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Climbing the Social Ladder

Social Class and Mobility in *Downton Abbey*

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ABSTRACT

Syftet med denna avhandling är att undersöka de rådande sociala förhållandena i de brittiska samhällsklasserna vid sekelskiftet 1900 samt den sociala rörligheten mellan de olika samhällsklasserna. Denna avhandling redogör för de sociala förhållandena genom en empirisk undersökning av det populära televisionsprogrammet *Downton Abbey*. Genom att studera ett antal nyckelpersoner i TV-serien kartläggs deras rörlighet under serien. Undersökningsobjekten är earlens mellersta dotter Edith Crawley, chauffören Tom Branson samt husan Ethel Parks.

Materialet för denna avhandling är det brittiska televisionsprogrammet *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015) av Julian Fellowes. Serien består av sex säsonger och följer den aristokratiska familjen Crawley samt deras tjänstefolk i början av 1900-talet på det fiktiva godset *Downton Abbey* i Yorkshire, England.

Social rörlighet innebär individers eller familjers förflyttning mellan sociala skikt i samhället och kan innebära vertikal rörlighet eller horisontell rörlighet. Vertikal rörlighet uppfattas som byte av samhällsklass och kan ytterligare delas i stigande eller fallande vertikal rörlighet. Horisontell rörlighet kan innebära t.ex. ett yrkesbyte inom den egna samhällsklassen och kan medföra en förändring i personens sociala status men inte i de sociala relationerna.

Edith Crawleys sociala rörlighet är ett resultat av vidgningen av klasserna efter första världskriget. Hon upplever både horisontell rörelse inom sin klass samt stigande social rörlighet. Tom Branson upplever stigande vertikal rörlighet då han gifter sig med earlens tredje dotter, Sybil Crawley. Ethel Parks är en före detta husa av *Downton Abbey* som är den mest tydliga exemplet på fallande social rörlighet.

KEYWORDS: social class, social mobility, *Downton Abbey*

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to explore social class and social mobility in the popular period drama *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015). Social class, especially the social class of the United Kingdom, has long been focus of study among scholars, and in recent years, there has been an increase of research done on class inequalities, spurred on by the Great British Class Survey (BBC, 2010). Although there has been research conducted on class and mobility, as well as some research on *Downton Abbey*, there is very little research on the two combined. The historical narrative sets an auspicious frame to view the representations of class and mobility in a period drama, such as *Downton Abbey*. “There is a natural emotional wish to believe that social mobility is improving. People like rags-to-riches stories, wanting to think everyone has a fair chance to rise by merit and effort – even when it’s patently not so.” (Toynbee 2014) Therefore, it is the interest of this thesis to see how 20th century social class is portrayed, and how social mobility manifests in the series. This thesis will examine social class and social mobility with the help of sociological theories in order to compare and analyse the representation of class structures and mobility in the series.

Downton Abbey (2010–2015) is a historical period drama set in England in the post-Edwardian era between 1912 and 1925. The series follows the lives of the aristocratic Crawley family and their domestic servants through historical events that influence the characters’ lives as well as the British social hierarchy. Social class is a very prominent feature throughout *Downton Abbey*, but the unravelling of the barriers between the classes is set in motion after the First World War in season 2. Other historical events depicted are the sinking of the Titanic, the Spanish Influenza, the Irish war of Independence, the British General Election of 1923 and the rise of the working class and the eventual weakening of the British aristocracy. Although *Downton Abbey* mentions these and many more global and political changes, it does not deeply analyse them, but focuses on the family. The coming of a new era emphasizes social mobility, and as Lady Sybil explains her more

simpler life with Tom Branson in Dublin: “[...] class and that just seems to fade away” (*Downton Abbey* Episode #3.1). The time after the First World War was a time of change for many of the larger country estates and their families, as they had to make decisions about the future.

Fellowes’ choice of the setting for *Downton Abbey* plays a crucial role in the success of the series, as the audiences around the world have found English country estates fascinating for a long time (Mattisson 2014: 7). This is evident in the success of films such as *Pride and Prejudice*, of which there are seven (7) versions created in 1938, 1940, 1980, 1995, 2003, 2005 and the latest in 2014; and *Gosford Park* (2001). Mattisson (2014: 2) quotes Andrew Higson’s argument that “the heritage of England and Englishness includes [...] luxurious country-house settings, and picturesque landscapes of England”. Even Lady Mary Crawley highlights the significance of the country estate in season three: “[...] the role of houses like Downton is to protect tradition – which is why they are so important to maintain.” (*Downton Abbey* #3.1). The setting of *Downton Abbey* not only provides the location for the action of the series, but also the motivation of the characters as they debate whether to maintain the estate or split the grounds for profit.

This thesis intends to view the mobility of three characters, focusing on the progress of vertical mobility, as they all show upward mobility in the end. Social mobility is the movement of individuals within the same social class, called horizontal mobility, or between social classes, called vertical mobility, which later divides into either upward or downward mobility. The characters are Edith Crawley, the aristocratic Earl’s daughter, the chauffeur Tom Branson, and as an example of temporary downward social mobility, the housemaid Ethel Parks. Edith Crawley is the Earl’s second daughter who does not mind doing things that are against her status as an aristocrat. Her movement is a result of the broadening of the classes after the First World War. She experiences horizontal movement within her class – as she experiments with manual labour more commonly performed by members of the upper or middle classes, without any repercussions to her social status – as

well as upward social mobility when she marries the 7th Marquess of Hexam. Tom Branson is an Irish socialist and chauffeur at Downton Abbey. His social status changes and he experiences upward social mobility as he marries the Earl's third daughter, Sybil Crawley, and he becomes the estate manager of Downton Abbey. Ethel Parks is a former housemaid of Downton Abbey who, due to poor decisions, moves down the social ladder and is the most prominent example of downward social mobility. Her predicament ends when she finds new employment, leading to upward social mobility. In the 1970s John Goldthorpe (1980) created a class scheme based on the occupational social status of the public (see Giddens 2009: 445). This scheme works as a comparison to the different social classes of the series to this thesis and contributes as a focal point to the analysis.

The popularity of the period drama has encouraged critical debates about the tradition of quality television in British television studies. Period drama represents culture, as its source material often lies in respected literary texts such as the works of Jane Austen, and quality, as it contains literate scripting and good acting. Period drama, however, distances itself from the present through emphasis on the nostalgia of the past. (Chapman 2014: 131.)

The fascination for costume dramas like *Downton Abbey* shows a longing for structure in the world, a sense of nostalgia and a glorification of the Golden Age. In an age of political and economic instability, like the present, *Downton Abbey* “provides a sanitised yet [...] ‘authentic’ portrait” of a similar period of time (Byrne 2014: 311). The way the world views the identity and heritage of England, as well as the whole notion of Englishness, is part of the popularity of series like *Downton Abbey* (Mattisson, 2014: 1). Katherine Byrne (2014: 326) continues to argue that the reason why *Downton Abbey* is so popular is Fellowes’ style of filming. His idea to create a period drama in a “soap-opera-style” has made it accessible to a wider range of people across different classes and not only the “literate middle classes who are the usual consumers of this type of programme”. Typical consumers of soap operas have usually been women, and those who watch a lot of television – the elderly, part-time workers or the unemployed (Lu & Argyle 1993: 505).

Chapter 2 discusses theories and history and Chapter 3 describes how class and mobility are evident throughout the series. The actual analysis of the characters' mobility is presented in Chapter 4.

1.1 Material

The primary material of this thesis consists of the entire production of the television series *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015), seasons 1–6. Season one is the only season with seven episodes, all other seasons feature nine episodes, altogether 52 episodes. The following six seasons, along with additional material, are divided into 26 discs, on 6 DVDs. Because the purpose of this thesis is to view the progress of the characters' social mobility, and as class is seen as a matter of breeding and social background (Scott 2006: 25), all episodes of the series will be examined. To be able to examine the social mobility of the three characters, this thesis will explain in Chapter 3 the overall representations of social class and mobility by providing examples from the series to work as background. These examples will be referred to with the number of the season and the episode of said season, for example, episode three of season two will be referred to as: (*Downton Abbey* #2.3).

1.2 Downton Abbey

Downton Abbey (2010–2015) is a television series created by Julian Fellowes, set in the fictional country estate of Downton Abbey in Yorkshire, England, during the reign of King George V. England was at this time in a state of political confusion after the death of King Edward VII and the succession of the politically inexperienced George V. The series follows the lives of the aristocratic Crawley family: the Earl and Lady of Grantham, Robert

and Cora Crawley, and their daughters Mary, Edith and Sybil as well as the 16 house servants.

Life on the estate functions with clocklike precision, as the butler Mr. Carson and the housekeeper Mrs. Hughes oversee the daily chores performed by the staff. Everyone has a role to play, from kitchen maid to valet, and should conduct themselves in accordance to the prestige of the house, and family, they serve. The pre- and post-war era introduces the house and its servants to innovations such as in-house electricity and the telephone, and requires perseverance from the staff, and especially Mr. Carson, who is the most conservative of the service staff.

The first three seasons of the series revolves around the appearances and conduct fitting the aristocracy, especially with financial matters such as matters of inheritance. As the law in Britain stipulates, only male heirs can inherit titles and estates, and as the Earl of Grantham and Lady Grantham do not have a son, the title and estate will go to the next male heir. Seasons 4–6 concentrate on the broadening of the classes, women's labour and social relationships.

In season 1, the focus of the narrative lies on the need to find a male heir to the estate and the troubled love life of Lady Mary as she tries to find a husband. The death of the heir presumptive Patrick, the fiancé of Lady Mary, turns the succession to Robert's distant cousin Matthew Crawley, a solicitor from Manchester, who moves to Downton together with his mother Isobel Crawley. Matthew's past as an upper middle class lawyer creates confrontations between the aristocratic family and his mother Isobel Crawley regarding the behavioural manners suited an heir presumptive.

Season 2 covers events of The First World War – the battle of the Somme and the Armistice – and the Spanish Influenza, as well as the appointment of David Lloyd George as Prime Minister. Matthew and the two footmen, Thomas and William, fight at the front

during the war and the ones left at home try to contribute in any way they can. Lady Sybil defies her aristocratic position and joins the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse, and Downton Abbey becomes a convalescent home for officers. After the war, Lady Sybil marries the working class chauffeur, Tom Branson and moves to Ireland. Lady Mary refuses to marry Matthew and he is engaged to Miss Lavinia Swire, until her death in the Spanish Influenza.

In season 3, Mary and Matthew marry and the estate faces bankruptcy due to poor investments by Lord Grantham. Matthew is able to save the estate but feels that the estate has been mismanaged for years and should be remodelled. Lady Sybil and Mr. Branson return to Downton Abbey and Sybil gives birth to a baby girl. Lady Sybil later dies of eclampsia and Mr. Branson stays at Downton as he is appointed the new agent of the estate. Lady Edith is to marry Sir Anthony Strallan but at the last minute, the wedding is cancelled. Later she begins to write a column in a newspaper and becomes romantically involved with the editor, Michael Gregson. Lady Mary gives birth to a son, and future heir of Downton Abbey, and as Matthew leaves the hospital, he dies in a car accident.

Season 4 begins as Lady Mary mourns the death of Matthew. Tom persuades her to take a more active role in the management of the estate, as Matthew had named her his sole heir. Lady Mary soon finds suitors in Lord Gillingham and Mr. Blake but she is unable to make any decisions at the time. Tom is attracted to the schoolteacher Ms. Bunting, a socialist like himself, who upsets Lord Grantham with her liberal political views. Mr. Gregson leaves Lady Edith and travels to Germany to be able to divorce his mentally unwell wife, an act forbidden in England. Lady Edith finds out that she is pregnant and travels to Switzerland with her aunt Lady Rosamund to have the baby there and give it up for adoption. She, however, cannot leave the child and goes to bring it back home to live with tenants to the estate, closer to herself.

Season 5 uncovers the election of a Labour government, an election that upsets the conservative Lord Grantham and butler Carson. Tom grows closer to Ms. Bunting as he finds her political views similar to his own. Ms. Bunting tutors Daisy, the kitchen maid, so that she can pass her final exams at school. Lady Edith becomes the patroness of the daughter, Marigold, whom she has left with the tenants of the estate. Later she aggravates the adoptive mother who does not know the circumstances of Lady Edith's involvement. News of Mr. Gregson's death arrive at Downton and Lady Edith mourns him deeply, and leaves with her daughter to London. Edith and Mary's second cousin Rose marries, although her parents' divorce complicates matters; and Lady Mary meets a new suitor, the middle class race car driver, Henry Talbot. Lord Grantham realises Marigold is his granddaughter and welcomes Lady Edith back to Downton Abbey. Tom leaves to America and takes his daughter Sybbie with him. Mrs. Crawley, Matthew's mother, becomes engaged to the Baron Merton but declines his proposal later.

Season 6, the last season of the series, shows the crumbling of the class structures of the past. Downton's former maid Gwen comes to visit as the wife of a gentleman and Thomas does not like to have to serve her at dinner. Mr. Molesley, a footman at Downton Abbey, passes a general knowledge test and becomes a teacher at the town school. Mrs. Crawley marries Baron Merton and becomes the Baroness Merton. Lady Mary becomes more involved with Mr. Talbot and later marries him, even though he is middle class. Tom returns from America, and states that he had to travel far to realise where he truly belongs. Mr. Talbot and Tom later start a business together, as car salesmen, and Mary reveals she is pregnant. Bertie Pelham, a land agent like Tom, proposes to Lady Edith. Edith has to reveal that Marigold is her illegitimate daughter, which causes distress as Mr. Pelham becomes the 7th Marquess of Hexam after the death of his cousin. Lord Hexam, nevertheless insists on the marriage to Lady Edith and they are married, which elevates her social status to Marchioness, a station above her father the Earl of Grantham.

2 SOCIAL CLASS AND MOBILITY

The English hierarchical image of society is derived from the Elizabethan notion of a great chain of being, and presupposes that each individual has an allotted place in the divinely pre-ordained order of things. Class society did not exist in its prominent way before the 18th Century, after the formation of Great Britain by the Union of the Crowns in 1707. Adam Smith, who divided British society into what he called the three great and constituent orders, formulated the triadic model of classes: those who lived on rents, those who lived by profits and those who earned wages in exchange for their labour. (Cannadine 1998a: 100–101) Subsequently, the British society has been guided by this three-stage model to this day, and continues to conduct research in the analysis of social class and social class inequalities.

In a more recent study, Mike Savage (2013) states that the class system in the UK is divided into two opposite classes – the prosperous elite and the poor working class – and that the intermediate class is shattering further due to differing amounts of cultural and social capital (see Bourdieu, P. (1986) *The Forms of Capital*). These class divisions are created by the interplay between economic and cultural capital, and are therefore a central feature to the organization of cultural taste and practice in the UK (LeRoux & Rouanet 2008: 1066). David Cannadine (1998b: 22) writes: “a Briton’s place in this class hierarchy is also determined by such considerations as ancestry, accent, education, deportment, mode of dress, patterns of recreation, type of housing and style of life”. Most class schemes developed, are based on occupational structure, on the social inequalities connected to employment, while others are more explanatory and tend to draw on the theories of Karl Marx and Max Weber (Giddens 2009: 443). The differences between occupations and an interest in the individuals that occupy them as well as the movement of these individuals from one occupation to another has encouraged research in social mobility.

2.1 History of Social Class in the UK in the 18th–20th Century

Social class can be traced back to the 18th century and the Enlightenment. Although agriculture was still important at that time, trade and industrialisation were increasing, providing people with employment. The foundation of the Bank of England in the late 17th century made it possible for people to come into fortune through the stock market and the growing areas of trade and industry. Wealth, however, was still unevenly distributed. Society, as Daniel Defoe claimed in 1709, was divided into seven categories:

1. The great, who live profusely
 2. The rich, who live plentifully
 3. The middle sort, who live well
 4. The working trades, who labour hard, but feel no want
 5. The country people, farmers etc. who fare indifferently
 6. The poor, who fare hard
 7. The miserable, that really pinch and suffer want
- (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991, 29: 65)

In 1759, economist Joseph Massie suggested that of the top 300 families that owned great estates many belonged to the peerage – that is they were Dukes, Earls or Barons; hereditary titles granted by the crown – and were entitled the right to sit in the House of Lords. He categorised the population into ‘gentlemen’ and ‘middling and inferior classes’ (Cannadine 1998b: 29). Massie estimates that 40 percent of the population belonged to the inferior classes that survived on an income of less than 14 percent of the nation’s income (New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991, 29: 69–70) and presented his findings in a table:

Table 1. Estimate of Social Structure in 1759 (New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991, 29: 69–70)

Annual income	Number of families	Social types
£ 5,000 +	310	Peers, great landowners
£ 1,000 +	1,000	Greater gentry
£ 600 +	3,400	Great merchants, squires
£ 100 +	104,900	Small landowners, clergy, traders, professionals
£ 50 +	160,000	Small traders, lesser clergy, farmers
Below £ 50	1,093,000	The rest

By the mid-18th century, the middle class experienced a considerable expansion and created new professional opportunities in law and medicine, among others.

Ideologies of the French Revolution in 1789 also reached England. The legal rights of the English population were spurred on by the slogan of the French Revolution: *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. Thomas Paine (1791: 32–33) explored the ideologies further in his work *The Rights of Man* in which he criticised the governments of corrupting mankind by (uncalled-for) punishment and turning the lower class into mobs. He proclaimed that “Government even at its best state is a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one” (Scott & Marshall 2009: 543). Even though he supported the French Revolution, he did not approve of the occasionally violent behaviour of the mobs, and thought that the governments should be the ones to change their methods of operation first.

The Victorian Era of 1837–1901 was a time of tranquillity in England and the focus lay on the family as the centre of society. Class analysis conducted by Erikson and Goldthorpe among others, and analysed by Susan McRae (1990: 121), reveals that the social position of women was in the family, that is, women maintained the household and raised the children.

Upper class women had staff who helped with the management of both the house and the children, which enabled them to attend parties and other social events. Lower class women (e.g. wives of farmers) tended the house and children as well as helped on the farm. The family was linked to the social structure via the occupational position of the family member with the most enduring or continuous participation in the labour market (1990: 119) until the Industrial Revolution. Anne Laurence (2002) writes “[t]he most obvious way in which a woman might aid her husband’s social aspirations was by being an heiress [...]”, women therefore were the ones who conveyed status through marriage and in doing so could advance a man’s standing and acceptance.

The relationship between the gentlemen and the self-made men rested on a balance of reliance and obedience. There are some ambiguities in the debate over who was or was not a gentleman. To the believers of the hierarchical model, he was upper class – a landowner with a coat of arms, chivalrous, generous and dutiful. To the believers of the three-tiered model, defining the gentleman was not as simple. Men with an education and a profession regarded themselves as gentlemen, and this was increasingly the case. However, those working in trade or business were not so sure; to be a gentleman required a comfortable income, so any member of the peerage or the landed gentry could call themselves a gentleman. David Cannadine (1998b: 33) writes, “Some wanted to claim they were genteel: ‘town gentry’ if not necessarily ‘country gentry’. But as Defoe had discovered [in 1709], this was not always accepted: the ‘born gentleman’ and the ‘bred gentleman’ were ‘two sorts or classes of men’ obviously different.” Discussions of class conflict gave way to the idea of social mobility and theories suggested that the lines dividing the classes should remain as long as there was a possibility of social mobility.

The beginning of the 20th century and the Edwardian Era, brought class conflict back to the surface. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George’s budget of 1909 aimed to raise money to fight poverty through a supertax on high incomes and land sales. The budget enraged the House of Lords, who were already on edge because of the Liberal party’s

legislations regarding the Parliament Act of 1911, that they rejected the proposed supertax and thereby turned “a political debate into a constitutional one” (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991: 87). The new Parliament Act enabled laws that had been rejected three times by the House of Lords to be passed solely by the House of Commons.

Not all conflicts in the early 20th century were tied to social class structures. The Irish pursuit for independence began with the Easter Rising in 1916, a rebellion that inspired the Irish War of Independence in 1919–1922. British forces suppressed the rebellion in six days, but the punishment and executions issued by the British quickly turned Irish sympathy toward the men. The Prime Minister at the time, Herbert Henry Asquith appealed to Lloyd George to arrange Home Rule, an act that Asquith had introduced earlier in 1912 and 1913 but that had been postponed because of the First World War, for both the south of Ireland and for the north of Ireland, Ulster. After prolonged negotiations and the power of the Parliament Act of 1911, all parties finally accepted Home Rule in 1921, long after Lloyd George had succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister.

The time before the First World War was a time of significant political changes. “The agricultural depression, combined with the reform of local government, the threat of Home Rule for Ireland, and the passing of the Parliament Act in 1911, undermined the aristocracy as the economic, social and political élite” (Cannadine 1998b: 107). The workers were becoming more discontent, and, as some of the union leaders were anxious to use political as well as economic power to secure their objectives, rallied to become more organized. The political power of the working class led to the rise of the Labour Party. The political rights of the working class were important in fostering the modern welfare state. The legal rights developed early in the form of capitalism, as the expansion of political power helped limit the power of the capitalist class, and thereby helped to consolidate recognised modes of collective bargaining in industry (Giddens 1986: 53).

Much like the workers that rallied to organize, so did the women. In the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, two active groups emerged fighting for women's suffrage: the suffragists and the suffragettes (UK Parliament). The Women's Social and Political Union, founded in 1903, supported the more radical methods of the militant suffragettes and were ready to encourage acts like bombings and arson that led to sharp police retaliation, harsh sentences and even martyrdom (New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991, 29: 87). In an episode of *Downton Abbey*, Lady Sybil attends a meeting before the by-election in May 1914 in which the women's right to vote is discussed. Upon departure, Sybil discusses the rights with the chauffeur, Branson:

Lady Sybil:	Women must get the vote, mustn't they Branson? Why does the Prime Minister resist the inevitable?
Tom Branson:	Politicians can't often recognize the changes that are inevitable.

(*Downton Abbey* #1.6)

The outbreak of the First World War postponed the possibility for the government to make any decisions concerning women's right to vote. In 1918, a law was passed that enabled women over the age of 30 who met minimum property qualifications to be able to vote, and later in 1928, all women over the age of 21 were allowed to vote.

The First World War thinned the lines between the classes and the need for factory workers provided the middle class an improved economic position. The worker's improved position, however, did not help increase the affection towards the upper classes but enabled them to, to some extent, be treated better than before the war, emphasizing that the old differentiating Britain was gone (29: 89). Winston Churchill, quoted in Cannadine 1998b: 127, recalled, "The pre-war era had seemed in retrospect so stable and so secure, but now it had vanished forever". This was a sense of nostalgia that many of Mr. Churchill's generation shared. Although the war had decimated the classes, all saw a new beginning for society after the war; ordinary people did not see society as hierarchical anymore and started to treat those who had previously stood above them on the scale as their equals. This

was not well received among the upper classes or gentry, or even among the aristocracy. Cannadine (1998b: 128) further states, “as a result, there was a weakening of class distinctions” and that the complaisance that had existed earlier disappeared. Between the wars, Britain was a society that had no privileges and was close to a classless society, closer than it had ever been, and the hierarchical setup was dissipating.

2.2 Social Class and Mobility in *Downton Abbey*

Downton Abbey is a series that is rich in portraying the class system of Britain in the 20th century, therefore, it is essential for this Thesis to present the different characterisations of class before proceeding to analyse the mobility of the characters. In all the material viewed, social conflict seems to reside mainly within the classes, rather than between classes. The conflict arises when members of lower social classes are included in the upper classes; if one is moved down the social ladder, it does not create any conflict but rather a state of confusion.

The relationship between the family and its servants is affectionate, “[t]he grand estate is inhabited by two social classes, masters and servants, who are portrayed, not without social controversy, as living in peaceful coexistence” (Baena & Byker 2015: 263–264). Lady Mary feels that it has been the butler, Mr. Carson, who has raised her, and the girls share much with the head housemaid, later lady’s maid, Anna. Even Lady Grantham seems to consider her lady’s maid O’Brien a friend. However, after receiving a scolding from Lady Grantham O’Brien tells the other maids:

We’re not friends – and you’re not friends with the girls neither.
We’re servants, you and me, and they pay us to do as we’re told.
That’s all.
(*Downton Abbey* #1.2).

O'Brien's outburst is strengthened by historical records that reveal that the real relationship between servant and master in fact were not as rosy as the series present them. Servants were often required to face the wall when a member of the family passed them (Lethbridge 2013: 251). Even though the divisions of social classes in the first seasons of *Downton Abbey* are so perceptible, the overall feel is that the family truly cares for their staff.

Besides differences between the classes, there are hierarchies inside the classes as well. The higher the position within the class the more honour bound and proud the servant becomes. Servants of the lower status are not to be seen by the family, and the housekeeper Mrs. Hughes tells the scullery maid Daisy to get back down to the kitchens before anyone sees her when she had finished her job to light the fires. In *Downton Abbey* the butler Mr. Carson and housekeeper Mrs. Hughes (i.e. the servants' equivalents of the Lord and Lady Grantham) maintain the order downstairs and make sure that the other servants know how to behave and how not to. Goldthorpe's (1980) and Schumpeter's (1955) theories, of how members of specific social classes conform to the identity of that class and become a tightly woven group that pursues common class interests and shares the same view of the world (see Chapter 2.4), are confirmed through the ways the butlers and housekeepers set rules to the other members of staff. The housekeeper Mrs. Hughes calls attention to this as she tells one of the housemaids, Edna: "There are rules to this way of life, Edna, and if you are not prepared to live by them then it is not the right life for you" (*Downton Abbey* #3.9).

2.3. What is Social Class?

Karl Marx and Max Weber are two of the most prominent sociologists of the 19th century and agree on the notion that social class is a group of people who share a relationship to the means of production. Marx later divided society into two classes – those who own the means of production, and those who operate them. (Giddens 2009: 439) Social divisions can, however, also manifest themselves with people from the same background and

education. Between a shopkeeper and a factory worker, both with the same knowledge and educational background, the shopkeeper is considered a self-made man and therefore higher on the social scale than the factory worker who is of working class. Marx's theory focuses on ownership and the division between the landowners, or landed aristocracy (gentry), and those who owned no land, the peasants. In his *Communist Manifesto* (1848), which is discussed by Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset in *Class, Status and Power* (1968: 6–11), Marx explains that society is splitting up into two hostile camps, two classes, that are facing each other – the upper (and middle class) and the working class (i.e. the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat). The social relations that decide into which class one belongs create different interests. The interests of the bourgeoisie are completely different to those of the proletariat, which leads them to be hostile towards them, as it is in the nature of the bourgeoisie to exploit the members of the proletariat, and for the proletariat to eradicate the bourgeoisie.

Up to the Age of Reform (1780–1832), the landed aristocracy benefited from an atmosphere in which wealth, status and power were entwined and hereditary with one another. The three affect each other and create a circle where power gives status and wealth; wealth gives power and status; and status gives power and wealth. From 1880 onwards, the progress of the traditional aristocracy became downward, mainly because of a continuing economic decline. The aristocracy's degeneration hastened the withdrawal from national governance and from the higher levels of the civil service, governance, and status in Ireland.

Throughout the last three centuries of Britain's history there has been much less evidence of class consciousness and class conflict than Marx [...] asserted. But there has also been a great deal of *consciousness of class* as social description and social identity: most usually of class as hierarchy; sometimes of class as 'upper', 'middle' and lower; on other occasions of class merely as 'upper' and 'lower'. For Britons are always thinking about who they are, what kind of society they belong to, and where they themselves belong in it. (Cannadine 1998b: 23)

In the 1970s, John Goldthorpe develops a new class scheme that consists of seven levels, or 11 depending on the interpretation. Goldthorpe's Class Scheme does not include the upper class, but focuses on the social groups of the middle and working classes. He does, however, acknowledge the presence of an elite class by stating that the members of the first category, Class I, have a secure, sufficient income that is likely to rise during their lifetime (Goldthorpe, Llewellyn & Payne 1980: 40).

Table 2. Goldthorpe's Class Scheme (Giddens 2009: 445)

	Goldthorpe/ CASMIN schema	National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification	Common descriptive term
I	Professional, administrative and managerial employees, higher grade	1 Higher managerial and professional occupations	Salariat (or service class)
II	Professional, administrative and managerial employees, lower grade; technicians, higher grade	2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	
IIIa	Routine non-manual employees, higher grade	3 Intermediate occupations	Intermediate white collar
IV	Small employers and self-employed workers	4 Employers in small organizations, own account workers	Independents (or petty bourgeoisie)
V	Supervisors of manual workers; technicians lower grade	5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	Intermediate blue-collar
VI	Skilled manual workers	6 Semi-routine occupations	Working class
IIIb	Routine non-manual workers, lower grade	7 Routine occupations	
VII	Semi- and unskilled manual workers		

With the latest version of the class scheme about to become the standard across the European Union, it seems that Goldthorpe's ideas are likely to become more, rather than less influential in the future (Giddens 2009: 445). Le Roux and Rouanet's (2008: 1062) research, however, proves that the NS-SeC (National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification), which is a condensed scheme of Goldthorpe's, could be further reduced into a three-level class scheme, separating the salariat (or service class) from the intermediate and working classes. Brigitte Le Roux and Henry Rouanet's research proves that social classes are connected to the patterns of lifestyles and therefore re-establish their importance. Le Roux and Rouanet studied over 1 000 Englishmen and -women from different social classes, following Goldthorpe's Class Scheme, and viewed habits and tastes in music, cinema, theatre, television, etc. in order to confirm or dispute the scheme.

Goldthorpe's class scheme differs from other schemes in its detailed categorisation. Anthony Giddens (2009: 444) analyses the scheme: "class locations are still compressed into just three main class strata: a 'service' class (classes I and II), an 'intermediate class' (classes III and IV) and a 'working class' (classes V, VI and VII)". Giddens (2009) describes the upper class as a group of people, the more affluent members of a society, who often possessed some inherited wealth. The middle class, especially the upper middle class, work to enjoy a comfortable living. Among the upper middle class are the doctors, lawyers and scholars – the academicians that have attended University. According to Max Weber's (1946) definition, the farmers and craftsmen also belong in the middle class, as a result of economic factors, alongside the academicians Weber indicates that the expansion of capitalism plays a significant role in the advancement of bureaucracy, or state functionaries. He challenges the Marxist idea of a socialist society to be able to create a more democratic order than the capitalist society. In the end, Weber discovers that both the Marxist socialist, as well as the Weberian capitalist society, are to step down before the modern democratic system where the workers are in control of their means of production (Giddens 1986: 81). Goldthorpe's Class Scheme does not concentrate on the cultural social class but on the

economic social class – on how the occupation of a person decides the social class he or she belongs to.

Goldthorpe's Class Scheme, albeit widely used in studies about social mobility, does have some flaws, which are presented in an article by Mike Savage, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Yaojun Li, Johs Hjellbrekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman and Andrew Miles (2013: 220–250). In their article, Savage et al. study the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) of 2011 – with 161 400 respondents it is the largest survey of social class conducted in the UK – and derive from its results a new class system comprising of seven categories (see below).

The authors challenge Goldthorpe's scheme and point out five main lines of criticism towards it: 1) Goldthorpe's Class Scheme does not take into account the social and cultural aspects that define social class. 2) It does not have a large number of respondents, which means a moderate sample size determines a whole nation's placement in the scheme. 3) The scheme derives class by measuring employment, wealth and income. 4) The scheme requires "a more culturally sensitive mode of analysis" (2013: 222) in order to explain the symbolical and cultural ways in which class operates. 5) The scheme does not take into account the cross-national or international variations of an occupational class. "All these factors explain the appeal of developing a new, multi-dimensional way of registering social class differentiation" (2013: 223) and the development of a new model of social class. The model comprised by Savage et al. is a contemporary scheme that, for the purpose of this study, portrays the constant evolution of class society and shows how class continues to reinvent itself in various forms:

Table 2. A New Model of Social Class (Savage et al. 2013)

Class I	Elite
Class II	Established middle class
Class III	Technical middle class
Class IV	New affluent workers
Class V	Traditional working class
Class VI	Emergent service workers
Class VII	Precariat

In their article, Savage et al. (2013: 219–250) give descriptions in regards to the different classes. The elite have a very high economic capital as well as a high social capital and are “the most advantaged and privileged group in the UK” (2013: 233). The established middle class is larger than the elite, and comprise nearly 25% of the population. They have a good income, and are culturally very engaged. The technical middle class is, in terms of income, like the established middle class. Socially and culturally, the two classes differ, as the technical middle class “is distinguished by its relative social isolation as well as its cultural apathy.” (2013: 237). The new affluent workers are the true middle class, although Savage et al. are hesitant in referring to them as ‘middle class’ since the group has a relatively secure economic position and are comparatively socially and culturally active. The traditional working class represent less than 2% of the GBCS and includes occupations such as lorry drivers, cleaners and electricians as well as some white-collar occupations like legal and medical secretaries. The youngest group, in terms of the age of the respondents, is the emergent service workers. This group usually works in the service sector and has a modest income, but grows in terms of cultural and social capital. The economically poorest class is the precariat. Savage et al. write that they are the most deprived of the classes, as well as one of the largest, with 15% of the population. These are the unemployed, van drivers, cleaners, care workers and postal workers, but can also include shopkeepers.

Savage et al. are careful to state that the New Model of Class does not compete with Goldthorpe's Class Scheme, but rather complements it. Goldthorpe's Scheme follows the capitalist ideas of an occupational- or employment-based class structure, while the model created by Savage et al. reveals more about how the cultural and social boundaries operate in Britain and how they create new lines of class division.

2.3.1 The Dichotomy of the Classes

As stated previously, *Downton Abbey* is a series rich in representations of social class and class differences. Contrary to the title of this subchapter there are more than two classes portrayed in the series, they are however, often described through comparisons between two classes at a time; actions between the upper and middle class, or between the upper and the working class. Season 1 introduces the new heir presumptive to the title, Matthew Crawley, who is Lord Grantham's third cousin, once removed. As a distant relative, Matthew has never had to prepare for the Earldom and has been able to live a normal middle-class life before moving to Downton. His background as a middle class solicitor, and a son to a middle class doctor, creates the first conflict between the classes. The rise to the aristocracy and conflicts it creates is encouraged by John Scott's theory presented in the Introduction – "class is seen as a matter of breeding and social background" (Scott 2006: 25). Matthew is proud of his background but his mother corrects him emphasizing that they are, in fact, upper middle class. (*Downton Abbey* #1.2) If placed on Goldthorpe's Class Scheme (see chapter 2.3) both Matthew and his mother, Mrs Crawley do not need to work to survive but choose to do so in order to live comfortably. Matthew intends to continue his work as a solicitor, which is met by some resistance from the family at Downton. Even the servants find the everyday work of an heir as odd and voice it below stairs: "Gentlemen don't work, silly. Not real gentlemen" (*Downton Abbey* #1.2). This is all consistent with Goldthorpe's Class Scheme and the explanation that the upper class does not work, especially with anything considered as middle-class.

With his new position Matthew has to learn how to conduct himself as an Earl should, which means that he is to have a valet to assist him when getting dressed or undressed. Matthew finds this very uncomfortable and in a discussion with Mr Molesley, his butler and valet, he expresses that Mr Molesley surely has something better to do. When Molesley answers that he was just doing his job Matthew responds somewhat insensitively, “It seems a very silly occupation for a grown man” (*Downton Abbey* #1.2). When he asks Lord Grantham if he could dismiss Mr Molesley Lord Grantham elucidates that they “all have different parts to play and must be allowed to play them” (*Downton Abbey* #1.2).

The primary source of conflict in the first season comes with the line of succession. The father of Lord Grantham had set an entail in his will that prohibits any female of inheriting Downton Abbey. Both the Dowager Countess and Lady Grantham try to find legal ways to let the entail go to the eldest daughter, Lady Mary, although unsuccessfully. Fellowes has explained in an interview that he felt that “[...] one of the great misunderstandings of the last century was the fear of inheritance” (Author Podcast, 2012). For families with only daughters the solution was usually one of the daughters marrying the heir presumptive, in order to keep the estate within the family. Rosalía Baena and Christa Byker (2015: 265) consent that “[m]arriage is often referred to in the show as a woman’s only choice.” The position of women in the Edwardian Era was a complicated one as Lady Mary voices: “Women like me don’t have a life. We choose clothes, pay calls and work for charity, and do the Season. But really we’re stuck in a waiting room until we marry” (*Downton Abbey* #1.4).

As explained in chapter 2.1, the First World War set in motion a change in the classes. Mattisson (2014: 5) indicates that the effects on Downton Abbey were no different, as the series reveal the reasons “[...] why the Edwardian society had to disappear, what role World War One played in this process, and how it affected all classes, from servants to aristocrats.” Although the lines between the classes had been blurred, the classes were still there, and the class society was still a very noticeable factor among the population. The

men in the trenches could act as if they were comrades or even friends on the same line, but the fact was that the officers were of the upper classes and the infantry were working class. Historian Margaret MacMillan explains in an interview with Jenny Hall (2013) that

[t]he war hastened the decline of the landed upper classes, though. It was expected that their sons would be officers. The death rate for young officers who were on the line was high—there were parts of the line where the life expectancy for a lieutenant was two weeks. In some families, virtually every male of military age got wiped out. There were horrendous losses in the other classes, too. But the aristocracy was a small class. They were losing their power anyway for a number of reasons, and fact that so many of them got killed hastened their decline. (Hall 2013)

In *Downton Abbey* only three men of the house were sent to the front: Matthew, and the footmen Thomas and William. As an upperclassman, Matthew is a Captain, and though many of the officers die, as stated by MacMillan above, he survives the war albeit severely wounded. William acts as Matthew's servant in the war and is injured in the same attack as Matthew. When William and Matthew are wounded, Matthew is moved to Downton where the army runs a hospital for officers; William is treated in the hospital for soldiers in Leeds, which creates a problem for his family to be able to be with him. Thomas, who seldom speaks up for anyone else, is very angry that William cannot get treatment in his own village and when the others are surprised for his reaction, he states, "Well I'm a working class lad and so is he. And I get fed up seeing how our lot always gets shafted" (*Downton Abbey* #2.5). The Dowager Countess and Lady Edith arrange for William to be transferred to Downton where he later dies of his injuries, surrounded by friends and family. Thomas, who serves in the medical corps at the Somme, is sent home to Downton as he is shot through his left hand, an accident he caused himself, which renders him maimed and unfit for active duty. In an encounter in the trenches, Matthew shares a cup of tea with Thomas and states: "War has a way of distinguishing between things that matter and things that don't." (*Downton Abbey* #2.1) Before the war, it would have been unheard of for a servant to share a drink with an upper class man. Even Lord Grantham has a special relationship to his valet Mr. Bates who served with him in the Boer War, a relationship Lady Grantham

articulates: “You must form the most tremendous bonds. Even with a servant” (*Downton Abbey* #1.1). Lady Grantham refers to the matter that Lord Grantham employed Mr. Bates as his valet in *Downton Abbey*, because of wartime camaraderie; despite that Mr. Bates is disabled and cannot perform his tasks without a cane.

The class conflicts between the upper class and the lower classes often manifest in arrogance, and, as presented earlier, the Marxist theory of social division portray “the interests of the bourgeoisie are completely different to those of the proletariat and tend to be hostile towards them” (Marx 1848). Le Roux’s and Rouanet’s (2008: 1062) conclusions are that social class connects to the patterns of lifestyles, and has therefore re-established its importance. The conflicts are a result of differences between the two classes, between the education and customs of the aristocracy, the middle class and the servants in the working class. One source of witty remarks about the superiority of the aristocracy and the inferiority of the other classes beneath is Lord Grantham’s mother, the Dowager Countess Violet Crawley. She feels that the presence of strangers for dinners is the only guarantee of the family’s good behaviour, and when the village doctor disregards the Dowager’s proposition in a clinical matter she retorts, “It always happens when you give these little people power – it goes to their heads like strong drink!” (*Downton Abbey* #2.1)

The Dowager Countess, her son Lord Grantham and the butler Mr. Carson are the series’ most conservative and monarchist characters who provide an insight in the inequalities between the classes. The aristocracy in *Downton Abbey* feel they have a personal relationship with the royal family and feel obliged to maintain the reputation of the nobility, as Mr. Carson states, “[m]onarchy is the lifeblood of Europe” (*Downton Abbey* #2.6). He expects the servants to conduct themselves to a standard that is befitted the house they serve: “[a] good servant at all times retains a sense of pride and dignity that reflects the pride and dignity of the family he serves” (*Downton Abbey* #1.2). Throughout the series, the Dowager Countess holds the power over most of the community, the only one to challenge that power is Mrs. Crawley, although she is of a lesser status. When Baron

Merton pays courtship to Mrs. Crawley, Lord Grantham notes with amusement, “[o]h, it might be rather fun for her to reinvent herself as a great lady of the county and put us all in our proper place (*Downton Abbey* #5.1).

The complexity of the titles among the aristocracy create confusion among those who are not accustomed to it and the Dowager Countess agrees: “[t]he British peerage is a fountain of variety” (*Downton Abbey* #4.9). When the Dowager Countess overhears Tom Branson talking to a Duchess at a party, she informs the former chauffeur:

Dowager Countess: Don't call her Your Grace.
 Tom Branson: I thought it was correct.
 Dowager Countess: For a servant, or an official at a ceremony, but in a social situation, call her Duchess.
 Tom Branson: But why? I don't call you Countess.
 Dowager Countess: Certainly not!
 Tom Branson: There's no logic in it.
 Dowager Countess: Oh no, if I were to search for logic, I should not look for it among the English upper class.

(*Downton Abbey* #4.3)

The power of the aristocracy started to crumble already in the 18th century after the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum, and the Great Reform Act of 1832 replaced the aristocracy as the power wielding class with the middle classes (Cannadine 1998b: 5). As stated earlier, the War hastened the decline further. In the series the new age comes as no surprise for some of the members of the upper classes. Lady Grantham’s mother remarks pleasantly, “[i]t seems so strange to think of the English embracing change” (*Downton Abbey* #3.1) and Lady Mary is aware of the changes to the new social order as well as she speaks with a government official: “[m]y lot’s going down and your lot’s coming up” (*Downton Abbey* #4.9).

2.4 Social Mobility

The age of the Renaissance and the Reformation represented a period of intensive social mobility. Social mobility is the movement of individuals or groups from one occupational status to another and in order to study an individual's mobility, researchers evaluate the mobility over a period. Class structures are not located on the same level horizontally, but are instead superimposed on each other vertically, similar to a ladder. Therefore, the mobility within classes is called horizontal mobility, and the movement between classes vertical mobility.

Social mobility defines the boundaries of class divisions, and has been extensively studied in Britain in the post-war period (see Sorokin 1927–1941; Ginsberg 1932; Lipset & Bendix 1953 and 1959; Glass 1954; and Goldthorpe 1980–2016). The classes, especially the upper classes, were to conform to change and adapt, or face possible extinction. John Scott (2009: 86) examines John Goldthorpe's argument that individuals will most likely "pursue common class interests" and states that as they realise that they belong to a specific class they will thereby conform to the identity of that class. In *Imperialism and Social Classes: Two Essays* (1955: 107) Joseph Schumpeter states: "A class is aware of its identity as a whole"; therefore, the members of a specific class can become a tightly woven group that protects its own and that shares the same view of the world within the group.

Membership in a class offers social advantages and disadvantages to the members of that class, making some social classes more desirable than others. David Cannadine (1998b: 24) states that even though there were tensions between the fortunate and the less fortunate, two deeply antagonistic groups before the 18th century, the tensions were not called class conflict, but rather "class struggle without class" (i.e. simply a struggle between the two groups). Class conflict is the struggle between the non-productive elements of a dying feudalism and the productive industrial class. Karl Marx (1848) acknowledges that the two sides, that he calls the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, are opposed to each other, but he does not call the opposition class conflict. Giddens (1973) contemplates if it is because "[...] the criterion for the identification of class conflict is obviously that of the

‘exploitative dependence’ of one class upon the other in the dichotomous model [...]”. In the matter of the relationship between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, conflict arises when the latter tries to dissolve the social and economic characteristics of the feudal order, and while peasant rebellions occurred the peasants did not care about the class system as such, but rather wanted to see a change in the economic situation.

Karl Marx (1848) and Pitirim Sorokin (1964) discuss the theory of social classes and social mobility, and both seem to share the idea that an individual has the chance to change his social stratum (i.e. moving either horizontally within the same social class, or vertically from one social class to another) and can thereby expand the boundaries of class structures. Sorokin (1964: 133) develops Marx’s ideas further, and clarifies that within especially vertical mobility there are two types of social mobility, that is social climbing or social sinking. These types of mobility can change individuals’ or whole groups’ social stratum either by inclusion into an existing class or by creating a new one. The theorists, however, emphasize that the only social class that would seem unaffected is the upper class – people usually marry or move into the upper class, and adapt to their new social stratum, rather than down to a lower class.

John Goldthorpe, Catriona Llewellyn and Clive Payne (1980: 42) agree with Marx and Sorokin and clarify on the subject of social mobility stating, “[...] mobility is most likely to occur between groupings which are at a similar level within the occupational hierarchy, whether this is conceived of as one of desirability, prestige, or socio-economic status”. Goldthorpe et al. continue to discuss the mobility between classes and, much like Sorokin, emphasize that mobility, be it upward or downward social mobility mainly consists of descending or ascending from Classes I and II on the Goldthorpe Class Scheme (see Chapter 2.3). The theorists agree that upward social mobility rarely involves ascending to the upper class or the aristocracy.

Sorokin (1959: 139) emphasizes that vertical social mobility is most likely to occur in democratic societies, rather than non-democratic societies. In democratic societies, an individual's social position is not determined at birth and everyone can seek positions that are open for everyone as there are no judicial or religious hindrances. David Glass (1954) studied social mobility in Britain in the 1950s. His study shows that, while there is substantial social mobility, most of it is short range. In his opinion, Britain is not particularly "open" in matters of social mobility. However, he did find out that, upward social mobility is more common than downward social mobility, and that it is concentrated at the middle levels of the class structure – people at the top or the bottom tend to stay there.

The Oxford Mobility Study, conducted in 1972, sought to investigate how social mobility has changed since David Glass' research in the same matter. The study was analysed by John Goldthorpe and led to the construction of the Goldthorpe Class Scheme (see Chapter 2.3). His results, presented in Giddens' *Sociology* (2009), demonstrate that the overall level of mobility has increased because of the increase in higher, white-collar jobs rather than the occupational system becoming more egalitarian. Goldthorpe updated his research in 1986 and found that further developments have occurred, for example occupational mobility has improved in the terms that an individual's social class no longer affects job prospects and that men from blue-collar backgrounds can seek managerial, white-collar employment. Giddens (2009: 467) concludes "Findings such as these, demonstrate a substantial amount of fluidity in British society: for many people, it is indeed possible to move up the social hierarchy".

2.4.1 Climbing the Social Ladder

Although social mobility is not the central theme of the series it does manifest in various forms, in subtle changes as well as more apparent changes, such as the mobility of the chauffeur Branson and that of Lady Edith, both discussed in more detail in Chapters 3.1

and 3.2, respectively. I suggest in this Thesis, that subtle changes in a character's social position is when he or she experiences horizontal social mobility. Subtle changes are, for example, movement within the service-class (i.e. moving from housemaid to lady's maid or from footman to valet). In addition, the more apparent change is the vertical social mobility between different social classes (e.g. from the service class into the middle class).

Education plays a key role in the mobility of the characters. For example, the housemaid Gwen takes lessons in short writing in order to become a secretary; the kitchen maid Daisy finishes her exams so that she can help on her father-in-law's farm; and Edna, another housemaid, takes hairdressing lessons so that she can apply for the position of lady's maid. However, further education is not considered necessary for the aristocracy. Before the war, Lady Sybil wants to learn how to cook and clean and plans to enrol at a school for nurses. She is met with encouragement from the staff, "Why shouldn't she learn how to cook and scrub? She may need it when the war is over. Things are changing – for her lot and us" (*Downton Abbey* #2.1), but resistance from her family:

Dowager Countess: Why would you want to go to a real school?
You're not a doctor's daughter.
Lady Sybil: Nobody learns anything from a governess,
apart from French and how to curtsy.
Dowager Countess: What else do you need? Are you thinking of a career in
banking?
(*Downton Abbey* #1.4)

The Dowager Countess' remark is a sarcastic jibe towards Lady Sybil and her ambition to make a difference. However, Lady Sybil is a character known for her determination and sense of duty and is not easily swayed from her decisions once they have been made. During the war Sybil works as a nurse at the hospital and convalescent home in Downton, but after the war Sybil feels at a loose end as the rest of her family long for life to return to the way it was before the war. "I know what it is to work now. To have a full day, to be tired in a good way. [...] That's what I want. No going back." (*Downton Abbey* #2.7) She

finds a new life with the chauffeur Branson as she agrees to move with him to Ireland, which creates quite an uproar in her family members.

Another determined and headfast character is that of Mrs. Crawley, Matthew's mother. She seeks to improve the conditions of the servants wherever and whenever she can. When the housemaid Gwen wants to seek a position as a secretary Mrs. Crawley agrees and states "Surely we must all encourage those less fortunate to improve their lot where they can" (*Downton Abbey* #1.3). Gwen's mobility is within the same class, namely horizontal mobility, a theory that both Sorokin (1955) and Goldthorpe (1980) clearly advocate (see chapter 2.4). Ultimately, Lady Sybil endorses her transition into her new position:

Lady Sybil: I saw another opening for a secretary and I applied.
 [...]

Gwen: I thought you'd given up.

Lady Sybil: I'll never give up, and nor will you.

Things are changing for women, Gwen.

Not just the vote, but our lives.

(*Downton Abbey* #1.5)

Later, in series six, as Gwen returns to Downton as the wife of a prominent gentleman, it is revealed that she now works for the government. Gwen thanks the family, and emphasizes that she owes everything to the kindness of Lady Sybil. Gwen's rise from housemaid to secretary to work in a government institution, and the marriage to a gentleman, provides her with vertical upward mobility and a new social position.

Sorokin's (1964: 139) theory that an individual's social position is not determined by birth in democratic societies, but that everyone can seek any position (presented in chapter 2.4) accentuates the importance of education. The kitchen maid Daisy studies mathematics with Ms Bunting, the schoolteacher, in order to help her father-in-law with his farm:

Daisy: But I don't know anything.

You talk about my working at Mr Mason's farm, but how?

Mrs. Patmore: I couldn't balance the books if my life depended on it.
 Why do you need to?
 Daisy: Because I want to be grown up, Mrs Patmore. I want
 responsibility. I want to be an adult. I can't just stand here,
 following orders, for the rest of my life.
 (*Downton Abbey* #5.1)

Daisy marries Mr. Mason's only son William on his deathbed during the war and thereby becomes the heiress to his farm, and when she passes her exams she moves in with her father-in-law. Throughout the series, Daisy rises steadily from scullery maid to kitchen maid, and eventually becomes irreplaceable to the head cook Mrs. Patmore. Lady Grantham's brother who lives in America wants to employ Daisy as his cook but she decides to stay with Mrs. Patmore at Downton Abbey. Daisy is keen to try new innovations when it comes to cooking, and is the first to learn how to use an electric mixer, although she experiences some resistance from Mrs. Patmore: "Before too long, her ladyship could run the kitchen with a woman from the village. What with these toasters and mixers and the such, we'd be out of a job" (*Downton Abbey* #4.1). Cooks trained hard from a young age often starting as scullery maids, then advancing to kitchen maids and ultimately becoming cooks. Mrs. Patmore's anxiety of being made redundant by the new appliances is a logical fear due to the changes in society at the time. After the war, the demand for domestic servants was declining and the achievements of the suffragist movement offered new employment for women in hotels or shops within the service industry (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1991, 29: 90).

Daisy helps Mrs. Patmore get accustomed to the new machines, as well as teach the footman Alfred cooking skills in order to help him enter a cooking contest at the Ritz Hotel with the prospect of acquiring advanced chef training if he passes. He eventually passes and leaves Downton Abbey, again emphasizing the importance of education. There are many more examples of horizontal mobility among the service staff; the head housemaid Anna becomes a lady's maid when Lady Mary marries; Edna learns new skills and is employed

as a lady's maid. The footman Thomas runs Downton Abbey during the war after which he becomes a self-employed man, an under butler and at last a butler when Mr. Carson retires.

Matthew's valet and butler Mr. Molesley experiences many changes to his occupational status throughout the series. He starts as a butler at Crawley House and a valet for Matthew, but after Matthew's death he has to find employment in the village before he receives a position as a footman at Downton Abbey again, which is a demotion from his previous position. During Daisy's studies for her exam, Mr. Molesley acts as a teacher and discovers a hidden passion in education, and after he passes a general knowledge test set by the school's headmaster, he accepts a position as teacher at the village school – an upward social movement to the middle class.

Characters from the middle class experience vertical social mobility as well. For example, Matthew's rise from the middle class to the aristocracy, as previously mentioned; Tom Branson's mobility from working class to middle class, which will be discussed in chapter 3.2; and Mrs. Crawley's ascent to the aristocracy as she marries the Baron Merton. Mrs. Crawley is a proud upper middle class woman who enjoys being a member of the community. Her father was a doctor, as was her late husband, and she trained as a nurse in the Boer War so when she arrives in Downton village she is involved with the running of the hospital as well as introducing some innovations to the village doctor. When she arrives at Downton, she is the mother of the future Earl of Grantham and befriends the Dowager Countess. Although she is still below her in social hierarchy, a matter that the Dowager Countess does not let Mrs. Crawley forget, Mrs. Crawley persistently engages the Dowager Countess in discussions and debates, proving to be a match to the Dowager's witty remarks:

Dowager Countess:	You are quite wonderful the way you see room for improvement wherever you look. I never knew such reforming zeal.
Mrs. Crawley:	I take that as a compliment.
Dowager Countess:	I must've said it wrong.

(Downton Abbey #1.4)

When Mrs Crawley marries Richard Grey, the Baron Merton she receives the title Baroness. She is subsequently raised to the aristocratic class, which initially irritates the Dowager Countess. The viewers are led to presume it is because of Mrs. Crawley's shift in social status but it is revealed that the Dowager Countess fears she is losing a friend.

3 FROM RAGS TO RICHES

The interest in social class also spurs an interest in social mobility. The characters chosen for analysis in this thesis (Edith Crawley, Tom Branson and Ethel Parks) represent different social classes in order to depict the mobility of those characters from one social class to another. As presented in the introduction, all characters chosen show vertical social mobility, some from the beginning of the series and some later in the series or at some point of the character's story.

This Chapter will examine the social class and mobility of the three characters as a case study. Edith Crawley's evolvment is not clearly class bound in the beginning. Her struggles to find her place in society, while she tries to find a husband, tie her progress to matters of social relationships, which in turn shape her character. Therefore, the analysis of Edith Crawley will focus on her social relationships that have connections to her social status. Tom Branson, the Irish socialist, experiences vertical social mobility early in the series and later tries to understand his role in the family. The analysis of Tom will for that reason focus on the class conflicts he encounters, as well as his own inner conflicts regarding social class. Ethel Parks is a minor character that only appears in a couple of episodes in the series. She is an optimist that feels that she can rise on the social scale through marriage. She enters a relationship with an army officer, becomes pregnant and subsequently gives birth to an illegitimate child. Her situation is similar to that of Lady Edith's, although their social status differs. Ethel is the only character in this case study that experiences downward social mobility, however she does experience upward social mobility as well in the end. Julian Fellowes' choice to bring closure to the different characters and in a soap-opera way give them a "happily ever after"-ending, ends the whole series on a positive note.

3.1 Edith Crawley

Even though the aim of this chapter is to view the vertical mobility of the characters, Edith's mobility in the series is initially horizontal movement. Her mobility is restricted to the aristocratic class and, as theorists present in Chapter 2.4, whilst in the upper classes the only variety of vertical social mobility a person can express is upward social mobility. The only method for a woman to experience upward vertical mobility in the upper classes is to marry into that status. However, as Anne Laurence (2002) states, women of the upper classes can aid the rise of men of lower class by marriage, a choice Edith contemplates when she is romantically involved with the middle class editor, Michael Gregson. Edith does experience upward vertical mobility later in the series when she marries above her own position and receives the title Marchioness, a station above her father, the Earl of Grantham. Through the series, she deviates from the typical behavior of an aristocratic woman (e.g., she has a child out of wedlock with a middle class man she helps on a farm and she writes a column for a magazine). Unlike for women of the lower classes (i.e. middle and working classes), none of these examples force her out of her position, which is because of her hereditary status given at birth (see Chapter 2.4; Sorokin 1959: 139) and a result of the broadening of the classes.

Edith Crawley is the Lord and Lady Grantham's second daughter and sister to Ladies Mary and Sybil Crawley. Edith finds it hard to find her place and to stand out and through the first five seasons often refers to that she will be the spinster of the family, set to take care of the parents as they get older. She feels caught in between in her family, because unlike her older sister Mary she does not have the need to find a husband of noble birth, nor does she have the liberty to rebel against the conventions of social structures like her younger sister Sybil.

Dowager Countess:	Oh, don't worry. Your turn will come.
Lady Edith:	Will it? Or am I just to be the maiden aunt? Isn't this what they do?

Arrange presents for their pretty relations?
 Dowager Countess: Don't be defeatist, dear, it's very middle class.
 (*Downton Abbey* #2.8)

The Dowager Countess' opinion of the middle class can be analysed as such, that the middle class are content with their lot, and do not want to improve their future. Labelling the middle class as "defeatists" affects the way other people see the class as well as the self-identity of that class (Giddens 2009:946). Upper class women have little to do in the day: they call on each other, arrange social events and work in charities (see quote by Lady Mary on page 27); therefore, Edith's remark that maiden aunts arrange presents for their prettier relations is not far from the reality that awaits her. Even the Dowager Countess encourages Edith to find something to occupy herself with, but when Edith decides to become a journalist, the Dowager Countess, however, replies: "I meant run a local charity or paint watercolours or something" (*Downton Abbey* #3.7). The Dowager Countess is not the only member of the family who initially opposes Edith's future career, Lord Grantham does not approve of his daughter working in a middle class profession. When Edith announces her plans at dinner, Lord Grantham objects to the idea:

Lord Grantham: Mama, talk to her. Talk to all of them.
 Say something sensible.
 Mrs. Crawley: Yes, let's hear how a woman's place is in the home.
 Dowager Countess: I do think a woman's place is eventually in the home, but I see no harm in her having some fun before she gets there.
 [...]
 Dowager Countess: And another thing. I mean, Edith isn't getting any younger. Perhaps she isn't cut out for domestic life.
 (*Downton Abbey* #3.7)

The Dowager Countess' comment contradicts her opinion presented earlier, and emphasizes the changes in society as well as the position of the middle or younger child of the family. The conservative views of a woman's place in the society as well as in the family are changing and women can find work outside the home more freely (see Chapter 2.4.1). The Dowager Countess knows that Edith is headstrong and determined, and as she

recognizes the changes in the family, she states “[s]ince we have a country solicitor, and a car mechanic, it was only a matter of time [that we had a journalist as well] (*Downton Abbey* #3.7).

Years of resentment have built up the rivalry between Edith and Mary, towards whom Edith displays her mean, jealous and cruel side, and vice versa. Edith sees her older sister as her competition and often competes for the same suitors. When Lady Grantham, who feels sorry for Edith, tells Lady Mary to be kind to her because she has fewer advantages than Mary, Lady Mary only replies that Edith has no advantages at all (*Downton Abbey* #1.5). Lady Edith retaliates and states “[t]he one thing Mary can't bear is when things are going better for me than for her” (*Downton Abbey* #6.8). Edith feels less attractive than her peers, and is certain that it has an impact on her marriage prospects. Nevertheless, Edith becomes romantically involved with four suitors throughout the series, but it is not until the last season that she finally marries. Her misfortunes earn her the nickname “Poor Edith”, and even Lord Grantham utters: “[...] poor old Edith who couldn't make her dolls do what she wanted [...]” (*Downton Abbey* #6.9). Members of the staff notice Lady Edith's low self-esteem and sympathise with her:

Mr Bates: I always feel a bit sorry for Lady Edith.
 Anna: Me, too. Although I don't know why,
 when you think what she's got and what we haven't.
 (*Downton Abbey* #1.5)

Edith comes across as snobbish in the beginning but mellows as the series progress, and in the end, she tries to make amends with her sister.

Edith, as well as her sisters Mary and Sybil are, according to Baena and Byker (2015: 265), “caught between two worlds”, the old world represented by Lord Grantham and the Dowager Countess who believe in keeping society the way it has always been, and the new world where the position of the working class and women is improving. Edith's courage to go against the grain is encouraged by having witnessed her younger sister Sybil battle the

conventions of social class structure, and she too finds courage to speak her mind: “If Sybil can be a nurse why can’t I be a chauffeur?” (*Downton Abbey* #2.1) Edith is the first woman in *Downton Abbey* to learn how to drive, and during the First World War, she helps a local farmer to operate his tractor:

Lady Edith: I told her I could do it. I could drive the tractor.
 Dowager Countess: Edith! You’re a lady! Not Toad of Toad Hall.
 (*Downton Abbey* #2.2)

Women’s liberation is portrayed in the series by, for example, horse riding without a sidesaddle; Edith learning to drive or by aristocratic women entering the workforce (e.g. when Edith works as the head of non-medical welfare when the estate becomes a convalescent home, or when she becomes the editor of a magazine). The First World War loosens the formalities of social affairs and makes it possible, and appropriate, for women to accept dinner invitations without a chaperone:

Lady Edith: It feels so wild. To be out with a man.
 Drinking and dining in a smart London restaurant.
 Can you imagine being allowed to do anything of the sort
 five years ago, never mind ten?
 Michael Gregson: The war changed everything.
 (*Downton Abbey* #4.1)

After the war, Edith becomes a writer of an editorial column for a magazine, and later the editor. The acceptance of the position as editor results in what I would say is a slight decline of Edith’s social status, although it is hardly noticeable. Nevertheless, the times are changing and women are able to pursue careers outside the home. As the editor, Edith becomes more independent, assertive and interested in the business world and the world outside *Downton Abbey*. While concerned with class distinctions, as every woman of her status in that era would be, Edith has never let them stop her trying to help others or trying to prove her own worth.

The broadening of the classes, and the change of the atmosphere after the war, result in Edith's change of opinion about what is proper behaviour. While the conservative ways, represented by the Dowager Countess and Lord Grantham, start to break down Edith becomes more aware of the social situation of people around her. When the Dowager Countess discovers the infatuation of Tom Branson and the village's schoolteacher Miss Bunting she discusses it with Lord Grantham, which leads to a conversation that surprises Edith:

Dowager Countess: There's an alliance that does not bode well
 Lord Grantham: I quite agree with you
 Lady Edith: Aren't you being very snobbish?
 Dowager Countess: We're being realistic - something your generation has such
 trouble with.
 (*Downton Abbey* #5.1)

Edith becomes romantically involved with the editor of the magazine while writing the editorial column. Mr. Gregson is middle class, but since the First World War, the conventions of social class boundaries have loosened which enables the two to enter a relationship. However, he is married to a mentally ill woman, which means Edith and he cannot marry. When Mr. Gregson travels to Germany in order to divorce his wife, Edith discovers she is with child. Mr. Gregson never returns and Edith gives the child away to a family in Switzerland. She, however, cannot leave her daughter and decides to bring the child back to Downton Abbey under the pretence of being the child's ward. Edith's decision is a conscious statement against the prevailing notion that illegitimate children cause downward social mobility. Clark (2012: 121) states that mothers who have illegitimate children are declassed (i.e. lose social status) as do their children. Edith's family does not know of the child, Marigold, until later, and society will never know of the biological bond the two share.

The last of Edith Crawley's suitors, Bertie Pelham, is the land agent of Brancaster Castle in Northumberland, lands that belong to the Marquess of Hexam. He shares the same social

status as Tom Branson (i.e. middle class) and when the family are told about Marigold, Edith is allowed to keep company with Mr. Pelham. He asks Edith to marry him, as a land agent, but Edith does not give him an answer, as she is unsure about telling him about her daughter. When the Marquess suddenly dies, everybody is surprised about the new heir:

Lady Edith: Well, that's the thing. He is the new Marquess... Bertie.
 Lord Grantham: Bertie Pelham is now the Marquess of Hexham?
 Lady Edith: Yes.
 [...]

 Lady Mary: But that's absurd! If Bertie's a Marquess, then Edith –
 Lord Grantham: Edith would outrank us all. Yes. That's right.
 [...]

 Tom Branson: We'll all bow and curtsy to Edith. You'll enjoy that, Mary.
 Lady Mary: Hardly. And if Bertie really IS Lord Hexham, which I still don't believe, he won't want to marry her now.
 Lady Grantham: Careful. People will think you're jealous, dear.
 We don't want that.

(Downton Abbey #6.8)

Lord Grantham is ecstatic when he realizes that Edith, his second daughter, will outrank himself, which is a prospect he had not envisioned for her at all. The marriage to Bertie Pelham, now Lord Hexam, will elevate Edith's social status above that of her father, the Earl of Grantham. Lady Mary, as the eldest of Lord Grantham's daughters, does not enjoy the idea of having to curtsy her younger sister as she feels that she is superior to Edith.

However, in accordance to Glass' theory about the range of mobility, Edith's mobility is short range as it is within a class, that is, the aristocracy. As stated by John Goldthorpe (1980: 42), "mobility is likely to occur between groupings which are at a same level within the occupational hierarchy", members of the aristocracy usually marry other members of the aristocracy. However, the scandal concerning Edith's illegitimate daughter, and whether Edith shall tell Lord Hexam about her, creates some clamor in the family. Lady Rosamund, Lord Grantham's sister who has known about the child since Edith's pregnancy, feels that they are to tell Lord Hexam about Marigold. Society does not know that the Earl's daughter has an illegitimate child, and if it became known that the Marquess of Hexam is involved

there can be consequences (e.g. loss of respect towards the aristocracy by the public). Lady Rosamund is the only one to voice “[a]re we going to sit by and let this young man's family and future be put at risk from a scandal we are hiding from him?” (*Downton Abbey* #6.8). As Clark stated above, mothers who have illegitimate children often lose their social status; and because of the social structure, it is not acceptable for the Marquess to marry someone of the middle class.

When the Marquess learns about Marigold he is shocked and withdraws his proposal for a while. He, however, returns and the two inform their respective families about their engagement. Lord Hexam’s mother is very much like Lord Grantham, a conservative, who believes that the Marquess of Hexam shall lead by example and be the moral compass of the public. Lady Edith, however, feels that she should know the truth about her past before the wedding, and tells her future mother-in-law about Marigold. Mrs. Pelham, Bertie’s mother, commends on Edith for telling about Marigold: “She was prepared to deny herself a great position, to say nothing of happiness, rather than claim it by deceit. We must applaud her” (*Downton Abbey* #6.9). In the end, Edith experiences upward social mobility as she becomes the Marchioness of Hexam and a fairy-tale ending with her very own Prince Charming.

3.2 Tom Branson

The most prominent case of social mobility across class boundaries is that of the chauffeur Tom Branson and his relationship to Lord Grantham’s third daughter, Lady Sybil. Tom Branson was born and raised in Ireland, and is, as many Irish at that time, a politically active Irish Republican and Marxist. Through the first three seasons, Ireland’s future is in play: the House of Lords had not accepted Prime Minister Asquith’s law of Home Rule and The Easter Rising of 1916 (i.e. the start of the Irish independence war) claimed several Irish lives, which aggravates Tom. The dialogues between Tom and the other members of the

Crawley family are interlaced with comments about politics. Lord Grantham is Tom's hardest critic and often refers to Tom's past as a Socialist and Marxist. Tom is passionate about the Irish cause and attends many political meetings, often together with Lady Sybil who is also politically active:

Lady Sybil: I hope you do go into politics. It's a fine ambition.
 Tom Branson: Ambition or dream? If I do, it's not all about women and the vote for me, nor even freedom for Ireland. It's the gap between the aristocracy and the poor and...

(Downton Abbey #1.6)

Tom comes to Downton Abbey to be the family's new chauffeur, but when he discovers that Lady Sybil shares his passion for politics, he becomes infatuated with her. Tom and Sybil are the Romeo and Juliet couple at Downton Abbey. She is a member of the aristocracy and he of the working class, and therefore their classes do not accept the relationship. Lady Sybil doubtfully questions Branson if his family in Ireland would accept her, as he has been determined to leave Downton Abbey and Sybil's family. In accordance to Goldthorpe's (1980: 42) theory that social mobility is most likely to occur between groupings that are at a similar occupational level, Tom and Sybil's relationship should not have been possible as they are not members of the same class, or even adjacent classes. However, Sybil's determination to contribute to society by any means (e.g. engaging in the women's movement and training to be a nurse) are evidence that Sybil does not think much about social class distinctions.

Lady Sybil: Why not? You obviously don't approve of him.
 Tom Branson: Not as a representative of an oppressive class.
 Lady Sybil: But he's a good man, and decent employer.
 Lady Sybil: Spoken like a true politician.

(Downton Abbey #1.6)

Of the two, it is more likely Tom who feels nervous about their differences. Lady Sybil, however, fights against the conventions of social class structures and shows a keen interest in matters that members of the aristocracy usually does not engage in (e.g. cooking and

cleaning). Her break from the normative behaviour encourages Tom to profess his love, and his plans for the future:

I've told myself and told myself you're too far above me, but things are changing. When the war is over the world won't be the same place as it was when it started. And I'll make something of myself, I promise. (*Downton Abbey* #2.1)

The working class is the first to realise the changes in the world, because of the First World War, which is evident in Tom's proclamation. The members of the working class see the coming dissipation of class boundaries, and realise that for the upper classes to function they need the working classes which leads to raised confidence among the workers.

By the end of the second season, Lady Sybil decides to marry Tom Branson and in the process, she lifts him from the working class. The heir presumptive, Matthew, considers Tom to be a friend and an outsider in the family, much like himself: "[i]f we're mad enough to take on the Crawley girls, we have to stick together" (*Downton Abbey* #3.1). After the wedding Tom and Lady Sybil remain at Downton Abbey and Sybil gives birth to their daughter. She later dies at childbirth, and Tom assumes that he will return to the working class. In accordance to theorists' claim that one only moves up the social ladder, rather than down (Marx 1848; Sorokin 1964) Lord Grantham, together with the rest of the family, decides to involve Tom in the running of the estate as the land agent. However, the family's decision is based on their desire to keep their grandchild, not necessarily Tom, at Downton Abbey.

Tom's rise from chauffeur to member of the family is not easy and without conflict, for example the servants do not know how to address one who, until recently, had been one of their own. Even the Dowager Countess struggles to address Tom by his given name and not by his surname, as is customary when addressing the staff. Jealous comments and behaviour is typical, as is exhibited in the footman Thomas' statement:

Marvellous isn't it? One minute he's the chauffeur, and in the normal way of things, he'd be below me now. But instead I have to wait on him hand and foot, standing there while he decides what might please him next. [...] But we still have to call him sir. (*Downton Abbey* #4.9)

Class-consciousness dictates the role one has to play in society, and the hierarchy among the staff defines the role of the servant; and for a servant to be included in the family he once served can create discord among the parties involved. Tom treads on eggshells when left alone at Downton Abbey, uncomfortable as master over his old colleagues. The senior staff, the butler Mr. Carson, the housekeeper Mrs. Hughes the valet Mr. Bates and the lady's maid Anna, acknowledge this but can only attest: "[i]f he wants to play their game, he'd better learn their rules" (*Downton Abbey* #3.1). Tom is bewildered and still mourning the death of Lady Sybil and his uncertainty does not go unnoticed by the staff, as the housemaid Edna does not hesitate to try to seduce the unsuspecting Tom. Edna's motive is that if Tom was able to undergo upward social mobility through marriage, so will she. Even though Tom is not a member of the aristocracy, he is still higher on the social scale than Edna is, and should they marry Edna would not have to be a housemaid anymore.

Tom is a close friend with Matthew Crawley and together they work on the estate in hopes to make it profitable again. Occasionally Tom realises his new role and states: "[i]t's strange for me to be arguing about inherited money and saving estates when the old me would like to put a bomb under the lot of you" (*Downton Abbey* #3.1). After Matthew's death, Tom continues his work on the estate together with Lady Mary and Lord Grantham and Tom convinces them to invest in the estate. The time after the First World War is a crucial time for decisions about the large estates in England; Downton Abbey sells land to property builders, establishes pig farming and investigates in alternative methods to crop farming.

Before Sybil's death Tom is a passionate Irish socialist, determined to improve the conditions of the workers and to abolish the aristocracy, if not by practical means, at least through oral propaganda. After the First World War, he abandons his political principles

when he realizes that the Bolsheviks had killed the Romanov family, an event he never thought possible (Mitchell 2015). Both events have an impact on Tom and he struggles to find his place in the new society. Even though some members of the family have embraced Tom as part of their family, Lord Grantham finds it hard to forget about his past as a political activist:

Lord Grantham: So says the Marxist.
 Tom Branson: If you don't mind me saying so,
 you have a narrow view of socialism.
 Lord Grantham: You seem to have a very broad interpretation of it.
 Dowager Countess: Now, now, children. If Branson is watering down his
 revolutionary fervour, let us give thanks.
 (*Downton Abbey* #3.7)

Socialists in Britain support Irish nationalism; however, socialism in Britain in the 1920s is more extensive than just the Marxist movement. Society is moving towards a Socialist Commonwealth and the mentality of the masses has to be “transformed into an educated democratic awareness” (Macintyre 1977: 484) in order to secure class-consciousness. A surge of interest in the socialist political parties, for example the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Socialist Labour Party, the Fabian Society or the Independent Labour Party, lead to the victory of the Labour Party and the forming of the first Labour minority government in 1923.

Sybil's death leaves Tom in a state of confusion about his role in the family and his status in society and he considers whether he should move abroad:

Tom Branson: Since Sybil died, you have let me believe I was one of you.
 Lord Grantham: You are one of us. Now.
 Tom Branson: No, I'm not. Not when you're among your own people
 [...]
 Tom Branson: I don't belong here
 and these past few days have shown me that.
 (*Downton Abbey* #4.3)

[...]
 Lord Grantham: But, if you went back to Ireland, Tom,
 would you belong there?
 Tom Branson: No. I don't think I would. You've changed me too much.
 I'm a man without a home. I am stateless.
 (*Downton Abbey* #4.5)

A stateless society is one of Marx's concepts in his Communist Manifesto. By abolishing the bourgeoisie class' rule society can be free for all social classes. However, Tom does not refer to Marx's idea but rather to the sense that he does not belong in any class, neither the middle class at Downton Abbey nor the working class in Ireland. Especially through seasons 4–6, Tom wrestles with the question of his role in the family. He is not an aristocrat but cannot return to the working class either, and ultimately he leaves Downton Abbey in season 6, only to return a few episodes later: "I learned that Downton is my home. And that you are my family. If I didn't quite know that before I left, I know it now." (*Downton Abbey* #6.3).

After his return to Downton Abbey, Tom accepts his occupation in the family and loses some of the chains that had weighed him earlier. He starts to look forward to the future and on the possibility for him to marry again. Tom and Lady Mary debate the choice of second spouses: "Tom, look I don't mean to pull rank but with people like us, we need to marry sensibly. Especially if we're going to inherit the family show. It's a way of life that isn't for everyone and a bad marriage can poison it." (*Downton Abbey* #6.8). The editor of Lady Edith's magazine, Ms. Edmunds, intrigues Tom. She is a strong woman like Lady Sybil or Ms. Bunting, but unlike Ms. Bunting, the family accepts Ms. Edmunds. Tom approaches Ms. Edmunds at Lady Edith's wedding, in the last episode of the series, and states:

Tom Branson: We like strong women here.
 Ms. Edmunds: Do you really?
 Tom Branson: I can assure you we like them very much indeed.
 (*Downton Abbey* 6.9).

Tom Branson's process of social mobility in the series is upward vertical mobility. He rises from the working class by marriage, but cannot become a part of the aristocracy although his late wife was a member of it; instead, he becomes upper middle class. Even the Dowager Countess regards Tom as part of the family, and clearly not working class: "I mean, these are your people now. You must remember that. This is your family." (*Downton Abbey* #4.9) Tom's social status is elevated to upper middle class, and, in the end he can venture into business with Lady Mary's second husband Henry Talbot, who is also middle class.

3.3 Ethel Parks

Ethel Parks is a housemaid at Downton Abbey between the years 1916 and 1918. She was, in her own words, the head housemaid at her previous place of employment and feels that her present position is a demotion (i.e. downward mobility within the service-class) although Mrs. Hughes reminds her that she actually was Senior Housemaid out of two housemaids. Ethel is an independent woman who knows what she wants: "I want the best and I'm not ashamed to admit it. [...] I suppose, in the end, I want to be more than just a servant" (*Downton Abbey* #2.1). She would much rather spend her time reading magazines than being in service. She envies Thomas, who at the time is in charge of the convalescent home, and Mr. Bates who works at a public house:

"But you're both free of all the bowing and scraping and "Yes, my lord" and "No, my lord." I envy him. I envy you. 'Cause I'm ready for a new adventure and I don't care who hears me" (*Downton Abbey* #2.4).

Ethel's outbursts are a form of class-consciousness, almost a hatred towards the class structures, a concept that is growing in popularity in the working class.

When Downton Abbey becomes a convalescent home during the First World War, Ethel begins an affair with one of the patients, Major Charles Bryant. David Cannadine (1998b: 24) writes: “membership in a class offers social advantages and disadvantages to the members of that class, making some classes more desirable than others” (see Chapter 2.3). Ethel is convinced that they will marry, and to be an officer’s wife is a great step out of the service class, which displays her as a social climber. Ethel fantasizes of a brighter future but does not plan ahead in case of adversities. As the couple are discovered, the affair ultimately costs Ethel her employment at Downton Abbey as Mrs. Hughes dismisses her immediately:

Mrs Hughes: Ethel, you are dismissed without notice and without a character. You will please leave before breakfast.
 Ethel: I didn’t think how—
 Mrs Hughes: No. And that’s a problem. You never do.
 (*Downton Abbey* #2.4)

Polly Toynebee (2014) points out that in real life servants are banished without references at any whisper of a scandal. Reluctantly Ethel later returns to Downton Abbey when she finds out she is pregnant and has nowhere else to go. Mrs. Hughes pities her and arranges a small cottage where she can stay. During her pregnancy, Ethel tries to contact the Major to tell him of his child but to no avail.

When Major Bryant dies, his parents visit Downton Abbey to see the house where he had spent some time while recovering. Mr. Bryant is a proud upper class man who does not believe Ethel when she presents her son as their grandson. Mrs. Bryant wishes to help Ethel, and the child, and offers to adopt him, which Mr. Bryant agrees to and tries to pay Ethel for the boy. Mr. Bryant explains that the child will be educated at Harrow and Oxford, which will guarantee an upper class education and a comfortable income in the future. When Ethel suggests that she can be the child’s nursemaid, Mr. Bryant strongly opposes the idea. Mr. and Mrs. Bryant feel that they can take care of the child on their own

and will eventually let him know about his mother when he is old enough. In the end, Ethel does not agree to the deal and feels that the best place for the child is to be with his mother.

When Ethel does not accept the grandparents' offer, she has to seek a living wherever she can find it. There are records of "workhouses filled with maids who got pregnant, forever vulnerable to other predatory servants and tradesmen, often reduced to prostitution without a character reference to get another job" (Toynbee 2014), Ethel does not live in the workhouse, but as stated above she is subdued to prostitution in order to survive. Prostitutes are of the lowest class who often did not own more than the clothes they wore. Mrs. Crawley, Matthew's mother, who works for an organization that helps prostitutes to break from their old lives, finds Ethel and tries to help her. At first, Ethel refuses her help and insists that she is past all help, but eventually she decides to let the grandparents take care of her child.

Ethel only worked as a prostitute in order to care for her son, but when she leaves him with the Bryants, she is able to seek employment elsewhere. Scott and Marshall (2009: 608) write: "[s]ociological studies of prostitutes show that their motivation is mainly economic and it seems likely that the number of prostitutes increases when there are fewer job opportunities for women." However, without a reference it is close to impossible to find. When Mrs. Crawley sees that Ethel is at her wits end she decides to employ Ethel as a maid at Crawley House, and thus lifts her up from the lowest class to the service class again. Mrs. Crawley's actions cause an uproar among her own staff, the vendors in the village and among the staff at Downton Abbey. With Ethel's history as a prostitute, Mr. Carson prohibits the servants from visiting Crawley House in fear that she might corrupt them (*Downton Abbey* #3.5).

Mrs. Crawley is not affected by the gossip in the village and while at Crawley House, Ethel learns how to cook and clean and once again becomes a proper housemaid. Mrs. Crawley, however, recognises the effect of the gossip on Ethel and decides that, as Ethel's past will

haunt her if she stays in Downton Village, she must leave. Mrs. Crawley and the Dowager Countess place an advertisement in the paper in order to find Ethel a position elsewhere where her history is unknown. Ethel receives a position in a household in Cheadle, a village close where the Bryants live with her son. After discussing the location and possible problems tied to the position with Mrs. Bryant, Ethel can, with peace of mind, accept the job offer and turn a new leaf in a new place – where no one would know about her or her past.

Neither the Goldthorpe Class Scheme (1980) nor the scheme derived by Savage et al. (2013; see Chapter 2.3) depict the lowest class, unless the precariat includes the poor and the prostitutes. Ethel's mobility in the series is the only one that clearly shows downward social mobility as she loses her position at Downton Abbey. However, like the rest of the examples, she, too, eventually experiences upward social mobility when Mrs. Crawley helps her receive another place of employment.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Downton Abbey (2010–2015) is rich in representation of class structures, although it concentrates on the three large ones: the aristocracy (upper class), the middle class and the working class. The aristocratic Crawley family of Downton Abbey, the series main protagonists, are deeply concerned at first with social position and protect their status at any cost. Towards the middle and especially the end of the series, they soften to the point that even the Earl's eldest daughter, Lady Mary, can marry a race car driver (i.e. a member of the middle class and below her in hierarchy), something that was not accepted in the early 20th Century.

Social class in Britain is derived from the Elizabethan notion of a great chain of being in which everyone has an allotted place in the hierarchical social structure. Adam Smith formulated the triadic model of classes, which has later been analysed further and divided into structures encompassing between 2–11 social classes. Karl Marx and Max Weber are considered the most prominent theorists of social class of the 19th century. On the one hand, Marx divides society into two classes: those who own the means of production and those who operate them. Weber, on the other hand, includes the importance of economic consumption in Marx's theory.

Social Class is a constantly evolving phenomenon with its roots in the 18th century with the Union of the Crowns in 1707 and the Enlightenment. The rise of the gentleman in the 19th century signalled the decline of the aristocracy as wealth enabled a position in the peerage. The political power of the working class led to the rise of the Labour Party in the early 20th century and the demand for women's equal rights to vote in elections. The First World War thinned the lines between the classes and the need for factory workers, as well as the broadening of the classes, provided the middle class an enhanced position to improve their social status.

Class is connected to the social and cultural habits of a community and the honour accorded to them by others. In order to describe the social class structure of Britain, sociologists create class schemes that concentrate either on the Marxist idea of occupational hierarchy or on the Weberian model of economic consumption. In the 1970s, John Goldthorpe developed a class scheme that divides the population into seven categories based on their occupational status. This class scheme is widely used in social mobility studies. The Great British Class Survey in 2011 is the largest survey conducted in Britain and encompasses the social and cultural preferences of the British society. Mike Savage et al. (2013) analysed the findings of the survey and deduced from it a new model of social class. The contemporary model, based on their findings, represents the viewers of the series analysed in this Thesis.

Social class differences are presented in the characters' manners, language and the discussions between the characters in the series. In my opinion, the witty dialogue carries an otherwise superficial storyline, and gives the audience a glimpse into the lives of both aristocrats and servants alike. Fellowes makes the portrayal of the English upper class, although as sophisticated as ever, more approachable and, in a way, more humane. The social class differences are conveyed as manners and the notion of tradition works as a focal point throughout the series.

Even though the gap between the classes is substantial, the relationship between the characters of the series is intimate, even friendly. The family helps the servants to find other employment if they want to improve their lot, although still keeping to the conventions of their social class. The political changes brought forward by the First World War hasten the decline of the aristocracy and the Earl's daughters explore different areas of labour: Lady Edith learns to drive and becomes a writer, and later editor of a magazine and the youngest daughter Sybil becomes a nurse. Lady Sybil challenges the conventions of social class structures further when she marries the family's chauffeur.

The First World War is an event in history that changes the social structure of Europe in the early 20th century. The political movements and legal rights of both the working class as well as women are set into motion in the aftermath, and the servants are the ones to notice it, “things are changing – for her lot and us” (*Downton Abbey* #2.1).

The class conflicts presented in the series often manifest in arrogance and sarcastic comments. The main source of witty remarks is the Dowager Countess who is a traditionalist and often comments on the behaviour of others, especially the younger generation. Theorists advocate that social class is connected to the patterns of lifestyles rather than to the economic or inherited social position of an individual, and enables therefore social mobility.

Social mobility is the movement of an individual from one social class to another, and is likely to occur between classes that are close to each other on an occupational scale. Pitirim Sorokin (1964) describes the structure of social class as superimposed, like a ladder, which allows movement between the classes. Sorokin categorizes the mobility as horizontal mobility (i.e. movement within the same class) and vertical mobility (i.e. movement between different classes), of which the latter can be further divided into upward or downward vertical mobility. The Age of the Renaissance and the Reformation represent a time of increased social mobility. The time after the First World War, and the broadening of the classes, enabled the members of the working class to re-invent themselves as middle class. The theory presented by Sorokin, emphasizes that in democratic societies the social position of an individual is not determined at birth, but that everyone can seek positions that are not typical to the social class of that individual. The only exception of social mobility is the aristocracy where the Crown determines the peerage; one can only go as high as there are titles. Within the aristocracy, the mobility is thus mainly horizontal, but within the working or middle classes, the research conducted by David Glass in the 1950s

shows that upward social mobility is more common than downward social mobility as some classes are more desirable than others are.

Because *Downton Abbey* is a period drama that covers the social class structure of 20th century Britain, the phenomenon of social mobility is also featured in the series. There are evident and subtle changes to some of the characters' class positions throughout the series. Most of the social mobility depicted is horizontal mobility (i.e. mobility within a social class) for example a housemaid becomes a lady's maid or a footman becomes a valet, but there are examples of vertical social mobility as well. Education is the key in the improvement of a character's social status, advocated by theorists and other characters of the series. As stated in the Introduction: "[t]here is a natural emotional wish to believe that social mobility is improving. People like rags-to-riches stories, wanting to think everyone has a fair chance to rise by merit and effort – even when it's patently not so" (Toynbee 2014). In an era where the political opinions rise among the population, the emphasis on presentation of those opinions becomes more and more important. The village teacher Ms. Bunting is too articulate in her opinions and thus angers the more conservative members of the family, and by that destroys her chance to enter in a relationship with Tom Branson. Then again, the editor Ms. Edmunds also shares Tom's strong opinions about the society, but is more cautious to voice them and has thereby a better chance than Ms. Bunting had previously.

The aim of this thesis is to explore social mobility as well as social class by concentrating on a few key figures of the series to view their evolvement throughout the series. The characters chosen for this study are the Earl's second daughter Edith Crawley; the chauffeur Tom Branson; and the housemaid Ethel Parks. Edith Crawley experiences horizontal mobility in the series because of her position as part of the aristocracy. She does, however, experience upward social mobility (within the aristocratic class) when she marries above her father's status, and thereby outranks her own family.

Tom Branson is a working class chauffeur to the family. As an Irish, politically active socialist he marries the Earl's youngest daughter, Sybil, and experiences upward social mobility as he ascends to the upper middle class. While Sybil is alive, he maintains his political views and tries to improve the conditions of the working class. After her death, Tom has to find his own place in the family who teach him the speech and mannerisms of the nobility, even though he does not regard himself as a member of the upper class. Through the series, Tom struggles to find his place in society, and faces class conflicts from society as well as experiencing inner class conflict; he is not an aristocrat but cannot return to the working class either. In the end of the series he does accept his position and can thereby create a new life for himself.

Ethel Parks is a former housemaid at Downton Abbey. As she tries to improve her position, she begins a relationship with an upper class man, and subsequently becomes pregnant. When the officer does not acknowledge the child or the affair, Ethel has to leave Downton Abbey and becomes a prostitute, a member of the lowest class and an example of downward social mobility. Like the rest of the characters examined for this thesis, she also experiences upward social mobility in the end, as she is once again employed as a housemaid.

Social mobility is a phenomenon that exists wherever there exists social class. The conclusion of this thesis is that Julian Fellowes has succeeded in creating a period drama that illustrates the existing social structures of the early 20th century, albeit with some independent interpretations. In my opinion, social mobility is evident in both subtle and obvious changes to the characters' positions, both in the key figures analysed in this thesis as well as in the general observations. Goldthorpe's Class Scheme (1980) can be used in regard to the occupational mobility of a few characters, for example Tom's rise to the middle class and Ethel's rise to working class; but also in the mobility of minor characters in the series such as Mr. Molesley, Thomas, Anna and Gwen. The character's personalities, as well as the circumstances they are in, affect the mobility they experience. As there is in

real life, there are characters throughout the series that portray the opportunistic members of a class (e.g. Edna), the ones who misstep (e.g. Ethel, Edith) as well as characters that break the conventions of social class structures (e.g. Mary, Edith and Sybil).

The awareness of class distinctions is rising because of political and social events of the 21st century. The nostalgic representations of a “simpler” life encourage nationalists to preserve the national heritage, at times in radical ways. Although this Thesis deals with the portrayal of social class and social mobility in *Downton Abbey*, there is still a need for more research in sociology on contemporary television series.

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