

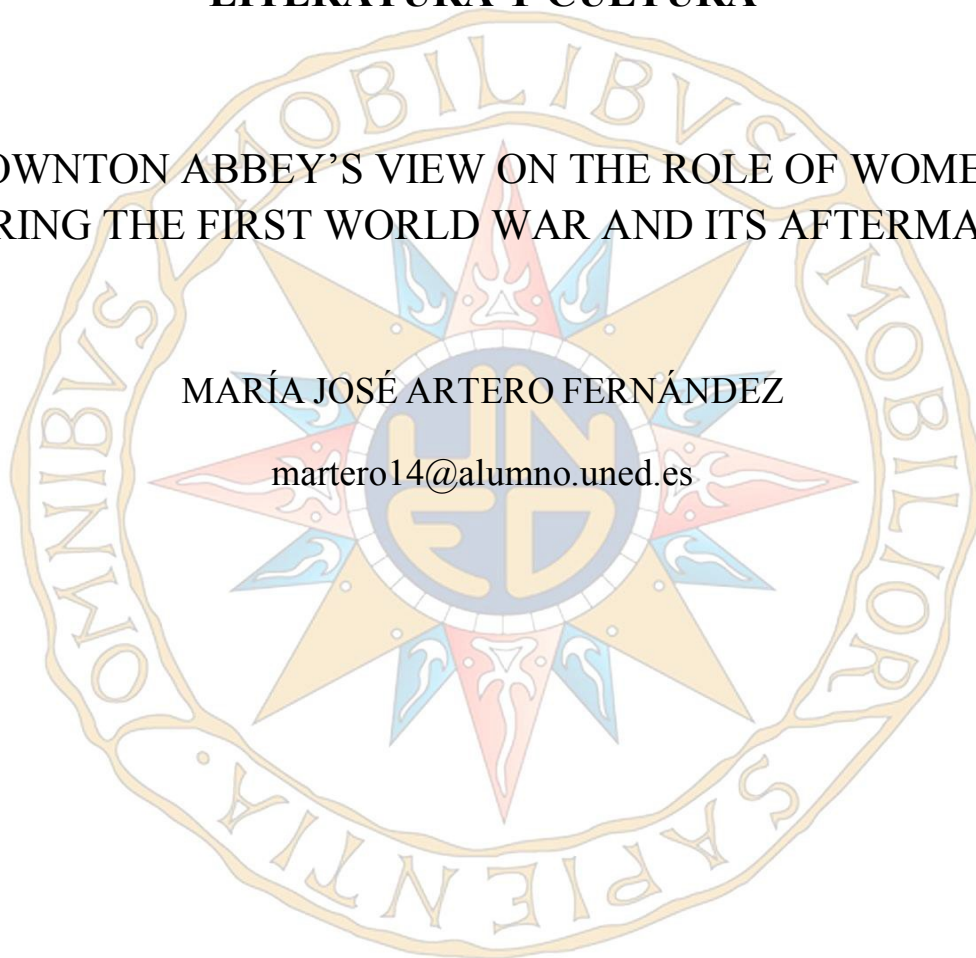


TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO
**GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA,
LITERATURA Y CULTURA**

DOWNTON ABBEY'S VIEW ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN
DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

MARÍA JOSÉ ARTERO FERNÁNDEZ

martero14@alumno.uned.es



TUTOR ACADÉMICO: María Luz Arroyo Vázquez

LÍNEA DE TFG: Historia y Cultura de los Pueblos de habla inglesa

FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

CURSO ACADÉMICO: 2018-19- Convocatoria: junio

INDEX

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Social and Political Context	5
3. Women at war	14
3.1. Lady Almina	16
3.2. Dr. Flora Murray and Dr. Garret Anderson	19
3.3. Doctor Elsie Inglis	24
3.4. Other heroines	26
4. Some facts about Downton Abbey	27
5. Main characters	29
5.1. The family	29
5.2. The servants	36
6. The plot	39
Conclusions	43
Bibliography	47
Annexes	52

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to study and emphasize the work of women during the First World War and its aftermath with the aid of the television series “Downton Abbey”. This paper will be focused on medical work performed by women, not only as nurses or orderlies, which was the most common duty but also as doctors or managing hospitals during the four years that the conflict lasted.

The series’ second season recounts how the stately house where the family live is transformed into a convalescent home for soldiers wounded in the battlefield during the First World War. It is important to highlight that the TV series is based on actual facts, but our research will help us find out the interpretation that Julian Fellowes, its creator, gives to these facts. I will explore the nurses’ work shown on TV series and also find out about women doctors and their job related to the management of hospitals in war times.

I will also analyse the treatment that the series gives to those women who tried to get out of their traditional roles in society and lead their own lives, in particular those who used education to climb up the ladder. There is a lot written about this topic and therefore I will try to show some of the different views on this issue.

KEY WORDS: First World War, Downton Abbey, women, medical work, change, suffragists, enfranchisement.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is carried out as a final project of the “Grado en Estudios Ingleses” and it aims to study the way the British TV series “Downton Abbey” shows the role of women during the “The Great War” as the First World War was named then or, as, ironically, H.G. Wells popularised the term “The War to end all Wars” because it was, indirectly, one of the causes of the Second World War.

In the first part of my paper I will explain the social and historical context in which the series is settled (from 1912 to the mid-twenties) so it is easier to understand the circumstances and conditions of life in the last century.

Then, I will give an overview of the lives of some women who performed an extraordinary job during the First World War such as Doctor Flora Murray, Doctor Louisa Garret Anderson, nurse Edith Cavell, Doctor Elsie Inglis or Lady Almina (Countess of Carnarvon) together with thousands of unknown heroines who worked at the home front as well as in the battle front in order to help their country. In this part of the research I will try to point out the difficulties they found to develop their work and also show how they were treated as inferiors by men and how their own capabilities were called into question.

Further on, I will give a brief account of the most relevant facts connected to the topic of my essay.

In order to develop the work, I shall analyse some of the characters from the TV series Downton Abbey. Then I will compare these to the real people whom inspired Julian Fellowes to write his script and find out some similarities and differences. In addition, I will also show the stance that some of the characters have in relation to the suffragist movement and the opportunities for women through education as well as to the changes that the world was suffering in those decades.

Furthermore, I will deal with the fight for vote which took place just before the war started and how things changed in the aftermath of the conflict. I will explain some of the aspects shown in the series but also develop other points of view which were quite controversial.

In the last section I will summarise the plot of the six seasons of the series and give an account of the most relevant true facts featured in them.

The methodology followed in order to develop this research will be the use of some of the bibliographic resources on the topic available at data bases such as Linceo+, Jstor, Dialnet, Google Scholar or Lion as well as books and articles from the catalogues of the UNED libraries along with other printed books. The number of available works related to the First World War is so ample that once I have gathered articles, reviews and books I will have to read them and classify the contents to see which can be useful and which have to be discarded. To keep carrying on with the work properly I will use textual analysis to extract the information required from the different episodes of the series, going through the dialogues, the situations and the characters and also registering the true events and people mentioned. Then I shall give an interpretation of all that information to explain how Fellowes wanted to depict that era.

Finally, I will set the conclusions of my research and analyse some aspects which could be developed in the future.

2. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The First World War took place mostly in Western and Central Europe. There were also the Eastern and Southern Fronts and the Middle East, where the number of losses was unimaginable.

It started on the 28th of July 1914 and finished on the 11th of November 1918 after four years of tough fighting.

It was a global conflict between two opposing groups: The Allies (France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan and later the United States) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey).

During the years of war, more than 70 million soldiers were mobilised which turns it in one of the biggest wars in History. The figures of this terrible conflict were unpredictable with over 9 million people killed (and about 30 million soldiers and civilians wounded or maimed) due partly to the development of new military technology which was used against the ground troops: the breech-loading rifles that substituted the old muskets could be fired further and faster and more accurately causing a higher number of casualties. Another technological development were the steam warships which replaced the sail ones. They were

equipped with telescopic sights and quick-firing guns releasing high-explosive shells with a huge destructive capacity¹.

To understand the historical background which led to the First World War we must analyse the deteriorated international environment due to a series of diplomatic crises, as David Stevenson explains on his book *1914-1918 The History of the First World War* (2004). The excerpt is in the first chapter “The destruction of peace”, and it is stated the following:

Between the 1880s and 1904 such crises mainly started over colonial competition and involved individual powers: for example, Britain and Germany in 1896 over South Africa and Britain and France in 1898 over the Sudan. But in the pre-war decade a new series of crises came closer to home and squared off the two great blocs. In 1905-6 in the First Moroccan Crisis Germany failed to frustrate French attempts (with British support) to establish predominance in Morocco. In 1908-9, in contrast, Austria-Hungary with firm German backing pushed through the annexation of Bosnia. The first of these events consolidated German encirclement and the second deepened antagonism between Austria-Hungary and Germany on the one hand and Serbia and Russia on the other (23)

The circumstances mentioned above highlight the fragility of peace and also give an idea of the increased capacity for war the countries had achieved during the period prior to 1914.

However, it was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on the 28th June 1914, that triggered the war. It was seen by the Austrians as a pretext to invade Serbia. Austria-Hungary got Germany’s support to declare war on Serbia and gave them an ultimatum which was partially accepted. However, the German Foreign Office had encouraged the Austrian Foreign Minister to persuade Franz Joseph to declare war against Serbia. On the 28th of July the Austro-Hungarian artillery started to bomb Belgrade. Then Russia ordered mobilization against Austria-Hungary.

Germany, which at the very beginning had instigated war, realized then that it would not be a “localized” conflict within the Balkans but a European war and sent an ultimatum to Russia to stop mobilization and another one to France to

¹ Data retrieved from chapter one *The Destruction of Peace. 1914-1918 The History of the First World War* (David Stevenson).

stay neutral in case Russia took part in the conflict. Both of them ignored the orders and then Germany was forced to do a general mobilization and declared war on Russia. Therefore, France also began to organize its troops for war. On the 2nd of August Germany sent its forces into Luxembourg asking for “free passage” through Belgium, which at the moment was neutral territory. The next day Germany declared war on France and then invaded Belgium. In view of these circumstances, Great Britain, which was committed to defend Belgium, declared war on Germany.

At this initial stage, many countries joined the conflict:

- Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia (5th August).
- Serbia declared war on Germany (6th August).
- Montenegro declared war on Austria-Hungary (7th August).
- Montenegro also declared war against Germany (12th August).
- France declared war on Austria-Hungary (10th August).
- Great Britain also declared war on Austria- Hungary (12th August).
- Japan declared war on Germany (23rd August).
- Austria-Hungary then declared war on Japan (25th August).
- Austria-Hungary finally declared war on Belgium (28th August)².

However, other countries such as Romania or Italy remained neutral at the beginning of the conflict though later on they would have to take sides.

When the war broke out in 1914 it was received with confidence and it inspired a patriotic feeling among the peoples in Europe which thought that the it would only last until Christmas. Few people could have imagined at that moment that the war would go on for four long years of devastation which would change the map of the world forever as well as give rise to the Second World War.

In order to understand the economic and cultural context of the age, we must explain some of the characteristics of Europe’s society in the previous decades. Eric Hobsbawm’s view on this matter as he expresses it in his book *Age of*

² Historical facts and data retrieved from the Encyclopedia Britannica on the 21st February 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>

Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991 (1994). In the introductory chapter of his work "The Century: A Bird's Eye View", Hobsbawm explains that:

...the First World War marked the breakdown of the (western) civilization of the nineteenth century. This civilization was capitalist in its economy; liberal in its legal and constitutional structure; bourgeois in its image of its characteristic hegemonic class; glorying in the advance of science, knowledge and education, material and moral progress; and profoundly convinced of the centrality of Europe, birthplace of the revolutions of the sciences, arts, politics and industry, whose economy had penetrated, and whose soldiers had conquered and subjugated most of the world; whose populations had grown until they had risen to form a third of the human race; and whose major states constituted the system of world politics (16).

As Hobsbawm points out, the years previous to 1914 were ones of prosperity based on Victorian developments such as the railway, the telegraph or the steamship together with an increase in agriculture and manufacturing productivity. Many continental countries exported goods and capital to each other while Britain's trade was mostly based outside Europe, especially in its colonies extended throughout the world. At the same time, it started a new wave of emigration in order to open up new markets which placed Europe at the centre of all the worldwide economic transactions that extended across the Atlantic. The creation of heavy industries which produced coal and steel for many countries forced the cooperation between governments but, unfortunately, it was based more on a "non-interference policy" than on a mutual understanding with no binding multilateral agreements. As a result, the economic balance was so fragile that when the conflict burst each country was willing to smash its continental enemies.

The globalization that started in the decades before 1914 was indeed economic, but also cultural and political, being imperialism its main manifestation. In case of war it was a logical consequence that the colonies would be implicated in it and would support the Empire. It must also be highlighted the role of the United States as emerging power which stayed neutral at the beginning, but whose part in the conflict turned out to be crucial.

Domestic politics were also suffering changes in those decades. Many countries saw the expansion of cities and their bourgeoisie and working class which obliged

monarchies to grant elected parliaments and civil liberties in order to win favour from the governed.

The British 1832 Reform Act, the first of many, attempted to change the electoral system of England and Wales; in the German Empire the monarchy coexisted with a Reichstag (the lower House of Parliament) elected by universal male suffrage; in Russia, after 1905 the tsar had accepted an elected assembly.

Just before the outbreak of the war in 1914, many European countries had achieved a series of social accomplishments³:

- Trade unions (only made up of male members),
- pressure groups,
- political parties; and
- uncensored mass media (newspapers distributed around the globe spread news and government propaganda).

During the Victorian era, which lasted 64 years and ended with Queen Victoria's death in 1901, society saw great changes, particularly in those aspects that concerned industrialization. The middle class was growing rapidly in cities while the working class had to stand long hours of work with such low wages that many people suffered from poverty, hunger and disease.

Poverty led to other social problems which at the same time brought along reform movements. These movements also led to the great changes that happened in the 20th century which often had women in leading roles, as we will see later on. The position of women in society during the Edwardian era (which started in 1902 with the reign of Victoria's son, King Edward VII) was quite complex and directly related to domesticity and marriage. With regard to the lower classes, women worked as domestic servants, on farms or in factories performing unskilled jobs with low wages. Those women who belonged to the upper classes were expected to be the moral centre of the home, dedicated to bear children and care for their husbands but at the same time they could engage themselves in charity activities or social work — and therefore reform — which was considered acceptable. Some middleclass women helped to build hospitals and asylums for the mentally

³ Data retrieved from the book 1914-1918 The History of the First World War (David Stevenson). Chapter one *The Destruction of Peace* (page 7).

ill while others campaigned in order to get access to their own property and money.

The expansion of women's education allowed some women to enter careers which had been previously male dominated, but only those careers that were deemed suitable, such as teaching, nursing or office work. As we can read in Arthur Marwick's book *Women at War, 1914-1918* (1977):

Women could take degrees at the Scottish and at the English provincial universities: there were women's colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, respectfully sited on the outskirts of these ancient towns, though women could not actually take degrees at either university. A few women were penetrating into higher professions: there were women doctors, and women university teachers. Almost without exception these women were unmarried (18).

The WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union) was created in 1903 by Emily Pankhurst, her daughter Christabel and Annie Kenney (a working-class woman). As they said, their organization was devoted "to Deeds not Words" and were decided to win the vote for women, at any cost. They carried out violent protests and fought with the police. Some of them were arrested several times and led hunger strikes in prison and suffered abuses such as force feeding. For several years the suffragettes led active campaigns turning women's suffrage into a first-class political issue. They had the support of quite a large number of Liberals and of a considerably smaller number of leading Conservatives. However, the Liberal Prime Minister from 1908 onwards, Henry Asquith was himself hostile and therefore there was no formal Government support. After the two elections of 1910 (which reduced the Liberal majority) the suffragettes started a series of more violent actions such as chaining themselves to railings, bombing the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, slashing valuable paintings and damaging or destroying castles in Scotland. Though all these events brought further attention to the cause, it is clear that the vicious circle of the Government responses and the harsher rejoinder from the suffragettes were counter-productive and led to a stalemate⁴.

The outbreak of the war began a sort of truce between the women's movement and the Government. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies

⁴ Information extracted from pp 22-26 in Arthur Marwick's book *Women at War, 1914-1918*, previously mentioned.

(NWUSS) suspended its militant action and concentrated on the war effort. Again, in Arthur Marwick's book *Women at War, 1914-1918* (1977) we can read part of Mrs. Henry Fawcett's speech. She was the leader of the NWUSS and was addressing a group of women protesting against war on the 4th August 1914. The extract is in the second chapter, "The War Emergency", and it said:

Now is the time for resolute effort and self-sacrifice on the part of every one of us to help our country. Let us show ourselves worthy of citizenship, whether our claim to it be recognized or not (27).

The suffragists groups continued supporting women with organizations like the Women's Service Bureau or the Women's Interests Committee which were willing to show that women were perfectly capable of performing their job as skilfully as any men. At the same time, they focused on ensuring that women were not exploited as voluntary or cheap labour.

However, women's role in the war was not very clear at the beginning and the feeling that their potential was not being properly used was widespread. There were different phases:

1. The period called "War Emergency" and later "Business as Usual"; it lasted from August 1914 to the summer of 1915. No massive changes took place, apart from the voluntary work of a minority group of upper-class women. The first ones were Decima Moore and Hon. Evelina Haverfield, who raised the Women's Emergency Corps to provide feeding centres for soldiers and refugees. Later came The Women's Volunteer Reserve promoted by the Marchioness of Londonderry, Marchioness of Titchfield and the Countess of Pembroke.
2. The "Shells Scandal" of 1915 (the revelation that a shortage of munitions could have been the cause of the defeat of the British corps at Neuve Chapelle in March that year) led to the fall of the Liberals in May 1915. The new Coalition Government established the Ministry of Munitions (1915) under Lloyd George. This fact, together with the "Women's March Through London" in July the same year claiming "The Right to Serve" were the turning points for the massive enrolment of women in munition factories. They were known as "munitionettes". Many of these young girls came from

a working-lower-middle-class background with no special qualification. They usually worked twelve-hour shifts and carried out dangerous work (exposure to the chemicals like TNT and the risk of explosions were the main hazards). By the middle of the war about 75,000 women were employed in the munitions industry and produced millions of shells and small arms ammunition every year.

3. The introduction of universal military conscription in May 1916. The lack of men forced women to join up all sorts of employment: tram or ambulance drivers, bus conductors, nursing services, farm work, flour mills work, police work, leather stitching, clothing machinery or manufacturing industries (producing children's shoes, concrete, glucose, soap, hats, etc.).
4. The last eighteen months of war (from July 1917 to November 1918) are characterized by a more efficient organization of the war effort by Lloyd George Coalition Government. The Women's Auxiliary Military Corps (WAAC) were set up as part of the British Army in 1917. The WAAC became the first example of a Western nation employing women within the armed services. However, they were not considered a combat organization and military ranks were forbidden. Its original aim was to substitute men working in non-combatant or administrative roles within the army. By placing women into their jobs, men could be redeployed at the front war. These women were meant to perform various roles such as clerks, domestic service, mechanical maintenance, cookery and tending war graves. Most of them served within the United Kingdom but on the 31st March 1917 the first members of the WAAC were sent to France to work there. By the beginning of 1918, more than 6,000 WAACs were serving in France. By 1921, when the organization was officially dismantled, about 57,000 women had joined in⁵.

Just before the end of the war (1918-1920) a terrible disease called the "Spanish Influenza", struck a population which was weak and malnourished after such a long conflict. Food was scarce and hygiene measures were almost non-existent

⁵ Historical facts and figures extracted from the book *Women in the First World War* by Neil Storey and Molly Housego; pp 31-36.

which proved fatal. An already undermined population suffered the devastating effects of the disease. Only in London, around 2,000 people died and in the whole Britain some 228,000 inhabitants died. The worldwide figures are disheartening with over 40 million people dead, turning it into the most terrible epidemic in history⁶.

Another big issue that had to be tackled was the position of women workers now that the conflict was over. Much has been said about the opportunities and changes that the war would bring about on matters such as the women's vote, wages, education or other legal reforms. However, we know now that these "emancipating" effects had been exaggerated and the years that followed were not going to be easy at all for women. It was widely believed that once the war was over women would go back to their homes and their former jobs, especially in domestic service and the like.

Even though the Government knew that demobilization would imply laying off women and employing men, they didn't foresee the extent of the situation. As Gail Braybon said "only half of those who made up the increase in women's labour chose to withdraw, and the government seemed incapable of dealing with the immediate post-war employment situation" (179).

The experience of war had affected many people's views, but society as a whole was not ready for radical changes. It is true that industrial work underwent transformations due to technological advances and to the high number of men killed during the conflict. Although few people wanted to go back to the *status quo* of 1914, not many were ready to let women replace men in factories or any other skilled job. More often than not, women were paid lower wages and performed tasks that men would not want to do. Nevertheless, there was a strong pressure for women to go back home. To cite Braybon again: "this was a matter of ideology, not just economics" (176). The situation was delicate indeed and many men wanted their wives back at home as a way of restoring their peacetime roles. The propaganda spread during the 1920s contributed to it by highlighting the joys of domesticity and thus hiding the widely held fear that women would try to escape from their position as caregivers and childbearing wives.

⁶ Statistics taken from Ian F.W. Beckett's book *Home Front 1914-1918. How Britain Survived the Great War*; pp 201-206.

Circumstances were not the same for women of all classes. Those who belonged to the lowest working classes had little chance of finding a decently paid job and most of the times they could hardly cope. Unfortunately, on too many occasions they had to turn to prostitution to keep their children alive. Others, who were eligible to get a benefit from the Government, were obliged to accept any kind of job or else they would be cut off if they refused it (even if they were paid less than the meagre benefit).

However, middle-class women who had some sort of education or training had a broader range of employment and more economic independence and therefore they were not so interested in just being wives and mothers. They could work as clerks, nurses, retail trade or other new fields that emerged in the post-war years.

3. WOMEN AT WAR

In this section of my paper I will give an insight of some of the many women who worked during the war in the field of medicine and who have been underestimated during decades just for the simple fact of being women. This includes doctors but also nurses, orderlies, cooks, drivers, clerks and all the different staff needed in a hospital. Some of these posts are shown in DA, but *Fellowes* focuses particularly in nursing. In season 1 there is an example of the difficulties women encountered to work in hospitals, although it is a bit exaggerated because in real life the doctor would not have followed the advice of a nurse, even if it was a man. Before the war, when Isobel Crawley had just arrived at Downton and offers her services as a nurse to the doctor he agrees, thinking that she will not last very long there. However, she is happy to be useful and stays. There is a patient, a young farmer, suffering from heart dropsy who is going to die. Then she tells the doctor she has been researching and suggests a possible treatment. Here is the dialogue that takes place after she has been examining him (episode 2):

- Isobel: It's definitely the heart. It's almost too quiet to hear at all.
- Dr. Clarkson: I'm afraid so.
- Isobel: I've been thinking about the treatments that are available. Considerable success has been achieved over the last few years by draining the pericardial sac and administering adrenaline.
- Dr. Clarkson: Mrs. Crawley, I appreciate your thoroughness.

- Isobel: But you are unwilling to try it?
- Dr. Clarkson: Injection of adrenaline is a comparatively new procedure.
- Isobel: It's a while ago, but I saw my husband do it. I know how.
- Dr. Clarkson: Please, Mrs. Crawley. Don't force me to be uncivil. We would be setting an impossible precedent when every villager could demand the latest fad in treatment for each cut and graze.
- Isobel: I would remind you that we are not talking of a cut or a graze, but the loss of a man's life and the ruin of his family.
- Dr. Clarkson: Of course, but I beg you to see that it is not reasonable.

This dialogue shows a very unusual behaviour for a woman at that time, but as in many occasions during the series, Isobel is not an ordinary woman. She doesn't understand the doctor's stance and, in the end, she will push him to try the treatment in order to save the man's life ("will you really deny the man his chance of life"), which they finally manage.

Many women doctors who had graduated before the war belonged to the middle or middle-upper classes because they were the only ones who could afford it. The problem, once they had finished their qualifications, was to find a hospital to do the residence and then gain experience. They were offered those posts disregarded by men like gynaecology and obstetrics or general practice. However, soon after the conflict started they were welcomed to occupy the place of men doctors who had gone to the Front in many teaching hospitals in London. Surprisingly, even the press was encouraging women to start their medical studies because they were needed and also because it would enhance new opportunities for them. There were quite a few women who believed it was their patriotic duty to go to the Front and serve there but due to the lack of support from the War Office, that would not admit women in its ranks, they decided to offer their services to allied governments. They joined the French, the Serbian or the Belgian army and they served in the Front as any other men would have done. Therefore, after a few months of conflict, the War Office had no other option than admit them but without being commissioned which was a disadvantage for them. Some other doctors preferred to organize themselves independently of the War Office and funded different units who were to work abroad. They did an excellent job and a dangerous one also because in many occasions they were made prisoners and had to endure terrible ordeals. It would take too long to refer to all

of them and that is not the purpose of this paper, so I will only mention the most relevant of them in relation to the topic. But what I must say that applies to all of them is that their work during the war, though highly appreciated, in many cases could not be continued due to demobilization and many valuable women had to go back to their previous occupation. Dr. Murray in her book *Women as Army Surgeons* tells us about the prospects for some of the younger staff:

“There was other work for professional people, like doctors and nurses and clerks, to take up; but the future was blank to the young girls who had been there so long and who were now to be unemployed. They missed the hospital and the hospital life sadly. In many cases there was no special place in the home circles for daughters who had been living away for some years; those who had experienced the joy of work and of responsibility, had to exchange these for the comparative inactivity of home-life. Parental restrictions had become unfamiliar and now seemed irksome to them; and they found unrelieved amusement a poor substitute for work. Thus, they suffered considerably, until they were able to adapt themselves to new conditions or to find new openings.” (262-3)

In *DA Fellowes* shows this situation quite well in the second season once the war is over. Lady Sybil and Lady Edith talk about their future with nothing to do, no purpose in life except going to parties or looking for a husband. They both think that it is not a fulfilling life compared to be helping others. Sybil will get married and go to Ireland to work as a nurse and Edith will start writing for a newspaper but eventually will run her own magazine. Once the convalescent home is closed Lady Grantham will be more involved in the running of the county hospital and Isobel Crawley decides to help the refugees and also those women who had lost their husbands or their jobs and are struggling to survive. In this way *DA* shows some of the opportunities available for women, but as it usually occurs in fiction it is a biased approach.

3.1. LADY ALMINA, COUNTESS OF CARNARVON

In the second season the most important storyline is that *DA* is transformed into a convalescent home for wounded officers. This was not extraordinary at the time and *Fellowes* was inspired by the story of Lady Almina, the 5th Countess of Carnarvon who lived at Highclere Castle (the setting for *DA*) during the First World War. She was a woman out of the ordinary, the illegitimate daughter of

Alfred Rothschild, the multimillionaire Jewish banker, who got married to Lord George Herbert, the 5th Earl of Carnarvon. This marriage allowed her to be accepted into the British Royal Society of the time. However, she was not overwhelmed by that fact and she was determined to do something good of her life apart from giving parties and entertaining guests. In 1909, David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Liberal Government proposed the "People's Budget" to reform the tax system, but it was rejected by the House of Lords which triggered a general election in January 1910. Thus, resulted in a coalition government led by the Liberals with the alliance of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Only a few months later, the situation reached a dead-end and new elections were expected. Lady Almina thought it was her duty to support the Tory party and assisted to political meetings and gave speeches who touched the hearts of her audience and campaigned for their values that were in danger if the Liberals were to win. She was indeed a skilled orator, but as a woman she had no right to vote, let alone to stand for election, so she channelled her political ambitions campaigning for her brother-in-law who managed to win. Although she was an upper-class lady she believed in women's power to influence public life. In a speech delivered to the Newbury Unionist Women's Association in 1911 that we can read in the book *Lady Almina and the real Downton Abbey* (chapter 8: "The Passing of the Golden Age"), she said:

"In the dark ages, which are not very far behind us, we used to be called the weaker sex. We never were, and we never shall be weaker in our patriotism. In this as in all similar matters we are neither inferior nor superior, but only very different and I am convinced that we shall do most good to our country and her cause if instead of imitating men we endeavour to widen and perhaps enrich the spirit of public life by being simply ourselves" (111).

Her words give an idea of her concerns and though she had obviously no financial problems she was not happy with her life as it was and wanted to improve those who were not as fortunate as herself. Due to her husband's poor health she began to take care of him proving herself an excellent nurse. She wanted to learn more about nursing and she attended operations by the eminent surgeon Berkeley Moynihan at the University Hospital which led her to discover her vocation to help caring for ill people. She was appointed Patroness of Cold Ash Hospital, near her home and she got involved in its running. (This fact was used

by Fellowes in the last season to give Lady Cora a role in the county Hospital Board). By now the outbreak of war was a certainty and she wanted to be prepared. She would use Highclere Castle as a hospital for wounded soldiers. She was determined to hire the best professionals: doctors, nurses and other staff to give the greatest possible care to the patients. She went to see Mr. Rothschild and ask him for money that she would spend in equipping her home. Now, she only needed to get permission from the military authorities. So, the next step was to talk to Lord Kitchener and persuade him to support her cause, which he obviously did. The years to follow would be an exhausting challenge for Almina and her team, but they proved to be efficient and managed to give love and care to their patients. In 1916 the hospital was moved to London where more patients could be attended and it was better equipped in order to treat a greater range of injuries and many specialists from other hospitals nearby could work there when needed. She carried on with her work until February 1919 when she definitely closed it and had some months of rest before attempting a new challenge. In the book mentioned before *Lady Almina and the real Downton Abbey* (chapter 17: "From war to peace") we can read a letter sent to the Countess by Sir Robert Jones the Inspector of Military Hospitals to thank her for her work. It shows how much she did for those in need:

"I have always looked upon you as one of the discoveries of the war. You have devoted yourself with such extraordinary vitality to helping our wounded soldiers and I am sure the nation should be very grateful to you for it all. I shall always have the pleasantest memories of Highclere, the wonderful times the officers had there, and particularly of the self-sacrificing way in which you ministered to their mental and physical well-being" (225).

This was not the only thank-you letter she received. Hundreds of families were grateful to her and they let her know it which gave her a sense of pride and accomplishment.

In DA Lord and Lady Grantham are not in favour of the convalescent home and they see it as an invasion of their private lives, but they accept it due to the pressure of Lady Sybil and Isobel Crawley. At the beginning, it will be a difficult task and the whole family will have to adjust to the new life, but in the end, they all agree that nothing will ever be the same after the war is over. So they try to be useful: Cora, despite some disagreements with Isobel, will be an efficient

overseer; Lady Edith will help the soldiers with their letters, books or just talking to them and trying to cheer them up; Lady Sybil who has finished her training as a nurse and is working at the hospital in town will spend her free time also helping at home and realizes that she has a purpose in her life other than going to parties. Nevertheless, Lord Grantham feels uncomfortable and useless because he would rather be at the front than staying at home while so many people are enlisting.

As I said earlier, it was common for the nobility to carry out this kind of “relief work”, for example Lady Sutherland set up a field hospital in France. The Dowager Countess of Carnarvon helped the soldiers wounded at Gallipoli during the war, and after she collaborated with the Vocal Therapy Society which helped ex-soldiers with certain disabilities to restore their normal speech and also founded King’s Services Choirs which proved that through the use of music and singing patients recovered their speech faster. But there were also other ordinary women who worked really hard during the conflict. In particular, I want to dedicate the next section of this paper to their priceless work⁷.

3.2. DOCTOR FLORA MURRAY AND DOCTOR LOUISA GARRET ANDERSON

Doctor Flora Murray was the only woman Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Army during the Great War. She worked as Doctor-in-Charge at the Military Hospital in Endell Street (London). However, the War Office was not going to make life easy for her or for Dr. Louisa Garret Anderson, Chief Surgeon. The Hospital, which was staffed and run entirely by women, remained open during the war and sometime after its end and both women and their team worked as hard as they could to prove themselves worthy of the tasks they were assigned. Needless to say, that had they been men none of their ordeals would have been the same. They had to be able to look after their patients but they also had to be efficient administrators, capable of running the hospital smoothly so nobody could say that women didn’t manage to rise to the occasion. For all of them this was the opportunity to work for their country, but at the same time it was another step in

⁷ Data taken from the book *Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey*. Chapters 9 and 17: “The Summer of 1914” and “From War to Peace”; pp 125; 223-224.

the Women's Movement and if the hospital was successful (and indeed it was), this was their own success, something to be proud of⁸.

Both women had been part of the Suffragist movement and they knew well that it wouldn't be of much use to offer their help to the politics because they were quite sceptic. Therefore, they offered their services to the French Red Cross to establish a hospital in France. In less than a month they managed to raise funds and organized a team of doctors and nurses who would settle in Paris the first Women's Hospital Corps. At the same time Dr. Louisa Woodcock would be in charge of organizing any supplies, correspondence or money that was received in London, which was by no means plentiful as soon as their work was known at home. It is worth mention here the words of Mrs. Elizabeth Garret Anderson, mother of Louisa and the first woman in Britain to qualify as a physician and surgeon and also a suffragist who became truly interested in her daughter's project. Her words are taken from Murray's book "Women as Army Surgeons": "If you go, and if you succeed, you will put your cause forward a hundred years" (12).

These words help us understand the magnitude of the challenges ahead for these brave women. When they started their mission in France few people believed they could manage, but their tireless work and commitment to their country and their compatriots moved them forward. They received many visitors, curious to see the hospital and when they left they were all admired and surprised. In particular, there was a senior officer sent by the War Office to inspect the hospital who could not believe that women were real doctors or surgeons but when he finished the visit called it a "model hospital" and asked why it was a French Hospital and not a British one. Dr. Murray answered: "The War Office would never look at women doctors" which he thought absurd. There were many other visitors, including Mrs. Pankhurst, Dr. Elsie Inglis, the Duchess of Westminster or the Queen Amelie of Portugal, but those who had more influence were the reporters from English journals because they wrote excellent articles about the hospital and that helped to spread their work and get support through gifts, food or money⁹.

⁸ Information extracted from Susan Cohen's book *Medical Services in the First World War*; pp 51-55.

⁹ All the valuable information mentioned in this section was retrieved from Doctor Flora Murray's book *Women as Army Surgeons*. (Part I, chapter 8: pp 78-89 and chapter 11: pp 118-120; part II, chapter 1: pp 123- 126).

The success of the Paris hospital was so impressive and the need for new ones so large that the French Red Cross asked Dr. Murray if she could help with the setting of a new unit in Boulogne. She chose a couple of doctors and some staff and found a large house at Wimereux which could be used as such. With the help of the mayor they managed to equip the hospital with furniture and she also made a request to the Army Medical Service in Boulogne, who had heard about their wonderful job in Paris, and was willing to help. The senior officer was the Commandant there and the women doctors were to be working under the British War Office at his orders and they would be allowed to take surgery. Finally, their ambition to work as army surgeons was fulfilled. A couple of months later the hospital in Paris had to be closed due to the lack of coal to keep the rooms warm and to supply hot water. Therefore, the staff was sent to Wimereux. During the winter months the fighting slowed down due to the weather conditions and the work was lighter. However, the need for more hospital beds was growing in England and also the need for doctors and surgeons. Then, Dr. Murray and Dr. Garret went there to talk to the General in charge of the War Office and they were received by Surgeon-General Sir Alfred Keogh who was at the moment serving as Director General Army Medical Services. He had heard a lot about their work in the two hospitals in France and was determined to ask them to manage a hospital in London with more than 500 beds. So, they went back to France to prepare their staff and equipment. The day before their return Sir A. Keogh made public his intentions regarding the future of the Women's Hospital Corps. The words he addressed at Sunderland House in favour of the extension of the London School of Medicine for Women were on *The Times* the next day:

“He had received numbers of unsolicited letters from Paris and Boulogne, which stated that the work of women doctors at the Front was beyond all praise; it was an example of how such work ought to be done. So impressed had he been that he had asked two of the staff from Paris and Boulogne to come here and do bigger work. He asked them to take charge of a hospital of 500 beds and, if they pleased, of a hospital of 1000 beds.”
(The Times 19th February 1915)

The audience, which was made up of people interested in women's medical work, congratulated him for his courage in implementing such an innovation. This would

lead, eventually, to enhance the development of Women's Services throughout the war.

When they arrived in London they encountered quite a few problems in the War Office because some officers could not accept women running a hospital. However, thanks to their determination and hard work the Military Hospital at Endell Street was opened in May 1915 and remained in use until November 1919, well after the end of the conflict under the supervision of both women. The staff was made up of 180 people, only 21 of them were men (14 of them replaced shortly by women).

They treated soldiers from many nationalities, but those who were the most educated and with a better attitude to women were the Australians and New Zealanders who could not understand why women were not granted the vote. Despite their rule of not talking about these matters, the doctors allowed some propaganda, but in the form of "deeds, not words".

Another subject in which women proved their efficiency was discipline. The War Office denied them commissions or honorary ranks which would have been very helpful in order to obtain authority. Nevertheless, of all the 25,000 patients they had over the years very few caused trouble, to the astonishment of many sceptical officers.

It is worth copying here part of the words that Sir Alfred Keogh addressed to both women when he left his post at the War Office in 1918 which we can read in Dr. Murray's book:

[...] "I have often talked of you and heard your work discussed, and it has always been to me a great pride to know how successful you have been. I was subjected to great pressure adverse to your movement when we started to establish your Hospital, but I had every confidence that the new idea would justify itself, as it has abundantly done. [...] I should have been an object of scorn and ridicule if you had failed, but I never for a moment contemplated failure, and I think we can now congratulate ourselves on having established a record of a new kind. I think your success has probably done more for the cause of women than anything else I know of, and if that cause flourishes, you and I can feel that we have been sufficiently rewarded for our courage." [...] (167)

Unfortunately, there were still few people that agreed with sir Keogh and things were not going to be easy at all for women, particularly once the war was over.

As the conflict was lasting more than expected, the Army needed more women at its service, not only in hospitals but also in camps as cooks, storekeepers and even motor-drivers. Then a delegation from the Red Cross led by Dame Katherine Furse visited Doctor Murray asking for advice in order to form a new section of VAD's who would be dispatched overseas as soon as they were ready. Again, they encountered quite a lot scepticism on women's capability of becoming stretcher-bearers or performing any other duties which involved strength or organizational skills. Another challenge that women doctors had to face was related to the position they occupied in the hospitals as it is straightforwardly stated in Dr. Murray's book *Women as Army Surgeons* (digitalized in 2012):

“One doctor wrote from East Africa, stating that her position had been excellent under a commissioned officer (C.O.) who allowed her to wear a captain's badge of rank, but that his successor had ordered her to remove it, and she was therefore a discredited person in the hospital to which she was posted. Women working under Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) colonels in RAMC hospitals were at the mercy of the wisdom or the prejudices of the officers-in-charge and the pin-pricks and little indignities to which they were often subjected were very unfair. They were volunteers in the best sense of the word, and if their services were accepted at all, no difference should have been made between them and the men they worked among.” (238-9)

Realizing that this problem had lasted too long, Dr. Murray and Dr. Anderson asked the War Office for honorary rank or commissioned rank for women doctors who were serving with HM Forces. Despite the fact that many individual officers would have had no objection, their request was refused. They didn't give up and sent letters to *The Times* in order to get public attention but, unfortunately, they didn't succeed. Then they decided to write a leaflet (called “Bricks without Straw”) to explain their complaints which also included the difference in their wages, and send it to the House of Commons. Although elections were near and they got quite a few positive answers, nothing was done; partly because the conflict was over and the need for women doctors was not so urgent¹⁰.

¹⁰ Information extracted from Doctor Flora Murray's book *Women as Army Surgeons*. (Part II, chapter 7: page 240).

However, Dr. Murray was an indefatigable fighter and she knew she could get the support of the British Medical Association and with their help at least she managed that the new Income Tax gave women doctors relief under the Service Rate. Unfortunately, the rest of the staff were receiving very low salaries and she decided to start a new campaign sending letters to the Government. After months of weekly letters, she managed to improve some of the conditions, but she failed to equal their pay to that of civilians or men. This matter infuriated Dr. Murray because she thought that the Government was taking advantage of the generous disposition of these patriotic women¹¹.

3.3. ELSIE INGLIS

Elsie Inglis was born in 1864 in a small town in India where her father worked as Chief Commissioner for the East India Company. He was a man ahead of his time and believed in the education of women as equals to men. Therefore, he encouraged her to further the studies that she had begun in Paris. In 1887 she started to study at the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women. While she was studying she found The Hospice, a nursing home and maternity centre staffed by medical women. In 1891 she went to Glasgow to take the examination for the Triple Qualification Licentiate at the Medical School and started practice with Sir William MacEwen at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary¹².

However, she was quite concerned about the few opportunities given to women, not only in medicine but also in other fields. This led her to join the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage and started her life as an activist in favour of women's rights. She was so determined in her purpose that whenever she found an obstacle she would try any other alternative in order to overcome it. She wanted to create a hospital for women where they could do their training in every speciality and without any restriction. Before the outbreak of the war she was also conscious of the need for field hospitals but it was difficult to raise the money because the project didn't appeal to those who could help (such as the Scottish Red Cross). Then she donated the first 100 pounds and managed to convince

¹¹ *Ibid.* Part II, chapter 7 pp 244-248.

¹² Biographical data obtained from Lady Frances Balfour's book *Dr. Elsie Inglis*. (Chapters III to V).

the Scottish and National Women's Suffrage Societies to fund what would become the Scottish Women's Hospitals. When in 1914 the war broke out, she went to the War Office in Edinburgh to offer her hospital services overseas and the representative there uttered the well-known, shameful sentence "my good lady, go home and sit still"¹³ which probably served as a salutary lesson for Inglis who, more determined than ever, started to work with the French Red Cross and her unit was sent to Belgium first and then to France, Russia and Serbia where she found the support of the Admiralty and the Foreign Office. Lord Robert Cecil must be mentioned by his great work done in order to allow the field hospitals, fully staffed by women, to go to the Front. Doctor Inglis knew very well the dangers she would encounter, but she also knew they could be much more helpful there than at home and she didn't hesitate. Then she organized her team and started taking care of the wounded, but they also had to face extreme weather conditions or an epidemic of typhus which was devastating the Serbian people. She and some of her staff chose to stay in Serbia working at a prisoner-of-war hospital taking care of patients in terrible conditions during the 1915 winter. They were repatriated in 1916. On the 3rd April that same year she became the first woman to be bestowed with the Order of the White Eagle, the highest honour that Serbia could grant, although at home all this praise was ignored. Before the beginning of the war she knew she suffered from cancer, but after three years of exhausting work her body was too weak to recover and she had to return home where she would die¹⁴.

The words of the Prefect of Constanza, published in the British Press, and quoted in Arthur Marwick's book *Women at War 1914-1918*, give us an idea of the unprecedented work these women did:

"It is extraordinary how these women endure hardships; they refuse help, and carry the wounded themselves. They work like navvies. No wonder England is a great country if the women are like that" (107).

¹³ Extracted from Susan Cohen's book *Medical Services in the First World War*. (Page 17).

¹⁴ *Medical Women at War*, by Leah Leneman. Pages 160-177. Downloaded from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1036842/ on the 24th March 2019.

What the Prefect of Constanza probably didn't know was the struggle these women had to bear in England because they were considered unfit for the War Office. It was much easier to deny them a place in the conflict than recognize their value and their right to vote.

3.4. OTHER HEROINES

It would be unfair to finish this section without mentioning other women who also became the silent heroines of the war. First of all, nurse Edith Cavell who worked at the Berkendael military hospital in German-occupied Belgium in 1915. She was executed by the Germans on 12th October 1915 for assisting some 200 wounded soldiers to escape to neutral Holland¹⁵.

Mabel St. Clair Stobart, a woman with no medical training but who spent her money in organising an all-women unit and offered it to the Belgian Red Cross. She had the help of the St. John Ambulance Association and the Women's Imperial Service League and among her team was Florence Stoney, who had studied radiology and had created a portable X-ray apparatus (she had offered it to the War Office and had been rejected just for being a woman). They worked in a hospital in Belgium until they had to be evacuated for safety reasons.

We must also mention Dr. Alice Benham and Dr. Laura Forster who both worked in a British Field Hospital Unit in Antwerp where they managed to save many soldiers under extreme conditions of bombardment. There was also a couple of doctors, Mr. and Mrs. Berry, who organized a unit and went to Serbia and there they created the Royal Free Hospital Serbian Unit with the help of a few other doctors.

Other women that served in the Eastern Fronts as independent doctors were: Caroline Matthews, Elizabeth Ross, Irma LeVasseur, Helena Hall, Muriel Kerr or Daisy Stepney among others. There they managed to perform a wide scope of treatments and coped in the best possible way not only with military surgery, but also with infectious diseases, imprisonment or bombardment. Their names

¹⁵ Data taken from Susan Cohen's book *Medical Services in the First World War*. (Page 12)

cannot be found in any official records, but their silent work proved that their commitment to their country and their compatriots was above anything¹⁶.

And last but not least, I must also mention the “FANY”, the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps. This service was established in 1907 by Captain Edward Baker who realized that it was vital to transport the wounded from the battlefield to the hospitals as fast as possible if they wanted to have any chance of surviving. The women in this group received training not only as nurses and orderlies, but they also learned how to drive a motor, which proved really useful when war broke out. Again, the War Office decided that women were not useful at the Western Front and were rejected. And again, they turned to France or Belgium where their service was welcomed. They ran some field hospitals, drove ambulances, operated a motor bath to provide baths for the soldiers, they disinfected their clothes, set up soup kitchens and troop canteens under dangerous conditions. By the end of the conflict among its members they were awarded 17 British Military Medals, 27 Croix de Guerre and one Legion d’Honneur¹⁷.

4. SOME FACTS ABOUT DOWNTON ABBEY

In this section of my dissertation I will give some guidelines about the series and a brief account of the most relevant facts concerning the topic of study recreated in the TV show Downton Abbey, subsequently referred to as DA. It is a British period drama written by Julian Fellowes. It was first released in 2010 and it is made up of six seasons with a total of 57 episodes. All of them were written by Fellowes himself. Unlike other period dramas it is not inspired in a work of literature, but was created specifically for television. It was an immediate success and has won many awards, including BAFTA’s, Emmys, Screen Actors Guild awards and Golden Globes. It even holds a Guinness World Record as the Most Critically Acclaimed Television Show. It has been shown in more than 90 countries and translated into several languages. Fellowes’ niece, Jessica,

¹⁶ The information about the women doctors above mentioned, was extracted from Leah Leneman’s book *Medical Women at Work, 1914-1918*. Pages 160-177. Downloaded from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1036842/ on the 24th March 2019.

¹⁷ Information retrieved from the official website of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Volunteer Corps. <https://www.fany.org.uk/history/wwi/overview> visited on the 22nd March 2019.

explains her theory about its success in her book *The Wit and Wisdom of Downton Abbey* (2015):

When the show first began, the whole world was more or less in the throes of the recession and it is a known truism that when we feel unsafe we look to the past for comfort – nostalgia is a powerful emotion and *Downton Abbey*, set at the cusp of the modern age and featuring characters that could have been our grandparents or great-grandparents, delivers nostalgia in spades. It is beautiful to look at, features gorgeous stately homes, good-looking actors and covetable costumes [...] [...] My uncle believes it is such a successful show because the audience enjoys watching fundamentally decent people trying to go about their lives, as opposed to the usual television set piece of “cops and robbers” [...] Whatever its magic ingredient, there is no denying that *Downton* has a special something that appeals to everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from (16-17).

Fellowes was inspired in a time when aristocracy and splendour were dominant among the upper classes in British society which was the Victorian era. However, at the turn of the century, when the Edwardian era began, society had to face a world of change and anxiety mixed up with nostalgia. The series narrates the story of an aristocratic family and their lives at Downton, their stately home, which is located in Yorkshire. Parallel to the Grantham family we are also told about the lives and worries of the servants who work for them. Much as in real life, the stories going on “upstairs” were normally a subject of debate “downstairs” and vice versa, even though to keep away from gossip was seen as a virtue it was not very common among servants.

A historical period drama is defined in the Collins dictionary as “a drama set in a particular historical period”¹⁸. In DA the story covers the Edwardian era. It begins in 1912 with a historical fact: the sinking of the Titanic and ends in the mid-20s in the aftermath of the First World War.

As I mentioned before, a possible cause for its success could be the reasonably accurate depiction of the fabulous world of British country houses, the dramatic and intricate plots, the fascinating costumes and all the elements introduced in order to create a realistic picture of life in the past. It is also important to mention that the location was vital to create a proper Edwardian atmosphere and

¹⁸ “Period drama” <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>. Collins Dictionary, 2019. Mon. 14th January 2019.

therefore, Fellowes chose Highclere Castle (a real country house from the late 18th century with a Georgian style, situated 60 miles from London) to film the scenes that recreated Lord Grantham's family lives. However, those parts of the plot that involved the service "headquarters" were filmed at the London Ealing studios. The combination of all these ingredients turns this series into a unique television masterpiece.

Another key to success was the cast of actors which were meticulously chosen. I must mention in particular the superb role Dame Maggie Smith plays as Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham which later on I shall deal with. The different accents needed to play the various characters were considered. For example, servants in the lowest positions would have a Yorkshire accent while other staff like Tom Branson, the chauffeur should have an Irish one, due to his origin and Mrs. Hughes, the housekeeper who was meant to come from Scotland had, therefore, a Scottish accent. However, the characters who represented the upper-class would use a clipped accent which produces an excessive and snob intonation. At the same time, vocabulary or expressions were also taken into account when writing the scripts for the various characters. There are many words that servants would use but their masters would not. For example: toilet and lavatory or napkin and serviette.

5. MAIN CHARACTERS

In this section I will give an account of some of the main characters that appear in the series. I shall divide the overview in two: first the family and then the staff. At the end of this paper there are two pictures which show the cast of actors and the different roles they played.

5.1. THE FAMILY

Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham, brilliantly performed by Dame Maggie Smith. She is the oldest member of the family, a matriarch, accustomed to express her views and not being contradicted. She plays the role of Lord Grantham's mother. She is the embodiment of tradition and Englishness and truly believes in the class system. A real Lady of the Victorian Era with a

sarcastic, sharp tongue and witty irony with touches of black humour (episode 8, season 2: “Wasn’t there a masked ball in Paris when cholera broke out? Half the guests were dead before they left the ballroom”). She dislikes progress and anything that has to do with it (episode 7, season 1: “First electricity, now telephones. Sometimes I feel as if I were living in a H.G. Wells novel”). She loves her family and believes that they must stick together through thick and thin that’s why she has no qualms about doing whatever it is necessary in order to keep her family’s good name safe from rumours. She is particularly involved in everything concerning Mary, her eldest grand-daughter, including all her affairs that have to do with her possible marriage and she doesn’t hesitate to use her influence to her advantage. As she states in episode 1, season 3: “family must never be a topic of conversation”. As a member of the aristocracy she is entitled to be patroness of charity institutions and she is also the president of the hospital at Downton, but in the last season she will have a strong argument with Lady Grantham and Isobel Crawley about it because she thinks it must stay as a county hospital while they think that patients will get better and more modern treatments if it was to be taken over by the British Government in Yorkshire.

Robert Crawley, Earl of Grantham, played by Hugh Bonneville. He is the Lord of DA. When he was young he served in the British Army during the Boer War where he was comrade-in-arms of Mr. Bates, who will be his valet in the series. He is married to Cora and they have three daughters. The fact that they don’t have any sons is a major part of the plot because the future of the estate is linked to the man who would inherit it, depriving his daughters of almost everything and leaving for them only an allowance. To avoid this, Lady Mary’s marriage was arranged with Robert’s cousin’s son, Patrick (who would inherit Downton), but his death in the Titanic wreck turned his distant cousin Matthew Crawley into the future heir. Lord Grantham is a traditional man who believes in the established system and he is stuck in the Victorian era. His role is quite paternalistic and he cares for his family as well as for his loyal servants. He is reluctant to accept the changes that the war has brought, especially in everything that concerns the management of Downton and the reforms that Parliament wants to implement. In season 3 he states: “sometimes I feel like a creature in the wilds, whose natural habitat is gradually being destroyed”.

Lady Cora, Countess of Grantham, played by Elizabeth McGovern. She is the daughter of an American multimillionaire who travelled to England when she was just 20. At that time, it was very common for English nobility to marry rich American women in order to maintain their wealth; in exchange the woman would get a title and become part of the nobility. In most cases it was a marriage of convenience as is the case here. However, in some episodes we learn that as time went by, they have fell in love and feel happy together, although there are moments when things are not easy for any of them and their relationship will suffer a tremendous setback. For example, in season 3 Sybil, the youngest daughter, dies during childbirth. Lord Grantham had hired a very famous doctor among the nobility (Sir Phillip Tapsell) and Cora thinks that the family doctor (Dr Clarkson) is better because he knows Sybil. Finally, both attend the delivery but they do not agree in the procedure when Sybil develops symptoms of pre-eclampsia. Dr Clarkson thinks that it would be safer if Sybil was taken to the hospital in order to perform a caesarean section while Sir Phillip finds it too dangerous and an unnecessary risk. In the end she stays at home and as a result she doesn't survive childbirth. Cora will blame her husband and the wounds will take a while to heal. In season 3, episode 6 Robert says: "You listened to Clarkson and so should I have done, but Tapsell has a reputation as an expert". Cora's devastating answer shows not only her grief and her anger but also her different background and beliefs: "and you believed him, when Dr Clarkson knew Sybil's history and he did not. You believed Tapsell because he is knighted and fashionable and has a practice in Harley Street. You let all that nonsense weigh against saving our daughter's life which is what I find so very hard to forgive". When she married Robert, her fortune was incorporated to the estate. In order to keep their lands and their wealth and as an "emergency measure" she will try to persuade Mary to marry Matthew. In some scenes of the series she is criticised because of her American attitudes or points of view and sometimes she is at odds with her husband and with her mother-in-law. For example, in season 1, episode 2, when she is talking to Mary about the possibility of marrying Matthew, Mary who is horrified at the prospect, says: "Marry a man who can barely hold his knife like a gentleman? and Cora answers: "you exaggerate" to which Mary responds: "You're American, you don't understand these things". She is more open-minded in some aspects and her daughters usually tell her their secrets. While Downton

is being used as a convalescent home during the war she proves herself a very valuable person but she also has problems with Isobel, Matthew's mother, because they don't agree in many aspects and it seems as Isobel forgets who the Lady of the house is.

Lady Mary Josephine Crawley, played by Michelle Dockery. She is the eldest daughter and one of the main characters throughout the series. She doesn't get on well with her sister Edith who seems to envy her, while Mary is rather mean and takes every opportunity to ridicule Edith. Only after their sister's death their relationship will improve a little bit. As the eldest daughter, she is expected to marry a man of her position and throughout the series we will see quite a few suitors. However, in the first season (episode 3) we are witness of a story that will haunt her all her life: A Turkish diplomat who is going to take part in the Albanian Talks (a true fact related to the creation of an independent Albania) comes to Downton when Cora invites a friend (a possible suitor for Mary) to a hunting trip with the family and at night he goes into Lady Mary's room and there he has a heart attack and dies. She has to tell her mother and her maid and carry the corpse back to his room. Obviously, such an affair must not come to light, but to keep it secret won't be easy at all. In those days there were too many people in the house willing to wash the Grantham's dirty linen in public and it would have been a terrible scandal for the prestige of the family and in particular for Mary. When she takes her mother to her room and shows the dead body she refuses to help, but then Mary says: "If you don't, we will figure in a scandal of such magnitude it would never be forgotten until long after we are both dead" And she adds: "I'll be ruined and notorious, a laughingstock, a social pariah. Is that what you want for your eldest daughter? Is it what you want for the family?". Moving on to other issues, Mary is the prototype of a Lady who belongs to the aristocracy in her manners and in her attitude to life. However, when the war is over the new circumstances will force her to take an active role in the administration of the estate and she will have to contend with her father because their points of view are quite different. The fact that a woman of her class would be engaged in "men's issues" is surprising and not very realistic even if the years of war had brought about many changes in women's lives.

Lady Edith Patricia Crawley, played by Laura Carmichael. She is the second daughter of the family. She is always overshadowed by her sister Mary and on a

few occasions, she tries to harm her interests. During the war she finds herself helpful providing the wounded soldiers at Downton with books from the family's library, reading and writing letters for them and other chores. She also learns how to drive a car which will prove very useful in war times and she will even help driving a tractor in order to help in one of the tenants' farms. At that time, it was possible for women of the higher classes to drive although not very common. When the war is over she feels her life is empty with nothing to do. In episode 4 of the third season while she is having breakfast with her brother-in-law and her father, the latter reads in the paper a piece of news about the ratification of the 19th Amendment which will give the vote to all American women in 1920; her father thinks that in England it is almost so, but she disagrees and says: "I'm not over 30 and I'm not a householder so I don't have the right to vote". She follows her brother-in-law's suggestion and writes a letter to the newspaper The Times to express her views. Much to her surprise and to everybody else's it is published. This takes place in the same episode mentioned before, when at breakfast her father reads in the paper: "Earl's daughter speaks out for women's rights. In a letter to this newspaper today, Lady Edith Crawley, daughter of the Earl of Grantham, condemns the limitations of the women's suffrage Bill and denounces the Government's aims to return women to their pre-war existence". Her father who is a conservative man is angry about it, but she is delighted to have found something where she can prove helpful. She is offered to write a regular column in "The Sketch", a weekly journal focused on high society and aristocracy. Turning to a different subject, she is not very lucky in issues related to love. She is engaged to a man much older than her and, on their wedding day, she is jilted at the altar. Sometime after that, she will have a relationship with her employer, a man who owns a magazine in London. Unfortunately, he goes to Germany and disappears leaving his business to Edith who is now pregnant and to avoid a scandal she will spend her months of pregnancy in Switzerland with her aunt Rosamund and she will have to put her baby up for adoption. Later on, she will regret that decision and will fight to get her child back, which obviously will complicate her life enormously because she cannot say that the girl is her daughter.

Lady Sybil Cora Crawley, played by Jessica Brown-Findlay. She is the youngest daughter of the family and the most rebellious. She is in favour of women's

opportunities and in the first season she goes to a political meeting and then to the counting of the votes of a by-election where she will be caught in a riot. Later in the same season, when she learns that Gwen, one of the maids, wants to become a secretary she will help her. She gets her a job interview and will lend her some clothes; she even offers Gwen to name her as a reference. Moreover, when she is dining with the family she speaks up for her: "We should be helping Gwen if that's what she wants". Only Isobel, Matthew's mother, is of the same opinion: "I agree; surely we must encourage those less fortunate to improve their lot where they can" (episode 3). Needless to say, the rest of the family disagrees and can't understand that working in an office can be seen as a better job than serving in a house like Downton.

During the war period she feels very distressed because so many men are being killed and she can't do anything. Then Isobel will encourage her to learn some skills so later on she can work as a nurse. Then she decides to ask Mrs. Patmore, the cook, to teach her some basic tips that can be useful in the near future. When the butler finds out he tells Lady Grantham, but much to his surprise she is delighted to see her youngest daughter getting ready to lead her own life. She will go to York to train as a nurse and then work at the hospital in town with the Voluntary Aid Detachment (known as VAD) and also help with the convalescent officers at Downton. In that way she can fulfil her willingness to contribute in such a terrible moment of their lives. At the same time, she falls in love with Tom Branson, the chauffeur, and tries to elope with him, but her sisters manage to convince her to do things the proper way and take her back home. Then she tells her family that she will go to Ireland and marry him there, causing a shock, especially to her father who will shout at her "I will not allow it. I won't allow my daughter to throw away her life". On her part, her grandmother, Violet, always looking at things in a practical way, will say to her: "Sybil, my dear, this sort of thing is all very well in novels, but in reality, it can prove very uncomfortable" (season 2, episode 8). The dialogue that will follow between Lord and Lady Grantham shows their different points of view, and how for him it would be unbearable to let her do such a thing for two main reasons: the scandal that will fall upon the family and also because his future son-in-law is an Irish man with revolutionary ideas and who wants to fight for Ireland's freedom. Cora seems much more reasonable; perhaps her origin makes her think about her own

marriage and how war has changed the perspective of many aspects of life, in particular for the aristocracy which could already foresee its future. I transcribe here the dialogue, as I find it quite significant:

- Lord Grantham: This is what comes of spoiling her. The mad clothes, the nursing. What were we thinking of?
- Cora: That's not fair. She's a wonderful nurse and she's worked very hard.
- L.G: But in the process she has forgotten who she is.
- C: Has she, Robert? Or have we overlooked who she really is?
- LG: If you're turning American on me, I'll go downstairs.

Matthew Crawley, played by Dan Stevens. He is the third cousin of Lord Grantham and he becomes the heir of Downton accidentally because the actual one drowns in the Titanic wreck. He is a lawyer who works in Manchester and belongs to the middle-upper class. When he learns that he will be inheriting everything he moves to York with his mother Isobel. At first, he feels like a fish out of water and doesn't seem comfortable with the new standards of living he has to put up with. For example, he thinks that he doesn't need a valet or a butler and asks Robert if it would be very ungrateful to dismiss him. Then Lord Grantham answers: "Is that quite fair to deprive a man of his livelihood when he's done nothing wrong? [...] We all have different parts to play, Matthew and we must all be allowed to play them" (season 1, episode 2). As time goes by he adjusts and starts to learn aristocratic manners and finds his position in the family. He will have disagreements with Lord Grantham due to their different views on how to run the property. Matthew finds it necessary to implement changes if they want to save Downton from ruin, particularly after the war. Despite the Lord's reticence about these changes he will carry on his new projects and, eventually, will save the estate. He has a strange relationship with Lady Mary because it's obvious that she feels he is not good enough for her, although he will become attracted to her. As the series develops their feelings towards each other undergo a lot of changes and third parts are also involved. In the end, and after quite a few setbacks in their relationship, they will get married and have a son. Unfortunately, Matthew will have a car crash and die on the same day as his son is born.

Mrs. Isobel Crawley, played by Penelope Wilton. She is Matthew's mother. She is a widow. Her late husband was a doctor and she studied nursing during the South African war. Although she doesn't belong to the nobility, she doesn't want the Granthams to think they are not worthy or second-rate and will do a huge effort to appear like them, but only in their manners, because she has her own ideas about the world and on many occasions she criticizes their attitudes towards other people, in particular those from "lower classes". She will be involved in the hospital's work and soon after her arrival she will be appointed the first "chairwoman" of the hospital Board much to the Dowager Countess' annoyance. Violet considers Isobel as an inferior and treats her with irony and certain degree of condescendence. Their views of the world are diametrically opposed, and they rarely agree on anything. However, as the series develops they will forge a sort of friendship and will understand each other far better than at the beginning. In particular when Isobel has a marriage proposal and Violet recognizes that she has grown used to her company and will miss her if she accepts it.

When the war starts Isobel will also clash with Cora due to the running of the convalescent home. She believes that she can do a better job, due to her experience as a nurse and interferes in everything; as she realizes that her work is not welcomed she decides to go to France with the British Red Cross to help in the "Wounded and Missing Inquiry Bureau". But when the war is over Cora and Violet will bring her round to be in charge of attending the refugees that come back from the front and other people who may be in need (this is just a manoeuvre so that Downton can become their home again). In particular, she will help Ethel (a former housemaid at Downton that was dismissed for having an affair with one of the officers who was recovering there during the war). As a result, she has a son and in order to survive she has no compunction in doing whatever she has to do so she ended up in prostitution. Isobel helps her rebuild her life by offering a position in her own house, even if this leads to problems. In episode 6 of the third season she invites Lady Grantham and her daughters to have lunch at her house. When Lord Grantham finds out that Ethel is cooking for them he is outraged and confronts Isobel, who says: "I don't think you understand the difficulties she's had to face", and he answers: "I couldn't care less how she earns a living. Good luck to her. What I care about is that you have exposed my family

to scandal". This example clearly shows that Lord Grantham is still a very class-conscious man, even after a war, and his prejudices and his fear of scandal are much more important than what is right or wrong.

5.2. THE SERVANTS

Mr. Carson, played by Jim Carter. He is the butler of Downton. He has been there almost all his life and is very attached to Lady Mary who is his favourite. He takes his job really seriously and is committed to perform it in the best possible way. He is very strict with all the staff and doesn't tolerate nonsense from anybody. He doesn't like changes or progress. He fears that Downton and everything that surrounds it will vanish with the war and its aftermath, that's why he tries to keep the standards of the house and service in spite of the conflict. He will hardly manage to keep things as they were. In the end he realizes that the world he knew before 1914 will never come back and he will try to adjust.

Mrs. Elsie Hughes, played by Phyllis Logan. She is the housekeeper and is in charge of all the maids in the house. She is quite severe, but at the same time she has a good heart and tries to help when needed. She is friends with Mrs. Patmore, the cook whom she shares worries and secrets. She feels sorry for Ethel and will try to help her with the baby without judging her. She has her feet firmly on the ground and is certain that the war will change the world as she knew it.

Tom Branson, played by Allen Leech. He is the chauffeur at Downton. He is Irish and is interested in politics because he believes in Ireland as a free state. His role in the series is relevant because he falls in love with Lady Sybil, the second daughter. At first, she doesn't love him back, but as time passes Sybil decides that she wants to be with him at any cost. He will be rejected by everyone, but little by little the family will be more tolerant, and in the third season, after Sybil's death, he will help Matthew running the estate and become the administrator.

Miss Gwen Harding, played by Rose Leslie. She works as one of the housemaids at Downton. However, she doesn't want to be a maid all her life and she has taken a postal course in shorthand in order to become a secretary. Then, she realizes that it will be very hard for her to achieve her dreams and she confesses to Anna, another maid, that "I was born with nothing and I'll die with

nothing” (season 1, episode 3). However, she will get Sybil’s help and eventually will get a job in the telephone company. Later on, in the last season she will come back to Downton as the wife of a man called John Harding who is a trustee at Hillcroft, a women’s college for middle-class women who want to be something more than servants. She has been invited to lunch because Lord Grantham’s sister is interested in the college and wants Edith to become a trustee also. At first, they don’t recognize her, but when she says that she was a housemaid there before the war, they are all very surprised of her improvement. The conversation that takes place is worth stating it here as it illustrates how views had changed over the years for everybody, even for the lowest classes:

- Lady Rosamund: we have to find ladders to help women achieve their potential.
- Isobel: I do agree.
- Gwen: We can’t afford to waste working women by not educating them. [...]
- Isobel: It seems marvellous to me. You leave service, go into government. Now you are married to a prominent man. A 20th century story.

This situation depicted was not very common, but it shows that improvements could be achieved for women.

Daisy Mason, played by Sophie McShera. She is a scullery maid in the kitchen and takes orders directly from Mrs. Patmore, the cook. She treats her in a very rough manner and thinks that she cannot do anything right, but at heart she is fond of her. Daisy is quite nonconformist and is always complaining about her miserable life and wants to be promoted to kitchen assistant. As the series develops, she will gain Mrs. Patmore trust, but not without effort and will finally get her promotion. She will also be involved in a sort of relationship with one of the footmen, William. At the beginning of the war he is not recruited (during a fund-raising event that is held at Downton female activists will give him a white feather, a symbol of cowardice to humiliate those men that were not in uniform), but later on he will serve at the battle front. Daisy feels sorry for him and tells him that she can be his fiancée. Unfortunately, he is seriously wounded and he returns home to die. On his deathbed William will ask Daisy to marry him so she can become a “war widow” with all the privileges that it brings along. She is quite reluctant because she thinks it will be a lie, but in the end Mrs. Patmore and Mrs.

Hughes persuade her that it won't do any harm if she gets married, which she finally does. This will cause her great remorse and unhappiness, especially because her father-in-law is very kind to her and wants to make her heiress of his farm. In light of her possible future, she decides to study accounting and other subjects in order to be able to run the farm when the time comes, but she will encounter many difficulties. Even Lord Grantham doubts if it will do her any good. In episode 4 of the fifth season she will say to him: "I must say this my Lord. Miss Bunting (her teacher) has opened my eyes to a world of knowledge I knew nothing of. Maybe I'll stay a cook all my life, but I have choices now, interests, facts at my fingertips. And I've never had any of that if she hadn't come here to teach me".

Education is a recurring theme among the staff, as it is seen by some of them as the only way to improve their lives. When Daisy is thinking about giving up her studies, Mr. Mason, her father-in-law, tells her: "Education is power. There's no limit to what you can achieve if you'll just give a year or two to mastering those books" (season 5, episode 7).

At the same time as Daisy starts to study, she will also become interested in reading the newspapers and she is informed about the world around her and she is very disappointed with politics. She was expecting that the Labour Party would change things for people like her. She says to Mrs. Patmore: "Don't you read the papers? Mr. MacDonald (the Prime Minister in 1924) seems to limp from crisis to crisis. They were going to do so much when they first came in, the first Labour Government, and now I doubt if they will last the year. We're trapped, held fast in a system that gives us no value and no freedom".

6. THE PLOT

As I mentioned before, DA starts with the news of the sinking of the Titanic. This fact is relevant to the plot because Patrick Crawley, heir of the Downton estate was in the ship and is presumed dead. Lord Grantham has three daughters, but no sons and due to an entailment established when he married, they could not inherit neither the property nor the title. Thus, the importance of Patrick's death. Lord Grantham finds out that the new heir is Matthew Crawley, a distant cousin of his. He is a recognised lawyer who lives and works in Manchester. He doesn't

belong to the nobility, but to the middle-upper class and at first, he will be regarded as inferior and not a worthy heir. In spite of that fact, Lord Grantham and his wife Cora will try to persuade Lady Mary, their oldest daughter, to marry him in order to keep the family's heritage.

Matthew and his mother (Isobel) move from Manchester to Yorkshire to live near Downton and start getting familiarised with the estate and his duties as the future owner. At the same time, we are introduced to the different characters that have some relevance for the plot, not only in the family, but also the members of the staff who live downstairs so we can discover their concerns and obligations.

The story moves on until the beginning of the war which is announced by Lord Grantham in the last episode of the first season. Some of the most relevant true facts or people mentioned in this first series are: Sir Lloyd George, Emily W. Davidson a feminist activist who was killed because she stood in front of the King's horse during the Derby Day in 1913, the vote for women, and the writer John Ruskin or the philosophers Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill who supported the suffragists.

The second one starts in the battlefield (1916). During the war Downton will be used as a convalescent home for military officers who had been wounded in the battlefield. At first, both Lord Grantham and his wife will oppose the idea of having their home full of strangers, but the pressure from Isobel (whose late husband had been a doctor and she herself is a nurse), Sybil, the youngest daughter (who has been training to become a nurse) and also from Dr. Clarkson, (the family doctor, who runs the Hospital in the county) will eventually, make them change their minds.

This was not unusual at the time and many country houses were used as Auxiliary War Hospitals by the Red Cross or by the Royal Army Medical Corps. In fact, Fellowes knew the fact that Highclere Castle had been used as a hospital in wartime and decided to add it to the plot. Lady Almina was married to the 5th Earl of Carnarvon and was living at Highclere when the war broke out. She was decided to "do her bit" and with the help of her father's money (Alfred Rothschild, a really wealthy and generous man) she turned the castle into a hospital which she ran smoothly. As I said, Lady Almina spent part of her fortune in the hospital. However, in several episodes of DA we learn that the War Office is funding the

running of the convalescent home so that the officers can have the food and treatment necessary for their recovery.

In the second season we will also be introduced to the love story of Lady Sybil and Tom Branson, the chauffeur. He is from Ireland and is quite involved with politics and the Irish Liberation Movement. He is a revolutionary and he shares his ideas with Lady Sybil, who at first is confused and not prepared to leave her life behind. However, the years of war and her work as a nurse have changed her and the feeling of having a purpose in life has made her strong enough to face her parents and tell them she wants to marry Tom. Needless to say, the news falls like a bomb and Lord Grantham threatens with disowning her. Despite this, she decides to go to Ireland and marry Tom.

The second series finishes at the beginning of 1920 with the servants' ball. An event where all the staff and some local people took part in. The family danced with the service and there were also food and drinks. This kind of celebration was common at the time, as we read in Evans' book "Life below stairs": servants' balls were sometimes held when "the master of the house was away" and he also says that there were aristocratic families who "attended themselves", and although it was quite a peculiar event, "the good intentions of the family were usually evident and appreciated".

Many real people who took part in the conflict or historical events that happened during the war are mentioned in several episodes: the Marconi scandal, the Royal Army Medical Corps, the British Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau, the Russian Revolution with Kerensky and Lenin, General Haig, Winston Churchill, Marshal Kitchener, Lieutenant General Sir Herbert Strutt, the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, the White Feather Movement, the Education Act of 1918, the Spanish Influenza epidemic and the battles of the Somme, Amiens or Gallipoli just to mention some.

The third season takes us from 1920 to the end of 1921. The future of Downton will be in danger due to a bad investment the Earl did in The Canadian Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad almost leading to bankruptcy which will cast a shadow over Lady Mary and Matthew's wedding. Fortunately, Matthew will receive a large sum of money as an inheritance which he will invest in the estate becoming co-owner with Lord Grantham. In the same season we will also be witness of two sad stories: Edith's frustrated marriage and the death of Sybil at childbirth. In the

same season the family will travel to Scotland to spend a few days with some relatives (Robert's cousin, Susan and her family).

Some historical events or people that are mentioned throughout this season are: The Black and Tans, a temporary force of constables that assisted the Royal Irish Constabulary during the Irish War of Independence that took place between 1919-1921; Mr. Edward Shortt, Home Secretary in 1919; Maud Gonne, an Irish revolutionary who activated for Home Rule; Lady Augusta Gregory, Irish dramatist known for her support to the Irish Literary Revival; Charles Ponti, an Italian swindler who promised high benefits to investors or *Chu Chin Chow*, a musical comedy produced in 1916.

The fourth season covers from February 1922 to the summer of 1923. After a few months of Matthew's death Mary starts to take in what her new life will be like, but is very hard for her to accept that now she is on her own. Fortunately, with the help of Tom she will become interested in the running of Downton. In this season we are also presented Miss Bunting, a school teacher that Tom meets by chance at a political rally they attend. They become friends, but she is against the nobility and the upper classes which will bring some troubles.

Another storyline in this season is the presentation in society of Rose, the Earl's niece which takes place at Buckingham Palace. Cora's American mother and brother are also attending to the event and we are shown the different stereotypes for American as well as for British people: Martha (Cora's mother) says that English people think she is "loud, opinionated and common" and she thinks they are "narrow, pompous and boring".

Some of the real events and people mentioned in this season are: Mr. John Ward, a Liberal Party whip, Lloyd George and his split with Mr. Asquith, Freda Dudley Ward, the Prince of Wales' mistress and the Teapot Dome Scandal.

The fifth season covers from February to December 1924. It continues some of the stories that started in the fourth season: Tom's relationship with Miss Bunting; Lady Mary's suitors; Daisy's struggles with her studies and how she improves thanks to Miss Bunting's lessons, and the story of Edith's protégée who is in fact her daughter and which will be the cause of a few troubles for her.

In this season quite a few historical events or real people are mentioned: the first speech given by a British monarch on the radio (King George the 5th at the opening of the British Empire Exhibition on the 23rd April 1924); the Russian

refugees that came to England escaping from the Revolution as well as the wedding of Prince Alfred (Queen Victoria's son) and the Grand Duchess Maria in St. Petersburg in 1874; Marie Stopes and her controversial book about sex titled "Married Love"; Rosa Luxemburg, a German communist who was shot and thrown in the Canal; Douglas Fairbanks, the famous American actor of silent films; British novelist Elinor Glyn, known by her romantic fiction which was quite scandalous for the time; Piero Della Francesca, an Italian artist of the Early Renaissance, well known by his frescoes.

The last season will take us from early 1925 to the beginning of 1926. Lady Mary will finally get married again to one of her suitors. At the same time her sister Edith has become a successful business woman running her magazine. She will also be getting married, although she will first have to confess to her future husband that she has a daughter. The story of Daisy's education comes to an end when she manages to pass all her exams and decides to be in charge of her father-in-law's farm.

Some of the most relevant true facts mentioned in this season are: The *Dreadnought hoax*, a prank played by Horace de Vere Cole and some of his friends (among which was Virginia Woolf, the writer) who pretended to be an Abyssinian delegation visiting the warship; Mr. Neville Chamberlain as Minister of Health; Florence Nightingale, a British woman, considered the founder of modern nursing; Clara Bow, an American actress; the Gettysburg Address, a speech given by President Lincoln during the American Civil War, and novels like "The Prisoner of Zenda", "Vanity Fair" or "The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby".

CONCLUSIONS

The first part of this research paper is dedicated to the social and political context in which the series *Downton Abbey* takes place. The first decades of the 20th century will certainly be remembered as years of change in all aspects of life (education, industrialization, government reforms, etc.) but unfortunately they will also be remembered by the vast bloodshed and devastation that the IWW brought along throughout the world and in particular in those countries where the

fighting occurred. The work of women during the conflict has been studied in order to highlight their position. Unfortunately, all the books and articles read lead to the same conclusion: women were clearly marginalized and considered inferior. They encountered many obstacles to go to the Front, or to work at home as surgeons or doing a “man’s job”. The reasons were often the same: either they were told that it was too dangerous or they were deemed unfit for the job. However, the length of the conflict made the need for people to cover the posts left by men, so urgent that the situation reversed. Propaganda spread in order to encourage women to “do their bit” for the country. Many women saw here the chance to leave domestic service, poorly paid, and work in factories, hospitals, farming, driving or other sort of occupations. Nevertheless, they worked long hours and got a very low wage, lower than men’s performing the same tasks. Another important aspect of the context is the political situation and all the reforms that started to take place before the war and in its aftermath, particularly in relation with the franchise for women. Unfortunately for them, for every step towards equality there were more setbacks which led to a very frustrating and strenuous situation.

In the following part I examine the work carried out by some women doctors and nurses during the years of conflict and the struggles they suffered in order to persuade the War Office of their capability. They were continuously rejected with the feeble excuse that the Front was too dangerous for them, as if it wasn’t also dangerous for men. Disappointed and enraged they offered their service to other countries where they were welcomed with open arms and were allowed to perform their duties without restrictions. They could do surgery, treat diseases, or simply provide care and listen to the exhausted soldiers. In some cases, they were even made prisoners and went through uncountable hardships without complaining and proud to be doing their part for the country. When the War Office finally realized that they were perfectly capable of doing an excellent job and offered them to work in hospitals, they also had to face the lack of rank which would have been very useful to exercise authority over men. In spite of this, there were very few cases of uncivilised behaviour and much more of sincere thanks and acknowledgement for the great job and care. In fact, many patients preferred

a women doctor because “they claimed that women surgeons were more gentle, never rough, and generally more tender and patient”¹⁹

Many of the women mentioned in this research who were doctors or nurses were also suffragists who, before the war, had been fighting for the enfranchisement and other rights that were denied to women. In some instances, their methods were too extreme and if the war had not started, it is clear that their fight would have intensified thereby provoking a tense environment possibly counterproductive for the cause. However, not all of them agreed in using violence; for example, Elsie Inglis, member of the “National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies” (NUWSS) called herself a “suffragist” not a “suffragette” and distanced from “The Women’s Social and Political Union” (WSPU) because she didn’t approve of their methods. In fact, the latter, directed by Mrs. Pankhurst was criticised by turning the WSPU away from reality and by becoming too demanding which in the end made the NUWSS grow in number of militants while the WSPU decreased and even split up when Sylvia Pankhurst (who was not very keen on her mother’s schemes) decided to create the “East London Women’s Suffrage Federation” to help improving the conditions of women of the working class²⁰.

The positive part of their work in times of war is that they proved themselves perfectly capable of performing any task required. However, demobilization also brought negative consequences for those women who had been earning their living for four years and who suddenly found themselves without employment and in a precarious situation, struggling to feed themselves and their families. The worst position was for those women who performed less-skilled jobs. They have fewer chances than doctors or nurses. Even though the latter were forced into inferior jobs in asylums, dispensaries or poor law hospitals. They could not hold posts at voluntary general hospitals (which was the normal way to be promoted) or high positions, let alone perform as surgeons like in war times. They could only work with children or women which was not what they desired.

This enforced idleness was exasperating and frustrating for many women. In DA these feelings are reflected in various characters: Lord Grantham’s daughters had been contented to be useful and have something to do during the war and

¹⁹ Dr. Wakefield’s words, recovered from *Medical Women at War 1914-1918* by Leah Leneman (page 174)

²⁰ Data retrieved from Arthur Marwick’s book *Women at War, 1914-1918*; (pp 24-26).

realized that to have no purpose in life was unsatisfying. Even though in their situation their work was just voluntary and they really didn't need it for life.

Another issue that DA deals with is the possibilities that the post-war era opened for those women (and men) who had access to education. First we see the case of Gwen, a maid who thanks to her studies and her hard work has improved her social status considerably. Then we see the story of Daisy who started as scullery maid and through education she has managed to open up her mind, have opinions and discover that the world can offer her other opportunities than just being a servant all her life.

In the next section of the paper, I presented some facts about the series and the possible reasons for its success. Then there is another part which shows the main characters that appear in the series divided in two: the family and the servants and I give a brief account of their personality, ideas and ambitions. The next part goes through the six seasons, explaining the most relevant stories in the plot and also some of the true events and the people mentioned. I think that it is very interesting to see how Julian Fellowes has managed to insert so many actual facts throughout the plot, perhaps to arouse the audience's curiosity to find out more about it, or simply to add to its credibility. Speaking for myself, I have felt rather curious and any time I came across a name that might ring a bell I searched to find out more about it, in particular to see if it really existed or not and what connections it had with the situation depicted.

To sum up, I would say that *Downton Abbey*, as any other work of fiction, gives the scriptwriter's approach to life and his own particular interpretation of society in the first decades of the 20th century and helps to understand the end of an era and, as Lord Grantham said, "the dawn of a new age".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbott, Edith. "The War and Women's Work in England." *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 25, no. 7, 1917, pp. 641–678. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1821772
- Adie, Kate. *Fighting on the Home Front: The Legacy of Women in World War I*. Hodder & Stoughton Limited. London 2013.
- Agopian, Kristina. "'Body-snatching by Great Ladies' British Auxiliary Hospitals in the First World War: 1914-1918." *Voces Novae*, Vol. 9 article 3. <https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/vocesnovae/vol9/iss1/3>
- Balfour, Lady Frances. *Doctor Elsie Inglis*. Classic Reprint Series. Forgotten Books 1760.
- Bandy, Mara. "Stories of Sacrifice, Courage, and Loss from World War I: Battle Scars." *Library Journal New York*, vol. 138, no.18, 2013, p 82. PROQUEST, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1444870039?accountid=14609>
- Beckett, Ian F. *The Home Front 1914-1918: How Britain survived the Great War*. The National Archives. London 2006.
- Braybon, Gail. *Women workers in the First World War*. Croom Helm Ltd. London 1981.
- Briggs, Asa. *A Social History of England*. Penguin Books. Third edition. London 1999.
- Byrne, Katherine. "Adapting Heritage: Class and Conservatism in Downton Abbey." *Rethinking History*, vol. 18, n° 3, Sept. 2014, pp 311-327. EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/13642529.2013.811811.
- Cohen, Susan. *Medical Services in the First World War*. Shire Publications 2014.
- Darrow, Margaret H. "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 1, 1996, pp 80-106. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2169224
- Davis, Belinda. "Experience, Identity and Memory: The Legacy of World War I." *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 75, no. 1, 2003, pp 111-131. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/377750

- Devoe, Bailey. "Medicine, the Body and the Mind." <https://www.rollins.edu/annie-russell-theatre/documents/upton/upton-abbey-research-medicine.pdf>
- Early, Frances H. "Feminism, Peace and Civil Liberties: Women's Role in the Origins of the World War I." *Women's Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2/3, Nov. 1990, p. 95. EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/00497878.1990.9978824.
- Errington, Jane. "The Journal of Military History." *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 64, no. 2, 2000, pp. 559–560. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/120283
- Evans, Sian. *Life below Stairs: in the Victorian and Edwardian Country House*. National Trust. London 2011.
- Fair, John D. "The Political Aspects of Women's Suffrage during the First World War." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal concerned with British Studies*, vol. 8 no. 3, pp. 274-295. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4048477
- Fara, Patricia. "Women, Science and Suffrage in World War I." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol.69, no. 1, 2015, pp. 11-24. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/26312890
- Fell, Allison S. "Remembering First World War Nursing: Other Fronts, Other Spaces." *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2018, pp. 269-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17526272.2018.1523779>
- Fellowes, Jessica. *The Wit and Wisdom of Downton Abbey*. Headline Publishers 2015.
- Fellowes, Jessica. *The World of Downton Abbey*. Collins. London 2011.
- Fountain, Nigel. *Voices from the Twentieth Century: Women at war*. Michael O'Mara Books Ltd. London 2002.
- Gregory, Adrian. *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War*. Cambridge University Press 2008.
- Grayzel, Susan A. *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*. University of North Carolina Press 1999.
- Greaves, Simon. *The Country House at War: life below stairs and above stairs during the war*. Pavilion books 2014.
- Hallet, Christine E. "The British VAD". *Nurse writers of the Great War*, Manchester University Press, 2016, pp. 187-210. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1b3h94f.18

- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. Penguin Group. London 1994.
- Howenstine, E. Jay. "Demobilization After the First World War." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1943, pp. 91–105. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1885757
- Kelly, C. Brian. *Best Little Stories from World War I: Nearly 100 True Stories*. Sourcebooks Inc. Illinois 2014.
- Kevers, Laetitia. "Re-establishing class privilege: The ideological Uses of Middle and Working-class female Characters in *Downton Abbey*." *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies*, 2017; 26 (1), pp 221-234. DOAJ, Directory of Open Access Journals, <https://doaj-org.ezproxy.uned.es/article/3858616b0a4b4583932b8cf6c78f72cf>
- Leneman, Leah. "Medical women in the First World War-ranking nowhere." *BMJ (Clinical Research ed.)*, vol. 307, 6919, 1993, pp. 1592-1594. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1697762/
- Leneman, Leah. "Medical women at war, 1914-1918" *Medical History*, vol. 38 (2), 1994, pp. 160-177. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1036842/
- Marwick, Arthur. *Women at War 1914-1918*. Fontana Paperbacks. Glasgow 1977.
- Marwick, Arthur. "The Impact of the First World War on British Society." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1968, pp. 51–63. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/259966
- Mason, Amanda. "12 Things you didn't know about women in the First World War." *Imperial War Museum*, 2018. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/12-things-you-didnt-know-about-women-in-the-first-world-war>
- Mattison, Jane. "Downton Abbey: A Cultural Phenomenon. History for the Many." [Sic] – *a Journal of Literature, Culture and Literary Translation*, n° 1.5, 2014. http://qq8yy6pb7j.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rft_id=info%3Aasid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Ajournal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Downton+Abbey%3A+a+Cultural+Phenomenon.+History+for+the+Many&rft.jtitle=%5Bsic%5D+--+a+journal+of+literature%2C+culture+and+literary+translation&rft.au=Mattison%2C+Jane&rft.date=2014-12-01&rft.issn=1847-7755&rft.eissn=1847-7755&rft.issue=1.5&rft_id=info:doi/10.15291%2Fsic%2F1.5.lc.4&rft.exter

- More, Ellen S. "A Certain Restless Ambition: Women Physicians and World War I." *American Quarterly*, vol.41, no. 4, 1989, pp. 636-660. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2713096
- Murray, Flora. *Women as Army Surgeons*. Hodder & Stoughton Limited. London. (Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2012 with funding from Open Knowledge Commons and Yale University, Cushing/Whitney Medical Library. <http://archive.org/details/womenasarmysurgeOomurr>)
- Newman, Vivien. *We also served: The Forgotten Women of the First World War*. Pen and Sword Books Ltd. 2014.
- Of Carnarvon, Countess. *Lady Almina and the real Downton Abbey: The Lost Legacy of Highclere Castle*. Hodder & Stoughton Limited. London 2011.
- Paxman, Jeremy. *Great Britain's Great War*. Penguin Books. London 2014.
- Redmond, Jennifer. "Journal of British Studies." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2009, pp. 1037–1039. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27752676.
- Robert, Krisztina. "Constructions of "Home", "Front", and Women's Military Employment in First World War Britain: A Spatial Interpretation." *History and Theory*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2013, pp. 319–343. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24542989>
- Schneider, E. F. "The British red cross wounded and missing enquiry bureau: A case of truth-telling in the Great War". *War in History*, vol. 4, 1997, pp. 296-315. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.uned.es/10.1191/096834497670091368>
- Spiers, Edward M. "The British Centennial of the Commemoration of the First World War." *Comillas Journal of International Relations*, no. 2, 2015, pp 73-85. <http://revistas.upcomillas.es/index.php/internationalrelations/article/view/4985>
- Stevenson, David. *1914-1918: The History of the First World War*. Penguin Books. London 2005.
- Storey, Neil & Housego, Molly. *Women in the First World War*. Shire Publications. Oxford 2011.
- Stoddart, Scott F. *Exploring Downton Abbey: Critical Essays*. McFarland and Co. Inc. North Carolina 2018.

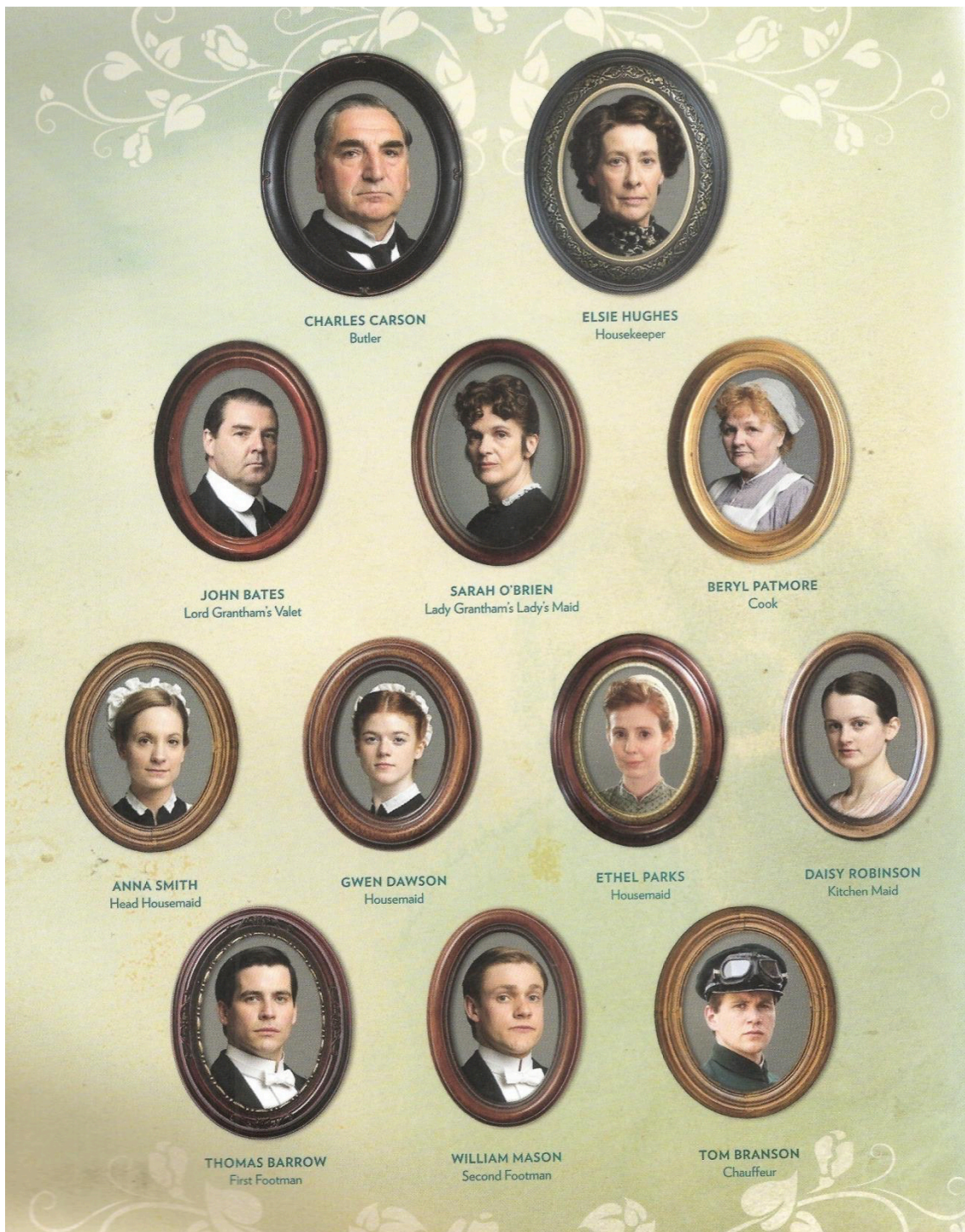
- Thomson, David. *England in the Twentieth Century*. Volume 9. Penguin Books. London 1979.
- Wald, Kenneth D. "Class and the Vote before the First World War." *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1978, pp. 441-457. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/193635
- Watson, Janet S. K. "Wars in the Wards: The Social Construction of Medical Work in First World War Britain." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2002, pp. 484-510. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/341439
- Yarrell, Zuleika. "Women in Medicine." *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, vol.17, no. 8, 1944, pp. 492-497. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2263110

Annex 1: The cast for the Grantham family.



Picture 1: Fellowes, Jessica. *The World of Downton Abbey*. Collins, London 2011. (Page 13)

Annex 2: The cast for the service.



Picture 2: Fellowes, Jessica. The World of Downton Abbey. Collins, London 2011. (Page 12)