

INCONSUMABLE REALITIES: DOCUMENTING WARFARE, BRITAIN 1914-1920

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The concept of mimetic realism—how it functions in literature and its representational value—comes into sharp relief during the period when the First World War ensues. This dissertation proposes that the magnitude of atrocities caused by the First World War presents a crisis of representation such that the classic theory of realist representation comes into question. In response to the ultimate dystopia created by trench warfare, a variety of writers attempt to produce realistic portraits of the war while photography is widely used to show readers the allegedly most authentic version of the war front. In the study of those writing practices by journalists, novelists, and soldiers and of visual media by photojournalists, some key questions arise about the authorial discourse of war: who constructs it, how is it constructed, and by which means do these discourses secure the survival and longevity of one version of a war's history and not another?

I concentrate on texts produced by journalists, British literary writers—exemplified primarily by Virginia Woolf—and soldiers, who were prolific in their correspondence with family members on the home front, the chronicling of their experiences in diaries, and in reflections recorded in postwar memoirs. In all cases, I provide close-readings of texts to discern the ways each player is documenting the experience of war and in which ways each negotiates his or her writing practices within the lens of classic literary realism. I find that discursive practices become distinct according to a writer's geographical proximity to the war front and are

distinguished from the classic style of realism. I observe that journalism produces objective realism, the modern novelist produces mytho-synaesthetic realism, and soldiers produce synaesthetic realism. An examination of photography's ocular realism in the context of war introduces the concept of the documentary record. A documentary photograph stretches the concept of realism as a literary style such that the commensurability of the real and its representational media comes to depend upon acknowledging the ability and willingness of a public to read the inconsumable, such as the horrific and traumatizing outcomes of mechanized warfare on the human body.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	XIII
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE NEW JOURNALISM AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF WAR	6
CHAPTER 3: THE EXPERIENCE OF COMBAT: BODY-LESS NARRATIVES....	11
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATING FROM AFAR: THE MYTHO-SYNAESTHETIC WAR EXPERIENCE	16
CHAPTER 5: OCULAR REALISM: VIOLATING CODES OF CLASSIC REALISM	19
2.0 THE NEW JOURNALISM AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF WAR.....	26
I.....	26
II.....	32
III	44
IV.....	50
V	62
VI.....	66
3.0 THE EXPERIENCE OF COMBAT: BODY-LESS NARRATIVES.....	75
I.....	75

II.....	78
III.....	82
IV.....	85
V.....	91
VI.....	102
VII.....	109
4.0 PARTICIPATING FROM AFAR: THE MYTHO-SYNAESTHETIC WAR EXPERIENCE	118
I.....	118
II.....	122
III.....	126
IV.....	128
V.....	132
VI.....	135
VII.....	140
VIII.....	144
IX.....	149
X.....	151
XI.....	154
5.0 OCULAR REALISM: VIOLATING CODES OF CLASSIC REALISM.....	157
I.....	157
II.....	161
III.....	167

IV.....	175
V.....	191
VI.....	194
6.0 EPILOGUE: MODERN CODES OF REALISM.....	198
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	207
7.0 NOTES.....	216

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Robinson's column declaring the readability of the <i>Times</i> , March 17, 1914.	42
Figure 2. Official Photograph Taken on the British Western Front in France. <i>A group of Allies War Correspondence on the British Front [sic]</i> [original title] (Ernest Brooks. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. C 2797. National Library of Scotland.....	47
Figure 3. <i>Times</i> article, August 25, 1914, p. 6.....	52
Figure 4. <i>Daily Herald</i> , August 15, 1914, front page.....	60
Figure 5. <i>The Clarion</i> , August 14, 1914, front page.....	68
Figure 6. Lieutenant Wallace before and after Facial Surgery A) May 21, 1918; B) November 9, 1921 (Gillies Archives at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup).....	85
Figure 7. Propaganda Poster, <i>More Men Are Wanted For His Majesty's Army</i> , 1915 (Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, London).	87
Figure 8. Graham Simmons. <i>The Army Isn't All Work</i> , 1919 (Imperial War Museum Collections, London).....	87
Figure 9. Official Unpublished Photograph, <i>Scene during a night attack on a training ground. Western Front</i> [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. 1915. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 33350. Imperial War Museum, London).	95
Figure 10. Official British War Photograph taken for Propaganda Purposes, <i>European War - With the British Forces in France - Troops in steel helmets moving along a communication</i>	

<i>trench fully equipped for their various duties</i> [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. F. 19450. National Library of Scotland).	99
Figure 11. Official Photograph Taken on the British Western Front in France. <i>The Battle of the Ridges. Telegraph wire going up for No Man's Land. Signallers on the way to establish communications.</i> [Original Title] (John Warwick Brooke. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. D. 2114. National Library of Scotland).	100
Figure 12. British Official Photograph from the Western Front. <i>A letter home! A gallant Jock writing home finds a smashed staircase makes a good writing desk.</i> [Original Title] (John Warwick Brooke. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. D. 2114. National Library of Scotland).	102
Figure 13. Censored Letter. After being processed, letters would be affixed with an approval stamp and sent to the recipient (Royal Mail Archive, Freeling House).	104
Figure 14. Field Service Post Card (Imperial War Museum, London).	105
Figure 15. <i>New Church Times</i> , No. 2, Vol. 1, May 1916, cover page.	113
Figure 16. <i>The Sphere</i> , June 12, 1915.	125
Figure 17. <i>Daily Herald</i> , August 7, 1914, front page.	125
Figure 18. Unpublished Official Photograph, <i>Canadian Official Photographer with Artillery Observers Watching a Battle on the Western Front</i> [Original Title] (Unnamed official war photographer, Sept. 1916. Photograph Archives, no. CO. 849. Imperial War Museum, London).	162
Figure 19. Unpublished Official Photograph (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 3116. Imperial War Museum, London).	168
Figure 20. <i>The Sphere</i> , May 20, 1915.	170

Figure 21. *The War Illustrated*, September 19, 1914. 172

Figure 22. *The War Illustrated*, September 5, 1914. 172

Figure 23. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *A cup of coffee for the wounded* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. X. 32056. National Library of Scotland). 176

Figure 24. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *Frying his bacon in a reserve trench* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. X. 33062. National Library of Scotland). 177

Figure 25. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *Tea Time* [original title] (Ernest Brooks. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. C. 1013. National Library of Scotland). 178

Figure 26. *Death the Reaper* (Frank Hurley, Black and white composite print. P. 02514.001. Australian War Museum). 180

Figure 27. *Battle Scarred Sentinels* (Frank Hurley, Combined negatives. National Library of Australia). 180

Figure 28. Unpublished Photograph of Mortar Shell Bursting (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 002890. Imperial War Museum, London). 181

Figure 29. Unpublished Photograph of Mortar Shell Bursting (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 000541. Imperial War Museum, London). 181

Figure 30. *The Sphere*, June 26, 1915. 184

Figure 31. *The Sphere*, May 29, 1915. 187

Figure 32. *The Sphere*, May 29, 1915, front page. 189

Figure 33. Unpublished Official Photograph of Dead German (Unnamed official war
photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 002891 Imperial War Museum, London). .. 191

Figure 34. Unpublished Official Photograph of British Dead on Battlefield (Unnamed official
war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 042245. Imperial War Museum, London).
..... 193

Figure 35. Unpublished Photograph (Unnamed official war photographer. Photograph Archives,
no. Q. 23679. Imperial War Museum, London). 197

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Inconsumable Realities: Documenting Warfare, Britain 1914-1920

Modern writers and artists in Britain faced some new struggles in describing their society after July 28, 1914, the beginning of the First World War. In many respects, the First World War and its impact on British identity puts the Enlightenment project of humanitarian progress into deep crisis for the thinkers and writers of the early twentieth century.¹ This dissertation explores the ways in which writers reconcile a tension that is characteristic of modernity: the pursuit of rationality in an irrational world. The underlying question of my work here is, do writers of war justify world conflict, or do they declare the failure of the Enlightenment project? As Christine Froula has observed, the eruption “of collective violence not only destroyed the illusion that Europe was ‘on the brink’ of an international, economically egalitarian civilization committed to human rights, political autonomy, and world peace but threatened to eclipse even its idea.”² When the very *idea* of a modern civilized society was being threatened by an ongoing conflict of highly developed nations, what could public discourse propose in defense? What reality could be presented that would uphold the *ideas* of progress and western civilization? Would journalists guard against the imposed censorship of war’s realities? Would modernist fiction writers rely on a tradition of realist practices in an effort to make the war experience a visceral one? Would the veracity innate in the photograph provide a necessary counterpart to what Phillip Knightley

described as the “great conspiracy... to suppress the truth”?³ This dissertation is about the tension between the assurance of civilization and the reality of an uncivilized war.

In the four body chapters of this dissertation, I look at the discourses of four main players: journalists, novelists, photographers, and soldiers. On the one hand, journalists, novelists, and photographers were encountering an unprecedented reality that it was their job to document. It has been estimated that 30 per cent of men between the ages of 20 and 24 in 1911 were dead by 1918. Nearly one in fourteen Britons had lost a close relative in the First World War.⁴ The magnitude of the loss necessarily became a topic for public discourse. On the other hand, the unpalatable horrors of modern warfare needed to be made consumable to a public until then unfamiliar with such destruction. Journalists needed to sell newspapers; novelists needed to make aesthetically pleasing literature; photographers needed to live up to the demands of the public to “see” the war; and soldiers needed to communicate to their civilian counterparts the experiences only soldiers could tell. In all instances, the writer needed to transform the ultimate dystopic reality—experiencing the horrors of war—into a narrative. The consistent posture of all those writing about the war—whether civilian or soldier, whether professional or layman—was to produce a realistic narrative of the war.

In seeking to produce the most authentic realist war narrative, each player I mention above negotiates within the lens of realism, as it comes to be understood in the twentieth century, and ultimately achieves a unique practice and style of realist representation. The variety of writers and photographers of the time that I explore create distinguishable styles from classic modes of realism, despite the level of formal experience each may have with the traditions of the realist genre. The first chapter will review the ways in which war correspondents reporting from the field observed first-hand the daily life of combatants in the trenches and relied on the New

Journalistic standards of writing to relay their encounters. Counter-intuitively, the adherence to standards of transparency and impartiality in the production of objective realism has frontline correspondents violate classic codes of realism. I show in the third chapter the ways in which soldiers writing letters home and in their diaries communicated a range of experiences that were wholly based on their exposure to conditions in the field. The attempt to describe these multi-sensory experiences forms the basis for, I argue, a synaesthetic realism. As an expression of the tactile experiences of living in this modern warscape, soldiers consistently attempt to describe a perceptible version of warfare that has no traditional lineage to prior literary forms, like classic realism. As civilians, modern novelists rely on aesthetic modes of representation to describe the impact of the war. Writing in response to both English literary tradition and modern warfare, Virginia Woolf sets a precedent for novelists by producing mytho-synaesthetic realism; this style references more than the immediate aspects of life that a traditional classic realist novel does. It combines a narrative of human sensorium with a historical lens on the contemporary experience of war. Finally, the photojournalist, by virtue of his technologized medium, problematizes the basic tenets of realism because of its incontrovertible modernity—photographs eschew traditional narratives of heroic imperialist wars because they embed a visual marker of the disfigured human body into a discourse that, for centuries, is devoid of it. By using the camera as a tool, photojournalists produce a visually realistic view of the war; they produce ocular realism.

Each of the forms of realism I expound on in the following text is shaped by the concept of classical realism. Theoretically, classical realism subscribes to the idea that reality is what we can physically see; that everyday life could be depicted with fidelity to how we visually register what is happening around us. In short, that perception equals cognition.⁵ Therefore, if the knowledge of reality is incumbent upon the visual recognition of something occurring in the

world, then one must be temporally and/or spatially close to view the spectacle at the time that it appears. In the case of representing war, then, one would assume that the person in closest proximity to the battleground presents the most authentic view. Secondly, an authentic representation of an event would be the product of mimesis. That is, the representation of an object or event in a text corresponds in likeness to the thing as it exists in the world.

As a literary genre, realism conjures up a variety of formal incarnations that can be traced across geographical borders, temporal periods, and political contexts. In French literature, the origination of realism is largely accredited to Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert, whose fiction could be described as belaboring the *mise-en-scène* of urban life undergoing rapid processes of modernization. For instance, the detailed description of costume and its accessories—buttons, gloves, pocket watches—are meant to represent the manners of a character's social and economic station. Later in the nineteenth century, literary realism in France is associated with Naturalism—a form of writing made notable by Emile Zola, who strove to characterize commonplace life according to natural and social laws.⁶ These realist trends expanded globally into the mid-twentieth century, evolving into a grander socio-realist art movement that included international authors, muralists and filmmakers.

In the United States, late nineteenth-century realism can be generally defined as portraying the natural vernacular by lower or middle class characters who play out their lives under plausible—rather than melodramatic or sentimental—terms. Sometimes referred to as authors of socio-realist literature, writers such as Edith Wharton, Upton Sinclair, Henry James, and Theodore Dreiser are understood as responding to the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, and in literature, as further developing the writer's concern for the poor and reflecting class-consciousness.⁷

British realism sits comfortably in this constellation of realist production. British literary realism is usually traced to the Victorian style of vivid description and depictions of the dispossessed. Namely, Charles Dickens exemplifies the creator of the style of realism that takes into account *all things*. Peter Brooks offers insight to the preoccupation of “things” for the nineteenth-century realist:

You cannot, the realist claims, represent people without taking account of the things that people use and acquire in order to define themselves—their tools, their furniture, their accessories. These things are indeed part of the very definition of “character,” of who one is and what one claims to be. The presence of things in these novels also signals their break from the neoclassical stylistic tradition, which tended to see the concrete, the particular, the utilitarian as vulgar, lower class, and to find beauty in the generalized and the noble. The need to include and to represent things will consequently imply a visual inspection of the world of phenomena and a detailed report on it—a report often in the form of what we call description. The descriptive is typical—sometimes maddeningly so—of these novels. And the picture of the whole only emerges—if it does—from the accumulation of things.⁸

This tradition of realism—its highly descriptive and referential treatment of characters and the places in which they live—is what Arnold Bennett adopts in the Edwardian age and precisely what Virginia Woolf controverts. The following chapters consider the ways in which this classic form of British realism is transformed by media portraying the First World War.

CHAPTER 2: THE NEW JOURNALISM AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF WAR

In Chapter Two, I argue that journalists who are witnesses to the actual gruesome realities of the war can, and do, avoid certain modes of sharing their observations and experiences—not altogether because of external censorship laws, but because of a code of objectivity that shapes the profession of journalism. This code, called the New Journalism, has a new impact on the modern readership. When presented in a broadsheet format predicated on notions of impartiality and witness observation, those “objectively” written statements are accepted as evidentiary and factual; they are unassailable and immutable. In other words, while newspapers presume to uphold the widely held objectives of the industry by informing its readership of accountable and practical information, they actually supply the reading public with enticing stories of fiction. This duality of news allows for the modern tension to persist: it allows the mythos of imperialist wars to survive while pretending that civilization is progressing. As Alan J. Lee asserts, imperialism “provided wars sufficiently distant as not to be too distressing, but successful enough to sustain confidence, with occasional setbacks to maintain tension. It provided opportunity for sometimes vastly imaginative tales of foreign land, disguised as news.”⁹

The *disguise* of the “New Journalism” was fashioned with the use of appealing imagery and typography, supposedly attracting readers by making aesthetic qualities easily consumable. Since the Victorian era, this disguise attracted the attention of elite critics, concerned with the quality of news reporting. Already in 1862, an anonymous article in the publication, *Cornhill*, remarks upon the differences between an opinion piece largely taken as news in Victorian England with the developments beginning to appear in broadsheet papers. The author of the editorial first boasts that “the best leading articles that are written are nothing more than samples of the conversation of educated men upon passing events, methodized and thrown into a

sustained and literary shape.” In comparison, he concludes that “the faculty of composing leading articles is merely a form of technical skill, like the handiness of a mechanic.”¹⁰ Here, a learned journalistic craftsmanship was associated more with an assembly-line-like process of manufacturing news—clearly a projection of class values onto different styles of reporting. Thus, as the readability of newspapers gets better, allowing for the general public to more widely participate in political discourse, journalism undergoes vast scrutiny.

Critics widely charged that the arrival of a “cheap” and more “democratic” press would promote a competition amongst “nobodies” and pose a “threat [against] the “gentlemanly” status of the proprietors.”¹¹ To a large degree, this brand of journalism was most successfully embodied by the *Times*. The *Times*

claimed to be independent of governmental influence and control; it seemed to be representative of a certain kind of public opinion—that is, of the enlightened, educated middle classes; and it set out to give its readers that constant stream of information and free comment necessary for the public to form a considered judgment on political matters.¹²

In short, it appeared that the press as an organ for political parties now turned into an organ for public opinion. The popular dailies acted to counter the feeling of a citizen not able to be kept abreast of information necessary to participate in decision-making processes. It functioned as an ambassador for public relations in the sense that a presentation of public affairs informs the public and implores it to become involved with its government and society. By 1914, then, the newspaper could feasibly act as a bulwark against the barbarity that the First World War generates.

Under no circumstances could the First World War be considered as a progressive step in the Enlightenment project, which the turn-of-the-century culture-makers of Britain endlessly debated.¹³ However, this did not prevent the British government from employing bureaus of censorship and propaganda to produce uncanny stories of Empire, which injected the ongoing conflict with ideas of noblesse and heroism, of the likes from preceding wars, which had already passed into the realm of mythology. These bureaus had an intimate connection with the news industry during the war years, undoubtedly affecting any journalist's ability to produce an account of the war independent from government shadowing.

While I consider those relationships between mechanisms of official censorship and the press, I also assay what other possibilities journalists had at the time to create a narrative of the war that does not correlate directly with the overt propagandistic imagery one could readily expect to find coming out of the War Office from 1914-1919; indeed, the major commercial newspapers did not simply replicate the now iconic Kitchener poster or publish nothing but fabricated stories about the enemy, such as the notorious atrocity stories like the one published in the *Times* about Germans "distilling glycerine from the bodies of their dead."¹⁴ Rather, newspapers, despite the claims otherwise put forth by the industry, produce narratives that blur the distinction between subjective and objective perspectives.

Official censorship was justified by the need to protect national interests either by preventing sensitive information from being leaked or by preventing the "spread of 'false reports' likely to cause 'disaffection.'"¹⁵ At first, the Defence of the Realm Act, passed on August 8, 1914, imposed exceptionally strict censorship laws on both newspapers and letters home from soldiers at the Front.¹⁶ Some laws went so far as to arrest war correspondents found traversing too closely to the war front.¹⁷ Such obtrusive measures quickly became untenable,

however, because the public's intolerance of manipulated information had already been tested in the Boer Wars.¹⁸ In response to growing public criticism in 1914 and early 1915, the government came to realize the impediments strict censorship on the press had in raising public support for the war.

Mark Hampton explains that "the governments censored some information, such as troop movements or casualty figures, that could have a deleterious effect on public morale; such information was protected by the 1911 Official Secrets Act" and, in any case, "the governments during World War I preferred to rely on self-censorship where feasible."¹⁹ Ironically, the prohibition of printing certain items the government deemed too sensitive for public consumption had the unintended consequence of creating an information vacuum wherein the press needed to substitute other content in order that a newspaper still retained its primary role in informing the reading public. The public that the government deemed ill-equipped to consume the real atrocities of the war was the very same population demanding more detailed information about the events of the war.

Too strict a censorship on war details could be dangerous, as Colin Lovelace explains: "The ban on news of the whereabouts of the BEF [British Expeditionary Force], together with the inevitable delays to press cablegrams, led to an immediate shortage of 'hard news,' and a spate of wild rumours and exaggerated reports."²⁰ Therefore, while the War Office enforced rules about disclosure of military figures or geographical coordinates, self-censorship took over as the press's own pressure-induced system of regulation, influencing public opinion not by mounting explicitly jingoistic or patriotic campaigns, but by narrating unimaginable states of warfare and exaggerated stories in "objective" terms.

Propaganda during the First World War was calculated to appease those members of British society whose politics and sensibilities were based in liberal-democratic ideals. As Knightley pointed out,

A democratic government cannot afford to be... crude. It never goes in for summary repression or direct control; it nullifies rather than conceals undesirable news; it controls emphasis rather than facts; it balances bad news with good; it lies directly only when it is certain that the lie will not be found out during the course of the war. This [is] the method that Britain chose.²¹

This equivocal approach worked largely in congruence with the popular newspapers consumed by the middle classes. By alternating fabricated stories with official reports, the government was able systematically to attempt to shape public opinion without directly enforcing a mechanism of censorship or an apparatus of repression.

Major newspapers benefited from the government's efforts in propagandizing the war in that they could continue to build upon a set of rhetorical conventions and beliefs already legitimized by the heads of state. Early on, the *Daily Mail* initiated the exceptionalism of the Kaiser by "referring to him as a 'lunatic,' a 'barbarian,' a 'madman,' a 'monster,' a 'modern judas,' and a 'criminal monarch.'"²² By maintaining the vision of war as a fight between a noble nation against a single unruly man, the fight for civility occurs between tropes instead of between actual young men. The "technical sense of war" keeps the idea of man-to-man combat irrelevant, relieving people from comprehending real-life wounds and fatalities. Ultimately, my examination of the New Journalism in the first chapter demonstrates that the press's maintenance of professional guidelines for objective reporting allays any need for stricter censorship by any external body. I show that journalistic reportage was not necessarily tied to nationalist or

imperial interests and, instead, could provide a generalizable point of view. In effect, then, war correspondents' reliance on "newspaper language" worked by coding what atrocities they would have witnessed into acceptable terms for public consumption.

CHAPTER 3: THE EXPERIENCE OF COMBAT: BODY-LESS NARRATIVES

At first glance, the scope of the First World War presented such unfathomable realities that a discursive representation of them seemed highly problematic if not altogether impossible. One might argue that the confluence of technology and human experience during this war in the early twentieth century has processes of communication exceed the boundaries of written language. Like the radical transformation of the status of written language that occurs with the invention of media technologies, words begin to seem insufficient when being employed to depict an extraordinarily intensified human experience like trench warfare. I argue that, on the contrary, soldiers created a synaesthetic realism as a way to implore a reader's understanding of a modern man's extraordinary experience of an unprecedented level of violence.

Synaesthetic realism portrays a set of perceptions that are experienced through the senses of the body. By tracing the etymological source of the concept of aesthetics, Susan Buck-Morss concisely recalls the original definition as a discourse of the sensual body:

Aisthitikos is the ancient Greek word for that which is 'perceptive by feeling.' *Aisthisis* is the sensory experience of perception... It is a form of cognition, achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smell—the whole corporeal sensorium... This physical-cognitive apparatus with its qualitatively autonomous, nonfungible sensors... is 'out front' of the

mind, encountering the world prelinguistically, hence prior not only to logic but to meaning as well.²³

According to this original sense of aesthetics, then, a physiological response to the external world is central in the creation of discourse. In the context of war, when life is constitutive of execrable experiences and the deprivation of pleasure, aesthetic literary representation would not reflect anything sublime. Instead, it would most adequately consist of unappealing imagery and irrational—or even prelinguistic—language. I find that the soldier’s attempt to describe—at length and in detail—his sense-perceptions of war is innovative by virtue of his presence on the battlefield. The compositions in diaries and letters about the lit-up night sky, the sounds of artillery fire, and the smells of rotting corpses are attempts at apprehending the shocking experience of modernized warfare, as it was immediately perceived. This discourse inaugurated in the writing by soldiers, I argue, engenders a style of realism previously inconceivable.

The concept of synaesthetic realism implies that the way in which one registers an event is affected by his or her spatial proximity to it. In the case of experiencing the First World War, a British civilian might have heard the mortar bombs exploding from a distance as muffled booms while the soldier was directly impacted by the piercing explosions and vibrations or even afflicted by flying shrapnel. On the one hand, all experiences of war can be frightful, disorienting, unsightly, and traumatic. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the effects of mechanized warfare on a body when it is in the zone of mortar fire is remarkably distinct from when the body is not in the direct line of fire. In making the argument about the ways soldiers are psychologically damaged in mechanized warfare, Eric Leed argues that “the learning experience of war, like that of initiation, equips the individual with a kind of knowledge that could be called ‘disjunctive’ rather than integrative. What men learned in the war set them irrevocably apart

from those others who stood outside of it.”²⁴ I consider the ways in which the experience of reading conventional narratives of war also created a psychic distance for soldiers from civilian life; if the initial wounding in wartime indelibly traumatizes the soldier, reading newspaper articles about the war exacerbates the soldier’s pain such that resentment of civilian life is also an effect of mechanized slaughter.

Part of Chapter Three exposes the ways in which soldiers with the most intimate experience of the trenches were acutely aware of the disregard official sources commonly showed toward their writing. Be it Robert Graves’s bitterness about the static reportage of “newspaper language,” Field Service Post Cards, or an editor’s retorts in the trench journal *Wipers Times*, ordinary soldiers struggled in various written responses to intervene in public discourse, to communicate better the physical and psychological effects of warfare or to provoke a greater social response for a quicker resolution to the stalemate situation of trench warfare. My purpose in examining texts written by soldiers is not to excavate the emotional or psychological trauma of the war-wounded, or to prove the inhumanity of war, but rather to consider the trends of writing sensoria and humor as central to a modern realist aesthetic. I argue that since a major challenge that the soldier faced during the war was the inability to contribute to a traditional—thereby publically recognizable narrative of war—he constructed his own (incidentally, it is my view that since the soldier’s discourse was not consumable by the general public during the war, it remains tangential in the narrative of the First World War today). The swathe of soldier writing I explore in Chapter Three reveals soldiers’ preoccupations with creating realistic narratives with synaesthetic description.

I rely on the concisely articulated sentiments by Robert Graves to represent a large number of disparately recorded attitudes of soldiers. Graves is able to outline a general

“mistrust” soldiers in the field had of reporters and the sense of alienation many engendered after returning home. Two writers, a Chaplain and Frederick Noakes, exemplify the possibilities and the problems facing those who tried to write about the war. I contend that, although not concerned with literary genre or tradition, novice writers were still concerned with their style of presentation. Indeed, that a soldier’s writing home was on almost all accounts radically different from how he wrote in a diary—it was invariably shallow and quotidian—highlights the concern for issues like accuracy and realism.

I agree that ordinary language structures could not mimic the multi-sensory world as technology could. As Mark Wollaeger explains, “writing loses its ‘surrogate sensualities’ and is increasingly understood as a closed system composed of twenty-six standardized letters.”²⁵ How could one go about revealing the atrocities of war by using an efficient and orderly system of language? Wouldn’t the pare-down of descriptive accounts of a multi-sensory experience from an infantryman minimize or even falsify the actual experience of warfare? Or, would the creation of personalized themes and self-styled narratives somehow mark each description of the experience as too particular or as too subjective a selection of images or themes for every reader to grasp?

In answering each of these questions, I am careful to address the life and literary context in which soldiers are writing. Santanu Das provides an opportunity to explore the ways in which touch and intimacy are crucial for understanding the war experience in a more immediate way, though these senses are also highly elusive and impermanent, and resistant to practical description.²⁶ Thus, in writing practices, an urgent need arises to find a literary language so that a new intensity can emerge from a matter-of-fact account of the war experience. Das’s approach extends First World War scholarship that I hope to contribute further to here. The synaesthetic

style of writing practiced by many soldiers, I argue, emerges in response to the negation of the personal war experience in society and other literature available in Edwardian society.

Finally, I examine a text that is written in direct response to the mainstream newspapers which exacerbated the sense of alienation reported by First World War soldiers. The *Salient News*, an edition of *Wipers* put together by the company at Ypres Salient, printed this reflection by a soldier facing daily shelling: “To know all the by-paths and alternative ways so as to dodge when shelling starts! To know all its holes and ditches when machine guns loose! Can there be any emotion to equal that of lying prone in a crumhole with a machine gun ripping across your back.”²⁷ Addressing a common experience at the Front, this entry informs the reader of the living soldier’s thoughts when he is facing what those dismembered men in Figures 33-35 could not express anymore.

If one were to measure which form of literature best provides a critique while most accurately telling the ‘truthful’ tale of the First World War, I would be inclined to say that *Wipers* provides the greatest potential. Evelyn Cobley proposes this hypothesis when determining the best way to remember those who died from combat. She writes, “If the dead were to be properly commemorated, the war stories they inspired had to resist appropriation by a sociopolitical establishment which was being blamed both for having sacrificed thousands for dubious ends and for being in the process of concealing what had really happened.”²⁸ In the contemporary period of publication and subsequently, up to today, *Wipers* has not been held up as the First World War’s authoritative text by any major cultural, military, or political establishment. I believe the neglect of a text such as *Wipers* illustrates how writing in a passionate way about the war that expresses an emotion like fear or agony, humor or delight—

anything *unherolike*—is a violation of a realist and a journalistic discourse, making it an illegitimate source of knowledge of the war.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATING FROM AFAR: THE MYTHO-SYNAESTHETIC WAR EXPERIENCE

In Chapter Four, I regard Woolf's strides in development as a modernist writer to be concurrent with the advance of the First World War, and society's interpretation of it. Virginia Woolf's formal literary innovations are drawn up in direct response to the war record of what she calls "colourless phrases" that newspapers printed.²⁹ In striving to engage with the modernist project, it is clear that Woolf necessarily does not overtly express a political agenda in her prose. Rather, she prioritizes an aesthetic agenda—in her theories and in her literature—in which the intention is to represent human experience more accurately through formal changes and in which critiques of an imperialist order can be read. I examine epistolary and diary entries of Woolf in order to explore the ways in which she shaped a modernist writing style in relation to her spatial and temporal distance from the warfront of the First World War. Mainly, I examine the ways in which Woolf's writing establishes a new template for war writing in response to two considerations: 1) practical economic and political trends that make up the literary climate during the First World War and 2) tradition.

In this chapter, I explore how the years that elapsed between the war and the publication of *Jacob's Room* in 1922 allowed for a period of reflection about the First World War and on the effects of it on society afterwards. From 1917, the year she began to operate her own press, Woolf had the material means to generate and promote literature that was governed by an

aesthetic code cast in large part by her experiences as a civilian writing after the close of the First World War. From a temporal and spatial distance, then, I consider that someone like Woolf had the hindsight by 1922 to have constructed a text that was stripped of the objectivity that something like “New Journalism” demanded. As a novelist, Woolf did not promote upholding the principles of professional journalism or feel any imposition by the public to disclose the facts “as they are.”³⁰

It is undeniable that Woolf had a particular disdain for the ways in which newspapers related the facts of the war to the reading public. To her, newspapers worked in an anti-aesthetic way—a most egregious affront to a modernist novelist’s sense of the purpose for language. Worse still, Woolf considered all newspapers a form of propaganda, because they were all versions of a “masculine fiction” that led the reader further astray from comprehending the truth about the war instead of informing her better. As Karen Levenback put it, “it was the newspapers that eschewed the reality of the war and made it appear non-threatening to those at the home front.”³¹ The civilian’s emotional distance from the actualities occurring at the Front took a critical tone in Woolf’s fiction, newspapers taking most of the blame. As Levenback notes, Woolf “recognized that immunity, which was concomitant with incomprehension, also deprived the civilian of a sense of both responsibility and risk.”³² The idea of neutral information newspapers claimed to print not only became a disservice to the British population at large, but it also created a false impression of the actual horrors occurring during the war. As we learn in *Three Guineas* (1938), published during the Second World War, warmongering was the result of the failure of civilization to evolve.

I read *Jacob’s Room* as particularly concerned with the question of the progress of civilization. Woolf frames the narrative about a young man’s death in the war as an epical tale,

even placing the site of his demise in the Piraeus Sea, off the coast of the port town that has seen the democracy of Ancient Greece secede to Spartan and Roman rule. Woolf's modernist literary aesthetic does not insist on implementing styles which automatically guarantee some kind of transparency in order to reveal the workings of social life. Rather, a modernist novel like *Jacob's Room* succeeds when it is able to account for language having a dual role in the representation of human experience; it can narrate a current and historical story at once. The modernist technique that I understand Woolf creates is what I call mytho-synaesthetic realism.

In Chapter Four, I review why a *Wellsian* or *Bennetonian* realist style doesn't do the work to transform a story about a soldier's death into a tale about the loss of civilization. Ultimately, the greatest potential modernist literature had for providing a realist perspective on the Great War was its innovative attempts in supplying a spatio-temporal view of various human experiences of the period that were alternative to the hegemonic narratives produced about the war in newspapers, or even in poetry or other novels. Even though "fiction is indeed probably the most effective medium for evoking atmosphere," it is generally conceded that fiction hasn't been "the means whereby some of the most vivid writers have been able to describe the minute detail of the life at the front."³³ Much criticism has been lodged against modernists who have attempted to portray trench warfare. I think the skepticism about novelists writing about the war has more to do with their status as civilians rather than their abilities to craft sincerely written prose, which is why a novel, written by a woman in an elite literary group is least likely to impress a reader with any attempt to accurately depict the trenches. Indeed, *Jacob's Room* does not reconstruct a scene of trench warfare attempting to reproduce "convincing soldier talk,"³⁴ nor does it evoke pathos for Jacob as a soldier, one of the criteria usually a measure of what counts as a war novel. My examination of *Jacob's Room* instead shows the ways in which highly constructed aesthetic

language can successfully achieve a sense of war by virtue of the novelist's status as civilian writing from afar.

CHAPTER 5: OCULAR REALISM: VIOLATING CODES OF CLASSIC REALISM

In this era, we are all familiar with the quintessential images that have come to symbolize past conflicts, and in this age of 24-hour real-time coverage, it seems that the making of iconography occurs almost as instantaneously as the initial footage is taken.³⁵ If this is the case, then, images of war, today, are by default socially useless; perhaps, as John Berger puts it, the time has come that “if everything there existed were continually being photographed, every photograph would become meaningless.”³⁶ However, in the context of war photography, I argue, streams of shocking or iconographic images become meaningless only when they become consumable.

How do we explain ineffectual photographic evidence? Don't the images convince the common person of those ultimate injustices the war produces on a daily basis? One explanation is put forth by Allyson Booth: since “the confrontation of war corpses was limited almost exclusively to soldiers,” and we concur that the “distinction between soldier and civilians extended beyond political or rhetorical formulations,”³⁷ then we can understand why war photos would “pile up” on a civilian's dining room table for generations before the option of pacifism or active resistance became politically and socially tenable. There is one step further in understanding the impotence of documentary photographs, too. The image may present information, but it does not present to its viewer how to analyze what the eye is seeing. New photo technology makes viewing a foreign place and unfamiliar activities a fascinating

experience, even, an aesthetic experience—a confusing prospect for the audience who assumes documentary photographs to be stark and factual. To comprehend the implications of corpses and bombs which stokes an aesthetic or pleasurable experience is a complicated operation that I will address here. One imagines that a common viewer must have asked him or herself, what am I to do as a witness to those bodies in the mud?³⁸

When Woolf complained about the manner in which newspapers were reporting, or rather, *not* reporting the realities of the Front, she did so despite the fact that photographs were increasingly present in publications that reached the general public. The presence of photographic evidence did not, for Woolf, automatically advance a viewer's knowledge toward the ugly truths of war. Rather, the ideological calculus of photographs requires that a viewer have the adequate tools to decode the signs—which was, lamentably, not usually the case. Even the accumulation of photographs “that are piling up on the table—photographs of more dead bodies, of more ruined houses”³⁹ that Woolf writes about twenty years after the First World War cannot provide enough evidence by themselves to convince people that the effects of war are always unjustifiable and are always “insupportable.” The criticism about photographs, for Woolf, is not about the adequacy of their representational capacities—surely, images of dead bodies do provide a viewer enough descriptive referents to be considered convincing reflections of reality. Rather, a critique of the photographic image derives from acknowledging the ways in which the information in photographs is always intertwined with the mediating lens of the viewer. Helen Wussow has explained that,

unlike Barthes, who wavers between granting the photograph the Edenic status of an uncoded denotation and admitting that like all signs photographs bear a code...Woolf is

fully aware of how readers/viewers come to photographs in search of evidence and place upon the photograph their preconceived notions of knowledge, truth, and fact.⁴⁰

That is, the object qua photograph does not simply make evident a neutral and unmediated “truth,” nor does the information gleaned from an image create knowledge; arguably, it merely provides an instance for recognition by the viewer of what he or she already knows. For a citizen observing a foreign war, the photograph, then, is not capable of signifying the same reality that a soldier experiences; it can only reference a civilian understanding of warfare or offer a caricature of that experience.

In contemporary literary studies, this theoretical outlook about the photograph informs how we read a historical event, such as the First World War, even today. Thus Stuart Hall writes that the “ideological concepts embodied in photos and texts in newspapers... do not produce new knowledge about the world. They produce *recognition* of the world, as we have already learned to appropriate it.”⁴¹ Likewise, Raphael Samuel claims that “We may think we are going to them [photographs] for knowledge about the past, but it is the knowledge we bring to them which makes them historically significant, transforming a more or less chance residue of the past into a precious icon.”⁴² This understanding about photographs—that they do not produce knowledge but reflect it back to us—presents a problematic tension. On the one hand, our contemporary lens makes relevant a past event; on the other hand, the encapsulated information in the photograph remains abbreviated and static. In becoming a “precious icon,” any controversy surrounding a disturbing image has quieted and its value becomes merely symbolic and no longer socially or politically useful.

Ironically, the conventional war photograph of the First World War followed most closely the principles of nineteenth-century mimetic realism when it depicts non-descript

impersonal figures, like those in propaganda posters: when the body is an image of masculine uniformity, literally and figuratively. The consumer of published war photographs always sees the actor of a scene in full-dress uniform, performing a professional duty; he is a regular lad. However, even if a snapshot is taken of a soldier eating, resting, or writing a letter, the context prevents the viewer from interpreting the body to be in any leisurely pose or partaking in any personal pleasure. The visual cues prevent the viewer from understanding the war figure as a sensual human being who might have complex experiences or an emotional relationship to the scene other than to the pre-existing narrative which interpellates him.⁴³ Or, inversely, when the men in the photographs fail to reproduce the scenes of bravery and heroism of traditional battle scenes, they present a puzzle for the civilian viewer to figure out, challenging the antiquated notions of war and possibly making a modern interpretation of war possible.

Just as many diary entries of soldiers were devoid of detailed descriptions of body parts,⁴⁴ by and large, published official pictures showed merely inanimate debris produced in battle—the byproducts of shellfire—not the human casualties. Mainstream papers regularly printed photos taken on or near the front. They depicted soldiers partaking in various war-related activities, from demonstrating proper gas-mask attire to lying in trenches and taking aim at the enemy. But, images were hard to make exciting, they were mostly commonplace, i.e., boring. While “Civilians contemplating trench war today would tend to think of it largely in terms of artillery and sniping action, raids and patrols,” the soldier “remembers clearly how seldom these actions interrupted the prolonged inactivity. To him, the real enemy was the weather and the side-effects of living rough.”⁴⁵ For the newly conscripted soldier, there was an expectation of the shape of his new environment—that active duty on the frontlines meant taking part in exhilarating military exercises. The myths which frames the wars of a young soldier’s forefathers would fail to

describe the unromantic vision of warfare taking shape starting in 1914. Instead, once having that civilian outlook, a soldier encounters an unexpected reality that trench warfare presented to him. The unique context-specific experiences of many soldiers who faced long stretches of the doldrums is what makes this war challenging for leaders to sell it as a noble fighting ground as well as it makes it a modern phenomena.

On the whole, coverage of the First World War avoided the exposure of wounded soldiers.⁴⁶ Put succinctly, “Never before had so many photographers donned uniform and gone to the Front, and never before had a war been so comprehensively photographed, and never before had the public seen so few pictures showing the realities of a war in which ten million men died or so few depictions of death.”⁴⁷ Considering the massive number of injuries, the absence of images of trauma would have been deliberate to some degree. Tate reminds us that

Among British soldiers, the rate of injury was more than twice the death toll: perhaps as many as three-quarters of a million died, while more than 1.6 million were wounded. At least 200,000 men were mentally wounded, suffering from war neuroses or shell shock. Some surviving men were injured in horrifying ways, with portions of their faces or bodies missing.⁴⁸

The avoidance of publishing images of 1.6 million wounded soldiers very likely contributed to the feelings of alienation of returning soldiers that I discuss in Chapter Three. I suspect that allowing for what I am calling ocular realism—an unobstructed, therefore perceivable view of an actual scene—would alter the hegemonic narrative associated with the First World War—and this would impact how we understand the war today: the photographs that circulated in mainstream papers become central to a sanitized construction of the war, and propelled readers of the war to understand it nostalgically instead of critically. The popular discourse constructed

during the period of the war then crystallized into a narrative of the First World War, which continues to obscure and misinterpret the extreme horrific experiences of war.

It does seem that the scale of real-life war outstrips any values that an artistic representation of mechanized warfare could show to a civilian audience. While Allyson Booth reminds us of the prevalent hypothesis that, “from a civilian perspective, the world constitutes itself into either the one side or the other”⁴⁹ and that distance protects the civilian from engaging in concrete ways with casualties of the war, here I suggest that because of a newly conceived notion of documentary photography, casualties and dead bodies are literally available to the civilian in ways they cannot be in semantic language or in artistically rendered portraits. Ocular realism depends upon this availability of the civilian to clearly *see* what he or she cannot experience. What I discover in my research on photographs of the First World War presents a major obstacle in reading for ocular realism, however. Though thousands of images exist of the ultimate tragedies of warfare, hardly any photos of mutilated bodies or corpses ever circulated for public consumption.

The evidence that a documentary photograph presents to a civilian is believable and irrepressible to the human eye once it is seen. The question, of course, is whether or not the evidence is irrepressible to a civilian’s consciousness is another matter—one, which I am concerned with throughout these chapters but nonetheless, that remains an elusive quandary. Nevertheless, as Errol Morris as puts it,

Pictures force us to collect our thoughts. They make us think about motivation, intent—they make us think about how we interpret our experiences, how we think about the world, how we try to understand the motives of others... And when it’s a photograph of a crime or of violence, we think even harder. Such images make us care because they make

us part of the mystery of what happened. We are not merely spectators; we are investigators. We are involved. What do the images mean? What do they show? What led up these events? Are there mitigating circumstances? Is it as bad as it looks?⁵⁰

A true ocular realism would have consumers continually ask these questions in a permanent search for a realistic narrative of war that reveals rather than mystifies the actual human costs we continue to expend.

2.0 THE NEW JOURNALISM AND THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF WAR

A myth can combine fact and fiction without any uneasiness existing between the two: nowhere is this dualism—this ability to mix mythology with reality—more apparent than in the examination of the British press at the height of its power and prestige, between 1880 and 1918.⁵¹

The daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spread inventions over the whole earth, [could] fabricate more myths... in one day than could have formerly been done in a century.⁵²

I

This chapter analyzes the ways in which newspapers framed public discourse about the First World War. The universal crisis of representation brought forth by the First World War that affected writers in all sectors of society produced its own features within the press industry. With special access to government officials, military personnel, domestic opinion and the action on the Western Front, war correspondents were in a unique position to present a wide range of news on all aspects of the war. However, across the variety of news outfits operating at the time, there were scores more of similarities in tone and ideological standpoint of war coverage than there

were variations—even from socialist publications. Furthermore, as Phillip Knightley surmises, “more deliberate lies were told [in 1914-1918] than in any period of history and the whole apparatus of the state went into action to suppress the truth.”⁵³ The revelation of the truth, it seems, might have precipitated more fervent anti-war sentiment, endangering both the project of the imperialist state and the profitability of newspapers selling the kind of news that helped to ensure hegemonic prominence of Britain in the global power structure. Although the rhetorical strategies and institutional frames of the mainstream press created an ideological sphere directly in line with an imperialist state’s propagandistic and militaristic goals, public discourse is shaped by various intersecting voices and texts, which always challenge a monopoly over ideas in the public sphere. That is to say, the representational confines set by the state and the press could not altogether impede an alternative narrative from surfacing within public discourse.

Rather than revelatory of the War Office’s efforts to conceal the extraordinary level of casualties waged at the Front, mainstream newspapers, such as the *London Times*, sustained a conquering imperialist narrative, employing a militarized vocabulary that evoked propagandistic imagery such as heroism, patriotism, and empire. More politically left-leaning newspapers, such as the *Herald*, took a more overtly critical line about the war. As officially backed by the Labour party, it managed to maintain a healthy readership, though never in numbers to rival a paper like the *Times*. Finally, socialist publications and soldiers’ newspapers also contributed to public discourse on the war, but remained marginal in their popularity or influence upon popular opinion. By comparing a few of the key ways in which various newspapers during wartime represented the conflict to their readers, I show how the rhetorical strategies typically pursued by newspapers in constructing the crisis of the First World War were produced in response to a nexus of material interests, both reflecting a pre-existing social consciousness and producing it.

From the start of the First World War, the press took on a new significance in its representational role of its broadening readership; in a landscape of devastation by mechanical warfare and extraordinary industrial advancement, a new literate public, and imperious battle cries, national newspapers became central harbingers of expression and power for all these conflicting elements. Premised upon faith in the processes of creating a record of history and structurally organized to produce standardized copy—whether for posterity, wealth, status, or political gain—national newspapers wrote in a language best suited to attain social legitimacy. A modern newspaper language would report factual details and consist of declarative statements instead of editorialized commentary. The language would be recognizable for its legibility in typographical choices and brief summaries of information. The formal innovations adopted by national newspapers made its news more consumable, therefore more popular. However, the standardized mode of reportage in national newspapers also proscribed many perspectives on the war. Judging from the headlines, in the First World War combat was brutal, but clean and bloodless, and above all, earned its adage the *good war*.

This tendency by the popular press to evade disclosing the condemning news of the war—like the high number of soldier casualties occurring on a daily basis—was not altogether stipulated by the War Office or by any other executive orders. The “New Journalism” of the Georgian period was structured such that newspapers were no longer purely a “mouthpiece” for a select set of patrons. Even the explicit censorship regulations put into effect by the Defence of the Realm Act enacted in the first month of the war could not directly manage what became headlines. In fact, as Colin Lovelace argues,

although certain Defence of the Realm regulations were of particular application to the press, governments never had control of the press by law. Some newspapers were

prosecuted (unsuccessfully in most cases) and few newspapers were suppressed. But these were for very short periods and never as part of any deliberately repressive policy.

Furthermore, the press during the First World War, “was far too powerful an institution for any government to control or repress.”⁵⁴ Therefore, censorship of the press during the First World War was in large part voluntary. So, what accounts for the collusion between the press and the objectives of imperialist Britain? This chapter will show some ways in which the relationship of newspapers to market forces made the industrialized processes of documentation a self-referential system, which prioritized the profession over the practice of providing frank accounts of world events and reasonable analysis. Specifically, the “New Journalism” promoted its own ethos of freedoms rather than providing British citizens the tools with which to understand and critically assess the circumstances leading the nation into a global war.

An examination of alternative media, such as left-wing Labour and socialist publications will show the ways in which various models of journalistic production were in operation at the time of the war. The publication most dedicated to Labour issues, the *Herald*, mass-produced weekly copy and had a national audience.⁵⁵ It also implemented “New Journalism” conventions, making bold typeface and illustrations key components of its layout. Financially, the paper also relied partially on advertising for its revenue, though it was heavily subsidized by private donations. Relative to a paper such as the *Times*, however, the distinguishing factor of the *Herald's* content was its political lens. Initially a strike sheet, the bulk of its content continued to center around left-wing Labour politics and other working class concerns after it transitioned in 1912 into a national daily. Accordingly, the representation of Britain’s entrance into the First World War was remarkably different from that of the Fleet Street publications. The *Herald* complicated the “New Journalism” ethos of journalistic objectivity because it violated the

professionalized code of objectivity the press industry set for itself while its reporting added a critical dimension of the war to public discourse. This version of relaying the news enabled the *Herald* to provide journalistic analysis while working within the structural framework of the media industry and subverting many formal regulations espoused by Fleet Street industry.

In a climate dominated by the “New Journalism” of the early twentieth century, when “objective” reporting became elevated in professional journalism and associated with ways of providing adequate and truthful coverage of events, papers that did not abide by institutional standards struggled to attain social legitimacy. More than any other type of reporting, socialist journalism experienced the pitfalls of the industrialized and professionalized newspaper industry of the early twentieth century. In most cases, as advertisers avoided circulating their ads in these socialist publications, socialist journalism necessarily needed to structure its field differently than a commercial press. At first glance, the relative independence of socialist papers might imply greater flexibility and opportunities to sway public opinion away from mainstream pro-imperialist ideologies. However, working on the margins of a free-market economy whilst mostly employing novices who lacked the business savvy, technical expertise, and professional standards of reporting, the socialist press was never, in effect, threatening to the institutional profession of journalism. The scale of operation for most of the socialist press was miniscule in comparison with the popular press. As a result, the quality of its news in content and form was poor. The sub-par printing machinery often churned out unreadable copy, and the inability to finance correspondents in the field forced the papers to rely on other publications for the bulk of their information.⁵⁶ To a large degree, then, the mechanics of running a newspaper hindered socialist papers from participating in the larger course of public dialogue about the war. At the same time, the eventual failure of any socialist newspaper to gain a foothold in the marketplace

can be attributed to the ideological and political lens that informs the articles. Papers such as *Justice* and *Clarion* were unambiguously socialist publications and unapologetically propagandistic. Therefore, journalistic objectivity was not practiced, nor delivered in papers like these. Is the appearance of prejudice the major impediment for the success of socialist journalism? The examination of such papers as *Justice* and *Clarion* will further address the issue of framing, in that values of representational modes affect the ways in which information is considered newsworthy or socially legitimate.

In exploring the relationships between material factors governing the press industry and the representational strategies mainstream newspapers took in order to sustain their viability and profitability, it will become clear in which ways structural forces shaped the practice of journalistic writing and hence indirectly shaped the discourse about the First World War. The discourse analysis of selected articles will draw out the form and function of the text, the way it relates to the way it is produced, and the relation of textual production to the wider society in which it takes place. Finally, I argue that, no matter the intent or design of a free-market publication, an ideological symmetry with capitalist and imperialist objectives prevents commercial newspapers from providing the reading public the intended outcome of its style of reporting: an objective and representative discourse for the mass readership of the twentieth century. This does not, however, exclude social actors who present different views of the war from exerting their own influence so that absolute censorship or suppression of the truth becomes impossible.

II

The “New Journalism” of the new century could attract a wide range of readers with appealing imagery and typography, emphasizing aesthetic qualities that were easily consumable and designed for reading as a practice of leisure rather than as political activism. In large part, the popular commercial press restricted their work to leisurely trends, which proved profitable and a promising longevity. However, it is not clear in which ways these stylistic and formalistic changes necessarily make “New Journalism” newspapers politically bankrupt, or unable to maintain a critical discourse on an imperialist government sending the majority of young men to a gruesome, life-threatening destination like the Western Front. How did the “New Journalism” treat the subject of war? For one media historian, imperial expansion was perfectly suited for the new brand of reporting. Alan J. Lee asserts that imperialism “provided wars sufficiently distant as not to be too distressing, but successful enough to sustain confidence, with occasional setbacks to maintain tension. It provided opportunity for sometimes vastly imaginative tales of foreign lands, disguised as news.”⁵⁷ In other words, newspapers could supply the reading public with enticing stories of fiction, while presuming to uphold the widely-held objectives of the industry, which was to inform its readership of accountable and practical information. Prizing itself for a realist and objective discourse, the “New Journalism” would achieve the height of its paradoxical development during the First World War.

Hampton argues that in the more progressive post-Victorian era, the press became an advocate for growing trends in public life, a showcase for the people’s free ideas about, praise for, or dissent from their government. This press was committed to cultivating a well-informed public, which implied a deep trust in its own authority and ability to select what information best suited the needs of the public. This attribution of authority made the public service role of the

press a well-accepted one. It also brought up a crucial question: How will the popular press maintain this prestige and position of power granted it by the public? Largely, the media industry promoted editorial integrity and representational accuracy by professionalizing and commercializing its operations. It did so to such a competent degree that, in fact, many of the industry standards instituted during this period are still upheld today; for instance, the division of labor between owning, editing, leader writing, managing, and reporting; the centralization of production and control; the concentration of ownership and the dependence on advertising revenue have all become standard if not sought-after practices.

The outcome of rapid industrial and professional development in the post-Victorian era presented a telling contradiction for the newspaper industry. On the one hand, newspaper proprietors were finally able to act on a set of noble ideals about the free press according to the principles outlined in the democratic theory of the state. On the other hand, those ideas generated by the public sphere often contradicted the economic interests of a newspaper business. A liberal point of view justified this dissonance by understanding journalism as an act of social observation that works in concert with objective conditions shaping society. As James Curran points out,

Liberal theory assumes tacitly that press freedom is a property right exercised by publishers on behalf of society. According to this approach, publishers should be free to direct personally their newspapers, or delegate authority to others, as they see fit. What they do is consistent, ultimately with the public interest since their actions are regulated by the free market. This ensures, in liberal theory, that the press is free, diverse and representative.⁵⁸

In other words, the profitable discourse is presumably the popular discourse. Because, while “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production,”⁵⁹ this does not mean that ideas and meanings that circulate through newspapers owned by the ruling class do not confront other social determinants and life experiences of its readers, which may directly conflict with the notions of society the press proposes. In fact, most of the time, commercial newspapers are more likely to respond to social trends by incorporating them into a worldview that does not endanger the status quo. Furthermore, to synthesize the function of journalism with the motives of a capitalist democracy eschews the dialectical character of social and discursive practices and discounts the actual transformational power that journalism could potentially embody. Hence, while a liberal theory promotes a modern model of news production and the idea of a “free press,” the Fourth Estate of the post-Victorian era could not absolutely excoriate the economic system that advanced the profitability an industrialized press would yield that, at the same time, created inherent contradictions.

William Lovett points out the main motivations of the Victorian press, which were seemingly more rudimentary and in most cases unabashedly elitist:

The Newspaper Press, daily and weekly, is the property of capitalists who have embarked on the enterprise upon purely commercial principles, and with the purpose of making it contribute to their own personal and pecuniary interests. It is the course which is *profitable*, therefore, and not the course which is *just*, which necessarily secures their preference.⁶⁰

For Victorians, then, news organizations were unapologetically-run business ventures, designed to secure future capitalist investments for an elite minority in society. In contrast, innovators of

the “New Journalism” considered their own approach and treatment of their readership as antithetical to this previous style of writing news. But this did not mean economic interests became secondary to the noble ideals of a free press. In fact, altering patterns of production and consumption by newspaper proprietors only made the industry more likely to expand in its efforts to gain greater market shares. As for “New Journalism” and all of its representational promise, the adaptation of liberal theory to “free market” demands created an irreconcilable contradiction between material interests and ideals of a democratic press. Most disappointingly, instead of developing a press in pursuit of interests for social justice, purveyors of news in Edwardian Britain adapted liberal theories in order to further secure capitalist control and concentrate ownership over a major conduit of public discourse, newspapers.

In the years preceding the years of King George’s reign, metropolitan newspapers were owned and operated by press barons whom were either themselves in parliamentary politics or invested spokespeople of one party or another. The “Victorian stately press,” characterized by James D. Startt as run by “students of politics,” contended with each other to greater influence public opinion. They struggled against “major forces at work challenging the quality journalism they represented.” Startt explains that at the end of the Victorian era, “they all had to face and respond to three major problems confronting the stately press: the increasing commercialization of the press, the forceful development in the press known as the New Journalism and the perceived lessening of journalistic influence.”⁶¹ This environment made competition for public opinion keener and more costly. It also signaled a need to update an industry out of touch with the social and political landscape of a modern British readership.

In practical terms, the repeal of the Stamp Duty in 1855 (and subsequent abolishment of other “taxes on knowledge”) and the growth in public literacy enacted a process for newspapers

to be freed from intrusive governmental controls.⁶² These relaxations of political and market-regulated restrictions created a climate in which press barons needed to be more attuned in catering to the public's interests, which were deeply in flux. The processes of colonization happening outside the boundaries of the British Isles and the massive organizational working-class movements forming inside the nation in late Victorian times complicated the notion of the press's traditional readership.⁶³ Hampton points out that the "mid-Victorian idealized newspaper reader... had masculine, European, and middle-class attributes."⁶⁴ But, the imagined reader of the new democratic state was no longer only the elite and educated man of the Victorian period.

It is commonly understood that the new reading public, significantly comprised by the working classes, required less a critical and stately presentation of information and more a fascinating or impressionable delivery of material. Mark Hampton uncovers that "the emergence of working-class readers... was blamed on the 1870 Education Act" and that this, in turn, promoted "changes in character in tastes of newspaper readers."⁶⁵ Given a negative interpretation of this development, one would conclude that, as the conservative establishment often did at that time, nothing but a low-brow pleasure-driven press existed, therefore becoming incapable of transmitting any serious or essential political analysis or newsworthy information. The usual argument about the depreciation of public discourse centered primarily around the development of the "New Journalism."

Coined by Matthew Arnold in 1880, the "New Journalism" is most visually recognized by formal features that were adopted in late Victorian newspapers that appealed to the popular masses.⁶⁶ Late nineteenth-century newspapers designed to exclude those readers without training or familiarity in specialized legislative language had a formatted appearance of "heavy, long and dreary columns of small print, unpunctuated by paragraphs and crossheads, and unrelieved by

pictures.” In contrast, the typographical innovations used in broadsheets of the “New Journalism,” like cross-heads, larger type, bold headlines and pictorials, emphasized the visual interest for readers over the protracted verbatim text of political discourse. W. T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1883-1890), further developed the concept of the “New Journalism” so that journalism “would interpret and communicate ‘the will of the people’ to the government and, when necessary, force the government by press ‘agitations’ and/or sensational revelations to legislate what the masses wanted or needed.”⁶⁷ In other words, the modern Fourth Estate would allot the general public with a representational agency of its own. As Hampton sums it up, “rather than influencing the people or drawing them into a politics by public discussion, the press was seen to represent readers’ interests and desires.”⁶⁸ In an era when ideological and material shifts were endangering the hegemonic dominion of an imperialist state, a theoretically “free” press—by which a greater segment of the majority of the population would be “agitating” the government and a representative function of the newspaper would be enacted—became a particularly crucial factor in the organization and maintenance of social order.

This newly constructed terrain of mutually constitutive discourse—the discursive interplay between political, institutional *and* social realms—was not immediately or easily accepted by the cultural elite in Britain. “New Journalism” was criticized for having “catered to the emotions, to triviality, and to the public whim and lacked persuasive political commentary... thus [the critics] thought that it reduced the effectiveness of the press as a political instrument.”⁶⁹ Therefore, according to some critics, it turns out that the press’s emerging value as a “popular literature” deactivated the direct political influence newspapers were normally perceived to have. The assumptions underlying criticisms of “New Journalistic” styles pointed out that the “mechanical expansion of the electorate and of readership did not guarantee... expansion of

political interest and knowledge.”⁷⁰ The interests of the public were being reflected in the daily and weekly newspapers, and they did not indicate any widening interest in parliamentary politics. Instead, “crime, violence and sport” became the most widely read sections by the working classes, challenging the middle-class Victorian ideologies about the values of popular culture.

When commentators on the press remarked on the cheap and tawdry aspects of sensationalistic and entertainment-driven segments of newspapers, they frequently extended their critique so as to communicate their discontent with changing social attitudes of Victorian Britain in decline. As Lee points out, a major concern that arose with the arrival of a “cheap” and more “democratic” press is that it would promote a competition amongst “nobodies” and pose a “threat [against] the “gentlemanly” status of the proprietors.”⁷¹ These so-called hazards raised by a new style of journalism relied on a time-honored ideological binary designed to associate class status with acculturated tastes. As J. O. Baylen benignly puts it, “as the newspaper-reading public increased, it became less politically minded and bored with the arid reporting of political and parliamentary speech-making, while the more intellectually aware readers demanded greater objectivity and less partisanship from the press.”⁷² The implied criticism—that the populism New Journalism engendered would cheapen intellectual and political discourse—relies on the counterpoise between the subjective and emotionally driven faculties and a more objective process of knowledge consumption. The assumption is that the lower classes are not capable of comprehending complex ideas while only the elite upper classes are equipped to evaluate serious social and political news. Therefore, the impression given by critics, who were generally members of the cultural elite, was that the newly literate working classes would sway popular

discourse away from sober parliamentary matters to focus on commoner domestic interests, like sports, entertainment, or the workplace.⁷³

Regardless of the judgments waged against the impact of “New Journalism” on cultural discourse, the changes in representational values of late-Victorian newspapers also indicate an epistemological change in the conceptualization of objectivity that defied the narrow confines set for it by a more conservative era: in Victorian Britain, a civilized and rational sense of objectivity was possessed by the elite “gentleman,” who was relied upon to set the boundaries between private and public spheres.⁷⁴ In the modern era, “New Journalism” modified the meaning of objectivity so that it became defined by popular consensus in a democratic society. Objectivity became formulated such that opinions and interests are reflective of “the least persons in a nations, and to all of them.”⁷⁵ This might mean that articles would no longer be articulated by “rational” argument—the criteria of which was defined by the bourgeois public sphere—or that lengthy explanations of a parliamentary debate become obsolete. In other words, the intellectual conformity of Victorian sheets would give way to a free expression of minority opinions.⁷⁶

No longer written solely for the “governing classes—aristocratic, official, parliamentary, financial and commercial,”⁷⁷ the style of newspapers became indicative of the type of news printed in them. Newspapers took to providing stories meant to titillate and entice a reader on a supposedly “subrational” level. In a broad sense, the character of news did alter during this transformational period such that the content of news included more salacious stories. Startt commented that in Victorian papers “dominated by political matters, there contained little that was entertaining or lively. These ponderous dailies appealed little to the new reading public that emerged late in the [nineteenth] century.”⁷⁸ Therefore, in this new stage of journalistic enterprise,

labeled “New Journalism,” the sensationalistic concentration on particularly grotesque or unusual stories (such as local murders, fantastic scandals, and other thrilling events) was an exploitative tool used to “heighten the appeal of political analysis for relatively unsophisticated readers.”⁷⁹ In parallel development, pages were segmented by more columns and headings and special categories of news came to displace essayistic passages on a singular political issue. By the late nineteenth century, “women’s pages, gossip columns, sports coverage, parliamentary sketches and political commentaries, the extensive use of illustrations, sensational exposes, and the ‘Occasional Notes’ columns were quite commonplace.”⁸⁰ The imagined reader would have links between political, social, and economic issues re-mapped for him such that all those columns would appear co-existing, but unrelated. It appeared that the combination of a greater quantity of diverse topics and attractive design made the practice of reading seem more simplified, too, as the narrow columns of seemingly infinite text converted into condensed and episodic stories.

With the technological advances of an industrialized press, one of the most concrete adjustments the broadsheet papers could make in the newsmakers estimations to accommodate the modern reader was its typography and formatting of the broadsheet. In 1912, the newspaper editor of the *Times* Geoffrey Robinson already recognized the ways in which new printing processes could draw in more readers. Robinson deems that newspaper readers are becoming wary of the tiny typeface and long prosaic segments characteristic in Victorian sheets that did not differentiate themselves from each other. He concludes, therefore, that the newspaper should better measure the cultural meanings and values of its reading public by simplifying the visual field of the broadsheet and enhancing its legibility.

Becoming newsworthy in itself and achieving its own column on March 17, 1914, the *Times* informed its readers that it was “MORE EASILY READ THAN ANY OTHER NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD.”⁸¹ The “reduction of the price to One Penny,” the “immense variety of subjects” and being “better arranged” were all efforts, according to the article, that the newspaper made to make the “form most easily accessible to the busy reader.” Legibility, therefore, was measured at the time in both formalist and substantial terms. At the same time, while responding to a greater general need by the public to consume news, the form and function of “New Journalism” paradigmatically shifted the representative confines of relaying news.

Statistics support the argument that these new specialized modes of production changed the nature of news reporting: for instance, the rise in dailies during the period of implementation of all these technologies shows that a new mode of production required a new market and, consequently, it socialized a new reader with new interests. Anthony Smith has associated the technological advances with cognitive changes in a reader's understanding of how society is organized:

The specialism of the journalist, and especially of the editor, lay in knowing what the market required. Reality was categorized into pages—home, over-seas, political, women's interest, sport, the City and so on. Special new kinds of events were developed which had not previously existed in human cognition, such as, for example, the "crisis," the "horror," or the "human story." Events acquired "angles," or rather, special elements which made them more easily communicable within certain sectors of the market.⁸²

Smith concludes that "the journalist has come to supply the needs of a large social machinery which defines the interim phases of reality."⁸³ By this logic, the journalist was not only developing new interests for a readership, but also defining the dimensions in which imagined readers consumed world events.⁸⁴ It is like the spatial dimensions in the layout of broadsheets prepares the reader in which ways to consume the information; that the restrictive format of "New Journalism" articles will delimit the reader's capacity for consuming information. Accordingly, then, when journalists did present any new content in a categorical and truncated fashion, any measure of facts would appear calculable and immutable. Events become accessible to a reader by the formal organization of the information, which tended to be interpreted by the reader that the events themselves were orderly and logical episodes. Especially when it comes to war reporting, the assumption that armed conflict follows any commonsense

notion of logic is grossly misleading. Nonetheless, it is particularly during wartime that the premises of transparency and objectivity are heralded.

III

Because it had been established by 1914 “that the public was not convinced by logic but seduced by stories,”⁸⁵ newspaper proprietors and editors needed to make decisions about which stories they were going to tell. This was going to be a war where rapid-fire machine guns and artillery-laden tanks were going to be used for the first time in modern history. The range and intensity of destruction and loss of human life was going to be unprecedented. But, so too would the mechanical and technological advances of the press industry be able to keep up with modernized mechanized warfare, transmitting and printing news in unparalleled promptness to real-world events. In one sense, the extremities of the war provided prime material for producing sensationalistic stories on a daily basis. The war offered Fleet Street the opportunity to forthrightly cater to the supposedly “subrational” sensibility in the modern but seemingly “unsophisticated” British reader. At the same time, though, the professional ethos of “New Journalism” was steering the industry to perform the more noble function of critically informing its readership of the actual severity of the nation’s crisis.

In most cases, mainstream journalists lauded the ethos of objectivity that underpinned their reportorial choices. For war correspondents, access to the real-time course of events and having to produce an immediate record with little time or place allowed for reflection or revision supported the notion that the war was being represented in authentic and realist discourse, instead of in subjective or imaginary terms. A general principle of war journalism, as Stuart

Allan and Barbie Zelizer point out, is that “in times of war, objectivity is a prized status where the principles of detachment are a key element in the social construction of the journalists’ own sense of professional identity.”⁸⁶ When a journalist is in plain sight of the atrocities that his own nation is causing, for instance, the ethical dilemmas the journalist may personally confront are circumvented when he is able to claim an objective reportorial role. This ideological shape-shifting by a first-hand witness into an objective reporter of armed conflict, however, eclipses the emotional face of war, which portrays a particular aspect of human suffering otherwise unimaginable in modern society.

Each newspaper proprietor recognized that a narrative of the war needed to be powerful and clever enough to appease the modern newspaper reader who could affirm a newspaper's value by exercising his newfound purchasing power but who would also participate directly or indirectly in the war effort. Besides some practical reasons

which impelled newspapers to co-operate with the government, such as the difficulties in replacing and repairing printing machinery, and the scarcity and rising cost of newsprint (which constrained many papers to decrease the space available for lucrative advertising revenue) in a situation where increasing costs of production reduced profit margins, editors needed to ensure that their newspapers would not undermine the government’s war and recruiting efforts.⁸⁷

Politically, the nation’s leadership realized that to maintain the public’s morale, newspapers could not deprive readers of the “news of the exploits of its gallant sons dying or lying wounded in France; it was bad for recruiting.”⁸⁸ At the same time, though, because newspapers needed to sustain the tenuous loyalty of their readership—which demanded more information and transparency about the situation abroad—the press would have to discover the level of tolerance

the public had for reading about or viewing its slain men. The British government and admiralty would have intramural and extramural struggles in determining this new social role for newspapers and their representational power over imagery and ideas of the First World War.

The quandary over the function of the press in wartime reached an apex at the outbreak of the war, when General Kitchener imposed an absolute ban on war correspondents.⁸⁹ Kitchener was personally agitated by war correspondents and prohibited their presence at the war front. For the General, any stories or photographs of battles gone badly would have corrupted the War Office's efforts to maintain a healthy outlook on the progress of the war. Paradoxically, though, the absolute ban "led to an immediate shortage of 'hard news,' and a spate of wild rumours and exaggerated reports."⁹⁰ In a society where journalism was expected to provide the masses with consumable information, the absence of news was politically untenable; to keep British imperialism viable for ideological hegemony, the government would have to forge an apparatus to reconcile the duality presented to it by a democratic press. Kitchener's arbitrary but decisive prohibition of the presence of any war correspondents in the field forced an ambivalent government to create an apparatus with which to regulate any information that would become available to the public. The public demand for detailed accounts of the army's situation abroad ultimately compelled the government to create a Press Bureau as a measure to appease public curiosity and heed Kitchener's warnings about allowing unfiltered information to be disseminated amongst the general public.⁹¹

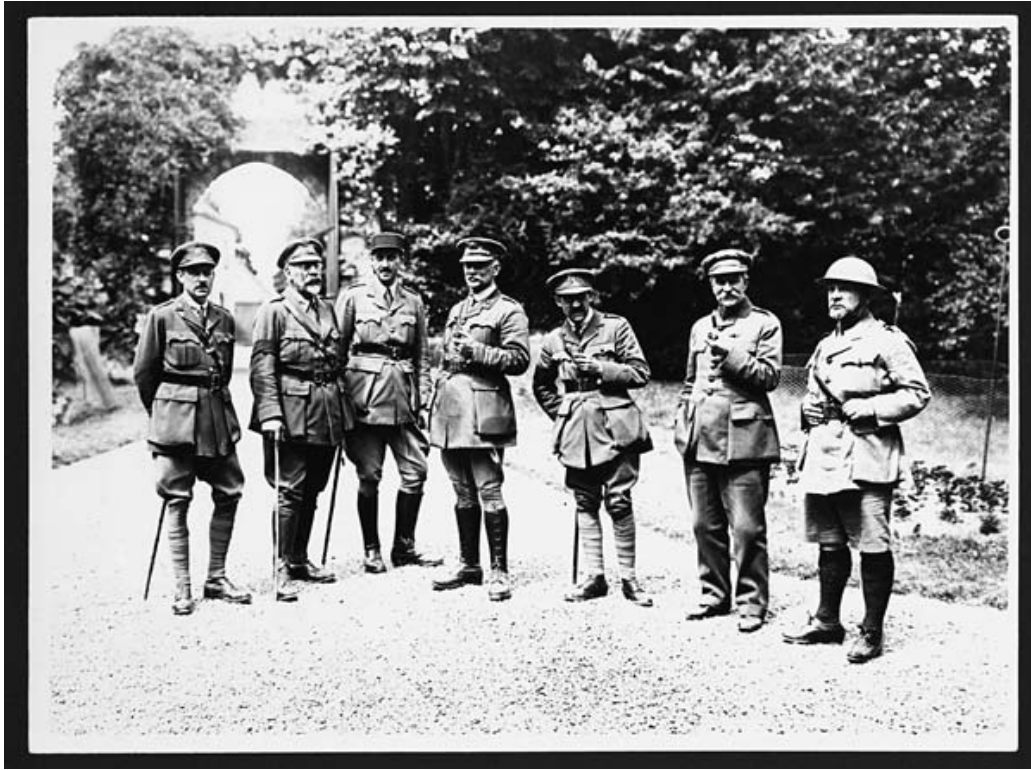


Figure 2. Official Photograph Taken on the British Western Front in France. *A group of Allies War Correspondence on the British Front [sic]* [original title] (Ernest Brooks. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. C 2797. National Library of Scotland.

The Press Bureau—whose functions were so imprecise and inconsistent that, it has been said, its inefficiency was its only asset⁹²—developed a number of procedures to keep a measure of control of the correspondents on the battlefield. Most notably, it had correspondents don a military uniform with an honorary rank, with the only distinguishing feature a green armband. As will be shown below in an analysis on newspaper language, the correspondent's reliance on and identification with military soldiers in the field complicates the act of objective representation. In addition to any assimilating function the correspondent's dress might enable, the funneling of news via a regulatory apparatus moderated any story that could potentially incite a public's

outrage. As Farrar notes, maintaining control over the activities of correspondents would narrow the possibilities for counter-narratives about the impact of the war. The less journalists were invested with the war offices, the more they would work. It turned out to be

immensely hard to find war-related stories to send back to Britain. They [journalists] were not spoon fed by the military or governments and therefore their reports had to be well researched which involved traveling vast distances and talking to the local population who had first-hand accounts of the engulfing war. As they became more reliant on the military between 1916 and 1918, their flair to examine and question what was put before them was less in evidence.⁹³

By establishing a Press Bureau, the War Office defused the tension between the martial and political arms of the government, and initiated the development of what would later become the Department of Information and finally a Ministry of Information. The creation of the Bureau, however, did not promote any news gathering activity that might challenge sources of information or an authoritative interpretation of the war.

The Press Bureau could, in effect, satisfactorily “remove the need for war correspondents to be stationed at the Front and to duplicate information already being sent by the military authorities themselves to the Home Front and press.”⁹⁴ The generally conceived uni-dimensional version of warfare—that it is a noble venture in which men gallantly defend their country—was well maintained when a news agency’s story validated the information given through the Bureau by reproducing it. In effect, a reproduction of the press release socially authorizes the Bureau and gives credence to the system of thought producing knowledge on the war, affirming for the reader a consensus between his or her representative organ, the newspaper, and the officers running the war. It has been commented that the public had “a reasonable right to expect that no

news will be published in the press except such news as furnished in the Bureau.”⁹⁵ By reading such a paper as the *Times*, then, a reader not only implicitly accepts the agreements made between the institutions of news and governance but also learns that official information is reliable when it is collected from official sources through authorized channels; a reader had no reason to speculate that an account of the war could be given by any other source, like a soldier in the trenches or a worker in the village being shelled. As the main conduit for any practical knowledge about the war, the Bureau relied on the probability that the modern readership expected an authoritative source to be the very same as a governmental or military source. Since “facts were deployed selectively yet rationally [by the British government], while falsehoods were eschewed in the belief that they would ultimately be exposed and thereby jeopardize the credibility of those facts that had been released,” the public did not consider filtered stories released by the Bureau to be propagandistic or excessively censored.⁹⁶ As a result, with the consent of the Fleet Street papers, this officiated level of censorship was successfully sold to the public, making readers receptive to the idea of negotiable access to the war front. Hence “objective” journalism distinguished itself from a state’s militaristic propaganda campaign, even when alternative information existed that would undermine the reportage of the war as it stood in broadsheet papers.⁹⁷

To summarize, the British government initially refused to allow any war correspondents anywhere near the battle fronts and developed a censorship system under the Defence of the Realm Act, passed on August 8, 1914, in order to have disciplinary measures in place for those who ignored the strict guidelines for reporting on the war. After the Second Boer War (1899-1902), the British government considered war correspondents as so meddling and influential a group that it resisted giving access to correspondents in the early weeks of the First World War.

Eventually, however, after it became clear that the myth of the war being over before Christmas was eroding, frontline reporting became a common feature of the dailies and weeklies. By the final months of 1914, the British government eventually concluded the newspapers were imperative to the success of the war effort. However, this conclusion was only reached as a reaction to the ideological power the popular press had gained by the beginning of the twentieth century. It was the ideals the press embodied—democratic freedom, equal representation—which made the press responsible for circulating true and accurate information so that it became impossible for the government to simply avoid recording and allowing communiqués about the number of casualties and military defeats. The government could not outright suppress or censor the news, despite any deep desire to do so, as Kitchener’s attempts to ban war correspondents exemplifies. Notwithstanding censorship, however, the press’s adherence to the standards of reporting, I argue, eclipsed any critical view of the war from surfacing.

IV

This is not to say that the relationship between the British government and the Fleet Street Press coordinated with each other so as to agree collectively about how to run the war effort. To the contrary, the tension between the government and newspapermen had risen to such a degree of resentment that the wartime censorship “poisoned within weeks the co-operative spirit painstakingly built up during the pre-war years.”⁹⁸ As member of the Asquith government and co-director of the Press Bureau, E. T. Cook recognized, “the enterprising newspaper or news

agency and an official censorship are natural enemies.”⁹⁹ Curiously, though, despite even Northcliffe's own personal vendetta against the Asquith administration, the *Times* remained the “house magazine of the British ruling establishment and, abroad, as the official mouthpiece of the government.”¹⁰⁰ It is fair to assess that a metropolitan newspaper such as the *Times* maintained this peculiar status because it presented itself as impartial and objective while selectively excluding graphic or critical details concerning the scale of the war and its horrific consequences.

It appears that, upon an initial reading of a conventional newspaper such as the *Times*, political debates were presented in a non-partisan fashion and logistical military strategies of its armed forces were explained in a responsible way, for several reasons. For one, the *Times* had less bureaucratic interference: its own self-censorship activities were in accordance to a higher degree with the censorship guidelines suggested by the government. For example, a major concern claimed by the British government was the revelation of military or naval defense information that would put any campaign or national security at risk. Principally, the guideline for an editor was to avoid any publication of news that would contravene the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA).¹⁰¹ The *Times* was not only voluntarily compliant with the requests by the government to repress information, it also championed national morale and imperial strength. Eventually, it was concluded that

throughout the war the commentators of *The Times* could seldom be anything but *laudatores temporis acti*. They felt that their task was to sustain the morale of the nation in mortal combat; therefore they praised victories no less highly than they deserved; in stalemates they found elements of advantage; and defeats they minimized, excused, or ignored.¹⁰²

Put more explicitly by Robinson, editor of the *Times*, “We are continuously receiving information, sometimes actually passed by the Censor, which it is not in our opinion in the national interest to publish.”¹⁰³ What is being suggested is that constructing the discourse about battles at the Front became the newspaper’s key function in defending the “national interest.” From an entrepreneurial standpoint, newspaper editors fully realized that articles which outlined the naked and brutal realities required to protect the “national interest”—that millions of young British men would be slaughtered in mechanized warfare—would not be economically advantageous. Propagandistic tendencies needed to be coded in terms and formats that would achieve both national and economic goals.

Consider some articles on a page that circulated in the *Times* in August 1914. This page marks the end of the Battle of the Frontiers, on August 25 1914.



Figure 3. *Times* article, August 25, 1914, p. 6.

In a series of conflicts taking place on eastern fronts, the Battle of Mons is the first time the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and the British II Corps engage with the German army. The troops must retreat on August 24 because of an exposed eastern flank and because they become sufficiently outnumbered by more than double the number of German soldiers. If we glance at the layout of these articles reporting on this event, immediately the eye concentrates on the headlines. Presented all together, the headlines read: “NAMUR LOST, GERMAN SUCCESS IN BELGIUM, BRITISH FORCE FIGHTING WELL” and “ENEMY’S HEAVY LOSSES” next to “BRITISH ARMY’S STERN FIGHT, OFFICIAL REPORT,” and so on.¹⁰⁴ These headlines seem contradictory—they appear to present multiple perspectives on the same event. A reader would feel forced to ask the question: how can the British army be fighting well if it lost a major city?

The bold headlines tell us that these opposing ideas—that good fighting can accompany a major loss—can in fact both be true. Furthermore, the “BRITISH ARMY’S STERN FIGHT” is qualified by the following leader: “OFFICIAL REPORT.” Undoubtedly, a charitable reader would find it difficult to refute any information that is officially sanctioned. The appealing statements of stoicism and bravery are accompanied by the articles below which do not include specific facts, names, or figures. Instead they furnish neatly-contained tit-bits of news perforated by neat columns like this concisely summarized point in the article on the left: “there is as yet no explanation of its [Namur’s] sudden fall.” What would the reader think could the fall have been attributed to? It could certainly have been due to the heavy casualties of the allied troops (British soldiers losses totaled 7,800 by the end of these battles, the French losses are no less than staggering) or of the failure of a military plan (the French forces retreated east of Mons, therefore forcing the British to withdraw), though none of these explanations are given here.¹⁰⁵

Another possible explanation for the discrepancies outlined above may be found in the next day's edition of the *Times*. From the very beginning of the First World War, reports of "German Barbarism"—here, again substantiated by the headline "OFFICIAL REPORT"—were widespread. These "fearful and atrocious crimes committed willfully and deliberately by the invading hosts against helpless non-combatants, old men, women, and children" were presented as if they were self-evident, even though these facts have never been independently verified. It appears these accusations were designed to provide counter-evidence to the image of a weak and defeated British army corps. The mythical quality of this barbarism—which went so far as to claim that German troops mutilated children—has been well documented, but has never quite been disavowed.

In these articles on page six of the *Times*, soldiers do not have names, nor do any of the correspondents doing the reporting, yet a rhetoric that uses first person plural possessive pronouns is predominant. For example, the middle article from the first page displayed earlier contains the following sentence: "Fighting has gone on more or less continuously, but the enemy has not effectively harassed *our* operations" (my emphasis). This example shows that the self (the British) and other (the German) are literally marked: any underlying attitudes toward "the enemy" surface as soon as the possessive pronoun is used. In a more subtle way, the verb of choice in the article, "harassed," sets the tone for what action to expect from "the enemy" and what response can be anticipated from the British military. The discourse is constructed such that a grander narrative is achieved in the description of the battle. The message that gets purveyed is this: the Germans are a persistent or relentless nuisance of a people that are ineffective against the sober and controlled operations by the commanders of the Army Corps.

In the presentation of the Namur battle, a mode of “othering” happens, according to Prasun Sonwalkar, at the level of the nation:

The discourse of nations and nationalism is premised on several assumptions about common myths and historical memories, a common, mass culture, a historic territory, common legal rights, and duties of members, etc. the “we/they” dynamic is central to nation formation... it assumes a version of hegemony by which one view of society is made to appear as the “natural” order of things, beyond rational questioning, which may completely delegitimize or even obliterate alternative versions.¹⁰⁶

In consideration of Sonwalkar’s argument, then, the role of discourse in the process of “othering” of Germans would be required by British national interests not because it was directly economically profitable or militarily strategic to do so but instead shows that a fight for imperialist domination requires a transformation of a productive, rival nation of people into an objectified “other” so that the aims of imperialist domination can be legitimately expressed. Credibility and legitimacy were crucial attributes in the building of patriotic support for the war. But how would newspapers keep up appearances of their objective informative duties while proliferating falsely conceived stories? Even though a more usual racist configuration of justification for British hegemony could not be directly applied in this instance of competing European nations—after all, fighting a European superpower isn’t the same as claiming colonialist supremacy in the *primitive* lands—a familiar mythology featuring barbarism and savagery became available for adaptation to the specific relationship between the British Empire and Germany.

Furthermore, the natural order of things is decidedly drawn along the lines of national identities instead of along class lines. This suggests that all members of each society are

undifferentiated in their relations to production, and according to that logic, British workers would not identify with German workers. While the notion of “othering” is implemented to distinguish Britons from Germans, a British worker would be defying the “natural” order of things and found “irrational” if he were to form any notion of solidarity with German workers. This ideological construction is built in to the framing devices of “New Journalism”: as Anthony Smith points out, “Journalism was kept from communicating between classes, from spreading its truth in such a way as to allow the crowd to set up in judgement against the governing classes.”¹⁰⁷ The naturalization in the *Times* of Germans as homogeneously predatory of innocent civilians created fallacies out of actual social realities. This made it more difficult for readers to grasp the actual circumstances that perpetuated the drive to war while it asserted a control over the discursive terrain, so that an alternative understanding of international relations would appear to be “beyond rational questioning.” The irony informing this logic is that, supposedly in the business of informing the public on a factual level, a majority of newspapers proliferated a discourse based on assumptions and mythologies; that is, on speculative and imaginative language rather than on actual observable reality.

As a result of a combination of ideological and discursive frameworks, the relationship between national identity, national interest, and the concept of objectivity as performed by the popular press is naturalized. In articles like those in the *Times*, the war is narrated to its public as a supporter of Empire likes to imagine it: “Our Operations” are led by the “British Army’s Stern Fight” so that “Casualties are not Heavy” even though the city of Namur was “Lost.” And readers know this narrative is true because these “facts” are gathered from an “Official Report.” “Our” interests are described in more detail in the body of the articles, but before a British civilian decides to read on, the headline, “CASUALTIES NOT HEAVY” relieves him of any

distress. How does the reader know this caption only applies to the British forces? Indeed, this headline does not even end up applying to the allied forces in general (the French lost an estimated 27,000 in the battle at Mons) and it becomes certain that this caption does not describe German losses because we learn that “The enemy suffered very heavily.” This caption, “CASUALTIES NOT HEAVY,” can only exist where there is an implicit assumption that the public digesting this information identifies with the force that is “fighting well,” that is protecting the nation’s interests—which, the public learns, turns out to be the fight against barbarism. Furthermore, this caption can only perform this function when there is an a priori assumption of objectivity—in other words, when the public believes that what it is reading is immutably true and actually occurring in the world.

The rhetorical moves I have discussed above, which occur ubiquitously throughout the newspaper, work to situate the reader in the position of an imagined reader for which the battle is being fought. In this case, the typified reader is a British civilian, allied with the French, in the brave fight against the uncivilized and savage Huns. After reading the articles in popular newspaper such as the *Times*, of which these few articles are broadly representative, it is not difficult to surmise how the notion of the Great War for Civilization becomes a common idiom. As pointed out by Barbie Zelizer, newspapers don’t so much provide a surplus of information as they “provide what is already known, familiar and sensical.”¹⁰⁸ The reports on Namur, for example, relay more the traditional caricatures of fighting than they do specific circumstances or particular dynamics of that battle. Again, major newspapers seem to be reinstating symbolic or associative meanings in public discourse rather than instigating critical reading practices. Moreover, frameworks that construct such premises as those given by the *Times*—like the representation of a deadly battle in stoic terms—demonstrate that a mainstream newspaper is not

necessarily a predetermined product of imperialist ideology, but rather that it is compatible with a set of ideas and the interests of the ruling class of the period.¹⁰⁹

Incidentally, a story on battles at Mons released by writer of the *Times* Arthur Moore brought out numerous criticisms and debates for the industry and for the Press Bureau. Initially said to have been merely overlooked by the censors, the report detailing a major British defeat exposed a bleak outcome of the battle when it concluded that “we have to face the fact that the British Expeditionary Force, which bore the great weight of the blow, has suffered terrible losses and requires immediate and immense reinforcement but it needs men, men, and yet more men.”¹¹⁰ The dispatch about the depleted and exhausted regiments generated a flurry of controversy on the domestic front because censorship should have prevented any “depressing” news from reaching the public. But as David Silbey has found, “the main effect of the *Times* article was to increase recruitment. Enlistment figures shot up as soon as [the article] appeared.”¹¹¹ This effect may not have been achieved had it not been for the censor, F. E. Smith—who, it turns out, did not delete or redact any original information assembled by the *Times* correspondent Moore, but only tacked in some conclusions of his own: “England should realize and realize at once that she must send reinforcements and still send them... We want men and we want them now.” Regardless of propagandistic success, the overt manipulation of a dispatch to heighten the war effort transgressed the boundaries that had been set by “New Journalism.” The censor from the Press Bureau violated the press’s ethos, even having Parliament denounce the maneuver and decide “that the defeat at Mons, despite its possible appeal in a recruiting drive, was not the sort of news the British public should read.”¹¹² The early confusion about the integrity of a war report is a telling example of the finely tuned balance

newspapers struck in keeping with an acceptable stance on the war, its propagandistic functions and staying within the confines of a professional ethos of reporting.

If the source of information, the Press Bureau, is responsible for funneling all the foreign information to numerous newspaper organizations, it might be reasonable to conclude that a news organization could not relay the information in a more critical way. The *Daily Herald* challenges this proposition. Although it is the case that official reports submitted by the Bureau circulated amongst all the newspapers that printed stories on the war, the formal presentation of a war story can shift the lens of the reader to details otherwise obscured by the dominant narrative dedicated to preserving “national interests.” The *Daily Herald*, the newspaper backed by the Labour party, ran special war editions that included the statements released by foreign news sources and the Press Bureau. Reporting on the same battle discussed above, the front page of the *Daily Herald* provides the header: “BRITISH TROOPS IN ACTION/ “NAMUR HAS FALLEN”/ GREAT BATTLE NOW IN PROGRESS.” Though similar to the “NAMUR LOST” headline given in the *Times*, the quotation marks around the second header in the *Herald*, “NAMUR HAS FALLEN” prepares the reader to expect a fuller citation in the body of the story. The article in the *Herald* presents the reported fact of the fallen city as it was received from the source, the Press Bureau: “Just before four o’clock yesterday afternoon the Bureau sent out the following message:—‘It is announced that Namur has fallen.’”



Figure 4. Daily Herald, August 15, 1914, front page.

The added punctuation in the headline signals to the reader that the conclusion of the lost city was reached, not by the paper's correspondent, or by any foreign correspondent or independent source, but by the Press Bureau. The *Times* headers lack any punctuation that might indicate the primary source for the information was anyone other than writer of the article himself. But the writer of the article was not a reporter employed by the *Times* who espoused the occupational responsibilities of professional journalism. The writer(s) of the release was had no such ethical code to uphold, only political motivations to fulfill.

The dissonance achieved by the contradictory headlines, “BRITISH ARMY’S STERN FIGHT” and “NAMUR LOST” on page 6 of the *Times* can be best explained by understanding that the middle column in the *Times* is a reprint of the entire release written by the Press Bureau. In a momentary glance, the “OFFICIAL REPORT” column sandwiched between the paper’s own reports makes it difficult for the reader to make any distinction between the point of view given by the source of the material—the Bureau—and that of the newspaper—the view of the *Times*. In a comparative reading, the reader would notice that the *Herald* presents the message that was “sent out” by the Bureau and the message itself—“NAMUR HAS FALLEN”—as details that are distinct, even when printed in the same column. When the Bureau’s quotation is reported within the text of the article, the reader is more equipped to understand that someone employed by the *Daily Herald*, a politically left-wing newspaper, wrote the article. This formal tactic of the newspaper provides a perspective on the situation abroad that may otherwise be absent in those papers considered to be following a standard of objective reporting. The mere reproduction of the entirety of a report by the Bureau, including the time stamps of the statements—“3:45” for instance—may be legitimized by a newspaper in its claims to display in objective fashion the statements given by official governmental channels of information. However, the duplication of a verbatim statement of the Press Bureau in even measure and equal formatting as those articles produced by journalists does not sharpen a realistic view of the overall war, which would better serve the interests of newspaper readers. A faithfully reproduced Press Bureau’s release instead preempts the reader from performing a more critical type of assessment.

The syntactical construction of the discourse is, of course, only part of the entire contextual terrain in which individual articles are being printed. As Richardson reminds us, “we shouldn't consider elements of vocabulary, grammar, semantics (and so on) to be of profound and direct significance in themselves; rather it is the *function* that such elements serve in the moment of their use that is of interest.”¹¹³ The distinctions that textual analyses help us to draw reveal that a particular style of writing may indicate an over-arching social or political logic in operation at the time. The comparative reading of articles by the *Times* and the *Herald* shows a great number of similarities and differences in the content of the coverage. The Press Bureau's control over the information explains why the data would have been the same in each paper, but it does not explain why the treatment of the information by one paper or the other is a pro-imperialist, ruling class, or workers' interests rendering of fighting a war.¹¹⁴

While the *Herald* used “New Journalism” formal conventions to present its news, breaking up lengthy columns with leads and sub-headers and partitioning stories according to the subject matter, even including advertisements in its pages, it still did not draw the same conclusions or perform the same ideological function as a paper such as the *Times*. The readability of the leftist newspaper kept it competitive in the larger marketplace, though its content challenged the typical reader to make a choice on which imagery and discursive frame of the war he was going to accept. Addressing the working man, the *Herald* regularly foregrounded its own politics in reference to the war. A few days after the entrance of Britain into the conflict, the *Herald* printed an editorial that tackled the issue of a correspondent's role in drumming up patriotic or pro-war sentiments. On August 18, 1914, the paper reminded its own journalists and its readers that “Correspondents complain that overmuch attention is devoted in the papers, even

our own, to tidings or rumours from the war arena. They say that man does not live by militarism alone, rather he dies thereby; that the nation has other interests, even to-day, apart from firing lines.” These “other interests” were the constant objective conditions that all workers experienced, and which the Labour party wished to regenerate, especially when facing circumstances and the corresponding discourse of a world war. While critiquing the propagandistic fervor spread by the government and commercial press, the *Herald* consistently promoted a “war fever” based on the idea of class war, not imperialist conquest:

We would like to see the workers filled these days with war fever. We would like to see a generous rivalry amongst dockers, navies, transporters, railmen, miners, etc., etc., as to which of them should show the fever in the most ardent degree. But the fever we refer to is fever in the workers own ever-necessary war, the war in the industrial arena, the war for social justice, and the opportunity to enjoy their share of the intellectual and artistic sides of life.

The *Herald* certainly reported on the war arena, as the article on Namur demonstrates. However, the newspaper’s framework provides a lens on domestic and international relations that suggests alternative ideological guideposts than those staked in papers like the *Times*. Specifically, articles such as the one above do not perform an elision of class, like I argue articles in the *Times* would. In the article above, “We” identifies and refers to the newspaper staff that is addressing a specific class of people, industrial workers. The paper is writing to a class *in* itself and promoting the idea that the class reads and thinks *for* itself.

It can be argued that the editorial character of articles in the *Herald* precludes it from being considered *real* journalism. In other words, its articles disclosed a political bias that disqualified the paper from a model of journalism known for its assumed impartiality. “New

Journalism” predicated itself on a style of reporting that minimized a personalized vantage point so that objective factors would provide basic untainted information to the reader. However, what style of presentation can provide a greater objective standpoint than an article that outlines multiple possible vantage points? In an article with the lead, “How the World Might End War,” the *Herald* included a section titled “War is Stupid.” Quoted at length below, it asserts that

From any standpoint war is simply stupid, apart from its horror and suffering.

If we believe the institution of monarchy to be good, and we preach that loyalty to kings is a virtue, European war is foolish. All the monarchs are closely related. They are members of one great family.

If we look at the matter from the standpoint of the merchant and the manufacturer, again war is stupid. Exchange of goods can only be carried on with profit when the Government is stable and the people prosperous. Neither is possible under militarist domination.

Or take the outlook of the financier or investor. Hundreds of foreigners have invested money in England.

And so far as the worker is concerned? He simply works for wages everywhere, and is exploited in all countries. He lives and no more. What will he gain by war?¹¹⁵

The excerpt above does not provide a blunt conclusion, that “war is stupid” based on a singular writer’s opinion, but provides a logic according to which all social participants would find a detriment in supporting the cause for war, from the worker to the capitalist investors, and even kings. In contrast, the editorial sections in commercial newspapers meant to provide analyses from individuals who claimed expertise into the causes or solutions for the war. In most cases,

members of the cultural intelligentsia supplied commentary that stood apart from general news sections while furnishing the political and ideological justifications for further aggression.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, that the logic cast in the *Herald* would lead a reader to understand the conflict in Marxist terms, by default, has the newspaper avoid mythologizing the terms of the war in the same way as a paper like the *Times* does. Since the premises informing articles on the war in the *Herald* do not reintroduce those associations and values that remain pervasive in war reporting done in the protection of capitalist interests—like jingoistic notions of courage or associations between the battlefield and glory—journalism appears to function differently; a growing labour movement, like the one led by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in Britain in the early twentieth century, requires a qualitatively divergent content and tact than that delivered in a commercial press. The most obvious visual clue that the *Herald* approached the subject of the war from a different perspective is given by the illustrations donning the cover of each issue; on the whole, each edition printed an ink drawing depicting the foreboding deaths of British soldiers or mawkish cartoon representations of war profiteers.

To a great extent, the *Herald* became the most successful prophylaxis to a capitalist press because it adapted many “New Journalism” formalist techniques to keep a reader interested—it printed illustrations, varied its fonts and used bold headlines—yet refrained from pretending the objective point of view mainstream newspapers maintained. Taking a cue from “New Journalism” by attempting to socialize a new reader by creating new categories, the newspaper backed by the Labour movement sought to impress the imagined reader in the same manner as a commercial newspaper. As Curran explains,

They helped their readers to make sense of the world in a new way, most notably by popularizing the labour theory of value. The assertion that the wealth of the community

was created by labour that became a recurrent theme of the new radical press was of crucial importance in developing a corporate class pride and establishing an ideological base from which to resist middle-class propaganda.¹¹⁷

Instead of writing from the disposition of a liberal bourgeois understanding of news, that from writing “impartially, then a reader should certainly gain a rational understanding of how contemporary events affected his or her interests,” the *Herald* instead elevated those concerns that were usually buried in the commercial press. It attended to an aspect of society that exists in society, but that is not “newsworthy”: class injustice.¹¹⁸

VI

From what I have been able to gather, the *Herald* was unique in its application of class politics for an anti-war position. Somewhat surprisingly, the numerous socialist publications were not anti-war. A less militant socialist paper, the *Clarion*, not only supported the war effort, but printed government propaganda on the front page.¹¹⁹ The editor of the *Clarion*, Robert Blatchford, claimed to follow a policy of “humanity: a policy not of party, sect or creed, but of justice, reason and mercy.”¹²⁰ Not formally representative of any political group or party though associated with numerous left organizations, its independence from party associations signaled to its readers an interest in a kind of humanist objectivity.¹²¹ As “New Journalism” made the notion of objectivity in the press practicable and valuable, smaller left-wing papers could adapt it whereby they could now incorporate narratives that were in direct conflict with their traditional political and social worldviews. As Hopkin says, Blatchford’s conviction of socialism came in the form of a “policy of political neutrality in the midst of growing internecine warfare [that]

was not only politically wise but better for business.”¹²² Apparently, in its attempts to draw a diversified readership, the paper found no intrinsic contradiction in proposing a socialist worldview can discursively coexist with imperious ads for recruitment. Blatchford’s “policy” in conjunction with the printing of a recruitment ad reflects not only how fragmented socialist politics in Britain became during the war, but reveals the compromises that were made in order to stay in business.

For the socialist groups in Britain, the aspect of commercialization prompted a number of internal political arguments. Early on, one of the most prominent socialists and *Labour Leader* editor, Keir Hardie, lamented over the choices left-wing newspapers made in distributing papers financed solely by political parties. By opting out of the commercial market, all socialist publications end up struggling, according to Hardie, “with the same invariable tale of failure and debt. Not debt alone but the absorption of all the energy of the best members to keep the paper alive. This is bad in every sense and tends to hinder rather than help the movement.”¹²³

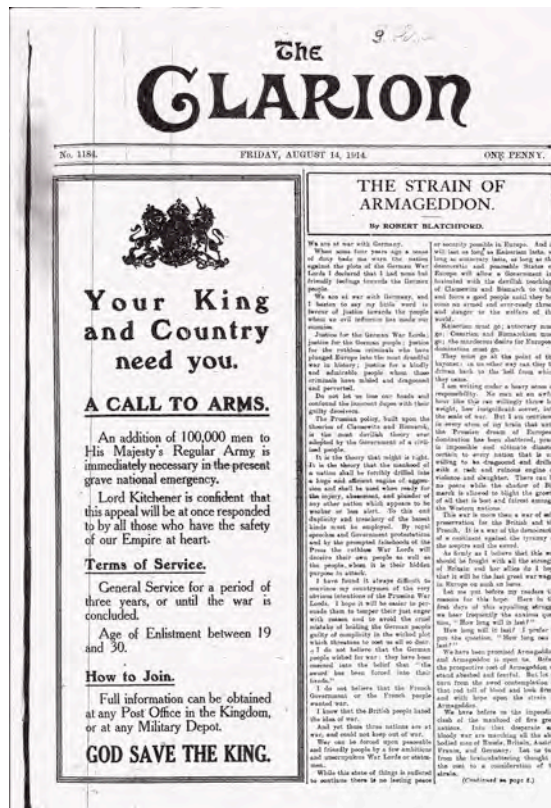


Figure 5. *The Clarion*, August 14, 1914, front page.

Hardie couldn't be more right when it came to the difficulties leftist publications faced during the war. The preoccupation with fiscal solvency eventually hindered the majority of the radical press such that by 1914, workers' and radicals' movements had difficulty finding an outlet for agitational or revolutionary perspectives.

Even more militant papers reached political conclusions that contradicted a radical socialist perspective, some going so far as to promote recruiting for the King's Army. According to F. J. Gould writing in the Marxist paper *Justice*, the official organ of the British Socialist Party, the goal of socialists in the party was to reach a “world wide humanity,” as it is for all Socialists. “But,” Gould qualifies, “our race has to reach this ideal by stages.”¹²⁴ That is, radical militancy should be tempered in the midst of the war. Lead editor H. W. Lee writes,

I can say that *Justice* has furnished the best and most reliable Socialist information published in this country. I have tried also, to conduct the policy of the paper in accordance with the pronouncements of the Executive Committee of the British Socialist Party, those pronouncements being the only statements which could be accepted as official on behalf of the body. Further, *Justice* has been open for the expression of all shades of opinion on the war—save one which would quickly have brought us under the Censor, and I saw no reason to sacrifice the safety of *Justice* in order that the particular view should obtain publicity.

And lastly, it seems after a litany of apologies, Lee comes to conclude, “I am in favour of recruiting for the British Army under present circumstances.”¹²⁵ What are these circumstances? Is the BSP operating at a “stage” whereby it could not give expression to a particular “shade of opinion on the war”? What is that opinion which might endanger the future existence of the official organ of a political party?

It is possible that the legal ramifications brought by censors might compel a newspaper to minimize a militant rhetoric or resist publishing stories that might somehow jeopardize national security. However, as Tania Rose has found, “only 747 ‘D’ notices were issued the whole of the war.”¹²⁶ In addition, “until the introduction of conscription, only pamphlets or leaflets considered likely to deter recruiting had been liable to be seized.”¹²⁷ Rose’s findings suggest that, especially during the initial chaos and inefficiency of the Press Bureau of the early war years, when Lee’s editorials were written, the threat of censorship alone would not have wholly compelled a socialist newspaper to adopt a pro-war stance, let alone encourage further aggression and army recruitment. It is more likely that the socialist papers, in softening their radical rhetoric, were

responding to a social consensus that was successfully building through systematic campaigns against the Bolshevik revolutionary movement in Russia.¹²⁸

In retrospect, we see that the trends in journalism of the period, not exempting the left-wing press, acted as faithful corollaries to the wider social and political formations, which averted the public's view away from potential revolutionary thinking onto free market principles which promised to advance British society above that of rival nations. James Curran sums it up this way:

The portrayal of labour as the source of wealth was replaced by the portrayal of “profits” as the mainspring of the economy, and entrepreneurs as the catalysts who created wealth. The early stress on class solidarity [in left-militant papers] gave way to a stress on the individual who, as the master of his own destiny in a free opportunity society, was free to obtain the rewards that his own efforts would bring and to participate as a consumer in the growing prosperity of industrial Britain.¹²⁹

Whether financed by a political party (e.g., *Justice*) or by independent shareholders (e.g., *Clarion*), socialist newspapers found themselves in a most precarious position when the war, a broadening readership, and commercial markets coincided such that the material and ideological costs of operating a press were significant. Left-wing papers could not operate in the same way like a paper such as the *Times* that “used advertising revenue to consolidate its supposed political independence.”¹³⁰ They had to directly appeal to their patrons for subscription fees and rely on members of the BSP to attract new readers. James Curran and Jean Seaton explain why this model of newspaper production and distribution delimited the paper's function as shaping public opinion:

Radical newspapers could survive in the new economic environment only if they moved upmarket to attract an audience desired by advertisers or remained in a small working-class ghetto, with manageable losses that could be offset by donations. Once they moved out of that ghetto and sought a large working-class audience, they courted disaster. If they sold at the competitive prices charged by their rivals, they made a loss on each copy due to lack of advertising. If they increased their sales, they merely incurred greater losses and moved more heavily into debt.¹³¹

Whereas the radical press of the nineteenth century—mainly generated in the scattered provincial regions of England—relied on a patronage system to remain in operation, those periodicals catering to the select erudite niches of a bourgeois metropolis in either London or Manchester did not yet have the structural or financial fortification later bestowed to them by commercial and mechanical innovations to outstrip what was popular reading material in the mid 1800s. With industrialization and revenue gained through advertisements, though, every branch of journalism revolutionized.¹³²

To be sure, the exceptional financial costs of modern technology, which only increased in the approaching twentieth century, became a primary factor for anyone interested in opening a news office. The transition into industrialized printing processes threatened or forced extinction of the radical press, which consisted of “over 2,000 papers published between 1800 and 1914.”¹³³ James Curran illustrates the effects an emergence of “New Journalism” production had on the working class world of publications: “Whereas many of the radical papers in the early 1830s... had been printed on machines costing £10 to £15 set up in small print shops, Northcliffe is estimated to have spent half a million pounds establishing plant and machinery for the *Daily Mail* and related publications.”¹³⁴ Mostly, the initial expenditure for expanding a paper’s

production could be attributed to acquisition and maintenance of advanced printing machinery and the mechanical typesetting machines introduced in the late nineteenth century. The speed and cost of production most dramatically changed with the replacement of hand-fed presses to rotary presses able to print on one continuous roll of paper. For instance, according to the *Printer's Register*, 7 men working two Walter presses (an adapted Hoe press first acquired in 1868 by the *Times*) could produce the same output as 48 working on hand-fed Hoe machines.¹³⁵ Though the sheer amount of capital needed to produce and distribute a national daily newspaper became immense for any news outfit merely for the price of operating the printing press machinery, remaining financially viable became an even greater concern for leftist and radical newsmen in a politically volatile period.¹³⁶

Whether a publication could produce copy with modern formatting and aesthetic appeal like that achieved by “New Journalism” seems to be the most telling indicator of its success and possible influence on public opinion. According to Hopkin, a socialist publication could not attract the numbers of readers that a capitalist publication could because

The papers had no standard format, each paper possessed its own distinctive style and appearance but, in general, socialist papers differed qualitatively from the conventional papers they sought to rival. For one thing they were not so much newspapers as periodicals; they were explicitly concerned with perennial issues rather than ephemeral incidents, and their preoccupation with politics coloured everything written in them. Their contributors were not journalists in the ordinary sense but political commentators.¹³⁷

War coverage, in particular, consisted of speculations about allied troops' progress on the battlefields and abstract analysis of policy issues instead of first-hand accounts of events or even

interviews with official sources. The costs of dispatching a correspondent or opening a foreign office was, to say the least, out of reach for all of these small enterprises. In effect, this meant that most of the war coverage was either assembled news from larger established outlets or analysis of already-processed news; either way, these socialist publications could not provide the modern reader with the latest breaking, and sensational, stories of war.

Hopkin's analysis likens socialist papers formally to the stately press of Victorian years. News stories were not organized by topics that exist in modern newspapers such as current events, sports, or human interest stories. On visual examination of a socialist paper such as *Justice*, it appears that its composition more closely resembled a Victorian newspaper, where lengthy columns on the minutiae of parliamentary debates were run together with very little visual distractions, either headings or illustrations. Even though some publications proudly proclaimed, like *Labour Leader* did, that "There is no other paper like it. No Police News. No Football News. No Society News. But it is Full of News,"¹³⁸ this was not a good thing. Being "out-of-date," I would venture to guess, did little to attract a readership outside of its traditional patrons, making the struggle to financially survive even more difficult. That *Clarion* and *Labour Leader* used more typographical innovations and other "apolitical features" of "New Journalism" to attract their readers exemplifies the ways in which some leftist publications took cues from the "New Journalism" in order to become more notable and influential. However, as we've seen, as features were adopted, the political lens of these papers altered as well, resembling "New Journalism" papers not only formally, but ideologically as well.¹³⁹

Perhaps the most surprising findings are the rhetorical and symbolic similarities between the capitalist and socialist press circulating during the war. That the BSP officially "wishes the Allies to be victorious over the Prussians" and is advocating for conscription of workers in its

pages¹⁴⁰ and that other socialist organs simply declare Prussians as “evil,” papers such as *Clarion* and *Justice* are in effect mirroring the political conclusions drawn by the commercial press. Curran explains that, historically, “the internationalist perspective of the early radical press, reflected in reports of working class struggles abroad, dissolved into an increasingly nationalistic and imperialistic coverage of foreign affairs that replaced the symbols of class conflict with the new affectual symbols of membership of a superior race and world power.”¹⁴¹ Just a glance at the front page of the *Clarion*, with its printing of government propaganda and claims that “Socialism can serve humanity through the war,” proves this to be true.¹⁴² So, what were workers into soldiers to read? How could a sanitized discourse about the heroism of soldiering retain any legitimacy in the face of experience in the trenches?

3.0 THE EXPERIENCE OF COMBAT: BODY-LESS NARRATIVES

I

The three forms of writing by soldiers that I examine in this chapter are postcards and letters addressed to family, diaries, and the trench journal, *Wipers Times*. In what follows, I argue that the experience of living in the trenches during the First World War makes soldiers uniquely positioned to create a narrative of war that achieves the greatest level of realism. The three levels of communication all describe the conditions of being at the Front, but in distinctly differing styles. Free from governmental or military scrutiny, soldiers express the need to describe the sensorial nature of the Front in their diaries. To account for the visceral impact of combat, these writers use impressionistic narrative conventions rather than classic realist techniques. At the same time, in personal correspondence, soldiers are usually reticent to describe their experiences because of two types of censorship: 1) official censorship and 2) self-censorship. I observe that the Press Bureau and Intelligence services unnecessarily imposed strict censorship since the epistolary texts had more the effect of a static and disembodied account of war than an intimate one. Thus, the gravity of the tragic state of the war was pre-emptively kept from civilian perception. Finally, I argue the soldiers using humor, satire, and highly aestheticized techniques to express their attitudes about the war when contributing to *Wipers*, a trench journal, produce an intimate portrait of experiences otherwise neglected or suppressed in writing of the time.

Ultimately, I contend, soldiers achieve a generative realism when their writing violates a main proposition of classical realism: that purely factual description can adequately communicate the reality of the world. Instead, soldiers produce synaesthetic realism, a style of writing that features the haptic and perceptual senses of warfare and transforms them into a permanent and viable record.

As I showed in Chapter Two, the formal and economic requirements of newspapers make the graphic depiction of war conditions impossible. One would have never found a description about rats “as large as otters who gorged themselves on the human flesh that lay rotting all around them”¹⁴³ or the nits on everyone’s skulls, the itch mites that caused scabies, or—least of all described—the smell of putrefaction.¹⁴⁴ In contrast to reports by correspondents, a soldier’s recounting of the trenches more commonly cite “a penetrating and filthy stench... a combination of mildew, rotting vegetation and the stink which rises from the decomposing bodies of men and animals.”¹⁴⁵ If a soldier who experienced these features of the trenches first-hand read an article about a soldier’s daily life from a popular newspaper like the *Times* or the *Daily Mail*, it was likely that he would find depicted not a familiar but a foreign experience instead. This caused a great level of distrust to form amongst the majority of British troops. War veteran and poet novelist Robert Graves explains:

the partial or dishonest war-communicés and over-cheerful despatches from the field by special correspondents shocked the Fighting Forces, who knew the facts, and undermined their simple faith in the printed word. I found serious conversation with my parents all but impossible.¹⁴⁶

For Graves, the violation of his “simple faith”—the basic presumption that written language failed to mirror the factual world—was egregious. This chapter examines the ways in which a

soldier's experience of the First World War shaped a realist discourse distinct from the traditional narratives of literary classic or journalistic objective realisms.

It was hard to ignore the general sentiment of soldiers returning home for leave from the Front. As Allyson Booth has pointed out, the “fracture between combatant experience and civilian perception of the war ensured a combatant alienation so profound that the idea of a homecoming became impossible.”¹⁴⁷—at least, the kind of sentimental homecoming which has become popularized in songs of the period like “When Tommy Comes Marching Home” or “Keep the Home Fires Burning.”¹⁴⁸ At the time, one could find some complaints of the chasm between soldiers and civilians in letters to the editor in various publications and, after Armistice, numerous veterans published their memoirs describing the pervasive sense of loss, anger, alienation, and resentment amongst their comrades in the trenches.¹⁴⁹

In October 1916, an anonymous letter appears in the *Nation* attempting to explain how ignorant the public was of a soldier's return to civilian life:

It is very nice to be home again. Yet am I at home? One sometimes doubts it. There are occasions when I feel like a visitor amongst strangers whose modes of thought I neither altogether understand nor altogether approve... And your ignorance as to the sentiments of your relations about it! ¹⁵⁰

Indeed, one might have readily heard the type of commentary like “the same old Tom” did upon return to the home front in Hugh Walpole's “Nobody”: “‘It's quite wonderful,’ they all said, ‘to see the way that dear Tom has come back from the war just as he went into it. His same jolly generous self. Everyone's friend.’”¹⁵¹ How could such a disregard for the altering experience of an afflicted soldier—as Tom was—occur? For many, the commercial press was responsible for misrepresenting, if not completely erasing the realities that soldiers faced on a daily basis. From

the perspective of the returning war veteran Robert Graves, “we could not understand the war madness that ran about everywhere, looking for a pseudo-military outlet. The civilians talked a foreign language; and it was newspaper language.”¹⁵²

II

“Newspaper language” operates on a number of levels to make the dominant discourse of the war a foreign one to soldiers. First, as I have shown in Chapter Two, the development of the New Journalism conventions define the ways in which information becomes consumable to the public. Newspaper reports are semantically written to satisfy both the censors in the War Office and the public while claiming to uphold an ethos of objectivity by publishing “Official Reports.” Here, the following analysis of the semantic construction of articles will show the ways in which live and dead bodies are left out of stories. As the receptacle for the sights, sounds, and shocks of the trenches, the body—its presence or absence of it in articles—designates the kind of realism that is achievable.

Under the headlines, “Germans gain ground near Ypres by using asphyxiating gas” and “Driven back by bomb gas” in an edition of the *Daily Mirror* dated April 24, 1915, explanations of the gas attack by the Germans rang hollow to many soldiers who might have experienced this biological warfare.¹⁵³ Accompanying articles by war correspondents described the consequence of the gas attacks this way: “In Belgium the surprise caused by the asphyxiating bombs used by the Germans to the north of Ypres has had no grave consequences. *Our* counter-attack, vigorously supported by the British troops on *our* right and also by the Belgian troops on *our* left, was developed with success” and “To the north of Ypres the Germans, by employing a large

quantity of asphyxiating bombs, the effect of which was felt for a distance of a mile and a quarter behind *our* lines, succeeded in forcing *us* to retire” (emphasis mine). This correspondent’s manner of reporting ensures that any gravity of the situation, which we may have to assume means numerous soldier deaths and painful afflictions suffered by allied troops, were inconsequential to the overall success of allied nations in the war. This would not be the conclusion a soldier on the frontlines would reach.

The article is grammatically written so that the counter-attack seems to have nullified the “surprise caused by the asphyxiating bombs” from causing mass deaths. Firstly, the language used in the article does not include information that radically modifies the nouns of the story. This is what makes the story seem purely factual and not opinion-based. One notable exception is the insertion of the adverb “vigorously” that describes the support by the Allied forces in the counter-attack. This sparing usage of the adverb “vigorously” injects a positive opinion about the allied troops while the absence of any descriptive terms about “the Germans” leaves the reader to reach his or her own conclusions about the strength and viability of the enemy army. Secondly, by using intransitive verbs, the semantic construction of the sentences suggests the event appears to be happening automatically, almost naturally. The “surprise caused by asphyxiating bombs” which “succeeded in forcing us to retire” is written in positive terms; it “elides[s] agency for the negative process, by limiting a clause to represent the *effect* of the event... rather than the process that brought about this effect.”¹⁵⁴ The attributed cause of “the effect of which was felt for a distance of a mile and a quarter behind our lines” makes the large quantity of “asphyxiating bombs” incidental, rather than central, to the main action of the sentence. Finally, the “Germans... succeeded in forcing us to retire” clause reads as the most important statement of the sentence, declaring the finality of the situation. Rhetorically, “retire” signifies that a tactical

decision was made after some considerable deliberation over the action. This keeps the import of the article grounded in military terms, making it difficult for the reader to imagine the actual painful consequences that came from the secondarily listed form of noxious gas attacks. In this instance, the constraints limiting a journalist from conveying those indecorous observations of war are not that adequate language isn't available for describing what he sees but rather that he cannot write in a language that depicts the theater of war as "nasty."¹⁵⁵ As a public discourse, "newspeak" casts a battlefield as a hard and tight reality that can be simply absorbed into mainstream culture, not be shocking to it. A story figuring the actual brutality of fighting that would relate how phosgene gas affects soldiers, for instance, would estrange the civilian readership rather than appeal to it.¹⁵⁶

Apart from the grammatical style of writing, the newspapers also found ways to strip bare the cruelties that were inflicted on soldiers by substituting dispassionate and sterile reportage when giving accounts of the dead. For instance, regular tallies of death tolls became a prominent way to display some of the real effects of going off to war. As Allyson Booth explains, "Posted on buildings and printed on the front page of the *Times*, names of the dead, listed in small type, were the perpetual front-page story. Casualty lists were thus, to civilians, the daily representation of war's physical consequences."¹⁵⁷ Besides these lists, as Juliet Nicolson notes, there were no other physical reminders of the dead at the time:

A decision had been taken in 1915 that no corpses of either officers or soldiers would be brought back from the front. There were simply too many for the authorities to be able to manage such a task. There was another reason too. Many of the bodies were unidentifiable, being so badly mutilated, although this detail was not often made explicit. The dead remained abandoned, drowned in the liquid mud into which they had slipped or

been trampled, and were buried abroad either in the very place where they had lost their lives or in vast cemeteries—what Rudyard Kipling called a ‘Dead Sea of arrested lives’—set up by the Imperial War Graves Commission.¹⁵⁸

So, while soldiers necessarily bore witness to the “Dead Sea” of bodies at the Front, the War Commission expressly made efforts to bury the cost of war *over there*. In effect, then, when the casualty lists published in newspapers acknowledge those actual losses abroad, they transform the stench of death and corporeal loss into a consumable set of data for civilians.

Additionally, even when the enemy endures tremendous losses of life, more in-depth coverage is not warranted. As Phillip Knightley observes, in a *Daily Mail* paper on April 20, 1915, “the total number of German soldiers killed, wounded and missing [was officially tallied at] *two and three quarters million*. The item was given one inch of space at the bottom of page five.”¹⁵⁹ This instrumental treatment of the most devastating reality of war could be viewed as a blatant attempt to minimize the ability for civilian readers to comprehend the immensity of the total losses at the Front, no matter what the nationality of soldiers. For this reason, the press not only performs a communicatory function, it also creates a way in which to comprehend the information given. A casualty list crops out a total human experience and makes a soldier’s death a fact, but not a knowable state.¹⁶⁰

The removal of the body from newspaper reports also creates more of an opportunity that the link between a man’s psychic and corporeal being is severed. While recovering from wounds suffered at the Battle of the Somme, Robert Graves was affected directly by the “body-less-ness” of newspaper language. Hynes explains that the family of Graves was notified that he had been killed and that he had the peculiar experience of “reading a notice of his own death in *The Times* as he lay recuperating in a London hospital.”¹⁶¹ The listing of dead soldiers not only disembodies

the deceased by underrepresenting them, but in this case, it falsely pre-determines a living soldier's demise. By this example, we become aware of the distance language necessarily signifies between an experience and the recording of it. In this case—Graves reading about his own death—the identity of the soldier gets figuratively and literally lost.

III

The abstention of the body was not the only method in obscuring the reality of warfare. Even when a newspaper does acknowledge a military loss, which assumes the loss of many British lives, a newspaper such as the *Times* uses particular verbiage that delimits the immense value a singular life would have. Glenn Wilkinson proposes that

The most direct method of removing casualties from the consciousness of readers was to suggest that the soldiers no longer existed, that they had simply disappeared. In this way, the word “annihilate” was utilized extensively and became a common method to denote the deaths of soldiers, particularly if on a large scale.¹⁶²

In effect, the denotation of soldiers *disembodied* soldiers instead of accounting for them. A clinical term, such as “annihilate,” dehumanizes the process of disappearance while making a distasteful reality appropriate for public consumption.

With the release of medical and psychology texts produced around the war, the heteronormative physicality of the male image became a difficult construction to maintain and make admissible for public consumption. Many surgeons wrote graphically in their memoirs about the genital mutilation common to wounded soldiers.¹⁶³ Additionally, many psychiatrists produced literature about a mental castration that occurred as a result of trauma from the war.¹⁶⁴

As much recent scholarship on the First World War reveals, the discourse on wounded bodies also linked impotence to homosexuality as if it were an emasculating perversion. Instead of celebrating the camaraderie of soldiers in the trenches, for instance, pioneering work in psychology twisted “moments of generosity, mutuality and commonalty”¹⁶⁵ into eroticism or sublimations of sexual drives. ¹⁶⁶ This literature, in turn, cast physically disabled soldiers in public discourse as psychologically fragmented and sexually impotent.

Given that 41,000 servicemen in the British army had limbs amputated and 60,500 suffered head or eye injuries,¹⁶⁷ the suppression of the “nasty” consequences of the war was not entirely possible. The restoration of the masculine image would require surgical intervention with a popularization of prosthetics that only the print media is equipped to incite. In keeping with the classical training and the study of anatomy that underpinned medical illustration since the Renaissance, medical illustrations and clinical photography were widely used during the war to document medical innovations with great detail, and newspapers made war surgery manuals popular texts.¹⁶⁸ The *Times* recommended Major Alfred Hulls’ *Surgery in War*, for instance. It characterized the text as a “romantic story” because it showed how “courage and self-sacrifice... triumphed over a hundred obstacles.”¹⁶⁹ In effect, the combination of technology for prosthetic limbs and reconstructive surgery with the accompanying romanticizing literature was able to transform severely mutilated bodies into restored and functioning figures. However, this phenomenon also made those men who underwent the treatment into public spectacles.

While soldiers themselves became an object for medical experimentation and public curiosity—becoming physically visible and relevant in public discourse—any recognition of their suffering got sublimated.¹⁷⁰ Because of becoming conspicuously visible by virtue of their deformities—a tin-mask or a re-made face draws a gaze rather than deflecting it—most wounded

soldiers permanently endured physical and psychological isolation.¹⁷¹ An initial lengthy convalescence usually turned into a lifetime of social seclusion. As observed by an inspector of convalescent hospitals in 1918,

The jagged fragment of a bursting shell will shear off a nose, an ear, or a part of a jaw, leaving the victim a permanent object of repulsion to others, and a grievous burden to himself. It is not to be wondered at that such men become victims of despondency, of melancholia, leading, in some cases, even to suicide.¹⁷²

So, while there were great strides to physically reconstruct a soldier's body so that he could return to civilian life, the discursive remaking of the wounded soldier—as sexually dysfunctional, therefore unfit for public life—created an inconsumable image. This inability for consumption of the disfigured soldier will be further explored in my discussion of ocular realism in Chapter Five. That the grotesque image is hidden from view for the general public prevents ocular realism from becoming fully realizable.



Figure 6. Lieutenant Wallace before and after Facial Surgery A) May 21, 1918; B) November 9, 1921 (Gillies Archives at Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup).

IV

The Edwardian British public was suited to accept an image of the soldier as a young, fit, heroic, and culturally relevant figure. During the period of the First World War, this image of the soldier became especially widespread. Glenn Wilkinson has pointed out that the image of the regimental soldier became so central to a consumer's relationship to the war that it substituted the ubiquitous "fashionable girl" in advertising to sell everything from paint and soap to cigarettes.¹⁷³ The "sellable" quality of the soldier indicates the British consumer's desire to

acknowledge and appreciate the work of soldiers during the war. Wilkinson makes this point by arguing that images in newspapers provide a unique index of the popular social consciousness because “the immediacy and ephemeral nature of newspapers helps determine those modes of expression and types of imagery that are time and class specific.”¹⁷⁴ The newspaper couldn’t circulate an image of a dismembered or traumatized soldier—this would violate the sensibility of the Edwardian public who consumed the more preferable fashionable soldier of commercial images.

Early on, popular opinion seemed to follow the imperatives of the posters baring national slogans advertised in the newspapers, such as serving for “His Majesty’s Army.”¹⁷⁵ However, as the following letter in a newspaper suggests, the general public was misled about the actual scale of the war as they underestimated the potential cost of human lives:

To be really at war I ought to burn with hatred. But the only two Germans I have ever spoken to were two of the nicest gentlemen I have ever met. We may be at war in the technical sense with the German emperor but with the German People—never. We must fight; honour demands it. But we must not lose our tempers.¹⁷⁶

This editorial indicates that a sensible approach is what will keep Britons from being “really at war” with “the German People.” By only envisioning the fight as acutely directed at the German Emperor, civilized people who are able to manage their tempers will be spared. Furthermore, a stoic attitude in wartime deflects other responses that arise when a war is waged on people—that the war affects ordinary working people in tragic ways is an issue that is averted by keeping the disagreement between “gentlemen” and a rogue emperor. This letter demonstrates a general abstract notion about the nature of warfare. Written in rational tones, it addresses a symbolic rather than a material idea of imperial nations at war. The choice by a newspaper to publish this

letter amongst others just like it suggests that its individual sentiment carries a message the news industry desires to generalize. In that way, it functions like propaganda.¹⁷⁷



Figure 7. Propaganda Poster, *More Men Are Wanted For His Majesty's Army*, 1915 (Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, London).

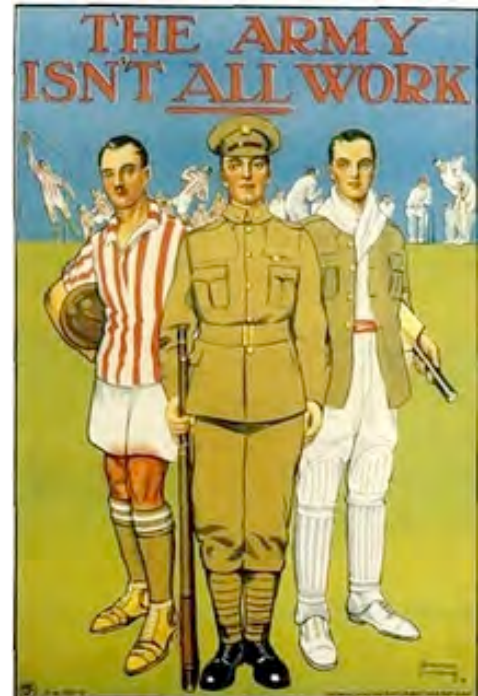


Figure 8. Graham Simmons. *The Army Isn't All Work*, 1919 (Imperial War Museum Collections, London).

As part of the modern readership, the soldier who had the experience of trench warfare would recognize the significant divergence between the sight of a uniformed corpse and the images of athletic and cleanly outfitted men circulating government propaganda of the time. From the point of view of soldiers, newspapers significantly partook in the “partial or dishonest” project of mass recruiting by propaganda posters manufactured by the Parliamentary Recruiting

Committee; propagandistic imagery was central to the construction of “newspaper language.”¹⁷⁸

As Knightley points out,

the government had realized at an early stage that the ideal recruiting ground for propagandists was from among the most powerful newspaper proprietors and editors [because] their skill lay in knowing how to get the war over to the man in the street, how to exploit his vocabulary, prejudices, and enthusiasms.¹⁷⁹

However, if the “man in the street” did get persuaded into “doing one’s duty” and enlisting, then, as a soldier he was more likely to find a disparity in the actual experience of trench warfare and the promise of engaging in exciting military exercises as it had been advertised.

The military training undergone by young conscripts did not end up preparing the type of activity soldiers eventually experienced. Denis Winter explains that the “problem was that in training no one had been prepared for vigilant inaction, for the blinded feeling which followed being confined below the surface, for the demoralizing stooped walk, for the need to take constant care.”¹⁸⁰ The image in propaganda posters of fit youth in uniforms suggests that active duty on the frontlines meant taking part in exhilarating military exercises. While “civilians contemplating trench war today would tend to think of it largely in terms of artillery and sniping action, raids and patrols,” the soldier “remembers clearly how seldom these actions interrupted the prolonged inactivity. To him, the real enemy was the weather and the side-effects of living rough.”¹⁸¹ Or, if the soldier did engage in the occasional warfare, it was often a surreal and frenzied experience. Personal accounts by soldiers who engaged in assaults of the enemy line include descriptions of “everybody in a desperate hurry,” “stumbling blindly across no man’s land” and being in a state of “not-thinking, not-feeling, not-seeing.”¹⁸² In all cases, the corporeal body was consistently put in challenging and risky situations: whether the soldier needed to lie

still for hours at a time or “go over the top,” the body was far from feeling like a glamorous image.

The continual inclusion of propaganda in dailies—engineered by the government as recruiting advertisements or selectively chosen letters by editors—signaled to soldiers that the narrative of war as a patriotic and symbolic fight was primarily important for shaping civilian attitudes about fighting, not for illuminating the gritty details of a soldier’s experiences. For a military man, the sense of patriotism implied by articles, propaganda posters, and letters became more extraneous the longer a soldier was entrenched. The grander scheme for imperialist expansion and defense of the Empire was an abstract notion when compared to the immediate assaults by weapon fire and sleeping in muddy ditches. As Graves put it, “There was no patriotism in the trenches. It was too remote a sentiment, and rejected as fit only for civilians. A new arrival who talked patriotism would soon be told to cut it out.”¹⁸³ Indeed, the sentiments of Rudyard Kipling to “take up the White Man’s burden” would not have been a tolerated topic for discussion in the lousy trenches. To use a “remote” sentiment like patriotism as a rationale for suffering in the trenches would violate the most immediate senses of perception and confuse a civilian sensibility with that of a soldier.

As G. K. Chesterton remarked about a series of propaganda articles written by H. G. Wells, “To tell a soldier defending his country that it is The War That Will End War is exactly like telling a workman, naturally rather reluctant to do his day’s work, that it is The Work That Will End Work.”¹⁸⁴ The domestic rhetoric that circulated in newspapers, be it in a war correspondent’s report on the front lines or an editorial from a member of the intelligentsia, must have seemed absurd to those soldiers actually experiencing the horrid conditions of trench

warfare. In any type of publication, the imagery relayed about the war in the flourishing language of tropic and referential meanings would have offended a great number of troops.

Alternatively, Graves would assign a greater level of credibility to written accounts by frontline soldiers who did not necessarily provide correct factual information but who did selectively include the details of the muddled experiences in the trenches:

The memoirs of a man who went through some of the worst experiences of trench warfare are not truthful if they do not contain a high proportion of falsities. High-explosive barrages will make a temporary liar or visionary of anyone; the old trench-mind is at work in all over-estimation of casualties, “unnecessary” dwelling on horrors, mixing of dates and confusion between trench rumours and scenes actually witnessed.¹⁸⁵

This faith in the printed word of a possibly “temporary liar” puts a reader in a precarious position to discern what constitutes the greater level of realist representation of the war. The reader is presented a contrast: she can consume the representational possibilities for accurate depictions of warfare that are presented in either the official collation of dispatches or communiqués, i.e. the popular press or, she can read a singular reflection on an experiential perception of warfare, i.e. a soldier’s letter. Or, to put it more simply, the distinction arises between objective realism and synaesthetic realism. Either of the written texts could be construed as “partial or dishonest,” therefore creating a problem for the citizen to clearly envision what is at stake in the war.

As shown above, the assortment of reports in countless newspapers often failed to portray the gruesome aspects of trench warfare or to disclose the tremendous losses of human life. In large part, the newspaper editors dealt with the problem of governmental oversight by practicing self-censorship. Newspapermen learned to standardize their parlance so that events such as mass casualties were not the prominent feature of their stories. Their writing style informed about

basic facts while it deprived readers from understanding the impact of technological warfare on soldiers. For that reason, writers on the front lines that were unbound by journalistic conventions would potentially be more able to relay unrestricted firsthand realities of warfare.

Hence, communiqués from soldiers became especially vital for informing the public about the nightmarish realities of trench warfare. Ana Carden-Coyne explains that, “Soldiers’ diaries were not merely private confessions of things that could not be said outloud. They were often written for their comrades. During the war, soldiers wrote believing their memoirs would have an audience.”¹⁸⁶ Perhaps, writing that which was not being expressed through newspaper language could potentially reframe public discourse so that it includes the bodies and trauma that became central to the human experience at the front. The details of infantrymen’s diaries most commonly and uniquely described are the visceral and immediate sensory world.

V

A Chaplain to an infantry brigade in the 21st Division was witness to this unprecedented scale of brutal mechanized warfare. Father J. B. Marshall described the heavy use of artillery at the Front, previously never experienced by humankind. In his diary he wrote,

It was appalling. I could see the flashes from our guns from every side, far in the distance, behind me, every side of me, below me, before me. Every kind of gun was working its hardest and fastest—the great monsters behind sending their heavily roaring giant missiles, the smaller howitzers and the sixty-pounders belching forth their whirring shells, the busy 18-pounders with their sharp savage voice spitting out their swirling projectiles. And there before me was the awful view of the German line where all these

thousands of explosives were bursting blood red, sending debris of the enemy trenches high into the air.¹⁸⁷

Artillery explosions surrounded Father Marshall in 360 degrees. Shots came from near and far, from friendly and enemy fire. The “appalling” nature of the firefight has to do with the excessive flurry of shots and explosions coming from “every side.” As a result of this description, we can imagine the Chaplain overwhelmed with the repetitive cadence and deafening sounds of every frequency coming from “every kind of gun.”¹⁸⁸ Father Marshall used active descriptive verbs and named specific weapons to try and capture the movement and the character of the scene. The air was saturated not only with the shells and missiles but also with the “roaring” and “whirring” and “sharp savage voice” of the machines. These “noises” captured in a diary convey the three-dimensional sense of the experience. The warfare comes to life when Father Marshall anthropomorphizes the killing machines, attributing sounds and voices to their firing. The artillery even acquires the physiological characteristics of human flesh: The “explosives [themselves] were bursting blood red,” not the bodies of soldiers being blown up by these explosives. The “enemy trenches” were obliterated, “sending debris,” not bodies, “high into the air.”

The narrative conventions of a classic realist text, for instance, rely on a linear and progressive flow of events. A logical, rather than an abstracted version of events would make the narrative accessible to every reader who understands the world as an organized and reasonable place.¹⁸⁹ As a result of this account of Father Marshall’s, however, readers achieve more than a neatly composed rendering of trench warfare. Readers would have to use an imaginary sensibility in order to ascribe human vulnerability and mortality to machinery, as Father Marshall does. Understandably, though, this impression of an unpopulated battlefield would possibly not

register with a reader as causing horrific loss of life. It might rather connote a mechanical operation, devoid of human casualties. This diary entry was not intended for immediate publication or to reach a mass audience. The author uses active descriptive terminology in the passage to create a memorable theme of personally meaningful imagery. In this case, it is animated artillery. Upon a review of the diary entry by its author, the theme may help him to recollect the intensity of the scene as he experienced it at the time. However, the theme does not necessarily provide a record of the human cost of those explosions, nor would it resonate in a meaningful way for every reader.

In a memoir, Frederick Elias Noakes, a former draper from Kent, similarly recalls the screams and mechanical outbursts of artillery at the Front:

Sixteen hours of blackness were broken by gun flashes, the gleam of star shells and punctuated by the scream of a shell or the sudden heart-stopping rattle of a machine-gun. The long hours *crept by* with *leaden feet* and sometimes it seemed as if *time itself was dead*. In the darkness we were prey to all sorts of *unreasoning fancies*. A tree stump, a hummock of earth, a coil of wire took on new and menacing forms and in the light of a star shell, *could seem to be moving towards us*. (my emphasis)¹⁹⁰

Like the Chaplain's diary entry, this passage also gives objects like tree stumps and wire "new forms" and puts them into motion, as if inanimate objects could move on their own volition. In breaking up a dark space, the high intensity flashes of a gun fragment any visual continuity, therefore making it difficult for the human eye to accurately map the locations of stationary objects. This practical visual-mapping problem translates into a theoretical difficulty of comprehending the reality at hand for the young Noakes. At the time, gun flashes that punctuated the darkness mimicked strobe-like effects. A strobe light gives the impression that time, like the

spatial realm, is discontinuous—while illuminating an area, flickering light gives the illusion of slow motion from making static objects perceptible in rapid succession. This is how a “hummock of earth” or a “tree stump” would “seem to be moving.” In trying to recount the disorienting physical experience of enduring sixteen hours in the muddy trench, to describe what “unreasoning fancies” were while in the dark, Noakes infuses language with metaphor and creates fictional possibilities out of otherwise sharp senses. When put into words for a diary entry, time itself, “sixteen hours” was “broken” and “punctuated” as if it were a tangible object, able to be shattered, like a mirror. Furthermore, time, an unalterable dimension, was described as if it was able to be disturbed by both visual and oral medium. The “flashes” and “gleam” of guns and shells as well as the “scream” or “rattle” of shells and guns rupture the sequence of the ordinary passage of time.

Interestingly, these representations of stroboscopic cinematic effects of the warscape are both what distinguish a soldier’s writing from the classic realist literature, where the urban doldrums often constitute the scenery, *and* what make soldier writing *realist*. The haptic experiences of pedestrians in Baudelaire’s world that Benjamin so expertly analyzes is remarkably similar to what I imagine a soldier endured at the Front. Moving through traffic and working amongst the drill of the machines produces a jolt for the modern industrial worker such that the rhythm of life itself is altered, like it is for the soldier.¹⁹¹ Modern technological life requires a corresponding language and, in the life of warfare, the language which emerges in synaesthetic realist texts enlivens technology and describes kaleidoscopic *effects* rather than the material accoutrements that normally dress the parlor spaces of classic realist fiction.



Figure 9. Official Unpublished Photograph, *Scene during a night attack on a training ground. Western Front* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. 1915. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 33350. Imperial War Museum, London).

Noakes understood the perceptual difficulties presented by the terrain of the Front—and, his descriptive writing demonstrated that his attention was more toward representing the ineffable situation of his existence than it was the impending possibility of nonexistence. Paul Virilio theorizes that, “as sight lost its direct quality and reeled out of phase, the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as derealized or demoralized, any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing.”¹⁹² Here, vision by the soldier and visibility of the soldier are intimately related. Therefore, if the ability to see is lost, so is the ability to feel present in the world. Since “time itself was dead,” the entry describes the existence as if in a vacuum, somewhere between life and death; in the dark, the soldier was not dead yet, but living as prey. Either way, he could not see and he was invisible. Wilfred Owen describes this foreboding sense of living, too. In a letter to his mother sent from the Front in 1917, Owen wrote: “I have not seen any dead. I have done worse. In the dank air, I have *perceived* it, and in the darkness, *felt*.”¹⁹³

Another entry in the diary of Noakes recounts the potential consequences from losing the ability to see the rest of the unit when moving along the trenches: “If one stopped for a moment to shift one’s rifle or ease a cutting packstrap, it was easy to lose sight of the man in front.”¹⁹⁴ Thus, with limited visual capability, a soldier would rely more heavily on audible cues. Sound is central for the soldier in structuring and understanding the space around him. Developing a keen sense for hearing oncoming shells could save one’s life and even prevent psychic trauma. As Das has observed, by combining the perception of sound, danger and space, “shell sense could potentially prevent shell shock. The ability to judge the direction of a coming shell prevented the psyche from being battered repeatedly with the possibility of death.”¹⁹⁵ Or, being constantly attuned to the sounds of shellfire could produce a sense of trauma that does not dissipate once the soldier leaves the noisy landscape.

In ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (1920), Freud explains the relationship between the “ceaseless impact of external stimuli” and psychic trauma. He argues that stimuli is necessary to live, however excessive stimuli wears away the protective layer of an organism: “the reception of stimuli serves above all the purpose of collecting information about the direction and nature of the external stimuli, and for that it must suffice to take little samples of the outer world, to taste it, so to speak, in small quantities.”¹⁹⁶ If one is overly stimulated, a protective barrier is broken, the “mechanism for apprehension” fails, and trauma results.¹⁹⁷ The one certainty about suffering from shell-shock is its gradual impact. Even when describing the decline of an officer—a class of men Robert Graves had no shortage of resentment toward—the impact of shell-shock is insufferable:

For the first three weeks, an officer was of little use in the front line; he did not know his way about, had not learned the rules of health and safety, or grown accustomed to recognizing degrees of danger. Between three weeks and four weeks he was at his best, unless he happened to have any particular bad shock or sequence of shocks. Then his usefulness gradually declined as neurasthenia developed. At six months he was still more or less all right; but by nine or ten months, unless he had been given a few weeks; rest on a technical course, or in hospital, he usually became a drag on the other company officers. After a year or fifteen months he was often worse than useless. Dr. W. H. R. Rovers told me later that the action of one of the ductless glands—I think the thyroid—caused this slow general decline in military usefulness, by failing at a certain point to pump a sedative chemical into the blood. Without its continued assistance the man went about his tasks in an apathetic and doped condition, cheated into further endurance.¹⁹⁸

This trauma of neurasthenia, come to be known as shell-shock, affected an estimated 10% of British casualties, and perhaps even more over a larger span of time.¹⁹⁹ It has become well established that the effects of living in a warscape are lifelong in the psychic life of soldiers well after they leave the Front.

The excessive noise of falling shells also created a soundscape which prevented the soldier from hearing crucial voices in the dark. In the same entry as above, Noakes describes the process of talking and listening for warnings:

There were frequent obstacles to negotiate on the way such as slack wire under foot sagging telephone wires overhead which caught in the piling-swivel of one's rifle, unexpected holes in duckboards. It was an unwritten law that the leading men should pass back word of each obstacle as it was encountered. The word often transmitted faster than we moved and would be forgotten by the time the obstacle was reached, leaving us to be half throttled by the wire.²⁰⁰

Like Noakes's sight became unreliable in gleams of light such that stationary objects became mobile (e.g. tree stump or hummock of earth), language itself became an inadequate medium for informing a soldier about the ground he covered while in the trenches.



Figure 10. Official British War Photograph taken for Propaganda Purposes, *European War - With the British Forces in France - Troops in steel helmets moving along a communication trench fully equipped for their various duties* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. F. 19450. National Library of Scotland).

The network of phone lines was installed with extraordinary effort by the Allied forces. These land-line systems were not mobile, making it useless when battalions moved from one front line to the next. Even less relevant for the rank-and-file soldier, the intended purpose of the lines was to service only governmental headquarters and high-ranking officers.



Figure 11. Official Photograph Taken on the British Western Front in France. *The Battle of the Ridges. Telegraph wire going up for No Man's Land. Signallers on the way to establish communications.* [Original Title] (John Warwick Brooke. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. D. 2114. National Library of Scotland).

Graves confirms the rank-and-file soldier's primordial conditions of traversing through the communications trench:

The guide gave us hoarse directions all the time. 'Hole right', 'Wire height', 'Wire low', 'Deep place here Sir', 'Wire low'. The field telephone wires had been fastened by staples to the side of the trench, and when it rained the staples fell out and the wire fell down and tripped people up. If it sagged too much, one stretched it across the trench to the other

side to correct the sag, but then it would catch one's head. The holes were sump pits used for draining the trenches.²⁰¹

Perhaps the soldier could use wiring laid in the trenches as guidance in circumstances when audible or visual cues were ineffective, though the commentary on its nuisance, on being “half-throttled by the wire”—makes that unlikely. In any case, the network for communication ceased to exist in no-man's-land. John Keegan remarks, “once the troops left their trenches... they passed beyond the carry of their signals system into the unknown.”²⁰² Once a soldier was ordered to engage in combat, all possibilities for visual or verbal communication became futile. This reality is far from being depicted in photos that circulated in public, such as Figure 10. That soldiers are looking directly into the camera lens while apparently moving along quite easily not only gives the impression to a viewer that vision is unimpaired for these soldiers—they wouldn't be looking at us if they couldn't *see* the camera gazing at them—but also that the trenches are effortlessly traversable.

According to Allyson Booth, advanced technology such as telegraph or phone lines to the front would have been no more useful than written accounts: “even if it had been possible to hear the human voice over the noise of the bombs, the splintering of old habits of perception would have made it difficult for soldiers to express what was happening to them.”²⁰³ No matter what technology could have been accessible to soldiers, those in the trenches confronted a conceptual problem of giving sensible expression to an unintelligible situation. Even technological advances in communication devices could not provide the qualitatively adequate channels for communicating a soldier's daily reality in its entirety. Nonetheless, the advancement that becomes central to the act of soldier writing was the operation of the post office.

VI

Writing *Natural*



Figure 12. British Official Photograph from the Western Front. *A letter home! A gallant Jock writing home finds a smashed staircase makes a good writing desk.* [Original Title] (John Warwick Brooke. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. D. 2114. National Library of Scotland).

In October 1914, the army postal service handled 650,000 letters and 58,000 parcels a week. Within five months, this had shot up to 3 million letters and 230,000 parcels, and by 1916, correspondence for troops had reached a weekly average of 11 million letters and 875,000 parcels.²⁰⁴ The network designed to maintain communication with people back home was so tightly organized, that even during the massive chaotic retreat of March 1918, only three bags of mail were lost. In general, post and parcels came very quickly to the soldier in the trenches,

mostly within a few days.²⁰⁵ With this high level of correspondence, it became apparent that the postal service became an essential part of maintaining troop morale—it provided one of the only essential links for soldiers to their pre-war reality. However, all this writing also worried the War Office.

Of foremost concern for the government was not only that “official” stories in newspapers shaped public perception of the war, but how much information was shared in letters home from troops. All soldiers’ letters were censored in enforcement of the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914. In *Tommy Goes to War*, Malcolm Brown describes the kinds of correspondence allowed between the front lines and the home front:

Letters in ordinary envelopes could... be sent as often as a soldier cared to write, but they had to be censored by the officers of his battalion. If the soldier wished to write confidentially he had to wait until he was assigned a green envelope; this would not be censored by the man’s officers but might be subject to a spot-check examination at the base. Green envelopes were precious as they were only available at irregular intervals—in some cases as rarely as once a month. They were normally issued on application to a man’s Company Headquarters, but only when out on rest.²⁰⁶

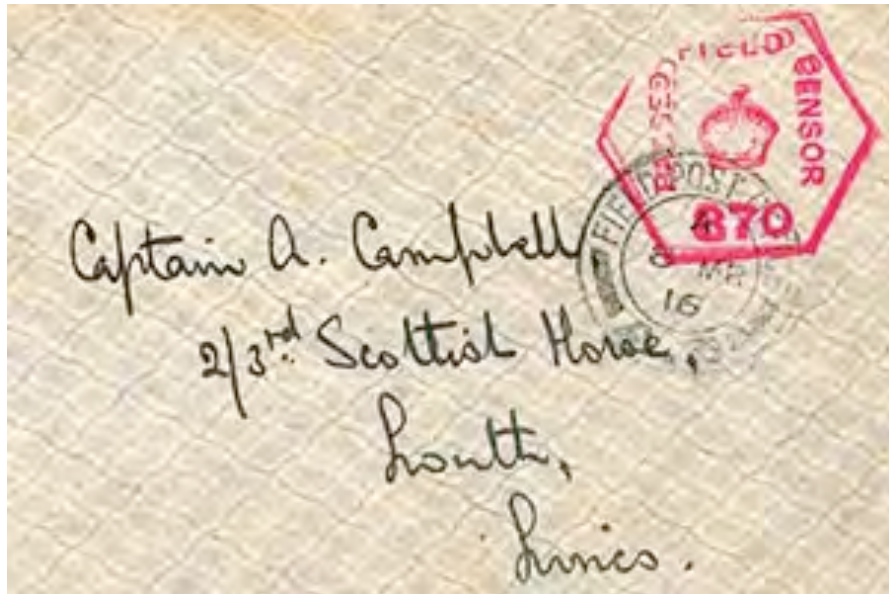
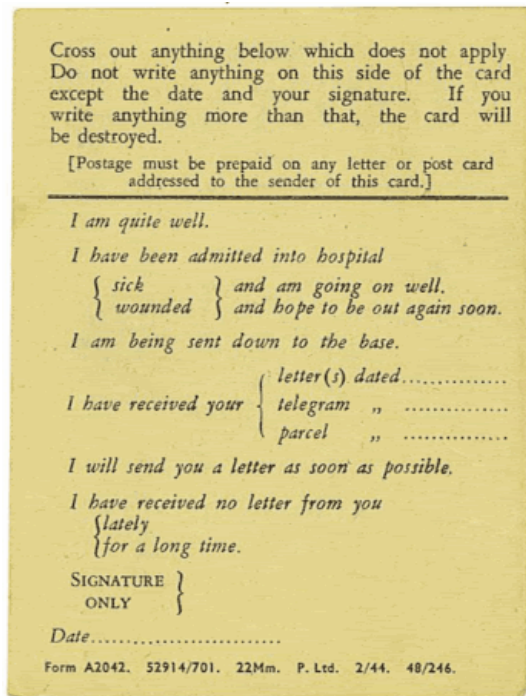


Figure 13. Censored Letter. After being processed, letters would be affixed with an approval stamp and sent to the recipient (Royal Mail Archive, Freeling House).

Explicit postal censorship included blacking out any text that the government deemed too revealing of military strategies or too *demoralizing*. To boot, field censorship became more highly prioritized the longer the war went on. By the final year of the war, 4,861 censors are employed by the War Office. Additionally, the standard cost of sending a letter is also raised from *1d* to *1½d* (thus ending the Penny Post which had been in existence since 1840).

If an infantryman wanted to communicate as immediately as possible with his family, he would send pre-form Field Service Post Cards, in which a soldier would merely tick a box describing his state of being.²⁰⁷ However, these postcards were little more communicative of a

soldier's actual experience than the *body-less* articles in the press. By selecting a statement, personal experience becomes "reduced to a bare statement of fact, life and death are reduced to an item of news, the personal and the intimate detail are reduced to a matter of public knowledge and speculation, and in every way the world of subjective privilege is subjected to democratic objectivity."²⁰⁸ It is notable that a soldier could not even add a comment, for if he wrote anything more than the date and signature, we can plainly read in the directions, "the card will be destroyed." With the postcard, a soldier's mode of communication is manipulated in ways that remove the intimate knowledge of war; in other words, the postcard renders a humanist understanding of the soldier's experience mute.



**Figure 14. Field Service Post Card
(Imperial War Museum, London).**

The Censorship Bureau's treatment of mail and postcards exemplifies a heavy-handed approach to controlling the war narrative. I propose that the strict regulation of personal writing may not have been necessary because, aside from the lack of highly technologized methods of communication available at the war front, soldiers recognized the wideness of the experiential lacuna between themselves and their civilian readers. Louis Simpson argues, "To a foot-soldier, war is almost entirely physical, That is why some men, *when they think about war*, fall silent. Language seems to falsify physical life and to betray those who have experienced it absolutely—the dead."²⁰⁹ According to this explanation, one would think that there are ideas absolutely incommunicable between people because no language is adequate enough to convey them. Paul Fussell suggests instead "that soldiers have discovered that no one is very interested in the bad news they have to report. What listener wants to be torn and shaken when he doesn't have to be? We have made *unspeakable* mean indescribably: it really means nasty."²¹⁰ From Fussell's point of view, a soldier would be making a more conscious decision in filtering his language when writing home. Thus, even if more realistic descriptions could bypass the official censorship of letters, the British sensibility of the Edwardian era would resist receiving more frank dialogue about wartime conditions.

When deciding personally to express their thoughts to their civilian friends and family, many soldiers found it difficult to share an even-handed account of their experiences because of the chaotic nature of their daily life. In most cases, soldiers constructed a model letter for correspondence with their families. The model letter would put into practical terms the needs, experiences, and gripes of his time at the Front. According to Fussell, "the trick was to fill the page by saying nothing and to offer the maximum number of clichés. *Bearing the brunt* and *keep smiling* were as popular as *in the pink*."²¹¹ Structuring a letter in accordance with personal

standards—for emotional reasons—provided for the soldier a regulated space where fixed terms deter the writer from using his imagination or memory. Thus, letter writing often had the soldier avoid having to make sense of an incomprehensible reality. As in newspapers, literary conventions—instead of observable realities—guide the writer in his story telling.

In reflection of expressing himself to his mother, Hawtin Mundy revealed later that, Mine was just an ordinary letter to me mother, in any case I shouldn't have wrote and said 'I'm going into battle tomorrow morning.' That's natural, when you write to your mother you don't want to upset her... you try to write a cheerful letter home, you don't write and say Oh Hell! I'm going into battle tomorrow and I'm frightened to death. You wouldn't dream of that, or shouldn't do then.²¹²

To write “natural.” That was the goal for most soldiers. A postcard written by a soldier in France is exemplary of this very sort of letter. Written in pencil on the back of a postcard depicting a town in Amiens, a young man wrote,

Dear Mother,

Just a card to let you see what a French town looks like when it is not knocked about by big guns. Only a few shells fell in [scribble]. It is a very nice town but towns very near as large have been leveled to the ground. The Somme River runs through it, I looked through this place when on leave.

From your loving son, C. E. Bloxome²¹³

That there was no address printed on the card nor any postmark suggests that it was sent in a package containing other items or even given to a buddy about to go on leave. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the cheerful disposition a soldier writing home typically employed. Furthermore, the scribble making a word or words illegible, which was done in pencil, occurs over what would

have been the name of the location in which the soldier was. As a rule, a geographical mention would have been the type of usual information excised by a censor. What makes this example peculiar is the lack of any official markings by anyone other than the soldier himself: no use of rubber stamps, no ink corrections. What are we to make of the correction? The only plausible answer is that it was self-correction. Perhaps Bloxome decided he would rather have his postcard free from any of the censor's ugly stamps as to preserve an intimacy between him and his reader. One way to do this would be to preempt the censor by crossing out the piece of information that revealed his location. He had no eraser, so crossing out in the same pencil makes sense. Or, perhaps the young soldier had realized that the press ran stories on heavy shelling on the named town, contrary to what Bloxome wrote. To tell his mother that he was in the thick of it would have brought her more worry. If his mother was reading the papers, better to expunge the specifics, better to just let her know a few shells dropping in my town is a relief compared to where else I could be, he might have thought.

The examples above suggest that soldiers, like journalists, participated in self-censorship for reasons specific to them, but not entirely unrelated. It is not that language was unavailable or not adequate enough to describe their situations, but rather that the inescapable and unsavory experiences of soldiers would fail to satisfy their reader's expectations. Since the established media rendered battle scenes as temperate in bland styles of writing, the singular soldier would be left with having to fill in the blanks, to sharing with those back home what it was *really* like. However, not being able to "break the bad news" by revealing such wartime atrocities, like shells blowing up bodies, i.e., abstention, often became a soldier's response.

Though there was greater correlation between a soldier's experience and the language he used to describe it, I argue that, ironically, the memoirs and epistolary texts hampered public

consumption by a more raw account of warfare because they referenced a world inaccessible and unintelligible to a civilian reader, who was accustomed to more traditional narrative conventions. Booth explains that “for civilians, battles constitute the landmarks of war and give it shape. Yet combat at close range is about as disordered, incomprehensible, and illogical an experience as it is possible to imagine.”²¹⁴ It would have been *unseemly* for any soldier to expect that a civilian would really want to experience the war at close range. According to the newspapers, the most consumable method of writing involved concealing rather than revealing the raw experience of the war front. But, from the soldier’s point of view, the “newspeak” of the commercial press that is written in “objective” terms and having undergone processes of filtration and self-censorship disqualifies it from providing a satisfactory representation of the war. What the war reports at the time did do was cater to the Edwardian reader’s sensibility, creating the profound sense of alienation that one can read in many veteran’s accounts of returning to civilian life.

VII

From the point of view of the soldier, the level of distortion, misrepresentation of actual events and the overall tone of war reports in the commercial press were reprehensible. The lack of a critical response from most of the left-wing press was equally dismal. Even articles titled “The Soldier’s Point of View” were a misnomer, as they were written by the editor of the paper.²¹⁵ Though taking some time to foment and materialize, soldiers came to respond in their own publication called *Wipers Times* beginning in February 1916. The paper connotes a general attitude held by soldiers that the commercial press not only misunderstood the realities of the war, but was taking after the decision-makers in England and specifically neglecting the main

actors of it: the soldiers. After a facetious commentary that “it is good to see that England has at last realised that we are at war, and has fixed the price of officers meals,” a *Wipers* note from the editor adds that

we think that our contemporary the “Daily Mail” should be suppressed. It is always urging some drastic step, and calling attention to the war. In fact, so strong and persistent at times became its hysterical shouting, that some decisions were actually reached. All this is very unnerving, and we really think that the total suppression of the Northcliffe Press is the only way of ensuring the preservation of a respectable and dignified “festina lente” policy. Should the war be hurried we, the Editor, would lose our job, and so would many others, a fate horrible to contemplate. Out of work, and thrown on the mercy of a hard and cruel world.²¹⁶

The tone of the column signifies a deep dissatisfaction held by rank-and-file soldiers about the framing of the war that takes place despite its actual degradation and about the social alienation many returning soldiers feel after leaving the muddy trenches and being thrust back into a “hard and cruel world.”²¹⁷ While, admittedly, “there is little doubt that the line men are *not* [sorry the war is over], as most of us have been cured of any illusions we may have had about the pomp and glory of war,”²¹⁸ putting their “civvy clothes on” and being called back to “the order of the bowler hat,”²¹⁹ for most soldiers, meant a difficult life, returning to the mines where they were no longer heroes, but merely workers. The *Wipers Times*, distinguished in every sense from a domestically produced paper, provided a point of view unfounded in any other publication of the time. Thus, it was probably one of the only papers that drew a mutual appreciation from its civilian and military readers.

Written by soldiers, for soldiers, *Wipers* is brimming with sarcasm from cover to cover, making this publication a unique first-hand response to domestic publications whereby relevant news and stories provided both information and entertainment.²²⁰ Most notably, the publication was consistently written in humorous tones.²²¹ That it is the most famous example of over 100 other trench publications, one wonders what sort of comedic coverage of war could produce a narrative appreciable to the majority of its readers. Its satirical and literary qualities were specifically what made *Wipers* become successful in avoiding the pitfalls journalism might encounter when dealing with a heterogeneous readership which was experiencing the war from radically divergent vantage points. On the one hand, as soldiers desired more realistic treatment of the war by the domestic commercial press, they would have also wanted to avoid being viewed as barbaric murderers to their friends and family at home—which is what actual description of the circumstances of fighting in the war would have revealed. On the other hand, purely comic, patriotic, or light-hearted publications put out by soldiers—of which there were quite a few²²²—would further conceal and distort the life of war for soldiers, making it more difficult for society to understand them after returning home. By spoofing their own mythology (i.e. mocking government propaganda and media-spun imagery heroizing British soldiers), *Wipers* undermines the systematic interference created by commercial and imperial interests to feign a “good war” and exposes a more totalizing view, mending the divide between soldiers’ and civilian perspectives.

One way in which *Wipers* connected the trenches to the home front is by creating characters that emulated figures in popular culture. Perhaps the most well-known example of comic fiction published in the paper is in the serial titled “Herlock Shomes” wherein absurd mysteries were set to be solved by a sleuth at the Front.²²³ Additionally, a special correspondent

penned “Teech Bomas” wrote sarcastic dispatches—a lampoon of the actual correspondent writing for the *Daily Mail*, Beach Thomas. It is hard to miss, too, the poems dedicated to Northcliffe and the play in form of articles meant to echo the style of commercial newspapers. Undoubtedly, the press became a favorite target for those reading and writing from the trenches. As in this “Extracts from Contemporaries,” the editors make sure to acknowledge the commercial press that makes up the community in which the soldiers' paper finds itself. Reprinting an extract from the *Times*:

“GERMAN GOLD CAPTURED NEAR RIGA.--Petrograd. Jan. 13.--Among the trophies captured during the Riga offensive and counted up to the present are 50 machine guns, 30 guns, the treasury chest of the 364th Infantry. Regiment containing 335,000 marks (16,750 sovs.) in coin, 300 horses, two armoured motor-cars, 50,000 gas masks, 50,000 uniforms, 15,000 rifles, 20 field kitchens, and 10,000 bottles of brandy. --Reuter.”

Contained in scare quotes, the soldiers' paper stays in keeping with proper accreditation, does not alter any language or punctuation in producing commentary on the *Times* article. Rather, the editor alters the meaning of the information by printing an addendum at the bottom of the extract. Simply put, the rejoinder “Some chest!” incisively mocks the news story, seeming to simultaneously indict both the collection of wares in and of itself and the detailed coverage granted the event by the national newspaper. Encountering such an item of news while under enemy bombardment or sleeping in lousy muddy trenches on a cold January morning, the soldier is not the imagined reader of civilian comforts who might enjoy a story about acquiring goods and their monetary value. Rather, the reader-as-soldier would be more interested in a narrative that pertains to his daily experience—which is perhaps the reason why there are virtually no

articles that concern themselves with acquisitions made by nations and countless references to encounters with rats.²²⁴



Figure 15. *New Church Times*, No. 2, Vol. 1, May 1916, cover page.

Wipers signified that a popular press did not need the most updated or advanced equipment to put out regular copy or that the style of writing necessarily presupposed a set of objective principles like those practiced in “New Journalism.” According to Lieutenant-Colonel F. J. Roberts, editor of *Wipers*,

Our paper was started as the result of the discovery of an old printing-house just off the Square at Wipers. *Some* printing-house and *some* square! There were parts of the building remaining, the rest was on top of the press. The type was all over the country-side; in fact the most perfect picture of the effects of Kultur as interpreted by 5.9’s ever seen.”²²⁵

The technical difficulties included securing a printing machine and sustaining basic functions of it, which were far from simple tasks. In fact, “One page only could be done at a time, and we had no ‘y’s and ‘e’s to spare when one page was in the ‘chaser.’”²²⁶ Even more substantial and dangerous difficulties occurred in the production of this newspaper because of the proximity of the press to the front lines:

At dusk, donning boots, gum, thigh, we would set off to Hooge to work till dawn in feet of liquid mud ... trying to make a little cover for the lads who were holding on to the remnants of Belgium in the teeth of every disadvantage, discomfort and peril. Yet always at the most inconvenient moment came a persistent demand from an ink-covered sergeant, “Copy wanted, sir!”²²⁷

Beside the astounding challenges soldiers faced in putting together the magazine, the operational costs for the soldiers' paper was also an issue. Made into a matter for the reader to consider, financial concerns are raised on the front page of an issue: “The Editor is sitting with a towel round his head, thinking hard. He doesn't know whether on account of the increase in the price of paper, to double the price of this journal, or reduce the size. The Northcliffe bunch, by an effort

of superb patriotism has doubled the price of their efforts. Hence the Editor's dilemma. Wait and see.”²²⁸ Sometimes, the reader would have waited up to six months to see the next issue.

Despite the inconsistency of production, though, the relative distance from having to meet industrial and commercial demands provides a flexibility to *Wipers* denied to those facing domestically-produced publications. This paper made efforts to pique a reader's visual interest: Every cover page has a woodcut design and large bold titles in varied fonts, advertising that week's cinema features. Of course, the “Dead Cow Farm” Cinema being publicized, as in Figure 15, is not a real movie house. It is a tongue-and-cheek reference to what soldiers may pass in the fields when on leave from trench duty. Rather, every week the program lists a series of spectacular little shows, including features that are “filmed at enormous expense” (like the war), and other sardonic titles like “Over the Top, A Screaming Farce” and “The Empty Jar, A Rum Tragedy.” Sometimes, the cover page advertises the opening of a new nightclub or a special performance at an opulent opera house. The noteworthy point about the writers' humor is that night events are not titled “Dead Man's Cinema” or “Rotting Corpse Comedy Hour”; the jocularly is not unkind or ruthless, but maintains a ludic quality in the clever manufacturing of the reality around soldiers that can be joked about. Regardless of the theme, when the writers of *Wipers* create an imaginary venue or item, they are, in effect, bringing the idea of entertainment and enjoyment to their fellow infantrymen. Because no one is ever able to attend the events that are advertised, it is appropriate that the fantasy cinemas or shows are at least humorously described in a farcical style.

Like “New Journalism” broadsheets, the paper assigns its pages with special topics, too: Sports, serials, correspondence, gossip, and local news. Unlike “New Journalism,” though, these columns were written not with fidelity toward a notion of objectivity, but a commitment to

relaying stories written in subjective terms, from first-hand experience and in fictional styles. The first page contained an editorial which usually commented on the progress of production of the paper and what to expect in the current edition. For example, an editorial on December 1, 1916 explains the reasons for a delay since the previous publication. The editor claims

This was unavoidable, in fact at one time it seemed that our tenth number would also be our last, as the press was marooned in the midst of a disturbance which is taking place down South. However the outfit is once more safely housed, and our new premises, although draughty, are at least in a quieter situation where the street calls and other noises are not so persistent... For reasons over which we have no control we are compelled to alter the title of our journal, and so we now appear under the all-embracing name of "The B. E. F. Times."

The conditions affected the production of the paper to such an extent that it would be absurd not to address the reader—who was most likely consuming the pages in conditions like those they were being printed in, filthy and deplorable—in familiar and subjective terms. To pretend objectivity, or give the sense of removal from the present state of living—the battlefield—would be unacceptable; it would violate the code *Wipers* created for itself, which, "by still telling the truth to our subscribers we hope to retain their confidence, which may have been shaken by pernicious utterings of the Yellow Press during our silence."²²⁹ The anxiety over the paper's "silence" presents itself in numerous commentaries like this one, circulating in every issue during the course of the war.

Viewing itself as a vital response to the commercial press's persistent glorification and sanitization of the soldiers' experience—mostly by excluding it altogether—*Wipers* insists on a measure of truth, which it pursues by addressing the horrors and boredoms faced by its readers

every day. It transcends any conventional knowledge about newspaper production in material terms by its very economic and geographical distance away from civil or business operations. What's more, *Wipers* self-consciously produces copy anathema to that in the commercial press. It gives one the sense, instead, that an imaginary space is being created wherein feelings of futility and fear would be replaced with those human values like humor, wit, thoughtfulness, and poetry. To present the truth, so to speak, in the trench newspaper is not to code reports in a detached and impartial way devoid of value judgments. On the contrary, the emphasis on the fictiveness of the content in the paper makes an entirely new set of values accessible to a reader interested in learning about events in the world that are to affect him directly. In this case, "newspaper language" signifies a re-embodiment of the war narrative.

4.0 PARTICIPATING FROM AFAR: THE MYTHO-SYNAESTHETIC WAR EXPERIENCE

Thus it is that we hear all around us, in poems and novels and biographies,
even in newspaper articles and essays, the sound of breaking and falling,
crashing and destruction.²³⁰

I

This section on war and representation in fiction writing will concentrate on the ways in which a modernist novelist could take up the practical and theoretical issues that faced war correspondents and soldiers when writing about their experiences of warfare. Here, I focus on Virginia Woolf's early writing because of its aim in reformulating a traditional British form of literary realism and because, as I will argue, the self-conscious confrontation of the issue of representation in her fiction becomes a way to particularly object to "newspaper language." When producing a text, such as *Jacob's Room*, Virginia Woolf constructs her prose using unconventional literary techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, repetitive clauses and fragmented sentences. When dealing with subjects such as war, these compositional innovations meant to reveal a substantive reality of warfare that was ordinarily omitted or obfuscated by other styles of writing, like reportage or diary entries. In providing the British citizen with an

alternative view of experiences people had during the First World War, a work of fiction potentially makes a subjective point of view as legitimate, if not more so, than reports from the battlefield by journalists. By claiming to reveal an unrepresented reality—that which is not reported in newspaper articles, for instance—modernist fiction in effect proposes that objective and subjective styles of narration are equally legitimate, and that annexing subjective renderings of reality to the objectively described world offers the comprehensible gravity of the war that journalism cannot.

As I explained in Chapter Two, the “New Journalism” understood itself as duty-bound to inform the general public about social and political events in the most objective terms possible. In the case of reporting on the war, the popular press generated articles that fell short from displaying an impartial or disinterested point of view. “New Journalism” created its own institutional discourse of value-free reporting, though its practices frequently produced ideologically imperialist perspectives. It is also the case that modernist literary authors created their own systems of meaning when imparting their point of view of society and warfare. Writing in the 1920s, the novelist Virginia Woolf was able to carefully craft her fictional style so that it addressed what she found to be lacking in the reports coming out during the war. In portraying the extinguishing of a young man’s life in hindsight and reframing it in terms of evolving civilization, Woolf was able to transform what a reporter observed into a crafted narrative of multiple impressions, all the while lending credence to the effects war has on civilians at home. This transformative effect is what I am calling mytho-synaesthetic realism.

Though it would seem that a nuanced treatment of the human condition in modern society, including experiences of war, would provide for civilians and soldiers a more multifaceted view of the British nation and people’s place in it, the modernist style of fiction-writing

remains fraught with representational limits when coming to portray the effects of war. Virginia Woolf's fashioning of a modernist aesthetic aims to temper the incongruence between the experience of war and the representation of it. In what follows, I will argue that on one hand, the novelist's temporal and spatial distance from the war front discounts the immediate restrictions placed on writers producing material during the war while on the battlefield. Conversely, this same temporal and spatial distance creates a space in which, as is commonly argued by critics of modernist writers, a literary aesthetic realigns the static subjective and objective poles of classic realist narratives into a more dialectic oscillation.²³¹ In particular, I will argue here that, despite the absence of any recognizable political critique of the First World War, this spatio-temporal distance allows for the novelist's discourse to counter the journalist's predominant narrative of the war, which privileges a militaristic standard when depicting experiences of war.

Mytho-synaesthetic realism is a term that combines the mythic architecture of Woolf's narrative with the sense of bodily presence, as it can be literarily represented. The influence of classic Greek myth in *Jacob's Room* is more obvious, and has been commented on in many places.²³² While synaesthetic realism in soldier writing emphasizes the haptic experiences of a body at the Front, the synaesthetic sense that I am ascribing to Woolf's writing involves presenting the body by removing its presence from the narrative while preserving the memory of its life; the synaesthetic sensibility takes into account what is lost when the physical being can no longer communicate in the world.

Santanu Das, who writes on touch and intimacy in the trenches, explores how bodily senses are related to human development:

A person may be born blind, deaf and mute but in order to live, the skin—constituting 20 per cent of the body weight and the largest human organ—must respond to touch, which

is the earliest sense to develop in the embryo. Different kinds of bodily contact—holding, caressing, kissing and feeding—underlie the first communications between the mother and infant, and these tactile processes are fundamental to our physical, psychological and social development. Language is born as the child cries out to the mother for contact and comfort; language breaks down before the experience of physical pain, felt as hammering, burning, throbbing of nerve endings, and internalisation of touch; and as a person dies, the skin becomes cold and inert.²³³

Like Das establishes the link between haptic senses and language, I understand Woolf's writing to be informed by a theory about the relationship between language and a multi-sensorious perceptual system; that the motivation for formal literary innovation is to represent that moment when *language breaks down*. I read *Jacob's Room* to be a progenitor of future modernist works concerned with this theory of language.

Finally, this chapter will especially concentrate on the novel, *Jacob's Room*, not because it is canonized as exemplary of a war novel but precisely because it is not. For instance, after the novel's first publication, critics commented more on the formal play of narrative structures than the theme of war and its effects. Karen Levenback makes this observation in her study on Woolf and the First World War: "Early reviews of *Jacob's Room* that mention the war, like that of Rebecca West, do so only in passing; others, like the one published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, which compares Jacob to 'little marching soldier,' make no mention at all of the war."²³⁴ In more recent studies on British war novels, *Jacob's Room* often gets passed over altogether. For instance, in an essay dedicated to Woolf as a war novelist, a contemporary literary critic Roger Poole does not even mention *Jacob's Room*.²³⁵ I presume that *Jacob's Room* is marginal in the study of First World War literature today because it renders the horrors of the

war in highly structured literary conventions, which puts it at odds with the dominant narratives of the war, then and now. In other words, because Woolf drew upon the discourse of human civilization and ancient mythology, rather than heroism or graphic details common to the canon of war literature, she made her book about the Great War inconsumable.

II

Writing from a civilian standpoint, Virginia Woolf did not share a participatory or occupational experience of the war with soldiers. She “lived through the war on the streets of London (largely at Hogarth House) and in Asheham House, near the village of Firle; and, from time to time, in 1914-15, at a rest facility in Twickenham or confined to bed at home.”²³⁶ She was not privy to information shared by officers in the military like war correspondents nor was she physically stuck in the mud as soldiers were in the trenches at the Front, though it is evident that newspapers informed her of the daily wartime events. Her remote position from the Front during the years 1914-1918 ensured the entire perception of the international affair would be formed from a civilian’s standpoint. This position inferred that domestic life provided a place of refuge. Writing three years after the end of the war, Giulio Douhet explains that

beyond certain distances determined by the maximum range of surface weapons, the civilian populations of the warring nations did not directly feel the war. No enemy offensive could menace them beyond that predetermined distance, so civilian life could be carried on in safety and comparative tranquility.²³⁷

For a writer who addresses the subject of war, this supposition seemingly allows Woolf to avoid confronting two major obstacles that faced writers corresponding from the Front. One assumes

that Woolf's citizen status had her avoid two main obstacles: 1) any direct experience of mentally traumatic incidents incurred at the Front or physically harmful injuries caused by partaking in active warfare Woolf's distance from the front allowed her greater freedom to use information about the war in her writing, and; 2) the bureaucratic oversight and censorship of her writing that wartime regulations placed on publications of the time.

The civilian's angle on the First World War, however, was not altogether devoid of the effects war had at the homefront. The two aspects that distance Woolf from a soldier's experience of the front also situate Woolf in a more specialized relationship to the violence and censorship committed during First World War. The Zeppelin raids on London began in January 1915, just a few months after the commencement of the war. Although when reading Woolf's diaries and letters there is not much evidence of Woolf's concern over the blitz, the dropping of bombs, especially its significance in terms of technologically advanced warfare was not lost on the author. In part, the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) laws of censorship explains the reasons for Woolf's minimal attention to the attacks. Enacted four days after the beginning of the war, the DORA laws made basic information about damage and casualties caused by the air raids almost unattainable.²³⁸ As the war drew on longer, however, the special brutality incurred by mechanical warfare became ever more evident in Woolf's writings and more information about the damages incurred by the raids eventually became accessible to the general public.²³⁹

For Gillian Beer, the Zeppelin and the aeroplane are central symbols in many of Woolf's novels. They represent both "the destructiveness and the new beauty generated by the possibilities of flight."²⁴⁰ The aeroplane transports the militarism from abroad to the domestic sphere, even taking part in commercial advertising, as in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Beer examines how the plane ruptures the usual boundaries and horizons of the British Empire in literal and symbolic

terms. No longer confined to traveling by sea, the Empire is allowed a more expansive reach into new territories, even bringing “impossible freedoms within the range of the everyday.”²⁴¹ By looking upward, the common civilian was symbolically able to envision the technological and national accomplishments that aerial flight brought to the modern world. The aeroplane gave modern man an upward poised gaze, allotting him a greater realm of possibilities for viewing the world. At the same time, Beer points out, the “aerial view affords a dangerous narrative position” when, for instance, a “brief account of an air-raid [is] unseen from the cellar where the characters finish their dinner and wait for a bomb to fall.”²⁴² For civilians breaking bread at the dinner table, the inability to see could produce a similar synaesthetic experience as someone like Federick Elias Noakes, the young soldier who wrote about the ways in which “sixteen hours of darkness were broken by gun flashes, the gleam of star shells and punctuated by the scream of a shell.”²⁴³ The civilian, like soldiers in combat I reference in the last chapter, also maintains the capacity for sight but loses the ability to *see* what or from where oncoming bombs would fall. In fact, the civilian, arguably, has more of “any sensory point of reference suddenly vanishing”²⁴⁴ in a bomb raid because he or she is not familiarized with a militarized landscape. That the relatively comfortable architecture of domestic life in no way attunes a civilian to expect the shock of warzone dangers makes the encroachment of technological warfare impact the psychic senses of all people in wartime.

The more banal renderings of airplanes in battle, such as those in the illustrated magazine, *The Sphere*, heralds the aeroplane for its superior flying abilities and precision marksmanship in shooting down the “enemy machine.” This imagery of air flight as menacing magnificence is also more alarmingly caricatured as a bird of prey on the front page of the *Daily Herald* as early as August 7, 1914. Attributed magical dragon-like qualities while diving into the

domestic front dropping fire-bombs, the press had the aeroplane, either as friendly protector or threatening predator, evoke both fascination and terror. With the advent of the aeroplane, air strikes potentially make psychological and physical trauma a reality for civilian Britons as warfare does in the trenches for military recruits. The civilian's experience of modern warfare, therefore, becomes central within a number of Woolf's novels.²⁴⁵



Figure 16. *The Sphere*, June 12, 1915.



Figure 17. *Daily Herald*, August 7, 1914, front page.

In effect, then, the technological advances of wartime life disallow the generous field of vision normally acquired in regular life; the rapidfire and bomb raids made possible by modern weaponry create a visual, auditory, and tactile landscape which prevents any actor from *seeing*

clearly or comprehending the temporal and spatial dimensions of their surroundings, be it a trench or a living room. Since, it has been theorized, the “nervous system is not contained within the body’s limits [but rather, the] circuit from sense-perception to motor response begins and ends in the world,”²⁴⁶ then it would be fair to conclude that a synaesthetic sensibility is necessarily prohibited in scenes of war.

III

As a literary author, Virginia Woolf faced an officiated censorship, as journalists did, and also a personal kind. The extension of censorship during the war years especially affected those novelists who offended the social laws when Britain needed to impress the Edwardian notions of loyalty and honor the most. For example, D. H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* was banned and burnt on 13 November 1915 for violating the conventional expectations for morality, sexuality, and nationality.²⁴⁷ In the private sector, the publishing industry avoided possible scandals by imposing variations of censorship on literary authors themselves. In the best attempt to eschew the government or industry’s tightening control on publishing, Woolf’s half-brother, Gerald Duckworth began his own publishing house. He owned the rights and published her first two works, *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. Though free from public scrutiny, for Woolf, having family in the publishing business also created additional pressures and limitations on what was possible to produce.²⁴⁸

At the point where Virginia Woolf decided she no longer “like[d] writing for my half-brother,”²⁴⁹ she decided to “embody all my deposit of experience in a shape that fitted it,”²⁵⁰ rather than allow conventional relations to determine what gets written. Compelled to have

greater freedom to write during and about the First World War, Woolf decided to purchase a tabletop printing press. Delivered to Hogarth House on April 24, 1917, a small tabletop handpress gave the Woolf couple capabilities to begin printing their own publications.²⁵¹ They learned all the steps necessary to put out a book, including typesetting and inking each page, printing woodcut illustrations and binding.²⁵² Having turned out to be a successful business, the ownership of Leonard and Virginia Woolf's own press allowed for full control over the content of their publications. It had the authors circumvent any invasive sanctions by editors making decisions external to the writing process itself.

During the startup years of Hogarth Press, literary authors in general were discovering new ways to approach the subjects of British society. Amongst the Bloomsbury artists, discussions often turned on the predominant backdrop of high industrialization, urban-centered social development and cataclysmic warfare challenged the traditional ways of describing the world.²⁵³ Early modernists imagined themselves as engaged with the public sphere and with commercial culture of the early twentieth century. Hogarth Press was central to this imagining.²⁵⁴

The Hogarth Press published texts in English by numerous critical thinkers of the age including Clive Bell, Vanessa Bell, John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, Duncan Grant and Sigmund Freud. With the centralization of thought that the Hogarth Press created, a set of ideas arose which were directly concerned with questions regarding the development of civilization in, what Christine Froula argues is, a true democratic and internationalist style.²⁵⁵ In other words, Hogarth Press provided a contextual space whereby those Enlightenment narratives of ethico-political progress could be maintained without re-using the dominant frames that had been historically developed in literary and journalistic discourse. Rather than reproducing traditional realist literature or jingoist journalism, Hogarth Press intervened by producing texts which

invigorated discussion about the struggle for civilization.²⁵⁶ I contend that for the writer who later declared “that on or about December, 1910, human character changed,”²⁵⁷ privately owning a press allowed the greatest potential to have full aesthetic license over the form and content of the new and challenging work being produced at the time.

In turn, this self-control allows for an even greater pursuit of building a true modern readership; one that could as easily consume highly aestheticized work as generic newspaper language. Moreover, enlarging the reading public meant broader circulation for modern philosophy, history, and fiction. As Mark Morrison points out, “nobody wished to retreat into the private and elite confines of coterie publication.”²⁵⁸ This chapter capitalizes on the assumption that, as Melba Cuddy-Keane proposes, Woolf’s writing and publishing practices do not encourage amateur reading practices nor do they maintain an unapproachable elite status. Rather, Woolf’s writing invites the reader to participate in a social project whose goal would be a better “democratic society.”²⁵⁹

IV

Increasingly important to her as the war years transpired, Woolf continually thought, argued, and wrote about what contributions could be made by the British literary tradition in interwar England. Woolf asserted that, when depicting a complex and confounding subject such as war, the formalistic conventions of an Edwardian style occlude the possibility for readers to comprehend the psychological depths or subjective conditions of living during wartime. In a

letter to her friend, Janet Case, Woolf recounts an argument with her husband had about the subject:

Leonard says I'm narrow. I say he's stunted. But don't you agree with me that the Edwardians, from 1895 to 1914, made a pretty poor show. By the Edwardians, I mean Shaw, Wells, Galsworthy, the Webbs, Arnold Bennett. We Georgians have our work cut out for us, you see. There's not a single living writer (English) I respect; so you see, I have to read the Russians.²⁶⁰

The Russians, for Woolf, offered an insight to human relations absent from previous styles of English writing. According to the major Russian theoretician Shklovsky, as human perception becomes habitual it becomes automatic and thought processes become abbreviated and algebraic until the world of objects is treated only as a world of abstract shapes. The relief against the abstraction of the world and loss of human sensibility, Shklovsky offers, is to create art that works toward recovering the sensations of life.²⁶¹ And what of these sensations of life when they derive from traumatic and horrific life experiences, such as those had during wartime? As for modernists concerned with aestheticizing human experience, the perception of trauma and disorientation would become key motifs in fiction and poetry. Especially since Woolf faced the general notion that war did not permeate a civilian's sense of security and well-being, the pursuit for ways to represent such things caused or exacerbated by modern warfare such as alienation, grief, anxiety, and even shell-shock became of primary importance. Hence, Georgian writers needed to reference a literary tradition other than the one offered by the Edwardians, whom Woolf did not find adequately supplied methods to write about subjective qualities of human emotions. For the author, this distinction between the Edwardians and the Georgians becomes

one that frames the problematic issue of traditional literary inheritance for modern literature thence onwards.²⁶²

Read to the Cambridge Heretics Society on May 18, 1924, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” outlines the argument publicly. In the paper, Woolf explains that “men and women who began writing novels in 1910 or thereabouts had this great difficulty to face—that there was no English novelist living from whom they could learn their business.”²⁶³ Furthermore,

The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour.²⁶⁴

Instead of writing for the purpose of making a character life-like, Woolf is arguing, authors have the tendency to write in order to fulfill some prerequisite script they have imagined has been constructed for them prior to writing their story. The prefiguration of a type of character was a practice so established in English literary history, according to Woolf, that any character invented in its mold would stultify the imaginative and unpredictable life supposed to keep the character alive for the reader. Nothing was more unpredictable than the effects of warfare. Therefore, the type of writing to most closely respond to the conditions created by war would have to be re-imagined. The inheritance of literary history placed constraints on the writer at a period in time when social life, at least after 1910 and especially after 1918, required different literary forms.²⁶⁵ These would be “new forms for our new sensations.”²⁶⁶

As the First World War came to an end, Woolf completed and had published by Duckworth Publishing House *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. After those novels, which

were still considered to be modeled after a Victorian style of fiction writing came out, Woolf worked toward writing a new kind of novel, based upon those “new sensations” a post-war way of life engenders.²⁶⁷ Beginning her third novel during the First World War, Woolf approaches the task of pursuing more truthful representation from two fronts. First, Woolf directly engages with the theoretical problems of representation: she expresses her discontent of the writing styles of her contemporaries in her essays and letters. Secondly, because of the ability to self-publish the work she considered important, Woolf concentrates on finding innovative literary techniques in the poetry and fiction of her fellow writers as well as implementing them in her own writing. Woolf’s writing practices shape the product in which an aesthetic literary theory responds to the war. By considering the two-pronged approach Woolf takes early on toward the problem of representation, the usual militaristic discourse of the First World War will be able to include the persistently obscured features of warfare, including civilian’s experiences.

Virginia Woolf only began to seriously take up writing novels and the essays about the writing process at the beginning of the First World War. Though Woolf’s ideas of literary representation are barely forming during the years of the war, the essays can be viewed as the outcome of the author’s earlier ruminations on the subject. In general, the mere appearance of formalist experimentation in literature consistently characterizes the modernity of literature for the author, from the nineteen teens into the nineteen thirties. As evidenced in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf to a great extent measured the progress of literary fiction based on which ways writers kept from relying on traditional forms of writing or caricatures found in classic literature. The trajectory of thought that began to form in the four years of extreme disarray and cataclysmic global change of the First World War had Virginia Woolf eventually conclude that

the social life that seemed to no longer follow convention itself could no longer be summed up as it was in the predominant pre-modern model of aesthetic verisimilitude: formal realism.

V

According to Frederic Jameson, the tradition of realism suggests that direct “representation is possible, and by encouraging an aesthetic of mimesis or imitation, tends to perpetuate a preconceived notion of some external reality to be imitated, and indeed, to foster a belief in the existence of some such common-sense everyday ordinary shared secular reality in the first place.”²⁶⁸ In other words, the realist style supposes there is *naked* relation in showing what objectively exists in the real world. This shows that “the ‘real’ is supposed to be self-sufficient, that it is strong enough to belie any notion of function... and that the *having-been-there* of things is a sufficient principle of speech.”²⁶⁹ As expressed in 1941 in *Between the Acts*, when the philosophical issue of existence comes up for the characters that are in the making of the play taking place in the novel, Woolf puts into question the idea of a simple correspondence between perception and objective reality. The actors wondered if the things they perceived were the same as what exists in the historical record. As readers, we learn that normally, “When they [individuals] were alone, they said nothing. They looked at the view; they looked at what they knew, to see if what they knew might perhaps be different today. Most days it was the same.”²⁷⁰ For Woolf, then, when those characters that sought verification for their own thoughts by looking for changes in the outside world mostly failed to do so, the idea of objective reality—severed from subjective interpretations—becomes acutely limited.

The quotation above also prefaces the next insight that Mrs. Swithin, a main character in *Between the Acts* offers to her actors: that the act of looking, not of speaking, becomes central to the possibilities of expression. Mrs. Swithin advocates methods of acting other than recitation when it comes to needing to communicate what a person may know. Instead of verbally repeating a classic Shakespearian soliloquy that the actors practice, Mrs. Swithin protests, “ ‘We haven’t the words—we haven’t the words.’ ” She suggests instead that actors communicate what is “Behind the eyes; not on the lips; that’s all.” This proposal is summed up by Mrs. Swithin’s brother as producing “Thoughts without words.”²⁷¹ The conclusion reached by Bart Swithin puts into doubt any concrete notion of the “*having-been-there* of things” that a realist outlook promotes. Mr. Swithin’s commentary also brings to light an alternative conceptual frame for understanding the composition of reality that Woolf had outlined in earlier writings. These two points illuminated within the narrative of *Between the Acts*—that objective reality outside of subjective interpretative lenses can only provide liminal understanding and that visual cues may provide an insight to subjective expressions better than language can—exemplify Woolf’s key concerns about writing and representation, especially during times that seem to defy comprehensibility, like periods of war. The passages in *Between the Acts*, such as those above, demonstrate an evolution in Woolf’s thinking about the variables in subjective and objective expression in fiction that launches in her earlier writings.

In the essay written in April 1919, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf critiques the idea that precise discursive details and exhaustive descriptions of objects provide the reader with any sense of an environment a character of the novel would have in that setting. She argues that the “code of manners” Edwardians still followed in their writing promoted “decay,” instead of what is “interesting in character itself.”²⁷² In place of providing some sort of direct reportage of

objective items or circumstances, Woolf theorizes a more approximate style of writing meant to capture the thoughts of a character rather than a portrait of his or her situation. Thinking about what constitutes a modernist subjectivity, Woolf implores her contemporaries to create new formalist styles of writing. However experimental, she does caution her audience that the breaking from a traditional “code of manners” should be tempered with a self-conscious and prudent sensibility. Shaping an aesthetic, she beseeches, should not be a destructive activity. A blunt treatment of language would impede the primary goal of the novel: to “describe beautifully if possible, truthfully at any rate... life itself.”²⁷³ Philosophically, then, writing in the modern era needed to convey the sensations and psychological dimensions of living after the war, while maintaining the eternal humanist tradition of classic literature. In practice, this act of creation needed to be deliberate, though naturally expressed at the same time.

Other modes of writing can potentially undertake the task of shaping the new modernist aesthetic, though the war period, Woolf seemed to suggest, made it more likely that fictional prose would be the primary vehicle to do so. Poetry was more readily susceptible to the radical formalist experimentalism that destroyed rather than enriched a modernist aesthetic that Woolf envisioned. In a review of Siegfried Sassoon’s poetry, for example, the war imagery in the poem contained a shock value for Woolf such that its “realism” was almost *too* real. For Woolf, Sassoon’s poetry revealed the “terrible pictures which lie behind the colourless phrases of the newspapers.” The war poetry’s “rawness” owed too much to the perception of the war by newspapers. The poetry’s *literalness* did not allow for the writer or the reader to exercise the imaginative capacities necessary to appreciate an aesthetic work like a poem. On the other extreme, Woolf warns against an “obscurity” modern poetry can present, such as the verses of T. S. Eliot. The effect of poetry should not make the reader feel as if she was “flying precariously”

from line to line, maintaining abstraction to such a high degree that all context to reality is lost.²⁷⁴

Even up until 1927, Woolf still anticipated what the true modern novel would be like. She imagined it would be able to reflect the “modern mind” which was “full of monstrous, hybrid, unmanageable emotions.”²⁷⁵ The new incarnation of fiction would make “little use of the marvelous fact-recording power” of traditional forms of fiction while it would “take on some attributes of poetry,” thus making fictional prose as fluid as the “modern mind” that both records and aestheticizes life at the same time. In “The Narrow Bridge of Art,” written in 1927, Woolf attributes an autonomous nature to the new form of fictional prose she imagines taking shape in the future:

Prose is so humble that it can go anywhere; no place is too low, too sordid, or too mean for it to enter. It is infinitely patient, too, humbly acquisitive. It can lick up with its long glutinous tongue the most minute fragments of fact and mass them into the most subtle labyrinths, and listen silently at doors behind which only a murmur, only a whisper, is to be heard.²⁷⁶

This new form of writing encapsulated by the modernist novel will capture previously unexplored avenues of human life.

VI

In 1917, Woolf notes that the novel is an exceptional form of media because it allows for a particular kind of artfulness. In reference to the First World War, the novel requires a greater

patience and the novelist a less prompt reaction to the reality of the war. It was either the ultra-patriotism or blunt anti-war propaganda in fiction that disturbed Woolf about the role of literature in shaping social perspectives. In an essay discussing the treatment of war in fiction, Woolf writes “the vast events now shaping across the Channel are towering over us too closely and too tremendously to be worked into fiction without a painful jolt in the perspective.”²⁷⁷ Involved with numerous anti-war causes while pursuing her own literary career, the “jolt” in her own perspective would have her continually re-evaluate the relationship between literature and politics. For the civilian author, writing about the war happening overseas was too immense a project to carefully craft, for both geographical and timely reasons. First, not being able to witness the events directly made realist description a challenging if not impossible prospect. Second, concentrating on the militarized aspects of war has the writer ignore the features of war that civilians directly experience; the immediate experiences of civilians would include feelings of alienation and fear, as well as the day-to-day reality of taking shelter from air-raids and dealing with food rations. These experiences, however, rarely manifest at the moment in which they are being made. These two points inform Woolf’s perspective that immediacy of an author to the battles taking place overseas impeded rather than elucidated the reality from which a writer’s stories would be created.

As a participant in those ongoing debates about civilization within the literary community, Woolf held fast to the idea that the time in which they lived required a mode of writing that is less a matter of realizing objective circumstances—as she regarded war dispatches pretending to capture—and more a matter of viewing “past layers [of consciousness] and their content in perspective; [consciousness] keeps confronting them with one another, emancipating them from their exterior temporal continuity as well as from the narrow meanings they seemed to

have when they were bound to a particular present.”²⁷⁸ According to Woolf, the Edwardian novelists “developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose,” which does not have much to do with “human nature.”²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the “tools” an Edwardian author uses prolong a tradition of writing that constructs a superficial reality. In the context of a war-torn country dealing with traumatized soldiers, any mode of writing that avoided authentic depictions of the subjective facets of people failed the reading public.

Discussing the descriptive style Edwardian author Arnold Bennett uses in his novels, for example, Woolf argues that “he is trying to make us imagine for him; he is trying to hypnotize us into the belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person living there.”²⁸⁰ Woolf’s objection underscores an argument that the Edwardian mode of writing does not, in practice, produce anything more vital than a hollow rendering of a domestic setting; it does not show what makes domestic life meaningful. For Woolf, the profuse description of things is no longer sufficient for the reader in the modern world who is seeking “real, true, and convincing” characters.²⁸¹ Woolf is suggesting, rather, that fiction writers “bridge the gap” with their readers by offering less a standardized model of narrative and more a relatable and impressionable portrayal of a character’s imaginative or emotional state of being.

Contrary to the properly tooled realist practice of providing refined details of objects making up the environment around characters, Woolf suggests the portrayal of life be presented through a refracted aesthetic lens.²⁸² The reader should not have to methodically “deduce the human beings” from the meticulous descriptions of a house, for instance, but rather, she should be able to composite them from more abstracted impressions of less concrete elements, like emotions or memories. It’s as if Woolf is asking that fiction writers use more far-sighted vision than a near-sighted lens so that the more elusive elements of the human condition be exposed.²⁸³

As described in “The Narrow Bridge of Art,” the new and “unnamed variety of the novel will be written standing back from life, because in that way a larger view is to be obtained of some important features of it.”²⁸⁴

When put into practice, this theoretical outlook has the author intertwine form and content in more fluid ways than would realist novels. In the original manuscript of *Jacob’s Room*, the following reflection by Woolf articulates the type of interlaced vision of expressive and static life she hoped to create in her fiction. She wrote,

I think the main point is that it should be free.

But what about form?

Let us suppose the Room will hold it together. Intensity of life compared with immobility.

Experiences.

To change life at will.²⁸⁵

“It” is not clearly defined in this brief notation, though the context of the reflection suggests that “it” refers to the story itself. The story about a death of a soldier, and all of the range of emotions resulting from the loss, be it “monstrous, hybrid, or unmanageable emotions,” should be free to express itself. As a writer, Woolf asks the question regarding form—if the story is “free,” does this also mean that the formal constraints must also be loosed? Her answer is that the “Room” itself, a fictional space, should hold the content and the form together, and that something called “experiences”—a composite made from memories forged in the past and contemporary concrete moments in a person’s present—would contour the novel. The experiences related through the experiences of the reader herself and the text—the “intensity of life” and the “immobile”—might fuse so that enough distance could be achieved for “it” to be sufficiently free. For Woolf, the task

of the writer would be to have the reader to gain the notion of a dialectical relationship that occurs between form and content, subjective and objective realities, static and lively states of being, and near and far temporal and geographic distances. This comprehensive literary theory initiates in the writing of *Jacob's Room*.

While in the process of writing the novel, *Jacob's Room*, Woolf sent out a letter to an acquaintance Gerald Brenan on the necessity for a novelist to gain distance from her immediate subject matter. When discussing the difficulties a writer has in producing finished work, Woolf relates that at some point, "one cannot write, not for lack of skill, but because the object is too near, too vast. I think perhaps it must recede before one can take a pen to it."²⁸⁶ Perhaps influenced by Freud's comments about standing too close to the war to see it properly, Woolf had the "object," the Great War, recede a few years before setting out to write her third novel.²⁸⁷ Beginning in 1920, Woolf began collecting ideas for a new work of fiction she would title *Jacob's Room* and publish in 1922. This novel purposefully achieves the forging of a relationship between the experimental literary techniques she imagines makes a modernist novel and the theories about the changed nature of the human condition. In the same letter mentioned above discussing *Jacob's Room*, Woolf declares,

The human soul, it seems to me, orientates itself afresh every now and then. It is doing so now. No one can see it whole, therefore. The best of us catch a glimpse of a nose, a shoulder, something turning away, always in movement. Still, it seems better to me to catch this glimpse, than to sit down with Hugh Walpole, Wells, etc. etc.²⁸⁸

As a way of talking about the methods with which a writer portrays characters, the "glimpse" is put into opposition to the more myopic view her fellow writers in the Edwardian camp use. Woolf maintains that the method of glimpsing human actions is preferable to a completely

explained persona at a time—following the Great War—when the “human soul” is “orientat[ing] itself afresh,” not quite ready yet to “see it whole.”

Jacob's Room presents an alternative novel than those written in the realist tradition because of its attempts to capture the human relations as they are becoming newly “orientated.” The subject matter of a young male soldier’s life dying in the First World War provides the context from which Woolf attempts to gain a theoretical understanding of the “modern mind.”²⁸⁹ As Levenback put it, “Woolf’s writings on the war always served her growing need to recognize and explain a reality that was outside her own experiential frame.”²⁹⁰ At least theoretically, Woolf put into question such a thing as an essential reality by not fully fleshing out or explaining each thought or encounter of a character’s movements and consciousness. As the war was an inexhaustible and confounding experience for anyone contemplating it, this novel sets out to reflect that peculiar “something left unsaid for us to find out for ourselves and think over.”²⁹¹ Woolf sets out to write about those things “left unsaid” by refurbishing a mechanics of language she understood had become staid and immaterial in fictional writing after the war.

VII

Jacob's Room narrates a prewar civilian life via the lens of postwar memory. Theoretically structured as memories of experiences formed in the past, the narrative is written in fragmentary prose, composed of half-articulated phrases of dialogue or truncated passages designed to show only “glimpses” of people, written in active voice. The majority of syntax in *Jacob's Room* does not shift the elements of sentences so that the object gets promoted to the place of the subject of the sentence. Therefore, subjects always stay active and identifiable. The first lines of Chapter 12

from *Jacob's Room* provide the reader with a typical example of syntactical structures that use active voice: "The water fell off a ledge like lead—like a chain with thick white links. The train ran out into a steep green meadow, and Jacob saw striped tulips growing and heard a bird singing, in Italy." These introductory sentences use standard word order construction, making it easy for the reader to identify the principal components that establish the opening scene of the chapter. However, the simplicity of these opening sentences also indicates reality is not so simple as it may be when described in traditional realist style.

The opening scene of the chapter also illustrates a theme woven throughout the novel: the contradictory moment in modern history when the natural world is worked on by a hyper-developed mechanized society. The natural and industrial imagery (e. g. the meadow, the bird, and the train) mark the unique juncture in history when the railroad revolutionizes the natural world; when new views of nature's landscape are possible from railway cars. In these few lines, a double meaning is grammatically written into the paragraph, indicating the contradictions modernity brings to the reader. The train "ran out into" the meadow. The train can be perceived as encroaching upon the meadow, as if the train is trampling the earth and is violating a hallow space. At the same time, the active sentence describes a freshly sprung nature, both "green" and "growing." This portrayal of the scene works against reading the train and nature as oppositional. In this instance, parallel imagery works to support the reading that nature and the railroad move in a similar fashion: the "water fell off the ledge" while "the train ran out into a steep green meadow." In this opening paragraph, grammatically, both the environment and the railroad are presented as equally new and durable features of the modern world.

The coordinator of the compound sentence, the word "and," does not indicate the particular relationship of the actions of the clauses. "And" does not specify if the actions are

causal, contemporaneous or unconnected. This makes it difficult for the reader to definitively locate the protagonist in the scene, spatially or temporally. In fact, this sentence eludes any assignation of who the narrator may be. A third-person omniscient narrator, intended to present an objective situation like that in novels by Charles Dickens or George Eliot, would indicate to the reader what the protagonist may be thinking when seeing plants grow or hearing birds sing; the narrator would use direct or indirect speech. Here, there are no suggestive or critical lenses looking upon the meadow or at Jacob. The reader does not receive the subjective perspective of Jacob either in first-person speech. We are not looking through Jacob's eyes to look upon this meadow. The fixed narrator does have a limited omniscience in this passage, though it seems to blend the more traditional types of omniscient narration of realist literature. This method of narration records sights and sounds as if picked up from a fly on the wall—as opposed to the broad point of view customary in nineteenth-century realist novels—and it also presents a peculiarly selective point of view that indicates that someone is telling us of only a few observations which come into their purview.

A third agent, Jacob, is associated with both the organic and man-made imagery described above. However, Jacob's function is distinguished from nature or machinery because of his placement in the syntactical structure of the second sentence of the opening paragraph. In this compound sentence, "The train ran out into a steep green meadow, and Jacob saw striped tulips growing and heard a bird singing, in Italy," Jacob is the subject of the second independent clause. He is active, like the "water" of the previous sentence and the train in the first independent clause of this sentence. However, the reader cannot tell whether Jacob is inside or outside of the train, in or out of Italy. Also, because "Jacob" is situated grammatically in the middle of the second sentence of the paragraph, the reader does not notice any structural

symmetry between the first sentence and the second sentence. Semantically, “Jacob” does not parallel “water” or “train,” either. So, then, what is Jacob? What sort of inferences shall a reader make from such a discriminating perspective? Shall the reader draw only limited conclusions from the selective information interspersed in these fractured discourses? Or, does the narrator in flux signal that the sense of perception is not always conscious, and that a narrative can be about multiple subjects at once? These questions are better answered when considering the context in which these formalist methods of writing are being used.

In the passage above, the water and the train are emphasized so that the reader seemingly gets an unobstructed view of the meadow in Italy, not a view as perceived solely by Jacob. In this case, the reader sees Jacob as one subject amongst the other subjects in the landscape, as if the reader enters the chapter from an objective point of view. In the passage above, Jacob “*saw* striped tulips growing.” The imperfect tense of the irregular verb can have the reader see what anyone there would have seen: the scene as it existed at the moment Jacob saw it. Or, the past tense verb “saw” can indirectly report what Jacob saw so that the reader would imagine she was seeing through his eyes; what did *he* see? He saw tulips. What impressions do these syntactic innovations as a whole offer to the reader? How is the world presented any differently when it is narrated in Woolf’s modernist style? The grammatical complexities in this couple of sentences signify the work of an aesthetic designed to foreground not only surface realities, but other attributes central to a more comprehensive understanding of reality. After all, “the modernist sensibility,” as Allyson Booth puts it “is attuned to psychological as well as physical realities.”²⁹² Whether the sentence has the reader interpret an objective or subjective point of view, or both, the reader also “sees” another dimension.

The addition of a simile, “like a chain with thick white links” presents a figurative dimension to the description of the meadow that complicates reading the opening scene as objectively presented. A simile requires a reader’s visionary faculty that stipulates the reader uses an imaginary reflex instead of recalling what a meadow basically looks like. This visionary quality moves the reader into a realm of symbolic significance, where meanings are less literal and they can freely associate with the more figurative features of the narrative: a character’s emotions and experiences. The construction of the highly stylized sentences moves a realist language about a static world into a modernist symbolic realm—a mytho-realist world—where “glimpses” are meant to rupture a linear narrative so that a burgeoning post-war human condition can be pieced together.

VIII

At the opening of the novel, the little boy Jacob is missing until he picks up a sheep’s skull on the strand that, according to his mother Mrs. Betty Flanders who finds him, is “something horrid.”²⁹³ The train of thought framing Mrs. Flanders’s reaction to the skull involves a “buried discomfort” that resulted from a “gunpowder explosion in which Mr. Curnow had lost his eye.”²⁹⁴ Where did this explosion take place? Who is Mr. Curnow? At this point in the novel, none of this is contextualized or explained. Mrs. Flanders’s train of thought is the context from which the reader begins to learn what the backdrop of the characters’ lives is. The glimpse into the life of Betty Flanders is conveyed by one interjected sentence describing a feeling that the skull brought forth. This detail does not ask the reader to deduce a meaning from the object she encounters in the same way a realist writer would, but rather it prepares the reader to recognize a

presence of evasive things such as a “buried discomfort” or “something horrid.” The consciousness of Betty Flanders is not the only context given in these opening pages. There is also young Jacob’s interpretation of the skull.

The foreboding symbol of the skull is not “horrid” for Jacob. After encountering two “motionless” lovers on the shore, Jacob “absent-mindedly” runs toward the skull in order to get re-oriented from this jarring sight. In the scene, it is the sight of two lovers that becomes “horrid” for Jacob, not the skull. The interplay of life and death blur when the meanings of popular symbols, the flush of life in lovers and the inevitable decay of death in the skull, swap places. In this case, lovers are “bloated” and rotting, the skull is fresh and renewed: “clean, white, wind-swept, sand-rubbed [and] unpolluted.” Jacob seeks respite from two “motionless” bodies by running toward a rock on the shore, mistaking it for his nanny, finding she is not alive either, then finally finding calm in the sheep skull. The lovers are not alive for Jacob, but they are “stretched entirely rigid” as if dead. The “nanny” is an inanimate rock, unable to keep him from feeling “lost.” After Jacob “held the skull in his arms,” his mother finds him.

The order of the narrative makes the embrace of the skull the moment when Jacob gets beckoned back into the realm of the living. In western mythology, a skull generally symbolizes mortality. In traditional Victorian folklore, when the child holds a skull, it signifies that a child is deceased.²⁹⁵ Here, the interrelationship between the symbols of life and death suggests the distinction between present and past is not so clear. The phrases written in the past tense and in third person indirectly tells the reader that this scene on the beach had already happened, but the context of unfinished thoughts, e.g. the “buried discomfort” of Mrs. Flanders, tells the reader that allusions to what may be buried has not yet been revealed. The temporal and referential shifts that lexically occur between the report and speech frames complicate the notion that there are

direct correlations between thoughts and actions, or that there is necessarily a clear line of distinction between someone's interior thoughts and their existence in the objective world.

The narrator's position is the axes where all points of view converge. The narrator tells the story, but does not tell it in the same way Betty Flanders, Jacob or any other characters would presumably tell it; it is not told in definitive language from a singular point of view, but rather as if it were impossible for the reader to demarcate what was happening in the present and what occurred in the past, and from whose standpoint. Therefore, one of Woolf's modernist strategies for the representation of warfare is to narrate an unfixed perspective: the modernist style of writing would present a first-person's point of view from a grammatically third-person mode. For some readers, this free indirect discourse implies an ambiguity of meaning since a speech or thought cannot be precisely attributed to any one character in particular. When it comes to a story about wartime, Levenback reads *Jacob's Room* as suggesting "that the implications of the war have not yet been either felt or recognized and the fate of Jacob is made as uncertain as the war; even the highly opinionated narrator is silenced."²⁹⁶ However, do the pluralities of perspective indicate a stifled voice or, rather, that the features normally censored in the newsprint or field postcard versions of war are, though unrecognized, being expressed?

In a story about the life and death of a First World War soldier in which a thought surfaces that "it's not catastrophes, murders, deaths, diseases, that age and kill us; it's the way people look and laugh, and run up the steps of omnibuses,"²⁹⁷ the demarcation between soldier and civilian identity is blurred. In the case of young Jacob, a statement like the one above is told using free indirect discourse, which has the effect of making general the particular response directed toward Jacob's "beautiful" but "stupid" lover Florinda. This generalized statement about the feelings of social alienation marks a moment of confusion concerning Jacob's identity and

about his role in society. As a young man, Jacob had cultivated a taste for classic art and literature and could easily assimilate into the refined world of bourgeois culture. All the while, though, he also incurred a strong distaste for established society. In fact, the moment in Florinda's presence has the reader come to realize the extent of Jacob's discomfort, that it was not just a mere discomfort that he had developed but "a violent reversion towards male society, cloistered rooms, and the works of the classics; and was ready to turn with wrath upon whoever it was who had fashioned life thus."²⁹⁸ Where does this visceral reaction come from?

Shortly before this passage, the reader had just encountered Jacob being treated as if an incarnation of ancient Greek royalty, his head "wreathed... with paper flowers" then suddenly, "taking Jacob for a military gentleman," a stallkeeper manages to dispel for the reader that imagery.²⁹⁹ Using modernist conventions of writing, in this case fragments of discourse, a reader would be able to draw a number of inferences regarding the identity of Jacob. The violence informing the mood of the passage is not assimilable by bourgeois society; it is an unexpected attitude coming from a young man raised in high society. The "violent reversion" would more likely be an emotional response from a military man. This shift is indicative of the novel which continually thwarts any definitive notion about the identity of Jacob. Woolf has the reader follow the logic of the narrative, compelling the reader to stay in flux with the narrative and defer making any conclusions about Jacob as a civilian or as a soldier. As a result, the reader comes yet again to ask herself about the certainty of Jacob's identity. The novel encourages the reader to advance simple questions like "what is Jacob?" or "what did Jacob see?" to more multi-layered questions such as those asked within the narrative itself: "why are we yet surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the

most real, the most solid, the best known to us—why indeed? For the moment after we know nothing about him.”³⁰⁰

Woolf’s use of free indirect discourse guides the reader so that normally opposing poles such as presence and absence, life and death, present and past, and civilian and soldier are reconstructed into a narrative in which time and space exist in a continuum. It challenges what Jane Marcus defines as the normative cultural narrative of imperialism; that “England” is created by an Eton/Cambridge elite who (re)produces “the national epic (the rise of...) and elegy (the fall of...) in praise of the hero.”³⁰¹ The epic tale that Jacob personifies is not one that is ideologically limited by imperial Britain. In resisting a purely nationalist colonialist invocation of world war, the complexity of Jacob’s figure instead raises questions about the mythologizing by institutions and governments of war-making acts of colonization, placing culpability for the deaths of young men on the system of brutal conquest itself. For Woolf, there is a direct correlation between British political ideologies and the cultural forms they are propagated by. Just like the inheritance of traditional literary forms retards the progression of responsive fiction to social needs, so to does the legacy of colonizing ventures by western civilization, be it Ancient Greek or English.

The overall effect of the formalist moves employed in this novel, e.g., inversions of grammatical structures and free indirect discourse, prevents the reader from fully realizing at any singular moment the central character, Jacob. The fracturing of discourse that occurs with shifts in point of view between sentences has the reader postpone the act of completely understanding Jacob as a fully developed physical character. Instead, Jacob gets detached every time the narrative shifts focus or when the discourse is disrupted by a free indirect quotation. In short, the method of writing informed by Woolf’s literary modernist aesthetic prevents the reader from

following the story in any streamlined, concrete way or in any chronological order.³⁰² This does not necessarily mean, however, that something else will not be portrayed in lieu of a more concrete grasp of the one character named Jacob.

IX

Curiously, the novel about a young soldier's death does not attempt to simulate the vantage point of someone who experienced the brutalities of warfare. Instead, the ultimate consequence of war, death, is only implied. No death scene exists, only an outcome of blended insights and observations given by the narrator. In the final pages of the novel, Jacob exists in Fanny's mind as "more statuesque, noble, and eyeless than ever" as if he were Ulysses away on a heroic journey. His mother similarly imagines her son having taken a "delightful journey."³⁰³ Morbid or "raw" language is not used to color the demise of the young soldier. Jacob's death is instead signaled in a paragraph about ships firing shells off of the coast of Greece in the Piraeus Sea. Since Jacob had acquired the likeness of figures from classical Greek civilization, the reader could draw associations between the references to Greek history and the guns that bring darkness to that great civilization.³⁰⁴ As the age of antiquity often does, Jacob's life and death connotes a venerable and tragic period.

That Woolf would have deployed the use of classical imagery isn't too surprising. Besides the scholarly debates at the time about western civilization and the accompanying anxiety of whether or not progress could be regenerated in any philosophical or material ways, the motifs of classicism themselves were officiously deployed, therefore recognizable. In attempts to strengthen the importance of civic duty and reiterate the myths upholding Empire

during the war, committees were formed to inject classics back into education. Formations like The Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister to Inquire into the Position of Classics in the Educational System of the United Kingdom asserted that ‘law, citizenship, freedom and empire’ were rooted in ancient civilization, and that the lessons of classicism were equally valuable for professional and working classes.³⁰⁵ In discussions on modern British civilization, Carden-Coyne explains, “Greece was regarded as the ‘cradle of democracy’ and instigator of beauty, while Rome founded the rule of law and statehood.”³⁰⁶

Likening Jacob’s story to a classicist epic was a way to rescue and revitalize the values of civilization under threat from the war, but not quite bond the literary craft to the narrow social sensibility of Victorian Hellenism popular in the previous generation of literature.³⁰⁷ In *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf would have been able to draw on the extensive knowledge of canonical Greek texts that she cultivated since youth. Most importantly, Woolf would have learned about the historical weight of the narrative function of concepts such as death, desire, and loss, and would have understood in great detail the imagery of heroism and mythology.³⁰⁸

As in Greek mythology, the figure of Jacob takes on representational rather than narrative value—though Jacob has a human form, his significance is allusive more of a moral, political, or social condition. Meanwhile, the narrator recognizes the heads of state in crude physical terms: “bald, red-veined, hollow-looking” who “lifting their pens or turning perhaps rather wearily in their chairs, decreed that the course of history should shape itself this way or that way, being manfully determined.”³⁰⁹ The contrast in the treatment of figures—Jacob versus heads of state—demonstrates a way of distinguishing between ways of reading history; one can consider accepting the transcendent and indeterminate qualities of a myth when reading history, or one can read history as synchronic events, preordained by forces and decrees outside of a common

person's control. When the outcome of war means either the loss of a dynamic civilization embodied in a cultured young man or the occurrence of a formal, ceremonious act, a reader would more likely come to conclude that the loss of all that Jacob symbolizes is a brutality more noteworthy than yet another turn of events determined by imperial governments.

X

Throughout *Jacob's Room*, the narrative proposes that ways of reading correspond to the types of text one reads. In figuring newspapers throughout her narratives, for instance, Woolf speaks to the differential relationship novels and newspapers have to something like society during a period of war. The newspaper was such a principal source of information, it "pressed nightly over the brain and heart of the world."³¹⁰ Even though Woolf herself had access to countless publications, sometimes she could rely solely on newspapers to learn about any developments about the war.³¹¹ Newspapers "take the impression of the whole... A strike, a murder, football, bodies found; vociferation from all parts of England simultaneously."³¹² The collage of stories creates an available landscape from which people learn what events are the most important—and, it seems in this example, that the most important for the whole world were the voices of England. In the *Globe*, "the Prime Minister's speech [proposing Home Rule for Ireland] was reported in something over five columns." The number of columns given to the speech, at least for Jacob, underscored how much this was "a very difficult matter." But, the narrator exclaims, "How miserable it is that the *Globe* newspaper offers nothing better to Jacob Flanders!" Wasn't this speech by the Prime Minister indeed important? What else would someone like Jacob

Flanders want to know about the state of the world? What else would he want to read? Perhaps, Woolf is having the reader question the need for another perspective?³¹³

The narrator offers a view of London not given in the newspaper. The following account also gives an “impression of the whole” though it is of a different whole than the one the Prime Minister would give a speech about:

The street market in Soho is fierce with light. Raw meat, china mugs, and silk stockings blaze in it. Raw voices wrap themselves round the flaring gas-jets. Arms akimbo, they stand on the pavement bawling—Messrs. Kettle and Wilkinson; their wives sit in the shop, furs wrapped round their necks, arms folded, eyes contemptuous. Such faces as one sees... Shawled women carry babies with purple eyelids; boys stand at street corners; girls look across the road—rude illustrations, pictures in a book whose pages we turn over and over as if we should at last find what we look for—in search of what?

This portrait of an outdoor market containing all the trappings of modern urban society including meats, household goods, and judgmental eyes follows a series of passages describing areas in London such as Greek Street, Shaftesbury Avenue and Queen’s Square. In these passages, subtle motions of people are recorded; looks and attitudes are registered in words and premonitions of a dire future are inferred. As if referencing itself, the narrative expounds to the reader that “The strange thing about life is that though the nature of it must have been apparent to every one for hundreds of years, no one has left any adequate account of it. The streets of London have their map; but our passions are uncharted.”³¹⁴ Since a number of characters in the novel had only a more sullen composure or sense of loss after finishing the perusal of a newspaper, one would find it difficult to deduce that the press provides any helpful insight on the human experience as it is perceived on a daily basis on city streets.³¹⁵ The reader is then asked by the narrator, “What

are you going to meet if you turn this corner?”³¹⁶ By rhetorically posing this question, the narrator is not only asking the reader to start reading the streets as if they had a story to tell but is also asking the reader to turn the page to find out what is around the corner. The passage above makes the act of observation about the reader’s own self-conscious reflection about the process of reading instead of about watching others compliantly consuming the copy of newspapers.³¹⁷

The “street market in Soho... fierce with light” allows Woolf to color the setting with an “odd pallor in those particular days of sunshine.”³¹⁸ It implores the reader to expect the unknown still to come in the following pages. A reporter for *Spectator* and Woolf’s close friend, Lytton Strachey, gives a written account of Soho streets that is in divergent contrast with Woolf’s perspective on the atmosphere of city streets:

The fog has descended in force and the shadow of Death reigns... very nearly all the lights were out, which combined with the fog, produced complete darkness. In the streets of Soho one might have been on a Yorkshire moor for all one could see to the contrary. How the human spirit manages to flicker even as faintly as it does is a mystery... it is solid, damp and heavy with the depression of war.³¹⁹

This likening of Soho streets to a damp moor makes literal the damp sadness someone like Strachey experienced of wartime. Evidence exists to assume that Woolf also found it difficult to continue as a writer during this period.³²⁰ However, being in the city provides the light necessary for a person to *see*, literally and metaphorically, if the civilian adequately uses her vision to seek something better than what a newspaper has to offer.

XI

The ineffable characteristics of the First World War derived from the impact of highly mechanized weapons firing on human bodies, in the trenches and on the home front. The scale of violence was so vast that any empirical measurement of human casualties would have been inadequate. As Robert Graves had observed, soldiers maintained that “newspaper language” was too dishonest or sterile in the description of battles and the suffering endured in them. The primary complaint was that the militaristic information circulating in newspapers was too regulatory and neatly composed to allow room for the unspeakable images of warfare to be qualitatively represented. Upon returning home, this “newspaper language” was detrimental to the soldier’s recovery and sense of again belonging to civilian society. For the modernist novelist, empirically drawn or pure literal figurations of war would not be sufficient for producing an ultimate mode of representation, either. The way in which soldiers wrote about their own experiences in letters and diaries exhibits that a more sufficient rendering of the war would composite a history from subjective experiences of warfare instead of offering an officiated and tabulated account of casualty numbers or military tactics used on the field. In a modernist aesthetic, the demonstration of an “after-the-fact” perspective constructed in a novel such as *Jacob’s Room* produces a narrative about war such that an auxiliary discourse involving subjective experiences of both soldier and civilians ratifies the militaristic nomenclature of the press.

In order to effectively depict a crucially significant survey of the atrocities of the First World War, Woolf would come to assuredly conclude by 1933 that she would write as to “give the whole of the present society—nothing less: facts, as well as vision.”³²¹ This is the principle I am calling mytho-synaesthetic realism; a style in which the portrayal of the world requires

description about the senses along with the mythos that accompanies human civilization. That Woolf concentrates on narrativizing various senses of perception in her fiction gives credence to the trend that soldiers are unwittingly fashioning in their personal writing.

Just thirty years earlier, such a notion as objective knowledge that had come to prominence in the prior era of scientific positivism and literary naturalism was going into decline. Modernists around the globe began responding to world wars that resulted from the contradictions of colonial imperialism with sentiments like those expressed by Marlow in *Lord Jim* (1900), “Facts! They demanded facts from him, as if facts could explain anything!”³²² Mark Wollaeger makes the argument that literary modernists harbored a general “mistrust of factuality.”³²³ Drawing from Mary Poovey’s work on the devaluation of the “fact,” Wollaeger makes the case for the modern artists’ shift away from the static confines of a realist style of representation. He observes that “facts” themselves become increasingly unmoored in scientific and literary realms especially during the First World War and that modernist literature’s role in this uncoupling of the “fact” from its original and unmitigated source moves the writer to adopt an impressionistic style of representation. Wollaeger explains that an impressionistic approach in fiction is a way to “repair the damage” done to the “fact” by the surge of propaganda during the war by “reinvesting facts with feeling”; in effect “humanizing” again the reality from which “facts” get abstracted. For instance, as early as 1915, upon attending a concert where “they played a national Anthem & a Hymn,” Woolf expressed that “all I could feel was the entire absence of emotion in myself & everyone else”³²⁴ At least for Woolf, the consequences of a “base emotion,” such as patriotism, risked a sense of reality that tied human synaesthetic experience to the historical world.

The fact was not disposable, but the infusion of an synaesthetic reading of reality would provide more for a reader than lines like from a 1917 Sassoon poem: “Savage, he kicked a soft unanswering heap,/ And flashed his beam across the livid face/ terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore/ Agony dying hard ten days before;/ And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.” (“The Rear-Guard”). The reader learns about the topography and experience of a soldier in the field primarily by the descriptions of bodily movements, e.g. kicking, flashing, clutching. These descriptions, Woolf would argue, are perfunctory. Depicting the physical reflexes of a soldier in the war zone does not meet the needs of a reader seeking to understand the profundity of the war in the soldier’s mental world. In Auerbach’s words, that mode of representation only confines the subject to “the narrow meanings they seemed to have when they were bound to a particular present.”³²⁵

Postwar society required a method of representation with the explanatory power to rival the intensity of inhumane acts that modern warfare thrust onto civilization. By the 1930s, Woolf’s certainty in “considering the facts” outdoes the various mitigating factors which had been used as social justification for continuous war.³²⁶ It may be the case that the atrocities of warfare are simply not absorbable by the human senses; that the speed and lethality of war in the modern era exceeds the ability for writers to match it in its scale and volume. Nonetheless, in dealing with war, the modernist novelist addresses those experiences that create the gulf between soldiers and civilians. A novel might offer an imaginative space to reflect on and learn from the impact wars have on people, whether they be on British or foreign soil. The postwar age required a new literary realism to depict the facts of an event *in addition to* the symptoms that they purvey.

5.0 OCULAR REALISM: VIOLATING CODES OF CLASSIC REALISM

Candour was not the only path to truth. Censorship and press practice also produced the truth of war. Photographs did not open people's eyes to a knowledge of the war that was at odds with the written account: on the contrary, eye-witness photographs lent authenticity to the texts. Together they created a reality that was firmly established as truth.³²⁷

I

This chapter will discuss what I find to be two distinct photographic records of the First World War: the published and the suppressed photographs taken by official war photographers at the Front. Each cache of photographs allows for the Edwardian viewer to draw upon the notion of realism in consuming the narrative of the war; published photos of soldiers eating, chatting, and posing at the Front have indexical features just as those censored photographs of dead bodies do. However, that the second batch of *unseemly* photos are censored from public consumption make the indexical features of them absolutely proscribed from public discourse. Moreover, I propose, the photographic representation of mangled bodies per say presents to the reader a function of vision that is not heretofore acculturated. This obstruction of the public to determine any sense of

the relationship between the image and reality not only impedes a viewer's ability to learn more about the actual effects of modern warfare but also, I argue, censorship of the inconsumable images of war thwarts another concept of realism from emerging: ocular realism.

The indexical aspect of photography has, since inception, become one of the main measures by which one might judge an image's relationship to an actual object in the world.³²⁸ The film negative's ability to capture and store the light that reflects off an object onto photosensitive materials has one think that reality can be directly imprinted onto media. Theoretically, this mechanical process has images appear less a product of fictive creation and more legible as a record of fact. As many essays on early photography attest, the camera is considered less as a tool for artistry and more of a clinical instrument that mirrors natural phenomena, especially in Victorian times. This conceptualization of early photography as purely a scientific enterprise dissipates slightly over time, though never quite altogether—which is why a viewer's experience of looking at a photograph, no matter how pleasurable, appears to be an inquisitive search for a “quantum of truth”³²⁹ and revelatory of real life.

In the early twentieth century, as photography became more accessible to the general public, a number of observers and critics debated the aesthetic value of photographs and started to comment on photography's phenomenological implications. In describing the unique qualities of the photograph, Oliver Wendell Holmes declares, “Theoretically, a perfect photograph is absolutely inexhaustible.”³³⁰ He considers the mechanical attributes of the camera an asset for the observer who is more interested in finding the unexpected view of the world: the “distinctness of the lesser details of a building or a landscape often gives us incidental truths which interest us more than the central object of the picture.”³³¹ Holmes's interpretation of vision has the viewer actively participate in constructing the meaning of the image by figuring out

which visual information is primary and which is ancillary. Then, the viewer, according to Holmes, would consider the secondary information more interesting and more telling: “the more evidently accidental their introduction, the more trivial they are in themselves, the more they take hold of the imagination.”³³² The photograph, in effect, changes the way an observer perceives and interprets something.

Once debates about the ways in which mimetic visual imagery get consumed in the late nineteenth century surface, the standard philosophical binary of objective and subjective reality is problematized in fundamental ways. Holmes had described photography as the “mirror of memory,”³³³—a procedure of both copying and imaginative recall, which anticipates Benjamin’s later “optical unconscious.”³³⁴ The instrumental aspects of photography are tempered by the “self-conscious” choices the cameraman makes about the time and space in which he frames, focuses, and shoots a scene. This means that a pure documentation of a scene is always affected by someone’s physical *and* psychological or ideological point of view. In documentary photography (as opposed to aesthetic photography) the camera eye registers the social world both visually *and* imaginatively. This manifold realism is what I am calling ocular realism.

In the most generalizable sense, ocular realism differs mainly from objective, synaesthetic, or mytho-synaesthetic realism by virtue of its mode of representation, i.e., the photographic image rather than a discursive description makes ocular realism legible. Ocular realism is not achieved simply when the image successfully resembles the object in the world, but rather, ocular realism is produced when the *traces* of the object being photographed is measurable in the image. Bazin familiarly discusses this concept:

The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how

lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model.³³⁵

That is, even if the quality of the image is poor or warped so that there is little similitude between the object—as it is—and its representation, the production of photography, de facto, makes the image credible. Therefore, any object being photographed is potentially a subject of the ocular realist style. However, what makes the issue of credibility crucial in the process of reading the war is the traceability of the human body. In the context of the First World War, however, ocular realism is not fully integrated into popular discourse because statements do not exist in public discourse to grant its consumability.

For instance, in the context of the First World War, any photograph depicting explosions of mortar shells shows the reader of the time the awesome mechanical power of modern artillery. In looking at Figures 28 and 29, the reader is registering a mimetic depiction of an explosion, proving the truth claim about the level of danger infantrymen at the Front were facing. However, as I argue below, ocular realism is genuinely realizable only when the inference or the material image of the body is the subject of the photograph.

As I discussed in previous chapters, details of dead soldiers were not written about in newspapers or letters; any unmoored photos of corpses would violate the laws of public discourse. Furthermore, it seems, when the body as subject is disfigured or lifeless, there are additional qualities to the indexicality of the image that make it represent something more complex than merely the signification of that body as it existed in the world. My study here is not a lamentation over *what could have been* if the suppressed pictures were aired and accompanied by supporting articles. Rather, I think, by probing the issue of inconsumable photographic images—what representational features they exhibit such that they become unfit

for consumption—I will be identifying those features of ocular realism which I suspect may reframe future narrative constructions of war.

II

Aside from the first four months of the war when correspondents could be found “roaming” the countryside—as there were little to none enforceable rules about press coverage—press photographers were absolutely forbidden—and in most cases incapable—from stationing along the Front Line. As a result, newspapers could only rely on the foreign press to supply information and images of the war. As the demand for photographic representation of the war was tremendous, competition for control over the narrative of the war became crucial. Jane Carmichael explains that “when first the Press Bureau and then the propaganda organization at Wellington House voiced their concern that visual publicity for the British effort at home and abroad was being overtaken by other countries, negotiations were put in hand and the appointments of the British official photographers followed.”³³⁶ In 1916, the War Office put two official photographers, Ernest Brooks and John Warwick Brooke in the field.³³⁷ Overall, “during the period 1916-1918 there were twenty-two official and semi-official photographers in the British and Dominion armies, while ten, of whom five were with the British Army, worked on the Western Front.”³³⁸ Figures 10, 12, 23, 24 and 25 are photos by our official photographers that would have been circulated widely in periodicals or in specially produced pro-war literature. The vast majority of photographs taken, though never meant for publication in the press, were taken

for the purposes of establishing a permanent record of war activity. These photos, like Figures 11 and 18, are easily accessible in the archives and appear now in history books.



Figure 18. Unpublished Official Photograph, *Canadian Official Photographer with Artillery Observers Watching a Battle on the Western Front* [Original Title] (Unnamed official war photographer, Sept. 1916. Photograph Archives, no. CO. 849. Imperial War Museum, London).

Considering that the army infantry numbered in the tens of thousands at any one site, there is little doubt that the few official photographers that there were could not and did not shoot the majority of activity at the battlefield. The cameras were too big and clunky to transport and station easily. Besides, the physical dangers facing cameramen were tremendous. Anyone standing on the parapet of a frontline trench in daylight was likely to be shot by a sniper within

seconds. These difficulties were openly presented to the public by the publications desiring to present exciting photos. The *War Illustrated* stated:

From the pictorial point of view modern warfare lacks much which the battlefields of the past provided. Soldiers today are fighting enemies on the continent whom they never see... For this reason the great mass of photographs which reach us do not show actual hostilities in progress.³³⁹

In the context of the First World War, wartime photojournalism imposes a distinct structure of perception on viewers precisely because, at the most crucial times in the trenches, there was normally no light. Ernst Jünger has written that a “shell-hole and trench have a limited horizon. The range of vision extends no further than a bomb-throw.”³⁴⁰ This practical set of limitations on the ability of a person—and the camera—to physically see the landscape in front of him makes confusion and elusive memories of sensory perception the most effable characteristics of frontline battle. Therefore, while photographs could “introduce us to unconscious optics,” there could be no real visual certainty about what trench warfare actually looks like (of course, the replicas of trenches that were constructed in major cities during the war which made the Front appear sanitary and secure attempted to fill in the gaps for civilians of what it’s like “over there”).³⁴¹ In other words, what war photography offers the viewer is more of a mirror of a combatant’s experience than a mimetic snapshot of a locale. What then is a picture of that experience? That the darkness and danger of setting up cameras widely made shooting war action infeasible also means that photographers would resort to taking pictures behind the lines. Wouldn’t firsthand pictures of soldiers in their intimate tedium, then, represent that military experience as accessible and familiar to the reading public? In fact, despite the profuse supply of war photos, soldiers felt like their experiences could not be shared with civilians and someone

like H. G. Wells could still write: “Reality is horribly distorted. Men cannot see the world clearly and they cannot, therefore, begin to think about it rightly.”³⁴² These responses are only possible when the photographs, which do represent the crucial distinguishing experience of the Front, are kept from public view.

By the 1930s, the technical developments and scale of reproducibility of photographs were accompanied by ever more evolved analyses on the photograph, which were influenced by advancements in psychoanalytic theory. While discussing visual technology in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin notes that,

with the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear; it reveals entirely new structural formations... The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.³⁴³

So, while the camera’s mechanical achievement of capturing light makes a photograph seem to be a mirror-image of concrete conditions at the time of exposure, it also reorients a viewer to the very concept of “seeing.” Contrary to the intuitive argument about the kinds of naked exposure war photography produces about the physical conditions of warfare—accumulation of images over time, as Woolf points out, does not simply produce critical knowledge—photographs come to be better understood in terms of their dialectical properties. John Berger explains it this way: “The photograph is an automatic record through the mediation of light of a given event: yet it uses the *given* event to *explain* its recording. Photography is the process of rendering observation self-conscious.”³⁴⁴ That is, photography is not merely a process of documentation; it also simultaneously produces its own language system, making it, at least potentially, a system of meaning-making heretofore nonexistent.

With the advancement in printing technology in the nineteenth century, an editor of a newspaper has an even greater chance to exploit a reader's desire to learn about the stories in the world—a fantastic opportunity which was not lost on early proprietors: One publisher in the 1830s “turned his attention to illustrations because they were more in line with his philosophy of ‘making use of the intimate link between woodcuts and the printing press in order to accompany the events of the day by providing them with pictorial comments and to make the present time come alive by blending pictures and words.’”³⁴⁵ This process in itself is a powerful evolution, especially for those that would have a dominant role in controlling the narrative about the war.

The half-tone process allowed for the photographic images to be reproduced in greater detail and efficiency, including shades of gray. The first halftone process used in newspapers was called the autotype. Described succinctly in *A History of Photojournalism*, the characteristic feature of the invention of the autotype “was the splitting up of the half-tones of the original into dots in a regular arrangement which can be etched and printed.”³⁴⁶ In effect, Jane Carmichael explains, the dots that are “grouped according to the original densities of black and white, create[s] the necessary illusion of shades of grey. Transferred by mechanical means to the printing block the process allowed the apparent reproduction of a full range of tones through a medium which used only black and white paper. The result,” Carmichael goes on to tell us, “was both cheaper in labour and closer to the original than previous methods.”³⁴⁷ Additionally, I would argue, that half-tone reproductions make realism the perceptible standard for consumers who want to see the actual frontlines of war. The previous methods of etching and engraving photographic imagery into woodcuts become less reliable in the eyes of the public who are learning to appreciate a documentary perspective.³⁴⁸ The first half-tone newspaper picture was

published on November 4, 1891 in the *Daily Graphic*, making wars waged in the twentieth century the first to be visually scrutinized by the general public on a wide scale.

Since the technology for reproducing images exists by the beginning of the First World War and it has been established that “photography has become one of the principal devices [in modern life] for experiencing something, for giving an appearance of participation,”³⁴⁹ memories of the experience of warfare become as possible for people who are far away from the trenches as those soldiers who are suffering in them. Photos can offer “instant romanticism about the present”³⁵⁰ while they provide archival evidence of that actual present. An image is the most authentic when it combines both the emotional and veritable experience of the world. This integrative process makes images *memorable*. When presses were first able to print graphics, newspaper editors were highly cognizant of the “memorableness” of imagery. As Zelizer points out, “when a news photograph is deemed ‘memorable,’ there is reason to believe that modes of appraisal other than newsworthiness are being evoked.”³⁵¹ Indeed, pictures are central to informing the collective memory of war from the First World War on. Considering the ways in which something like the War Graves Photographic Project in association with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has expanded over time and memorials are still celebrated—that pictures of aseptic objects like gravestones serve to represent the war dead—demonstrate how early practices of censorship and suppression of the gruesome photos I talk about here are still at work today.

III

Temporally, the concept of documentary value appears with urbanization so that “realism and photography [are] partners in the same cultural project.”³⁵² This cultural project can be summed up in many respects as one of mediation. The beginning of the use of the camera is accompanied by various theories of “visuality,” a process achieved by new relationships between the eye and the optical apparatus.³⁵³ This transformation had various implications for the Victorians, one of which becomes central for the modernists.³⁵⁴ Nancy Armstrong explains that,

After the advent of the photograph, the accuracy of any image, whether sketch, painting, or photograph, would be determined by way of an implicit comparison with an unmediated image—or photograph—of that object. An image’s quality was measured against other images, not by its resemblance to those people and things it claimed to represent.³⁵⁵

If this is the case in the nineteenth century, then the process of visualization, I argue, must have experienced a radical shift during the First World War, when certain visual information lost its customary and aesthetically pleasing referent.



Figure 19. Unpublished Official Photograph (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 3116. Imperial War Museum, London).

The picturesque landscapes Armstrong says that a Victorian had become accustomed to viewing becomes starkly violated when the “standardized image”—usually refined and judiciously composed—would have to be newly measured against the new images of barren acres of pestilence and mud and the disembowled soldiers strewn across them.³⁵⁶ The press industry realized that, just as its journalistic practices needed to sustain the notion of objectivity, the maintenance of the credibility of photorealism depended upon the function of photos to reaffirm the status quo in society. The general strategy by newspapers in concert with the government, as Taylor reminds us, is that “in fighting wars for political reasons, states try to place the reality of older values in the forefront, so that people know what they are fighting for.”

In practice, this meant that war photojournalism would need to perform acts of self-referentiality, even when modern warfare created a human condition which, in all senses, breached those core values on which middle-class British society was premised: it would need to “provide what is already known, familiar and sensical”³⁵⁷ in order to preserve the narrative cycle of middle-class values without offending the aesthetic sensibilities of the spectator.³⁵⁸ This tricky endeavor led photojournalism to establish “its truth not by logic but by offering an experience that veers between ‘nostalgia, horror, and an overriding sense of exoticism of the past.’”³⁵⁹

It has been well established that the emblematic images of the imperious sieges popularized in the twentieth century had “little compunction about distorting the real facts of the event.”³⁶⁰ Dramatically rendered sketches of men charging toward the enemy or soldiers under attack by shells and gas was typical in a variety of publications coming out in the first months of the war. Take, for instance, the typical scene below that was regularly reproduced in the periodicals of the time.



Figure 20. *The Sphere*, May 20, 1915.

A typical scene on the front cover of *War Illustrated* showed black and white drawn images of British soldiers charging forward, brandishing swords while officers on horseback struck down the enemy.³⁶¹ The background usually features a cavalry of horses kicking up dust and a number of other indiscernible actions depicting an offensive action. According to Wilkinson, “Almost all illustrations... captured the moment before wounding or just at the very moment that bullet or shell fragment made contact.”³⁶² When depicting a battlefield, “death was portrayed without showing any overt signs of wounds, pain or physical suffering, once again, depending on the viewer to ‘read’ the message conveyed by the illustration.”³⁶³ With illustrations, successful

messages that convey bravery and military strength could still be credible. Since, in the majority of cases, the illustration would be credited to an artist who created the scene from a narrated description of a battle, the scene would have been technically accurate. For instance, that the image in Figure 20 was credited as “Drawn by Philip Dadd From *Personal Description*, 1915” acknowledges the source of information: a recounted story rather than a firsthand observation.

Though sold as contemporary narratives of modern warfare, this sort of imagery is nonetheless more reminiscent of wars past when conflicts were “exciting diversions in national life and despite the occasional blunder the skirmishes of Empire had, for the most part, been seen as tales of adventure and heroism.”³⁶⁴ But, as the Edwardians were learning as soldiers started to return home, wars were no longer just fought in exoticized settings by a specialized class of decorated heroes. These heroic tales that modern viewers read and saw in illustrations were outmoded by other accounts provided by foreign correspondents and soldiers themselves.

Though the concept of modern warfare fails to materialize in these early war images, and does mark hand drawn illustrations as antiquated media, I suggest that the generic wooden figures portrayed in both Figures 21 and 22 turn out to be outdated more because of the notions of war they reference rather than the artistic style or medium used in the image. When the propaganda makers of the First World War asserted that danger was part and parcel of all wars, they must have also realized that “the danger is that wars also produce new types of reality,”³⁶⁵ invoking a new kind of interest and excitement from the reading public, and new contests over which modes of representation would best serve the needs of Empire.

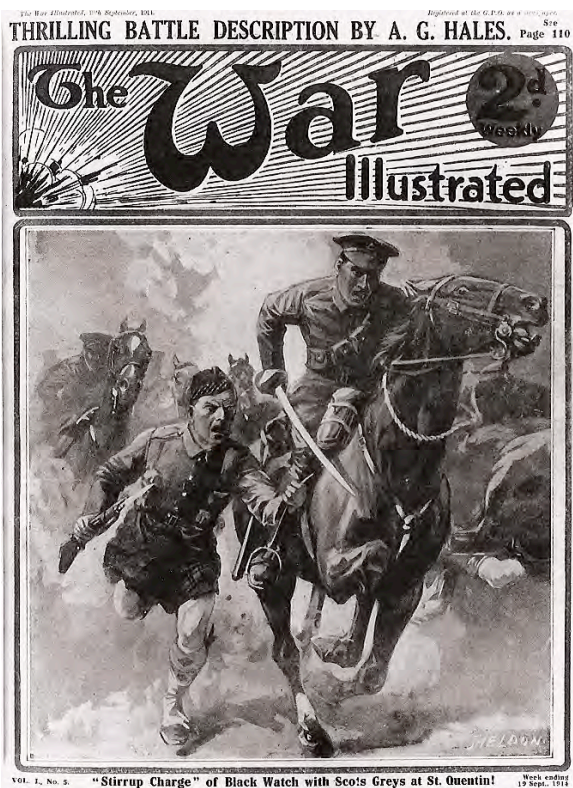


Figure 21. *The War Illustrated*, September 19, 1914.

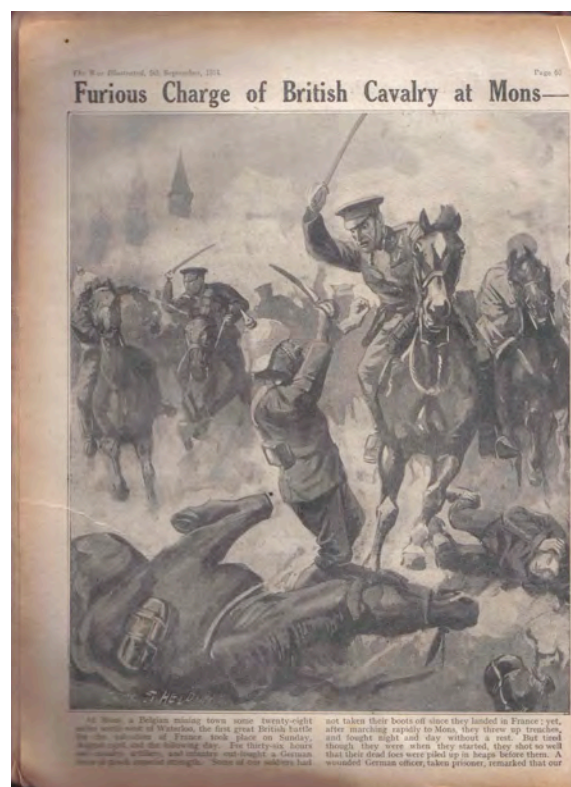


Figure 22. *The War Illustrated*, September 5, 1914.

The transition in illustrated journalism was an uneven and uneasy one, especially for some critics. While pictorials became increasingly popular by the turn of the twentieth century, hand-drawn illustrations were productively and ideologically in decline. As Clement Shorter explained in 1899, “Illustrated journalism expanded rapidly during the 1880s and 1890s, encouraged in part by a newly discovered ability to reproduce photographs directly in periodicals. Previously engravings of photos had had to be made: the direct introduction of photography marked the commercial death of wood-engraving.”³⁶⁶ The Victorian was not edified by the camera’s ability to reproduce the likeness of real life and further argued that,

in a higher sense, I am disinclined to call [pictorial journals] illustrated newspapers. So large a part of life, and particularly of public life, cannot be depicted by the camera. It

has, it is true, been seen in the battlefield, and now and again in the church; but I am inclined to believe that there will always be a place for the artist in illustrated journalism.³⁶⁷

While Shorter was right that the reproductive and technological aspects of photography would endanger the longevity of hand-drawn engravings, he was probably pleased to discover that the First World War revived the hand-drawn image—at least, for a little while.

The variety in imagery that accompanied this war markedly reflects the myriad attempts to represent the new conditions of mechanical warfare as well as the cultural need to express a variety of individualized experiences. Carden-Coyne describes the diverse types of representation emerging at the time:

Stoicism and emotional remove were the behavioural norms of the Edwardian military man. Military propaganda framed violence against the enemy as patriotic. In Britain, killing was represented as exhilarating in popular war magazines and illustrated newspapers [...] Covers highlighted hand-to-hand combat, death, wounding, an bayonetting, performed in cinematic mid-action.³⁶⁸

With the competition over control of the dominant narrative, an introduction of new methods of war and new tools of representation required a new topos of war—and the press industry as well as the British government recognized this fact. It is no question that imagery has been central to the Empire's previous war activity. The First World War involved more of the general population in Britain and its colonies than any previous war, both in numbers of combatants and the civilians as indirect witnesses to the war. It is inevitable that a variance of usual themes associated with war—e.g., heroism, sacrifice, and glory—is recycled from wars past. This does

not mean, however, that those idioms and representational conventions fit the circumstances of this war.

The modern eye would have difficulty assigning the abstract qualities of older wars—such as sacrifice, glory, and courage—to those grim scenes of mud and rotten corpses modern mechanized warfare engendered. Potentially, a photographic image could supply a viewer with new visual cues unaccompanied by the usual war idioms of imperialist logic. That an editor selected images which created more of an aesthetic experience for its readers than a tool for clarifying or illuminating its reading public is problematic. By harkening concepts of prior wars, what hand-drawn illustrations of First World War battle scenes lacked was the factor of memorableness of the current war. By the mid-twentieth century, “no one believe[d] any longer in the ontological identity of model and image, but all are agreed that the image helps us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death.”³⁶⁹ Considering the actual loss of most of the subjects in war photography, the act of preservation must have been an extremely compelling desire. With the evolution of the pictorial, the documentary photograph taken during the First World War presents the viewer with a new opportunity to consume the narrative of the war. However, the War Office decided, some images taken for the permanent record would not be advantageous to publish.

The modern viewer had not seen documentary photographs of the trenches before. Nor had the common viewer needed to contend with the myriad images now available at the newsagents. The timely production and distribution of war photos such as Figures 23, 24, and 25—mostly accessible through periodicals and propaganda—opened a distinctive view on the present social context so that the daily practices of soldiers at the warfront became concretely accessible to the civilian eye, and pleasantly interesting. In other words, published photographs

constructed an indexical relationship between the palatable imagery of war and the putative object: the stark muddy daily routine of soldiers in the trenches is the evident trace of soldiers maintaining themselves in preparation for active fighting. These photos become widely disseminated. In contrast, figures 33, 34, and 35 were taken by official war photographers for the permanent record, and immediately concealed from public view. The image of a soldier slunk down in a muddy trench and disfigured is a visible reality that is incommensurable with the familiar narrative framework of “fighting for the Empire” that British people accepted. That the official war photographers took these photos for the purposes of establishing a permanent record testifies to the indexical value of them; images of dead bodies means that there were, in fact, many corpses lying around. At the same time, the suppression of these images from public view demonstrates that the index is not the only means by which to understand what we see in a photograph. The photos of mangled bodies, I think, were and still do contribute something, as Bazin says, “to the natural order of creation instead of providing a substitute for it.”³⁷⁰

IV

There is ample evidence to suggest that the consumer of war images was entranced by the fantastic elements that mechanical warfare produced. Conditions endured by soldiers in their foxholes were appreciated in terms of a harsh necessity—it was indisputable: war was dangerous. The endless scenes of marching soldiers, the innumerable shots of heavy and impressive armory, reconnaissance photos of vast landscapes, and the ubiquitous highly-publicized lines of captured Germans. These shots were in more ways than not similar to other drawn images, therefore only unique because of an ontological quality of photography. In effect,

when war photos were published in newspapers, a soldier's personal experiences were converted from lonely or traumatic realities into popular entertainment. Furthermore, the experiences were more than manipulated; they were for the most part manufactured.³⁷¹ Given the popularity of war imagery, photos had the potential to structure a field of vision so that a viewer could encounter objects he or she would have been unfamiliar with. However, official and published photos rarely if ever offered the viewer a perceivable reality that was distinct from the sentimentalized or grandiose narratives about the Empire's battlefronts—not even those documentary photographs which only displayed for the viewer the *inactivity* of the entrenched soldier.



Figure 23. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *A cup of coffee for the wounded* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War 'Official Photographs,' no. X. 32056. National Library of Scotland).



Figure 24. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *Frying his bacon in a reserve trench* [original title] (Unnamed official war photographer. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. X. 33062. National Library of Scotland).

It is easy to see how photos of generals in full uniform or soldiers unloading weaponry, for instance, repeated the commonplace standard of noble and fearless officers who perform their heroic duty in service of King and Country. It is notable, though, that even scenes of infantry regiments who are innocuously posing for the camera contribute to the sense of war as a noble enterprise because of the *exclusivity* of the soldiers’ identities. As John Pegun argues, the authentic experience of an infantryman does not come from the “exclusivity of [an infantryman’s] unit, but principally from the exclusivity of [his] location; the trenches.”³⁷² The geographical space of *this* war disallows the action-man of previous wars—of hand-drawn battles—from emerging. Figure 8 clearly illustrates the modern image of the soldier: the military

uniform is just another form of dress for the leisurely sportsman. With the photographic image of soldiers, though, these propagandistic images of the soldier cannot be depicted so easily. In fact, when a seemingly transparent view of the warfront is portrayed—which, for the most part contains a lot of *inactivity*—the viewer is prevented from seeing both any evidence of the romanticized image of the soldier, and the untenable level of horror he lives in. One way in which Empire tackled the problems that photojournalism poses is by making the photos of commonplace activity—frying bacon and drinking coffee—at the Front widely known for the purpose of easing the public’s anxiety about the safety of young men’s lives. People who are lunching or having a coffee break could seemingly not be traumatized.



Figure 25. Official British War Photograph Taken for Propaganda Purposes, *Tea Time* [original title] (Ernest Brooks. First World War ‘Official Photographs,’ no. C. 1013. National Library of Scotland).

A citizen has very little information besides the hegemonic narrative to guide his or her consumption of any war imagery. Documentary photography could also introduce new visual content without necessarily reorganizing the logic with which consumers use to understand the information contained within the photograph. In the same way that “Exploiting the picturesque appeal of urban poverty... made slum life safe for middle-class observers,”³⁷³ war photography that was published on a mass scale made injuries, trudging through mud, and firing weaponry, palatable. In actuality, a stalemate in the war meant inaction for the soldier. Winter explains that the “problem was that in training no one had been prepared for vigilant inaction, for the blinded feeling which followed being confined below the surface, for the demoralizing stooped walk, for the need to take constant care.”³⁷⁴ But, the key to iconographic war imagery is, above all else, the appearance of action. By 1916, Frank Hurley had figured this out.

When Frank Hurley was hired in 1916 as the official photographer for the Australian Imperial Forces and given the rank of honorary captain, the limited access to the entire landscape at the Paschendale Front must have frustrated him. Hurley had just completed two projects: documenting the expedition of the Australian explorer Douglas Mawson followed by joining the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, both of which the entire Antarctic continent was to his disposal.³⁷⁵ In 1919, he wrote of his time at Ypres:

To include the event on a single negative, I have tried and tried, but the results are hopeless. Everything is on such a vast scale. Figures are scattered—the atmosphere is dense with haze and smoke—shells will not burst where required—yet the whole elements are there could they but be brought together and condensed... On developing my plate there disappointment! All I find is a record of a few figures advancing from the trenches—and a background of haze. Nothing could have been more unlike a battle. It

might be a rehearsal in a paddock. Now if negatives are taken of all the separate incidents in the action and combined, some idea may be gained of what a modern battle looks like.³⁷⁶

For Hurley, the straight-forward shots of the battlefield were disappointing because they did not impact the eye the way that he had been sensorily experiencing the landscape. To relay a documentary vision, Hurley concluded, he needed to create photographs by compositing negatives in one print, otherwise known as the using “hopover” process. Some of the most referenced photos from the war are the product of the hopover.



Figure 26. *Death the Reaper* (Frank Hurley, Black and white composite print. P. 02514.001. Australian War Museum).



Figure 27. *Battle Scarred Sentinels* (Frank Hurley, Combined negatives. National Library of Australia).

Composite photographs did, theoretically, compile a variety of fragments to create a contiguous scenario. Hurley's method, then, did not require that the reader extrapolate a narrative from the presentation of isolated images, such as those regularly published in national newspapers. Ironically, though, the aggregate parts in Hurley's compositions falsify rather than honestly depict the scenes of battle. In reality, what a documentary observation would have presented to the modern eye was stillness. In recognizing the limitations of straightforwardly shooting the modern battle, the disappointing stillness that Hurley first photographed did not project a sensibility of serenity and inactivity the way that the nineteenth-century picturesque aesthetic could. In effect, manufacturing the battle scenes so that brilliant rays of light break over the horizon of a bleak expanse while surviving soldiers survey their losses or take shelter behind destroyed pillars realigns the aesthetic of documentary realism with nineteenth-century standards. The ironic proposition Hurley asks the modern viewer to consider is that a nineteenth-century realist aesthetic exposes a more authentic view of the war than a twentieth-century documentary creation could.



Figure 28. Unpublished Photograph of Mortar Shell Bursting (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 002890. Imperial War Museum, London).



Figure 29. Unpublished Photograph of Mortar Shell Bursting (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 000541. Imperial War Museum, London).

It is also significant that, for the most part, Hurley presented his dramatic documentary composites in exhibits or folios and albums, not in mainstream periodicals. As Ennis has observed, Hurley's inventive ways to display his work further animated his photographs:

For example, he presented his photographs as part of extended sequences in folios and albums, enormous enlargements in exhibitions, as the centerpiece of public lectures in which he provided the commentary and selected the music, and as elements in his films. In addition he frequently wrote extended captions and/or contextualizing essays to accompany those photographs which were published, an activity that can be seen as precursor to the photo-essay, the lynchpin of photojournalism.³⁷⁷

That Hurley's composites were considered specialized creations, which invited much controversy because of what Captain Charles Bean at the time called "tampering," illustrates the adherence to the journalistic standards of photography the War Office had at the time. Rather than publish dramatic, iconographic photos, the official version of the war would instead be constructed of, albeit staid, so-called more *true* images.

The dramatic impact of Hurley's composites compared to the existing archive of trench explosions is remarkable. These images did not include bodies because as Hurley pointed out, "shells will not burst where required" for a spectacular shot. Too, when a mortar bombing was caught on camera, the shot was often blurry because of the vibrations. Figures 28 and 29 are typical examples of shots that newspapers could use in their publications. Out of any context, the photos are neither very instructive nor interesting to look at.

In 1915, the *Sphere* started the trend of publishing images of shell bursts so that the reader could understand the devices and patterns of explosions [Figure 30]. The series of explosions was arranged on the page in successive stages, captioned to explain that each shell

bursting came closer to the photographer as he was tucked behind a French battery. The narration by captions seem to relay to the reader a sense of impending danger as each image depicts a more detailed instance of a shell burst. The fourth and fifth shots show the blast hitting behind the battery after enemy shells recalibrated in aiming to hit the battery, giving a more comprehensive presentation of the unpredictability of where explosions may occur; maybe the shells will be short of where we are, maybe they will overshoot us. Depicting danger, the photographs are, for all intents and purposes, documentary. They are also the type of disappointing shots Hurley would later determine to improve upon for a greater dramatic effect.

Failure of a German 150-mm. to Locate a French Battery.

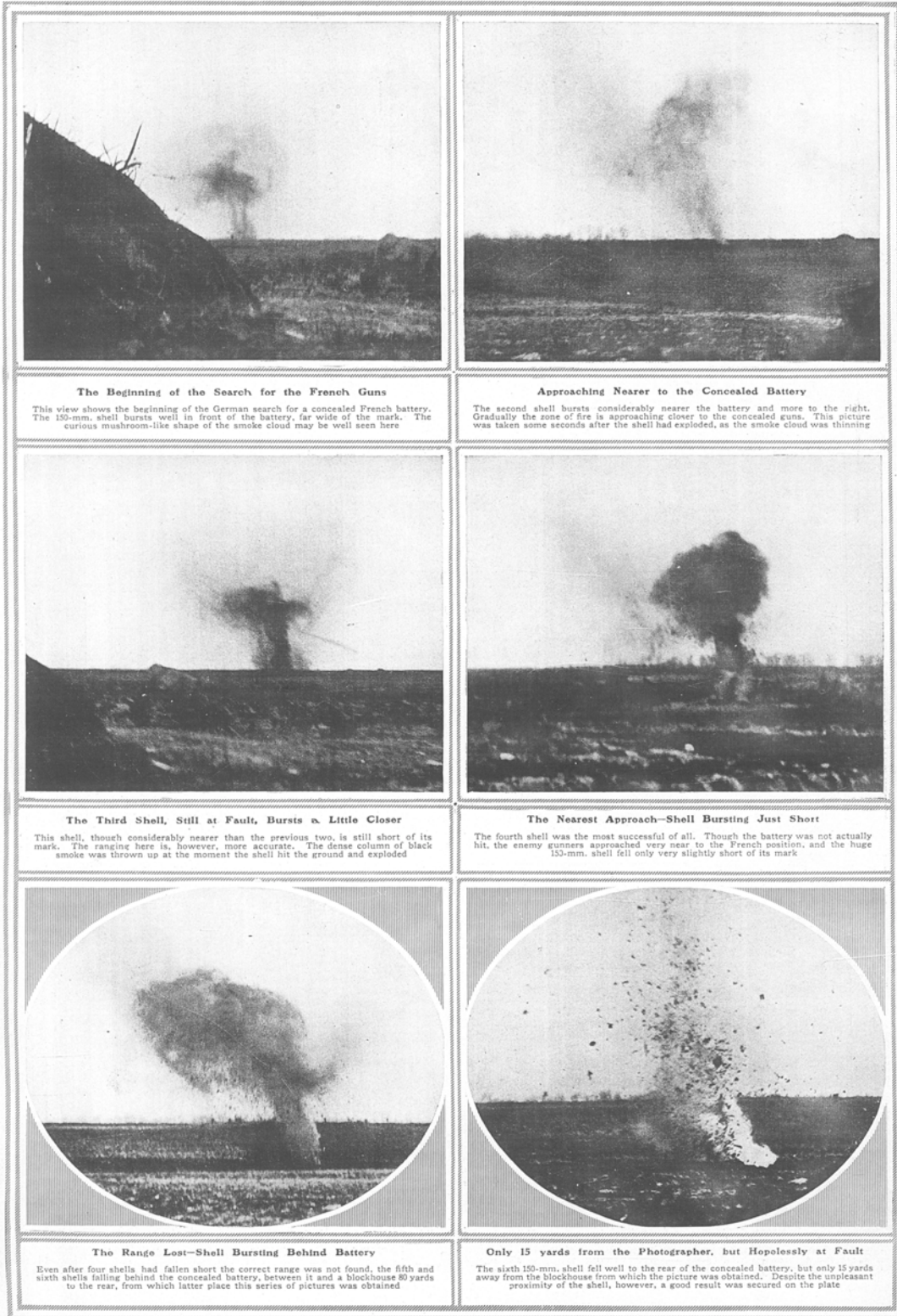


Figure 30. *The Sphere*, June 26, 1915.

The newspaper's selection of explosion pictures provides the viewer with the type of data most greatly associated with a formal literary realism of the nineteenth century. While the *Sphere's* reputation was built on "pictures to stress the themes of security, comfort, and safety at the front,"³⁷⁸ its choices also reflect a narrative logic which prizes a linear and sequential order of events. As Oliver Wendell Holmes predicted in 1859, "It is asserted that a bursting shell can be photographed. The time is perhaps at hand when a flash of light, as sudden and brief as that of the lightning which shows a whirling wheel standing stock still, shall preserve the very instant of the shock of contact of the mighty armies that are even now gathering."³⁷⁹ With photographic representation, the original impact of a "shock of contact" can be relayed to a remote viewer; a descriptive narrative could be conveyed in more sensory terms through imagery. Most notably, the systematic presentation of images, as in Figure 30, usually neglected to show the unpredictable or surprising elements a human figure might bring to a photo. Further, the extraordinary events like exploding bombs are normalized when they are organized into a predictable flow of pictures.

Realism is achieved, then, by making an unknowable experience part of the common knowledge ordinary people gain from perusing the newspaper everyday. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations this sort of realistic depiction of warfare also conveys. The focus on the exploding shell as the object of interest provides a narrative action that propels the reader forward only to the point of learning about the power of a shell bursting, and not its intended impact on those people who are the target of the attack. The documentary series of photographs, in this case, works to familiarize the reader with experiences foreign to him or her while it also performs a narrative closure so that the gaze of the reader remains focused on the mechanical function of a shell. The captions act as supplementary descriptions of the action in the images,

guiding the viewer to consume them as informational more than sensational. The causal chain of events depicted by these photos ends, fortuitously, without resulting in injury or death. However, not to be entirely dismissed for its lack of dramatic appeal, the editor of the piece does include a personal statement of relief—however restrained it is—in the final caption to indicate the mortal danger that the proximity of the explosions posed: “The sixth 150-mm. shell fell well to the rear of the concealed battery, but only 15 yards away from the blockhouse from which the picture was obtained. Despite the unpleasant proximity of the shell, however, a good result was secured on the plate.” In journalistic style, the *Sphere* is able to include some of the details concerning the photographer who was (obviously) in proximity to the explosions, though not treat him as a target of the explosions. That an editor could talk about the photographer in third person and as someone merely enduring an “unpleasant” moment so that the series of shots could successfully be completed makes the function of the photographer perfunctory. Printing the plates in a sequential order conveys the danger involved in achieving the shot in a visually dramatic fashion, however lacking the experiential impact that a photo like Hurley’s composite imagery could invoke. Notwithstanding the attempts of the editor to attract the reader with dramatized captions, the scientific visual presentation and absence of *any body* makes the series somehow flat and emotionless.

When the body is represented in documentary photographs of illustrated periodicals, the resulting imagery still did not breach those realist prerogatives of Edwardian England. In reporting on the presence of poisonous gas, the *Sphere* reprints the details of a *Morning Post* article that tells of a debilitating gas attack on British troops that “choked their lungs with gas, which... sufficed to weaken them. Yet they ‘stuck it.’” The resilience of the British soldiers to ‘stick it’ is displayed below the article in a set of photographs. The first photo captioned “British

Soldiers Protected Against Poisonous Gas Fumes” shows a group of approximately 20 British soldiers raising arms and legs expressly for the camera. Each soldier is wearing a set of goggles and a primitive mouth-covering that resembles an extra large medical mask. The tone of the photograph is triumphant as the soldiers demonstrate the undeniable presence of their limbs that re all operational and intact.



British Soldiers Protected Against Poisonous Gas Fumes

The employment of asphyxiating gases by the Germans constitutes a new phase in modern warfare. The usual German method of attack is to subject the opposing trenches first to a severe artillery bombardment and then to bring their gas cylinders into play. After allowing time for the gas to produce its expected effects, their infantry then advance to the assault. One such effort was recently made north of the Ypres-Comines Canal. The Germans here had two batteries of cylinders placed so that their nozzles projected



The Effects of Asphyxiating Gas on French Soldiers

over the parapet, and for the space of half an hour a cloud of thick gas was spurted out. It was so dense that when standing in it a man could not see his hand when held in front of his face, and its fumes bleached the grass and turned the sand bags of the parapets a bright yellow colour. No infantry attack was attempted, and, although the trench had to be evacuated for a time, it was soon reoccupied. From the movements in their lines, however, it is probable that the Germans suffered equally from the effects of this gas.

Figure 31. *The Sphere*, May 29, 1915.

The photograph on the right demonstrates no such success. The caption, “The Effects of Asphyxiating Gas on French Soldiers” shows two felled soldiers, one of whose head is hidden behind the limp body in the foreground. The soldier we see in full body profile is lying on his back. One hand is in his pocket while he is clutching his rifle with the other. His legs are crossed and his eyes are closed. Is it possible that this French soldier is merely sleeping? The slumped body next to him suggests that this is not the case. The hidden soldier looks crumpled and positioned uncomfortably. Furthermore, the misalignment of the two bodies implies these men were not engaged in a conversation at the time the picture was taken.³⁸⁰ Also, there are a number of abandoned rifles lining the parapet, which suggests a hasty withdrawal by those soldiers who

could retreat, which, in turn, means the deadliness of the gas must have been so great as to force a whole troop's withdrawal.

Publishing photos depicting the impending danger of gas was a risky endeavor because it was the most unwieldy form of weaponry. As described by John Ivelaew-Chapman, gas “was released behind defenders’ line and the antagonists relied on the prevailing wind to carry the evil cloud to the other side to blind and choke the enemy.”³⁸¹ There was no telling which side would prevail with the use of gas: “A rolling evil yellow cloud of chlorine gas had everyone’s name on it and the unreasoning fear of gas attack became a feature of everyday life.”³⁸² It was impossible to depend on the narrative of triumph when it came to gas attacks, therefore, the press needed a rationale behind publishing photos of a resilient allied force next to a suffering one.³⁸³ When the series of gas attack photos are run regularly in the commercial press, an emphasis is placed on the presence of the body when it is intact and fully functional. It works this way in illustrations of gas attacks.

THE SPHERE

AN ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER FOR THE HOME

With which is incorporated
"BLACK & WHITE"

Volume LXI. No. 801

{REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL
POST OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER}

London, May 29, 1915

Price Sixpence.



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DRAWN BY F. MATANIA, SPECIAL ARTIST OF "THE SPHERE" IN FRANCE, 1915

HOW THE GAS DEVIL COMES—"THE THICK GREEN MIST CAME ROLLING TOWARDS THE PARAPET"

"The Sphere's" special artist here depicts the heavy gas from the German lines rolling into one of our trenches. At first it is very thick and heavy and fills every crevice. A recent case is thus described: "A thirty-minutes bombardment preceded the opening of the gas cylinders. Then the thick green mist came rolling towards the parapet from the enemy's empty front trench, several hundred yards away. It looked like

vapour rising from a marsh, and the wind was strong enough to carry it rapidly towards the parapet. One battalion had time to load and fire two rounds through the screen of gas before it came pouring over the sandbags, penetrating into every crevice of the dug-outs and choking the men who lay there. It was so thick at first that objects 3 ft. distant were hardly recognisable."

Figure 32. *The Sphere*, May 29, 1915, front page.

Interestingly, the front page of the *Sphere* uses a hand-drawn illustration on the front cover of the edition in which the photographic set of images of Figure 31 are published. This instance showcases the kind of problem for the photographer, who was most likely not in the trenches when the “gas devil” came floating into the parapet. The only shots he could achieve were captured afterward; the staid ones. Not surprisingly, then, the *Sphere* chose to attract readers with a dramatic depiction of choking and embattled soldiers. Notice, even though suffering, the troops are all alive. The civilian population educated in pre-modern warfare did not understand the effects of noxious gas, which are not as physically apparent as a body trauma. But a dismembered body of the First World War soldier impaired any governmental agency or press outfit from continuing to sell the war in the idiomatic terms of patriotism the portraits of past wars were painted in.



Figure 33. Unpublished Official Photograph of Dead German (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 002891 Imperial War Museum, London).

As I've already explored in previous chapters, the press was uniquely positioned to represent the war to its public in transparent, yet palatable terms. The presentation of the war, therefore, was usually couched in official language that was celebratory of Britain's military prowess and indefatigable drive to win the war. In the majority of printed photographs like these across a variety of mainstream periodicals the element of danger is always present, though rarely if ever are the worst consequences of those witnesses—the soldiers—at the front depicted. Why wouldn't the British government encourage the publication of documentary photographs that prove the technical supremacy of Britain's gunnery and success of the Allied military in winning battles against Germany? Figure 33 shows a destroyed German bunker with its human inhabitant crushed and obviously dead. Wouldn't the image of a dismembered enemy soldier be the most powerful kind of propaganda for the British government precisely because it follows the narrative logic of classic realism—a pure mimetic presentation of content—while vividly depicting the triumphs on the battlefield—killing the enemy?



Figure 34. Unpublished Official Photograph of British Dead on Battlefield (Unnamed official war photographer, 1916. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 042245. Imperial War Museum, London).

A choice that a paper such as the *Sphere* could have made to dramatize its series of explosions would be to extend the causal chain of events to include the intended result of exploding shells: human casualties. If the editor of the *Sphere* included the common outcomes of shell explosions, countless scenes such as the one depicted in Figure 34 would be printed on a daily basis. To maintain the usual journalistic form, descriptive captions could still accompany photographs like these that align with the narrative logic of formal literary realism. The simple description, “German Offensive. British dead on battlefield. Longueval: March 1918,” could accompany the photo if it were to be printed in a newspaper, as it was catalogued in the Imperial War Museum photo archives. However, no pictures showing human decomposition ever made it into the national press. Nor did any kind of written text circulate that might illustrate a reality at the Front such as the one photographed in Figure 34.

Newspapers did not regularly include photos of dead bodies simply because imagery depicting rotting British corpses could not follow a narrative logic of nineteenth-century realism: classic realism of Edwardian England implies that normative civilian life corresponds to basic categories of human experience. The First World War ushers in a new set of experiences for the soldier that are unequivocally offensive to the British civilian not yet equipped to comprehend mechanized warfare and its effects. The grotesqueness and evocation of tragedy violated, above all else, the censor's rules about maintaining morale amongst troops and promoting patriotic support by civilians to continue funding the war—even when those violent pictures proved the successes of allied warfare. In order to preserve the narratives that underpin the patriotic notions of Empire, the detrimental images of these corpses needed to be suppressed. As Booth has argued, “corpses collapse the distinction between ally and enemy and confuse the boundary between life and death” so that it eventually becomes “impossible to compile the body counts upon which the substantiation of war's issues depends.”³⁸⁴ Nothing highlights this point more than seeing Figures 33 and 34 next to each other.

VI

The photographic images I talk about here raise central issues associated with realist representation: the centrality of visual depictability in the conceptualization of realist narratives, the ability of consumers to decode the cues printed on the page, and the process of recognition or disillusionment that realism sometimes promises throughout time. In a sense, each of the forms of realism that I have investigated in this dissertation—objective, synaesthetic, mythosynaesthetic, and ocular—clearly derive from classic literary realist representational modes. Each

form I talk about here is highly descriptive of the *things* which occupy the social world in which protagonists live. What differentiates the world that solicits such a variety of responses by my writers is an unprecedented level of mechanized warfare that the First World War engenders; the *things* during this period that need narration are dug-out trenches, memories of lost loved ones, and the *whizz-bangs* of firefights. This new world of warfare confounds both writers in the domestic sphere as well as those in the line of fire and, as it turns out, compels each writer to attempt to describe the visceral, psychic, and visual features of this new landscape.

By looking closely at the construction of so-called objective realism in newspapers, I was able to identify the ways in which the function of censorship upheld traditional imperialist narratives of war. In this study, I was able to paint the backdrop against which, it seems, every writer struggles to overturn. The soldier, using synaesthetic description—making bodily sensoria legible in text—creates a narrative about the war experience which is nowhere else available to consume. The modernist writer strays from the conventional realist style of her literary forefathers (and of the newspapers) in an attempt to create an epic reflection of the war's impact on society. Specifically, mytho-synaesthetic writing in *Jacob's Room* does not offer the reader a linear or transparent understanding of the war context. Rather, it allows for the reader to reflect more about the values of rationality in a world where psychic disturbance and social upheaval threaten to undermine the Enlightenment notions of civilized progress. Finally, the war photographer presents another order of representation altogether. The indexical properties of photographic images of the warscape, on the one hand, dovetail perfectly with the hegemonic imperialist narratives of the war and, on the other hand, inaugurate a vision of the war kept at the margins of public discourse. This split cache of photographic images that I examine puts to task the issue of commensurability; in examining the publicly circulated images in contradistinction

to those censored plates buried in the archives, I contemplate the claim of an ocular realism, which may bring into social discourse that which is normally deemed inconsumable.

Ocular realism operates fully when the presence of the human body becomes the measure of reading the world for realism. In synaesthetic and mytho-synaesthetic realism, the body is present in so far as it is the instrument by which the world is contextualized in language. To put it in obvious terms, the body is discursively represented. What distinguishes the realism that the photograph produces, I want to say, is the way in which it is able to capture the body as it is actually visible in the world; the properties of a photographic image allow for a level of fascination that surpasses the level of achieving only its indexical meaning. Though I have not elaborated extensively on this point here, Tom Gunning makes the case eloquently:

Pictures generally are more than signs, and frequently we would be hard pressed to claim they referred to anything other than themselves. But photographs do seem to point beyond themselves in a curious manner, and this is part of the reason the index does seem to explain part of its power. But whereas signs reduce their reference to a signification, I would claim the photograph opens up a passageway to its subject, not as a signification but as a world, multiple and complex.³⁸⁵

It is this surplus of meaning of the photograph that I suspect makes viewing the images of carnage in the mud more than a process of deciphering semiotics. It is also this surplus of meaning in photographs of war torn bodies, I conclude, that keeps the images of corpses inconsumable—still—for a twenty-first century audience.³⁸⁶



Figure 35. Unpublished Photograph (Unnamed official war photographer. Photograph Archives, no. Q. 23679. Imperial War Museum, London).

6.0 EPILOGUE: MODERN CODES OF REALISM

Armed conflict is the brutality of economic and geopolitical competition made naked. The human cost of warfare is always supernumerary. There are always too many dead or dismembered bodies to represent appropriately. One often assumes that a realist depiction of the barbarity of war necessarily seems either graphically artless or gratuitously propagandistic. Depicting war is tricky business—especially if one’s business of writing is aesthetically based or if it is complicit with the political and economic goals of the capitalist and imperialist nations in which and for which it writes. When the topic of public discourse is war—and whether or not one nation declares war on another depends upon (at least in part) popular support—how media is involved with the circulation of that discourse is a crucial matter. My dissertation has been an investigation of questions about authorial discourse of war and what legitimates one public discourse over another. What makes one form of print media have greater authority on the topic of war than another? Which kind of discourse is ideologically appropriate for public consumption? What happens to the discourse of war when it is inconsumable?

In this dissertation, I have looked at a variety of discourses involved with a “spectacularly visual war”³⁸⁷—the First World War—in order to understand which narratives are privileged as *real*. I have done so the better to understand which representational practices are realist and, then, to evaluate the merits of the realism constructed in each document. I have explored objective realism in newspapers, synaesthetic realism in soldiers’ writing, mytho-synaesthetic

realism in Virginia Woolf's novel *Jacob's Room*, and ocular realism in photographs taken at the Front. In each case, I raised the problem of incommensurability: I asked in which ways each media-specific form of representation is commensurate with the reality of the war's brutal effects on soldiers and society.

In the first chapter, I concluded that journalistic objectivity was highly ideological. The review of the New Journalism's development showed how the codes of reporting at the turn of the twentieth century changed concurrently with the socialization of a new readership. The Edwardian reader became accustomed to visibly legible and substantially filtered coverage of world events. When the press industry in Britain re-organized itself around a free-market capitalist economic model and professionalized codes of journalism were normalized in public discourse, left-leaning and radical newspapers necessarily adopted similar codes to maintain credibility and circulation. This, I argue, has extensive social effects.

A historian of the British news industry has observed that, "Above all, the absence of a significant press maintaining and reinforcing a radical sub-culture—or even a radical social-democratic culture, after the death of the *Daily Herald* [a left, sometimes militant publication during the war]—has helped to isolate and contain sources of potential dissidence in modern British Society."³⁸⁸ Indeed, it is highly probable that the original adoption of New Journalism's formal and material models for reporting continually disables alternative ways of reporting and understanding "news" today. My study of the ways in which the press represents warfare brings to the fore the difficulties associated with the conceptualization of news as objective. I have deduced that studying the literary qualities of newspapers is central to any serious future discussion about understanding the impact of realist discourse in the public domain.

The concept of realism, which underpins deeply familiarized notions about representations of war during the early twentieth century, continues to influence how the inhumanity of warfare is understood today. We encounter concepts of realism in the most mundane conversations in daily modern life. Those paradigms of realism that circulate in public discourse frame our debates about war and become crucial for how we think and talk about war. For instance, when the Fox News Channel asserted its right to trademark the slogan, “Fair and Balanced”—originally used in conjunction with the phrase “Real Journalism” in the early years of the second Bush Administration in the United States—the media industry became embroiled in debates about what constituted objective news and biased reporting.³⁸⁹ This debate came to involve legal, political, and cultural institutions, eventually shifting the paradigm of objective realism to its ultimate paradoxical incarnation. By and large today, the American commercial press is considered to be tainted by political bias—either liberal or right-wing—no matter what content it may be bringing to bear.³⁹⁰

Take, for instance, an example of the latest upsurge in social movements and demonstrations around the world. When the majority of Wisconsin workers organized demonstrations in 2011 against a bill that would eliminate public employees’ rights to collectively bargain, the press approached the subject from their respective ideological perspectives—either in defense of Governor Walker’s bill by supporters of free-market capitalism, or doubtful of such a proposal’s ability to solve the budgetary problems of the state. Though both sides of the news industry recognized the class-based character of this struggle—the protestors made it impossible to ignore—neither side represented the objective historical role of the rank-and-file worker; nor did they consider the role of social movements in making historical change. Needless to say that either right-wing or the liberal press recognizes the

relationship between that struggle in Wisconsin, the revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa, and the current Occupy movements that are gaining momentum across this country and around the world. When there is no realist lens focused on events like social movements, how can true discourse reflect the actual social world? Indeed, when the US is involved in large-scale protracted wars, like the most recent in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is hardly any considerable news coverage.³⁹¹

The deep ideological split of the mainstream press that I indicate germinates with the rise of the New Journalism is also interrelated with the widening fiscal crisis that afflicts us today. For the last decade or so, newspapers in the US and Britain are either consolidating to stay financially viable or shutting down altogether. In wider ontological terms, this economic threat to the survival of newsprint signals a crisis in discourses of legitimation. Most media critics pit “citizen reporting” like blogs, digital photos, and other Internet networking sites as challenging the dominant media models of the last century.³⁹² Debates arise over the quality of content and pundits in large news conglomerates disparage any notion that the common person could be considered a journalist (the irony of a right-wing or a liberal-biased reporter defending the role of the “real journalist” is not lost here). There is a frenzied anxiety in both political camps over what our citizen-based democracy will actually look like when a trained and disciplined set of media professionals no longer provide the dominant terms with which we discuss world events.³⁹³ What will happen when the objective clarity that has shaped our consumption of news is replaced by a new code of realist representation: one that is built out of numerous independent sources that document the world around us, at every moment, from innumerable vantage points?

The documentary evidence of the 26 year-old Iranian woman, Neda Agha-Soldan, shot in the chest by a pro-government militiaman in Tehran in 2009, is a circumstance for reflection

over the issue of realist representation in contemporary media. Furthermore, it allows for an investigation into the question about the public's ability to critically consume the horror of a maimed body. Neda Agha-Soltan was a bystander of the protests against the 2009 election outcomes in Iran. The footage shot by bystanders that depicted the young woman collapsing from the gunshot, bleeding profusely, then dying, reached a global audience by circulating on independent media and Internet networking sites. After the initial attention on this event, CNN ultimately decided to broadcast the footage, as it became impossible to contain the public's need to access the news of this event. With the combined independent postings and network circulation of the footage, the video is what a writer from *Time* declares, "probably the most widely witnessed death in human history."³⁹⁴

The global impact of the video of Neda Agha-Soltan's death testifies to the potency of a civilian's ability to report, while it offers an opportunity to understand which forces shape civil discourse. Though many outlets of the commercial press were ultimately compelled to broadcast the footage, its ability to show the footage was eventually curbed by economic, social, and possibly political factors. The magnitude of the horror invoked by the imagery is *inconsumable*, making it unprofitable for network and cable news outlets. As the dismembered bodies of First World War soldiers were purposefully hidden from the public by either self-imposed or official censorship, today's moving images of murder are anathema to the commercial world of news, therefore delimited in their lifespan in newsprint or television. If the mainstream press continually probed into the details of Neda Agha-Soltan's death, one might begin to expect the link to form between something like the state-sanctioned police repression in a dictatorship to other instances of police brutality, like the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles in 1989 or the

more recent assault on Occupy protestors in Oakland, California which, among other casualties, resulted in the fractured skull of Iraq War Marine veteran Scott Olsen.

I think that even with the new technologies at work today, current events like assaults on civilians by police highlight those issues of realism and representation that arise in my discussion on First World War discourse: the reporter as the witness of horror, the commensurability of the reality and what is captured as its image, and the capacity of the public to consume the images. In examining realism in the context of war, I determine that the central nodal factor is the human body: that civil discourse is affected most by the presence or absence of bodies in media. My dissertation considers to what extent bodies are present or absent in the texts and images of the war. Are they figuratively or literally depicted? Are they imaginary or corporeal? Does it make a difference how bodies are represented?

In Chapters Two and Three, I noted the absence of bodies in both newspaper reports and in novels, and found that a body's absence functions differently in those two forms of media. The underrepresentation of soldiers' bodies in newspapers functions negatively: when bodies are made into a consumable set of data, this deprives the reader of a richer knowledge about the actual effects of war. Alternatively, the absence of someone like Jacob Flanders in Woolf's novel signifies a surfeit of loss for human civilization. The combination of mythological and realist components of Woolf's novel allows for a historical understanding of the single human loss in the war. In fiction, the body is a metonymic vessel used to describe the human condition.

For the soldier-as-writer, the body in trench warfare is both a concrete experience and an oneiric construction. While each soldier writes privately about the physical smells and pains of his own body or his comrades' bodies, he would also write about the surrealistic senses of being under shellfire and bright bomb-blasts. The endless flashes of light in the prolonged darkness and

the rapid-fire sounds of heavy artillery created a vacuum of time and space, making the narratives of such realms distinct in the context of journalistic accounts or literary fiction. As a body of literature, soldiers' texts generate a synaesthetic realism, which combines graphic and figurative language to describe the war experience.

I suspect that if the everyday Edwardian were able to read about the bodies depicted in the texts of soldiers, the mythologies and propaganda about fighting in wars as noble acts would perhaps erode at a faster rate. Perhaps, I agree with the proposition in "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen: that if we could only hear "at every jolt, the blood/ Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs," then, "The old Lie" would be exposed. The presence of traumatized bodies in texts would have readers able to perceive more of a warscape's reality rather than an ideologically sanitized version or simply less of it. At least, if family members of soldiers were able to read about that smell of putrefaction every soldier became intimately familiar with, perhaps they would have been able to acknowledge that the "same old Tom" who left England wasn't the same after coming back from No Man's Land.

I am not proposing that there is a singular version of truth about war and its effects that a soldier could tell better than anyone else. Nor am I suggesting that one representation of war is more accurate in one text rather than in another. The mere inclusion of graphic representation of traumatized bodies does not by itself constitute truth in representation. More precisely, I understand the multivalent factors of moments in life and of death to require an *assembly* of representational media and practices. I think an *assembly* of media practices corrects the distortions produced by singular and naturalized hegemonic discourses. This means, then, that a literary set of responses to war be considered as valid a contributor to public discourse as any official version presented in dominant forms of media and that multiple forums are made

requisite for the representation of marginalized realities. When a model of realism evokes a resonant kaleidoscopic plane of evolving points of view rather than a naturalized sense of static reality, then a more true realism is in reach. The various writers about the war that I have investigated regenerate literary realist forms when their texts evoke less about what the reader may already know and more about constructing an unknowable experience for him or herself. I am suggesting that these forms of literary realism contribute to the pursuit of a radical understanding of documentary realism, which equips the ordinary person to interpret what Empire may deem she is not fit to consume.

Finally, the documentary photograph is key for examining an age that puts into turmoil the order of the real, when the First World War puts into severe crisis any notion that civilization is progressing. In the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I return to the argument that mimetic realism, or, depicting the world in mimetic terms as if there is a strict correspondence between what one *sees* and what one *represents*, is deficient for providing a “true” vision of the world. I propose that documentary photography does more than preserve the narrative cycles of the values of Empire and provide iconic imagery by which wars become memorable. Documentary photography achieves an ocular realism: a visual *and* imaginative form of representation. First, ocular realism is achievable when 1) images are allowed to circulate without censorship. Second, it is achievable when the narratives that accompany the images invite further interrogation: the captions provoke the spectator to test the evidence provided in the image rather than acquiesce to the implied narrative that has been constructed to delimit the viewer’s imaginative faculties.

In this final chapter of my dissertation, I have discussed ways in which the news photograph does not acquire its value because it is inherently revealing to the viewer any substance that is new or unknown. On the one hand, a photograph’s value is ambiguous, so

captions work to shape the viewer's interpretation of the image. After all, as the editor of the *The Paris Review* remarks in an op-ed about the torture photos of Abu Ghraib, "Photographs cannot tell stories. They can only provide evidence of stories, and evidence is mute."³⁹⁵ However, even without captions, I attest, an image never circulates outside of narrative structures. Therefore, any evidence provided in an image either corroborates or disproves the story that is being told. A viewer is always confronted with a decision of how to interpret an image. The question is: does the viewer see an image that preserves the universal and generic narratives promulgated in the service of Empire, or does the viewer employ an ocular faculty to undermine and contradict the dominant narratives which try to explain away brutal and unjust realities?

Throughout my dissertation, I explore the ways in which certain texts and images were suppressed during the First World War, either through overt government-enforced methods of censorship, or by ideological pressure to limit tragic or grotesque depictions of war-torn soldiers. One consequence, I conclude, is that the synaesthetic and mythosynaesthetic forms of realism that soldier writing or early modernist fiction writers generated were relegated to marginal discursive terrains, just like the photos of dead soldiers were. The consequences for this early neglect, which deemed those narratives by the literary laymen of the First World War inconsumable, persist today. By revisiting this war literature and recuperating the values of realism therein, I contribute to the modernist project of probing those tightly bound contradictions that arise when the building of civilization occurs concurrently with full engagement in barbaric warfare. This dissertation raises the concept of realism as further contributing to overturn the sustained narratives that still exist about the *war to end all wars*.

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7.0 NOTES

Chapter 1

¹ For a review of this history, see Christine Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); G. W. Clarke and J. C. Eade, *Rediscovering Hellenism the Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

² Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*, 1.

³ Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam, the War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 80.

⁴ Juliet Nicolson, *The Great Silence: 1918-1920, Living in the Shadow of the Great War* (London: John Murray, 2009); Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919-1946, The Legacy of the Great War* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

⁵ John Hill, *Sex, Class, and Realism: British Cinema, 1956-1963* (London: BFI, 1986).

⁶ For studies of French literary realism, see Harry Levin, *The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971); Bernard Weinberg, *French Realism: The Critical Reaction, 1830-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937).

⁷ It bears mentioning how variable the theories of realism are and even how unsettled the realist canon is. Some writers may be classified in both socio-realist and psychological realist genres, as Edith Wharton sometimes is. That Glazener focuses on the ways in which dominant reading practices shape American realism—rather than understanding realism as produced by a select set of authors—demonstrates the level of flux still in classifying the category of literary realism. Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁸ Peter Brooks, *Realist Vision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 16.

⁹ Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London; Totowa, N.J.: Croom Helm; Rowman and Littlefield, 1976), 161.

¹⁰ James Fitzjames Stephen, "Journalism," *Cornhill* 6(1862): 53.

¹¹ Lee, *Origins*, 117. This preoccupation with the future of the gentleman appears throughout the Edwardian era in Britain—and, it is often intertwined with the status of journalistic reporting. I think the ubiquitous concern of what is happening to the “gentleman” signifies a struggle in the shift in the ideological supremacy of Victorian standards to a more populist-generated image of British society. For an interesting discussion on the identity of the gentleman in early twentieth-century British society, see Chapter Nine in Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹² George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate, *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable; Sage Publications, 1978), 22-23.

¹³ There are numerous studies about the philosophical debates on civilization that occurred in Britain during the war. For example, see Jonathan Atkin, *A War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Roy Porter, *Enlightenment Britain and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000). Gabriel Jackson, *Civilization and Barbarity in 20th Century Europe* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999). Gabriel Jackson, *Civilization and Barbarity in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Prometheus/Humanity Books, 1999); Brian Shaffer, *The Blinding Torch: Modern British Fiction and the Discourse of Civilization* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

¹⁴ *Times* April 16, 1917. For more examples of atrocity stories, see M. L. Sanders, Taylor, Philip M., *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated throughout the Nations during the Great War* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928).

¹⁵ Deian Hopkin explains certain regulations listed in DORA designed to manage the reporting of the war. The regulation used to control the spread of “false” reports was regulation 27. Regulation 51 “enabled the authorities to enter premises suspected of being used for publishing or distributing dissident literature. These regulations,” Hopkin tells us, were liberally interpreted and “were widely used throughout the war against newspapers of all sizes and all shades of opinion, from the *Jewish times* to the *Morning Post*, the *Globe* to the *Worker*, the *North London Guardian* to the *Glasgow Forward*.” Deian Hopkin, “Domestic Censorship in the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 5.4(1970): 157.

¹⁶ Hopkin explains the operation of the official Press Bureau when it was set up in 1914: “The main functions of the bureau were two-fold. One department controlled the supply and distribution of information from the Admiralty and the War Office to the newspapers, while a second department examined every telegram and cable sent and received by each newspaper... By 1915 there were 40 censors, mostly civilians, but generally appointed by the War Office or the Admiralty. Almost every department was headed by a military officer. *Ibid.*, 151-169.

¹⁷ Knightley offers numerous cases of correspondent arrests made if journalists came too close to warring fronts. See Knightley, *First Casualty*, 91-96. Hopkin points out, however, that the “decision to prosecute a newspaper was... often governed by political considerations.” Therefore, it was not advantageous in most cases to strictly enforce the regulations. Hopkin, “Domestic Censorship,” 158.

¹⁸ The overt denial by Kitchener and the government of carrying out any genocidal policies in South Africa just 15 years before made it questionable whether or not another brutal war would be tolerated by the middle-class public. Unlike the more explicit warmongering produced during the Second Boer War, the British government’s approach to this war assumed a different character. With a heightened awareness and outrage by the public over the brutalities armed conflict could incur, Kitchener needed to soften the memory of the public’s remonstrations at the inhumane treatment of the Boer people if a recruiting campaign was to be successful for the newest entry into conflict. Mark Wollaeger offers an analysis of the reasons propaganda need not have proliferated during the Boer War: “With information from afar speeding across British telegraph lines into newspapers increasingly named for the telegraph, remote skirmishes at the edges of empire became a form of entertainment for the home front. Thus if the Boer War (1899-1902) shook British confidence in its imperial might, the conflict was a boon to the predominantly jingoistic press. Because the press and citizen-based patriotic organizations sang British praises so insistently, the government largely refrained from official propaganda before World War I.” Mark A. Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 75.

¹⁹ Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 43. Also, given the likelihood of each soldier encountering extreme violence, and that testimony of conditions at the Front could possibly reach the home country, the imperialist jingles—like those disseminated in the media during previous wars—would no longer effectively work alone to inspire enlistment from the general population. The nation was still morally coping with the brutal tactics the Kitchener’s army employed in the Southern African territories. It would be incredibly risky politically to allow parallels to be made between the two wars.

²⁰ Colin Lovelace, “British Press Censorship during the First World War” in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Sage, 1978), 310.

²¹ Knightley, *First Casualty*, 478.

²² *Ibid.*, 86.

²³ Susan Buck-Morss, “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin’s Artwork Essay Reconsidered,” *October* 62(1992): 6.

²⁴ Eric J. Leed, *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 74.

²⁵ Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda*, 36.

²⁶ Santanu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁷ *Salient News*, no. 4 vol. 2, 20th March 1916.

²⁸ Evelyn Margot Cobley, *Representing War: Form and Ideology in First World War Narratives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 10.

²⁹ Virginia Woolf, *Selected Diaries* (London: Vintage Books, 2008), 269-70.

³⁰ The occupation of journalism was framed in the mid nineteenth century largely around the idea that facts are neutral bits of information and that a journalist's duty was to forage them out of a situation and disclose them to the public. As Robert Lowe professed in the *Times* in 1852, "For us, with whom publicity and truth are the air and light of existence, there can be no greater disgrace than to recoil from the frank and accurate disclosure of facts as they are. We are bound to tell the truth as we find it, without fear of consequences... The responsibility he really shares is more nearly to that of the economist or the lawyer whose province is not to frame a system of convenient application to the exigencies of the day, but to investigate truth and to apply it on fixed principle to the affairs of the world." Quoted in Henry Wickham Steed, *The Press* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Limited, 1938), 76-77.

³¹ Karen L. Levenback, *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, 1st ed. ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 13.

³² *Ibid.*, 21.

³³ Hugh Cecil, "British War Novelists," in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Cooper, 1996), 808.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ The images that come to me most readily as iconic of war's brutality are from the war in Vietnam and of U. S. contractors killed in Fallujah in 2004. For a good survey of famous war photographs, see Peter Stepan and Claus Biegert, *Photos that Changed the World: The 20th Century* (London: Prestel, 2000).

³⁶ John Berger, "Understanding a Photograph," in *Selected Essays*, ed. John Berger and Geoff Dyer (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001), 178-82.

³⁷ Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 24.

³⁸ Though the presentation of a current piece of news was relatively rare in Victorian publications, an interest in catastrophes became more common as the age and technical processes in reproduction progressed. By the turn on the century, publishing images of a horrific character became possible and reporting current political or military events were often presented with particularly brutal frankness. In the new stage of journalistic enterprise, labeled "New Journalism," this sensationalistic concentration on particularly grotesque or unusual stories (such as local murders, fantastic scandals, and other thrilling events) was an exploitative tool used to heighten the appeal of political analysis for relatively unsophisticated readers. The addition of graphic images, illustrations or photographic reproductions, further appealed to a reader's visual sensory perception. This does draw the reader into a realm more closely assembling the trench experience because of the heightened use of sensory faculties.

³⁹ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938), 40. The mention of Wilfred Owen in this section suggests that Woolf's sense of time in which the amassing of photos has begun goes back to at least the First World War.

⁴⁰ Helen Wussow, *The Nightmare of History: the Fictions of Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1999), 3.

⁴¹ Stuart Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," in *The Manufacture of News*, ed. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981), 239.

⁴² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994), 328.

⁴³ I think it is important here to acknowledge the work by Santanu Das on the special character of physical intimacy between soldiers in the trenches. Das's work takes seriously the issue of homosexuality of soldiers while theoretically broadening the lenses with which it has normally been discussed: "In the trenches of the Western Front, where life expectancy could be as short as a couple of weeks, same-sex ardour, bodily contact and (in some cases) eroticism should not be understood solely in contrast to heterosexuality, nor viewed only through the lenses of gender and sexuality. Such intimacy must also be understood *in opposition to and as a triumph over death*: it must be seen as a celebration of life, of young men huddled against long winter nights, rotting corpses and falling shells... Although these acts may overlap with eroticism, such experiences should not simply be conflated with it—or, for that matter, with the repression or sublimation of sexual drives." Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, 118.

⁴⁴ According to Allyson Booth, the personal writing of First World War soldiers is generally devoid of describing carnage. See Booth, *Postcards*.

⁴⁵ Denis Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 95.

⁴⁶ Interestingly, casualties were depicted in postcards that were made to attract more visitors to the first replica of the “Loos Trenches” in Blackpool in 1916, originally constructed for training purposes, quickly attracted curious onlookers seeking to appreciate an authentic experience of soldiers who went “over there.” The “decision to maintain a presence of convalescent soldiers in the Loos Trenches can best be explained,” Espley suggests, “as a means of attracting greater numbers of visitors keen to engage with those living heroes... They are being used as the ultimate dressing of an authentic scene.” Richard Espley, “How Much Of An ‘Experience’ Do We Want The Public To Receive?: Trench Reconstructions And Popular Images Of The Great War,” in *British Popular Culture and the First World War*, ed. Jessica Meyer (Leiden: Brill; Biggleswade: Extenza Turpin, 2008), 329.

⁴⁷ Rainer Fabian and Hans-Christian Adam, *Images of War: 130 Years of War Photography* (Sevenoaks: New English Library, 1985), 165.

⁴⁸ See Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 96. Arthur Marwick estimates 745,000 dead in Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 2nd ed. ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991), 330. Ian Beckett cites the figure of 570,000; “The British Army, 1914-18: The Illusion of Change,” in John May Turner, *Britain and the First World War* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

⁴⁹ Booth, *Postcards*, 52.

⁵⁰ Errol Morris, “Not Every Picture Tells a Story,” *The New York Times*, November 20, 2004.

⁵¹ George Boyce, “The Fourth Estate: the Reappraisal of a Concept” in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (London: Sage, 1978), 27.

Chapter 2

⁵² Karl Marx and L. Kugelmann, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), 120.

⁵³ Knightley, *First Casualty*, 84.

⁵⁴ Colin Lovelace, “British Press Censorship during the First World War,” in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. James Curran George Boyce, and Pauline Wingate (London: Sage, 1978), 307.

⁵⁵ During the war period, the *Daily Herald* was issued on a weekly basis and titled the *Herald* “With Which Is Incorporated the *Daily Herald*.” In 1919, the paper relaunched as a daily. See James Curran “The Press as an Agency of Social Control” in *Newspaper History* for the history of the *Daily Herald*.

⁵⁶ See Boyce, Curran, and Wingate, *Newspaper History*; Joel H. Wiener, *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850 to 1914* (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

⁵⁷ Lee, *Origins*, 161.

⁵⁸ Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997), 347.

⁵⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1938), 64.

⁶⁰ Francis Place and D. J. Rowe, *London Radicalism 1830-1843: A Selection from the Papers of Francis Place* (London: Record Society, 1970), 128.

⁶¹ James D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903-1913* (London: Greenwood, 1991), 7.

⁶² In addition, public libraries enjoyed tremendous growth during the Edwardian period: public expenditure on libraries jumped from 286,000 pounds in 1896 to 805,000 pounds in 1911. See Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); Boyce, Curran, and Wingate, *Newspaper History*; Lee, *Origins*. Simon Nowell-Smith, *Edwardian England 1901-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁶³ Troy Boone explains, “The First World War was an imperial war, a result of the European competition for colonial spaces in the late nineteenth century and in the early twentieth. Whereas Queen Victoria’s so-called ‘little wars’ of imperial expansion depended primarily on professional soldiers, the escalation of industrialized warfare in 1914-1918 demanded the enlistment—and eventually the conscription—of large industrial populations; in order to win this new imperial war, it was necessary to mobilize a large fighting force constituted primarily by young men of the working classes.” Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart*

of *Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 134.

⁶⁴ Hampton, *Visions*, 12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 83-7.

⁶⁶ I should mention that Arnold was far from enthusiastic about the new style of journalism evolving at the time. Writing about "New Journalism," he remarked, "We have had opportunities of observing a new journalism which a clever and energetic man has lately invented. It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that is feather-brained." See Matthew Arnold, "Up to Easter," *Nineteenth Century* 21(1887): 629-43.

⁶⁷ J. O. Baylen, "The British Press, 1861-1918," in *Encyclopedia of the British Press, 1422-1992*, ed. Dennis Griffiths (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 38.

⁶⁸ Hampton, *Visions*, 131.

⁶⁹ James D. Startt, "Good Journalism in the Era of the New Journalism: The British Press, 1902-1914," in *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850 to 1914*, ed. Joel H. Wiener (New York: Greenwood, 1992), 276.

⁷⁰ Lee, *Origins*, 27-8.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 117

⁷² Baylen, "British Press," 33.

⁷³ Perhaps the cultural conservatives of the time were genuinely concerned with fending off mediocrity or politicians merely worried about their lessening influence in the press's news coverage. Whatever the case, the possibility of dedicating copy to matters that are shared amongst a mass of workers, like the conditions of the workplace for instance, would have posed the greatest actual threat to the traditional social order. The criticisms against "New Journalism," whether coded in moral or cultural terms, I think it is important to point out, are directed at protecting capitalist interests by discrediting the gains workers were increasingly winning, like their influence over elitist control over what had historically gotten covered in the newspapers.

⁷⁴ For a lengthy discussion on the evolution of public and private spheres as I understand them, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). In many ways, the criticisms I mention here that are levied against "New Journalism" prefigure what Habermas later identifies and critiques of the bourgeois public sphere.

⁷⁵ R. A. Scott James, *The Influence of the Press* (London: Partridge, 1913), 160-61.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Also, there is lots of evidence showing the "feminization" of "New Journalism" by critics because it reported on cultural and domestic events and printed columns on women's issues. Arguably the contestation by critics about "New Journalism" appealing to its public on a "subrational" level is directly related to the introduction of women in the pages of and as readers of newspapers. For a brief but interesting discussion on this see Hampton *Visions*, 119-121.

⁷⁷ George Augustus Henry Fairfield Sala, *The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala, written by himself* (London: Cassell and Co., 1895), 82.

⁷⁸ Startt, *Journalists for Empire*, 10.

⁷⁹ Victoria Berridge, "Popular Sunday Papers and Mid-Victorian Society," in *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day*, ed. James Curran and Pauline Wingate George Boyce (London: Sage Publications, 1978), 258.

⁸⁰ Baylen "British Press," 38.

⁸¹ *Times*, 17 March 1914, 1.

⁸² Anthony Smith, "The Long Road to Objectivity and Back Again: The Kinds of Truth We Get in Journalism," in *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day*, ed. James Curran and Pauline Wingate George Boyce (London: Sage Publications, 1978), 168.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ In a speech given to the 5th All-Russian Congress of Medical and Veterinary Workers on June 21, 1924, Trotsky tells his audience, "Probably a lot of you have seen the *Times*. It comes out every day in dozens of pages of splendid fine print, with a variety of illustrations and an endless range of sections, so that everything has its place in the paper, from questions of high politics to all kinds of sport, and including the affairs of the churches and of the world of fashion. And from what point of view is everything presented? Naturally, from the point of view of the interests of the bourgeoisie." The warning to workers here is to be wary of attractive formatting and select categories of thinking with which the bourgeoisie placates the masses. For Trotsky, aesthetic appeal was not to be appreciated

in isolation of the content which it shaped. Leon Trotsky, *Through What Stage Are We Passing?: The Strength of the Communist Party and the Level of Culture in a Country (1924)*, trans. Brian Pearce (London: Fourth International, 1965).

⁸⁵ Knightley, *First Casualty*, 89

⁸⁶ Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer, "Rules of Engagement: Journalism and War," in *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*, ed. Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer (London: Routledge, 2004), 16.

⁸⁷ Baylen, "British Press," 43.

⁸⁸ Lovelace, "British Press Censorship," 316.

⁸⁹ David Vincent outlines the dual roles the government played in enforcing the Official Secrets Acts of 1889 and 1911: "on the one hand fears about possible misuse of extra power were met with the assurance that if editors behaved as gentlemen... then the British tradition of liberty would be security enough... On the other hand it was urged... that the failure to observe the discretion expected of gentlemen was imperiling the safety of the nation." David Vincent, *The Culture of Secrecy: Britain, 1832-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁹⁰ Lovelace, "British Press Censorship," 310.

⁹¹ For excellent discussions on Kitchener's disgruntlements with the press and the establishment of the Press Bureau, see Martin J. Farrar, *News from the Front: War Correspondents on the Western Front, 1914-18* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998); John Taylor, *War Photography: Realism in the British Press*, Comedia (London; New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁹² Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 154.

⁹³ Farrar, *News*, 13.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6

⁹⁵ Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, 1914-1919. Vol 65, 8.8, 14.

⁹⁶ Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, New ed. ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 3.

⁹⁷ Gramsci's definition of hegemony applies to the relationship that is formed between the Press Bureau and the *Times*: "The 'normal' exercise of hegemony... is characterized by the combination of force and consensus which vary in their balance with each other, without force exceeding consensus too much. Thus it tries to achieve that force should appear to be supported by the agreement of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion—newspapers and associations. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 99.

⁹⁸ Lovelace, "British Press Censorship," 310.

⁹⁹ Interview given by Sir Edward Cook to the Associated Press, April 1916, FO (Foreign Office) 371/2844.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 28.

¹⁰¹ The Press Bureau was not an official government department thought it was used as an agent for other departments. Its actionable role consisted of recommending prosecutions of journalists or their newspapers. Official censorship laws were never passed although the repercussions for evading the recommendations by the Press Bureau could be harsh. Philip Knightley gives numerous accounts of the arrest warrants Kitchener put out for war correspondents and mentions the harshest penalty: the firing squad for anyone "caught taking a photograph at the front" *Casualties*, 105. This level of severity for taking pictures of the war is a subject that will be taken up more considerably in the fifth chapter.

¹⁰² *History of The Times*, vol. 4, 218.

¹⁰³ Public Records Office, HO 139/5/a127/pt 2 (16 March 1915).

¹⁰⁴ Quoting semiotics experts Iarovici and Amel, John E. Richardson explains that headlines "perform a double function: 'a semantic function, regarding the referential text, and a pragmatic function regarding the reader (the receiver) to whom the text is addressed. The two functions are simultaneous,' in as much as the headline acts 'to alert the reader (receiver) to the nature or the content of the text. This is the pragmatic function of the headline, and it includes the semantic one.'" John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 197.

¹⁰⁵ Philip Knightley makes the observation that "Between August 14 and 25, 1914, a German Victory that wiped out about 300,000 French soldiers, or nearly 25 per cent of the combatants—a rate of wastage never equaled in the rest of the fighting on any front—remained *completely unreported in Britain until after the war was over.*" [his emphasis] Knightley, *First Casualty*, 97.

¹⁰⁶ Prasun Sonwalkar, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind? The Non-reporting of Small War and Insurgencies," in *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 209.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, "Long Road," 164.

¹⁰⁸ Zelizer, "When War is Reduced to a Photograph," 21. Zelizer is discussing photography in particular when making this point. I will be addressing her argument more directly in the final chapter dealing with pictorial imagery.

¹⁰⁹ Mike Wayne argues that a failure by the media to openly confront capitalist ideology in its pages is a way in which the media justifies further exploitative imperatives of the ruling classes. He says that it is reasonable to draw that conclusion because, "if it were not a reasonable starting point then one would expect to see the mainstream news media calling capitalism into question on a regular basis; one would expect to find them attacking the profit motive routinely, pointing out the irrationality of capitalism's priorities, highlighting its wastefulness, attacking *wealthy* minorities that control vast resources rather than the poor and the vulnerable... and linking the various tragedies, discontents and crises which they find in the world back to capitalist relations of production." Mike Wayne, *Marxism and Media Studies: Key Concepts and Contemporary Trends* (London: Pluto, 2003), 136.

¹¹⁰ *Times*, 30 August 1914.

¹¹¹ David Silbey offers these facts: "In the final week of August, 66,310 men enlisted. After the article, in the first week of September, that number almost tripled to 174,901 men. Daily recruiting went from an average of 8,776 in the week before the article to 25,668 in the week after." David Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War, 1914-1916* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 24. It bears mentioning too that the rush of volunteer enlistment also coincided with the War Office's release of the Kitchener "Your Country Needs You" poster. This suggests overt government-sponsored propaganda also would have produced greater numbers in enlistment.

¹¹² Knightley, *First Casualty*, 97.

¹¹³ Richardson *Analysing Newspapers*, 38.

¹¹⁴ It is basically well-known that the majority of the British Army was composed of working-class men: "It should be stressed that mass recruitment from a society which, in 1914, was overwhelmingly working-class and overwhelmingly urban, produced, by 1916, an overwhelmingly working-class, urban army. The British soldier of the Great War was essentially the British working man in uniform." John Bourne, "The British Working Man in Arms," in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Cooper, 1996), 336.

¹¹⁵ *Herald*, 18 August 1914.

¹¹⁶ The War Propaganda Bureau headed by Charles Masterman, once literary editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, made sure to have well-known writers supply a steady stream of stories, editorials, commentary, and even first-hand accounts to the public via pamphlets and the newspapers. At Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, he secretly employed a lengthy list of credible and well-known writers including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Ford Madox Hueffer, Arnold Bennett—who became the director of propaganda in France—John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy and H. G. Wells, who in 1918 became responsible for the creation of propaganda literature directed against Germany. At the onset of the war, H. G. Wells took particular issue with pacifists and conscientious objectors and, with great hostility, engaged George Bernard Shaw over his controversial article, "Common Sense About the War." First published as a supplement to the left-wing journal, the *New Statesman*, its most singularly shocking argument incited soldiers to shoot their officers and return to Britain. By and large, though, the Propaganda Bureau's systematic efforts at jingoism outnumbered the provocations for dissent that a lone writer could invoke. For excellent history on Wellington House and the Propaganda Bureau, see Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American, and Canadian propaganda and fiction, 1914-1933* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987); Sanders, *British Propaganda*; Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda*.

¹¹⁷ James Curran "The Press as an Agency of Social Control," 66.

¹¹⁸ Mike Wayne explains that class injustice isn't newsworthy because it's 'not new.' In actual fact, there is a great deal of class 'in' the news; it just isn't explicitly indexed as 'class' and is rarely examined in these terms." Wayne, *Media Studies*, 35.

¹¹⁹ The founder of *Clarion*, Robert Blatchford was a successfully employed Fleet Street Journalist who "gave up a salary of reputedly more than £1,000 in order to enter the very uncertain world of fringe socialist journalism." He is credited with starting what became the first mass-circulation socialist paper and "a yardstick by which other socialist papers were judged." See Deian Hopkin, "The New Left-Wing Press and the New Journalism," in *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850-1914*, ed. Joel H. Wiener (New York: Greenwood, 1988), 294-306.

¹²⁰ *Clarion*, 12 December 1891, 1.

¹²¹ *Clarion* “was owned by nine registered shareholders headed by the editor, Robert Blatchford.” It also spawned a range of organizations, including the Clarion Cycling Clubs and the Clarion Glee Clubs, which in practice worked intimately with local branches of the Independent Labour party and, occasionally, the Social Democratic Federation.” Hopkin, “Left-Wing Press,” 296.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 297

¹²³ *Labour Leader*, 11 January 1896.

¹²⁴ In continuing, Gould warns of the Bolshevik influence, and in defending a particular brand of Socialism, ultimately reveals an imperialist politics: “There is to-day a universal cry for Home-rule in one phase or other. For example, I am myself a fervent advocate of Home rule for England—though, on business, Socialist and spiritual grounds, I do not ask for political separation from Ireland, India, Canada, etc.” *Justice*, 21 February 1918, 3. From what I was able to tell by reading a selection of editions over the course of the war, the paper represented a tradition of Socialism less Bolshevik and radical than Fabian and liberal.

¹²⁵ *Justice*, 21 January 1915, 2.

¹²⁶ “D” notices went out to newspaper editors and were devised by the Press Bureau in order to advise and instruct the Press as to what could and could not be published. Rose uncovers that “although many thousands of prosecutions were to be instituted under the DORA—136,000 in 1916 alone—relatively few of these arose out of the press offences. Only 422 charges were brought in an undifferentiated category, or offences of which ‘evasion of censorship’ was only one out of fifteen headings.” Tania Rose, *Aspects of Political Censorship, 1914-1918* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1995), 19.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 51

¹²⁸ Buitenhuis describes the use of pamphlets put out by Wellington House as explicitly meant to “counter the arguments of the few men in Britain who tried to present opposing views of the causes and effects of the war or wished to advance the cause of peace through negotiation. Some of the biggest literary guns,” Buitenhuis concludes, “were rolled out to fight battles against the “pro-Russian apologists,” as they were called.” The more public debates between members of the British intelligentsia, like Wells and Shaw, probably also impacted socialist thinkers who themselves struggled to intervene on social, political and discursive levels. See Buitenhuis, *Great War*, 21.

¹²⁹ Curran, “Press as an Agency,” 72.

¹³⁰ Andrew King and John Plunkett, *Victorian Print Media: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 341.

¹³¹ Curran, et al., *Power*, 32.

¹³² Alan Lee explains that there were “certain obvious thresholds of growth. The change from a weekly to a daily, or even from a bi- or tri-weekly to a daily, was one of these, and from even a large provincial paper to a metropolitan was another... provincial morning papers by the 1880s usually required £20,000 or £30,000 to establish, and often lost more than this when they failed. London dailies by then could hardly be continued with less than £100,000.” Lee then offers us the following analysis based on the above facts: “The effect of increasing scale and costs was to make it much more difficult to cross the thresholds, either from one to the other, or to start anew. The industry, therefore, was driven away from the traditional, small-scale, multiple structure towards a large-scale and more integrated one, geared to continuous market growth. Although this process was by no means complete by 1914, it was by then already a dominating feature.” Alan J. Lee, “The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1855-1914,” in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. James Curran and Pauline Wingate George Boyce (London: Constable; Sage Publications, 1978), 119.

¹³³ Hopkin, “The Socialist Press in Britain, 1890-1910,” 294. Hopkin retrieves his information from the *Warwick Guide to Labour Periodicals, 1790-1970* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977). The *Warwick Guide* classifies three types publications: trade union papers, socialist and communist papers, and papers which were published in the general interest of the working class.

¹³⁴ Curran, “Press as an Agency,” 68.

¹³⁵ *Printer's Register*, January, 1875.

¹³⁶ For an excellent study providing the economic and material details of the Victorian press, see Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

¹³⁷ Hopkin, “Socialist Press,” 296.

¹³⁸ Leaflet in the J. Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

¹³⁹ It is my view that principally, the liberal theory that promoted new models of journalistic production put politically-left and radical newsmen in a financial predicament, which ultimately indicated larger political challenges. There is a prevailing opinion by historians that trade unions “became more inward-looking, seeking to improve wages and working conditions rather than to restructure society.” Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, 24. This may explain why radical and socialist militancy shrank instead of growing after the 1860s. From a broader perspective, too, the reemergence of Liberal politics seems to have impinged on working class politics such that free market values had the ideological space to expand and consequentially affect purveyors of left-wing ideas, the socialist press.

¹⁴⁰ *Justice*, 21 January 1915.

¹⁴¹ Curran, “Press as an Agency,” 72.

¹⁴² *Clarion*, 14 August 1914.

Chapter 3

¹⁴³ Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 72.

¹⁴⁴ For discussion on the experience of trench conditions, see Das, *Touch and Intimacy*; John Ellis, *Eye-deep in Hell: Trench Warfare in World War I*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*; J. M. Winter, *The Experience of World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁴⁵ Qtd. In Ellis, *Eye-deep in Hell*, 58.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, New ed., Anchor Books (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 4.

¹⁴⁷ Booth, *Postcards*, 22. This general mistrust of the press is not particularly war-specific. Recounting a common sentiment from Second World War French soldiers, Marc Bloch writes that “the prevailing opinion in the trenches was that anything might be true, except what was printed.” Marc Leopold Benjamin Bloch and Peter Putnam, *The Historian's Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954), 107.

¹⁴⁸ For a history of British patriotic songs during the First World War see Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁹ The depth of resentment and bitterness can perhaps best be summed up by a comment made many decades after the end of the war. It was remarked in his obituary that veteran Alfred Finnigan made a conscious decision when he married that he would not have any children. He was reported to have said “I was not prepared to produce cannon fodder for the Army, nor fodder for industry.” Obituaries, *The Independent*, July 9 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Qtd. In Ellis, *Eye-deep in Hell*, 195.

¹⁵¹ Hugh Walpole, “Nobody,” in *The Penguin Book of the First World War Stories*, ed. Barbara Korte and Ann-Marie Einhaus (London: Penguin, 2007).

¹⁵² Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, 228.

¹⁵³ Though Germans are considered the first to implement usage of toxic gasses on the Front, the French were the earliest to use tear-gas grenades (in the first month of the war). The Germans were the first to dedicate serious research into mass-scale development of the poisons, however. The insidious nature of gas technology is that with every scientific advance in its composition, the detection and effects of it were not immediately apparent. Beginning in January 1915, tear gas was followed by chlorine, then phosgene, and finally in July 1917, the most harmful, mustard gas, began to be used. The British deployed chlorine-gas bombs beginning in September 1915. See L. F. Haber, *The Poisonous Cloud: Chemical Warfare in the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

¹⁵⁴ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 240.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Fussell employs the word “nasty” to articulate a sensibility that would not be welcome in Edwardian or Georgian society. See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 170.

¹⁵⁶ Denis Winter provides an example of what would happen after inhaling phosgene, a derivative of chlorine gas: “First, a “slight sensation of suffocation... Then would come shallow breathing and retching, pulse up to 120, an ashen face and the discharge of four pints of yellow liquid from the lungs each hour for the forty-eight of the drowning spasm.” Winter, *Death's Men*, 122. A nurse is recorded to have said that “with mustard gas the effects did not become apparent for up to twelve hours. But then it began to rot the body, within and without. The skin blistered, the eyes became extremely painful, and nausea and vomiting began. Worse, the gas attacked the bronchial

tubes, stripping off the mucous membrane. The pain was almost beyond endurance.” Nicolson, *Great Silence*, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Booth, *Postcards*, 27-28.

¹⁵⁸ Nicolson, *Great Silence*, 6-7.

¹⁵⁹ Knightley, *First Casualty*, 116.

¹⁶⁰ Of course, levels of depersonalization could be relative. As Glenn Wilkinson notes, depersonalization did not happen to British troops “particularly in Imperial settings like Somaliland where officers were the only white troops. After Punkett’s defeat, for example, the *Illustrated London News* published a list of all 9 officers killed with short biographies, in addition to a head-and-shoulders photo-montage of them in uniform placed around a photograph of an anonymous group of black troops from the King’s African Rifles.” The hierarchy for what Wilkinson terms depersonalization is certainly drawn along racial categories. I also think the white foot soldiers fall lower on the hierarchical scale of casualty value because of their class status or rank (which usually corresponds to their class identity). Glenn R. Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121.

¹⁶¹ Samuel Lynn Hynes, *A War Imagined: the First World War and English Culture* (New York: Atheneum; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991), 290.

¹⁶² Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images*, 112-13.

¹⁶³ For examples of medical writing in the war see, Mary Borden, *The Forbidden Zone* (London: W. Heinemann, 1929); Henry Sessions Souttar, *A Surgeon in Belgium* (London: E. Arnold, 1915); Basil Hughes and Henry Stanley Banks, *War Surgery from Firing-line to Base* (New York: Wood, 1919).

¹⁶⁴ See Angus McLaren, *Impotence: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Lesley A. Hall, *Hidden Anxieties: Male Sexuality, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 1991).

¹⁶⁵ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 25.

¹⁶⁶ Das builds on the archival work of Bourke by specifically arguing that the strict binaries of gender and sexuality were underappreciated in most studies on men in the trenches and that the intimacy amongst soldiers was in opposition to and even triumphant over death. Das, *Touch and Intimacy*.

¹⁶⁷ See Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999); Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*.

¹⁶⁸ Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*.

¹⁶⁹ "Surgery in War: Successful Methods of the RAMC," *The Times*, 6 Mar 1916.

¹⁷⁰ Suzannah Biernoff does some good work to point out the contradictory reports that exist in scholarship on disfigurement. She notes the paradox of the simultaneous concealment and advertisement of the medical advances in reconstructive surgery. She states that while there was a general sentiment of hiding visible reminders of the war so that Britain could “begin to move forward seemingly cleansed and guilt-free,” there was also a great deal of attention paid to the craftsmanship of artificial legs in the illustrated press. She does also note that there was not such attention by the press for facial reconstruction. Suzannah Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain," *Social History of Medicine* (2011).

¹⁷¹ For discussion of tin-masks see Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*. Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain"; K. Feo, "Invisibility: Memory, Masks and Masculinities in the Great War," *Journal of Design History* 20 (2007).

¹⁷² Robert Tait McKenzie, *Reclaiming the Maimed: A Handbook of Physical Therapy* (New York: Macmillan, 1918); Biernoff, "The Rhetoric of Disfigurement."

¹⁷³ Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images*, 33.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷⁵ Parliamentary Recruiting Committee Pamphlet no. 33 (London: PRC 1914), 2.

¹⁷⁶ *Catford Journal*, 21 August 1914.

¹⁷⁷ For a good discussion about the emergence of modern propaganda, as made by “diffusely constellated organizations and institutions, such as advertising, public relations, and popular films, whose interactions effectively reinforce official political propaganda without necessarily setting out to do so,” see Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda*.

¹⁷⁸ Propaganda designed to have men voluntarily enlist in the army proliferated in newspapers and posters during the first months of the war. Superficially, these advertisements and posters contained elements that would appeal to both the ruling and the working classes. Besides spurring the interest amongst young men for “doing one’s duty,” it implied that decent rates of pay, separation allowances, pensions for the disabled and provisions for widows and children were beneficial reasons for providing an honorable service. Denis Winter elucidates for us in which ways the “high status of war nationally was reinforced by traditional responses within the social groups which made up the nation.” While “reading through the letters and memoirs of the well-to-do,” Winter writes, “one has the strong impression of men oriented in the past and responding in the style expected of the country houses of England, leading their tenants into battle with the ethics less of the chivalric knight than of the Cambridge undergraduate doing a vacation stint in the college boys’ club in London’s East End.” A sense of adventure and patriotism “of the Rupert Brooke kind” were prevalent in letters home from the upper class soldiers. In reviewing the letters by working class soldiers, Winter further finds that “Simple men thought of themselves as being worked on by society rather than as playing an equal part in a national enterprise.” Therefore, any patriotic duty of a working class man was infused with a “more traditional inducement of financial pressure and an awareness of the limited possibilities for improvement in the future.” These material pressures explain why the government would offer financial and social incentives for working class men to enlist. However, they do not fully explain the reasons a non-conscription army could boast over one million volunteers enlisting in the first 3 months. See Winter, *Death’s Men*, 30-36.

¹⁷⁹ Knightley, *First Casualty*, 89.

¹⁸⁰ Winter, *Death’s Men*, 89.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 95.

¹⁸² Ellis, *Eye-deep in Hell*, 102.

¹⁸³ Graves, *Good-bye*, 172.

¹⁸⁴ G. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), 247.

¹⁸⁵ Graves, *Good-bye*, 33.

¹⁸⁶ I don’t entirely agree with Carden-Coyne’s assessment that diaries were written in order for the public to read. There are countless stories about the discovery of diaries after the death of veterans and, in interviews given late in life, veterans often refused to recall their experiences. This suggests that diaries were carefully concealed after soldiers returned from the Front because the memories evoked by the personal act of recording became too traumatic for the keepers of the diaries. See, for instance, the story of Alfred Finnigan in 2005: “Wales’s oldest man left secret diary of horrors from World War I” *The Free Library* (May, 28), [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Wales's oldest man left secret diary of horrors from World War I.-a0132834322](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Wales's+oldest+man+left+secret+diary+of+horrors+from+World+War+I.-a0132834322) (accessed September 03 2011); Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*, 67.

¹⁸⁷ Imperial War Museum (Great Britain) and Malcolm Brown, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the First World War: A Great Conflict Recalled in Previously Unpublished Letters, Diaries, Documents and Memoirs* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1991), 56.

¹⁸⁸ Denis Winter provides explanation of the sounds one might hear on the frontlines: “From the longest range they made a buzzing sound as if someone had thrown a spinning safety match. In the open a bullet made a steady phew-phew-phew sound. If the bullet flicked foliage, men would gasp at the sensation of speed and wonder what it would be like to be in the bullet’s path. Swishing meant crossfire; whining a spinning ricochet. The most dangerous was the brief roar of a near miss. It was just like a violin string breaking, followed by the report of the rifle firing it, like a popping champagne cork.” Winter, *Death’s Men*, 109.

¹⁸⁹ Catherine Belsey explains the affirming effect realist texts have on the modern reader: “reading a realist text is ultimately reassuring, however harrowing the events of the story, because the world evoked in the fiction, its patterns of cause and effect, of social relationships and moral values, largely confirm the patterns of the world we seem to know.” Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), 51.

¹⁹⁰ Qtd. in Winter, *Death’s Men*, 86.

¹⁹¹ See Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt, 1968).

¹⁹² Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London; New York: Verso, 1989), 19.

¹⁹³ Wilfred Owen, John Bell, and William Harold Owen, *Collected letters. Edited by Harold Owen and John Bell. [With portraits and facsimiles.]* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 429.

¹⁹⁴ Winter, *Death’s Men*, 84.

¹⁹⁵ Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, 83.

¹⁹⁶ Sigmund Freud, John Reddick, and Mark Edmundson, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other*

Writings (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 26.

¹⁹⁷ For greater analysis of Freud's theory, see Lilian R. Furst, *Idioms of Distress: Psychosomatic Disorders in Medical and Imaginative literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Mark S. Micale and Paul Frederick Lerner, *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the modern age, 1870-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁹⁸ Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, 143.

¹⁹⁹ By the end of 1918, the British government had awarded 32,000 war pensions for shell shock, a figure that would rise dramatically once soldiers were discharged from the force. See T. J. Mitchell and G. M. Smith, *Medical Services: Casualties and Medical Statistics of the Great War*, History of the Great War, based on official documents: Medical services (London: H. M. Stationery off., 1931).

²⁰⁰ Winter, *Death's Men*, 85.

²⁰¹ Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, 143.

²⁰² John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), 264.

²⁰³ Booth, *Postcards*, 103.

²⁰⁴ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 22.

²⁰⁵ See Ellis, *Eye-deep in Hell*, 137-39; Malcolm Brown, *Tommy Goes to War* (London: J. M. Dent, 1978), 80.

²⁰⁶ ———, *Tommy Goes to War*, 93.

²⁰⁷ There are numerous studies on the representational limits Field Service Post Cards put on soldiers in the First World War. See Booth, *Postcards*, 13-16. Fussell, *Great War*, 181-85.

²⁰⁸ Roger Poole, "'We All Put Up with You Virginia': Irreceivable Wisdom about War," in *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*, ed. Mark Hussey (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 84. Interestingly, in this passage, Poole is describing the literary technique Woolf uses in *To the Lighthouse*, not the postcard.

²⁰⁹ Qtd. In Fussell, *Great War*, 170.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

²¹² Hawtin Mundy, *No Heroes, No Cowards* (London: People's Press of Milton Keynes, 1981), 54. Mundy's book was produced from a transcription of tape recordings, as he had gone blind by the time he wrote the book. The oral reports he gives of his time at the front and of being a prisoner of war at times strike a different literary register than other accounts directly written down.

²¹³ C. E. Bluxome, "Black and White Postcard," Imperial War Museum,

²¹⁴ Booth, *Postcards*, 118.

²¹⁵ *Clarion*, 22 June 1917.

²¹⁶ *Wipers*, No. 2 Vol. 1, 25th December 1916.

²¹⁷ *Wipers* was produced under the same two editors, Captain F. J. "Fred" Roberts and Lieutenant J. H. Pearson, for the entirety of the period of publication, from February 1916 to December 1918. Even though officers were the head editors of the paper, and it is somewhat unclear the authorship of much of its content, its perspective is derived from a working class background. As Malcolm Brown describes, "*The Wipers Times* did not emerge from a gilded unit full of highly educated and well-connected glitterati, but from the 12th Battalion of the North Midlands Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, generally known as the Sherwood Foresters... [who were] a unit consisting of labourers rather than fighters. In this case a large number of the personnel were former miners; Roberts himself, in his early thirties, was a pre-war mining engineer." Malcolm Brown, "Introduction," in *The Wipers Times: The Complete Series of the Famous Wartime Trench Newspaper* (London: Little Books, 2006), xiii.

²¹⁸ *The Better Times*, No. 2 Vol. 1st December 1918. The name of the trench paper changed according to location or circumstances.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Though not entirely meant to be humorous, the title, *Wipers*, is derived from the majority of English soldiers unable to pronounce the region in Belgium, Ypres. At first, the town became known as "Eeps" or "Eepray," but eventually the name "Wipers" stuck. Though the best known, *Wipers* was not the only publication put together by ranks on the Western Front—there were over 100. The Royal Navy Division and the Royal Air Force also

produced their own magazines. Common amongst all of them was a humorous style of writing, including quite a lot of poetry. *Wipers* was, however, the only trench publication to be printed on the Frontlines.

²²¹ Why was this the mode of communication the people in the deepest privations chosen? Malcolm Brown has suggested humor as a mode of survival: "Indeed, it was the laughter—the mockery, the jokes, the cocking of the snook at authority, the leg-pulls, the puns, the catchphrases, the songs and snatches, the limericks, the earthy wit—that made the hell tolerable: perhaps even made it not quite the interminable hell we now assume it to have been." Malcolm Brown, "Introduction" in *Wipers Times*, x.

²²² For examples and discussion of other trench publications see J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); John Ivelaw-Chapman, *The Riddles of Wipers: An Appreciation of the Wipers Times, a Journal of the Trenches* (London: L. Cooper, 1997); David Roberts, *Minds at War: The Poetry and Experience of the First World War*, 4th printing ed. (Burgess Hill: Saxon Books, 2003).

²²³ A final note following the final installment of the serial humorously illustrates both a fidelity to the art of writing fiction and the heightened level of mockery" "Should there be a few characters not dealt with in this Chapter the reader must understand that they all met their deaths in the liquid fire attack.--The Author." *Wipers*, No 2 Vol. 1, 1st May 1916.

²²⁴ There are countless poems dedicated to the topic of rats. In a poem, titled "Rats," in the Christmas edition of the paper, a rat is able to use tools in its attempts to secure the soldier's food: "They are bloated, fat and cunning, and/ they're marvels as to size,/ And their teeth can penetrate a sniping/ plate,/ I could tell you tales unnumbered, but/ you'd think I'm telling lies,/ Of one old, grey whiskered buck-rat and/ his mate./ Just to show you, on my table lay a tin/ of sardines—sealed—/With the implement to open hanging/ near,/ The old buck-rat espied them, to his missis loudly squealed,/ "Bring quickly that tin-opener, Stinky/ dear!" *B. E. F. Times*, No. 2, Vol. 1, 25th December 1916.

²²⁵ Brown, "Introduction," *Wipers Times*, x.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid., vi.

²²⁸ *Wipers*, No. 4 Vol. 1, 5th March 1917.

²²⁹ *Wipers*, No. 3 Vol. 1, 6th March 1916.

Chapter 4

²³⁰ Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in *The Captain's Death Bed, and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, 1950), 114-15.

²³¹ Georg Lukács most famously critiques, negatively, modernist novelists including Woolf and Joyce for distorting social relations by delving into an ideologically suspect typology of psychopathology. In "The Ideology of Modernism" he writes, "Life under capitalism is, often rightly, presented as a distortion (a petrification or paralysis) of the human substance. But to present psychopathology as a way of escape from this distortion is itself a distortion. We are invited to measure one type of distortion against another and arrive, necessarily, at universal distortion. There is no principle to set against the general pattern, no standard by which the petty-bourgeois and the pathological can be seen in their social context." Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," in *Realism in Our Time: Literature and the Class Struggle* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 293-94.

²³² See Emily Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*; Theodore Koulouris, *Hellenism and Loss in the Work of Virginia Woolf* (Farnham, Surrey, England Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2011).

²³³ Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, 20.

²³⁴ Karen L. Levenback *Virginia Woolf and the Great War* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 44.

²³⁵ See Poole, "'We All Put Up with You Virginia!'"

²³⁶ Levenback, *Woolf*, 10.

²³⁷ Giulio Douhet and Dino Ferrari, *The Command of the Air* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 9.

²³⁸ For rules on what became forbidden to report, see Law Reports. *The Public General Statutes*, vol. 52. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1915-16).

²³⁹ In one instance in 1916, there was a string of attacks that ended up killing 557 people. Eventually,

newspapers could not entirely avoid reporting on these mass deaths.

²⁴⁰ Gillian Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 150.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 169. For an official history of aviation during the war, see Walter Alexander Raleigh and Henry Albert Jones, *The War in the Air* (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1922).

²⁴³ Qtd. in Winter, *Death's Men*, 86.

²⁴⁴ Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, 19.

²⁴⁵ Most notably, the figuring of the airplane in *Mrs. Dalloway* and themes on air strikes in *The Years*.

²⁴⁶ Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 16.

²⁴⁷ See Adam Parkes, *Modernism and the Theater of Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²⁴⁸ Woolf's history of depression and periods of emotional frailty becomes especially significant in light of the fact her brother-in-law made the executive decisions over her work. At one point, "Duckworth decided not to publish the novel until the first year of the war," two years after *The Voyage Out* was finished. Hermione Lee asserts that Gerald Duckworth delayed publication because of her state of being "on the brink of a breakdown." Lee also provides useful commentary on the paternalistic awkwardness arising from the familial relationship. She writes, "It must have felt uncomfortably demeaning, like being a child and an amateur, to get letters from her publisher addressed to 'Dear Goat,' however mildly he asked her to cut the length of her second novel." See Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1996), 322, 69.

²⁴⁹ Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. 6 vols. Edited by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (London: Hogarth Press, 1975-1980), vol 2., 168.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol.4., 231.

²⁵¹ The Woolfs bought the "Excelsior" model of a tabletop press sold by Excelsior Printers' Supply Company.

²⁵² Vanessa Bell provided for the majority of the woodcuts on the covers of all Virginia Woolf's first print books.

²⁵³ In poetry, the Vorticist and Imagist movement aimed to reorient a reader's sense of perception by deconstructing linear patterns of poems common to turn-of-the-century poetry. T. S. Eliot created the theory of the objective correlative. By writing according to alternative rules laid out by something like the objective correlative, the poet would achieve communicating a greater insight into human nature as it exists in modern society.

²⁵⁴ For concise studies of the Hogarth Press see Laura Marcus, "Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press," in *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, ed. I. R. Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren L. Chernaik (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996); J. H. Willis, *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press, 1917-41* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

²⁵⁵ Froula characterizes Bloomsbury as having an "internationalist stance at a moment when virulent nationalism prevailed even in England; its analysis of the violence with that 'dark continent' Europe and within the self; and its Darwinian sense of history as (in Freud's figure) a struggle between the 'immortal' adversaries 'eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species'." Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*, 4.

²⁵⁶ Paraphrasing Woolf, Froula describes the Hogarth Press as presenting a "cross-section of multidisciplinary thought toward a 'new life praxis'." *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵⁷ Woolf, "Bennett," 96.

²⁵⁸ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 10.

²⁵⁹ In *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere*, Cuddy-Keane argued that Woolf "Wrote about literature to inculcate good reading practices, and she did so because she believed that an educated public is crucial to the success of democratic society." Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

²⁶⁰ Virginia Woolf, Nigel Nicolson, and Joanne Trautmann Banks, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., vol. 2 (London: Hogarth Press, 1975), 529.

²⁶¹ For the full theoretical engagement with the purpose of attaining "artfulness," see Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. L. T. Lemon and M. J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 5-24.

²⁶² Woolf divides contemporary writers into two categories: “Edwardians” and “Georgians.” The difference between the two camps depends on how each group “creates characters.” The criteria for what constitutes what Woolf deems “real, true, and convincing” characters differs according to how each group of writers understands what makes characters. That Woolf has the capacity to draw these distinctions, I would argue, is owed in part to the demands required of her in the selection process and breadth of knowledge her Press business required. As a literary critic supplementing her income by writing for major literary magazines and mainstream papers such as the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, Woolf was firmly entrenched in ongoing literary debates as well as the practical tastes of the contemporary reading public.

²⁶³ Woolf, “Bennett,” 104.

²⁶⁴ ———, *The Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, 1925), 149.

²⁶⁵ It is important to note that the circle of writers that surrounded Virginia Woolf before and during the First World War included predominantly politically conscientious men such as G. B. Shaw, Arnold Bennett and Sidney Webb. The overlapping yet conflicting political ideologies influencing her perspectives on the war ranged from strict pacifist to Fabians. On a daily basis, Woolf contended with the entrenched ideas that made up the literary and political legacies in England at the time. See Woolf, *Letters* vols 1 and 2.

²⁶⁶ Virginia Woolf, Andrew McNeillie, and Stuart Nelson Clarke, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* (London: Hogarth Press, 1986), 112, 63.

²⁶⁷ *The Voyage Out* took nearly a decade to complete and was heavily autobiographical. The book is often understood by critics to be in the beginning stages of Woolf finding her fictional voice. In numerous letters and diary entries, Woolf referred to *Night and Day* as a “novel of fact.” She meant this phrase to describe the kind of writing done there relative to the kind of writing she noted authors such as T. S. Eliot and James Joyce were trying around the same time. The “novel of fact” was a novel that took stock of things as they are rather than creating an atmosphere of fiction she imagines modernist fiction will do. See Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977-84).

²⁶⁸ Fredric Jameson, *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 121.

²⁶⁹ Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect,” in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 147.

²⁷⁰ Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (London: Hogarth Press, 1941), 53.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷² Woolf, “Bennett,” 115, 97.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 118.

²⁷⁴ Marcus notes the ways in which Eliot’s fragmented narratives and the mechanical constraints of the Hogarth press influenced Woolf’s early writing: “The experience of laying out Eliot’s poetry on the page influence Woolf’s decision to use white spaces on the page in *Jacob’s Room*; the gaps provide the reader with a sequence of separated scenes rather than a narrative, and create new forms of connection. Marcus, “Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press,” 132.

²⁷⁵ Virginia Woolf, “The Narrow Bridge of Art,” in *Granite and Rainbow: Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), 12.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁷⁷ Woolf, *Essays*, vol 2, 87.

²⁷⁸ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 540.

²⁷⁹ Woolf, “Bennett,” 110.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁸² In “The Anatomy of Fiction,” Woolf criticizes the way that writers compartmentalize methods and styles. Woolf lays out the writer’s possible use of “emphasis,” as they are explained in a book titled *Materials and Methods of Fiction* by the literary critic Clayton Hamilton. She writes: “Take the case of ‘emphasis’ alone. There are eleven kinds of emphasis. Emphasis by terminal position, by initial position, by pause, by direct proportion, by inverse proportion, by iteration, by antithesis, by surprise, by suspense—are you tired already? But consider the Americans. They have written one story eleven times over, with a different kind of emphasis in each.” The formulaic treatment of the subject of novels, what Woolf reminds us is “life itself,” can only be stifled when shaped

by these “tools” the Edwardians have imparted to writers of the contemporary era. Woolf views the Americans, especially American critics who write books about methods to encourage the practices set by the Edwardians. Additionally, I think it is significant that *Anatomy* is written in 1919, a few months after the end of the war. The issue of perspective from a temporal or spatial distance in relationship to literary style is topical during the war, and anticipates the future practice of these theories in *Jacob’s Room*. See Virginia Woolf, “The Anatomy of Fiction,” in *Granite and Rainbow: Essays* (New York: Harcourt, 1958), 55.

²⁸³ The subtext outlining the personal or political reasons that Woolf singles out Bennett when speaking about the failures of Edwardian fiction would add another dimension to the essay. Arnold Bennett was employed by Wellington House, an organized body of propaganda production instituted by C. F. G. Masterman at the start of the war (All of Woolf’s targets worked for Wellington, including H. G. Wells and John Galsworthy). Though eventually an anti-war advocate, Bennett’s direct involvement with myth-making for Empire at the outset of the war might certainly give the impression to someone like Woolf, who is concerned with the correspondence between writing and consciousness, that a propaganda writer would easily derive his material from stories written in a style prone to superficial attention to reality. The remarks that Woolf makes in *Three Guineas* about Wells indicates that her attitude on popular English novelists did not dissipate over time but, in fact, grew over the next decades. In discussing the women’s movement, she uses Wells as an example of misguided misogyny.

²⁸⁴ Woolf, “Narrow,” 22.

²⁸⁵ Virginia Woolf Manuscripts M15-M26 Reel 6, New York Public Library.

²⁸⁶ Woolf, *Letters* vol. 2., 599.

²⁸⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Thoughts for the Time on War and Death,” in *Civilization, Society and Religion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 61.

²⁸⁸ Woolf, *Letters* vol. 2., 599.

²⁸⁹ Woolf, “Narrow,” 20.

²⁹⁰ Levenback, *Woolf*, 20.

²⁹¹ Woolf, “Life and the Novelist,” 45.

²⁹² Booth, *Postcards*, 58.

²⁹³ Virginia Woolf, *Jacob’s Room* (London: Penguin, 1965), 10.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ In the Victorian era, the literal signification of death turned euphemistic. Jennifer Leaney describes the then general “desire to swathe the reality of decomposition in a romantic aura, masking and denying the actuality of death.” For instance, Leaney tells us, the word “dead” was replaced by euphemisms such as “passed on,” “passed away,” or “gone to God.” Incidentally, this Victorian tradition to mark the dead continues today. See Jennifer Leaney, “Ashes to Ashes: Cremation and the Celebration of Death in Nineteenth Century Britain,” in *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph A. Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), 134.

²⁹⁶ Levenback, *Woolf*, 43.

²⁹⁷ Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, 82.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75, 76.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Virginia Woolf, *Virginia Woolf: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Margaret Homans Prentice Hall (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1993).

³⁰² I am imagining that Woolf had Russian Formalist theory in mind when writing *Jacob’s Room*, especially studying some primary concepts that were particularly applicable to fiction novels. “Fabula” and “sjuzhet” or, story—defined merely as chronological sequence of events—and plot—the arrangement of events by literary devices may have been a useful dichotomy for Woolf to keep in mind when deciding in which ways her novel would formally differ from works by authors such as Bennett or Wells.

³⁰³ Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, 170, 173.

³⁰⁴ It is highly likely that the Greek setting surrounding Jacob’s death is due to the deaths of two men in Virginia Woolf’s life. Her younger brother, Thoby died of Typhoid while vacationing in Greece and her good friend and poet Rupert Brooke died of blood poisoning while in the Aegean serving in the British Navy. These factors indicate that a very intimate set of memories infuse Woolf’s narrative other than those I talk about in the body of this text.

³⁰⁵ Great Britain. 1923. Report of the Committee appointed by the prime minister to inquire into the

position of classics in the educational system of the United Kingdom. Lond: H.M. Stationery off.

³⁰⁶ Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*, 41.

³⁰⁷ On Victorian Hellenism, see Shanyin Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism: Women Writers, Ancient Greece, and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008); T. D. Olverson, *Women Writers and the Dark Side of Late-Victorian Hellenism* (Basingstoke England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

³⁰⁸ For an excellent exposition of Woolf and her knowledge of Greek literature see Koulouris, *Hellenism and Loss in the Work of Virginia Woolf*. A main argument that drives the book establishes that in her intellectual development, Woolf ultimately subverts Victorian Hellenism into what Koulouris terms “Greekness.”

³⁰⁹ Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, 172.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

³¹¹ Virginia Woolf’s letters and diaries are littered with references to literary and journalistic publications. She would often make conjectures about people’s attitudes about the war from articles she has read in newspapers: “The revelation of what our compatriots feel about life is very distressing. One might have thought in peace time that they were harmless, if stupid: but now that they have been roused they seem full of the most violent and filthy passions. Are the French better? This I gather only from newspapers as we haven’t seen many people.” Letter to Duncan Grant, Monday Nov. 15th, 1915. Woolf, *Letters*, vol. 2, 71.

³¹² Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, 98.

³¹³ The alternate sense of perception that Woolf creates with her literary technique is what Roland Barthes later calls, “l’effect de réel,” (the reality effect), which is “that imaginative supplementation of the historical account with details which may be factually based or may be probably extrapolations, but have the role of confirming its historicity through the very vividness and, as it were, unmotivated immediacy of their effect.” Barthes, “The Reality Effect.”

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

³¹⁵ There are ubiquitous passages on various characters reading a variety of newspapers where the undertones of the passage are of dejection, boredom or bewilderment. For example, in *Jacob’s Room*, see pages 35, 86, and 137.

³¹⁶ Woolf, *Jacob’s Room*, 95.

³¹⁷ Again, we can see the probable influence of the Russian Formalists in passages such as the one discussed here. A Formalist’s theory privileged writing that would frequently call the reader’s attention to the fact that she is reading a novel instead of observing a mirror of reality. A novel that practiced this mode of writing would be considered the most artful of all novels for it takes as its subject matter the process of storytelling itself.

³¹⁸ Woolf, *Diary*, 186.

³¹⁹ The references to light that Woolf articulated in *Jacob’s Room* were somewhat unique amongst Bloomsbury artists writing at the time. E. M. Forster struggled to complete the only work-in-progress of the war period, *Maurice*. In his diary, he described a bewildering state of being when trying to write during the war, feeling trapped in a “narrowing circle of light.” Lytton Strachey relied on darkness metaphors to describe the life during the war. In the fall of 1915, he wrote in a letter to Francis Birrell, how “alone—desolate and destitute” he was “in a country of overhanging thunder clouds and heavy emptiness.” Strachey to J. Strachey, 30 October 1915. Forster Diary entry 3 August 1914 (cited in P.N Furbank p. 259) cited in Holyrod, 323.

³²⁰ See Woolf, *Diary*. Lee, *Woolf*.

³²¹ Woolf, *Diary*, 84.

³²² Joseph Conrad and Thomas C. Moser, *Lord Jim: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Sources, Criticism*, 2nd ed. (New York W.W. Norton, 1996), 29.

³²³ Booth, *Postcards*, 67

³²⁴ Woolf, *Diary I*, 5.

³²⁵ Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 540.

³²⁶ See Woolf, *Three Guineas*. Throughout the work, when Woolf considers the value of untapped resources to discover the motivations for war, such as biography, she does not take the information gained from biographical information to displace an objective form of analysis. Rather, she complements a rational argument through rigorous analysis of such information gained from biography.

Chapter 5

³²⁷ Taylor, *War Photography*, 23.

³²⁸ Indexicality is identified with the nineteenth-century philosopher, Charles Peirce and taken up by many media critics since, namely Andre Bazin. For a discussion on the ontology of the photographic image, see Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972).

³²⁸ For example, see Dominique François Arago, "Report," in *History of Photography*, ed. Josef Maria Eder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945); William Henry Fox Talbot, "A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of Art," in *The Pencil of Nature* (London: Da Capo Press, 1969). Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, "Photography," *London Quarterly Review* (1857): 442-68.

³²⁹ Berger, "Understanding a Photograph," 216.

³³⁰ Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 77.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

³³² *Ibid.*, 79.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 74.

³³⁴ See Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980).

³³⁵ Andre Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 241.

³³⁶ Jane Carmichael, *First World War Photographers* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 48.

³³⁷ The possibility of candid presentation of the gore available on the battlefield worried General Kitchener in particular, who had previous experience with "nuisance" correspondents on the battlefields during the Boer War. Kitchener treated war correspondents with particular disdain and would dismiss them, like he did during the battle of Omdurman in Sudan, with disparaging remarks like, "out of my way, you drunken swabs!" Quoted in Knightley, *First Casualty*, 89. Kitchener's personal attacks on journalists and photographers can be viewed in terms of a wider resistance by actors of the state to accepting more democratic coverage of the war that the modernized Fourth Estate promises.

³³⁸ John Taylor, *War Photography*, 43.

³³⁹ *War Illustrated*, 14 November 1914.

³⁴⁰ Ernst Jünger, *Copse 125: A Chronicle from the Trench Warfare of 1918* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), 263-64.

³⁴¹ For an excellent discussion on the efforts taken by the government to supply the public with an accessible and clean trench experience, see Espley, "Trench Reconstructions."

³⁴² H. G. Wells, *The Salvaging of Civilization* (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1921), 188-89.

³⁴³ Benjamin, Walter Benjamin et al., *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 236-37.

³⁴⁴ Berger, "Understanding a Photograph," 216.

³⁴⁵ Johann Jakob Weber qtd. in Bodo von Dewitz, Robert Lebeck, and Museum Ludwig, *Kiosk: Eine Geschichte der Fotoreportage, 1839-1973* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2001), 94.

³⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, 40.

³⁴⁷ Carmichael, *First World War Photographers*, 6. By 1913, an image took less than an hour to prepare and 4 pounds, compared with the 60 pounds for a woodcut. See F. J. Mortimer, "The Presidential Address to the Photographic Convention of the United Kingdom," *British Journal of Photography* (11 July 1913): 530.

³⁴⁸ Theoretically speaking, the mechanical attributes of the processes needed to create documentary images minimize the creative input of individuals, therefore giving the viewer an impression of objective representation. Another way to consider the point is by conceiving the profession as subtracting the experience-based narrative. The camera mitigates the presence of the human eye so that the photojournalist captures less of his own purview, and more of an objective reality. In other words, as storyteller, the photojournalist is able to assert his own perspective, but one garnered from a lexicon that is not personally theirs.

³⁴⁹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 10.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁵¹ Barbie Zelizer, *The Changing Faces of Journalism: Tabloidization, Technology and Truthiness*

(London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 130.

³⁵² Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 26.

³⁵³ Nancy Armstrong recounts the historical development of the photograph and how Victorians came to imagine themselves in relationship to it. See Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*. Also, see James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

³⁵⁴ Armstrong's definition of the modernist authentic subject is useful: "The modernist concept of authenticity was a post-photographic way of imagining one's relation to the real." Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, 246. The fact that the issue of mediation becomes theoretically central to a modernist artist's practice is assumed throughout this project.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁵⁶ Armstrong's reading of late eighteenth century logic of aesthetics is more dialectical than I can give credit to here. Though, Armstrong points out, "we grant that Gilpin's version of the picturesque did indeed revise traditional aesthetic theory to fit hand-in-glove with the economic practices of modern townspeople... we must confront the possibility that the reverse may be true as well: that the picturesque aesthetic aestheticized the lives of this class of people and, in so doing, made their taste into a national and international standard." *Ibid.*, 44. Also, see John Berger *Ways of Seeing* for an equally compelling case on the adoption of an aesthetic standard by the landed gentry and commodification of taste.

³⁵⁷ Zelizer, "When War is Reduced to a Photograph," 21.

³⁵⁸ In material terms, Taylor explains that photography was "well situated to represent the unity of the nation as a middle-class family. Since the coming of the mass market in the 1880s, the success of the photographic industry had been built upon the expectations of those with spare income and leisure time. Sales of equipment and film were based upon idealizations of family life, and the family album was full of pictures which represented the ideal unity of the family. Its communal memory depended upon trade, but both were now under threat. They were saved because both were useful in wartime—after all, the chief elements in the idealized home life were harmony and the acceptance of hierarchy. Hence, marketing the family in wartime photography made it coterminous with the nation: then the family/nation was seen as natural and obvious, and though endangered, it would flourish." For an interesting expose on the use of snapshots and marketing campaigns in the project of unifying the family and national sense of sacrifice, see Taylor, *War Photography*, 24-35.

³⁵⁹ Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital," in *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures: A Selection from Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, 1948-1968*, ed. Benjamin Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and The University College of Cape Breton Press, 1983), 159.

³⁶⁰ Frederick Voss and National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institution), *Reporting the War: the Journalistic Coverage of World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Portrait Gallery, 1994), 136.

³⁶¹ The first issue of *War Illustrated* dated September 19, 1914 printed articles expressly written by H. G. Wells titled "Why Britain Went to War" and "A Clear Exposition on What We Are Fighting For."

³⁶² Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images*, 124.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁶⁴ Carmichael, *First World War Photographers*, 4.

³⁶⁵ Taylor, *War Photography*, 17.

³⁶⁶ Clement Shorter, "Illustrated Journalism: Its Past and Its Future," *Contemporary Review*, no. 75 (1899): 481-95.

³⁶⁷ Shorter also commented, "but in the hurried work that journalism compels the skilled handicraft can never again hold its own with mechanical processes, and among those who have seen it die without regret are many artists in black-and-white who have always considered that their work was falsified by the intervention of another mind. Fortunately for those engaged in it, it died slowly thus giving the engravers the opportunity to quit the occupation gradually." *Ibid.*, 483.

³⁶⁸ Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*, 66.

³⁶⁹ Bazin, "Ontology," 238.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 242.

³⁷¹ Taylor describes the kind of overt manipulation that went on in photojournalism. He describes the front page of the *Daily Mirror* dated 16 October 1916 where “a photograph, taken for the Canadians, was published... and described as men actually going ‘over the top’ in battle, whereas they had been practicing at a training camp behind the lines.” Taylor, *War Photography*, 44. This sort of misrepresentation was common throughout the war and although interesting to follow in its own right is not exactly what I am exploring. My study, rather, hopes to consider those photos whose source is not falsified; those images which would have actually been observed at the war front.

³⁷² Mary Hammond and Shafquat Towheed, "British Army Trench Journals and a Geography of Identity," in *Publishing in the First World War: Essays in Book History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 129-47.

³⁷³ Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, 97.

³⁷⁴ Winter, *The Experience of World War I*, 89.

³⁷⁵ For a recent exhaustive study on Hurley's life work, see Robert Dixon, *Photography, Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lecture Entertainments* (New York: Anthem Press, 2012).

³⁷⁶ Frank Hurley and Helen Ennis, *Man with a Camera: Frank Hurley Overseas* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002), 3.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁷⁸ Carmichael, *First World War Photographers*, 31.

³⁷⁹ Holmes, "Stereoscope," 164.

³⁸⁰ I would also add here that, even if it is the case that it turns out these soldiers were sleeping instead of incapacitated or dead, the narrative is still consistent with a superior British nationalism. That a few lone French soldiers might be sleeping while the British present a lively united front in the battle against the Germans suggests that French commanders do not have a disciplined army and that, considering the lack of gear against gas attacks, their level of preparation is poor.

³⁸¹ Ivelaw-Chapman, *Riddles of Wipers*, 32.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁸³ There is no evidence to suggest that the press predesigned the output of images in any predictable or purposefully malicious way. Like the modernization of presses and its impact on content of newspapers, I argue that the technical aspect of photography also makes conscious control over ideological messaging images more indirect. As an editor of the *Times* Ivor Thomas has pointed out, “distortion is more often unconscious than conscious. Critics are apt to attribute to deliberate malice what is more probably due to the speed at which newspaper staffs work.” Bulmer-Thomas Ivor, *The Newspaper* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 27-28.

³⁸⁴ Booth, *Postcards*, 51.

³⁸⁵ Tom Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index? Or, Faking Photographs," *Nordicom Review* 25, no. 2 (2004).

³⁸⁶ Figure 35 presents a whole new slew of questions about censorship and the sensitive nature of representing dead soldiers. I find it curious that the faces of the dead soldiers are scratched out on the plate itself, making it forevermore impossible to discern the identity using any process of facial recognition. Since these types of photos are the kind which normally were immediately taken only for the permanent record, and not intended for publication, it is curious why the handler would have destroyed any permanency of identity this photo would originally have provided.

³⁸⁷ Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body*, 4. Carden-Coyne's emphasis on the visuality of the war depends upon the prevalence of mutilated and reconstructed bodies in literature, medical texts, and museum exhibitions. In other words, for Carden-Coyne, the First World War was highly visual because it pictured the body in cultural media. Though I agree that the First World War is spectacularly visual, I am not convinced that it is the presence of bodies in images that makes that war so visual. In fact, I am arguing that the lack of bodies is why the visual experience of the war is delimited. I think about the exponentially visual media of war we have today, and am under the impression that, on the contrary, the fewer bodies affected by war that are depicted, the more visual our contemporary wars have become.

Epilogue

³⁸⁸ James Curran, "The Press as an Agency of Social Control: An Historical Perspective," in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. James Curran and Pauline Wingate George Boyce (London; Beverly Hills, Calif.: Constable; Sage Publications, 1978), 51-78.

³⁸⁹ For instance, see Seth Ackerman, "The Most Biased Name in News: Fox News Channel's extraordinary Right-Wing Tilt," *FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)*, no. July/August 2001. The debate is most notable with the release of then comedian and later Senator Al Franken's satirical book whose target is mainstream right-wing cultural and political figures in the United States. See Al Franken, *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right* (New York: Dutton, 2003).

³⁹⁰ There is a plethora of "watchdog" organizations dedicated to exposing the liberal or conservative bias of American media. FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) understands itself as a progressive bulwark against censorship and corporate sources of information. See <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=100>. For an example of a conservative watchdog organization, see <http://www.mrc.org/public/default.aspx>.

³⁹¹ An article on the news coverage of the Iraq war offers a glimpse into the lack of coverage of the current war in Iraq: "During the first 10 weeks of 2007, Iraq accounted for 23 percent of the newshole for network TV news. In 2008, it plummeted to 3 percent during that period. On cable networks it fell from 24 percent to 1 percent." Sherry Ricchiardi, "Whatever Happened to Iraq? How the media lost interest in a long-running war with no end in sight," *American Journalism Review* (2008). For the most recent analysis of news coverage of the Iraq war, see http://www.journalism.org/numbers_report/iraq_war_reaches_new_low_2011.

³⁹² A three part series in *Digital Journal Reports* outlines the variety of concerns over the future of journalism as a credible medium, including the issue of citizen reporting: Chris Hogg, "In Mainstream Media We Trust?," *Digital Journal Reports* (May 2009). For a deeper historical study of this development, see Papandrea, Mary-Rose. "Citizen Journalism and the Reporter's Privilege." *Boston College Law School (Minnesota Law Review, Vol. 91)*. 2007. Retrieved on January 7, 2007.

³⁹³ An opinion piece in the *New York Times* illustrates the spectrum of arguments about "citizen journalism": Eric Etheridge, "Why David Simon is Wrong about Blogs and Local Reporting," *The New York Times*, no. May 7, 2009. Although taking a more nuanced account of the de-professionalizing of journalism by arguing for greater internet presence of classified reporters on the internet, Nicholas Lemann represents a generalized anxiety about the disappearance of "true" journalism: Nicholas Lemann, "Amateur Hour: Journalism without Journalists," *The New Yorker*, no. August 7, 2006.

³⁹⁴ Krista Mahr, "Neda Agha-Soltan," *Time* (2009).

³⁹⁵ Philip Gourevitch, "The Abu Ghraib We Cannot See," *New York Times*, May 23, 2009.