The Return of the 1920s: An Examination of the Twenty First Century Revival

Dirk Andrew Gibb

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Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made.

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Dirk Gibb

Abstract

This thesis presents, frames, and analyses a corpus of films and television programs set in the 1920s, all of which have been produced in the last decade. It posits these texts as the latest in a long line of 'returns' to prominence of this storied decade within popular culture. It questions why such a twenty-first century resurgence of interest in the 1920s has come about, arguing that we have much to learn from these representations in seeking to grasp key origins of our ever-later modernity's founding mass media and consumer age. In so doing, it apprehends the 1920s as a 'protean' decade, and this for its future-oriented energy, unfinished nature, uncontrollable generativity, diverse potential, and ongoing relevance. In the process, it seeks to discover what makes this latest return of the 1920s distinctive and in what ways it repeats overdetermined tropes that date back as far as the decade itself. In both respects, the thesis argues that the 1920s accumulatively appear to us on screen in a manner that comprises dense intertextual, audiovisual, literary, and historical layers in a state of constant realignment.

In allegorical terms, it is argued that our twenty-first century present is rearticulated and questioned through this audiovisual revival of the 1920s, and that the story of our times is made more palatable, and less traumatic, by the filter of the past through the setting of what is by general consensus a key nodal point in the history of Western modernity. At the same time, the 1920s themselves were already a protean multimedia decade, forward looking and intrinsically adaptable to subsequent allegorisation, and radically open to diverse, contradictory possibilities.

In order to address productively such complex historical, textual, and conceptual terrain, the thesis engages a number of academic disciplines, notably History, Film and Television Studies, and Literary Studies, drawing on and combining them in distinctive ways. It thereby seeks to demonstrate the degrees to which the audiovisual texts of the current revival reconstruct and remain faithful to, and/or distort and adapt, the historical events of the 1920s, and how previous iterations are updated by these films and television programs. In this sense, it aims to provide a work of historical

accompaniment for the present day consumer of this 1920s revival, while at the same time reading the latter as a phenomenon of and for our times that seeks to understand a central chapter in the genealogy of its ever-expanding modernity as played out on screen.

Acknowledgements

This project of mine had its true genesis in my friendship with a fellow student, Sarah Kauter. Although my interest in the history and popular culture of the decade of the 1920s dated back to my childhood, it was when I met Sarah in 2010, the final year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Newcastle, that I truly appreciated the hold that the Roaring Twenties still held on my generation. Sarah was a fan of Ruth Etting, and her portrayal by Doris Day in the 1955 biographical motion picture *Love Me Or Leave Me*. Many were the afternoons and evenings that we would listen to recordings of Etting singing such songs as "You Made Me Love You", or watch clips from *Love Me Or Leave Me*, on Youtube. It was extremely enjoyable to revisit this fabled era with a peer through the capabilities of contemporary, electronic technology. YouTube, alongside allowing us to follow fads and fancies of the start of a new decade, also provided a conduit for nostalgia. Sadly, Sarah passed away from cancer in 2012, but I will always remember with fondness our shared interests and companionship.

I will start off by thanking my supervisors, all from the Faculty of Education and Arts in the University of Newcastle's School of Humanities and Social Sciences: Dr. Hamish Ford (Discipline of Film, Media and Cultural Studies), Dr. James Bennett (Discipline of History) and Associate Professor Alistair Rolls (Discipline of French). Drs Ford and Bennett were present at the start of my Ph.D journey, in February 2013, and Assoc. Prof. Rolls came on board, thereby forming my triumvirate of supervision, in September 2013. All three scholars put me on a course of greater depth and scope for my postgraduate research, encouraging me to expand my research from a comparative study of *Boardwalk Empire* and *Underbelly: Razor* to a general overview and study of the return of the Jazz Age in twenty first century popular culture. They have provided invaluable advice, counselled restraint and alternate approaches during my more unfocused moments of candidature and weathered personal issues and requirements for family leave, on my part, with

understanding and great patience. These gentlemen have my admiration and sincere gratitude.

Associate Professor Rosalind Smith, hailing from the same school and faculty as the aforementioned academics (Discipline of English and Writing) was my initial third, and primary, supervisor from the commencement of my thesis until August 2013. Regrettably, Assoc. Prof. Smith had to step down due to an overextended workload. Before this change in my candidature, however, Assoc. Prof. Smith encouraged me to consider how my texts could be understood through the prism of true crime literature and crime fiction. This aided me considerably, especially during the early days of the narrowed focus of my writing, and I am indebted to Assoc. Prof. Smith and her period of supervision.

At my institution, the process of Confirmation, after approximately the initial year of candidature, sharpens the skills of provisional candidates in formulating a detailed plan and literature review for their Ph.D projects, before they are allowed to progress further. Over the course of two Confirmation meetings, in February and June 2014, I underwent a defence of my project. The two attempts were necessary because of the complexity of my project, and alterations that needed to be made to my argument. Nevertheless, this step was worthwhile and intellectually stimulating, thanks to the challenging, probing questions and constructive criticism of my panels. They were comprised of Professor Victoria Haskins (Discipline of History), Dr. Trisha Pender (Discipline of English and Writing), Dr. Michael Sala (Discipline of English and Writing) and Dr. Steven Threadgold (Discipline of Sociology and Anthropology).

Undertaking a Ph.D needn't be a solitary endeavour, and the camaraderie and support found in the Postgraduate Room in the McMullin Building on the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle was great for morale. My fellow postgrad researchers, Bryce Abraham, Laurence Allen, Dael Allison, Samuel Ariong, Markos Carelos, Jude Conway, Honae Cuffe, Alan Duncan, Ian Eckford, Robert Elliott, Jeff Green, Susan Grimes, Ann Hardy, Peter Hooker, Robert Kear, Michael Kilmister,

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Conferences are a fantastic opportunity for presenting one's own research and networking, so my next shout out goes to all of the organising bodies for conferences where, over the years, I was privileged either to present at or spectate. The conferences I merely attended were, in chronological order; the NewMac Conference in 2013 at the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle, the RHD Symposium in 2013 at Callaghan, the "Tethering the Past" conference in 2013 at the University of Sydney, the "Cinema's Realisms - 5th Cinematic Thinking Workshop" conference in 2014 at the University of New South Wales, the "AMSN2: Transnational Modernisms" conference in 2014 at the University of Sydney, the "First World War: Local, Global and Imperial Perspectives" conference in 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Newcastle, the RHD Symposium in 2015 at Callaghan and the Australasian Humour Studies Network's 22nd Conference, on "Unfunny: The Limits Of Humour", in 2016 at the Women's College, University of Sydney and the RHD Symposium in 2016 at Callaghan.

As for the conferences where I presented, these were, chronologically; the Australasian Humour Studies Network's 19th Colloquium, on "Humour and Creativity", in 2013 at the City Campus of the University of Newcastle, where I presented a paper entitled, "'Oh He Could Grind My Coffee': Female Bawdy and the 'Hokum' Tradition in Pre-War Blues", the Staff and Students Talking About Research (SSTAR) Conference in 2013 at Callaghan, where I presented a paper entitled, "'You Can't Be Half A Gangster Anymore, Nuck': The Law, The Underworld and the vices in *Boardwalk Empire* and *Underbelly: Razor*," the School

of Humanities and Social Science's Research Higher Degree (RHD) Symposium in 2013 at Callaghan, where I presented a paper entitled, "The Boys Light Up For Revisionist History: Musical Performance in *Boardwalk Empire* and *Underbelly: Razor*", the RHD Symposium in 2014 at Callaghan, where I presented a paper entitled, "Why the 1920s? The Protean Decade's Return as Ongoing Text in Recent Film and TV", the "Histories Past, History's Future" conference in 2014 at the University of Sydney, where I presented a reworked version of "Why the 1920s: The Protean Decade's Return as Ongoing Text in Recent Film and TV", the "New Directions in Screen Studies" Conference in 2015 at Monash University, where I presented a paper entitled, "Magic in the Midnight Moonlight: Woody Allen's Fantastical Return To The 1920s In *Midnight In Paris* and *Magic in the Moonlight*", and the XVIIth Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand (FHAANZ) Conference in 2015 at the Queensland University of Technology, where I presented a paper entitled, "Don't Be 'Blinders' By The Underbelly of the Style: History as Opening Credits in *Underbelly: Razor* and *Peaky Blinders*."

I have an especially resonant memory of the NewMac Conference, on the topic of "Human/Nonhuman/Inhuman/Posthuman", held at Callaghan in 2014, because I was one of the organising committee, as well as presenting a paper entitled, "Farewell Daddy Blues": The Emotional Use of Soundtrack in *Boardwalk Empire* and *Underbelly: Squizzy*." My thanks, and renewal of academic solidarity, go out to my fellow organisers for that conference.

The Office of Graduate Studies for my university kindly eased my financial situation from 2013-16 through an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA). This scholarship permitted me ample amounts of time in which to write and research. Michelle Allan, the Administrative Assistant for my relevant School and Faculty, tirelessly arranged for the costs of my essential texts and conference fees to be reimbursed under my APA. At the beginning of my candidature, the Faculty of Science and Information Technology at the University of Newcastle also awarded me a Post-Graduate Scholarship, thereby enabling me to attend the Australasian Humour Studies Network's 19th Colloquium in 2013. From the beginning of January 2017, I was

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And now on to everyone else. Firstly, a major crisis reared its ugly head in January 2018, the beginning of my final year in the Ph.D program, when my hard drive, containing all of my valuable research material and writing, became corrupted! Luckily, over the course of the next three months, two talented and diligent businesses on the Central Coast, Buckland IT Solutions (run by Chris Buckland) and Kincumber Computers, were able to retrieve my data, allowing me to finish and present this volume that you now hold in your hands. The patience and technical know how of these respective businesses rescued my family and I from a very bleak period, and my thanks and gratitude are never ending. Hats must also be doffed to the amazing staff at the Auchmuty and Huxley libraries on Callaghan campus for their skilful, diligent and passionate guidance towards onsite references, and their patient and dedicated arranging of resources at external libraries to be transferred to Newcastle through their Bonus and Getit interlibrary loans schemes. The staff at the Newcastle, Wyong and (since July 2018) Armidale public library (and University of New England Dixson Library) services graciously and professionally did the same, both through their main branches and suburban branches. Frequent writing bootcamps were organised by the University of Newcastle and the Newcastle University Postgraduate Student's Association (NUPSA, whose initiative was entitled "Shut Up and Write!") in 2017-18, in the McMullin and Behavioural Science Buildings and at the Bar on the Hill on the Callaghan campus. The Centre for Teaching and Learning, also found on the Callaghan campus, hosted additional writing bootcamps in 2017, and Dr. Lil Hayes, a Learning Adviser for the Centre, offered valuable feedback on improving my topic sentences and integrating theory with my case studies during the last few months of my candidature. To Amanda Hall-Griffin, Research Training Officer for the Faculty of Education and Arts, Assoc. Prof. Rolls, Michelle Allan and Hugh Milligan, the NUPSA Project Officer, go my huzzahs for providing lengthy periods of serenity within which to clear out my mental cobwebs and put either pen to paper, or fingers to keyboards. Through the Student Equity and Support department at the University of Newcastle, Katy

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Lastly, much love, respect and thankfulness goes out to my family. My adorable wife, Sylvia, and my children, Dakota and Stormy-Serenity, have provided a haven from the stresses unavoidable in writing a thesis of this magnitude. Alongside their love and support, however, has been priceless advice, encouragement and feedback from Syl, including the idea to discuss race, immigration and gender in the same chapter – she is undertaking her second degree by correspondence, so our house is a very studious one! My father and mother, Paul and Linda Gibb, and my siblings, Melissa White and Jason Gibb, have checked in with me along the way, and reminded me, along with my immediate family unit, that I am valuable and worthwhile no matter what, and that they are proud of my achievements. My parents also provided invaluable emotional and financial support for my family and I when we moved to Armidale at the end of June 2018, during the final months of the writing of this thesis. Their aid and comfort to us can never be truly repaid. My paternal grandparents, Peter and Julie Gibb, came through for my family and I at a trying time in 2016 with emotional and financial aid, immeasurably aiding my life's

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Introduction

The Return of the 1920s on Screen

During the first two decades of the 2000s, a great many films and television programs set during the 1920s have been released. These audiovisual texts have emerged from the Australian, English, French, German, Spanish and United States entertainment industries. Reflecting the 1920s' ongoing resonance and attraction across these national contexts as a pivotal decade for many Western societies, marking a period in which key tropes of modernity were developed, consolidated, and disseminated in ways that often spanned an increasingly global popular culture, the films and programs under discussion in this thesis have enjoyed a global reception.

The numerous audiovisual texts set in, or returning us to, the 1920s display a variety of genres. There are gritty, violent underworld sagas, as well as revivals of less intense and graphic detective procedurals and heritage inspired miniseries. There are texts featuring soap opera and drama elements tracing stories that chart early women's liberation and empowerment against altering permutations of technology and warfare. Meanwhile, sometimes science fiction and fantasy genres emerge to incorporate aspects of time travel and foreground notions of nostalgia. Alongside these genres we see some use of documentary techniques, with extended reenactments and even films whose design faithfully recreates the *mise-en-scène* of the late silent era of moving images. These are just a few stylistic takes on the twenty first century return – the latest incarnation of the 1920s' enduring fascination for popular culture – of simulated digital-era recreation and essaying of the Roaring Twenties, Jazz Age, and *Années folles* ("crazy years"). Within these differing modes of dramatisation, recurring tropes can be discerned, such as stylisation of the choreography of violence and editing patterns on display in such television programs as *Underbelly: Razor*, *Underbelly: Squizzy* and *Peaky Blinders*, or the utilisation of variously self-conscious anachronism, often through the use of sound. Historical infidelity is highlighted through the soundtracks of television programs including the *Underbelly* franchise instalments, *Peaky Blinders* and even *Boardwalk Empire*, alongside films such as *The Tender Hook*, *Easy Virtue* and *The Great Gatsby*. Frequent themes and issues featured in this 1920s screen revival are: youthful

hedonism; Prohibition and gangland intrigue; the emancipation of women; the status of veterans of the First World War in peacetime; the complicated (and frequently blighted) place of race, gender, class and sexuality in the midst of rapid socioeconomic change; and conservative reactions against modernity and its emergent consumer or popular culture.

This collection of disparate, but ultimately connected films and television programs is far from the first time that popular culture has replicated the 1920s. But the modern technologies and explicit realism brought to bear on this seminal decade by twenty first century film and television constitutes a unique prism through which to view this seemingly forever protean decade. The audiovisual techniques brought to bear on this latest revival of the 1920s concurrently provide a greater level of grit and an increased degree of realism than earlier texts set during the 1920s at the same time as constituting an increasingly 'virtual' presentation of this overdetermined period in modern history. The format of television, with importance placed on long-form stories and the writer or writers, along with the segmentation into a serial pattern of instalments (although streaming-era viewership habits have an impact on audience reception), also provide potential incentives to revisit (and remake) the 1920s. Viewers, in the context of streaming and home media viewing patterns, can enjoy a greater degree of agency in how they engage with popular culture, in a manner similar to the flexibility of reading, or re-reading, books (Mittel 2015: 37 – 8). The serialised nature of television in the twenty-first century does have parallels with the fandoms of nineteenth-century serialised fiction (*Downton* seen as a updated, serialised romance novel of seven to nine chapters per season, or *Boardwalk* as a digitalised Great American Novel of twelve chapters each season), and the interactions between letter-writing correspondents and authors such as Charles Dickens (Mittel 2015: 40) have a parallel in the social media campaigns of fan bases urging new seasons for beloved programs, as was the case with *Miss Fisher's* being commissioned for a third season in 2014 (Groves 2015). However, what is unique to the contemporary media landscape is the communal practice of "bingeing", or "marathoning", seasons of television via home entertainment or streaming options, "which fosters a more immersive and attentive viewing experience" in the quest for a narrative reckoning (Mittel 2015: 39).

This decade in and of itself, let alone in digital-era recreated textual form, presents itself to twenty first century minds as possessing the characters of quickly moving, mercurial change, demonstrating a versatility, ambiguity and multiple diverse trajectories where popular culture, society, politics, technology and other fields of human achievement are concerned.

Often foregrounding realism and verisimilitude, these films and television programs that are my focus also frequently feature the use of distance to present national allegories. Home Box Office's (HBO) *Boardwalk Empire*, for example, features unflinching reflections on, and depictions of, discriminatory housing practices and sociocultural divisions between (and within) communities comprised of different races, the black market for illicit substances and the trials and tribulations of their distribution, fractured and corrupt government and law enforcement, and the media's relationship to societal functioning. The passing of time can distance viewers from the problems of the twenty first century, a well-known conservative effect of period set texts. On the other hand, for example, a Prohibition-era setting inoculates the viewer, giving homeopathic, prescriptive glances of contemporary reality in a period solution, thus sweetening the pill of realisation, through art, that history is cyclical, frequently resonating with what occurred in the past. Featuring a modernity and consumer culture very much in flux, the relevance of this pivotal decade is reaffirmed by the diverse updated screen representations of the 1920s that this thesis goes on to analyse, driven by the fact that its central problems and issues remain in many respects unresolved.

In addition to the ongoing relevance of the themes and challenges charted on screen, despite being nearly a century in the past, the 1920s connects to and even at times can feel like the twenty first century through being rendered in high definition digital sound and image. This is only one aspect of the linearity-challenging vision of history in action throughout these texts. The recycling of the 1920s also benefits from previous textual cycles set in and commenting on this decade, each in turn bringing something new to the metaphorical table. There is no direct representation of history, rather texts piled atop one another. The treatment of onscreen violence has increased in explicitness since the 1960s' revisionist reimaginings of the Hollywood gangster film (such as *Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967) and the western (such as *The Wild Bunch*, 1969) in the context of the breaking down of decades-long

censorship policies and the commercial film industry's economic crisis. For films set during the Prohibition era, precedents for raw, violent acts included the disturbing sexual violence in *Once Upon A Time In America* (1984) and the Grand Guignol, heightened and stylised bloodletting of *The Untouchables* (1987). From this tactic of dismantling the tropes of essentially bloodless gunplay, ubiquitous in Great Depression era gangster films and the television series *The Untouchables* (1959–63) has come the more contemporary, visceral shocks possible with closeups of faces slashed by razor blades in *Underbelly: Razor*, or shots of faces exploding and blood spraying through the impact of gunshots in *Boardwalk Empire*. The 1920s has always been with us, in revisited form. Now it bears the marks of history increasingly turned into textual – here audiovisual – form.

A Dense Textual Web

In the twenty first century, the decade of the 1920s as recreated in films and television programs appears to have returned with a vengeance. This audiovisual return is varied in its stylistic and thematic approaches. In an attempt to understand this phenomenon in all its complexity, this thesis engages with a number of fields of inquiry that often remain segregated in discrete academic disciplines. It operates at the nexus of the scholarly disciplines of Film and Television studies, English, and History, also taking in history on film, "dramadoc" (drama documentary)/ "docudrama" (documentary drama) analysis, the study of returned veterans' affairs and experiences, the concept of "vernacular modernism", and true crime. As the chapter breakdown and the choice of texts in each will demonstrate, each genre, or subgenre employed by one of the films or television program under discussion brings with it a history of theoretical and thematic treatment, which the present scholarship seeks to interrogate and extend. This thesis analyses a selection of English-language films and television programs released since 2008, set in the 1920s. The primary case studies comprise seven films and thirteen television programs. The films are: *Easy Virtue* (2008), *Leatherheads* (2008), *Midnight in Paris* (2011), *The Immigrant* (2013), *Bessie* (2015), *The Danish Girl* (2015), and *Goodbye Christopher Robin* (2017). The television programs are: *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2014), *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015), *Underbelly: Razor* (2011), *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (2012–2015), *Underbelly: Squizzy* (2013), *Peaky*

Blinders (2013–present), *The Making of the Mob: New York* (2015), *The Making of the Mob: Chicago* (2016), *Timeless* (2016–present), *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* (2016–present), *Decline and Fall* (2017), *Babylon Berlin* (2017), and *Las Chicas Del Cable* (*Cable Girls*, 2017–present).

A central concern throughout the thesis is to suggest how the above texts' presentation of the 1920s help us view present day issues in a new light. This involves the use of select methodological and theoretical sources. Of particular use throughout will be: the notion of "history on film" as defined by Robert A. Rosenstone; Miriam Hansen's theories of modernity, especially the idea of "vernacular modernism"; and, select Frankfurt School writing for its more overtly critical accounts of modernity's everyday popular culture. Applying these methodologies, concepts, and analytical lenses to the question as to why the 1920s have returned with such force in early twenty first century film and television, exploring the extent to which this most recent cycle of period dramas can be seen as not merely nostalgic, but demonstrate strong links to present day concerns and ways of viewing, analysing, engaging with and interpreting film and television programs.

The above films' and television programs' fidelity to historical record will also be investigated, not so as to judge them according to narrow and naïve criteria of objective or simple representation claims but more to see how these texts engage with particular versions of history, and the kinds of fused audiovisual history that results. Therefore, we need to take into account allegiances to franchise conventions – in the case, for example, of the *Underbelly* canon – and the notion of maintaining dramatic suspense as in the fictionalisations inherent in *Boardwalk Empire* and many other examples. As a consequence, the different production contexts will be scrutinised for similarities and differences in artistic and historical approach. In the context of television, this will include HBO for *Boardwalk Empire*, Showtime/Channel Nine for *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy* and Carnival Films/Masterpiece for *Downton Abbey*.

Over the course of the twenty first century so far, the first three years of the 2010s alone brought *Boardwalk Empire* and *The Great Gatsby* (2013) from the USA, *Downton Abbey* from the UK and *Underbelly: Razor*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and *Underbelly: Squizzy* from Australia. The reason for this proliferation

in production and popularity of popular cultural texts set during the 1920s raises interesting research questions. The upsurge exists alongside popular cultural productions set almost every other decade of the twentieth century. Although, in a cumulative sense, cultural productions set in other relatively recent historical periods may outnumber productions set during the 1920s, this body of artistic work remains sizeable, and its presence on the popular cultural landscape, so close to the centenary of the beginning of the 1920s, is notable.

The films and television programs discussed ahead clearly do not resemble the first cycle of popular culture returning to and commenting on this protean decade. Rather, this most recent revival exhibits its own modes, traits and preoccupations in revisiting that 1920s, inspiring what can appear endless subsequent literary and audiovisual representations such that we are long past being able to pretend there is such a thing as a direct representation of this history that is not enmeshed, consciously or otherwise, in a giant web of preexisting textuality. Although Andreas Huyssen has written about the "intense public panic of oblivion" fueling "contemporary public obsession with memory" (2003: 17) as a direct commentary on the tactile attractions of museums and monuments (1995: 255), a case could also be made that an uneasiness with more selective, whitewashed and anodyne revisitations of the 1920s in popular culture has led to another cycle that seeks to improve upon inclusivity and the wealth of experiences embedded in the history of that decade. Far from existing in a vacuum, the twenty first century plethora of 1920s reenactments follow precedents that began in the 1930s. As early as 1931, a trifecta of popular cultural/literary revisitations, analysis and eulogies of the recently concluded decade reached the public of the United States. Frederick Lewis Allen published his journalistic exploration of the decade, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History Of The Nineteen-Twenties*, while F. Scott Fitzgerald published the short story "Babylon Revisited" in *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine (and later in the short story collection *Taps at Reveille* [1935]). Meanwhile, *The Front Page*, the first cinematic adaptation of Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's 1928 comedic play about newspaper crime reporters, was also released. During the decade of the Great Depression, gangster films often included the social and underworld historical context of Prohibition in recounting their protagonists' stories, such as *The Public Enemy* (1931) and *The Roaring Twenties* (1939). What marked out gangster films in

this era as the 1930s progressed, as distinctive from the more recent past, was Hollywood's highly restrictive Hayes Code, which enforced a tight regime of censorship. Underworld figures could be seen to gain wealth, power and prestige from their illicit acumen, but crime could never be seen to pay at the end.

Alternatively, motion pictures tackling social issues, such as *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932) could increase the *gravitas* of the hero's plight through a mood of disbelief at the ingratitude felt by the social system towards service in the First World War, followed by economic hardship in the new decade. Another style of immersion in the 1920s, and a trend that was to continue throughout the following decades, was the musical motion picture, with extravagant production values, that were often biographical, and set at least partly in the 1920s. Examples released during the 1930s include *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936, about the life of theatrical impresario Florenz Ziegfeld) and *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938).

During the 1940s, the trend for biographical musicals, such as *Till The Clouds Roll By* (1946, about the life of composer Jerome Kern), *Night and Day* (1946, about the life of composer Cole Porter), *The Jolson Story* (1946, about the life of entertainer Al Jolson) and *Words and Music* (1948, about the life of composing team Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart) continued. The early 1940s also saw the release of *Roxie Hart* (1942), based on the 1926 play *Chicago*, by Maurine Dallas Watkins, that was itself informed by two murder trials involving women in Chicago in the early 1920s that ended in acquittal (Perry 2010). Notably, the end of the 1940s marked the second cinematic adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1949, after a now lost 1926 adaptation), which posed a questioning stance towards 1920s frivolity against a historical backdrop of post Second World War American consumerist and economic might. Musicals and biopics dominated the 1950s take on the 1920s. Although an original property such as *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), albeit mainly containing older songs as part of its soundtrack, could take a satirical look at the introduction of talking pictures in Hollywood in the 1920s, it was outnumbered by cinematic offerings such as *The Story of Will Rogers* (1952), *The Eddie Cantor Story* (1953), *Deep in My Heart* (1954, about the life of composer Sigmund Romberg), *Love Me or Leave Me* (1955, about the life of singer Ruth Etting), *Beau James* (1957, about the life of New York City mayor James J. "Jimmy" Walker), *The Buster Keaton Story* (1957), *Man of a Thousand Faces* (1957, about the life of

chameleon-like actor Lon Chaney senior), *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957, an adaptation of aviator Charles Lindbergh's 1953 autobiographical account of his 1927 flight across the Atlantic) and *The Five Pennies* (1959, about the life of cornetist and bandleader Ernest "Red" Nichols). The medium of television was also starting to acknowledge the 1920s, with the popular dramatic television series *Robert Montgomery Presents* (1950–57) adapting "The Great Gatsby" (S6E33, 1955).

During the 1960s, big budget musicals continued to return to the 1920s, such as *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967), *Star!* (1968, about the life of performer Gertrude Lawrence) and *Funny Girl* (1968, an adaptation of the 1964 Broadway musical about the life of entertainer Fanny Brice). Alternately, there were more intimate films, such as *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), an account of teenage sexual repression in 1928 Kansas. The dismantling of the Production Code, and its replacement by a ratings system, during this revolutionary decade bore fruit with a cycle of cinematic adaptations during the 1970s that permitted a more explicit treatment of violent and sexual themes, as well as the use of profanity. Such motion pictures included *The Great Gatsby* (1974) and *The Front Page* (1974), as well as the original screenplay, the subject of which was barnstorming (stunt piloting of aeroplanes) for *The Great Waldo Pepper* (1975). Occasional musicals, such as *The Boy Friend* (1971, an adaptation of Sandy Wilson's 1953 West End musical) and *Funny Lady* (a sequel to *Funny Girl*, continuing the life story of Fanny Brice [1975]) continued to appear, while more attention was being paid to the era on television. The British drama series *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1971–75) set its fifth and final season, following the lives and fortunes of an aristocratic London family and their servants, during the 1920s, while the short-lived U.S. version *Beacon Hill* (1975) was set in Boston after the First World War. The United Kingdom also delivered *Agatha* (1979), recounting detective writer Agatha Christie's famous eleven-day disappearance in 1926 (Cade 1997), while Australia was represented in the 1970s return to the 1920s with *Caddie* (1976, about a single mother and bar attendant in Sydney during the 1920s and Great Depression).

The 1980s commenced with a television film remake of *Splendor in the Grass* (1981). Australia produced two comedic reimaginings (in the vein of *Caddie*) of the urban Australian 1920s in the early 1980s. *Squizzy Taylor* (1982) dramatised the life of the titular Melbourne gangster, while *Kitty and the Bagman* (1983) dealt with

gangsters and prostitution in 1920s Sydney. In West Germany, epic film sagas such as *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's character study of a pimp and ex convict in late 1920s Berlin) and the first two episodes of Edgar Reitz's *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984, about a family in the rural, Hunsrück area of Germany) chronicled different aspects of Weimar era Germany. In the United Kingdom, *Chariots of Fire* (1981, recreating a true story of religious faiths intersecting with the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris) and *A Passage To India* (1984, an adaptation of Santha Rama Rau's 1960 play, which was itself an adaptation of E.M. Forster's 1924 novel concerning tense social interactions in a fictional city in the British Raj [the colonial Indian subcontinent]) tackled themes of class, religion, gender and colonialism. As for the United States, *Once Upon A Time In America* (1984) traced the lives of Jewish underworld figures from the early 1920s until 1968, *The Cotton Club* (1984) took as its subject the titular New York City nightclub, and those involved with it, while *Matewan* (1987) was inspired by a coal-mining strike in Matewan, West Virginia in 1920.

Moving into the 1990s, gangster films continued to hearken back to the 1920s for historical setting and subject matter. The proportion of the 1920s revisitation during the last decade of the twentieth century that tackled criminal topics included *Miller's Crossing* (1990) and *Mobsters* (1991, a semifictionalised retelling of the events leading up to the creation of The Commission, or governing body of the American Mafia, in 1931). Otherwise, the biographical film was in the ascendancy where the return of the 1920s was concerned, encompassing such films as *The Babe* (1992, about the life of baseball player George Herman "Babe" Ruth), *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* (1994, about the lives of writer Dorothy Parker and her fellow, literary Algonquin Hotel Round Table members), *Balto* (1995, an animated dramatisation of a Siberian husky sled dog's role in transporting medication to diphtheria patients in 1925 Alaska), *Michael Collins* (1996) and *The Newton Boys* (1998, about the Newton Gang, a family of Texan bank robbers). However, there was an outlier released just as the 1990s were finishing. *Man of the Century* (1999) took a uniquely satirical look at nostalgia for the 1920s, focusing on the life of Johnny Twennies, a newspaper journalist living an authentically 1920s existence in present day Manhattan.

Defining a Cycle, Mixed Modes, Scholarship

To mark the beginning of the new millennium, *The Great Gatsby* was once again remade, this time as a television film (2000). The 2000s also bore witness to a further spate of films based on true stories, such as *The Cat's Meow* (2001, inspired by the death of film director Thomas H. Ince during the birthday celebrations of media mogul William Randolph Hearst in 1924) and *Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius* (2004). The golfing thematic concerns of *Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius* was pre-empted by *The Legend of Bagger Vance* (2000, an adaptation of Steven Pressfield's 1995 novel), where Bobby Jones appears as a supporting character. The main character, Rannulph Junuh epitomises in this Southern set drama the dysfunctional trope of the war veteran, due to Junuh's trauma at losing so many of his company in the First World War causing his alcoholism. Warfare was also the subject of *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (2006), an overview of Irish nationalism and resistance against British colonialism in the context of the Irish War of Independence (1919–21) and Irish Civil War (1922–23). Perhaps the most prestigious entry in the recreation of the 1920s from the first decade of the twenty first century was *Chicago* (2002), a musical adaptation of the 1975 Broadway musical by John Kander, Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse, which continued the popular cultural appropriations of the 1926 play *Chicago*'s exploration of celebrity, scandal and corruption in the titular city during the Roaring Twenties.

The most recent revival of the 1920s in the late 2000s and 2010s, the subject of this thesis, is similarly created and disseminated through the genre and stylistic parameters of biopic, war drama, epic saga, animation, intimate character study and, to a degree, musical. Where the present-day revival differs, however, is also an important consideration. Likewise, what this thesis adds to the already rich scholarly history of work studying the 1920s on screen and as history. The chief scholarly disciplines engaged with in what lies ahead are film and television studies and history. Television studies offers an especially central methodology, addressing the length of television program seasons under discussion, if not individual episodes, offering the potential to permit more time and space for a story to unfold than in the cinema. As an emerging scholar, I am a relative outsider in debates on TV studies. Nevertheless, this thesis demonstates a strong relationship to recent work examining digital- and streaming-era television and notions of 'quality television', which often

features representations of history. 'The concentration of "quality television"' (McNair 2011: 14) with a "cinematic approach" (ibid.: 15) as seen in the 1920s revival relates to the present-day medium's method of presenting unfolding stories with historically unprecedented production values. The medium, in the view of Raymond Williams in the 1970s, and still valid in the greatly changed landscape of contemporary television, has benefited greatly from 1920s developments in "dramatic mobility", exposing intimate spaces within naturalistic dramas to "public pressures that were seen as determining it [the involved family or group]: not just as *messages* from the streets or the stock exchanges or the battlefields, but as the dramatic *inclusion* of just these exchanges" (Williams 1990: 57). The return to the 1920s in contemporary popular culture takes advantage of, and acknowledges the continuation of developments cited by Williams, the sweep of history, budgets and the potential for spectacle to incorporate epic setpieces, such as gang warfare in *Razor* and *Squizzy*, industrial unrest in *Boardwalk*, deployment of government forces against dissident civilians in *Blinders*, financial machinations on Wall Street in *Gatsby* (through archival footage and re-enactment) and *Boardwalk* and battlefield carnage in in texts ranging from *Boardwalk* to *Downton* to *Tiempos de Guerra* (2017, *Morocco: Love in Times of War*).

Television programming pertaining to historical events frequently has a goal of hyperauthenticity, or an underplayed, dichotomous unreality, due to the historical method (with associated connotations of authenticity and historical accuracy), frequently deployed to reenact fictionalised (or semifictionalised) versions of the past (De Groot 2008: 181–2). Comedic historical programming permits the mask of verisimilitude to slip, in order to reveal "caricatured illusion" (De Groot 2008: 182), but subgenres of comedy such as parody etc have not yet been prominently served by the revival, although the programs do feature many humorous moments. Despite their various modes of production, television's engagement with the past generally, and the 1920s specifically, can be understood to be accepted (or otherwise) by audiences as a continuation of popular conceptualisations of previous historical eras (De Groot 2008: 187; Cardwell 2002: 114).

Especially relevant to the changing nature of the televisual medium is the production of iconoclastic, revisionist and uncompromisingly adult programs such as those, examined ahead, including *Boardwalk*, the *Underbelly* series (*Razor* and *Squizzy*) set

during the 1920s, and *Blinders*. Returning to Williams, these programs can be reliant on "an essential retrospect" (1990: 61), or an attempt to comprehend the past, and interpretations of received popular memories, through artistic mediums. The ability of television productions to "invent an imagined past via the aesthetics and narrative of a series" (Niemeyer and Wentz 2014: 130) can go beyond foregrounding exclusively affirmative and positive emotions and themes through taking advantage of the organisational and spatial characteristics of long-form seriality to "unfold the multiple dimensions of nostalgia" (Niemeyer and Wentz 2014: 130). In this sense, television can be seen as another mode of "living, imagining and sometimes exploiting or (re)inventing the past, present and future" (Niemeyer 2014: 2). This trend of relatively uncensored historical programming is at least partly due to increased demand for more challenging televisual fare since HBO's success with original programming, especially *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), but such a trend is also apparent since the plethora of television sagas from West Germany starting in the 1980s. Series like *Downton* or *Miss Fisher's*, by contrast, feature more genteel overtones of nostalgia, tidy conclusions of storylines and unthreatening notions of "heritage", which can in itself be the spark for problematic and challenging discussion and reception (Braun 2014: 172–81).

In addition to television and film studies, scholarly work in the area of English Literature incorporates crime fiction, while History scholarship encompasses history as represented on the screen, the experience of veterans, mateship[1] and bohemia, racial politics, and the role of the police. Crossing these disciplinary boundaries, the role of allegory in artistic production – a crucial belated and different geographical and historical component in multiple interpretations of art – emerges as a useful concept. Allegory here refers to characters, real or fictional, or historical events representing or symbolising ideas, concepts, personalities and historical events apart from what is depicted or heard "on the surface". The term is of Greek origin, comprising *allos* (other) and *agoreuein* (to speak in public), and the resultant sense of "other-speaking" refers to two related processes of composing and interpreting. Allegorical composition entails writing with a double meaning, while allegorical

[1] An Australian concept of companionship or friendship, especially between men (Bowers 2018: 305–6 & 310–11).

interpretation (or allegoresis) means to analyse a work "as if there were another sense to which it referred […] encoded with meaning intended by the author" (Copeland and Struck 2010: 2). There is a clear relationship between allegory and the "construction of a popular iconography of memory"(Holdsworth 2011: 97), which, especially in the case of television, like the recurrence of 1920s-set dramas across Australian, British and U.S. networks, can "build and reinforce a series of visual repertoires which refer to a specific area or period, or combine selected and selective images, objects, sounds and soundtracks to connote an appropriate sense of 'pastness'" (Holdsworth 2011: 98).

Allegorical nostalgia is an especially pertinent case in engaging with the revival when there is an underlying political reading that can be extracted from texts. In the view of Amy Holdsworth, in a discussion of nostalgic television (a medium that has encouraged the dissemination of received popular memories of romanticised decades such as the 1920s), the recreation of the past has the potential to encourage a "co-existence of critical thinking and emotional engagement" (2011: 102), or what Pam Cook, in terms of the nostalgia film, has deemed the imperative of a cognitive, as well as imaginative and performative, response (2005: 4). Revisionist views on nostalgia, placing it on a range encompassing history and memory, can partner, but also entertain an uneasy, co-existing relationship, with popular culture's ability to "complicate the notion of nostalgia as being essentially inauthentic, ahistorical, sentimentalising, regressive and exploitative" (Holdsworth 2011: 103). For example, some representations of characters and cultural traits we see on screen in the 1920s revisited tend to smack of what would in the 1970s come to be termed "Orientalism." This term comes from postcolonial studies inspired by the work of Edward Said, elucidating a Western "exotic" analysis of colonialism and non-Caucasian populations. The revival features some, albeit usually marginal, Asian characters often treated via what appear highly clichéd representations such as when such characters are show as providers/dealers of vice (such as drug taking) for curious or depressed Westerners.

We can see such apparently Orientalist representations in *The Tender Hook* (the cocaine supplier in this film, atypically for the revival, is granted extended screen time and dialogue), *Boardwalk*, and *Razor*. More benign, perhaps, but ultimately one-dimensional and dehumanising, is the utilisation of Chinese characters as agents

of mysterious Eastern mysticism and magic spirituality, such as the action of the pilot episode of *Blinders* (2013) commencing with gang leader Thomas Shelby persuading a young, fortune telling Chinese girl, Mei Zhang, to cast a spell on his horse to ensure good fortune at the races. Zhang's father's brothel/laundry also serves as a plot device/setting in *Blinders*' for negative and sexualised images of Asian women. Even the sympathetic character of Lin Chung in the episode "Ruddy Gore" (S1E6, 2012), portrayed as a gentlemanly silk dealer and lover of Phryne Fisher, and illustrative of present-day historical programming exhibiting, to varying degrees, a "broadly progressive attitude towards those who are positioned on the margins or periphery of society" (Chapman 2014: 140), is assumed by Phryne to be an opium dealer. This assumption links Chung's heritage to the widespread moral panic around the trade in opium in the European world in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, stigmatising "Asiatics" in the process (Ahmad: 2007; Derks 2012: 105–34, 383–94 & 531–58). In a later episode, "Away With The Fairies" (S1E8, 2012), Chung has a fiancée, Camellia Lu, who ends up becoming the chief case study of a newspaper report on the positive contributions of Melbourne's immigrant communities. However, her climactic deployment of martial arts against henchmen hired by Chung's grandmother highlight an uneasy assumption of character traits in Asian characters and the appropriation of aspects of Chinese culture by Western content creators. This trend has been aided by the widespread Western dissemination, in the twenty first century, of such works of *wuxia* (martial heroes) cinema as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), the action setpieces of which appear to have inspired Lu's fighting skills in the spirit of the scenario, if not the stylised choreography of the aforementioned films. *Miss Fisher's*, through the characters of Lin Chung and his family, is a consummate representation of the uneasy engagement with Orientalism, and the coexistence of sensibilities from different eras, in the revival.

Characters from a non-European background do not even need to appear on screen for public displays of Orientalism to take place in the revival. In the *Boardwalk* episode "Resolution" (S3E1, 2012), a New Year's Eve party is held at the home of Enoch "Nucky" Thompson and his wife, Margaret. The soirée is Egyptian themed, to commemorate the discovery of the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun by Howard Carter in November 1922. Even before gifts are brought out for the party

guests in a sarcophagus, carried by servants clad in era appropriate attire, entertainment is provided by Broadway personality Eddie Cantor. His rendition of the song "Old King Tut" (actually published the following year), contains many stereotypical images of dynastic Egypt, such as desert sand, dancing girls who "Would even make the old Sphinx smile" and "gold and silver ware" amongst a royal burial site "full of souvenirs." Cantor, however, goes further than this through conflating in the lyrics the reign of Cleopatra (51–30 Before Common Era [BCE]) with "King Tut" ("Cleopatra she sat upon his knee/Pat! That's where she sat") (Tutankhamun's New Kingdom reign occurred from roughly 1332–1323 BCE, almost 1300 years prior to Cleopatra's). Additionally, in an egregious mixture of religions and cultures, "The first love letter Adam wrote to Eve", referencing an important creation myth of the Abrahamic religions, is found amongst the possessions of the deceased ruler of a polytheistic state. As a site of spectacle (and the almost regal power enjoyed by Nucky in Atlantic City), the appropriation of North African history and culture in the recreated 1920s, through aesthetics and Tin Pan Alley[2] song, is light hearted, rather than possessing the sinister and unsettling overtones present in the representation of Chinese characters. Nevertheless, this scene in *Boardwalk* highlights the problematic relationship to international cultures, through a Western prism, in the 1920s redux, and forces a (largely Western) audience to ponder their engagement with the non-Western world.

In analysing the revival of the 1920s, the role of allegory is thoroughly privileged. This is largely due to the narrative basis of texts in the revival being such a rich source of allegory because of the presence of allegory. However, the notion of the palimpsest, in the sense of something – here, the history of the 1920s and its screen dramatisation – reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier forms and textual articulations, also possesses value for engaging with the revival as a

[2] The name given to the collection of New York City music publishers and songwriters who dominated popular music in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Located in the borough of Manhattan, these publishers and writers received their name either from a derogatory reference to the sound of many pianos playing simultaneously or from pianos being modified to maximise their percussive qualities.

cycle.[3] A palimpsest is a kind of text, or combination of texts, that is always in the process of becoming. It is constantly erased and rewritten, similar to the parchment texts of late antiquity prior to the Middle Ages whose surfaces were reused through the application of water or camouflage through colouring. History, seen in this light, is far from static, but an energetic and flexible medium that exists as a cycle of construction and destruction, and, as a text, can only ever record events imperfectly before they are superseded by future events or texts (Pramaggiore 2013: 37). As theorised by Maria Pramaggiore, the production of history entails record, remembrance and envisioning. In the context of her 2013 study of history as palimpsest in *Barry Lyndon* (1975), the "Great Man" theory of history, which sees history as the result of tangible advances made by prominent (male) individuals as originally put forth by Thomas Carlyle, is subverted by Stanley Kubrick through the highlighting of negative personality traits and the eventual thwarting and failure of the ambitions of the main characters in not only *Barry Lyndon*, also in but Kubrick's other historical epics (2013: 32–33). Embodying ideas about history as cycles of creation and destruction, with the life's work of historical figures (and their acted "doubles" in dramatised popular culture) being only temporary (Pramaggiore 2013: 38), the palimpsest is a process of levelling the stratum of "history's winners and losers" (2013: 38). This is because triumphs are likely to be supplanted by the achievements of later generations, while the "traces of the vanquished" can be retrieved (ibid.).

Pramaggiore's research can be extrapolated for useful scrutiny of the revival of the 1920s where the goals and ambitions of the primary characters – especially when they incorporate ideologies that deviate from twenty-first-century sensibilities – are framed in a manner that foretells a halt to, or changing practical manifestations of, dramatic ends that relate to gender, race, class and crime. Modes utilised in the revival include characters that are designed to be in opposition to words or deeds that either represent the intellect of the 1920s majority or the designs of the main characters in assorted texts. These include characters whose viewpoints align more closely with a loose present-day liberal sentiment associated with the target audience

[3] My grateful thanks go out to Professor Maria Pramaggiore, Head of Media Studies at Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland, for her input into my discussion about the role of the palimpsest in the 1920s revival.

of such programs, or characters who offer a counterdiscourse through their belonging to a marginalised demographic in the context of the 1920s and reacting against the status quo. The presence of non-Caucasian characters in the return of the 1920s, such as African-Americans in *Boardwalk*, the action of a film like *The Immigrant*, and the immigrant milieu of 1921 New York City, being seen through the eyes of a female Polish immigrant and the privileging of the experience of a pioneer transsexual in *The Danish Girl* stand as examples of the latest cycle of the recreated 1920s recovering traces, and voices, of experiences that were unequally analysed and respected in previous eras.

The concept of the palimpsest has the greatest value in the 1920s revival where narrative and character arcs, such as the rise and fall of characters including Nucky in *Boardwalk* or the titular gangster in *Squizzy* that destabilise triumphalist tales of success, are concerned. As a visual process, the palimpsest has less traction. Pramaggiore's investigation of Kubrick's directorial decisions to both engage with standard aspects of cinematic realism (from the conventions of Hollywood classical cinema) and incorporate elements from art cinema foregrounds a methodical approach that "manipulates time and space in ways that undermine narrative progress and preclude audience identification with the characters" (2013: 38). This stylistic decision is not echoed in the revival; indeed, it reveals a hesitancy to fully immerse itself in an experimental mould, instead stepping back towards a tendency to more conservative formal approaches (ibid.). Nevertheless, the return to the 1920s does display considerable aesthetic variation. Alongside the carefully constructed, orthodox treatments of the "look" of history found in such television programs as *Boardwalk* and *Downton*, which follow in the footsteps of prestige, "heritage" miniseries and revisionist recreations of sites of violence in U.S. history, respectively, more unorthodox versions of dramatised history can be observed in the mediums of both film and television. *Razor* and *Squizzy*, as well as *Blinders*, contain reflexively "postmodern" editing styles and slow-motion action sequences, indebted to present-day music videos and action cinema.

As for slavish devotion to recreating the verisimilitude of an historical period, through basing visual design on engravings (Pramaggiore 2013: 39) and having the *mise-en-scène* mimic the layout of famous paintings of a particular era (45–49), none of the texts in the return of the 1920s display such a strict adherence (as undertaken

by Kubrick in the production of *Barry Lyndon*) to the aesthetics of any particular art form, painting or otherwise (with the exception of *The Artist*, which is constructed as a convincing 1920s-style silent motion picture). This does not mean, however, that the aim of visual historical accuracy is not a priority for content creators in the twenty-first century. On the contrary, location scouting for a period-authentic building (such as Highclere Castle in north Hampshire, England for *Downton* [Brennan 2013; Fellowes 2015: 13]), using a combination of tangible sets and computer-generated imagery (the Brainstorm Digital company added skylines, billboards, piers and beaches to the boardwalk set in Greenpoint, Brooklyn for *Boardwalk* [Lipkin 2009: McGrath 2010]), or stock newsreel footage from the 1920s being used as backdrops or transitional context in *Tender Hook* and *Squizzy*, respectively, are just some of the procedures that have been utilised by production crews in the revival. The desire to immerse audiences in as authentic a return to the 1920s as possible has even resulted in details that may not even be noticed by audiences, such as John Dunn, the costume designer for *Boardwalk*, limiting wardrobes to the fabrics of 1920 for the first season, or even manufacturing woollens specifically for suits (Dunn 2010). However, such mimicry of the past only goes to a certain, superficial point. Although the opening title sequence of a program such as *Razor* may, in staging and tinting, hearken back to 1920s-era police photographs, the actresses portraying the most powerful underworld personalities in 1920s Sydney are depicted as considerably more glamourous than photographs of the actual crime bosses themselves. The attendant manipulation of historical time, recreated by the actors, *mise-en-scène* and sound design within the frame, showcases an awareness of the process of narrative construction, reminding viewers that fictions and histories alike are intertwined with the aesthetics of produced representation. As a result, the revival fuses fiction and history to "suggest that narrative form itself structures our understanding of the past" (Pramaggiore 2013: 39).

Social groups, from bohemians and free thinkers to ethnic minorities, are both a source of fascination and fear to the dominant powers that be in texts in the revival, from *Boardwalk Empire* to *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. Such anxieties over the "place" that these groups can, and should, play in interwar society has parallels with public stereotypes over such people as student activists and "boat people", to name but two examples, in the twenty first century. These parallels return us to the notion

of the revival as a site of allegory and commentary on issues that have not lost their applicability over the decades, appropriate for popular culture operating in an era that can "transmit, store, retrieve, reconfigure, and invoke the past in new and specific ways" (Grainge 2000: 28), with a aestheticised capacity to "construct meaningful narratives of cultural memory" (Grainge 2000: 29). Following this Introduction, in the Literature Review I will map out in more detail the central concepts and methods behind the thesis through discussion of its primary research terrain and sources.

Project Mapping

This thesis is divided into five main chapters. Following this Introduction, Chapter One comprises an elucidation of the theory and methodology underpinning the thesis and a Literature Review, followed by three chapters looking at and analysing a particular aspect, approached thematically, of the 1920s audiovisual revival. These thematic concerns are illustrated through combined case studies of selected films and television programs released since 2008. Chapter 2 begins the close readings of audiovisual texts alongside discussion of the cultural classifications of modernity, taking in questions of aesthetics of style and subject matter. The chapter's primary audiovisual texts are as follows. *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2014) is an HBO crime drama television series set in Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA, between 1920 and 1931, focusing on the machinations of politician Nucky Thompson. *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015) is an Independent Television Network (ITV)/Carnival Films/Masterpiece television program depicting the lives of the fictitious, aristocratic Crawley family and their domestic servants in Yorkshire between 1912 and 1926. *Goodbye Christopher Robin* (2017) is a British biographical film about the relationship between author A. A. Milne, creator of *Winnie the Pooh*, and his son, Christopher in the late 1920s. *Babylon Berlin* (2017) is a German Netflix television series following the adventures of police inspector Gereon Rath and aspiring police inspector Charlotte Ritter in Berlin during 1929. *Decline and Fall* (2017) is a BBC satirical comedy series adapting Evelyn Waugh's 1928 novel about the exploits of an English schoolteacher in England and Wales during the late 1920s. *Underbelly: Razor* (2011) is an Australian television program from the Nine Network/Showtime recreating the notorious gang warfare (deploying shaving razors as weapons) and

rivalry between bootlegger and cocaine dealer Kate Leigh and brothel proprietor Tilly Devine in late 1920s and early 1930s Sydney, Australia. *Las Chicas Del Cable* (*Cable Girls*, 2017–present) is a Spanish Netflix television series chronicling the lives and careers of four young women working at a telecommunications company in Madrid in 1928–29. *Peaky Blinders* (2013–present) is a BBC crime drama dramatising the fictionalised exploits of the Birmingham, England criminal underworld between 1919 and 1926. *Midnight in Paris* (2011) is an American fantasy comedy film about a screenwriter, Gil Pender, visiting present day Paris, who travels back in time each night at midnight to his nostalgic ideal of Paris in the late 1920s. *Timeless* (2016–present), is a National Broadcasting Company (NBC) science fiction, time travel television series concerning a team (led by a history professor) attempting to stop a mysterious organisation from altering U.S. history. *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* (2016–present) is a CW Television Network science fiction and superhero television series tackling similar thematic concerns (but in the vein of superhero/supervillain sagas) of protecting the integrity of the present and the past from the nefarious Time Masters. *The Making of the Mob: New York* (2015) and *The Making of the Mob: Chicago* (2016) are the final case studies in this chapter. Both are drama documentaries from the American Movie Classics (AMC) network that prioritise dramatic reenactments of the history of organised crime in the respective U.S. cities of New York City and Chicago This series has been chosen for its drama documentary alternate approach, in comparison to a fictionalised drama such as *Boardwalk Empire*, and for the manner in which their recreation of history, including anachronistic touches, definitely bear the imprint of responding to received popular memories of the 1920s.

Chapter 3 concentrates a recurring trope within the revival, the war veteran, and how the trauma faced by such mainly male figures and survivors of the First World War comments on the relationship of that conflict to the Roaring Twenties (and, by extension, to history ever since) and how contemporary audiences engage with the revival. *Peaky Blinders* and *Boardwalk Empire* are joined as case studies in this chapter by two films and two television series. *Easy Virtue* (2008) is a British comic film adaptation of Noel Coward's 1925 comedic play (itself adapted into a 1928 British silent film) about the cultural clashes that arise when an American automobile racer marries into a manorial English family at the end of the 1920s.

Underbelly: Squizzy (2013) is another instalment in the Australian *Underbelly* television franchise, this time recounting the life and career of Melbourne gangster Joseph Theodore Leslie "Squizzy" Taylor, between the years 1915 and 1927. *Leatherheads* (2008) is an American sports comedy film, set in 1925, about the early years of U.S. professional football and a Princeton University football star and veteran of the First World War, who harbours a major secret in his combat record. *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (2012–2015) is the final case study for this middle chapter. Following in the tradition of English murder mysteries from authors such as Agatha Christie, this ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) adaptation of Kerry Greenwood's series of novels centres on the amateur sleuthing of The Honourable – and thoroughly modern – Phryne Fisher in 1927-29 Melbourne.

Chapter 4 explores the role of race (focusing on non-Caucasian characters), immigration (immigrants from Europe carving out a new life for themselves in the New World of the United States), and gender (female characters asserting independence in a changing cultural *milieu*, while at the same time being controlled by the patriarchal status quo, or gender norms and biology being questioned and even changed) in the revival. These issues can, and do, intersect with each other. *Boardwalk Empire*, *Downton Abbey* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* are joined as case studies by three films. *The Immigrant* (2013) focuses on the trials and tribulations faced by Polish immigrant Ewa Cybulski in New York City in 1921. *Bessie* (2015) is an American musical biographical film about the life of blues singer Bessie Smith, concentrating on her 1920s fame. *The Danish Girl* (2015), a British-American film set in Denmark (and partially France and Germany) between the years 1926 and 1931, is an adaptation of David Ebershoff's 2000 novel, which is itself a fictionalised retelling of the pioneering transgendered experiences of artists Einar and Gerda Wegener.

The thesis' Conclusion will summarise the character and tone of the 1920s screen revival, and what it reveals of our own era's ongoing fascination for this nearly century old era and culture of protean modernity. Featuring some final conclusions about the audiovisual texts themselves, the Conclusion will also contextualise the thesis in relation to ongoing research across the interdisciplinary fields it occupies.

The case studies featured throughout have been chosen for their value as popular cultural depictions of varying experiences of the 1920s and for their popularity and fame inside the cultural conversation (including analysis and reviews from the popular press, social media presence and scholarly literature discussions) where historical dramatic programming is concerned. While there is an Anglocentric bias in the selection in the interests of focus, and also reflecting available English-friendly versions of recent television production, *Babylon Berlin* has been included for its recreation of Weimar era Berlin in all of its glorious hedonism and existential quality. Meanwhile, as well as focusing on the intersection of technological innovation with a conservative, patriarchal sociopolitical structure in 1928–29 Spain, *Cable Girls* has been included due to its disturbing depictions of period specific medical treatment of "deviant" sexuality.

In undertaking an overview of the revival of the 1920s in twenty first century popular culture, we can ponder its continuation and future. The fascination with this era has stretched to incorporate renewals of a number of the television programs included in this thesis: *Cable Girls* returned for a fourth season on August 9th, 2019; *Peaky Blinders* has been renewed for a fifth season (Trendell 2018), due to air in late August 2019 (Pope 2019); and *Babylon Berlin*'s third season was scheduled to begin production in 2018 (Clarke 2018) and will premiere in late 2019 (Clark and Lynch 2019). Meanwhile, film adaptations of some of the television programs under discussion have been announced, such as *Downton Abbey* (Svachula 2018), which premiered on September 13th, 2019, and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (Frater 2018). Lastly, the fantasy film franchise begun by *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* (2016), set in New York City in 1926, continued with the November 16th 2018 premiere of *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, a story set a few months after the events of the previous film (Barraclough 2016; Tartaglione 2017).

As the centenary of the 1920s' beginning draws ever closer, it appears that the immersion in twentieth century modernity's protean decade by our century's audiovisual content creators shows no signs of stopping. Although an immersion in a simulated or archived past through popular media may result in disapproval on the grounds of an amnesiac loss of historical consciousness, to quote Huyssen "it is precisely these media – from print to *television* to CD-ROMS and the Internet – that make ever more memory available to us day by day" (2003: 16-17, italics mine). In

addition to permitting a greater appreciation of this trend of dramatising history through the medium of cinema and television, a closer glance at what the current return to the 1920s has to offer may offer some important clues for what the future holds.

Chapter 1
Theory, Methodology, and Literature Review

Historical Accuracy

The revival of the 1920s includes several well-known television programs that act as standard bearers for the public face of engagement with this cycle. Two examples are the (organised) crime series *Boardwalk Empire* and *Underbelly: Razor*, containing thematic concerns and an overall artistic style of recreating the 1920s that make these series representative examples of the decade revisited for the twenty first century. Academic literature pertaining to these two television programs exists but is not extensive. For *Boardwalk Empire* as a prime text in the present account of the revival, Lisa Van Dorp's Master's thesis is germane to this thesis because of its usage of *Boardwalk Empire* as a case study. It analyses the theme of the "American Dream", as theorised by such writers as Godfrey Hodgson, Samuel P. Huntington and Robert Merton. It also interrogates personal reinvention in the search for success, as elucidated by Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean. While the thesis confines *Boardwalk Empire* to only around a third of its pages, Van Dorp lingers on perversions of a Protestant work ethic in the everyday realities of Atlantic City, in both licit businesses, for instance, politics and elections, and illicit businesses, such as bootlegging. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the mainstream social beliefs widespread during the time periods during which *Mad Men* and *Boardwalk Empire*, lending Dorp's work historical basis. This is an important issue for the methodological approach of this thesis, due to the recurrence of thematic concerns and issues in the revival that carry allegorical weight.

Martha P. Nochimson's study of *Boardwalk Empire* begins as an extended interview with Terence Winter, the creator of the program, and Howard Korder, the head writer. The article then goes behind the scenes for a typical epic day of shooting the series. Nochimson provides an explication of the major themes of the program, including urban gangsterism and the experiences of women and immigrants. These include making history dramatically riveting, and relevant – in an allegorical fashion – to a twenty first century context (Nochimson 2012: 25–7, especially on the parallels, on page 27, between Prohibition and the War on Drugs). As for the

program's thematic content, discussed by Nochimson, *Boardwalk Empire* is connected to the organised crime element of such programs as *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy*, along with the struggles over the changing situations and opportunities available for women in such shows as *The Forsyte Saga* (2002–3) and *Downton Abbey*. The industrial, or production, context for such shows as *Boardwalk Empire* is important due to HBO's policy of permissive thematic content and "sophisticated/adult" influences on dialogue, along with character arcs and teleplays aligning with relaxed censorship for cable television subscribers.

In September 2013, a major addition to the literature dealing directly with *Boardwalk Empire* took the form of the publication of Richard Greene and Rachel Robison Greene's edited omnibus *Boardwalk Empire and Philosophy*, continuing a series of books on popular culture and philosophy, analysing themes, characters and the historical backdrop to the HBO series in a philosophical manner. It follows on from prior books in the series in lacing the chapters with a witty, at times cynical, sense of humour that is, nevertheless, appropriate for the topic. Patricia Brace and Maria Kingsbury, in "How to Be Happy on the Boardwalk" (47–64), talk of the sadness and rootless stirrings in the lives of veterans Jimmy Darmody and Richard Harrow. Harrow's possessions of "two-dimensional *representations* of those things Aristotle mentions as objects necessary for happiness" (56) is underlined, due to his physical wounds. Rachel Robison-Greene, in "Absurd Heroes" (129–41) devotes more time, through the prism of existential philosophy, to analysing Jimmy and Richard as absurd heroes that may act at times, especially in the case of Jimmy attempting to make his way in an interwar world in the shadow of his parentage, in "bad faith" (derived from Jean-Paul Sartre, 135). It is unfortunate, however, that, with the exception of a brief discussion of Jimmy's Chicago dalliance with prostitute Pearl (Emily Meade) in Brace and Kingsbury's chapter (56), the journeys that Jimmy and Harrow embark on over the course of the show are downplayed. Jimmy, in the first season, relocates to Chicago on a locomotive, a prime symbol of modernity. Such an odyssey acknowledges, via his movements, the relationship between changes in technological and societal progress and changes in fictional character arcs found in such nineteenth century naturalist novels as Émile Zola's *La Bête Humaine* (1890). Harrow, in the fourth season, disappears from Atlantic City to reunite with his sister in Wisconsin, after his rescuing of Tommy Darmody from Gillian's

gangster-controlled brothel reveals to the Sagorsky family – Tommy's new guardians – Harrow's violent side. The inability of returned veterans ever to fully throw off the march, and the restless temptation to seek greener pastures and new beginnings elsewhere even temporarily, can be found in other popular cultural texts outside of an English-speaking context, such as the fascination in 1980s German television programming for sagas dealing with characters engaging with the Weimar (or pre Nazi) historical era. In the first instalment of *Heimat* (1984), for example, Paul Simon, a veteran of the Imperial German Army, disappears from his village of Schabbachin in 1928, disillusioned at his failure to progress with his wireless set, never to return. Indeed, such a trope – whether intentional on the part of ex soldiers or not – can be observed going back all the way to the era of Homer's *Odyssey*.

Rod Carveth's chapter in the above omnibus (67–78), questions the ethics of *Boardwalk Empire*'s mix of fact and fiction. Following on from Derek Paget's book *No other way to tell it: Docudrama On Film And Television* (2011), Carveth gives readers context via opening and closing with a general description of television "historical fiction" (67–8 & 77–8), putting *Boardwalk Empire* squarely in the "based on" version of history as entertainment (68). "Based on" versions of history veer towards "semifiction", or the U.S entertainment led form of "docudrama" (Paget 2011: 15), blending fictional characters with real life characters, and often prioritising drama over history. Carveth lists the most glaring historical inaccuracies in the series (70–5), including the transformation of Al Capone (71–2), before acknowledging the realities of dramatising history for "good television" (75–6). The program may be based on Nelson Johnson's *Boardwalk Empire: The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City* (2002), but the reality of the real Enoch "Nucky" Johnson's Atlantic City, where political corruption used job security as blackmail to keep the populace loyal, is tweaked to create "historically accurate fiction" (Nelson Johnson, quoted on 75). Such fiction prioritises the "essence and possibilities" (75), rather than concrete data, and gangland violence stands in as a representation of one of the unintended consequences of Prohibition. In allowing Terence Winter, the creator of *Boardwalk Empire*, to have his say on page 77, the fictionalisation of characters such as Nucky Thompson can also be attributed to our current digital age. This means that unless historical details are altered, "spoilers", or important information about a standalone television program, television series or

motion pictures unknown to audience members who are not yet up to date in their cultural engagement, may be a reality for the program's fanbase who choose to undertake their own research.

Carveth's chapter brings to light pertinent ethical questions about the effect on audiences from watching historical drama that deals with periods that they may not necessarily be familiar with, and it underlines the fact that *Boardwalk Empire* is, foremost, entertainment, and not a documentary. His firm beliefs about historical goofs are nevertheless weakened by his declaration, on page 70, that "in the very first episode, real life character Al Capone is given a military service background when he was never in the military." Capone's claim to have been in the "Lost Battalion" is, indeed, false, but Carveth misinterprets the dramatic import of this lie in the first season. Later on in the first season's Chicago subplot, telling details, such as Capone's unfamiliarity with the army game of "five finger fillet", leads Jimmy to the conclusion that Capone's supposed military service is made-up. Eventually, he humiliates Capone socially, joking to the throng in Johnny Torrio's brothel that the Lost Battalion were so lost that they never left Brooklyn. Carveth also misquotes some dialogue from the *Boardwalk Empire*. On page 71, Capone's introduction ("Al. Al Capone") is situated as following on from Jimmy's query, "What's your name?", when, in actual fact, the pilot episode has the two characters engage in a farewell handshake, with the men simply stating their names. It must be said in Carveth's, as well as Arp's, defence, however, and appropriately enough for a chapter that takes as a point of concentration fiction with a strong historical underpinning, that the misquoting still follows the spirit, rather than the letter, of the law. These mistakes are relevant due to their metonymic quality. They are metonymic of a concentration, and prioritisation, of the major aims of the storyline, alongside the character arcs embedded in the storyline, being achieved by action and the meaning of the dialogue. The "big picture", rather than specific details, is what counts, and such a methodology is not necessarily related to a faultless familiarity with the program under discussion.

There is one major omission in the selection of subjects in the above omnibus: the lack of a chapter that explicitly grants space to examining the world of the African-American Northside, or the African-American residential area of Atlantic City, in the series *Boardwalk Empire*. The presence of this area in the revival, especially the

actions and character arc of Albert "Chalky" White, and the indignities that he has to endure as the scheming, African-American counterpart to Nucky Johnson's entrepreneur, allows a sustained dramatisation and investigation of racial politics, segregation and racial hostility, but also black aspirations during the 1920s. There are sections of chapters in *Boardwalk Empire and Philosophy*, however, that unveil, for instance, the Northside's relationship to the dominant white society in Atlantic City. Without utilising an approach where the dramatisation of the 1920s turns into a list of historical accuracies and inaccuracies when discussing the history behind the relevant programs, a philosophical eye can be turned to the thematic concerns and characters in other programs discussed herein.

Underbelly: *Razor* is a reenactment of the lives of women in Sydney during the 1920s and '30s, especially in a working class, criminal *milieu*. To this end, Marise Williams directly discusses the television program (2012), while providing a feminist reading of the underworld activities of the denizens of Darlinghurst and East Sydney, inspired by historians such as Kay Daniels (1984: 9 & 11) and Mark Dunn. Williams acknowledges the working class and the potential for gender and labour liberation, posed by prostitution and trade in the vices, despite accompanying violence and police counterattacks. The historical background of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Sydney, especially in comparison with the contemporary *milieu* of "Razorhurst", where bourgeois and alternative society still intersect, is fascinating. Indeed, the author's revelations of her personal experiences of the area aligning with other people's personal connections to place on page 10 is a powerful reminder of communal memories and received histories. However, it is a shame that more than one episode could not be examined at length. Williams' focus is on episode five, "The Darlinghurst Outrage", which nevertheless, as she points out, constitutes a key example of the ways in which the economics and politics of women's labour at this time in history are reflected in the narrative space and the verisimilitude of its televisual recreation (18). Williams' article is essential, not only for its commentary on a television program that displays many of the traits of the current 1920s revival, but also as a meditation on the changing situations of Australian women.

History on Film

One of the aims of this thesis is to expand the cross section of countries of origin, genres and subgenres covered by films and television programs in an English language context. For instance, the discussions over the societal place and potential, of women in such programs as *Downton Abbey* and *The Danish Girl* will be scrutinised in order to discover how these texts approach the revival of material from the 1920s, including gendered and racialised identities, and how this revival opens up or closes down aspects of gender and race. Other relevant issues include crime as a presence within society and immigration. In this respect, there is a relative scarcity of secondary material directly relating to the films and television programs under discussion.

A number of historical studies are, however, relevant to this aspect of the thesis, such as the "history on film" approach pursued by Robert A. Rosenstone. In his volumes *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (1995) and *History on Film/Film on History* (2013), Rosenstone utilises a postmodern approach to laud the potential of motion pictures as a challenge to what he calls the mentality of the "Dragnet historian" ("Just the facts, ma'am"[1995: 7]). Cinema can privilege general human behaviour alongside documentable events, engaging with "traces of the past" (Rosenstone 2013: 159) to construct a "[p]roximate reality" (Rosenstone 2013: 42). Proximate reality may permit anachronisms to shake audiences out of a sense of receptive complacency and force them to recognise the similarities between past and present. (This is Rosenstone's conclusion in the final chapter of *Visions of the Past*.) Apart from such blatant deviations from the historical record in popular culture – or "goofs" in the vernacular, which are accidental – alternative ways of rendering history on film can act as a counterdiscourse to the past. This encompasses "both what happened and what might have happened" (Rosenstone 2013: 164). Such anachronisms, Rosenstone argues, can be metonymic of the motion pictures and television programs under scrutiny in this thesis.

Rosenstone's work makes use of a wide variety of international films and eras, although the concentration in this thesis is on the English-speaking world and "mainstream" products intended for a wide audience. His theories of anachronisms are especially valid in the present context, because aural links to the revival include

the soundtrack anachronisms in a program such as *Underbelly: Razor*. However, with the exception of classing television in a similar relationship as the "larger discourse" as cinema on page 9 of *History on Film*, television is absent from the discussion. The fact that very few historians write about television must be taken into account[4]. There are also no representative examples of films dealing with the 1920s in the pages of Rosenstone's works, and he misses the opportunity allowed by the publication date of his second volume to engage with "history on film" from the twenty first century, preferring to concentrate, instead, on the 1960s–90s.

Current scholarship that continues in a similar fashion to Rosenstone's, while also breaking free from and expanding on it, includes Emma Hamilton's work on hyperlinear history (2016). "Hyperlinearity" refers to the construction of "deliberate temporal links between the represented historical past and the present reality of the audience. In so doing the past assumes particular and explicit relevance to the present, and a specific relationship between the two time periods is created" (Hamilton 2016: 3). In this vein, Hamilton's research, investigating the problematic status of veteran reintegration, the role of women in society and race relations in the Reconstruction era United States as reflected in post Second World War films (the period of the Civil Rights Movement, to cite just one example), can potentially inform an understanding of how the past is represented and dramatised. Representations of the past can encourage positive continuity, discontinuity or negative continuity (Hamilton 2016: 4–5). Positive continuity illustrates a socially reasserting and comfortable relationship that is conducive to a consequential future.

[4] While television has not been a major focus of historical studies, the following studies engage with television from a historical perspective: John E. O'Connor (ed.) "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the Importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past", *American Historical Review* Volume 93, no. 5, December 1988 (1200 – 09) and *Image As Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television* (1990); Vivian Sobchank, *The Persistence Of History: Cinema, Television And The Modern Event* (1996); Robert Brent Toplin (ed.) "History on Television: A Growing Industry", *The Journal of American History* Volume 83, no. 3 (1109 – 1112); Erin Bell and Ann Gray (eds.) "History on television: Charisma, narrative and knowledge", *European Journal Of Cultural Studies* Volume 10 Issue 1, February 2007 (113 – 33) and Charlotte Brunsdon (ed.) "Is Television Studies History?", *Cinema Journal* Volume 47, no. 3, Spring 2008 (127 – 37).

In a television program such as *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, the title character acts as a proxy for the sensibilities of present-day viewers, and acts as an advocate for disadvantaged and marginalised groups in 1920s Melbourne, in opposition to (or with the support of sympathetic members of) the authorities. *Downton Abbey*, to use another example, features female characters, from the nobility, breaking free from the confines of gender expectations in post First World War Britain, in an aspirational fashion, through living independently, gaining employment, wearing up-to-date fashion and stretching the possibilities of relationships outside of wedlock (including the sexual aspect). Revisiting the past in popular culture can also embrace discontinuity, where parallels should, and will, cease for an improved future. Virulent political incorrectness, and racism, displayed by main members of the *dramatis personae* in a television program such as *Boardwalk Empire*, or a film like *The Tender Hook*, as well as opposition to a controversial issue, such as the resistance to prenatal care featured in *Boardwalk Empire*'s third season, ram home the message for viewers in the twenty first century that such ideology and behaviour is unacceptable, taboo and (to varying degrees) banished from the mainstream of public discourse. Finally, films and television programs can possess an underlying negative continuity, an abstruse, disagreeable connection that, nevertheless, lack a clear avenue for effective change. The African-American characters in *Boardwalk Empire*, such as Albert "Chalky" White and his family, and the villainous Dr Valentine Narcisse, are either killed, or otherwise lack unambiguously happy conclusions to their arcs. The overarching sociocultural structure, including the powers that uphold law and order, within this series demonstrate continuity with the present-day continuation of obstacles that African-Americans face in contemporary U.S. society, especially in a context of right wing backlash under the Trump administration. Similarly, the violence and corruption bred by Prohibition in texts such as *Boardwalk Empire* and *The Immigrant*, and restricted alcohol licensing legislation in texts such as *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy*, stand in as an allegory for the unresolved, problematic and bloody international "War on Drugs" that remains as a moral, legislative, law enforcement and social issue in the twenty first century.

One of Hamilton's examples is the utilisation of Native American-white settler interactions and clashes in the "pro-Indian" sub genre of Western films (2016: 101–37). While a post Civil War context spoke to pressing concerns such as Manifest

Destiny, frontier security and a postwar expansion of national economic potential (Hamilton 2016: 9, 103), films of the 1960s and '70s echoed civil privileges movements in the USA and anti-colonialist peace movements abroad (Hamilton 2016: 13, 23, 39). Hamilton rightly acknowledges, however, in her Ph.D thesis (2013) that it is problematic to have one racial group "simply be substituted for another without causing the audience to connect with and question the experiences of the group actually represented" (2013: 107). An example of this can be found in the second season of *Boardwalk Empire*, where a highly political act – Nucky Thompson's profit-oriented offer to provide arms to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in their struggle against English rule – overlaps anti-colonialism with an expansion of capitalism. By this is meant that the trade-off for unofficial U.S. aid in the Irish War of Independence is the importation of Irish whisky into the United States. In more recent decades, dealings between the United States and other nations have centred around the "War on Drugs", where reducing access to illicit substances, rather than increasing ease of dissemination, has been the aim.

An obvious point is that so many popular cultural texts set in the 1920s, the immediate post First World War era, touch on the societal trauma of war in general. To that end, examples whereby the onscreen developments of a program like *Boardwalk Empire* or *Babylon Berlin*, with their depictions of police and legal harassment, incarceration of heroin and cocaine dealers and users, and the personal consequences of drug usage, can be read as an allegory for the contemporary "War on Drugs." This allegory is acknowledged, in relation to *Boardwalk Empire*, in Nochimson's interview with Terence Winter. "[P]arallel[s] with recent history" are also found by Nochimson in Warren G. Harding era political corruption and big business manipulation (2012: 26). Also, in his chapter "Fighting for Life in Atlantic City" (2013: 143–52), John Fitzpatrick ends his discussion of Consequentialism – morality practised for producing the best consequences for all parties – and the unintended consequences of Prohibition with the following pronouncement: "Ultimately we may end our own drug Prohibition when we realise that the costs exceed the benefits" (146). These examples are a form of reading film or television about the past as a cultural artefact of its presence.

More pertinent, in the sense that it is focused specifically on television, and Australian television at that, is Bill Garner's chapter on *One Summer Again* (1985)

in Bennett and Beirne (2012: 179–83). While the historicised period for this 1985 ABC series is Melbourne in the 1880s, which allows Garner to draw similar points to Rosenstone about the relation to 1980s concerns about technology, artistic currency and bohemia, he discusses the problematic nature of period "look" in television. He feels that drama can "embody what historians have empirically established, while on the other hand the fictionalisation falsifies that history" (2012: 180); notably, he references the 1920s as a prime example of "entrenching stereotypes" (2012: 180). While the films and programs in this thesis engage in a stronger sense of historical verisimilitude than *One Summer Again*'s historically inaccurate costumes and settings, which are reminiscent of Rosenstone's classification of cinema as "experiment" (1995: 53), there is ample opportunity to probe the extent of, and underlying premise behind, the "trappings" of the era. The thesis will also address the fictionalisation of historical personages and tweaking of historical events to serve the dramatic narrative, as has occurred in *Boardwalk Empire*. It is worthwhile to remember that all of the texts dealt with here that dramatise the 1920s are, indeed, drama. Despite any claims to authenticity, their purpose is also to entertain, a point well highlighted by James Bennett in his chapter "*Heavenly Creatures*: The 1954 Parker-Hulme Case" (2012: 199–204). In this chapter, drawing on Rosenstone, the titular murder case is subjected to "true invention" (2012: 200) in order, alongside making the film work as drama, to rethink status quo oriented memories of prior eras, restore a voice to the marginalised in society and touch on the "emotions and obsessions" (Bennett 2012: 199) of challenges to conservative societies. "True invention" is relevant to many themes that run throughout the 1920s as represented through contemporary film and television.

These themes run the gamut from problematic race relations in *Boardwalk Empire* to police corruption and medical brutality in *Changeling* (2008) and to the Irish struggle for independence in *Downton Abbey*. Cunningham (1993) operates in a similar vein. Drawing on the theories of Albert Moran, Cunningham (122–3) posits that 1980s Australian historical miniseries, as the television equivalent of the nineteenth century *Bildungsroman*, or coming of age narrative, and foregrounds a "critical and interventionary" value on history (Cunningham 1993: 121), tracing the at times questionable motives and actions of real-life personalities of the period (Cunningham 1993: 120). Cunningham's study is valuable for stressing the

"multiperspectivism" (121) of these programs, a tack that cuts across racial lines in *Boardwalk Empire*, class lines in *Downton Abbey* and the divide of law and order in the *Underbelly* series, to classify just a few examples. However, Cunninngham's assertion that, by contrast, the "period film" – in this context, Australian cinema post Whitlam – tends to "reconstruct the past in nostalgic terms" (120) is a questionable one. Commercial imperatives play a part in the production and distribution of these films. Yet, even in motion pictures such as *The Artist*, which, on the surface, appear to revel in the nostalgic values of Hollywood at the historical moment when talking motion pictures became commercially viable and successful, dark personal, if not always purely historical, themes are apparent. These themes are most affective in the negative downward spiral and depression that inflects the character arc of actor George Valentin as his popularity fades.

Derek Paget (2011) focuses on the truth claims made by the British/Australian model of the "dramadoc", which contrasts with the American model of the "docudrama", due to a tradition of investing greater historical fidelity in the subject matter of the "dramadoc" through the dramatisation of documentary tropes (2011: 120). Paget goes into great detail on the legal and/or public responses, often controversial, to researching and dramatising stories in the public eye. To quote Paget, "Mixed forms are more in danger of breaching copyright laws than freely imagined fictional forms" (2011: 37), especially if the subject matter is controversial. The collaborative partnership between HBO – responsible for *Boardwalk Empire* – and Granada in the 1990s is employed as a case study on "trauma dramas" (Paget 2011: 171), where underdog individuals struggle against governmental cover-ups and machinations. Through elements such as captioned introductions to characters, including vital statistics, including dates of birth and death and prison stints, sometimes presented with a cheeky, "larrikin"[5] sense of humour, a program such as *Underbelly: Razor* does exhibit certain traits of the dramadoc/docudrama. However, along with the Australian traditions of dramatising true life through television drama being invisible in the pages of Paget's book, the emphasis is on contemporary events. Usually

[5] An Australian term for a boisterous, often badly behaved young man or a person with maverick sympathies (Bellanta 2012: xi–xii). Apparently from a dialect word from around Warwick or Worcester, England which meant "mischievous or frolicsome youth" (Bellanta 2012: xiv).

newsworthy, in these cases careful legal action must be taken to ensure that no aggrieved parties to the actual events may sue, or undertake any action detrimental to production companies. The book was originally released (1998) before the twenty first century body of televisual works from the Nine Network – the co-production company responsible for *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy* – dramatising events from Australian history. Although production companies can have a role in impacting on the content of dramatised popular-cultural texts, the consequences are different when dramatising the distant past. Events in such scenarios are so removed in time that all major participants to tales set in the 1920s are deceased. This relatively risk-free process, when liberties are taken with the historical record or issues are made implicit rather than explicit, appears to prioritise the entertainment factor and mainstream audience appeal inherent in popular cultural texts, rather than the sensibilities of academics and the academically minded. Indeed, such altering of history is noted by Paget (2011: 57–8), in line with the suggestions of media lawyers Oliver Goodenough and Patrick Swaffer, but the one of the intentions of this thesis is to elaborate on these "Golden Rules" of legal procedure (2011: 57).

The Veteran

Returning to the interwar situation elucidated by Hamilton, the experience of veterans is another vital and valid body of work from which this thesis draws its theoretical inspiration. The presence of the veteran in a 1920s setting is generally relevant for the revival due to the veteran's role in a cataclysmic event whose international ramifications are still being felt today. Specifically, in the context of the 1920s, the interwar drift of veterans into organised crime and law enforcement is an important theme, especially if parallels can be drawn between the experience of veterans both during the 1920s and in the twenty first century. Notably, the "moral fibre" of the serviceman and his family, along with anti-German propaganda and austerity measures, were present in discourses leading up to the implementation of Prohibition in the United States, and six pm hotel closing in Australia. These "wowser" (socially conservative) tendencies have been outlined in books by Ross Fitzgerald and Trevor L. Jordan (2009) and Daniel Okrent (2010).

Alistair Thomson (1995) taps into new understandings of oral history, as encouraged by the "popular memory" efforts of such organisations as the Popular Memory

Group at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. The at times painful gap between the dominant "public languages and meanings of our culture" (1995: 8) and personal memories that "help us to feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities" (1995: 8) is a dominant preoccupation for Thomson. In his view, this gap manifested itself after the First World War in "digger"[6] alienation with postwar existence, dysfunctional relations with veterans' organisations, alcoholic homosociality and even radical politics. While Thomson's study covers the Australian experience, it could stand in for the postwar experiences, if not on a political state level, then at least on the individual level, of veterans of other combatant nations. Such an approach must take into account the differences in the political and social landscape between countries, especially the schism between the victorious and defeated nations. Also, care must be taken to separate veteran influence in organised crime from the "big picture" issues of postwar industrial unrest and unemployment, right wing political stirrings, including isolationism, and the struggle over the legacy of conflict between organisations both liberal and conservative, including para-military organisations. These vital features of the interwar years, along with the sobering statistics and status of maimed veterans, have been covered extensively in the literature concerning the First World War, including David Stevenson's *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (2004: 530–62). The eighth chapter of Thomson's book, "The Anzac Revival", encompasses an overview of post Second World War public feeling towards Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) mateship, the historiography of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and popular-cultural depictions of Australians in the First World War. The characterisations of veterans in contemporary texts dealing with the 1920s, including, in the Australian context, the Communist taxi-drivers Bert and Cec in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, and Albert "Tankbuster" McDonald in *Underbelly: Squizzy*, will be dissected to demonstrate and update the varied realities that civilian life offered veterans of the First World War, especially when they strayed from notions of law abiding, middle class values. Now that the last of the

[6] Military slang term for soldiers from Australia and New Zealand during the First World War, due to their communal and egalitarian digging of trenches and other defensive earthworks (Dennis, Grey, Morris, Prior and Bou 2009).

First World War veterans have died, it is interesting to ascertain whether public interest in those who experienced it, even if fictionalised, has intensified.

The experience of veterans as service personnel brings to mind another aspect of nostalgia that is inescapable when watching the revival of the 1920s. Nostalgia, if not so much a longing for the past as a fascination with and respect for it, often manifests in the form of public commemorations for anniversaries of significant events. As Holdsworth argues, again in the context of television (a medium where war veterans, in the cycle of the 1920s redux, are heavily represented), this function "is marked by and generates our obsession with commemoration and anniversaries, through its repetition and continual re-narrativisation of grand historical narratives, for example, of world wars and world cups" (Holdsworth 2011: 1). Celebrating a certain (significant) amount of time elapsed since a noteworthy event, such as the founding of a nation state or a momentous military campaign, these events provide a space for the population to remember, pay homage, celebrate and/or learn from the past to encourage a better future. Examples of these tributes include the bicentenary remembrance of the exploratory landing and claiming of New South Wales, Australia for the British, by Captain James Cook, in 1770 (1970); the centenary and bicentenary anniversary celebrations of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1776 (in 1876 and 1976, respectively); the centenary, sesquicentenary and bicentenary festivals for the founding of a penal colony in New South Wales by the First Fleet in 1788 (1888, 1938 and 1988, respectively); the bicentennial commemoration of the uprising that inaugurated the French Revolution in 1789 (celebrated in 1989); the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries of the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War (marked by encampments, in 1913 and 1938, respectively, of Union and Confederate veterans upon the Pennsylvania site of the battle); the centenary celebrations of the Federation of the Australian colonies into a unified nation in 1901 (observed in 2001); and the fiftieth, seventy-fifth and centenary anniversaries of the Gallipoli Campaign of the First World War (held in 1965, 1990 and 2015, respectively). Expanding upon the remembrance of the Dardanelles invasion of 1915 is the Western world's official marking, between 2014 and 2018, of the centenary of the First World War (1914-1918).

There are diverse narratives providing the motivation for participation in commemorative ceremonies, including patriotism and a sense of needing to justify

and venerate the efforts of forebears (Mycock 2014: 5). Especially after a significant event in the life of a nation state (such as its founding) remains stable for more than a hundred years, public reflection on national identity is encouraged in the thought processes of many people, while ritual and symbol has been incited to encourage inclusion (for instance, political appeal to national unity and sharing of the military burden through conscription etc) while discouraging polarity and dissent (Spillman 1997: 58 & 94–5). However, where the remembrance of previous martial conflict is concerned, an alternative concept, termed the "memory boom" by Jay Winter, has risen to challenge the primacy of mediation held by historians, and challenge homogenous ideological, collective identities fostered by institutions about shared, public war reminiscence (quoted in Mycock 2014: 2–3). This revisionist project of rupturing certain received historical narratives is especially relevant when tracing the postwar character arcs of traumatised veterans in the revival, on both sides of the law, where they align with, or deviate from, codified masculine and warrior archetypes.

The decade of the 1920s will celebrate the centenary of its first year in 2020. At the time of the completion of this thesis, that date is less than two years away. Planning for the official acknowledgement of centenaries and bicentenaries entails much time and effort. The Australian Bicentennial Authority (ABA) was pursuant to the Australian Bicentennial Authority Act 1980 (Foley 1996: 89), while the U.S. bicentennial national planning commenced with the formation of the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) in 1966 (Spillman 1997: 96), to quote two examples. Considering the build-up and prolific inclusion of recreated 1920s scenarios on television and at the cinema over the past decade, it makes sense to consider this trend as cultural preparations, on the part of content creators and production companies, for commemorations (at least artistically) during the decade of 2020–30. Such a trend would follow on from the spate of First World War related films and television programs released over the last decade, both before and during the centenary commemorations, including *Beneath Hill 60* (2010), *ANZAC Girls* (2013), *The War That Changed Us* (2014) *Gallipoli* (2015), *When We Go To War* (2015) from New Zealand, the Australian and New Zealand documentary co-production *Why Anzac with Sam Neill* (2015) and *The Crimson Field* (2014) and *Testament of Youth* (2014) from the UK.

National and international reflection on past historical eras, through state-mandated ceremony or cultural productions, takes on a new resonance when the generation that experienced these eras begins to dwindle in size, or cease to exist entirely. For the First World War, the subject matter for the aforementioned popular cultural revival, and occurring in the decade prior to the 1920s, the last surviving veteran was Florence Green (1901–2012), who served in the Women's Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom (Blackmore 2012), and the last surviving combat veteran was Claude Stanley Choules (1901–2011), another Briton, who served in the Royal Navy (Carman 2011). Despite increasing life expectancies and living conditions in many parts of the world over the last century, the rate of dying for those in their nineties who were children during the 1920s, and older is increasing as a fact of life. There are only an estimated 300–450 supercentenarians (people 110 years of age or older, who would have been adults, using the traditional definition of an adult as twenty-one years of age or older, during the 1920s) alive as of July 2019 (Gerontology Research Group 2019). Amongst the centenarians who died during 2017–2018 was Spaniard Francisco Núñez Olivera (1904-2018), who was the last surviving veteran of the Rif War (1921-1926) in Morocco upon his death on 29th January 2018 (Couzens 2018). This war provided the historical setting for the Netflix Spanish soap opera *Tiempos de Guerra*, one of the few instances of a war fought during the 1920s being dramatised in the revival. Olivera's death is a sobering reminder that, with the passage of the years, popular cultural productions will have to shoulder more significance for the public as a form of engagement with the past.

The value of popular culture in examining the past encompasses the importance of veteran testimony to the researchers and writers of television programs and motion pictures. This means engaging with extant oral history, and the literature surrounding it. The problematic and unreliable nature of memory and recollection is encapsulated in the suspicions around the wartime heroics of football player Carter "The Bullet" Rutherford in *Leatherheads* (2008). There is also the unsettling difference in public and official mindsets over the "justified" training of soldiers during times of war for battle and "individual violence", whether committed by those in uniform or civilians. This is especially a concern on home fronts during times of conflict. Michel Foucault informs and inspires Anita Biressi's points, in her fifth chapter on "Period True Crime", from her volume *Crime, Fear and the Law in True Crime Stories* (2001).

Otherwise prioritising British true crime narratives since the late 1970s, this chapter is vital for its bearing on the consequences of military dehumanisation on demobilised men in peacetime, generally, and the character trajectories of individuals such as Richard Harrow (Jack Huston), in *Boardwalk Empire*, specifically.

Mateship and Bohemianism

Notions of mateship can be complicated by re-evaluations of trench mateship as sublimated homoeroticism, as David Coad extrapolates (2002). Coad brings to light the alternate and closeted sexualities of Gallipoli and the Australian bush, and links these sexualities to a "hidden" history of the American west in the second, third and fourth chapters. However, the oppositional artistic and bohemian circles of metropolitan Australia in the 1920s are conspicuous by their absence. Nevertheless, methodologically speaking, Coad's "queer" reading of the "Oz bloke fantasy" (2002: 14) is important insofar as it grants time and attention to those whose sexualities act as a challenge and "inconvenience" to the circles in which they move. Such characters in the revival as Constable Edie McElroy in *Underbelly: Razor*, Angela Darmody in *Boardwalk Empire* and Thomas Barrow in *Downton Abbey* illustrate and render relatable a moralistic, social and legal struggle that still continues to this day. Charles Carson, in *Downton Abbey*, may feel that such sexuality goes "against the laws of God and man", yet homosexual characters in these texts elicit different responses from the characters with whom they interact. Richard White's *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity* (1981) also, fascinatingly, looks at the postwar solidification of the ANZAC ideal as wholesome, Anglophilic and Empire-minded by groups such as the Returned and Services League (RSL) and the New Guard. Such a strategy cast an "us versus them" patina on returned veterans, many of whom were working class and disillusioned by the empty gestures of patriotism (White 1981: 137–39). Bert and Cec in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* are fictional versions of these figures.

White also investigates Australian bohemian subculture of the 1880s and '90s in the chapter "Bohemians and the Bush" (1981: 85-109). In keeping with his thesis that national "images, rather than describing an especially Australian reality, grow out of assumptions about nature, race, class, democracy, sex and empire, and are 'invented'

to serve the interests of particular groups" (backcover), the artists and writers of this movement are depicted as rebelling against conservative Victorian values. They embraced hedonism and, if not swearing allegiance to purely Australian cultural values, embarked on a cosmopolitan co-optation of European movements over a slavish copying of British ideals (White 1981: 96–8). Their lust for convivial socialising was complete with drinking, tobacco smoking and even, as early as the 1860s, with Marcus Clarke's experimentation with cannabis (White 1981: 93–6). Such hedonism aligns these bohemians, in popular cultural circles, with the at times madcap, at times relaxed parties witnessed in the second season of *Boardwalk Empire*, *The Cat's Meow* (2001, in drawing back the curtain on the Bohemian qualities of Hollywood personalities) and even earlier films, such as *Reds*' (1981) depiction of Greenwich Village and Provincetown in the 1910s.

However, Australian bohemianism prior to the First World War was sexist in its exclusion of women from artistic circles and its denigration of their potential in favour of the "Coming Man" (White 1981: 101). This is a contrast to the free love circulating through and highlighting the alternative lifestyles in *Boardwalk Empire*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Reds* and the descriptions in Douglas Perry's book *The Girls of Murder City: Fame, Lust, and the Beautiful Killers Who Inspired Chicago* (2010) of the mingling of promiscuous sexuality and bootleg alcohol-fuelled parties in New York and Chicago (133–7 & 140–1). Any evidence of homosexuality in Sydney and Melbourne bohemian circles is sadly absent from White's overview, though whether this is due to a lack of documented cases, or a research-based decision on White's part, is unclear. Such an omission is doubly striking due to the "healthy sensuality" to be found in painting, and an adaptation of the homo-social ethos of the Australian bush lifestyle to the urban *milieu* of Australian bohemia (White 1981: 100). This hearkens back to the closeted sexualities of the Australian bush in the second, third and fourth chapters of *Gender Trouble Down Under*. In contrast, both male and female gay characters are to be found in *Boardwalk Empire*, although male homosexuality is unfortunately given limited screen time in the second season. *Midnight in Paris* (2011), *Bright Young Things* (2003, in a Bloomsbury-inspired, "Bright Young Things" context) and, going further back in time in relation to release dates of cultural productions, bohemianism and same-sex attraction as part of the Oxford undergraduate experience in

Brideshead Revisited (1981) are further instances where gay characters and subcultures are given screen time. In this thesis, the inclusion of glimpses into bohemian subcultures in contemporary productions will be examined, in order to investigate the rationale behind what is included and excluded. This thesis, however, will be on a larger canvas than White's concentration on bohemianism centering around middle class heterosexual, Caucasian men, for the position of women and queer-identifying people in this context is also very illuminating.

Racial Politics

When tackling the topic of race, especially in the context of her discussion of *Boardwalk Empire* and its inclusion of the African-American experience in Atlantic City, African-American studies is paramount in Kimberley A. Yates' Ph.D thesis (2012). From an entertainment and political vantage point, Yates investigates the impact of black comics such as Richard Pryor, Paul Mooney and Dave Chappelle in bringing black nationalist ideology to challenge hegemonic white ideals in a "radical" manner. Theorists such as Harold Cruse and Joseph Peniel are drafted into Yate's scholarship (2012: 3–4) to bolster an idea of an explicit, angry and "dirty" style of African-American televisual comedy (3) that took pains to deviate from a sanitised norm with roots in nineteenth century minstrelsy and *Amos 'n' Andy* (6–11). This ancestry, according to Robin R. Means Coleman (quoted in Yates 2012: 8), nevertheless acknowledges the schizophrenic nature of blackface minstrel shows, which alternated moments of racism and "racial envy" (Eric Lott, quoted in Yates 2012: 6).

It is interesting to ask whether the presence of African-American characters like Albert "Chalky" White and the Trinidadian Dr Valentin Narcisse, especially in their differences in character and personality, in *Boardwalk Empire*, the West Indian "Nugget" in *Underbelly: Razor* and the Chinese Lin Chung in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* symbolically stand as a monument to an artistic desire to represent the 1920s experiences of those who were downplayed by the history books. Whether these representations are metonyms for a politically correct tip of the hat to "reconciliation", alongside a dramatisation of hidden stories, or merely pandering, tokenism or quota-filling, the presence of these characters deserves further interrogation. There is no argument here that the presence of non-Caucasian actors

and characters in these programs, in and of itself, is revolutionary. Character arcs are also limited by official and unofficial racism, segregation and so on that were a fact of life in the 1920s. Nevertheless, the present thesis includes an investigation into the perspective that twenty first century creative artists bring to this factor of dramatising the 1920s, and how it differs from what went before.

"Vernacular Modernism" and Postmodernism

Miriam Hansen (1991 and 2000) draws on the Frankfurt School's pioneering, influential work on mass culture, modernity, and modernism to develop the concept of "vernacular modernism." The vernacular is key to what we see throughout the 1920s screen revival, in its charting of a rapidly changing postwar world. Hansen suggests that when it comes to reception, vernacular modernism potentially undermines a potentially homogeneous classical Hollywood paradigm. This paradigm, which during the 1920s was in the process of becoming fully established and dominant, was typified by linear and understated narration, a concentration on psychological motivation and agency, and continuity editing (Hansen 2000: 11). Resistance to Hollywood classicism was achieved through varied live entertainment; exhibition practices geared towards the tastes of immigrants and African-Americans (Hansen 1991a: 95–100) or international cultural tastes and official censorship and marketing practices (Hansen 2000: 12). Hansen describes vernacular modernism as a "sensory-reflexive horizon for the experience of modernization and modernity" (2000: 10).

Hansen's primary work stems from the period of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s and its US correlative, investigating U.S. cultural theories, German cultural (1992) and Chinese cultural (2000) theories. These discourses converge for Hansen around late silent film. Interestingly, though, some of her writings, such as *Babel & Babylon* and "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?" (1983), which investigate German silent film during the Wilhelmine era – after setting forth a debunking of some of the myths of American nickelodeon reception that serves as an early version of the second chapter in *Babel & Babylon* – also cover the pre First World War and First World War period. Certain texts in the revival, such as *Downton Abbey*, *Underbelly: Squizzy* and, in a more personalised and sentimentalised fashion, *The Great Gatsby*, also either start out in, or effect a flashback to, events prior to 1920.

Hansen is fascinated by female reactions to motion pictures and society opinions on this issue. Another academic interest of Hansen's is modernity's capitalistic manifestation in pervasive advertising. "Ambivalences of the "Mass Ornament" (Hansen 1992: 102-19), under this rubric, aligns with the inescapable consumerist exhortations on the Atlantic City billboards in *Boardwalk Empire*. These two issues of feminine spectatorship and advertising in modernity are amongst the issues that are fruitful for further investigation in terms of the revival. Hansen's interrogation of Rudolph Valentino's celebrity cult in *Babel & Babylon* details the gendered ideologies and scope for misinterpretation of or double-meanings gleaned from signifiers of the celebrity in question embedded in the relationship between celebrities and the public. This ideology can be seen in motion pictures such as *The Legend of Bagger Vance* (2000), *The Cat's Miaow*, *Chicago*, *Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius* (2004) and *The Artist*, plus the television program *Underbelly: Squizzy*.

In *Downton Abbey*, the downstairs domestic staff see no reason why their fascination with the cinema and fashionable dance steps cannot co-exist with attendance at traditionally British folk amusements such as country fairs and fetes. In other productions, however, the culturally imperialist amusements of the United States (or Britain for their colonies and dominions) can predominate. In the *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* episode "Framed for Murder" (S2E9, 2013), the titular amateur detective investigates a murder on the film set of a local production company. The episode's teleplay features local cinematic production, foregrounding a homegrown industry that was still producing films for local audiences in the late 1920s, even though output had declined from the Australian industry's glory days prior to the First World War (Pike and Cooper 1998: 1–49; Moran and Vieth 2005: 32). However, the motion picture in production is set in Ancient Rome. This reflects a long tradition of (imported) British performing arts (such as William Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*) set during antiquity. The deaths of vital cast and crew members are further complicated by a representative (Australian, but pretending to be from the United States) from the U.S. film industry, Jefferson Clarke. Clarke claims to be the Vice-President of the fictional Pegasus Studios in Hollywood. He states that he is in Australia on business in order to wire local cinemas for talking picture showings and he schemes to cast an American actor as the new lead in the Roman film epic and

contractually exclude Australian films from exhibition in the theatre chain owned by the studios.[7]

Hansen writes that "vernacular modernism" as a force that "articulated, brought into *optical consciousness* (to vary Benjamin), and disseminated a particular historical experience" (2000: 12). It can be argued that certain cultural products, such as *Easy Virtue*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *The Great Gatsby*, display elements of what could be denoted as "vernacular *post*-modernism", but in a limited and more conservative manner than, say, the costumes, staging and anachronisms of history on film on display in cinematic "experiment[s]", often from Third World production contexts (Rosenstone 1995: 53). The adapted term "vernacular postmodernism" has been employed by Mark Andrejevic (among many other scholars), in whose work it refers to a shrewd and alternative, almost dissident, critique of expertise and "master narratives" (2010: 406) by "prediction markets" in various capitalist, corporate policy contexts. Prediction markets are sites of information and punditry – often Internet based, but also encompassing television network programming such as Fox News (Andrejevic 2010: 408–10) – offering opinions and predictions on everything from elections to Oscar winners (Andrejevic 2010: 403–7). This populist backlash against "elitist" influence over public policy (Andrejevic 2010: 403–5) is worthy of intellectual scrutiny, but is otherwise beyond the scope of this thesis.

The notion of "vernacular post-modernism" retains scepticism about realism, regardless of the impact on drama, when it comes to historical representation. A opposed to Hansen's Frankfurt School influences, "vernacular post-modernism" is

[7] These developments echo U.S. industry participation in Australian cinema during the late 1920s, which was designed to increase the chances of Australian films being distributed in the U.S. market, such as director Norman O. Dawn directing the Australian epic film about a wrongly convicted convict, *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1927), with fellow American George Fisher playing the lead, John Rex/Rufus Dawes (Pike and Cooper 1998: 138–40). "Framed for Murder" concludes with the business ideal of Pegasus Studios unrealised, and an all-Australian cinematic production of *The Bride of Babylon* being announced as Australia's first all-sound motion picture (predating Australia's actual inaugural "talkies", *Diggers* [1931] and *Showgirl's Luck* [1931, again directed by Dawn], by a couple of years). Nevertheless, the proposed infusion of U.S. talent into the local film industry is a harbinger of the increasingly dire straits of Australian cinema from the Second World War onwards, which reached a nadir during the 1950s and 1960s (Vanderbent 2006: 36–7).

indebted to philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, who in such volumes as *Of Grammatology* (1997) proposes the theory of deconstruction. One example where we can see and hear this deconstructive process at play, is the use of musical soundtracks in many of the audiovisual texts addressed by this thesis. Soundtracks of several of the films and television programs feature period music in the form of original recordings or re-recordings, as in *Midnight in Paris*, *Boardwalk Empire* and *Downton Abbey*. Other soundtracks, including those for *Easy Virtue*, *The Tender Hook* and *Underbelly: Razor*, feature contemporary music with "period" arrangements. *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy* also include present day music, with contemporary arrangements unaltered. These scores may be diegetic, meaning part of the narrative sphere of the text, or non-diegetic, being heard only by the audience. Whatever the classification, the scores of the aforementioned texts reflect new ways of witnessing reenactments of the past. Strictly literalist visions of prior ages are deconstructed, permitting critical thinking about how the past has impacted on tangible elements of the present for contemporary audiences.

Another useful link between the 1920s and the twenty first century on the level of theory can also be detected in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (1995), edited by Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz. In their introduction, the authors discuss the *flâneur*, the nineteenth century Parisian dandy who "strolled the city streets, eyes and senses attuned to the distractions that surrounded him" (1995: 5). In the existing literature on modernity (especially its nineteenth century, European manifestation), the topic of the *flâneur* in French poetry and other styles of literature, such as the meandering genres of literature theorised by such academics as Ross Chambers (1999, especially 215–49), calls to mind the prevalence and reasoning behind walking (whether aimless or with a goal in mind) on the part of various characters in the revival.

In Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*, Gil Pender, a Hollywood writer who wants to do more 'substantial', literary work, wanders the streets of Paris, disenchanted with his own historical context. His timetravelling to Paris after midnight via automobile allows his character, and the audience, to question notions of nostalgia and a "better" past, issues broader in their import than a retelling of Paris during the "Lost Generation". As for Ben Singer's chapter in the aforementioned book, the rapid updates in technology, speed of living, walking and moving in an industrial, urban

context were linked to the "sensationalisation" of commercial entertainment (1995: 90). Such updates were especially speedy in comparison to the experiences of previous generations. From the 1890s to the 1910s, a conservative outcry over what Michael Davis, a New York social reformer, termed "hyperstimulus" (Singer 1995: 75) highlighted anxieties over "post-modernity", with an emphasis on immediate gratification and sensory excess (Singer 1995: 73). Also, as the titular gangster character discovers in *Underbelly: Squizzy*, carrying out criminal acts with his confederates on foot is riskier than the more modern "getaway" car. Such anxieties as are germane to hyperstimulus also relate to the aesthetics of, inter alia, *The Great Gatsby*, especially the titular Gatsby's high-speed jaunts in his automobile through suburban Long Island and ultra urban New York City.

All of the texts comprising the revival, to one degree or another, deal with the urban experience. Even the carrying out of business and relaxing in seclusion in the English countryside, in programs such as *The Forsyte Saga* and *Downton Abbey*, are inevitably interrupted by the need to go to an urban centre, usually London. New and novel technology in these texts functions as signs of societal change. The semiotics of modernity, such as the pianola player in *The Forsyte Saga*, can provoke joy and merriment, in accompanying family sing-alongs and dances. At other times, a negative reaction is the result, as in the new vacuum cleaner frightening Tommy Darmody in *Boardwalk Empire*. One allegorical component of the recent revival of the 1920s is the link between prewar misgivings about the neurological effects of heightened stimuli and twenty first century fears about the intended side effects and consequences of new forms of technology, on an individual and communal basis. These misgivings exist, of course, alongside ongoing industrialisation. It will be not just the physical and tangible presence of objects on the screen, but what they signify, that equates to a cogent link between touches of the traditional and the modern, especially when the allegorical distance provided by translation comes into play.

Marxist cultural critic Fredric Jameson's work provides further theoretical background to this thesis. Of particular relevance is Jameson's discourse on "The Nostalgia Mode" (1983: 116–17), or "nostalgia film" (1983: 116), according to which the meanings intended by certain films set in the past allude not merely to actual historical settings, but to the period of time immediately before that. For

instance, while *American Graffiti* (1973) is set in 1962, the intention is to "recapture all the atmosphere and stylistic peculiarities of the 1950s United States […] of the Eisenhower era" (Jameson 1983: 116). Jameson does not mention that *American Graffiti* is set in the early Kennedy era but, owing largely to historical proximity in the setting, his point is still valid. The spectre of the First World War over the popular cultural texts that comprise the 1920s revival looms large, especially considering that, as the time of writing of this thesis, the centenary of that conflict's end is less than three months away. Considering this fact, it can be argued that the canon of twenty first century films and television programs set in the 1920s, especially those containing veterans as characters, speaks to audiences not just of the relevance of the 1920s to the twenty first century, but also of the 1910s, on issues such as the eternal question of war veterans, for instance. For instance, *Boardwalk Empire* flashes back, in its second season, to Jimmy's time as a student at Princeton in 1916, and *Downton Abbey* and *Underbelly: Squizzy* commence during the 1910s – *Downton Abbey* in 1912 and *Underbelly: Squizzy* in 1915.

Films released at the time of the publication of Jameson's 1983 chapter, such as his chosen example of the neo-noir film, *Body Heat* (1981), that downplay a contemporary setting (1983: 19–20) stand at one remove from films set in the 1920s, such as *Changeling* (2008), that moderate the "modernity" aspect of historical accuracy. Such films are obviously costume dramas, but they refrain from any attempt to entrench certain stereotypical representations – the "money shots" of youthful hedonism or overt gangster activities, for instance. This is a return to Bill Garner's engagement with "expressions of 'period'" (2012: 180).

Such a tactic, on the part of director Clint Eastwood, may be designed to render the true story of child abduction and police corruption as more "inside the timeline", rather than in an objective, overarching position from the perception of viewers. Viewed from a contemporary perspective sensitive to historical hindsight, there is little in *Changeling* that highlights 1920s modernity, apart from aspects of the *mise-en-scène* and scattered references in the dialogue to Hollywood films. A gritty, graphically violent method, relevant to crime dramas such as *Boardwalk Empire*, *Peaky Blinders* and the *Underbelly* franchise entries (the latter two of which also contain a stylised approach with a degree of anachronism) permit an approach to the 1920s that demonstrates the negative, dark side of that decade, including the

consequences of the First World War and reformist legislation during that era. More genteel, less explicit "heritage" miniseries and films, such as *Downton Abbey*, *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, *Decline and Fall* and *Easy Virtue*, treat the interwar British historical experience as one more infused with elegiac mourning for fallen comrades and ambitions. Simultaneously, a pronounced uneasiness with aspects of modernity (such as technological improvements etc) is displayed, and audiences are positioned to question the impact of ever-present class stratifications in society on this sub stratum of the revival, and present-day society.

Fantasy films and television programs that deal with time travel, such as *Midnight in Paris*, *Timeless* and *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, borrow and take advantage of "fish out of water" comedic tropes, but also interrogate received popular memories of the Jazz Age and contemporary nostalgia for a romanticised era. As for dramas such as *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (containing a liberal dose of comedy) and *The Danish Girl*, societal issues, such as homosexuality, interracial relationships and even pioneering gender reassignment surgery, alongside opposition towards these issues, are foregrounded for the advantage of underlining an allegorical link to the status of these issues in a twenty first century context, and reflecting on how far society has come. Overall, the degree to which Jameson's assertion that "we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about that past, which itself remains forever out of reach" holds true for historical film and television released in the new millennium will be surveyed. Additionally, it is useful to trace how more "anachronistic" and "experimental" approaches to history impact on received, "popular" memory. It is imperative to remember, in this frame of academic mind, that Jameson also argues that such nostalgia actually destroys history per se.

Echoes of Noir

The historical context of a world where society was changed forever after a worldwide cataclysmic event is the major reason that the genre, and tropes, of film noir can be a rewarding prism through which to contemplate the revival of the 1920s. The protagonists of the revival live in the aftermath of the First World War; the challenges that they face are symptomatic of a society in transition. In films such as *The Tender Hook* (2008), entertainment for the masses – in this case, boxing – is

mired in the corrupt dealings of managers and boxers alike, including fixed fights and the entire spectre of pugilism being a cover for, and adjunct to, other shady activities. Television programs such as *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *Underbelly: Squizzy* include as part of their cast of characters prohibition agents and police officers (mainly men) who experience both the thrill of enforcing the law, with attendant successes and failures, and the temptation of benefiting from corruption. When temptation is succumbed to, the underworld is both strengthened in reach of influence and made more vulnerable on an individual basis, due to personal crises of conscience and public outcries over the effectiveness of law enforcement. Personal conscience and values systems also come into play in reference to ex military personnel, present in a majority of the texts comprising the revival. Their experience of life, shattered irrevocably by combat experience, and tested by a society that does not always know best how to reward such men for their service, results in psychological and gangland war, and the further testing of martial experience.

Dark City: The Lost World of Film Noir (1998), by Eddie Muller, surveys Hollywood film noir, spanning the period from the early 1940s until the release of *Psycho* (1960). Written in a style that imitates the argot of the "hard-boiled" film and pulp fiction of the era, the book tackles topics including the influence of organised crime in politics, boxing and the penitentiary (1998: 21–37); the changed sociocultural landscape of the home front facing disturbed war veterans on demobilisation (1998: 129–43) and, hanging over the entire genre like a repressive Sword of Damocles, the right wing, anti-Communist witch hunts spearheaded by figures like Senator Joseph McCarthy, paranoid over the perceived "subversion" of "American values", in the chapter "The Precinct" (1998: 39–53). Especially telling, in the latter chapter, is the insertion of this history as the backdrop for the tropes around depictions of law enforcement, corrupted and otherwise. Insertion of said history is similar to the occasional voicing of paranoia over late 1910s and early 1920s left wing, socialist and anarchist movements (a wave of activism precipitated by the Russian Revolution, leading to social backlash such as the first U.S "Red Scare"), by both law enforcement in Atlantic City and the Ku Klux Klan, in *Boardwalk Empire*.

Muller's critiques of the films of this period, including many of the most revered classics of the form, often celebrate the underdog figure stemming from Depression-era socialist theatre and 1930s Warner Brothers gangster pictures, and noteworthy victims of anti-Red purges. The aforementioned chapters and the chapter "Loser's Lane", on page 172, supports Muller's hypothesis that, in dwelling on the seedier aspects of postwar U.S. society, film noir stood as some of the most convincing and compelling Tinseltown fare, offering "bracing respite from sugercoated dogma, Hollywood-style" (1998: 11). While it is somewhat limiting that the scope of *Dark City* does not encompass films inspired by noir released after 1960 or, indeed, international equivalents, the texts of the revival scrutinising the criminal underworld (especially in a United States setting) do contain aspects of mood and *mise-en-scène* that hearken back to the Golden Age of Hollywood theorised by Muller.

James Naremore (2007) covers film noir production in the years after 1960. Naremore analyses the "neo-noir" (2007: 10) globally, detailing the various backgrounds to the genre. Specifically, he questions the tightly held, and popularly received, notions of film noir having its roots in German expressionism (2007: 278–81), expounding instead on nineteenth and twentieth century modernism and detective literature (2007: 42–46, 48–52 & 279), and urban tabloid newspaper and urban street photography in the 1940s and '50s (2007: 280–81). The latter cultural form pops up time and again in scenes from such texts as *Boardwalk Empire*, where the books that characters read, as well as being signifiers of historical setting, comment on the actions and moods of various scenes. Represented amongst these on-screen volumes are examples of what would nowadays be termed "pulp fiction". Naremore also takes issue with Aristotelian genre classifications – categories are comprised of items with like properties (2007: 5) – finding support from the cognitive theories of George Lakoff (2007: 5-6) and Michel Foucault's arguments on the imprecise attempt to "tame the wild profusion of existing things" (quoted on page 282) in the context of biological classifications. Naremore is careful to state on page 6, however, that his approach is always rooted in "cultural and social history". Hybrids and "transgeneric" motion pictures are the result of this "ideological concept" (Naremore 2007: 6).

Another link between film noir and the revival is whether the greater permissiveness in contemporary screen content makes the past, and any attendant links with the

present, more "real", and affecting, for audiences. Such fresh modes of film noir are relevant to the revival, but not in the sense of postmodern, updated – chiefly in setting – takes on the famous film style's conventions. Instead, conventions and signposts of film noir are embedded in the cinematography, editing, *mise-en-scène*, urban settings – especially under cover of night – and thematic concerns, including male-female relationships, in the grittier, more graphic popular-cultural examples under scrutiny in this thesis, such as *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *Underbelly: Squizzy*. Such texts go against a surface reading of their being aligned with previous cycles of popular culture set in the 1920s, such as Warner Brothers gangster films of the 1930s. Rather, the twenty first century vision, in art, of the 1920s, benefits from current liberal censorship, or lack thereof, in cinema and cable television, allowing a greater realism than the censorship-inflected cinematic image of pre 1960s cinema (Naremore 2007: 96–135).

Television is sidelined by Naremore, in its possibilities for engagement with film noir, except for references to Mark Frost and David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991) (2007: 10 & 307), listings of police procedurals and private eye programs from the 1950s and '60s (2007: 259– 61) and a lamentation of commercial U.S. television's wariness about producing "dark" programming on commercial grounds (2007: 297–98). The reference to HBO's *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) draws cable television renderings of "cynical, sometimes darkly humorous entertainment" (Naremore 2007: 298) into the orbit of "neo-noir", but there is a lack of discussion of contemporary programming, with period settings, displaying noir tendencies. Also absent, in the midst of space allocated to United States, British, European, Latin American and Asian noir-esque cinema, are any examples of Australian noir. In recent years, Australian media, including an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* written by David Dale and entitled "Small-town secrets in *Mystery Road*" (19 January 2014), have dubbed local "small flicks about sleazy criminals […] on the neat streets of sunny suburbia, or in the middle of a red desert" as "Oznoirs." While historical films and, indeed, television in general are absent from Dale's discussion, it is worth pointing out that the serenity of suburbia is often disturbed in *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *Underbelly: Squizzy* – partially as a historical consequence of increasing suburban sprawl in interwar Western cities – and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. The latter television program, whilst displaying some

similarities with noir, has as much to do with a revisionist attempt at classic ("drawing room") English detective literature. This is especially apparent in the solving of the murder mystery in the episode "The Green Mill Murder" (S1E3, 2012), where a dart blown from a cornet has overtones of the improbable murder weapon (such as a poisoned dart, projected through a blow-pipe) named in a representative Agatha Christie novel such as *Death in the Clouds* (1935). Such a trend deserves further interrogation.

The Police

The institution of the police force in popular culture is seen by Ayana McNair as de-politicised and re-affirming of its place in the status quo. This is especially the case when the police have control over circulated, mediated messages (McNair 2011: 10–11). McNair is inspired here by Michel Foucault's theories of control and surveillance Unlike the texts covered in McNair's thesis – Los Angeles police museums, the television program *COPS* (1989–present) and U.S. television cop comedies – the revival does not concern itself with the everyday lives of police officers per se, with the exception of *Babylon Berlin*. Nevertheless, the police play a major role in contextualising and dramatising the breakdown of the struggle between the forces of law and order and the underworld. For this reason, police detectives and patrolmen, as well as Federal agents, feature prominently in such texts as *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly Razor* and *Squizzy* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. Even *Downton Abbey* has a major sub plot in the third season that involves John Bates' incarceration over a false charge of murder.

Certain characters charged with upholding the law, such as Detective Inspector John "Jack" Robinson and Constable Hugh Collins in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, are treated sympathetically and shown as fair in their dealings. Contrastingly, seemingly hard and unsympathetic characters such as Van Alden/Mueller and Detective Inspector Bill Mackay in *Underbelly: Razor* are allowed to have their "cuddlier" side emerge as their respective series progress. Nevertheless, most representatives of the law, from police to agents to prison guards, are shown as corrupt, brutal, hypocritical, firm believers in the ends justifying the means and generally villainous – or, at best, anti-heroic. Possibly this could be due to the ideologies held by the makers of these television programs and motion pictures.

Another hypothesis is that these representations are meant to mark a warning about the consequences of morality-based legislation and enforcement of the same, both in the 1920s and today. The negative portrayals of law enforcement personnel in the revival are clear symbols of anxiety over state power embedded in these texts.

In relation to the Australian historical context where the intersection of the police and the underworld is concerned, Gavin Brown and Robert Haldane's study of the 1923 police strike in Melbourne (1998) fills a gap in Australian police studies concerning Australia's sole instance of a police strike. *Days of Violence: The 1923 police strike in Melbourne* takes the form of a cautionary tale, setting out the causes for the strike as emanating from police industrial relations, and detailing the course that the strike itself took and its aftermath. Brown and Haldane are both former Victorian police officers, one of whom (Haldane) possesses a doctorate. Despite this authorship context, with attendant assumptions about supporting the status quo and displaying hostility towards any industrial action in police ranks, the book maintains sympathy towards police grievances over the scrapping of superannuation in 1902 (1998: 8–11 & 164), low pay rates and allocated periods of leave (1998: 12 & 165), the deployment of plain clothes supervisors, or "spooks", to monitor police conduct (1998: 16–26 & 166) and sub par logistics provided for constables and officers (1998: 41 & 165). Indeed, all sides of the story, and all viewpoints, are included in the narrative, which never attempts to "apportion blame as such to the many organisations and individuals discussed"; this is due to the conclusion that "[m]ost [of the] individuals highlighted in [the] study acted honestly in accordance with the information which was available at the time" (Brown and Haldane 1998: 162).

Brown and Haldane's scholarship, while not "oral history" as such, use interviews with surviving strike participants, which permits a memory-based contrast with official discourses. This is another instance of the human face of an incidence of social rupture, as has been previously discussed in connection with the recollections of First World War "diggers". Indeed, data analysis of the members of the police force who went on strike shows that over half of those with military service engaged in industrial action. Conceivably, they were imbued with the ethos of mateship and comradeship that flourished in the trenches (Brown and Haldane 1998: 129). One example of a police officer character in the revival who is a veteran of the First World War is Detective Inspector John "Jack" Robinson in *Miss Fisher's Murder*

Mysteries. Conversely, Chief Inspector Chester Campbell, in the first season of *Peaky Blinders*, is a character who avoided military service. Indeed, Inspector Campbell's self-consciousness over being in a reserved occupation during 1914–18 deepens his distance and alienation from both the police force and his nemeses, the Peaky Blinders gang (a community which include veterans in its ranks). This civilian past also increases Inspector Campbell's zealous desire to clean up post First World War Birmingham, England.

Brown and Haldane commence their book with a general historical background of Melbourne in 1923, including the robberies and murders perpetrated by criminals such as Squizzy Taylor (1998: 2). They also reveal, admirably even-handedly in view of their aforementioned career paths, instances of police offences, including consorting with underworld figures (1998: 16). Yet, surprisingly, the vandalism and theft caused by crowds during the strike, and the charges laid against those convicted after the fracas (Brown and Haldane 1998: 46–74), are presented as individual or communal initiatives divorced from organised gang influence. This is in contrast to the apportioning of blame for disorderly conduct, in Hugh Anderson's *Larrikin Crook: The Rise and Fall of Squizzy Taylor* (1971), towards the "criminal factions", who "fought amongst themselves with bottles, bludgeons, and boots for the choicest loot. Taylor and others sat back and received the plunder" (1971: 154). Such an omission from Brown and Haldane's volume can be excused by its focus on the varying efforts to maintain public order, and communal resistance to that, during November 1923, as opposed to the anecdotal, biographical thrust of Anderson's book. What *is* exceptionally puzzling, however, is the decision to omit the Melbourne police strike entirely from the miniseries *Underbelly: Squizzy*. Such a refusal to acknowledge this event is even starker when set against the depiction of ruthless, corrupt constabulary practices in both *Underbelly: Squizzy* and *Razor*. In this *milieu*, bribery of underworld *habitués*, including "phizz-gigs" (British/Australian slang for police informers) is commonplace, and new, "scientific" methods of police detection and surveillance are regarded with suspicion by veteran officers and detectives. A dramatic shying away from the police strike has an impact on opinions held by the Australian populace about the functions and power of the police to this day. This is a trope that runs throughout such historical programming as the entire *Underbelly* franchise, including *Squizzy*.

Crime Fiction and True Crime

In the context of Australian crime fiction, Stephen Knight offers what he deems "a thematic approach to the multiplicities possible in interpretations of local crime fiction, influenced by the multi-layered approach of Roland Barthes towards the complexities of literary material" (1997: 6). Knight's now seminal text *Continent Of Mystery* ranges from colonial exposés of the convict experience (1997: 15–30 & 180–83), to postcolonial, "syncretic", as in a conglomeration of features from multiple sources, criminography dealing with squatter intrigue and black trackers (1997: 30–45 & 181–86) to 1980s and '90s feminist re-appropriations of the "private eye" novel (1997: 94–105, 189 & 191–93). Further, Knight outlines the hybrid, "colonial imitation" that has characterised much of Australian crime fiction as a simultaneous site of resistance and identification (1997: 173–99). This postcolonial methodology is indebted in large part to Homi Bhabha. Albert Memmi's ideas of depersonalised struggles between colonisers and colonised, with "*deprivations*" as an "almost direct result of the advantages secured to the colonizer" (Knight 1997: 177), are also essential to comprehending the historical processes traced throughout the book.

Kerry Greenwood's series of novels detailing the detection practiced by Phryne Fisher, later serialised by the ABC, are an intriguing example of Australian crime fiction. While the volumes, according to Knight, contain "a good deal of urban and political history" (1997: 102), they also fall into the genealogy of "genteel", English drawing-room murder mysteries as written by such writers as Agatha Christie (1997: 193). The *Murder Mysteries*, as adaptations, do contain some disturbing scenes, and the mysteries to be solved occasionally overlap with thematic concerns to be found in the *Underbelly* series set in the same era, as in the pilot episode "Cocaine Blues" (2012). Nevertheless, the visceral gangland horrors of that franchise are mostly disregarded in favour of capers centring around, according to Knight, "local politics of religion, class and, of course, football" (1997: 194). Despite the liberal characterisation of Fisher in the series, there is a major research question, with historical import, that pertains to the depiction of female characters, as well as other "second class citizens", in the revival. The issue is whether the dramatisation of unfair conditions and discrimination against these characters discourages debate and discussion over the reality of progressive contemporary social "improvement."

Finally, true crime, and the motivations behind the committing of atrocities, is a key part, both faithful and reworked (or fictionalised) of the "underworld" element of the revival. Especially relevant are those texts that feature gangsters as significant members of the *dramatis personae*. Charlotte Brunsdon may speak, with support from the theorising of Tana Wollen, Andrew Higson, Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau, of "heritage television", a genre that acts as a bulwark of conservative, bucolic English values (1998: 229–30); however, in television set in the past generally, the trend has been to re-visit the hidden, "dark" side of the realities, and the ideologies and value codes of another era. Such a trend proceeds even at the risk of alienating audiences from characters. A revisionist trend exists alongside an unfurling of all the tropes of nostalgia, including, inter alia, music, dancing, costumes and sets. Karen Halttunen's *Murder Most Foul: The Killer And The American Gothic Imagination* (1998) is valuable for its historical overview of the change in discourse in the annals of U.S. criminality. Discourse altered from a theological belief in "original sin", while encouraging communal pity towards the sinner, to an Enlightenment mode. This mode encompassed romantic domesticity and the conviction that the individual *tabula rasa*, from birth, was susceptible to "passions" and environmental circumstances. Daniel Webster is invoked (Haltunnen 1998: 61–2), due to his formulation of the "paradox" of a "virtuous" public being seemingly addicted to the dissemination of the details of crime, and this raises questions concerning the attraction of present-day audiences to such programs as *Boardwalk Empire*, the *Underbelly* franchise and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*.

Vicarious enjoyment, or nostalgia for the past, mingled with voyeuristic intrigue at prurient details that may have been marginalised in previous received histories, may be a major factor in the popularity, and scope, of the revival. Such enjoyment may be aligned, or have a parallel, with the pervasive presence of forensic crime shows on contemporary television. Haltunnen's book is confined to true crime before the American Civil War, although she offers numerous examples of how seemingly archaic discourses still inflect contemporary texts ranging from the novels of Tom Harris to *Dead Man Walking* (1995). Regardless, it seems clear that Haltunnen's methodology, according to which she aims to explain "evil" while "salvation history" – a sacred narrative foregrounding the spiritual condition of the condemned – "was losing cultural power in the late eighteenth century" (1998: 3), remains just

as relevant today as it ever was. Where the depiction of villains in the return of the 1920s is concerned, the backstories of personages such as Gyp Rosetti in *Boardwalk Empire*, Squizzy Taylor in *Underbelly: Squizzy* and Murdoch Foyle in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* offer intriguing glimpses into the mixtures of the often gritty realities of lives spent in criminal pursuit with individual psychoses and peccadilloes. Also of interest are those characters in the revival, such as Agent Nelson Van Alden in *Boardwalk Empire*, whose individual moral codes preserve a black-and-white view of the motivations for crime that rejects the ethos of the Enlightenment. His unattractive piousness encourages his, at times, brutal bending of the law, before circumstances dictate a change of identity. Van Alden's *alter ego*, George Mueller, is brought into the orbit, from the third season (2012), of the Cicero, Illinois underworld, as an underling for those whom he previously opposed. Such a character arc highlights how, as opposed to the ideology of "heritage" television, conservative values can be rendered in a negative light as opposed to more liberal values.

Sara L. Knox examines the competing narratives in the United States preoccupied with the act of murder and its meaning, and in this respect echoes Haltunnen (1998: 15–28). Knox gives a brief overview of antecedents of modern-day true crime, including broadsheet confessional narratives and the Newgate Account compendium, which rank the value of the relevant specifics of a case as "less important than the narrative rules of the genre" (1998: 17). Such a statement is applicable to the balancing act of the more contemporary mediums of film and television in depicting (historical) crime. Further, she notes how the nineteenth century shift to the importance of murder being imprinted on the murderer, rather than the act, with the "subject a synecdoche for the greater social 'whole'", had the psychological consequence of codifying "homosexual", "adolescent" and "psychotic" subjects, amongst others (1998: 17). The critical breakdown of the criminal characters in the texts of this thesis, especially where they display "deviant characteristics" – by the standards of the 1920s – will allow for a study of the intersection of the values these texts are trying to disseminate with the degree to which these values align or divert from the "grand narrative."

Ideologies voiced by characters in the relevant films and television programs under study, allegory, metonymy and intended audience responses from a twenty first

century perspective are additional factors valuable, and worthy of being highlighted, when engaging with the revival. Especially important is the concept of metonymy. A figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to, in an act of substitution, by the name of something closely connected to that thing or concept, this noun is useful in attempting to analyse the presence of, and representation of, non-Caucasian characters in the revival as making amends ("reconciliation") for decades-old sociocultural omissions and stereotypes. It is also valuable for the additional connotations of geographical locations, like the pictorialised Atlantic City (hedonistic excess and capitalist defiance of moralistic norms) or idealised, but unseen, Paris (a freer existence for those estranged, or "deviant" outcasts, from mainstream society) in *Boardwalk Empire*, as associated prototypical, or protean, modernity recycled for new millennium consumption. Archetypes of the 1920s, such as the wounded returned soldier in *Underbelly: Squizzy*, are another example of metonyms that act as familiar signposts and entry points into recreations of an Australian criminal *milieu* (as well as amplifying the horrific and grave intent of aspirational underworld expansionism through brute force). Finally, taboo props in the revival, such as pornographic images in *Babylon Berlin*, for instance, exist on the screen as fetishistic channels for the depiction of topical (as in twenty first century) concerns, but relocated to a historical place and during a specific historical period. Transmission and dissemination of interpretations of the text use previous historical disturbances in order to sharpen contemporary audiences' understanding of their own experienced malaise and trauma.

Noel Sanders scrutinises case histories, from 1945 to the early 1990s, of "questions of identity, national and sexual in most cases" (1995: 3) that infiltrated media coverage of notorious criminal issues in society. Along the way, the prejudices and priorities of a bourgeois White Australia are writ large. These range from thallium homicides from 1947 to 1953 (Sanders 1995: 7–55), to fears of "white slavery networks" targeting vulnerable Australian women during the Menzies era (1995: 59–95) to the unofficial, popular discourses around Azaria Chamberlain's disappearance (1995: 165–82). Sanders draws parallels between his case studies and Foucault's procedure of "eventualisation", or dormant truths and suspicions held by members of society that, except in cases of intense media scrutiny, are not "issues" (1995: 114). Walter Benjamin's project of investing "unreadable" social pursuits and conduct

with the strength of legend (1995: 115–16), in the context of a modern industrial existence, is also employed in Sanders' methodology, along with Benjamin's dialectical observation that events will "incorporate both their prehistory and their after-history [...] in virtue of which their pre-history, too, can undergo constant change" (quoted in Sanders 1995: 124). Readings of Vince Kelly's 1950s and '60s writings on the 1920s criminal *milieu*, after the historical fact, reveal a conservative anxiety over the Cold War and, later, a sense of uneasiness over the counterculture and social permissiveness (Sanders 1995: 124). Michel de Certeau's conjecture of "*setting aside*, or reassemblage" of historical events from forerunning texts to create a "new redistribution (that) transforms space" (quoted in Sanders 1995: 125) is also appropriate when critically examining the revival for after-historical meanings, and what ideologies – liberal, conservative, hybrid – they possess.

Alfred W. McCoy (1980) manages to bypass the obviously chronological omissions of future "moral panics" over ecstasy and methamphetamines, and the twenty first century debates over liberalisation of cannabis legislation. In so doing, he delivers a sociological account, with a journalistic eye, of the nineteenth and twentieth century history of drug use in Australia. Moving from an international history of narcotic usage (1980: 13–18), he then details the experience of the Antipodes with opium, cocaine, cannabis and heroin, highlighting a number of vital theses. One is that Sydney and Melbourne's underworlds have flourished in differing ways. Sydney's convict past, port economy and police force were more susceptible to corruption (McCoy 1980: 112 & 142). This state of affairs stood as a contrast to the more "fragmented and episodic" trappings (McCoy 1980: 112) of Melbourne's *milieu*, aided by a more effective police force and an alliance of conservative business interests and pro-active government (McCoy 1980: 104–12). The second thesis is that Australian "sly-groggers[8]", purveyors of illicit alcohol after the legal hotel

[8] Such dealers ran "sly grog shops", illicit establishments for drinking alcohol (much like speakeasies) (Partridge 2002: 1093; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009: 62; Straw 2016: 70–1), especially during the era of the "six o' clock swill", or six o' clock closing for hotel bars in Australia (Luckins 2008: 297–300; Writer 2011: 20–1 & 47–9). Sly grog referred to clandestine (sly) alcohol (grog, or diluted, adulterated, and substandard spirits, introduced into the British navy by eighteenth century admiral Edward Vernon [1684–1757] [Ranft 1958: 417–19], whose wearing of a grogram cloth coat resulted in his being given

closing time of six pm, were unable to achieve the same degree of market share enjoyed by their U.S. counterparts in the context of total Prohibition and larger urban centres (McCoy 1980: 103). Such an analysis of urban difference is expanded on, in a comparative study of Sydney and Melbourne's organised crime experiences, in McCoy's later contribution to *The Sydney-Melbourne Book* (1986).

McCoy's work is relevant to the revival due to its general chronology of patterns of community desire for proscribed products, and the ebb and flow of legal criminalisations and decriminalisations. All of this chronology is set against the backdrop of divisions in society over how to deal with the effects of alcohol and other drugs. In texts such as *Underbelly: Razor*, *Underbelly: Squizzy* and *The Tender Hook*, those who peddle and use substances are fleshed out in their character dimensions, with their motivations for their behaviour analysed, while the official discourses over legal responses to organised crime are questioned by representatives of the law and the underworld. Press and pulpit condemnations of "sly grog", "snow" (cocaine [Writer 2011: 42; McConville 2013; Straw 2016: 102; Cormack 2018]) and other vices, in the context of the 1920s, exist as a metaphorical allusion to contemporary hysteria over suburban tolerance, or lack thereof, towards prostitution and alcohol-related violence. The "underbelly", behind the headlines, is acknowledged as lacking in American-style glamour by such gangsters as the Al Capone-fixated Guido Calletti in *Underbelly: Razor*, and, in a "smaller" world, manifests as ties to international criminality. One example is the link between U.S.-bound shipping from coastal Victoria and small-town "sly-grogging" in the second season of *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*.

While, obviously, his book predates even the 1982 film *Squizzy Taylor*, or many of the most famous examples of "OzNoir", it is unfortunate that McCoy does not investigate the attitudes towards drugs in 1970s Australian popular culture. Nevertheless, his final chapter "Australia's Heroin Subculture" (1980: 388–406), through describing, in prose, a "Portrait Of A Pusher" concerning a would-be academic's succumbing to heroin in the late 1970s, is almost cinematic in its *mise-*

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the nickname of "Old Grog" [Partridge 2002: 506]). In common with speakeasies, the term "sly grog" was first attested well before the 1920s, in the 1820s (Ramson 1988: 602).

en-scène and descriptions of the potential consequences of indulgence. Also rendered in an almost cinematic fashion are the attendant emotions of witnessing the victim's experiences vicariously. The writing style of much of McCoy's expose has a tendency to lapse into moralism, along with a propensity to uphold the status quo by declining to deconstruct its policies. Nevertheless, such a writing style is allied to querying the connotations surrounding the dramatisation of hedonism in such texts as *Tender Hook*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *Squizzy*, and how hedonism impacts on receptions of characters in these texts, fictional or otherwise. Heroin, the addictive killer, is demonised, along with opium, as a destroyer of families and crutch to block out psychological pain in *Boardwalk Empire* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. Cocaine, on the other hand, in *Boardwalk Empire*, *Underbelly: Razor* and *Underbelly: Squizzy*, is a metonym for the further "enslavement" of prostitutes, while increasing the volatility and irrationality of violent criminals. Ideologically speaking, cannabis is relatively free of censure, as a vehicle for disoriented comedy, in the form of hashish, in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and a relaxing, communal recreation, as long as it does not interfere with musicianship in clubs, in *Boardwalk Empire*.

Chapter 2
Charting a Protean Modernity

Looking for Modernity, via Postmodernism

The concept of modernity has long been seen by scholars as a central means to understand and approach twentieth century art and culture. Outlining some of the most noteworthy and important of these scholarly discourses will serve to pin down exactly how my examined audiovisual texts, which revisit and recreate the 1920s in a twenty first century context, engage with this grounding, protean concept. Modernity will be explored in its intersections with tourism and industrialisation, the conditions faced by the working class, capitalism, bohemianism, the performative aspects of enclosed urban(e) spaces, religion and anti-modernity, the place of cinema in the 1920s in its revisited early twenty first century form. A central means of understanding the form and expression of this revisiting will be the intersection of anachronism and stylisation.

A useful general definition of 'modernity' by historians, refers to a complex amalgamation of political, social and economic changes wrought by and following on from revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century, most notably the American and French Revolutions. The moral, legal and economic genealogy of modernity, however, extends back as far as the Magna Carta. These cataclysmic and momentous political upheavals challenged and provided an alternative to longstanding traditional structures of European power – feudalism and absolutist monarchy. Simultaneously, the Industrial Revolution resulted in seismic shifts for vast swathes of the European population. A radical shift occurred, transforming pre-modern, agrarian communities, centred on cohesive villages, towns and cities, into metropolises, serving as industrial powerhouses in their respective nations. These altered societies often saw close-knit communities replaced by populations characterised by urban anonymity and facelessness (Kniesche and Brockmann 1994: 7). As cultural historians Thomas W. Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann have written, one manifestation was modernity, which "summarizes the outcome of modernization in terms of the economic, political and social changes it causes" (1994: 9). Socially speaking, alongside an urbanised *milieu*, modernity was marked by a division of

labour, wage and salary discipline, expanded opportunities for education and the practical application of skills and training in a workplace context. Intellectually, it coincides with an overwhelming implementation of "western rationality" in social planning, encouragement of scientific expansion and self-replicating vitality of technology (Peukert 1992: 82). Modernity as a process continued, as a hallmark of the increasing urbanisation of Western society (especially in the United States), after the First World War.

Modernism is also defined by Kniesche and Brockmann as "a catchword for developments, movements, and revolutions in architecture, literature, painting, music, theatre, film, and other art forms", characterised, as with modernity, by "notorious instability" (1994: 9). This is a prime example of historical situatedness. In this chapter, the concept of modernity as both a dramatised recreation of these artistic "developments, movements, and revolutions", including societal reactions to these movements will be examined.

This chapter will focus on the twenty first century's recreation of what Miriam Hansen has termed "mid-twentieth-century modernity", a period she frames as lasting approximately from the First World War to the 1950s, incorporating "mass production, mass consumption and mass annihilation" (1999: 59). While Hansen is clearly thinking of the incidents of genocide perpetuated during the Second World War, her explanation nonetheless still pertains to the production and consumption potential of the interwar years, especially in countries, such as the United States, that had not been physically ravaged by the First World War. Modernity, as defined by Hansen, gestures, in its inclusion of "mass annihilation" (1999: 59) to the ever-present war veteran, a reminder of the horrors of twentieth century warfare and a character that will be explored in depth in the chapter analysing the place of the war veteran in the revisitation of the 1920s. Another pertinent manifestation of modernity is the alternative lifestyle classified as "Bohemianism", an artistic sensibility that originated amongst non-conformist, dissident and anti-bourgeois writers, painters, poets and philosophers in early nineteenth century Paris before spreading to Britain, the United States and Australia at the turn of the twentieth century (Moore 2012: 1–3). This sensibility will be analysed in relation to its co-existence alongside the status quo in television programs such as *Boardwalk Empire*.

Where popular culture is concerned, one form has been an important embodiment of modernity's mass production and consumption from the last years of the nineteenth century until the present era. This is the medium of cinema. In the view of such scholars as Ben Singer and Tom Gunning (from whom the influential term "cinema of attractions" is derived, evoking the moving-image's earliest mode and audience relationship [1989: 31]), cinema personified the breakneck tempo and sensational stimulus of the experience of feeling or emotion, characterising what everyday urban life was like at the turn of the twentieth century, an observation later expanded on by famous German scholars of modernity, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin (Singer 1995: 90–1). Cinema's genesis involves a camera recording sequential photographs, then those photographs being projected at speed, permitting the illusion of movement through tricking the eye with what scholars often call the "persistence of vision", then, often, an editing process constructing these shots into narrative arcs projected onto a screen (Murphet 2008: 344). From the late 1920s onwards (but not in an industrial, consumer-friendly manner until the 1940s), television utilised similar principles, but combined them with electromagnetic wave broadcasting, as opposed to celluloid, to private homes instead of communal, darkened cinemas. Both media forms are represented in this thesis. And both are historically located, in a retrospective fashion, through the use of Hansen's concept of "vernacular modernism" as outlined in the Introduction/Literature Review.

Although cinema's invention predates the 1920s, it was during the late 1910s and '20s that what film studies scholars now call Hollywood's "classical cinema" crystallised in the form of its defining features of linear, unobtrusive, psychologically based narration, continuity editing and coherent time and space subordinated to narrative functions, all delivered via a highly industrialised, commercial "studio system" dominated by a small handful of companies. The 1920s, Hansen argues, was in the period that the public fully adopted the cinema as a "sensory-reflexive horizon for the experience of modernity" (2000: 10). In this way, the discursive form of the cinema, predicated on sensory insight and skills, permitted individual experience to find common ground via the expression and recognition of other cultural consumers in public (Hansen 2000: 10). Cinema and television both have their origins in the era of peak modernity, reflecting and participating in societal changes inherent in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Nearly a

century later, these media forms recreate and disseminate anew the experience of the 1920s to an audience that has only even known such a period in its audiovisual, virtual form.

Hansen's notion of the "vernacular", as framed in the Introduction, also has connotations of a native, or indigenous, language or sub culture existing on the margins of the official and the mainstream. It pertains to how economic classifications of society have their experiences, and relationship to a post First World War consumerist culture, represented in classical cinema (Mulvey 2009: 223). As an expression of the modern change in aesthetics, the vernacular mode of modernity was also affected by new structured, logical principles of production, as embodied in the factory-line and scientific management principles of Fordism and Taylorism, respectively. Fordism prioritises the production and standardisation of low-cost goods on assembly lines by unskilled workers, using special purpose tools and/or equipment, who are paid increased "living wages" in order to be able to purchase the products resulting from their labour. Taylorism's objective is to improve economic efficiency, especially labour productivity, through eliminating waste, transforming craft industries into mass industries (in common with Fordism), standardisation of best practices and discouraging traditional hierarchies and social status of workers with specialised skill sets (Murphet 2008: 351; Drucker 1974: 181). Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane write of cultural responses to this new reality:

> [I]t is the one art that responds to the scenario of our chaos. It is the art consequent on Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty principle', of the destruction of civilization and reason in the First World War, of the world changed and reinterpreted by Marx, Freud and Darwin, of capitalism and constant industrial acceleration, of existential exposure to meaninglessness or absurdity. It is the literature of technology (1986: 27).

These developments are embedded in the twenty first century revival of the 1920s in popular culture. Twenty first century television culture, spearheaded by both producers and consumers, accomplish this cultural work through the culture's obsession with the 1920s. For instance, unionist and socialist rhetoric fuels blue-collar worker unrest in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (2012–2015), while the grimy industrial iconography of Birmingham, England that defines the visuals of

Peaky Blinders (2013–present) reflects a postwar malaise reminiscent of Otto Dix's Weimar-era German artwork that foregrounds the brutal cycle of capitalism and the effects of warfare. As for "existential exposure to meaninglessness or absurdity", the laments and depression experienced by war veterans, physical or psychological, are common tropes in *The Tender Hook* (2008) and *Boardwalk Empire* (2010-2014).

Postmodernism is another cultural epoch, concept, or attitude that co-exists in the stylistic and thematic fabric of the twenty first century canon of the 1920s' twenty first century revival that is my focus, further complicating the era's representation in coming "after" both modernism and postmodernism. If the 1920s is a decade firmly rooted in what we call modernity, as an especially crucial period in the acceleration of culture becoming increasingly defined by mass media and audiovisual forms, many of the subsequent films and television programs set within or concerning this overdetermined ten years and their ongoing ramifications have emerged via a culture of postmodernism that peaked in the twentieth century's final quarter.

Shohini Chaudhuri defines postmodernism as a movement that

> […] emphasises the plural, the partial and the provisional, the relativity of all 'truths', thereby challenging orthodox historiography. Postmodern works react to perceptions that modernist works are 'difficult' by playfully mixing high and low culture, thereby addressing a broad audience. Postmodernism thrives on simulation (using parody or pastiche to imitate former genres or styles), […] [and] intertextuality (texts exist in relationship to other texts and are tissues of quotations from other texts) (2005: 9).

The critical discourse of postmodernism, as a spirited blend of high and low culture, simulation and intertextuality, must be acknowledged as a vital aspect of contemporary (that is, twenty first century) popular culture, not just in the context of the technology and aesthetics behind films and television programs, but also where its influences are apparent in the specific texts that will be discussed here. For example, historical reenactment, complete with on-screen titles and verbatim dialogue, in television programs such as *Underbelly: Razor* (2011) and *Underbelly: Squizzy* (2013), blends with the distancing effect of tongue-in-cheek, even "larrikin", humorous animation in the aforementioned titles. Tilly Devine's substitution of her rival's pet dog with another canine in the pilot episode, "The Worst Woman in

Sydney" of *Underbelly: Razor* is visualised via a hand-tinted, sepia title card with the words "The Switcheroo!" emblazoned on the screen in bold white font.

As for *Underbelly: Squizzy*, the third episode, "Squizzy Takes Charge", prominently features Squizzy Taylor's murderous revenge for an attack upon his girlfriend, combined with his aspirations to become the head of Melbourne's underworld. This is enacted through his pitting of his two chief rivals, Henry Stokes and "Long Harry" Slater, against each other. This instance of gang warfare is pre-empted by a still designed to approximate garish pulp fiction paperback artwork (O'Brien 1997: 1–4). The text proclaims, in font designed to evoke reflexive memories of *film noir*, "Leslie Taylor Presents *The Fitzroy Vendetta*: Henry Stokes – Long Harry Slater." The surrounding, foregrounded figures of the underworld figures vie for attention with a "getaway car", and nighttime images of Melbourne, in the background. The overall vintage effect is capped by three thin black lines running vertically in the middle of the screen, approximating the graininess of film stock of the era. The melange of visual, stylistic elements representing sensibilities from different historical eras, representing both history and its audiovisual rendering as "old" through self-conscious formal techniques, act as a kind of bricolage, long a hallmark of postmodern textuality.

Chaudhuri writes: "[D]istinction is often made between 'popular' postmodernism and 'resistance' postmodernism; the latter uses these techniques 'to 'deconstruct' and subvert old meanings as well as to 'construct' new meanings through the repositioning of artistic and cultural discourses" (2005: 9). The creators of *Squizzy* appear to have taken this subversion to heart through favouring resistance postmodernism. The animation hearkens back to earlier forms of popular culture (such as silent film intertitles and promotional posters for boxing matches) while simultaneously indicating more contemporary discourses, including sensationalised media reportage and the *Underbelly* book/television franchise itself, that can repackage (or "reposition") Australian underworld lore (a national cultural discourse), with a lengthy pedigree of reception, for twenty first century reception.

Chaudhuri emphasises that television is recognised as the primary medium of postmodern culture, and cites the example of MTV. Its targeting of a youthful demographic is largely predicated on mimicking the editing of music videos, which

closely follows the tempo of the song being visualised. Disruption and speed are essential components of MTV's sensual impression, embodied in a quick-cut style rearticulating and also recombining portions of visuals from other contexts as an example of bricolage. MTV is just one example of television that, since the 1960s, has attempted to attract youthful demographics through such aesthetics. Television programs such as *Boardwalk* (partially) and *Razor* clearly evince traces of the postmodern, both aurally and visually. Their thematic content and stylistic tropes appear to throw down a permissive gauntlet against the practice, over many decades, of tailoring programs for family audiences.

Mixed Genres

The recent audiovisual revival of the 1920s that is my focus presents an important aspect within the formal and conceptual treatment of the decade. This is the films' and television programs' adherence to, or reworking of, genre conventions (Pramaggiore 2013: 30–32). For instance, *Boardwalk* is a gangster series, *Miss Fisher's* is a reworked example of the heritage English murder mystery, and *The Artist* (2011) is a romanticised behind-the-scenes look at film-making mixed with melodrama over declining and soaring popularity reminiscent of *A Star Is Born* (1937). These and the other primary texts play their roles as parts of cycles grouped around occupations and aesthetics defining the 1920s. Their generic and formal ancestors are films and television programs often already historically based, such as the Warner Brothers gangster films of the Great Depression, or 1970s Hollywood productions such as *The Front Page* (1974) and *The Great Gatsby* (1974). The latter motion pictures were able to exhibit a degree of faithfulness to the original source materials, due to the dismantling of the Production Code system of censorship, which had not been possible in earlier adaptations such as the 1931 *Front Page* (and its 1940 reworking, *His Girl Friday*) or the 1949 *The Great Gatsby*.

While not the primary focus of the current thesis, the primary texts' role within complex histories of film and televisual genres is an important part of their generative form, whereby the multi-layered past of a given genre's textual and mythic history continues to resonate, encapsulating the 1920s and the countless iterations thereof in the subsequent nine decades. The present day revival of the 1920s looks back to previous waves of 1920s-themed cultural content, as enumerated

and described in the Introduction, for inspiration, updating, modification or revision. For instance, *Downton Abbey* relocates the basic premise of the 1970s ITV series, *Upstairs, Downstairs* to London and, reflecting the sociocultural (even "revisionist") climate of the 2010s, includes historical, background events that reflect the dark side of British colonialism (the Irish War of Independence and the Jallianwala Bagh, or Amritsar, massacre of 1919, for example). It also treats characters of differing sexual orientation and ethnicity with more sensitivity and nuance. As for *Underbelly: Squizzy* and *The Great Gatsby*, these texts are remakes (the former an adaptation of an established property, namely the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald) of previous films. *Underbelly: Squizzy* takes the light-hearted, toned down approach of *Squizzy Taylor* and, instead of a larrikin homage of earlier styles of Australian variety entertainment, reenacts the exploits of the titular Melbourne gangster with the same gritty, much more explicit and even (where the non-diegetic soundtrack is concerned) anachronistic trappings of its parent, *Underbelly* franchise. This style makes the television series, in its quick editing, hand-held camera shots and slow-motion sequences, both more realistic and more fantastical than the 1982 film. *The Great Gatsby*, directed by Baz Luhrmann, displays the director's hyperkinetic approach to scenes of hedonistic party spectacle, aided by blue-screen special effects and a contemporary hip-hop sensibility in its soundtrack (the film is executive-produced by Jay-Z). The mixture of period-appropriate and contemporary music in the film's soundtrack is clearly meant to evoke a link between 1920s and present-day celebrity and club culture. The racist ideology espoused by Tom Buchanan is foregrounded and rendered more problematic (especially due to an increased African-American presence in Luhrmann's version, including a house servant who displays, through facial gestures, offense to Buchanan's racial views) than in the 1949 and 1974 cinematic adaptations. The critique of the shallowness and irresponsibility of high society in the 2013 *Gatsby* contains an added bite due to the after effects of the 2008 financial crisis and the Occupy Wall Street movement.

It is vital, when examining and researching the recreation of an historical era in popular culture, to examine closely the artifice involved and relevant historical precursors, including the degree of reflexivity with which the era is presented to us on screen. Especially where television is concerned (and even more so in age concurrently defined as marked by "event", "peak" and "quality" television), it is

commonplace for historical programming (that is, shows set in the past) to frame past customs in a manner designed to reassure, perhaps coyly, contemporary viewers of the superiority of twenty first century sensibilities. This approach appears to be steeped in the Whig view of history, where circumstances are always improving (Mayr 1990: 301). However, if this approach – aided by privileged "liberal" characters, stand ins for audience members, who are often presumed to be loosely left, or liberal, by content creators – is designed to counterbalance behaviour deemed by present day standards as politically or ethnically debased, then programs set in the 1920s such as *Boardwalk*, with its treatment of race, or *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015), with its notions of class and gender, may be even more overt in this respect. This is where constant signposting of the programs' historical setting comes into play through dialogue. If costumes, vehicles, hairstyles, buildings and assorted props are the signs of this overdetermined era, then what the popular culture A.V. Club website terms the "Hey, it's the 1920s" moments in scripted exchanges highlight the context of characters' conversations, and attempt to offer understanding, if not justification.

The discourses of modernity, frequently handed down and understood through postmodern textuality, are central to the re-emergence of the 1920s and its cultural landscape in contemporary culture as presented in this thesis. Of particular importance is the way in which modernity is used as an overt audiovisual marker of these historically-set programs in order to tap into and heighten the ongoing appeal and fascination contemporary audiences have for this decade. One of these modes is the connection of modernity with the fields of tourism and industrialisation.

Modernity as Tourism and Industrialisation

In *Boardwalk Empire*, Atlantic City is a resort catering to tourists' whims. Its role as a new centre of leisure and "vice" – behaviour deemed "sinful" by dominant conservative elements in society and the institutions that seek to govern it – is interrogated in the program in relation to older would-be markers of American community, such as the Church, the family, and definitions of race. The importance of tourism is also evident in other of the thesis' primary texts.

In the global village of the twenty first century, conspicuous consumerism and apparent hedonistic excess are prevalent across various locations around the globe associated with tourism. Famous, or notorious, sites such as the Strip in Las Vegas, Bourbon Street in New Orleans, the Spanish island of Ibiza and the Indonesian island of Bali exist as metonyms of unbridled partying, alcohol- and drug-fuelled oases from both the chores of the working week and a cordoned-off exception to more traditionally conservative customs and practices found elsewhere in their respective nations. These sites may bring people from all over the world to sample the attractions; yet, in the context of international representation, rather than multicultural solidarity, such proximity can lead to cultural clashes and displays of boorish behaviour, often in the guise of displays of hyper-patriotism and xenophobia displayed by the more powerful visiting groups (Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen 2005: 88–90). These carnivalesque environments have their roots in the nineteenth century.

To demonstrate the sometimes fickle nature of the tourism trade, Atlantic City had a tourist rival for decades in Brooklyn's Coney Island. This amusement park, as Hansen and Singer have noted, vied for working families', and especially immigrants', recreational dollar and brief moments of leisure time, offering them thrilling rides and other forms of spectacle (Hansen 1991a: 16, 30, 116 & 222; Singer 1995: 88 & 92). For its part, Coney Island, while still possessing rides and events (Hughes 2012: 214–5; Allen and McCune 2011; CBS New York 2013), exists now mainly as a memory, a metonym for the increasing dominance of American-style consumer society as chronicled by such cultural critics as Kracauer first in the context of a 1928 Berlin fairground equivalent, the Berlin Luna Park (Hansen 1995: 387–9). Atlantic City still retains its tourist, recreational status as "Las Vegas of the East Coast"; although – especially in the aftermath of Donald Trump's real-estate speculations in the 1980s – it has jettisoned much of its glamorous past history associated with gambling (Johnson 2011a: 158–60 & 223–4). Recently, especially as gambling is legal in neighbouring states, more casinos in the city have been scheduled to close, throwing the job security of thousands of people into question (Associated Press 2014; Jacobs 2014). Nevertheless, the city's boardwalk remains an inherently strange, virtual space, with the ocean stretching towards the horizon serving as another naturalised, or point of origin, mass. The vastness of the Atlantic serves, in its vast and varied capacity, as a stage for the late-nineteenth/early-

twentieth century commodification of the pursuit of middle-class leisure time (Johnson 2011a: 20 & 59).

In its heyday, years after the city's humble beginnings in the 1850s as a resort village for wealthy families, Atlantic City was truly, at least in a United States context, the "Playground of the World" in its scope and ability to attract repeat business. By 1920, when *Boardwalk Empire*'s narrative begins, hundreds of thousands of people were arriving in dozens of specially commissioned train services to take advantage of the city's liberal licensing laws, swim in the Atlantic Ocean, view theatrical productions in their pre-Broadway tryouts, and spectate at the varied happenings on the 2000-foot boardwalk itself. Everything was on display – from hawkers peddling salt-water taffy, to birthing clinics displaying premature babies ("the miracle of nature"), fishing fleets bringing in the catch of the day and novelty diving events with elephants and other exotic creatures. The hawkers and show-business acts on the boardwalk even reflected the racial politics and received popular imagination of the early 1920s. One might think of "anthropological" exhibitions such as a stereotyped Zulu warrior, Mambo, "tribal chieftain of the Zulu, from the dark continent of Africa", apparently raised among lions and having a thirst for human blood, as dramatised in the *Boardwalk* episode "Belle Femme" (S1E9, 2010). This tourist hospot was a seasonal economy, concentrated on the northern summer months, but during its era of greatest fame Atlantic City exhibited a relationship to modernity redolent of the changes inherent in both working and middle class potential for leisure and capitalist consumerism (Johnson 2011a: 27–9, 30, 86 & 89–91). Even the commercialisation of sex – the brothels that numbered 100 as early as 1890 were a distinguishing feature of Atlantic City's libertarian appeal to male tourists – found a more bourgeois outlet in the Miss America Pageant, inaugurated in 1921 as the "Intercity Beauty Contest" (Johnson 2011a: 90–1). Atlantic City's pleasure economy meant that it was inherently "virtual." Virtual is not used here to signify cyber-based technology that mimics the real, but instead to denote a site that, especially after dark, is founded on artifice. Such artifice, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, is a key marker of the 1920s revival and its ongoing interest and relevance.

The concentration on tourism in the selection of shots and the choreography of the mass of humanity on Atlantic City's boardwalk is indicative of a major elision in

relation to the representation of class-based employment and industrial contexts in many historically based television programs. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, according to scholars such as Nelson Johnson, Atlantic City appealed most strongly to workers in factories specialising in heavy industry ranging from coal to iron and steel, such as manufacturing firms in Eastern United States cities, including Philadelphia (Johnson 2011a: 57–60). Into the second decade of the twentieth century, from late winter through spring, the city showed all the markers of a lower-blue-collar municipality, or "Tent City", with thousands of workers, confined to makeshift accommodation, building and renovating boarding-houses, businesses and the railways into and out of the city (Johnson 2011a: 20–2). Industrial productivity rose by 64% between 1920 and 1930 in the United States (Dumenil 1995: 58). Yet despite all this crucial context rich with thematic potential, in *Boardwalk* and the other films and television programs of the 1920s revival, the indexical and documentary claims of heavy industry labour are constantly given short shrift. This may appear surprising given that the 1920s was a decade marked by the growing radicalisation of workers throughout the Western world (especially in Europe), offering enormous dramatic potential. After all, the spectre of Communism/socialism permeated the popular mood, resulting in much inherent anxiety, in the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although the power of the combined union movement, and the number of actual strikes, decreased during the 1920s in the United States, for example (Dumenil 1995: 61–3), industrial action still affected sectors including coal mining and textiles (Zinn 1999: 376–7). The relative inattention given the industrial aspect in these films and television programs is fascinating, potentially revealing the ideological limitations audiovisual producers still adhere to decades after the end of the Cold War.

There are occasional subplots that concern industrial relations. In the first season of *Miss Fisher's*, for example, the episode "Death At Victoria Dock" (S1E4, 2012) serves as an *exposé* of aggressive strikes on the Melbourne docks. Elsewhere, characters such as the Irish émigré Eamonn Rohan, an Irish subway digger in "Peg of Old" (S2E7, 2011) of *Boardwalk*, have their working life delineated merely in exposition. The audience learns that he is working as a labourer on a Brooklyn subway project, but there are no scenes of the actual working conditions undergone by Rohan and his fellow workers. The following season episode, "The Pony" (S3E8,

2012), features a long shot – enabling a panoramic vista thanks to a downward-tracking camera – of the Chicago stockyards, an image that seems to typify the common approach adopted when it comes to industrial themes. This mobile shot permits views of animal carcasses and slaughterman hauling more carcasses past the main characters. However, the workers at the meat packing business are a faceless, almost inhuman mass, whose features are turned away from the camera or blurred in the background. The opening seconds of the shot reveal abattoir employees moving amongst cattle penned into cages, yet the camera is positioned too far away to reveal their features. This slaughterhouse acts more as a stage for a tense meeting between gangsters – presented clearly to the audience through editing concentrated, in the main, into medium shots and close-ups – than a living, breathing concern.

The historical setting of 1926 for the most recent season of *Peaky Blinders* contains frequent foreboding over societal unrest and predictions of widespread industrial action, culminating with the General Strike of that year. Although London-based, the impact of the strike was nation-wide, and Thomas "Tommy" Shelby has business interests in that metropolis. Tommy has received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and has continued to expand his business empire, replete with factories, from the previous season. Although we see more scenes of manual labour in this season than in prior seasons, the automobile manufacturing plant exists primarily as a stage for set pieces. Tommy's executive office is the setting for his cultural clashes with the Communist labour representative Jessie Eden and the Italian-American gangster Luca Changretta, setting up more philosophical crises for Tommy as an unethical businessman and pillar of his community, similar to Nucky in *Boardwalk* (especially from the third season on).

Far from fitting into the genre of "working class cinema", as surveyed by such Marxist scholars as Julien Murphet, and encompassing films as diverse as *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) and *Matewan* (1987), the recent revival of the 1920s seems to privilege the nobility or aristocracy (*Easy Virtue* [2008], *Downton*, *Miss Fisher's*), housekeeping and other domestic employment (*Downton Abbey*, *Miss Fisher's*), show-business and the arts (*Tender Hook*, *Boardwalk*, *The Artist*, *Midnight in Paris* [2011], *Miss Fisher's*), and party politics and the underworld (*Tender Hook*, *Boardwalk*, *Razor*, *Miss Fisher's*, *Squizzy*) over blue-collar employment. This

approach is consonant with an increasingly de-industrialised and a de-unionised industrial context in many Western countries.

In the context of both the historical 1920s and the era as revisited in popular culture, a specific offshoot of tourism, namely employment centered on voyaging and seeking an alternative to the mundane and artificial, everyday qualities of Western existence, can be germane not just to urban "civilisation", but also to the intersection of Western exploration with the wilderness. *The Lost City of Z* (2016) is a biographical recount of explorer Percy Harrison Fawcett in the context of Edwardian imperialism and scientific anthropology. The last half hour of its running time is set in the 1920s, climaxing with Fawcett's 1925 disappearance. His final expedition, upon which he disappeared with his son, was covered by the print media internationally for a readership estimated at forty million (Grann 2009: 7). This historical fact, unveiled to the audience through a voice-over of Jack Fawcett, Fawcett's son, reading aloud one of his letters, conveys a sense of the fascination held by the public for "great white hope/hunters", in remote wildernesses. At the end of the Golden Age of Exploration, after the Scramble for Africa and the First World War, not just the media but also fiction and the motion picture industry romanticised "savagery" and the march of civilisation for commerce and colonisation.

The book upon which the film is based, *The Lost City of Z*: *A Tale Of Deadly Obsession In The Amazon*, mentions an illuminating incident that is absent from the film. A potential backer for Fawcett's 1925 expedition squandered funds on a celebratory party in a New York City hotel, resulting in a temporary setback for the Fawcett party until John D. Rockefeller Jr stepped in and provided financial relief (Grann 2009: 191). This vindication, for the teetotal, health-conscious Fawcett (Grann 2009: 13), could have provided thrilling dramatic content. However, Fawcett's puritanism is only really foregrounded in his disapproval of his drunken second-in-command, Corporal Henry Costigan. This is not the only lacuna in the film relating to the 1920s. Fawcett's family lived in Los Angeles during the early years of the decade, and his son was entranced by the glamour of Hollywood celebrity (Grann 2009: 183). This moulding of his personality, and the attendant impact on how the Fawcett party viewed their mission and relationship to their "fans" is omitted, with the film depicting the family in England immediately prior to

the embarkation of the final exploration. Their departure from New Jersey is left out, alongside another American connection deemed unworthy of inclusion.

The exploits of various rival exploratory teams, equipped with state of the art equipment and larger funds, are only brought up in Fawcett's farewell speech at the Society's press conference in late 1924. Fawcett's most feared rival was an American doctor, Alexander Hamilton Rice, a wealthy Harvard graduate who could afford state of the art equipment and large, well-trained crews (Grann 2009: 143–4, 163, 172–5 & 187–8). The contrast between the historical record of Rice's affluence and Fawcett's subsistence on financial aid from foundations and capitalists (Grann 2009: 144) has the potential to inspire riveting drama, yet Rice is never seen in *Lost City of Z*. Fawcett speaks of the nobility and worth of his underdog crew, yet the lack of any scenes detailing the pioneering usage of radio and aeroplanes in the Amazon jungles, plus the less enlightened and combative attitude towards the indigenous inhabitants therein on the part of Fawcett's rivals, dilutes this dramatisation of the European relationship with the Amazon and its resources in the early twentieth century. Dramatically, the greater allocation of screen-time to Fawcett's pre First World War explorations, especially contrasted with Western Front slaughter (Fawcett was a veteran) as the demolition of an ideal vision of early twentieth century progress, introduces and develops his ultimately fatal obsession with bucking conventional historiography concerning humankind's past, and constructs a motivation for his uneasiness towards being a middle class, Caucasian English man. However, while acknowledging the necessity for the medium of cinema to telescope events in scenarios, in excising Fawcett's other 1920s voyages (including a nearly fatal journey in 1920-1) (Grann 2009: 175–82) the film presents an incomplete picture of Fawcett's race against technological competition, and also gives a misleading representation of the amount of time Fawcett required to recuperate from the war.

Modernising Servile Conditions

While there is an overall reticence to examine up close the industrial conditions and realities of 1920s working life, unsavoury work done characters in order to earn a living are selectively utilised in the context of the given on-screen drama. However, there is a sizeable discrepancy in the screen time devoted to the reenactment of

various vocations. Servants, especially in the English or "English inspired" programs such as *Downton* and *Miss Fisher's*, comprise the majority of the working class positions represented in these films and television programs. Illicit professions such as prostitution, also falling into the category of working-class labour and with an emphasis on hospitality, are foregrounded in programs such as *Razor* (where families such as the Devines attempt to keep up bourgeois appearances through hiring servants). In the confines of the Yorkshire country house setting of *Downton*, the proper and fixed relationships between the staff and residents of the estate, and the socially conservative political opinions that they express, may seem to point to a nostalgic, even reactionary, pattern of period dramas "seeming to turn their backs on the iconography and values of postmodernity, postindustrialisation, and multiculturalism" (Higson 2003: 70). However, signifiers of a rapidly industrialising age, such as the telephone and the electric toaster, add to the melodramatic and soap opera traits of the program, especially through Charles "Charlie" Carson, the estate's head butler, and his initial suspicion of such appliances.

In alignment with the potential of dramatised history to recover the "details of everyday life – details that are often so minute that academic historians often overlook them" (Harlan 2007: 121), the second episode of *Downton*'s fifth season (2014), set in 1924, foregrounds strife over the acquisition of a "wireless", or radio set, opposed by both Carson and Lord Robert Grantham. One chief objection to the wireless, even after the revelation that King George V will deliver a radio broadcast (an event and its leadup that is also dramatised and thematised, in the context of the public life of George VI, in the popular 2010 film, *The King's Speech*), is that the majesty and mystique of the British monarchy will be tarnished if the "common" populace hear the King's voice. However, after the assembled household hears King George's stirring speech (*Downton* does not use an archival recording, but an impersonation by the actor Jonathon Glover), the patriarchal overlords of the Abbey soften their paranoia about a rapidly changing world and permit the radio set to remain. This balances out a tendency for the voices of modernity and dissent to emanate from servants, often posited as villains, including the footman Thomas Barrow (Byrne 2014: 10). The opinions of liberal-minded servants, such as Daisy Mason, to the effect that the King's oratory makes the British monarchy more approachable to their subjects marks a dramatic turning point in the English

population's relationship with the institution, despite continued high levels of public support for the realm (Schama 2000: 548–9).

Since the advent of commercial radio broadcasting in the 1920s, the position that the monarchy holds in British society has metamorphosed into the figurehead of a constitutional monarchy, thus demonstrating an effort to appear less distant, and more "human", to the general public. The co-operation between the labour of servants and the "brave new world", or cutting-edge technological field, of radio engineers allows for the introduction of another progressive level of technology and (mediated, in this case) human interaction within a class-based social system. This relationship is also apparent, existing alongside more traditional forms of media, in the biographical film about the relationship between A. A. Milne and his son, Christopher, *Goodbye Christopher Robin* (2017).

Familial Relations and Class

In *Christopher Robin*, radio, as well as newspaper coverage, increases the reach and cultural appeal of Milne's fictional creation of Winnie the Pooh. The relative novelty of the wireless is highlighted by the scene of Christopher's confusion over his telephone conversation with his father being broadcast. A newsreel recreation, recording a pageant of historical figures alongside guests of honour Winnie the Pooh and Christopher near the Milne residence, is a "talkie", and, although there is no fixed date for this scene, it is conceivable that the Fox or Warner Brothers motion picture companies (the narrator has an American accent), or even a fictionalised studio in this scenario, may have sent a crew to England for this event post 1927.

Not included in this biographical portrayal is much screen time devoted to the social perks of Milne's success. However, what is featured underlines the reliance on servants for Christopher's welfare, and the initial emotional chasm between the younger and older Milnes. *Christopher Robin* follows in the tradition of such previous motion pictures as *Shadowlands* (1993), *Finding Neverland* (2004) and *Saving Mr Banks* (2013). As an adaptation of the genesis and creation of a beloved literary property, it dramatises the behind-the-scenes dramas, dysfunctions and eventual triumphs inherent in seeking personal satisfaction and fame. The social whirl of London after 1918 has only one extended visualisation, which is the

homecoming ball, a transition scene from Milne's frantic charging through the trenches in a 1916 flashback. The homecoming ball is where his wife Daphne is introduced and the couple's relationship, and her complicated support of her veteran husband, is established. After this introductory sequence, the Milnes' leisure activities are only depicted through suggestions and tantalising glimpses. Following the precedent of such previous films as *Shadowlands* and *Finding Neverland*, the impact of the caste divide between "upstairs" (the middle class, or higher socioeconomic ranks) and "downstairs" (staff and servants) on the personal lives of British celebrities of the twentieth century and their families is therefore foregrounded. An affecting scene of Christopher and his nanny Olive observing the boy's parents entering and exiting a series of taxi cabs from the upstairs window of their London house relies upon visual ellipsis to encapsulate the young boy's loneliness resulting from his parents' hedonism.

Later on, after the Milnes have relocated to the East Sussex countryside, Christopher reads one of his father's Winnie the Pooh poems aloud, marking a high point during their period of parent-child bonding. Christopher's assured and invested enjoyment of the verse overlays a silent, slow-motion tracking shot of his absent mother dancing at a raucous house party. The mixture of Christopher's non-diegetic voiceover providing the narration for Daphne's celebration of being away from her family is designed to manipulate the audience emotionally into condemning her as an absent, indifferent mother. In a later scene, after the Milnes have embarked on a promotional tour of the United States, Daphne expresses her desire to visit a speakeasy[9]. Reminded that they are illegal, she responds that that fact is part of their charm. We never see her visit a speakeasy; yet, the press conference is enough to foreground the potential of the mass media, in the 1920s, to disseminate changing societal attitudes towards Prohibition.

[9] A slang term for a secret location for the consumption of alcohol during Prohibition, often arranged to resemble a legitimate business (Okrent 2011: 207–11). Unlicensed bars were referred to as speakeasies as early as the 1830s in Australia ("The Soothing System": 3) and the 1880s in the United States (Small 2017), due to the practice of speaking quietly about such a place in public, or when inside it, so as not to alert the authorities or neighbouring residents (Okrent 2011: 207).

Due to the absence of both Daphne and Olive, the circumstances of the screenplay force Milne into a greater emotional intimacy with his son that flies in the face of emotional reserve practiced by the British middle classes during this period. This unorthodox arrangement, however, cannot withstand the public's scrutiny of the Milnes' sudden fame due to popularity of Winnie the Pooh, and Christopher's celebrity acts as further impetus for Milne to send him away to boarding school, a site of bullying and geographical distance from family. Milne's brief redemption due to emotionally engaging with his son comes at the expense of his wife's being framed in a conservative, disapproving fashion as a "liberated" woman who flees from home and hearth.

Jobs traditionally associated with the working class, such as servants in *Downton* and *Miss Fisher*'s, and illicit professions such as prostitution in *Razor*, are the vocations most often depicted on screen in the revival of the 1920s. These choices appear to have been made for the dramatic possibilities inherent in conflicting ideologies between conservatism and progressivism. This is also reflected in the comforting nostalgia of period dramas forcing the Whiggish (that is, society improving for the good of the populace) introduction of novel appliances for reactionary characters to interact with and attempt to tolerate (Byrne 2014: 311–13). Indeed, the place assumed by new technology, for instance radio, within the setting of an English country manor in *Downton*, encouraged by serving staff, reflects continuing repercussions in the relationship between the general population and royalty. Inventions that are an important component of modernity coexist alongside older media forms, including the popular press, in *Christopher Robin*, and increase the fame and fortune of the biographical protagonist. However, in line with the tropes embedded in previous biographical films about creative figures, celebrity leads to fraught interpersonal, familial relationships, including with children. The socialisation of the Milnes, especially Daphne, is shown to aggravate the distance between Christopher and his parents, and modernity is painted as a problematic influence where families are concerned, necessitating a reliance upon nannies and other support staff. However, the bucolic serenity and isolation of an older, bucolic England ironically acts as a catalyst and a spur for a father-son relationship founded on a base more in tune with contemporary sensibilities.

While the picture is complicated when it comes to impacts on family organisation and life, this thesis' primary texts show the ways that modernity offers a chance at improvement for working class characters. The move undertaken by characters in *Downton* from the "provinces" to London or other large cities in order to be cooks, secretaries and writers demonstrates social mobility, while the Milnes' inability to stay away from the bright lights of the English capital's nightlife underscores the importance of the urban experience during the interwar historical period in the Western world. The city was a site of capitalism, of the fixation upon and promotion of consumerism and amusement designed to divert self-reflection on the conformity thereby concurrently encouraged by the urban experience. This experience, nevertheless, still found room for subcultures that entertained a questioning and multi-faceted relationship with such dominant modes of modernity.

Capitalism and Bohemia

Commercial images and their proliferation as iconography in a tourist economy are foregrounded in the production design for *Boardwalk* as, to borrow Hansen, a "*locus classicus* of the culture of distraction" (1992: 109). Hansen's concept of the "playground of self-abandonment" (1992a) when describing the use of Coney Island as a site both of courting and consumerism in the 1928 film *The Crowd*, is highly pertinent in the context of *Boardwalk* beyond the obvious connotations of holiday-making also associated with Atlantic City. This is due to such a space's literal illustration, on the screen, of a community where the signs of a Protestant work ethic and the rigours of industrialisation are absent, or relegated behind closed doors.

Store signs, billboards and sandwich boards serve as advertising attractions for the intersection of advertising with tourism (Hansen 1992: 109). Neon signs promising novelty acts such as the "Human Cannonball", and billboards promoting Chesterfield cigarettes – 'Over 7 Billion Smoked Yearly!' – reflect two aspects of consumerist modernity. The first is electricity, an important signifier of an industrialising North America, intersecting with the performative side of Atlantic City – the year 1920 alone, returning to Broadway tryouts, saw 168 productions debut in the city's three main theatres (Johnson: 2011a 89–90). The second is the acknowledgement of the codifying of leisure time, and new ways to spend it, in a historical context in which improvements in the corporatisation of technology allow for new sales figures to be

trumpeted and praised as both records and improvements on past productivity. A neon sign advertising Gillette razors stresses their utilitarian value as an effective grooming device. These are Fordist-Taylorist principles of business brought into the domestic arena. Technology is deployed for a more practical purpose in relation to radio broadcasting: in the episode "The Age Of Reason" (S2E6, 2011) a demonstration of wireless broadcasting of classical music prompts Angela Darmody to inform her husband, Jimmy, that she has heard that immigrants are using radio to learn English.

Boardwalk is set at the tail end of an era during which the hectic pace of urban existence was reflected by ubiquitous advertising signage and accompanying intensified sensory stimulation. In the twenty first century, when potential consumers are met with a barrage of consumeristic images on the Internet, through social media and between programs on television alongside more traditional forms of print media, it is intriguing to see the origins of this media presence dramatised in *Boardwalk*. This intrigue works from both a twenty first century context and because the "hard sell" is being deployed on the boardwalk in ways that are still intelligible today. It is also beguiling to be privy to domestic scenes where a gadget reminds the viewer of the way that it comments "pointedly on us", the descendants of this first generation to enjoy *en masse* what the twenty first century takes for granted (Jameson 2007: 305).

No matter the archaic form, the practical usages and day-to-day existence of the 1920s generation are unmistakeable. Examples include the vacuum cleaner in "The Ivory Tower" (S1E2, 2010) and Nucky's possession of an icebox in the fourth season. *Las Chicas Del Cable* (*Cable Girls*) (2017), in its second season, contrives a contest at the telephone exchange to make public telephones a feasible reality, a novel development for 1929. Its demands on the firm's chief engineer, alongside personal problems in his *ménage à trois*, result in his succumbing to cocaine addiction, a widespread trope (alongside heroin) in the context of drug addiction in the 1920s. Although the focus in texts set in 1920s North America, obviously, is on illicit alcohol, "giggle juice" is far from the only drug used in the revival of the 1920s.

High in the High Life, and Low Life

In the German television series *Babylon Berlin* (2017), the heroin addiction of police informer Franz Krajewski is rendered more tragic by his status as a shellshocked veteran, while gangster's moll Iris in *Tender Hook* remains in a dysfunctional relationship as a result of her cocaine usage. Although the worlds of *Tender Hook* and *Razor* never intersect, in the historical universe the female protagonists of the latter program were active in Sydney at the time (1928), and involved in the cocaine trade.

Heroin and opium are a sideline, in *Boardwalk Empire*, of Luciano and Meyer Lansky, who are in cahoots with gambler Rothstein. Jimmy tries opium to block out the suicide of Pearl in "Nights in Ballygran" (S1E5, 2010) and again snorts heroin as a psychological crutch after hearing about Angela's murder in "Under God's Power She Flourishes" (S2E11, 2011). The cinematography for these scenes utilises out of focus shots and ethereal golden light to simulate the disoriented state of Jimmy's mentality. In the second season, Luciano and Lansky first seriously plan an expansion of their business interests via targeting "artistic types." This customer delineation ties into ideologies of the period equating drug use with "degenerate" types, the "slumming" counterculture of the 1920s, or *demi-monde* (Blackman 2004: 54–5).

By *Boardwalk*'s "White Horse Pike" (S4E10, 2013), Nucky is persuaded to lend his support to narcotics trading, due to Lansky's promises of profits totaling millions of dollars to be made. During this same season, Gillian, since being jabbed with a syringe by Rosetti in the previous season, lives the existence of a heroin addict until kicking the habit under the guidance of her new beau. Prior to this, also in the third season, she had employed heroin as a weapon to asphyxiate her lover, with his senses dulled, in a bathtub. Cocaine is used by Capone in the fourth and fifth seasons – a physician's report for Capone demonstrated nasal evidence of cocaine usage (Hoffman 1994: 228) – dramatising the medical symptoms of cocaine abuse such as anxiety and restlessness. His use of cocaine as an ego boost, and as a display of power, is a precursor (chronologically) to the trope of invincible mobster delusion, which is memorably featured in the climax to *Scarface* (1983). Indeed, the taboo of Capone's cocaine usage is tellingly demonstrated in his admission to Mueller, in

"All In" (S4E4, 2013), that the powder is "better than my wife's coffee!" This is a counterdiscourse to the American faith in the restorative powers of a "cup of joe"[10], and its connotations of wholesome domesticity (Morris and Thurston 2013: 220; Topik and McDonald 2013: 235).

In *Boardwalk*'s final episode (2014), Capone's honesty with his wife about the impending seriousness of his court case for tax evasion, and its potential consequences, is a reversal of the atavistic attitude and underworld power represented by the previous scenes set in the Lexington Hotel. His stressed countenance and body language prompt Mae to ask whether there is anything she can do for him. His answer, "Make up some coffee. That's what you can do", is in complete contrast to his previous addictive, hedonistic boast to Mueller. Capone's return to an American ideal of coffee, home and hearth, and a heart to heart talk to his son, plays as a redemptive moment, of sorts, for Capone.

Cannabis is depicted once in *Boardwalk*, in "Resignation" (S4E2, 2013). A tracking shot through the backstage of the Onyx Club reveals several members of the house band smoking a joint, or a "muggle" in the parlance of the era (Steinmetz 2017). Albert "Chalky" White castigates the musicians for indulging in a drug that will render them "all red-eyed and giggly", and orders them to extinguish the weed. This scene symbolises both the limited reach of cannabis in the early 1920s, compared to "harder" drugs, and the demographics of its users, as during this era it was chiefly associated with (often black) jazz musicians (Abel 1980). However, with one appearance on the program, as opposed to the binges associated with heroin and cocaine, or, in the case of Capone, an apparent message of amplifying concerning character traits, cannabis smoking appears harmless and calm recreation by comparison.

The twenty first century international War on Drugs has parallels with Prohibition in the 1920s, and public opinion on the legal status of drugs has changed, especially where cannabis is concerned. An enormous traffic in narcotics is met in the USA with resistance from organisations such as the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the anti-drug forces continue to be scrutinised under varying degrees of public opinion. In the second decade of the twenty first century, thuggish tactics by

[10] United States slang for a cup of coffee.

representatives of the law, including excessive force on the part of Fargo, Dakota police in dealing with a fifteen-year-old girl suspected of smoking cannabis in 2014 (Gomez-Schempp 2014), and police harassment of medical marijuana users in Australia (Vincent 2018), have also rendered the moral authority of anti-drug agencies suspect for many civilians. Almost 10% of U.S residents use cannabis (*The New York Times* 2014), and medical research continues to encourage debate over undesirable stereotypes about cannabis (Hall and Degenhardt 2009: 1384–7; Calabria, Degenhardt, Hall and Lynskey 2010: 323–8). Cannabis is now legalised for both medicinal and recreational purposes in eleven states of the United States (and Washington D.C.) as of 2019, and the plant has been legalised for medicinal use in Australia since 2016. Repeal similar to the one that occurred in 1933, with the U.S. passage of the 21st Amendment ending Prohibition, may be accomplished sooner than previously thought.

The function of the use of drugs in the films and television programs under discussion, such as *Boardwalk*, works to present the historical view of an earlier, perhaps in some ways more permissive state, leading the way to changes in legislation pertaining to controlled substances. This included the unintended social consequences of morality-based legislation such as the Volstead Act that led to Prohibition in the USA, the NSW Liquor Act of 1916 that resulted in 6 o'clock closing of hotels throughout the state in Australia and the Marihuana Tax Act 1937 and Controlled Substances Act 1970, federal US legislation criminalising the use of cannabis for many decades. Previously tolerated and legal beverages and drugs, alongside the social act of consuming and enjoying them, were subsequently made illegal. The consequences impacted both the historical record and the recent audiovisual texts addressed here.

Artistic Tendencies

The arts, and creative artists who create them, find a place in the revival of the 1920s as a delineator of character, as well as a field of creative endeavour. Angela Darmody, in *Boardwalk*, is an example of a character that provides a glimpse of artistic subcultures during the interwar years. An aspiring painter in the first season, and a practitioner of artistic modernism, glimpses of Angela's art throughout the first two seasons show a strong Impressionistic tendency. Her creations display small yet

visible brush strokes, open composition, accuracy in depicting the mobility of light, ordinary subject matter and unusual angles. Her artistic influences are significant, due to Impressionism's classification as a precursor, at least in France, to the modernist art movement that spawned experimentalism and eclecticism in the oeuvre of artists seen at work in the revival, such as Phryne Fisher in *Miss Fisher's*. Impressionist painters from the early 1860s such as Claude Monet, Édouard Manet, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir defied the conservative rules of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, with its focus on historical deeds, religious themes and portraits as subjects for painting (Samu 2004; Brodskaia 2010: 13–14). The focus of the European Impressionists tended towards still life views of modern life, taking inspiration from, while attempting to outdo, the potential of photography (Rosenblum 1989: 228; Levinson 2005: 47–48). Their communal spirit of independence and rebellion would prove inspiring to social movements, such as bohemianism, that offered a contrast to mainstream values of the early twentieth century.

Angela also fantasises over Paris as a metonym for a less constrained and independent existence and a potential refuge from Jimmy's secretive routines and occasional violent streak. Gillian Darmody, Angela's overbearing common law mother in law, belittles her daughter in law's bohemian tendencies ("I thought that you Bohemians went *au naturel*"), in a scene that reflects the opprobrium felt by much of orthodox, mainstream America during the 1920s for what it interpreted as irresponsible, indulgent, unconventional, and rebellious behaviour (Perry 2010: 140). Later in the first season, the subplots in *Boardwalk* detailing her relationship with photographers Mary and Robert Dittrich display certain quasidocumentary traits in the scenario's insight into East Coast artistic attitudes to European cultural influences of the early twentieth century.

This artistic attitude and would be cultural *milieu* features, even encourages, alternatives to bourgeois family standards. *Boardwalk*'s Angela and Mary embark on an affair, partially resulting from Robert's having an art dealer friend in New York's Greenwich Village. This development serves as a justification for partial nudity, from the waist up, of the lesbian lovers in "Home" (S1E7, 2010). There is another potential reason for such disrobing, however. Angela and Mary's state of undress can be interpreted as one possible result of the permissive trademark of HBO programming, whereby the viewer can see what commercial films of the 1920s and

since rarely could show. There is a voyeuristic aspect to the scene, with the 'excuse' that that program is acknowledging and in part celebrating – albeit briefly – a "hidden history" of alternate, bohemian lifestyles, including gay liaisons, so often written out of fictional texts and official narratives. A beach party in "Two Boats and a Lifeguard" (S2E8, 2011), where Angela embarks on another same sex affair, features one of only two male homosexual characters in the series, Arthur Lasch, a camp professional dancer. The fact that most of the partygoers are performers, and that the sole other gay male character in the program is Lillian "Billie" Kent's leading man in "You'd Be Surprised" (S3E5, 2013), continues to place *Boardwalk*'s ideological account of sexual diversity firmly in the clichéd realm of "queer" thespianism (Senelick 2006: 503). This is but one example of the program's emphasis on diverse performative aspects of 1920s culture.

As a site for challenges to conservative social norms of the era, bohemianism offers resonant potential for viewer interrogation, pleasure, and analysis in a twenty first century spectatorial context. While bohemianism is represented in such texts as *Boardwalk* and *Miss Fisher's*, it is again only up to a point. Angela is an aspiring painter, but her desire to move to Paris is frustrated after being abandoned by her lover. Jimmy, representative of a transgressive criminal business model bound to patriarchal values, comes home seeking reconciliation, a tactic which is successful. Angela's experimentation in the bohemian *milieu*, however, continues to extend to non-mainstream sexualities after she protests standards of decorum at the Atlantic City beach in the second season. This "new woman", continuing to enter into lesbian relationships, meets more alternatives to home and hearth. Despite this dramatic potential, portrayal of Angela's new relationship is confined mainly to one party scene. Revenge by a disgruntled former ally of Jimmy's subsequently claims the life of Angela and her lover. While it would be a stretch to say that this dalliance radiates moral panic, due to its secretive nature, Gillian's dismissive comments on morality during the police investigation mend the protective barriers of heteronormativity and close off this strand of bohemianism. The viewer never gets to see Greenwich Village, let alone Paris. However, other television programs, such as *Miss Fisher's*, both acknowledge and depict such important bohemian locations.

Miss Fisher herself displays bohemian traits. In addition to her taste in music and art, the character's sexual freedom and, of course, her modelling for artists in Paris after

the war, place this figure firmly within a more *outré* lifestyle than much of contemporary New York society, let alone staid 1920s Melbourne. However, Phryne is "the Honourable": she bears a title due to a battlefield fatality's having changed the line of her English relations' succession. Her wealth and ability to hire a butler, amongst other visible marks of her station, make her unrepresentative of the more usually struggling Bohemia. *Downton* provides glimpses of smart-set literary bohemia in the gatherings of the Bloomsbury Group at the residence of Lady Edith and her lover. Here, the new ideas discussed and the smoking of cigarettes add to the overall unchaperoned image of writer Edith. However, our viewpoint is through a member of the established aristocracy, not *nouveau riche* like Fisher.

Bohemianism, whether thwarted or allowed to blossom, is telling in its absence as well as its presence. *Razor* is set in Sydney's Kings Cross and Darlinghurst. These were centres, along with parts of central Melbourne, for bohemianism in the interwar years. However, while the excessive drinking and debauchery – however exaggerated in *Razor* – were enjoyed by bohemian writers, journalists and other devotees of the post "six o'clock swill"[11], they are absent from the series. Even the press, who had a complicated relationship with figures such as Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine, are hardly depicted in their investigations (except for the dramatisation of the origin of the feud between Leigh and Devine), although shots of newspaper headlines are a vital ingredient in providing context in both *Razor* and *Squizzy*. There is evidence that the world of bohemia and the 1920s urban underworld did intermingle, at least in the view of dispatches from tabloid newspapers of the time such as *Truth,* amalgamating the "deviance" of bohemia with criminal activity (Writer 2011: xxxii), suggesting a missed opportunity to recreate authentic challenges to bourgeois Anglo-Celtic norms after the First World War.

[11] The colloquial term given to the drinking habits encouraged by 6pm closing of Australian public houses between 1916 (in the states of South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania) and 1937 (Tasmania), 1955 (NSW) and 1966–7 (Victoria and South Australia, respectively) (Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009: 195). The "swill" was the rapid consumption of, or binging upon, as much alcohol as possible before the close of business (Freeland 1966: 175; Phillips 1980: 250; Fitzgerald and Jordan 2009: 194).

The interest of this lacuna resides in the squandered potential of more thoroughly recreating neighbourhoods such as King's Cross, and their deliberate nonconformity, where "the wealthy, the raffish, the damned and the desperate existed side by side" (Sayer and Nowra 2000: xvii). In contrast to conservative societal mores, there was a greater degree of tolerance in "the Cross" (incorporating corners of Sydney's inner eastern suburbs Darlinghurst, East Sydney, Potts Point, and Woolloomooloo), for example, for "outsiders, misfits, and those who dared to be different" (Sayer and Nowra 2000: 15). Considering the alteration in societal attitudes towards alternative lifestyles and nonconformists in the decades since, the absence of characters displaying these traits in texts such as *Razor* is marked.

Constructions, Layers, Divisions

Alongside recreated sets (the newly built boardwalk for *Boardwalk*, at a Brooklyn Navy Yard) and computer-generated imagery (CGI), the actual manor in *Downton*, and the restored houses in *Boardwalk*, demonstrate a hybrid presentation of 1920s reality that incorporates diverse temporal versions of both the media constructed and "real" architectural space, resulting in a quasi-archeological vision made of virtual and material elements.

Along with such a multilayered version of preservation, however, come expectations of behaviour not necessarily born of 1920s reality. For instance, interiors in *Boardwalk* that survived from the early '20s were protected by heritage ordinances from tobacco smoke, resulting in changes to the portrayal of group meetings on screen. The exterior of the First Baptist St Ambrose church, Harlem, New York, in the final season episode "Eldorado" (S5E8, 2014), where the gangster Valentine Narcisse is slain, was made available for use by cast and crew by the relevant authority, but on the condition that Narcisse's death occurred at the exterior church gates, rather than inside. Such doctoring of reality due to the producers, no matter their intention, requiring cooperation by the same historical and present-day institutions, has the effect of artificially bolstering or exaggerating the reverence often afforded such power on screen and in society. Archival footage as historical detritus and context, as well as rear projection (utilised in *Tender Hook* and *Squizzy*, respectively), bring viewers closer to the world recreated but similarly distance them

through artifice. Not quite Brechtian[12], this distancing effect nevertheless highlights the well-known notion that the past is a foreign country, and links the audiovisual text we are watching to the history of multimedia presentations. More prosaically, a few seconds or minutes do not have to be given over to a quotidian recreation, replete with costumes, props, actors and so on. Television programs like *Boardwalk*, *Tender Hook* and *Razor* achieve this effect through utilising vintage buildings, sets, costumes, locations, and historical records, while also engaging with, commenting on and adding to, the vast media archaeology, incorporating but not limited to films and television, devoted to the culture of the 1920s and its ongoing fascination as a truly protean decade in which what we now called modernity was irrevocably enshrined.

Kracauer's Urban(e) Lobby

The performative aspects of the 1920s as a generative decade for narratives of modernity also encompasses the central role that enclosed urban – and urbane – spaces, as well as communal buildings in both rural and city contexts, play in molding societal expectations, behaviours and actions. Additionally, these new spaces influence how characters in the revival of the 1920s conform to, or deviate from, the possibilities and culture of these locations as settings.

Performance by the characters in *Boardwalk* – especially the metaphorical masks utilised and discarded in public – is highlighted and controlled through the liminal space of the hotel lobby. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, in particular, showcases the idle, and reflexive, nature of much of the upper strata of society in the program. In his essay, "The Hotel Lobby", Kracauer writes that "whereas the house of God is dedicated to the service of the one whom people have gone there to encounter, the hotel lobby accommodates all who go there to meet no one. It is the setting for those who neither seek nor find the one who is always sought" (1995: 175). For a space

[12] This is in reference to the famous "Epic Theatre" technique of German theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956). In Brecht's view, plays should not encourage spectators to identify emotionally with protagonists and their experiences. Rather, the desired response should be rational self-reflection, and a critical perspective towards the action on the stage. This perspective, Brecht believed, would lead to a recognition of social injustice and exploitation, and the empowerment of audiences to change conditions in their society (Glahn 2014: 8–9).

such as the hotel lobby, Kracauer suggests, historical and the dramatic are not in union with each other. This can be seen in *Boardwalk*, an inescapable proposition considering that, as its focus is on a resort town, the program of necessity features the intricate *mise-en-scène* of architecture devoted to hospitality.

Strictly speaking, the idea of a hotel lobby being the location for those "who neither seek nor find the one who is always sought" is not literally true in every occurrence, as the hotel lobby actually functions as a conduit, a passkey, as it were, for business of all sorts, perhaps especially of the illicit variety. Prohibition encouraged mergers, consolidations and professionalisation of organised crime in the United States, leading to the May 1929 Atlantic City conference solidifying the five East Coast Mafia families, presided over by Meyer Lansky and hosted by Nucky Johnson, the inspiration for Nucky in *Boardwalk* (Johnson 2011b: 98–101; Mappen 2013: 79–96). As a "respectable" area, denoting capitalism and hospitality, the hotel lobby is the ground floor, or the "meet and greet" area, for gatherings conducive to Nucky's business interests. This is evident from as early as the pilot episode, "Boardwalk Empire" (S1E1, 2010), where Nucky hosts a dinner attended by gambler Arnold Rothstein, James "Big Jim" Colosimo, Charles (originally Salvatore) "Lucky" Luciano and Torrio.

Yet, it is the very illicit nature of these dealings that transforms them into sites for meeting "no one", for the hotel manager greets the mobsters as honoured guests and other guests ignore the significance of these gatherings. To the outside world, there is nothing to fear, until violence erupts outside in the streets, in which case press conferences are called, as in the episodes "A Return To Normalcy" (S1E12, 2010) and "Margate Sands" (S3E12, 2012). Perpetrators of discord (especially if their business infringes on the Atlantic City tourism trade) are harshly dealt with by men outside of the law. Even if surveillance is attempted by Prohibition Agent Nelson Van Alden and Agent Eric Sebso in the program's first episode, it is destined to be futile, not least because of Sebso's incompetence in inscribing the names of the parties present and those soon to be present, mixing up "Lucky" Luciano and Nucky Thompson, for example. Van Alden can play the detective, trying to discover "the secret that people have concealed" (Kracauer 1995: 175); however, in his being privy to widespread flouting of the law, and observing first hand the masks that hospitality wears in the city, he discloses, like the "detective novel in the aesthetic

medium", the secret of a "society bereft of reality" (Kracauer 1995: 175). The obsequious posturing adopted by the restaurant manager in "21" (S2E1, 2011), a man responsible for storing crates of illegal liquor out back, is a leading example of the disingenuousness facing Van Alden at every turn. Indeed, it is the manager's none too subtle hints about the accommodation of "most requests" that attunes Van Alden to a delusional mindset of "business as usual" and provides the grounds for a raid of the premises.

Weimar Connections

Hotel lobbies, in Kracauer's account, also induce recognition of the lobby as a metonym for the permutations of modernity in evidence in Weimar era Germany, especially Berlin. With over four million inhabitants in the 1920s, Berlin was Germany's most populous city, and the second most populous in Europe after London. As a cosmopolitan site for technological and cultural possibility, it resembled the success story and rapid growth of a United States city such as Chicago during the nineteenth century up until the 1920s (an era of flexibility, versatility and adaptability) in its sociological possibilities, but also in its at times chaotic political situation. Weimar era Berlin, as a definitive, representative location for modernity, localises a fascination with urban *mise-en-scène* and experiences, in the present day return of the 1920s, through the Berlin set *Babylon Berlin*, to be further discussed shortly. Additionally, primary cinematic texts from the Weimar era itself further bolster Kracauer's thoughts on the hotel lobby.

Weimar-era cinema, including such titles as *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (1922, *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler*), directed by Fritz Lang, treated the hotel lobby as just one more example of areas to be contrasted with private residences and offices, yet also a space radiating authority and professionalism, however corrupt (Elsaesser 2000: 168–9). In discussing Germany's "historical imaginary", Thomas Elsaesser argues that the German cinema of the Weimar era took the position of a *Doppelgänger* (or lookalike) for its prehistory of modernist tendencies interacting with conservative and reactionary (Wilhelmine or later National Socialist) political currents (2000: 3–4). In this historical context, Weimar era German films often concerned themselves with the process of cinematic creation itself, as a practical, local example of vernacular modernism challenging, with some success, the efforts of Hollywood to

attain a hegemonic monopoly of international markets (Elsaesser 2000: 5). *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* foregrounds the cosmopolitanism and "raffish" qualities of early 1920s Berlin (Elsaesser 2000: 156 & 168), whether eclectic orientalism and non-Western props in private residences or mechanical gadgets and sunken levels in places of amusement (Elsaesser 2000: 168). The breakneck pacing of *Dr. Mabuse* and other central examples of Weimar cinema may allude to the hyperstimulus encouraged by the "barrage of impressions, shocks, and jolts" manifest in the quickened tempo of the early twentieth century city (Singer 1995: 73).

The segmentation of *Dr. Mabuse* and some other key European films from the period into individual episodes (following in the foosteps of Louis Feuillade's similarly metropolis-based crime French serials from the previous decade, such as *Les Vampires* [1915–16]), which in the context of a cinematic serial builds up towards cliffhangers and climaxes, is reminiscent of a prototypical TV structure familiar to twenty first century viewers through programs such as *Boardwalk* and *Downton*. The German miniseries *Babylon Berlin* follows in a recent trend of Netflix originals exploring pivotal experiences in the life of a nation state during the 1920s. In this case, the societal tensions bubbling to the surface in Berlin during 1929 provides opportunities to dramatise the frenzied nightlife and the volatile politics of the few years preceding the Third Reich. Unlike Spanish television programs in this vein, such as *Cable Girls* (2017-present) and *Tiempos de Guerra* (*Morocco: Love In Times Of War*) (2018), *Babylon Berlin* is not indebted to the soap opera format. Instead, it is based on *Babylon Berlin* (originally published as *Der Nasse Fisch*, or *The Wet Fish*), the first book in a series of novels by renowned German author Volker Kutscher set in the years from 1929 to 1934.

In her interactions with other young women, *Babylon Berlin*'s secretary cum aspiring detective, Charlotte Ritter, brings to mind Kracauer's sociological observations in his essay, "The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies" (1995: 291–304), and Hansen's theorising of this seminal text (1991b: 60–1, 63–4 & 75). In one scene, Ritter's presence in a move theatre, showing a bucolic comedy scene set at a beach, temporarily reconciles her with her sister. The visual components of *Babylon* even further aligning it with 1920s modernity include the closing credits where 1920s cinema is utilised as the building blocks of the visuals behind the written text, in the

form of Walther Ruttmann's *Opus* short films – experimental animations from 1921 (*Lichtspiel: Opus I*) and 1922 (*Lichtspiel*: *Opus II),* respectively.

Ritter's aspirations, reluctantly aided by collusion with a corrupt police officer at her nightclub place of work, reflect uncertain social and institutional attitudes towards the employment status of young women after the First World War. Her cramped existence in a tenement, renting with her married sibling and brother in law, younger sister and brother, ailing mother and senile grandfather, acknowledges the problems associated with increased urbanisation, and aligns her with the "have nots." Gereon Rath is more of a "have", in common with the aforementioned "bent [corrupt] cop", who is living in a bourgeois household presumably bought with his wife, and Rath is also, like so many of the protagonists of the 1920s revival, a veteran of the First World War. Whereas he served on the Western Front, where his elder brother fell, his widowed landlady lost her husband on the Eastern Front. Such exposition, revealed through dialogue, is rare in the canon (only Newt Scamander in *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them* [2016], who claims to have tended to the welfare of "fantastic beasts" on the Eastern Front, comes to mind). Yet appropriately, it is in synchronisation with the tense Soviet intrigue (a plot to supply Leon Trotsky with agents of chemical warfare in Istanbul) that is woven into the plot.

Babylon Berlin might be the most explicit depiction of Socialism and Communism in recent audiovisual texts set in this era. European television – in this instance a show made as part of 'Netflix original programming'– here devotes as much screen time to the negative historical results of such ideologies' real-world application as to the plight of sympathetic revolutionaries. Nor do there appear to be any misgivings about creating such major characters involved in law enforcement that are so unnervingly swayed towards conservative "stab in the back by social democrats" theories that resulted in the Nazi ascendancy. Meanwhile, an extended Sunday interlude at a lake in the sixth episode offers relief from the preponderance of darker colour tones present in work suits and hats with brighter, more vibrant hues found in swimming costumes, sweaters, slacks and bohemian style shirts and jackets. This scene harkens back to idealised visions of German outdoor culture (such as the *Der*

Wandervogel and, later, the Volk[13] ethos extolled by the Nazis), although the strummed banjo points to Americanised, collegiate urban culture. More variety in colour is to be found, obviously, in the hedonistic nightclub scenes. The diegetic and non-diegetic score is faithful to the era, in its jazz flavourings, and Bryan Ferry's involvement with the score is noteworthy (and controversial) due to the singer's well-known fascination with both Weimar and Nazi iconography. Cabaret influence is overt in the crossdressing headliner, and liberal attitudes towards homosexuality manifest themselves in the early morning revels at a club that prove useful for Ritter and Rath's investigations.

Due to the many scenes set in public spaces dedicated to a leisure economy – gambling casinos, cabarets and so forth – interwar German cinema is an overt thematic forebear, and *Babylon Berlin* can be viewed as a thematic and stylistic contemporary of a program like *Boardwalk* with its black market economy and propensity for those in power to don disguises. Unlike Mabuse, though, the masks worn by characters such as Nucky in the US program are imperceptible as tangible costume, dealing instead with repressing one's true personality.

The above reference to Kracauer's theory of the "society bereft of reality" should not be taken to declare that there is no "reality" in the Atlantic City of *Boardwalk*, or the urban spaces of any of these texts, but rather that the reality of the working week is ignored by tourists being pushed on strollers down the boardwalk or swimming in the Atlantic Ocean. Furthermore, the legal reality of drinking alcohol, prostitution or election fraud (an overarching thematic concern in the second season, and almost the cause of Nucky's downfall) is denied by those conditioned by years of excess and with means at their disposal to avoid punishment.

Atlantic City served as a microcosm for larger municipalities in the nation, with "vice districts", segregating prostitution, for instance, away from bourgeois residential and business interests (Stange 1998: 150–1, n.12). In a historical context featuring lack of uniformity in U.S. legislation regarding prostitution, legislative bodies and committees spearheaded moralistic "purity campaigns" against the

[13] The German word for people.

"sporting life" (Stange 1998: 76–7; Keire 2010: 89–97). Atlantic City was not immune from such debates (Paulsson 1994: 187–9). Alongside city-specific closing of red light districts (Keire 2010: 97–105), the Mann Act (or White Slave Traffic Act) forbade prostitution across state lines from its passage in 1910, and the First World War encouraged a national push to preserve the "social hygiene" (a term inspired by the eugenics movement that aimed at improving the genetic quality of the U.S human population) of military personnel (Keire 2010: 105–12). Prohibition's behind closed doors aura of subtle discretion encompassed prostitution, albeit in a less geographically concentrated manner than before (Keire 2010: 114), as well as the consumption of alcohol.

Social Deviance and Respectable Appearance

"The guests here roam about in their light-hearted, careless summer existence without suspecting anything of the strange mysteries circulating among them", writes Sven Elvestad, a writer of detective novels quoted by Kracauer (1995: 184). These "mysteries", which could refer to illicit activity, are concealed from view by hotel management to keep up the pretense of a space where "conventions" of a social nature – i.e., customs – "take the upper hand" (Kracauer 1995: 185).

The outward appearance of social respectability in *Boardwalk* disregards underworld affairs where "civilians" are unmolested (the "we only kill each other" ethos), but, as Nucky's brutal tactics against everyone from Jimmy (shooting him dead in "To The Lost" [S2E12, 2011]) to Rowland Smith in "Blue Bell Boy" (S3E4, 2012) demonstrate, even this selection of human suffering unequivocally traces Nucky's continuing veering away from the image of "gentleman", a bourgeois (though corrupt) civil servant in opulent surroundings. The hotel lobby functions here as a conduit to a world of possibility and "cocking a snook[14]" at convention while wearing the mask of propriety, and Nucky's relationship with gangsters in the confines of the Ritz-Carlton could almost be construed as a type of modern day sanctuary. However, not all secretive flouting of convention needs to be mired in the

[14] Doing something intentionally to demonstrate a lack of respect for someone or something. Literally putting fingers to nose in a derisive manner (Partridge 2002: 233).

potential for murder. On a more intimate note, in the second and third episodes of the fifth season of *Downton*, Lady Mary Crawley enters into a tryst with her lover in a Liverpool hotel. Here, the hotel lobby, signifying as it does improved transportation and opportunities for leisure time in the 1920s, conceals as much as it reveals.

Until the final two episodes of the third season, Nucky lives on, and does business in, an entire upper floor of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. In order to regulate the citizen body seeking an audience, he tasks his valet, Edward "Eddie" Kessler, with screening his suppliants. The corridor outside of his quarters becomes a microcosm of the hotel lobby downstairs and, further outside, past the entrance, the "Boardwalk Empire" of Atlantic City. People waiting for an appointment sit on chairs, idly flipping through magazines, until their allotted time – if they are so lucky. This display of power, along with Nucky's being visibly privy to the inner workings of all Atlantic City dealings and his conspicuous consumption, have overtones of monarchy in a supposed meritocracy. As Kracauer writes, the "change of environments does not leave purposive activity behind, but brackets it for the sake of a freedom that can refer only to itself and therefore sinks into relaxation and indifference" (1995: 179). This manifests itself in outward behaviour in different ways, depending on the person observed in scenes depicting petitioners waiting for Nucky. Some take this schedule in a negative light. For example, Chalky's introduction in the first episode consists of a scene where Chalky, irritated and straight backed, orders Kessler, "You tell Nucky I ain't got all day."

Waiting for an audience with Nucky, Margaret Schroeder takes the time to peruse a copy of *Vogue*. The magazine was still relatively new at the time, having been founded in 1892, so it has value in the story as a familiar text that is nevertheless still full of potential for igniting new discourses in society, as well as serving as shorthand for the time period of 1920. The distress on her face is obvious, but it is channelled into the study of luxurious clothing and pictorial signifiers of a changing world, such as automobiles. Over the course of the first season's progression, she will get to experience such extravagance at first hand, after becoming Nucky's lover, but at this point she experiences "an aimless lounging, to which no call is addressed", and indulges, on the surface, in "mere play that elevates the unserious everyday to the level of the serious" (Kracauer 1995: 179). Distraction is necessary

for Margaret, due to the serious nature of her request – she seeks a job for her alcoholic and gambling-addicted husband – and her abusive home life.

While Margaret is initially aided financially by Nucky, who subsequently also arranges for the young woman's employment in a dress shop, this concern quickly becomes distanced by business affairs, his relationship with Lucy, a former Ziegfeld Follies showgirl, and distrust towards the aims of groups with which Margaret is involved such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in the aftermath of the implementation of the Eighteenth Amendment.[15] Indeed, the class divide between the treasurer and the immigrant woman, despite the fact that Nucky also grew up in deprived circumstances, is accentuated by his excuses to Margaret, through Kessler, for being unable to receive her due to business. All the while, he entertains political and business clients in tuxedos behind closed doors, wining, dining and providing willing female companionship while Margaret, originally a servant back in her home nation of Ireland, has to rise early and stay back late for work.

Kracauer describes the hotel lobby in relation to the interior of a church. Here, he writes, "the visitors suspend the undetermined special being – which, in the house of God, gives way to that invisible equality of beings standing before God […] – by devolving into tuxedos" (1995: 181). The stratification of human social class, supposedly dissolved in the confines of a house of worship, is writ large in the powerhouse of the Ritz-Carlton, where business not only crosses the threshold of leisure and domesticity, but is also mixed with Atlantic City *realpolitik* as "good will gestures".

The hotel lobby in *Boardwalk* is a monument to the possibilities of social stratification and conditioning through the use of interior spaces in sites of modernity. Kracauer's comparison of the hotel lobby with the interior of a church points to the place and partial appropriation of religion in the revival of the 1920s.

[15] This Amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified on January 16th 1919, was also known as the "Volstead Act" after the congressman, Andrew Volstead, who introduced it, and made Prohibition possible.

Religion and Secular Faiths

The place of religion is a complicated aspect of the 1920s onscreen revival, sometimes pitted against the nascent media age modernity and sometimes in league with it. We also see new, secular forms of belief in their ascendency, in particular a business culture often related to criminality. Traditional religion often fuels the ideology of characters who appear decidedly antimodern. In the United States, the 1920s witnessed a resurrection of evangelical, Protestant Christianity, fundamentalist in nature. Its influence, where the recruitment of adherents was concerned, had reached as far as Europe by the outbreak of the First World War (Carter 1968: 204–6). One of the most chilling consequences of this appeal to the "Rock of Ages" – a popular hymn utilised by the resurgent conservative Christianity – was the revival of an "anti-modern", nationalist, racist Ku Klux Klan (Dumenil 1995: 188). Such reactionary movements were, in their own way, a direct symptom of modernity itself.

While rearguard Christianity fought against modernity's ever increasingly definition of everyday life, and a large motivation for such movements, the dominant influence that religion had over public life and cultural norms experienced significant threats during the 1920s (Dumenil 1995: 171), a trend that carried over into other faiths such as Judaism (Dumenil 1995: 176). Although the United States still contains a high proportion of devout religious adherents and is overall a more religious culture than comparable Western societies, although actual church attendance is dropping (Kaleem 2014), the twenty first century trend towards secularism in the Western world is reflected in the transitional characterisations of religious practitioners and discourses in these historical programs. Whether narrow minded and judgemental in relation to personal morality (as seen in the second and third seasons of *Boardwalk*), ultimately ineffectual in the context of halting personal choice in relation to consumption of alcohol (and a haven for hypocrisy, as in *Squizzy*), or complicit in abuse and neglect (the *Miss Fisher's* episode "Unnatural Habits" [S2E12, 2013]), organised religion is generally depicted in an unflattering manner, reflecting the generally liberal politics of such productions. Some, such as *Tender Hook*, *Midnight in Paris* and *The Artist*, privilege the secularism of modernity to such a degree that no religious representatives are portrayed at all.

After Nucky and Margaret start a relationship, reconcile after a serious argument (both in the first season) and marry (at the end of the second season), Nucky still utilises the Ritz-Carlton as a refuge from domestic strife and as a secluded location for his extramarital trysts. It is tempting, then, when Nucky is driven from his suite in the final episodes of the third season and relocates to a modest boarding house in the fourth season, to read this development not just as an acknowledgement of his hubristic ambition after his Pyrrhic victory against Rosetti and Masseria in "Margate Sands" (S3E12, 2012), but also as an ironic sop to surroundings symbolic of working class and petit bourgeois values, as opposed to the characteristics associated with decadent luxury and political corruption, both consequences of modernity that could flourish in a building like the Ritz-Carlton, in a city like Atlantic City. Another important point is that this is karma, or retribution (divine or otherwise), against a man who abused the privileges of power in a town heavily embodying the qualities of modernity. Nucky's abuse was to take for granted the affection of a woman who, like him, had experienced hardship in youth. Although Nucky is still relatively affluent, the modest trappings of his new abode and his propensity to keep a lower profile demonstrate that his personal circumstances have changed irrevocably. His code of morality, however, remains erratic in his occasional affairs.

Alongside a general scepticism in implicit values towards religion in these texts (despite acknowledging the prevalence of religion during this period), there is a willingness to demonise men of the cloth, such as in the third season of *Blinders* (2016). Possibly reflecting current distrust of authority figures such as priests within the Catholic Church, Father John Hughes schemes against the Shelby family, even going so far as to kidnap Tommy's son. As for Linda Shelby, the wife of Peaky Blinder gang member Arthur Shelby, while she is a layperson, and a very devout character in the third season, she adopts a more pragmatic and secular code of conduct in the fourth season once she realises the reality of her new family's business. In Arthur's office (he is the Vice-President of the Shelby firm), she engages in a secluded tryst with her husband to relieve the man's stress over a vendetta pursued by the Changretta Mafia family against the Shelbys. Her Christian conservatism, in this third episode (2017), has already started to collapse – by the end of the episode, she is swearing and brokering bets for the Shelby gambling

racket. Her coarsening of character is reminiscent of Nelson Van Alden's crises of faith and hardening of character.

Moral Righteousness in The Jazz Age

Prohibition Agent Nelson Van Alden in *Boardwalk* is the personification of an antialcohol, antimodernity religious believer. He also epitomises an extralegal, and thuggish, handling of authority that brings to mind the puritanical and brutal actions of the law previously mentioned in connection with illicit drugs. Similar instances of unhinged, unprofessional conduct on the part of Prohibition agents (Lerner 2007: 67–8; Bryson 2013: 189) and police (Lerner 2007: 84 & 89), often carelessly deploying firearms, are present in the historical record.

Drugs, especially alcohol, are treated by many authority figures, at least in their public pronouncements, as a social menace (albeit a widely flouted taboo), and despite communal disapproval other social issues such as female suffrage and employment opportunities and African-American culture are not censured by all encompassing legislation. In this instance of social control over intoxicating substances, *Boardwalk* can be read allegorically. Van Alden, the head of the Prohibition Bureau in Atlantic City is a stern, self-righteous figure. As a fundamentalist Christian, his disdain for alcohol is channelled into "muscular Christianity." He does not hesitate to skirt the limits of the law in his attempts to bring lawbreakers to justice. In "The Ivory Tower" (S1E2, 2010), he tortures the only surviving witness to the botched liquor truck robbery in the pilot episode. Invading the space of a dentist and allowing the witness to be administered with cocaine – further shades of the changing legal status of the drug, as demonstrated in *Razor* – Van Alden shoves his hand into the witness' gaping stomach wound, seeking to find information that will contradict the official story, information which he regards with grave scepticism. Another, even more telling, instance of Alden's crusading under the guise of his badge's duties is his breaking up of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians' St Patrick's Day dinner in "Nights In Ballygran" (S1E5, 2010). One guest is understandably incensed, and uses his professional training to protest, albeit ineffectually:

> Do you have any idea who these men are? This is a private party, and the mere consumption of alcohol is not illegal. Now I'm an attorney, and the Volstead Act clearly states…

Van Alden is noticeably unmoved, punching the lawyer in the face and ordering the room to be emptied and shuttered. It is this rough handling of those who flout the law of the land – evidenced again in his violence against the restaurant proprietor that inaugurates a raid in "21" – that posits Van Alden firmly as one whose teetotal (or "dry") lifestyle fuels his zealous prosecution of the law, with no nuance or loopholes tolerated. Despite his best efforts, illustrating the historical undermanning of the Prohibition Bureau's manpower, the flow of alcohol to Atlantic City is barely dented.

Van Alden also has feet of clay. His wife, Rose, is unable to conceive a child, and the investigation of the murder of Hans Schroeder for possible links to Van Alden's arch nemesis Nucky leads to a growing attraction towards Margaret. The *mise en abyme* – a recursive sequence commenting on the creation of the text that the audience is watching – of her passport photograph is actually a signifier of future change in the future of a character, or characters. Margaret's photograph is the catalyst for Van Alden to act out his sexual repression through flagellation. He finds another outlet, though, after making no headway with his case against Nucky. He drowns his sorrows in a speakeasy and has sex with Lucy, recently jilted by Nucky. From this affair a baby daughter is born, and once Rose finds out, divorce proceedings are initiated. Due to Lucy's abandoning of the infant, and a murder committed by Van Alden coming back to haunt him, he flees with his daughter and nanny to Cicero, Illinois, changing his name along the way to George Mueller.

This geographical relocation is matched by a fortuitous change of vocation. Initially he is an iron salesman, but in "Resolution" (S3E1, 2012) he comes into the orbit of Dion O' Banion, a kingpin of the Illinois underworld who uses his florist shop as a front. Mueller ends up running errands for the Irish-American gangster. Eventually, after O'Bannion directs Mueller to assist the Capone brothers in getting their preferred candidate elected as Cicero mayor, Capone puts pressure on Mueller to work for them and kill O'Bannion. Because Mueller has been honing his forceful tactics for the other side of the law, his religious faith is all but shattered. O'Bannion

is executed in his flower shop by other gangsters in "Marriage and Hunting" (S4E9, 2013), but Mueller takes the credit for the "hit." Firmly in the pockets of Capone as the fourth season concludes, simultaneous with Torrio's retirement as head of the Chicago underworld and transferral of duties to Capone, Mueller appears to have metamorphosed entirely into a mobster. Capone even encourages Mueller, who still resists alcohol, to start drinking more. Van Alden, previously a firm supporter of "old-time religion", later a member of Al Capone's outfit, furnishes further proof that religiosity experiences strain once in contact with the dark side of modernity in the 1920s. Characters such as Linda Shelby and Van Alden, whose faith starts out as devout and genuine in the revival of the 1920s, if they are tasked with combating objects or people deemed "sinful", cannot always resistance temptation while frequently exposed to these "deviant" commodities or modes of behaviour.

Van Alden, as the embodiment, in the revival, of ultra strict morality (fused with the power possible as a representative of the law), is situated as an agent of conservative, communal and legislative opposition towards alcohol, as a signifier of modernity. However, his resolve is gradually weakened through sustained contact with the defiantly secular and hedonistic atmosphere of Atlantic City. Although Van Alden attempts to combat inner, lustful feelings through violent self-denial and punishment, the cracks in his ethical persona result in infidelity, murder and a change of identity. His eventual relocation (geographically and vocationally) to the Chicago underworld acts as an extreme example of the inevitable victory of the forces of modernity (the liberating, progressive tendencies of the 1920s), in the mainstream, over a more archaic, narrow minded and fundamentalist lifestyle.

Secular Conservatism

Decline and Fall (2017), a BBC adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's debut novel from 1928, despite its frequent explorations of modernity in the field of education in England during the 1920s, ultimately opts for a message of a secular opposition to modernity – appropriate, considering Paul Pennyfeather's failed studies as a divinity student. Despite the eccentricities of Pennyfeather's fellow teachers at the Llanabba school, the take home message from the series' finale, as voiced by the don of Scone College, is that "dynamic individuals" are unwelcome at Oxford.

Stodgy conservatism is enshrined in *Decline and Fall* as a cornerstone of England's next generation. Dynamism appears to be only acceptable as occasional disturbances of hallowed inertia through drunken college brawls, which result in fines to line the college's coffers. This is in stark contrast to the dynamism embedded in the technologically and sexually obsessed, somewhat robotic German architect, Otto. This symbol of modernity embodies clinical, "Teutonic" progress, illustrated through theories of mechanical supremacy prominent during the Weimar era (when Germany was likely the most scientifically advanced country on Earth), and as such represents a "foreign", awkward obstacle to Pennyfeather's inherited affability and progress through teaching, not to mention his feelings towards his employer, Mrs Beste-Chetwynde. Her Latino-American exoticism is acted in a politically correct manner through actress Eva Longoria's employing of her natural, Californian accent (although somewhat clipped and clearly enunciated to fit the character's social aspirations in 1920s Britain), while her sexual permissiveness (in contrast to Pennyfeather) is eluded to through the architect's allusions to an affair with her. Pennyfeather's experiences as an unwitting accomplice to his fiancée's prostitution racket, under the guise of a dance troupe, and his confinement in an isolated prison, confirm for him the safety of being part of the status quo. Pennyfeather's character arc coming "full circle" is depicted as the most satisfying manner of leading a life with a degree of conservatism in these instances of the revival of the 1920s.

Not every text in the 1920s screen revival features religious figures, but those that do usually feature discontented and inwardly tortured individuals (Van Alden in *Boardwalk*), outright villains (Father John Hughes in *Blinders*) or characters who are fairly easily pressured by circumstances to alter personal behaviour in order to take on, chameleon-like, the characteristics of a criminal *milieu* (Linda Shelby in *Blinders*). Religion is shown to have a complicated relationship with modernity, appearing in opposition as flourishes of fundamentalist activity pining for old-fashioned values. For the remainder of the populace, fictional or otherwise, a different way of fitting in with a bourgeois conformity shared by millions is to attend the cinema.

Metonymic Modernity and the Pornographic Image

In these 1920s revival texts, the cinema is portrayed as modernity's secular cathedral, within which its virtual home – the moving image – is given fullest expression. Such a real space and virtual experience is often the key denominator in bourgeois family outings seen in these films and television productions, likewise jilted lovers and surveillance.

Cinemagoing, and cinematic production processes, weaves its way through the texts of the revival as a form of entertainment and as recursive sequences. Examples include *The Artist* (which depicts the transition in Hollywood from silent cinema to "talkies"), the television series *Squizzy* (as fictionalised in the sixth episode "Squizzy Makes The Front Page", in which the real Squizzy Taylor stars in a lost film entitled *In Emergency Colours* [Anderson 1971: 124–5]) and the second season episode of *Miss Fisher's* entitled "Framed for Murder" (S2E9, 2013). Recreations of the production of cinema are not the only inclusions of cinema as a symbol of the popular culture and imagery of the Roaring Twenties. Film, as exhibit of the 1920s preserved for posterity, appears in texts such as *Boardwalk* as part of the immersive experience of returning to another era.

A pornographic film is screened in Nucky's suite in the *Boardwalk* episode, "Hold Me In Paradise" (S1E8, 2010). The Italian film, *Saffo e Priapo* (1921–2),[16] is transgressive, due to its blasphemous depiction of nuns and priests engaged in sexual acts, and it is a relic of the earliest era of pornographic cinema. The absence of Nucky from Atlantic City in this episode, leaving his colleagues in charge, foregrounds an arrogant sense of corrupt entitlement and procrastination on the part of Nucky's local government minions. The content of their choice of entertainment, which by today's standards would be construed as sexist and even sexual harassment, stands in context as a further disguised, defiant response to surface engagement with moral reformers in Atlantic City, typified by the meeting of the WCTU in *Boardwalk*'s pilot episode.

[16] This film was chosen despite the episode being set during the Republican National Convention in 1920. However, considering the preservation status of 1920s pornography, it is understandable that this representative example was selected.

The pornographic film also functions as an indirect *mise en abyme.* The all male gathering in Nucky's office viewing sexual intercourse on film functions as a metacommentary on *Boardwalk Empire* as a production from HBO, whose programming has been noted, and criticised, for graphic and "showy" scenes of nudity and sex (Kornhaber, Orr and Sullivan 2015). A toast is led by Nucky's brother Eli, the sheriff of Atlantic County, after the flammable nitrate film catches fire in the projector – "To too hot to watch!" As well as depicting the risks of handling fragile film stock during this era, the line of dialogue, as well as humorously highlighting the taboo nature of the destroyed film, also addresses the viewer with a double meaning. The creators of *Boardwalk*, taking full advantage of the permissive standards possible for content creation at the network, are delving back into historical precedent to show a historical pattern of pushing the envelope where recorded entertainment is concerned.

Saffo e Priapo's appearance in *Boardwalk* is just one instance of a film's use as a tactile part of the media fabric that adds material and virtual historical verisimilitude to the text, thereby cutting across multiple audiovisual layers. Such props work to reinforce the reflexive nature of 1920s modernity itself (the topic that is under discussion), by encapsulating the film (such as the pornographic reel above) shown during moments of projection on screen within the given audiovisual text we are watching, the latter itself, the diverse industrial, production and exhibition contexts by which both are manufactured, circulated and consumed, and thereby the whole dimension of audiovisuality itself as an increasingly central marker of modernity's vertiginous, inherently mediatised identity and generative power. In *Babylon Berlin* we can see the influence of Weimar artists erupting to the surface of events through an artefact, in this case a motion picture from the 1920s itself (a Marlene Dietrich UFA, or Universum Film AG, production), being positioned during a scene when Rath crashes a screening looking for the point of origin for his obsessed-over photograph. This visual signifier is itself significant for – like the photograph that sets the detection plot of Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) into action, and the pornographic film that ignites the descent into a seedy underworld in *8mm* (1999), plus countless other films and television shows – it depicts an act with overtones of both sex and violence.

A raid in the pilot episode of *Babylon* by Rath and the vice squad results in the arrest of a film crew filming a blasphemous pornographic film. The director, echoing ongoing debates about art versus censorship that are still ongoing in the twenty first century, defiantly proclaims that art cannot be silenced under Articles (German legislation). A multicultural clientele and staff and outrageously flamboyant aesthetics in attire mark this location, alongside later scenes set in a transvestite bar, as "Exhibit A" of a Berlin counterculture. As for the photograph, the point of origin is revealed to be another pornographic text. The male figure shown engaging in bondage and sadomasochistic acts in the film is revealed to be Rath's own father, the chief of police for Cologne. This potential scandal, averted by Rath, who sets fire to the negative, has overtones of contemporary sexual scandals and the notoriety of the celebrity "sex tape."

In a television program set in the Weimar Republic's last years, another unsettling premonitory connotation is decipherable through a related action – the censorious book burning of "degenerate" literature by the Nazi party after taking power in 1933. The above photograph and film are further examples of the *mise en abyme* in their knowing allusion to the greater composition of a text shown on Netflix, *Babylon*, having greater liberty in thematic content, in common with *Boardwalk* on HBO, than non-cable programming. Amongst *Babylon*'s overall *mise-en-scène*, a piece of evidence of transgressive behaviour from the 1920s is simulated, rather than being the genuine article, both in terms of harkening back to the past and allegorically. In other words, the recorded act of sadomasochism metaphorically acts as a vehicle for a character, in a historical place and during a specific historical period, to represent real world issues and occurrences through the conveyance of (semi)hidden or complex meanings.

Allegorically, future state sponsored censorship and intellectual repression, and the pattern of sex tapes circulating through a culture obsessed by celebrity, followed by titillation and moral condemnation, are alluded to by the images in *Babylon*. These images have power over social groups and the conduct of people in power (who have "dirty little secrets" to hide), and function in a fetishistic manner. Metonymic of the broader 1920s revival, the *mise en abymes* look back to refigure the present of the twenty first century, to use previous trauma to allay (but also to make us aware of) our own.

Cinema and Surveillance

Reflections of the emotional connection to modernity, in texts such as *Boardwalk*, are shown through medium shots of cinema audience members in moments of rapt attention, chewing silently on popcorn. Closeups of a tearful Lucy in "Home" (S1E7, 2010) also draw our attention to darker realities. Instead of her attendance being framed by conventions of the family or courting ritual, she views *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920), where a snippet from the production shows Robert Louis Stevenson's pensive looking doctor in medium shot, followed by an intertitle "Think what it would mean! To yield to every evil impulse, yet leave the soul untouched!" Lucy, clad in black, must now come to the realisation that she is mourning her relationship with Nucky.

Nucky's leaving of Lucy to attend the cinema alone compounds his increasing lack of interest in her, in the wake of his affair with Margaret, and the film drives home the message that Nucky is indeed Janus-faced. Such a figure is passionate about life, yet prioritises his or her own values at all costs (Hollingdale 1965: 167–70; Greene: 2013 25 & 28–31). Jimmy takes his family, in the pilot episode, to see a silent comedy, *The Hayseed* (1919), which features the protagonist literally burying memories of a relationship with his girlfriend by disposing of a bottle of spirits in a sandy creek. The official, enforced repression – subterranean through the speakeasy (illegal, and secret, drinking establishment) – of the United States' love affair with alcohol is once again entwined with complicated relationships. While on the surface light hearted escapism, this humour preempts the all-encompassing role that alcohol will have, directly or indirectly, on the lives of all the protagonists, a point that Margaret confides to Owen Sleater in the third season.

Finally, in "Belle Femme" (S1E9, 2010), the Western film *Wagon Tracks* (1919), is unseen within the episode but described by Jimmy as his alibi while he is in custody and being questioned by Van Alden. Therefore, it is pivotal that Van Alden manoeuvre to point out that, while Jimmy claims to have been at the cinema for four and a half hours on the night he actually helped to rob a liquor truck, the running time of the film is only seventy-eight minutes. Jimmy is caught out in his lie, and incarcerated, demonstrating that the exhibition of motion pictures, with their attendant publicity and program scheduling, is a valuable new tool in the arsenal of

official surveillance/investigation. Indeed, the absence of *Wagon Tracks* from this *Boardwalk* episode confirms our role in the 1920s revival as both spectators (surveillance operators) and participants through this spectatorship, due to our seeing the primary film. Before Jimmy's incarceration, he sarcastically justifies his evasiveness on the details of the picture by feigning not to want to give away the ending. This is a verbal gesture prophesising the cultural piece of etiquette known as the "spoiler alert" (Cohen 2010). Another instance of cinema as document for the authorities, with a strong historical basis, will be examined in the chapter on the issues of race, immigration and gender in the contemporary revival of the 1920s.

Cinema, in both its mainstream and underground forms, holds an important place in the revival of the 1920s. Bourgeois sharing of entertainment and relationships is fraught with the reality of an escape into solitude from dysfunctional relationships and the reflection, on the screen, of the complicated realities of the era (both apparent in *Boardwalk*'s first season). Alternately, the genuine 1920s pornography (*Saffo e Priapo*) and the simulated 1920s pornography (the film in *Babylon*) pinpoint societal deviance, constructed for a presumptive heterosexual gaze, in the interwar period as represented by the revival. They also function as *mise en abymes*, offering metacommentary on the permissive quality of the texts in the revival, precedents of visual deviance that they are utilising or simulating and situating themselves as allegorical links between the 1920s and the present. The twenty first century is not only insinuated into the thematic concerns of the 1920s, however. At times, the connections between the 1920s and the future are more overt in contemporary popular culture, going so far as to constitute anachronism.

Anachronisms and Stylisations

Anachronisms and stylisations permeate, to varying degrees, the texts that comprise the revival of the 1920s as another marker of their engagement with modernity. In television programs such as *Cable Girls*, *Blinders*, *Empire*, and *Razor*, the relevance of the 1920s to the twenty-first century is overtly present on the screen (and on the soundtrack) through anachronisms that track the development of aspects of popular culture and compel audiences to think about the 1920s, and history dramatised, in a new way. Other texts, such as *DC's Legends of Tomorrow* (2016–present), *Midnight in Paris*, and *Timeless* (2016–present), engage with the humorous possibilities of

historical hindsight through time-travelling characters. Finally, dramadocumentaries, such as *The Making of the Mob* franchise (2015–16), contain visual errors in relation to their historical setting that mediate a relationship between text and viewer steeped in received popular memories of the underworld.

Diverse kinds of modernism – art, concepts, and communication styled as having a "critical-reflexive relationship with tradition" (Kovács 2007: 13) – are couched by *Boardwalk* and some other films and television programs under discussion as the feeling, expression, or point of origin for societal change and rebellion on both the less radical macro level (the boardwalk as site for a leisure economy and the vices,) and potentially more subversive micro level (Angela's art and the setting of bohemianism). But such ideas and concepts never take over the primary audiovisual texts themselves, the formal stylistic or aesthetic constructions of which remain in the main devoid of modernism's radical markers.

The notion of the "modern" itself, while touching on everything we see and hear, is concurrently ascendant and potentially a threat to the established status quo. Even in a healthcare context, Margaret's pitching of prenatal care in the local hospital to Bishop Norman in "Bone For Tuna" (S3E3, 2012) is decried by the prelate as an unorthodox "touch of the modern." Margaret, showing her own two-faced nature (she plans to challenge Catholic dogma), promises that her suggestion will constitute "Only a touch" of such secular progress.

Musical Anachronisms

Anachronisms force audiences to reflect seriously on the fact that the past informs the future, and vice versa. For instance, *Razor*, as with previous incarnations of the franchise, begins with an opening credit sequence that lasts for forty-five seconds. This serves an intertextual function, the opening titles taking their template in relation to iconography and shot selection from previous seasons. With Burkhard Dallwitz's "It's A Jungle Out There", a *mélange*, or mash-up, of club rhythmic beats, electric rock guitar and Italian operatic aria providing an aural accompaniment to the mayhem with its sole, titular lyric, the images switch between black and white and colour, and lively scenes of dancing in sly grog dens and general debauchery with posed stills of the cast trying to approximate period authentic mug shots, such as those to be found in Peter Doyle's 2009 collection of Sydney interwar police

photographs, *Crooks Like Us* (158–69, for example). The composition has links to the high tragedy – in its operatic sampling – ever-present in Sicilian-American gangster sagas (the exploits of U.S. gangsters were eagerly followed by their Australian counterparts and reported on by the metropolitan papers). The danceable and rock aspects of the song also nod to the continuing nightlife, live music tradition in Australia, a scene that has traditionally attracted the underworld on its margins.

"It's A Jungle Out There" foreshadows the blues-rock and roots music that comprises the soundtrack of *Razor* proper. While they are inauthentic to the 1920s per se, these musical choices harken back to an era of music prior to electronic amplification. They act as a slight, but perceptible, instance of a prolepsis, where the narrative is repositioned temporarily forward in time from the historical setting of *Razor*. Alongside and furthering these non-diegetic anachronisms, a jazz band in Kate Leigh's establishment is shown diegetically belting out 1980s era Australian pub rock standards such as "The Boys Light Up" by Australian Crawl, and "The Nips Are Getting Bigger" by Mental As Anything. This encapsulates the humour and irreverence noted by Rosenstone in postmodern historical reenactments, and follows on with the artistic and stylistic patterns expected from previous incarnations of *Underbelly*, such as *A Tale of Two Cities* (2009) and *The Golden Mile* (2010). These musical anachronisms are overtly unfaithful to the time period recreated through choice of songs and their initial arrangements and musical genre, sounding totally "out of sync" with musical styles appropriate to the 1920s. However, the Jazz Age arrangements serve to continue the efforts at immersion and surface verisimilitude practiced by *Razor*.

Songs by alternative and blues-rock artists such as Ash Grunwald and Mojo Juju also feature in the series as a form of musical compromise, combining a genre, with attendant thematic concerns, which thrived in the 1920s. It is interesting to note, in particular, the glamourised impressions of Sydney bootlegger Kate Leigh and procurer Tilly Devine against their real-life counterparts. Historical verisimilitude – faithfulness towards the historical truth of photographic imagery of the historical era – is cited, or more accurately foregrounded to an extent suggesting auto-deconstructive effect, through scratches and blotches on the film stock, clearly a "post-digital" trick, and action is at times slowed down (when speed is not

alternatively exaggerated) to reference – again the effect is less convincing than playfully reflexive – the jerky projector speed of a silent film. The fast-paced editing still allows for handwriting from police reports, newspaper headlines and the final disclaimer – a title card reading "Based on events 1927-36" – to be discerned, lending scope for dramatic license to the data of history. However, it is the rather romanticised shots of gangs dressed to the nines in suits engaging in combat with Bengal razors that drives home the main, chilling point. While the attire and weapons may have changed, and urban Australia retains its lawless streak to a degree, urban crime rates are falling (Mouzos 2002: 158–9; Roberts and Indermaur 2009: 9–11). In a less violent era (despite media reportage that can, on occasion, verge towards the exaggerated and sensational), society may be attracted to the grittiness of such a "retro" underworld.

Razor's opening credits exploit the expected ingredients that have kept *Underbelly* in circulation for seven seasons as of 2018; they also, however, bring the historical wheel full circle at its most accessible, "mainstream" end (the franchise being a product of commercial free to air television). As Larry Writer points out, it was the early decades of the twentieth century, leading into the 1920s, that saw a wave of puritanical temperance against alcohol, narcotics, gambling and prostitution (2011: xxvi–xxvii). The result was the start of syndicated Australian crime.

The frequency of musical anachronism, as utilised in *Razor*, is taken to its logical conclusion in *Cable Girls*. Unlike other motion pictures and television programs marking the 1920s revival, here there is no period appropriate music whatsoever. The opening theme song has a darkly "retro" feel, a smooth, "chanteuse" influence reminiscent of Lana Del Rey's "Young and Beautiful" from *The Great Gatsby*. However, the remainder of the score is contemporary pop, with elements of electronica and club music. Twenty first century music in a 1920s *milieu* applies to both the diegetic and non-diegetic spheres of *Cable Girls*. It is especially affective in transcending the historical period, and highlighting the timeless gaiety of youthful frivolity, in party scenes where a band or gramophone is present, juxtaposed against the period specific clothing and dance steps. However, considering the conservative, patriarchal and monarchical forces foregrounded in Spanish society in the decade before the Civil War, it is striking that historically appropriate jazz music is omitted.

This elision deprives *Cable Girls* of potential social commentary, especially as jazz music was often associated with "flaming youth" and female liberation, troubling for Spain during the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. By way of contrast, jazz is heard in one scene in a later episode of *Morocco: Love In Times of War*, when a picnic in the countryside outside of the soon to be besieged city is accompanied on the gramophone by an unidentified jazz composition. It sounds, in arrangement, to have been recorded later than 1921, but it serves to underscore the liberated personality of the journalist in the scene.

Non-Diegetic Soundtracks

The music of representative present-day artists such as Jack White and The Black Keys are heavily featured throughout *Blinders*. The track chosen to introduce audiences to *Blinders*, however, is Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds' Gothic, alternative "Red Right Hand", originally released on the band's 1994 album *Let Love In*. A song of murder and revenge, it smoothly, but eerily, conjures up an uneasy atmosphere. After time and place have been established by the use of an intertitle that appears on the screen, the editing consists largely of tracking shots, which are further broken down into panning, long and medium shots focusing on the fictional Tommy Shelby.

This approach is in contrast to *Razor*'s credits, which prioritise images of historical personalities that defined both an era and an urban geographical space. Shelby, except when he is dwarfed by the edifice of capitalism, is the head of his family and a leader in the community. Although a preaching minister and two obsequious police officers are observed amongst the working class and the signifiers of heavy industry, they mainly fulfil the shorthand function of archetypes. Archetypically, representatives of organised religion simultaneously seem to denounce a "sinful" neighbourhood, whilst being resigned to the secular reality, and representatives of law and order are "on the take"[17], able to be bribed to maintain a form of social equilibrium. The less than altruistic governance and forms of welfare undertaken by these societal figures operate as foreground against an appropriately bleak urban background.

[17] An idiom for being corrupt and susceptible to bribery.

The iconography of a fiery, dirty, coal streaked Birmingham (a hellish image possibly on the minister's mind) is not only a reference to Birmingham's industrial importance from the Industrial Revolution through to the First World War, but also an evocation of the hyperstimulus and chaos of increased urbanisation and changing spatiotemporal relations between people and their environments, as writers such Georg Simmel and more recently Ben Singer have pointed out. This is very much "historical period as dark, dangerous and unpleasant (and in need of controlling)", to quote Jerome De Groot (2008: 201).

Jazz and "Jazz"

Razor and *Blinders* share the explicit trait of *Boardwalk*'s soundtrack in featuring the defining musical genre of the era – jazz. Indeed, the second episode of *Blinder*'s second season contains a climactic scene in a tavern where one of the first jazz recordings, "Livery Stable Blues" by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (1917), can be heard, albeit murkily, as verisimilitude. In the first episode of that season, however, the Shelby family attend an evening at a London club run by a rival criminal enterprise. The dance floor in this scene is full of hedonistic young people, "interracial" dancing, public sex acts and flagrant drug usage. All of these actions, historically and in the dramatic production being viewed, are presented as consequences of the First World War and the English *Defence of the Realm Act* of 1914, which forced nightlife underground in response to curtailed licensing hours. The promotion of the recreational use of narcotics was encouraged by services personnel (veterans fill the ranks of the gangsters in both *Razor* and *Blinders*) as an accompaniment to, or sometimes substitute for, alcohol.

Arthur Sheby, Jr complains "What is that fucking racket?" in response to the black jazz group in *Blinder*s, who are playing a style of jazz that sounds more like bebop from the late 1940s-early 1960s than early recorded examples. Arthur's personal tastes are certainly offended by the music on offer in the club. However, the raucous, abrasive quality of the musical performance, in comparison both to actual jazz music from the period and the less avantgarde quality of song structure inherent in the contemporary songs comprising the series' soundtrack, also reflexively stage an objection to the black jazz group on the grounds of anachronism. Although Jack White and The Black Keys, amongst other present day artists, can also be classified

as raucous and abrasive (taking into account the subjectivity of such an opinion), and are certainly exemplars of anachronistic genres of music, these musicians are present on the non-diegetic soundtrack only, whereas the object of Arthur's wrath are a part of the onscreen universe of the *Blinders* episode.

Later, in the second season's fourth episode, as part of a successful takeover of the club by the Blinders, Arthur taunts the brutalised manager and the patrons, claiming that the violence partly derives from "complaints from the neighbours about the terrible fucking music." These scenes, in Arthur's derogatory and harsh ultimate denunciation of jazz, echo contemporary British critiques of the genre. Such an opinion was the priority of a journalist writing in *The Reporter* in 1919, who noted that "the best qualification for a jazzist is to have no knowledge of music and no musical ability beyond that of making noises either on piano, or clarinet, or cornet or trap drum, which, I believe, are the proper constituents of a jazz orchestra" (Schwartz 2007: 3). In the same year, Sir Dyce Duckworth described scenes of London nightlife for *The Times* as follows: "wild dance-amid noises only fit for West African savages-held in London drawing rooms" (Parsonage 2007: 86).

The word "jazz" was not only a style of music, but also deployed as a verb for uninhibited dancing and socialisation during the interwar years. An emphasis on the behaviour of audiences listening and dancing to music, as much as the music itself, is on full display in the eighth episode of *Babylon*. Rath and his superior Bruno descend to a cellar bar after the aforementioned incineration. An acoustic blues quartet (two guitars, one of them played with a slide, and a piano are glimpsed, and drums are heard) perform in front of an affluently dressed and intoxicated crowd. Some of the audience are decidedly less attired, however, due to their kissing, embracing and copulating on lounges and chairs, while around them suggestive dance moves are performed. Before the scene's conclusion, it is revealed that secluded corners of the space are the site of showings of pornographic films. Those present in the club scene in *Babylon* view, once again, filmed copulation, and have sexual intercourse amongst themselves elsewhere in the club, while the audience watching *Babylon* views copulation in the moment and mechanically reproduced. The multiple observations of sex tie in with the aforementioned disjunctions in music heard, both diegetically and non-diegetically, across these audiovisual texts,

another aspect of the highly reflexive nature of the revival of the 1920s rather than a simply proclaimed historically accurate representation.

The lyrics of the blues song in this scene, dealing with dysfunctional romantic and sexual relationships, echo the performative nature of "jazzing" (still applicable in this example despite the different genre of music being played), while encouraging, as a component of the soundtrack, the titillating visual spectacle provided for two voyeuristic audiences: the one present in the club and the one watching *Babylon*. Such excesses may differ from moralistic disapproval in popular culture of the 1920s, however, due to the more permissive and liberal ideology espoused by *Babylon* and its nuanced portrayal of different characters' philosophies. The vibe's waters are further muddied by Rath's drink being spiked while he is in the club, which puts the detective in a situation whereby he must kill to survive. The drama of this scene, juxtaposing tense situations in the teleplay with visually arresting and raucous musical accompaniment, is frequently featured in television programs comprising the revival. These include the British *Downton* and *Blinders*, texts that include noteworthy creative liberties with the soundtrack.

Blinders, in its fourth season (2017), entered the "Charleston Twenties" of December 1925, continuing into 1926. This description is inspired by Julian Fellowes' reminder in promotional material for earlier seasons of *Downton* for viewers not to expect 1920s shorthand, such as the Charleston dance, in earlier seasons. Fellowes' assertion is that the dance did not enter British popular consciousness until 1926, only a year after its actual English debut in 1925 (Abra 2017: 66). *Downton* ended on New Year's Day 1926, so, since 2017, *Blinders* carries the responsibility for long form television dramatisation of England in the latter half of the decade. Already, as with *Boardwalk*'s Onyx Club orchestra, and *Downton*'s expensive hotel scenes in the final two seasons, the restaurant's "mixed race" jazz orchestra in the third episode has a big band sound. The choice of this style of musical arrangement copies, somewhat too anachronistically, the arrangements of the following decade, rather than period authentic dance band scores, following on from the bebop influence of the London jazz group performing in 1922 as seen in *Blinders*.

Beginning around the same period in English history, bohemian young aristocrats and socialites known as the Bright Young Things engaged in topsy turvy, anything

goes public interactions and behaviour (Dyhouse 2014: 74, 76 & 102). Although the Bright Young Things are never explicitly mentioned or depicted in *Decline and Fall*, they are an inspiration for the breaking down of class barriers by the servants, if only through fraud, and the party scene at Beste-Chetwynde's mansion. 1920s modernity's experimentations in the realm of music (although, in this instance, not necessarily jazz or blues) are here mocked, and Pennyfeather's aspirations to prominence are punctured, by his being corralled into an impromptu recital on the piano. Claiming to be a music teacher, but with no actual talent, his aimless and tuneless tickling of the ivories is presented as an "improvisation", with a Germanic theme, but this excuse meets with stunned silence at the conclusion of his performance, with one exception: the supposed inspiration of interwar technological progress is greeted with rapturous applause by the architect. This punchline serves to highlight further the architect as an "oddity" in relation to the values espoused and represented by the party-goers.

Improvisation is confined to this scene, which is absent from Waugh's original novel, and seemingly exists to provide a commentary on the wider cultural world of the 1920s. The production design, staging and relationship to history is similar to the approach undertaken by other texts in the revival.

Straight Up and Down, a Glimpse into the Future

Compared to the hyperkinetic editing, stylised staging and anachronistic soundtrack choices of the *Underbelly* franchise set in the 1920s, *Boardwalk* is much more deliberate, unobtrusive, and formally "sober" in its construction without overt markers of "postmodern" bricolage. Yet what remains important is the copresent historical and audiovisual layering, including some – on this occasion more limited – anachronism.

Most overtly, the opening title sequence features an instrumental version of the song "Straight Up and Down" performed by the present-day San Francisco band The Brian Jonestown Massacre. This remains the series' the most experimental segment, thanks largely to the aural bricolage, even taking into account Nucky's occasional visions and hallucinations pertaining to his childhood and relationship with Jimmy. Glimpsed in shots ranging from medium shots of his back to closeups of his

contemplative eyes, Nucky lights a cigarette and views the darkening storms above the Atlantic Ocean. While thunder crashes around the politician, hundreds of bottles of alcohol wash up on the sandy shore courtesy of the churning tides: a symbolic, visual metaphor for the basis on which Atlantic City prospers in the 1920s, but also an acknowledgement of the risk of smuggling alcohol via boat.

The potential hazards of "rum running" are illustrated diegetically in "A Man, A Plan…" (S3E10, 2012), an episode which begins and ends with bootleg liquor adrift in the ocean waves. The treachery of the sea is further mirrored in the mercurial behaviour of Rosetti, who refuses to heed the advice of Captain Bill McCoy to avoid "rogue waves" and bludgeons a confederate to death when the man, who has had shipping experience, contradicts Gyp's obstinacy. *Boardwalk*'s opening credits exhibit strong surrealist overtones, with the attire sported by Nucky and the clouds harkening back to the Belgian painter René Magritte (in spite of Magritte's own ambivalence towards such a descriptor [Geis 2010: 60]). This creative choice appears deliberate, acknowledging a revival of the 1920s that is ultimately and necessarily reflexive – albeit in usual subtle, implied ways – rather than slavishly historically accurate on the one hand or overtly self-conscious on the other. It is worth remembering, additionally, that Magritte has sometimes been positioned as a prototypical postmodernist (Geis 2010: 63), a classification making the painter an appropriate choice as inspiration for one of the most anachronistic (thereby contemporary) sequences in the program.

The electric, psychedelic music, chosen by creator Terence Winter for its quality of surprise (Halperin and Ginsberg 2011), firmly codifies this introduction sequence as the program's primary explicit nod outside its own reality as an HBO production to a twenty first century reality. It also codifies the role of the Magritte reference, speaking to audience perceptions of the artist, which require hindsight and, as an act of taxonomisation, cannot be firmly or simply applied in the historical moment or national cultural context.

Time Travelling

The varied modes of stylisation and anachronism, reaching of necessity more reflexive peaks, in the texts under discussion is further tinged with dramatic irony

when we examine more overt time travelling accounts of the 1920s. *Midnight in Paris* focuses on the *milieu* of – and ongoing fascination with – the "Lost Generation." This penetration of a previously undisturbed space/time continuum, due to the genre conventions of science fiction/fantasy, allows for ironic and learned present-day hindsight to lead to expressions of gushing wonderment on the part of Gil. One of director Woody Allen's prime jokes is for Gil, in an extended conversation with Surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel, to gift the artist the genesis for his later film, *The Exterminating Angel* (1962).

The time travelling operatives in the television program *Timeless* display some wonderment at meeting their idols, such as Ernest Hemingway, in the episode "The Lost Generation" (S1E14, 2017). Setting the episode in 1927 Paris sets up the gaffe of operative and history professor Lucy Preston revealing that she has read all of Hemingway's books. The humour, reliant upon historical hindsight and foreknowledge on the part of present-day viewers, derives from the fact that, by this date, only the short story anthology *In Our Time* (1925) and the novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) had been published. Yet, the knowledge of historical figures' futures also permits both an attempt to change the course of history through a player's actions, or disrespectful ribbing of the peccadilloes of these celebrities. Witness the encouraging of Charles Lindbergh to disappear after his crash, or the comments that disapprove of Hemingway's drinking and carousing. Attempts such as these to influence the course of history on a personal level see the aims of the creators transposed onto those of the time travellers, thereby feeding into reflexive, as opposed to historically accurate, portrayals of the 1920s.

The notion of time travel's impact on history, in its various permutations, presents an interesting, now much more reflexive strain in the vision at work across these diverse audiovisual texts. Even more overtly popular culture and genre related texts have pursued this potential. On the heels of *Midnight in Paris* and *Timeless* came *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, a network television program concerned with two opposing forces fixated on the control of the space/time continuum. When the villains attempt to change the course of history, the Time Masters crew protagonists counterattack with time travel and academic preparation, courtesy of the professor character. These characters visit many historical periods, among them Chicago in 1927 in the second season episode "The Chicago Way" (S2E6, 2016). Chicago under Al Capone's

gangland supervision is a playground for the protagonists to engage in banter. These humorous interactions acknowledge the nexus between history and the benefit of hindsight.

The *DC* characters further tweak dramatic irony, whereby the audience, or one character, knows things that the rest of the players do not. Here, a running motif concerning *The Untouchables* (1987) ("Bobby De Niro", "I think [Elliott Ness's operation would] make a great movie", etc.) amongst the superheroes is meant to go over the heads of oblivious 1920s Chicago residents, in a fashion similar to the parallel time lines (the 1920s and the present) and Gil's knowing sense of being "out of time" in *Midnight in Paris*. The realities of speakeasy experiences, such as passwords and chutes to jettison illicit alcohol during raids (Okrent 2011: 209), are excluded by *DC* in favour of an inconceivably "dry" (to the observation of the Time Masters, even after a conspiratorial wink is offered) establishment. As for the conclusion, historical accuracy is disregarded by the production team in relation to the realities of Capone's meteoric ascent to power running parallel alongside the slow burning federal case against him. The Time Masters hand over to Elliott Ness a ledger containing Capone's business records, thus sealing his eventual fate, although not until 1931.

Although attached to the Prohibition Bureau after 1925, Ness did not begin to lead the "Untouchables" until 1929 (Tucker 2012: 14–17). However, the Internal Revenue case against Al Capone, on charges of tax evasion, did commence in 1927, and was ultimately successful in putting Capone behind bars. In contrast, Ness' Untouchables, despite successfully interfering with Capone's brewery interests, were ultimately unable to prosecute Capone. This bitter reality for Ness is disregarded by *DC*, however, in favour of a heroic, victorious version. Condensing the historical timeline is acknowledged by the Time Master agents before returning to their ship, through an exchange between Ray Palmer/The Atom and Nate Heywood/Steel. Palmer/Atom asks, "You know, if this is the week the Feds get Capone's ledger, why does it take four more years for them to take him down?" Heywood/Steel responds with, "Because it's the Federal government."

As well as being a flippant, folkish crack, this justification of the slow-moving bureaucracy of the Federal government covers up a plethora of other potential stories

and issues that the team could have been engaged with. The infatuation with the film *The Untouchables* (where Ness again achieved legal vengeance against Capone), itself an update of a 1950s television account of Elliott Ness' memoirs, is emblematic of the treatment of the 1920s in broad strokes in "The Chicago Way" and further evidence of the palimpsestic form, demonstrating traces of earlier forms, with which the 1920s is always presented on screen. This is yet another reflexive "return" of the 1920s, taking inspiration from received popular memories of the opposition to Capone, spanning the 1950s layered atop the 1980s, embedded in a 2016 television episode.

Rosenstone and some other historians present similar theories about the various categories of historical fidelity valued by audiovisual content creators. Historical authenticity, in the context of history on film/television, refers to the believability, and truth, of the broad details and data of the past. This includes authentic costumes, modes of transportation, technology, architecture and forms of culture. Alongside these tangible objects of *mise-en-scène*, may be added the sense of sound. In addition to music, as discussed, the vocal component of speech patterns, conversational styles and slang is a major component of aural history.

Dramadoc Accounts of the Underworld

The AMC television programs *The Making of the Mob: New York* (2015) and *The Making of the Mob: Chicago* (2016) are two examples of the "dramadoc", or dramadocumentary, genre of television entertainment "based on a true story" that is ubiquitous in the United States, prioritising entertainment over documentary techniques to recreate history (Paget: 2011: 15). Hayden White sees in the organisation of dramadocumentaries a "*post-modernist*, para-historical representation" that "deal[s] with historical phenomena" and has a tendency to "'fictionalize' to a greater or lesser degree the historical events and characters which serve as their referents in history" (1996: 18). Such fictionalisations encompass everything from the thinly disguised version of Enoch "Nucky" Johnson, renamed Nucky Thompson, in *Boardwalk*, to dramatic licence that is unavoidable when actors impersonate real people in dramatic texts, to the foregrounding of fictional families that stand in for historical archetypes and stand in as witnesses to history, such as the Crawleys in *Downton* and the Shelbys in *Blinders*. *The Making of the Mob* series

appear to present audiences with approximations of interwar underworld situations, balanced with interviews with "talking head" historians, academics and actors that appear to lend an added dose of fidelity to the historical record to the enterprise. However, anachronisms coexist with period-specific props in the dramatic segments. These may be signifiers of a time only a few decades in the future or closer to the era of production, but verisimilitude is undermined.

Automobiles from later decades pop up in *Making of the Mob* scenes set in 1913 and 1924, and fashions from the 1930s are worn by extras in the scene of the infamous 1917 Coney Island knife assault that gave Al Capone his scars. The franchise appears as a collage of every received stereotype, archetype and symbol of the era of Prohibition, Thompson submachine guns (or "tommy guns"), the glamour of urban nightlife and pre Second World War modernity. Audiences have perceived these images from prior filmographies of gangster deeds, such as Hollywood gangster productions released before the Production Code's censorship enforcement, such as *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932). Later, more moralistic James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart productions from the mid to late 1930s and '40s, such as Cagney's *G-Men* (1935) and *White Heat* (1949) or Bogart's *The Roaring Twenties* (1939, also starring Cagney) and *Key Largo* (1948), encourage the dissemination of images and stereotypes that are readable to us, and designed for contemporary and subsequent audiences to feel comfortable thanks to a lens of comprehensible, dramatised history.

The first season, fixated on the underbelly of New York City, is especially rife with anachronisms. On a micro level, the aforementioned *mélange* of vaguely "period" attire and cars in both series is complemented by tunes played on the radio and gramophone, which are usually from an earlier era than the one being enacted. This is not strictly a case of anachronism, because these songs were already extant during these historical periods. It is entirely feasible that mobsters, in nostalgically sentimental moods, would have played songs from an earlier era. Yet it seems unlikely that radio in the 1930s, decades before "golden oldies" programming, would have played recordings from the 1910s or even earlier. These soundtrack choices sound like loose shorthand for a generalised signposting of the past, as with the more egregious big band recordings heard on the soundtracks of *Leatherheads* (2008) and *Squizzy*.

Fuller immersion in the past, however, necessitates a reflexive return *to* the 1920s requiring overtly artificial narrative devices, as experienced by characters in texts such as *Midnight in Paris*, *Timeless* and *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*. The immersion offered to contemporary audiences, though riddled with anachronisms and stylisation, is always partial and to some degree critical. When viewing texts such as the above, but also *Cable Girls*, *Blinders*, *Empire*, *Squizzy*, *Morocco* and *Razor*, the audience is expected to be both "in the moment" and reflecting on the version of the 1920s recreated on screen. In this context, the sense of a thoroughly reflexive revival is predicated on the sense of absence-presence that results in the significant landmarks, or imagery, of the 1920s coexisting alongside thematic content less infused with received popular opinion about the era.

Seeing and Hearing

The diverse, sometimes contrasting and even opposing discourses and manifestations of modernity occupy a place of significant importance in the revival of the 1920s that is my focus. Overall, the reverse of rose-tinted glasses – a fixation on the less palatable aspects of an era – oftentimes seems a primary aim of the scripts. Although the visual detritus of an artificial past may provoke nostalgia for surface details, as Katherine Byrne has argued, dialogue referring to aspects of modernity has the potential to remind viewers that they are, indeed, watching a television show or film that deals with less ideal situations than they are accustomed to. The frequency of this tactic can at times border on the didactic. The subtlety varies with the individual productions, but it seems fair to say that the films that constitute this 1920s revival, for the most part, attest to, and forge a dramatic discourse of, an uneasiness with the relation of this overdetermined decade to our own twenty first century reality.

In the course of this chapter we have seen this discourse of uneasiness articulated thanks in large part to the notion that the audience sees the 1920s and does not see the 1920s *at the same time*. The period drama presents a reflexively artificial surface that invites audiences to reinscribe the contemporary reality of lived twenty first century experience onto the surface, without explicitly visualising said present day reality.

Various texts in the revival meet the classificatory characteristics of twenty first century examples of the genres of gangster films, detective novels, and creative melodrama, respectively. These films and television programs comprise cycles grouped around occupations and aesthetics defining the 1920s, and follow on from prior historically based cycles. These latter films, in common with subsequent cable television productions, are able to exhibit a degree of faithfulness to the original source materials impossible in earlier adaptations. Most anachronisms can thereby reasonably be seen as conscious references to the artificiality of contemporary revival dramas, signalling their susceptibility to allegorical reinscription.

When examining and researching the recreation of an historical era in popular culture, an inherent awareness of the artifice involved, and the reasons behind such artifice, including the presence of reflexivity, is imperative. Especially where television is concerned (and even more so in the age of "event", or "golden age" of television), it is commonplace for historical programming (that is, shows set in the past) to frame past customs in a manner designed to reassure, perhaps coyly, contemporary viewers of the superiority of twenty first century sensibilities. However, if this Whiggish approach – one that purportedly seeks to improve society for the common good – foregrounded by chosen "liberal" characters, spokespeople for the assumed leftist, liberal sensibilities of contemporary "quality TV" audiences, according to the assumptions of content creators – is designed to counterbalance behaviour deemed politically incorrect, then programs set in the 1920s that tackle such subjects as the treatment of race, or notions of class and gender, may be especially egregious. This is where constant signposting of the programs' historical setting comes into play through dialogue, or the "hey, it's the 1920s" moments in scripted exchanges, which highlight the context of characters' conversations and attempt to offer, if not justification, then at least understanding.

The revival of the 1920s I have been charting above is inherently virtual, rendered through the world of moving images. "Virtual" does not refer to cyber technology that mimics the real, such as computer technology/effects aiding the recreation of an historical *milieu* of the 1920s in the revival, even as such digital techniques are very important in enabling such recreations within television production budgets. Instead, the virtual here refers to a site, space, and experience that, especially in a nighttime economy, is based on artifice and appealing to the recreational masses – be it the

boardwalk, the cinema, or television. This artifice is a key marker of the 1920s revival both in how it locates the decade's key contribution to modernity's unfolding and multilayered story, but also the means by which such a story is told – both at the time and subsequently – via screens. Working in the industries catering to tourists in a capitalist mode of modernity or earning wages in a social setting divorced from pleasure industries, servant classes play their usually unacknowledged part in the advance of technology and new ways of existing in the texts under discussion.

On screen, we see people going about their sometimes indentured duties in addition to the labour context of the "brave new world", cutting edge technological fields peopled by workers like radio engineers. The moment in *Downton* addressed above, mediating a traditional act of royalty (addressing the imperial realm), through modern telecommunications, allows for the introduction of yet another layer comprising technology and (mediated, in this case) human interaction within a class-based social system. In other words, technological progress intersects with a traditional British class structure, with the result that the distance between the British monarchy and the mass of the British population has lessened, and the institution has become more "human", to the general public over the decades.

Jobs that are traditionally the province of the working class, and illicit professions such as prostitution in *Razor*, are the careers most often depicted on screen in the revival of the 1920s. These choices appear to have been made for displaying conflicting ideologies between conservatism and progressivism. This is also reflected in the nostalgic period dramas in which reactionary characters are forced to interact with, and attempt to tolerate, the introduction of new appliances. This uneasy relationship with new technology works as a comment upon the newness of the audience's viewing experience. Twenty first century audiences live in an era where adaptation to post analogue TV viewing includes a wider range of viewing devices, alongside streaming platforms such as Netflix that encourage patterns of "binge watching." Simultaneously, alternate modes of engaging with popular culture are available, such as DVDs, Blu-Rays and Internet downloading, file sharing, and streaming. This plethora of distribution options (legal and illegal) speak to a growing mix of technological unease and ease, generally.

Inventions that are an important component of modernity, such as radio as a site for interviews and promotion of the publication of books, coexist alongside older media forms, including the popular, and increase the fame and fortune of the biographical protagonist. However, in line with the tropes embedded in previous biographical films about creative figures, celebrity leads to fraught interpersonal and familial relationships, including with children. Although modernity offers a chance of a better future for working class characters in the revival of the 1920s, the move undertaken by characters from the "provinces" to London or other large cities in order to become more socially mobile, as well as a fascination with urban nightlife, underscores the importance of the urban experience after the First World War in the Western world. The city was a site of capitalism, but also of the fixation upon and promotion of consumerism and amusement designed to divert self-reflection upon urban conformity. This experience, however, still found room for subcultures that questioned and maintained a multi-faceted relationship with this aspect of capitalism, such as bohemianism.

The inclusion of archival footage as historical artefacts, as well as rear projection, brings viewers closer to the world that is being recreated. However, these techniques are often used in conjunction with artifice, which has the paradoxical, and concurrent, effect of distancing audiences. This distancing effect deliberately connects viewers, to a closer degree, with a past that can be quite alien to contemporary experiences. Twenty first century audiences are at home and, also, not at home. Such a doubled relationship must, in turn, cause those engaging with the revival to see their contemporary viewing situation through a similarly uncanny lens. Distanciation also links the texts comprising the revival that are being watched to the history of multimedia presentations. More prosaically, a few seconds or minutes of reconstruction through more traditional cost and labour-intensive techniques are saved during the production process through the exchange of tactile sets and computer models for archival footage. Television programs like *Boardwalk* achieve this effect through using vintage buildings, while television programs such as *Boardwalk* (again), *Tender Hook* and *Razor* do so via building, mechanically and virtually, on sets, on location and on historical records.

The stratification of social class is writ large in an enclosed space such as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in *Boardwalk*, where business not only commingles as a social ritual

alongside leisure and domesticity, but is also mixed with Atlantic City *realpolitik* as "good will gestures." The hotel lobby in *Boardwalk* is a monument to the possibilities of social stratification and conditioning through the use of interior spaces in sites of modernity. Kracauer's comparison of the hotel lobby with the interior of a church is a useful segue to the place of religion in the revival of the 1920s. In this context, the closure of Pennyfeather's character arc in *Decline and Fall* is depicted as the most satisfying manner of living with a degree of conservatism and tradition in the revival of the 1920s. Not every text in the revival features figures of the cloth, but those that do usually feature discontented and inwardly tortured individuals or out and out villains. Other characters are pressured by circumstances to alter personal behaviour in order to adapt to the characteristics of a criminal locale. Religion's relationship with modernity is shown to be convoluted, appearing in opposition as flourishes of fundamentalist activity pining for archaic values in the historical record of the 1920s, for example. For everyone else, fictional or otherwise, a different way of fitting in with a widespread bourgeois conformity is to attend the cinema.

Recreations of the production of cinema serve as symbols of the popular culture and imagery of the Roaring Twenties. Film, as an exhibit of the 1920s preserved for posterity, also appears in the revival as part of the immersive experience of returning to another era. Cinema, in both its mainstream and underground exhibitions, is a recurring and telling aspect of the revival of the 1920s. Bourgeois sharing of entertainment, including as part of relationships, is beset with the reality of an introverted escape from dysfunctional relationships and the reflection, on the screen, of the complicated realities of the era. Alternately, the use of genuine 1920s pornography and simulated 1920s pornography pinpoint societal deviance, designed for a heterosexual gaze, in the interwar period as represented by the revival. However, they also function as *mise en abymes*, siting themselves as allegorical links between the 1920s and the present day through their metacommentary on the permissive quality of the texts in the revival, texts that follow precedence of visual deviance. At times, however, the connections between the 1920s and the future move from insinuation to more overt links to contemporary popular culture, going so far at times as to equate to anachronism.

Anachronism and stylisation are heard and seen to full effect in the use of diegetic Jazz Age arrangements of rock music, and non-diegetic soundtrack usage of blues-rock and roots music. While they are inauthentic to the 1920s per se, these musical choices harken back nonetheless, through underlying influences, to an acoustic era of music. They act as a slight, but perceptible, instance of a prolepsis, where the narrative is moved temporarily forward in time from the texts' historical setting of the 1920s. These musical anachronisms are disloyal to the verisimilitude of the recreated time period through both song selection and their original release arrangements and musical genres, and are out of synchronisation with musical styles appropriate to the 1920s. However, when Jazz Age arrangements are used, they serve to continue the efforts at immersion and surface verisimilitude. This compliments the iconography of a text such as *Blinders*, which is not only a reference to the historical industrial importance of the city, but also an evocation of the hyperstimulus and chaos of increased urbanisation, the changing spatiotemporal relations between people and their environments and an appropriate "out of time" backdrop for the non-diegetic inclusion of 1990s popular music. As for the modern electric, psychedelic music heard during the opening credits of *Boardwalk*, its quality of surprise firmly codifies the introduction as the program's sole nod to a twenty first century reality. It also reinforces the role of the Magritte reference in the art design of the credits sequence, speaking to audience perceptions of the artist. These perceptions require retrospection and, as a practice of classification, cannot be applied in the historical moment, but do appear appropriate to the recreated world of the program through hindsight.

Historians such as Robert A. Rosenstone have theorised about the extent to which historical fidelity is valued by content creators. Historical authenticity, when film and/or television returns to the past, refers to the believability, and truth, of the broad details and data of the past. Authentic, unalloyed interaction, however, would mean that time travel to the actual decade of the 1920s, as experienced by the characters in science fiction/fantasy texts within the revival, would be essential. Attempts in these programs by characters, in violation of the space/time continuum, to influence the course of history on a personal level see the aims of the creators placed onto the motivations of the time travellers, thereby encouraging reflexive, as opposed to historically accurate, portrayals of the 1920s. The immersion offered to

contemporary audiences in the revival of the 1920s, through anachronisms and stylisation, is partial and critical. When viewing texts with varying degrees of stylisation, the audiences are expected to be simultaneously in the moment and reflective on the version of the 1920s that is being recreated. The reflexive revival is, as a consequence, grounded on a mix of elements both in the act and omitted. The substantial imagery that is closest to signposting received popular memories of the 1920s coexists alongside thematic content that echoes popular opinion about the era to a lesser degree.

Finally, allegory is another technique frequently utilised to focus audience perceptions and reactions towards the revival of the 1920s. Instances of *mises en abymes*, or recursive sequences commenting on the creation of the text that the audience is watching, include the simulation of moving and still imagery. These mechanically reproduced images stand in for real world issues and occurrences through the transmission of quasisecreted or complex meanings. Future politically motivated censorship and intellectual repression, and the hypocritically prurient interest held by the public towards the private lives of celebrities and public figures throughout the decades, are alluded to by these objects, which are loaded with meaning and potential consequences for stakeholders, as well as functioning as a form of fetishism. These *mise en abymes*, because they are metonymic of the broader 1920s revival, look backwards in order to give new meaning to the present of the twenty first century. Previous trauma assuages (but also renders contemporary audiences aware of) the trauma inherent in the twenty first century.

* * *

In various and multilayered ways, in relation to thematic content and aesthetic style, the revival of the 1920s in twenty first century popular culture engages with the discourses of modernity, to a lesser degree modernism, and even postmodernism. However, it is only one aspect of the themes present in the return to the 1920s. Also inherent as thematic topics are the concepts of race, feminism and the presence of the war veteran. This latter archetype of the revival of the 1920s is a living reminder of the tumultuous four years between 1914 and 1918 that, in many ways, aided the eventual shape of the following decade. To a much lesser degree, characters are even

depicted as serving members of the military during this historical period. It is the fraught and multilayered representation of the war veteran in the 1920s that will be the focus of the following chapter. This chapter will position the war veteran as an essential part of the revival, owing to the alienated quality of the veteran in relation to 1920s modernity. The veteran also provides a site for analysing the consequences of the previous decade (encompassing the First World War) for the protean decade.

Chapter 3
Assigning the Veteran on the (Recreated) 1920s Home Front

In the twenty first century audiovisual revival of the 1920s charted by this thesis, the war veteran, and the veteran's feeling of trauma and alienation, typifies attempts to navigate the fluctuations of society following the First World War. Veterans witnessed the horrific consequences of technological advances (a hallmark of modernity) on the battlefield, before attempting to fit into postwar society. However, due to a gulf between the lived experiences of veterans and civilians, aggravated by medical discourses on the psychological impact of combat upon veterans, returned soldiers often felt alienated after demobilisation. As a result of this, it will be argued in the present chapter, the war veteran, and the feelings of trauma and alienation felt by the veteran, recurs as a central motif in the filmic and televisual return of the 1920s.

Veterans in twenty first century recreations of the 1920s interact with the changing tenor of the times, but they also feel a sense of estrangement from them. To explore the fraught relationships between dramatised veterans and their surroundings, and to investigate the varied treatments of veterans in contemporary films and television programs – what their purpose is in these texts, and how they enact these purposes – are the two major aims of this chapter. With recourse to the work of a number of theorists from the areas of poststructuralist theory, military history, international studies, literary theory, colonial studies and oral history, the experience of the veteran in the return of the 1920s, including trauma and alienation chief amongst thematic concerns, will define an important intersection of traumatic and alienated feelings with the experience of postwar modernity.

In the context of the dramatisation of the veterans' experiences returning to civilian life in the 1920s, trauma is faced and presented on screen in the majority of historical cases, by white, male, ex Army personnel who served in the First World War or, in rarer cases, wars that occurred during the 1920s such as the Irish War of Independence (1919–21) and the Rif War (1921–26). In addition, we see representations of veterans from previous wars, such as the Philippine-American

War (1899-1902).

Framing the Veteran

As situated by Slavoj Žižek, trauma is apt to break out, and affect human behaviour, through "an impulse from external reality, an accident that triggers it off" (1992: 189). The idea of a trigger is key to a modern conception of factors that bring submerged trauma to the surface. Veterans in the revival of the 1920s live constantly with the spectre of their wartime experiences, whereby different temporal layers coexist via, in this case, recent wartime memories. To this end, external actions on the part of themselves or other parties, as well as dreams and aural fantasies, have the potential to bring these characters back to face past battlefield horrors. Even the more "passive" veteran figures, those who refrain from violent and depressed physical behaviour, are classified for audiences as shouldering a status of at least partial "victimhood", due to descriptions in dialogue of their service (delivered either by the veterans themselves, or by those who interact with them) or techniques such as flashbacks. The use of flashbacks, and the occasional slipping of literal masks worn by selected traumatised veteran characters also mirror the idea that audiences read their own viewing present through the mask of the period drama.

Such trauma can be productively theorised borrowing Julia Kristeva's understanding of the "abject", a state of being that "beseeches, worries and fascinates desire." This state consists of being "opposed to *I*" (1982: 1) and corrals a primal, "obsessional, psychotic guise" (1982: 11) into a person's conscious/unconscious dichotomy. Kristeva's *I*, in this case, is the veteran or, more precisely, his irreconcilable wartime incarnation. Clearly, this pertains to the capability of veteran characters, or lack thereof, to control their demons and interact with society. However, feelings of abjection and trauma felt by these characters can also be kept at bay, or even transcended (at least for a time) through partial engagement with what we might call the "sublime", an aesthetic and experiential quality of greatness beyond the possibility of recording or indeed understanding. Despite itself, of necessity, bringing forth a confronting level of experience that ultimately threatens the subject, sublimity also eludes the indicator of trauma and abjection, in effect transcending such confronting experiences because it is so much larger. This results in the subject becoming characterised as what Kristeva calls a "secondary universe" (1982: 12). The futures for the onscreen veterans

discussed in this chapter may be bleak, and the effects of their wartime experiences ultimately irreversible. But they can enjoy victories large and small, personal and professional, that reconcile them both to their interior selves and to society.

It is important to state that not every popular cultural text returning to the 1920s features veterans. Even some that feature veteran characters do not treat their war service as a focal point. For example, in *Fantastic Beasts*, Jacob Kowalski reveals that he is a veteran of the First World War during his unsuccessful interview for a bank loan, and later on to Newt in explanation as to why he works in a job that affords him so little collateral (he served with the Army of Occupation until his discharge in 1924). However, as with Newt's later revelation to Jacob that the wizard was responsible for the welfare of dragons on the Eastern Front, this piece of exposition is only briefly spoken about. Kowalski's service as a "doughboy" (slang for a United States infantryman in the First World War [Mead 2000: 66-68])[18] was a contributing factor to his dreams being deferred, yet it can also be situated as a subliminal formative influence – Kowalski is an aspiring baker – through the linguistic idiom of "dough" (the first part of the slang descriptor) equating to pastry, which Kowalski may have experienced from military canteens on the Western Front. Newt and Kowalski's status as veterans serve as further common ground between the two, but this aspect of their pasts does not seem to have much overt impact on their personalities, or actions, as seen in the film.

Deployed as a metaphor, assigning the veteran an active role in the revival has a twofold purpose. Firstly, the sociocultural political tenor of the 1920s is an already multileveled era pointing towards out own. Secondly, the precedent of literary and cinematic veterans of the First World War, wounded mentally and physically and attempting to reintegrate into civilian society, is invoked here as the artistic component of this concept.

This chapter presents warfare as an especially literal and destructive subjugation of combatants and infrastructure as well as (to a degree) history, language, memories

[18] This informal term allegedly referred to either brass buttons on infantry uniforms that resembled dumplings during the nineteenth century or the dusty appearance unavoidable from marching through dry terrain or field rations that consisted of flour and rice concoctions baked in ashes during the Philippine-American War (Mead 2001: 67–8).

and traditions (2013: 37). The historical setting of the 1920s, by its very nature in the recreated world of the twenty first century canon of films and television programs, relegates the visual presence of the First World War to brief flashbacks in television programs such as *Boardwalk Empire* or *Peaky Blinders* or films such as *The Tender Hook*, although these scenes are important for their capacity to flesh out the psychologies and backstories of veteran characters on television (such as the simulation of Jimmy Darmody's life "flashing before his eyes" during his dying moments in *Boardwalk Empire*) or introduce and clarify the screenplay's secret, requiring a cover up, in cinema. The long-lasting impacts of warfare for veteran characters in the revival, both physical, mental and in terms of the death/change of future goals and ambitions, is, however, in evidence as a lingering form of combat as continued existence (with echoes down through the generations) in the revival. Physical disfigurement, requiring a mask and marked vocally through coarsening vocal timbres, relegates and stigmatises an ex sniper, Richard Harrow, in *Boardwalk Empire* as "not a whole person", who is fixated on media representations of idealised family life. Although his skill sets make him a perfect fit for illicit alcohol distribution (and its attendant violence) in Prohibition era Atlantic City, Harrow's violent vocation complicates his personal happiness, and results in his eventual death.

Respiratory ailments force a veteran of the AIF, Charlie, in *The Tender Hook* to live a reclusive, secluded life at home with his brother. His breathing difficulties, the result of chemical warfare, also immobilise him when his house is burnt down, causing his death. Other veteran characters in the revival are depicted as drug addicts (such as Tommy Shelby medicating with opium in *Peaky Blinders*, or Franz Krajewski injecting himself with heroin in *Babylon Berlin*), exiles from their homelands or regions in pursuit of hedonistic forgetting of their past (Major Whittaker in *Easy Virtue*) or are represented, like Harrow, as guns for hire, but with their mutilated appearances prioritised over fleshing out their character development (criminal foot soldiers in *Underbelly: Squizzy*). Even veteran characters who appear to have acquired the outward appearance of materialistic success, such as Jay Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio) in *The Great Gatsby*, are actually estranged from the attractive cult of celebrity and personality surrounding them. Gatsby is often absent from the lavish parties that he hosts for his leisure seeking peers, sequestering himself in his

mansion in pursuit of an ultimately doomed romance, witnessing his business acumen and quality of life deteriorate and, after his death and sparsely attended funeral, he is forgotten by a society that previously entertained various, and differing, recounts of Gatsby's origins, rise to affluence and the nature of his business affairs. These veteran characters may have survived the carnage of 1914–18, but their debilitating (to varying degrees) illnesses, both mental disorders and physical scars, result in partial or full erasure of their full potential and rehabilitation on the home front, including categorisation amongst the marginalised of the 1920s and becoming delayed fatalities of war.

The way in which military personnel serving in the 1920s are present but erased in these films and television programs demonstrates a form of lacuna. A perspective on the disconnection between the realities of the front line and military strategy and the perceptions of the importance of the military for civilians and politicians is provided by James Brown (2014) in the Australian context. Brown puts forward the case of Australia neglecting the welfare of its veterans and in so doing questions a twenty first century Western state's nostalgic commemoration of the First World War generation. He also provides the general literature on war veterans with the wider ramifications of the cycles of military history, staging commemoration that emphasises sacrificial nostalgia. Changes to the modernity project, such as the intersection of technology with social changes, in the early twentieth century, culminated in changed sensory perceptions on the Western Front. These were experienced by both combatants at the time and future generations of viewers engaging with recreations of the Western Front, and permitted techniques such as flashbacks in these films and television programs to take on the contours of dreams and memories. Paul Virilio (1989) famously theorised the relationship between the cinematic and war industries, as well as the impact of technology on the perspectives of combatants during warfare, pinpointing the self-perceptions and outlooks of veterans, alongside their relationship to society, in the 1920s.

Traumatic, Missing, and Radical Cases

Peaky Blinders foregrounds examples of how nightmares afflict veterans, and their coping mechanisms. It also reveals the historical, imperial project as not quite extinguished (in this instance, conflict in Syria and Ireland). Sublimity, as theorised

by Kristeva, and trauma, as theorised by Jacques Lacan and Lindsey Barlow, are experienced by two major characters in *Boardwalk*. These characters are both veterans of the First World War, yet the relationship to trauma varies over their character arcs, and is complicated by peacetime experiences.

Joanna Bourke (1996) investigates the ideology around the male physique and wartime camaraderie. Her thesis makes it possible to distinguish and differentiate *Boardwalk*'s male relationships from those of the other texts under discussion, reflecting a return to primal male-female relationships after the conflict's conclusion. In particular, affection is exhibited in the relationship between the aforementioned veterans in *Boardwalk*. In relation to politics, the character of Philippines veteran Paul Sagorsky (Mark Borkowski) in *Boardwalk*, as a case study, stresses the nineteenth century origins (present in the 1920s) of U.S. foreign policy and the consequences of instilling in people the skills for killing, as detailed in Anita Biressi's discussion of military violence directed against civilian populations (2001: 129).

Troubled veterans, returning from war and embarking on journeys both physical and of discovery, have a long and extensive history in the arts. James I. Deutsch (1997) traces a literary lineage back to Ancient Greece. 1920s veterans are able to utilise up-to-date and faster modes of technology for these journeys. The case study of *Easy Virtue* outlines the positive and glamorous aspects of the concept of "hyperstimulus", a sociological and nervous sensation made possible by industrialised modernity, and the potential of battlefield trauma to ease bonding over shared problems, as opposed to the English agrarian tradition. *Easy Virtue* privileges the lengthy periods of recuperation faced by veterans, as opposed to the short-term trauma endured by veterans in other British texts. A historical backdrop to the recurring dysfunctional veterans follows this case study with a discussion of the types of treatment available to veterans throughout the chosen films and television programs.

Melanie Oppenheimer, Marina Larsson and Jen Hawksley (2010, 2009 and 2010), Australian medical historians, focus on the hospitalisation, general welfare and care of Antipodean veterans, as well as the grief implicit in cases of missing and amnesiac veterans. The sense of "double victimhood", which hangs like an aura

around veterans who experience hardships in peacetime, is explored by Peter Stanley (2010), a revisionist historian of Australian military experience in both world wars, whose scholarship often coaxes out the truth of the complex behaviour of "larrikin" service personnel from an Anglo-Celtic, imperial society while experiencing alternate cultures, as well as questioning the sacrosanct nature of ANZAC commemoration (2010: 10-11). This questioning permeates the case study of *Squizzy* by interrogating the sensationalism of graphic wounds suffered by veterans in a visual medium and, in microcosm, the divide between veterans and non-veterans in the Australian First World War context. The links between war and sporting prowess, and the concept of celebrity, are featured in the case study of *Leatherheads*.

In programs such as *Boardwalk*, historical and political context imbues the back stories of veteran characters through dialogue, the site of exposition and character development, and visual techniques such as flashbacks. The case in point of a labourer's brief presence in the third season of *Blinders* symbolises the lacuna that is otherwise the status of non-European veterans in the revival, despite the increased availability of archival footage for contextual purposes. As scholars such as Santanu Das have highlighted, the truly global nature of the First World War necessitated mass migrations of service personnel and non-combatants across nations and continents, exposing millions of colonial, non-Caucasian subjects to the "heart of whiteness" (2012: 4). However, despite a renewed scholarly endeavour in the twenty first century to document the colonial and racial dimensions of the conflict of 1914-1918, the popular cultural representation of the experiences of First World War veterans in the 1920s overwhelmingly prioritises Caucasian representatives.

Finally, the present study of the radical veteran in such case studies as *Miss Fisher's* is indebted to Alistair Thomson. His oral history analysis of the popular (self) image of the "digger", and the activities of the "radical digger" (1995), interrogates the often fraught integration of demobilised ANZACs back into society and their relationships towards welfare organisations and groups such as the RSL. Consequently, as the two radical veterans in *Miss Fisher's* demonstrate, the reconciliation of veterans with a civilian romanticised conception of patriotic wartime heroism is not always seamless. This fraught relationship to mainstream society is also apparent in a telling scene involving Paul Sagorsky in *Boardwalk*, thereby establishing a social pattern apparent in multiple national postwar

experiences. Indeed, the emotions and misunderstandings displayed in this scene stand as a symbolic microcosm of the divide between veterans and civilians in the protean decade.

A Dream State?

The welfare of soldiers in combat, and the status of veterans once they attempt to reassimilate into civilian life, remains an ongoing issue. Its scope has widened alongside technological change and expanded battle terrain. Alongside the military's position in twenty first century world affairs are worldwide commemorations of the centenary of the First World War, which started in 2014 and continued through 2018 at great government, taxpayer and endowed cost (Brown 2014: 20). These commemorations intermingle the historical project of an empire eroding international conflagration (where modernity and a retreat away from modernity's tenets coexisted) with new millennial major party politics. Australia's national budget for its commemoration of the centenary of ANZAC, to mention one example, is set to dwarf the budgets of all other participating countries. This is one of Brown's key criticisms, due to, in his view, a currently underfunded Australian military disproportionately prioritising the past over future goals for the military (2014: 20-1), such as more expenditure on the rehabilitation of veterans who have served in contemporary wars, and strengthened geopolitical security.

Brown acknowledges the invisibility, for the majority of the nation state with no direct ties to the military, of serving personnel. "Outside of Anzac Day" – April 25th (originally serving to commemorate the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War in 1915, this date is now a public holiday celebrating Australian service in all wars) – Brown writes,

> few Australians see the military. There are few documentaries on modern military life, few military characters in our favourite television shows. Military bases are shifting away from urban centres and our warriors lead relatively cloistered lives. There are no soldiers toting semi-automatic weapons at our airports and rarely do we see armoured vehicles in formation. […] It's stretching a little – but only a little – to suggest that most Australians would not have witnessed a soldier performing anything other than ceremonial duties (2014: 72-3).

The 1920s revival also excludes the experience of peacetime military personnel,

between the world wars, in the form of significant plot points and character arcs. The 1920s were by no means devoid of armed conflict. Nevertheless, the focus on veterans in the revival is primarily centered on veterans of the First World War. This ellipsis is remedied, to a limited degree, by scenes of ceremonial remembrance featuring peacetime personnel in *Boardwalk* and *Downton*. However, scenes in the second season of *Boardwalk* and the fifth season of *Downton*, although featuring servicemen in uniform for commemorative purposes, are populated mainly by demobilised service personnel from the First World War and earlier conflicts. Although peacetime military personnel feature in selected episodes in *Boardwalk*, *Miss Fisher's*, and the film *Leatherheads*, their presence serves the dictates of the main scenario, and the focus of storylines is never on the peacetime armed forces per se.

The First World War was fought in the context of an early twentieth century. Modernity had several concrete consequences in the context of the First World War. Bureaucracies were restructured to recruit, train, clothe and deploy millions of troops. Amongst these millions of troops, conspicuous by their absence in the revival, were colonial, non-European combatants and labourers. The productivity of the military-industrial technological sector was improved to increase the output of constructed weapons, alongside governmental contracts disseminated to improve strategic advantage and front line martial prowess for combatant nations.

The First World War, as the largest war in history to date, marked a turning point in the "speed" of the historical killing project. As Virilio argues, the simultaneous changes of direction in weaponry and cinematic technology towards perception and destruction, containing the same boundaries in space, time and meaning, resulted in an interpretive understanding of combat as battle/s shaped as scenario/s. Battlefield tactics, as a result, were theorised as "special effects" (1989: 48). These "special effects" involved, in the long-term situation of documented warfare being witnessed by the home front: "a whole mass of spectator-survivors who are the surviving spectators of combat" (Virilio 1989: 66). On the ground in France and Belgium, on the other hand, the quotidian realities of trench warfare played havoc with notions of "concrete time", confining combatants to a dirty, muddy, insanitary and primeval environment that, along with the often static nature of No Man's Land, took participants back in time to a makeshift society recalling the Middle Ages.

Trauma is in evidence in flashback scenes present in selected texts analysed in this thesis, yet these flashback scenes tend to be brief. An exception can be found in the *Miss Fisher's* episode, "Death Comes Knocking" (S2E2, 2013). Whether stressing comic stylisation and uncertainty over the true identity of a "war hero", as befits the romantic comedy conventions of the flashbacks in *Leatherheads*, or the paranoid, existential, primal combat in subterranean trench darkness that haunts ex-sapper Tommy Shelby in *Blinders*, flashbacks experienced by characters in the worlds of these texts correspond to the "flashback" of memory of past, experienced events. As audiosensory experiences that stamp the imprint of murderous capacities onto veterans' biological/psychological processes, flashbacks further take the present-day viewer "there and back" as a complicated continuation of the vicarious nature of viewers witnessing long-past (if "constructed") experiences.

The rift between the observation of surroundings and technology and the sights and sounds of military activity on the Western Front in Europe complicated the journey of veterans to war and back and fleshes out the importance of the veteran as a symbolic entrance point for a contemporary audience into the 1920s revival.

Peaky Blinders

In *Blinders*' pilot episode, a member of the "Peaky Blinders" gang, Danny, also a Western Front veteran, has a nervous breakdown in the gang's headquarters. Tommy comforts him with the assurance that the veteran (specifically Danny, but his comforting words could apply to veterans generally, including Tommy himself) has not been dehumanised into an artillery shell (or "whizz-bang", British slang during the First World War [Graves 1960: 87], and Danny's nickname), but is indeed a man, home in England. The gangster rests his hand on Danny's shoulder, cradles the neck of his comrade's head and connects his forehead to Danny's forehead. These actions bring him back to sanity (Danny cannot remember his violent episode). This scene exhibits therapy mandated by disturbance, where an immediate "snapping out" from psychosis is required, as opposed to alternative male companionship.

In the first season of *Blinders*, set in 1919, the relevance to twenty first century geopolitics is especially manifest. The primary complication that the titular gang has to contend with in this season is the appropriation of a consignment of machine guns

bound for Libya. This was originally a drunken accident on the part of several gang members, yet Tommy perceives that the British government will pay a large sum for their retrieval. At this point in history, Libya was Italian territory, as a result of the Italian victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912). The purloined guns in the television program, conceivably bound for military policing and the subjugation of nationalist and tribal squabbles (an uprising that lasted for twenty years), attract the attention of Winston Churchill. Churchill, Secretary of State for War and Secretary of State for Air in 1919, favoured stability and maintaining the status quo in the Middle East. Churchill's colonial mentality manifested itself in his uneasiness over the Irish War of Independence and the Bolshevist movement throughout Europe.

The fictionalised Churchill in *Blinders*, paranoid over the potential powder keg of socialists and Irish nationalists (including IRA members who are interested in taking possession of the arms themselves) in Birmingham, commissions Chief Inspector Chester Campbell, a Protestant detective in the Belfast Royal Irish Constabulary (as representatives of the United Kingdom in Ireland, the Constabulary upheld Unionist values [Ellison and Smyth 2000: 18]), to target agitation through his police forces. Medium shots and closeups of police raids on the homes of suspected dissidents during grimy daytime are shot with a hand-held camera, giving the images of police officers restraining and assaulting resisting "troublemakers" the immediacy of a television news report. During nighttime interrogation scenes in subterranean views and in back alleys, on the other hand, shadows that silhouette medium shots of the backs of constrained suspects alternate with closeups of the terrified but defiant faces of those accused. These faces are bruised, and blood flows across cheeks. One prisoner, a Communist go between for the Soviet government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), is kept overnight in a secluded room and dies of a seizure after being beaten (S1E4, 2013). The camera reveals a long shot of the corpse hanging in a doorway, his arms wrenched towards the ceilings with rope in a position reminiscent of a crucifixion – the symbolism here is of anti-Communism with overtones of sectarian war and outraged personal morality on the part of Chief Inspector Campbell. Tracking shots follow, consisting of extreme close-ups of deep, red crisscrossed lacerations and streams of blood located all over the deceased's flesh.

Such imagery and torture are, once again, suffused with a contemporary sensibility of extralegal punishment of those desiring societal change from a government desiring "law and order." Especially important is the long-running conflict between the IRA and the British government, known as "The Troubles." In this way, *Blinders* dramatises the beginnings of this period of Anglo-Irish relations. Official corruption through "cover ups" ends the scene on a disturbing note, with the Chief Inspector instructing his reluctant sergeant to stage the death as a suicide. As dramatised, these tactics provoke powerful questions about the consequences of decisions made by those in power, and the hidden, violent side of nation state security during times of war.

The veteran is a restless figure. Wandering, or going on a journey, is a less repetitive trait in the 1920s revival addressed here than, say, mental anguish, but this trope reconnects the veteran with the issue of welfare, even if such welfare is only the veteran's self preservation. These rootless aspects of veterans' natures, put into action through journeys, call to mind earlier sagas and stories that have been part of a rich heritage of literature and, later, cinema.

James I. Deutsch has traced examples of disaffected veterans in the ancient Greek and Roman literary canons, various books in the Christian Bible and medieval romances dealing with King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, engaged, famously, in a quest (1997: 225-26). As far back as the eighth century BCE, Homer's *The Odyssey* – the source of the word meaning an epic voyage – chronicled the decade long journey back to Ithaca undertaken by Odysseus and his followers, in order for Odysseus to regain his throne after their exploits during the Trojan War. Deutsch sees the veteran as

> a universal character found in many of the most important cultural artefacts produced by a variety of civilisations from around the globe […] the problem of the veteran's return to peacetime society after battle is a topic that has long concerned the creators and shapers of dramatic narrative (1997: 226).

Veterans in the revival display similar patterns over two decades later (in relation to production and release dates) of proactively either making a new life elsewhere (James "Jimmy" Darmody and Richard Harrow crossing the United States via train in *Boardwalk*) or fleeing war induced depression (Major Whittaker in *Easy Virtue*, who

ends up in a French brothel). Although the immigrant veteran of early twentieth century warfare is, surprisingly, a figure that is hardly present in the twenty first century revival of the 1920s in the United States context, a major exception is Owen Sleater. He is a veteran of the IRA in the second and third seasons of *Boardwalk*. Although his martial skills in Ireland are never depicted, he does demonstrate bomb construction in the second season. Later, in "Blue Bell Boy" (S3E4, 2012), Owen recalls his past experiences on patrol to Nucky whilst they hide in the basement of a young liquor thief. The fact that this conversation occurs while rival gangsters search the property looking for the two men underscores the unavoidable element of warfare inherent in Prohibition.

Restless wandering provides a mode (of both transport and focal point) for another recurring relationship between modernity and the veteran on the home front. This relationship is the intersection between the motor car and the veteran. Veterans of the First World War, on all fronts, would have had ample opportunity to witness motorised ambulances carrying wounded combatants to field hospitals and couriers on motorcycles ferrying messages. After veterans were demobilised, they were witnesses to a sharp increase in private car ownership (especially in the United States). This widespread change in social mobility amongst populations had a profound impact on personal conceptions of senses, and encouraged, in an era famed for fads and crazes, a new addition to the repertoire of sports. This was motor speed racing. Although the influence of modernity on the combat veteran on the Western Front could be bewildering and frightening, other aspects of modernity could be more attractive. Veteran characters, set in patterns of personal behaviour/circumstances or business, are often shown engaging in reckless driving or uncontrolled speeding.

Automobiles, with their material composition and potential to cause destruction and death if not handled properly, were a major component of the sociological diagnosis of hyperstimulus. These vehicles demonstrated a progression, in the twentieth century, from the uncontrolled power of the locomotive, often hurtling out of control and crashing in a paroxysm of modernity, described by Emile Zola, and other realist writers, in the nineteenth century. The theory of hyperstimulus was first advanced by a New York social reformer named Michael Davis in 1910 (Singer 1995: 75), but its theoretical genealogy extended back to German sociologist Georg Simmel's 1903

essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (2002: 11-19), a text that conceived of modernity as an "intensification of nervous stimulation" (Singer 1995: 73).

Easy Virtue

The legendary "Pal's Battalions" were specially recruited battalions of the British Army staffed with personnel who had joined up together during local enlistment drives (Beckett 1988: 104). They are recalled by Major Jim Whittaker in *Easy Virtue*. They encouraged community solidarity, but also ran the risk of battalion parochialism, homogeneity in inter-unit relationships and disillusionment over separation from friends due to army requirements (Bourke 1996: 131 & 150-1). These military units also ratcheted up the chances for high, *localised* casualties (towns and villages suffering proportionately high losses amongst their adult male population) during major offensives on the Western Front.

Easy Virtue is an anomaly amongst the British cultural productions analysed in this chapter in devoting screentime to the pain felt by veterans in the late 1920s. A solid historical setting is never given for *Easy Virtue*. In its vague, "time out of time" period, a shot of a newspaper dated 1930 inconsistently meshes with scenes foregrounding cultural items, such as the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), as new and postal messengers (agents, such as the medieval heralds in Shakespearean drama, bringing news from the outside world) informing the Whittakers of events such as the death of Rudolph Valentino (which occurred in 1926). Major Jim's references to the amount of time that has elapsed since his war service, however, permit a rough estimate of the late 1920s, possibly 1928 (the year of Alfred Hitchcock's silent film production of *Easy Virtue*) as the setting of Stephan Elliott's 2008 adaptation. This is significant, as other British productions featuring veterans from the First World War, such as *Downton*, *Blinders* and *Mr Selfridge* (ITV Studios/Masterpiece, 2013–2016) prioritise the short-term suffering, and healing, undergone by veterans between 1919 and 1922. Veteran characters do not disappear as these series forge on into the middle and late 1920s (for *Downton* and *Mr Selfridge*), but they are presented as well adjusted and seemingly "cured" of their trauma by the passage of time. This ignores the long road to recovery faced by many veterans concerning self-esteem, health and employment prospects throughout the 1920s and into the Depression years, including the higher prevalence of pensions

granted in Britain for "shell shock", or what would by the post Vietnam War era be classified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the late 1920s than during the period up to 1922 (Bourke 1996: 109 & 122), and, relevant for Britain's allies during the First World War, escalating rates of hospitalisation, disability claims and deaths attributable to service amongst Australian (Larsson 2009: 209–11 & 222) and U.S. veterans (Mead 2000: 353-54). Although the 1920s was largely shaped by the consequences of the First World War, it is significant that the complicated arcs of fictionalised veterans in the British popular cultural imagination are not sustained in the same fashion as are other societal changes.

Major Jim, in reminiscing about his wartime regrets, references the lack of military age men in his local village to his daughter in law, Larita, a glamorous widow and racing car driver. Her marriage into a family of English gentleman farmers is fraught with tension, due to her brashness, hatred of English manorial traditions, such as hunting, and passion for daring works of modernist literature, all of which collide with the cultural assumptions and snobbery of her new family, the Whittakers. Amongst her few allies is Major Jim. His passion for technology, represented by his constant tinkering with a motorcycle in his workshop, matches her love for the speed and freedom epitomised by the automobile. When Larita has to respond to newspaper clippings revealing that she euthanised with poison her much older first husband, who was stricken with cancer, Major Jim recognises that she is even more of a kindred spirit than was previously assumed. Major Jim may have been born into the routines and rituals of the manor, as opposed to Larita's marrying into the system, yet his lust for life, the horrors of the trenches eroding his complacency towards bourgeois and agrarian values, and his extended enforced exile in France and Italy have made him just as much of an outsider. Losing none of its controversy ninety years later, euthanasia periodically enters the news and public discourse, one example being Dr David Goodall, a British-Australian botanist and ecologist, and voluntary euthanasia advocate, who ended his own life via physician assisted suicide in Switzerland on May 10th 2018 (Bourke and Noyes 2018). These voluntary acts of resistance to decreased qualities of life underline the parallel to, and allegory of, the present offered by a film such as *Easy Virtue*.

Major Jim, as well as recognising her decency as a human being, may also remember similar experiences of having to put mortally wounded comrades out of their misery

during battle. In war, the necessity of having to make such a humanitarian gesture towards grievously injured fellow soldiers, whether fighting on the same or opposing side, was regarded as both a necessary evil and proof of a combatant's innate humanity. At the conclusion of *Easy Virtue*, having been freed from the confines of her marriage by her newly understanding husband, Larita and Major Jim speed away from the family property together. This conclusion frames modernity as a surging out of the present into the future. Major Jim has experienced his sublime moment in his mutual love, with Larita, of technology, such as her automobile. Their taking leave of the Whittaker property, symbolic of an earlier age and stable traditions abhorrent to the veteran, marks the start of a new journey with the potential for long-term recuperation and maximising life's possibilities, unlike the short- term balm of Major Jim's sojourn in France.

Progressive sympathies and mutual fascination may prove to be bonds for Larita and Major Jim, but there is a more sinister and destructive manifestation of mechanical modernity's appeal. This is the concept of hyperstimulus, which describes the intensification of sensations and sense perceptions of everyday acts in an urban environment (Singer 1995: 74-75). For example, the ability, need and desire to transport oneself from one place to another, for purposes of work or leisure, is sped up. As a consequence, the "thrill" quotient, a physical and internal manifestation of the pleasure felt by the drivers of automobiles towards both the pleasure of driving and accomplishing tasks reliant upon the successful act of driving, is increased, even maximised. For criminals of the 1920s, acting as agents in an increasingly technologised underworld *milieu*, their mode of transport permitted a new and improved *modus operandi*. Motorised crime could be accomplished over greater distances, and perpetrators could hasten their disappearance from the scene of the crime. Along with the "tommy gun", the "getaway" car solidified a place in the iconography of the era's urban gangland. Just as the tank brought a new tactical advantage to battlefield tactics on the Western Front (despite the lumbering movement and frequent breakdowns of the invention's prototype), the combination of high intensity gunfire and automotive transport brought the ambience of military campaigns to the gang rivalry played out in city streets – a change noticed by journalists of the era. In such television programs as *Boardwalk* and *Squizzy*, the responsibilities of gang members involved in heists, transportation of products and

"drive by" shootings, breaks down manpower requirements into the smaller units of combat. The "squads" of armed men in cars, aiming to penetrate enemy territory, carry out their objective (or "mission") and return to base, may be removed from the *milieu* of mud, barbed wire and squalor of 1914–1918, yet they comport themselves with the discipline of a squad of military personnel regardless. It is notable in this context that the U.S. underworld hierarchy (urban centers like New York City and Chicago, represented in *Boardwalk*) denoted operatives in the chain of command by military rank, such as "lieutenant."

These disparate audiovisual texts dealing with the returned veteran, alongside literary forebears, although separated by millennia of compositional and production history and historical context, point to a common truism: the struggles faced by veterans of war do not end after the fighting has ceased, and discomfort (even violence) often marks their readjustment into society. Repatriation, as scholars such as Melanie Oppenheimer, Marina Larsson and Jen Hawksley have argued in the context of Australian war service, took many forms. Convalescent hospitals and institutions in Australia, often with the patronage of organisations such as the Red Cross, handled cases of veterans with amputations and shellshock (Oppenheimer 2010: 19-20 & 21). For the majority of repatriated soldiers, however, their recovery was in the domestic sphere, through care and the hands of family (Larsson 2010: 40). In the British context, aristocratic families often gave up the privacy inherent in their manors for the war effort, providing extra hospital beds and nursing opportunities for titled women, although often with a class bias towards officers (Carnarvon 2011: 1-5). Reunions were often followed by an alternate option available for veterans' welfare, that of family caregiving, which was how the majority of ANZAC veterans were cared for post demobilisation (Larsson 2010: 40). As a result, family breakdown and dysfunction, due to alteration in veterans' behaviour and mobility, were commonplace (Larsson 2010: 46-54).

Malaise felt by veterans returning to previous patterns of civilian behaviour has a strong precedent in the literature of the interwar years. The fiction produced by "Lost Generation" writers, such as John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, foregrounded the topics of the futility of war: unsuccessful attempts by veterans to settle back into civilian life, imprisonment, suicide, alcoholism, bankruptcy, apathy, sexual impotence, physical and psychological

injuries, poverty and insanity (Deutsch 1997: 227-30). As Larsson has shown, in the Australian postwar context, domestic violence and erratic behavior often marked relationships between veterans and their kin during the interwar years (2010: 50 & 54). In a wider historical framework, violence directed against wives by husbands was widespread across Australian and British culture (Bourke 1994: 74–81; Larsson 2009: 140), and remained unchallenged by both government departments (Larsson 2009: 142) and local custom (Bourke 1994: 74, 78 & 81). However, repressed aggression on the part of veterans was direly predicted by some commentators to increase the likelihood of interfamily assault, including death, as punishment for refusal to acquiesce to demands (Bourke 2014: 42–43).

The isolation of the Australian veteran in a domestic setting is palpably encapsulated by a scene in *Tender Hook*, in which two of the main protagonists, Art, a boxer, and his lover, Iris, flee the henchmen serving Sydney gangster McHeath, Iris' possessive boyfriend. They hide out at Art's brother, Charlie's, house. As previously mentioned, Charlie is a veteran of the Western Front, who is not only housebound and unemployed, but apparently left for long periods of time on his own despite his respiratory system being affected by chemical warfare. During the course of *Tender Hook*, Art conceals Charlie's medal in a glove in order to gain unfair advantage in a boxing match. This is a metaphor for how the unethical, even criminal, ambitions of certain postwar Australians are aided by the experiences and legacy of Australian service in the First World War, even a decade after the war's conclusion (the film is set in 1928).

Cynical 1920s literature reflected this disillusioned popular mood in the United States in the interwar years that "spread like a poison gas, to every part of the social body" (Wynn 1986: xv). The mood of these novels and short stories differed markedly from Hollywood cinematic trends of overcoming adversity for a happy ending, including especially egregious examples of rapid, conclusive healing of disabilities (Deutsch 1997: 232). This attitude has been resurrected by twenty first century depictions of the coping mechanisms of veterans of the First World War. Their rehabilitation is a slow, gradual, painful process, which often fails. Although the tone is similar to these works of 1920s fiction, contemporary returns to the postwar years arguably add a further layer of grit and realism. A text like *Johnny Got His Gun* (published as a novel in 1939, with a film adaptation being released in 1971) features a protagonist

deprived of arms, legs, ears, nose, eyes and face due to a shell explosion on the last day of the First World War, who is nevertheless sentient and able to communicate with the world through banging his head against surfaces to produce messages in Morse Code. However, while author (and director of the film) Dalton Trumbo's descriptive prose outlines the jarring shock of veteran Joe Bonham's changed appearance, his wounds are never actually revealed to the audience. In the 1971 film adaptation, white blankets swaddle Bonham, while his head is obscured by bandages and a white box also covered in white linen. In comparison, the horrific damage rendered on the faces of veterans in *Boardwalk* and *Squizzy* is presented to the audience without censorship or distancing. In the case of Richard in *Boardwalk*, the mask that covers his mutilated face is literally allowed to slip (while he dreams) in the episode "The Emerald City" (S1E10, 2010), while in "Gimcrack[19] and Bunkum[20]" (S2E5, 2011) Richard deliberately removes his mask while contemplating suicide in woodland territory. The trauma in prose has been echoed, with appropriate images to match.

Boardwalk Empire

The appearances of U.S. infantry guarding the Atlantic City Armoury in "Two Boats and a Lifeguard" (set in 1921), under the pretence of a legitimate business meeting, and Nucky Thompson, one of the participants, bribing a guardsman to lie to federal agents, highlight a shadow U.S. economy. The secret meeting of Nucky and mobsters Johnny Torrio and Arnold Rothstein to discuss business and rivals in the liquor trade, plants the seed for Nucky's idea of an incursion into the Irish whisky trade and demonstrates practical hoodwinking of a U.S. military force, acting in the interests of a government impotent in the face of Prohibition (U.S. legislation). While the United States Army was not tasked with enforcing Prohibition, in the

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[19] Showy but cheap or badly made. From the Middle English *gibecrake*. Originally a noun, the term denoted some kind of inlaid work in wood, later a fanciful notion or mechanical contrivance, hence a knick-knack.

[20] An informal dated noun meaning nonsense. Originally buncombe, and named after Buncombe County in North Carolina, USA, which was mentioned in an inconsequential speech made by its congressman solely to please his constituents around 1820 (North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resource, n.d).

absence of an overpowering enemy or "noble cause" to fight, the armed forces in microcosm in Atlantic City appear to be predicated on the need for garrison duties. Nucky's jest about the sheer volume of Thompson submachine guns being in case of an attack on the Armoury and their status as surplus from the First World War signify a vacuum in *realpolitik* that will be filled by Nucky's later contribution of machine guns to the Irish War of Independence. The guardsman's taunting of Kessler, Nucky's German valet – "I guess your Kaiser chickened out" – explicitly foregrounds, in dialogue, an arrogant U.S. international policy that is limited by stealthy criminal tactics and isolationism. The soldier's boasting is nostalgic, for it is an opinion concerning past glories that did not keep pace with increasing reduction of U.S. armed forces personnel until the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

With the exception of around half of the episode "Under God's Power She Flourishes" (S2E11, 2011), and immediately after the climax of the same season's finale "To The Lost" (S2E12, 2011), there are no flashbacks in any *Boardwalk* episodes that are set in the 1920s. There is the exception, though, of the aural flashback in "Broadway Limited" (S1E3, 2010). An internally diegetic remembrance haunts a dozing Jimmy, an ex infantryman, while he travels to Chicago on a train. The sounds of a wounded German soldier crying out for his mother are shown to be prompted, ironically, by the conversation of a Pennsylvania Dutch mother and child seated nearby. The strain on Jimmy's face can be easily interpreted and the soldier's screams and the noise of battle preempts, fleshes out and adds poignancy to an anecdote Jimmy relates in a Chicago café later on in the season. One form of the senses, the internal dimension of mental recollection connected to the "triggers" of sound, brings to mind Abel Gance's definition of the cinema, with the medium's resemblance to the "war machine." According to Virilio in *War and Cinema*, Gance defines the resemblance as "Magical, spell-binding, capable of giving to the audience, in every fraction of a second, that strange sensation of four-dimensional omnipresence cancelling time and space" (1989: 26). There is no indication in *Boardwalk* that Jimmy is always in the grip of being mentally elsewhere, such as the Western Front (although individual instances of reverie may be lengthy). The positive connotations of "magical" and "spell-binding" – happy, consensual entertainment – are not implied here. Rather, the descriptions, in the context of this scene, have sinister overtones, and appear to be a critique of the military-industrial

reality faced by Jimmy in 1918. The war, though finished, is not segregated to a tactile, *past* experience, but invades and overtakes the boundaries of Jimmy's "in the world" mental processes, "cancelling time and space" due to its porous qualities that easily allow for recall and memory. Even if not physically present, the traumatic experience still leaves behind a trace, or an aura.

The journeys undertaken, both internally and externally, by such characters as Jimmy Darmody and ex sniper Richard in *Boardwalk* exemplify the still troubling issue of the validity of war and the adjustment of veterans to the home front. This issue also inflects the personal history and war service of characters such as the minor role of Philippines war veteran Paul Sagorsky. Such characters' war service, therefore, corresponds to ongoing social debate (in the press and through public forums, even if not acknowledged by government) about U.S. foreign policy and whether it is imperialistic. Sagorsky, as a character representative of U.S. foreign policy in the Pacific during the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, is situated in a historical period of supposed United States isolationism on the world stage. This was the early 1920s, after Warren G. Harding, U.S. President from 1921 to 1923, declared a "Return to Normalcy", also the title of the final episode of *Boardwalk*'s first season (Morello 2001: 6; Gerstle 2002: 190).

Jimmy Darmody attended Princeton for two years, an abridged college education mentioned in the first season. The conclusion of Jimmy's tertiary education is staged through flashbacks in the episode "Under God's Power She Flourishes." Jimmy dropped out of Princeton before graduation due to committing incest with his mother, Gillian, and assaulting his English professor who had designs on her. Prior to this, Jimmy had displayed a strong cynicism about patriotism (symbolised by the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] program on campus) and the increasing belligerency in the United States after the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915. The loss of a classmate's cousin in the disaster is later co-opted by Jimmy at the recruitment office as his rationale for enlisting. Despite the urgings from his partner (and later wife), Angela, in the pilot episode, Jimmy never resumes his studies.

Although he experienced the horrors of trench warfare first hand, Jimmy is scarred to a greater degree by his incestuous experience with his mother. Indeed, his trauma presents as a case, Lindsey Barlow argues, following Jacques Lacan, of desire as "a

sensed loss of something that one must try with all her might to return to" but to which "there is no possibility of actually returning" (2013: 51). As Barlow further points out, the initial high of this significant instance of incestuous trauma cannot be surpassed by war trauma:

> Just like with the enigmatic object *a* of desire – the first experience that causes the paling of all experiences thereafter – even if Jimmy's experiences in the war were far worse than incest with his mother, he will always experience them as pale in comparison. (2013: 51)

In the wake of Jimmy's oedipal killing of his father at the conclusion of "Under God's Power She Flourishes", it is perhaps inevitable that, out of several choices (returning to sexual intercourse with his mother, guilt ridden power or suicide) he chooses to commit suicide in the following episode, "To The Lost", by refusing to bring any firearms to his confrontation with Nucky. This is a successful act of severing oneself from trauma, an asserting self-authorship (or control of one's destiny). It is the most extreme form of an everyday act whose change, in the short or long term, alters the participant into a new subject (Žižek 1992: 93).

Jimmy's flashback, his final dream, or fantasy, before he dies, however, is not of his relationship with his mother. It is, instead, a medium shot of himself and fellow U.S. soldiers going over the top of a trench, with the sounds of battle (explosives and barked orders) heard on the soundtrack. The camera pans gradually to the left before tracking upwards into the sky, the image fading into a blinding white light. This suggestion of a fading and eventual cessation of consciousness presents for the audience, albeit briefly, a frightening and bustling scene of warfare. Returning through the mind's eye of Jimmy to his war service contradicts Barlow (2013: 42), who states that the First World War is excised from *Boardwalk* and is only present through Richard's tin mask, although it is the case that his physical disfigurement does symbolise the repetition, like an echo, of the conflict's visual representation (Randell 2003: 221). Jimmy's memory is nostalgic, but it is nostalgic in the literal ancient Greek meaning of the word, "the pain from an old wound" (Toles 2013: 170). Despite the paramount contour of Jimmy's sexual intercourse with his mother as a disturbing imprint on his experience of life, the suggestion in this flashback in "To The Lost" is that Jimmy's war service, to which he is reconciled at death, was still a milestone in his character development. The troubled soldier is now at peace.

Neither Jimmy Darmody nor Richard Harrow exhibit overt signs of hysteria in *Boardwalk*. Yet, both are depicted as exceedingly scarred by battle experiences. In Richard's case, this means physically, as half of his face, mutilated in battle, must be covered in public by a partial mask designed to approximate his pre-service features. Although Jimmy appears calm and "normal" externally, he is ill at ease in civilian life owing to the disconnection between his wartime experiences and the assumptions, on the part of those who did not experience wartime service, about the ease for ex service personnel of returning to prewar rituals of war. This encourages a higher likelihood of disillusionment with society and conservative values. One such civilian individual is Nucky, who has a relationship with Jimmy that encompasses guardianship over Jimmy's welfare. This state of affairs clashes with Jimmy's wanderlust and instability as a veteran, and this understanding layers two scenes that bookend Jimmy's character arc over the course of the program's first two seasons.

In the pilot episode, "Boardwalk Empire" (S1E1, 2010), Jimmy objects to what he feels are Nucky's restrictive peacetime employment plans for the veteran. Jimmy reminds Nucky that any trace of callow naiveté has been eroded by his baptism of martial fire: "I've seen things, I've done things", he informs him. Nucky, whose flippantly cynical attitude towards patriotism is encapsulated by his opinion that only "fuckin' rubes[21]" go off to die for their country, sarcastically retorts: "Well, how are we gonna keep you down on the farm?" This line of dialogue references a popular song from 1919, "How Ya Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Paree?)", whose lyrics highlighted concern that U.S. soldiers from rural backgrounds would not want to return to their previous mode of existence after experiencing European sophistication. It also acknowledges a seismic shift in U.S. demographics: conscription relocated numerous young men to different cultural contexts, and the 1920 census, just a year after the song's publication, registered the highest proportion of urban dwellers in the nation's history up to that date (Glaab 1968: 399).

Nucky's response restricts his conception of the changes wrought in his protégé to

[21] U.S slang for country bumpkins, or unsophisticated rural inhabitants. Originating in the late nineteenth century as an abbreviation of the name Reuben, commonly associated with agrarian areas (Allen 1995: 245).

youthful hedonism, and does not take into account the wider implications (the intersection between capitalism and criminality) inherent in Jimmy's words later in the episode: "You can't be half a gangster, Nuck. Not anymore." Jimmy eventually becomes a successful rival gangster to Nucky, before the latter kills him in "To The Lost." At the end of this episode, during the morning after the murder, Nucky tries to evade any suspicions that his wife may have over his temporary absence from home and Jimmy's permanent absence: "It turns out he's re-enlisting. Already left, actually." The tendency for ex service personnel to have "itchy feet"[22] is apparently so noteworthy that it can furnish an excuse for Nucky's foul play.

As for Richard, while we are not granted an equivalent moment in the series, he is taunted in "The Emerald City" by a dream in which, complete with face unmarred by war, he approaches a woman on a beach, before the woman shrieks at his real-world visage. The shriek is prompted, in reality, by a young girl's shrieking at the literal "slipping" of Richard's mask. The shock (of modernity) for the audience is filtered through the extensive use of flashback or, in this instance, fantasy. If audiences step outside and see the present in these terms, they too may scream just like the little girl.

In the meantime, as if to cope with his disheartening experiences while conscious, much of Richard's spare time is spent pasting images of ideal bourgeois families into his scrapbook. These pursuits mark the return of the ironic fantasy element of mass advertising: like fantasy, mass advertising provides only temporary relief from the pressures of Richard's existence. In the episode "Gimcrack & Bunkum", Richard attempts suicide, his alienation from the official Memorial Day ceremony in Atlantic City having driven him into the wilderness. Noticeably, both Jimmy and Richard embark on journeys, fleeing Atlantic City for various reasons. Jimmy exiles himself to Chicago for much of the first season, after incurring Nucky's displeasure, to take advantage of business opportunities encouraged by Al Capone, until the threat from a rival criminal outfit prompts Nucky to recall his former protégé. In "Margate Sands" (S3E12, 2012), Richard departs Atlantic City out of shame for revealing his warrior

[22] An idiom meaning to have a restless urge to travel, be elsewhere and/or do something different.

nature – encapsulated in the blood on his face – to girlfriend Julia Sagorsky after rescuing Tommy from a bloody shoot out at Gillian's brothel. *Boardwalk*'s fourth season, prior to "Acres Of Diamonds" (S4E3, 2013), sees Richard reuniting with his sister in Wisconsin, before disillusionment with being a civilian mercenary comes to a breaking point, necessitating his "call[ing himself] to account" back in Atlantic City. The tendency of veterans both to align themselves with criminal behaviour and experience misfortune also affects Richard. In "Farewell Daddy Blues" (S4E12, 2013), he is caught in the crossfire of an unsuccessful assassination attempt, and his wounds prove fatal under the boardwalk of the program's title.

Through all of these displays of his military prowess, however, he possesses admirable traits, especially in his attitudes towards women and children. This chivalric nature may align him firmly with traditional conservative values, but it is a kinder, gentler and more amiable side to the ex sniper, and this concerning and protective contrast with his acts of killing encourage audiences to feel sympathy towards him. His personality has the potential to be a site for notions of chivalry continuing into the 1920s. Bourke has described snipers, along with air force personnel, as demonstrating nobler military codes, reminiscent of the "warrior", in twentieth century warfare. These service personnel, due to a greater distance from their enemy, and thus from hand to hand combat, were categorised as professionally depersonalising the enemy. This depersonalisation was supposed to keep emotions in check, preclude personal hatred and vendettas from the battlefield equation, and encourage a renewed respect for opposing troops (Bourke 1999: 44-68). Richard's inaugural backup for Jimmy, as an avenging angel "taking out[23]" the murderer of the latter's girlfriend in a café in "Home" (S1E7, 2010), recreates the spatial and camouflage dynamics of his battlefield experience. Where his interpersonal relationships with women are concerned, especially in an adopted family unit from the third season onwards, Richard's treatment of such female characters as Angela and Julia are amongst the most tender and understanding of all such treatment seen in the revival. This initial bashfulness on Richard's part is

[23] Killing, in the context of assassination, warfare or underworld violence.

largely due to his war wounds.

Scholars of the welfare of returned veterans such as Bourke have pointed out that the posttraumatic stress and guilt of combat survivors over atrocities committed on civilians can result in veterans further questioning their relationship to, and belief in, the military establishment of which they were once a part, and, by extension, the government itself. Although Richard, as a gangster and mercenary, manages to compartmentalise his prey as "soldiers", and shuns harming women and children, his moral compass is gradually thrown off kilter over the course of *Boardwalk*'s seasons. He moves closer towards his prey, killing them with close discharges from his weapon to the face, via pistols or rifles. As will be discussed in the next subsection, Richard even participates in an act of "savagery" in the second season.

Barlow cogently traces Richard's favourite anatomical target, the face, back to his original injury (2013: 86). Barlow further describes the way that he finds the strength to go on living in "Gimcrack & Bunkum" as a moment of sublimity (2013: 44-45). However, before Richard dies in "Farewell Daddy Blues", he accidentally shoots a female hostage, due to nerves, instead of his desired target. His "Symbolic Eye", always watching and protecting (Barlow 2013: 41), which prevents him from failing in his duty in the season finale of season three, now metaphorically short circuits. His shock at his mistake, and his slow death crawl under the boardwalk, is intercut with delirious visions, in vivid colour, of a reunion with his new family in Wisconsin, the home of his rural upbringing, and the location where he first learned to hunt. A closeup of his face shows his features restored and healed. When set against previous sequences in *Boardwalk* that showed Richard tending to a scrapbook containing images of ideal, "normalised" family units, and taking into account the cumulative effect of incidents where he was made to feel alienated about his difference, this sublime fantasy appears the acme of joyous belonging for Richard. However, this reverie is interrupted by a medium shot, cutting to a long shot, of his slumped corpse against a boardwalk pillar.

These final shots from the fourth season of *Boardwalk* are designed as a combination of reunion fantasy and nostalgia. Despite this, these concluding scenes are pre-empted by a season finale montage that includes a grief-stricken medium shot of the female victim's father, oblivious to his surroundings and the activity on his porch. A case, therefore, could be made that Richard's death is a form of karmic retribution for his breaking of his own

personal code of valour and taking an innocent life, albeit unintentionally. He has destroyed a family unit and, as a consequence, will be denied his own family and suffer the penalty of death. By the time that the Great Depression has started to affect Atlantic City in *Boardwalk*'s final season (due to its time jump to 1931), death will have claimed all of the program's major veteran characters. This lacuna is an extreme version of the well-adjusted veteran, whose prior struggles are not mentioned again, in contemporary British productions dealing with the period after the early 1920s, and echoes the rate of veteran fatalities in the United States during the 1920s and the Great Depression.

Bourke points out that intimate male friendships were encouraged on the Western Front by the absence of women and the physical environment in which troops lived and fought; men danced with each other, comforted their comrades with blankets wrapped around ill bodies and "spooned"[24] while asleep (1996: 133-35). The interpersonal relationships between veterans in twenty first century recreations of the 1920s tends to fall into categories that display closeness, but a lack of passion, except in grief; the macho volatility of the underworld tough (*Boardwalk*, *Razor, Squizzy* and *Blinders*) or the "stiff upper lip" repression of the British/colonial bourgeoisie and aristocracy (*Easy Virtue*, *Downton* and *Miss Fisher's*). Even in the Australian ANZAC legend, where conventions and customs of mateship (in often male only environments) have been valourised in the Antipodean context since the nineteenth century, friendships between veteran characters are narrowly confined to "blokey"[25], rigidly heterosexual models. The revival of the 1920s, with one major exception, in contemporary popular culture appears to endorse the opinion of the era that what was permissible in the trenches, away from the dictates and expectations of family and community, was to be discouraged, if not deemed unacceptable, after the Armistice. When the fact that ex servicemen's organisations in the British Empire struggled to attract members in the years after 1918 is recalled, alongside the common endorsement by veterans of a "reiteration of the primacy of male-female relations" (Bourke 1996: 155), such an ideological

[24] Lay close together sideways and front to back, so as to fit together like spoons (Das 2014).

[25] Exhibiting the stereotypical traits (including gregariousness, heterosexuality, sociability and fitness) of British and Antipodean masculinity (Elder 2007: 4–5 & 26; Quinion 2009: 42–3).

change is perhaps to be accepted in the 1920s revival's treatment of sexuality tallying with historical reality.

In a social routine that, alongside codes of honour, helped structure the role of military personnel in the First World War, "[m]en took over the roles of mother, sister, friend and lover" on the Western Front (Bourke 1996: 133), so as to combine loyalty to, and fraternity within, the uniform worn by combatants with companionship and support during often trying situations. However, a scene between Richard and Jimmy in "Gimcrack and Bunkum" is the only real instance of genuine affection, as an exception, in the body of contemporary popular cultural texts exploring the place of the First World War veteran in interwar society. Richard, having failed to commit suicide earlier that day, returns to Jimmy's home, where the latter, agitated over an earlier show of disrespect towards him, plans revenge and seeks him as a confederate.

A close-up of the seated Richard, with a pensive look on his face and quivering lip, cuts to a medium shot of annoyed questioning from Jimmy. Richard, in the same close-up, appears as though he is about to cry. He asks Jimmy softly: "Would you fight for me?" Jimmy moves towards Richard in a tracking shot, with the editing switching to a shot of Richard looking down. A medium two shot of Jimmy (with Richard's head just visible near to the left of the frame) catches his stern, "masculine" but sincere "Of course I would." Richard looks up at Jimmy with almost adoring eyes, and a return to a two shot has Jimmy declaim, in a deeper tone suffused with emotion: "Right down to the last bullet." The closeup on Richard's face, processing Jimmy's friendship and love for him through moving his head back and forth and swallowing deeply, vocalises his loyalty: "Then let's go to work." Jimmy touches Richard's head in a comforting and consoling manner, gripping and tousling his hair slowly and affectionately, before he moves away to prepare for battle in "peacetime." Richard's insecurity gives way to cooperation in their business, marking the return of martial fervour.

An earlier generation of veterans in *Boardwalk* points to a darker side of the U.S. military experience that still has reverberations in a post 9/11 context. This is the prevalence of warfare as part of the territorial expansion of the United States during the nineteenth century, leading up to the cataclysm of the First World War and the

United States' changing importance on the international stage. Civil War veterans are glimpsed at the Memorial Day commemoration in "Gimcrack and Bunkum", the same ceremony from which Richard excuses himself, and the episode presents us with the figure of Jackson Parkhurst, one of the "old guard", or hidden powerbrokers, in Atlantic City. A cavalry veteran of U.S. Army campaigns against Native Americans, he recounts with glee a massacre of warriors by outnumbered U.S. soldiers, referring to his enemy unhesitatingly as "savages." This can be seen as a reference to the binary oppositions characterising human identity and civilisation for the European Enlightenment. Namely, savagery was the state of existence of the indigenous inhabitants of colonised lands, while civilisation was the state of being of the European colonisers (Buchan 2008: 18-19).

The ideological partition between "inferior" savagery and "superior" civilisation, always a tenuous separation in light of Western imperial subjugation of "subject peoples", suffered major damage following 1914–1918. Jackson also arrogantly mentions his service to the nation during the First World War, selling chipped beef to the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Jackson is the incarnation of enthusiastic nineteenth century expansionism and genocide in the name of "Manifest Destiny" (Miller 2006: 120). He is also a figure of unfettered capitalism and the military-industrial complex. Jackson dislikes Jimmy's differing ideas of power plays against Nucky, striking the younger man on the head for an insolent comment. This is a fatal miscalculation, however, as Jackson is the representative of the status quo that Jimmy is preparing to punish before Richard's return and his affectionate admission to his friend. Jackson ends up being scalped by Jimmy and Richard. This is both irony and poetic justice intertwined, considering Jackson's Eurocentric fascination with, and disdain for, such an indigenous practice. Chillingly, it also harkens back to notions of the dehumanisation of military training, which rendered demobilised veterans vulnerable to continued violence in peacetime.

As Biressi rhetorically inquires, in the context of a 1944 rape and murder of a young woman by an English soldier:

> Insoluble contradictions and unanswered questions abound, such as why is it that state-directed violence is right and individual violence wrong? Why is the violence of righteous warfare misdirected ('savagery he should have reserved for the enemy') by a soldier towards a civilian 'who provoked him simply by being visible and unprotected […]?' Here, as elsewhere,

> the act of murder highlights the knotty intersection between licit and illicit violence, between murder and warfare (2001: 129).

While Biressi's example concerns a soldier still on duty, it nevertheless confronts the unsettling reality of violence committed by military personnel against civilian populations. Indeed, civilian populations are now increasingly impacted directly by the violence produced by warfare. The results of state mandated training in violence has resulted, historically and dramatically, in the high proportion of veterans as members of crime syndicates. This is reflected, allegorically, in *Boardwalk*, *Razor, Squizzy* and *Blinders*. Amongst *Boardwalk*'s ex military characters, it is Paul, the father of Richard's girlfriend (and later wife) Julia, who projects a different emotional quality when it comes to a dramatic reckoning of the realities of U.S. imperialism and treatment, while in uniform, of populations under "Yankee"[26] control.

Boardwalk's Paul is the character, in the revival, who offers the most fleshed out potential for an allegorical reading of present-day militarism in selected texts. A veteran of the annexationist campaign in the Philippines, his initial introduction is casually racist. The local Veterans' Bureau meeting, in "Ging Gang Goolie" (S3E6, 2012), airs complaints of unfair requirements for veterans' pensions, leading to murmured protests of government ingratitude. Paul, an abrasive alcoholic (a status that is in part explained by his grief over losing his son in the First World War), retorts: "At least you were fighting white men." This retort is, of course, a simplistic opinion, considering the importance of non-European involvement in the conflict. Such grievances also align with the intrigues over the conduct of the Veterans' Bureau in Washington D.C. during this season. The sense felt by U.S. veterans of betrayal and neglect on the part of the U.S. government, especially after legislation passed in 1924 promising bonuses for war services (payable in 1945) was deemed urgent during the Great Depression (Ortiz 2012: 174-75), later manifested itself in such movements as the "Bonus Army" of 1932, an unsuccessful march on Washington by 15,000 veterans seeking financial aid against the Depression, and organised veteran protests, on moral and welfare grounds, against both the Vietnam

[26] A derogatory term for a resident of the United States, often used in the context of U.S imperialism.

and the second Iraq Wars.

When Richard returns to Atlantic City in "The North Star" (S4E6, 2013) and reunites with both the Sagorskys and Tommy, Paul finds out that he has irreparable liver damage. Drunkenly morose and reminiscent, he opens up to Richard about an atrocity that marked his war experience:

> In the Philippines, there was this girl. She couldn't have been more than thirteen. She was walkin' down the road, forest on either side. I mean, you couldn't see more than 10 feet in. She got a tarsier around the shoulder. Sorta like a little monkey crossed with a mouse. "Where you goin', miss?" "To my village." "I need to see some identification." I had to, you understand. I mean, those orders came straight from the top. She said, "I am who I am. Who else could I be?" I am who I am. I put a bullet through her face.

The framing of this monologue cuts between closeups of Paul's increasingly emotional and weary face, and of Richard's horror; and yet, an understanding of the potential in wartime for atrocities can be discerned. This is the dramatised human side of atrocities committed by the invading U.S. army in the Philippines campaign. It is an informal, almost secretive verbal key to truths about warfare that are not reflected in censored media accounts. The campaign spoken of by Sagorsky was an imperialist expansion of the "white man's burden", marked by scorched earth tactics against villages and harvests (Zinn 1999: 306–10), dehumanisation of Filipinos as "niggers" or "gu-gus"[27] (Zinn 1999: 310; Schama 2010: 119) and (especially horrific to comprehend in a post 9/11 world) the "water cure", where water was poured through a funnel down the victim's throat to simulate drowning and extract information. Failure to receive satisfactory intelligence would see further torture in the form of jumping or stamping on prisoners' stomachs to provoke vomiting (McCoy 2009: 89 & 104; Schama 2010: 119).

While the intersection of memory and testimony is vital to the presence, and

[27] The possible linguistic ancestor of "gook" (Hughes 2006: 207), gu-gu (or goo-goo) either derived from a local cocoanut oil shampoo (pronounced, in the Tagalog language, as "gu-gu"), thereby conveying a sense of Filipino slipperiness and elusiveness, or the "goo-goo" eyes supposedly made by local women (Kramer 2010: 389).

growth, of veteran characters in contemporary films and television programs set in the 1920s, the acceptance of the experience of warfare, and the attempt to reconcile battlefield atrocity with expectations of civilian conduct, cannot escape the connotations of white, "civilised" privilege. Paul's remembrance of the Filipino teenager whom he killed is simultaneously unflattering and cathartic, even apologetic. It is a confession to Richard, and an appeal to the audience's judgement, demonstrating a remorse and acceptance of complicity in imperial atrocity. However, "foreign" victims are themselves silenced. Victims of U.S. and British military policy, the historical background to the texts, are denied a voice.

Another lacuna is apparent in *Boardwalk*: the self-healing practised by veterans such as Paul, with the benefit of distance in time and space from their military service, serves to soften the blow of war crimes via a refusal to include the other side of these incidents through, in the main, even the device of flashback. Indeed, Paul's revelations are intended to have merely a personal effect in the form of the easing of a troubled conscience. There is no sense, in Paul's dialogue in this *Boardwalk* scene, or through any other means at the disposal of characters, of challenging the system itself, or speaking truth to power through admitting to abhorrent and criminal conduct publicly.

During the 1920s, the United States had occupation forces stationed in Latin American nations including Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Haiti (Zinn 1999: 399). To list one example, a civil war in Nicaragua broke out in 1926 against U.S. supervision of customs houses and with the backing of conservative, pro-U.S. politicians. The intervention of U.S. marines was required (Livingstone 2009: 16). No explicit reference is made to such political acts in *Boardwalk*'s depiction of the 1920s. Even the character of Dr Valentine Narcisse, a Trinidadian activist for "race pride" and Pan-Africanism in the fourth season, voices no complaint over U.S. interventions in the Caribbean. However, the double-edged sword of martial and cultural imperialism is never far from the surface. Later conflicts involving the United States that were mired in controversy include the Vietnam War and the second Iraq War. The latter war saw the historical wheel coming full circle with the

brutalisation of "towelhead"[28] prisoners of war in prisons, including in the city of Abu Ghraib, from late 2003 until early 2004. Abuse included, but was not limited to, rape and sexual assault, sensory deprivation, posing for humiliating photographs under duress and urination on detainees (Hersh 2004; Benjamin 2009).

In concentrating on the widespread horror and desperation embedded in the running time that is allocated to veterans such as Paul, and through body language and tone of voice and rhetoric, we can comprehend that the often shameful consequences of U.S. imperialism have their roots in the actions of soldiers in South-East Asia at the turn of the twentieth century. This unresolved story of would be empire is another incarnation of the 1920s (and the preceding few decades) as protean, in this instance featuring slippages and repetitions marked by blood.

Underbelly: Squizzy

The conclusion of the First World War, and the repatriation of ANZAC veterans home to Australia, was a matter of some apprehension where the violent experiences of ex soldiers, and the chasm between the experiences of former service personnel and civilians, was concerned (Bongiorno 2010: 88–89; Stanley 2010: 230–34). Ambition fueled by the ANZAC "legend" is seen, in a sensationalised fashion, in *Squizzy*.

In the episode "Squizzy Takes Charge", narrator Caroline Craig recounts how:

> Diggers had been returning from Europe for some time. Damaged men, for whom the war had ended early. Among them, men who had seen and done terrible things in the fields and trenches of the Western Front. Men who would now do anything for a price.

While Craig's voiceover is heard, shaping the dramatised story through moving backwards and forwards through time, thereby foregrounding history as constantly under construction (Pramaggiore 2013: 41), medium two shots of the titular character, gangster Squizzy Taylor, with his back to camera, and a one-eyed war veteran in civilian gear (no medals or insignia are seen on his clothing, and his

[28] An ethnic slur for people of Arab descent, derived from the commonly worn Keffiyeh headpiece ("Towelhead").

veteran status is implied through the narration) focus on the left hand side of the veteran's face; scarred and reddish- pink, garishly lit by a yellow backlight. The camera pans down from the veteran's face to Squizzy's hand offering a gun, while the camera pans up to show the transfer of cash from the gangster to the veteran. Both men are silent in this scene (the only sound is provided by Craig's narration and the diegetic music of an unseen military band playing "Waltzing Matilda" – an ironically patriotic touch), but these symbolic actions speak volumes about the frequency with which Australian demobilised veterans turned to crime (Stanley 2010: 230-34), including personalities such as James "Big Jim" Devine in the interwar urban underworld (Writer 2011: 27 & 30). The following scene, depicting the veteran, his face obscured by darkness, shooting two members of a rival gang, compounds the sensationalistic "shock" of the veteran's initial appearance, a horror trope that appears to trivialise the variety and gravity of war casualties' experiences. The veteran with the mutilated face does not even have the camouflage of a mask, such as the one worn by Richard, and therefore jars against the civilian population even more. This is another metonym of the broader treatment of the 1920s, where stereotypes and "money shots" of images containing received popular memory, such as the juxtaposition of mutilated veterans with their period clothing, are foregrounded.

The character of Albert "Tankbuster" McDonald in *Squizzy* suffers a full-blown case of PTSD after returning to Melbourne in 1919, breaking down into crying jags after writhing about in his nightmares. Tankbuster also unconsciously attempts to strangle Dolly Grey, the girlfriend of Squizzy Taylor, because he believes her to be a German soldier. Squizzy breaks up the fracas, and wakes up Tankbuster, thereby returning the ex soldier to his senses. Despite this, Squizzy's sense of overt, territorial masculinity is offended by Tankbuster's raw emotional outburst (even though Squizzy never enlisted during the conflict), and Squizzy also suspects that Dolly, who has started to feel estranged from her partner, may have approached Tankbuster to "root" (Australian slang for sexual intercourse [Richards 2018]) him. This lack of understanding on Squizzy's part profoundly dramatises, in the microcosm of a cramped Melburnian dwelling, the vast chasm between Australians who stayed on the home front during the First World War and those who experienced the horrors of trench warfare. This microcosm also acts as an indictment of interwar attitudes

concerning masculine ideologies.

Leatherheads

Outside of the potential for power and an accumulation of wealth through crime, the potential for self-worth and social stability through work for the veteran, as represented in the texts examined in this chapter, is limited. Characters such as Archie, in *Miss Fisher*'s, are marginally employed, in this case as a caretaker. Veterans are represented in the service industries, such as the Communist (or "red ragger", to use Australian vernacular, from the archetypal red in Communist insignia) taxi drivers Bert Johnson and Cec Yates in *Miss Fisher's*. Household domestic rosters are staffed with veterans in these programs, such as the workforce of Downton Abbey and the titular detective's butler in *Miss Fisher's*. Even Detective-Inspector John "Jack" Robinson, a veteran of the Western Front, is the embodiment of a professional rising through the ranks through devotion to duty, as a civil, rather than domestic, servant. Yet these examples, no matter their chance for promotion and their "steady" nature in the marketplace, still lack an element of independence and autonomy. Neither do these vocations feature that striking aspect of modernity, the factor of "fame" or "celebrity." There are, however, two films amongst the twenty first century revival of the 1920s that interrogate the concept of the veteran as celebrity.

In *Leatherheads*, serving army personnel, supporting the Chicago Bears football team, start a fight in a speakeasy with Dodge Connolly and the supporters of the Duluth Bulldogs team, of which he is the captain. However, some of these army personnel (just returned from an expeditionary incursion into China) recognise Dodge as having served alongside them on the Western Front. The nighttime brawl ceases, via a cut to later on the next morning, and changes to drunken camaraderie around a piano. George M. Cohan's "Over There" (1917), a Tin Pan Alley staple of the U.S. entry into the First World War, is sung heartily (if off key) and promises are made for the Chicago supporters to attend and support Dodge's next match. This scene may demonstrate that a past relationship to the services can defuse and reverse a violent situation, but it also symbolises a U.S. military so starved for combat opportunities in the 1920s that serving members are reduced to instigating barroom fracas. Indeed, conservative U.S. values, supposedly manifest in a sober institution

such as the army, are disregarded by the mere fact of servicemen drinking alcohol in a speakeasy. Not content with merely turning a blind eye to violations of Prohibition, as in *Boardwalk*, army personnel in *Leatherheads* partake in the illegal commodity themselves.

Carter "The Bullet" Rutherford in *Leatherheads* is a unique example, in the twenty first century revival of the 1920s, of a war veteran finding fame and fortune – indeed, becoming a household name – outside of the circumstances of illicit activity. His celebrity status is due to his being a football star for Princeton University and a pioneer professional player in the nascent business of professional football. He is a decorated war hero, although his heroic act, as the audience later discovers, was actually a misunderstanding. This was due to his slumber during forward movements rendering him vulnerable to German troops overtaking his trench, a development Carter solves by pretending to be a German soldier and yelling out his surrender (copied by his "fellow soldiers") to approaching U.S. infantry. Carter's curtailing of law studies to become an infantryman on the Western Front is a fictional mirroring of, and comment on, the calculated decision of famous sportsmen to enlist in the armed forces during times of war during the twentieth century and the propaganda value of these high profile instances of patriotic recruitment.

Carter entered the United States Army out of a desire to serve his country, and resumes his studies after the Armistice of 1918. Unlike Jimmy Darmody, Carter feels no sense of trauma from his war experiences, but rather guilt over not correcting the mistaken circumstances leading to his being declared a war hero. Carter seems remarkably free of any signs of war-induced trauma – at least, he never reveals any shocking behaviour that he witnessed while in service. Indeed, his darkest emotion is jealousy against Dodge Connelly, a fellow footballer and war veteran, over a journalist, Lexie Littleton, who is assigned to uncover the truth concerning Carter's war record and is the object of Carter's affections. This propels his desire to exceed on the football field. On the field of play, however, a character such as Carter would be unable to escape entirely a sense of déjà vu.

Training for sporting performance and military drill, with an emphasis on health and physical prowess, were linked by popular discourse and propaganda in combatant nations during the First World War as forms of patriotic duty and improvements to

the body politic. Yet the echoes of warfare do not end there in *Leatherheads*. The necessity of defensive and offensive plays in this contact sport, although not designed to be mortal, prioritise displays of male strength, tackling and running. Ground gained and lost by opposing teams corresponds to territory won or lost during battles. Even the rain soaked and muddy slush coating the Chicago field at the film's climax, a ground that reduces tactical manoeuvre to messy grapples, has overtones of the geographical and conditional discomfort of the Western Front. Dodge's Duluth Bulldogs' victory over the Chicago Bears (Carter defects to this team during the course of the film) teaches Carter a lesson in humility and gives him a second chance to "play the game" without deceit. His decision to "come clean" to the press allows for reconciliation with, and forgiveness from, his fan base. Cleansed of the taint of "dishonour", Carter, the war veteran and sports star, can now represent a newly honest, fair and patriotic pursuit.

Absence as Presence: The Non-European Veteran

The texts that comprise the 1920s revival contain a significant lacuna: the denial, to any character, of the agency to personify the experiences of over 16,000 men in the British West Indies Regiment (Smith 2012: 265) and 357,000 African-Americans in the AEF (Whalan 2012: 285), specifically, and over four million non-white combatant and non-combatant men in the European armies during 1914-18 (Das 2012: 4). This absence is in reference to characters present on-screen.[29]

There is one representative of auxiliary, "coloured" labouring services, present in the twenty first century return of the 1920s. A South African sapper named Private William Letso is introduced towards the end of the fifth episode of the third season of *Blinders* (2016). A worker in the Bloemfontein diamond mines before becoming a sapper, he is identified as a member of the South African Native Labour Corps. Treated as a friend and equal by Tommy during the Birmingham gangster's planning of the heist of a strong room filled with Russian treasure, Letso is hailed by Tommy as "the best tunneler I ever met." He reappears in the following

[29] The father of the heroine Tatiana in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) is seen in the introductory scenes. However, he is "absent" afterwards through death, due to service in the AEF during the First World War. He remains an inspiration for his daughter, however, attested to by a framed portrait of him in his army uniform found in Tatiana's bedroom.

episode, as part of the underground tunneling team, where he is given more screen time and dialogue. Given a position of importance, with his talents openly praised by Tommy, he exhibits care and concern for a fellow worker who, overcome by the pace and strain of the digging, exhibits the "shakes." The "underground" historical use of non-Caucasians, including exploitation of their physical strength, by nations such as South Africa during the First World War is, however, reflected in the success of the goal of breaking into the room. Tommy, the Caucasian "boss" of the enterprise, joins his team when time becomes of the essence and undertakes the final dynamite explosion and entrance amongst the valuable possessions. He is supported by the other miners, including Letso.

Films such as *Tender Hook* and *Gatsby*, as well as television programs such as *Squizzy*, use archival footage from the 1920s (and the era of the First World War), such as street scenes and explosions on the Western Front, to increase the verisimilitude of the recreated 1920s for the audience and construct an indexical shorthand for the historical period. This index of modernity, however, has shown a similar lack of diversity where footage of military personnel from the conflict is concerned. Although an institution such as the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London contains over 100 newsreels in its collection representing the combat, labouring and recuperation experiences of Indian, African, West Indian and Maori service personnel, stock footage of the representative combatant of the First World War in the revival solely encompasses Caucasians. This absence is even more jarring because it strips from the revival a valuable opportunity in engage in the First World War, as experienced by non-Caucasians, as a reflexively international experience.

Sites of memory, although often written over by circumstances such as nationalism or subsequent wars, retain traces of its "earlier form" through archival, historical and literary material, and the dialogue between them (Winter 2009: 167; Das 2012: 22). When the production imperative of archival footage alongside alternate modes of recreation omits visual evidence of a greater diversity in the experience of the non-European veteran in the revival, the concession to received popular memory seems entrenched.

The Female Veteran

In the third season of *Miss Fisher's*, the episode "Murder & The Maiden" (S3E2, 2015) features the murder of a young woman and disappearance of a high-ranking Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officer from an RAAF base on the outskirts of Melbourne, allowing air force personnel to be active agents in solving the case. 1920s service personnel are thus foregrounded. The backstory of Phryne Fisher's romance with Captain Lyle Compton, however, sees the setting of the RAAF base used as primarily a romanticised site – part "Boy's Own" adventure story, part "bodice ripper" romance – to reveal more of Phryne's backstory as a woman who defies convention.

Her prowess as an aviatrix (a 1920s term for a female aviator), itself a symbol of modernity and the changing roles of women in the 1920s, puts the technology of the RAAF at her disposal for the climax, thus providing an excuse for spectacular aerial shots and the motorcycle chase of a suspect on a landing strip. In the course of the investigation, friction develops between the Melbourne police and the RAAF "top brass", one cause being Detective Inspector Robinson's romantic jealousy over Phryne's attraction to Captain Compton. A love triangle, plus a sabotaged RAAF biplane at an air show, serves to tarnish the social indexicality of a unified, "brave" and "heroic" force. While Phyrne's former lover and his comrades (even the inactive aviator agents who were involved in the crime) are presented as professional and even daring in their flights, the episode shapes a glimpse of the late 1920s aerial defence of Australia to fit the tropes of a typical "murder mystery" episode of *Miss Fisher's*. Functioning more as a tableau for Phryne's "New Woman" persona and bravery, this episode shies away from a deeper exposé of the conservative state of the Australian armed forces in the interwar years. As the only sustained depiction of air force personnel in the texts studied within this thesis, the approach on "spectacle" is even more striking.

Veterans of the First World War are in abundance in *Miss Fisher's*. When the veteran is in the care of institutions, as in "Blood and Money", the fourth episode of *Miss Fisher's* third season (2015), the representation of the repatriation system is hardly flattering. Veteran cum caretaker Archie, facially disfigured and forced to wear a mask (strikingly similar to Richard Harrow's mask in *Boardwalk*), is

implicated in the disappearance and murder of male street urchins (an accusation which he violently rejects) and revealed as responsible for illegal morphine distribution from his hospital. This is before Archie is killed off with a morphine overdose at the hands of his employer Dr Harcourt in order to eradicate witnesses to the doctor's murders and chicanery, as well as his skin graft experimentation on Archie's face. Again, the veteran is prey to tragedy. Even an ex stretcher bearer has his patriotism impugned by combat veterans in the *Miss Fisher's* episode "Death Comes Knocking", resulting in the non-combatant veteran, ironically, resorting to fisticuffs. Despite the value of stretcher bearers as a non-combatant service in the First World War, this echo of what Alistair Thomson has called the "mutual incomprehension" between combatants and non-combatants in postwar Australian society (1995: 110) demarcates and acknowledges an incomplete template of the "real digger" in Australian popular memory.

The mythos of the digger includes the belief in Australian battlefield "fair play." This myth, however, is tarnished by a fictional Australian enlisted batman pitted against his officer in "Death Comes Knocking." Captain Freddy Ashmead, afflicted with mustard gas poisoning, nerves and hand tremors, and driven to spiritualism, later dies from drinking "virgin's tears". Before this, however, he believes that he may have been responsible for the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Roland Claremont, a "donkey" leading "lions" at the Somme. The late lieutenant was also a poet, but of a romantic, idyllic, "classical" style, rather than of the "war poet" variety. Claremont's valet/batman, Larry Dunn, disgusted at the lieutenant's brutal bullying, actually killed him during the tumult and isolation of a charge across No Man's Land, later exploiting Freddy's shell shock to conceal the truth. Dunn's murderous act is later revealed by Phryne.

Prior to this, however, Claremont's death, which occurs, in flashback, in the presence of only one other survivor of the charge, is imbued with two meanings. It further interrogates, through popular culture, the controversial "lions led by donkeys" (Neillands 1998: 514) thesis of oblivious British officers sacrificing heroic enlisted men in the Western Front trenches. The anti-British ideology of such texts as the film *Gallipoli* (1981) is transferred to the ethics of the digger, suggesting that outdated tactical thinking was present amongst Australian ("colonial") officialdom as well. Secondly, this scene preempts the practice, commonly practiced by U.S.

infantrymen in Vietnam, of "fragging" unpopular officers. In other words, "fragged" officers were killed by their own troops, often with a fragmentation grenade (Cornell 1981: 200), with the crime arranged to look like the actions of enemy troops or an accident (Huebner 2008: 210 & 231). Similarities between such desperate acts committed by soldiers in these different time periods, separated by almost fifty years, appear as an example of links between two complicated (not to mention romanticised) decades of the twentieth century (the 1910s-20s and the 1960s-70s), joining them together as portions of a historical network, with the 1920s (shaped by the First World War) as a "way station."

In the scene immediately following the unveiling of the culprit, at the police station, Detective-Inspector Robinson says: "Shell shock does mysterious things to the mind. It closes doors." Despite the war straining his marriage (his wife and he end up divorced), Robinson seems to have avoided the worst signs of shell shock and uneasy transition back into civilian life. He does display an understanding of the trauma inherent in the symptoms of shell shock, however, as only a veteran can.

Female veterans are rarely depicted in the 1920s revival. The war veteran is, by and large, a patriarchal construct, due to the First World War permitting women to serve only in an auxiliary capacity. Phryne Fisher, the chief protagonist in *Miss Fisher's*, is one of them. She served as a nurse on the Western Front. While Lady Sybil and Isobel Crawley are nurses in *Downton* (during the First World War, in the second season), their healing potential is confined to the English home front. Indeed, Phryne's socioeconomic status as a member of the aristocracy was due to the male heirs to a British peerage being killed during the First World War. These tragedies demonstrate that her life's direction was shaped, not just by nursing and the increased opportunities for women in society during the 1920s, but also by the carnage experienced by innumerable British and Empire families during the conflict.

Morocco: Love in Times of War (2017) is partly in the genre of action/war programming. The Spanish television series is set during the Rif War, which is not often remembered outside of a Spanish-speaking context, unlike the later Spanish Civil War. After Spain's neutrality during the First World War, its colonial possessions in North Africa (namely Morocco) saw a revolt by the Berber population in 1921. However, *Morocco*'s primary emphasis is the experience of upper class

Madrid women employed as nurses in Morocco during the imperial conflict of the early 1920s. In a manner redolent of a subgenre of television programming dealing with the experience of nurses in the First World War (such as *The Crimson Field* [2014] in the UK, and *ANZAC Girls* [2013] in Australia), the life of upper class Spanish women in a war zone, interacting with issues of race, class and sexuality, permits a torrid interrogation of a patriarchal, strictly hierarchised culture within a soap opera structure. Phryne's and the Spanish nurses' representation of the "Red Cross Nurse" in the twenty first century revival of the 1920s demonstrates a greater presence of the female veteran compared to the corresponding sum of racial diversity in the First World War combat experience.

Dissent, In and Out of the Trenches

Fictional war veterans also provide an arena of conflict between two forms of economic and political systems. These two forms are capitalism, based on private ownership of the means of production and the acquisition of profits by private owners through goods and service production, and different strains of socialism and communism, where the means of production (using the definition as claimed by Marxists) is socially and democratically owned.

National governments, laws and organisations representing the interests and welfare of veterans (from, in this thesis, Australia, Great Britain and the United States) are often demonised as being in opposition to the realities faced by veterans. These organisations include the RSL (originally The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia [RSSILA]) in Australia, and the DVA (not to be confused with the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Australia), or United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (of which the Veterans' Bureau was a previous component agency) in the United States. They are often maligned, in texts such as *Miss Fisher's*, as being in opposition to the realities faced by veterans.

Two important supporting characters in *Miss Fisher's*, Bert and Cec, symbolise the socialist strand of postwar radical ex servicemen. They are still forced to work inside a capitalist system to earn a living, and are granted only limited agency, as fact gathering operatives, to assist Phryne Fisher in the solving of cases. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to discover that their awareness of the potential of worker solidarity

(even having their fraternisation with fellow radicals depicted on screen in an Australian television program, broadcast by the ABC), and their "larrikin" suspicion towards the authority figure of Detective Inspector Robinson, never wavers. Although they are hardly a severe threat to the status quo, the two taxi drivers were not silenced by the police, or the RSL, during three seasons. Bert and Cec's presence is noteworthy, for radical veterans, veterans of the First World War whose postwar political allegiance (often left wing) diverted from the conservative norm of national commemoration – at a time when "Red Scares" were very real threats in Western democracies – are not commonplace amongst the archetypes presented in the twenty first century return of the 1920s. Indeed, pursuing such a representation is actually rather daring, considering the influence that Australia's national veterans' organisation still possesses, and its past history.

The RSL represented the mainstream values of official Australian remembrance and veteran welfare after the First World War – right wing, Anglophilic and monarchist. However, some working class veterans, incensed that class divisions had not been eradicated by the slogan "A land fit for heroes", either refused to join the organisation or tried to effect as much change as possible within the parameters of the RSL's tenets. Radical gestures were met with censure, such as sub branch closures and individual expulsions (Thomson 1995: 115-42). Despite their deviation from certain status quo norms, the tension between Burt and Cec (combat veterans) and Perce Bishop, a "conchie" (or conscientious objector) ex stretcher bearer, in "Death Comes Knocking" is revealing. The cabbies, both socialists, unexpectedly hold conservative, "white feather" viewpoints, reflective of the deep and lasting division in Australian society between those who served and those who did not. Plus, as Phryne admonishes, "It's not as if "anti-killing" meant you could sit out the war knitting socks by the fire."

The tolerance in *Miss Fisher's* shown towards an alternative to received popular wisdom about the conservative nature of Australia as a Dominion in the 1920s stands in contrast to the perceived far reaching effects and legacy of socialist movements in other programs from the English-speaking world. This subjective approach is a byproduct of the sustained love-hate relationship towards socialism in the Western Hemisphere, fuelled by the ties between the United Kingdom and the United States. This ideology is in evidence in the first season of *Blinders*. There, the socialist

oratory of disaffected workers, led by Freddie Thorne, a fellow veteran of Tommy's, is judged by the Peaky Blinders gang to be attracting too much attention to their operations in Birmingham from the government. In any event, Thorne's socialist movement is fragmented and rendered impotent by the tactics of the Chief Inspector's newly augmented police force in the first season.

In *Boardwalk*, the spokesman for the Veterans' Bureau in "Ging Gang Goolie" is challenged by a few members in attendance when his speech veers into socialist rhetoric. Paul, it is revealed in "Sunday Best", classifies himself, politically, as a socialist – he voted for Eugene V. Debs, five times the candidate of the Socialist Party of America for the Presidency of the United States – and decries Jesus' death, over an Easter Sunday lunch, as fueling patriotic fervour for young men (such as his late son) to be slaughtered in battle for no change to the orthodoxies of society. Richard, as Julia's guest, corrects another guest's mistaken belief that Debs is a Communist, yet refuses to align himself totally with Paul's irreligious opinions. Richard opines, "Just because you don't believe in something, doesn't mean it isn't true", and says grace in another room before eating his meal, due to sensitivity over his physical scars rather than ideological differences. Paul is also far from an active socialist. Indeed, while his political involvement seems confined to picking fights at Veteran's Bureau meetings, his self-medication seems apolitical and harmful towards his family.

Paul gains a more sympathetic patina in the fourth season of *Boardwalk*, and he shows his caring, familial side through his playing with Tommy Darmody. However, the spectre of socialism as a "dirty word" in U.S. politics appears to have been considered by the creators of *Boardwalk*. Socialism has never totally receded from the U.S. political landscape, as demonstrated by the socialist and progressive influences on, and policies endorsed by, Democratic presidential candidate for the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Bernie Sanders. Nevertheless, socialism as a social evil has a lengthy history, heightened by the "Red Scare" of 1919–20 and the witchhunts undertaken by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) during the Cold War. Considering this context, it is telling that a war veteran in a U.S. cultural production has his political stance downplayed in favour of his personal foibles. As with the almost total excision of the experience of black military service during the First World War, this discomfort with the echoes of the "Bonus Army"

points towards the limitations of the veteran as a symbol of the return of the interwar period.

Emblematic Figures

The veteran in the popular cultural revival of the 1920s is emblematic of a continuing historical project, since the era of the Vietnam War, in refiguring cultural assumptions of war veterans (in the return of the 1920s, overwhelmingly veterans of the First World War) as existing in a complicated and fraught relationship to normative ideals of masculinity (almost all of the veterans covered in this chapter are male) and modernity. The concentration on the experience of First World War veterans in the revival, and the limited presence of veterans of wars fought in the 1920s, as well as personnel serving in the 1920s, reflects James Brown's critique of Australian geopolitical priorities. Nostalgia and remembrance appear to take precedence over public acknowledgement, esteem and support of service personnel on duty during the 1920s and today. Ironically, according to Paul Virilio's examination of the intersection of modernity with the First World War "killing project", historical distanciation was both dismantled through the "special effects" of the alteration of direction in weaponry and cinematic technology towards perception and destruction, and maintained. This maintenance was achieved through static warfare, and exposure to extreme elements, that evoked conflict of earlier centuries.

Flashbacks, an important audiovisual technique, as experienced by veteran characters in the worlds of the texts comprising the revival, tally with the "flashback" of memory of past, experienced events. An audiosensory experience that biologically and psychologically altered veterans, flashbacks further take the present-day viewer time travelling (in a virtual sense). In *Blinders*, the foregrounding of the first-season police prosecution of IRA and Communist radicals evokes heavy-handed reactions to present-day terrorism.

The increased mechanisation of military transport, and growing ubiquity of automobile usage during the First World War, encourages journeying – a trope attributed by James I. Deutsch to restless veterans throughout literary history – and hyperstimulus amongst veterans in the revival, even to a reckless degree. Although mostly crosscountry, on rare occasions these wanderings can encompass

immigration. As an intensification of nervous stimulation, hyperstimulus connects the modern figure of racing car driver Larita to the alienated Major Jim Whittaker in *Easy Virtue*. The Major's malaise with manorial English existence, after a period of exile overseas, leads him to regain a new lease on life, in defiance of death, through speeding away from his country property with his daughter in law at the conclusion.

Hyperstimulus, and the military experience of hierarchical rank, inspires the use of motor vehicles and business tactics amongst gangsters with military experience in the revival. Another common, albeit more stationary, representation of veterans centres around hospital, or domestic, repatriation. However, alienation from the values of civilians encouraged numerous negative emotions, and this dysfunction had the consequence of exacerbating commonplace instances of domestic violence in Britain and Australia, while influencing cynical literature on a "Lost Generation" in the United States. As for the horrific, but shrouded, physical mutilation wrought upon a literary precedent such as in *Johnny Got His Gun*, the "Lost Generation" inspiration for revisionist explorations of postwar recuperation such as *Boardwalk* reaches a more explicit level of representation in the twenty first century. This is helped by the four seasons of the program that featured veterans as prominent characters.

In *Boardwalk*, the oblivious infantry guards protecting the armoury symbolise the postwar impotency of the United States military. Even veterans of the First World War such as Jimmy Darmody retain debilitating traces, or auras, of their past through aural flashbacks, or "triggers". His past also includes a deviant act that encouraged him to seek supposed redemption through military service. Indeed, as Lindsey Barlow argues qua Jacques Lacan, his trauma from the battlefield must constantly battle for impact with his act of incest, until his suicide. Jimmy's predicament highlights the impact of war upon already damaged psyches. As for Richard Harrow, his character may be more "noble", but his deviance is more overt, due to the mask that disguises his war wounds. Although possessed of a chivalric code of honour, befitting his previous occupation as a sniper, he also experiences pangs of distanciation, due to an obsession with fitting into an ideal family image. When Richard's "Symbolic Eye" fails him in the fourth season, resulting in the death of an innocent, he is spiritually and physically condemned to death, but not before a final moment of sublimity that briefly restores his facial features to an aesthetic whole.

Boardwalk also features an allegorical act of violence, in the form of a scalping that symbolises revenge against Manifest Destiny, and illustrates Anita Biressi's rhetoric over the brutalisation of recruits during military training wreaking havoc in peacetime. In the third season, a veteran of the Philippine-American War, Paul Sagorsky, is introduced. Paul's admission to Richard to the murder of a Filipino civilian is designed to draw parallels with atrocities perpetrated by the United States globally in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, including Latin American interventions during the 1920s, up until the current "War on Terror."

Squizzy further foregrounds the horrific consequences of the First World War through the disfigured features of a recruit to Squizzy Taylor's gang. The veteran's murderous skills with a gun in underworld shoot outs marks an end point for the "double victimhood", or continued hardships faced by demobilised veterans, that proved to be the post 1918 reality for many "larrikins", as Peter Stanley explicates. Albert "Tankbuster" McDonald's episode of mania has the effect of heightening Squizzy's suspicion and paranoia, however. His suspicion that Tankbuster is seeking sexual intercourse with his girlfriend is a microcosm of misunderstandings between Australians who served in the First World War and those who did not.

Angst, by contrast, is largely absent from *Leatherheads*, except perhaps for guilt on the part of Carter "The Bullet" Rutherford for his deception over his heroism on the Western Front, and jealousy in the context of a love triangle. Anger, however, alongside the requisite clashes inherent in football, fuels a speakeasy brawl between rival football supporters and the returned members of a military expeditionary force. A restless urge to fight is curtailed by nostalgia, however, once Dodge Connolly and several soldiers recognise each other from shared "doughboy" adventures. The comedic representation of the early days of professional football in the United States depicts Rutherford as mentally stable and aspirational, in contrast to the thwarted and tormented Jimmy Darmody. College boosterism is aligned with the cult of Jazz Age celebrity, yet the field of play requires training, and was linked by popular discourse and propaganda with military drill. Additionally, the crucial elements of defensive and offensive plays in a contact sport prioritise physical prowess and acquisition of territory. Further, the film's muddy climax recalls the battlefields of the Western Front as immortalised in iconic popular memory.

As for non-Caucasian and female veterans in the revival, representative examples are unfortunately scarce. Non-Caucasian veterans are confined to the framed photograph of Tatiana's father, an African-American soldier killed fighting with the AEF, in *The Princess and the Frog*, and a South African sapper in *Blinders*. Although the latter is identified as a brave, talented and trustworthy individual, it falls to Tommy to purloin the valuable aim of the theft. Despite the scholarship of Santanu Das on non-Caucasian participants in the First World War, and J. M. Winter's and Das' notion of the palimpsest of sites of memory, repositories such as the Imperial War Museum in London, with their voluminous collection of newsreel footage of colonial troops during the First World War, are unrepresented in stock footage portions of the revival.

As for the female veteran onscreen, she is confined to the feminine construct of the maternal nurse. Nurses serve as the main characters in the Spanish soap opera *Morocco*, set during the Rif War in 1921, and the First World War is a defining past experience for the titular character in *Miss Fisher's*. Steeped in the tenets of modernity and the "New Woman", the flirtatious and daring personality of the amateur detective and former nurse sees her cause intrigue in a third season episode. Here, air force personnel, a rarity for the return of the 1920s, are involved in a case in late 1920s Melbourne. However, the emphasis is on the genre influences of the adventure novel and the romance, along with the spectacle of Phryne as an aviator, rather than an in-depth investigation of the conservative state of Australia's defences during this historical era. Phryne, as an outsider, nonetheless interacts with, and attempts to aid, characters who fit the archetype of the "underdog." Furthermore, characters who are veterans of the First World War are in abundance in *Miss Fisher's*, and among their number is a caretaker who wears a mask to conceal his facial disfigurements and who is murdered to prevent his testifying to murder and medical experiments committed by his employer. This continues the tragic character arc of veteran characters that frequently recurs in the revival. Another veteran poisons himself in the same episode, believing himself to be responsible for the death of a late lieutenant-colonel. However, Phryne discovers that the lieutenant-colonel was murdered by his own valet/batman during battle. This revelation evokes the "lions led by donkeys" theory of Western Front leadership, while acting as a connection to Vietnam War era "fragging" during another

romanticised and contested decade, the 1960s.

Finally, *Miss Fisher*'s devotes significant screen time throughout its run to two Communist taxi drivers. These left-wing activists may ironically take exception to a former conscientious objector, making their pacifistic principles somewhat suspect, and they never truly break out of the capitalist paradigm. However, they prove reliable assistants to Phryne in her investigations. In addition, considering the negative connotations that have surrounded socialism and Communism since the Russian Revolution, and the attendant dearth of sympathetic "radical" characters in popular television programming, it is arguably astonishing that these characters are permitted to retain their authentic principles. This is in synchronisation with the repressed history of "radical diggers", in opposition to the RSL and right wing, imperial organisations in the years immediately following the First World War, as written about by Alistair Thomson. In contrast, socialist agitation in *Blinders* is discouraged as injurious to business. Paul Sagorsky, in *Boardwalk*, further bolsters his maverick status with his admission to voting for Eugene V. Debs, and his vocal disgust towards Easter links to a patriotic nationalism that killed his son. However, while Richard can distinguish between Debs' ideology and communism, he does not share Paul's radicalism. Thus, a veteran of the First World War, perhaps reflecting United States mainstream opinion over left-wing political movements, does not offer opposition to the capitalist status quo, while Paul's political affiliations are downplayed after this particular episode.

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Characters who are ex-service personnel may be distanced from the changing world of the 1920s, in common with viewers, but their lack of ethnic and gender diversity deviates from the demographics of potential audiences. Some viewers may be descended from veterans whose backgrounds are amongst those experiences erased in the revival of the 1920s, while increased contemporary scholarship concerning non-Caucasian and female veterans, as well as the body of films of colonial troops held in archives and curatorial policy towards this evidence, positions the bias favouring white, male veterans as still more jarring. Veterans may act as signposts, but they can, in their fluctuating degrees of complexity, let viewers into these

recreated worlds too easily. The presence of non-Caucasian and/or immigrant characters in the revival is much more comprehensive than the demographics of the veteran paradigm. However, the emphasis on race and immigration, although important thematic concerns in the revival, still raises significant and, at times, troubling questions about modes of depiction and appropriation. These matters of sensitivity in historical recreation will be at the core of the following chapter.

Chapter 4
Race, Immigration, and Gender in the 'Jazz Age' Redux

Representing the Underrepresented

The rich tapestry of race, immigration, and gender are interconnected topics that are observable, to a striking degree, in the 1920s screen revival. There is a sustained presence of non-Caucasian characters, immigrant characters, female characters and, in one film example, a character whose persona defies heteronormative gender classification in the present-day recreation of the 1920s. These characters, and the issues faced by them in their day to day existence, permit alternative perspectives on the dramatised interwar period to be engaged with by viewers. Greater variety in reflecting upon the effect of the return of this historical era at a simulated remove is also possible.

Boardwalk Empire is a definite example of tracing the sociocultural existence of a marginalised racial community (in this case, the segregated Northside African-American section of Atlantic City) in relation to a dominant Caucasian society during the 1920s. The entrepreneurial justification for African-American racketeering outlined by Rufus Schatzberg (1993), inspired by Emile Durkheim's (1964) belief in crime as inherent in humanity, will underpin the analysis of the Northside's relationship, in the program, to the vices. Concentrating on the fourth season, where racial themes become most overt, there will be a delineation of the at times tense reality of black labour keeping Atlantic City a viable community, while African-American popular culture was being vicariously enjoyed by Caucasian Americans – even before the "Harlem Renaissance." The tension arose from opposition by reactionary forces such as the Ku Klux Klan and superior attitudes that led to casual pejoratives in everyday conversation. This portion of the chapter is indebted to William L. Van Deburg's (2004) exploration of the Caucasian inventions of "noble savages" and "brutes", Venise T. Berry's (1996) notions of "racialism", Simon Frith's writings (2011) on "anti-essentialism" in regards to cultural appropriation and Frederic Jameson's (2007) "traces of the entire genre system." The

last text, in particular, will be useful for synthesising the existence of the Onyx Club in the entertainment economy of *Boardwalk*.

Mary A. Renda's (2001) dissection of ideologies of Caribbean "exoticism" during the 1920s and Nelson Johnson's thesis on the communal importance of religion to generations of African-Americans post slavery also serve as a theoretical base for the program's treatment of the United Negro Improvement Association and the Shiloh Baptist Church, respectively. More controversially, the traces of Leonard Jeffries, Jr's anti-white discourse on "anti-Kemetism" in the Afrocentric rhetoric of, in particular, the fourth season, as theorised by Van Deburg, will also be acknowledged. The intention is to question how far, as an international community, society's attitudes to race relations and black cultural signifiers have really altered.

Two characters, the transplanted Texan and businessman Albert "Chalky" White, and the urbane Trinidadian, Harlem based gangster Dr Valentine Narcisse, represent two differing, and conflicting, modes for the "improvement […] and uplift of the race", to quote Dr Narcisse. The experience of European immigrants, such as the Irish Margaret, in a similar context of xenophobia and national insularity will be probed for its echoes in twenty first century immigration policies, especially as changed irrevocably by September 11th, 2001. Overall, *Boardwalk*, as an important example of a text in the revival dealing with racial issues, lends itself well to a discussion of how it performs as a long form television dramatisation, in a revisionist vein, of the early 1920s.

Immigration is the primary (as well as titular) concern of *The Immigrant* (2013). This film will be analysed in order to explore the representation of the exploitation of female immigrants in 1921 New York City, which in itself is atypical for cinema recreating the early twentieth century immigration experience in the United States, and the Jewish experience (including anti-Semitism) faced by the titular immigrant's benefactor. *Downton* and *Miss Fisher's* both serve as illuminating texts scrutinising the intersection of race, jazz music and gender (especially female) control within early 1920s British high society and late 1920s Australian (specifically Melbournian) nightlife, respectively. *Miss Fisher's* also serves as an allegorical interrogation of the criminalisation of same-sex relationships in the Jazz Age, while *Miss Fisher's* is being consumed by viewers in an era where homophobia is largely demonised and

gay marriage has finally become a legal reality in Australia, like much of the developed world. In between these texts, *Bessie* (2015), a companion piece for *Boardwalk*, will serve as a platform from which to discuss issues of Caucasian appropriation of African-American culture, and lacunae where the reality of racial politics of the era is concerned. Similarly, and finally, *The Danish Girl* (2015) dramatises the originary point for transsexuality through gender reassignment surgery in Weimar Germany at the conclusion of the 1920s. Transsexuality is an important and well-publicised issue in 2018, thereby highlighting the relevance of *Danish Girl*, in the context of the revival, for its echoing of the cultural discourse almost ninety years later.

It is interesting to ruminate on whether the presence of non-Caucasian characters in the 1920s audiovisual revival stands symbolically as a monument to an artistic desire to represent the 1920s experiences of those who have been downplayed by the history books. Whether these representations are metonyms for a politically correct tip of the hat to "reconciliation", alongside a dramatisation of hidden stories, or merely pandering, tokenism or quota filling, the presence of these characters deserves further interrogation. No argument will be made here that the presence of non-Caucasian actors and characters in these programs, in and of itself, is somehow revolutionary. Character arcs are also limited by the official and unofficial racism and segregation that were a fact of life in the 1920s. Nevertheless, it is instructive and worthwhile to investigate the perspective that twenty first century creative artists bring to this factor of dramatising the 1920s, and how it differs from what went before.

Another example of contemporary popular cultural texts set in the past engaging with twenty first century values is worth mentioning. It is the inclusion, in deconstructing the text, of uncovering "hidden or repressed voices" (Milovanovic 1995). While Milovanovic is chiefly referring to the written text in his article, the visual dramatisation of the 1920s, as previously noted, devotes time to characters lower down on the socioeconomic and racial hierarchy. For instance, there is the inclusion, and importance, of characters from the African-American Northside in *Boardwalk* and the Afro-British community in *Downton*. Nevertheless, perhaps because of the revival's largely emanating from a Western, English-language context, there is a conservative tendency towards the loosely classical model of film

storytelling, in both the films and television programs (with obvious differences of emphasis and running times reflecting the two mediums) examined here. These include linear and restrained narration, rooted in the psychological backstory and agency and/or autonomy of characters; comprehensive motivation of all aspects of the *mise-en-scène* where cause and effect are concerned; coherent, logical time and space, and these forces' subservience to narrative movement; official patterns of repetition and variation; and, continuity editing (Hansen 2000: 11). Thematically, these conventions of storytelling in the twenty first century reconstruction of the 1920s allow for a glimpse of social anxieties during that decade concerning the behaviour of the younger generation.

Boardwalk Empire

Atlantic City's African-American population, as the writings of historians such as Nelson Johnson remind us, made up a sizeable proportion of Atlantic City's total population by 1920. Chalky, in "21" (S2E1, 2011) speaks of the "ten thousand black folk that make this city hum", and, while a businessman and not a statistician, he is not that far off the total figure of over 11,000 African-Americans registered as inhabitants of the city in 1915 (2011a: 39). Despite their invaluable role in the local hospitality industry, African-American workers and their families faced the daily humiliations of low pay, long working hours (except on Sunday), and the inability to frequent businesses in the "whites only" section of Atlantic City. This necessitated the creation of the "Northside", or African-American quarter, where black businesses, schools and churches flourished (Johnson 2011a: 37–45).

In the program, Chalky hails from the small town of Elgin, Texas. His family suffered from bigotry when he was young – his father, a carpenter, was lynched by jealous whites – and by the turn of the twentieth century he had relocated up North. He is married with three children; as such, his family situation is a fascinating example of period racial ideology in miniature. Notably, his wife, Lenore, is of a lighter skin colour, possibly as a consequence of interracial sexual relations, or miscegenation in the parlance of the era. Indeed, in "Ourselves Alone" (S2E2, 2011) this proves to be ammunition for the taunting of the incarcerated Chalky by Dunn Purnsley, a criminal in the same gaol cell who, feeling superior to Chalky, terms

Lenore a "high-yeller[30] bitch" and threatens, once he has gained his freedom, to "jazz her up."[31] Purnsley soon learns respect for Chalky, though, after the other prisoners in the cell, all loyal to the latter, beat him up. Later, Purnsley even becomes Chalky's trusted confederate.

Chalky has to rely even more on his allies later in the same season when a prominent local restaurant becomes the scene of industrial action, which is based on an actual strike at the Hotel Windsor in 1893 (Johnson 2011a: 35-36). Prompted by their inferior working conditions, and spurred on by the story arc of African-American resentment at a Ku Klux Klan attack on one of Chalky's warehouses in "21", the cooks and waiters march outside the front of the establishment bearing signs decrying their treatment and singing a spiritual exhorting the strikers to have faith in Christianity. While the workers are initially assaulted by white strike breakers, the management, faced with a downturn in profits, eventually agrees to meet their grievances through ameliorating conditions. The victory earned by the workers is a more positive outcome than the ruthless pattern of employment termination carried out by hotel managers as a consequence of historical strikes in Atlantic City, including, in addition to the 1893 example, an 1899 strike at the Albion Hotel and a 1906 strike at the Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel (Johnson 2011b: 34-35). In a more general, literary sense, or a case of *function proper*, returning to Roland Barthes, after the *cardinal function* of the industrial action (McFarlane 1996: 13–14), the names and locations of the offending Klan members are revealed to Jimmy and Richard. Though the Klan attack was aided, initially, by Jimmy as an act of sabotage against Nucky, shifting diplomacy and allegiance, plus the right price, leads to the

[30] A dialectical form of "high-yellow", a now offensive term for people classified as black who also have a high proportion of Caucasian ancestry. Etymologically, high refers to elevated social standing, while yellow refers to the extremely pale undertone to the skin colour of members of this group (Herbst 1997: 106; Hunt, Augustson, Rutten, Moser and Yaroch 2012: 5).

[31] Even as late as 1921, the word "jazz" still hadn't entirely managed to shake its status as a slang expression for copulation (Merriam and Garner 1968: 385). Prior to the Second World War, "jazzing" was also occasionally used as a euphemism for "ruining", or "fucking up." In the 1931 film adaptation of Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's 1928 play *The Front Page*, reporter Hildebrand "Hildy" Johnson accuses his editor, Walter Burns, of having "jazzed up" Johnson's life.

two ex veterans delivering the Klansmen to face the vengeance of Chalky and Purnsley.

The expansive medium and wide-angle shots of the disgruntled workers represent a long tradition of African-American protest, including, in a future, less prosperous Atlantic City of August 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer's protests against the wholly Caucasian Mississippi delegation to that year's Democratic Convention. Indeed, since the 1920s, and the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and '60s, despite all of the progress that African-Americans have made on the civil rights front, tensions still exist in the twenty first century where racial matters are concerned. The peaceful protest of African-American workers that is violated by a display of white political power and supremacy in *Boardwalk* dramatises the discriminatory motivations behind earlier twentieth century attempts to keep African-Americans "in their place" (Senechal 1990: 42; Van Deburg 2004: 147–48; Tuttle Jr 1974: 117, 171 & 185). Peaceful protest has the inverse image in later, even more brutal acts of civil disobedience.

Alongside greater militancy, this change is pertinent to the demographics of participants, while ideologies or motives remain similar. These acts of civil disobedience include the Watts, California riots of August 1965 over racially divisive institutions and practices (Van Deburg 2004: 150-53), the conflagration that erupted in South Central Los Angeles after the acquittal of four police officers, charged with assaulting Rodney King in May 1992 and the shooting of an unarmed eighteen-year-old African-American male, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri in August 2014 (Berman 2014; Lowery, Leonnig and Berman 2014). Media views of such riots have often tended towards the hysterical (Conot 1967: 218 & 325; Cannon 1997: 296, 318–20 & 330). Yet, readings of these crises as racially motivated revenge, with a strong "anti-white" bias, are not borne out by the evidence. In the case of the Rodney King riots, for example, African-Americans sought to shield innocents, regardless of ethnicity, in the crossfire from harm (Smith 1994: 1–15). It is also telling that, in the tense political environment that has existed in the United States since the election of President Donald Trump in November 2016, the Unite the Right rally (encompassing white supremacists opposed to both Jewish people and African-Americans), possibly the most notorious recent event of its kind, coalesced around the proposed removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee from

a park in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017 (Fausset and Feuer 2017). Differing discourses over the connotations of this statue of a Caucasian symbol of the agrarian, slave holding South prior to the 1860s led to three deaths (Heim 2017). The racial divides inherent in the healing process of racial reconciliation illustrate, through the revival, cycles of a problematic continuing strain, from before the 1920s to now, in U.S. history.

As verbalised in *Boardwalk* episodes such as "The Emerald City" (S1E10, 2010), where dice games on "Chicken Bone Beach" are mentioned, the African-American experience of modernity in the 1920s not only demonstrates strong familial and community bonds, but also encompasses a tolerance for amusements perceived as "harmless." Gambling, known in the context of the Harlem underworld as the "numbers racket" (Schatzberg 1993: 3–5), was also ubiquitous in Atlantic City, for it could be played in businesses ranging from bars to grocery stores. The aim of these wagers was to have three numbers (between zero and 999) match a preset series of three numerals, and the chance to win could be procured for as little as a penny (one cent). Games of chance that are depicted in *Boardwalk Empire* display benign impacts. It was later on, in the 1930s, that white mobster power struggles against African-American "Kings and Queens" of gambling created scenes of carnage (Schatzberg 1993: 4, 8 & 72–73), and these urban crime disputes have provided the subject matter for films as diverse as *Harlem Nights* (1989) and *Hoodlum* (1997), plus the fifth *Boardwalk* season episode "What Jesus Said" (S5E3, 2014). This development brings to mind French sociologist Emile Durkheim's claim that the absence of crime in society is inconceivable due to behaviour diversification (1964: 67). However, the background of African-American betting control lacked the evolution into parasitic and predatory organisations experienced by white gangs, and this allowed gangsters like Arthur "Dutch Schultz" Flegenheimer to annex a business that aided African-American community solidarity for Caucasian business supremacy.

Other illicit concerns are prey to this cycle of victimhood. The Ku Klux Klansmen in "21" (S2E1, 2011) may justify their assault on a liquor still as an act in accord with precepts of pure, sober Christianity, but it also reflects a paranoia about black business expansion in any form. African-American characters in the program, at least in Atlantic City, are simultaneously depicted as nobler in the pursuit of illicit

profits, caused by day to day struggles against a white establishment, and as being more helpless than entrepreneurs who are not African-American. Characters such as Chalky are depicted as hostages to bigoted community groups, and thus as requiring powerful white allies such as Nucky to consolidate black economic gains, or even expansion, as with the opening of the Onyx Club amongst non-black businesses in the fourth season. This ideology is consistent with the historical record, but it problematically evokes a paternal dramatisation of the "noble savage" theory. Under this almost Orientalist (or "exotic") construction, African-Americans were stigmatised as being prone to unconstrained displays of precipitous emotion, requiring white supervision in order to acclimatise to Western society (Van Deburg 2004: 25–26).

Even supposed supporters of the African-American experience in *Boardwalk* are shown to have ulterior motives detrimental to true cultural respect. The cultural scholar Venise T. Berry defines the concept of "racialism", encompassing the principle of centuries of racism, as thought that exhibits an:

> insensitivity, bias, or complete disregard for different culture […] the use of stereotypical images or ideas concerning different racial histories […] or the acceptance of antiracial attitudes based on a hostility or resentment for other races. (1996: viii–ix)

The *Boardwalk* episode "New York Sour" (S4E1, 2013) is a prime example of such superior attitudes on the part of Caucasian characters towards African-Americans. For instance, the crudely drawn image of two people having sex scribbled on a handkerchief passed to Purnsley indicates an assumption of illiteracy on the part of Purnsley – a consequence of the proscribed educational opportunities available to slaves in the pre Civil War South (Cornelius 1983: 1) – as well as serving as a code. Appropriately enough, given the overwhelming black demographics in Atlantic City hospitality and the servile, idealised relationship encouraged by Atlantic City's government towards relations between the races (Simon 2004: 13-14), Purnsley is seen as merely an asset to be exploited.

The trust between Chalky and Purnsley is abruptly shattered, later in this episode, in the aftermath of the only instance of onscreen interracial relations in the program. Purnsley is seduced by Alma, the wife of promoter and booking agent Dickie Pastor. Once the husband bursts in on the act, he expresses outrage, but is surprisingly calm.

It turns out that the married couple have perpetrated this scam before, and Pastor berates Purnsley at gunpoint for acting "just like the fucking niggers you are." Pastor may claim to love black culture, presenting himself as an anti-essentialist – a person who believes in the potential of culture to transcend racial boundaries (Frith 2011: 108) – but his racial epithets, plus the revelation that he has stolen from the vaudeville performers under his charge, marks him as exhibiting the final trait of Berry's definition: "antiracial attitudes." Pastor forces the humiliated Purnsley to continue the sex act while he masturbates, only for Purnsley to turn the tables on his tormentor with an empty bottle, bludgeoning him to death.

The final shot of this sequence, consisting of a medium shot of Purnsley in a blood-drenched singlet, has connotations of animal passion. The imagery connotes almost simian, rather than noble, savagery, and is ideologically jarring compared to the more liberal treatment of the African-American characters in the program up until now. From his imposing stature and physique, and rebellious attitude – he both consents to physical relations with a married woman and engages in intercourse with a woman of a different race in an era when such an act was illegal in many U.S. states (Fryer Jr 2007: 73–75) – it can be said that, although Purnsley has regained his self-worth and taught Pastor not to underestimate him, he has crossed over into the character type of what historian William L. Van Deburg terms the "black brute" (2004: 28). The black brute was characterised by rudeness, rebelliousness and dourness (Van Deburg 2004: 28), all aspects of Purnsley's character, to a degree, with the exception of his demonstrating, on occasion, a cynical and sarcastic sense of humour. His stature and ferocious temper, at least in this scene, certainly posit him as capable of generating fear.

"Liberal", in the sense of equality of civil rights, free of infringement by discrimination or repression, only travels so far in the program's depiction of African-American characters, however. *Boardwalk Empire* recreates the racial politics of the era rather "faithfully", and the Caucasian characters, including Eli, pepper their conversations with racial epithets for African-Americans such as "coon", "shine" and "spook."[32] Nucky is one of the few white people of power in the

[32] Coon is possibly derived from the supposed fondness of African-Americans for eating racoons, or a colloquial term for a sly person (Abbott and Seroff 2007: 12 & 416, n.3). Shine is an offensive term for

community not to resort to such racial superiority in discourse. His apparent betrayal of Chalky to Dr Narcisse in "Farewell Daddy Blues" (S4E12, 2013), with the words, "I don't want that spook coming anywhere near me again", is initially shocking in its unexpected prejudice, but it turns out later on in the episode to have been part of a trap *against* Dr Narcisse, luring the gangster into a meeting with Chalky where the former can be killed by Harrow. It is also worth mentioning that, like his fictionalised counterpart, the real Nucky Johnson was a champion of Atlantic City's Northside, even if only to garner votes during elections (Johnson 2011a & b). The insistence on sustaining a "segregated" atmosphere, in thought as well as deed, throughout *Boardwalk Empire* is certainly politically incorrect; yet, it adds to the program's atmosphere, suspense and verisimilitude. It must be emphasised, however, that Nucky is still capable of expressing culture shock when dealing with Chalky. To list one example, in the first season, he demonstrates his unfamiliarity with Chalky's use of the epithet "motherfucker."

In his essay "The Existence of Italy" (originally published in 1992), Frederic Jameson writes of the capacity of texts to "[expand] to reveal traces of the entire genre system within itself as in the peculiarly distorting registration of a specific generic microcosm, and according to its own structural priorities, its own characteristic dominants and subordinate" (2007: 242). While he is referring to Hollywood cinema genres of the 1930s, these "omnibus" texts, which present defining characteristics of differing genres before an audience in a manner akin to variety entertainment (Jameson 2007: 242), are still relevant to the current cycle of revisiting the 1920s. For example, the nightclub sequences in the fourth season of *Boardwalk*, with their Busby Berkeley style choreography, overhead shots and prominent, head on shots of musicians, ape the conventions of musical production numbers. This generic quota coexists alongside scenes from the series that follow the tropes of other popular cultural genres. The gangster saga is invoked by the

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African-Americans, derived from shoe shining (Green 2005: 1265), a career path stereotypically associated with African-Americans, and emblematic of their enforced socioeconomic inferiority (Crawford 2017). Spook is a racial slur for a black person, perhaps from the registered fear exhibited by many white children at their first sight of an African-American. The term is only attested as far back as the 1940s (Partridge 2002: 1130) so, in the context of *Boardwalk Empire*, it may be anachronistic.

machinations between Nucky, the D'Alessio brothers in the first season and Gyp Rossetti, as well as between Nucky and Jimmy. Comedy is prioritised in the banter and misunderstandings between Nucky and Kessler. Horror tropes inform Jimmy witnessing Philadelphia gangster and kosher butcher Manny "Munya" Horvitz slitting the throat of a treacherous associate in "The Age of Reason" (S2E6, 2011), and Gyp's bludgeoning to death of an associate with a shovel in "A Man, A Plan…" (S3E10, 2012). Even "message" productions influence the treatment of Gillian's heroin addiction, and her cold turkey withdrawals during her attempts to give up opiate use, in the fourth season.

Returning to the stylistic traits of the musical, it is not just music that is on display in the Onyx Club. Chalky's establishment is similar to other "black and tan joints" of the period, such as the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York, where only white patrons were admitted to be waited on, and entertained by, African-Americans (Ogren 1992: 76). This example of segregationist custom permits a fascinating glimpse of the beginnings of black standup comedy. It is hardly revolutionary or incendiary, however, as it is delivered by a male comedian wearing a bowler hat, white gloves and a black and white chequered suit. In the spotlight, he delivers jokes heavily indebted to blackface minstrelsy, punctuated by trombone noises (such as for example, the following: "What did God say when he made the first Negro? "Oh no, I think I burnt one!" and "What do you call a Negro woman whose husband just died? A black widow!").

This racist and exclusionist ribaldry – based on a later comedy routine by Club Harlem comedian Slappy White (Johnson 2011b: 158-60) – is juxtaposed with a later scene in which Dr Valentine Narcisse, a Harlem based gangster and representative for the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), boldly sits down at a table next to Nucky in the Onyx Club to discuss the fading respect for Chalky in the Northside community. In contrast to his introduction in a backroom of the Onyx Club in "Resignation" (S4E2, 2013), Narcisse's presence in a segregated venue crystallises his growing race pride and contempt for the self-righteousness of the local status quo.

Histories of conservative reactions to 1920s youth culture, and received public memories, tend to focus on outraged white repudiation of the "devil's music." Yet,

as the literature of African-American conservatism demonstrates (Ogren 1992: 138; Sugg 2013: 81-108), there was also much consternation on the part of conservative African-Americans towards jazz and general permissiveness. Chalky's son Lester jokingly berates his sister, Maybelle, in "Spaghetti and Coffee" (S3E2, 2012), after Maybelle has asked her brother if he is familiar with a "King and Carter number" (King and Carter Jazzing Orchestra was an ensemble from Houston, Texas [Kluft 2014]). Lester scolds: "Maybelle, jazz is the devil's music, and no self-respecting Negro should have anything to do with it", followed by a pause then laughter.

Chalky's son's inability to take seriously the admonitions of the elder generation are prefaced and followed by two scenes, in two separate episodes, of meetings of the Northside's notables. In the first, "What Does The Bee Do?" (S2E4, 2011), presided over by Chalky, an elderly woman decries a neighbouring couple prone to "rent parties", with "rag music"[33] and general depravity. In the second example of a community meeting, "William Wilson" (S4E7, 2013), where the gathering is chaired in Chalky's absence to question his allegiance to the African-American community, another woman is shocked by gatherings where "horrid jazz music" can be discerned. Her complaints echo moral panics in recent decades about the social fraternisation of youth (Chatterton 2002: 27 & 42-43) and music and/or noise restrictions in residential areas – in contemporary parlance, "noise pollution" that disturbs "quality of life" (Clout 2009). It also provides an opportunity for Dr Narcisse to don the mask of municipal pride, and demand the eradication of bootleg liquor and a heroin epidemic from Atlantic City. The dramatic irony, however, is that Dr Narcisse is responsible, as a supplier, for the current heroin supply, utilising people like Purnsley as dealers.

Dr Narcisse presents an image of the 1920s African-American experience that is the complete opposite of Chalky. Whereas Chalky has retained much of his down home, Texas character traits, including a pronounced drawl, rustic syntax of speech and illiteracy, Dr Narcisse presents himself as an urbane philanthropist, his reassuring and polished Trinidadian accent lending authority to his image of a doctor (of divinity, considering that the initials "D.D" follow Narcisse's name on a poster in the episode "The Old Ship Of Zion" [S4E8, 2013], and his frequent references to being a

[33] Ragtime.

"follower of Christ"). Chalky does not hesitate to demonstrate his anger at events not going to plan, losing his temper with family and colleagues alike, and neither is he afraid to kill out of a sense of community minded revenge. Dr Narcisse, while a man for whom violence is also part of his Harlem based racketeering, delegates violent acts to others and refuses to raise his voice, opting instead for calm, but firm, discourse with those around him.

Both Chalky and Dr Narcisse bedeck themselves in immaculate clothing for their day to day business, especially in the light of Chalky's becoming a club owner, and both put themselves forward as champions for their community. In the case of Dr Narcisse, his overseeing of UNIA-ACL posits him as a champion of the pan-African mandate of Marcus Garvey. Narcisse's designs on Atlantic City's entertainment industry, coupled with his West Indian heritage, also contextualise him as being in the vanguard of the Caribbean diaspora and entrepreneurial drive in the Eastern United States (Schatzberg 1993: 97–126; Johnson 2011b: 125–26). Putting forth an image of determined self-direction and race pride, such a figure embodies more sinister overtones, however. As with Phil "The Jew" Jeffs in *Razor*, philanthropic and charitable acts on the part of racketeers – such as Casper Holstein, the inspiration for Narcisse – are intended to mask the connotations of lawbreaking. In this way, a romanticised image of criminality is erected, which is difficult to dismantle, but that effectively positions the 1920s as a turning point for African-American organised crime. The historical arc is reversed, where societal progress or "improvement" is concerned. Whatever the personal flaws of a mobster such as Narcisse, his outward trappings of elegance stand as a signifier of lament for contemporary ghetto street crime, drive by shootings and inner city break down. Narcisse, especially in his heroin strategising in the fourth season, can also be interpreted as a point of origin for contemporary gangland drug trafficking, as Lansky and Luciano were, in a European immigrant context.

Yet, for all the surface glamour of Harlem based criminality, the spectre of exoticism and resulting social tensions are still present in the consideration of Narcisse's background and vulnerability in the 1920s *milieu*. There is an emotional and psychological link to Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones* (1920), which was a key literary document of the 1920s thematically concerned with racial tension. The play takes place on a West Indian island, with the titular deposed emperor, Brutus

Jones, losing his sanity and life by reason of paranoia and the treachery of the jungle in the midst of rebellion. Jones is an expatriate from the United States, but his controlled and haughty demeanour and Southern dialect unravel under pressure, the latter becoming more meandering and emotional. At one point, at the conclusion of Scene Four, Jones hallucinates, convinced that he is observing a chain gang of black prisoners supervised by a white guard, and bellows, "I kills you, you white debil, if it's de last thing I evah does! Ghost or debil, I kill you agin!" (O'Neill 1921: 41). Under the strain of the destruction of heroin supplies and an attempt on his life, Narcisse's "You ready for dis?" to a henchman in "White Horse Pike" (S4E10, 2013) is a clear linguistic marker of the slipping away, syntactically and through a willingness to employ violence, from a mask of complete self-control.

The primitivism of Afro-Caribbean thematic content in O'Neill's play provides an ideological justification for U.S. imperialism amongst neighbouring nations, allegorised by the dishevelled Jones losing the accoutrements of Eurocentric civilisation and reverting to an almost naked state (Renda 2001: 207–09). However, in evoking the conditions of slavery in such scenes as Scene Five's phantasmagorical plantation auction (1921: 43–45), O'Neill managed to remind white audiences of their past national sins (Renda 2001: 210–12). Such a message, steeped in the unpalatable realities of (from the perspective of the 1920s) history in living memory, permeates Narcisse's critique of Atlantic City's power structure as resembling an agrarian estate. For Narcisse, steeped in the British "islands" culture of self-reliance and literacy (Johnson 2011b: 125), in a society where slavery was curtailed decades before the United States model (Morrissey 1989: 89), his new home is backward, and "might as well be Mississippi." Even in the second decade of the twenty first century, certain fundamentalist U.S. Christians, such as televangelist Pat Robertson, have conflated paranoia over historical revolts in the system of slavery and fascination or dismissal of Caribbean religious practices in their firm conviction that heavenly wrath lay behind such catastrophes as the Haiti earthquake of 2010 (Lauerman 2010). While it is true that these viewpoints come from an extreme right-wing theological perspective, they are nonetheless indicative of longstanding Caucasian scepticism over alternative African-American cultural practices and independence.

"Farewell Daddy Blues" (S4E12, 2013) dramatises the start of a twentieth century cycle of bureaus and agencies interfering with black radicals and dissidents, from Martin Luther King Jr (Garrow 2002) to Malcolm X (Lomax 1987: 198) to the Black Panthers (Weiner 2012: 271), and even, through omission, the welfare of African-American populations in the United States. One recent example is the dilatory aid distributed to New Orleans African-Americans, under the aegis of the Department of Homeland Security, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (Sandalow 2005). When Garvey's investigation by the United States government led to his fall from grace as a powerful leader within the "back to Africa" movement between 1923 and his imprisonment in February 1925 (for mail fraud [Ellis 1994: 49]), he was under surveillance through photography and cinematography.

The newsreel of Garvey at a rally in "White Horse Pike" (S4E10, 2013) is another *mise en abyme*, concentrating the paranoia against "radical agendas" espoused by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), headed by J. Edgar Hoover, into technology as evidence in national security. Narcisse's decision to inform against Garvey's "radical agenda", while under duress from Hoover, in "Farewell Daddy Blues" (S4E12, 2013), is indicative of the FBI's lukewarm prioritisation of organised crime in the early 1920s while they obsessed over dissident elements (Ellis 1994: 39–49). In this specific instance of racial profiling, the FBI fears that Garvey's exhortations to African-Americans to embrace racial pride might upset race relations and, it is implied through the addressing of the conservatively attired informant in the latter episode, encourage African-Americans to test racial limits. This is the authoritarian discouragement of "uppity" African-Americans mentioned earlier.

Indeed, the underlying argument of Narcisse's final scene in "Farewell Daddy Blues", where the doctor restrains himself from physically attacking his oppressor, seems to be that African-Americans, aided by communications technology in the 1920s, are prey to insidious power games by white power elites. In the argot of the era, Hoover's policy is "mighty white"[34] of him, for his disdain for the uneasy notion

[34] A racialist phrase, connoting Caucasian supremacy, that was popular in the early decades of the twentieth century and was a form of praise referring to something positive, desirable, thoughtful or helpful that someone had done (Partridge 2002: 1331).

of "three thousand Negros with independent ideas" strengthens Caucasian superiority and the status quo for fellow whites. If there is noncompliance with undermining racial progress, then incarceration or (for an immigrant, like Narcisse) deportation are threatened as consequences.

On the basis of this evidence, it seems fair to suggest that *Boardwalk Empire* exhibits a certain degree of sympathy with Afrocentric notions of "white villainy": the deceptive and mean qualities of Caucasians as noted and propagated by racial separatists from W. E. B. Du Bois to Elijah Muhammad (Van Deburg 2004: 94-96). Indeed, the view of Caucasian attitudes to African-Americans in the program arguably presents itself as a case of "anti-Kemetism", the term given by controversial black studies professor Leonard Jeffries, Jr to an "inability to deal with the blackness of the Nile" (Van Deburg 2004: 99). Though *Boardwalk* is milder in dramatisation than the racist and anti-Semitic denunciations of Eurocentrism that resulted in conflict with Jeffries' employer, the City College of New York (Hecht 1992: 11–12; Bernstein 1993), the fourth season in particular demonstrates how black characters, like Narcisse, can face white hindrance with ancestral pride, rooted in constant references to black people as "Libyans", after the North African nation. A less tolerant side effect of this racial pride is linguistic, taking the form of Narcisse's denunciation of Caucasians as "white devils", a racial generalisation that prefigures the fiery rhetoric of the Nation of Islam. Between the fourth and fifth seasons of *Boardwalk*, however, exists a disappointing lacuna. Although Narcisse is compelled to spy on UNIA-ACL, this development is never again mentioned.

Religion, as an organised gathering of a community under the tenets of faith, has a solid position and standing in the world of *Boardwalk Empire*, from the WCTU to the African-American Shiloh Baptist Church's baptisms and revival meetings. The spiritual and temporal comfort provided by black churches, in particular, counted music among its ammunition for retaining allegiance (Johnson 2011b: 89–90). Another consequence of slavery in the United States was a firm attachment to spirituality amongst African-Americans seeking solace from enforced toil, a historical cycle well documented in the literature (Wilmore 1983; Lincoln & Mamiya 1990; Pitts 1996; Fulop 2013). Indeed, one episode from the fourth season, "The Old Ship of Zion" (S4E8, 2013), takes its title from a spiritual sung by Daughter Maitland, which demonstrates that, as well as being adept in "jazz,

improvisation and blues", Daughter moves in the same aspirational middle class socioeconomic level shared by Chalky, his family and many other northern African-Americans (Johnson 2011b: 79). Even today, African-Americans, according to major U.S. government agencies such as Pew Research, profess, statistically, a higher rate of religious observance than any other national ethnic group ("A Religious Portrait of African-Americans" 2009).

African-American religious communities in the program are not subject to the same whims of secular interference as, for instance, the territorial scheming of Gyp in the third season that results in the cancellation of the Bible Camp in the town of Tabor Heights. However, just as the trade in illicit alcohol plays havoc with religious freedom for this White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) community, the authority of the black Baptist church in Atlantic City is challenged with deadly, individual force in the fourth season over heroin. Deacon Lemuel Cuffey, a minister for the aforementioned church, is killed, in "William Wilson" (S4E7, 2013), to prevent his knowledge about the Atlantic City heroin trade becoming public, thus setting up the funeral and the singing of spirituals in the following episode. Although previously an aid to law enforcement in revealing Van Alden's act of murder in the second season, the figure of Cuffey as a man of the cloth turned martyr to the forces of modernity (the underworld distribution of narcotics) is symbolic of the increasing turn towards religious scepticism in contemporary U.S. society (Laderman 2013). In *Boardwalk*'s depiction of a stratified society, it appears that, if not a case of nothing being sacred, piety and respect for the sacrosanct is tarnished.

Narcisse's status as a Trinidadian expatriate, and a radical one, at that, is merely one example of émigrés in the world of the program. Immigrants comprise a significant proportion of the character demographics in *Boardwalk*, providing at the very least "multicultural colour" to the proceedings. Many countries and cultures are represented. There are the obvious camps: the Italian gangsters, including native Sicilians such as Capone and Luciano, and the Jewish underworld figures such as Rothstein and Lansky (also first generation, caused by their having been born in Grodno, then a part of the Russian Empire). For his part, Manny Horvitz hails from Odessa, Russia. However, to concentrate on these actual personalities is to ignore the supporting *dramatis personae*. Nucky's butler, Eddie Kessler, hails from Germany, and the preference for spirits as a tipple in the world of the show, apart from the

breweries in Chicago, is changed to that for beer in an inebriated night in an Atlantic City German style beer hall in "All In" (S4E4, 2013). Madame Isabelle Jeunet, the proprietor of a dress shop, La Belle Femme, in the lobby of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, is French. Sigrid, the nanny for Van Alden's illegitimate daughter Abigail and, later, Mueller's common law wife, is Norwegian, and an unintentional influence on her husband's gradual process of attaining worldliness by encouraging home production of *akvavit* (or *aquavit*), a flavoured spirit, to sell to the Norwegian community in Cicero to make up for the job that he lost as a salesman. As for the representatives of the law, Agent Stan Sawicki is of "Polish stock", as defined by his boss, Van Alden; and even Van Alden, though he stresses to Sigrid that his heritage is based in upstate New York and that he is not "Dutch", would be of pioneer immigrant stock, considering his surname and the ethnic history of New York State.

Immigration is also situated in the zone of xenophobia, including the virulent appeals to nationalism during wartime or elections. Nucky, incensed over unsatisfactory preparations for his birthday in "Anastasia" (S1E4, 2010), reminds Kessler that he provided succour during the "anti-German bullshit" of anti-German propaganda during the First World War. This demonisation of the "Hun"[35] nevertheless infuses Nucky's vocal tone with dismissal when he describes the murder of Hans Schroeder, framed for Jimmy and Capone's botched liquor truck hijack, to Van Alden, in "The Ivory Tower" (S1E2, 2010). Nucky's anti-German bias infuses his general descriptions of Margaret's first husband as a shiftless layabout. Indeed, as well as the personage of the veteran, the memory of the First World War as an event still fresh in people's minds is carried on through scraps of conversation. Sometimes this is humorous, as in "Hold Me In Paradise" (S1E8, 2010) when Annabel, another of Nucky's mistresses, asks Margaret laughingly what she thinks is under Kessler's woollen clothing, to which Margaret jokes, "The Kaiser's moustache." When Margaret's neighbour is queried by Van Alden in "Family Limitation" (S1E6, 2010),

[35] An abusive term used to refer to Germans by the Allies during the First World War. The term was originally the name of a nomadic people who established a vast, but short lived, dominion in Europe during the fifth century C.E, and their supposed barbarity (albeit chronicled by parties other than the Huns themselves) (Hughes 2006: 243) was equated with the German war machine by Allied propaganda from 1914–18 (Todd 2014: 140).

seeking the truth behind Hans' murder, of which Margaret is unaware, she denigrates Margaret in uncomplimentary terms. To the neighbour, not only is Margaret a "whore" for her liaison with the protective Nucky, but Margaret's employment by Madame Jeunet stigmatises her as working for "French people." Further judgement of Margaret as a neglectful mother ("off drinking champagne, I wouldn't be surprised") belies the fact that, unbeknownst to the neighbour, Margaret has quit the employ of the patronising dress maker, and the rudeness of client Lucy, in order to move her children and herself to a superior building provided by Nucky.

This distasteful Francophobia stands in stark contrast to Angela and Mary's romanticisation of Paris – they both repeat the phrase "Nous devons aller à Paris" (We must go to Paris) in "The Emerald City" (S1E10, 2010) – as a *locus* of permissive and enlightened freedom, especially as a place to raise Tommy. This posits Paris as the magical land of Oz, contrasted against the traditional values that act as oppositions to the full potential of the two women (Atlantic City, then, must be equated with Kansas in this context).[36] The sequences in which Francophobic sentiments are uttered also serve to remind viewers that history does repeat itself. The virulent calls to boycott French goods and the renaming of "French fries" as "freedom fries" in the United States during the lead-up to the Coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003 were especially disturbing (Vaïsse 2003: 42), considering that the government of President Jacques Chirac was not at war with the United States, but merely refused to participate in the offensive against Saddam Hussein.

The backdrop of the post First World War "Red Scare", culminating in anti-Communist arrests and deportations in 1919 (Zinn 1999: 365–67), manifests itself in topical references and character machinations. The Ku Klux Klan had an active membership in the North of the United States as well as the South during the early

[36] This is a darker, more adult interpretation of the children's literature of author L. Frank Baum, enjoyed by Margaret's children in the second half of *Boardwalk*'s first season. It is also the basis of the common ground that they find with Harrow in "The Emerald City" (S1E10, 2010). Harrow is shown be allegorically "hollow" in his maimed visage, emotional trauma and in his scrapbook collection. His quest to feel an emotional connection to Margaret's family, Jimmy, Tommy and Julia is strengthened and made more achievable after his ordeal in the woods, where a suicide attempt is prevented, in "Gimcrack and Bunkum" (S2E5, 2011). This catharsis, therefore, encourages him to embrace life.

1920s, and a Klan meeting in "Anastasia" (S1E4, 2010) outlines their anxiety over traditional values being subverted in their list of scapegoats for societal ills: "filthy immigrants, Christ-killing Jews, anarchists of every stripe" and "the coon." Although it reached its peak as an organisation in 1924 (Gitlin 2009: 20), the Klan is not mentioned or shown again after the second season. This exclusion is especially surprising considering the fourth season's concentration on the issue of race, and Marcus Garvey's attempts to inaugurate a *rapprochement* with the Klan in order to gain support for his separatist politics (Leeuwen 2000).

In "Resignation" (S4E2, 2013), set in the lead-up to the historical backdrop of the 1924 mayoral elections in Cicero, the Capone brothers, Mueller and a small army of hired thugs, infiltrate an election rally, where the candidate's, reform minded Democrat William K. Pflaum, pseudo-"Nativist" sympathies are broadcast:

> They can't buy the mayor's office and they can't bully their way in, either. Cicero is an honest town, an American town. That's right, American! Our neighbours may hail from Bohemia or Poland or Bavaria or the far reaches of the steppes, but we stand here today under the same Stars and Stripes…

The election was eventually won by the candidate endorsed by Capone's interests, Republican Joseph "Jumping Joe" Z. Klenha (Deuchler 2006: 60-61), but the far from democratic campaigning – during which Mueller comes close to shooting Capone in the episode showcasing Frank Capone's death on April Fool's Day 1924, "All In" (S4E3, 2013) – exists in both "Resignation" and "All In" as a representative instance of 1920s U.S. insularity.

Such sentiments still find a home in U.S. party politics and pandering to voters' anxieties today, especially in the case of border security and illegal, often Hispanic, immigration. Certainly, they manifest themselves in the pejorative slurs deployed by characters (including, again, Eli and even Nucky) when referring to Italians – "greaseballs", "dagos" and "wops[37]." While Nucky employs a tough guy approach

[37] Greaseball is a derogatory term used in the United States for a foreigner, especially one of Mediterranean or Latin American origin, derived from stereotypical perceptions of their "greasy" appearance and hair styles (Bryson 1998: 177; Hughes 2006: 259; Roediger 2006: 42). Dago is derived from the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian surname Diego (Bryson 1998: 177; Hughes 2006: 259). Wop supposedly originated in the 1890s in the United States from the Southern Italian (Neapolitan and

when dealing with "ungentlemanly" mobsters such as Luciano, even he raises an eyebrow to Alderman George O'Neill's eugenicist and physiognomic description of the D'Alessio brother who robbed O'Neill's takings in "Family Limitation" (S1E6, 2010) as having a "dago look […] feeble-minded." In these instances of the writers' further giving an authentic voice to anti-immigrant rhetoric of the era, the audience's loyalty to Nucky is nevertheless assured because his more liberal opinions are detectable in his (medium shot) facial expressions.

Although such unenlightened attitudes have roots in nineteenth century Protestant social movements such as the "Know-Nothing" Party, leading to the passage of the Immigration Act (or Johnson-Reed Act) in 1924, which set immigration quotas, anti-immigrant sentiment, xenophobia and "protectionist' mentalities are still prevalent today in the U.S. context. Although the target of citizens' ire is more likely to be illegal aliens, often in the form of the Hispanic diaspora over the Southern border, the same old prejudices around different customs and lifestyles, and paranoia over job security remain (Schama 2008; Schama 2010: 220–23). In "Paris Green" (S1E11, 2010), Nucky gets ready for a dinner with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a patriotic organisation known for its exclusionary and narrow ancestral requirements for membership (Wallace 1981: 66–68). Margaret asks: "How did their own ancestors get here?"; Nucky sarcastically responds: "why, they grew in the ground like pumpkins, and marched off with [George] Washington to Valley Forge."

In a political climate where issues such as immigration reform are influenced heavily by current U.S. president Donald Trump, there still appears to be trouble in the paradise of *e pluribus unum* and unintended heat in the Melting Pot. More specifically, the program demonstrates the United States' historically partisan relationship with the remainder of the globe. The reactionary alternative to supposed U.S. tolerance and acceptance is writ large in Terence Winter's creation, whether considering U.S. isolationism after the First World War, the rise of ultra nationalistic and xenophobic organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan or prejudice against

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Sicilian) dialectical term *guappo*, roughly meaning "dandy", "dude", or "fop" (Bryson 1998: 177; Hughes 2006: 258).

immigrants. In this way, *Boardwalk Empire* demonstrates, in an artistic manner, that U.S. nationalism has had a long gestation period and is by no means a dead issue.

The Immigrant

Immigration is the focus of subplots and character arcs in *Boardwalk*. The formative experience of a character such as Margaret highlights her complicated experience with the process of New World assimilation. However, in *The Immigrant*, the status of the titular character, from arrival in Ellis Island, New York to eventual migration out of the metropolis, is examined in greater depth.

Motion pictures examining the immigrant experience in the United States prior to the 1924 Immigration Act, from *America America* (1963) to *The Godfather Part II* (the experience of Vito Corleone, 1974), from *Hester Street* (1975) to *Ragtime* (1981) and from *Yentl* (at the conclusion, 1983) to *An American Tail* (1986), tend to be set in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *The Immigrant*, however, bucks this trend through its historical setting of early 1921, a year after immigration rates to the United States skyrocketed after a sharp decline during the First World War (Cannato 2009: 331). Ewa Cybulski and her sister Magda, in *The Immigrant*, represent the impact of conservative discourses surrounding immigration at this historical juncture. Magda is quarantined because of her lung disease. This results in her segregation from her sister and the citizens of New York City, at the behest of a medicalised attitude, on the part of officialdom, of distrust and xenophobia over new cultures commingling in the New World. As for Ewa, she is regarded by authorities with suspicion as a woman of "low morals", owing to rumours of her being a prostitute during her boat voyage over the Atlantic. The absence of her aunt and uncle at Ellis Island, coupled with her sister's convalescence, further categorise and stigmatise Ewa as an "unaccompanied female […] liable to become a public charge." Anglo-Saxon, Protestant morality, enshrined in the power wielded by immigration officials, acts against the Polish Catholic persona of Ewa and frames her as even more of an outsider.

Indeed, Ewa's religion is one of her defining traits, and this is not tempered by an increase in secularisation and religious disillusionment such as that experienced by Margaret in *Boardwalk*. Ewa's Catholicism increases her torment and shame over

having to work for Bruno Weiss, the master of ceremonies at a local theatre and a procurer, after he arranges for her to be granted admission into the United States. Bruno's relationship with Ewa is exploitative: she is compelled into prostitution in order to send aid and letters to Magda. Eventually, Ewa finds her aunt and uncle, but her uncle turns her in to the authorities, citing moral objections, and fear for his business standing, over sheltering a "whore." In fact, Ewa later confesses to a priest that she was sexually assaulted before disembarking at Ellis Island. Despite the spectre of "sin" complicating Ewa's new existence, she clings to the rituals of Polish Catholicism and the Polish language as a comforting reminder of the Old World. Her polylingualism further differentiates her from *Boardwalk*'s Margaret, who is never heard conversing in the character's native Gaelic.

In contrast to Ewa, Bruno's Jewishness is hardly devout. He presents an image of streetsmartness and pragmatism, yet respects, on a secular kinship level, the notion of diaspora or "exodus" that brought both his family and that of his cousin, Emil/Orlando the illusionist, to the United States. This streetsmartness, and lack of a strict religious mentality, influences his decision to host burlesque performances at the theatre. Here, a patriarchal attitude towards the commodified, undressed women onstage (representing an Orientalised representation of international womanhood) eventually transforms into drunken, toxic masculinity and crude comments directed at Ewa, assisting Emil/Orlando in a mindreading trick. However, as played by the actor Joaquin Phoenix, Bruno, despite continuing to "pimp" out his "doves" in Central Park (utilising, through his oratory, the trope of the "fallen woman", in this case, supposedly, from high society families), is also arranged as a sympathetic figure for the audience as a consequence of the anti-Semitism that he experiences from members of the New York Police Department (NYPD). These police officers call Bruno a "kike"[38] and, when relieving him of a substantial amount of money, comment that "his kind don't keep it in the bank." This reference to politically incorrect stereotypes of Jewish people as miserly (Flannery 1985: 176) is faithful to

[38] An ethnic slur for a Jewish person (Pearson 2003–4). Supposedly, it originates from the tendency of illiterate Jewish immigrants to the United States to draw a circle ("kikel" in Yiddish) on their entry forms (Partridge 2002: 645; Pearson 2003–4; Hughes 2006: 272).

popular racial attitudes of the early 1920s, and also frames Bruno, despite his aspirations, as destined to remain, like Ewa, an outsider in New York.

At the conclusion of *The Immigrant*, Bruno aids Ewa and Magda's escape to New Jersey, remaining at Ellis Island in order to confess to his murder, in self-defence, of his cousin. Although this final scene is intended as a form of redemption for Bruno, his arc prior to this moment (along with the mercenary motives behind the bribed official retrieving Magda at the finale) groups him alongside drunken theatregoers and corrupt police officers as recipients of benefits from a corrupt, patriarchal system that exploits and sexualises female immigrants. The sisters leaving New York City conveys a message of female solidarity being paramount in order to overcome predatory male behaviour in the early Jazz Age urban experience. *The Immigrant* shows parallels with the still polarising issue of migrant sex workers (Agustín 2006: 29–30). However, it is not just in a *milieu* of immigrants mired in poverty that moral panic over the conduct of women is evident. Privileged nobility also exercises control over its female members, especially where the concept of race intersects. This control will be demonstrated further through analysis of *Downton Abbey*.

Downton Abbey

Coverage in academic literature of the television program *Downton Abbey* has tended to concentrate on its representation of the post Edwardian period of 1912 to immediately after the First World War (Irwin 2012; Byrne 2014). This excision, unfortunately, omits the experiences of privileged young women after the First World War. From the third season onwards, the character of Lady Rose MacClare, in particular, acts as representative of the "flapper, or modern girl" (Dyhouse 2013: 77) in the context of the early '20s "Bright Young Things" (Dyhouse 2013: 101–02).

Thematically, the 1920s revival allows for a glimpse of social anxieties during the 1920s, concerning the behaviour of the younger generation. For instance, in its second season *Downton* includes the tentative victory of the British suffragettes in 1918, with women thirty years of age and over being granted the right to vote (Dyhouse 2013: 70). This serves as the background for the social upheavals represented by the "Bright Young Things", generally, and the aforementioned Lady Rose MacClare, specifically. These interwar changes are endorsed by the program,

yet relationships outside of the boundaries of heterosexuality and monogamy – sexual and relationship experimentation – have an air of moral censure over them.

Rose is introduced to the audience as an eighteen-year-old second cousin of the Crawley family in the eighth episode of the third season (2012), set in 1920. Although Rose feigns a desire to visit London in order to plan a surprise for her parents, her hidden agenda is experiencing the nightclub culture of London. Her socialising with a married man (a friend of her family) at a swank London nightclub is accompanied by the music of a black jazz band, with a much more authentic Dixieland sound than the group featured in *Blinders*. The jazz music, and the uninhibited (but not too suggestive) dancing of the couples present in the club leads Matthew Crawley, one of the Crawley family members who finds Rose in her compromising position, to compare the scene to the circles of hell in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. This reaction echoes the distaste harboured towards London nightlife by conservative elements of society shortly after the First World War, especially where a "Negro" presence was obvious (Parsonage 2007: 85-87). Rose's punishment for her associations is banishment (while chaperoned) to relations in Scotland. This forced removal highlights the importance placed upon female virtue, and the paramount objective of avoiding shame and disgrace to the family name, within the British aristocracy of the era.

However, after returning to Downton in the following season (2013), set in 1922–23, Rose embarks on a dalliance with Anglo-African jazz band leader, Jack Ross. Their "indiscretion" occurs in public dance halls, the sight of much moral panic over compromise of virtue even before the 1920s (Erenberg 1981: 62–87; Dyhouse 2013: 78 & 89). This relationship, with the taboo potential, for the era, of interracial sexuality and intermingling of different social classes, scandalises her family (Dyhouse 2013: 78–79). However, Ross ends the relationship out of a desire to spare Rose from social ostracism. The ending of their relationship means that *Downton* remains true to the era's racial politics. We never see evidence that the relationship between Rose and Ross, despite the attendant scandal, is ever consummated, in contrast to the ill-fated tryst between Purnsley and Alma in *Boardwalk*.

The conformist, "stable" values embedded in the ideology of *Downton*, endorsed by creator Julian Fellowes (Byrne 2014: 5) is compounded by the Christmas Special of

this fourth season, where Rose turns her back on her previously hedonistic youth by coming out as a debutante in a ceremony in front of King George V and Queen Mary. Nevertheless, Rose's defiance of societal norms is not quite finished. She falls in love with Jewish aristocrat Atticus Aldridge in the fifth season, set in 1924. Despite opposition from his family to their union, the pair end up marrying. Before this, however, Atticus is snubbed by aristocratic, White Russian émigrés, who are refugees from the Russian Revolution, on the grounds of his race. Their attitudes carry on a tradition of Russian prejudice against Jewish people, especially virulent after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, which was blamed by some in society on Jewish nihilists (Francis 2015: 64) and which resulted in widespread pogroms against Russian Jews during the early twentieth century. One of these nobles, Prince Kuragin, later turns out to have been the lover of the Dowager Countess decades earlier. This revelation, a complete contrast to the rigid conservatism that marks the Dowager's character, leads to a shared remembrance of illicit love and passion.

The Russian aristocracy interlinks with race and gender as a springboard for both reactionary and deviant emotions. Although these secrets occurred in the 1860s, it takes a younger generation of Crawleys in the 1920s to bring this suppressed past to the surface. The belatedness of perspective acts as a *mise en abyme* for our contemporary, "objective" understanding of the 1920s. This younger generation may be attracted to aspects of modernity, such as jazz, but this engagement with African-American culture is far removed from the lived in experiences of the black cultural *milieu* in the racially divided United States of the 1920s. One such life story is that of Bessie Smith, dramatised in *Bessie*.

Bessie

A 2015 film, *Bessie* is a companion piece, in a way, to *Boardwalk*. Both follow the fortunes and experiences of African-Americans in early twentieth century America, and both were produced under the HBO corporate banner. However, *Bessie* is a "rags to riches" biopic, with the character of Bessie Smith being the entertainment focus, as opposed to the fictional Daughter Maitland in *Boardwalk,* or the brief appearance of a blues singer (Ma Rainey, who is another character in *Bessie*) performing "Crazy Blues" in the same program's first season. *Bessie* also has a

predominately African-American cast, thus granting the African-American art forms of jazz and blues, as performed by entertainers "of colour", more agency than in the Caucasian power structure of the Atlantic City boardwalk. Additionally, Bessie's bisexuality is depicted faithfully in the film, although her heterosexual relationships are treated in more depth.

However, cultural appropriation still rears its problematic head in the party scene that takes place in writer and photographer Carl Van Vechten's apartment. His boasting about being the author of the novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926) is the catalyst for an irate Bessie's castigation of white insensitivity where the African-American experience is concerned. In reality, Bessie, aided by copious amounts of alcohol, was contemptuous of urban white "slumming", but her diatribe in this scene, alongside a later scene where Bessie and Ma Rainey continue to ridicule Van Vechten's appropriations, sounds suspiciously modern in its degree of political correctness. The characterisation of Van Vechten also elides the full degree of his support and patronage of black Harlem aspirations (including his later photographic portrait of Bessie) in favour of class and race-based patronisation.

What is not treated is Bessie's alleged indifference to white commentators like Van Vechten writing in a positive fashion about the blues. This was a consequence of her being more concerned about the attendant financial compensation. *Bessie* also continues the historical, dramatic trope of black characters regaining a modicum of self-respect by referring to white characters as "crackers".[39] Although this term is also pejorative, it is not framed as shocking in the same way that epithets directed at non-white characters are designed to be. Additionally, African-American characters in both *Bessie* and *Boardwalk* occasionally call themselves "niggers", an aspect of African-American culture that has continued into the present day (especially in hip-hop culture and television programs such as *The Wire*), continuing to elicit much controversy depending on the ethnic identity of the speaker.

[39] A colloquial, pejorative term for Caucasian people, originally referring to the sounds of "cracking" jests and flatulence specifically, loud, bragging conversation generally, and connected to the adjective "crack brained", or foolish (Isenberg 2016: 110), before coming to be associated with the lower socioeconomic situation of many Southern white people (Painter 2011: 308).

The use of the word "nigger" is the defining behavioural trait for the representation of Van Vechten in *Bessie*. This diminishes his genuine fascination with, and promotion of, African-American culture. The party scene at Vechten's apartment in *Bessie* brings up views held of the 1920s in the context of twenty first century political correctness, and interrogates white appropriation of black culture. After the apex of the popularity of minstrel show troupes, blackface was still utilised by Jewish entertainers such as Sophie Tucker[40], Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson. As scholars such as Irving Howe have written, these expressions of Yiddish sentiment and passion hijacked the oppression felt by blacks, while simultaneously showing solidarity with a fellow oppressed race (1976: 562–63). However, *Boardwalk* does not show blackface performances by either Tucker or Cantor (Jolson is referenced in dialogue, and on soundtracks, but never shown). Instead, the use of Cantor as a character in preference to Jolson is instructive, because of Cantor's not being associated with blackface to the same degree and, therefore, having less "baggage."

Even when black characters are played by African-Americans in *Bessie*, there is a fascinating and frank exploration of racist Theatre Owners Booking Association (TOBA) policies in an early scene that reduces the agency of these entertainers. These policies concern the "paper bag test" and "racial passing." The former concept takes the form of a comparison of a chorine's skin colour with a brown paper bag. If the chorus girl's complexion is darker than the shade of the bag, the performer is excluded from participating in the chorus line. The latter concept refers to the widespread practice of light skinned African-Americans (or "high yellers", to use the vernacular description of Lenore's skin colour in *Boardwalk*) trying to "pass" as Caucasian in United States society, and thereby limit their exposure to discriminatory experiences (Kennedy 2001: 1145).

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[40] The Jewish-American (of immigrant stock) appropriation of African-American culture is relevant to Jean-Paul Sartre's veiled and inverted portrayal of Tucker as "The Negress" singing "Some of These Days" in *Nausea* (originally published in 1938). In the novel, the song is attributed to a Jewish composer (Sartre 1962: 234–38), whereas Tucker was white and Jewish, while the composer (Shelton Brooks) was in fact black. In the pilot episode of *Boardwalk*, Tucker's original recording is heard on the soundtrack, while in the episode "Belle Femme" (S1E9, 2010), the actress Kathy Brier plays Sophie Tucker, who belts out a rendition of "Some Of These Days" in Babette's Supperclub.

Considering the thwarting of black ambition found frequently in programs such as *Boardwalk*, it is noteworthy that *Bessie* ends on a positive note via a picnic scene with her lover, rather than showing her tragic car crash in 1937. Her modest comeback is necessary in the storyline for a rags to riches success story (especially as Bessie is played by Queen Latifah, whose own career is in hip-hop, and who portrayed Mama Morton in the musical *Chicago*). The theory of a hospital with racist entrance policies condemning Bessie Smith to death has been disputed (Albertson 1972: 196). Therefore, the final scene, although it shies away from the reality of Bessie's fate, appears to boost the aspirational thesis of *Bessie* as a whole, especially in contrast to the bleak outcomes faced by African-American characters in *Boardwalk*. The lacuna of Bessie Smith's death also stands in contrast to an undeveloped theme of Ku Klux Klan opposition to African-American aspirations depicted in an earlier scene, where crosses are burned outside the tent of Smith's travelling tent show.

Bessie's calling out of Van Vechten's patronising attitudes directs attention to white appropriation and treatment of African-American culture. Although blackface is absent from *Boardwalk* and *Bessie* (with the exception of the mock funeral band blowing remembrance for "John Barleycorn" in *Boardwalk*'s pilot episode),[41] there are instances of white musicians covering both tunes written by African-Americans and white approximations of African-American musical genres in the revival. These examples include the jazz band in Babette's Supper Club blaring out Original Dixieland Jazz Band numbers in *Boardwalk* and the orchestrations arranged by prominent white musicians (including Benny Goodman, although his role is exaggerated) for Bessie's 1933 comeback in *Bessie*. At times, however, the revival also features integrated instances of African-American culture, with white and black

[41] "John Barleycorn", originally the subject of a British folk-song, was the personification of barley and the alcoholic beverages made from it: beer and whiskey (Winkler 1990: 75-76). By the time of the introduction of Prohibition in 1920, Barleycorn was "the symbolic proxy for alcohol's evils" (Okrent 2011: 2). The parade in "Boardwalk Empire" (S1E1, 2010) has overtones of New Orleans communal practices, in this case purloined by Caucasian drinkers. Strangely, enough, the episode "My Old Kentucky Home" of *Mad Men* (S3E3, 2009), arguably the preeminent 1960s dramatisation on television in recent years, set in 1963, does feature an especially egregious use of blackface by Roger Sterling at a party on his estate.

entertainers collaborating on performance. An example, although ultimately doomed, of this cooperation is to be found in *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*.

Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries

In the brutal and violent gangland settings of programs such as *Boardwalk*, *Razor*, *Squizzy* and *Blinders*, everyday existence is depicted as hyperpatriarchal and even misogynistic, even considering the positions of power held by crime bosses Kate Leigh and Tilly Devine in *Razor*, and the Peaky Blinders' matriarch, Aunt Polly (Elizabeth) Gray, née Shelby. Gangsters such as James "Big Jim" Devine in *Razor* and Squizzy Taylor in *Squizzy*, regardless of whether they are veterans or not, are depicted as physically assaulting their female partners in acts of patriarchal control. Their domestic violence is abhorrent to contemporary audiences (as well as characters who act as stand ins for the audience, including Squizzy's mother). However, as a reflection of interwar acceptance of familial discipline, especially amongst the working class (a social demographic that produced many notable criminals during this era), the depiction of this violence in the revival demonstrates some historical fidelity.

Even Nucky, whose outrage at the domestic violence visited on Margaret in the pilot episode of *Boardwalk* compels him to have her abusive husband murdered, strikes Sally Wheet, a Florida speakeasy owner and bootlegger, in the fourth season. This is in self-defense against the drunken ridicule and shoving foisted on him by Sally, after Nucky protests against the disregard of established gender norms. In a similar manner to Leigh, Devine and their female foes in business, Sally uses the changed legal landscape and expanding roles for women to solidify her status as a player in supplying illicit goods. However, her career path is cut short by her death in the final season at the hands of Cuban soldiers, irate at U.S. imperialism and arrogance. On the other side of the law, however, the unofficial sleuthing carried out by Phryne Fisher posits an altogether more positive outcome for enterprising women in the 1920s screen revival.

Kerry Greenwood's series of novels detailing the detection practiced by Phryne Fisher, later serialised by ABC Television, are an intriguing example of Australian crime fiction. Fisher, owing to family circumstances, may be a member of the nobility, but her egalitarian and liberal spirit pits her frequently against the status quo, represented by the Church, local government and even the police, whom she

otherwise aids as an amateur detective in championing the rights of "underdog" characters. These include, over the course of the series of books and television programs, orphans, indigenous Australians, queer identifying men and women, and immigrants.

Fisher demonstrates a profoundly progressive attitude, in matters of lifestyle, politics and sexuality – she is unmarried, but has a string of lovers (Knight 1997: 102) – that is, most likely, assumed to be shared by a majority of the ABC's viewing audience. This raises the spectre of whether the reading and viewing public, with the benefit of hindsight, is meant to feel smugly superior towards the majority attitudes charted on screen by the program. Prototypically feminist, and representative of the "Modern Woman" of the interwar years, through her charm, bravery and intellect, Fisher advocates for her world view to the wider community. Even her devout Catholic companion Dorothy Williams feels such a strong attachment to Fisher's influence that she questions her priest's belief in the subservience of married women during the conversion period of her Protestant fiancé, Constable Hugh Collins, and influences the priest to acknowledge the changing moral tenor of the era, in "Murder & Mozzarella" (S3E3, 2015).

The discordant music and public carnality, demonstrated in the revival in scenes such as the blues band sequence in *Babylon*, illustrate the spread of (African-) American forms of popular culture in Europe after the First World War, yet curiously focus on the "moral panic" aspect of lowered inhibitions, encouraged by these public performances, that conservative commentators at the time were concerned about. It is conceivable that these scenes, inserted into texts aimed at a more permissive audience, are intended for sensationalism rather than as a cautionary tale. (Certainly, other texts in the revival, such as *Boardwalk*, where Lucy lifts up her skirts and bends her frame over to the strains of "Tiger Rag" in the pilot episode [2010], highlight the sexual qualities of jazz, blues and dancing.) In the *Miss Fisher's* episode "The Green Mill Murder" (S1E3, 2012), the risqué aspect of the nightlife conduct in a Melbourne jazz club continues this trope, but extends it to a murderous conclusion.

The titular murder of the episode occurs in an environment where the liberated Phryne is in her element – a dancing space where sensuous dancing is not just

permissible, but encouraged. However, the night's entertainment is interrupted by the death, through a dart to the neck, of Leonard Stevens, a hanger on for the resident band. Stevens, it is discovered in the course of the episode, is a serial blackmailer and extortionist, resulting in a long list of potential suspects for his murder. Among them is Nerine Rogers, the African-American singer in the Green Mill band. She is married to the white Australian cornet player Ben Rogers, a fact that, while illegal in the United States, does not faze Phryne at all. Stone, the manager of the band, hosted the wedding in order to improve their employment prospects, and is aware of Nerine's secret: she is already married to an abusive older man who will not grant Nerine a divorce. Stevens, informed about Nerine's past, forced sexual favours from her in exchange for his silence. Ben, however, learned about Nerine's (offscreen) assignations with Stevens and, suspecting an affair, conspired to murder Stevens. This was achieved by tampering his cornet mute so as to allow a dart to be blown out of the instrument's bell and through the air towards its target.

In this instance, the reactionary fears of critics of jazz in Australia after its introduction to the nation in 1918 (Bisset 1987: 36–42) (even manifesting in the title of a lost 1919 Australian film, *Does The Jazz Lead to Destruction?*) are realised in a sense: jazz has indeed led to destruction and death, through a cornet redesigned as a weapon. At the conclusion of the episode, after Ben's confession, he is confined to a gaol cell, presumably destined for the gallows. Symbolically, Nerine is segregated from her husband outside the prison walls, while she sings a mournful blues tune to him. An interracial marriage that came into being through a meeting of artistic compatibility and commercial interests is broken up, indirectly, through the powers of the state.

Lenore and Ben's marriage, despite their appearances being confined to the Green Mill and the police station, appears to meet less opposition than expected. This may be down to Ben's being Caucasian. When the prospect of Caucasian Australian women coming into contact with African-American males became likely in the 1920s, mainstream, Anglo-Celtic Australian society was considerably less enthused. When Phryne attempts to seduce Stone in order to ascertain what he knows about Steven's machinations, she references Sonny Clay's Coloured Idea, while a recording of the band plays on her gramophone. Stone mentions that the band has had success in Sydney and will soon be arriving in Melbourne. This dates the

episode as being set in February 1928, because on February 20th of that year Sonny Clay and his fellow African-American musicians began a residency at the Melbourne Tivoli theatre. Their Australian tour was curtailed, however, in late March after a police raid on their East Melbourne lodgings discovered six band members with six white women in varying degrees of undress and sobriety. Public and governmental outcry soon led to their deportation and the loss of a contract to perform at the actual Green Mill ballroom (Bisset 1987: 43–45). Phryne alludes to this future *cause célèbre* via her remark that Clay's thirty- five purveyors of exciting, syncopated music are bound to annoy the authorities. In the fictional adventures of *Miss Fisher's*, this appears to also be the case for an integrated couple and their fellow bandmates.

"The Green Mill Murder" also includes homosexuality as a thematic concern, in the form of the sexual orientation of Charles Freeman, a friend of Phryne's, being an additional lucrative concern for Stevens. Charles' relationship with the rich and unemployed Bobby Sullivan is photographed by Stevens for the purposes of blackmail. Since same sex male relationships (under the criminal classification of sodomy/buggery) would remain illegal in Australia for a long time –even, in some circumstances in Victoria, punishable by death until 1949 (Carbery 2014: 2) – Stevens is able to collect bribery payments until his murder. Bobby attempts to retrieve the negatives from Stevens' residence afterwards, but is apprehended by Phryne and Detective Inspector Robinson. Learning of Bobby and the absent Charles' impending court appearances, Phryne expresses her disgust at existing legislation through the line, "A gaol sentence for loving someone?" This sounds like a statement much more resonant with the twenty first century than the 1920s, when same sex acts were commonly deemed "unnatural", and it was virtually implausible that two men could publically express physical love.

Phryne's critique of discriminatory legislation against members of what we today call the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community also had an element of poignancy even in 2012. This is because even though the Australian Criminal Code Amendment Act (1997) repealed the criminalisation of consenting same sex sexual relationships in Tasmania (the last state or territory in the country to do so [Carbery 2014: 46–47]), the Marriage Act 1961 was not amended to permit same sex marriage until November 2017.

At the end of the episode, Charles returns to Melbourne once he is no longer a suspect in the investigation into Stevens' death, and Robinson, reversing his previous assertion that he is "the servant of the law, not its master", uses his discretion and gives the negatives to Phryne for disposal. He justifies his decision with the observation that, due to not being a member of the Melbourne police force, she is not bound by protocol. Phryne's delegated "rescue" of Charles and Bobby from court cases and potential imprisonment may take further agency away from two queer characters who are already denoted with the aura of victimhood, yet the inclusion of these two lovers (alongside, in the series as a whole, Dr Elizabeth "Mac" Macmillan, a lesbian doctor and close friend of Phryne's) is a valuable addition to the representation of non-heterosexual characters in the audiovisual texts under discussion. There is only one, however, that privileges characters who fall outside the confines of heteronormativity as protagonists. Providing the final case study for this chapter, this is *The Danish Girl*.

The Danish Girl

The scenes set in brothels in television programs such as *Boardwalk* and *Razor* are problematic where gender relations are concerned. Especially in *Boardwalk*, in keeping with a more permissive approach to thematic content, patriarchal power relations are constructed through lingering shots of scantily clad women in performative "modelling" for clients, and glimpses of sexual acts, although these are fewer in quantity. The subjective, male gaze is always present, regardless of the gender of the proprietor (Gillian is a "madam" of a prestigious brothel by the third season of *Boardwalk*), aided by the fact that heterosexual relationships are the only choice offered in these establishments in the revival.

The marginalisation of public or private space for homosexual activity in these 1920s set texts as a whole (even taking into account exceptions such as *Miss Fisher's*) is curious, considering the avantgarde undercurrents of the Roaring Twenties. However, a scene set in a French brothel in the 2015 film, *The Danish Girl*, complicates this ideological pattern. While Danish painter Einar Wegener takes the role of a voyeur in peering through a window at a naked prostitute touching herself, he is not seeking sexual gratification; rather, although biologically male, he is already deep into his transformative journey of self-discovery, bringing to the

surface his long-repressed identification as a woman, Lili Elbe. The performative aspects of femininity, especially hand gestures, posture and walking stance were already practiced by Einar back in Copenhagen, but it is his sojourn with his wife, Gerda, in Paris that marks the turning point in his decision to gradually submerge Einar and live as Lili.

Based on the 2000 novel by David Ebershoff, *The Danish Girl* is a fictionalised retelling of the lives of Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener. Both Danish painters, they were married in 1904 (when Lili, born Einar Wegener, identified as male) ("Lili Elbe Biography"). In 1930, Elbe underwent pioneering sex reassignment surgery in Germany. This was the first of four operations that were performed on her ("Lili Elbe Biography"; Caughie 2013: 508). The final procedure, a labiaplasty (and succeeding surgical revision) unfortunately resulted in Elbe's death from infection in September 1931 (Harrod 2016). In *The Danish Girl*, the climactic (but entirely suggested) voluntary gender reassignment scenes in Dresden are contrasted with the invasive medical procedures, including radiation treatment focused upon a restrained and horizontal Einar, which are forced upon the artist. These, in contrast, are depicted in detail and reflect a punitive intolerance towards deviation from gender norms or, in the words of the consulting radiologist, "aberrant thinking."[42]

[42] These treatments are reminiscent of the pseudoscientific practice of conversion therapy inflicted upon Sara Millán in *Cable Girls*. One of the two paramours of the telecommunication firm's chief engineer in the series, and a supervisor at said firm, Sara is a bisexual woman who crossdresses. In order to heal her "deviant" personality, Sara checks herself into a clinic. The clinic's health regime is misrepresented by the attending physician to Sara, and she is subsequently victimised by him. One particularly harrowing scene of submergence in icy cold water under duress is a sad reminder of an early era's less enlightened views on sexual orientations deemed sinful and perverted. It is striking, therefore, when Sara's girlfriend, Carlota gains revenge by destroying the doctor's car. The resultant explosion momentarily removes *Cable Girls* from era specific verisimilitude and places the trappings of an action set piece (ubiquitous in twenty first century "event television" texts such as *Breaking Bad* [2008-2013]) onto the defiance displayed by female characters against the patriarchy. This is an extremely stylised example of the program's endorsement of violent disobedience against a misogynistic medicolegal system. The flaws inherent in this system against women are exemplified in *Cable Girls* by the manslaughter of an abusive husband by his wife who can seek no satisfaction under a deeply conservative, Catholic judicial system. Sadly, conversion therapy is still being perpetrated today by medical practitioners on the fringe of their profession (and even fraudulent)

Lili's appearance is initially constructed as a "game" by Einar and Gerda, as well as an aid for Gerda's paintings of feminine attire. However, Lili, introduced to the wider world as Einar's cousin, appears more and more frequently in the Wegener household and on the Copenhagen streets. Surprisingly, even though the Wegeners live a bohemian existence, and the mere act of Einar dressing in drag is itself transgressive, Lili is surprisingly "provincial" (hailing as she does, like Einar, from the village of Vejle) and demure in her interactions with crowds, especially males such as artist Henrik Sandahl. Lili's introversion and understated personality fits Einar's, but also reflects, in its distance from the archetype of the liberated "Modern Woman", a more traditional Nordic conservatism. This is apparent in glimpses of older Danish women in market scenes, clad in older styles of clothing and hats comprised of newspapers. By contrast, the Wegeners' ballerina friend Ulla Paulson is brash, an atheist, mostly clad in brightly coloured clothes and partial to discussing controversial topics.

After the Wegeners' relocation to Paris, the transformative, medical possibilities inherent in modernity are glimpsed in a scene set in a library. Einar is seen reading the pages of an edited volume entitled *A Scientific Study of Sexual Immorality*, specifically chapter four, "The Normal and Abnormal Man", credited to a Dr Clément Gauthier. Both Dr Gauthier and the volume are fictional (according to Ebershoff's original novel, the book was published in Dresden "twenty years earlier" and is mainly "about theories of gender development based on hypothesis and casual experimentation on laboratory rats" [2000: 138]). Nevertheless, the tome faithfully recreates period specific medical treatises on sexology and deviance from gender norms, with a mixture of scientific analysis and judgemental morality common to the early twentieth century intersection of pioneering sexuality studies and cultural norms (Hoenig 1977: 21–43).

Dresden, as the site of both the *Scientific Study*'s publication and the location of the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research, where Lili is medically

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(Besen 2012), and the religious right (Earp, Sandberg and Savulescu 2014: 6–7), using elements of aversion therapy and exorcisms/touch therapy etc (Tomazin 2018).

brought into the world), is historically significant owing to pre Nazi Germany's trailblazing work in challenging Victorian prudery around research into sexuality (Goltz 2008: 291). Lili's birth (and the death of Einar) in Germany also echoes, although in a far less hedonistic manner, the relative tolerance and open activities of queer urban culture (especially in Berlin) during the Weimar Republic (Gordon 2006: 17 & 256–57). Parisian modernity, although a haven from incarceration for "moral depravity" for Einar, still contains risks and danger for him. Immediately after his library visit, two homophobic Frenchmen, noticing his makeup, scarf and light coloured, loose fitting attire, accost him in a park, querying Einar's gender. Einar responds to this mockery by punching one of the men and, in retaliation, the duo assault him. This scene is not explicitly staged in the novel, but its inclusion in the film evokes contemporary discourse over violence and hate crimes directed against LGBT people (Meyer 2015: 1–3).

Cosmetic changes, defying conventional ideas about gender norms, are quite common in the screen revival of the 1920s. In the *Boardwalk* episode "A Return To Normalcy", Angela Darmody cuts her hair short as a gesture of independence against her criminal husband, and as a rite of mourning over the end of her relationship with Mary Dittrich. Lady Mary Crawley, in the sixth episode of *Downton*'s fifth season (2014), bobs her hair, further signifying her decision to be taken seriously as a thoroughly modern woman and, alongside her affair in Liverpool, move on from her husband's death. Yet, it is *The Danish Girl* that takes radical transformations by a character, in order to resemble more closely traits of the opposite gender, to their extreme conclusion.

In an era of increased presence in the media, popular culture and society of transgender people (such as Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox, one of the actors in *Orange Is The New Black* [2013-present]), and continuing campaigns to ensure equality for transgender people in all areas of life, *The Danish Girl* is a fascinating dramatisation of the earliest days of gender reassignment surgery and the widening of options for people who are in disagreement with their biologically determined gender. Although the death of Lili at the film's conclusion reflects the death of the real-life Lili Elbe (through historical fictionalisation), it still seems to follow the trope of thwarted queer ambition through death, or the so called "Sudden Gay Death Syndrome" (Rawson 2013), as depicted in a montage in the documentary *The*

Celluloid Closet (1996). Taking into account the less permissive environment that queer identifying people lived in during the 1920s, it will be interesting to observe whether content creators will, in the future, create more upbeat representations of queer characters that are less mired in the tropes of victimhood. It will also be noteworthy to analyse future representations of race, immigration and gender in the likely continuation of the 1920s revival, and to investigate what message or ideology these representations have to add to twenty first century discourse.

Alternatives to the Status Quo Paradigm of the 1920s

The thwarting of personal desire in the face of the status quo is an enduring theme in the historical cultural project of returning to the 1920s. This particular trope points to a multilayered revival of this decade. The recreation of attitudes from another era, however unpalatable to a contemporary audience, nevertheless reflects historical fidelity. Simultaneously, there can be glimpsed potential flashes of ideology and meanings in such storylines that resonate for contemporary audiences with the benefit of hindsight. The experience of African-Americans in *Boardwalk* encourages them to engage in either unlawful entrepreneurship or subservient hospitality to elevate their prospects in a context of uneasily mercurial race relations. This is despite the fact that, without black labour, Atlantic City would never have become the "Playground of the World." African-American culture was appropriated by white audiences during the 1920s, while the Harlem Renaissance was swelled by West Indian émigrés with their own cultural and racial ideologies. However, the villainy behind the surface servility of Dr Valentine Narcisse dramatically leads to an inevitable reckoning with the forces of government. This thwarting of African-American aspirations for the purpose of maintaining the status quo is positioned in a pattern of official reconnaissance and opposition that has continued, through the Civil Rights movement and police brutality, up until the present day.

Immigration in *Boardwalk* goes beyond Dr Narcisse to encompass many different nationalities. These nationalities encompass the underground economy of Prohibition, Margaret, and an increasingly reactionary and populist disdain for foreigners amongst "native" U.S. citizens, leading to immigration restriction in the middle of the 1920s. Overall, *Boardwalk*, as a long form, revisionist television

dramatisation of the early 1920s, reveals, through the part that race and immigration play in the trade in modernity and organised crime, the intricate bonds between the 1920s and the first two decades of the twenty first century.

Prior to the passing of the U.S. Immigration Act (or Johnson-Reed Act) in 1924, two fictional immigrant sisters are the prism through which the reality of the immigrant experience at the start of the decade is recreated in *The Immigrant*. This differs from the majority of the popular cultural canon set during the mass migrations to Ellis Island, which tend to be set during the late nineteenth and very early twentieth century. More conservative, and hesitant to a greater degree about assimilating to certain American values than Margaret, Ewa is representative of women moving from the Old World to the New. Exploited within a patriarchal system, Ewa nevertheless retains faith in her religion and her female kin. Even while being positioned as a villainous pimp, Bruno is also an outsider, being of Jewish extraction and forced to interact with an anti-Semitic and corrupt police force. As *The Immigrant* exhibits parallels with contemporary migrant sex workers, the film raises questions about whether the experience of immigrants in the twenty first century has greatly improved, and whether further reforms are necessary.

Downton has been shown to have more to offer, where gender representation is concerned, than just the immersion in the 1910s that is prioritised by the extant literature on this television program. Lady Rose MacClare is a significant focal point for the changing options available to the "Bright Young Things." Her enthusiasm for jazz and attending clubs also encompasses challenging accepted notions of propriety, culminating in her relationship with a married man. Her punishment through banishment to Scotland highlights aristocratic preoccupation with honouring the family name.

However, Rose's later romance with a black British jazz band leader is even more transgressive, touching as it does on paranoia over interracial relationships. Jack Ross, however, ends the relationship in order to prevent Rose being socially ostracised, thereby removing the "threat" of consummation, as problematically occurred in *Boardwalk*. Rose's coming out ritual as a debutante before royalty in the fourth season appears in line with the status quo mentality endorsed by creator Julian Fellowes. However, Rose has one more surprise up her sleeve: she ends up marrying

a Jewish aristocrat, thus maintaining a defiance of societal norms. Prejudices inherent in the era coalesce around White Russian refugees from the Russian Revolution, and their anti-Semitism. However, the revelation, at the hands of the younger generation of the Crawley family, of the secret romance between one of the royal émigrés and the Dowager Countess Violet decades earlier, undermines, even to a small degree, the veneer of rigid adherence to Victorian values espoused by the older Crawleys. The acceptance by the prince and the dowager countess of their youthful passions bolsters the changing options and ideologies available to the Crawleys, pillars of the British establishment, during the 1920s.

Bessie, while sharing similarities with *Boardwalk*, in addition to being an HBO production (the former through the company's film production subsidiary), is an example of the "rags to riches" biopic genre. The film's largely African-American cast permits the characters greater agency than in the racist social structure evident in *Boardwalk*. An increase in the chance of professional success within an entertainment *milieu* actually results in the marginal screen time allocated to Ku Klux Klan opposition towards Bessie, and the total excision of Bessie's tragic death in 1937. The concentration, instead, on Bessie's modest comeback in 1933 follows the tropes of many biographical popular cultural texts, especially taking into account the participation of Queen Latifah, whose professional demeanour has always radiated confidence and triumph.

Bessie's success in live performance and recording of the blues, however, leads to cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. While Bessie's rage against Carl Van Vechten's use of the titular racial epithet in *Nigger Heaven* may be couched in phraseology that sounds anachronistically politically correct, and the true dimensions of Bessie's relationship with white society is ignored, her disdain at Caucasian "slumming" provides a link with white American (often Jewish) appropriation of black American culture evident in texts such as *Boardwalk*. This cultural "borrowing" is framed as being motivated by both positive intentions, especially considering the fact that both the Jewish and African-American population in the United States have experienced hardship, and negative ones. Nevertheless, in the revival blackface entertainers such as Al Jolson are mostly excluded, except for being mentioned in dialogue, likely due to being too insensitive towards twenty first

century notions of racial equality. Ideas of racial "passing" and the "paper bag test" add an element of Caucasian culture influencing the practices of the TOBA, and remind contemporary audiences of the advances that have been made by African-American entertainers in the decades since.

There are a handful of successful female crime figures in the current revival of the 1920s, but they experience much patriarchal hardship while overseeing their underworld enterprises. Phryne Fisher, working with the forces of law and order, has an overall happier character arc. Her uninhibited and liberal personality even serves as an inspiration for her more conservative assistant to question the authority figures in her life. Specifically, Dorothy dares to question her priest's unbending belief in women obeying their husbands in the episode "Murder & Mozzarella", and compels the priest to modify his instructions to Dorothy's fiancé while the latter is undertaking conversion to Catholicism. The two characters of Phryne and Dorothy, representing different lifestyle choices, also represent the viewing act of the contemporary viewer pulling the period character/s out of the past. At the same time, the period character/s transport the contemporary viewer into the historical, narrative moment, as reenacted in the twenty first century.

Cultural appropriation in *Miss Fisher's* is centred around partially sensationalistic scenes of public dancing to genres of music originated by African-Americans. The level of appropriation is tempered by the integrated jazz band at the Green Mill in the episode "The Green Mill Murder." While Phryne does not judge the interracial (and bigamous) marriage between a black American singer and a white Australian cornetist, this relationship is interrupted and eventually segregated after the horn playing husband's confession to murdering a serial extortionist. The method of execution, a dart fired from an altered cornet mute, situates the jazz performance as harmful, literalising conservative fears over the apparently deleterious effects of jazz on society. Although the marriage between a Caucasian man and an African-American woman is framed as scandalous for the era, and was certainly illegal in the United States, it is considerably less loaded with taboo significance than the controversial tour of Sonny Clay's band in Australia in 1928. Referenced by Phryne and Stone while listening to a gramophone disc of the aforementioned musical group, the African-American ensemble is described as being too inflammatory for

the authorities. Indeed, the White Australia Policy, severely restricting access to Australia for non-white people, was victorious in deporting the band due to its "deviant" socialisation with white women. This incident foregrounded social control over women and tensions over maintaining a homogenous, British, moral society in 1928 Victoria. Phryne's prediction, allied with her rebellious and emancipated persona, serve to frame her as a woman ahead of her time. Crucially, Phryne is also an echo, on screen, of the contemporary viewer, who is, for his or her part, temporarily seduced back in time.

Phryne's progressive mentality relates to her opposition towards homophobic legislation, which, in the same episode, threatens to imprison a friend of hers and his lover. The late blackmailer was also extracting money from the same sex couple over compromising photographs in his possession. The criminalisation of sodomy/buggery is rendered impotent at the conclusion of the episode, however, when Phryne is entrusted with destroying the incriminating evidence. Her line, "A gaol sentence for loving someone?", is still relevant in a contemporary context where, although legal prosecution of LGBT people has in large part ceased in the Western world, and same sex marriage is finally legal in Australia, homophobia, and the ongoing conservative backlash of conversion therapy, remains a disturbing reality.

Lastly, the current climate of continuing campaigns for equality for queer identifying people, alongside increased cultural representation of those who do not identify with heteronormativity, lends a patina of reflexivity to *The Danish Girl*. Chronicling the fictionalised experiences of Danish artist Einar Wegener, who became a pioneer recipient of gender reassignment surgery in Germany, and Einar's wife Gerda, the film's reenactment of the former's transition to Lili Elbe goes far beyond the modish cosmetic changes to hairstyles performed in *Boardwalk* and *Downton*. Serving as a transformative scientific marvel of modernity, the entrance of Lili, biologically, into the world is actually suggested rather than graphically depicted. The gender reassignment surgery is in contrast to the invasive "corrective" treatment, including radiation treatment, forced upon Einar in earlier scenes of the film. These treatments highlight the intolerance of the medical establishment during the 1920s towards "aberrant thinking" and the criminalisation, through medicalisation, of "moral

depravity." They also echo the medical discomfiture faced by Sara Millán, as part of the regimen designed to "cure" her of her bisexuality and crossdressing, in the harrowing clinic scenes in *Cable Girls*.

An exception to this state of affairs is to be found at Dresden's Institute of Sex Research. Here, pioneering surgical procedures reflect a tolerance in Weimar era Germany towards research into sexuality and gay culture. The flowering of sexology studies in the period leading up to, and including, the 1920s is reflected in Einar's browsing of a fictional medical volume on sexual immorality (the descriptor acknowledges conflicting discourses on sexuality in a post Victorian age) in a Parisian library. The assault on Einar by two Frenchmen in a park afterwards brings to mind continuing homophobic trends in contemporary society, despite the prevalence of more enlightened attitudes in the twenty first century.

Lili, initially a "game", then a resurrected alter ego of Einar, before replacing him as the artist's true selfhood, eases into her female identity by observing women in the streets of Copenhagen. This performative side to gender directs the "look" towards prostitutes, in a French brothel, away from an otherwise predominant voyeuristic male gaze. Despite the bohemian Wegeners' friendship with an outspoken and extroverted ballerina, the common sight of traditionally dressed Danish women in the street, alongside Einar's provincial upbringing, embeds Lili with a demure introversion. Lili, consequently, despite drag or transgender status bestowing a transgressivity upon Einar in that time period, offers a particular Scandinavian alteration of stereotypes around the "New Woman."

Lili's death at the conclusion of *The Danish Girl*, although a faithful adaptation of Ebershoff's novel, and a fictionalised version of the death of the real Elbe, still follows a common trope in contemporary Anglo-American cinema of queer identifying characters dying onscreen. Whether future returns to the 1920s, in film and television programs, can find fresh ways to represent queer characters, and increase their representation, remains to be determined. What is certain, however, if the current canon of dramatising the 1920s is anything to rely on, is that the exploration of the differing experiences of race, immigration, gender and sexuality in North American, Australian, British and continental European societies during the

interwar period will continue to feature prominently, providing a source of fascination for content creators and audiences alike.

* * *

The dramatised representations of race, gender, sexuality and immigration emphasise a tension between the progressive and reactionary characters in the 1920s revival. This tension is teased out by the representations that have been examined in this chapter. The contemporary viewer, as a consequence, is positioned in opposition to (or in solidarity with) the figures on screen. In their divergence on gender and racial lines, the characters in the return of the 1920s embody themselves as the difference that is perceived to lie between the past and the present. Simultaneously, they highlight the reactionary and progressive differences that are in evidence today. Our troubled times have created the need for allegorical – thus objective because belated, or delayed – reworking of contemporary social problems on screen.

Conclusion

The revival of the 1920s, reflected through the artistic mediums of cinema and television, has made its recursive presence known from 2008 to 2018. This mainly Anglophone cycle – with additional examples from both Germany and Spain – demonstrates variety both stylistically and thematically. Through the genres of crime/police procedural/gangster (encompassing biographical or semibiographical elements), life stories, epic soap opera/melodrama (occasionally encompassing war), comedy and science fiction/fantasy (with frequent overlaps into comedy), the revival exhibits an aura of variation. In common with the tendency of the decade of the 1920s itself, the different forms that the revival assumes demonstrates its versatility.

Although the twenty first century engagement with the 1920s follows many previous sequences of popular culture recreating that pivotal decade, the most recent recreations, through their contemporary production techniques and graphic content, allow a paradoxically more "modern" (as in contemporary) window into the (simulated) interwar period through the distance in time between the historical period under consideration and audience reception. Allegorical inclusion and treatment of issues pertinent to the twenty first century in the revival of the 1920s positions the decade as never having been resolved, its consequences still apparent in 2019.

Early twentieth century modernity at its experimental, ambiguous zenith, as an important overarching signifier or cultural trait has been resurrected for the revival in multiple texts. The trope of modernity includes the use of archival footage as historical artefacts, as well as rear projected backdrops, helping to bring viewers nearer to the pretend 1920s experience. These techniques are often united with artifice, and this aggregation has the enigmatic, and concurrent, consequence of audience detachment. Such isolation deliberately links viewers more closely to a past that, while pioneering and popularising many aspects of the present day, can also be far removed from contemporary experiences and sensibilities. In this way, twenty first century audiences find themselves at home and, simultaneously, in an alien environment. This doubled relationship must proceed to encourage an engagement with the revival that views contemporary viewing situations through a similarly uncanny lens.

This mode of loose distanciation also connects the revival to the history of multimedia presentations. Where the imperative of approaching production design in a prosaic manner is concerned, the costs and labour power requirements of manufacturing through more traditional cost and labour-intensive techniques are saved during the production process through exchanging tangible sets and computer effects for the cheaper alternative of archival footage.

A subgenre of the revival, whereby texts take on the contours of science fiction and fantasy, permits an infusion of time travel. Time travelling characters, who are agents (or stand ins) for the viewing audience, interrogate (and sometimes bolster) received, stereotypical popular memories of the period. Endeavours in these programs by characters, in defiance of the space/time continuum, to influence the course of history on a personal level see the aims of the creators placed onto the rationales of the time travellers, thereby encouraging reflexive, as opposed to historically accurate, portrayals of the 1920s. The resultant immersion offered to contemporary audiences in the revival, through stylisation, is partial and critical. Alongside the reflective artifice, redolent of consumerism and the commercialisation of tourism, exists another prism through which to present the 1920s. This is a subversive, postmodern, openly anachronistic strain. Anachronism is especially prevalent in the revival within the use of soundtracks. Such contemporary musical incursions into the verisimilitude of their parent productions serve as a link, through subterranean and implicit historical cycles, to an acoustic era of music appropriate to, and popular during, the 1920s. These examples act as a slight, but traceable, instance of a prolepsis, where the narrative is moved temporarily forward in time from the texts' historical setting of the 1920s. The appropriation of music hailing from the 1970s onwards, through retrospective acuity, constructs space for engaging with the anachronisms in the revival as suiting the remade 1920s world.

The role of the veteran character adds to the surrogate nature of the visitors from the present day in the preceding chapter. These characters serve as doubles for the audience, whose distanciation from the 1920s can be explained by the passage of historical time, altered values and subsequent romanticisation after the fact. The veteran of the First World War (in the main) displays an estrangement from the "home front" in peacetime owing to a chasm in experiences between civilians and ex service personnel, the trauma experienced both in external and interior

manifestations and the sensory experiences (including hyperstimulus from the fast-paced urban modernity project) which veterans underwent both in combat and after demobilisation.

One type of artistic connection to this intermingling of psychology and sensory reception is the occurrence of flashbacks experienced by veteran characters in the worlds of the texts comprising the revival. These can equate to the "flashback" of memory of past, experienced events. An audiosensory experience that wrought significant biological and psychological modifications on veterans, flashbacks further serve to transport present day viewers virtually to the era that has been constructed for them. Veteran characters are frequently destined to experience pain and hardship, with the expiration of aspirations and opportunities categorising them as long-term casualties of warfare, even where their corporeal forms survived (even if, at times, these forms are scarred and mutilated). Anita Biressi's research into the brutalisation of recruits during military service, which has the unintended consequence of their later victimising civilians in peacetime, is pertinent for the options open to returned service personnel in the revival. The journeys taken by veterans to reintegrate into society often mean an immersion, in the underworld/gangster texts included in the revival, into criminal activity and actions, tactics and technology that harken back to their martial experience.

Veterans who fall into this category retain debilitating traces, or auras, of their past through aural flashbacks, or "triggers." Where the origin stories of veterans also include deviancy, the traumas must constantly battle for supremacy until an irreversible change of circumstances occurs. Sublimity is possible for veteran characters, but only at great cost, including death. In the revival, the career paths chosen by veterans who embark upon lucrative, but illegal, business ventures may position their deaths as inevitable, but sometimes these fatal endings of character arcs may prove, in the end, to be a positive release. As for the character in the revival who is a veteran of an earlier war, his presence is designed to draw parallels with war crimes perpetrated by the United States globally in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including Latin American interventions dating from the 1920s, up until the ongoing international counterinsurgency campaign against terrorism. This presence underlines, without being too explicit, the unsettling foundations upon which the international position held by the U.S. during the twentieth

century (as reflected in popular culture) was founded. During the second decade of the twenty first century, however, as evidenced by the Donald Trump Administration's current policy of "America First", governmental reaction against the kinds of foreign interventions that have affected veterans appears to have become the norm. Additionally, this marks a return, in the historical cycle, to President Warren G. Harding choosing the above motto during the 1920 U. S. election (Mikelbank 2018).

Not all occurrences of the veteran evoke torment, however. In *Leatherheads*, the veteran is presented as mentally stable and aspirational. In the midst of the intersection of collegiate pride and the cult of Jazz Age celebrity, the field of sporting play, in its requisite training for sporting performance, echoes the symbiotic popular discourse and propaganda of the First World War. Additionally, the iconic battlefields of the Western Front are resuscitated through a muddy climax that foregrounds crucial elements of defensive and offensive plays, as well as the importance of acquiring territory. The echoes of the First World War overlay the journey of the veteran onto a peacetime place of entertainment, insinuating that the First World War can never quite loosen its grip on those who experienced it nor, indeed, its place in the collective imagination of those back home.

The female veteran in the revival is restricted to the auxiliary services. The Honourable Phyrne Fisher, a former Red Cross nurse, is the most fully fleshed out example in the revival, and personifies the "New Woman." Her assistance towards characters who fit the archetype of the "underdog" include two Communist taxi drivers. Despite never effectively challenging, or posing much of a threat to, the capitalistic system, these characters' principles are relatively uncompromised as an embodied acknowledgement of the hidden history of "radical diggers." They also appear in stark contrast to the treatment of left-wing activism in British and U.S texts, echoing the negative nuances around the reception of communism and socialism in those societies' histories.

Non-Caucasian veterans have sparse representation in the revival, even though archival repositories could provide material for the stock footage portions of the revival. Where the broader thematic concerns of race, along with gender and immigration, are concerned, however, the thesis' final chapter demonstrates that

ample screen time (varying between individual texts, of course) is devoted to characters that fall outside of 1920s mainstream paradigms through the efforts of content creators. These characters advance a durable theme of the obstruction of personal desire in the context of an overwhelming status quo. This theme highlights a multitiered revival of the 1920s. The recreation of attitudes from another era reflects historical accuracy, however distasteful these attitudes may be to a contemporary audience. Simultaneously, ideological readings in such storylines can be detected that equate to contemporary sensibilities, if the benefit of hindsight is taken into account.

The experience of African-Americans in *Boardwalk Empire* obliges characters fitting this racial classification to choose between illicit entrepreneurship, or subservient hospitality, in a segregated and racially tense atmosphere. African-American culture as appropriated by white audiences during the 1920s shares cultural primacy with the racial pride inherent in the Harlem Renaissance, and the latter movement, troublingly, is the backdrop for villainous, Pan-African scheming. The eventual integration, under duress, of this race pride into the status quo is arranged as part of a cycle of reconnaissance and opposition which is still unresolved to this day. *Boardwalk Empire*'s revisionist dramatisation of the early 1920s also reveals the role of immigration in creating a bridge between the 1920s and the twenty first century. This importance granted to immigrants constructs their presence as a site for contemplating increasingly reactionary and populist xenophobia amongst "native" U.S. citizens. This resulted in immigration restriction in the middle of the 1920s and the bolstering of a longstanding distaste towards immigration by many in the United States that, again, remains a perennial issue.

In *The Immigrant*, Polish immigrants are the focal point of a recreation of the immigrant experience after the First World War. Female exploitation by a patriarchal social system, transposed from the Old World to the New, still retains space for essential religious and social optimism, however, and this more positive outlook also imbues the male agent of exploitation with a sympathetic quality, because of rampant anti-Semitism. As *The Immigrant*'s thematic content calls to mind contemporary migrant sex workers in an international economy, the film challenges

the Whig notion of an increasingly equitable labour scenario for present day immigrants.

Downton Abbey offers a principal point for the increased options available to the "Bright Young Things." However, banishment to Scotland highlights the superiority of aristocratic tradition leading to punishment for romantic indiscretion. Although a later interracial dalliance between Lady Rose and a black band leader is even more taboo, the latter upholds mainstream orthodoxy by ending their relationship. Although social ostracism is averted, and the former's social debut before royalty appears to align her with a status-quo ideology, Rose's surprising choice of a Jewish aristocrat as her husband finally allows her to deviate, although in a controlled fashion, from era specific expectations. A contemporaneous revelation of the secret, past romance between two elder members of the nobility tentatively cracks the veneer of rigid adherence to Victorian propriety, and the acceptance by these aged aristocrats of their youthful passions does much to augment the changing options and ideologies available to the pillars of the British establishment during the 1920s.

Performed by a largely African-American cast, *Bessie* permits greater agency and, in an elision of the full reality of the reception of African-American entertainment during the 1920s, a de-emphasis on the dramatisation of white opprobrium towards black independence. In line with this de-emphasis, the film even omits the titular character's death. Instead, the climactic moment of her limited return to fame in 1933 acts as a metacommentary on the participation of Queen Latifah. Success in live and recorded performance, however, is followed by cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. While the rage displayed in the party scene may sound jarringly politically correct for a return to the 1920s, and while Bessie's relationship with white society is never fully explored, disapproval of Caucasian "slumming" provides a link back to texts such as *Boardwalk Empire*.

The musical spectacle and choreography in a text such as the aforementioned television program incorporates white American (often Jewish) appropriation of black American culture. This cultural "borrowing" is prompted by both positive intentions, especially considering the fact that both the Jewish and African-American population in the United States have experienced discrimination, and racially and culturally insensitive intentions. Nevertheless, in the revival blackface performance

is mostly kept off screen. This is due to blackface being a virulently blatant riposte to twenty first century notions of racial equality. Concepts of racial "passing" and the "paper bag test" add an element, in *Bessie*, of the ascendant Caucasian culture influencing the practices of black entertainment, while providing an impetus to performers to adopt transgressive personas. The reminder for contemporary audiences is the progress that African-American entertainers have enjoyed in the decades since.

There are a handful of successful female crime figures in the current revival of the 1920s, but their experience of adversity, while overseeing their underworld enterprises, from the patriarchy as well as mainstream society underlines the dominant masculine power relations of the 1920s. Phryne Fisher, working with the forces of law and order, has an overall happier character arc. The contrasting characters of Phryne and Dorothy, emblematic of different lifestyle choices, represent the relationship between the contemporary viewer (for whom Phryne stands in) and the period drama (represented by Dorothy). Against a background of social control over women and tensions over maintaining social homogeneity during the Australian Roaring Twenties, Phryne's foreboding, allied with her nonconformity, serve to frame her as a trailblazer for her gender. By virtue of the character of Phryne acting *en abyme* – her presence in the show acting as a reminder of, and commentary on, our stereotypical present-day views of the 1920s – *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* demonstrates that the 1920s as a decade was not set in stone at the time, but was already a site of reinvention and experimentation. The contemporary viewer observes Phryne's impatience with her society, and this impatience, paradoxically, is part of a charm that attracts viewers to her and the period dramatisation of her society. Phryne is also a double, on screen, for the present-day viewer, temporarily lured in time. Where resonance with the present day is concerned, her opposition towards homophobic legislation is also relevant in a contemporary context where, although the legal status of LGBT people has improved in the Western world, homophobia is still a disturbing reality.

Lastly, continuing campaigns for equality for queer identifying people, alongside increased cultural representation of people whose identification falls outside of the categories of heteronormativity, adds a knowing layer of palimpsest onto *The Danish*

Girl's fictionalised experiences. The film's reenactment of pioneering transsexual surgery goes one step further than scenes of daring cosmetic changes to hairstyles which encapsulate female empowerment in the 1920s revival. In its suggestion rather than graphic depiction, gender change is juxtaposed against the invasive "corrective" treatment visualised in earlier scenes of the film. These treatments are staged as chilling reenactments of medicalised intolerance that foreground how far society has advanced. The pioneering surgical procedure offers a contrasting tolerance towards research into sexuality. Disturbingly, the assault upon the character of Einar forces audiences to reflect on continuing homophobic trends in contemporary society.

The performance versus truth opposition, manifested through the original status of Lili as "game", recalls the status of the 1920s in the revival. *The Danish Girl*, therefore, can be interpreted as a metonym for the way in which the 1920s masquerades for the contemporary viewer as itself and as a performance in order to find itself, to explore the ambiguous way in which it was experienced by the populace at the time. The censuring of the performance through the homophobic attack presents as an unthinking critique of the revival, giving audiences the truth, not a masquerade, when the truth was that the 1920s was a masquerade all along. Troublingly, the tragic conclusion of *The Danish Girl* echoes the limiting convention in contemporary Anglo-American cinema of queer identifying characters dying onscreen. If the revival conforms to received ideas of what the 1920s were, when the 1920s were never static, then audiences must ponder whether attempts at faithful portrayals necessarily repair their depictions and receptions, or kill them.

Whether future films and television programs set in the 1920s can find unique ways to feature race, immigration and gender in North American, Australian, British and continental European societies during the interwar period, remains to be determined. If the current trends in dramatising the 1920s are extended, however, it may be safe to assume that the return of the interwar period will continue to grant space to an expanded palette of gender, racial and socioeconomic experiences, providing a source of fascination and discussion for content creators, audiences, and scholars.

The dramatised representations of modernity – as well as its modifications and reactions – through the veteran, race, gender and immigration emphasise recurring interrelationships. One key example is the ongoing conflict between progressivism

and reaction in the revival that we are far from unfamiliar with in our own 2019 context. The contemporary viewer, as a consequence of expending time in order to engage with these audiovisual texts (through investment in the characters, situations and *milieu*), is manipulated to oppose or support differing ideologies on show.

Expanding outwards, a more general, and pertinent, relationship is the union between the twenty first century – and its audience for popular cultural texts set in the past – and the decade being revived and reenacted. The characters, situations and settings in the return of the 1920s, in their divergence on gender, racial and class lines, embody themselves as the difference that is perceived to lie between the past and the present. Simultaneously, these components of the 1920s simulated on twenty first screens highlight the differences (be they illiberal, reformist, or more radical) that have evinced a wider chasm of incompatibility since 2016, in particular, with the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA, and a new wave of emboldened conservatism. This offensive strategy against perceptions of dominant liberalism and leftism has had the effect of further opening the floodgates for the release of allegorical (belated, or delayed) reworkings of immediate social problems on screen.

The recreation of the 1920s on present-day screens shows no signs of slowing down, laying the groundwork for further iterations of the revival in what will be the centenary decade of the 2020s. Examining and analysing the allegorical, informative character marking one of twentieth century modernity's most pivotal decades as simulated on twenty first century screens through the still protean audiovisual mediums of film and television, looks set to remain a generative process and subject of scholarly endeavour.

Glossary

Académie des Beaux-Arts: A French learned society, and one of the five academies of the Institut de France.

***Akvavit* (or *aquavit*)**: A Scandinavian spirit made from potatoes or other starchy plants.

American Expeditionary Force (AEF): A formation of the United States Army on the Western Front in the First World War.

American Movie Classics (AMC): An American pay television channel that broadcasts theatrically released films and a limited amount of original programming. Their original content has resulted, since 2002, in its full name being deemphasised.

Amos 'n' Andy: A U.S. radio situation comedy, running from 1928 until 1960, set in Harlem, Manhattan, New York City. Although the titular protagonists were African-American, they were created, written and voiced by Caucasian actors Freeman Gosden (1899–1982) and Charles Correll (1890–1972).

Ancient Order of the Hibernians: An Irish Catholic fraternal organisation, founded in New York City, USA in 1836.

Anti-Kemetism: An ideology opposing Eurocentric conceptions of Ancient Egypt (Kemet was the native name of Ancient Egypt) as manifested through post 1970s Egyptian Neopaganism, or an "inability to deal with the blackness of the Nile." Formulated by Leonard Jeffries, Jr, a Professor of Black Studies at the City College of New York, his views caused controversy in the early 1990s due to Jeffries Jr's anti-white and anti-Semitic denunciations.

Army of Occupation: The United States occupation force that remained in Germany from 1919–1923.

Articles: Weimar era German legislation, subsections of the national constitution.

Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC): A component army corps (or operational formation), comprised of Antipodean troops, of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force during the Gallipoli campaign of the First World War. It was

disbanded in 1916 and replaced, for Western Front service, by the I and II ANZAC Corps.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): The national broadcasting body in Australia.

Australian Imperial Force (AIF): The main expeditionary force of the Australian Army during the First World War.

Back to Africa: A social movement, originating in the United States after the American Civil War (1861–5), that encouraged people of African descent to return to the African homelands of their ancestors.

Batman: An officer's personal servant in the armed forces of the British Empire.

Battle of the Somme: An extremely bloody battle of the First World War, fought by the British and French armies against the German Empire on the Western Front, from July 1st -November 18th, 1916.

BCE (Before Common Era): An alternative in historical dating to BC (Before Christ).

Bengal razors: A cutthroat razor, intended for use by men, that folds to protect the blade inside the handle. The trademark name was registered in Sheffield, England in the mid-eighteenth century.

Berber: A member of the indigenous people of North Africa, including Morocco.

Bildungsroman: In German, a novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education.

Black and tan joints: Night clubs where races either freely intermingled (held in disrepute by mainstream society) or were segregated into a hierarchy of Caucasian customers being entertained and served by African-Americans.

Black brute: A racist stereotype that originated in the southern United States of African-American males as rude, rebelliousness, dour, brutal and more akin to apes than human beings. Fear at the challenge to white supremacy posed by federal government efforts to improve the circumstances of ex slaves fuelled this belief.

Bloemfontein: The capital city of the South African province of Free State, and the judicial capital of South Africa.

Bloomsbury Group: A group of associated English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists in the first half of the twentieth century, including Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), E.M. Forster (1879–1970) and Lytton Strachey (1880–1932). Living, working and studying together near the Bloomsbury area of the London Borough of Camden, they believed in the primacy of the arts, and strongly influenced modern feminist, pacifist and sexual attitudes.

Bonus Army: First World War veterans, their families and affiliated groups who gathered in Washington, D.C., USA. in July 1932 in order to demand cash payment redemption (bonuses) of their service certificates due to the financial hardship of the Great Depression.

Boy's Own: In the style of a series of similarly titled publications (magazines, story papers and newsletters) published in the United Kingdom and the United States from the mid-nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century. Aimed at prepubescent and adolescent boys, they privileged exciting tales of adventure and derring do.

Brechtian: Relating to or characteristic of the German playwright, producer, and poet Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) or his work, which discouraged spectators from identifying emotionally with protagonists and their experiences. Rather, the desired response was rational self-reflection, and a critical perspective towards the action on the stage, in order to bring about social change.

Bright Young Things: A nickname given by the British tabloid press to a group of young, bohemian aristocrats and socialites in 1920s London. This scene became famous (or notorious) for outlandish costume parties, elaborate urban treasure hunts and, on the part of some members, excessive drinking and drug use.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC): A British public service broadcaster.

British West Indies Regiment: A unit of the British Army during the First World War, formed from volunteers from British colonies in the Caribbean.

Buggery: Anal intercourse.

Busby Berkeley (1895–1976): An American film director and musical choreographer. His elaborate and kaleidoscopic musical production numbers often involved complex geometric patterns, large numbers of chorus girls and fantastical props.

Carnival Films: A British television production company based in London, England, that has produced domestic and international television series and coproduced feature films and stage productions.

Chanteuse: A female singer of popular songs. From the French language.

Cologne: A German city.

Controlled Substances Act 1970: The federal U.S. drug policy under which the manufacture, importation, possession, use and distribution of certain narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, anabolic steroids and other chemicals is regulated. Within the Act there are five schedules at the federal level (I-V) that are used to classify drugs based upon their abuse potential, accepted U.S. medical applications and safety and potential for addiction. Federally, cannabis is still regarded as a Schedule I drug (i.e the most harmful variety).

Criminal Code Amendment Act (1997): Australian legislation that overturned the criminal status of consenting homosexual sexual relations.

CW Television Network: A U.S free to air television network. The network's name is derived from the first letters of the names of its two parent corporations, CBS and Warner Bros. Entertainment.

Darlinghurst: An inner city, eastern suburb of Sydney, notorious during the 1920s for being a key site of underworld intrigue; razor gang violence led to the suburb receiving the nickname "Razorhurst."

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR): A lineage-based membership service organisation in the United States, founded in 1890, open to women who can prove direct descent from a person involved in U.S. efforts towards independence in the Revolutionary period of the eighteenth century, and active in promoting historic preservation, education, and patriotism.

***Defence of the Realm Act 1914* (*DORA*)**: An act passed in the United Kingdom in 1914 that gave the government wide ranging powers during the First World War, including restricting the opening hours of public houses to noon–3pm and from 6:30–9:30pm. These licensing restrictions lasted for decades after the Armistice in 1918.

Department of Homeland Security: A cabinet department of the United States federal government, founded in 2002, that has responsibilities in public security and anti-terrorism measures.

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA): Also known as the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, this organisation is a federal Cabinet level agency (changed from the former Veterans' Administration [VA] in 1989) that provides near comprehensive healthcare services to eligible military veterans at VA medical centres and outpatient clinics located throughout the country, as well as providing burial and memorial benefits to eligible veterans and family members.

***Der Wandervogel* (*Rambling, hiking or wandering birds*)**: German youth group movements, from 1896 onwards, with an ethos of breaking free from the restrictions of society through engaging with the freedom of nature.

Dominion: Historically, each of the self-governing territories of the British Empire (later Commonwealth).

Don: In the British context, a university teacher, especially a senior member of a college at Oxford or Cambridge. Also, to put on.

Doppelgänger: Lookalike, or double, in German.

Dowager Countess: A widow with a title or property derived from her late husband (such as being the widow of a count, whose noble rank corresponds to that of an earl), or a dignified elderly woman.

Eastern Front: A theatre of combat operations during the First World War, encompassing most of Eastern Europe and stretching into Central Europe.

Eighteenth Amendment: An amendment to the Constitution of the United States, ratified on January 16th 1919, and mandating the beginning of Prohibition the following year, that declared the production, transport and sale of alcohol illegal.

Enlightenment: A European intellectual movement of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. Prominent figures included Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), Voltaire (1694–1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), and Adam Smith (1723–90).

Epic Theatre: A German theatrical genre and technique famously practiced by Bertolt Brecht, which discouraged emotional identification on the part of spectators, and prioritised rational self-reflection, and a critical perspective towards the action of the play being watched. This perspective was desirous for recognising social injustice and exploitation. Historicisation, or drawing connections from a historical event to a similar current event, was also often employed.

Eugene V. Debs (1855–1926): A U.S. socialist, political activist, trade unionist, founding member of the International Workers of the World (IWW) and a four-time Socialist Party of America candidate for the presidency of the United States (in 1904, 1908, 1912 and 1920).

Flaming youth: A common descriptor for young people in the 1920s, with connotations of sexual irresponsibility and a high chance of "burning out." From the 1923 novel *Flaming Youth*, by Samuel Hopkins Adams (1871–1958).

Gaol: British spelling of jail, or prison.

General Strike: A general strike in the United Kingdom that lasted for nine days in May 1926, in an unsuccessful attempt to force the British government to prevent wage reductions and worsening conditions in the coal mining sector

George M. Cohan (1878–1942): An American entertainer, playwright, composer, lyricist, actor, singer, dancer and producer. He published the song, "Over There", an anthem of U.S participation in the First World War, in 1917.

Golden Age of Exploration: The historical period from roughly 1910–30 when explorers, supported by and influenced by technological and cultural changes, attempted to up the ante in filling in the blank areas on the map of the globe.

Grand Guignol: A Parisian theatre that, from 1897 until 1962, presented naturalistic horror shows.

Great White Hope: Something or someone that is expected to succeed. Racist in origin, due to its being coined in the context of widespread white disapproval of African-American boxer Jack Johnson's gaining the world heavyweight title in 1908.

Great white hunters: Literary terminology for professional Caucasian big game hunters active in Africa, especially during the first half of the twentieth century.

Green Mill: A popular dance hall in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia during the 1920s.

Harlem Renaissance: An intellectual, social, and artistic explosion, witnessing a rebirth of African-American arts, that took place in Harlem, New York City during the 1920s.

Home Box Office (HBO): A U.S. premium cable and satellite television network. Founded in 1972, it has attracted widespread renown and viewership since the late 1990s for its original programming of drama series with cinematic production values and, due to not relying on sponsorship, explicit depictions of adult concepts.

Immigration Act of 1924 (or Johnson-Reed Act): A U.S. federal law that restricted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe through quotas, and barred virtually all Asian immigration.

Independent Television Network (ITV): A British commercial TV network.

Inspector: An official employed to ensure that official regulations are obeyed, especially in public services, or, in the context of the British Empire/Commonwealth, a rank in the police force.

Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research): A pioneering private sexology research institute in Berlin, Germany from 1919 to 1933.

Italo-Turkish War: A war fought between Italy and the Ottoman Empire between 1911 and 1912, due to Italian claims over Libya.

Ithaca: A Greek island, described in Homer's writings as a monarchy lead by Odysseus during the era of the Trojan War.

John Barleycorn: A traditional English harvest legend, immortalised in a folk song, acting as both a metaphor for the cycle of life and the personification of barley and the alcoholic beverages made from it: beer and whiskey.

King's Cross: An inner-city locality of the city of Sydney. Long associated with bohemian and hedonistic values, and the site of gangland intrigue and razor wars during the 1920s.

"Know-Nothing" Party: The common designation for the Native American/American Party (1855-60), an American nativist and anti-immigration political party that operated throughout the United States.

Lost Generation: The generation reaching maturity during and just after the First World War, a high proportion of whose men were killed, wounded, maimed or declared missing during those years.

Manifest Destiny: A widely held belief in the United States during the nineteenth century that its settlers were destined to expand across the entire continent, with a mission of conquering and civilising.

Mann Act (White-Slave Traffic Act of 1910): A United States federal law, passed on June 25th 1910, making interstate or foreign commerce transport of women or girls for prostitution, debauchery "or any other immoral purpose" a felony. The Act was named after Congressman James Robert Mann of Illinois.

Marihuana Tax Act of 1937: A United States Act that placed a tax on the sale of cannabis. It was a significant early piece of legislation in the criminalisation of cannabis use in the United States.

Marriage Act 1961 (Australia): The current Act that regulates marriage law in Australia. Prior to the Act's passing, all Australian states and territories had their own marriage laws. An amendment to the Act to legalise same sex marriage passed into law on December 8th 2017.

Masterpiece: A drama anthology television series produced by the United States station WGBH Boston (a PBS [Public Broadcasting Service] station), that has presented and been involved in the production of various British television productions.

Melbourne: The capital city of the Australian state of Victoria.

Memorial Day: A federal holiday in the United States that officially remembers service personnel who died while in service for the U.S. The holiday is held in late May.

Message productions: A term used during the era of classical Hollywood cinema to refer to films that dealt with social issues.

Modern Woman: A liberated woman taking advantage of social, economic, legislative and cultural changes during the 1920s.

Muscular Christianity: A Christian philosophical movement that originated in England in the mid-nineteenth century, characterised by a belief in patriotic duty, manliness, the moral and physical beauty of athleticism, teamwork, discipline and self-sacrifice.

Nation of Islam: An African-American political and religious movement founded by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in 1930. An Islamic movement that was established for the overall betterment of black humanity, it has been criticised as black supremacist and anti-Semitic.

National Broadcasting Company (NBC): One of the Big Three commercial broadcast television networks in the United States, alongside the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS, although the company's full name has been dropped since 1974).

New Woman: A socially and culturally emancipated woman, seeking reform in activity, dress, education and career during the late nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Nine Network: A major Australian commercial free to air television network, one of three alongside the Seven Network and Network Ten.

NSW Liquor (Amendment) Act 1916: An act passed by the state government of New South Wales, Australia, in 1916. It amended legislation pertaining to the legal closing time of public houses, and the result was that licensed hotels had to close at 6pm. The act was repealed in 1955.

Odysseus: The legendary Greek king of Ithaca, whose decade long journey home after the fall of Troy is the focus of the *Odyssey*.

One-drop rule: Codified social and legislative practices in the United States from the Reconstruction era (1865–77) until the Civil Rights era, categorising any person possessing even a single "drop" of "black blood" as African-American.

Order of the British Empire (OBE): A British order of chivalry, rewarding contributions to the arts and sciences, charitable and welfare commitments and public service outside of the civil service. The order was first established in 1917.

Ottoman Empire: A state, founded in northwestern Anatolia in present day Turkey by Osman I (hence the name), that controlled much of Southeast Europe, Western Asia and North Africa between the fourteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was dissolved shortly after the First World War, during which conflict it aligned itself with the Central Powers of German, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

Pal's Battalions: Specially constituted battalions of the British Army comprising men who had enlisted together in local recruiting drives, with the promise that they would be able to serve alongside their friends, neighbours and colleagues ("pals"), rather than being arbitrarily allocated to battalions. "Pal" is slang for friend.

Pan-Africanism: A worldwide intellectual movement that aims to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all people of African descent. "Pan" means all.

Peaky Blinders: A criminal gang situated in Birmingham, England from the early 1890s until 1930. Their name is said to derive from the practice of members secreting razor blades into the peaks of their flat caps, as well as the Birmingham slang term "blinder", meaning a dapper appearance – gang members were attired in tailored clothing.

Pennsylvania Dutch: A cultural group formed by early German-speaking immigrants to the U.S state of Pennsylvania and their descendants. Dutch is a linguistic reworking of *Deutsch*, the Germanic term used for these settlers.

Philippine–American War: An armed conflict between the First Philippine Republic and the United States, fought between 1899–1902, over Filipino

nationalist outrage at the Philippines being transferred to the U.S. from Spain as a colony.

Pioneer Battalion: A military unit that was used extensively during the world wars for engineering and construction tasks.

Pogrom: An organised massacre of a particular ethnic group, in particular that of Jews in Russia or Eastern Europe under the Tsarist regime, and later by the Nazis. From the Russian language.

Production Code: The set of industry moral guidelines that was applied to most motion pictures released by major studios in the United States from 1930 to 1968, codifying what was acceptable and what was unacceptable content for motion pictures produced for a public audience.

Progressivism: Support for or advocacy of societal improvement through reform. From the 1890s until the 1920s, American progressives sought to eliminate problems caused by industrialisation, urbanisation, immigration, and corruption in government, and were often in favour of prohibition.

Prohibition: The banning of the production, importation, transportation, sale and (sometimes) the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The United States instituted Prohibition (but not drinking itself) from 1920 to 1933.

Prohibition Bureau: The federal law enforcement agency charged with enforcing Prohibition in the United States. From 1920 until 1927, responsibility lay with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, from 1927 until 1930 responsibility passed to a separate entity within the Department of the Treasury and, from 1930 until the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, it was a part of the Department of Justice (and, briefly, the FBI).

Racial passing: When a person classified as a member of one racial group is also accepted as a member of a different racial group.

Raj: British sovereignty in India, from 1858–1947. From the Hindi word *rāj* (reign).

Red Scare: Promotion of widespread fear by a society or state about a potential rise of Communism, anarchism or radical leftism. The term is especially used in relation to a widespread U.S. crackdown on domestic left wing dissent in 1919–20.

Rent parties: A social custom practiced in African-American communities in the early decades of the twentieth centuries, where parties were held to raise money to pay rent by charging guests for attendance.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC): A group of college and university based officer training programs for training commissioned officers of the United States Armed Forces. The modern program's concept began with the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land grant colleges (with an emphasis on a curriculum removed from the traditional liberal arts bent of academia), with a requirement that these schools include military tactics as part of their curriculum.

Return to Normalcy: An ideology of neutrality from international affairs, and a return to the way of life before the First World War, advocated by United States presidential candidate Warren G. Harding (1865-1923) as his campaign slogan in 1920.

Returned Service League (RSL): Originally founded as the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) in 1916, the RSL is a support organisation for present and past members of the Australian defence forces.

Rif War: An armed conflict fought between 1921–6, pitting Spain (later joined by France) against the Berber tribes of the mountainous Rif region of Morocco, a protectorate of Spain.

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF): The air force of Australia, formed in March 1921 as the reestablished version of the Australian Flying Corps/Australian Air Corps.

Sapper: A soldier responsible for tasks such as building and repairing roads and bridges, laying and clearing mines, etc. In the British context, a private soldier in the Corps of Royal Engineers.

Scramble for Africa: The occupation, division, and colonisation of African territory (with the exception of Abyssinia [or Ethiopia] and Liberia) by European powers between the 1880s and the First World War.

Selective Training and Service Act of 1940: A U.S. act that was the first peacetime conscription in that nation's history, requiring that all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five register with local draft boards.

Sergeant: In the British system, a police officer ranking below an inspector.

Sheriff: An elected officer in a U.S. county, responsible for keeping the peace.

Showtime: The Australian subsidiary of the U. S. premium cable and satellite television network.

Small Heath: An area in Birmingham, England that was part of the territory of the Peaky Blinders gang.

South African Native Labour Corps: A force of black South African workers that carried out menial non-combatant tasks on the Western Front between 1916 and 1918.

Sporting life: A life dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure. Originally a reference to an intense interest in gambling, horseracing and sports in the nineteenth century, before gaining a pejorative patina due to social assumptions about the character of spectators and gamblers.

Taffy: A sweet similar to toffee, made from brown sugar or treacle, boiled with butter and pulled until glossy.

Tent show: A platform for live entertainment, popular for its ventilation potential and mobility, from the late nineteenth century until the Great Depression.

Theatre Owners Booking Association (TOBA): The vaudeville circuit for African-American performers during the 1920s. The acronym was derisively and colloquially taken to mean "Tough On Black Artists (or Asses)" by many acts.

Unite the Right: A white supremacist movement that held a controversial rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, in order to unify the U.S. white nationalist movement and to protest the nationwide removal of Confederate monuments.

Unionist: Historically, an Irish person and political organisation desiring for Ireland to remain a part of the United Kingdom.

Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL): A black nationalist fraternal organisation, founded in 1914 by Marcus Garvey.

Universum Film AG (UFA): A major German film company during the 1920s.

Valley Forge: A military encampment, located in the state of Pennsylvania, for the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War (1775–83).

Variety: A form of television, film or theatrical entertainment consisting of a series of different types of act, such as singing, dancing, and comedy.

Vaudeville: A type of entertainment popular chiefly in the US in the early twentieth century, featuring a mixture of speciality acts such as burlesque comedy and song and dance. The word is originally French, referring to fifteenth century songs from the Vau de Vire region in France.

Veterans' Bureau: A precursor agency to the DVA, founded after the First World War by President Warren G. Harding.

Vogue: A fashion and lifestyle magazine that has been published in the United States since 1892.

Volstead Act: The informal name for the National Prohibition Act, enacted to carry out the intent of the Eighteenth Amendment in the United States through ratification in January 1919. It was named for Andrew Volstead, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee who managed the legislation.

Waltzing Matilda: A famous Australian poem, written by A.B. "Banjo" Patterson in 1895 and set to music in 1903, about an itinerant worker travelling on foot ("waltzing") with his belongings in a portable sleeping unit (swag, or "matilda"). It is often regarded as Australia's unofficial national anthem.

War poet: A term referring to a number of influential British soldier-poets who served and fought during the First World War. Their ranks included Rupert Brooke (1887–1915), Robert Graves (1895–1985), Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) and Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967).

Whig: Denoting a historian who interprets history as the continuing and inevitable victory of progress over reaction.

White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP): An upper or middle class Caucasian Protestant, considered to occupy the highest social echelon. Usually used in a United States context.

White Australia Policy: Various historical policies that effectively barred people of non-European (and frequently non-British) from immigrating to Australia, and severely restricted even the temporary visitation of Australia by non-Caucasians. These policies lasted from the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 until their progressive dismantling between 1949 and 1973.

White feather: A symbol of cowardice throughout the British Empire during the First World War. Patriotic groups thrust said feathers upon young, able bodied men assumed (sometimes mistakenly) to be evading military service.

White Russian: Anti-Communist Russians.

White man's burden: A late nineteenth and early twentieth century imperialistic and Eurocentric ideology that justified the acquisition of colonies in the Third World as a noble enterprise of civilisation. The name derives from a poem, "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands" (1899), by Rudyard Kipling.

Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU): An active international temperance organisation, founded in 1873.

Woolloomooloo: A harbourside, inner city eastern suburb of Sydney, originally working class in demographics and, due to its close proximity to King's Cross, part of underworld territory during the 1920s.

Ziegfeld Follies: A series of elaborate theatrical reviews that were staged in the Broadway theatre district of New York City from 1907 to 1931 (with revivals in 1934 and 1936). They were named after theatrical impresario Florenz Ziegfeld (1867–1932), who conceived and mounted the productions.

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