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**ANGUS WRENN: ‘ANGLE OF ELEVATION’
ANGLE OF ELEVATION: SOCIAL CLASS,
TRANSPORT AND PERCEPTION OF THE CITY IN
*THE SOUL OF LONDON.***

Angus Wrenn

In *The Soul of London* Ford Madox Ford discusses ways in which the modern city is perceived. Ford is at pains to stress that the work, which Alan Hill describes as resembling ‘fiction, where the scene is set for characters who never actually appear’ⁱ, is in no sense strictly documentary.ⁱⁱ Rather he claims that his objective is essentially to evoke atmosphere:

I have tried to make it anything rather than encyclopaedic, topographical, or archaeological. To use a phrase of literary slang I have tried to ‘get the atmosphere’ of modern London (*SL* xi-xii)

And Ford emphasizes the ‘personality’ of London, and in consequence the importance of speaking of it as one might give one’s ‘impressions’ of a personality to one’s friend’s (*SL* xi). Perhaps as a result *The Soul of London* has tended to be overlooked within the field of social science studies of the city in modernity (an important exception is Andrew Lees’s essay ‘The Metropolis and the Intellectual’).ⁱⁱⁱ Nevertheless the date of *The Soul of London*’s composition (1903-1904) is of quite precise significance as regards developments in the modern London landscape. This is true both in relation to the establishment of certain institutions, such as the London County Council (1888) (*SL* 33) and in terms of the means of transport available in London at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Mode of transport is in fact crucial to the ways in which London is perceived in the period which Ford covers. Ford denotes as much in the subtitles which he gives to two of the sections of the work: ‘London at a Distance’

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and 'Roads Into London'. The two subsequent sections of the book additionally reflect the importance of social class as a determinant of the mental image of London: 'London at Work' and 'London at Leisure'. By setting *The Soul of London* in the context of the work of some of Ford's contemporaries and successors, which also takes London as its setting, it is possible to see Ford as both the heir of the nineteenth century (essentially James and Conrad), and as a pre-1914 precursor, especially in his emphasis upon fragmentation of perception, of what may be termed the 'high modernists' of the 1920s: Virginia Woolf and T S Eliot.

While Ford clearly inherited a musical sensibility and sensitivity from his father Francis Hueffer, which is evidenced elsewhere by his own serious attempts at composition, he also inherited a leaning towards the visual arts from his maternal grandfather Ford Madox Brown. In *The Soul of London* it is everywhere the visual and the painterly which dominate over the auditory and the musical. By reference to the landscape artist's concept of 'angle of elevation', that is to say the height from which a scene is painted or drawn, and the position within the frame given to the horizon and perspectival vanishing point, Ford's strange urban prose-poem can be given a certain unity.

Perhaps Ford Madox Brown's most celebrated painting of the urban landscape, or at any rate of a London scene, is his 1852 *Work*. (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) It depicts a scene of labourers digging a hole in the road in Heath Street, Hampstead. Although the painting is framed in terms of traditional 'classical' perspective, insofar as there is a single vanishing point, multiple points of view are also in operation here, and may be said to be determined by social class and professional status. At first glance a naturalistic slice of random everyday street life, it is in fact almost schematically hierarchical. Arguably the lowest viewpoint of all is that enjoyed by the navvies at work in the hole in the road. Theirs could almost be said to equate to a worm's eye view.

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Scarcely higher is the angle of elevation enjoyed by the unemployed, who sit at the road's surface, their backs indolently propped against the embankment. This scene is surveyed by two further groups: in the distance, making their way toward the workers come on horseback two sophisticated ladies. Their progress will be complicated by the hole in the road, but this lies ahead of the scene presented. Whether they have as yet even noticed the labourers in the road is unclear. By contrast a group of two men who stand in the same foreground plane as the labourers are clearly aware of them. Standing at street level, but at a certain distance, propping themselves against the railing, are F D Maurice, the great progenitor of Muscular Christianity^{iv}, and, on the extreme right both literally and figuratively, Thomas Carlyle, the proponent of 'work' as the redemptive and fulfilling quintessence of the Victorian age. These are the two 'labourers of the pen', as it were, whose mental efforts are to be equated with those of the more obvious toilers in the hole in the road. Ford himself, in *The Soul of London*, gives a parallel scene which combines road digging and the labours of the pen (albeit in an administrative and bureaucratic rather than creative capacity):

Workers in London divide themselves, roughly, into those who sell the labours of their bodies and those who sell their attentions. You see men in the streets digging trenches, pulling stout wires out of square holes in pavements, pecking away among greasy vapours at layers of asphalt, scattering shovelfuls of crushed gravel under the hoofs of slipping horses and under the crunching tyres of wheels. If walls would fall off offices you would see paler men and women adding up the records of money paid to these others. That, with infinite variations, is work in London.(SL 68)

This would seem to lend itself to an interpretation of London as a fragmented city, the poor, the manual labourers, being unbridgeably divided from their white collar counterparts. Indeed Ford goes on next to offer an alternative scene which suggests

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that the pen has the function of determining in the most literal optical terms the view of London which the working and writing classes respectively enjoy:

It is astonishing how different London looks from one or from the other end. Speaking broadly, the man who expresses himself with a pen on paper sees his London from the west. At the worst he hopes to end with that view. His London of breathing space, his West End, extends from say Chiswick to say Portland Place. His dense London is the City as far as Fenchurch Street, his East End ends with what he calls 'Whitechapel'.

The other sees his London of elbow room extend from say Purfleet to say Blackwall. He is conscious of having, as it were at his back, the very green and very black stretches of the Essex marshes dotted with large solitary factories and small solitary farms. His dense London, his City lies along the line from Blackwall to Fenchurch Street. Beyond that, the City proper, the city of the Bank and the Mansion House, is already a place rather of dilettante trifling...already a foreign land, slightly painful because it is so strange. That, further west, there may be another enormous London never really enters his everyday thoughts. (*SL* 70-71)

This implies a process of social fragmentation and division. Yet Ford also offers the pen, or more strictly speaking the pencil, as an agent of unification between the classes.

While the labourers in the hole in the road may evoke Madox Brown in the high Victorian era, the image with which Ford follows it seems at first glance to look forward to the modernists of the next two decades. In his description of the scene at Tilbury Docks Ford begins by placing great stress not upon the human but upon the purely geometrical perspectival lines of cranes at the docks:

The vast, empty squares of water lay parapeted, arbitrary and dim in their eternal perspectives; the straight lines of the water, the straight lines of the parapets, of the bottoms of the goods sheds, of the tops, of the fray corrugated roofs, all dwindled together into the immense and empty distances. (*SL* 68-69)

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Up to this point the description, with its emphasis upon the geometrical, might be seen to anticipate the images of the Vorticists to be made famous over the next two decades. *In the Hold* by David Bomberg (1913-1914) (Tate Gallery, London) comes particularly to mind, choosing as it does the same dockside subject as Ford at Tilbury, and also employing a strictly geometrical and abstract technique. However Ford then proceeds to dissolve the hard-edged, proto-Vorticist vision in favour of a dissolved, watercolour conception perhaps closer to the Impressionists, to Whistler, or even to Turner:

The rows of four-footed, gaunt, inactive cranes, painted a dull rust colour, and the few enormous steamers at the inner ends of the quays - all these things were wetted, fused and confused in their outlines, beneath a weeping sky in which a drapery of clouds had the look of a badly blotted water-colour painting, still wet and inefficient.(SL 69)

Rather than making his rendering of the scene at Tilbury a paean of praise to physical labour, Ford surprisingly focuses (with the concentration of the telephoto lens years before its invention) on a tiny detail. Among all the dockers he homes in on their foreman:

He dived into another small office. He was the chief officer of the liner that was coaling and he had a pencil behind his ear.(SL 69)

Not only does Ford choose for attention a figure who is set apart by function, and arguably social class, from the manual labourers, but he even focuses in on a single feature 'a pencil behind his ear'. That detail, which would surely elude the naked eye in normal circumstances, now becomes the very focus of Ford's attention:

He was uniting as it were the labours of the men shovelling in the buckets of coal, of the men uttering melancholy wails as they swung-in a white boat, of the men hooking up long planks from the painters to sit on,

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and of the painters themselves on the upper decks. With that pencil he controlled all their labours, as if he were twisting them into an invisible rope which passed through that tin office and up, far away into town where other pencils and other pens recorded these things on large pages, digested them into summaries and finally read them out to Boards of Directors. (SL 70)

Ford's implications here are ambiguous. On the one hand he seems to be suggesting that the modern city is thoroughly alienated and alienating - as shown by the apparent insignificance of the pencil and the enormity of the labours it controls, together with the 'other pencils and other pens' which process information for management. In one sense the fragmentation and alienation are complete in that here the pencils and pens have been divorced from human hand and seem to be going about their work unaided. At the same time Ford is suggesting that there is a unity, of sorts, but of questionable moral value. This is identified in the reference to 'Boards of Directors', a phrase which so closely echoes Ford's collaborator at this date, Joseph Conrad. The latter's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is also set among the docks east of London. Moreover one of Marlow's select audience on the *Nellie*, for his tale of physical danger and labour in Central Africa, is the 'Director of Companies' ^v a figure who is distinguished from, yet also shown as sharing an apparent affinity with, the manual workers (sailors) 'it was difficult to realise his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him within the brooding gloom'. ^{vi} In *Heart of Darkness* it is capitalistic commercial interest, represented by the ivory trade, which links, and also compromises all. Perhaps in Conrad the dubious link forged was between the developed and undeveloped, exploited worlds. Ford's image of oppression carried out in the name of capitalism seems to focus instead on the links which exist between the different social classes within London itself:

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Those invisible ropes - they are strong enough in all conscience - seem to be the only tie between these two classes of workers, between these two great camps set one against another.(SL 70)

Ford at once views London as a city divided by class and as a city paradoxically, and almost miraculously, unified by knowledge, brain rather than brawn. While that link might be far from benign, it is nonetheless a link, as opposed to none at all, as opposed to a dissolution into total social fragmentation.

Elsewhere in *The Soul of London* the social analysis comes again to the fore, and once again it is expressed in terms of the very optical perception of the city itself. As suggested, Ford perceives modes of transport as key in determining the individual's perception of the city. Despite his opening caveat Ford does allow in the historical development of transport in London, while insisting that his strict remit is always modernity. The oldest mode of transport into London which he considers is by river, but Ford pays this relatively little attention regarding it as, by 1900, an anachronistic form. Here he does make recourse to history in identifying the rise of horse transport and horse carriages in the eighteenth century as a factor which transformed the life of the capital, by bringing about the commercial demise of some forty thousand boatmen who hitherto provided the easiest means of crossing from one bank to the other of the Thames, in days before the building of the modern bridges.(SL 48) In the medieval era, and even into the early modern period, Ford alludes to social class, when he contends that the most common form of transport around the city employed by royalty was the litter: 'when Queen Elizabeth went abroad on land she was carried in a litter by her gentlemen'.(SL 48) Since the monarch or aristocrat inevitably enjoyed a higher angle of elevation than that of his bearers (who were by the same token inevitably of lower rank) this form might be said to constitute the *locus classicus* of the notion that angle of elevation and mode of transport are traditionally determined by social class.

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If this is the extreme case, and offered as purely historical by Ford in 1903, elsewhere Ford shows that modes of transport at the turn of the twentieth century are in a period of transition, and with them traditional social hierarchies. Thus, in his concern to focus upon the modern, Ford finds the notion of entering London on foot as anachronistic as the approach along the Thames by boat or the use of a litter:

It is a long time since I have come into London on foot, so long that I have forgotten what it feels like. Indeed, I fancy that the proceeding is no longer modern, and is in consequence illegitimate to my purpose.(*SL 43*)

To bear this out Ford cites two thoroughly marginalized groups, tramps and gypsies, who still come in to London on foot(*SL 43*), but the inclusion of the latter leads him to some surprising conclusions, concerning both class and point of view. Ford observes that the gipsy inside the caravan, while not enabled literally to look down on the urban scene through which he is passing, nevertheless enjoys a privileged view of the city because he always sees it from the view point of his own, moving home:

I fancy, however, that looking at things through the small square of a back window, being at home in the middle of strange things, the sense too of being very aloof from the rest of the world must make one's point of view rather a special one. One would become more or less of a foreign observer.(*SL 44*)

Ford then proceeds audaciously to suggest that there is an aesthetic community between the age-old gipsy and the quintessentially modern, sophisticated cosmopolitan globetrotter, arriving in London by Pullman car after a journey from some foreign city, perhaps as far-flung as St Petersburg:

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Your foreigner, reaching his London in a Pullman car, has been during his whole journey in an hotel, very much like one of his own hotels, not very much unlike his own home.(*SL* 44-45)

Hence the socially marginalized and the socially elevated are seen as on a par by Ford. Elsewhere too changes in mode of transport may reinforce social hierarchies or work to break them down.

In 1903 the motor-car was still a very new invention, and the ultimate social status symbol of affluence and success. Thus Henry James, by this date suffering ever declining sales, said he could hope to afford no more expensive a vehicle than a new wheelbarrow, while Rudyard Kipling, the greatest popular success of the day, would make a great scene arriving in Rye with a motor-car and chauffeur.^{vii} Yet if in the most literal, physical terms the motorist, perched higher up, enjoys a superior point of view to that of either the walker, the boat traveller, or the bicyclist(*SL* 41), in other respects Ford sees the motorist's vision of the city as fundamentally flawed:

It is not so much that the speed is very great, there is always the statutory limit, a sort of nightmare; but the motorist is too low down as a rule, the air presses against the eyes and half closes them; he has a tendency to look forward along the road, to see more of vehicles and of pedestrians than of the actual country or the regiments of buildings. He grows a little aloof, a little out of sympathy; he becomes more intent about keeping a whole skin on himself and on his car than about the outer world.(*SL* 38-39)

Paradoxically, in the London of the early twentieth century, it is a much more democratic form of public transport, the electric tram, which enjoys, in Ford's analysis, the most privileged view and psychological experience of London:

What the automobile is to the comfortable classes the electric tram is becoming to the poorer. It is a means of getting into town. It does not, however, produce the same psychological effects. For one thing, the speed is

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not so great, and you have not the least anxiety as to what you may choose to run into; if you want to see things you are at a greater height, your range of sight is much longer. You may pick out upon the pavement any strange object;... You may pick them out from a distance and watch them for a minute or two; you may look down at passing, you may look round.(SL 39-40)

Again this leads Ford to an image of a crane seen from a tram which is redolent of the Vorticists in its emphasis upon abstract, geometrical patterns and perspectives rather than human interest:

The other day I saw from the top of an electric tram, very far away, above the converging lines in the perspective of a broad highway of new shops, a steam crane at work high in the air on an upper storey. The thin arm stretched out above the street, spidery and black against a mistiness that was half sky, half haze; at the end of a long chain there hung diagonally some baulks of wood, turning slowly in mid-air. They were rising imperceptibly, we approaching imperceptibly...Looking back I could see down the reverse of the long perspective the baulks of timber turning a little closer to the side of the building, the thin extended arm of the crane a little more foreshortened against the haze. Then the outlines grew tremulous, it all vanished with a touch of that pathos like a hunger that attaches to all things of which we see the beginnings or the middle courses without knowing the ends. It was impressive enough – the modern spirit expressing itself in terms not of men but of forces, we gliding by, the timber swinging up, without any visible human action in either motion. No doubt men were at work in the engine-belly of the crane, just as others were very far away among the dynamos that kept us moving.(SL 40-41)

The reference here to the pathos of the uncompleted sight anticipates Ford's description of London viewed from the train, which comes at the end of the chapter and is surely the most famous passage in *The Soul of London*. The angle of elevation from the train is placed at the apex of the hierarchy of modes of transport into London. Indeed Ford mentions that from the train he looks down upon one of the other forms of transport, a bus in a street (SL 60). The train passenger enjoys the most elevated, but also the most alienated, point of view:

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One sees, too, so many little bits of uncompleted life. As the train pauses one looks down into a main street, and all streets look the same from a height. (SL 60)

The bus or tram passenger might not be in control of his point of view, but he is sufficiently close to recognize the individual streets through which he passes. The train passenger, by contrast, experiences only distant, incomplete sights, without the illumination of speech or sounds overheard to give full meaning to them:

Perhaps the comparative quiet fosters one's melancholy. One is behind glass as if one were gazing into a museum; one hears no street cries, no children's calls. And for me at least it is melancholy to think that hardly one of all these lives, of all these men, will leave any trace in the world. (SL 60)

The association of angle of elevation, transport, social class and perception, is also to be found in at least two contemporary works of Ford's friend and precursor Henry James. In *The Wings of the Dove*, the heroine Milly Theale, learning that for all her wealth, she is doomed to die, dismisses her carriage, her normal transport, and elects to walk on her return from Sir Luke Strett's Harley Street consulting rooms. The gesture is made as an assertion of her common humanity with the London poor, who for social and economic reasons have also met a dead end in life:

she went into it further now; this was the real thing; the real thing was to be quite away from the pompous roads, well within the centre and on the stretches of shabby grass. ... here were wanderers anxious and tired like herself; here doubtless were hundreds of others just in the same box. Their box, their great common anxiety, what was it, in this grim breathing-space, but the practical question of life? They could live if they would; that is, like herself, they had been told so: she saw them all about her, on seats, digesting the information, recognising it again as something in a slightly different shape familiar enough, the blessed old truth that they would live if they could. All she thus shared with them made her wish to sit in their company;^{viii}

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James's *The Golden Bowl*, published in the year in which *The Soul of London* was written, also begins with a walk through London. Amerigo is an Italian Prince and would normally take a carriage, but perhaps symbolically this walk stands for his last act of independence before marriage. For he is making a marriage of convenience to an American heiress in order to pay off his inherited debts. Elsewhere James informs the reader that Amerigo's perception is both physically and metaphorically (socially) elevated:

below a certain social plane, he never saw. ...One kind of shopman was just like another to him... He took throughout always the meaner sort for granted – the night of their meanness, or whatever name one might give it for him, made all his cats grey. He didn't, no doubt, want to hurt them, but he imaged them no more than if his eyes acted for every relation. ^{ix}

In another age, as prince, he would have been borne on a litter, like Ford's Elizabeth I, literally over the heads of others. Modern financial realities (the rise of the mercantile (American) classes, and the decline of his own) force him to walk. Yet his vision remains elevated, in the sense of what he excludes from consideration.

In two modernist works which Ford may be said to anticipate, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), angle of vision is also bound up with social class in the perception of the city. In *The Waste Land* Eliot, writing in the wake of the First World War, describes the crowd of city workers as resembling the dead in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with their vision fixed on the ground:

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. ^x

Whether Teiresias, who is blind, enjoys any angle of elevation at all is perhaps questionable, but Eliot describes him as 'I who have sat by

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Thebes below the wall/ And walked among the lowest of the dead',^{xi} while elsewhere the viewpoint is that of the canal bank 'fishing in the dull canal/ On a winter evening round behind the gashouse',^{xii} and again in 'The Fire Sermon' similarly low, from the river Thames "'By Richmond I raised my knees/Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.'" ^{xiii}

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the heroine, upper-class Clarissa Dalloway, walks through Westminster, having made the gesture that she would 'buy the flowers herself'^{xiv}. In the post-First World War era the affluent no longer travel exclusively by carriage. Nevertheless, servants still exist who would, in normal circumstances, take on Clarissa's self-imposed task. Yet Clarissa's decision, like Milly Theale's and Prince Amerigo's, to transgress her class enables her to come into contact, at street level, with other social strata. Both Clarissa, whose daughter has been presented at Court, and the humbler Septimus Warren Smith contend as pedestrians with the same motorised London traffic.^{xv} There is moreover a powerful affinity between Septimus's shell-shocked hallucination of the trenches of the Western Front in Regent's Park and the image which Ford, with uncanny prescience, gives in 'London at Leisure' describing the proximity, but also the distance, between the rich in the gentlemen's clubs and the unemployed lying idle on the lawns of Hyde Park below:

And if you desire a sight, equally impressive, of London at leisure, go down Piccadilly to Hyde Park Corner on a pleasant summer day. On the right of you you have all those clubs with all those lounging and luxuriating men. On the left there is a stretch of green park, hidden and rendered hideous by recumbent forms. They lie like corpses, or like soldiers in a stealthy attack, a great multitude of broken men and women, they, too, eternally at leisure. They lie, soles of boots to crowns of heads, just out of arm's reach one from the other for fear of being rifled by their couch-mates. They lie motionless, dun-coloured, pitiful and horrible, bathing in leisure that will never end. There, indeed, is your London at leisure; the two ends of the scale offered violently for inspection, confronting and ignoring steadily the one the other. For, in the

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mass, the men in the windows never look down; the men in the park never look up.(*SL* 141-142)

This vision anticipates the scene of Septimus's hallucination in Regent's Park, which had earlier served as the site for the doomed Milly Theale's expression of common suffering with the poor. Woolf also offers a certain sense of unification between disparate elements – Clarissa, driven to despair within her conventional upper-class marriage, parallels Septimus, driven all the way to suicide by shell-shock and the insensitivity of the medical profession. The urban setting allows 'random' interaction – Peter Walsh is passing by as Septimus undergoes his hallucination – but also compels individuals to continue about their business without empathizing, as if committed to tramlines, or like Ford's train passenger viewing London as if behind a glass case. The classes in the modernist world of the 1920s are still kept apart, although society is also changing, in the wake of World War One and in response to continuing technological change. And finally Woolf almost takes up Ford's idea, expressed before the First World War, that written language has the power to unify the fragments of disparate urban experience. Ford's uncompleted vision from the train in Southwark of a man rushing out after a woman into their backyard emphasizes the fragmentary nature of vision in this context, exacerbated by the lack of sound to accompany the vision:

The other day, too, we were moving rather slowly. I looked down upon black and tiny yards that were like the cells in an electric battery. In one, three children were waving their hands and turning up white faces to the train; in the next, white clothes were drying. A little further on a woman ran suddenly out of a door; she had a white apron and her sleeves were tucked up. A man followed her hastily, he had red hair, and in his hand a long stick. We moved on, and I have not the least idea whether he were going to thrash her, or whether together they were going to beat a carpet.(*SL* 61)

These fragments of human experience, of partial vision, are given unity (or not) by the written word. In this case the answer to the 'uncompleted life' (*SL* 60) which gives rise to 'a sense of some

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pathos and of some poetry' (SL 60) is provided by a form of writing scarcely less banal than the company reports which made sense of the experience of workers digging in the road, or dockers at Tilbury Docks: 'At any rate, the evening papers reported no murder in Southwark.' (SL 61)

In *Mrs Dalloway* the fragments of the day (and of the novel) are united in part by the spoken word – the conversation overheard by Clarissa at her evening party –

Sinking her voice, drawing Mrs Dalloway into the shelter of a common femininity, a common pride in the illustrious qualities of husbands and their sad tendency to overwork, Lady Bradshaw (poor goose- one didn't dislike her) murmured how, 'just as we were staring, my husband was called up on the telephone, a very sad case. A young man (that is what Sir William is telling Mr Dalloway) had killed himself. He had been in the army.' Oh! Thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought.^{xvi}

But the fragments of Septimus Warren Smith's and Clarissa's lives have also already been linked earlier in the day, and by means of absolutely modern facts of urban experience. So modern that Ford could not have included both of them in his 1904 *The Soul of London*. The first, the car, Ford might have been expected to anticipate – the backfiring of a limousine (presumed to be royal) startles Clarissa (who takes it initially for 'a pistol shot in the street outside'^{xvii} while she is shopping in Bond Street), and the same noise serves to trigger Septimus's hallucinations of the trenches. However the other example of modern technology, or indeed mode of transport, which appears in *Mrs Dalloway* and serves to unify the fragments, while also involving the written word, is a form which the Wright brothers had only just invented in 1903, the year Ford started *The Soul of London*. Both Clarissa and Septimus react to the sight of an aircraft flying over London. Clarissa and Septimus, along with the rest of the population of London free to look up at the time, are united in their focus upon an aircraft which is trailing an advertising slogan for 'Kreemo Toffee'.

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The royal limousine, modern day successor to the litter on which Ford says Elizabeth I was borne, which had previously held everyone's attention, is now quite forgotten: 'and the car went in at the gates and nobody looked at it'^{xviii}

The aircraft enjoys an angle of elevation unknown to Ford in 1903, a bird's eye view, all-encompassing, verging upon authorial omniscience, in its ability to see the whole of London at once, in an aerial panorama, and Woolf's parallel narratives of Clarissa and Septimus are for a moment allowed to intersect, like two trails in the sky overhead. Clarissa is later to seek her own moment of 'elevation' as she contemplates her own suicide from an upper window on the evening of her party, prompted by the news that Septimus (unknown to her by name) 'had thrown himself from a window'.^{xix} As an advertising slogan 'Kreemo Toffee' may be still more banal than either the company reports or the evening newspaper reports alluded to in *The Soul of London*. Yet for Septimus, the war invalid, the aircraft, with its word appearing between clouds, which as yet he cannot understand, nevertheless serves as evidence that he is overseen by omniscient, perhaps heavenly, at any rate otherworldly, forces:

So, thought Septimus, they are signalling to me. Not indeed in actual words; that is, he could not read the language yet; but it was plain enough, this beauty, this exquisite beauty, and tears filled his eyes as he looked at the smoke words languishing and melting in the sky and bestowing upon him, in their inexhaustible charity and laughing goodness, one shape after another of unimaginable beauty and signalling their intention to provide him, for nothing, for ever, for looking merely, with beauty, more beauty! Tears ran down his eyes.

It was toffee; they were advertising toffee, a nursemaid told Rezia.^{xx}

If only on Septimus's own tragic terms, as with the evening newspaper headline and the company reports in *The Soul of London*, the written word here makes some sense of the individual's fragmented experience of the city. Crucially, it is Ford, writing non-

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fiction (albeit in an impressionistic cast), before the social cataclysm precipitated by the First World War, who points the way for both Eliot and Woolf and anticipates their imaginative response to the modern city.

ⁱ Ford Madox Ford *The Soul of London* (1905) ed. Alan Hill, London: Everyman, 1995, p. xx.

ⁱⁱ Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Soul of London*, London: Alston Rivers, 1905, p xi, hereafter referred to in citations as *SL*.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'The Metropolis and the Intellectual' in *Metropolis 1890-1940* (ed. Anthony Sutcliffe), London: Mansell, 1984, p. 88.

^{iv} The *Edinburgh Review* (Jan. 1858) gave the following definition. 'It is a school of which Mr Kingsley is the ablest doctor, and its doctrine has been described fairly and cleverly as 'muscular Christianity'. The principal characteristics of the writer whose works earned this burlesque though expressive description, are his deep sense of the sacredness of all the ordinary relations and the common duties of life, and the vigour with which he contends for the great importance and value of animal spirits, physical strength and a hearty enjoyment of all the pursuits and accomplishments which are connected with them.'

^v Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995, p. 47.

^{vi} *Heart of Darkness*, p 47. It

^{vii} 'Wharton said she had bought her car on the proceeds of her last novel. HJ: 'With the proceeds of my last novel I purchased a small go-cart, or hand-barrow, on which my guest's luggage is wheeled from the station to my house. It needs a coat of paint. With the proceeds of my next novel, I shall have it painted.' Percy Lubbock, *Portrait of Edith Wharton*, (1947) p. 69-70, quoted in Philip Horne *A Life in Letters*, London: Allen Lane, 1999, p. 482.

^{viii} Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), New York: Norton, 1978, p.153-154.

^{ix} Henry James, *The Golden Bowl* (1904), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993, p 114.

^x T S Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922) 62 –65 in *Collected Poems*, London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

^{xi} Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 245-6.

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^{xii} Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 189-90.

^{xiii} Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 194-95.

^{xiv} Virginia Woolf *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 3.

^{xv} Note however 'Clarissa's Invisible Taxi' in John Sutherland *Can Jane Eyre Be Happy?* Oxford: World's Classics, 1997, p 214-224

^{xvi} Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 240.

^{xvii} Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 26.

^{xviii} Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 26.

^{xix} Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 241.

^{xx} Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 27.