 1975-79] spiky mutual dependency; *The Sweeney*'s [ITV, 1975-78] blend of antagonism to authority and respect for justice). The series is based upon the notion 'what will happen to them this week?', known elements are repeated with no discernible development from one episode to the next. (1992: 125)

A series drama is therefore constructed to continue indefinitely, the repetition of the problematic facilitating inexhaustible (albeit potentially homogenous) storylines with "no final closure" (ibid.: 156). As Dunleavy argues, "it is the narrative openness of its problematic that gives the drama series the capacity to endure through successive seasons and allows it[…] to foster audience loyalty over time" (2009: 20). Kozloff agrees that "series characters have no memory and no history", but in accordance with her identification of early serialised elements concedes that "characters' interrelationships do grow from week to week" (1992: 91). This introduces a more nuanced concept of series characters, corresponding with the narrative blending of episodic stories and story arcs. Michael Z. Newman suggests that "what is more important than character memory[…] is that *viewers* of episodic shows need no memory of the previous episodes to understand and appreciate the present one" (2006: 23, emphasis in original). While character relationships may develop within a series form, the viewer's interest is maintained more through "recognizing familiar bits of action, mise-en-scène, and dialogue" (ibid.). Accessibility is therefore key to the series form, the need for episodes to be understood independently limiting the potential for long running plots but allowing loyal viewers to appreciate subtle character developments.

Creeber establishes the increasing hybridisation of series and serial forms in the twenty-first century, asserting that "in more recent years the distinguishing characteristics between the serial and the series are gradually beginning to merge" (2004: 10). Attributing the decline of dramas where episodes can be watched out of order to the influence of *Dallas*, Creeber identifies a shift towards "cumulative narrative" in the series form (ibid.: 11). Conversely, serial dramas such as *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007) are considered by Creeber to allow "greater entry points for viewers who have not followed the entire story", with continuity between episodes less foregrounded (ibid.). Dunleavy defines these blended forms as the 'serialised series' and the 'series-serial' respectively. The serialised series is distinguished from fully serialised forms by its

"conceptual grounding in an open-ended problematic" and "the presence of at least some new characters and stories in every episode", despite the potential to emphasise serialised stories and arcs (2009: 158). Dunleavy connects this form to the commercial imperatives of broadcast television: "the serialised series combines the commercial advantages of the episodic drama series[…] with the addictive potentials of primetime soap opera" (ibid.). Series-serials, meanwhile, hold a "conceptual openness to new stories and characters", allowing them to "incorporate episodic stories into an otherwise serialised central narrative" (ibid.: 155). These episodic stories "operate to exemplify and embellish each show's conceptual tension" (ibid.: 156), displaying the continued primacy of the serial framework. Newman implies a narrowing gap between the series-serial and the serialised series in twenty-first century television drama, considering "the interplay of commerce and art in the television industry":

> Narrative practices that originate in maximising the networks' profits, such as repetitive dialogue to remind viewers of details they might have missed and regular breaks in the story for advertising spots, might seem to inhibit artistic expression. But in the PTS [primetime serial], these and other constraints designed to boost advertising revenues have been adapted to narrative functions that can deepen and enrich the experiences of viewers. (2006: 17)

The balance of series and serial elements in blended forms is therefore related to the negotiation between commercial and artistic imperatives in television narratives. Newman writes before the genesis of internet-distributed television, and also omits any consideration of public service broadcasting, but nevertheless offers a useful starting point from which to identify the developments in television form of the 2010s.

Greg M. Smith's analysis of *Cold Feet* (ITV, 1997-2003; 2016-20) reveals the series-serial form's existence in British drama, recognising the prominence of episodic closure in tandem within the drama's serialised narrative:

> Primetime series[2] are traditionally geared towards providing a satisfying payoff within the episode itself, and thus there is a tendency towards providing some form of closure, such as the answer to a continuing narrative question (who is the father of the baby?) or the resolution of a guest star's particular conundrum (the verdict of this episode's court case). If a television show neglects the needs of the episode, then audiences are unlikely to gain much pleasure from watching that evening's television. Something significant needs to happen in each episode to make it interesting. (2006: 83-4)

Smith continues by contrasting 'resolution without progress' with 'irrevocable turning points', the former offering episodic closure while the latter displays the serial's conceptual evolution and eschewal of the recurring problematic (ibid.: 85-6). These turning points are frequently reached

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[2] Smith is here referring to all continuing drama forms.

at the end of an episode of *Cold Feet*, both settling "major audience concerns" and providing the "opening impetus" for the following episode as the serial narrative continues to unfold (ibid.: 86). Despite this serialisation, substantial elements of conceptual stasis still exist in *Cold Feet*, with 'actions without progress' used to prolong the narrative and develop the relationship between audience and character (ibid.: 86-7).

Smith's analysis suggests Jason Mittell's concept of narrative complexity, which is outlined as follows:

> At its most basic level, narrative complexity *redefines episodic forms under the influence of serial narration* — not necessarily a complete merger of episodic and serial forms but a shifting balance. Rejecting the need for plot closure within every episode that typifies conventional episodic form, narrative complexity foregrounds ongoing stories across a range of genres. Complex television employs a range of serial techniques, with the underlying assumption that a series is a cumulative narrative that builds over time, rather than resetting back to a steady-state equilibrium at the end of every episode. (2015: 18, emphasis in original)

Dunleavy further establishes the importance of audience engagement to complexity in television, arguing that "complex dramas are not devised to be viewed casually; instead, they offer their fullest readings and pleasures *only* to those willing to watch and listen closely" (2018: 3, emphasis in original). Earlier in television's history, as Ellis has argued, "TV's regime of vision is less intense than cinema's: it is a regime of the glance rather than the gaze. The gaze implies a concentration of the spectator's activity into that of looking, the glance implies that no extraordinary effort is being invested in the activity of looking" (1992: 137). Complexity has rejected this separation of 'glance' and 'gaze', allowing television to adopt the latter. Television's formal developments facilitate the various gazes within period drama (see Introduction), allowing post-heritage innovations to take place. Formal complexity also facilitates the psychological investigation of central characters, as indicated by Dunleavy (2018: 105-6).

Anthony N. Smith takes a closer look at the narrative trends of twenty-first century US television drama, including productions originated on internet-distributed networks, from an economic perspective. Smith defines the 'modified soap structure' (MSS) to distinguish the hybridised televisual form: "MSS drama series episodes are each organised around a succession of scenes that interweave multiple distinct storylines, with each storyline drawing upon different characters of an ensemble cast, and with at least some of these storylines being multiple episodes in length" (2018: 53). While Smith's modified soap structure form is identifiable in broadcast network television (ibid.: 55-71) and basic cable (ibid.: 95-113), its role in the emergence of premium subscription networks (via cable or internet-distributed television) is most relevant to

this part. Beginning with the HBO dramas *Oz* (1997-2003) and *The Sopranos*, Smith identifies a dissonance between the network's promotional alignment with "culturally privileged media" and "reliance on the soap system of plot organisation" (ibid.: 72). Subsequently, Netflix pioneered internet-distributed television drama yet remained closely connected to the formal characteristics of US cable drama, maintaining generally uniform episode lengths in its original programming, which are presented alongside dramas originating on cable or broadcast networks (ibid.: 78).[3]

While their different distribution platforms and network strategies may still distinguish drama productions on HBO and Netflix, the potential offered by their serialised narratives is broadly comparable. It is also aligned with elements of post-heritage drama, as Smith's examples indicate. For instance, his analysis of *The Leftovers* (HBO, 2014-17) establishes the serial's prominent use of subjectivity: "the practice of privileging character inaction and of visually emphasising characters' interiority became central to the series' storytelling[…] Characters' feelings of grief, loss, confusion and frustration are often principally conveyed via shots in which performers non-verbally express their characters' emotions" (ibid.: 80-1).[4] Furthermore, Smith's discussion of *Bloodline* (Netflix, 2015-17) reveals its deployment of a familiar post-heritage characteristic, where "the 'paradise' setting serves as a stark contrast to the storyworld's dark 'underbelly'" (ibid.: 82). This connects high-end contemporary-set drama to the tension between spectacle and narrative critique in period drama. Additionally, both *The Leftovers* and *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-08) display a disinterest in appealing to a wide, casual viewership, made possible by the subscription model (ibid.: 87-8).[5] These sophisticated elements contribute to the serial form, which the modified soap structure exemplifies. *The Wire*, as argued by Dunleavy, can be seen as "a revealing exemplar of the potentials of complex seriality", eschewing the conventions of series police procedural dramas and telling a developing narrative over its five seasons (2018: 107-8). There are, however, potential drawbacks to abandoning episodic narrative features entirely, even in the absence of commercial requirements to maximise viewership. In contrast to *The Wire*'s celebrated formal innovations in the 2000s, the ubiquity of fully serialised narratives in internet-

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[3] International co-productions, usually required to be regularly scheduled on a linear network in addition to internet distribution on Netflix, also contribute to this continued structural uniformity.

[4] This characteristic is emphasised in *The Leftovers*' second and third seasons, in which most episodes are told entirely from one or two characters' perspectives.

[5] Lotz further conceptualises the 'subscriber model' utilised by Netflix and other internet-distributed television services, arguing that "subscriber-funded services care much less about demographic features of their subscribers" as opposed to the "younger, whiter, and more affluent audiences" targeted by broadcast and cable networks (2017b: 52).

distributed dramas of the 2010s has led to a critical backlash lamenting the decline of the episode as a storytelling unit (VanDerWerff, 2016; Sepinwall, 2017). These considerations will impact the discussions of period drama narratives in this part, asserting their relevance to broader trends in television drama of the 2010s.

The narratives of this part's case studies are strongly linked to traumatic experiences, the exploration of which facilitates psychological investigation within their serialised forms. While trauma theory, as a whole, presents a field of study that is outside the scope of this project, the influential theories of Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra offer a general dichotomy that will be useful to the following analysis. Caruth establishes the endless recurrence of trauma as follows:

> The story of trauma[…] as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality – the escape from death, or its referential force – rather attests to its endless impact on a life[…] Is the trauma the encounter with death or the ongoing experience of having survived it? (2016: 7)

This reveals the resonance between traumatic narratives and post-heritage points of view, which both work to expose the impact of the past on the present. Elsewhere, Caruth indicates trauma's incomprehensibility, connecting it to ambiguity: "the trauma is the confrontation with an event that, in its unexpectedness or horror, cannot be placed within the schemes of prior knowledge" (1995: 153). Lucy Bond and Stef Craps further describe Caruth's concept of trauma: "trauma remains essentially unknowable and, by extension, irresolvable[…] The repetition of the traumatic experience is, then, not only an attempt to understand that one has nearly died, but also an attempt to comprehend the improbable fact of one's survival" (2020: 75). LaCapra, meanwhile, offers a more optimistic concept of trauma by distinguishing between 'acting out' and 'working through'. The former is defined as follows: "in acting out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed" (LaCapra, 2001: 70). Working through, on the other hand, "involves the effort to articulate or rearticulate affect and representation in a manner that may never transcend, but may to some viable extent counteract, a re-enactment, or acting out, of that disabling dissociation" (ibid.: 42). Although conceptualised differently, LaCapra's working through can be aligned with the televisual process of the same name described by Ellis (see part I introduction). The importance of this process is emphasised by LaCapra, despite its limitations: "it may be argued that a basis of desirable practice is to create conditions in which working through, while never fully transcending the force of acting out and the repetition compulsion, may nonetheless counteract or at least mitigate it" (ibid.: 71). As Bond and Craps summarise, "for Caruth, the compulsive repetition of traumatic experience and the indefinite reach of the post-

traumatic period threaten to collapse the distinction between past, present, and future", whereas LaCapra "allows for the possibility of overcoming or, at least, ameliorating trauma's cognitive void" (2020: 77).

Despite their differences, Caruth and LaCapra agree that narrative explorations of trauma are beneficial. Caruth acknowledges that "it is in the literary dimension of the discourse of trauma[…] that the language of trauma, both as testimony and as theory, first powerfully spoke to, and continues to address, so many people from different fields and different cultures" (2016: 117). LaCapra expands upon this notion, suggesting that "at least certain forms of literature or art, as well as the type of discourse or theory which emulates its object, may provide a more expansive space[…] for exploring modalities of responding to trauma, including the role of affect and the tendency to repeat traumatic events" (2001: 185). Fiction, according to LaCapra, "may also explore in a particularly telling and unsettling way the affective or emotional dimensions of experience and understanding" (2004: 132). Serialised televisual narratives therefore offer an appropriate arena through which to consider diverse perspectives of trauma.

In exploring televisual narratives of trauma throughout this part, the voices permitted to emerge will be considered. In recent years, Caruth has emphasised the unknowable voice at the heart of a traumatic experience, designating trauma as a collective phenomenon:

> The question of *who* is left to voice the traumatic complaint lies at the very intersection of so-called individual and collective trauma[…] The annihilation of experience at the core of what we think of as personal trauma is never wholly extricable from larger social and political modes of denial. (2016: 121, emphasis in original)

Jeffrey C. Alexander expands upon what he terms cultural trauma: "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (2012: 13). According to Alexander, the process of trauma "can allow collectivities to define new forms of moral responsibility" (ibid.: 30), indicating the significance of voicing trauma in narrative works. LaCapra also considers the voicing of trauma, conceptualising its simulation:

> In certain forms of experimental writing or performance, one may even more or less cautiously inhabit, or be inhabited by, the 'voices' of others, including the dead, whom one evokes[…] The validity and rhetorical success of simulation would depend on the specific way it is enacted, and its role in different fields or genres would be open to debate. (2004: 138)

Christian Gutleben and Julian Wolfreys, considering trauma in terms of postmodernism and neo-Victorian fiction, discuss these voices as those of the repressed:

To avow the disavowed certainly seems to be on the agenda of neo-Victorian fiction, particularly if one thinks of its emphasis on colonial contexts. In that respect one cannot strictly speak of a belated response or a return of the repressed because, both for the descendants of the former colonisers and the colonised, the guilt and the anger, the shame and the revolt are still acutely present[…] Yet neo-Victorian narrative does figure the return of the repressed in another manner; for it presents that which the Victorians could not articulate about themselves[…] not because they were ashamed but because theirs was also a material and historical condition of historicised traumatism[…] (2010: 61)

Gutleben and Wolfreys here indicate the social function of giving voices to these groups, addressing inequalities and traumas that still recur today. Aspects of serial form allow this process to be pursued, although the institutional imperatives of televisual narratives still often impose limitations on their theoretical considerations of trauma.

The case studies of this part will illuminate characteristics of televisual form, which allow the dramas to pursue narratives of trauma. These will be shown to connect individual narratives to collective, socio-cultural positions. Chapter 3 focuses on the first two seasons of *The Crown*, which establish its concept through the early reign of Queen Elizabeth II. The traumatic event of becoming royalty echoes through *The Crown*'s narrative, with the ambiguity of its serial narrative allowing trauma's effect to be felt in Caruthian terms. This will be shown to allow the conflict between personal and public roles in members of the royal family to be sustained, generating dramatic narratives across multiple seasons. Chapter 4's case study is *The Living and the Dead*, a neo-Victorian supernatural drama. The drama's literal conflation of the past and present through ghostly incursions instigate a LaCaprian working through process, through which individual and collective traumas are resolved by the season's end. Although grounded in series form, *The Living and the Dead* deploys significant serialised elements to pursue its narrative of trauma, allowing psychological investigation to drive the drama across its six episodes and offer potential for future seasons. The traumatic narratives of these productions will reveal the ability of formal characteristics specific to the television medium to facilitate post-heritage points of view.

"The Crown Must Win": Negotiating history and fiction through serial drama

> I have seen three great monarchies brought down for their failure to separate personal indulgences from duty. You must not allow yourself to make similar mistakes. While you mourn your father, you must also mourn someone else: Elizabeth Mountbatten. For she has now been replaced by another person: Elizabeth Regina. The two Elizabeths will frequently be in conflict with one another. The fact is, the Crown must win; must always win.
>
> --- Queen Mary (*The Crown*: season 1 episode 2)

The Crown, created and primarily written by Peter Morgan, examines the function of the British royal family in the modern era through Queen Elizabeth II's conflicted public and private roles. This chapter explores *The Crown*'s investigation of the monarchy throughout its first two seasons,[1] establishing the serial's active role in twenty-first century cultural and political debates. This will dispute the assertions of some early scholarly responses that *The Crown* holds a conservative, heritage point of view (Littler and Williamson, 2017; Biesen, 2019). The post-heritage critical framework will be used to analyse the serial's psychological investigation of its central characters, all of whom are well-known public figures, and in many cases (including that of Elizabeth herself) are still alive today. This allows the drama to pursue a non-deferential approach to the monarchy at a critical point in its history, towards the end of Elizabeth II's long reign. *The Crown*'s narrative themes speak to debates on the monarchy contemporary to the serial's release, as Laura Clancy establishes: "*The Crown* reproduces the debates of 1953[…] while simultaneously playing with and subverting them for contemporary 'publics' who engage with the monarchy in different sociopolitical contexts" (2019: 440). Contemporary contexts that have appeared during the serial's lifetime, and speak to the themes it tackles, include the Duke and Duchess of Sussex relinquishing their roles as senior royals and the allegations of sexual abuse against Prince Andrew. Additionally, the UK's departure from the European Union in the 2010s informs the serial's approach to national and international politics. Furthermore, James Leggott identifies how the drama's first season "frustrates easy interpretation at the time of a resurgent wave of popular feminism", placing Philip's depiction in the context of Donald Trump's US presidential victory (2018: 273). *The Crown* opens itself to such debates through its central use of ambiguity, allowing its questions around the monarchy's role in modern society to remain

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[1] These seasons constitute the first era of *The Crown*, where Claire Foy and Matt Smith star as Elizabeth and Prince Philip respectively. Following Foy and Smith, Oliva Colman and Tobias Menzies take over the lead roles in the third and fourth seasons, with Imelda Staunton due to play Elizabeth in the fifth and sixth seasons (Kanter, 2020).

unresolved and reflect upon the present day. The importance of the serial's ongoing critique of the monarchy is indicated by its very title: 'The Crown', rather than the more traditional 'Elizabeth II'. The serial prioritises this critique over visual spectacle, indicating its post-heritage point of view; even though its lavish production makes substantial use of the latter, the wider issues that permeate the drama always remain at its centre.

The Crown's serial form allows it to thoroughly investigate its central questions and sustain its ambiguity across multiple seasons. Narratives of trauma connect the conflicted positions of different members of the royal family, allowing twenty-first century viewers to understand their relevance to the present day. The serial's founding traumatic event is ostensibly the abdication crisis of 1936, which places the young Elizabeth in line to accede to the throne and is described as causing the untimely death of King George VI. As the drama enacts a critique of the monarchical institution as a whole, however, it is more accurate to say that the foundational trauma of *The Crown* is the trauma of becoming royalty. This trauma is depicted as Caruthian in character, endlessly recurring across the generations. Its recurrence is emphasised by the parallels drawn between royal characters across the generations. Princess Margaret (Vanessa Kirby), for example, is associated with Edward VIII throughout the first season by her 'individualist' attitude, prioritising her desire for public prominence and love affair with Peter Townsend (Ben Miles) over her duty to the royal family. By season 3, Prince Charles (Josh O'Connor) is also connected to this group of royals striving to assert their individual personalities onto the institution of the monarchy.[2] Becoming royalty also imposes codes of behaviour upon *The Crown*'s characters, which Edward VIII most egregiously violated at the time of his abdication. Consequently, the older generation of characters (represented by Winston Churchill, the Queen Mother and Queen Mary) frequently evoke the abdication to explain the monarchy's vulnerability in the modern age and insist on the continuation of its restrictive conventions. Elizabeth is required as monarch to uphold these traditions despite her personal feelings, creating conflict (both internal and external) with the more progressive perspectives of her own generation.

While the Queen's public appearances are a matter of historical record, *The Crown* speculates on her personal life and subjective experience. This allows the drama to self-consciously examine the negotiation between fact and fiction undertaken by historical drama and biopics. The serial thus performs a comparable function to that identified by Julie Sanders in the novels *True History of the Kelly Gang* (Peter Carey, 2000) and *Blonde* (Joyce Carol Oates, 2000),

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[2] While these sympathies are apparent throughout the serial, they are made explicit in the third season where Philip identifies the family's "dull" and "dangerous" strands across the generations (season 3 episode 2).

where history is transformed into fiction and facts "become a matter of interpretation" (2016: 189). Thomas Ebbrecht further describes the process of fictionalising history, arguing that "these interpretative representations fulfil[…] the desire to fit national or personal versions of history to officially remembered history by offering a framework for interpreting and reconstructing historic incidents in the viewer's mind" (2007: 40). *The Crown* pursues this process through a self-reflexive motif of media representation: photography, television screens and newspapers feature frequently, recording and commenting upon the fictionalised royal family, and reflecting the media commentary *The Crown* itself instigates decades later. Jonathan Bignell identifies the distinctly televisual possibilities taken advantage of through this, arguing that "biographical drama on television has the potential to thematise the medium's conventions for looking into others' lives in factual and fiction genres, telling life stories to reflect and evaluate national life" (2020: 51).

Bignell also acknowledges the constraints to the political and cultural function of biographical drama under the scrutiny and regulations of the BBC (ibid.: 53-4). *The Crown*'s commission by Netflix, however, frees it from these constraints. Netflix's internet-distributed platform not only eschews a linear television schedule but the restrictions of a "regulatory regime" (Lotz, 2016: 134), allowing *The Crown* to emphasise its post-heritage elements. It is also a transnational production, through its American commissioning network (Netflix) and studio (Sony Pictures), and its British production company (Left Bank). Netflix's international expansion strategy was completed in early 2016, when it became available in all countries other than China, North Korea, Syria and Crimea (Kelion, 2016). *The Crown*, commissioned in 2014 (BBC News, 2014), can therefore be considered as an early indicator of the network's international intentions. While the serial brings a national story to a transnational audience, there are possible detrimental effects of this: Jenner suggests that a "grammar of transnationalism" has been created on Netflix under "an assumed 'universality' western cultural value systems claim for themselves" (2018: 226). Nevertheless, it is not accurate to assume that *The Crown* "eschews more controversial aspects of British history" in order to appeal to a transnational audience (ibid.: 228), although "tension between 'nation' and transnationalism" (ibid.: 227) does become apparent when the serial's narrative moves beyond the UK. These complexities will be explored in the below analysis.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, it will expand upon the institutional and creative contexts around *The Crown*'s conception, considering the developments of internet-distributed television alongside the specific tradition of royal period dramas. The following section will trace the drama's exploration of private and public roles through the central characters of

Elizabeth and Philip, establishing *The Crown*'s use of the historical gaze. It will also consider the serial's status as a transnational drama, suggesting the positive and negative effects of this outlook. The final section will explore *The Crown*'s self-conscious use of media motifs through a selection of key scenes involving Elizabeth and Margaret. These scenes will be shown to enact a negotiation between history and fiction, as well as displaying the drama's use of Caruthian trauma through its serial form.

CONTEXTS OF *THE CROWN*: INSTITUTIONS AND HISTORY

The impact of internet-distributed television upon high-end drama productions, in tandem with broader developments in production technologies and practices, is significant and ongoing. Lotz establishes the trends of innovation and distinction that characterise drama commissions from premium cable networks, identifying how "creating original, scripted series offered both distinction and an opportunity to more clearly brand a channel's identity and stand out amidst the quickly expanding competition" (2016: 128). Following this, Lotz sees the emergence of internet-distributed television as a second "transformational change" in the television industry (2017a: 18). Jenner, meanwhile, identifies Netflix's adoption of branding strategies from premium cable channels such as HBO, both utilising serialised 'quality' programming to take advantage of the viewer control afforded by DVD box sets (HBO) or internet distribution (Netflix) (2018: 140-4). However, the branding strategies employed by Netflix and other internet-distributed television platforms differ from premium cable channels in two key respects. Firstly, as noted by Michael L. Wayne, their brand identities are "not tailored to specific audience demographics" but rather "present themselves as portals through which audiences can find a wide range of content matching their personal tastes" (2017: 5). Lotz coins the term 'conglomerated niche' to describe this strategy, contrasting with the 'mass' strategies of linear networks:

> Netflix takes advantage of what might be considered as the positive properties of filter bubbles so that people with different tastes have very different experiences of the content available in a way that affirms their sense of the Netflix brand[…] It does not license or develop a series with the expectation that all Netflix viewers will value it, but develops offerings with distinct segments of subscribers in mind. (2017b: 26)

This strategy cultivates an audience that is "dispersed, fragmented and spread across different nations" (Jenner, 2018: 242), crucial to Netflix's near-global expansion up to 2016. Secondly, the 'Netflix original' branding includes Karen Petruska and Faye Woods' category of 'false originals' (2019: 51), which describes acquired programming with exclusive international distribution. Without any creative influence, false originals do not offer Netflix the opportunity to embed

transnational appeal, compromising the network's capacity to curate 'quality' drama.[3] Only productions commissioned by Netflix allow the platform the creative control required to realise its transnational strategies.

Joseph D. Straubhaar's influential theory of cultural proximity (1991) can be reconsidered in the light of the genesis of internet-distributed television. As Straubhaar later summarises, cultural proximity

> argued that countries and cultures would tend to prefer their own local or national productions first, due to factors such as the appeal of local stars, the local knowledge required to understand much television humor, the appeal of local themes and issues, the appeal of similar looking ethnic faces, and the familiarity of local styles and locales. (2007: 91)

Related to cultural proximity is Colin Hoskins and Rolf Mirus' concept of cultural discount, defined as follows: "a particular programme rooted in one culture, and thus attractive in that environment, will have a diminished appeal elsewhere as viewers find it difficult to identify with the style, values, beliefs, institutions and behavioural patterns of the material in question" (1988: 500). Andrea Esser has questioned the validity of these theories in relation to transnational format adaptations, arguing that "in today's globalizing world with its accelerating transnational flows of media images, ideas, and people, we can expect the diversity, plurality, fluidity, transnationality, and complexity of media consumption and reception to increase" (2016: 32). Elsewhere, Noël Carroll usefully identifies the importance of "moral maxims, concepts, presuppositions, and emotions that are distributed most widely" across cultural boundaries (1998: 357); although his general thesis of 'mass art' is not applicable to the strategies of high-end television, his theory nevertheless identifies the shared value systems that may travel across borders. The international success of non-English language dramas in the 2010s (Esser, 2017) provides further support for the assertions of Esser and Carroll. The transnationalism of Netflix's commissioned dramas, along with its conglomerated niche strategy, therefore continued the trend of television dramas that do not subscribe to the notions of cultural proximity and cultural discount. This allows nationally specific narratives, including that of *The Crown*, to themselves become a viable point of distinction for transnational television networks.

Netflix is considered by Lotz as "akin to the first global television network" (2018: 117), despite economic conditions in many territories preventing it from becoming fully 'global'

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[3] Netflix's brand identity is further augmented, and perhaps diluted, by its practice of effacing the brand identities of other networks in programming and menus, aspiring to be "the audience's primary point of identification" (Wayne, 2017: 11).

(Jenner, 2018: 190; Lobato, 2018: 252). Netflix's commissioned programming is released simultaneously across the world, creating an instant community of viewers that transcends national borders. Although some programmes, notably *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-19) from 2015 and *Twin Peaks* in 2017, have been simulcast across multiple national channels and on-demand services, until the launch of Disney+ in 2019 Netflix commissions remained unique by being released simultaneously worldwide through a single network.[4] The dual influences of the national and the transnational inherent to Netflix commissions is apparent in the textual features of *The Crown*, which sits between the 'quality' US aesthetic tradition[5] and British heritage (Leggott, 2018: 264). This institutional context introduces a new significance to the negotiation of narrative critique and visual spectacle inherent to period drama.

While *The Crown* adopts a post-heritage approach to its central theme, its focus on the monarchy has a strong precedent in British television drama. The following brief examples indicate the strain of royal historical dramas on television that are grounded in a heritage approach. Once again, however, re-readings under the post-heritage critical framework indicate the complexity of their representations.[6] *Edward the Seventh* (ITV, 1975) depicts the life of its eponymous king from birth up to the end of his short reign. The series, starring Timothy West as Edward and Annette Crosbie as Queen Victoria, relishes in the spectacle of heritage drama, established by the grandiose fanfare of its theme tune and furthered by lavish set design and intricate attention to historical detail. However, its approach to royalty is more nuanced than these aesthetic features suggest. McArthur defines the series' "central ideological concept" as "no less than the humanisation of the British monarchy" (1980: 36), identifying Edward's role as "mediator" within the pan-European royal family of the turn of the century (ibid.: 37). Edward embodies the future of Britain, with the conflict of values between the UK, Russia and Germany played out as a family drama. The individual is here a "bourgeois historiographical category" (ibid.: 38), the humanisation of Edward permitting his progressive views to be seen as sustaining the monarchy while the backward-looking dynasties of Russia and Germany are soon to fall. Similar to *Downton Abbey* (see chapter 1), modern attitudes are displayed in order to uphold heritage structures. The depiction of the abdication crisis in *Edward & Mrs Simpson* (ITV, 1978),

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[4] Lotz identifies *Game of Thrones*' simulcast as the introduction of the 'global blockbuster', also recognising the potential of Netflix commissions to capitalise on this development (2018: 142-48 passim).

[5] Leggott here generalises 'quality' as synonymous to high-end.

[6] Other, more conceptually post-heritage, televisual representations of the British monarchy also exist prior to *The Crown*; examples include Poliakoff's *The Lost Prince* and the depictions of Elizabeth I discussed by Sabrina Alcorn Baron (2015).

meanwhile, displays an even more challenging period for the monarchy. Monk contextualises the commissioning of *Edward & Mrs Simpson*, positing that "the rumblings of Republican dissent within British politics" towards the end of the 1970s engendered a "less reverential approach" to its representation of royalty (2015: 15-16). However, any reduced reverence in *Edward & Mrs Simpson* comes from its historical subject, not from its representation. The serial, notwithstanding some location filming, retains the familiar aesthetics of period drama, and makes little attempt to go beyond matters of public record; much of its dialogue is even appropriated verbatim from letters and other historical documents. It is therefore unable to challenge the institution of the monarchy, which of course survives the drama's events intact.

The Crown's debut on Netflix was shortly preceded by *Victoria* (ITV/Masterpiece, 2016-present), which begins its narrative when its eponymous queen ascends to the throne.[7] Like *The Crown*, *Victoria* is conceived to run for multiple seasons (Leggott, 2018: 263). However, it was also conceived to appeal to international networks, contrasting with *The Crown*'s near-global distribution on a single platform. This impacts *Victoria*'s approach to the past, leading it towards the familiarity and stability of heritage characteristics. The constraints of commercial television prevent *Victoria* from enacting any significant or sustained investigation of its concepts and characters, despite alluding to many of the themes investigated more thoroughly in *The Crown*. For instance, *Victoria*'s tendency towards closure rather than ambiguity can be recognised by comparing Prince Albert's negotiation of his emasculated role as husband to the Queen to Prince Philip's equivalent situation in *The Crown*. The series form of *Victoria* dictates that such narratives are resolved at an episodic level, hindering the drama's potential to thoroughly investigate the royal institution. Ultimately, *Victoria*'s first season was sold to over 150 countries (Mitchell, 2016), proving its success as an international commodity.

The Crown's more complex relationship with history, and its encouragement of an active response from its viewers, can be understood through the differing reactions of two royal historians to the serial. Hugo Vickers assumes that the serial's interpretations will be read by most as historical facts: "while I believe that fiction can be a useful device to illuminate the truth, I am uncomfortable when it twists the facts and introduces themes that did not happen" (2019: vii). Conversely, Robert Lacey, the serial's historical adviser, offers a more understanding assessment in his companion book to season 1: "what you see on screen is both truth and invention – in the age-old spirit of historical drama" (2017: 6). Lacey's assessment of *The Crown*'s relationship with

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[7] *Victoria*'s chronology therefore overlaps significantly with *Edward the Seventh*, albeit at a much slower rate.

history is supported by the serial's narrative, as demonstrated by a moment that arouses Vickers' disapproval. Early in the serial's second season, Elizabeth (Claire Foy) begins to suspect that Philip (Matt Smith) may have had an affair with the ballerina Galina Ulanova, after she finds a portrait of the dancer amongst Philip's possessions (season 2 episode 1). As Vickers establishes, there is no historical possibility that such an affair could have taken place, not least because Ulanova had never been to England before 1956 (2019: 98). However, the ambiguity of Elizabeth's discovery serves to raise Philip's infidelity as a possibility rather than a definitive assertion. Viewers of *The Crown* would have no difficulty in discovering that the suspected affair with Ulanova, which remains neither confirmed nor denied in the drama, did not occur, aided by multiple press articles directly responding to the serial's storyline (Hallemann, 2017; Hill, 2017; Miller, 2017). The ease with which the contemporary viewer can dismiss Elizabeth's suspicions means unwarranted accusations are avoided; nevertheless, Elizabeth's mistrust is still speculated upon, and the possibility that Philip may have had an affair at some point is left as unanswered in the drama as it is in history. While this moment is, as Vickers attests, historically inaccurate, the serial's post-heritage intentions lie elsewhere. What Vickers fails to note in his rundown of the serial's perceived historical inaccuracies is that *The Crown* makes no claim of truthfulness; in fact, its use of ambiguity and self-consciousness, the latter stemming from the periodic recasting of every character, acknowledges the act of speculation inherent to historical drama.[8]

THE HISTORICAL GAZE AND TRANSNATIONAL INFLUENCES: ELIZABETH AND PHILIP

As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, Vidal's identification of the 'historical gaze' in *The Queen* (also written by Morgan) connects Elizabeth to Diana, Princess of Wales through mediatised images. Vidal recognises the ultimate resolution of this gaze, leading the film towards a heritage point of view: "*The Queen* finally endows Elizabeth II's historical gaze with an understated superiority, allowing the heritage narrative to capture the disenchantment with the present. This can be read as a conservative retreat into the values of permanence and continuity embodied by the monarch" (2012b: 47). The historical gaze also connects the past to the present in *The Crown*; however, its serial narrative allows traumatic experiences to recur without finding resolution. *The Crown*'s post-heritage use of the historical gaze is demonstrated by a scene where Elizabeth wears her crown for the first time (season 1 episode 5), intercut with her remembrance of her father, King George VI (Jared Harris), before his own Coronation. The repeated editing

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[8] Kara McKechnie (2002) establishes the prioritisation of illusory authenticity over historical accuracy in film royal biopics of the 1990s, placing Vickers far behind the critical discourse.

between father and daughter allows them to seemingly share this moment from two decades apart. The end of the sequence also reveals the young Prince Charles (Billy Jenkins) watching Elizabeth, reminding the viewer that the next stage of this chain of successions is still yet to occur. Another interpretation of *The Queen*'s historical gaze is offered by Isobel Johnstone, who considers it in terms of Helen Mirren's performance as Elizabeth. Johnstone analyses the film's opening sequence, where Elizabeth sits for a formal portrait before turning towards the camera: "by dramatising the careful process of constructing the monarch's identity for public consumption, the film playfully encourages the audience to acknowledge not only the private woman Elizabeth's ritual self-transformation into 'the Queen', but Mirren's as well" (2014: 69). This foregrounding of performance is taken further by *The Crown*, which is able to self-consciously acknowledge the multiple interpretations of Elizabeth offered in different seasons. In the most direct example of this, the third season begins with Olivia Colman's Elizabeth surveying her new stamp portrait, placed next to a previous version that shows Foy as Elizabeth. Moments such as these foreground the drama's constructedness, ensuring it is viewed as just one possible interpretation of its historical characters. This self-consciousness also suggests, as Johnstone puts it, "the potential for the reconstructed or re-enacted life to become, in the popular imagination, more vibrant, memorable and emotionally compelling – and hence, implicitly, more real – than the original" (ibid.: 66).

In conjunction with the historical gaze, *The Crown* displays an influence from twenty-first century 'Nordic Noir' drama through its socio-cultural point of view and aesthetics, along with that of other high-end productions. This connects *The Crown*'s post-heritage characteristics to transnational televisual trends of the 2010s. Creeber identifies the aesthetic features of Nordic Noir, including "long moments of stillness and reflection" (2015: 25), the "more visually orientated aesthetic" (ibid.), and connection of place to the psychology of central characters (ibid.: 26-7); all of these are deployed in *The Crown*. The Danish public service 'dogma' of 'double storytelling', which, according to Eva Novrup Redvall, requires the premise of a drama to "contain larger ethical and social connotations" beyond its individual characters and storylines (2013: 230), is also relevant to *The Crown*. In Nordic crime drama, led by the example of *The Killing* (DR/ZDF, 2007-12), double storytelling allows a particular event to act as "a mirror on reality", revealing "several other layers beneath the crime investigation" (Clausen, translated in ibid.). *The Crown*'s conceptual similarity to *Borgen* (DR, 2010-13; DR/Netflix, forthcoming)[9] makes its deployment of

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[9] Tellingly, Netflix and DR have recommissioned *Borgen* as *The Crown* approaches its conclusion (Sweney, 2020), suggesting that it may be considered by the streaming service as serving a similar audience.

double storytelling apparent: both serials tell the story of a woman negotiating high public office (in *Borgen*, that of the Prime Minister) with her private life, the conflict between her two identities providing the central dramatic tension (ibid.: 231).

The double storytelling of *The Crown* is revealed by its cultivation of the historical gaze through the subjectivities of Elizabeth and Philip. The couple's frequent averted gazes reveal both the difficulties in their own relationship and the socio-historical tensions that permeate the drama. The averted historical gaze of the royal couple recurs across *The Crown*'s first two seasons, before it becomes a direct feature of the final episode's narrative (season 2 episode 10). Several prominent examples can be found in the narrative arc that encompasses season 2's first three episodes, which depict Philip's solo tour of the southern hemisphere. These episodes are bookended by a repeated scene where Elizabeth confronts her husband in Lisbon, which forms an opening flashforward for season 2 and eventually results in an uneasy truce between the couple (season 2 episode 3). The averted historical gazes of this arc display Elizabeth and Philip avoiding each other's scrutiny but also conceal their features from the viewer, alluding to the ultimate unknowability of the historical figures portrayed in *The Crown*.

In season 2's second episode, "A Company of Men", the ambiguity of Elizabeth and Philip's averted gazes is furthered during their geographic separation. This is demonstrated in the two scenes where Philip's private secretary Mike Parker (Daniel Ings) writes letters back to the Thursday Club that both he and Philip are members of. The first of these letters is written with salacious intent, narrated first by Mike and then continued by 'Baron' Nahum (Julius D'Silva) at the Thursday Club:

> MIKE: On royal tours in the past, when the Queen has been present, the evenings have been polite occasions, with everyone on their best behaviour.
> BARON: Not this time. Philip, as you all know, is a work-hard-play-hard man who would never stand in the way of a bit of fun. And in New Guinea, as it turns out, there's no such thing as infidelity. Men are expected to indulge. (season 2 episode 2)

Baron's reading is met with boisterous jeers and laughter at the Thursday Club, the letter clearly designed for this arena of hypermasculinity. The self-conscious association with twenty-first century 'lad' culture is emphasised by the anachronistic phrase of "what happens on tour stays on tour", deployed as an appeal for secrecy amongst the club's members. As the letter is narrated, the image cuts to Philip's company enjoying their night in New Guinea, Philip and Mike seen dancing with the native women before the latter is led away to apparently indulge in the extra-marital practices implied by his letter. Although the scandal around Mike's actions subsequently calls Philip's own fidelity into question, the extent of the latter's actions is left ambiguous. Mike's

second letter, again written to the Thursday Club, is written under very different circumstances. It is composed after the rescue of a shipwrecked Pasifika man, for whom Philip insisted the tour be diverted. As Mike narrates, the man's emotional reunion with his island community is shown on-screen, including Philip personally helping him to shore:

> After twenty eventful weeks at sea, visiting five continents and covering many thousands of miles, I'm happy to report that we saved our greatest adventure for last, as the Royal Yacht Britannia turned naval rescue and we fished a shipwrecked mariner out of the water. Our brilliant surgeons operated on him, then we went out of our way to return him to his home, his family and his people. And what people; what a family; what a home. Should you Thursday Club members ever grow tired of your colourless and empty lives in London, I suggest immediate relocation to the discrete island nations nestled around Tonga: surely the closest one can come to heaven on Earth. (season 2 episode 2)

These respectful words are far removed from the bawdy tone of Mike's earlier missive. Nevertheless, his change in attitude is unheeded by Baron at the Thursday Club, who assumes the letter's narration in the same register as before:

> Never have I experienced such a willingness to set oneself free and enjoy. And nowhere on Earth, and we have by this point travelled almost every inch, have we encountered such beautiful women. These really have been the most remarkable few days. And it is with the greatest reluctance that after three days here we tear ourselves away, each of us not a little bit, but a great deal in love. (season 2 episode 2)

The club's members again respond to Baron's reading with cheers, drawing their own conclusions as to what it means to "set oneself free and enjoy". As the letter is read, we see another fireside dance, with Mike once more led away from the circle. The noble sentiments of his letter have not changed, however, despite the Thursday Club's interpretation of events. Baron's tone contradicts Mike's words and the rescue sequence seen by the viewer, emphasising the various possible readings of *The Crown*'s characters. Despite its ambiguity, it is this second letter that is procured by Mike's wife Eileen and used as the legal basis for divorce proceedings, resulting in media speculation over Philip's own marriage. Even Elizabeth appears to share the assumptions of the Thursday Club when she reads the letter herself. Sixty years later, *The Crown* self-consciously participates in the act of media speculation instigated by the scandal, inviting questions over Philip's behaviour while also acknowledging the power of media-led gossip to mislead even the Queen. The story is shown to itself cause damage, regardless of whether the events it relates are true.

The final episode of season 2, entitled "Mystery Man", closes the first era of *The Crown* and completes the narrative arc of Elizabeth and Philip's relationship, while keeping the serial's overarching questions about the monarchy open. In the episode, Elizabeth and Philip's marital

issues re-surface against the political backdrop of the Profumo affair, after it is speculated that a 'mystery man' photographed from behind at one of osteopath Stephen Ward's notorious parties may be Philip. This narrative directly draws attention to Philip's averted gaze, allowing the tensions that characterise Foy and Smith's iterations of the characters to reach their climax. After the possibility of Philip being the mystery man has been established, a lingering close-up shot of the back of his head is accompanied by complete silence as Philip contemplates his marriage, inviting the viewer to consider his integrity and providing the time to do so. Subsequently, a conversation between Elizabeth and Philip ends with the couple repeatedly looking back towards each other, their gazes never connecting at the same time. The camera, however, is able to see their expressions on this occasion, asserting a privileged position through its discovery of the historical gaze.

When Elizabeth and Philip subsequently address their differences, *The Crown*'s serial form allows its wider critique of the monarchy to remain unresolved. The season's climactic scene incorporates numerous allusions to the events of previous episodes, beginning with Elizabeth finally confronting Philip with his portrait of Ulanova, allowing the scene to be recognised as a culmination of the serial's first era. Philip remains evasive on this matter, maintaining the possibility of his infidelity, but does defend himself by asserting his constancy. The recently foregrounded motif of looking away now forms the terms of the couple's reconciliation:

> ELIZABETH: Philip, we're both adults. And I think we're both realists. We both know that marriage is a challenge, under any circumstances. So I can understand if sometimes, in order to let off steam, in order to stay 'in', you need to do what you need to do. I can look the other way.
>
> PHILIP: Yes, I know you can look the other way. You've raised looking the other way into an art form. I'm saying I don't want you to. You can look this way. I'm yours. In. And not because you've given me a title; not because we've come to an agreement, but because I want to be. Because I love you. (season 2 episode 10)

In the latter part of Philip's speech he moves to kneel before Elizabeth, who searches out the truth of his declaration by at last looking at him directly. Her gaze, now not historical but personal, allows Elizabeth to abandon monarchical reserve, accepting Philip's constancy even if the viewer may continue to doubt it. Ambiguity is thus sustained amidst the moment of personal resolution; as Creeber notes of Nordic Noir crime drama, even whilst the individual characters' stories are resolved, "the moral, political and social problems that produced them are not" (2015: 32).

While the transnational influence of Nordic Noir allows *The Crown* to emphasise its post-heritage elements, the serial's international narratives threaten to undermine this approach. The eighth episode of season 2, "Dear Mrs Kennedy", combines two transnational stories, depicting

Elizabeth's personal and political relationships with the Kennedys of the US and President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Both presidencies feature in this episode only, deployed in support of the serial's overarching British narrative. Vickers objects to the connection drawn between the Kennedys' 1961 visit to Buckingham Palace and the Queen's trip to Ghana later in the same year, the latter of which "had nothing to do with upstaging Mrs Kennedy" (2019: 124). However, notwithstanding that the visit to Ghana was initially arranged earlier than shown in *The Crown* (ibid.), understanding of the psychological impact of Elizabeth's meeting with Jackie Kennedy cannot be gleaned from historical records. *The Crown* is able to speculate on this through its combination of the two international storylines. However, the dominance of Elizabeth's subjectivity becomes problematic when the serial's scope widens to other cultural perspectives, revealing a more significant issue than infidelity to historical truth. Despite their failure to acknowledge the serial's post-heritage characteristics, Jo Littler and Milly Williamson's assertion that *The Crown* reduces "imperial subjects to sentimental storyline fodder" (2017: 154) holds true in these narratives.

The historical narrative of Ghana's independence is told in *The Crown* exclusively through its relation to Britain, minimising post-colonial perspectives and asserting the benevolence of Commonwealth rule. The heritage household becomes a heritage nation through the globalised drama, effacing the agency of other countries. "Dear Mrs Kennedy" begins with Nkrumah (Danny Sapani) addressing other African heads of state, declaiming the "imperialist powers of the past" while Elizabeth's portrait is replaced with one of Lenin. Despite the validity of Nkrumah's wish to "choose our own destiny", his dictatorial style of oratory and the evocation of Lenin's communism positions Ghanaian autonomy as a threat to ordered society. When the prospect of a Ghanaian alliance with Russia is raised back in the UK, the assumption that continued presence in the Commonwealth is the desired result of negotiations is accordingly unchallenged, in contrast with the serial's consistent ambiguity around the monarchy's domestic function. Elizabeth's subjectivity is the priority of the episode, allowing herself and the British cultural identity to remain the central focus when visiting the African nation.

Out of her depth in the international political situation, Elizabeth weaponises her femininity to appease Nkrumah and ensure Ghana remains in the Commonwealth. Her dance with Nkrumah, an historical event, is instigated by the Queen in *The Crown*; when Nkrumah is told of Elizabeth's request, her pointed look towards him wordlessly expresses the significance of both the proposition and her power to offer it (figure 5). As the two heads of state meet on the dancefloor, Elizabeth further seizes the upper hand by alluding to the "terms" of their dance. The

Figure 5: Elizabeth (Claire Foy) wordlessly imparts the significance of her proposed dance with President Nkrumah (*The Crown*, Netflix: season 2 episode 8)

tone of the scene shifts into comedy through the bewildered reactions of the royal staff and politicians following the developing situation from Downing Street: in the serial's most overtly comic moment, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's (Anton Lesser) exasperated cry of "what are they doing?" is met with the deadpan answer "the foxtrot". The comic incompetence of those around her in this scene positions Elizabeth as superior, through her personal intuition if not political intelligence. This depiction, however, further reduces the role of Nkrumah and the Ghanaian nation. As Yepoka Yeebo's response to the episode from a Ghanaian cultural perspective indicates, effacing Nkrumah's role in the dance while exaggerating its long-term impact on the country's future casts Ghanaians as "background players in the fate of their own country" (2018).

Elizabeth's visit to Ghana is framed in *The Crown* as her response to the popularity of Jackie Kennedy (Jodi Balfour), whose marriage is portrayed as analogous to Elizabeth and Philip's. Like the reactions to Elizabeth's dance with Nkrumah, the Kennedys' introduction to the royal couple satirises the British Establishment: the errors of protocol made by Jackie and John F. Kennedy (Michael C. Hall), culminating in the latter's awkward greeting of "Your Royal Majesty", are commented on by the same civil servants who are later dumbfounded by the Queen's foxtrot. While the Establishment remains subject to interrogation through the humour of such cultural clashes, the primacy of Elizabeth causes the depiction of the American first family to lack depth. Despite the imminent tragedy of his assassination, President Kennedy is portrayed as unambiguously hypocritical and cruel: before his visit to the UK, following a stirring speech on the

decline of "moral and intellectual strength" in America he shown to be jealous and controlling towards his wife behind closed doors. *The Crown* thus revises the popular veneration of Kennedy but, without the opportunity to investigate his complex character over multiple episodes, this results in a caricatured depiction. In Jackie's later audience with Elizabeth, the former alludes to her husband's abusive behaviour; her vague comment that Kennedy "didn't appreciate being upstaged" is accompanied by a flashback that reveals the President's physically and sexually aggressive actions to the viewer. Elizabeth, however, does not see this, so when she claims that she "can imagine" Kennedy's behaviour she is relating Jackie's situation to her own, unaware that Kennedy's transgressions far exceed Philip's. The American couple's single appearance in *The Crown*, deployed in support of the overarching story of the British monarchy, results in the complexities of the non-fictional Kennedy marriage being marginalised, leaving a revisionist approach to the characters that is not justified by sustained the sustained investigation of a serial narrative. After President Kennedy is assassinated, Elizabeth continues to assert her understanding of Jackie's situation: "that's the thing about unhappiness: all it takes is for something worse to come along, and you realise it was actually happiness after all". Elizabeth again applies the Kennedys' situation to her own marriage, but from the viewer's privileged position her statement appears as a highly inappropriate summation of an abusive marriage. The need to relate its international narratives back to the Queen is therefore detrimental to *The Crown*'s approach to history, leading it back towards heritage characteristics and the homogenised western value systems that Jenner warns of.

HISTORY WITHIN FICTION: REPRESENTING THE MEDIA

The Crown's Caruthian approach to the trauma of becoming royalty is made possible by the drama's serial form. Elizabeth, despite being represented by multiple actors, is a constant presence, embodying the conflict between a youthful, modernising world and the ancient institution she represents. Using the Queen as a subject of its serial narrative allows *The Crown* to negotiate the complexities of the monarchy over multiple narrative decades and hours of screen drama. As part of this, the serial deploys self-reflexivity to acknowledge its intervention in contemporary and historic debates around the monarchy, incorporating a recurring motif of media representations of its central characters. Many episodes feature the disorienting burst of camera flashbulbs, the first significant example occurring as Elizabeth returns home following her father's death (season 1 episode 2). As the new Queen disembarks her plane, shutters sound and flashbulbs light as one, before the row of assembled journalists quickly bow their heads in

deference. The disorienting impact of this auditory and visual burst illustrates Elizabeth's emotional turmoil as both grieving daughter and newly acceded monarch, with the news media displaying their intrusion on her private life. Strikingly, the photographers prioritise the photo opportunity before respect for Elizabeth's position and situation, indicating the incivility required by their profession. As itself a media depiction of intimate details of royal lives, *The Crown* opens its own act of representation to criticism through this moment, exposing the drama's negotiation of respectfulness and intrusion towards its subjects.

The following sequence of Elizabeth's return home as Queen resonates with her earlier reading of Queen Mary's (Eileen Atkins) letter, which serves as the epigraph to this chapter. Mary's advice establishes the tension between public and private identities that permeates the serial, foreshadowing the difficulties this will cause for Elizabeth. As Elizabeth travels to Buckingham Palace, Mary's private warning is succeeded by Winston Churchill's (John Lithgow) public address to the nation, adapted from Churchill's historical address. Prior to this point, the cultural memory of Churchill's wartime leadership has been subverted, the narrative focusing on his increased frailty and questionable faculties upon his return to the role of Prime Minister. At this moment of collective mourning, however, his oratory regains the gravitas of his famous wartime speeches. The speech is mostly adapted verbatim from its historical source, which opens by casting the King's death as a moment of national mourning and reflection:

> When the death of the King was announced to us yesterday morning, there struck a deep and sombre note in our lives, which resounded far and wide, stilled the clatter and traffic of twentieth century life, and made countless millions of human beings around the world pause and look around them. (Churchill, 1952)

Churchill's speech connects the monarch to the nation, espousing traditional, heritage values. As Churchill moves on to talk of death coming to the King "as a friend" (ibid.), Elizabeth is shown visiting her father's body. The new Queen turns away from the camera and sobs, a personal moment of grief that is hidden from public view. Elizabeth then steels herself and straightens up, visibly taking on the 'Elizabeth Regina' persona that is required of her before turning back towards the camera. The duties of the monarch are thus placed above individual grief; the averted gaze becomes a historical gaze.

As Churchill's speech concludes, *The Crown* adds a phrase that acknowledges the epochal moment of history: "this new Elizabethan age comes at a time when mankind stands uncertainly poised on the edge of catastrophe". The addition of this sentence emphasises the vulnerability of the monarchy, drawing parallels between the Establishment and the tribulations of the nation as a whole. It also introduces the notion of a 'new Elizabethan age'; while the Churchill of history did

not use this exact phrase in his speech, as the time of Elizabeth's Coronation approached it became ubiquitous as "a coherent, unified invocation of immediate historical parallels between one national age and an imminent era of contemporary achievement and expression" (Morra and Gossedge, 2016: 2). Watching from near the end of this new Elizabethan age, the use of the phrase allows *The Crown*'s viewer to recognise the significance of the era that is beginning and compare its realities to the optimism promoted by Churchill in 1952. The vulnerability of the heritage ethos advanced by Churchill's words is emphasised by the conclusion of the sequence, when Mary arrives in person to pay her respects to the new Queen. Dressed in full mourning, Mary appears in near silhouette; as she bows low the floorboards below her creak and the final string crescendo of the soundtrack's "The Letter"[10] ends the episode on a disconcerting note, Elizabeth and Mary's shared gaze silently acknowledging the latter's written warning. Mary serves as a spectre of the monarchy's past (she is the wife of King George V, and mother to Edward VIII and George VI), embodying the negative implications of Churchill's public speech and the private warning of her own letter. Elizabeth's reign thus commences by conflating public and private matters through Elizabeth's new identity as Queen, her bereavement as a daughter subsumed into the institution of the monarchy and its representation through the media.

The fifth episode of season 1, entitled "Smoke and Mirrors", further reveals the significance of *The Crown*'s act of media intervention through its depiction of Elizabeth's coronation. Clancy establishes the Coronation as itself a self-consciously constructed media event, its significance found through its creation of perceived connections between royalty and public (2019: 433). These are described as 'mediated intimacies', initiating "new and novel ways of experiencing monarchy, as 'publics' were being addressed in more intimate ways" (ibid.: 435). While television cameras were initially refused access to the ceremony inside Westminster Abbey, a media outcry led to permission being granted under the proviso that Elizabeth's anointing was omitted and no close-ups were used (ibid.: 430-2). *The Crown*'s representation of this media event displays both the spectacle of the ceremony and its mediation through 1950s television cameras, the latter reflecting upon the serial's own historiographical function. This, according to Clancy, perpetuates "the narrative of a relationship" between the Coronation and television (ibid.: 439). The serial narrative allows *The Crown*'s traumas to be investigated within this media relationship, the drama's reconstruction of the Coronation revealing it to its audience in a way that was not possible in 1953. This is furthered by the intercut scene of the abdicated Edward VIII, now the

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[10] In *The Crown: Season One Soundtrack* (Sony Music, 2016), composed by Rupert Gregson-Williams.

Duke of Windsor (Alex Jennings),[11] who watches the ceremony from his *de facto* exile in Paris. In this episode, the Duke displays a yearning for the role he gave up, adding further ambiguity to *The Crown*'s representation of the monarchy by suggesting losing royal status is as traumatic as gaining it. The Duke's characterisation in this episode also reveals his ambiguity; his true motivations are obscured amongst the contradictory attitudes towards his family expressed to his wife, Elizabeth and a magazine reporter.

As Elizabeth's anointing begins, the Duke and his assembled viewers are prohibited from viewing the sacred moments because, in the Duke's words, "we are mortal". Clancy establishes the significance of the absence of this moment in the 1953 broadcast of the Coronation, asserting that "the magic of monarchy is created in the gesture of hiding it, rather than being something that exists independently, since it implies there is magic to be hidden" (2019: 436). However, as the Duke contemplates his lack of access to the ceremony the twenty-first century viewer is invited into this privileged space, viewing the consecration ritual in the close-ups banned from the live broadcast. This entry into a space explicitly denied to television viewers of the time positions the twenty-first century perspective as more comprehensive than that of the 1950s, exposing the limited viewpoint of history. The Duke offers the following valorisation of the ceremony:

> Oils and oaths; orbs and sceptres: symbol upon symbol. An unfathomable web of arcane mystery and liturgy. Blurring so many lines no clergyman or historian or lawyer could ever untangle any of it[…] Who wants transparency when you can have magic? Who wants prose when you can have poetry? Pull away the veil, and what are you left with? An ordinary young woman of modest ability and little imagination. But wrap her up like this, anoint her with oil and hey presto, what do you have? A goddess. (season 1 episode 5)

Despite the authority with which he speaks these words, the viewer must consider whether they can trust this assessment of the monarchy in light of the Duke's ambiguous characterisation. His speech also displays the serial's self-consciousness: it is the greater transparency dismissed by the Duke that *The Crown* strives for, revealing the "ordinary young woman" beneath the goddess in pursuit of a deeper understanding of Elizabeth's position and the monarchy's place in the modern age. The drama allows its viewer to dispute the Duke's words, recognising that exposing the Queen's ordinariness has a function that he does not recognise.

A counterpoint to the constraints of Elizabeth's position is offered by the concurrent exploration of Princess Margaret, which allows *The Crown* to further the ambiguity of its

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[11] *The Crown* chooses to simplify Edward's familial nickname of 'David' by describing the latter as his given first name (season 1 episode 2), which he reverted to after abdicating. This chapter refers to him as 'the Duke of Windsor' throughout.

mediatised representation of history. In contrast to Elizabeth and Philip, Margaret courts the historical gaze by frequently looking towards the camera. Her gaze is frequently shown through various media, affirming *The Crown*'s position as part of the ongoing media discourse around the royal family. Her historical gaze is therefore positioned between the dramatic look and the documentary gaze, identified by Caughie as part of the negotiation between subjectivity and objectivity. Caughie describes the dramatic look as "the system of looks which orders narrative space, and gives the spectator a place within it in a process of quite literal identification" (2000: 111). The documentary gaze, meanwhile, "is marked by the conventions of spontaneity and the appearance of being unrehearsed, and it is this which produces the 'immediacy effect' which constructs its objects as more authentic, more objective, than the characters who are subjects in the drama" (ibid.). In summary, "the dramatic look inscribes the drama into experience; the documentary gaze claims that it is an experience of the real" (ibid.). As both historical figures and dramatic subjects, the characters in *The Crown* combine these functions. Margaret's looks directly towards the camera, and their mediation through television screens and newspaper images, acknowledge their dual function and encourage the viewer to take an active role in constructing the serial's meaning. The introduction of historic archival material in season 2, which culminates around Margaret at the time of her marriage, furthers the post-heritage impact of her characterisation.

In season 1, the foregrounding of the media during Margaret's affair with the divorced Townsend allows *The Crown* to allude to events and attitudes anachronistic to the depicted period. The public learns of the affair through an intimate moment between the couple being observed by the press, as Margaret is seen to remove some dirt from Peter's uniform after the Coronation (season 1 episode 6).[12] The intense journalistic interest in Margaret and Peter's affair takes on an uncomfortable aspect when viewed from the twenty-first century, despite the attention being interpreted by the couple as popular support for their wish to marry. Later in the season, a particularly disturbing example sees Margaret and Peter's car pursued at high speed by a group of photographers (season 1 episode 10), evoking memories of Princess Diana's death in 1997 and drawing a parallel between the two women's displays of individualism long before Diana's introduction in season 4. In another scene, a private conversation between Margaret and Peter ends in a long shot as the couple kisses passionately (season 1 episode 6). This cinematography suggests the possibility of press intrusion, calling to mind controversies such as

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[12] This press intrusion of an intimate action occurred in reality (Nevin, 2002), offering *The Crown* a point of entry into its theme of media intervention on the life of royalty.

the 2012 scandal around long-lens topless photographs of the Duchess of Cambridge (O'Carroll and Willsher, 2012).[13] There is, however, no further indication that this intimate moment was photographed; it is the dramatisation itself that is performing an act of media intrusion, problematising Margaret's encouragement of such attention. These scenes serve as visual anachronisms, alluding to events decades in the future and heightening *The Crown*'s self-consciousness. They position the media as a dangerous, disruptive influence, implicating the serial itself through the foregrounding of its negative impact.

In season 2, after her relationship with Townsend has ended, Margaret meets and ultimately marries the photographer Tony Armstrong-Jones (Matthew Goode). Tony's profession allows the act of photography to be evaluated, operating in conjunction with the motif of media representation. Tony's unconventional artistry is contrasted with that of Cecil Beaton (Mark Tandy), who cultivates a heritage perspective of the traditional, mythologised image of the monarchy. The first two seasons of *The Crown* both conclude with a Beaton-staged photography session, the image captured at the end of season 1 symbolising the conflict between the personal and public demands on Elizabeth. "Not moving, not breathing[…] forgetting Elizabeth Windsor now; now only Elizabeth Regina", Beaton intones before capturing the photograph (season 1 episode 10), echoing Queen Mary's earlier words and yet instantly undermined by Elizabeth's visible breathing throughout the scene. When Margaret later sits for Beaton, the debate between her and the Queen Mother (Victoria Hamilton) around his "fairy tale" photography creates a moment of extreme self-consciousness. Beaton embraces the Queen Mother's traditional perspective in paternalistic tones:

> Imagine this, if you will: a young woman, a commonplace creature. She sits in her drab little scullery; so much work to do, so much… washing-up. How she longs for comfort, for hope[…] She wants to believe her life has some meaning, beyond chores. She opens a magazine, and she sees Her Royal Highness' photograph. For one glorious, transforming moment, she becomes a princess too. She is lifted out of her miserable, pitiful reality into a fantasy. (season 2 episode 4)

Margaret's rejection of Beaton's style of representation in favour of Tony's is thus connected to a rejection of the escapist impulses of heritage drama. Through its established use of post-heritage elements, *The Crown* assumes that its viewers will be aligned with Margaret's sceptical viewpoint, rejecting Beaton's condescension and the deferential view of the monarchy it upholds.

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[13] This circumstance has also been connected to Diana's death, by media commentators and even Diana's son, Prince William (Samuelson, 2017).

Tony, by contrast, assumes the role of audience surrogate when Margaret sits for him later in the same episode, interpreting her character and asking the questions a dedicated view of *The Crown* may have:

> TONY: I'd prefer you to be yourself. Though I realise that's asking the impossible[…] Because you have no idea who you are.
> MARGARET: I know perfectly well –
> TONY: No, not the faintest idea[…] We don't know who you are either. The rest of us, outside the palace gates.
> MARGARET: That's because we keep feeding you the fairy tale.
> […]
> TONY: But that business with Peter Townsend. Cruel. Was he really as dreary as he seemed?
> MARGARET: He was decent and old-fashioned: easy qualities to mock. Easy to miss, too.
> TONY: Do you miss him? (season 2 episode 4)

At this moment, Margaret's expression gives Tony the authentic shot he searches for. The resultant photograph offers different frissons of scandal to the other characters of the drama and its twenty-first century viewer. With her dress deliberately adjusted by Tony, the main provocation of the photograph for the montage of characters who view it at the episode's conclusion is that Margaret appears to be naked. However, after this the image is refocused by its presentation underneath the episode's credits sequence. Cropped to the serial's widescreen aspect ratio, it now excludes Margaret's bare shoulders, making her eyes the focal point (figure 6). Viewed outside of the narrative, Margaret is looking directly at viewers of *The Crown*, exposed

Figure 6: Margaret's (Vanessa Kirby) photograph re-appears underneath the episode's credits, appealing directly to the viewer (*The Crown*, Netflix: season 2 episode 4)

psychologically rather than physically. The viewer is encouraged to undertake their own search for the 'real' Margaret by the direct address of the photograph.[14]

The episodes that follow this self-conscious consideration of photographic representation introduce documentary images as part *The Crown*'s negotiation of fact and fiction, which allow the increasingly episodic narratives to enact a cumulative examination of how history is understood. Ebbrecht summarises the documentary image's interrogation of national shame, describing how "German docudramas about Nazism and the Second World War use a combination of documentary and fictional modes of representation to create a special kind of tension and magical aura in order to offer the German audience a sensual and emotional space to empathize with the perpetrators" (2007: 49). *The Crown*'s use of this approach is exemplified by its exploration of the Duke of Windsor's potential Nazi affiliation (season 2 episode 6). This episodic narrative concerns the emergence of the Marburg Files, whose archival information is literally passed between characters. As de Groot establishes, representing the archive in historical fiction allows its findings to be understood as only one possible interpretation (2016b: 198). *The Crown* is therefore able to expose the potential for alternative meanings within archival material. Maintaining his ambiguous characterisation from the time of the Coronation, the veracity of the Duke's defence against the Marburg Files (he claims that his only desire was to avert the Second World War) is uncertain. It is the further recollections of private secretary Tommy Lascelles (Pip Torrens) that finally condemn the Duke of Windsor, persuading Elizabeth to deny him forgiveness. Like the Duke's defence, Lascelles' evidence creates ambiguity around the circumstances described, presented from a biased position and without documentary evidence. The Duke is nevertheless banished on the basis of Lascelles' testimony; the episode ends with further archival evidence, displaying a collection of photographs showing the Duke of Windsor's 1937 visit to Nazi Germany (including his meeting with Hitler). These troubling images assert the historical basis for the episode, but are still not definitive. As the narrative's use of the Marburg Files establishes, historical documentation cannot establish the Duke's true character or motivations. The use of these images reminds the viewer of the potential ambiguity of recorded history, rather than asserting it as fact.

Season 2's use of non-fictional imagery culminates in its seventh episode, "Matrimonium", as the preparations for Margaret and Tony's marriage begin. The heritage characteristic of

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[14] The psychological aspect of the image is further emphasised when Tony later proposes to Margaret: he conceals an engagement ring in a box of photographic cuttings, including a torn strip of Margaret's eyes only from the same image (season 2 episode 7).

fastidious preparation is evoked here, as the Queen Mother, Elizabeth, Philip, Princess Anne (Lyla Barrett-Rye), Charles (Julian Baring), Lascelles and his successor Michael Adeane (Will Keen) are all seen dressing for the occasion. Subversion of this heritage characteristic is achieved through the sombre soundtrack music and the demeanour of the characters shown, all of whom appear troubled for reasons not explicit in the narrative. The dissonantly morose tone at the time of a wedding, along with the inclusion of the royal family's younger generation in the montage, appeals to the viewer's retrospective knowledge that this marriage will not be a success.[15] While Margaret herself is not part of this montage, historical gazes remain of central importance: the editing of the sequence suggests Elizabeth and Philip looking towards each other, although they remain in separate locations, and the other royal characters all scrutinise themselves in mirrors. Contemplation of these characters and their non-fictional counterparts is further encouraged by the deployment of archival television and radio commentary over the sequence. The sequence concludes with the figure of Jacqui Chan (Alice Hewkin), one of Tony's multiple lovers, whose television set continues the news report of the wedding. On the television screen, Margaret and Tony face away from the camera; as they turn, they are revealed to be their non-fictional counterparts, the documentary image suddenly situated within the drama. History has intruded on the space of drama, stymieing any inclination to view Margaret's marriage from a nostalgic point of view or ignore its inevitable failure. The 'real' Margaret and Tony look towards the camera on the television screen, furthering Margaret's courting of the historical gaze while emphasising the distinction between the real and the fictional. Like Elizabeth's wedding and Coronation before it, Margaret's wedding is held in Westminster Abbey. On this occasion, however, the viewer is not permitted to view the interior of Westminster Abbey; the episode closes with an exterior shot of the Abbey, while archival audio of Margaret and Tony's vows is heard. In contrast with the Coronation, it is now the viewers of 1960 who hold the privileged viewpoint, while the visual spectacle of the ceremony is withheld from the audience of *The Crown*. *The Crown* is thus able to emphasise its relationship with history in order to sustain its serialised narrative, continually withholding narrative closure by alluding to events in the drama's future.

CONTINUING NARRATIVES, CONTINUING TRAUMA

As this chapter has shown, *The Crown*'s serial form allows it to consider its characters' royal identities as Caruthian traumatic experiences, recurring throughout and beyond its narrative

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[15] A parallel sequence takes place at the time of Charles and Diana's wedding (season 4 episode 3), further indicating the recurring trauma of these failed marriages.

events. This approach sees it diverge from the characteristics of other, more unambiguously deferential, television dramas concerning the British monarchy. The serial's status as a Netflix commission allows it to eschew the regulatory regime and commercial imperatives that restrict the depiction of royalty in dramas such as *Victoria*. The central conflict between Elizabeth's public and private identities connects the serial's concept to its negotiation of fact and fiction, allowing *The Crown* to acknowledge its acts of speculation through recurring motifs of the media and the use of archival material. These display the intertextual strategy that Brian Ott and Cameron Walter term "creative appropriation or inclusion", where texts incorporate fragments of other works (2000: 437-8). Ott and Walter assert that inclusion "frequently comments on the text that it steals from or on that text's role in the larger culture", with this commentary ranging "from critique to celebration" (ibid.: 437). In *The Crown*, inclusion contributes to the serial's ambiguity, acknowledging that multiple interpretations of its central characters and the monarchy as a whole are possible. The historical gazes of Elizabeth, Philip and Margaret further display what is concealed and revealed by *The Crown*'s narrative, encouraging the media-literate viewer to negotiate the drama's ambiguities and recognise that it does not offer a definitive interpretation of the royal family.

The commissioning of *The Crown* by an internet-distributed television network facilitates its transnational outlook, evident in both its production and narrative. While the characteristics of Nordic Noir establish the serial's post-heritage elements, asserting the complexities of its themes, the international narratives of "Dear Mrs Kennedy" reveal the potential issues of applying more diverse perspectives to a nationally focused story. The leaders of America and Ghana are unable to be investigated with the depth of the serial's central British characters, causing the ideological limitations of heritage drama to re-emerge. As Netflix itself is "a vehicle for cultural exchange" (Jenner, 2018: 192), transnational narratives are especially important to its role as a near-global television distributor. The conglomerated niche strategy of its distribution does not ensure that internet-distributed television's diverse storytelling is sensitive to the cultures it includes. Nevertheless, *The Crown* exemplifies how institutional shifts in the television of the 2010s have facilitated post-heritage approaches to British history. Unlike the other case studies in this project, *The Crown* has been successful as a long-form drama production; it will run for a total of around sixty hours by the end of its final season, and is concluding at this point at the behest of its creator rather than network commissioners (Kanter, 2020). The drama represents an early example of Netflix's intentions for non-American productions, a template that has since been followed by examples such as *Cable Girls* (Spain, 2017-20), *Dark* (Germany, 2017-20) and

The Rain (Denmark, 2018-20). On Netflix, *The Crown* is able to pursue a culturally British narrative with international relevance, making use of heritage spectacle to showcase the drama's high production values while avoiding a deferential attitude towards the monarchy. The serial therefore reveals the post-heritage elements facilitated by internet distributed television; rather than indicating Netflix's shift towards more populist dramas, it demonstrates that the freedoms offered by the platform are conducive to developments in the form of period drama. The following chapter returns to linear television, evaluating the formal innovations that are possible within traditional networks.

Chapter 4
"Let Me See You": Haunting the past in *The Living and the Dead*

I'm not trying to haunt you or your son[…] I just want to get on with my life. I just want to go home. I just need proof I'm not mad. You've seen me, Nathan; let me see you.

--- Lara (*The Living and the Dead*: episode 6)

The first image of Nathan Appleby (Colin Morgan) in *The Living and the Dead* is a full-screen, sepia-toned photograph, showing Nathan standing in a wheat field in Victorian dress (figure 7). The late nineteenth century is presented through this image as a tangible artefact, a photograph that could be found in an archive, experienced from the vantage point of the present day. Slowly, the still image fades into full colour before Nathan eventually mutters "can I move?", prompting the image to cut to a reverse shot that reveals his wife Charlotte (Charlotte Spencer) manning a box camera. The televisual image thus moves from the photograph to the moment of its taking, where Nathan is not preserved in celluloid but consciously standing still to allow the capturing to take place. When he finally moves, Nathan and the world he inhabits are brought to life, rescued from the impersonal formality of the still photograph; as if celebrating his renewed vitality, Nathan seizes his wife and they embrace passionately in the wheat field. *The Living and the Dead* tells the story of this marriage, Nathan's second following the deaths of his first wife and son, through which he attempts to rebuild his life and overcome the trauma of his grief. It is also the story of the fictional rural community of Shepzoy in Somerset, where tradition and superstition collide

This image is unavailable.

Figure 7: The opening photograph of Nathan (Colin Morgan), which demonstrates the uncanniness of the archive image (*The Living and the Dead*, BBC/BBC America: episode 1)

with the Applebys' desire to modernise their farming industry. Most centrally, *The Living and the Dead* is a story of the supernatural. Spirits, including that of Nathan's son Gabriel (Arthur Bateman), surround Shepzoy House and pollute the wider village, transferring Nathan's individual trauma to the community he leads. Nathan's pioneering expertise in psychology allows him to offer aid to haunted individuals, his knowledge promising to resolve the crises of the soul. However, such scientific resolutions are confounded by the final moment of the first episode, where Nathan encounters a woman from the twenty-first century (Chloe Pirrie). The woman is eventually revealed to be his descendant, Lara, who is herself experiencing visions of Gabriel (episode 6). The mutual haunting between past and present is the driving force of *The Living and the Dead*'s season-long narrative arc, with Lara's otherworldly intervention directly altering the traumatic history of Shepzoy and the Appleby family. This narrative foregrounds the impact of the contemporary era on televisual depictions of the past.

This chapter considers *The Living and the Dead*'s distinct approach to history through its post-heritage elements of interrogation and subversion. Its first section will focus on the intersection of the past and the present through the drama's form. *The Living and the Dead* is a serialised series, incorporating significant serial elements within an episodic structure. This form destabilises the heritage security of the series form, while still allowing narrative closure at the level of individual episodes and the season. Interrogation will be further shown through the series' association with the televisual tradition of supernatural or 'uncanny' dramas. The chapter's second section will explore Nathan's position as landowner and community leader, which is undermined by his lack of control over the supernatural. Nathan's grief over Gabriel's death will be shown to become a collective trauma for the village's inhabitants. Through this analysis, the trauma of *The Living and the Dead* will be considered in LaCaprian terms, the intersections of past and present suggesting a working through process that may resolve the recursions of the traumatic experience in conjunction with the series form. The final section will return to the archival image, considering the specific media archaeology of *The Living and the Dead*. Central to this concept is the image of Lara's iPad, which serves as both a historical object, filtered through the Victorian characters' drawings and recollections, and a digital repository of the spirits of Shepzoy. Like photography and television before it, the iPad is shown to facilitate supernatural experiences, becoming another medium through which the past is experienced. Theoretical writing on media archaeology will inform this analysis, revealing the importance of objects of the past to *The Living and the Dead*'s mise-en-scène. This will be related to the series' climactic

narrative events, which suggest that traumatic experiences are passed down through the generations.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

The Living and the Dead contributes to the trend of television dramas that pursue questions of culture and identity through the uncanny. While this mode of interrogation is not limited to formats based upon the supernatural, the narratives of these dramas centralise the role of the otherworldly in understanding the lived world. The innovations of *Twin Peaks* present an early example of uncanny television through the drama's self-conscious approach. As discussed in chapter 2, *Twin Peaks*' musical leitmotifs become decoupled from their characters of origin, allowing music to function as an organising element of the drama. Isabella van Elferen expands upon this concept, arguing that the decoupling of Laura Palmer's theme positions music itself as a ghostly presence:

> The theme keeps returning throughout the series, always reviving the unspoken uncanniness of that first scene [the discovery of Laura's body] – sometimes when Laura Palmer is talked of, but more often when she is absent for plot characters. This makes her an almost constant absent presence for TV audiences. The repetitive leitmotif here *is* Laura Palmer's ghost. It haunts onscreen and offscreen spaces at the same time, thereby loosening the boundary between the two and creating a liminal medial space of its own[…] (2010: 291)

Van Elferen uses the Derridean term of hauntology, "the idea that originary signification is an ontological impossibility because all meaning is informed, overshadowed, and haunted by the ghost of other meanings" (ibid.: 287), to place this function of music in a conceptual framework. Music and the other media of *Twin Peaks* are accordingly described as 'hauntographical agents', "revealing nothing but the hauntological void behind the symbolic, thus opening a space that is a liminal, postdialectic abyss" (ibid.: 288). Wheatley believes this sense of absence represents a 'new American Gothic', establishing *Twin Peaks*' "mood of melancholy and desolation" (2006: 163). This mood is identified in the unsettlingly unpopulated small-town images and haunting music of the serial's title sequence, which reveals "an absence of the human and the social in the serial, and refers to the deep sense of loneliness and isolation experienced by *Twin Peaks*' central characters" (ibid.: 164). Gothic characteristics are also realised through the subversion of the domestic household, with camera angles and extreme close-ups "rendering the familiar strange and evoking the uncanny within the domestic space" (ibid.: 165). Despite its contemporary setting, temporal haunting is also apparent through *Twin Peaks*' 1950s-influenced mise-en-scène, which according to Wheatley "constantly 'haunts' the present aesthetically" (ibid.: 170). The

uncanniness of *Twin Peaks* therefore reveals how the representation of various media and aesthetics can open up existential questions that challenge national and cultural identities.

The intersection of ghost stories and the television medium is further established by *Ghostwatch* (BBC, 1992). *Ghostwatch* is a single drama presented as non-fiction, where the 'live' investigation of a haunted house (fronted by Michael Parkinson) results in mass possession through the act of the broadcast itself. Lorna Jowett and Stacey Abbott describe this development, acknowledging that "within contemporary TV horror the television serves as a conduit, both to other worlds and to other televisions" (2013: 189). Viewers share the experience of the uncanny, connecting them as a collective to the events on-screen. In the case of *Ghostwatch*, this caused the "fictional broadcast hysteria" to be followed by a "real broadcast hysteria", as viewers questioned whether the events shown were really happening and inundated the BBC with panicked phone calls (ibid.). Murray Leeder expands upon the importance of this perceived subterfuge, identifying the drama's self-consciousness: "*Ghostwatch* cleverly uses the BBC to deracinate the BBC's own authority, to expose its brand of cultural nationalism and internal colonization, and even as it exposes television as uncanny, it does the same to the nation" (2013: 182). The cultural perception of television, including the authority of the BBC, can therefore be interrogated by the encroachment of the uncanny onto its narratives. Furthermore, *Ghostwatch*'s exploration of communication media is not restricted to television, extending back to nineteenth century spiritualism. Taking inspiration from the fraudulent ghostly encounters of the Fox sisters in 1848, *Ghostwatch*'s narrative centres on the iconography of the haunted house. As Leeder explains,

> *Ghostwatch* is a newer exploration of the entanglement of media and the supernatural that received a significant early synthesis in Fox house and resonates through to the present day. The Fox house became a site of the blurring of public and private space, in which the homely setting proves a contact point with another world and is transformed into a place of public scrutiny in the process. (ibid.: 177)

The potential of the spirit world to break free from the constraints of the haunted house and the medium through which it is communicated is therefore established through *Ghostwatch*'s innovative presentation.

Narratives of haunting within a series form are demonstrated by *Sea of Souls* (BBC, 2004-07). According to Catherine Spooner, *Sea of Souls* establishes "the university as a locus for hauntings" (2010: 176), allowing the search for academic knowledge to attempt to rationalise supernatural experiences. The central question of whether the supernatural realm exists is perennially unresolved, however, sustaining the series format as the "body of [paranormal]

knowledge continually exceeds the framework that the academy attempts to place around it" (ibid.: 177). The series also "opens up a space for epistemological critique", revealing multiple sources of knowledge and the "social function" of listening to ghosts (ibid.: 181). While these characteristics associate *Sea of Souls* with *The Living and the Dead*, the two series diverge through their respective relationships with ambiguity. While *The Living and the Dead* confirms the existence of the supernatural beyond reasonable doubt, *Sea of Souls*' first two seasons "sustain the tension between rationalism and faith" by allowing ambiguity to remain (ibid.). This also sustains the series format, facilitating further episodic stories and continued viewership as the audience attempts to glean the elusive truth through narrative and aesthetic clues. However, the third season dispenses with this ambiguity through increased use of special effects to depict ghostly encounters, moving its central characters towards firm belief in the occult (ibid.: 181-3). It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that this was the last season of *Sea of Souls*' regular format. *The Living and the Dead*, on the other hand, uses its lack of ambiguity to further its interrogation into the past; the cumulative knowledge revealed by its ghostly figures allows the series' post-heritage investigation to be sustained and, despite the drama's series form, developed over time.

Katie Moylan considers the uncanniness of *Top of the Lake*'s first season (BBC/UKTV/Sundance, 2013) and *Les Revenants* (Canal+, 2012-15), establishing the "sense of the uncanny that both complicates and enriches the form of the miniseries" (2017: 269-70). These dramas develop "a dialectical narrative structure that rotates between a rational procedural plotline and an irrational, less linear narrative of a secretive community" (ibid.: 270), revealing the dynamic between conventional television forms and conceptual innovations. This echoes the co-existence of heritage and post-heritage elements in period drama, furthered by the visual spectacle of these dramas. The landscapes depicted – New Zealand's Otago region in *Top of the Lake* and a French Alpine town in *Les Revenants* – are also crucial to the representation of the uncanny according to Moylan:

> Both *Les Revenants* and *Top of the Lake* activate the landscape, foregrounding and framing it as an entity that surrounds and dwarfs the small built community depicted, which in turn threatens the perceived solidity of home represented by these communities and creates narrative space for textual manifestations of the uncanny. (ibid.: 271)

Music can also emphasise narrative uncanniness, as the instrumental score for *Les Revenants*[1] demonstrates (ibid.: 278). Additionally, *Top of the Lake* centralises the empathy between detective Robin Griffin (Elisabeth Moss) and Tui (Jacqueline Joe), the pregnant twelve-year-old at

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[1] Composed and performed by Mogwai.

the heart of her investigation, through their traumatic experiences; Moylan describes this empathy as "solidifying their shared struggle against emotional and physical annihilation through abuse" (ibid.: 274). Trauma connects these two figures, with Robin's experiences worked through alongside the solving of the criminal narrative. In *Les Revenants*, meanwhile, the trauma of loss is confronted by the literal return of the dead. Despite the working through processes of their procedural elements, in both *Top of the Lake* and *Les Revenants* "the rational mechanisms of the official investigation are shown as ultimately ineffectual" (ibid.: 280). The uncanny therefore dominates over the rational, the more conventional televisual narratives unable to resolve the questions of trauma and identity that lie at the heart of these dramas.

The *Living and the Dead* was created and primarily written by Ashley Pharoah, who previously co-created *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-07) and its sequel series *Ashes to Ashes* (BBC, 2008-10). Like *The Living and the Dead*, *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* negotiate the conventions of procedural series television with conceptual innovation through the collision of the contemporary era and the past. *Life on Mars* sees Sam Tyler (John Simm) transported from the Manchester police force of 2006 to 1973, where his role as detective is enacted in a world more inspired by *The Sweeney* (ITV, 1975-78) than the reality of 1970s police work (Nelson, 2007: 177; de Groot, 2016a: 241-2). The televisual identity of the past inhabited by Sam and, in *Ashes to Ashes*, Alex Drake (Keeley Hawes) is explained narratively by the final episode of the latter series (season 3 episode 8), where the uncanny world is revealed as a form of purgatory for dead or dying police officers. Amy Holdsworth considers the nostalgic quality of *Life on Mars*' constructed televisual world:

> *Life on Mars* is both an example *of* but also reveals *how* television becomes significant for our sense of change and continuity. The comparative function of both television memory and nostalgia highlights the complexity of the relationship between past and present individual, [and] cultural and national identities[…] (2011: 110, emphases in original)

Nostalgia is found in the recreation of 1970s television; it can also become defamiliarised and uncanny, however, as Sam's visions of the BBC test card girl show (ibid.: 111). Nelson elaborates on *Life on Mars'* extension of heritage: "in providing undoubted generic pleasures, it has the potential also to be thought-provoking and to invite complex seeing" (2007: 179). The time travel aspect of the series' concept assists this "complex seeing"; according to de Groot, this facilitates a "desire to reimagine the past and examine it in more complex fashion" (2016a: 241). This is intensified by the conceptual development of *Ashes to Ashes*, set in the early 1980s, where Alex "recognises her fantasy of history, articulating a surprise and astonishment at the detail she creates and clearly conceptualising the past as a means of meditating upon the present" (ibid.:

243). As in *The Living and the Dead*, the past and the present are liable to haunt each other through Sam and Alex's temporal incursions in *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*. According to Jowett and Abbott, the final revelation of *Ashes to Ashes* "reinforces the link between television and the afterlife", allowing the medium to serve "as the channel through which the dead can communicate with the living" (2013: 185).

 The Living and the Dead adopts elements of the diverse dramas discussed above to activate television as a medium to the uncanny, combining representations of nineteenth and twenty-first century media, conflicts between academic knowledge and tradition, interrogation of identity through trauma, and incursions between the past and the present. The first three of these will be analysed in detail in the later sections of this chapter; the remainder of this section will consider the mutual hauntings of *The Living and the Dead* through its formal characteristics. The drama begins in accordance with the series form, the story of possessed teenager Harriet Denning (Tallulah Haddon) concluding by the end of the first episode. However, Lara's first appearance ends the episode on a cliffhanger, establishing the story arc that lasts for the entire season and competes for dominance with the episodic narratives. This situates *The Living and the Dead* as an example of the serialised series form, allowing the production to be positioned as a renewable format while maintaining "the addictive potentials of primetime soap opera" (Dunleavy, 2009: 157-8) through its season-long story arc and cliffhanger episode endings. However, the series also displays the series-serial characteristic of "reliance on well-drawn individualised characters" rather than interchangeable character types (ibid.: 155). Nathan remains the centre of the drama's narrative concept, the psychological investigation into his character continuing as his supernatural encounters cause his behaviour to become increasingly erratic. This psychological investigation would also have continued beyond the first season's story arc had the drama been recommissioned, as indicated by the series' cliffhanger ending: after the spirits of Lara and Gabriel have receded and his state of mind is recovered, Nathan is summoned by a 1920s-era séance and accused of killing his wife (episode 6). Its hybridisation of series and serial reveals *The Living and the Dead*'s central formal innovation, which corresponds to the distinctive relationship between past and present in its narrative. Initially, serialised elements only have a minor impact upon the episodic narratives; it might be assumed that Harriet would not appear again after the initial episodic narrative of her possession is resolved, yet she features throughout the series and plays a key role in Nathan's attempt to understand his visions. The young boy haunted in episode 2, Charlie Thatcher (Isaac Andrews), is killed at the episode's conclusion, further subverting expectations of closure around the series form. Charlie's family

subsequently leaves the village, but do so at the start of the following episode rather than at the end of episode 2, emphasising that the ongoing impact of recent events cannot be contained within the series form. These peripheral markers indicate the sophistication of *The Living and the Dead*'s narrative, allowing the ongoing narratives concerning Nathan and his family history to be furthered by each episodic story.

The Living and the Dead further undermines the stability of its series form through the subversion of heritage iconography, centred upon the heritage/haunted house palimpsest of Shepzoy House. The house is first seen in a medium shot as Nathan and Charlotte look upon it from a distance, a viewpoint that evokes the opening to *Pride and Prejudice* (BBC/A&E, 1995) (Ellington, 2001: 93) and the frequent establishing shots of *Downton Abbey*. The disturbing elements that lie within this idyllic facade are quickly established, however. Iris Kleinecke-Bates identifies the potency of subverting the heritage household through Gothic elements, analysing the 1997 adaptation of *The Woman in White* (BBC/WGBH):

> Heritage settings, when used, are emphasised as a façade to the sinister 'reality' lying underneath the picturesque images of pastoral 'Englishness'. Thus, Sir Percival Glyde's house, Blackwater Park, while visually appealing when first viewed from a distance in a typical 'heritage' shot, is revealed as a Gothic pile, the establishing of the outside space clearly a set-up for the unravelling of this image by what lies within. (2014: 73)

Similarly, the beautiful surroundings of *The Living and the Dead*'s household are belied by a shadowy, haunted aspect within, established in the first episode when Harriet paints the recurring image of Lara and her iPad on the drawing room wall in her own blood. Later, an increasingly fixated Nathan uses pig's blood to recreate this image, hypnotising Harriet in an effort to understand his visions (episode 5). He does this despite the psychological risk posed to the recovered Harriet by revisiting her possession, prioritising his paranormal investigation over his responsibility as landowner. The final episode subverts the series' narrative entirely in its opening section, following Lara to the twenty-first century Shepzoy House and revealing it as neglected and decaying (episode 6). The darkness on the periphery is allowed to fully manifest through the temporal shift, confirming that the heritage household cannot be recaptured in the present even if its spirits are exorcised. Similar to *Sea of Souls*' university setting, the irrational and the uncanny encroach and ultimately overwhelm the security of the heritage household, with ghosts of the past and the future equally culpable in this subversion. The household is also unable to contain the uncanny; even the heritage view of its exterior is undermined by the information that Gabriel died in the lake that faces the house.

The conflict between past and present is also interrogated in the corporeal realm through the depiction of Shepzoy's farming community. Nathan and Charlotte's intention to bring the industrial revolution to the isolated village challenges its entrenched traditions, where the same families have farmed the land for generations. The difficulties the Applebys face in modernising their industry are apparent from their first innovation, an expensive traction engine (episode 1). Although the machine works as intended when tested, Charlotte's glee is undermined by the concerned onlookers who fear for their livelihoods. Soon after, farm manager John (Steve Oram) suddenly commits suicide by encouraging horses to drag his plough across his prostrate figure. This death, which concludes a long generational line of farm managers, is unconnected to the supernatural occurrences in Shepzoy, revealing that the series' historical moment itself presents a significant threat to the community. Correspondingly, despite the absence of the otherworldly, the scene remains demonstrably uncanny: in addition to its fatal activation of the landscape, John's suicide is cross-cut with Nathan and Charlotte searching for Harriet, and housemaid Gwen (Kerrie Hayes) reaching for a crow caught in a trap. The sequence is underscored by the traditional Irish lament "She Moved Through the Fair",[2] its haunting melody uniting the three circumstances (which, in Gwen's case, is purely illustrative) and emphasising the uncanniness in a similar manner to the music of *Les Revenants*. Although the geographical closeness of the scenes is obscured by the sequence's editing, its elements are united when Harriet collapses in reaction to John's death and Charlotte, looking past her, sees his body in the adjacent field. The community is here united by uncanny empathy between characters: Charlotte's anger at Harriet is assuaged by the latter's display of emotion, while Nathan is confronted by the impact of his reforming zeal on the workers he is responsible for.

The tragic results of the Applebys' progressive ideas continue in *The Living and the Dead*'s second episode, culminating in Charlie's death. When Nathan's bid to bring a railway line to Shepzoy involves the excavation of an abandoned mine, Charlie is visited by the spirits of workers of his own age who died there decades previously. The land survey involves explosions on the land, further activating the landscape and causing showers of orange mud reminiscent of blood to rain down on the watching Charlie (episode 2). The episode thus manifests the anxieties felt by Victorians at a time when, as described by Bown, Burdett and Thurschwell, "the collapsing of time and distance achieved by modern technologies that were transforming daily life was often felt to be uncanny" (2004: 1). Nathan himself establishes the Victorian state of mind in *The Living and*

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[2] All music in *The Living and the Dead* is created and performed by The Insects. The vocals of "She Moved Through the Fair" are sung by Elizabeth Fraser (Peters, 2018: 218).

the Dead, explaining the attraction of both psychology and spiritualism by suggesting that "the old certainties are gone" (episode 1).[3] As Bond and Craps point out, the development of railway networks was a particular focus of these cultural anxieties, with fear over the dangers of train travel giving rise to the notion of physical injuries with psychological causes (2020: 14-6). Although the Shepzoy villagers' fear of the railway is based on superstition, it is given credibility by the supernatural forces awakened by the explosion. This episode's narrative is striking through its ending in abject failure: Nathan searches for the disturbed Charlie in the old mine, but discovers his dead body instead. This tragedy is emphasised by the context of Nathan's position as the estate's owner; Charlie's aunt Agnes (Pooky Quesnel), who raised him as her own child, is proved naïve in her certainty that Nathan's rescue attempt will be successful, while Nathan's inclination to treat Charlie as a surrogate for Gabriel ends in a recursion of his traumatic loss rather than the working through of his guilt. At this stage, then, the LaCaprian concept of 'acting out' remains dominant.

Nathan's former profession as a pioneering psychologist provides a logical and modern perspective on the uncanny happenings in Shepzoy, challenged by the increasingly inexplicable events in the village. Bown, Burdett and Thurschwell establish the significance of interrogating the Victorian psyche through the uncanny: "the occult has been a rich source for talking about both individual psychology (the haunted mind) and collective political experience (the sense of being haunted by history)" (2004: 10). Nathan initially approaches Harriet's difficulties from a scientific perspective, concluding that she has manifested the depraved persona of Abel North through fear of her own sexuality (episode 1). Charlie's disturbed behaviour is also attributed a psychological cause by Agnes, who suggests he is affected by the anxieties around the Applebys' industrial reforms (episode 2). In both cases, intellectual theories fall short of the challenge presented: Abel's spirit is exorcised through the performance of a baptism, while Charlie's life cannot be saved by Nathan's paternalistic intervention. As in *Sea of Souls*, the otherworldly realm cannot be contained by the imposition of logic and academia. Conversely, the certainty of religion is able to stand firm against the uncanny, as shown by the stoic Reverend Denning (Nicholas Woodeson). When Nathan confides in Denning about his first visions of Lara and the resultant questioning of his beliefs, the priest remains unfazed, assuring Nathan that he has "never" seen anything he cannot explain (episode 2). Later, when Denning is himself confronted with supernatural occurrences, religious means are unexpectedly successful in calming the spirits:

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[3] Richard Noakes (2004) demonstrates the school of thought that science and spiritualism offer rival responses to the lack of certainty in the Victorian era.

Harriet is saved from a supernatural hanging by a spray of holy water, and the subsequent exorcism at Shepzoy House appears to be effective until Nathan causes its premature end (episode 5). The spirits of Shepzoy accede to religious authority rather than science, displaying the efficacy of the belief systems at the heart of the community.

THE MASTER AND THE VILLAGE

LaCapra's conceptualisation of trauma reveals the significance of Nathan's psychological investigation in *The Living and the Dead*. LaCapra considers the Derridean term *différance*, defined as "play resisting seemingly dichotomous binary opposites" (2001: 20). This term allows him to further consider the function of acting out:

> Undecidability and unregulated *différance*, threatening to disarticulate relations, confuse self and other, and collapse all distinctions, including that between present and past, are related to transference and prevail in trauma and in post-traumatic acting out in which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes – scenes in which the past returns and the future is blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. (ibid.: 21)

Acting out thus involves the blurring of the boundaries between past and present, which can be recognised through Nathan and Lara's mutual haunting. The narrative crisis of *The Living and the Dead*'s central story arc is bound up in the experience of trauma. As LaCapra indicates, the potential movement from acting out to working through can offer dramatic resolution by renewing temporal separation: "to the extent one works through trauma[…] one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (ibid.: 22). Bond and Craps summarise that "for LaCapra, the key to surviving trauma is not to surrender oneself to its endless repetitions but to find a way of reconnecting knowledge and feeling, so that the survivor can re-engage with the present and begin to look towards the future" (2020: 77). In the historical moment of *The Living and the Dead*, surviving trauma allows late-nineteenth century industrial developments to be reconciled with the traditions and heritage of Shepzoy.

> The concepts of absence and loss form another key dichotomy in LaCapra's trauma theory:
>
> Absence at a 'foundational' level cannot simply be derived from particular historical losses, however much it may be suggested or its recognition prompted by their magnitude and the intensity of one's response to them. When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community. (LaCapra, 2001: 46)

Despite these ideological risks, it is only in moving from absence to loss that working through is possible; as LaCapra explains, "the very ability to make the distinction between absence and loss[…] is one aspect of a complex process of working through" (ibid.: 47). This distinction allows historical specificity to be discovered:

> In this transhistorical sense absence is not an event and does not imply tenses (past, present, or future). By contrast, the historical past is the scene of losses that may be narrated as well as of specific possibilities that may conceivably be reactivated, reconfigured, and transformed in the present.[…] Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or symptomatic revenant. (ibid.: 48-9)

Articulating loss allows it to be located in the past while still impacting the present, reconciled but not forgotten, rather than becoming an overwhelming and continuous presence. This contrasts with the unprocessed absence that conflates the worlds of the past and present: "when mourning turns to absence and absence is conflated with loss, then mourning becomes impossible, endless, quasi-transcendental grieving scarcely (if at all) from interminable melancholy" (ibid.: 69). Despite the specificity of Nathan's loss, the trauma of *The Living and the Dead* is ultimately structural, affecting victims, perpetrators and bystanders alike (ibid.: 79). The village of Shepzoy, which the nineteenth-century scenes never leave, is an enclosed dramatic space within which all characters are subject to the hauntings and trauma that stem from Nathan's grief.

In pursuing the possibility of working through, *The Living and the Dead* develops Nathan's subjectivity to represent the village's socio-historical position. The opening scene of episode 3 displays this, contextualising Nathan's ongoing story arc against the wider community. The episode begins with Nathan walking through a hayfield while the soundtrack plays a version of the 1930s folk song "The Reaper's Ghost",[4] the refrain of which repeatedly warns "do not cross the hayfield". The song's appeal implies the dangers present in the pastoral setting, compounded by Nathan's increasing preoccupation with the dead. As he wanders, brief cutaways to moments from the preceding two episodes are shown through Nathan's recollections, beginning with the haunting final image of episode 2 that shows Charlie walking hand-in-hand across the same hayfield with the boys who died in the mine. In episode 2, the boys fade from the scene to leave a lingering shot of the empty hayfield, representing both the spirits' departure from the realm of the living and Charlie's death. The image is imagined by Nathan on both occasions, demonstrating the centrality of his subjectivity and suggesting that his walk through the hayfield is compelled by the impact of the vision. As he continues, he also recalls the apparitions of Abel North and Lara

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[4] Composed by Richard Dyer Bennet and sung by Sean Cook (Peters, 2018: 218-9).

(both from episode 1), indicating the accumulating psychological impact of the season's events. This opening sequence therefore directly challenges the notion that memory between episodes is unimportant in series drama.

The pastoral image that opens episode 3 foreshadows the episode's interrogation of Shepzoy's rural community and the structural trauma it faces. In the episode, the Applebys face the test of their first harvest while villager Peter (Robert Emms) is haunted by reputed witch Clarity Winlove (Katy Carmichael). While this episode incrementally progresses the story arc of Nathan's grief, ending with the first glimpse of Gabriel's ghost, its primary focus is its self-contained story, which opens and resolves within an hour. This episodic story combines Peter's supernatural encounter with the superstitions of the vulnerable rural community, along with Charlotte's more progressive perspective. These three narrative strands pursue an interrogation of Shepzoy's socio-historical position, connecting the legacy of the land to supernatural occurrences. The idyllic pastoral setting of the abandoned water mill, where Peter's ghostly visions are focused, is subverted by the dereliction within as well as Clarity's otherworldly presence. The subversion is emphasised further when Peter mirrors the famous actions of Colin Firth's Darcy (see part III introduction) and dives into the mill pond, before being disturbed by a vision of Clarity's body under the water. Meanwhile, another line of bodies crosses the hayfield in an echo of Charlie's uncanny departure. This time, however, it is a line of expectant workers who stand by as Charlotte tests the wheat and decides to delay the harvest for another day. Subsequently, Clarity's spirit bids Peter to sacrifice his mother, Maud (Elizabeth Berrington), to save the harvest, a portent that gains credibility when the crops are discovered to be infected with beetles. While the workers blame Peter for this 'curse', Charlotte finds a scientific solution by burning caramelised sugar. For the villagers, the supernatural and the scientific are indistinguishable, the smoke that kills the beetles described as a "spell" equivalent to the initial curse. The episode's events are also connected to the collective trauma of 1862. In this year, the harvest was lost to another beetle infestation; it is eventually revealed that the young Maud blamed Clarity for this curse, causing her to be drowned as a witch in the millpond. Maud combines the psychological trauma of living through the 1862 harvest and the guilt of her role in Clarity's death. Both traumatic events threaten to recur in episode 3, but are ultimately worked through: the harvest is saved by Charlotte's quick thinking, Nathan intervenes when Jack (Joel Gillman) attempts to drown Peter, and Peter's forgiveness of Maud allows Clarity's spirit to retreat. The tradition of the harvest festival, both practical and ritualistic, maintains order in the

rural community and suggests an alternative meaning to the refrain of "The Reaper's Ghost": "do not cross [antagonise] the hayfield".

At the end of episode 3, it appears that the stories of Peter, Maud and Jack are completed: Peter, no longer haunted, can live happily with Maud, while the homicidal Jack is banished from the village by Nathan. While Peter does not reappear in the following episodes, Jack and Maud return to play significant roles in episodes 4 and 5 respectively. Rather than continuing stories began in their earlier appearances, however, their recurring appearances are episodic in nature, mitigating the need for audience memory. Jack is found living in the woods following his banishment in episode 4; the narrative of his affair with Alice (Gina Bramhill) is, however unconnected to his function in episode 3. Maud's appearance in episode 5 is even further removed, with no mention made of Peter or Clarity. These episodic roles could equally be performed by new characters, displaying *The Living and the Dead*'s grounding in the series form. The repetition of figures across the series nevertheless contributes to the verisimilitude of the fictional Shepzoy. Concurrently, aspects of episodic resolution are withheld from Nathan: Clarity's brief appearance at Charlotte's bedside can be inferred as a benevolent influence when the latter learns she is pregnant (episode 3), yet Nathan's ignorance of this development sees him preoccupied by the meaning of Clarity's visitation throughout episode 4. The pursuit of the story arc at the levels of the individual and the community therefore becomes as important as resolving each episode's self-contained narrative.

The psychological trauma of Nathan's grief spreads across the community over the course of the series, symbolised by the increasing presence of the ghosts of Shepzoy. This reaches a climax in episode 5, through a mass sighting of Roundhead attackers that even the sceptical Charlotte cannot deny. The sighting stems from Shepzoy's specific traditions and superstitions: the Roundhead spirits re-enact the 'All Hallows' Massacre' that took place in the village during the English Civil War, a tragedy that has evolved into children's games and an annual festival. The significance of this pre-existing collective trauma is emphasised by a striking sequence at the start of episode 5, which contextualises the episode's narrative within its fictional setting. The sequence is narrated in voiceover by Maud, while a sparse violin and flute duet plays on the soundtrack:

> You know the stories of the All Hallows' Massacre. We all do. About how the Roundhead army rode on Shepzoy with their muskets and swords, slaughtering all before them. Killed every man woman and child, they did. And those that tried to flee were given the worst death of all: hunted down and strung up in the trees by their necks. Gutted like pigs, and

> there were that many hanging in the woods that the ground was sodden with blood. And it was All Hallows' time when it happened. Just like now. (episode 5)

As Maud speaks, the camera utilises second-degree style, becoming an active participant in the scene; it moves with a group of village children as they run around a yard with a scarecrow at its centre, before becoming distracted by a man cutting eyeholes in a hessian sack. The image then cuts to one of the children in close-up, standing completely still and staring towards the camera as the sack is lowered over her head. Subsequently, the hooded children resume their game whilst another sack is placed upon the scarecrow's head. The camera is not part of the game now, instead panning across the yard as the scene plays in slow motion. The slowed running motion of the children, their obscured faces and the camera's distance creates an unsettling tone, emphasised by Maud's narration; the continued impact of the children lost to the massacre is represented by the ghostly performances of their nineteenth century counterparts, even before the presence of actual ghosts impacts the narrative. The next shot shows the scarecrow as a villager finishes its arrangement. Simultaneous to Maud's description of the hung victims, the villager's exit from the shot reveals a hanging rope around the scarecrow's neck. The narration ends with a shot of the children, still in slow motion, running around the hanged scarecrow, underlining the macabre imagery of the sequence and the tradition itself. As Maud finishes speaking, the soundtrack music segues into a female choral line, while the image cuts between a succession of brief shots that gradually reveal Gideon (Malcolm Storry) in the process of slaughtering a boar while Maud looks on anxiously. As Gideon strikes the boar with his knife, the image suddenly returns to the yard as one of the hooded children stops still in apparent response to the sounds of the dying animal, still audible on the soundtrack. The editing of this sequence, along with the ethereal music, contributes to the sense of the uncanny, connecting the traumatic events of the past to the continuing routines and rituals of Shepzoy. Past and present are tied together through Shepzoy's traditions, both superstitious and practical, their traumatic recurrence existing independently of Gabriel's death and Nathan's ghostly encounters. However, the confluence of individual and collective trauma is shown to bring both to a crisis at the end of the episode: Maud is killed in a ghostly re-enactment of the All Hallows' Massacre, while Nathan halts the exorcism at Shepzoy House after discovering the image of Gabriel in a recent photograph. Nathan chooses the living over the dead with his actions, allowing the massacre's recursion to continue and neglecting his role as the community's leader. He is accordingly unable to help the villagers who subsequently appeal to him for assistance, offering only a rambling speech that fails to take their collective trauma seriously. At this point of crisis, working through

still seems impossible; it is only through the direct intervention of the twenty-first century that it can be achieved.

THE IMAGE AND THE REALITY

The incorporation of elements that both pre- and post-date the primary nineteenth century setting of *The Living and the Dead* is established by its distinctive title sequence. A new recording of the pagan song "A Lyke Wake Dirge",[5] like the traditional songs featured in the drama itself, brings together a centuries-old melody with modern instrumentation and production to create immediate temporal dissonance. In conjunction with this music, the images of the title sequence are equally anachronistic, taken from Stan Brakhage's experimental film *Mothlight* (1963). As David E. James describes, *Mothlight* was "made without a camera by sticking fragments of insects and grasses on a strip of transparent mylar, then passing the assemblage through the printer" (2002: 285). The resultant imagery is liminal and ephemeral, as Michel Delville establishes:

> The moth's suicidal flight towards light[…] represents the agony of the starving artist whose personal life is sacrificed on the altar of his creation. As for the dead moths [sic] wings stuck on Brakhage's filmstrip, they are paradoxically *reanimated* after being fed into the projector[…] Brakhage's close inspection of the veined textures of the flickering fragments of nature which appear on the screen progressively cohere into a single organic environment of shrouded, unreadable shapes. (Caws and Delville, 2017: 72, emphasis in original)

The moths of *Mothlight* are thus caught between alive and dead; when reanimated once more for *The Living and the Dead*'s title sequence, they are joined by the single eyes of Nathan and Charlotte, looking towards the viewer from the past. Brakhage's "reinvention of the uses to which film could be put" (James, 2002: 285) corresponds with the modernising attitudes of both Applebys, Charlotte through her interest in nascent photographic technology and Nathan through his psychological research. These progressive activities seek to uncover authentic realities, of the image and the mind respectively, but are shown to be insufficient by the drama's supernatural elements. The resonance between Brakhage's style and "the expression of altered states of consciousness" (ibid.: 286) correlates to the shift in perception required to accept Shepzoy's ghostly presences, as well as foreshadowing Nathan's eventual recourse to mind-altering substances to make sense of the supernatural (episode 6). The common view of moths as suicidal creatures also reflects Nathan's anguish following Gabriel's death, which intensifies over the course of the series. Furthermore, as *Mothlight* is anachronistic to *The Living and the Dead*'s

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[5] Sung by Howlin' Lord (Peters, 2018: 218).

narrative by over fifty years, and is contemporary to neither the composition nor the recording of the accompanying "A Lyke Wake Dirge", its use displays the complex overlapping of time incorporated by the drama, evoking the recursion of trauma across the temporal gulf between the 1890s and the 2010s. The presence of both *Mothlight* and "A Lyke Wake Dirge" in the title sequence introduces *The Living and the Dead*'s use of artefacts and recordings to construct its mise-en-scène of the past.

The importance of artefacts to *The Living and the Dead*'s interrogation of history exposes its media archaeology, which uncovers and recontextualises media objects from the vantage point of the twenty-first century. Jussi Parikka defines the "spirit" of media archaeology as "thinking the new and the old in parallel lines, and cultivating enthusiasm for media, technology and science through aesthetics, politics and other fields of critical inquiry" (2012: 2). *The Living and the Dead*'s narrative accordingly draws parallels between the nineteenth and twenty-first century, with the progressive perspectives of Nathan and Charlotte encouraging an interest in their historical moment that moves beyond heritage impulses. The newest developments in late nineteenth century industry, psychology and media are explored, their innovations and physical objects encouraging the "enthusiasm" Parikka describes. These objects are relics of the past, the significance of which is described by Lowenthal: "like memories, relics once abandoned or forgotten may become more treasured than those in continued use; the discontinuity in their history focuses attention on them, particularly if scarcity or fragility threatens their imminent extinction" (1985: 240). Thomas Elsaesser further considers media archaeology in terms of film history:

> An archaeology respects the inevitable distance that the past has from our present perspective and even makes 'otherness' the basis of its methodology[…] Media archaeology is therefore perhaps nothing more than the name for the non-place space and the suspension of temporal flows the film historian needs to occupy when trying to articulate rather than merely accommodate these several alternative, counterfactual, or parallax histories around which any study of the cross-media moving image culture now unfolds. (2016: 99)

The 'otherness' of Shepzoy's supernatural visitors allows *The Living and the Dead* to enact this methodology, the narrative creating an alternative history while additional pasts are constructed by Nathan's paranormal investigations. The twenty-first century's incursion through Lara's uncanny presence ultimately changes the Appleby family's history, creating alternative traumas in the process. *The Living and the Dead* thus continues the challenge to nostalgia pursued in *Life on Mars* (Holdsworth, 2011: 107), while expanding its focus on televisual memory (ibid.: 110) to a range of media objects.

According to de Groot, through historical objects and bodies "texts meditate upon memory, haunting, death, and the representation of the past in the present" (2016b: 89). Accordingly, historical objects provide an insight into the Victorian period and the supernatural incursion of the present in *The Living and the Dead*, as demonstrated in the first episode. Harriet's hidden cylinder recordings, the cutting edge of technology in the mid-1890s setting, are discovered during Nathan's investigation of her behaviour. The recordings yield three spectral voices, each performing their own function. First, Gideon is heard delivering an uninspiring but detailed record of the village's farming practices, a still-living figure in the drama made distant by the crackle of the phonograph, establishing the significance of documenting history in granular detail. The second recording suddenly confronts Nathan with the voice of his dead son, with Gabriel heard repeatedly calling "where are you, Daddy?" This first uncanny appearance of Gabriel foreshadows his supernatural presence later in the series, blurring the distinction between the recorded past and otherworldly intervention. Lastly, the sinister voice of Abel North is excavated, describing his desire for young girls. The recording becomes stuck, the voice repeating "bury me" before Harriet concludes his diatribe in the exaggerated growl of Abel's register. The recording, implied to have been collected through Harriet's intellectual curiosity, is thus shown to bring the voice of the dead man into the present where it can continue to do harm. Furthermore, the cylinder recordings are themselves objects of curiosity when viewed from the twenty-first century, presenting them as not just aural experiences but objects that tell a story through their physical presence. As historical objects, the recordings pursue the negotiation of authenticity that Kleinecke-Bates identifies in the 1994 adaptation of *Middlemarch*:

> The continuing presence of Victorian jewellery, household goods, even houses themselves signifies the reassuring solidity and reality of the past which eases the anxiety of loss and of the impossibility of a return. At the same time, these objects also create a sense of recognition, an emotional authenticity which links the self to the past, a material reminder of the physical presence of the past within our own reality. (2014: 68)

The supernatural incursions into Shepzoy complicate these functions, allowing the traumas of the past to be recognised in place of "reassuring solidity". The physical objects, in addition to Shepzoy House itself, nevertheless link the present to the past, emphasised when Lara searches through them in the twenty-first century (episode 6). Emily Robinson describes a similar experience in the historian's handling of physical objects of the past, alluding to the traumatic experience: "the archive is the place where historians can literally touch the past, but in doing so are simultaneously made aware of its unreachability. In a maddening paradox, concrete presence conveys unfathomable absence" (2010: 517). The temporal trajectory of *The Living and the Dead*'s

objects sees Nathan and Lara confront the unreachability of their respective pasts, connected to them through tangible artefacts but remaining separated by time.

Among the physical objects of the past, photographs continue to dominate the mise-en-scène of *The Living and the Dead*, reflecting the production's own visual representation of the nineteenth century. Elsaesser identifies the challenge to the authenticity of photography in the digital age: "if the arrival of the digital pixel 'created' the concept of the post-photographic image, the consequence was that it also changed the meaning of photographic realism" (2016: 85). This twenty-first century vantage point facilitates an exploration of photography's function in the nineteenth century; at this time, according to Jowett and Abbott, it was "perceived as both a scientific tool able to document evidence and an uncanny technology able to photograph the invisible" (2013: 180). The photographs of *The Living and the Dead* challenge concepts of reality, capturing ghostly figures from both the rational and irrational realms, and evoking the traumatic experience. As Roland Barthes describes, the subject of a photograph meets with an uncanny experience in the moment of its capture: "the Photograph (the one I *intend*) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a spectre" (1981: 14, emphasis in original). The photographic image through which Nathan first appears, which recurs throughout the series, thus emphasises his uncanny function. The staging of Nathan's photographed image, shown on-screen, also indicates the psychological and supernatural disturbances that exist within himself and the pastoral landscape respectively.

For the twenty-first century viewer, and for Lara, the sepia-toned image of Nathan confronts us with the knowledge that its subject will die, described by Barthes as the *punctum* of Time (ibid.: 96). The photographic images of *The Living and the Dead* elaborate on this, suspending their figures between alive and dead; the direct looks to camera permitted by photography, beginning with the striking first image of Nathan, allow the viewer to be confronted with television's inherent uncanniness. Clarity Winlove's presence is discovered in a group photograph marking the 1861 Shepzoy harvest, while her spirit haunts the village in 1895 (episode 3). This image is explored through another instance of second-degree style, which allows the camera to investigate Clarity's ghostly presence before the characters. Nathan looks towards the abandoned mill before the camera enters the building without him, discovering a woman's breathing and an eerie fluttering of wind before cutting to a close-up of Clarity's photographed face. The image then fades out to two successively longer shots of the harvest photograph, the first excluding Clarity and mostly out of focus, foregrounding one young girl on the left of the shot,

before the second reveals the full photograph hanging on the Applebys' wall, observed by Charlotte. The second-degree style of this transition reveals the identity of the spirit, even though her story is not yet known, connecting Clarity's history to her spectral appearance through the inherent uncanniness of photography. Later, it is revealed that the girl innocuously focused on in this sequence is a younger Maud, her representation here suggesting her role in Clarity's spectral presence long before her confession. Photography thus helps to make sense of the paranormal, revealing the continued impact of past events. Charlotte discovers this herself later in the series, after taking another group photograph to mark the All Hallows' Day festivities (episode 5). While the masked villages play spectral roles for this composition, the children playing sack-headed massacre victims appearing alongside grotesque masks, Nathan is drawn towards the future by a sighting of Lara. He is called back in time to participate in the photograph, but there is no safety to be found there: as the camera pans across the masked villagers, laughs and snarls of the figures they evoke are heard on the soundtrack before Nathan, a lone uncovered face in the composition, sombrely stands alongside the dead. Although the hoods and masks are quickly removed after the photograph is taken, the villagers returning to themselves, it is this uncanny image that is preserved. The supernatural function of the image is confirmed when Gabriel appears in the developed photograph, apparently in the moments before his death. This foreshadows the final episode, where Nathan sees Gabriel re-enacting the scene of his death but is inevitably unable to save him. The historical object created by photography performs a resurrection, confining the living to exist alongside death and the traumatic event to continue its acting out process.

The twenty-first century scenes of the series' final episode, where Lara travels to Shepzoy to investigate Nathan's life, reveals the trajectory of historical objects over generations. Images become objects, objects become archives and archives are eventually digitised, in a process that obscures as much as it reveals. Lara's iPad acts as a powerful symbol of this process, creating and compiling digitised records of Shepzoy and the Applebys while also itself acting as a mysterious artefact when observed in the nineteenth century. The tablet device, warily described as a "book of light" by Nathan, continues the tradition of "inherently uncanny" new technologies described by Jowett and Abbott, which over time includes photography and television (2013: 181). Lara uses her iPad to capture and store the artefacts passed down from Shepzoy, including the opening photograph of Nathan and, paradoxically, Gabriel's drawing of her with the same device, before recording and narrating her exploration of the house in a manner akin to the haunted house investigation of *Ghostwatch*. The iPad thus acts as a conduit to the uncanny for Lara, while its inexplicable nature from Nathan's perspective reveals its independent supernatural function.

Elsaesser considers the significance of the advent of digital media, framing it as "the chance to rethink the idea of historical change itself" (2016: 73). The digitised images captured by Lara recontextualise the objects of the past, allowing this rethinking to take place. However, as Robinson establishes, "digital facsimiles" of physical historical objects may not produce the same affective experience as the originals (2010: 509). The inadequacy of the digital is suggested by Lara's brief encounter with Harriet during her recording; unlike Charlotte's photograph that reveals Gabriel's presence, Harriet fails to appear on the recorded video when played back. Lara's twenty-first century investigation into the past is shown to be lacking compared to *The Living and the Dead*'s televisual interrogation of history, where ghosts are revealed and the artefacts of the past are made tangible.

With the digital container of Lara's iPad unable to further her supernatural investigation, her genealogical connection to the nineteenth century Applebys becomes crucial to realising the working through process. Despite Nathan's centrality in both the series' narrative and Lara's investigation, it is the latter's ancestry with Charlotte that allows the narrative to reach a resolution. The connection between Charlotte and Lara is implied at the end of episode 5: as Nathan descends into madness and the story arc reaches its crisis, Charlotte stands with the detached viewfinder section of her camera, reflecting the now-familiar pose of Lara with her iPad and drawing a parallel from past to present across the generations (figure 8). The media objects the two women hold are also connected through this visual equivalence, emphasised by

Figure 8: Charlotte (Charlotte Spencer) holds her box camera's viewfinder in the manner of Lara's iPad (*The Living and the Dead*, BBC/BBC America: episode 5)

Charlotte's selection of a negative image of Nathan's photograph (itself representing his drift towards the realm of the dead). Subsequently, Lara is unable to communicate with Nathan when exploring the house, even when she witnesses him preparing to commit suicide. Nathan and Lara are temporally misaligned in this moment, which is seen from each character's perspective in different episodes. As Lara rushes into the kitchen to stop Nathan from drinking his concocted poison, the nineteenth century room vanishes around her (episode 6); Nathan, meanwhile, sees Lara's entry into the kitchen at an earlier point in time, adding to his confusion around her presence (episode 5). With her attempt to avert disaster unsuccessful, Lara is at last able to appear to Charlotte, who is on the verge of abandoning Nathan, bringing her back to her husband's side and allowing him to choose the living over the dead (episode 6). With Lara's further intervention, Nathan is also able to speak to Gabriel, both finally accepting that they cannot be together.

Lara's increased ability to impact the past can eventually be understood as a result of her own death, caused when she swerves her car off the road to avoid another apparition of Nathan (episode 6). Lara initially supresses this event, allowing her spirit to continue her investigation without interruption. While Lara's life is lost, Nathan's is saved by her actions, rescuing the nineteenth century Shepzoy community but also creating a new traumatic recurrence across the generations. Lara's sudden death leaves her new-born daughter without a mother, reflecting her own upbringing after her mother committed suicide (apparently due to her own visions of Gabriel). The visions are implicitly instigated by motherhood, with birth and death intersecting across the generations. This connects the trauma of *The Living and the Dead* to theories of transgenerational trauma, as outlined by Bond and Craps (2020: 83-7). LaCapra identifies this as a literary device in Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved* (1987), recognising "the intergenerational transmission of trauma whereby, through often unconscious processes of identification particularly with intimates, one may be possessed by the past and relive the hauntingly posttraumatic symptoms of events and experiences one may not have directly lived through" (2004: 43). The new traumatic recurrence suggests that the wife Nathan is accused of killing in the series' final moments is not his first wife but Charlotte, an event that threatens to leave their own new-born daughter without a mother. The story arc concerning Nathan and Gabriel is resolved through the intervention of the twenty-first century, but the new generational trauma that appears in its place provides the impetus for further supernatural incursions and a continuation of the series.

WORKING THROUGH

At the end of *The Living and the Dead*, Gabriel's spirit has retreated and the overlapping time periods of Shepzoy have seemingly separated. However, the resolution of the story arc is not as straightforward as it first appears: called to a marshy area at the edge of his land, Nathan and Charlotte witness the excavation of Lara's bright yellow car in the nineteenth century (episode 6). The car confronts the onlooking Lara with her death (revealed to the viewer at this point), allowing her to assume guardianship of Gabriel in the spirit realm. More significantly to the series' post-heritage approach, the stark image of the modern vehicle remaining inexplicably in the nineteenth century symbolises the enduring impact of representing the past in screen drama. Even when the contemporary era is not a direct part of the period drama narrative, a part of it remains buried under the surface, the future impacting the past as much as the past impacts the future. Lara's car also recalls Simon Joyce's image of viewing the Victorians in the rearview mirror, through which one looks forward to look back and experiences the "distortion that accompanies any mirror image, whether we see it as resulting from the effects of political ideology, deliberate misreading, exaggeration, or the understandable simplification of a complex past" (2007: 4). The image evokes the mutual haunting between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries foregrounded by the narrative of *The Living and the Dead*, which allows it to interrogate its own historical intervention while also pursuing the specific narrative of the Applebys' transgenerational trauma.

This chapter has placed the unique concept of *The Living and the Dead* in the contexts of recent uncanny television and media archaeology. The supernatural narratives of *Ghostwatch* and *Sea of Souls* reveal the potency of the television medium in explorations of the uncanny, primarily through their incorporation of self-consciousness and ambiguity. *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* invite a close consideration of police procedural elements through their shared overarching mystery, establishing the questions of media representations of the past that are expanded upon in *The Living and the Dead*. The denouement of *Ashes to Ashes* even positions television as a time-travelling medium, the drama's supporting characters confronted by their deaths (which both pre- and post-date the 1980s setting) by watching them on videotapes (season 3 episode 8). Lara experiences a similar process in *The Living and the Dead*, though with recourse to the conventions of period drama rather than those of police procedurals. Period drama characteristics are challenged by the supernatural narrative, allowing the stability of the heritage household to be subverted in a similar manner to the police precincts of *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*. Furthermore, *Twin Peaks*, *Les Revenants* and *Top of the Lake* reveal the importance of

subjectivities to long-form uncanny narratives, as well as elements such as setting and music. These aspects play important roles in *The Living and the Dead*'s construction, establishing the Victorian setting of Shepzoy as a site where traditional and modern elements collide. This is true of the historical moment interrogated in its narrative, where Nathan and Charlotte's progressive farming ideas conflict with the entrenched traditions and superstitions of the community, and the temporally diverse media and objects excavated by the drama's mise-en-scène. The compositions used in the series' soundtrack span the centuries, linking paganism to the Victorian era to the present day, while objects from the past and the future come together within Shepzoy House. The physicality of these historical objects is emphasised; these contrast with the digitised facsimiles of Lara's iPad, which are unable to interrogate the uncanny. The iPad is more significant as an anachronistic historical object itself, the "book of light" acting as a source of speculation and wonder when encountered in the nineteenth century.

Both the presence of Lara's car and the series' final cliffhanger reintroduce ambiguity to *The Living and the Dead* in its closing moments. Despite an ambiguous approach being a clear possibility in a narrative concerning psychology and the supernatural, as displayed in the earlier seasons of *Sea of Souls*, *The Living and the Dead* explicitly confirms the existence of ghosts from the end of its first episode. This certainty allows the drama to pursue an interrogation into its historical moment and period drama, pursuing the working through process considered possible by LaCapra's trauma theories. As précised by Bond and Craps, LaCapra's working through process "restores the distinction between past, present, and future and allows for political agency" (2020: 73). The narrative of *The Living and the Dead* seeks to separate the time periods that Shepzoy's supernatural incursions have conflated; the manifestation of Nathan's grief and guilt in ghostly figures allows it to ultimately be overcome, while also signifying the impact of his experiences on the entire community. The final resurgence of ambiguity displays the remaining impact of this trauma across the generations, altered by Lara's twenty-first century intervention but not entirely mitigated. Nathan's trauma is alleviated, allowing him to complete the working through process to "re-engage with the present and begin to look towards the future" (ibid.: 77) with his new-born daughter, but the prospect of him somehow causing Charlotte's death in the near future compromises his future and the safety of his descendants from traumatic events.

The prospect of further trauma is intrinsically linked to *The Living and the Dead*'s construction as a returning drama series. Although the primary story arc of the first season is resolved, the cliffhanger ending and symbolic presence of Lara's car in the past gives rise to the potential for future stories of the uncanny in Shepzoy. As the series was not recommissioned, the

exact nature of these further stories can only be speculated upon; nevertheless, the remaining consequences of the first season's narrative display *The Living and the Dead*'s status as a serialised series, a new story arc conflating the 1890s and 1920s beginning in its final scene. The series also adopts characteristics common to serial drama productions, most prominently the psychological investigation of Nathan. The recurring supporting characters, whose fictional lives extend beyond their self-contained episodic foci, also reveal the hybrid televisual form utilised by *The Living and the Dead*. As well as reflecting the complexities of the traumatic experiences and conflated time periods of the series' narrative, this form indicates the breadth of innovative structural possibilities available to television period dramas of the 2010s, establishing a new point of view on familiar narrative frameworks.

PART III

TELEVISION GENRE AND POST-HERITAGE ADAPTATION

Genre is a complex area of television studies, with a substantial body of critical writing establishing its diverse contexts. The final part of this thesis uses case studies of innovative works of literary adaptation to identify the various generic influences that inform their production. Combined with the thesis' earlier analyses of style and form, this part will display the continued importance of recognising generic characteristics, which often act as points of departure for innovative productions of the 2010s. Genre will be considered as fluid and palimpsestuous, with diverse generic characteristics co-existing within contemporary productions; this connects the theory of genre to that of literary adaptation, which itself creates a palimpsest of narrative versions, as well as to the project's central argument around the co-existence of heritage and post-heritage elements.

Mittell asserts the impermanence of genre, arguing that "genres are cultural products, constituted by media practices and subject to ongoing change and redefinition" (2004: 1). He therefore argues that it is important to ask not what a genre is, but "what a genre means *for specific groups in a particular cultural instance*" (ibid.: 5, emphasis in original). Genres "emerge from the intertextual relations between multiple texts", coming together "only through cultural practices such as production and reception" (ibid.: 7-8). Drawing upon Mittell's influence, Bignell has recently elaborated upon the dialogic relationship between generic categories:

> Genres change and have shifting relationships with each other, so a programme cannot be tested against a set essence of a genre or the boundaries of a genre, because texts break the rules for creative, economic, and political reasons. Generic hybridity includes the recognition of genres that combine conventions and techniques, such as docudrama, dramedy, or the gamedoc, for example. But the genres from which such hybrids are composed are not as consistent as they might seem. Some television genres that seem stable, for example, undergo significant changes when more closely investigated. Genres are historical phenomena, existing at a certain time and in relation to each other. (2020: 46)

Generic conventions are therefore liable to be developed and even subverted, allowing genre to be another area in which a post-heritage point of view can be identified. Despite their constant state of flux, Jane Feuer establishes the importance of recognising genre, arguing that "genre offers a way for the film and TV industries to control the tension between similarity and difference inherent in the production of any cultural product" (1992: 142).[1] This tension can also be delineated as between convention and innovation, allowing considerations of genre to be applied to the relationship between heritage and post-heritage elements in period drama productions.

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[1] Additionally, Mittell establishes the need for genre theories specific to television (2004: x-xi).

It is important to reassert at this stage that, under the critical framework established by this project, heritage and post-heritage do not constitute generic categories, a point made by both Monk and Higson in relation to the heritage film. Monk asserts that "a whole range of recognised film genres and – more significantly – genre mixes may be found" in the sub-categories of heritage drama (2002: 176); Higson argues that "it would be more useful to suggest that heritage discourses have always informed particular currents within the national film culture, surfacing more visibly at some times than at others" (1996a: 237).[2] Heritage and post-heritage elements therefore operate within and through generic categorisations, their adopted conventions allowing a production's ideological focus to be recognised. Where a heritage approach is dominant, generic characteristics that facilitate traditional perceptions of period drama – such as melodrama, romance, satire and picaresque (Monk, 2002: 176) – are likely to dominate. Dramas utilising a post-heritage approach are more likely to adopt wider generic influences, including those specific to the television medium, in order to challenge such traditional perceptions. Literary adaptations present a useful area through which to explore this facet of post-heritage drama, with more traditional productions often foregrounding literary genres and conventions rather than asserting their televisuality. The use of generic features specific to television, conversely, suggests an approach that challenges heritage assumptions. The analysis of literary adaptations in this part will therefore assert the continued importance of genre in television.

Adapting a work of fiction from one medium to another is undertaken by commissioners and programme makers for a variety of reasons, as explained by Robert Giddings, Keith Selby and Chris Wensley:

> Sometimes the adaptation is undertaken with the aim of bringing a literary work to a wider audience, sometimes to trade off its cultural respectability, sometimes to cash in on its popularity, sometimes to comment upon or develop an aspect of the original text, and sometimes because of a paucity of good original scripts. (1990: 24)

Self-consciousness is thus an important aspect of works of adaptation; for instance, in her discussion of the film adaptation *Atonement* (2007), Christine Geraghty argues that "an adaptation is an adaptation not just because it is based on an original source but because it draws attention to the fact of adaptation in the text itself and/or in the paratextual material which surrounds it" (2012b: 364). This allows an adaptation to be considered through its textual signifiers and formal qualities, rather than the uncertainty of the viewer's foreknowledge (ibid.).

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[2] See also Higson (2003: 9-13).

Sanders further establishes the significance of works of adaptation being recognised as adaptations, arguing that this perception allows them to operate as part of a "shared community of knowledge" with viewers (2016: 123). To focus its analysis of the post-heritage approach to genre in works of literary adaptation, this part will focus on the conventions of the 'classic serial', a sub-category of literary adaptation that works within a literary canon. Although this term is imperfect, excluding some works of adaptation for arbitrary reasons, its established conventions will allow recent innovations to be associated with the post-heritage developments of period drama in the 2010s within the scope of this project.

Giddings and Selby outline the philosophy behind the classic serial, initially established by the BBC on radio before migrating to television: "the genre emerged in the context of the BBC monopoly which enabled John Reith to initiate public service broadcasting – the Reithian trinity of Information, Education and Entertainment. The classic serial as we know it today is part of that Reithian legacy[...]" (2001: 1). As such, according to Richard Butt, the classic serial developed a distinct set of characteristics:

> The volume of classic serials produced by the BBC between the late 1950s and the late 1980s demanded relatively standardized production practices which inevitably manifested themselves in the consistencies of narrative structure and pacing, set design and iconography, that enable the classic serial to function as a recognizable genre with a distinct set of conventions and audience expectations. (2012: 162)

In this period, then, the classic serial itself operated as a genre, excluding wider televisual influences. Cardwell notes that the classic serial's Reithian origins continue to influence approaches to adaptations in the twenty-first century; this facilitates a canon of "acclaimed writers such as Austen, Hardy, Dickens, Eliot, and Tolstoy", their success measured against "broader conceptions of television's public role" and demonstrating a "preoccupation with fidelity" (2007: 188). Despite the continued legacy of Reithian values, however, the classic serial form has evolved alongside the institutional developments of television from the 1990s onwards. Cardwell identifies the revitalisation of literary adaptations at this time, recognising "a marked broadening in the range of source novels chosen" and a "more innovative, varied and reflexive" style (ibid.: 190). The relationship between literature and television can be mutually beneficial, with works of adaptation serving to canonise previously overlooked texts (Giddings and Selby, 2001: ix-x; Cardwell, 2005a: 139; Higson, 2006b: 97; Childs, 2012: 91; Kleinecke-Bates, 2014: 101). As Sanders identifies, "in the era of dispersed digital cultures[...] the notion of the canon itself is now increasingly under pressure and[...] new forms of shared communities of knowledge[...] are altering the landscape of adaptation studies" (2016: 125). In the 2010s, adaptation can therefore

be considered in a "Darwinian, evolutionary context, where organisms claim a niche to which they are best fitted, and continually develop in a complex competitive environment" (Bignell, 2019: 149).[3] In this context, distinction becomes more important than familiarity or fidelity to a source novel.

While makers of classic serials choose whether to maintain fidelity with the characters and events of a source novel, the degree to which academic responses should prioritise this has been a matter of some debate. This discourse is influenced by George Bluestone's polemic, which argues that "the filmed novel, in spite of certain resemblances, will inevitably become a different artistic entity from the novel on which it is based" (1957: 64). In the decades since Bluestone's assertion, the fidelity debate's usefulness to adaptation studies has been contended. Brian McFarlane summarises the argument for fidelity as a "wholly inappropriate and unhelpful criterion for either understanding or judgement", asserting that "every reading of a literary text is a highly individual act of cognition and interpretation" which no screen version could imitate except by chance (2007: 15). Ultimately, "the anterior novel or play or poem is only one element of the film's intertextuality", with production contexts and genres or categories such as 'heritage' constituting other key factors through which adaptations are understood (ibid.: 27). Casie Hermansson nevertheless argues that fidelity should retain a place in "the intertextual toolbox of adaptation criticism, advocating "for a recuperative view of fidelity in line with select recent studies which endorse a pluralistic, intertextual vision of adaptation's critical strategies" (2015: 146-7).[4] As Cardwell identifies, from the 1990s "fidelity has been reconfigured and adaptors have become more concerned with conveying the 'spirit' of the source text" (2007: 193). Accordingly, in a volume entitled *True to the Spirit*, Dudley Andrew asserts that "genuine fidelity abandons vain and simple-minded matching for creative transformation" (2011: 38); Jameson further proposes that source text and film adaptation may be of "equal merit" if the latter is "utterly different from, utterly unfaithful to, its original" (2011: 218). Despite this development in academic thinking, this history of television classic serials that strived for fidelity looms large as a point of departure for recent innovations.

The initial Reithian ideology of the classic serial, particularly its remit to be educative, facilitated a fidelity approach to source novels; Giddings and Selby establish that "as far as possible these versions stuck to character, plot and dialogue as closely as broadcasting allowed, and they were essentially translations from the printed page into broadcast drama" (2001: ix).

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[3] See also Hutcheon (2013: 31).
[4] See also Leitch (2003: 161-2) and Murray (2012: 8-9).

This narrowness of vision was compounded by the limitations of television drama in the 1950s and 60s, establishing a televisual grammar relying on dialogue, close-ups and studio interior scenes (ibid.: 18-9). Traditional classic serials thus aimed to position television as an invisible or transparent medium, a conduit through which classic literature can be experienced (Kerr, 1982: 12; Cardwell, 2007: 188), despite the impossibility of achieving this aim. The BBC's classic serials continued to display the legacy of Reithian values after their decline in contemporary-set television drama, resulting in literary adaptations that lack innovation dominating until the 1980s. The limitations of the fidelity approach also became apparent in this period, even amongst the comparatively ambitious BBC2 projects, exemplified by the failure to deliver on the challenges presented by 1972-3's *War and Peace* (Giddings and Selby, 2001: 35-6), 1974's *The Pallisers* (ibid.: 41-3) and 1978's *Anna Karenina* (ibid.: 51). As Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier's analysis of *Wuthering Heights* adaptations concludes, traditional heritage adaptations "can hardly represent the novel's special aesthetics and metaphysical aspects or its social criticism and complex moral values" (2004: 156); a more innovative approach is required. One notable exception to fidelity in this period is *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (BBC, 1978), adapted by Dennis Potter, where outside broadcast cameras are used to break out from the studio and the subjectivity of the central character is explored (ibid.: 32-3). The freedom to push the boundaries of television drama enjoyed by Potter (see chapter 2) here came to bear on the classic serial, allowing the post-heritage potential of works of adaptation to be glimpsed. In 1985, innovations to the BBC classic serial were anticipated by two BBC2 productions, Potter's adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* and Arthur Hopcraft's *Bleak House*, together described by Giddings and Selby as "the earliest manifestations of the revolution" (ibid.: 74). The economic context of these dramas meant, however, that their expensive innovations could not become a regular feature of the television schedule; Hopcraft's *Bleak House*, for example, became infamous within the BBC for its prohibitive expense (Geraghty, 2012a: 10-1).

Co-production arrangements became a consistent factor in the commissioning of classic serials from the 1990s, the resultant higher production budgets allowing more advanced filming technologies and significant location work to be incorporated into the classic serial tradition.[5] The most consistent co-producer of classic serials is WGBH, based in Boston, who began to routinely fund British period drama productions from the 1990s for broadcast on its long-running

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[5] Location filming had been used in classic serials from the late 1960s (Kerr, 1982: 15), but was not a common feature until consistent co-productions were established.

Masterpiece Theatre strand.[6] *Masterpiece*'s executive producer Rebecca Eaton notes that the continued American appetite for classic serials, despite waning interest in the UK, saw WGBH lead this arrangement, with Eaton herself proposing the 1994 adaptation of *Middlemarch* to the BBC (2013: 135-7).[7] This adaptation, scripted by Andrew Davies, began a new era of literary adaptations on the BBC, following the decline of the longstanding Sunday evening classic serial slot in the late 1980s (Giddings and Selby, 2001: 77-9). *Middlemarch* is identified by Giddings and Selby as effectively a trial for the future of the BBC classic serial: "it had been internally resolved that the reception of *Middlemarch* would decide whether or not the Corporation was to continue with classic novel dramatisation" (ibid.: 89). The classic serial's future was therefore secured through the aesthetic innovations facilitated by the BBC/WGBH co-production arrangement. Three years prior to this, however, an adaptation of *Clarissa* (BBC/WGBH, 1991) first established the possibilities for co-produced classic serials in the 1990s. Unlike *Middlemarch*, the plot of *Clarissa* does not lend itself to a heritage approach, concerning the sustained mistreatment and tragic death of its titular heroine. Giddings and Selby identify how the production aimed to make the story, and particularly Clarissa (Saskia Wickham) herself, relatable to a contemporary audience, prioritising this over fidelity to the extreme piousness of the novel's character (2001: 86). Location is an important part of *Clarissa*, with the spectacle of various settings subverted by Clarissa's effective imprisonment within them. As Cynthia Wall analyses, the adaptation's use of space "visually opens up the endless narrative sense of shutting down" (2002: 115), providing "a visual *interpretation* that supplies both the iconography of place and its specific possible details" (ibid.: 120-1, emphasis in original). Lois A. Chaber further considers "the priority given to visual authenticity over textual" (1992: 258) in *Clarissa*'s adaptive process; while this may have resulted in a production "in tune with the feminist, doubt-ridden 1990s" (Wall, 2002: 263), the narrative's rejection of heritage elements prevented *Clarissa* from serving as a template for future transatlantic commissions.

As well as securing the future of literary adaptations through its critical and popular success, *Middlemarch* introduced post-heritage elements to the traditional classic serial style. Nelson establishes that *Middlemarch* and the more directly subversive *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (BBC, 1990) "pick up on their source novels' interrogation of the yet dominant viewpoint of

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[6] After the *Masterpiece Theatre* strand was reconfigured in 2008, subsequent co-productions were rebranded as "with Masterpiece".

[7] Eaton does not mention the genesis of *Clarissa*, the first BBC/WGBH co-production, leaving it unclear who first proposed the arrangement.

Western society – that of the Caucasian, heterosexual, male, middle class" (1997: 127). Ian MacKillop and Alison Platt further acknowledge *Middlemarch*'s innovations, recognising the subjectivity found in a slow close-up of Dorothea, and how this imitates the function of novelistic narration: "we are given time to work out possibilities within the character's reaction: our mind speaks, as it were, for a narrator" (2000: 73). Additionally, MacKillop and Platt note the appearance of Dorothea (Juliet Aubrey) as a figure from the 1990s rather than the 1830s, similar to Wickham's portrayal of Clarissa, although they consider such self-conscious anachronisms a "general problem" of the classic serial rather than a benefit (ibid.: 74-5). Despite these post-heritage elements, Nelson's analysis aligns *Middlemarch* with television's realist conventions (see part I), identifying a "presumed objectivity" that minimises the subjectivity of George Eliot's novel (2007: 141). Although *Middlemarch*'s style represented a departure from the naturalist aesthetic utilised by prior adaptations, it is mostly unremarkable when compared to other television dramas of the time. Furthermore, "formulaic realism's disposition to efface history to focus on decontextualized personal relationships in the present moment" leads to Eliot's historical context being equally marginalised (ibid.: 145). Although a "new industry standard" open to more complex narratives is suggested by *Middlemarch* (MacKillop and Platt, 2000: 90), television in 1994 remained constrained by its ephemerality: prior to the advent of the DVD format, let alone Internet catch-up services, omnibus VHS home releases had negligible audiences (ibid: 72). This meant that simplicity and "a literal respect for the original" (ibid.) remained prevalent.

Following *Middlemarch*, the cultural resurgence of the classic serial was confirmed by the broadcast of *Pride and Prejudice*, also written by Davies. Vidal asserts the significance of this adaptation, characterising it as "a stepping stone in the Jane Austen boom of the 1990s, yet one that crucially contributed to diminish the role of the original literary text and to enhance the sense of a generic cycle" (2012b: 31). *Pride and Prejudice* establishes conventions of the 1990s classic serial through "a new mode of historicity that arises from the status of the televisual as a popular, participatory and performative event" (ibid.: 30-1), exemplified by the famous scene of Darcy (Colin Firth) diving into the Pemberley lake. The serial's cultural impact has been credited with instigating "a wave of 'sexed-up,' politically aware adaptations of classic literature" (Leggott and Taddeo, 2015: xvii) in subsequent years, as well as instigating a wave of 'Austenmania' (Harman, 2009: 7).[8] Nevertheless, *Pride and Prejudice*'s outlook remains predominantly conservative. Pamela Church Gibson asserts that in this adaptation "progressive depictions of gender relations

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[8] Higson asserts, however, that the cycle of Austen screen adaptations that contributed to this resurgence of Austen's popularity was largely coincidental (2004: 38-9).

were suspended to permit the portrayal of a reactionary model of masculinity", and "the links between heritage culture and the heritage industry were made explicit" (2000: 116). Furthermore, the 1990s 'postfeminist' approach that sees the serial end with a kiss between Darcy and Elizabeth "confirms the primacy of the romantic relationship over other claims and valorizes the drive towards individual self-fulfilment and gratification" (Belton, 2003: 187), imposing a heritage resolution despite the revisionist approach to Austen's text. While *Pride and Prejudice*'s popular success opened the door for a range of future adaptations, it therefore leaves a sustained post-heritage approach to subsequent productions.

Following the transnational success of *Pride and Prejudice*, the classic serial maintained a regular presence on British television for the rest of the 1990s. Within a few years, adaptations of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (BBC/WGBH/CBC, 1996), *Emma* (ITV/A&E, 1996), *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders* (ITV/WGBH, 1996), *The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling* (BBC/A&E, 1997), *The Woman in White* (BBC/WGBH, 1997), *Vanity Fair* (BBC/A&E, 1998) and *Wives and Daughters* (BBC/WGBH, 1999) were commissioned, all realised through co-production deals with either WGBH or A&E in the US.[9] A new cycle of Dickens adaptations also emerged in this period: despite the limited success of the earlier *Martin Chuzzlewit* (BBC/WGBH, 1994), Sandy Welch's re-imagining of *Our Mutual Friend* (BBC/CBC, 1998) paved the way for new versions of *Great Expectations* (BBC/WGBH), *Oliver Twist* (ITV/WGBH) and *David Copperfield* (BBC/WGBH), all shown at the end of 1999 in the UK. From *Moll Flanders*' direct addresses to camera (Giddings and Selby, 2001: 129; Cardwell, 2002: 167-70; de Groot, 2016a: 229) to the self-conscious manipulation of heritage tropes in *The Woman in White* (Kleinecke-Bates, 2014: 68-83) and the innovative aesthetics of *Our Mutual Friend* and *Vanity Fair* (Held, 2004), this era of classic serials displays "a noticeable tendency readily to abandon the old BBC tradition of faithfully rendering a classic novel in favour of rewriting, or considerably readjusting, novels to suit the perceived and expected feminist or politically correct requirements of today" (Giddings and Selby, 2001: 191). *Oliver Twist* is notable in this regard: adapted by Alan Bleasdale, best known for his landmark social realist serial *Boys from the Blackstuff* (BBC, 1982), the adaptation constructs an additional opening episode around Oliver's conception and revises Fagin's personal history, mitigating the narrative coincidences and perceived anti-Semitism of Dickens' novel (ibid.: 181-4). The integrated prequel allows the serial's distinct point of view and revisionist approach to Dickens to

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[9] See Weissmann (2012: 144-5) for an assessment of the relationship between British broadcasters and A&E from the 1980s to the 2000s, including A&E's desire for a distinctive brand and the BBC's continued dominance over the creative process of *Pride and Prejudice*.

be apparent, inscribing character motivations and a structural consistency lacking in its source novel.

The new possibilities for classic serials were capitalised upon by Davies' *Bleak House* (BBC/WGBH, 2005), which introduces further structural and stylistic innovations to the literary adaptation. The serial adopts the form of the British continuing soap opera, arranged into 30-minute instalments after its initial hour-long episode. Narratively, Davies' *Bleak House* emphasises its connection to soap opera through its cliffhanger episode endings and the arrangement of Dickens' multiple storylines. As Geraghty establishes, the soap opera structure allows the serial to make use of the subjectivity of its heroine, Esther Summerson, developing its story "from the angle of the young woman" (2012a: 40). Despite the influence of soap opera on its production, *Bleak House* deviates from the genre's conventions through its aesthetic innovations, moving away from the naturalist aesthetics of both the soap opera and traditional classic serial. Nelson notes the impact of emerging digital editing technology on the serial, identifying its use of the modern feature of "the dynamic 'crash zoom' accompanied by a whooshing sound[…] deployed to drive the pace of the complex multistrand narrative in the otherwise traditional genre of period drama" (2007: 117). The adaptation also deviates from the conventions of continuing soap opera through its closed form, being "based on the promise of a denouement" rather than "the organisation of space" (ibid.: 28). Geraghty describes the serial's conclusion as "a more emphatic ending than the book", celebrating "a heterogeneous version of the family in which all sorts of characters can find a place" (ibid.: 62). The ending of Davies' *Bleak House* returns the narrative to heritage comforts, abandoning by necessity the innovations hitherto facilitated by soap opera conventions. This aligns with Chris Louttit's assessment of the serial, which characterises it and *Cranford* (BBC, 2007-09) as "clearly cultural products of the Blairite era in the way that, on the surface, they appear to radically alter some of the conventions of the genre but at the same time are quite conservative both in their politics and in their approach to period drama" (2009: 36). Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn consider *Bleak House*'s soap structure as a deliberate imitation of Dickens' serial publication, describing the contemporary desire "to return to a more 'authentic' experience of the Victorian text" (2010: 215). It could equally be argued, however, that *Bleak House*'s hybrid genre was designed to assert the nineteenth-century narrative's contemporary relevance through soap opera characteristics; as Dominic Sandbrook acknowledges, "for longevity and consistency there is nothing to touch the soap opera" (2015: 290). Each episode of the serial immediately followed BBC One's flagship soap

EastEnders (1985-present) in its original broadcast (Caughie, 2012: 61), suggesting the intention to secure a lead-in audience unfamiliar with period drama.

In the years since *Bleak House*, other adaptations have incorporated self-consciousness by embedding generic hybridity into their dramatic concepts. For example, *Lost in Austen* (ITV, 2008) sees twenty-first century woman Amanda Price (Jemima Rooper) swapping places with *Pride and Prejudice*'s Elizabeth Bennet, transported to Austen's world in the place of the literary heroine and, inevitably, falling in love with Mr Darcy herself. This unique premise allows Amanda to directly impose twenty-first century perspectives and attitudes onto the past. Crucially, it is an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* rather than Austen's text that Amanda lives through, allowing her to embody the role of an active viewer. Her presence instigates deviations from Austen's narrative, with Amanda frequently denouncing aspects of the drama that she perceives as incorrect. In a key romantic scene between Amanda and Darcy, the self-conscious influence of Davies' *Pride and Prejudice* in particular is made apparent. In the scene, which according to Deborah Cartmell "encapsulates the essence of the modern adaptation" (2012: 31), Amanda implores a bemused Darcy to stand in Pemberley lake in imitation of Colin Firth's famous scene as the same character (which does not occur in Austen's novel), describing the result as "a bit of a strange postmodern moment" (episode 3). De Groot further describes this development:

> It is unclear what her 'postmodern moment' is – whether history itself has evaporated, or whether she is articulating a sense of metatextual self-consciousness. The latter is something that the viewer is assumed to share, so that those watching are automatically removed from the narrative, their subjective engagement with the text revealed; this is why the scene is funny[…] (2016b: 171)

The humour found through self-consciousness is only extended when Darcy's declaration of love is interrupted by a particularly invasive peacock cry, a common – and usually ignored – feature of the classic serial's diegesis. The romantic mode here competes with parody, establishing the adaptation's distinctive approach.

The above assessment of the history of the classic serial indicates the influence of diverse televisual genres on this category of period drama. This part will establish the post-heritage adaptation, identifying productions that broaden the conceptual, structural and aesthetic possibilities of literary adaptations. Chapter 5 will assess *Dickensian*, a drama that adapts numerous Dickens stories and characters into a renewable soap opera concept. As such, the serial negotiates between the high-end aesthetics of the classic serial and the economies of scale of the continuing soap opera. However, these economies of scale also introduce constraints to the serial's post-heritage potential and ultimately prevented *Dickensian* from returning for a second

season. Chapter 6 will analyse *Parade's End*, an adaptation of Ford Madox Ford's literary tetralogy. Alongside finding a visual equivalence of Ford's modernist prose, *Parade's End* also adopts conventions of television comedy to further its exploration of the tetralogy's social and political themes. It will be shown that these allow the complex cultural moment depicted to be understood by a tele-literate twenty-first century viewer, asserting the serial's achievement as a post-heritage adaptation. These final two case studies will show that generic considerations remain important to the study of innovative television drama, as well as situating 'classic serial' adaptations within the wider concerns of period drama.

────────────*Chapter 5*────────────

Soap Opera Conventions and Post-Heritage Appropriation in *Dickensian*

> I am Inspector Bucket of the Detective and I'm here to talk of the murder of your partner, Mr Jacob Marley.
>
> <div align="right">--- Bucket (Dickensian: episode 2)</div>

Dickensian capitalises on the cultural status of Charles Dickens' novels, classic serials and the soap opera genre, aiming to combine literary prestige and popular appeal within a renewable serial concept. Establishing their open serial form (see part II introduction), Allen outlines the 'paradigmatic' narrative structure of soap operas, which *Dickensian* adopts:

> Soap operas operate according to very different narrative and dramatic principles than more closed narrative forms: they are predicated upon the impossibility of their ever ending[…] Put in semiotic terminology, US daytime soap operas trade an investment in syntagmatic determinacy (the eventual direction of the overall plot line) for one in paradigmatic complexity (how any particular event affects the complex network of character relationships). The long-term, loyal viewer of the soap opera is rewarded by the text in that her knowledge of the large and complex community of characters and their histories enables her to produce subtle and nuanced readings, whereas a single episode of any given soap opera, viewed out of context by a textually-naive critic, appears to be so much pointless talk among undistinguishable characters about events of maddenly [sic] indeterminable significance. (1995: 7)

Dickensian creates paradigmatic complexity by bringing together characters from multiple Dickens novels, in most cases before their literary narrative commences. Its unique concept allows the serial and its characters to potentially return for additional seasons, although ultimately the drama was not recommissioned after its initial twenty-episode run. This distinguishes *Dickensian* from closed form classic serials, including Davies' *Bleak House*, freeing it from any requirement to impose a conventional ending onto its soap opera narrative. The open form allows *Dickensian* to capitalise further on soap opera conventions than *Bleak House*, adopting the genre's production ecologies as well as its narrative structure.

   Dickensian operates within the specific tradition of British primetime continuing soap operas. Geraghty establishes the core characteristics of this genre, identifying its organisation of time, sense of a future and interweaving stories (1981: 9-12). Organisation of time refers to the soap opera's regular linear scheduling at multiple times in the week, the drama's narrative striving to parallel its viewer's experience of time (ibid.: 9-11). The sense of a future is described as "the continual postponement of the final resolution" (ibid.: 11), aligning with Allen's definition of paradigmatic complexity. Lastly, interweaving stories refer to "the way in which two or three stories are woven together and presented to the audience over a number of episodes" (ibid.).

Dickensian adheres to these characteristics: in addition to its open form, the serial parallels narrative and real-world time despite its nineteenth century setting, interweaving its numerous prequel storylines from diverse Dickens novels. Geraghty subsequently asserts the significance of the community of characters in British soap opera: "the extension of familial relationships into the community is very important, enabling a group to be brought together which might otherwise be split by the conflicting interests of age, gender and class" (1991: 84). This community is constructed within an enclosed fictional space, whose "geography allows for a large number of characters with a variety of reasons for living in the area and different ways of relating to the community" (ibid.: 90). The constructed space, usually emphasised by basing filming around a primary set, engenders familiarity; Geraghty notes that "repetition permits a familiar geography to be established through camera-work and cutting which allows the audience to build up a sense of the fictional space" (ibid.: 13). Familiarity is also found in soap opera narratives, which Geraghty describes as following a 'testing-out' process: "the very repetition of soap opera plots allows them to offer a paradigm of emotional relationships in which only one element needs to be changed for the effect to be different" (ibid.: 41). *Dickensian* establishes a soap opera community through the use of its own elaborate set, within which the entirety of the serial is filmed. Its use of familiar soap storylines, with a focus on the relationships between its characters, allows the element of change to be the Victorian era itself; the testing-out process is enacted through the conjunction of soap opera and period drama conventions. Soap opera characteristics also depend on long-term viewership for their success, indicating the importance of *Dickensian*'s concept as a renewable serial.

Unlike their US counterparts, British soap operas of recent decades hold a significant social function. Geraghty identifies this in the two major UK soaps established in the 1980s, *Brookside* (C4, 1982-2003) and *EastEnders*; these soaps "took up social issues more overtly and handled social problems in a more direct way which went beyond the plight of individual characters and dealt with the public sphere as well as the personal" (1995: 66). *EastEnders* has also pioneered innovations to the standard soap opera format, occasionally deviating from the genre's conventional structure and aesthetics. These innovations are not able to exist regularly in a continuing soap opera; as Dunleavy acknowledges, the requirement of soaps to "cultivate enduring loyalty" demands "an unusually high production output", necessitating "the use of streamlined scriptwriting, shooting, and editing processes[…] from which they derive economies of scale" (2009: 98). Producing just twenty half-hour episodes a year rather than over 200, *Dickensian* is able to consistently make use of the innovative techniques found at exceptional

moments in British soap operas. This is apparent in its eschewal of the naturalist aesthetic that is characteristic of continuing soap operas, using single camera filming to ground its style in realism. This allows the drama to adhere to the conventions of soap opera, while also utilising the more sophisticated elements expected from a high-end classic serial.

This chapter considers *Dickensian*'s use of the generic conventions of soap opera to facilitate its pursuit of a post-heritage adaptation. The serial's premise, which allows Dickens characters from multiple novels to interact with each other, necessitates the rewriting and revising of literary sources, although the drama's narrative often mitigates the impact of this. Nevertheless, the cultural memory of Dickens' works and prior adaptations is evoked to allow the narratives of *Dickensian* to assert their place within the tradition of Dickensian representations. Following the example set by Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which famously reimagines *Jane Eyre* from the colonised perspective of Rochester's first wife (Sanders, 2016: 129-35), Peter Carey's novel *Jack Maggs* (1997) re-tells Dickens' *Great Expectations* and suggests the revisionist potential of *Dickensian*. Collette Selles describes *Jack Maggs* as a 'displacement' of Dickens' novel: "written from a postcolonial Australian perspective, *Jack Maggs* offers a reassessment of the values prevalent in nineteenth-century England, of Britain's social and cultural heritage, of its hegemony and, reversing the 'cultural cringe', presents a self-assertive image of the often denigrated former colony" (2004: 63). Re-focusing the narrative of *Great Expectations* around Jack Maggs – a version of Dickens' convict Magwitch – allows Carey to develop a subjective response to Dickens' novel, expanding and critiquing the source novel from a new perspective. *Jack Maggs* fulfils a characteristic of 'appropriation', as described by Sanders, displaying "a deep political and literary investment in giving voice to characters or events which appear to have been oppressed or repressed in the original" (2016: 126). This chapter's analysis will reveal *Dickensian*'s achievement of this through its use of post-heritage self-consciousness, while also identifying the limitations imposed by its soap opera conventions and televisual imperatives.

The first section of this chapter will detail *Dickensian*'s use of British continuing soap opera characteristics, describing its narrative structure and the function of the Dickens characters selected to populate its soap community. Following this, it will analyse the opening scenes of *Dickensian* to establish its construction of space, before considering the economic reasons for the serial's restriction to its composite set and the impact of this on the drama's post-heritage potential. The second section will consider the serial's narrative innovations, focusing upon its final five episodes and the characters who originate from Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-53). The innovations of these episodes will be associated with the occasional innovations to the soap opera

genre pioneered by *EastEnders*, which the lower episodic output of *Dickensian* allows to be deployed more regularly. The serial's movement towards both resolving its major storylines and asserting the potential for further seasons will be shown to reflect *Dickensian*'s negotiation between the imperatives of the classic serial and soap opera genres, which is itself reflected by the serial's heritage and post-heritage elements.

A DICKENSIAN STRUCTURE

Dickensian functions as a multi-stranded appropriation of Dickens' works, taking characters and narratives from various novels and combining them to create the interweaving storylines of a soap opera. According to Geraghty, the multiple stories in a soap "make it appear quite natural for characters to come and go, for regulars to disappear for a while and return, for new light to be shed on familiar characters" (1991: 16). With individual Dickens narratives each becoming one of the serial's interweaving storylines, the concept of *Dickensian* holds the potential for multi-season longevity. Furthermore, the characters are re-established within a single Victorian neighbourhood, allowing stories to overlap and a soap opera community to be constructed. Although the serial at least alludes to most of Dickens' novels (only *Little Dorrit* and *A Tale of Two Cities* are entirely unrepresented), the dominant storylines focus on characters from *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House* and *Oliver Twist*. Assessing whether *Dickensian* can be considered truly neo-Victorian, Armelle Parey notes that the serial is inclined towards the best-known and most adapted Dickens texts,[1] with its characters "never deliberately made to go against verisimilitude" (2017), indicating the drama's return to a fidelity approach to adaptation. Fidelity is further facilitated by the prequel status of the main narratives, all of which take place prior to their respective source novels; this allows Dickens' material to remain largely undisturbed by *Dickensian*'s intervention. The sense of narrative determinacy is augmented by the interaction between characters from different novels remaining "mostly spatial and visual, for the viewer's benefit only" (ibid.), without significant impact on the discrete storylines. Alongside the core prequel narratives, individual characters such as Inspector Bucket (*Bleak House*), Little Nell (*The Old Curiosity Shop*), Venus (*Our Mutual Friend*) and Mrs Gamp (*Martin Chuzzelwit*) are utilised. Such characters are liberated from direct connection to the events of their source novels, allowing them to foster relationships between characters from multiple source novels. However, with the notable exception of Bucket (Stephen Rea), these characters appear in a supporting capacity only,

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[1] *Bleak House* could be considered an exception to this, but the novel's 2005 adaptation arguably allows it to assert some cultural recognition in 2015.

limiting their impact on *Dickensian*'s structure. The dominance of prequel narratives hinders the serial's long-term potential, suggesting each major character has a finite lifespan in the drama (ibid.); it is difficult to imagine many of the central characters continuing into a second season, each climactic circumstance of season 1 setting the events of their respective literary sources into motion.

The most significant relationship between characters from different source novels is the close friendship between Miss Havisham, here named Amelia (Tuppence Middleton), and Honoria Barbary (Sophie Rundle), *Bleak House*'s Lady Dedlock. Geraghty establishes the importance of female friendships in soap opera, arguing that "because the central husband-wife relationship is such hard work for the women characters, they need to be supported by other friendships which are more reliably sustaining" (1991: 49). In *Dickensian*, Amelia and Honoria's ability to comment on each other's stories allows female conversation to retain its place as "the backbone of the traditional soap" (ibid.: 50). Geraghty further explains that women "handle the complex web of relationships which make up a soap opera with a care and intensity which makes the men seem clumsy and uncomprehending" (ibid.), a description that holds true when comparing Amelia to her brother Arthur (Joseph Quinn), and Honoria to her father Edward (Adrian Rawlins). Both men struggle to negotiate both business and family relationships, Edward through incompetence and Arthur through immorality. The soap genre thus allows *Dickensian*'s female characters to enjoy more autonomy than their literary counterparts. The youthful depiction of these women, preceding the life-altering events that shape their characters in Dickens' novels, displays *Dickensian*'s capacity to interrogate its established characters. Additionally, the friendship between Amelia and Honoria draws attention to both characters having most recently been played by Gillian Anderson, in the 2011 adaptation of *Great Expectations* (BBC/Masterpiece) and 2005's *Bleak House* respectively. Bringing the two characters' younger depictions together displays a self-conscious awareness of *Dickensian*'s palimpsestic appropriation; the serial alludes to Amelia and Honoria's prior existences in cultural memory, derived not only from Dickens' novels but previous works of adaptation.

The tone of *Dickensian*'s promotion suggests a resurgence of the Reithian values that underpinned the early years of the classic serial, asserting the cultural cachet of the production through its connection to literary source novels. The serial's promotional material focuses on explaining the characters through their literary sources, evidenced by its press pack, its preview in the *Radio Times* (Kirkley, 2015) and on the BBC's own website (Furneaux, 2015). Perhaps even more significantly, the serial's promotional trailer, broadcast on BBC One in the lead-up to its

debut, also focuses on recognising its characters from their Dickensian sources, even utilising voiceover narration ("Imagine a world with all your favourite Dickens characters[…]") to ensure the drama's premise is understood (BBC One, 2015). Although *Dickensian*'s title, as suggested by Parey, implies that it is only *like* Dickens (2017), the production nevertheless seeks to benefit from the author's cultural status by answering the natural question of whether the adaptation can be considered as authentically 'Dickens' (Christie, 2018: 181) in the affirmative. To achieve this, *Dickensian* finds an equivalent to the dedicated soap opera viewer's access to promotional 'spoilers' through its connection to Dickens' literary heritage. Charlotte Brunsdon asserts that the "attendant fascination" of soap opera is not what will happen, but "*how* it is going to happen" (1997: 21, emphasis in original). This "hermaneutic [sic] speculation" can be enacted through generic predictions or extratextual knowledge, particularly where a character is known to be leaving the soap by dedicated viewers (ibid.). In *Dickensian*, the viewer with knowledge of the source texts – or the inclination to research details between episodes – is aware of the end points the various narratives are leading to. This has a fundamental impact on the serial's *Great Expectations* prequel narrative, where viewers are assumed to be aware that Amelia's relationship with Compeyson (Tom Weston-Jones) will end with her being jilted on her wedding day and commencing a reclusive lifestyle. However, capitalising on this extratextual knowledge limits *Dickensian*'s capacity to adopt a revisionist approach; the serial's events may add to Dickens' narratives, but they are rarely permitted to contradict them. A disjunction between creative and institutional imperatives is therefore apparent: while the concept of multiple appropriations positions *Dickensian* as a post-heritage classic serial, the need to secure and sustain a strong prime-time viewership over twenty episodes restricted the drama's potential innovations.

A moment towards the end of *Dickensian*'s first episode reveals the tension between soap opera and post-heritage characteristics. Amelia's surname is here revealed, establishing her as *Great Expectations*' Miss Havisham. Amelia's identity reveals the stakes of Compeyson and Arthur's plan to steal her fortune; however, the impact of this revelation is mitigated by the promotion of the series, which widely reported her as Miss Havisham in order to legitimise the serial's concept (BBC One, 2015; Furneaux, 2015; Kirkley, 2015). While this reduces the potency of *Dickensian*'s self-consciousness, it displays the serial's promotional awareness of the benefits of a soap opera's long history. Geraghty asserts that in established continuing soap operas such as *EastEnders*, the act of speculation by loyal viewers is aided by the drama's history: "the audience becomes familiar with the history of certain characters and has access to knowledge

which is well beyond that given in a particular episode" (1991: 14). For instance, the year after *Dickensian* was broadcast *EastEnders* reintroduced the character of Michelle Fowler (Susan Tully and Jenna Russell) after a 21-year absence (24 December 2016); as the role was now played by a different actor, the delayed revelation of her identity is a self-conscious moment reminiscent of Amelia being revealed as Miss Havisham in *Dickensian*. *Dickensian*'s acknowledgement of its source texts acts as the equivalent to this extratextual knowledge. Amelia and Michelle's identities are significant only to viewers with knowledge of the rich history that contextualises both characters: from *EastEnders*' long history in Michelle's case, and from the context of Dickens' works (and its prior adaptations) in Amelia's. Prior knowledge of Amelia's story allows viewers to engage with the serial in a similar manner as in contemporary soap opera, anticipating her eventual jilting at the altar throughout the season. While the inevitable result is awaited, pacing typical to the soap opera is pursued, as established by Geraghty: "the essence of soaps is their reflection on personal problems and the emphasis is on talk not on action, on slow development rather than the immediate response, on delayed retribution rather than instant effect" (1991: 41). The season-long wait for Amelia's fateful wedding day, alongside the other prequel narratives of *Dickensian*, demonstrates this use of the soap genre.

In addition to specific characters and events, *Dickensian* appropriates the cultural memory of Dickens and Victoriana more generally. Contemporary soap operas connect with their viewers' lives by allowing natural time to organise the narrative, facilitated by their regular scheduling. Their chronological development, according to Geraghty, is "based on the yesterday, today and tomorrow of the viewer" (1991: 11), with seasons and even specific topical events occurring parallel to the real world (ibid.: 12).[2] *Dickensian* approximates this effect by appropriating iconography associated with Dickens: in addition to the Victoriana of costumes and mise-en-scène, the serial's opening two episodes are set on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, allowing the Christmas iconography that Dickens helped popularise with *A Christmas Carol* (Forbes, 2007: 60-3) to act as a backdrop to the opening stages of the drama. Additionally, the serial's original broadcast began on Boxing Day 2015, establishing an approximately parallel chronology for its contemporary viewers (Parey, 2017). The visual spectacle of the Dickensian mise-en-scène adheres to a heritage point of view, asserting the serial as truly 'Dickens'.

Dickensian's opening episode establishes the soap opera community of the drama, appealing to the cultural memory of Dickens as mediated through successive works of adaptation.

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[2] See also Gripsrud (1995: 250-2).

The funeral procession for the Havishams' father allows the *Dickensian* neighbourhood to be explored, introducing the characters and locations that make up its world. The first identifiers of Dickens' characters are encountered in quick succession: with the sign of Scrooge and Marley's offices clearly visible, the latter (Peter Firth) is addressed by name by a woman who he in turn identifies as Mrs Gamp (Pauline Collins). Marley then gives a passing boy a message to take to Fagin, linking *Oliver Twist*'s iconic figure and its den of thieves to Marley's money-lending business. Figures and establishments from numerous Dickens texts are shown to be connected in this constructed soap world, able to impact each other via these liminal figures. The camera subsequently follows the boy through the streets, towards the lower social strata of the community and Fagin's dockside den. Along the way, the image briefly diverts from the boy's course to find Mr and Mrs Bumble (Richard Ridings and Caroline Quentin) nearby. While the Bumbles' storyline does not begin in earnest until much later in the season, their presence in this opening episode displays the characters' peripheral function as part of the soap opera setting. The use of second-degree style in this sequence, with the camera choosing its direction and selecting the figures it alights upon, also displays *Dickensian*'s sophisticated aesthetic in comparison to the naturalism of continuing soap operas.

The soap opera community established in *Dickensian*'s opening sequence also displays the set in which the entirety of the serial was filmed, which was constructed in a London warehouse (Pickard, 2016). Tony Jordan, the serial's creator, describes this as the "biggest set ever built for television in the UK", comprising 27 two-storey buildings and 100 metres of wide cobbled streets (quoted in BBC Media Centre, 2015: 6). The set allows an impressive Dickensian world to be realised, facilitating the serial's soap opera premise: the *Dickensian* neighbourhood has clear parallels to *EastEnders*' Albert Square or the cobbles of *Coronation Street* (ITV, 1960-present). *Dickensian*, however, uses an indoor studio rather than an exterior lot, maximising its period detail and allowing control over weather features (BBC Media Centre, 2015: 7). *Dickensian*'s first season reportedly cost an average £1 million for every hour of drama (Pickard, 2016), with a high proportion of this clearly dedicated to the initial set construction. High expense notwithstanding, and despite Jordan's insistence that "there's no way you would know this show is filmed entirely on a set" (quoted in ibid.), the production develops a distinct visual character that separates it from the real world. Cardwell describes this as a "painterly aesthetic", which she reads as both "a conscious stylistic allusion" and "particular to Dickens' vision" (2017: 131-2). However, this also introduces conspicuous spatial limitations that operate against the realist style of contemporary soap operas.

Unlike most continuing soap operas, *Dickensian* makes use of a composite set;[3] the interiors of buildings are constructed within their facades, allowing the neighbourhood to be interacted with as a genuine location. Jordan emphasises the verisimilitude this allows: "we ran real horses and carriages down the street and all the shops and buildings are open and have interior sets. So you can actually walk into The Old Curiosity Shop, Scrooge & Marley's, Mantalini's dress shop and Mr Venus' Taxidermist" (quoted in BBC Media Centre, 2015: 6). The composite set would have allowed the serial to utilise economies of scale in subsequent seasons, justifying the high initial expense of the set's construction. According to Benjamin Poore, dynamic scenes can be achieved in a composite set "without the need to cut or adjust the camera angle to avoid breaking the illusion of a complete three-dimensional world" (2015: 70). *Dickensian* accordingly uses single camera filming throughout, diverging from the multi-camera set-up of continuing soap operas (Brunsdon, 1981: 35; Butler, 2010: 38-40). Nevertheless, *Dickensian* remains confined to its set. This becomes especially apparent after Edward Barbary is sent to debtors' prison (episode 9), an event that implies another typical Dickens setting will be added to the serial's locations. However, Edward's brief appearances while incarcerated fail to realise the potential for visual spectacle; when it briefly appears, the interior of the prison is obscured by soft focus and shadows (episodes 10-11). Identifying the composite set utilised by period drama *The Paradise* (BBC, 2013-14), Poore establishes how its use allows the BBC to "monetize its cultural capital as a producer of classic-novel serializations by introducing economies of scale to the normally time-consuming, handcrafted, one-off model of the costume drama" (ibid.: 67). Unusually for period dramas of the 2010s, neither *The Paradise* nor *Dickensian* is an international co-production, making economies of scale even more important to their viability. Economies of scale rely on multiple years of production to reap a benefit; *Dickensian*'s failure to be recommissioned therefore prevented it from overcoming its spatial constraints in subsequent seasons. For example, a second season might have allowed it to incorporate some location filming, similar to how soap operas occasionally include scenes shot away from their production base, overcoming the limitations of the serial's constructed world.

A DICKENSIAN NARRATIVE

Despite the conceptual limitations apparent in *Dickensian*, its later episodes display a resurgence of post-heritage innovations. While these may be motivated by the need to establish the potential

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[3] *Brookside* is a notable exception to this; the production was based in an actual housing estate, purchased specifically for the drama (Hobson, 2003: 71).

for subsequent seasons, they nevertheless allow a more substantial negotiation to be pursued between the serial, Dickens' texts and their prior adaptations. This approach, which results in a shift away from fidelity, is pursued by the writing of Jordan and Sarah Phelps, who together scripted the final five episodes. Jordan and Phelps' prior works, particularly as *EastEnders* writers in the early 2000s, indicate the influence of British soap opera in the narrative innovations of these episodes. During his time as an *EastEnders* writer, Jordan scripted the week where Zoe Slater's (Michelle Ryan) parentage is revealed (1-5 October 2001) in its entirety. Geraghty analyses this "special storyline" (2006: 221) in detail, describing its atypical aesthetic and narrative features as representative of a shift from realism to melodrama in contemporary soap opera (ibid.: 222-3). Under the aesthetic categories established in part I of this thesis, soaps nevertheless remain grounded in naturalism, with the Slater week displaying exceptional use of first-degree style. According to Geraghty, this shift represents the decline of the soap community in favour of "a world that is darker and more precarious than before" (ibid.: 227). The production rigmarole of a continuing soap opera means that the sophisticated style of this 'special' week is not possible on a regular basis; *Dickensian*, on the other hand, can consistently utilise infrequent soap opera devices, facilitating what Cardwell calls "an extraordinary level of visual density and stylistic flair" (2017: 130). Jordan is familiar with the parameters of soap opera production, but is also able to develop its generic conventions: in addition to the innovations described by Geraghty in the Slater week, Jordan has scripted six of *EastEnders*' occasional 'two-hander' episodes (15 November 1994; 27 October 1998; 2 October 2001; 5 September 2002; 31 October 2002; 25 May 2004), where the usual interweaving narratives are abandoned in favour of a sustained focus on just two characters. These episodes tend to be staged in real time and in limited locations, facilitating a focus on dialogue and interrogation of character to a greater extent than is possible in a typical episode. For instance, Jordan's two-hander episode from 2 October 2001, part of the Slater week, shows the immediate aftermath of Zoe learning that Kat (Jessie Wallace) is her mother rather than her sister, allowing the impact of this to be explored in detail before the second bombshell that Kat was raped by her uncle propels the story forward again and allows other characters to become involved in the subsequent episodes (Geraghty, 2006: 222-3).

Phelps, meanwhile, brings experience from both *EastEnders* (serving as a regular writer between 2002 and 2007) and literary adaptations, most notably of Dickens and Agatha Christie novels. Phelps' first foray into period drama was 2007's *Oliver Twist* (BBC/WGBH), which like *Dickensian* deployed the structure of the continuing soap opera, followed by 2011's *Great Expectations*. More recently, Phelps' revisionist adaptations of Christie mysteries – *And Then*

There Were None (BBC/A&E, 2015), *Witness for the Prosecution* (BBC/A&E, 2016), *Ordeal By Innocence* (BBC, 2018), *The ABC Murders* (BBC, 2018) and *The Pale Horse* (BBC/Amazon, 2020) to date – adopt a post-heritage, revisionist viewpoint towards an author associated with a more light-hearted approach through her own novels and previous adaptations, particularly the long-running *Poirot* (ITV, 1989-2013). As with both Phelps and Jordan's returns to *EastEnders* in recent years,[4] Phelps' contribution to *Dickensian* allows her expertise in both soap opera and classic serials to contribute to *Dickensian*'s post-heritage project. This is especially apparent in episodes 16 and 17, both written by Phelps, which commence with a two-hander[5] between the Barbary sisters and continue by revealing Jacob Marley's murderer. These episodes herald *Dickensian*'s shift towards a more revisionist approach as it begins to look towards the possibility of a second season. The innovations of episode 16 follow precedents set by *EastEnders*, the two-hander between Honoria and her sister Frances (Alexandra Moen) allowing their relationship to be interrogated. Frances is the 'Miss Barbary' of *Bleak House*, a fierce woman who raised the novel's partial first-person narrator, Esther Summerson. Miss Barbary's death before the events of *Bleak House* begin means she is only considered in retrospect, from Esther's perspective, with no justification for her pretence that Esther had died offered by Dickens' narrative. Episode 16 of *Dickensian* sees Honoria give birth to Esther and culminates with Frances' decision to separate mother and child, establishing her subjectivity in the process. Although Frances has previously been depicted as the unsympathetic character suggested by *Bleak House*, the sustained focus of this episode allows the previously unseen depths of her character to be uncovered. Luke McKernan describes episode 16 as exemplifying "the best of what the medium [of television] can achieve" due to its disruption of soap opera conventions: "while previous episodes had criss-crossed over the series' different story strands in the usual soap-opera manner, this episode concentrated on the one story alone with remorseless intensity and extraordinary effect" (2018: 185). This facilitates a direct negotiation with the narrative of *Bleak House* and an interrogation of the sisters' complex relationship, deploying the post-heritage characteristics that are minimised in earlier episodes.

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[4] Phelps scripted two episodes in 2015 (27 March; 14 September) and then returned to write the death of Peggy Mitchell (17 May 2016), while Jordan wrote the 2018 return of Kat Slater/Moon (22 March) under a pseudonym (Kilkelly, 2018). These episodes all focus on long-standing characters, with Phelps and Jordan's scripts appealing to the long-term viewer's "understanding of the way in which a particular character fits in to the network of relationships" (Geraghty, 1991: 15).

[5] Phelps also has experience writing *EastEnders* two-handers, having scripted all three involving Den Watts during his short-lived return stint (29 September 2003; 1 April 2004; 26 August 2004).

As episode 16 begins, the slower pace permitted by the absence of interweaving stories creates a change in tone and allows Frances' fastidiousness to immediately become comic: Honoria's waters having broken, her sister's reaction is to exclaim "look at the rug, it's soaked and it's Persian!" The humour of the dramatic circumstance continues to be mined as the sisters struggle to get Honoria out of her Victorian corset and Frances falls down the stairs in haste before having to wait to blow dry a note to Hawdon, the baby's father. These comic moments are based upon the intricacies of nineteenth century life, creating a comic subversion of familiar period drama elements and a 'testing-out' of a familiar storyline through its temporal distinction. However, there is more at stake here than simply finding humour at the expense of the past: Frances' newfound helplessness in this moment of crisis, and her surprising agreement to send for Hawdon, adds complexity to her character and allows empathy to be felt for her conflicted position. As the episode continues, Phelps' script interprets and revises the history between Honoria and Frances, as established in *Bleak House*. This allows viewers familiar with Dickens' novel to use it as an equivalent to the televisual history of long-running soap operas, enjoying the loyal viewer's thrill of recognising the details retroactively added to this history. As the sisters finally discuss the animosity between them, Frances' prior engagement is revealed as the source of her jealousy of Honoria. Although her former fiancé is not named, this circumstance alludes to Miss Barbary's engagement to Boythorn, related in *Bleak House*. In Dickens' novel, it is suggested that this engagement was broken by Miss Barbary because of her decision to raise Esther in secret (Dickens, 1991: 605); *Dickensian*, on the other hand, implies that it was ended by Boythorn years previously. The apparent change in chronology gives Frances a perspective independent of Esther's *Bleak House* narrative; her newfound subjectivity allows her unfavourable depiction in *Bleak House* and earlier episodes of *Dickensian* to be called into question. In *Dickensian*, Frances is able to directly speak of this situation and her feelings around it, a right she does not have in *Bleak House*. Despite the sisters reaching an understanding in this episode, knowledge of *Bleak House* suggests that they will soon become permanently estranged, leaving the viewer to speculate upon the circumstances that will prevent a happier future and lead to the events of Dickens' novel. However, another minor deviation from Dickens' narration casts doubt on the extent to which Dickens' events will be adhered to, as Honoria selects the name "Esther Frances" for her child. In *Bleak House*, Lady Dedlock did not name her child, and therefore does not suspect Esther's identity when they first meet (Dickens, 1991: 513). This distinction, more noticeable than the alterations to Frances' history, does not require the fundamentals of Dickens' narrative to be

shifted, but nevertheless is significant enough to challenge the immutability of *Dickensian*'s prequel narratives.

The increased doubt over whether literary fidelity will be maintained creates dramatic tension at the time of Esther's birth. It is questionable whether the viewer of *Dickensian* could ever believe that Esther – the heroine of *Bleak House* – would be stillborn in this revised narrative; nevertheless, the child's apparent death allows Frances' role to be further interrogated. In *Bleak House*, Esther's narration of Lady Dedlock's letter to her makes clear that her aunt orchestrated the deceit over her survival, holding "no desire or willingness that I should live" (ibid.). At this point of *Dickensian*, however, Frances sincerely mourns Esther's death, maintaining the integrity of her sisterly relationship with Honoria in the wake of tragedy. Her initial reaction when Esther, after being taken away from Honoria, begins to cry is one of joy, and she rushes to inform her sister before suddenly changing her mind. Although her actions are ultimately the same as those related in *Bleak House*, the deeper understanding of Frances achieved through this two-hander episode allows her character – and Esther's history – to be reinterpreted. Despite this, Frances' change of heart re-imposes limits to the longevity of the Barbary family in *Dickensian*. With the story falling back into alignment with *Bleak House*, Honoria duly accepts the proposal of Sir Leicester Dedlock (Richard Cordery) and prepares to move to Chesney Wold (episodes 19-20). Frances, meanwhile, arranges for Esther to be taken away but is last seen contemplating reclaiming her (episode 20). Although Esther's return to Frances' care is not seen, the capacity for further storylines around this seems slight; Honoria is even more unlikely to return, the events of *Bleak House* requiring her to remain apart from her sister and daughter following her marriage.

In contrast to the Barbary family's use in *Dickensian*, Inspector Bucket functions separately from his role in *Bleak House*, here investigating the murder of Jacob Marley. Bucket's entry from outside of the soap opera community allows him to provide what Geraghty calls the "outsider's objective gaze", trying "to rearrange the pattern of life in a way that may be more tidy but is different from that agreed by the residents" (1991: 100). This aligns with the character's function in *Bleak House*, where the third-person narration asserts that "time and place cannot bind Mr. Bucket" (Dickens, 1991: 712). Bucket's outsider status allows him to operate separately from the confines of the *Bleak House* prequel narrative in *Dickensian*; concurrently, the whodunit storyline integrates him into the community, resulting in his eventual decision to let Marley's murderer go free. Bucket is assisted in his investigation by Venus (Omid Djalili), whose taxidermy is located in the neighbourhood. Venus functions as Bucket's sidekick, their companionship, according to Justyna Jajszczok, allowing the detective "to reveal his human side" (2017: 19). Bucket is thus able

to transition from outsider to insider and, unencumbered by the constraints of a prequel narrative, continue in the drama beyond his initial storyline.

Following the two-hander between Honoria and Frances, episode 17, also written by Phelps, returns to Bucket's investigation, pushed towards a conclusion by the imposition of a two-day time limit to solve the crime. At stake is not only justice but the very role of the Detective; Bucket has established this investigative role, a self-conscious allusion to his cultural reputation as a pioneering literary detective (Clarke, 2016: 73; Parey, 2017). At this climactic moment, Bucket's identifiable characteristics are shown through his "exaggerated gestures" and mastery of disguise (Jajszczok, 2017: 17), both of which are foregrounded during his reconstruction of the murder scene. Bucket takes on the role of Marley in the reconstruction, with Venus playing his frightened victim-turned-attacker. Bucket has no need to wear a disguise here, but is seen to relish his performance, snarling exaggeratedly and slipping into a false accent as he elaborates on Marley's mindset: "there is nowhere you are free from me: every brick and every stick is mine. Your life; the life of your loved ones is mine. All of it, crushed by the debt you owe to me, and that gives me pleasure. So why should I be kind?" Venus, meanwhile, attends the meeting in the company of a taxidermised cat named Madame Snuggles, eventually raising her miniature shepherd's crook rather than the murder weapon in self-defence. The scene's absurdity contributes to the constructedness of *Dickensian*'s world, self-consciously acknowledging the serial's unique interpretations of both Bucket and Marley.

Bucket's investigation eventually uncovers a vital clue to Marley's murder, leading him back to the house of *A Christmas Carol*'s Bob Cratchit (Robert Wilford). He is shocked, however, when Bob's wife Emily (Jennifer Hennessy) herself confesses to the crime (episode 17). Although Bucket's murder mystery in *Bleak House* also exposes a woman as the culprit, here Bucket has consistently assumed the killer he seeks is a man. His assumption therefore functions as a comment on Dickens' narratives and Victorian culture more generally, especially considering Mrs Cratchit's marginalised role in *A Christmas Carol*. The viewer has also been encouraged to share Bucket's assumption, with a montage at the time of Marley's death establishing Silas Wegg, Bob Cratchit, Edward Barbary, Nell's Grandfather, Fagin, Bill Sikes and Scrooge as an all-male list of suspects (episode 1). In the following episode, written by Jordan,[6] the exposition of Emily's confession is aided by flashbacks that show the murder. These scenes fulfil a threefold purpose. Firstly, they continue to make use of innovative soap opera characteristics. Flashbacks are unusual

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[6] With a short reprise, the narrative of episode 18 continues directly from episode 17; like continuing soap operas, at this time of a major storyline the usual organisation of time between episodes is broken (Geraghty, 1981: 11).

in British soap operas, but not entirely without precedent: *EastEnders* first pioneered the device to narrate Diane Butcher's (Sophie Lawrence) months of homelessness in 1990 (27/29 March), and Jordan also incorporated flashbacks at the end of the pivotal Slater week in 2001 (Geraghty, 2006: 223). Secondly, *Dickensian*'s flashback reprises scenes from the first episode, extending sequences to insert Emily into previously seen events. This reveals to the viewer that the female perspective has been deliberately neglected up to this point, allowing *Dickensian* to enact the function of appropriations by giving voice to a character repressed by Dickens (Sanders, 2016: 126). As Emily originates from the same novella as Marley, it is easy for *Dickensian*'s revelation to encourage a revised reading of *A Christmas Carol* that recognises Mrs Cratchit's marginalisation. Lastly, the flashbacks legitimise Bucket's investigation. The confrontation between Emily and Marley evokes the Bucket and Venus re-enactment from the previous episode through the content of Marley's threats, the positions of the characters and the camera angles used. However, opposite Emily rather than Venus' comic re-enactment, Marley's sexual aggression in the flashback sequence further indicates the female perspective that Bucket is ignorant of.

The revelation of Marley's murderer causes an existential conflict for Bucket, where legal and moral justice compete. Legally, Emily should be hanged for her crime, but morally her arrest will only generate further unhappiness. Bucket – fast becoming an insider to the soap community – empathises with the position Emily was placed in; this complicates the more straightforward ideology of Dickens' text, where Bucket's stoic professionalism is never problematised. Jajszczok asserts that the Bucket of *Dickensian* seeks to remedy the amorality of his literary counterpart: "the literary Bucket is uncompromising in his professionalism, which may be perceived as a flawed attitude in itself; the TV Bucket is uncomfortable with these flaws and sets out to remedy them – with questionable success" (2017: 23). D. A. Miller, however, offers an alternative view of Dickens' Bucket, arguing that through him law enforcement "is capable of showing a human face" (1988: 78). Nevertheless, *Dickensian*'s intervention allows Bucket's potential for empathy and moral justice to be foregrounded, even when it opposes the law. Bucket initially resolves to act as "an instrument of the law", but when he brings Emily to the police station amidst a riot he has a sudden change of heart. He allows the murderer to return to her family, confirming that he believes justice to have been served. His literary ambiguities are thus retained through his position as "an imperfect police officer operating within an imperfect system" (Jajszczok, 2017: 23-4). After Emily runs back home, the episode ends on a moment of reflection rather than the conventional soap opera cliffhanger: Bucket surveys his surroundings as Edward waves off Sir Leicester Dedlock and Amelia passes by with Compeyson, the detective enjoying a moment of
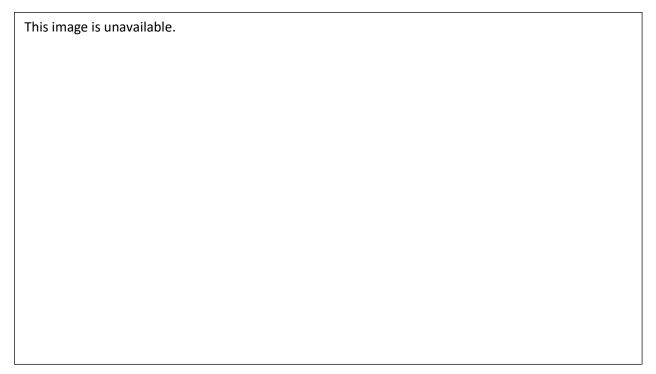
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Figure 9: Bucket (Stephen Rea) enjoys a moment of contentedness, assimilated into the soap opera community after choosing morality over the law (*Dickensian*, BBC: episode 18)

contentedness before he turns away (figure 9). Bucket's assimilation into the world of *Dickensian* is completed through his choice of morality over the law; his peace comes from aiding not just Emily but the community as a whole. This moment simultaneously reminds us that there are limits to Bucket's insight, as his contentment is ignorant of the unresolved situations within the Barbary and Havisham households: Honoria is about to enter into a loveless marriage with Sir Leicester, while Amelia's fateful wedding day is also fast approaching. Nevertheless, Bucket is established as a character that can exist beyond the single storyline of the Marley whodunit, unlike the majority of the figures he encounters in the *Dickensian* neighbourhood. This is confirmed in the final episode, where Bucket reappears in The Three Cripples pub with a new case to solve. Bucket's freedom from the constraints of *Bleak House*'s narrative therefore allows him to fulfil *Dickensian*'s post-heritage potential, while retaining the longevity of a soap opera character.

"I WANT SOME MORE"

Dickensian's shift away from literary fidelity towards the end of its first season is exemplified by the introduction of Oliver Twist (Leonardo Dickens), which provides a final illustration of the post-heritage possibilities assessed by this chapter. Oliver's identity is concealed until he re-enacts the character's most familiar moment, approaching Mr Bumble with an empty bowl and pleading "please sir, I want some more" (figure 10). The drama assumes the viewer's knowledge of this moment, cutting away from Bumble's anticipated response to show Oliver being ejected from the
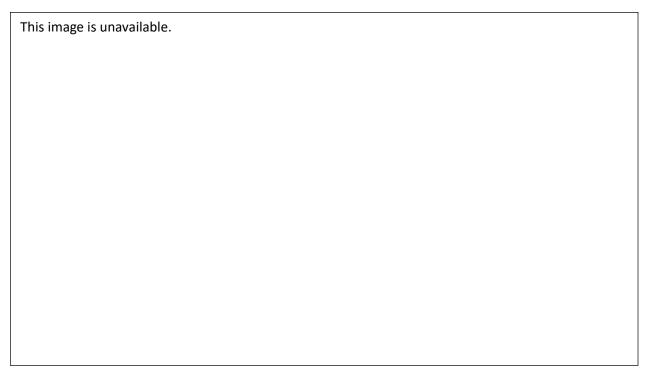
Figure 10: The Bumbles (Richard Ridings and Caroline Quentin) and their guests are dumbfounded as Oliver (Leonardo Dickens) enacts his most famous literary moment (*Dickensian*, BBC: episode 19)

workhouse. Despite its familiarity, this development subverts the expectations around *Dickensian*'s narrative accumulated across the season: prior to this, the Bumbles' storyline has appeared to offer another prequel narrative, depicting their efforts to secure a position at a Midlands workhouse that would reflect the station in which Bumble is found at the start of *Oliver Twist*.[7] Oliver's appearance in the *Dickensian* neighbourhood interrupts the course of the prequel narrative, commencing his storyline early and causing the Bumbles to lose the Midlands position. In the season's final scene, where a dejected Oliver meets the Artful Dodger (Wilson Radjou-Pujalte), the events of *Oliver Twist* continue to be pursued in a new context. The future of *Dickensian* is thus seen to lie in revised readings of the events of Dickens' novels, not simply their characters, redressing the restrictions imposed by the prequel narratives that dominate the first season. However, the late shift from legitimising the serial's concept to asserting its longevity was not enough for the drama to be recommissioned for a second season. This left the benefits of the serial's economies of scale, in particular the investment in its composite set, unrealised.

Dickensian's soap opera structure offers the potential for a post-heritage approach, yet the institutional context of the continuing soap opera restricts its innovations. The soap opera community established by the drama allows characters from various literary sources to integrate,

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[7] Mrs Bumble's ambiguous presence complicates this, however; she shares characteristics with *Oliver Twist*'s Widow Corney, who later marries Bumble, but could also be interpreted as an earlier marriage before the events of Dickens' novel. Further obscuring matters, Richard Ridings, who plays Mr Bumble, surprisingly describes his character as existing after the events of *Oliver Twist* (quoted in BBC Media Centre, 2015: 31).

with audience familiarity achieved through Dickens's works and previous screen adaptations, in addition to the Victorian mise-en-scène. *Dickensian* uses the Darwinian evolution of its characters (Hutcheon, 2013: 31; Bignell, 2019: 149) as an equivalent to the serial history and promotional information utilised by long-running soap operas; this allows its viewers to anticipate future events and recognise the generic familiarity of its storylines. The serial's lower episode output in comparison to continuing soap operas does, however, allow *Dickensian* to utilise features of first- and even second-degree style, establishing a more consistently sophisticated aesthetic. Despite this, the serial's inability to film away from its composite set imposes constraints that become increasingly apparent as the drama continues, while the prequel narratives deployed to legitimise the serial's concept hinder its characters' potentials for longevity. This results in *Dickensian* returning to the aesthetic limitations and fidelity approach of the traditional, studio-bound classic serial. The innovations introduced in the serial's final five episodes, including a two-hander episode, flashback sequences and a more revisionist approach to Dickens' texts, find precedent in the occasional devices of *EastEnders* and other British continuing soap operas, belatedly establishing a more successful negotiation between generic conventions and post-heritage innovations.

The word 'Dickensian' itself suggests the serial's negotiation of the conventions of soap opera and classic serial; as Andrew Sanders summarises, "the shorthand term 'Dickensian' has achieved a unique and unrivalled breadth of application, whether that application refers to snowy Christmases or decaying schools or failing hospitals" (2003: 177). Giddings, Selby and Wensley establish the term's negative perception through its televisual character, suggesting that "what impresses viewers as 'Dickensian' accuracy is really a prissy and fussy romantic historicism which is irrelevant to Dickens' intentions" (1990: 88). This indicates the tendency of traditional classic serials to foster a sanitised version of Dickens, distorting the social critiques of the author himself. Juliette John's assessment of the Dickensian brand at the time of the author's 2012 bicentenary establishes a broader application of the term, "combin[ing] veneration with more inclusive, accessible, and 'modern' forms of celebration which strip our connection with Dickens of its hierarchical and nostalgic Otherness" (2012: 2). The bicentenary commemorations thus acknowledged the negative connotations of a 'Dickensian' society, but within this lies an optimism that resonates with the characteristics of soap opera: "Dickens' work is saturated with loneliness, with the fear of detachment but because of that, it invests in 'company', willing belief in community, and communion" (ibid.: 4). John concludes by acknowledging Dickens' role in presenting images of hardship to a mass audience (2012: 4-5), suggesting the purpose of an

appropriation of the 'Dickensian' through a popular televisual genre. *Dickensian* has the potential to encompass the full scope of meanings evoked by its title; its concept allows it to combine familiarity and innovation, while conducting a dialogue with literary sources that may adhere to or disrupt Dickens' narratives. This tension exists in all literary adaptations, but is foregrounded through *Dickensian*'s use of self-consciousness. The drama places the different interpretations of 'Dickensian' in close proximity, asserting its significance through the palimpsestic nature of adaptation.

The need for *Dickensian* to legitimise its unique concept, establishing its characters as authentically 'Dickens' despite their new narrative contexts, reveals the difficulties faced by unconventional adaptations on television. Unlike literary works such as *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jack Maggs*, television productions with the level of investment of *Dickensian* are required to justify their expense by achieving popular success or critical acclaim. *Dickensian* failed to achieve either; rather than complementing each other, soap opera and post-heritage characteristics imposed limits on the drama's cultural impact and mass appeal respectively. Following *Dickensian*'s lack of success, the BBC adopted a new approach to Dickens adaptations by commissioning Steven Knight, the creator of *Peaky Blinders*, to adapt a number of the author's works (Chitwood, 2019). The first of these is *A Christmas Carol* (BBC/FX, 2019), due to be followed by *Great Expectations* (BBC Media Centre, 2020). *A Christmas Carol*, in a parallel to *Dickensian*'s whodunit storyline, also gives Bob Cratchit's wife an agency she does not have in Dickens' novella; Mary Cratchit (Vinette Robinson) is here revealed as the cause of Scrooge's (Guy Pearce) transformative visions, giving her both an individual and a supernatural voice. Knight's revisionist approach indicates the possibilities of post-heritage innovations within the traditional framework of linear adaptations, despite the lack of economies of scale offered by these new productions. However, Knight's inclination to continue with the frequently adapted texts of *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*, in addition to *Great Expectations* (Chitwood, 2019), suggests that less familiar Dickens texts remain resistant to a post-heritage approach. The cultural memory of Dickens' texts and previous adaptations appears to remain vital for revisionist appropriations to assert their points of departure. Conversely, the following chapter considers the impact on the act of adaptation of a production that carries minimal cultural associations, assessing the potential freedoms this offers in its negotiation of palimpsestuous televisual genres.

────────────── *Chapter 6* ──────────────
Adapting the "Light Comedy" of *Parade's End*

Why can't one get a man to go away with one and be just… oh, light comedy?
--- Sylvia Tietjens (Stoppard, 2012: 35)

Ford Madox Ford's tetralogy of novels, *Parade's End*, which consists of *Some Do Not…* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up –* (1926) and *Last Post* (1928), presents a number of challenges for potential screen adaptors. Its modernist style and psychological focus suggest it as an archetypal example of 'unfilmable' literature, although, as Kamilla Elliott points out, "when we speak or write of unfilmable books, we are not referring to the incapacity of film technologies to represent books but to the resistance of various aesthetic, media, technological, economic, political, cultural, and ethical *conventions* to filming books" (2017: 101-2, emphasis in original). As the post-heritage element of subjectivity shows, television as a medium is capable of representing such complexities when cultural and institutional conditions allow. A co-production arrangement between the BBC and HBO allowed these conditions to be realised for *Parade's End*'s 2012 adaptation, scripted by Tom Stoppard. The challenges of filming *Parade's End* were previously tackled in 1964, when its first three volumes were adapted by John Hopkins as part of BBC2's *Theatre 625* anthology series. While Hopkins' version unravels Ford's complex structure into a mostly chronological narrative, the approach taken by the more recent *Parade's End* adaptation strives to establish a visual equivalent to Ford's prose, which reflects the societal upheaval and cultural crisis of the First World War period.

> Marlene Griffith outlines the importance of social disruption to Ford's tetralogy:
>
> This railway carriage [of the opening scene] leads us into the Edwardian world of country weekends, golf courses, clubs, bachelor quarters, and Whitehall offices, but it is a world beginning to shake. The golf course is invaded by suffragettes; the country breakfast is shattered by Duchemin's indecencies; city men with oily hair invade private clubs and discuss their domestic circumstances in a loud voice, and gentlemen can no longer trust each other. (1963: 27-8)

The pivotal historical moment is also explored through the relationships between the central characters of Christopher Tietjens (Benedict Cumberbatch in the 2012 adaptation), his wife Sylvia (Rebecca Hall) and the young suffragette Valentine Wannop (Adelaide Clemens). Stoppard deploys a revised structure that allows his adaptation to emphasise this 'love triangle' narrative: *Some Do Not…*, which narrates Christopher and Valentine's inability to pursue an affair in the pre-war society, is adapted into the first three of the five episodes, with *No More Parades* and *A Man Could Stand Up –* forming the bases of episodes four and five respectively. *Last Post*, as in 1964,

is not directly adapted,[1] allowing the adaptation's narrative to conclude with the union of Christopher and Valentine on Armistice Day. This structure allows Stoppard's adaptation to foreground the wider appeal of a romance narrative alongside the cultural prestige of Ford's literary work.

Stoppard's *Parade's End* also emphasises the comic aspects of Ford's novels, particularly in its first and fourth episodes, utilising the generic features of televisual comedy to interpret the drama's historical moment and critique the characters' ideological positions. As Jameson has noted, the complexities of war appear impossible to narratively represent (2013: 233); Ford himself faced this problem in his war writing (Chantler and Hawkes, 2015: 3-4). Stoppard's *Parade's End* uses the conventions of television comedy to attempt to overcome this impossibility, particularly important at a moment when first-hand memory of the First World War had recently expired.[2] Leggott's assessment of 'costume comedy' indicates the validity of this approach, identifying "a vigorous tradition of British period comedy continually tilting at notions of taste, finding new hybrid forms, and inviting audiences to reflect on their attitude to history, and to representations of history" (2015: 50). Furthermore, de Groot argues that, despite the dominance of 'straight' representations of the past, "historical comedy is clearly a place where a text expects a response on the part of the viewer" (2016b: 167). Comedy can therefore be linked to the notion of active viewership, which is facilitated by post-heritage approaches to history (see Introduction). *Parade's End*'s approach to comedy differs from the peripheral use of humour in *Downton Abbey*, for instance, which can be described as a comedy of manners. As described by Alexis Greene, comedies of manners in theatre

> are built on rules – rules for having sexual and emotional relationships, rules for marriage, rules for telling (or, more likely, not telling) the truth, raising children, living in the city, vacationing in the country, ordering in restaurants[…] Ultimately, rules exist to protect the closed world from outside incursions. (1992: 80)

The comedy of *Downton Abbey* thus allows the drama's heritage impulses to dominate, its microcosm unthreatened by the deficiencies of wider society. As Deery indicates, *Downton*'s comedy also avoids the subversive elements of sitcom: "whereas full-blown ridicule or satire can be ugly and miserly, here comic elements work to diffuse tension or allow the politically incorrect to survive" (2017: 63).

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[1] Unlike Hopkins in 1964, however, Stoppard does draw on incidents from *Last Post*, "pillaging[…] for anything which threw light on the first three [books]" (Stoppard, 2012: viii).
[2] Florence Green, the last surviving veteran of the First World War, died in February 2012 (The Telegraph, 2012).

This final chapter will examine the use of comedy in 2012's *Parade's End*, which is deployed in conjunction with the drama's post-heritage realisation of Ford's modernist prose style. The comedy of *Parade's End* on screen will be compared to the situation comedy formats of *Blackadder Goes Forth* (BBC, 1989), which offers a caricatured depiction of the First World War, and *Up the Women* (BBC, 2013-15), which concerns the women's suffrage movement. These comparisons will display how humour can be used to explore significant cultural issues. The chapter's first section will outline the Impressionist style of Ford's writing, exploring its influence on the aesthetics of Stoppard's *Parade's End*. The next section will establish the 2012 adaptation's approach to the narrative's historical moment, considering the influence of contemporary art movements on Ford's *Parade's End* and the development of this as a motif in Stoppard's adaptation. The third section will establish the post-heritage function of the sitcom genre in *Blackadder Goes Forth* and *Up the Women*, before comparing this to the use of comedy in Ford's *Parade's End*. The fourth and fifth sections will perform close analyses of key comic scenes in Stoppard's *Parade's End*, which lambast Edwardian social mores and wartime bureaucracy. The comic depictions of these situations will be shown to display the adaptation's use of subversion and self-consciousness, confirming its post-heritage intentions.

FRAGMENTATIONS IN FORD AND STOPPARD

Ford scholars have identified the writer's complex relationship with modernism, which impacts the historical position of *Parade's End*. Sara Haslam describes Ford's "fragmenting modernism" through the image of the kaleidoscope: "the kaleidoscope, with its coloured, textured shards of reflected glass, helps Ford to describe vivid experience that is always changing, always made new" (2002: 8-9). According to Haslam, in Ford's non-fiction wartime writing "the kaleidoscope signifies the complex multiplicity of British wartime psychology, one that depended partly on how the light (of experience, of understanding, or of narrative) was thrown" (ibid.: 88). Visual style is thus important to *Parade's End* even before it undergoes the process of adaptation to a screen medium, allowing an inexpressible moment of history to be articulated. As Haslam summarises, "when words fail in Ford, he can resort to pictures" (ibid.: 106). Ford's kaleidoscopic style also relates to his concept of Impressionism, described by the author as follows:

> I suppose that Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass – through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person behind you[…] any piece of Impressionism[…] is the record of the impression of a moment[…] the impression, not the corrected chronicle. (Ford, 1964: 41)

Subjectivity is vitally important to Ford's Impressionism, as Isabelle Brasme's discussion of Haslam's kaleidoscope metaphor establishes:

> Kaleidoscopes are made not of mere glass fragments, but of multiple mirrors: new combinations are thus created from reflections of fragments. This process reveals the dynamics at work in the whole novel: the action is shown from several diverging angles, and the 'cubist' vision is generated in the mind of the reader, who juxtaposes and combines those various perspectives. (2008: 196)

Furthermore, Eric Meyer's reading of *Parade's End* establishes the development of its literary style from the pre-war quasi-realism of *Some Do Not…* to the psychological disturbance of the First World War: "as *Parade's End* progresses, the novels' textual surfaces become diffuse, elliptical, and discontinuous, while reified subjective experience becomes atomistic, interiorized, and even schizophrenic" (1990: 89). This stylistic shift indicates the challenges faced by screen adaptations of *Parade's End*, which are required to find visual equivalences for Ford's subjectivity while also contextualising his English society for a modern viewer.

The kaleidoscope imagery Haslam uses to describe Ford's work is emulated throughout the 2012 *Parade's End* adaptation, established by its title sequence. The sequence places the opening credits within a mirrored glass prism, an approximation of the "bright glass" of Ford's Impressionism, rotating between its triangular panels for each grouping of superimposed credits. Only a neutral orange backdrop is apparent behind the prism, allowing reflections of the text to appear in the adjacent panels and shadows to move across the screen. The final rotation finds an opening in the prism, through which the first scene of the episode is revealed as the final mirrored panels retreat at the edge of the screen. This kaleidoscopic title sequence indicates the importance of subjectivity to Stoppard's *Parade's End*, and its association with Ford's fragmented literary style. This is maintained through the serial's aesthetics and mise-en-scène, with mirrors, reflections and lines of sight used to evoke various characters' perspectives. Prismatic fragmentations are also used to represent images presented as Tietjens' memory, with increased distortions representing his damaged state of mind during wartime. This is established by the sequences that begin the first and third episodes, which continue the visual motif of the title sequence. The flashbacks of the opening sequence reveal the centrality of subjectivity to the drama's exploration of the 1910s socio-historical moment. The flashback's image of Sylvia is "divided into segments" (ibid.: 196) in the manner of the opening titles' mirrored glass (figure 11), contrasting with the undistorted Christopher in reverse shots as the two meet for the first time. In the third episode's short opening sequence, where an injured Christopher awakens in a field
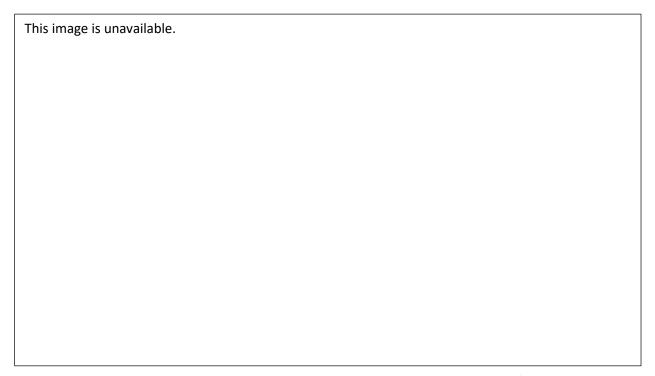
Figure 11: Sylvia (Rebecca Hall) appears in fragments during Christopher's flashback (*Parade's End*, BBC/HBO: episode 1)

hospital,[3] this flashback is reprised. When seen again, the fragmented visuals also affect the reverse shot of Christopher, which twice cuts away before he speaks his name. The increased distortion of the kaleidoscopic image visualises Christopher's amnesia and crisis of identity following his injury, repurposing the obfuscating effects of the serial's aesthetics as its narrative develops towards the psychological focus of the tetralogy's later novels.

Post-heritage subversion is also initiated by the techniques deployed by the first episode's opening sequence. Here, the title sequence's mirrored prism recedes to reveal a glass chandelier shot from above, the camera moving across the elegantly decorated drawing room and eventually down towards Sylvia in her bedroom, first glimpsed by the train of her gown. Hockenhull directly considers the post-heritage character of this opening: "no explanation or establishing shots set the scene, and rather than presenting the opulence and splendor associated with heritage through lengthy takes, arguably, through the self-consciousness and kinesis of the camera, these images disorientate, distance, and confuse" (2015: 195). Although this is an atypical manner to introduce setting and character, it should be recognised that the "spectator investment" (ibid.) found through its innocuity depends upon contemplation of the opulent mise-en-scène, displaying the continued function of heritage elements. Nevertheless, as Hockenhull describes, the seven-minute opening sequence continues at a fast pace that incorporates flashback,

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[3] Episode 3 is rearranged from its scripted iterations (where Christopher is absent for a long period at the beginning of the episode), allowing Christopher to remain "the centre of consciousness" through this opening sequence (Price, 2013: 128-9).

kaleidoscopic visuals, sophisticated editing techniques and explicit sexual content to establish Christopher and Sylvia's complex relationship, providing "no indication whatsoever that this will be a heritage costume piece" (ibid.: 196-7).

The opening sequence also establishes Sylvia as a more sympathetic character than her literary counterpart, offering a post-heritage interpretation of her character. The flashback to Christopher and Sylvia's meeting transitions suddenly to the couple's wedding day, where Sylvia is found examining her reflection in an ornate powder box. The box, a gift from Sylvia's lover Gerald Drake, makes only a single appearance in Ford's novels, its image allowing the reader to glimpse the depth of feeling within the often-villainous Sylvia:

> She had brought it down to-night out of defiance. She imagined that Tietjens disliked it. She said breathlessly to herself: "Perhaps the damn thing is an ill omen. …" Drake had been the first man who had ever … A hot-breathed brute! … In the little glass her features were chalk-white. … She looked like … she looked like … She had a dress of golden tissue. … The breath was short between her white set teeth. … Her face was as white as her teeth. … And … Yes! Nearly! Her lips. … What was her face like? (Ford, 2012: 403)

The elliptical style of this moment of self-reflection displays Sylvia's uncertainty, corresponding to Tietjens' own lexical deterioration during wartime. Without the possibility of revealing the interiority of the central characters through such prose, Stoppard's adaptation instead deploys Sylvia's powder box as a recurring motif that contributes to the theme of reflections (Park-Finch, 2014: 331). The powder box is ascribed meaning additional to Ford's text after Sylvia spontaneously throws it out of a car window, forcing the honourable Christopher to rescue it (episode 2). Later, it is seen to have obtained a large crack across its mirrored surface, symbolising both the state of the Tietjens' marriage and Sylvia's self-perception in lieu of Ford's prose. When the crack is first shown, the shot's focus shifts from the crack itself to Sylvia's eye, the latter blurring the surrounding scene and obscuring the crack from Sylvia's perspective (episode 2). At the conclusion of the fourth episode, a similar shift in focus occurs as Sylvia examines herself in the powder box again. On this occasion the crack remains clearly visible across another focus transition, implying that Sylvia is beginning to reconcile her identity as "the Captain's lady" (Stoppard, 2012: 276) with the reality of her fractious relationship with Christopher. Lastly, Sylvia produces the powder box after briefly resuming her affair with Drake (Jack Huston) and holds it open while she learns about Christopher's wounding and the war's imminent end, pointedly snapping the box shut as she refuses Drake's invitation to return to bed (episode 5). Sylvia's powder box serves as a visual reminder of her subtle character development, allowing the viewer to understand her motivations and sympathise with her position. The additional dimensions to

Sylvia's character aid the adapted narrative's emphasis on the love triangle between her, Christopher and Valentine; acknowledging the impact of network notes from both the BBC and HBO, Heebon Park-Finch considers the sympathetic revisions to Sylvia's character as facilitating the "conservative characterisation" of a "Hollywood style love triangle" (2014: 336). Hall's Sylvia can also be read as a progressive shift towards a more complex and contemporary heroine, however, as established by Byrne:

> While in the first episode of the series Hall's Sylvia comes across as brittle, even hysterical, by the second the viewer understands that most of her behaviour is motivated by emotional and intellectual frustration. She is "bored" and unstimulated by her idle society life, and resentful of her husband's superior – inevitably, because he is a man in the early twentieth century – education, knowledge and opportunities. (2015a: 123)

Stoppard's *Parade's End* therefore responds to Sondra J. Stang's call to recuperate Sylvia's poor critical reputation (1977: 108-11), while also negotiating the transnational imperatives of the production.

PICTURING *PARADE'S END*

The 2012 adaptation of *Parade's End* introduces a motif of artwork through its aesthetics and mise-en-scène, establishing the era depicted and situating Ford's narrative within its social and political contexts. The adaptation contains additional scenes designed to accommodate, in Stoppard's words, the "good stuff expressed through the inner lives of Christopher, Sylvia and Valentine, without, very often, a concrete dimension, let alone a dramatic momentum" in the *Parade's End* novels (2012: ix). Many of these scenes are found in the adaptation's second episode, which bridges Ford's narrative gap between the first and second parts of *Some Do Not…*. The originality of this episode allows Stoppard to shed light on the characters and historical context of the drama for a contemporary audience, as Byrne above indicates in her assessment of Sylvia. As part of the association between the serial's central characters and the 1910s culture they exist within, paintings feature significantly in the episode, the motif allowing Christopher, Sylvia and Valentine to process their lives and relationships while the international political situation deepens. In one scene, Valentine enters the National Gallery during a suffrage demonstration, where she witnesses the 1914 slashing of Velázquez's "Rokeby Venus". The direction and editing of the transmitted scene emphasise Valentine's response to the nude painting and its desecration, implicitly connecting it to her desire for Christopher. Whereas in the episode's script Valentine's curiosity is piqued by the interest of a group of male visitors (Stoppard, 2012: 115), on screen her attention is captured by the painting alone. Through the

suggestive "Rokeby Venus", Valentine implicitly considers her own sexuality; this is confirmed in the following episode, where a brief cutaway shows Valentine imagining herself reclining in the Venus' pose as she awaits Christopher for a promised sexual encounter.[4] When Mary Richardson (Letty Butler) enacts her protest at the gallery, the absence of the scripted group of voyeuristic men allows her censure to encompass Valentine's sexual awakening: "do you think that is all women are good for?"[5] The end of the scene focuses on Valentine's confused reaction to the attack on the painting and Richardson's arrest, revealing her difficulty in reconciling her sexual identity as a woman with her suffragist politics through her subjectivity.

The following scene shows Sylvia at another art gallery, musing over an exhibition of post-Impressionist works with Brownlie (Jamie Parker), a would-be suitor whose overt interest Sylvia languidly tolerates. Alighting on a nude painting, Sylvia contemplates "buying one to annoy Christopher" (Stoppard, 2012: 117). The scene then cuts to Christopher at home, enthusiastically professing his admiration of the picture Sylvia has bought for him. The picture is subsequently revealed to be a landscape image, rather than a nude from the exhibition. Although there is clear humour in the discovery of Christopher eagerly poring over "Tom Girtin on one of his topographical tours of the 1790s" (Stoppard, 2012: 118) rather than the expected naked female, the scene also functions to reveal that Sylvia has ultimately purchased an artwork that she knows will please her husband, not annoy him. Despite its reconciliatory function, the painting ends up banished to the breakfast room where both husband and wife will see it, as they do not share a bedroom; it thus represents the complexities of the Tietjens marriage. The painting's symbolism is revisited during the episode's closing montage, with the war now imminent; Christopher is shown breakfasting alone in army uniform while the Girtin landscape sits conspicuously in the corner of the room, the tableau displaying both his personal isolation and the English values the war threatens (figure 12). While Byrne views the presence of works of art in the serial's mise-en-scène as the driving force of the characters' emotional responses and a reminder of "the ultimate function of heritage productions" (2015a: 134-5), in these scenes they also question the dominant ideologies of the narrative's historical moment.

Art movements contemporaneous to *Parade's End*'s time period are also co-opted as part of the serial's aesthetics. The kaleidoscopic visuals, as well as representing the central characters'

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[4] This moment foregrounds the process of self-discovery through representation in Ford's tetralogy, where "the central characters enact roles drawn from poetry and myth that change as each seeks to discover what he has become or can be" (Levin, 1970: 184).

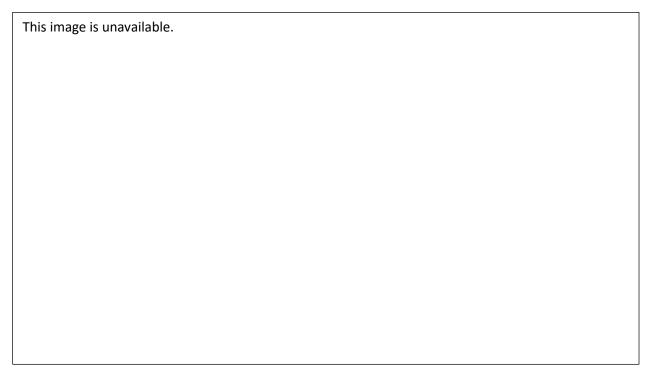[5] This line is absent from the published script.

Figure 12: Christopher (Benedict Cumberbatch) prepares to go to war, with his Girtin landscape in the background (*Parade's End*, BBC/HBO: episode 2)

subjectivities and Ford's fragmentary writing style, allude to the Vorticist art movement, led by Ford's contemporaries (Gasiorek, 2008) and noted by literary scholars as influencing scenes in *Parade's End* (Becquet, 2009: 195; Piette, 2014: 141).[6] Andrzej Gasiorek summarises the aim of Vorticism as "to make sense of modernity through a form of geometrical abstraction in the belief that naturalist representation was incapable of getting at the implications of industrial and urban experience" (2015: 214); its use in the adaptation of *Parade's End* therefore indicates the serial's intention to similarly "make sense" of the historical moment behind Ford's narrative. In the trenches, however, the Vorticist aesthetics give way to the realist influence of Paul Nash's war landscapes,[7] representing the shift in perspective instigated by the war.

The aesthetics of the 2012 adaptation of *Parade's End* allow it to be associated with Ford's own visual style. Alexandra Becquet returns to the image of the kaleidoscope to consider Ford's artistic influences:

> Far from being merely Impressionist, Ford's art borrows from and participates in the early twentieth-century avant-gardes. In 1914 already, representation and fragmentation were not simply *duplex*, or dual, but kaleidoscopic and aesthetically closer to what the French art critic Philippe Dagen conveniently calls 'cubo-futurism', a term that includes all avant-garde movements of the time. (2009: 194)

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[6] Susanna White, the serial's director, discusses Vorticist photography as a direct influence on its fragmented imagery in its "Behind the Scenes" DVD feature.

[7] Nash's influence impacted the selection of filming locations ("Behind the Scenes" DVD feature) and the specific composition of an establishing shot during episode 5's trench scenes (White, 2012).

The consequent "endless refraction" (ibid.: 196) allows *Parade's End* to present the possibility of working through the trauma of war through visual means: "the perspective necessary to composition introduces a distance that makes those events more manageable because less close and so less traumatic" (ibid.: 201). This is apparent in the scene of *A Man Could Stand Up* – where Christopher is caught in an explosion and catapulted into the air (Ford, 2012: 637-8). According to Becquet, this "symbolically climactic moment" is depicted cinematically:

> The darkness which stamps the passage converts the reader into a spectator in a movie theatre. The very slow rhythm that characterizes the prose fragments time, and space in its wake, thus reproducing the effect of film in slow motion (plainly recorded in the text). Christopher's vision of his fellow soldiers reveals a height and a width of angle to be paralleled with a camera bird's eye view while his words definitely associate his visual and physical experience with the movies. (2009: 198-9)

In the 2012 adaptation the sequence's visual potential is realised, with computer generated imagery and slow-motion replacing the novel's interior monologue (episode 5). The scene's visuals thus expose the disorientation experienced by Christopher during wartime. Christopher Brightman elaborates on the interpretative function of Ford's visual writing, connecting Ford's Impressionism (and the motif of the mirror) to the complex narrative 'loops' that structure the tetralogy: "the loops enact[…] a drama of mind and memory and invite the reader's participation in the often taxing experience of unravelling their complicated chronology" (1982: 69). In Brightman's analysis, the reader is eventually freed from the restrictions of the structural loops and yet shut out from the union of Christopher and Valentine (ibid.: 72-3). The revised structure of Stoppard's *Parade's End* mitigates this consequence in its drive towards a romantic resolution, allowing the viewer to be part of the adaptation's romantic union and the new world it represents. *Parade's End* in 2012 unties Ford's narrative loops for its contemporary audience, but maintains the cultural significance of the tetralogy through its adapted visual style.

The revisionist point of view indicated by the production's aesthetics suggests the influences of its co-production networks. Hockenhull's analysis of Stoppard's *Parade's End* as a post-heritage adaptation acknowledges the centrality of its visual character, but fails to establish the full significance of its approach; considering Monk's post-heritage film cycle (see Introduction), Hockenhull reduces deviations from fidelity to "playful asides" (2015: 193) and suggests *Parade's End*'s innovative style aims "to appeal to a less elitist and more populist audience" (ibid.: 198). This claim, conflated with Stoppard's stated desire to create an engaging drama (ibid.: 199), belies the adaptation's function as a public service drama that makes use of the cultural cachet of both Ford and Stoppard. Furthermore, the BBC asserted Ford's prestige

through his status as a less populist 'classic' author in an accompanying episode of *The Culture Show* (2004-15), as Hockenhull herself notes (ibid.: 202). *Parade's End*'s function for the BBC is therefore comparable to that of a Poliakoff drama, with mainstream appeal only of negligible importance to its purpose (see chapter 2). Director Susanna White's assertions of *Parade's End*'s superiority over *Downton Abbey* (ibid.: 200), a comparison taken up by the serial's positive critical responses (Byrne, 2015a: 112), are therefore designed to promote *Parade's End*'s cultural superiority rather than to better *Downton*'s viewing figures. Nelson, meanwhile, considers HBO's surprising involvement in the adaptation of such an oblique novel, suggesting that Stoppard's literary prestige, European tax breaks and the opportunity to capitalise on the popular US success of *Downton Abbey* were deciding factors in the cable network's decision to co-produce the drama (2019: 155). Audience impact was consequently a more important consideration for HBO than it was for the BBC in pursuing *Parade's End*, the "mutual reinforcement of brand reputation" intended to build audiences for the subscription service (ibid.: 157). The low viewing figures for *Parade's End* were thus more of a disappointment for its US network, which Nelson posits as a reason for the lack of BBC/HBO co-productions in subsequent years (ibid.: 158). This was the case until 2019, when the BBC and HBO co-produced *Gentleman Jack* (2019-present), *Years and Years* (2019) and *His Dark Materials* (2019-present); the only example of this arrangement in the interim period was *The Casual Vacancy* (2015).

SITUATING COMEDY

The potential of comedy to facilitate a post-heritage approach to the past is demonstrated by the concepts of *Blackadder Goes Forth* and *Up the Women*, as the scholarly responses to these comedies show. Emma Hanna establishes the increased cultural impact of *Blackadder Goes Forth* in comparison to the three previous *Blackadder* seasons (1983-87), comparing this to the dramatic narrative of *Upstairs, Downstairs*' war season (see chapter 1): "the power of the narrative of 1914-18[...] appears to have made a stronger impression on viewers and critics than previous series [of *Blackadder*] which had been set in earlier – and perhaps less familiar – periods of history" (2009: 132). Nevertheless, *Goes Forth* remains a pastiche of familiar representations of the war: as described by Sam Edwards, the season constitutes a "playful reworking of the ideas, images and tropes established over the previous eighty years" (2018: 263).[8] It is this self-consciousness that allows the contemporary relevance of the absurdities of war to be felt;

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[8] See also Stephen Badsey (2001).

Edwards argues that *Blackadder* finding humour in the wartime loss of life is justified through its parallel in the Cold War politics of the 1980s (ibid.: 265-6). The most memorable moment of *Blackadder Goes Forth* is the ending of its final episode, "Goodbyeee", where the main characters go 'over the top' towards certain death and their slow-motion charge fades into an image of a poppy field. As this ending approaches, the episode's comedy is overtaken by pathos as Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) relates the circumstances of the war's outbreak (ibid.: 264-5). Comedy and drama intersect in their representation and memorialisation of the war, allowing *Blackadder Goes Forth* to influence the "postmodernist, metahistoric social construction of history" (Voigts-Virchow, 2005: 212).[9] Notably, the series casts the officer class of the British army, primarily represented by General Melchett (Stephen Fry), as its antagonists (Edwards, 2018: 263), allowing its satire to focus on the British bureaucracy rather than the German 'enemy'.

Up the Women, like *Blackadder Goes Forth*, adopts a traditional sitcom format. The characteristics of this format include limited studio locations, a live audience, a small core cast with few guest characters and multi-camera recording (Dunleavy, 2009: 188-90). *Up the Women*'s traditional characteristics allow the comedy to stem from a self-conscious approach to the women's suffrage movement; as Leggott describes, the sitcom "invites its audience to reflect upon the differences and similarities between the suffrage and modern feminist movements" (2015: 49-50). The suffrage organisation led by Margaret Unwin (Jessica Hynes) is depicted as well-meaning but almost entirely blind to the seriousness of their political cause, often unable to put aside more traditional womanly concerns and reluctant to participate in any direct action. As Tara MacDonald identifies, the comedy's studio audience creates an "affective community" where the laughter is directed to sympathise with the female characters despite their frequent ineptitudes (2017: 182). The parochial suffrage movement of *Up the Women* is quaint yet earnest under Margaret's leadership, while the sitcom genre allows the series to embody its depiction of suffragism as an everyday struggle that connected communities, utilising familiar narratives and character traits within its historical specific setting. While MacDonald indicates the "difficulty of making such weighty matters amusing" (2017: 186), her analysis ultimately suggests that "while humour has the potential to cement social differences and sexist beliefs, it also has the potential to encourage us to reconsider these beliefs and ask at whose expense we might be laughing" (ibid.: 189). As de Groot asserts, *Up the Women* displays a "desire to uncover stories" through its emphasis on female history (2016a: 237-8), subverting assumptions around the suffrage

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[9] This follows the satirical approach to history pioneered by Alan Clark's *The Donkeys* (1961).

movement and paradoxically encouraging its viewers to consider the significance of its historical moment through familiar generic features. The present is recognisable in the caricatured past of *Up the Women*'s comedy, positioning its characters' incorrigibility as a caution rather than a triviality.

The comedy of the *Parade's End* novels likewise uses farcical situations to expose society's ills, depicting and satirising gender politics and wartime bureaucracy at a pivotal moment of history. Alan Kennedy identifies the "immense comic spirit" of Ford's novels in the following terms:

> If Ford looks with a touch of regret at the passing of a particular code, he looks much more actively towards the proper fulfilling of the passionate needs of men. In saying this I imply that *Parade's End* is ultimately comic and not tragic; that we are not meant to grieve at the protracted suffering caused Tietjens by a corrupt society. Rather we should laugh at and ultimately with him. We should also revel in those other feelings of release, freedom and clear vision that come with the best of comedy. (1970: 85)

While Kennedy's notion of readers laughing at Christopher is debatable, his analysis does indicate Ford's approach to recording his lived past, asserting that the narrative of *Parade's End* ultimately reconciles its characters to the changed world rather than lamenting its passing. Paul Skinner elaborates on Ford's use of comedy more generally, asserting that his "funniest and strongest materials" are found when characters or narratives "confront the absurdities, the tragic ironies, the cruelties, the sheer madness of the 'real' world" (2019: 428). Identifying the Duchemin breakfast and golf course incident from *Some Do Not…*, and the climactic scenes of *No More Parades*, as key comic moments of *Parade's End*, Skinner notes that the tetralogy's humour "is increasingly dark, often poised[…] on that narrow border along which the comic and the tragic touch and bleed into one another" (ibid.: 433). As will be shown in the following two sections, Stoppard's *Parade's End* exploits the tragicomic potential of the scenes Skinner identifies by utilising the conventions of television comedy. This allows its humour to achieve a more significant, post-heritage function than a peripheral comedy of manners. The adaptation also allows Christopher himself to represent the lament for the old world through displays of heightened emotion in comparison to Ford's novels, making his affection for the old way of life explicit and ensuring the importance of the historical moment is recognised. The drama's romantic resolution requires such lamenting to be abandoned, reconciling Christopher to the post-war society and allowing him to pursue a life with Valentine.

A GOLF GAME AND A BREAKFAST PARTY

Arranged over five episodes rather than four novels, and almost entirely removing the events of Ford's *Last Post*, the 2012 adaptation of *Parade's End*'s alternative structure impacts its approach to comedy. The most prominent comic sequences occur in the first and fourth episodes of the adaptation, based on the first part of *Some Do Not…* and *No More Parades* respectively. In episode 2, where Stoppard creates original scenes and circumstances, a more elegiac and emotionally wrought tone is established, culminating in Tietjens' explicit description of his Toryism and display of lament for its passing. Prior to this, episode 1 exposes the fissures in the 1910s English society through the adjacent scenes of the golf game at Rye (where Christopher first meets Valentine) and the breakfast held by the mentally unstable Reverend Duchemin. In Ford's *Some Do Not…*, these scenes exemplify the narrative 'loops' discussed by Brightman. In Stoppard's *Parade's End*, they conversely untangle the narrative loops in favour of a chronological approach, while maintaining the tetralogy's social critique by emphasising the comic qualities of Ford's scenes. The screen medium also allows perspectives and lines of sight to be foregrounded, approximating the subjectivity of the tetralogy's narrative.

Lines of sight are especially important to the incident at the Rye golf game, where Valentine and Gertie's (Naomi Cooper-Davis) suffragette demonstration quickly descends into farce. In *Some Do Not…*, the two demonstrators are first referred to innocuously as the scene is established, glimpsed by Christopher from a distance (Ford, 2012: 64). In the 2012 adaptation, Christopher first catches sight of Valentine through binoculars as he casts his eye around the landscape (episode 1). Although he is not anticipating catching a glimpse of a young woman through this action, the image of Christopher viewing Valentine through binoculars carries allusions of voyeurism, emphasised by General Campion's (Roger Allam) words to Macmaster (Stephen Graham) immediately after Valentine is seen: "Chrissie must have been running after the skirts". Campion's asides, which exemplify the pervading gossip around the Tietjens marriage, do not appear in the published script's iteration of this scene (Stoppard, 2012: 42);[10] as shown, it is unclear whether Christopher's "confused and bemused" expression (Hockenhull, 2015: 197) is in response to the brief sight of Valentine or his overhearing of Campion's gossip. The scene subsequently cuts to shots from Valentine and Gertie's perspective as they look down upon the golf game and begin their demonstration, rather than the more omniscient perspective outlined in the published script (Stoppard, 2012: 43-5), allowing either Christopher or Valentine's rational

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[10] The final sequence also removes the vulgar City Men, allowing Christopher's ideals to more directly contrast with others of his own class (Price, 2013: 127).

subjectivities to be foregrounded throughout the farcical sequence that unfolds. When Valentine approaches Christopher for aid after Gertie is pursued by a policeman, the scene's dialogue closely follows Ford's (2012: 66-7). The comic potential of the circumstance nevertheless continues to be exploited; rather than simply dropping his golf club when surprised by Valentine, Christopher swings it wildly as he turns, and the novel's overview of the fracas is reduced to off-screen shouts, whistles and Sandbach's (Malcolm Sinclair) misogynistic catcalling.

Similar to *Up the Women*'s approach to suffragism, the comedy of the *Parade's End* protest sequence is not designed to trivialise the movement but to expose the wrongfulness of its opposition. Anne Marie Flanagan characterises Ford's progressive depiction of suffragism as follows:

> He does not portray the women, as many suffragettes were then portrayed, as hysterical, ineffective, and, ultimately, laughable. The men are portrayed in a realistic and negative light, supporting the notion that Ford was trying to be historically accurate, as well as sympathetic to the women involved in the cause. (2001: 239)

While this progressive view is, for Flanagan, undermined by a "sexual anxiety" demonstrated by the unfeminine descriptions of Valentine's physicality (ibid.: 240) and her ultimate domestication in *Last Post* (ibid.: 243-4), the comedy of the golf sequence remains supportive of the suffragette cause. Brasme considers Valentine's suffragism as secondary to her broader "self-assertion against the social and cultural order at large", her first appearance showing her encroachment in the "archetypal male space" of the golf course (2014: 175). Valentine's political activism is thus understood through her status as a romantic prospect for Christopher, casting her as "the feminine counterpart of Tietjens' eighteenth-century ideals" (ibid.: 178). With women's suffrage no longer a controversial matter, Clemens' portrayal of Valentine can be related to Brasme's reading, allowing the serial's love triangle narrative to be prioritised. The farcical scene at the golf course concludes after Christopher uses his bag to trip over the reluctantly pursuing policeman, followed by a shared look with the defiant Valentine that establishes their mutual attraction. As in *Up the Women*, the scene's comedy allows the suffragette cause to be connected to wider questions of female identity, while ensuring viewers are sympathetic to Valentine's plight and aware of its cultural implications.

In Stoppard's adaptation, the cultural critique of Ford's *Parade's End* is displayed through the subversion of heritage drama characteristics. This is exemplified by the Duchemin breakfast scene, which immediately follows the golf course incident. The scene expands upon aspects of Ford's narrative, confirming the adaptation's post-heritage approach to the past. Unlike *Some Do Not…*, where the scene begins with Valentine and Mrs Duchemin inside the Duchemin household

(Ford, 2012: 80), the adaptation commences the sequence through Christopher and Macmaster's approach. This creates a subversion of the establishing shot of the heritage household, achieved through the comic entry of Reverend Horsley (Michael Mears). Horsley approaches Christopher and Macmaster on a bicycle, overtaking them and looking back to raise his hat in an ostentatious greeting. Stoppard's script stipulates that Horsley "loses control of the bicycle" from this motion (2012: 55). As filmed, however, the camera pans left with the cycling Horsley and a carriage mare suddenly appears directly in front of him; Horsley then turns back and cries out in alarm, falling off his bicycle in shock. The exaggerated comedy of this moment allows the heritage iconography to be undermined, while the role of the camera in its creation of humour again emphasises the importance of lines of sight. The latter is furthered inside the house, where Mrs Duchemin (Anne-Marie Duff) is found placing a vase on the breakfast table to obscure her husband's place. As the participants of the breakfast party enter the dining room, the sequence continues to operate as a parody of the dinner table scene familiar to class-focused period dramas (see chapter 1). Initially, Macmaster's gentlemanly greeting is unheeded by the deaf Miss Fox (Sheila Collings), while the further introductions – and Christopher's recognition of Valentine from the golf course – are undermined by Horsley's persistent chatter in the background. The comic aspect of the scene increases further when the uninvited Mrs Wannop (Miranda Richardson) enters, her interruption preventing Christopher and Valentine from talking at length. Mrs Wannop's attempts to sit by Macmaster also threaten Mrs Duchemin's careful place arrangements, allowing the adaptation to capitalise on the scene's comic potential: rather than continually guiding Macmaster away from the table (Ford, 2012: 90), Mrs Wannop collides with Mrs Duchemin as they attempt to sit simultaneously, before moving Reverend Duchemin's seat out of its position. When Duchemin himself (Rufus Sewell) finally enters the dining room, the stakes of this comic scene are revealed. Max Saunders discusses the significance of Duchemin's lewd comments in the context of Ford's narrative:

> He is simply articulating the sexual undercurrents of the scene, in which Macmaster[…] has been distracted by his wife[…] Meanwhile Tietjens has recognised Valentine as the lead Suffragette whose protest had ended in sexual violence the previous day; and the air is thick with sexual tension as the two of them begin to get to know each other better. (2015: 19)

Gerald Levin's analysis extends this representative meaning to the tetralogy's social context:

> The sexual ferocities that disrupt the lives of Christopher Tietjens and the woman he loves, Valentine Wannop, are the result of a cultural decadence and are explored in this context; the war that brings the world to collapse is the result of lists that civilization has disguised in its 'parades'. (1970: 183)

While Duchemin's dialogue and the disruption it causes around the table follows Ford's narrative (2012: 95-100), his obscenities are able to go a step further in Stoppard's adaptation. Duchemin moves from Latin epigrams to an English translation of "the lament of the wife of a boy-buggerer" (Stoppard, 2012: 65), and his soliloquy is stopped by a swift punch in the middle of a well-chosen word: "alas, my love, with women, it's more a case of having two cu— ugh –" (ibid.). Duchemin's profanities, comic through their unexpectedness in a period drama setting, emphasise the scene's disruption of the social order for its modern audience.

WARTIME SATIRE

Christopher's ideological position as the "last English Tory" (Ford, 2011: 6) is challenged in Ford's novels by the cultural impact of the First World War. Dennis Brown considers Christopher's Englishness as resilient to the events of the war:

> In the major decade of literary modernism, when selfhood was typically represented as dynamically fragmentary, *Parade's End* is remarkable for bringing a highly modernist stylisation to bear on shoring up traditional English manhood[…] There'll always be an Englishman, even if he is marginalised away from the national centre of a low dishonest decade. (2003: 168)

Christopher is able to adapt to the post-war world, reconciling his value system to the changes in society and his desire for a life with Valentine (Stang, 1977: 120-2). His psychological development reflects the cultural shifts prompted by the war; he represents his class position (Gasiorek, 2002: 65-6), the soldier's experience (Piette, 2014: 144-5) and "a psychic reality beyond either nationality or gender" (Brown, 2003: 165). As Karolyn Steffens establishes, Ford's war writings emphasise his Impressionist style: "under the pressure of rendering trauma, Ford's Impressionism forces him to turn away from a literal rendition of the traumatic event and instead elaborate the visual impact of these traumatic experiences on a conscious mind" (2015: 46). In Stoppard's adaptation, however, Christopher's experiences of war service coincide with a shift away from Vorticist fragmentation, towards first-degree style and the aesthetic influence of war landscape paintings. The fourth episode, based on *No More Parades*, reconstitutes Ford's psychological investigation as a wartime farce, using satire and the characteristics of television comedy to expose the inadequacies of wartime bureaucracy. These incompetencies are embodied by the figure of General Campion, while the events that lead to Christopher's arrest at the conclusion of *No More Parades* are re-interpreted to facilitate the episode's comic tone and the serial's self-conscious recuperation of Sylvia's character.

Roger Allam's portrayal of General Campion is reminiscent of Stephen Fry's performance of General Melchett in *Blackadder Goes Forth*, allowing him to symbolise the institutional failings of wartime bureaucracy through a televisual referent. Not only do the two characters share the function of exposing the paradoxical logic of war strategy, their actors possess a similar physical stature and as Campion Allam even sports a similar moustache to Melchett's. Furthermore, Allam is most familiar to contemporary viewers for his role as MP Peter Mannion in the political satire *The Thick of It* (BBC, 2005-12), carrying associations of bureaucratic ineffectualness from this performance that are reflected in Campion's position. Allam's casting therefore associates Campion with the British sitcom's "tradition of cynicism", which Eckart Voigts-Virchow identifies as facilitating a revisionist approach to history (2005: 217). While Fry's performance in *Blackadder*'s situation comedy is more caricatured, Allam's Campion maintains a self-consciously sardonic tone in his exposition of the war's bureaucratic processes. This is established early in episode 4, where Campion and Colonel Levin (Elliot Levey) establish Captain McKechnie's background:

> LEVIN: Captain McKechnie has returned from leave, sir, but he omitted to get divorced.
> CAMPION (*angrily*): How dare he not get divorced? He told me his wife was co-habiting with – an Egyptian, wasn't it? – some sort of dago anyway.
> LEVIN: No, sir, an Egyptologist. They have agreed to… to share her.
> CAMPION (*outraged*): The dirty dog! I'll strip him of his commission! (*Broods a moment.*) A damn fine officer when he isn't going mad, and a Vice Chancellor's Latin prize man too… (Stoppard, 2012: 221-2)

This short exchange displays Campion's traditional notions of English propriety and the difficulty of sustaining these in wartime; the comic tone of his outburst and following rationalisation of McKechnie's madness allows his paradoxical position to be understood. The values of Englishness Campion espouses also contextualise his increasing dislike of Christopher, as he believes the salacious gossip surrounding the Tietjens marriage.

Campion's comic function is confirmed in a sequence extrapolated from a brief aside in *No More Parades*, where Sylvia is told that the Canadian draft Christopher is responsible for has been repeatedly ordered ready and countermanded (Ford, 2012: 432). In Stoppard's adaptation, this circumstance is developed into a comic farce with the hapless Campion at its centre. Campion is shown arriving at Christopher's base to send the draft off with considerable ceremony, the establishing shot including a marching band playing in the background and champagne being served inside (episode 4). Just as Campion begins his speech, however, a telephone begins ringing, and he is handed a note after detailing the arrangements of the draft's departure. Campion reads the note, looks up and calmly concludes his speech with "that's in the event of there being no

further orders" (Stoppard, 2012: 230), before summoning Christopher and angrily explaining that the order has been countermanded. The sequence then immediately repeats,[11] with the same march playing and establishing shots of the base that mirror those previously seen. The comic repetition is emphasised by a slight change of pace, with Campion's car heard screeching to a halt and the impatient general quickly striding out. The sequence also cuts to Campion's farewell speech while it is in progress before the telephone begins ringing again, prompting worried looks from both Campion and Christopher. This time, however, the news is not of a countermand but of Sylvia's arrival at the camp with 'Potty' Perowne (Tom Mison), another former lover, allowing the scene to end with a zoom towards Campion's exaggeratedly shocked reaction to Sylvia's imminent appearance. Subsequently, Campion undermines his formal greeting to Perowne by simultaneously expressing his dissatisfaction: "I will break you for this. I will smash you" (Stoppard, 2012: 233). He then turns towards Sylvia, his anger dissolving into a genteel smile. The exaggeration of Campion's facial expressions, and the rapidity of the changes between them, sustain his function as a comic figure whose contradictions stem from the endemic crises of ideology during wartime. This continues in the final episode, where he establishes Christopher's position in *A Man Could Stand Up* – in the manner of a sitcom set-up:

> So… we have Captain Tietjens, whom the War Office wanted transferred to the command of Nineteenth Division's horse-lines… going instead to the trenches to take over as second-in-command of the Sixth Battalion, Glamorganshires… and we have Captain McKechnie – who detests Tietjens because he considers second-in-command of the Sixth Glamorganshires to be his by right – going instead to take charge of Nineteenth Division's horse-lines, which he sees, correctly, as a humiliation… And finally we have Major Perowne, last heard of attempting to enter the bedroom of Mrs Tietjens, allegedly at her invitation, being sent back to his battalion as a punishment… and all I can say is that it takes a movement order of some genius to send these three officers up the line sharing transport. (Stoppard, 2012: 281-2)

Campion's monologue evokes the recontextualisation of a sitcom's premise at the start of an episode, as Mick Eaton analyses with an example from *Come Back, Mrs Noah* (BBC, 1978) (1981: 44-52). Campion even describes where Perowne was "last heard of", providing a recap of events from the viewer's perspective. As Byrne identifies, the expression of "sarcastic exasperation" here foreshadows the inevitable miseries to come at the front line, even if the adaptation remains focused on the psychological rather than physical aspect of this destruction (2015a: 131). Campion displays his self-conscious function through this exposition, recognising the comic situation's potential to maximise the conflict between the three characters.

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[11] The comic reprise of the scene is emphasised by a rearrangement from Stoppard's script, where a scene with Sylvia is placed in between its two iterations (Stoppard, 2012: 231).

The relationship between Sylvia and Perowne instigates the climactic farce of episode 4, which also develops the narrative's theme of gossip. Trudi Tate identifies gossip as an "organizing principle" of Ford's tetralogy, alluding to "contemporary concerns about propaganda" (1997: 332-3). As identified by Tate, the characters of *Parade's End* "tell lies about [Christopher], then behave as if the stories were true" (1997: 338). In the final part of *No More Parades*, Christopher has been arrested following a series of events at his hotel, allegedly involving Perowne attempting to enter Sylvia's room and Christopher assaulting either Perowne or General O'Hara. Typical of Fordian style, this circumstance is narrated in fragments through dialogue between Christopher and Colonel Levin, obscuring the true sequence of events (Ford, 2012: 446-54). Stoppard's adaptation, however, depicts the scene directly, dispensing with the novel's ambivalence. The adaptation confirms Christopher's account, with one important addition: Perowne's attempted entry comes as Sylvia and Christopher share a rare moment of intimacy. Christopher's desire for his wife is rekindled through her monologue, which does not appear in Ford's *No More Parades* and establishes Stoppard's interpretation of her character:

> Can you see how I must have been feeling, to go away with a fool like Potty? I was not in my senses. I broke under your forbearance, your permanent well-mannered forgivingness for my doing the dirty on you when I married you not knowing – still don't know! – whether my child was yours or Gerald Drake's. You forgave without mercy. To scream blue murder and throw me out would have been a kindness compared to five years under your roof banished from your comfort – oh, look what you brought me to! (Stoppard, 2012: 264-5)

Sylvia's speech, and the tryst it leads to, offers a revised reading of the Tietjens marriage, suggesting that in other circumstances they could have found happiness together. Ford suggests neither this circumstance nor Sylvia's explanation; this pivotal moment in Stoppard's *Parade's End* therefore reveals the adaptation's capacity to re-interpret literary events, imposing a twenty-first century viewpoint on Ford's narrative.

Despite this brief glimmer of hope for their relationship, the possibility of happiness between Christopher and Sylvia is immediately confounded by Perowne, the very "fool" Sylvia eloped with, attempting to enter the bedroom. The ensuing fracas is depicted comically, with Perowne sent sprawling across the hallway in his underwear and the drunk General O'Hara (Iain Mitchell) meeting a similar fate after he and Christopher attempt to arrest each other. Although the comic figures are ejected from the scene, their interruption makes Christopher realise that reconciliation with Sylvia is impossible. While Christopher's assessment of the situation is vague, it can be understood that Sylvia's reputation for promiscuity is more of a hindrance than her actions. The comic sequence therefore foregrounds the implicit theme of gossip from Ford's

novels; while Christopher's "anachronistic moral code" does not allow him to defend himself in the tetralogy (Tate, 1997: 339), the addition of this private moment allows his intransigence to be understood in the adaptation. The expanded hotel room scene in Stoppard's *Parade's End* shows Christopher realising the consequences of his morality; while still unable to alter the situation, he is at least able to apologise for it, displaying "an awareness of his culpability which he never outwardly expresses in Ford's novels" (Byrne, 2015a: 124). The clarity Christopher reaches at the end of the *No More Parades* narrative thus contrasts with Ford's novel, where his mind remains "fragmented and fragmenting" (Chantler and Hawkes, 2015: 8). Accordingly, Campion's words to Christopher in the adaptation explicitly define the changing times: "there'll be no more parades for *that* regiment. It held out to the last man, but you were him" (Stoppard, 2012: 275, emphasis in original). As Haslam describes, in Ford's novel this lengthy conversation "manages to bring to Tietjens' traumatised attention all the aspects of his life that he would rather forget", leaving him "quietly desperate" and unable to articulate his feelings plainly (2002: 106-7). By contrast, the adaptation uses more explicit language to make the novel's subtext clear, while Christopher is left visibly close to tears as the scene ends. For a television audience at nearly a century's distance from the events depicted, Christopher's emotional reaction allows the weight of Campion's words to be understood, revealing the wider cultural associations of the serial's central love triangle narrative.

A ROMANTIC RESOLUTION

This chapter has shown how the comedy of Stoppard's *Parade's End* allows it to manipulate the style and themes of Ford's tetralogy, using self-consciousness of its status as a television adaptation to depict the narrative's liminal historical moment and make sense of Christopher's eventual decision to live with Valentine. While the sustained comic scenes discussed in this chapter also feature in Ford's novels, their screen realisations allow them to subvert familiar characteristics of classic serials and period dramas. This asserts *Parade's End*'s cultural value and, like *Blackadder* and other British historical sitcoms, uses "the sitcom genre to present history cynically and parodically as a repetitive pattern of lunacy, reinforcing but also debunking the cultural heritage of a country which has both more history and more comedians than others" (Voigts-Virchow, 2005: 226). Stoppard's script also introduces comedy through peripheral scenes and minor dialogue, operating alongside the televisual equivalence of Ford's visual style to establish the cultural context of the *Parade's End* novels. This places *Parade's End* in the category of productions that "self-consciously and purposefully interrogate the very process of making

memory" around the centennial of the First World War (Edwards, 2018: 254). As Edwards identifies, comedy can play a significant role in revealing the madness of war: from the satire of *Oh! What a Lovely War* (a stage musical from 1963, and a film in 1969) (ibid.: 261) to the "comedic caution" of *Blackadder Goes Forth* (ibid.: 266), the self-consciousness of comic reflections allows the significance of war to be understood and its cultural memory to be re-assessed. Although Ford's fragmentary style is further distorted across the distance of time, Stoppard's adaptation asserts the relevance of his narrative to contemporary society.

Parade's End indicates the potential of post-heritage adaptations, overcoming the limitations that often hinder classic serials. Such limitations are demonstrated by earlier attempts at adapting complex and seemingly 'unfilmable' literature, including the more linear approach of 1964's *Parade's End* and, as Giddings and Selby establish, 1972-3's *War and Peace*:

> Could it be that Tolstoy's masterpiece is such a literary triumph of the novelist's art, that it defies adaptation? The essence of the problem lies in the very effectiveness of Tolstoy's mastery of narrative, dialogue, monologue and omniscient authorial voice[…] The best BBC Television could do[…] was to boil Tolstoy's complexity of dialogue, commentary and revealed action down to a straightforward narrative which faithfully reproduced, yet at the same time, completely betrayed the novel's flow of events. (2001: 35-6)

Stoppard's *Parade's End*, similar to Andrew Davies' more recent *War & Peace* (BBC, 2016), tackles this question and reveals the creative possibilities afforded by the developments of 2010s television. Not only does *Parade's End* enjoy the freedom of being based upon a text outside the usual literary canon, the technological and institutional developments of television drama and the cultural status of Stoppard allow it to introduce textual and aesthetic innovations. These realise the tetralogy's visual potential and establish its socio-cultural themes for a modern audience. *Parade's End* explores the historical moment of Ford's novels beyond their narrative events, developing the subjectivities of Christopher, Sylvia and Valentine while refining the narrative to emphasise its marketable love triangle aspect. The serial also suggests the function of high-end international co-productions, with the BBC and HBO seeking mutual benefits through the confluence of literary prestige and post-heritage innovations. The comedy of *Parade's End* allows the serial's various transnational aspirations to be reconciled, developing an engaging narrative that utilises sophisticated self-consciousness. Although *Parade's End*'s audience response did not match its critical acclaim (Nelson, 2019: 157), the resurgence of BBC/HBO co-productions in 2019 suggests that its post-heritage approach may now, like Christopher and Valentine's relationship during the Armistice, have reached its moment of fulfilment.

─────CONCLUSION─────
POST-HERITAGE FUTURES

> Golden Ages only exist in retrospect. They are never lived as golden, but can only be constructed in memory from the hindsight of what came after.
>
> --- John Caughie (2000: 57)

In August 2018, CEO of the FX Network John Landgraf claimed to the Television Critics Association that "the golden age of television has become the gilded age of television" (quoted in Andreeva, 2018). Despite being a generalisation spoken from a position of self-interest, Landgraf's comment indicates the significance of this project's focus from an industry point of view. The image of something more everyday under the veneer of spectacle evokes the dichotomy between heritage and post-heritage characteristics that the six preceding case studies have investigated, which exists alongside their negotiation between creative innovation and audience appeal. As indicated by this project's analysis, while television productions should not be dismissed as universally catering to a maximised and homogenous audience, likewise they should not be considered free from institutional constraints and imperatives. Landgraf's address continues by raising the notions of "too much story" and "narrative exhaustion" in contemporary television, claims that directly respond to the exponential increase in television fiction output (quoted in Andreeva, 2018). These terms evoke Ellis' concepts of 'time famine' and 'choice fatigue' (2000: 169-71), which suggest that viewers may come to miss the linearity of broadcast television in the era of plenty. This alludes to the limits to distinction and uniformity of business practices that persist amongst the proliferation of new programming in 2010s television. A new homogeneity threatens to emerge from the very elements of distinction, a concern that may impact post-heritage approaches to period drama. This would be particularly detrimental in the context of increasingly globalised television distribution, including via multi-national streaming networks such as Netflix, extending the dominance of "western cultural value systems" Jenner warns of (2018: 226). While the developments in television distribution of the 2010s hold the potential to bring narratives from diverse cultures to an international audience, as well as supporting local production industries, their movement into international production may also obscure the distinctions between cultures. Where post-heritage becomes post-national, problems may arise.[1] McElroy and Noonan introduce this as "a sense of urgency and crisis in the midst of what is more

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[1] Vidal identifies the "disturbing acts of cultural erasure" apparent in post-national European film (2012b: 54), indicating the present risk to pluralism in television.

commonly being framed as a 'golden age' of unparalleled abundance", threatening the "diversity and stability" of the ecology of television drama production (2019: 2). This conclusion will consider these warnings alongside the innovations of 2010s television, acknowledging that the decade's post-heritage cycle exists alongside continued institutional constraints.

Offering an important critical perspective through which to deconstruct Landgraf's comment, Caughie argues in the above epigraph that temporal distance is required to recognise a golden age. With the potential 'golden age' of the 2010s still too close to recognise, the gilded age Landgraf refers to is a doubly speculative projection, unable to be substantiated by retrospective knowledge. Caughie nevertheless identifies

> a sense in which the idea of a Golden Age may be meaningful: when it refers to that historical moment when one set of meanings and values is being replaced by another, when the traditions which stabilized a culture are beginning to be questioned and rewritten, and when creativity seems to transgress the boundaries of received good taste. (2000: 57)

If it does exist, a gilded age would be one in which risk-taking and innovation are not able to occur to the extent that institutional conditions had seemed to allow. Landgraf's hyperbolic statement, despite its prematurity, indicates the potential for the novelty of high-end television to wear off under the weight of ever-increasing production levels. Period drama holds the potential to reflect this situation within its narratives, with post-heritage characteristics questioning the past and acknowledging that a 'golden age' may not be what it first appeared when viewed with hindsight from the contemporary era. The post-heritage elements of period drama can therefore be connected to the contexts of television drama both in the UK and internationally, allowing the findings of this project to assert a wider significance in the field of television studies.

This thesis began by establishing the 2010s as a transitional decade for television drama. The case studies that bookend this period are *Upstairs Downstairs*, which began the decade with an attempt to recapture television's past, and *The Crown*, which aims to bring its period drama narrative forward to the twenty-first century and whose production continues into the 2020s. The transitional decade could also be considered a transnational decade, as displayed through narrative features and the increasing importance of international co-production arrangements to high-end drama. While period drama was ahead of this trend, co-productions with *Masterpiece* and other predominantly US networks having been commonplace since the 1990s, transnational factors have become increasingly important to the survival of a range of television productions in the 2010s. Elke Weissmann identifies distinction as a key factor in establishing co-production arrangements, recognising "'the other' as an attraction in its own right" (2012: 39). This is only

beneficial in certain conditions, however: "the spectacle of difference can[…] only be successful when it operates in established frameworks that another culture can recognize and hence assimilate" (ibid.: 40). The UK and US are a prime example of this potential; in general terms, the narrative critiques of UK drama and visual spectacle of US productions are both appealing to viewers on the opposite side of the Atlantic. In the case of British period dramas facilitated by co-production arrangements with US networks, the heritage and post-heritage dichotomy can therefore be mapped onto US and UK influences respectively. It is this hybridity of national influences that Leggott identifies in *The Crown* (2018: 264). However, as the evaluation of *Downton Abbey* revealed in chapter 1, assimilation rather than incorporation effaces cultural specificity. Complexities and cross-currents exist within the categories of heritage and post-heritage; alluding to this, Nelson establishes the intricacies of the relationship between UK and US characteristics in early twenty-first century television drama (2007: 130-60).

Transnational concerns permeate this project's case studies. *Upstairs Downstairs*, *The Living and the Dead* and *Parade's End* are all co-productions between the BBC and a US network (Masterpiece, BBC America and HBO respectively), while *The Crown* holds an embedded transnational function through its commission for Netflix and its consequent near-global distribution. *Dickensian* utilises economies of scale to compensate for the lack of co-production finances but was unable to justify its presence as a returning drama, even on the public service driven BBC. Of the project's case studies, only *Dancing on the Edge* is not impacted by transnational concerns, due to the cultural cachet of Stephen Poliakoff in conjunction with the public service imperatives of the BBC. The transnational considerations of programme commissioners thus continue to significantly influence the development of innovative period dramas, with repercussions for their narrative and aesthetic characteristics. This may result in the dominance of heritage elements, as seen in *Downton Abbey*'s favouring of assimilation over incorporation and avoidance of Ellis' working through process. As acknowledged by its executive producer Gareth Neame, *Downton* was devised to be "commercial" and "soap opera", the latter evoked for its associations with mass appeal (quoted in Eaton, 2013: 233). Rebecca Eaton, executive producer of WGBH's co-producing *Masterpiece* strand, further identifies the transatlantic star power of Maggie Smith and Elizabeth McGovern as a deciding factor in the US network's investment (ibid.: 240). This results in a production that, in Eaton's words, "has morality at its core" and rejects the ambiguity found in other dramas on US television (ibid.: 277). However, the more innovative post-heritage concepts identified in this project may also be realised through

co-production arrangements and other transnational considerations, even if (as in the case of *Upstairs Downstairs*, *The Living and the Dead* and *Dickensian*) longevity eludes these productions.

Steemers further identifies the potential of transnational co-productions, particularly between the UK and the US, to encourage either post-heritage innovations or heritage conformity. Steemers establishes the context of the international television trade prior to the emergence of internet-distributed television, analysing the "perception of a basic tension between the culturally specific demands of the domestic market, and the demand for internationally attractive programmes and concepts, which need to satisfy a broader range of cross-cultural tastes and circumstances" (2004: xv). She further identifies a decline in the appeal of British drama in response to the emergence of high-end premium cable dramas, arguing that "historical and literary-based British drama, which was regarded as innovative on PBS and even potentially influential in the 1970s, is no longer perceived as sufficiently different, and has proved vulnerable to attempts by American channels to create distinctiveness on their own terms through original production" (ibid.: 112). Despite this, the transatlantic relationship remained important for "British producers seeking financial support" (ibid.: 144). This suggests a reversal of the situation that lead *Masterpiece* to take a more active commissioning role in the 1990s (see part III introduction), resulting in a potential erosion of British national identity; as Steemers concludes, "the need to overcome cultural barriers diminishes the inclusion of social, political and cultural content aimed specifically at British audiences" (ibid.: 209). Britain therefore became "a supplier of universally appealing concepts whose British origins are masked, and which are internationally integrated from the start in an interplay of the global and local" (ibid.: 211).

Weissmann asserts the continued importance of the national point of view within the transnational, arguing that "co-productions are discursively constructed to belong to specific nations and, at the same time, the transnational sphere" (2012: 140). She further establishes that "the co-production can be seen as an opportunity to gain access to nationally distinct content which can be used to create a specific brand for a producing partner" (ibid.: 142). This is demonstrated by the use of Britishness as branding by *Masterpiece* (see chapter 1), although Monk identifies the existence of programmes that challenge this reputation from its early days (2015: 67). Weissmann traces the development of *Masterpiece*'s creative influence on co-productions, distinct from their commissioning role, into the twenty-first century, arguing that "whereas UK producers held most editorial control in the 1990s, making UK-US co-productions appear as essentially British, in the 2000s the co-productions were clearly marked by the influence of both partners" (ibid.: 148). If the dichotomy of heritage and post-heritage elements can be

mapped onto US and UK influences respectively, recent co-productions are conducive to exploring the tension between these approaches. Weissmann's case studies also reveal the risk of effacing the national through co-production influences, noting the stereotypes perpetuated by *Law & Order: UK* (ITV, 2009-14)[2] (ibid.: 152) and the "concessions" made by *Torchwood*'s co-produced final season, *Miracle Day* (BBC/Starz, 2011) (ibid.: 155-7). Weissmann concludes from an assessment of the critical and audience responses to *Miracle Day* that "discourses about national belonging in relation to television content are strong and cannot be easily replaced by an understanding of the transnational" (ibid.: 158). Resistance to co-productions can also be found from commissioning networks themselves, as demonstrated recently by the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC). The CBC's president Catherine Tait has rejected a continued co-production relationship with Netflix, fearing "deals that hurt the long-term viability of our domestic industry" (quoted in Benzine, 2019). Apparently as a consequence of this decision, *Anne with an E* (CBC/Netflix, 2017-19) – a programme that brought a distinctly Canadian story to an international audience via Netflix – was cancelled after its third season. It is therefore possible that, for commissioners, creators and audiences alike, a situation that appears to be golden at first glance may be merely a gilded surface, with hindrances to innovation lying underneath.

RETURNING TO THE POST-HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

The five guiding elements of the post-heritage critical framework, as established in the Introduction, were identified by their increased prominence in period drama of the 2010s. The project's six case studies have identified the important role these elements play in innovative period drama of 2010s television, distinguishing them from period dramas that maintain a heritage point of view. It is useful, therefore, to re-assess the findings of each chapter against the five post-heritage elements, drawing parallels between the project's case study dramas that will lead to final concluding remarks.

Interrogation, through which the ethos and value systems of heritage drama are questioned, has been found to be the most pervasive post-heritage element at the level of a drama's concept. It is also potentially the most nebulous. Interrogation has been identified in the socio-historical context and Poliakovian characteristics of *Dancing on the Edge*, the uncanny televisuality of *The Living and the Dead*, and the literary characters appropriated by *Dickensian*. It could also be associated with the exploration of ideologies foregrounded by the concepts of

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[2] As Weissmann outlines, *Law & Order: UK* is an adaptation of the US series, commissioned solely by ITV but with UK and US production companies, and beholden to the template of the *Law & Order* brand (2012: 149-50).

both *The Crown* and *Parade's End*. The foundational use of interrogation in these case studies indicates how its presence may reveal a drama's post-heritage emphasis. As chapter 1 discussed, *Downton Abbey* displays the antithesis of this approach by consistently evading the interrogative possibilities of its concept. Interrogation has also been shown to facilitate the psychological investigation of central characters, most notably in *The Living and the Dead*.

Subversion, which overturns the assumptions and expectations of period drama, has been recognised in various ways across the case studies of this project. It is apparent in the revised concept of the BBC's *Upstairs Downstairs*, which develops its premise away from the heritage security of the Edwardian era and also creates alternative versions of memorable scenes from the LWT series. *The Living and the Dead* similarly subverts the heritage household through the palimpsest constructed between it and the haunted house, allowing the mutual haunting between past and present in period drama to be made explicit. *Parade's End* presents itself as an alternative to heritage drama in a different manner, using its sophisticated visual style and the generic conventions of television comedy to subvert expectations around period drama. *Dickensian*, on the other hand, holds the potential for subversion but does not substantially incorporate it, prioritising the legitimisation of its innovative premise by allowing familiar heritage characteristics – and literary fidelity – to persist.

Subjectivity, which facilitates the psychological investigation of character and the exploration of identities, is often used to present the experiences of oppressed and marginalised groups in the dramas studied in this project. In *Upstairs Downstairs*, subjectivity allows the narrative of female experiences across the class divide to be understood. These come to the fore in the war season of the LWT series and the "A Perfect Specimen of Womanhood" episode of the BBC revival, both of which are pivotal in developing their respective series away from the tenets of heritage drama. However, neither series frequently departs from their grounding in naturalist and realist aesthetics respectively. Conversely, *Dancing on the Edge* makes significant use of second-degree style in key scenes that explore Louis Lester's subjectivity as a marginalised figure in 1930s society. *The Crown* also uses subjectivity to reveal hidden experiences, but rather than the experiences of the oppressed it exposes the private lives behind the public figures of the modern royal family. This allows *The Crown* to speculate upon the stories and events that lie behind documented facts, exploring the position of the monarchy in a more detailed way than would be possible under a heritage approach. *The Living and the Dead* utilises subjectivity to expose Nathan Appleby's connection to both the community of Shepzoy and his family history through supernatural incursions. *Parade's End* similarly uses subjectivity to forge wider

connections to the literary characteristics of the novels it adapts, finding a televisual equivalence to Ford's fragmented literary style. However, *Dickensian* only occasionally capitalises on the possibilities for a subjective response to Dickens' characters, its soap opera conventions favouring a focus on narrative.

Self-consciousness, which acknowledges a screen production's historiographical role and the significance of contemporary attitudes upon its act of representation, is deployed in a variety of ways across the case studies. The analyses of part I reveal the potential to establish self-consciousness through both dramatic space (*Upstairs Downstairs*) and music (*Dancing on the Edge*). Both these dramas also establish self-consciousness of the limitations of past productions, *Upstairs Downstairs* through its LWT predecessor and *Dancing on the Edge* through previous Stephen Poliakoff dramas. *The Crown*'s self-conscious motif of print and television media, which are shown responding to and speculating upon the royal family, reflects the drama's own function in the twenty-first century, including its contributions to contemporary discourses around the monarchy. While *The Living and the Dead* does not itself make significant use of self-consciousness, its connection to other examples of uncanny television associates its media representations with the self-conscious tradition of supernatural dramas. Part III, meanwhile, reveals the use of generic self-consciousness in post-heritage adaptations. *Dickensian*'s constructed soap opera community, in conjunction with the assumed knowledge of its literary sources, allows its audience's expectations to be manipulated. *Parade's End* emphasises and develops the humour of Ford's novels, using comedy to establish a retrospective point of view of 1910s society that asserts its contemporary significance.

Ambiguity, which evades definitive responses to pervasive societal questions, has been less frequently apparent than the other post-heritage elements in this thesis, although it remains a significant marker of a post-heritage approach where utilised. It is most fundamental to *The Crown*, which consistently avoids demonstrating either support or rejection for the institution of the monarchy. This allows the serial to be appreciated by viewers with various opinions on the royal family; it holds the potential to challenge or confirm the monarchy's place in modern society, or simply to assert its complexities. Additionally, ambiguity is foregrounded through the depiction of certain characters, most prominently Prince Philip in the first two seasons. The ending of *Dancing on the Edge* also makes use of ambiguity, with Louis' attempts to overcome the prejudices of interwar society left open as a possibility for the future. Conversely, *The Living and the Dead* rejects ambiguity, allowing otherworldly incursions to be explicitly confirmed as genuine visitations of the dead. This allows the drama to pursue a LaCaprian concept of trauma,

in contrast to *The Crown*'s Caruthian approach; the presence of figures from other times allows the working through process to take place and the season's narrative to reach a resolution. This reflects the different functions of *The Crown*'s serial form and *The Living and the Dead* as a series drama, despite the increased hybridisation between these forms in 2010s television.

These findings reveal the influence of post-heritage elements on period drama productions of the 2010s, impacting the development of televisual styles, forms and genres across the decade. This study has indicated the possibilities for innovation in period drama, challenging the critical dismissal the categorisation is often subjected to. It must be reiterated, however, that the case studies of this project have been chosen selectively, as examples that best display post-heritage innovations through their conceptual or textual characteristics. Other 2010s productions referred to during the study place a greater emphasis on heritage elements, confirming that diverse points of view and ideologies remain across period drama productions. Alongside these two strands are what have been termed as 'anti-heritage' productions (Byrne, Leggott and Taddeo, 2018: 6), which display a close focus on the working class and consciously reject all characteristics of heritage drama. This tendency has, for instance, been noted alongside Monk's initial post-heritage film cycle in 1996's *Jude* (Gibson, 2000: 118-20), and subsequently in neo-Victorian adaptation *The Line of Beauty* (BBC, 2006) (de Groot, 2016a: 231). In the 2010s, 'anti-heritage' can be applied to what de Groot terms the 'misery programming' of *The Village* (BBC, 2013-14) and *The Mill* (C4, 2013-14), which eschew the heritage characteristics of *Downton Abbey* to claim a more authentic representation of the past (2016b: 162-6). Displaying a more reactionary impulse, anti-heritage dramas are less useful in exploring the potentials for innovation in period drama.

PUBLIC SERVICE DRAMA AND CO-PRODUCTIONS

As this project's Introduction acknowledged, the dominance of BBC public service dramas amongst its case studies, selected for their display of post-heritage characteristics, is itself revealing. Conversely, 2010s productions discussed as counterpoints to these case studies, including *Downton Abbey*, *Victoria* and *The Halcyon*, originate on the commercial ITV network. This suggests that the tension between heritage and post-heritage can be broadly associated with commercial and public service television respectively. Other British channels do not substantially commission period drama productions: the only significant period drama commissioned by Channel 4 in the 2010s was *The Mill*, suggesting the function of its anti-heritage point of view in relation to the channel's alternative public service remit (despite the concurrent presence of *The*

Village on the BBC). The UK's premium subscription channels introduce a further point of view, again mostly rejecting heritage characteristics. This is exemplified by the ITV Encore dramas *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015-17) and *Harlots* (co-production with Hulu, 2017-18),[3] and Sky Atlantic's period drama commissions of *Britannia* (co-production with Amazon, 2018-present) and *Chernobyl* (co-production with HBO, 2019), the latter two also avoiding the familiar heritage settings of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The commissioning contexts of the case studies therefore indicate the continued function of public service broadcasters in the contemporary drama landscape, often realised through co-production arrangements with premium networks. *Parade's End*, co-produced between the BBC and HBO, is indicative of the mutual benefits of such arrangements. The increasing involvement of premium subscription networks in co-production arrangements at the end of the 2010s suggests the distinctive character of this relationship; premium network commissioners are less inclined than commercial networks to seek maximum viewership at the expense of conceptual or narrative sophistication.

Co-productions do, however, have a substantial history in the category of period drama, whose high costs have been prohibitive for single networks since the 1980s. *Downton Abbey* is identified by Hilmes as an exemplar co-production relationship, highlighting "the narrative appeal of a program that foregrounds international relationships and provides the opportunity for reflection on cultural similarities and differences" (2014: 13). *Downton* is a co-production between a British commercial broadcast network (ITV) and a US public service broadcaster (*Masterpiece* on WGBH), complicating the notion that a UK co-production partner naturally contributes a less populist, post-heritage point of view. It is vital that scholarly work recognises the distinct imperatives of co-producing networks, in order to understand the transnational points of view reflected in drama productions. This is especially important at a time when public service networks such as the BBC are under threat, with their function in a modern media society often unrecognised by the public and politicians.

As the fates of the co-productions analysed in this project suggest, establishing innovative programming as a returning series or serial remains difficult. *Upstairs Downstairs* and *The Living and the Dead*, the former a co-production with a public service broadcaster and the latter with an advertiser-supported cable network, both failed to justify their continued presence to their respective networks. The example of the CBC and *Anne with an E* furthers these difficulties, revealing the possibility for the objectives of public service broadcaster and international co-

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[3] *Harlots* continued as a Hulu commission only from 2019, following ITV Encore's closure.

producer to diverge over time and working relationships to break down. *The Crown* is the only renewable drama amongst this project's case studies that has continued beyond a second season, indicating the benefits of Netflix's economic and distribution models. Although it is not a co-production from a commissioning standpoint, *The Crown* nevertheless negotiates international appeal with its British narrative and creative personnel. In this case, the absence of public service imperatives arguably allows *The Crown* to emphasise its post-heritage elements, questioning the British monarchy and Establishment figures with a depth that the government-funded BBC may have been reluctant to pursue. However, while it displays the creative potential and long-term viability of a post-heritage approach to history, *The Crown*'s success does not benefit the UK's embattled public service media or its broadcasting industry.

WIDENING THE SCOPE

Monk's work subsequent to her coining of 'post-heritage' (see Introduction) suggests the potential for a wider application of its critical framework. Her analysis of the contemporary-set 1990s 'underclass film' is established along lines that evoke the post-heritage film cycle:

> The 1990s saw a notable cycle of British films that drew their subject or subtext from the problems of unemployment and social exclusion faced by a social stratum[…] my discussion takes the 'underclass' to be a *post-working* class that owes its existence to the economic and social damage wrought by globalisation, local industrial decline, the restructuring of the labour market and other legacies of the Thatcher era. (2000b: 274, emphasis in original)

The close relationship between fictional narratives and the social and political contexts in which productions are made is reminiscent of a post-heritage point of view, through which contemporary issues may be explored. However, Monk more explicitly links the underclass film to post-heritage through its commercial impulses:

> It would be a mistake to interpret the underclass cycle as simply the binary antithesis of heritage cinema or as straightforward proof of a wider rejection of heritage values. The 'post-heritage' films of the earlier 1990s[…] had already strategically differentiated or distanced themselves by various means from the aesthetic and ideological conservatism for which heritage cinema had been criticised[…] In short, the underclass and post-heritage cycles were increasingly marketed via similar strategies to similar audiences, and contributed to the same trend in British cinema promoting a 'modernised', 'cool' Britannia. (ibid.: 283-4)

This suggests an alternative, more market-driven, prism through which to consider post-heritage characteristics. Monk's category of the underclass film shares complexities with post-heritage period drama in this respect; both negotiate institutional imperatives and creative innovation through their elements of distinction. The underclass film could therefore be considered under

the broader post-heritage framework proposed by this project. Accordingly, the post-heritage framework may be utilised to study not just period productions, but a wide range of television dramas concerned with ideas of nationhood. As Monk raises the possibility that heritage ideologies "are not specific to films set in the past" (2002: 192), the same can be said for post-heritage critical approaches to television drama.[4]

The guiding elements of the post-heritage framework can be recognised in a range of high-end television productions, beyond the scope of period drama. The following examples demonstrate the existence of each post-heritage element in high-end television dramas of the twenty-first century, which utilise contemporary settings and are produced outside of the UK. Interrogation is facilitated by the premise of *Big Little Lies* (HBO, 2017-19), which exposes the darkness underneath the visual spectacle of an affluent Californian town. *Les Revenants*, discussed as an example of uncanny television in chapter 4, also demonstrates subversion, deploying and challenging the conventions of zombie fiction in a similar manner to the iconography of the heritage household. Conceptual subjectivity is found in *The Affair* (Showtime, 2014-19), which pursues its narrative through multiple delineated – and often contradictory – perspectives, leaving the viewer to contemplate what can be considered 'truth'. Self-consciousness is fundamental to *Watchmen* (HBO, 2019), the narrative of which continues the events of the comic book series of the same name (1986-87). *Watchmen* is able to self-consciously develop and interpret aspects of the comic series, introducing the theme of racial prejudice to its narrative and developing an alternate history around this.[5] Lastly, an archetypal moment of ambiguity is found in the final scene of *The Sopranos*, which famously cuts to black before revealing if Tony Soprano is assassinated (Edgerton, 2018). These brief examples indicate the relevance of the post-heritage elements to television drama as a whole, establishing the potential for broader applications of this project's critical framework.

At the beginning of the 2020s, television drama's transitional period remains in progress. International co-productions offer a potential route through which post-heritage elements can continue to be realised, although such arrangements are no guarantee of nationally specific stories or viability across multiple seasons. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the television industry, with limitations on the production of expensive, high-end

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[4] Monk's analysis of masculinity in films of the 1990s (2000a) can also be applied to this wider notion of heritage and post-heritage.

[5] Alternate histories have themselves become a trend in high-end television drama, exemplified in 2020 by *The Plot Against America* and *Lovecraft Country* (both HBO).

drama likely to continue in the medium-term at least. The impact of the global pandemic on international travel, and thus co-production logistics, will stretch even further into the future. Alongside the obstacles, however, are opportunities. The new period of cultural, social and economic hardship, which unites people around the world, presents storytelling potential with which post-heritage elements may resonate. Already, drama productions designed to both adhere to and depict public health restrictions have been commissioned and broadcast, reflecting the moment of history as it is being lived with an unprecedented immediacy (Youngs, 2020). With smaller television industries vulnerable to the economic impact of the pandemic, international collaboration may also offer a lifeline for nationally specific stories, potentially mitigating the anxieties felt by national networks such as the CBC over the interventions of transnational networks (led by Netflix). Uncertainty over the future presents a fittingly ambiguous note with which to conclude this thesis, with the shape of subsequent scholarship dependent on institutional developments that remain somewhat unclear. Despite this, the theorisation of post-heritage is sufficiently flexible to negotiate the unknown complexities of the coming decade.

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