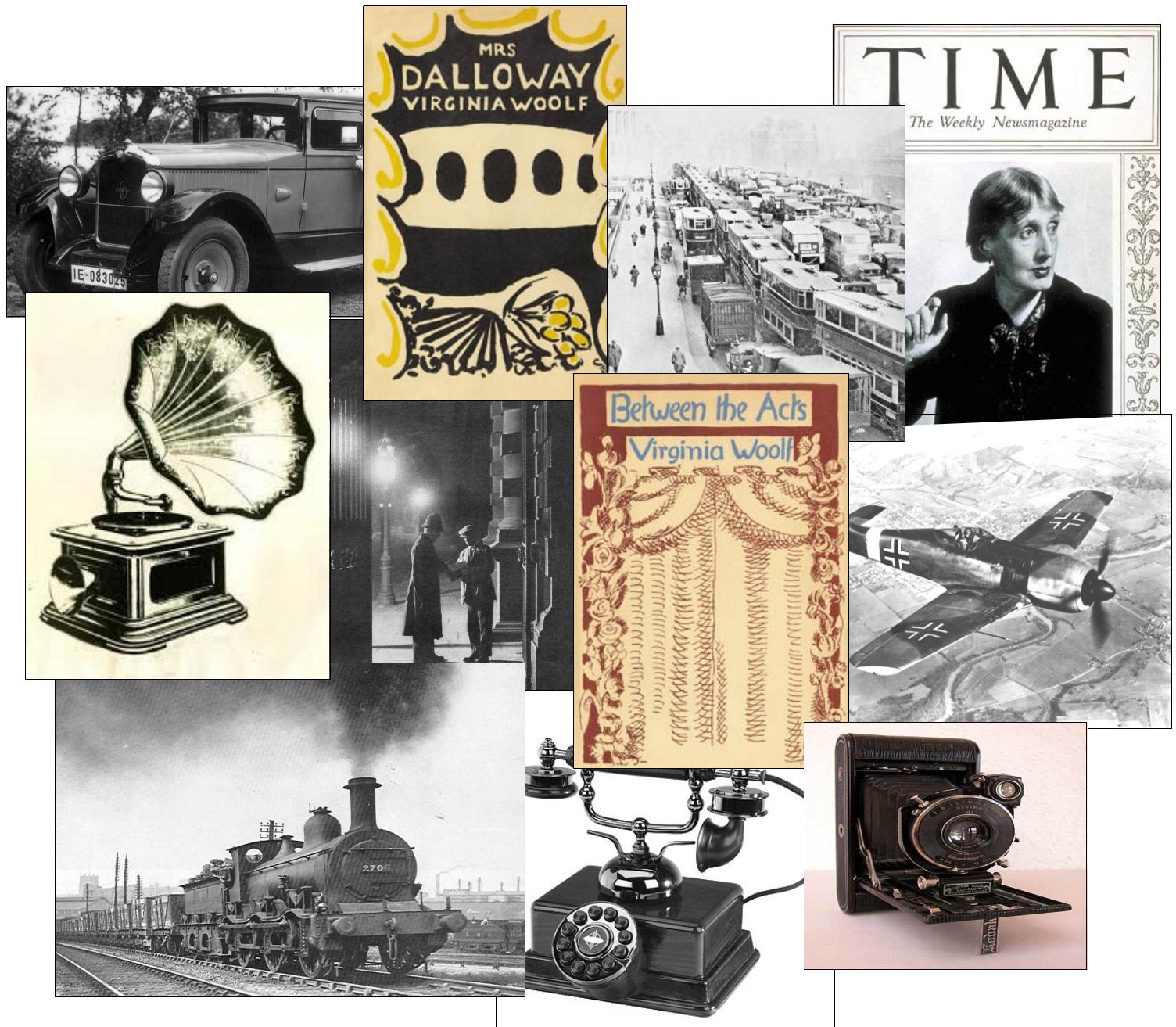


VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE SOUL OF TECHNOLOGY



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Abbreviations

Works by Virginia Woolf

- VO* *The Voyage Out*
JR *Jacob's Room*
MD *Mrs Dalloway*
O *Orlando*
TY *The Years*
TG *Three Guineas*
BA *Between the Acts*
D *Diary of Virginia Woolf*
SE *Selected Essays*

Technologies in Times of Peace

Luxuries for the Soul

In 1924 Virginia Woolf dreams of a new life and a new house in London. She wishes “our domestic establishment [...] entirely controlled by one woman, a vacuum cleaner, and electric stoves.” (D 2:281) Woolf got her domestic dream and more than that. Their growing income enabled the Woolfs to afford increasing luxuries, so that in 1931 Woolf can marvel:

At Monks House we had electric light, & the Frigidaire is [...] working. When the electric light fused, we could hardly tolerate Alladin lamps, so soon is the soul corrupted by comfort. Yesterday men were in the house all day boring holes for electric fires. [...] And, though the moralists say, when one has a thing one at once finds it hollow, I dont at all agree. I enjoy my luxuries at every turn, & think them wholly good for what I am pleased to call the soul. (D 4:28)

In August of that same year she adds: “... loud speaker [gramophone], camera, Electric Light, frigidaire – thus I run through those material blessings which one ought so say make no difference. Yet they do”.

It is very clear that Woolf was fond of her material and technological luxuries. She even goes as far as to claim that “telephone, gas, electric light” are “the resources of civilisation” (D 2:293). In connection to civilisation, the word 'resources' can be defined as “a country's means of supporting itself or becoming wealthier” (OED). It points to an idea of independence and progress that Woolf linked to both technology and civilization. In her book *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde* (2005) Christine Froula studied the concept of civilization that Woolf and the Bloomsbury avant-garde envisioned. She claims this concept was based on the Kantian idea of Enlightenment that entails an “unending struggle” (2) for “a democratic, economically egalitarian, international civilization” (4) ruled by world peace. However, she also asserts that Bloomsbury thinkers and artists fought “for a civilization that had never existed” (3). Civilization is a goal yet to be attained, in a continuous process of struggle.

Woolf connects that notion of civilization with the progress of technology. According to Tom Standage this link has been forged ever since the invention of the telegraph in the nineteenth century. In his book *The Victorian Internet* (1990), Standage claims that since the birth of telegraphy and the progress it brought, there has always been a sense of hope pinned on new technological creations (211). Moreover, devices like the telegraph, or electricity, were believed to bring world peace, because of the global connections they made possible (82f), a world peace Bloomsbury fought for as well. However, it was world war, not world peace, that dominated the twentieth century. This lead Albert Einstein to claim, after the First World War, that “all our lauded

technological progress – our very civilization- is like an axe in the hand of the pathological criminal” (qtd. Ronell 19). Woolf too experienced the Great War and came of age in the Interwar period with its war threats. Still, she remains largely positive about technology. She even regularly compares herself to a piece of machinery, for example when she asserts in 1933: “What I must do is to set it – my machine I mean – on the rails & give it a push.” (D 4:160) But what can account for her positive look upon technology and the progress it might bring to civilization? By first looking at her reflections upon technology in times of peace I will shed more light upon the question of her treatment of technology under the threat of war. These peacetime technologies are divided in three main groups, defined by their nature as technological devices; technologies of transmission, recording and transportation.

Through the Air

Woolf has bound up her notion of civilization with technologies like electricity and telephony; both function by transmitting signals in two, or more, directions along tubes and wires. These transmissions effect communication over greater distances, or simply a movement of electric signs along a wired network. Telephony was made possible in 1876 by the invention of Alexander Graham Bell, who found a way of transmitting sound over great distances. Within three years of its first invention, the number of telephone receivers worldwide increased by over 130 percent (cf. Standage 197). Though Bell is credited for having invented the first working telephone, Friedrich Kittler claims that the telephone was largely an improvement of that earlier device, the telegraph (Kittler 27f). Indeed, the telephone was initially known as the “speaking telegraph” (Standage 197), but soon outgrew its ‘older brother’. Thus, by the time Woolf was born, in 1882, the telephone was rapidly becoming a familiar household product and dispelled the telegraph from its position at the cutting-edge of technology (200).

Nevertheless, the telegraph remains present during the Woolfs's lifetime. They frequently sent or received telegrams themselves for they were faster than the post, especially when great distances were involved (D 2:204). A telegram could give the feeling of instantaneous communication with another part of the world. A connection made visible by the wires that linked the many telegraph offices worldwide (cf. Standage 3f). This feeling of immediate communication and simultaneity can be seen in Woolf's 1928 novel, *Orlando*. When Orlando lives in the late nineteenth century, she uses telegraphy to attempt an instant conversation with her absent husband: “whenever anything popped violently into her head, she went straight to the nearest telegraph office and wired to him.” (184) The telegraphic wire gives Orlando the feeling of simultaneity; by receiving her thoughts at the moment she sends them, her husband comes very near to her. She even uses a special cipher language “so that a whole spiritual state of the utmost complexity might be

conveyed in a word or two without the telegraph clerk being any the wiser." (185) This code language makes the virtual proximity between Orlando and her husband even more personal; it creates a special community of two people linked by a wire.

However, there were several flaws in this system. First of all, the necessity to use code language points to a lack of privacy on the wires. Indeed, Standage claims that operators could 'listen in' to the message being sent, especially during the early days of telegraphy when the system often consisted of one single wire (65, 110). Thus, the special bond between Orlando and her husband is very fragile. Moreover, the immediate connection the telegraph suggested was only immediate for the telegraph operators, for its other users the telegraph still functioned more or less like the post, only quicker. But most importantly, the wires, though linking people together, also "stimulate[d] the desire for physical presence", thereby underlining the absence of a voice or person (Otis 195f). Thus, Orlando's attempt at instantaneous contact with her husband is more an ideal than reality. Yet, Orlando keeps wiring her husband about her surging thoughts and feelings (188); the idea of virtually living together through the telegraphic linkages drives Orlando back to this modern invention despite its lacks and failures.

Another medium that uses wires to enable communication is of course the telephone. In Woolf's second novel, *Jacob's Room* (1922), the narrator spends several pages discussing the use of the telephone and comparing this new device to the older postal system. She claims: "And the telephones ring. And everywhere we go wires and tubes surround us to carry the voices that try to penetrate before the last card is dealt and the days are over [...] Yet, letters are venerable; and the telephone is valiant." (87) For the narrator, letters are venerable, but also lost and forlorn, it is "speech attempted" (87). This brings to mind the attempts at speech Orlando makes in her one-sided conversation with her husband. The telephone, however, is valiant like the soldier Jacob will become. It underlines a certain kind of determination carried by the voices over the telephone wires. Thus, the telephone brings the "speech attempted" by letters a step further. Nevertheless, both letters and telephone calls seem necessary to join people together, for "if bound together by notes and telephones we went in company, perhaps - " (87). In her extensive study on the telephone, *The Telephone Book* (1989), Avital Ronell shapes her work like a telephone conversation of which static and interference are, as she claims, a major part (xv). Nevertheless, her first chapter starts with a description of a person answering a call and thereby establishing a connection between two people (2).

The sense of community brought about by letters and telephone calls is also visible in Woolf's diaries. In an entry of November 28, 1919, she describes her activities of the previous weeks as: "a greater number than usual of dinners, letters, telephone calls, books to review, reviews of my books, invitations to parties and so forth." (D 1:313) Woolf groups together a range of social

activities, both friendship and business meetings, of which the telephone calls are a common part. For Woolf, society was very important, it was one of the reasons she moved back to London from Richmond in 1924: "London thou art a jewel of jewels [...] music, talk, friendship, city views, books, publishing" (D 2: 283) As part of society, talking to people on the telephone brings them as close as dinners and parties do. However, as in *Jacob's Room*, letters and dinner parties are also still part of this everyday communication; therefore it should be noted that Woolf saw the telephone as one of several devices to bind herself to other people in society, not all of which were technological.

Yet, the telephone does have a special element, as was already visible in *Jacob's Room*; the hearing of a real voice. Even as late as 1928 Woolf was still amazed by this wonder: "Julian dines with us tonight to meet Miss Sylvia Norman whom I fetched up from complete nonentity on the telephone last night. Another marvel of science." (D 3: 187) After this phone call, Miss Sylvia Norman indeed visited the Woolfs, therefore the nonentity is completely reversed here. In most cases, however, a telephone call would not result in the immediate appearance of another person. But, as Ronell asserts, the direct hearing of a voice can certainly lead to instant action, for "the call of the telephone" can be "the call of duty" or "giving something up, receiving an order" (2). This direct action is illustrated for Woolf by the appearance of a person which underlines that a telephone always implies another telephone; more than with letters, the person receiving the call is necessary to make the system of immediate connection work (cf. Ronell 3f).

Thus, the society created by the telephone becomes more pressing than that produced by the telegraph and results in a feeling of increased proximity. This can be seen in Woolf's novel *The Years* (1937). In the present day section of the book, Eleanor Pargiter phones her cousin North, who describes to her their cousin Sara, with whom he's having dinner. After the conversation, Eleanor is "smiling at the little telephone picture of two people at the other end of London, one of whom was sitting on the edge of her chair with a smudge on her face." (283) North's voice paints a picture that makes Eleanor feel a part of the life she imagines at the other end of London; it creates a presence that, though virtual, makes her smile. The philosopher Maurice Blanchot maintained that "a problematics of image-obliteration engages the telephone and even the rhetoric surrounding it." (Ronell 21) Ronell explains that this leads to idea of "the dead gaze" (22f). Woolf, however, entirely opposes this concept. To her, the telephone certainly does create an image, and though it leads the gaze to something beyond reality, a picture only imagined, this more-than-real image is alive and provides for Eleanor a positive sense of connection. Moreover, Woolf adds another dimension. For, shortly after Eleanor's phone conversation Peggy asks: "One of these days d'you think you'll be able so see things at the end of the telephone?" (286) What Eleanor only imagines, Peggy already conceives as possible for the future. It is precisely the idea of the image created by

the telephone that Woolf uses to illustrate the possibility of an increasing proximity between people in time yet to come.

Despite this positive look on the telephone, however, it is also regarded as an ambiguous instrument. As with the telegraph, there is still a physical absence to be reckoned with; even though she smiles at the scene she imagines, Eleanor is not really a part of it. Furthermore, the closeness envisioned by Peggy has not yet been realised. This ambiguity was also recognised by another contemporary of Woolf, Sigmund Freud. As Ronell has asserted, for Freud “the most earnest concept of ambivalence [...] is built into the telephone” (230), since there is a presence and a cut off of that presence; something is missing (cf. Ronell 4). This idea of absence becomes even clearer in relation to North. When he arrives at Sara's house for dinner, Sara is still talking to somebody on the telephone. North sees her talking, yet notes: “there was nobody there” (272). The distance here created by the telephone can be regarded as a double void: first of all there is the physical absence of the person at the other end of the telephone line. Furthermore, the telephone conversation creates a distance between North and Sara. Thus, the telephone symbolises both presence and absence; where for Sara it presents the presence of a voice, and the absence of a physical being, for North it means an absence of both this voice and a physical being. In the case of *The Years* this underlines North's lack of connection to English society, since he has just come back from a long stay in Africa (267). Still, this example illustrates how ambiguous a technology like the telephone can be.

Ronell claims that for Freud the telephone points to this cutting, but it also makes “telephonic couplings” possible (230). These couplings contain relations between human beings, but they can also embody more metaphorical connections; for example between a woman and her mind (cf. Ronell 89) Yet, this pairing too can be cut off or interrupted. As Woolf illustrates: “ Such a good morning's writing I'd planned, & wasted the cream of my brain on the telephone” (D 2:32). By incessantly calling attention to itself, “a telephone bell ringing I, I, I” as Peggy describes it (TY 315), the telephone sometimes creates too many obligatory conversations and thereby prevents Woolf from thinking and writing (cf. D 3:130). Thus, the telephone has stood in the way of productivity and separated her from the stream of thought. However, it can also work in the opposite direction. In a diary entry of 1935 Woolf states that, after a moment of interlude “at once life – that is the telephone beginning – starts.” (D 4:319) After a short interval, here of depression, the telephone reconnects Woolf with life and reality. It disturbs a moment of stasis in order for life to continue. Thus, the telephone provides images of metaphorical connections; an image moreover that consists of continuous motion.

Ronell goes even further and claims that the telephone itself flirts with the opposition between life and death. Because live voices insert themselves in the telephone and become a part of it; the telephone cannot be considered completely dead (84f). In her philosophical analysis of

telephony, Ronell therefore sees this instrument as the site of postmodern dissemination (84). Though Woolf might not go that far, the image of the telephone as always referring elsewhere underlines the idea of movement this machine can bring. It is as such that life interferes with death. Woolf has claimed before: "I meant to write about death, only life came breaking in as usual" (D 2:167) The life Woolf describes here is seen as active, words like "beginning" and "breaking in" underline this idea of movement. The interruption of the telephone therefore is welcome if it brings motion, like thoughts and productivity; elements that separate life from the stasis of death. As a disruption that moves forward and does not stop, it can thereby also create new links that are part of the social network Woolf seems to value so. An ever moving network of community and connections is thereby the most important goal of the transmissive technologies of the telegraph and telephone.

Furthermore, this concept of the social network is depicted by Ronell when she claims the telephone: "presupposes the existence of another telephone [...] To be what it is, it has to be pluralized, multiplied, engaged by another line..." (4) Woolf herself links this pluralisation to the metaphor of the telephone switchboard. In one of her journals she describes Lady Colefax, a frequent visitor to the Woolfs: "I found us talking socially, not intimately, she in pearls [...] popping up one light after another: like the switch board at the telephone exchange at the mention of names." (D 3:116). Woolf is not very flattering about Lady Colefax, for she claims that "the machine doesn't work in private". Though Woolf herself valued social contact, here she expresses the need for intimate connections as well. Woolf compares Colefax to the switchboard, thereby implying that she is nothing more than a social network; her own person is absent. This absence is not the physical absence inherent in the telephone; it is a mental emptiness never leading beyond the surface of society. Moreover, its a void that has lead Woolf to conclude Lady Colefax resembles a machine. It appears that in spite of the telephone always referring to another telephone, an ever moving network of connections, Woolf does look for something more substantial; a station between fluxes that does not just distribute motion, but is itself affected by these signals; a machine that is affected by life. Indeed, she herself already provided the means for this substantiality by inserting moments of human thought. Thus, by their ambiguous nature, the telegraph and telephone can be used in such a way that they can contribute to the civilization Woolf envisioned for the future, but only when their mechanical side does not come to dominate, as with Lady Colefax.

Moreover, in the description of Lady Colefax, the telephone is linked to lights popping up. This coupling of light and telephony was also visible in the diary entry of February 23, 1924 where Woolf mentioned electric light as a technological device that is equally a "resource of civilisation". Nevertheless, unlike telephony and telegraphy that attempt to bring about communication between people, electricity functions by transmitting signals around a network of wires, without ending in

long-distance conversation; the human element is thus less prominent. Still, electric light is part of the luxuries she enjoys as much as possible (D 4:28) and it appears in many of her works. In her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), lights emerge almost immediately. The narrator describes London as seen through the eyes of the main characters sailing the Thames:

... and London was a swarm of lights with a pale yellow canopy drooping above it.

There were the lights of the great theatres, the lights of the long streets, lights that indicated huge squares of domestic comfort, lights that hung high in the air. (11)

The picture of London painted here is very similar to the image of a light bulb. The word 'canopy' can be defined as a "covering [...] over a throne, couch, bed" or shrine, or as the 'umbrella' of a parachute (OED). Seen from the river, this canopy forms a gathering of all the little lights of London in one pale yellow firmament. London as a city of light.

Within the collective light of London this quote also points to human activity, for the lights form a "swarm", an adjective normally used only in reference to insects or people. In connection to a city it indicates a multitude of bodies (cf. OED). Thus the lights are bound up with an active human night life, which is further underlined by the spaces that are enlightened: the theatres, streets and homes. In his book *Nights in the Big City* (1998) Joachim Schlör has analysed the night life in the cities of London, Paris and Berlin. He claims that from the 1830s onwards the nocturnal city has 'opened up' (23). Before that time there had been a clear separation between night and day, whereby the "nature of night was silence" (43). However, with the coming of the first street lighting the difference between night and day gradually disappeared (59). This process started with the arrival of gas lights in 1825 and culminated in the coming of electric street lights in 1880 which assured a "definite conquest of the night" (66). In Woolf's novels, this new day at night is also present. In *The Years*, where a newspaper report relates to Kitty, that new "brilliant lights" illuminated everything "as if by daylight." (68) Orlando describes a similar scene when she walks in the modern city at night: "And the sky was bright all night long; and the pavements were bright; everything was bright." (194) The darkness of the night has vanished, Schlör claims it disappeared into pre-history and was thus no longer part of the modern city life (57).

In spite of these street lights, the earliest night life was situated mainly in closed spaces, like restaurants, shops and theatres (Schlör 39). These locations of withdrawal returned as the main public spaces in the 1930s (279). However, for the long period in between 'luxury lighting' on the boulevards created its own public space as it "came together with the newly discovered entertainment of the evening walk" (60). Thereby, light enables new forms of connections between people in lighted spaces. In her diary Woolf paints the sights that could be seen on these night time walks: "then we turned out into Regent Street where the lamps were lit, and the shop opposite had all its windows full of bright clothes" (D 1:241). For Woolf "the shops blazoning unshaded lights"

(D 1:217) were a fascinating sight to be seen. Electric light creates the entertainment of observing life outside. Even in 1930 she claims: “I began to feel the quality of the evening – [...] a silver light; mixing with the early lamps; the cabs all rushing through the streets; I had a tremendous sense of life beginning” (D 3:287). The life she watches is a rushing stream of traffic; people are all going on a journey to their own form of entertainment. This is underlined by Peter Walsh in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). On a night time walk he claims “it seemed as if the whole of London were embarking in little boats moored to the bank, tossing on the waters, as if the whole place were floating off in carnival.” (145) Thus, the street is also a link between outside and inside spaces of entertainment. The people “floating off” provide amusement for those in the streets, while being on their way to their own closed spaces of pleasure in theatres, houses or restaurants.

Woolf also creates other visible links joining both the open en enclosed spaces of entertainment Schlör detects. These are the connections made by some of the characters in her novels observing illuminated private spaces from their position on the lighted street. Peter, for instance, on his way to Clarissa Dalloway's party, contemplates the concept of beauty and remarks:

It was not beauty pure and simple – Bedford Place leading into Russell Square. [...] but it was also windows lit up, a piano, a gramophone sounding; a sense of pleasure-making hidden, but now and again emerging when, through the uncurtained window, the window left open, one saw parties sitting over tables, young people slowly circling, conversations between men and women... (144)

The scenes he characterises are part of a normal life; conversations and romances between people. Even though he sees only fragments that reach him “now and again” through the frames of lit up windows, it gives him pleasure to absorb the mysteries of this life (144). His contemplations briefly connect him to the hidden lives of others.

Sara Pargiter relates a similar experience to her cousin North: “I remember [...] A still autumn night; the lights lit; and people padding along the pavement with wreaths in their hands?” (TY 280) And on this night she saw a car coming:

Yes; the Rolls-Royce. It stopped in the lamplight and there they sat [...] two people [...] He was smoking a cigar. An upper-class Englishman with a big nose, in a dress suit. And she, sitting beside him, in a fur-trimmed cloak, took advantage of the pause under the lamplight to raise her hand [...] and polish that spade, her mouth. (281)

Sara observes this highlighted scene that takes place in the enclosed but visible space of the car. Unlike Peter, she does not feel pleasure as she gives meaning to the event she witnesses. The ironic use of phrases like “Englishman with a big nose” and “that spade her mouth” illustrate that Sara's personal feelings stand in the way of an objective interpretation of this sight. Peter seems to be more of an impartial observer than Sara. Nevertheless, they are both still only that: observers. They are

not part of the pictures shown by lamplight and when the car moves on or the curtain closes, the image will disappear. The connection between inside and outside here is fragile.

A more solid joining of the two spaces is made by people entering houses, theatres or other lighted spaces. Thus, Peter arrives in “the house, the lighted house” of Clarissa’s party (145), thereby becoming actively involved in the scene. Woolf herself regularly visited theatres and parties and felt “intoxicated” by their light and voices (D 1: 10). She was often physically affected by the sensations the evening parties produced: “Let the scene open on the doorstep of number 50 Gordon Square. [...] and the blood, not the sticky whitish fluid of daytime, but brilliant and prickling like champagne.” (D 2: 222f) The brilliance and sparkle of the emotions here create an almost electric vocabulary that invades even the private space of the body. However, in spite of providing an entry to these enclosed spaces, the word “scene” that opens this description also accentuates the fragmentariness of the illuminated private sphere. Similarly, in *The Years*, Eleanor enters a drawing room that “After the dark [...] with its lamps lit had the effect of a stage.” (182) The entertainment electricity brings invades the private space more than might be expected, for it transforms even the house into a stage, thereby underlining life as a performance.

This idea of life as a play can also be found in Woolf’s last novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), where she explains that we are all “orts, scraps, and fragments” of the play of life (116). However, this is not necessarily seen as negative, for Woolf underlines that it is the way we give meaning to this play that matters (124): the connections between the orts, scraps and fragments. It are precisely these links that are embodied by technologies of transmission. Looking at the technological qualities of telegraphy, telephony and electric light, has provided Woolf with ideas as to the functioning of the connections between the fragments of human life. This, she has applied to her own life; a life of writing fiction. Thus, *Between the Acts* effectuates a continuous thinking about the meaning of the play. In the case of electric light the links between the enclosed and open lighted spaces can only be made by continuous movement, people embarking on the flux of city night life. The image of London as a “swarm of lights” brings to mind the picture of an ant-hill, where people, like ants, keep moving to and from each other in order to uphold their social network.

With this idea of a social network consisting of spaces of light, we return to the description of London given in *The Voyage Out* where the swarm of London lights form the pale yellow canopy that encloses the entire city night life. But the narrator goes on: “No darkness would ever settle upon those lamps, as no darkness had settled upon them for hundreds of years. [...] the town would blaze forever in the same spot” (11). Here lights embody more than electric bulbs. Light thus assures another motion; the movement towards the symbolic realm. Schlör asserts that in Paris, the actual difference in street lighting lead to metaphors about lighter and darker city spaces (38), Woolf, however, uses light metaphors not in relation to physical areas, but on the contrary; to

describe human beings and the space of their mind. These analyses of the human mind take place when the links created between outer and inner city spaces become fixed for a moment; at times of actual social communication between people.

An example of this can be found in Woolf's journals where she describes the visit of Mrs Webb who "divines a little what one's natural proclivities are, and she irradiates them with her bright electric torch" without welcoming "one's individuality" (D 1:194). However, the surface is touched by too strong an illumination. Like Mrs Colefax who was compared to a telephone switchboard, Mrs Webb too is juxtaposed to an electrical instrument; the electric torch. Again, this comparison is not much of a compliment, for Mrs Webb radiates light only in order to blind individual differences. The mechanical aspect in her has come to dominate the metaphor. The image of blinding comes back when Woolf relates a dinner party with Mr and Mrs George Cole: "...and Cole and Mrs hopping on the surface like a couple of cockney sparrows. The whole effect as of electric light full in the eyes [...] as it is not a shade or valley in her mind." (D 2: 40f) The electric light that the Coles ignite is again blinding to the eyes and results only in a completely illuminated field without "shade or valley", or individual differences. It underlines that if light is used the wrong way it undermines the relief of the thinking mind; it makes that mental space superficial and mechanical; for the one thing that separates human beings from machines is their thinking and as long as they use that, they can rule the machine. Thus at a moment of fixation, reflection is wanted in order to prevent the technology from taking over.

Fortunately, like the telephone, electric light is ambiguous. When Woolf uses electric light herself, for instance, it does not blind. Woolf uses electric light, for example, when Vita Sackville-West and her husband come to visit: "Exposed to electric light eggs show dark patches. I mean we judged them both incurably stupid."(D 2: 239) Woolf's electric light functions contrary to Webbs's light and exposes rather than blinds the people around her. Here she reveals darkness that represents the absence of intellect, but darkness means more than that. Schlör claims that the dark had its useful sides: though it often lead to immoral behaviour, darkness also created for people the idea of free movement (22f). Without darkness connecting spaces of light, without curtains veiling inside spaces, everything would become visible. This would undo the scenes and fragments of life and rather unite them in a static whole, something Woolf opposed. In consequence, she sees advantages in darkness, yet argues for spaces not of total blackness, but of penetrable shadows, co-existing with light. This is exemplified in her diaries where she uses images of daylight and gaslight next to those of electric light in order to illustrate the illumination of people. Thus, in 1920 she talks about E.M. Forster, who represents daylight "capable of showing up the rouge & powder, the dust & wrinkles, the cracks & contortions of my poor parrokeet." (D 2: 6). Moreover, Woolf claims herself to be "like a lantern stood in the middle of a field [where] my light goes up in darkness." (D 2:72)

Candles and gas light have the possibility to add shadows to the brightness of electrical illumination. Moreover, they represent a natural element that is combined with technology; this gives a better result than technology alone. It is in this context that Woolf looks at fiction as well; if it is combined with elements of technology fiction can become more powerful in illuminating the diversity of human life and the human mind.

Nevertheless, Woolf provides herself with a special role in the enlightenment of others, for she is the only one who operates electric light the right way. Perhaps the reason for this is, that she is an author, a profession Woolf endows with great powers. Thus, as for the telephone, she herself seems to be the best user of technologies that lead to minds of profound motion. Still, she also claims to use "friends rather as giglamps: Theres another field I see: by your light. Over there's a hill. I widen my landscape." (D 3:316) The word 'giglamp' signifies the lamps on either side of a small carriage, but can also mean 'spectacles'. It underlines the image of people enlightening each other; making each other see. If Woolf were to use electricity alone, it would eventually become blinding, as her example of the Coles and Mrs Webb illustrate. However, her friends add the necessary shadow to her light; whereby she remains dependent on others to keep clarifying instead of blinding. It gives responsibility to individuals and to the group; if both remain critical of each other the right combination of mechanical and natural light can be found that prevents the eventual taking over of electricity. Thus, it is the communal operating of light that produces the best result; a space of light and darkness where continuous movement brings ever new elements of the landscape to light.

Froula claims that the civilization Woolf and Bloomsbury fought for, was a goal yet to be attained (3), electric light, both as metaphor and as real phenomenon, can contribute to that as long as its power is not abused. Furthermore, light represents transmission as movement in itself and this transmissive motion between lighted public and private spaces, also leads to a motion of the human mind. Like a telephone always referring to another telephone, it creates a mind always referring elsewhere; a mind capable of continuous thought. The transmissive flux thereby leads from public to private to inner spaces and back; at least, so long as it is operated in the right way. In her diaries, Woolf provides us with a users manual as to the proper application of technologies of transmission. In her novels, she illustrates these ideas. Nevertheless, there is a much closer relation between Woolf's writing and technologies than becomes visible in the technological devices analysed so far. This can be illustrated by looking at Woolf and the use of photography in her journals and fictional work. Photography is an instrument of recording and it is precisely this function that enables a dialectic use of the technology, both in reality and in fiction. Fiction thereby comes to resemble its technological counterpart. In order to illustrate this, we first have to go back to Woolf's childhood.

Machines of Discord

In peace time Woolf linked technologies to a sense of progress. This feeling is related to an escape from the darkness of the past. In *Orlando* the narrator claims: "All was darkness; all was doubt; all was confusion. The Eighteenth century was over; the Nineteenth century had begun." (145) Here, the Victorian Age is defined as the age of darkness. And, like the Pargiter sisters sitting in an enclosed and dark room in the nineteenth century (TY 15), so Woolf's personal Victorian past was literally spent in a dark house (Lee 40f). Though this actual darkness mainly signifies a much deeper metaphorical darkness connected to Woolf's childhood, it remains interesting to see that her escape out of that past with a move to Bloomsbury was also a real progression towards the light. The Bloomsbury house where, then, Virginia Stephen, came to live in December 1904 was the Stephen children's first house with electric lighting. Woolf's biographer Hermione Lee adds that in Bloomsbury "there was more light and space for them all" (205), thereby underlining that going to Bloomsbury was literally a stepping out of a darker past. However, the Stephens children also took part of this past with them as they moved out of their father's house. Lee asserts that Vanessa, who decorated the house, also "hung up Watts' portraits of their parents, and, in the entrance hall, Julia Margaret Cameron's¹ photographs of the great Victorians (Tennyson, Meredith, Browning, Herschel) and of Julia Stephen." (205) Thus, Woolf's personal past overlooked the new life that became her future in the form of old photographs.

Diane Gillespie has studied the meaning of photography in Woolf's personal life and in her writing. She claims that photographs kept absent people present and dead ones alive (120). This is illustrated by the earliest uses of photography in the Victorian Age, where parents often took photographs of their deceased children in order to keep their memory alive. The connection between photography and death is also visible in *Jacob's Room*. Here Jacob's girlfriend Flavinda knows nothing about her parents and she "had only the photograph of a tombstone beneath which, she said, her father lay buried."(71) Death is especially present on the photograph in the form of a grave, thereby also providing a link with the dead father. Yet, the photo does not show the father's actual image and it remains highly uncertain whether Flavinda's father is really buried there; *she said* so, but all Flavinda knows of her father stems from rumours (71f). Thus, the picture Flavinda makes of her father does not necessarily represent the truth.

Indeed, Gillespie asserts that it is often the case that "photographs from the past signal [...] a distortion of it" (125). Woolf herself illustrates this in *The Voyage Out* where the heroine Rachel is dominated by a picture of her dead mother, Teresa. This picture exists in the presence of an actual photograph of her mother, hanging in her father's office (VO 75). According to the narrator, the woman would have laughed at her husband if she could. He, however, simply sees in her the object

¹ Julia Margaret Cameron was Virginia's mother, Julia Stephen's, aunt. She became a rather famous Victorian photographer whose photographs are characterised as artificially posed and surreal portraits (cf. Schaffer 47).

to which he dedicates his life's work "and although he had not been particularly kind to her while she lived [...] he now believed that she watched him from heaven and inspired what was good in him." (76) While she was alive, Helen's mother could not entice her husband to be kind to her, but after her death he tries to make up for this by casting her in the role of his guardian angel. Because the photograph is thought to represent reality, it is easy to give the person captured by it idealised properties that one sees as representing the truth. In consequence it can be claimed that "an idealised dead woman dominates her husband" (Gillespie 121). Endowed with idealised qualities, Teresa's image symbolises the past as it never was.

Furthermore, Gillespie adds that by symbolising or presenting a distorted past, photographs can impose rigid definitions of social roles upon the present (125). In this context, Gillespie mainly studies the fixed social roles that existed for women in Woolf's age. The idealised picture of Rachel's mother in *The Voyage Out* indeed illustrates this, for the idealisation is kept up not only by Rachel's father, but by her aunts as well. While criticising Teresa during her life, they now want Rachel to live up to "an artificially stiff ideal of ladylike behaviour" (Gillespie 122). Teresa is no longer understood as the complex human being she might have been during her life, instead she is stifled in a fixed model her daughter has to live up to. This halts Rachel's understanding of life, or as Gillespie claims it contributed to Rachel's "arrested development" (Gillespie 122). Indeed; she is brought up only to play her mother's role and when Helen tells her to become her own person, Rachel can only stammer: "I can be m-m-myself [...] in spite of you, in spite of the Dalloways, and Mr. Pepper, and Father and my Aunts" (75). Teresa's distorted image has become fixed in an ideal social role, symbolised by a photograph. Since Teresa herself can no longer contradict this picture, it comes to dominate her daughter's life with extreme force; it produces a stifling of her mind, that is only opposed by Helen, who tries to enlighten Rachel.

This dominating social image, symbolised by the photograph, was also experienced by Woolf personally. Rachel's aunts portray Teresa as "very sad and very good" (171). This resembles the description of Woolf's own mother, Julia Stephen, by Hermione Lee as "the deep-socketed, hollow-eyed, far-gazing widow in her aunt Julia Margaret Cameron's intensely romantic shadowy photographs" (82) with eyes "modestly suffering the gaze of a very feathery angel." (83) According to Lee, the dead Julia Stephen became "the saint of Leslie Stephen", her husband, who feared he had treated her badly during her life (83). In consequence, for Woolf as well as some of her female characters, the photograph of the dead mother becomes linked to a fixed image of a sad angel, upheld by her surviving relatives, most notably the husband. Thus, photographs do not simply keep the dead or absent present, but rather fix their subjects in history and endowing them with qualities they did not have during their life; thereby forgetting the reality of who they were and allowing for the surrender of the living to the control of the dead.

This brings to mind Walter Benjamin's concept of the aura. He defines the aura of an artwork as pointing to "its here and now, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be." (Cadava 18). The aura of an artwork defines its authenticity (cf. Benjamin 139). Only a photograph that is considered to represent reality can gain such powers with which to impose the roles it symbolises. Thus, it is only as long as Rachel sees the image of her mother as true, that she feels the obligation to follow its lead. However, Benjamin adds that photography has actually created a loss of aura, for it enables the replication of "any given negative an indefinite number of times." The consequence is, according to Benjamin, that a photograph loses its uniqueness, for "the whole sphere of authenticity withdraws from technical [...] reproducibility". In consequence, the reproduced artwork is detached "from the domain of tradition" (Cadava 7, 18). In *The Voyage Out*, Helen helps Rachel to understand this by telling her she can be her own person. However, by the end of the novel, Rachel still ends up replacing her mother by getting engaged to Hewett (257). Nevertheless, Woolf herself did fight to escape the imposing roles of tradition and used the art of photography to do so. She played with photography's aura in order to expose its artificiality.

Several forms of artificiality become visible in her novel *Orlando*, where she combines the art of fiction with the technology of photography. Woolf's fourth novel is a biography of the character Orlando. It contains five photographs of Orlando and three of persons that played an important part in his life. As Schaffer states, photographs were expected to represent reality, thus providing the biographical story with real images that underline the biography's truth (30); the aura of photography is expected to enhance the text's reality. However, the reality of the text in *Orlando* is dubious from the beginning. First of all, the biography of Orlando is fictional, which is already illustrated by Orlando's transformation from man to woman halfway through the text. Moreover, it is also "the courageous publication of a lesbian love story"; the love story between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, to whom the book is dedicated (Schaffer 28). Thus the text itself already complicates its own truth-claims, which brings many critics to the conclusion that with *Orlando* Woolf expresses "doubts about the possibility of biography itself" (Schaffer 28).

The truth-claims of the photographs are thereby also immediately fragile. In this context it becomes very interesting to look at the connections between text and photographs and the ways in which they work together or oppose each other. In *Orlando* the expressive language initially underlines the importance of showing images while narrating a life story: much effort is made to describe Orlando's appearance. Biography and photography thus seem to support each other. In this context, a photograph of "Orlando as a Boy" (xx) is expected to represent the following:

The red of the cheeks was covered with peach down [...] The lips themselves were short and slightly drawn back over teeth of an exquisite and almond whiteness. [...] the hair was dark, the ears small, and fitted closely to the head. (4)

And his forehead is especially admired as “the swelling of a marble dome” (4). However, in the photograph of Orlando as a boy, his cheeks look pale, his teeth are not visible, nor are his ears. Moreover, his forehead is covered and does not show any resemblance to a great marble dome (cf. Schaffer 53). Just before this description, the biographer claims to be so happy to describe such a boy, for: “from deed to deed, from glory to glory, from office to office he must go [...] Orlando, *to look at*, was cut out precisely for some such career.” [my emphasis] (4) However, a comparison between Orlando's actual picture with his portrayal in the text, immediately attenuates the promise of his career. For, if Orlando does not look like his description, then what represents the truth, the text or the photograph? Cadava underlines that “Although images may help constitute the “truth” of an event [...] they do not belong to the domain of truth.” (xxviii) In consequence, Schaffer concludes that the photographs form a counter-narrative to the text (27), they undermine what the text says. However, the text itself was already considered untrustworthy. Thus, the photographs, though contradicting what the text says, actually support its play with structures of reality.

This can be further clarified by looking at another photograph in *Orlando*. One of the pictures in *Orlando* carries the caption “Orlando as Ambassador”(O 77). In the text, Orlando the ambassador, is portrayed as a man with “princely manners” but special emphasis is put on his leg: “Such a leg! Such a countenance!” (81) His legs are continually mentioned as his best assets. Nell Gwyn even goes as far as to lament: “Twas a thousand pities, that amorous lady sighed, that such a pair of legs should leave the country”(73). The narrator further mentions rumours that claim Orlando has won his dukedom because of “Nell Gwyn's tribute to the memory of a leg.” (79) Still, with all these evocations of the ambassador's legs, the picture that shows “Orlando as Ambassador” conveys only his upper body and completely ignores his legs. Thus, the picture weakens the truth of Orlando's portrayal in the text. More importantly however, the photograph is not displaying what it professes to show. Claiming to be the painting of a man, it is in fact a photograph of Vita Sackville-West (cf. Schaffer 55f). In consequence, the photograph obscures Orlando's sexual identity, but it does more than that, for it also displays Vita performing as the man Orlando. The photograph is playing with its own artificiality as well as with that of the text.

Hence, doubts are raised about the sexual identity of Orlando, Vita and “every human being”, since for all of us a vacillation ”from one sex to another takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness...” (121). Schaffer analyses these doubts about sexual

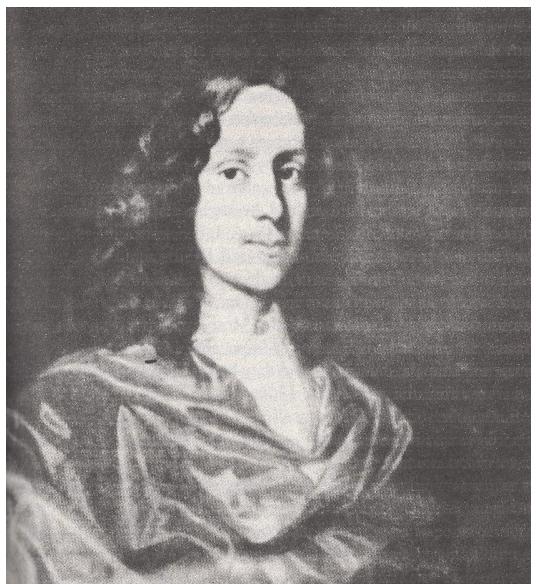


Figure 1. *Orlando as Ambassador*

identity by introducing Butler's notion of the 'masquerade' (cf. Schaffer 50). This concept implies successive layers of identity, hiding an original self (29), like Orlando, who has "a great variety of selves to call upon." (202) Thus, the text professes a loss of aura, or authenticity. However, the photographs are equally important here. In his study of Walter Benjamin and photography, *Words of Light* (1997), Eduardo Cadava claims that photographs become an actual part of the text through the links provided by the inscriptions that bridge "an image with its meaning, with the result that the images themselves signify only as elements in a pictorial script" (Cadava 21). This quote underlines that photographs with captions are submitted to the text. As a result, the viewer is forced to interpret the photograph in a certain way. In *Orlando*, the photos are also governed by captions.

Nevertheless, like the rest of the text, these inscriptions too are highly dubious. The caption "Orlando as Ambassador", for instance, claims to portray Orlando *as* ambassador, which underlines the performativity of this function (cf. Schaffer 56). To this is added another uncertainty, for who is performing as ambassador, Orlando or Vita? Thus, in *Orlando* neither text nor photograph dominates, rather, they work together to undermine any idea of truth or fixed identity. Thereby, where technologies of transmission merely illustrate the right technological usage, photography connects fiction and technology in such a way that, though still recognisable in their own right, they nevertheless become inseparable.

It is in this context that photography becomes the first technology Woolf applies on an actual level. The reason behind this is that, like fiction, photography too is considered an art form. But it is a special art form that is actually an art-technology. However, the nature of technology seems to oppose the nature of art, for where technology signifies motion, speed and reproduction, the classical artwork is defined by fixation and uniqueness. Nevertheless, by combining technology with art, the opposition between the two can be transformed in a dialectical point of usage. Like the hyphen that both divides and connects words, technological photography as hyphenated art can also function on two opposing levels. As such, photography as art-technology brings to mind the art works that are produced by mechanical reproduction, as defined by Walter Benjamin in his famous essay "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit"² (1936). Benjamin does not immediately regard art created by technological reproduction as negative, rather he claims it to be simply a new form of art that is brought forth by the conditions of the time (141). Indeed, at first sight, technological reproduction appears very positive, for Benjamin claims that it opposes concepts that are useful to fascism, like originality, geniality and everlasting durability (137).

Cadava, in analysing Benjamin's theories, adds another element to mechanical reproduction:

Seeking to eternalize its objects in the time and space of an image, the photographic present returns eternally to the event of its death – a death that comes with the death

² This essay is translated into English as "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction".

of understanding. That a photograph is always touched by death means that it offers us a glimpse of a history to which we no longer belong.(xxviii)

At the moment it captures a person on film, the photograph fixes an image that is already past in the present and shows a situation to which we cannot return. Thus, the photograph does not simply keep dead or absent people present, it also *embodies* death, not simply as the photograph of a tombstone, like in *Jacob's Room*, but as the absence of progress and motion. For, as it eternalizes objects in history: "photography works to immobilize the flow of history" (Cadava xx). Moreover, this death is an event, it is always still going on in the present. Thereby a photo comes to represent a metaphorical death that is defined by ongoing stasis. As such, a photograph leads both towards and away from history (xxvii).

In consequence, technological reproduction can be defined as dialectical. Benjamin himself claims it carries its own destruction within itself. For instance, where mechanically reproduced art destroys the concept of aura, it does not only eliminate the idea of originality and authenticity. It also eradicates the notion of tradition that is part of the artwork's authenticity, as Benjamin claims: "Die Einzigkeit des Kunstwerks ist identisch mit seinem Eingebetetsein in den Zusammenhang der Tradition" (143). This tradition usually found its expression in cults or rituals. However, as mechanical reproduction destroys these, the art work is thus taken out of its context. The danger of which is, as Benjamin argues, that a secret tradition will form itself in the form of a hidden political purpose. This hidden meaning will nevertheless be incorporated in the work of art and thereby demand (fordern) a certain reaction from its audience (148).

Furthermore, mechanical reproduction is thought to oppose the idea of "Schöpfertum", or creative power (137). The German word "Schöpfer" also signifies Creator, or God, and thereby points to a single Supreme Being. But, when art becomes mass produced, the idea of originality loses importance since everybody can easily become an artist (155f). Even so, Benjamin explains that the new concept of mass production also results in mass perception and it is at this point that mechanical reproduction again starts to undermine itself (148). According to Benjamin, the masses have the strange quality of exerting a kind of self-control that follows a simple formula: people do not want their opinion to differ from that of others (159). This function of the masses can easily be abused by people who want to reinstate the idea of a Supreme Being, like a dictator (154). Thereby, a dictator can transform the masses he rules into an apparatus with a mind thus flattened that it is only capable of reproducing superficial ideas imposed upon it; indeed, a dictator can change a mass into another mechanically reproduced art work (Cadava 49f).

Nevertheless, in spite of all the undermining functions inherent in mechanical reproduction, its dialectical character asserts that next to destroy, it can also create. Indeed, Cadava has claimed that photography moves away from history, and its aura, but also towards it. Thus, at the point of

its own destruction, there is also the hope of a solution. Cadava claims that for Benjamin, history and photography are intertwined: there is no history prior to photography; history is represented in photographic terms. Benjamin, furthermore, argues that “there is no history without the capacity to arrest historical movement” (xx). The fixing capacities of photographs, while producing a stasis that is defined as death, can also *create* something else. As is characteristic for Benjamin's dialectical theories; death as event points to the motion of stasis. In this context, it is precisely in moments of arrest that photographs, instead of fixing the past in the present, can also perform an interruption of the present (61). Where telegraphy and telephony created moments of interruption that were really disrupting movements, photography creates interruption as a moment of real fixation that leads to the possibility of reproduction. It is there that room for reflection can take shape, for, reproduction is always copying with a difference and in this space of difference, thought is kept in motion. It is also at this point that, according to Cadava, Benjamin makes a call for responsibility, “a call that requires a passionate and determined effort of reflection” (4); an obligation to think and act. Thus, photography, like the other technologies already reflected upon, is an ambiguous technology; it can create precisely at the point where it destroys. Pierre Mac Orlan summarises it thus: “The camera's click suspends life in an act that the developed film reveals as its essence.” (qtd. Cadava 7)

In *Orlando* Woolf has done exactly that: created a space of reflection by undermining the truth claims imposed by biography. In order to do so she has used photography's qualities that stem from it's being an art that is mechanically produced. She has played with the idea of the aura as representing authenticity and undermined it. However, *Orlando* is not only undermining the implications of mechanical reproduction, it also illustrates the dangers that can result from this reproduction, for indeed a loss of aura can also signify a loss of history and tradition which leads to the imposition of fixed social roles outside of their context by authoritarian persons. Nevertheless, Woolf has also used photography's fixing capacity to undermine itself and create a space of difference that can be used for reflection. Furthermore, the space thus created *continually* produces new possibilities, for although the photograph is a reproduction of its negative, it is also “immediately different from itself, always taking another form.”(7) As Cadava has claimed, photography can mean “the death of understanding”. However, when it works at the cutting-edge between destruction and creation, photography, by undermining its own implications, thus also works against this death. If used in the right way, photography thereby causes continual reflection. The consequence of which is that no real conclusion, either to thinking or identity, is ever reached.

This can be further illustrated by looking at Woolf's personal relation to photography. When it came to photographs of Woolf herself, she shows a definite aversion to this art-technology. Though she liked taking photographs of others (Gillespie 129ff), she did not want to be

photographed herself, particularly if it came to the taking of official pictures. By the end of Woolf's lifetime, however, photojournalism had become more and more influential and Woolf, as an increasingly famous person, was being harassed by journalists invading her house to take her picture (146). However, Woolf detested this and went as far as to suggest a "Society for the Protection of Privacy" (qtd. Gillespie 134). Moreover, she did not want to be photographed even by famous photographers such as Gisèle Freund. Hermione Lee asserts that Woolf was "enraged" when Freund was invited into her house by a friend, Victoria Ocampo, to take her picture (661). Lee even claims that the resulting photograph "eloquently show[s] up the subject's resistance and dismay" (716). An explanation for this resistance towards being photographed is given by Woolf herself in a diary entry of September 16, 1932. Here she writes:

I'm in such a tremor that I've botched the last – penultimate chapter of *Flush* [...] & can hardly sit still. [...] Wishart is publishing L.'s snap shot of me instead of the Lenare photograph & I feel that my privacy is invaded; my legs show; & I am revealed to the world (1,000 at most) as a plain dowdy old woman. (D 4: 123f)

A first reading of this passage seems to emphasise a snobbish image of Woolf, who shows feelings of "wounded vanity" (Gillespie 132). However, there is more to it than that.

The diary entry about Leonard's snapshots, brings to mind a scene in Woolf's novel *Between the Acts*, where the audience of a village pageant is reflected by pieces of mirror and thus captured just as they appear at that very moment. Like Woolf, the audience does not like this, for "that's cruel. To *snap* us as we are before we've had time to assume... And only, too, in parts." [my emphasis] (114) The snapshot of the audience here provided resembles a private photograph of a person who is unconsciously caught on film. It appears that both Woolf and the audience still believe in the possibility of authenticity provided by the photographs; for if they had time to prepare for an official photograph, they might have been pictured just as they are. What the audience in *Between the Acts* opposes, however, is being snapped in parts. Nevertheless, the vicar who explains the meaning of the pageant tells them that "orts, scraps and fragments" (117) is all they are. The perception of the audience in *Between the Acts* remains incomplete. As was stated before, the audience is part of the play of life and it is the way they give meaning to this play that matters; not the creation of an absolute truth of meaning. In consequence, Woolf was not afraid so much of being photographed, but of being captured in "a role she did not want to play" (133). Rather, she opts for a continuous changing of roles.

Nevertheless, being captured in a snapshot by the wrong kind of people can lead to a fixing of this truth and it is this that Woolf seems to fear in being caught on film. As Gillespie asserts, photography can turn people into objects that can be symbolically possessed (135). Gillespie links Woolf's aversion against being thus objectified to her increasing awareness of the aggression of

photography (139). Woolf herself used photos more aggressively in *Three Guineas* where they function “to exemplify and to challenge the masculine values she indicts as the causes of war” (136). In the wrong hands such an aggression could lead to an “objectification and petrification of the world” that, especially in combination with the organisation of the masses, can lead to fascism, as Benjamin has shown (Cadava xxiv). Nevertheless, Woolf emphasises the other possible use of technology. As long as the ambiguity of an art-technology like photography is not overlooked, it can work at the undermining point of technological reproduction and as such oppose stasis and rigidity. Here, something of Woolf's morality begins to assert itself. In the opening quote of this text she speaks of 'moralists' as people who “say, when one has a thing one at once finds it hollow” (D4:28), which makes them consider technology as bad for the soul. However, Woolf disagrees, for she sees the possibilities of using technology precisely in the opposite direction; to go against the hollowing and flattening of the human mind, which is good for the soul. It is the *operation* of these technologies that matters, not the technologies themselves. Thus the artist who operates technology as art should always be critical of his own function; thereby the responsibility Benjamin argued for becomes important as something that should continuously be developed.

Woolf's reflections on technology so far analysed are all about older technologies; telephony, telegraphy and electric light were all invented in the second half of the nineteenth century and were already part of daily life when Woolf started to publish her writing with *The Voyage Out* in 1915. Photography is a little different, for as is already clear, Woolf ranked it with 'traditional' art forms (Gillespie 113), nevertheless, it is also a technology. Cinema, developed out of serial photography (cf. Kittler 124ff), receives very different contemplations. Though the first films were already shown in the 1890s (Gaudreault 70f), Woolf attached to film, or cinema, a sense of newness she does not link to the photographic medium. She regularly notes in her diary that she went to the pictures (cf. D 1:28, D 2:185). However, she rarely expands on these experiences. The same goes for her novels. In *Mrs Dalloway* Peter Walsh watches young people going by and notes: “They would now have two hours at the pictures.” (143) Peter envies them the way they spend their summer evening. He himself has to spend the evening at Clarissa's party, a prospect he does not very much look forward to. Similarly, Peggy Pargiter in *The Years* drives with her aunt through London and wishes she were at the pictures rather than going to yet another family dinner (291). In both novels, the cinema provides entertainment and is presented as a place to which one can escape in order to avoid social contact at the usual dinner parties. However, neither Peter nor Peggy actually go there and the cinema is absorbed by the larger whole of 'city night life'.

Nevertheless, the cinema as place to escape real social contact is also a place of danger, as Walter Benjamin asserts. He sees the cinema as more destructive even than photography, for where photography still possesses the ability to create moments of reflection in its fixation, cinema

consists of images that move with such speed they leave no room for reflection (164). However, this reflection is needed to see through the manipulation of the truth that is exerted by film. This manipulation exists on two levels. First of all, film creates the illusion of closeness; because the camera is drawn in by the human life it films, and is not itself visible (158). This provides the audience with the feeling of being very closely connected to the scenes displayed. Nevertheless, it forgets that at the actual filming of these scenes, the audience is in fact formed only by the camera's lens, the real and human audience receives these images later and through the machine of the camera. It is thus further away from the filmic scenes than they realise. Moreover, the scenes that are displayed on a movie screen are cut and edited and thereby present only an edited reality. Thus, according to Benjamin, the lack of distance, edited images and the speed with which these are presented can easily result in the audience being drawn into the film and accepting its truth without further reflection.

Though Woolf recognises some of these elements Benjamin presents, she does not completely agree with him. This becomes clear in her only essay on cinema, "The Cinema", written in 1926, ten years before Benjamin's essay. In this essay, Woolf compares film to photography as she claims that images in films "have taken on a quality which does not belong to the simple photograph of real life." Rather, film becomes "more real" or "real with a different reality from that which we perceive in daily life." (172) Straight away these assertions evoke questions, for how can there be a "simple photograph of real life" when in *Orlando* Woolf has pained herself to unsettle any fixed notion of photographs as presenting reality or truth. Though *Orlando* was not written until two years after this essay on cinema, even in Woolf's journals and other novels, it becomes clear that photographs do not show a simple reality. Woolf expands her explanation on the different reality of filmic scenes, for: "We behold them as they are when we are not there." (172) However, this too is part of the photographic experience, a characteristic of which is, according to Cadava, that "In photographing someone, we know that the photograph will survive him – *it begins, even during his life, to circulate without him*" [my emphasis] (13) Thus, absence is linked to photography as well as film.

For these many similarities between film and photography, there is also an important difference. As Gillespie has shown, photographs often function to keep dead or absent people present (125). This function can also be part of film, however, in the case of photography it is much more personal; photographs mainly show people who are close to the owner of the photograph. Film, on the contrary, usually shows actors who are not in any way linked to the audience. They cannot even interact with them, as Benjamin too has shown (150). Thus, there is a greater distance between film and its audience and it is this distance that Woolf wants cinema to use. David Trotter, who has studied Woolf's treatment of the cinema, agrees that "this life we have no part in", as Woolf

describes the scenes on the big screen (SE 173), is a very important element of Woolf's reflection on film (Trotter 23). For Trotter, the reason for this is that Woolf saw "the common life", or the "encounterless life", as the real life (14). Here, emphasis is put on co-existence as living together without actual contact. Trotter adds that this form of co-existence also requires a constitutive absence (21), for film is not a simultaneous experience in the sense of telephony. Rather, like Peter in *Mrs Dalloway* who looks at scenes lightened by electricity, in the Picture Palace we observe without being part of the scene.

However, a requirement for observing life as "when we are not there" (172) is that this life is shown as it is. In an essay on early forms of cinema, Tom Gunning asserts that the earliest films indeed presented life as it is; for one of the functions of cinema was to display its visibility (57). Gunning categorises this early cinema as "cinema of attractions". After 1906, the cinema of attractions became part of the avant-garde cinema and made way for the narrative film as we know it today (57). In this context, Gunning uses a concept of 'attractions' as defined by the well-known Russian film theorist, Sergei Eisenstein whereby "an attraction aggressively subjected the spectator to 'sensual or psychological impact'." (59) According to Gunning, Eisenstein wanted film and theatre to create confrontation rather than absorption in order to cause reflection, much as Benjamin too described absorption as negative. It must be noted here that Benjamin seems to refer only to narrative films in his analyses and so indeed to the kind of film Woolf opposes. Thus, she agrees with both Benjamin and Eisenstein by asserting that distance has to be a part of cinema, for "beauty will continue to be beautiful whether we behold it or not" (173). Only then can we "have time to feel pity and amusement, to generalise" and "to open up the whole of our mind wide to beauty" (173) Rather than the sense of constitutive absence that Trotter sees as essential to cinema, it seems to be distance that creates the form of cinema appreciated by Woolf.

Hence, in the first page of her essay, Woolf claims that cinema is characterised by observation without being a part of it, sheer visibility and distance. In this context she describes the effect of watching a newsreel in the Picture Palace (cf. Trotter 17). Nevertheless, after this description she adds: "all this happened, we are told, ten years ago." (173) Trotter argues that the events described after that are all events that indeed took place much earlier, before the Great War (18). Trotter finds it difficult to explain this insertion, as it seems to break the flow of the text; it puzzles by its interruption. Though Woolf's move to "ten years ago" is indeed difficult to explain, it can also be argued that here, she simply creates a new distance. First of all a distance between the brain and the eye where "the brain adds all this [memory and emotion] to what the eye sees upon the screen", thereby underlining a psychological effect. Furthermore, a distance towards the past is created and this distance is observed too in the art of film making, for "the picture makers seem dissatisfied with these obvious sources of interest." (173) As Gunning has asserted, the films

displaying pure visibility, such as Woolf describes in the first page of her essay, largely went underground after 1906 (67). Thus, what is most important is that the breach in time points to a breach in the interest of film makers, something Woolf clearly is not happy about, for the “wonders of the actual world” were thus left behind.

As such, Gunning explains that Woolf's attitude towards later cinema was characteristic, for many modernists were enthusiastic about the new medium and its possibilities and disappointed at the way it had already developed, especially at “its enslavement to traditional art forms, particularly theatre and literature”(56). This is precisely what Woolf laments after inserting a ten-year distance in time. She understands that film makers wanted to create their own medium, however, the translation of novels into film are described by her as “disastrous to both” (173). The result of this 'enslavement' of film to literature is that the “eye and brain are torn asunder” (173). Trotter underlines that Woolf criticised the fact that narrative films reduced their suggestive content to meaning and emphasised action rather than movement (18). According to Trotter, the difference between action and movement is that action points to one single interpretation of meaning, whereas movement presents motion in itself (15). The imposition of a single meaning again brings to mind Benjamin's reflections on film as mass medium. According to Benjamin the loss of aura could result in the reinstating of a new, hidden kind of meaning that is politically charged and demands a certain kind of interpretation. Moreover, the mass audience of a film can easily be forced to express a uniform opinion by excluding single and different opinions under the pressure of the majority and thus become transformed itself into a means of mechanical reproduction (cf. Benjamin 161, 164). Thus, the medium of film can be easily used to impose totalitarian values. In consequence, narrative films opposed the motion that presents life as it is displayed by the cinema of attractions. Furthermore, by removing the eye from the brain and pointing to specific meanings, the element of reflection so important to Woolf is no longer present in narrative film.

Regardless of this negative development in film, Woolf does not simply give in. Rather, she claims that cinema has great ambition. Gunning adds that for many modernists it was the *potential* of the medium film that fascinated them (56). Woolf uses the example of a showing of *Dr. Caligari*³ to illustrate what she wanted from film; there a dark shadow coincidentally showed on the screen and “for a moment it seemed as if thought could be conveyed by shape more effectively than by words” (174). She claims that “cinema has within its grasp innumerable symbols for emotions that have so far failed to find expression” (174). Indeed, she wanted film to go beyond the words of literature and convey thoughts and emotions directly as they are. Where Trotter defines the real life that Woolf opted for in this essay as “the common life”, Woolf herself seems to give another definition. To her, the real life displayed in future films should consist of thoughts and emotions,

³ Its original title was *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* (1919), an expressionist horror film directed by Robert Wiene.

connected to physical experiences, that should be presented in a direct experience, something words could not do. The distance that she appreciates in early films is overcome when thoughts and emotions become physical realities; somehow she seems to envision a cinema that replaces the interval she now reserves for critical reflection with reflection in itself.

However, Woolf laments “the cinema has been born the wrong end first. The mechanical skill is far in advance of the *art* to be expressed.” But at the same time “the *art* of the cinema is about to be brought to birth.” [my emphasis] (176) Thus, as for Benjamin, for Woolf the negative aspect of film as mechanically reproduced art seems to rule the medium. However, unlike Benjamin, Woolf still holds great hope for a change in and new future for this medium. Even so, she proves that she is aware of the possibility that art is overruled by mechanics. In the case of film, this means that narrative films predominate; films that oppose the moment of critical thinking Woolf always wanted her art to affect. However, when a balance is found between art and technology, as in Woolf’s use of photography, technology can support art in going against this static flattening of emotions, thoughts and reflections. Thus, cinema as motion picture has great potential for the future, where art and mechanics flash before us “the most fantastic contrasts” with “the speed which the writer can only toil after in vain.” (175) Nevertheless, this quote underlines that Woolf saw fiction as something different from film, especially in the future potential filmic medium. Though some critics claim she uses cinematic techniques in her writing (Trotter 14f), she does not apply these as she applies the art of photography. It may be concluded then that Woolf uses arts that are mechanically reproduced only if they can become part of, or supportive to, this fiction. She is not afraid of technology, but her fiction comes first. Nevertheless, she valued all technologies that could possibly contribute to the new civilisation as she envisioned it and that is not yet reached; cinema as technology fits this description, as did the other technologies so far analysed.

The use of the gramophone in Woolf’s peacetime novels, however, nuances these assertions a little. The gramophone too was a technology of recording and can be ranked among inventions such as photography and the cinema (Kittler 2). Woolf was familiar with this machine as well. The Woolf’s bought a gramophone in 1925: “we have the algraphone, & that's a heavenly prospect – music after dinner while I stitch at my woolwork” (D 3: 42) The algraphone, or 'Gramophone Superior', indeed often accompanied the Woolf’s on their evenings at home (cf. D 3:139). In their listening to the gramophone, the Woolf’s were not alone. According to Roland Gelatt the First World War had brought “happy days” to the British gramophone industry (196). It even created a new kind of listener, the “serious, intellectual connoisseur of the arts” (202). Leonard Woolf seems to have been such a type of new listener, since in 1925 he began to review gramophone records for the *Nation Athenaeum*, a literary magazine of which he was editor (D 3: 42). Nevertheless, Virginia, though she was an avid gramophone listener herself, did not often refer to this device in her

peacetime novels other than looking at the entertainment it brings.

Sebastian Knowles gives a possible explanation for the lack of ambition shown by Woolf with regard to the gramophone. He claims that for modernists, like Woolf, the gramophone brought death and embodied death, “the opposite of what they were writing for and a direct threat to their writing lives.” (2) The source of the connection between the gramophone and death can be found in its creation and its initially intended uses. Thomas Edison, who invented the device in 1877, claimed that with this new instrument “speech has become, as it were, immortal” (Kittler 21). Indeed, the preservation of family voices and the “last words of dying persons” were among the first envisioned functions of Edison’s invention (Gelatt 29). It was not until well in the twentieth century that the gramophone was used to listen to music (Kittler 25). Here, the gramophone resembles the photograph in preserving something of the dead by recording them while they are still alive; moreover, it embodies death as by preserving in a ghostly manner the voices of the living, disconnected from their living presence.

Nevertheless, where Woolf uses the fixating qualities of photography in order to undermine its own rigidity, she does not use the phonograph in similar ways. Indeed, in her peace time novels she only refers to the gramophone briefly. In *Mrs Dalloway*, for instance, Septimus tries to focus on this machine in order not to lose his grasp on reality: “First he looked at the fashion papers on the lower shelf, then gradually at the gramophone with the green trumpet. Nothing could be more exact.” (125) For a while it works, it brings him back to his life with Rezia, his wife, and they can laugh together (127). As long as he looks at the gramophone and the reality of daily life it is a part of, Septimus prevents himself from falling into madness (cf. 128f). Therefore, in *Mrs Dalloway*, the gramophone opposes death rather than represents it. The fact that the gramophone is silent and functions only as an object of reality, can explain why it is not associated with death. Like the newspapers, the gramophone is part of life and thus opposes death. Still, it is dumb and thus has no other function than simply being part of reality.

More communicative gramophones can be found in Woolf’s novel *The Years*. Here the first gramophone appears in the 1907 section of the novel when Sara Pargiter is kept awake by dance music that reaches her from a neighbouring house. This music is not specifically linked to the gramophone. Yet, by looking at the draft versions of the novel, Froula concludes there is a gramophone playing here, for in the drafts Sara refers to the “mechanical accuracy” and “machine-like quality” of the waltz music she hears (qtd. Froula 246). This waltz, moreover, is interpreted by Sara as taking over the function of words. However, “it coarsened them, it destroyed them. The dance music interfered with everything.” (115) It especially interrupts Sara’s reading and thoughts (120). Froula underlines that the waltz music effectuates “a contest between waltz and poem and their conflicting stories of women’s sexual lives” (246). Froula, who looks mainly at the image of

sexuality that is sketched in *The Years*, claims the waltz signifies women's sexual initiation into patriarchal society. Therefore, its interruption of Sara's reading and thinking is a violation of her right to escape this societal structure (246f). In relation to technology, though, it is more important to note the fact that the music of the gramophone is here opposed to the art of writing. With regards to photography, Woolf has used the opposing elements of technology, because in photography she also distinguished an art form. However, she does not seem to value the art of the gramophone enough to see the similar possibilities for this instrument. Kittler, who also refers to conflicts between mechanical music and fiction (cf. 45f) adds that "record grooves dig the grave of the author" (83). As such, the death here created by the gramophone is a death of words, thoughts and writing; it destroys too much and can therefore not be valued as an art form. Thus, it indeed opposes everything Woolf wrote for, as Knowles has already claimed.

Knowles points to yet another conflict between modernism and the appreciation of gramophone music. He claims that modernism insists on live performance (9). According to Knowles the reason for this is that a live performance requires an audience and thus produces interaction and an awareness of oneself as audience (10). I would like to argue that live performances were also valued more because of the spontaneity they enabled. Indeed, Gelatt relates that for the recording of gramophone records, artists usually needed many takes in order to create the perfect sound (71). Although this was partly due to the bad quality of early records and recording instruments (200), it nonetheless points to an attempt at erasing possible imperfections in the performance. In her essay on the cinema it is precisely such an imperfection that causes Woolf's reflections on the future possibilities of this medium. Thus it can be asserted that she would have valued live music above its recorded version, because its unpredictability would produce thinking more than recorded music would. This can also explain why Woolf did not value gramophone music as an art form. In the party that occupies the final scenes of *The Years*, Delia underlines this: "'It's all right for dancing', she added, referring to the gramophone. 'Not for music. [...]. I can't bear music on the gramophone.'" (319) Though Delia values the gramophone for its entertainment, she does not claim it suitable for real music of live musical shows; its technology still dominates any expression of art.

Furthermore, like the first gramophone, this second instrument again interrupts thoughts and conversation and thus indeed stops thought rather than produces it. For instance, when Peggy watches the dancing couples "gyrating in time to the tune on the gramophone" she compares them with an animal dying "in a slow but exquisite anguish" (336). Moreover, this predictable, because recorded, tune causes the couples to circle around in the same way over and over again on a pre-imposed rhythm (337). Thereby, it creates a situation in which the couples may move, but only automatically. Moreover, this second gramophone adds another dimension to the stasis thus created.

This becomes clear when, just as Eleanor tries to explain to Peggy why she is happier and freer than she used to be, music breaks in (338). It interrupts a conversation about the development of society, but also points to a break between the generations. Eleanor's generation still believes in progress, Peggy's generation, to which North belongs as well, fears: "How can we be civilised? " if we "endow this man, that woman, with the power to lead us [and thus] add to the deformity"(331f). Similarly, Eleanor's failing comment is followed by Peggy's musings on the future "fall of civilisation" (339); brought on by her thoughts on the oncoming war. Therefore, whatever ceasing powers the mechanical music might exert, it is exacerbated by the threat of war that can directly lead from freedom and happiness to the fall of civilisation. Nevertheless, Froula adds that the musical interruptions are also ambivalent, for they help to underline the impossibility of expressing fear of the future in words (254f). Thereby, to a certain extent, words and music do work together to try to express the inexpressible. Again, the war adds dimension to the death of thoughts, words and writing. It is only under the threat of war that Woolf seems to envision positive uses for the gramophone, nevertheless, she does not develop these reflections in peace time.

Still, in *The Years* this war does not yet become reality and the ceasing function of the mechanical music prevails over any artistic uses. Thus, when the music stops, relief is the dominant sentiment: "The music which had been cutting grooves into her [Peggy's] mind had ceased." (339) Where Kittler claims that record grooves dig the grave for the author, here this grave is suspended. Nevertheless, the gramophone opposes thought, motion and writing. Envisioning the gramophone thus, Woolf did not use it in her peacetime fiction, not even metaphorically, as art-technology as she did with photography. In consequence, the gramophone is not envisioned as being intertwined with fiction; it is simply an element of daily life that can be presented in writing, but writing itself is still too largely opposed to the phonograph to help create any relation between the two. In times of peace, photography remains the most important technology of recording, because its qualities as mechanically reproduced art form can support Woolf's own fiction that is meant to display plurality, variety and ambivalence. Technologies of transportation however, especially that of the car, are not an art form at all; nevertheless, it are these technologies that bring the connection between fiction and technological devices on a more profound, level.

The Self Transported

In spite of her largely negative outlook on the gramophone in her novels, in a diary entry of August 8, 1927 Woolf is very positive about their own gramophone as she ranks it with another recent technological acquisition: "We opened one little window when we bought the gramophone; now another / opens with the motor [car]." (D 3:151) Woolf had looked forward to buying a motor car for a long time. As early as 1921 she lists part of her literary earnings and adds: "With luck we may have £400 instead of £250; & we might buy a motor car" (D 2:151) Six years later she still dreams of this, for "[I] have a fling at my book on fiction; & make all the money we want for Greece & a motor car." (D 3: 127) Her desire to have a motor car is closely linked to the amount of money the Woolfs make; especially, as Woolf claims, *her* money made by writing. Owning a car therefore seems to be a personal victory to Woolf as her success and income could buy the Woolfs luxuries they could not otherwise afford. This victory was won in July 1927. But even before 1927 the Woolfs already used motor cars for their travelling. They would rent cars to go to their house in Asheham (D 1: 94), for instance, or to make trips in the country (D 2: 266f). Still, until they owned their own car, the train was their most common means of transport outside of or towards the city.

From 1915 to 1924 Virginia and Leonard Woolf lived in the suburbs of London, in Richmond. However, most of Woolf's close friends, including her sister Vanessa, still lived in London. Therefore, she frequently travelled to London by train to visit people, to go to the theatre or to shop. In this context, the train forms a link with the society of London. However, as long as the Woolfs live in Richmond, the train also keeps separating Woolf from the people she loves: "I missed my train; & what I wanted most in the world was to catch it & travel back with L." (D 2:61f) Furthermore, in its separating function the train continually interrupts the social intercourse it enables. Woolf, who often felt the need to report on catching and missing trains (cf. D 1: 246, 257) is eventually fed up with the dominating role the train schedule plays in her life in Richmond: "Always to catch trains, always to waste time [...] when alternatively, I might go & hear a tune, or have a look at a picture [...] But now I'm tied, imprisoned, inhibited." In that same entry she adds:

I want freer intercourse, wider intercourse -& now at 41, having done a little work, I get my wages partly in invitations. I might know people. In Richmond this is impossible. Either we have arduous parties at long intervals, or I make my frenzied dashes up to London, & leave, guiltily, as the clock strikes 11. (D 2:250f)

Here, Woolf presents herself as a modern day Cinderella, who, as the clock strikes, has to catch the last train or else will never get home. It imprisons her in the suburbs when all she wants is the civilization of the big city.

More importantly, however, the train is presented as a machine that takes away people's control. Having to catch the train diminishes the freedom of leaving a party of your own account.

This sense of passivity is strongly linked to Woolf's reflections on trains, as is visible in *The Years*. There, Kitty exclaims: "I need do nothing, she thought, nothing, nothing, but let myself be drawn on." (237) Unlike Woolf, Kitty seems to enjoy the feeling of passivity provided by a train journey; it releases her from the need to take action. Nevertheless, she also describes the train as a powerful, almost animal-like machine that can easily drag her along: "It seemed all body, all muscle; even the neck had been consumed into the smooth barrel of the body." And as the train "rushed with a roar through a tunnel. It seemed to perform an act of amputation; now she was cut off from that circle of light [London]." (235) Yet, she does not regret this, on the contrary, the "monster" of the train seems to help her: "She could hardly believe that so great a monster could start so gently on so long a journey." (236) The reason for Kitty's ambiguous train description lies in the end of this long journey. Kitty does not mind losing control, she rather longs for it. She wants to be cut off from the London circle of societal light in order to lie down in the country, stop thinking (237) and let time cease (242). The powerful machine of the train simply helps her get there.

Nevertheless, though the train brings Kitty to a situation of ceasing, a stasis, the journey itself is characterised by motion. Unlike the movement created by technologies of transmission, Kitty cannot escape this motion, for she is part of the train as it transports her in reality. Moreover, she is caught by it too, for she cannot get off the train as long as it moves. As the narrator states: "The train rushed her on. The sound had deepened; it had become a continuous roar." (237) Thus, the train effectuates passivity by capturing its passengers with an imposing schedule and holding them in its compartments during the journey. Nevertheless, the imprisoning of passengers in the train also assures that they keep on moving. More importantly, it creates a movement of the brain, for as Kitty exclaims on the train: "How could she sleep? How could she prevent herself from thinking?" (237) Woolf similarly experiences the train as stirring mind. Thus, "with a brain still running along the railway lines" (D 1: 247) she waits for Leonard to pick her up from the train station. Woolf uses the movement of the mind caused by the train to meditate on matters much bigger than a train ride. This she expresses most clearly in an essay titled "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown". This essay was first written as a speech Woolf made for the Heretics Society on May 18, 1924 and was then titled "Character in Fiction" (cf. SE 226). In this speech Woolf describes a train journey from Richmond to Waterloo (SE 42) that eventually lead her to great reflections on literary representation, historical narrative and sexual difference (cf. Bowlby 15).

"Character in Fiction" describes how the narrator on the train from Richmond to London interrupts a scene between a man, Mr Smith, and a woman, Mrs Brown (SE 39). Mrs Brown draws her attention and initiates a series of reflections. However, before the narrator steps onto the train she already contemplates human character and influencing changes that took place "on or about December 1910" (SE 38). These changes can be seen reflected in books about life and consequently

in literary history. The year 1910 in fact symbolizes the change from Edwardian to Georgian writers. The narrator declares Mr Arnold Bennett to be the representative of the Edwardians. She quotes Mr Bennett's opinion about good writing: "The foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else..." (SE 37) He accuses the Georgians of failing to create good characters. The author does not disagree with Mr Bennett, however, she claims that the Edwardians create convincing characters no more than the Georgians do (45ff). Nevertheless, she does not totally dismiss Edwardian writing, rather, she wants to explain why their conventions on character-creating are "for us [...] ruin, those tools are death" (48). She lives in a new age and wants to try to find her own, new conventions on character writing that might be better than the old "tools" (48) and thus bring life instead of death.

The narrator's encounter with Mrs Brown on the train comes to symbolize this search for new literary devices. While observing Mrs Brown the writer imagines various stories that could capture this woman in fiction; she relates how Edwardians like H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett would have represented her. The former creates her "as she ought to be" and does not "waste a thought upon her as she is" (45). The latter, though observing every detail around Mrs Brown, "has never once looked at Mrs Brown in her corner." (47). In her own version of Mrs Brown's story she tries to describe what she sees by looking at the woman directly, which leads to thoughts on her history and family. Thus, to express a character can have an infinite variety of interpretations (42). Consequently, the discussion between the various writers becomes a search for the right way to represent the truth about Mrs Brown's reality. The end to this search exists only of more questions, for: "Who are the judges of reality? A character may be real to Mr Bennett and quite unreal to me." (43) Moreover, the author does not provide a final reality either, for her own story too "ends without any point to it" (42) The conclusion is therefore merely that "For that age and generation, the convention was a good one." (48) Reality becomes a flexible concept that moves through different ages where it is interpreted according to that age.

According to Rachel Bowlby it is no coincidence that this search for the truth of representation "takes place on a train." (3) Bowlby asserts that the train has an ambiguous status as a form of communication between people, historical movements and novelistic conventions (2). Indeed, the author confirms that "the carriage is travelling not from Richmond to Waterloo, but from one age of English literature to the next." (47) On this journey, Mrs Brown comes to embody "human nature", "life itself" and the train the means of bringing reflection on human nature from one point to another (47, 54). Moreover, it is not Mrs Brown who changes, but "it is the novelists who get in and out" of the carriage and change how human nature is represented (47). Thus, the truth about the reality of representation is a provisional one, it changes with the writing conventions of the time (SE 49); the different stations that the train calls at. Bowlby confirms that Woolf marks

"the present time as only a station *en route* to a prospective arrival at the new conventions where Mrs Brown will be decently treated." [emphasis in the original] (10). This also brings to mind the telephone switchboard where the voices transmitted are connected by stations that are embodied by operators. Nevertheless, in the train the operator is carried by the technology itself and has a more actual experience of its movements and the changes it goes through. Thus, the ride train ride from Richmond to Waterloo leads Woolf as narrator to reflect on developments in history, human nature and their representation in literature. The fact that these contemplations take place on a moving train underline the author's conclusion that there is no conclusion: "All this is only just beginning." (SE 54) The train will call at an infinite number of stations where Mrs Brown, as its traveller, will receive an infinite variety of interpretations, "but do not expect just at present a complete and satisfactory presentment of her." (54)

Furthermore, Bowlby adds that in Woolf's time "the imagery of public transport had become literally a commonplace for suggesting the repetitive and banal 'types' of realist fiction" of the time (3). She claims that Woolf altered the terms by "putting the novelist into the carriage with her subject"(3). It has already been stated that unlike technologies of transmission, the train actually transports people themselves. However, among these people is also the writer, who thereby brings fiction into a moving vehicle. Just as photography and fiction can become interdependent, so can the train and writing. Moreover, Woolf invites the reader to step on board (53), for he too can see Mrs Brown just as well as the writers do. Therefore, "your part is to insist that writers shall come down of their plinths and pedestals [...] You should insist that she is an old lady of unlimited capacity and infinite variety." (54) This, she sees as the responsibility of the audience (53). It brings to mind the concept of responsibility used by Walter Benjamin; he defines the moment of fixation that is part of technological reproduction as the point of resistance. However, where he locates responsibility in the dialectical usage of technology, Woolf has found another location for responsibility that allows for the inclusion of the audience or reader as a controlling factor. She thus seems to go beyond Benjamin's notions of technological reproduction by making both Mrs Brown, the novelists and the readers "companions in the railway carriage" (53) of life that constantly moves between different stations; the end station of which will always remain incomplete and in the future. It brings to mind Froula's concept of civilisation that is also always "yet to be reached".

Indeed, Woolf has transformed the train into a metaphor, not only for the human mind, but also for fiction and even life itself. By looking at the train this way, Woolf seems to have created a new art out of an existing technology. This art-technology, however, differs from Benjamin's mechanically reproduced art by including more responsibility and thus less ambiguity and failure. Nevertheless, there still are negative aspects to the train, mainly formed by the lack of control and interruption it can produce, Woolf does not overlook these elements, yet keeps them separated from

the new art form she envisions with the train as metaphor. As Froula has claimed, Woolf and other Bloomsbury artists wanted to fight for a new civilisation. The new possibilities that Woolf indicates in her new ways of looking at the train are a part of that future civilisation. Unlike photography that is already considered a traditional art and that can thus only work with its traditional connotations, new art forms based on existing technology could create new associations that are more positive than their technological base.

Nevertheless, the dependence on actual trains and railway transportation remains a nuisance for Woolf. This becomes especially evident at times of lacking public transportation, which happens several times in Woolf's lifetime in the form of general and railway strikes. All of which Woolf attempts to describe in her journals, for she often thinks "an exact diary of the strike would be interesting" (D 3:77) The first strike she describes is the national railway strike of 1919, that took place "over an agreement to standardize wages which was applied in such a way as to bring about wage cuts for some grades of workers" (Railway Gazette, October 10, 1919). According to Woolf, the railways, miners and transport workers all ceased their activities, the consequence of which was that the Woolfs are cut off "from all human intercourse". There are hardly any papers and there is no post. Added to this is "a queer deep silence". Moreover, if the strike "lasts another day or two the food difficulty will begin." (D 1: 301) All of this absence reminds Virginia Woolf of the recent war, for "we are on war rations & told to be brave & good".

In 1921 another strike is feared, but does not take place. In 1924 there is an eight-day strike that only partially disrupts the railway services, which explains why Woolf mentions these strikes only in passing (D 2:111, 288). In May 1926, however, the General Strike takes place and this time Woolf is determined to keep an accurate record of its events and consequences. Though this strike originated in a conflict between coal miners and the government, it also lead to a stop on bus and rail traffic, a lack of newspapers and a rationing of electricity. Consequently "Everyone is bicycling; motor cars are huddled up with extra people." (D 3:77). During the 1919 strike Woolf was in the country village of Rodmell, where the great literal and social silence that resulted from the railway cessation highly impressed her. In 1926, however, she is in London, where cars and cyclists keep London on the move and more of her friends are present, so she is less dependent on their letters. Moreover, in London some "skeleton newspapers" were still available. All of which could have supported her in concluding "we are more cheerful, take less notice & occasionally think of other things." (D 3:78) Nevertheless, she also asserts that "The shops are open but empty. Over it all is some odd pale unnatural atmosphere – great activity but no normal life". Though she does not mention the war, the empty shops and unnatural atmosphere still bring back her descriptions of the war rations and deep silence that accompanied the strike of 1919.

When the General Strike is over, on May 13, Woolf admits that this strike too has had a major influence on daily life, for

Anyhow it will take a week to get the machinery of England to run again. [...] In short, the strain removed, we all fall out & bicker & backbite. Such is human nature - & really I dont like human nature unless all candied over with art.(D 3: 85)

The 'bickering and back biting' refers to the fact that even though the strike was officially called off, some of the workers, including the railway employees, still refused to resume their activities. In Woolf's 1924 essay, "Character in Fiction" that is inspired by the train, the train symbolises the movement of human nature and its infinite and various representations in literature, or even human nature itself. In 1926, the bickering of labourers leads her to add that she likes human nature only if "candied over with art", for they delay the functioning of the "machinery of England". Thus, the metaphor of the train she presents in her fictional writing is here undone by actual trains that refuse motion. It illustrates at the same time the ambiguity the train represents and its importance in keeping the machine of England, and human nature, on the move.

Nevertheless, as Woolf has stated, when the public transport in London failed because of the General Strike, cars took over their function. By 1926 many people had cars, yet many more did not, which resulted in the "motor cars [are] huddled up with extra people" and "lorries full of elderly men & girls standing like passengers in the old 3rd class carriages" (D 3:78). These cars thus

directly opposed the dependence on trains, or third class carriages, many people still experienced. Indeed, cars provided more independence and control. Woolf, moreover, clearly linked the possession of a car to the possibility of earning her own income which added to the feeling of independence. Thus, she was very thrilled when she and Leonard could finally buy their own car on July 15, 1927. It was a second-hand Singer and cost £275 (D 3:147). Her joy at this new acquisition is subject of many diary entries: "But I have never mentioned the absorbing subject – the subject which has filled our thoughts to the exclusion of Clive & Mary & literature & death & life – motor cars. [...] We talk of nothing but



Figure 2: First model Singer

"cars." To which she adds

This is a great opening up of our lives. One may go to Bodiam, to Arundel, explore the Chichester downs, expand that curious thing, the map of the world in ones mind.

It will I think demolish loneliness & may of course imperil complete privacy (D 3: 146f)

The first thing she mentions is the new freedom the car provided. Indeed, the Woolfs often used their car to make trips both in England and abroad (cf. D 3:218f; D 4:298f). Moreover, this sense of literal freedom also opens up “the map of the world in one's mind”. Somehow she expected the mind to profit from the car as well, and receive a better understanding of the world by exploring it. The kind of expansion this entails is subject of a diary entry later that summer, where she claims the car provided: “an additional life, free & mobile & airy to live alongside our usual stationary industry.” (D 3:151) The physical stationary industry of everyday life had already been broken up by the car, but because it expands the mind too, the car seems to equally afflict mind and body and create for both a new life that exists of freedom and mobility.

The additional and new life thus expected from the car, signifies a very positive belief in progress created by technologies of transportation. Woolf underlines how much the car represented progress, for: “Soon we shall look back at our pre-motor days as we do now at our days in the caves.” (D 3:151) Thus the car appears to contribute wonderfully to the envisioned future civilization that is also characterised by a movement towards the progression of society (cf. Froula 9). This newness that is part of future progress, signifies, at least for Woolf personally, new possibilities in expanding the art of her fiction by looking at cars. These possibilities are closely linked to her new visions for the train as metaphor. Like the train, the car, because it is not yet defined as art, does not have all the negative connotations photography has and as such provides the possibility of going beyond the more dialectical aspects of art produced by mechanical reproduction. Woolf thus operates on untrodden paths, or even highways, that provide her with the possibility of using the car in new ways; as element of the art of fiction. Even so, the car is not only seen in a positive light, for it can also be related to the fixity of death as a result from the accidents it caused. Woolf herself regularly gives reports of car accidents. One remarkable example of this is the death of the Queen of Belgium who died in a motor car accident in 1935 (D 4: 336). In 1925 Woolf saw an accident herself, while being on a 'motoring trip' in France. There, a woman was suddenly trapped under a car that turned a “summersault” and landed on the pavement. This accident gives Woolf the feeling of being, even back in England, under the impression of that moment. She keeps hearing the voice of the woman under the car and “A great sense of brutality and wildness of the world remains with me.”(D 3:6) The accident seems to have caused an ongoing sense of the brutality of the world; a strong contrast with the positive outlook on the car she expresses later, after buying her own Singer.

But the most personal accident she describes is when her niece, Angelica Bell, is knocked over by a car, together with her nurse. Here, Woolf states that she should note the event “for the

psychology of it" (D 2:298f). Indeed, she relates in a dry, almost emotionless tone that Angelica will probably die, for she is "run over across the stomach". Again the casualty caused by the car is violent. Nevertheless, Angelica's accident forms a weird contrast with the collision she saw in France; for the more personal calamity is also the more distant: "my feeling was 'a pane of glass'". However, this is only true on the surface. Woolf uses the accident to reflect on her own feelings caused by "early impressions of death"; she contemplates the role of death in her life in general, like the death of her parents, that still pursue her. The ongoing brutality she felt towards the accident in France is here an ongoing sense of death and all its personal associations brought on by another car accident. Death keeps on coming.

Like the death that is part of, or even embodied by, photography and the phonograph, death here is also part of the experience of the car, since it is an ongoing death that accompanies Woolf's reflections. However, the former technologies point to death as stasis, but the latter embodies death as motion; an ongoing death. Moreover, the death created by car accidents leads Woolf towards reflections on her own emotions in relation to death. This signifies the importance of the mobility that is represented by the car; it even dominates the element of death as rigid. Indeed, Woolf finally notes that: "Nothing was wrong with Angelica – it was only a joke this time." (D 2:299) It is unclear even if Angelica was ever hurt at all. It seems that life prevails for Woolf, even after reflections on real, and not so real, car accidents. Woolf's description on Angelica's accident nevertheless illustrates that death caused by car accidents was on Woolf's mind regularly. Leonard may have contributed to that, for Woolf quotes him saying things like: "Death is stupid, like a motor car accident." (D 4:56) or "We may be like worms crushed by a motor car." (D 4:120) The stupidity of car collisions and the comparison of people to worms crushed by the big machine of the car emphasise the power of this vehicle; if it turns against people it becomes dangerous and thoughtless and can suddenly crush anyone near it. Thus, there is still a potential danger linked to the car that should not be ignored, but this crushing hazard is illustrated not so much in actual car accidents, but rather in the type of user that can be found operating this car.

Indeed, besides the anxiety of deathly accidents, the other form of fear Woolf connects to the car is that of people driving big, expensive cars: "'I wont wear my new dress I said, in case I should be laughed at'. This philosophy shivered on the doorstep, when I saw two 20 horse power cars drawn up, apparently, at his door." (D 3:104) Woolf becomes very self-conscious when she sees these big cars that seemingly contain equally big men who will criticize her. It brings to mind one of the earliest reflections Woolf makes on cars, in 1915, where she states: "I look into motor cars & see the fat grandees inside, like portly jewels in satin cases." This fills her with "aversion" (D 1: 17). These fat, corpulent and stately men are not only feared, they are also detested. It is in similar and ironic terms that Sara Pargiter describes the fat man with the big nose in the Rolls

Royce she observes in the lamp light (TY 281). Sara's portrayal of this man and his wife with the red lipstick also points to a feeling of jealousy, since she is poor and will never have such a life as displayed in the car (281f). Froula claims that Sara Pargiter in *The Years* represents an autobiographical artist-figure (241). As such her jealousy can be linked to Woolf's personal feelings of envy directed towards these big men in big cars.

In her journals, as in *The Years*, Woolf seems to regard the Rolls Royce as *the symbol* for the big, powerful car, for "A Rolls Royce means £5000 a year." (D 4:108) Nonetheless, Woolf's enviousness towards these big cars is more complicated than it seems at first sight. On June 4, 1932 she states:

And last night we stopped the car in Hyde Park & I watched a people *on the verge of ruin*. How many Rolls Royces, & other low, pink, yellow, very powerful cars weren't booming through the park like giant dorbeetles, with luxurious owners, men & women, lying back, on their way to some party. [my emphasis] (D 4:108)

These cars block the road and lead her to add: "& we on the verge of a precipice." This diary entry follows an entry of the previous day where Woolf reflects on the threatening situation that is developing in Europe. This explains her strong judgements on people who are on the edge of destruction. Still, this edge is linked to people who display their wealth while "lying back". She seems concerned about their carelessness towards the situation in the world; for while showing off their big cars, they block the road and create a dangerous stasis that leads attention away from the real problem, sketched by John Maynard Keynes on June 3: "Well, we're about as bad as we can be. [...] We may go over the edge." (D 4:107) The blame for this, Woolf thus partly lays with the rich show-offs in their Rolls Royces. The car thereby becomes a symbol for a type of person lurking behind a jewel case of greatness.

The reasons for Woolf's anxiety towards the type of man that drives such a powerful car can be clarified by looking at *Mrs Dalloway*; the novel that displays the most well-known cars of Woolf's fiction. In this novel one of the big cars is driven by doctor Bradshaw, the new doctor for Septimus. His motor car is "low, powerful, grey with plain initials interlocked on the panel, as if the pumps of heraldry were incongruous, this man being the ghostly helper, the priest of science" (83) The 'pumps of heraldry' are replaced by plain initials, however, they still point to Bradshaw's valour as helper of the sick and thus merely cover the great pumps of the car that keep underlining Bradshaw's value. This value can be taken quite literally, for Dr. Bradshaw often travels great distances with his car, to "the afflicted, who could afford the very large fee" he charged "for his advice" (83). This advice, however, is very valuable, for Dr. Bradshaw has the skill of "understanding the human soul" in only a few minutes (84) and imposing the outcome on his

patients. Hence, Septimus's words "I have, I have" already lead Bradshaw to declare that he is indeed very ill (85).

In her analysis of *Mrs Dalloway* Froula also draws in an older manuscript of this novel with the title *The Hours*. Froula claims that in *The Hours* Bradshaw's role is even more clearly sketched as "the judge, the saviour, the super man, in whose hands the powers of life & death were lodged" (qtd. Froula 115). According to Froula, Dr Bradshaw represents "civilization's well-compensated disciplinarians" and she adds that he wants Septimus to remain fixed in the role of victim. Thus, Dr. Bradshaw imposes his ideas of life and death on others as he personifies the "saviour" and "priest of science"; a monarch. In this authoritarian function Bradshaw silences any other opinion about life or the human soul that opposes his own judgement. For Septimus too claims to know the meaning behind humanity and civilisation (cf. 78). However, his stuttering conveyance of this message leads the doctor to conclude: "Try to think as little about yourself as possible." (86) Moreover, though Froula asserts: "captured and stilled in the work of art, Septimus's stammer interrupts the tanklike momentum of the heroic social script ventriloquized by Rezia and Sir William [Bradshaw]" (114) this interruption is not final. Eventually, Septimus is silenced, he forgets his message when confronted by Bradshaw's logic (86) and finally kills himself to escape the judgement of his doctors and the civilization they represent (131). Thus, the kind of man driving the big cars that filled Woolf with such aversion are dictatorial types that impose their definition of the human soul as the only right one on weaker human beings. It is the dictatorial imposition of one single meaning that Benjamin too criticised. But whereas Benjamin asserts that it is especially art that is abused by this type of person, here the car becomes a symbol of corruption.

The imposition of authority Woolf links to certain types of cars seems also illustrated in that other well-known car in *Mrs Dalloway*; the car that drives through the opening scenes. This car too announces itself with "a voice of authority" (11) like a "pistol shot" (10) that demands the attention of everybody within its reach. This car holds a "face of the very greatest importance", however, nobody knows whose it is, which immediately starts the circulation of rumours about this person (11). Unlike Dr. Bradshaw, who is very visible and whose grey hairs even resemble his grey car (84), here the face that owns the car cannot be identified. Froula claims it is the "blind spirit of monarchy and monotheism" (111). The invisibility of the car's owner points to the outworn character of this "spirit". This leads Froula to conclude that this "monovocal voice of authority" is confronted by a modernist cosmos that propagates; "weird enchanting harmonies of irreducible differences" that "displace the totalizing "spirit" in their midst." (111) For indeed, the rumours that circulate because of the car and its mysterious owner produce all kinds of different voices that exist next to each other (MD 11ff).

Nevertheless, the car does seem to create a totalizing and static situation as it brings everything “to a standstill” (11). The traffic accumulates (12) and “the throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an *entire* body.” (11) Yet, the silence and stasis the car causes is filled by various thoughts on the meaning this car symbolises and when the car finally moves on, it has left a ripple in the crowd that reaches beyond the surface: “For the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound.” (14) Moreover, the car is then replaced by its heavenly counterpart, the aeroplane (cf. Froula 111). This plane writers letters in the sky that are interpreted differently by each character and when the plane disappears from sight, no conclusion has been made about its message; the differences remain (MD 16ff). Thus, the car does represent the “voice of authority” but the fact that this voice is no longer connected to a visible face also undermines its authority.

Though Dr. Bradshaw's presence in the novel illustrates that the dangerous totalizing face of domination is still very much alive and present, the other car contains the “greatness” of its undermining as a future possibility. For, as the narrator in *Mrs Dalloway* claims, the face in the motor car will be known in the future (13). Froula is thereby lead to a very positive conclusion, for “*Mrs Dalloway* carries the “fight” to rebuild civilization on firmer ground into a future [...] whose myriad-minded creativity the skywriting airplane’s beholders can only suggest.” (126) Dr Bradshaw is not only a danger to society, he also lifts a tip of the veil of that new society's soul. For as he claims to understand the human soul within a few minutes, it is this “myriad-minded creativity” that he opposes. Consequently, the new soul is defined by various creative minds; in Woolf's case this points to fiction. Woolf herself saw a link between fiction and the soul. In the essay “Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown” Woolf/the narrator claims that:

The novel is a very remarkable machine for the creation of human character. [...]

And it is because this essence, this character-making power, has evaporated that novels are for the most part the soulless bodies we know [...] clogging our minds.

(SE 32)

It has already been claimed that train rides inspired Woolf to reflections on human nature and its representation in literature. She placed fiction's character-creation in the context of its time, claiming that there are an infinite number of ways to interpret and represent character. To her the new definition of character-making, that opposes 'soullessness' is thereby defined by infinite variety. This variation is present in *Mrs Dalloway* as well and inspired partly by the car that inserts a still moment of diverse reflection

So far, however, I have only looked at two individual cars that appear in *Mrs Dalloway*. However, *Mrs Dalloway* as one of Woolf's London novels shows many more cars as part of the general traffic that populates London:

In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved: life; London: this moment of June.

(2)

Here, Clarissa Dalloway ranks motor cars among other traffic that forms the general uproar of London and thereby form the life she loves. The word 'traffic' in itself already points to "trade between distant or distinct communities; commerce." [my emphasis] (OED) Furthermore, the long listing of all these forms of traffic and noises of daily life suggest that this traffic is constantly moving. Scott Cohen underlines this by claiming that "*Mrs Dalloway* vividly maps a supremely charming and thoroughly mobile modern London." He adds that the public space of the city thus presented is a space in movement (98).

The single car that appears in the opening scenes creates a moment of standstill itself, a moment that is filled by a range of reflections. However, this car also blocks the rest of London's traffic. Nevertheless, the motor cars that form "mobile modern London" are not less important than this single car, for the whole of London's traffic is also placed in opposition to stasis. The character of Septimus is most obviously linked to this stagnation, for as the motor car that carries greatness stops the traffic in the streets, Septimus feels that it is really he that is blocking the way (12). Cohen indeed claims that Septimus is associated with physical stasis resulting from psychic wounds inflicted by the terrifying immobility of the trenches (103). Septimus's immobility is further linked to stagnations and madness (104). Thus, it is the war that has produced Septimus's inertia and created his madness. Nevertheless, even in his madness he claims to hold the truth about society, but he is crushed by the judgemental authority of his doctors and can thereby express this truth only by flinging himself out of the window, crying: "I'll give it you!" (132) His immobility thereby appears final. Nonetheless, Froula asserts that where Clarissa Dalloway represents "sane truth", Septimus represents "unsane truth" which is still a form of truth (94). According to Froula it is the affinity that exists between the two that "counters the death of the soul" (101). Septimus's death allows Clarissa to go on with her life: "She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living." (165) Thus, it is still movement, the life's ability to go on, that defines the life of the soul.

It is the traffic in the novel that has the important task of illustrating this motion of life by constantly carrying its characters along. In this context, London traffic comes to resemble streaming water, for example when Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth travels on top of an omnibus: "It was like riding [...] and to each movement of the omnibus the beautiful body in the fawn-coloured coat responded freely like a ride, like the figure-head of a ship." (120) Similarly, when Peter hears "the

shuffle of feet, and people passing, and humming traffic, rising and falling traffic" (49); traffic transforms into waves. It brings to mind a definition of urban space that Cohen links to Walter Benjamin who, in his fictional work, presents "an ungraspable urban totality [that] appears in flashes, *renewing itself and reorienting the individual at every turn.*" [my emphasis] (102) In *Mrs Dalloway* it is the traffic that carries out this movement of renewal. This is repeated in that other London novel, *The Years* (ix), where "vans, cars, omnibuses ran along the streets as if the streets were slots; stopped and jerked; as if a puzzle were solved, and then broken..." (139) Traffic can fall and block, but as long as it also rises and moves on, it can be defined as "the pulse of a perfect heart, life struck straight through the streets" (MD 47). Traffic comes to symbolise life in itself, but unlike photographs who fix this life on film, cars and traffic keep on carrying it further and further; thereby 'capturing' life more as it is in reality.

It is in this context that Woolf can claim: "I walked along Oxford St. The buses are strung on a chain. People fight & struggle. Knocking each other off the pavement. Old bare-headed men: a motor car accident; &c. To walk alone in London is the greatest rest." (D 3:298) This quote underlines that even a motor car accident is here regarded as part of the general life traffic generates. Cars and traffic thus seem to be, for Woolf, the most positive of all technologies. Though cars can block the road and kill people unexpectedly, it is the life and mobility they create that is valued more than anything else. The reason for this lies in the fact that life and mobility oppose the death of the soul. It is this capacity of cars and traffic that Woolf wants to transfer to her fiction; thereby linking technology and art in a new way that reaches beyond the art work as produced by mechanical reproduction. However, it should be noted that Woolf does not oppose Walter Benjamin's theories by doing so, rather, she seems to use his ideas, or similar ideas, to give shape to this new form of art-technology as fiction. For a closer understanding of this, a look at one of Woolf's essays will prove helpful.

As Woolf claimed the car opened up both actual and mental landscapes. The title of her essay "Evening over Sussex: Reflections in a Motor Car" emphasises that in this essay an actual landscape, observed from a car, will lead to mental reflections. This essay was probably written in 1927, but was not published until 1942 (Bowlby 275). It begins with a description of the Sussex landscape shaded by the failing light of dusk. Though the title makes clear that this landscape is observed from a motor car, in the essay itself this fact is not mentioned until halfway through the text. Thus, emphasis is first laid on the natural and outer landscapes the motor car explores. The narrator begins to reflect on the beauty of the scenery that is increasingly veiled by the light of dusk until it looks as it did ten centuries ago (204). The beauty here admired is therefore also transient, for it is already related to the past. This transience, moreover, is also visible in beauty itself: "for beauty spread at one's right hand, at one's left; at one's back too; it was escaping all the time" (204). The

narrator expresses frustration about this fleeting beauty and the impossibility to convey it to another person. It is at that moment that she is interrupted by a second self who starts quarrelling with the first 'T'. The second self concludes that it is best to "sit and soak; to be passive; to accept" (205). She enjoys a sense of passivity in simply beholding the landscape.

The reflections in the motor car thus seem to have been made from the passenger's seat, which is consistent with the fact that Woolf herself never did learn how to drive (D 3:147). Furthermore, the fleeting and transient character of the scenery observed underlines that this landscape is viewed from a car, even before the text itself mentions it. This juxtaposes the journey by car and the reflections in it, as the essay's title already suggest. It is after this juxtaposition that a third party declares itself. This third 'T' finally mentions that the contemplations here represented are taking place "as the car sped along" (205). The car then, draws attention to itself and at the same time, the reflections are turning inward. For the third self is "aloof and melancholy" and muses on gloom and death. She declares that it is "over and done with" for "the light is out now". It is the car's movement that inspires these thoughts, for "I felt left behind even as the road is left behind." (205) Thus, the fleeting scenery that escapes all the time transforms into an inner landscape and its transience is now related to death. The narrator later explains that the death meant here is "the death of the individual" (206).

A fourth party, however, comes to interfere and draws attention to yet another light, the light "that dangles from the future" (205). The inner reflections are taken to a further level that transports the selves in the direction of the future. This future is defined as "Susses in five hundred years to come." Where "I think much grossness will have evaporated. [...] There will be magic gates. Draughts fan-blown by electric power will cleanse houses." Lights, moreover, will do the work there (205). This future is thus highly technological and positive, for it has less "grossness" and "will be full of charming thoughts, quick, effective beams." (205) Like all the landscapes thus far considered, the future will also be full of motion, as the "quick, effective beams" of light suggest. Moreover, these reflections move along with the car; thereby making thoughts and motion inseparable. This attenuates the third party's feeling of being left behind; for the selves are all part of the car in which the reflections take place and they all contemplate moving landscapes, which suggests that something of them will keep on moving until the future is reached.

Nevertheless, where the future in "Character in Fiction" is defined only as "beginning" (SE 54), here it sketched out much more clearly and becomes a small science-fiction like figure sitting on the narrator's knee (206). With the car "this little figure" advances "through beauty, through death, to the economical, powerful and efficient future". Such a clearly outlined positive future appears nowhere else in Woolf's work, neither in the novels nor in her essays or journals. Its shape is still small, however, and this little person that is defined as male, sends an electric shock of

recognition through the selves who have produced him (206). The fourth self feels compelled to ask whether this future satisfies the other selves. Their answer is a double “'Yes, yes,' as if affirming something, in a moment of recognition.” (206) Nevertheless, the confidence of this answer is not carried through to the final paragraph of the essay. The solemn figure, surrounded by “great rocks” and trees, seems to have stopped some of the movements and musings that lead up to his creation. The mental reflections make way for the body that expresses banal bodily desires for food, warmth, a bath and a bed whereupon the other selves are dismissed and “the rest of the journey was performed in the delicious society of my own body.” (206) It seems to suggest a final unity and a silencing of the mind.

This, as final note of the essay, is puzzling and seems very unlike Woolf who sees mobility, variety and difference as the most important elements of the soul. What then, does she mean by ending her essay this way? Her diary may provide more clarity. On August 21, 1927 Woolf writes:

What I like, or one of the things I like, about motoring is the sense it gives one of lighting accidentally, like a voyager who touches another planet with the tip of his toe, upon scenes which would have gone on, have always gone on, will go on, unrecorded, save for this chance *glimpse*. [my emphasis] (D 3: 153)

Like the four selves, driving through Sussex and producing a figure from another planet; the future, Woolf too imagines herself a voyager who visits other worlds. However, these other worlds are plural, for Woolf suggests there is an infinity of such scenes that can be visited. Moreover, the other planets touched upon are defined by “chance glimpses” only, for she adds: “Then it seems to me I am allowed to see the heart of the world uncovered for a moment.” Here it is useful to reflect for a moment on Benjamin's concept of the aura. It has already been stated that the aura of an art work refers to its uniqueness and authenticity. However, a closer look at Benjamin's original description of this aura enforces an attenuation of this concept. Indeed, he claims that the aura is “eine einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne” where he defines the “Ferne”, distance, as “unnahbar” (142) which translates as 'unapproachable'. Moreover, this unapproachable distance that is part of the aura is embedded in a tradition that is changeable (wandelbar) and alive (lebendig); it moves (143). In this context, the aura as a vision of an ever moving distance very much resembles the glimpses of other shores and planets that Woolf sees as part of the voyage by car. Thus, by comparing Woolf and Benjamin it can be claimed that Woolf uses a concept similar to Benjamin's aura to define the car as new art-technology. However, her awareness of the dangers that accompanies concepts like originality and authenticity leads her to use the aura only in its definition of a glimpse that always refers elsewhere, to the distance.

This is illustrated in the future Woolf envisions in her car in Sussex. As has been stated, the figure of the future is more clearly sketched than any other futures she refers to in her work.

However, this clarity can also be a danger, for it can lead to visions of the future that are already defined in the present; the little figure might grow into a big man controlling the selves who produced him. However, the future that is evoked in the car shares this room with the past and the present. The present is attendant in the form of the body that calls attention to the here and now. The past, moreover, was part of the reflections on the beauty of the Sussex landscape. Thus, past, present and future are part of one space of reflection. This is exactly how Benjamin defines his concept of the aura as embedded in tradition, for indeed this tradition is an assembly of all the past moments that have led up to the present and points to a distance that lies always in the future (143). Therefore, the car does not only refer to the aura, it expresses an aura in itself. Though it is very closely linked to Benjamin's aura, it also goes beyond this, for it emphasises its difference rather than its totalitarian connotations.

Moreover, this positive use of the car is linked to an aura that always catches glimpses of the future; it is an aura mainly of the future. This is very important, for the possibilities Woolf envisions for the car as fiction are always connected to this future; the civilization yet to be reached. As Gillespie claimed, any one perception of life is never enough, however, once writing is imagined as a means of transportation that moves like a train between stations, or like a car, between reflections, it becomes clear that Woolf's definition of writing will always lead to an infinite variety of reflections. As such, the mechanics of the car also work against the totalization of the masses that changes them into machines, as Cadava has asserted (50), by using technology in an undermining way. Here the importance of the car, and to a lesser extent the train, as a new fiction asserts itself. Like a driver, or his passenger, the novelist is motoring through language, looking for several selves that all express aspects of life in words. These reflections are contained in a moving vehicle that motors through life, touching upon several shores and catching glimpses of reality. Like photography, the car is closely linked to writing and thus creates multiple reflections. However, unlike photography, the art Woolf finds in the car is not just linked to fiction, it also embodies fiction itself. Woolf seems to transform the novel into a new technology, accorded even with a new aura. In the fight for a new civilization photography was supportive, the car, however, becomes an indispensable element of the fiction that fights for this society yet to come. Instead of turning the masses into apparatuses, she turns the novel into a machine that opposes the mechanisation of the people's minds.

Moreover, there is another strong emotion that Woolf associated with the car as new fictional medium. For the car was earned by Woolf herself by using this same medium of writing. Thus she herself enabled the thoughts and images that were produced by the car. Its newness is therefore also linked to female independence. As Woolf has claimed in *A Room of One's Own* (1929); a woman should form her own literary traditions. Later, in *Three Guineas* (1938), Woolf

would extend this claim and assert that the female literary tradition should show a female independence that is the result of the right to earn one's own living; a literature totally different from the established male literary tradition. According to Woolf's later writings, this is essential for the establishment of peace and freedom in the world. It seems that here, in her earlier novels and essays, she already begins to make her own contribution to this by introducing a new form of writing made possible by her reflections on technology. Thus the novel as a mechanical vehicle for the transportation of thoughts is also closely associated with female rights. However, at this point this connection remains largely subconscious as it is mainly linked to Woolf's personal gain.

Nevertheless, Woolf's positive view on technologies of transportation is not valid for all of its subcategories. Here the aeroplane asserts itself, for Woolf saw the plane as one of the most dangerous and undermining of all technologies. Though it is also a technology of transportation, the aeroplane differs from other technologies already in the perspective it offers on life; the aerial view. In this context, the plane opposes Cohen's definition of the modern city as a space "ungraspable in its totality" (102). Looking at a city from above, can very well create a total image. However, Woolf never travelled by air (Lee 16), and provides most of her aeroplane analyses from the ground. One of the first entries of her 1915 journals report on this earthly perspective, for: "An aeroplane passed overhead." (D 1: 7) As a powerful machine passing overhead this flying machine was considered threatening, not in the least because it belonged to the war that was being fought at that time. The danger connected to these war planes already asserts itself a few weeks later, when Woolf relates a trip to London where she heard "a terrific explosion" that she suspects comes from a Zeppelin or aeroplane. This time, the explosion she heard is "only, I suppose, a very large tyre burst", but it sets her thinking: "it is really an instinct with me, & most people, I suppose, to turn any sudden noise, or dark object in the sky into an explosion, or a German aeroplane." (D 1: 32) This image of planes, juxtaposed with explosions, defines not only the first aircraft that appear in Woolf's journals, but it will also cast a shadow upon all the later flying machines she envisions, even those in times of peace.

A highly negative view on planes is visible, for instance, in the many references to air crashes in the peacetime journals. In 1923 Woolf attempts to record some conversations of the previous evening, but she has difficulty writing out the "too formal & too conventional" talk. What she does write down, however, is a story related by Scofield Thayer, an American friend of T.S. Eliot's, which she defines as "a good account of flying" (D 2: 257). In this account Thayer tells about his experience of flying in an over weighted plane and "It was terrible", for "Suddenly the engines stopped. We pitched up & down. We expected the whole thing to crash." In fact, "we might just as well have dashed to the ground". (D 2: 258) The fact that Woolf records this entire conversation almost verbatim already illustrates the importance she accorded to this report on

flying. Moreover, she defined this story as a “good account”. As such, it underlines her own opinion about flying as something that is very dangerous and should not be attempted. Where Thayer exclaims: “Never again, no.” Woolf seems to echo this as a simple ‘never’.

Woolf’s negative attitude towards aviation receives yet another dimension when she and Leonard drive her sister Vanessa and nephew Quentin to the airport at Croydon in 1933. Here again, death is intimately linked to plane travelling:

We [...] saw the aeroplane whirl, till the propellers were lost to sight – simply evaporated: then the aeroplane takes a slow run, circles & rises. This is death, I said, feeling how the human contact was completely severed. [...] Up they went with a sublime air & disappeared like a person dying, the soul going. (D 4: 187)

For Woolf, the aeroplane means a severing of human contact and even symbolises the soul’s journey after death. This diary entry brings to mind a passage from *Mrs Dalloway* where the advertising plane slowly disappears from sight and is observed as “a symbol [...] of man’s soul; of his determination, thought Mr. Bently [...] to get outside his body.” (23) Mr. Bently defines this going outside of the body not as death, as Woolf does in her diary, but as a getting beyond “by means of thought, Einstein, speculation, mathematics, the Mendelian theory” (23). Consequently, the soul that is observed here is a soul that aspires to greatness. Indeed, the swooping aeroplane causes the people watching it to develop very different thoughts and ideas as to its meaning, something Woolf valued as one of the most important aspects of the soul; its infinite variety (cf. SE 42). Froula adds that: “old transcendences metamorphose into an airplane swooping” (111) whereby the old transcendences embody a non-modernist, monotheistic society (112). The different interpretations of the plane and its message contradict these old supremacies. Thus, the progressive aspirations symbolised by the aeroplane lead to an illustration of what kind of civilization it should aspire to; a society existing of myriad-minded creativity (Froula 126). Nevertheless, the aeroplane does not do this on its own; the “blind spirit of monarchy” (111) present in the car already prepared the audience for the various thoughts it would develop by the plane’s arrival.

Moreover, the link between the aeroplane, the soul and death that Woolf made in her diary is still indirectly present in *Mrs Dalloway*. The aeroplane is continually accompanied by a sense of doom. First of all it should be noted that the aeroplane as a flying soul brings to mind a folklorist belief in Western tradition that a human soul can take on the shape of a bird after death.

There were several birds who could symbolise a man’s soul, but on land it was most often associated with the raven (Amstrong 213f). The raven, indeed, was an ominous bird, yet with an ambivalent character; it could foretell both good and bad times, depending on the meaning given to it by man (Armstrong 71f). Shakespeare already speaks of the bad omen the raven brings in King Henry VI: “The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time [...] The raven rook’d her on the chimney-

top" (III- V- VI:45-47). It is very likely that Woolf, who knew Shakespeare very well, was familiar with the symbolic meaning of this bird.

This is underlined by the narrator in *Mrs Dalloway* who claims, as the aeroplane first appears, that its sound "bore ominously into the ears of the crowd." (16) Furthermore, the aeroplane shares the sky with a flight of gulls that is observed by the onlookers as well: "the whole world became perfectly silent, and a flight of gulls crossed the sky, first one gull leading, then another" (17). In the coastal areas of Britain and Ireland it was believed until well in the twentieth century that both ravens and seagulls embodied the souls of drowned sailors and announced disaster (Armstrong 211,212ff). It is not definite that Woolf had these connotations of gulls in mind as she wrote *Mrs Dalloway*. Still, it is not unlikely that she knew the symbolism around gulls, especially as she spent most of her childhood at the coasts of Cornwall. Moreover, according to Armstrong the folklorist meanings of birds were quite wide-spread and cannot be reduced to "the myth-making activities of minds under the strain of modern war" (212, cf 217). As such, the gulls in *Mrs Dalloway* would embody human souls that follow each other across the sky. Like ravens, gulls were feared for their ability to foretell doom (213ff). Nevertheless, the gulls in *Mrs Dalloway* appear in silence and are not accompanied by the ominous sound of the plane. It seems that, as with the raven, these gulls can be interpreted in various ways. It is up to their audience to create meaning around them. Thus, the aeroplane as a flying soul in *Mrs Dalloway* is surrounded by signs of death and the foreboding of doom.

This relation between the soul and death is emphasised later in the novel by Peter, who has fallen asleep on a park bench. In his dreams he has a vision of a figure, that symbolises "the lost mother whose sons have been killed in the battles of the world." (50) Soon after this vision he wakes up, exclaiming: "The death of the soul." (51) The soul's death, that first appeared in connection to the passing aeroplane, is now linked to death created by war. Peter, however, does not remember his dream and associates his exclamation with Clarissa Dalloway. Clarissa chose to marry Richard Dalloway instead of Peter and now she, "with a mind of her own [...] must always be quoting Richard" (67). Peter wished he had saved her, as he had intended, "from the Hughs and the Dalloways and all the other 'perfect gentlemen' who would 'stifle her soul'" (66). In consequence, "the death of her soul" (51) points to the fact that Clarissa no longer thinks for herself, and is stifled into the fixed role of being Richard Dalloway's wife. It is also the matriarchal role Peter has dreamed of in the park; the mother lamenting the death of her sons. In this context, the death of Clarissa's soul is the result of her societal function. It is a symbolic death that points to the end of movement and progression, furthermore, it could lead to whole generations of people not thinking for themselves. Indeed, even Clarissa's daughter is affected by an inability to take decisions about her life (120). Thus, the advancement towards an infinite variety of meaning within the human soul

that is hinted at by Mr Bently, is here presented as being in danger of becoming stifled by patriarchal society. The greatness the soul aspires to will then become the greatness of the big men in the big cars; dominant and imposing.

Yet another reference to the death of the soul brought about by aeroplanes can be found in Woolf's essay "Flying over London", which was published posthumously. In this text Woolf also refers to gulls as belonging to the realm of death: "where there are gulls only, life is not" (208). This idea suggests itself as the plane rises, shortly after it has gone down to offer a glimpse of civilization. It appears that the air is the opposite of civilization, as the air holds only the gull as symbol of man's death. Moreover, in the sky the aeroplane undergoes a transformation; the plane becomes a boat and the pilot changes into Charon, the mythological ferryman who conveyed dead souls over the river Styx, to the underworld (SE 243). Indeed, the plane had already been referred to as a boat "sailing towards a harbour" (207), but with Charon as its captain the boat is now piloted into the port of death. Thus, the plane does not only symbolize the death of the soul, it also embodies dead souls in flight through the sky. The perspective on society as seen from this machine is equally deadly, for, as the plane descends for the second time, the passengers, now reappearing from the underworld in the sky, are presented with the sight of London: "again the whole of civilization spread beneath us" (210). However, this society is visible only as whole, it is presented as a machine, but "nobody worked the machine" (210); its humanity is erased by a total view. Where in *Mrs Dalloway* the aeroplane was the machine that was navigated over society by an invisible hand, now it is civilization itself that becomes a machine with imperceptible operators. The plane, on the other hand, has a clearly identified pilot, frequently referred to by his full title: "Flight-Lieutenant Hopgood" (207). Thus, the roles are reversed, the deadly realm of the sky causes everything to change "its values seen from the air" (211). But as the plane has already been defined as the vehicle that transports dead souls, this aerial view is death itself; it brings changes that defy the human element in mechanization.

Even so, the total view of civilization that is offered by the plane, is attenuated a little as the plane goes further down. There, its passengers begin to discern human activity, however, the human realm cannot be entered, only observed. Even when the narrator wishes a door to open, so she can see what's behind the surface, this door offers a view of life where "personality was outside the body" and "one wished to animate the heart, the legs, the arms". But, "to do which it would be necessary to be there" and to come down from the air (211). The narrator confirms that there is humanity in the machine of civilisation, but one has to be *in* this society to truly observe it. One has to see and remember details, before an aerial view of life can be taken. Indeed, this is what happens in the essay, for the narrator's reflections on aerial perspectives take place only in her mind, for "the flight had not begun", "we had not flown after all" (212). Due to a "defect in the machine" the plane

had in fact never taken off. However, it is not only a defect in the plane that keeps it down, it is also a flaw in society that leads to a danger in aerial perspectives. A view from the sky allows for a perspective on society as total and inhuman. It leads to a mechanization of civilization that creates inanimate beings; a herd full of empty-minded people that we have already identified as the masses that bring Woolf's civilization of the future in danger of becoming totalized. Woolf's essay seems to form a warning against this kind of perspective on life.

Thus, Woolf's reflections on aeroplanes support her other views on technology by illustrating what can happen if a technology is used the wrong way. Indeed, technology as art has to be operated from within civilisation; it has to include the author or creator as the person who makes visible the human element within technology, art and society. Moreover, as Woolf's reflections on the car have shown, the audience too has to be clearly present as a multiple civilisation, for where single people appear as the dominant controllers of technology, like Dr. Bradshaw, this technology remains oppressive. The novel as machine or art-technology, however, can oppose such oppressive totalization and work towards a society where people are incited to think. Rather than totalizing the masses of readers and turning them into machines of mechanical reproduction, Woolf's novel becomes a vehicle that transports its readers into a future of diverse and various reflection, a unity created out of multiplicity. Thus, Woolf uses her texts in a dialectical way, precisely at the point where mechanical reproduction can oppress and totalize, she undermines this totalization by ensuring that her art-technologies are defined by humanity. But, as the war approaches, humanity becomes increasingly endangered.

Technologies in Times of War

The Infernal Megaphone

Virginia Woolf associated aeroplanes with war to such an extent that the plane came to symbolise the war's mechanical soldier. And where the aeroplane signifies the war's warrior, the wireless became its messenger. As early as 1932 Woolf notes conversations about the threat of a new war in her diary. The first time she mentions Hitler in this connection is in 1933 when she meets the German conductor Bruno Walter who had fled Germany after Hitler's rise to power. Woolf describes Walter as "very nearly mad; that is, he can't get 'the poison' as he called it of Hitler out of him." Walter tells the Woolfs that the situation in his home land is "terrible - terrible" and shortly after goes on: "And on the wireless, between the turns, they play military music. Horrible horrible." (D 4: 153). This double 'horrible' echoes the terrible situation of Walter's country and intimately links Hitler to the wireless that propagates his military regime. Woolf only starts making this connection in 1933, but in fact it was the First World War that forged the initial connection between wireless, war and propaganda (Brigs 33f) as it lead to rapid innovations on wireless technology, partly because of technological competition between the enemy parties. Another consequence of this was that after the Great War the wireless could be used by civilians as well, and on a grand scale. Indeed, the radio acquired a leading position in mass media after 1918, and most notably after 1922 when the BBC was established. In 1925 over eighty percent of the British population could be reached by this technology of transmission (Crisell 15).

Woolf herself first mentions the radio in 1926 when she listens to its news broadcasts on the General Strike. Her first description of the wireless, however, is not entirely favourable, for it reads: "A voice, rather commonplace & official, yet the only common voice left, wishes us good morning at 10. It is the voice of Britain, to wh. we can make no reply." (D 3:77) This "voice of Britain" can represent various things; first of all it could refer to the BBC that at the time had a monopoly in broadcasting (46) and was the only official corporation to send its voices into the air (14). Moreover, it can point to the entire nation of Britain; "the only common voice left". Yet, at the same time, this voice is official and different from the British masses, for it rules the "we" that cannot make a reply. Thus, whatever it signifies, this voice is mainly related to power. This power, nevertheless, does not have an identifiable face. Like the power symbol present in the car that drives through the opening scenes of *Mrs Dalloway*, this authority too is invisible. However, the car in *Mrs Dalloway*, produces various thoughts and reflections in its audience. The dominant wireless voice, on the other hand, does not seem to do so, for it is a voice that cannot be answered. Here, Woolf shows to have understood the special character of wireless technology. The wireless was created out of improvements to the telephone system that works by point-to-point, and thus private,

communication (cf. Brigs 5, Crisell 10). However, the nature of the wireless actually contradicts this private communication, precisely because it functions wire-less; without cables or wires. Radio transmission thus takes place through the atmosphere (Crisell 10) whereby it can reach “an indefinite number of receivers” at once (10). But it does so through indirect communication that works only in one direction.

Thus, the authoritative voice of the wireless becomes unanswerable; it creates a 'we' in the listeners, a collectivity or mass that simultaneously experiences the radio's effects. As Woolf notes: “London calling the British Isles [...] That is how it begins at 10.” (D 3: 80) In fact, a mass of listeners is required for the radio to function as broadcasting medium at all (10). This brings to mind Walter Benjamin's remarks on masses that are an essential element of most technologies of reproduction. According to Benjamin, moreover, masses can be easily dictated because of their tendency to unify themselves into a homogeneous crowd expressing collective opinions (154, 159). If this happens, they forget to think for themselves and are turned into apparatuses, masses thereby become very susceptible to dictatorial rulers (Cadava 50). Benjamin claims this is especially true for technologies like cinema and radio, because they are not only received by a mass audience, but by an audience that *simultaneously* undergoes its effects. Thus, there is a danger inherent in the masses required for radio transmission that Woolf too recognises. First of all, this danger is presented by Woolf through the unanswerable voice of broadcasting. Indeed, the concept of unanswerability has an important connotation, for next to an absent answer it also points to a lack of accountability (cf. OED). Therefore, where Benjamin saw a possibility of creation at moments of stasis by taking responsibility, here this accountability is not present. The broadcast of the General Strike thereby bears its own destruction within itself, for without responsibility it can easily influence its listeners and thus transform them into a unified, static whole.

Even so, the BBC did try to take responsibility. However, this was a liability of a special kind and originated largely from one man: the Director-General of the BBC, John Reith. Reith sought to use his company's monopoly by maintaining an independent vision and educating the masses in a morally justified way (14). Indeed, he claimed: “I think it will be admitted by all that to have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose and pursuit of entertainment alone [...] would have been a prostitution of its powers and an insult to the character and intelligence of the people.” (qtd. Brigs 7) Though Reith wanted to use the wireless for a good cause, the moral education of the masses and the BBC's broadcasting monopoly also assured that none of the wireless listeners could escape this good cause. Woolf's often ironic remarks on the news brought about by the radio underline this. For instance, she states: “The broadcaster has just said that we are praying today.” (D 3:80), or at the end of a 1936 broadcast: “Goodnight; & we were tucked up in our beds.” (D 5:44). It is a kind of morality that transforms the listener into a child in need of

directions. This kind of education does not advance thinking but rather prevents it by thinking for people; Reith's attempts to teach the masses fail to leave room for individual development (Crisell 14f). The same goes for the other moral teachers on the radio, like the Prime Minister's impressive voice with its rolling r's, of which Woolf claims: "I can't heat up my reverence to the right pitch" (D 3: 81). It makes him "a little ridiculous"; it is a ridicule of imposing morality, at least to Woolf.

However, here Woolf does show that, though the BBC imposes its morality on the listeners, there is still room for responsibility with the audience; it is about looking for the right pitch, or the appropriate attitude of listening. This suggests that an active form of listening is still possible and such an active listener would undermine the impositions made by the invisible voice. As such, Woolf can see through the performance of the Prime Minister and criticize him. Moreover, even the BBC uses its responsibilities in various ways, for next to educating the masses in a morally justified manner, it also attempted to tell the truth and give neutral news reports, even in the most difficult circumstances. In this context, Crisell claims the BBC had its first major test during the General Strike of 1926. According to Crisell the corporation passed, since it remained neutral and by the end of the strike, millions of listeners "had come to depend upon the accuracy of its information" (18f). Even Woolf, though criticising the BBC's messages, continued to listen to the news on the wireless, in fact it is a radio broadcast that leads her to conclude: "The Strike was settled at about 1.15 – or it was then broadcast." (D 3:84) By the end of the Strike, for Woolf as well as for the greater audience, the BBC appears as trustworthy. Moreover, the radio is even grown into a new function; that of a messenger. It is this role that becomes central, and expanded, in the Second World War that followed over a decade later.

Shortly before the Second World War breaks out, Woolf seems to be chained to the wireless. She states: "Are we at war? At 1 I'm going to listen in.." And she adds: "One touch on the switch & we shall be at war." (D 5:231). A few days later she repeats this almost literally: "Will the 9 o'clock bulletin end it all?" (D 5: 231) As soon as the news is given on the radio it becomes true, for it is the radio switch that Woolf sees as starting the war. Indeed, a few days later it is the wireless that announces the war declaration in a speech by the "PM [Prime Minister] at 11.15." (D 5: 234) Added to this character of the wireless, moreover, was its speed in bringing the news, indeed Woolf claims: "Scarcely worth reading papers. The BBC gives any news the day before." (D 5:234) The events are transmitted as they happen, or very shortly after. It illustrates how close the war came to the British homes, as a result of its fast transmission. Woolf underlines this by stating: "The public world very notably invaded the private" (D 5:131) As such, the wireless seems to become more than a technology of transmission, for if its broadcasts can bring the reality of war with one switch, only a small step remains for the radio to become the actual transporter of the fight. In the early days of war, however, the radio brings mainly news. News, moreover, that remained to be trusted, for even

in times of war, the BBC tried to maintain its policy of telling the truth. This was believed to strengthen the morale of people to “tell them the truth, and nothing but the truth, even if the truth is horrible” (Brigs 608). The consequence of not hiding horrible truths indeed was that people believed the BBC's good news as well as the bad, as they had done since 1926 (Crisell 56).

Still, the public world that invaded the private by means of the radio was not only the world of news, but also of public sentiment, expressed by various voices. However, unlike the 1926 'voice of Britain' that could signify multiple owners at once, now most of the voices were recognisable as belonging to single people. First of all there were the “raging voices” of Germany and most notably Hitler. Already in 1938 Woolf describes his voice as “mad”, and “vociferating” (D 5:166). Indeed, Hitler frequently utters something similar to “A savage howl like a person excruciated” followed by yet “another bark” (D 5:169). Michele Pridmore-Brown adds that Hitler, through the rhythm and rhyme of his speech and rhetoric, could magnetize nerves and bring about certain required moods, therefore “the power of the disembodied sound [...] frightened” Woolf (411). But there are other voices of war time radio; the British voices. Next to the BBC, that presents itself “in a measured trained voice” giving instructions (D 5:178), there is the voice of Churchill, for instance, sounding “reassuring about defence of England; not all claptrap” (D 5:297). The word 'claptrap' underlines that Woolf perceived Churchill's speech not as completely hollow and meaningless, which makes him reassuring, even if she cannot answer him.

Nevertheless, Churchill's sound too, is described by Woolf as “fast and furious”, “issue[ing] in a spate of words from the loudspeakers” (D 5:292). Indeed, Pridmore-Brown asserts that Churchill's oratorical skills and abilities on the level of rhythm and rhyme were “not so different from those of his fascist counterparts.” (411) Moreover, both Churchill and Hitler are recognisable and as such resemble the visible symbol of power that is also presented in *Mrs Dalloway*. In that novel Dr. Bradshaw is able to impose his opinion on his patients in a totalizing way, precisely because he is visible. Here, both Hitler and Churchill can do the same, by putting themselves in the visible position of sender, and making their voices recognisably powerful, they can address masses of receivers and these masses most willingly respond to strong leaders. Pridmore-Brown agrees, for she claims that by a technical employment of his voice, the Führer could regulate masses of mechanized bodies as if from a switchboard (411). Walter Benjamin adds that it is the movie star or dictator that becomes the winner (Sieger) of the new society ruled by mechanical reproduction (154). When both Hitler and Churchill are able to use their wireless voices this way, then the difference between the two diminishes.

However, one major distinction remains intact; Hitler and Churchill have very different objectives in mind while using radio transmissions. The voice of Britain, in fact, used its capacities precisely to create a British voice: a collective British community of listeners; “All of Lewes

listening to the wireless" (D 5:300). This voice is raised en masse against the atrocities of Hitler. Woolf is dragged into this communal voice as well, for she asserts: "I had I think an individual, not communal, BBC dictated feeling. I almost instinctively wished them luck." (D 5:306) Woolf is attentive to the fact that the nationalistic feelings here described are partially imposed through the wireless, but here she does not express a wish to escape these feelings. Rather, they come to her "almost instinctively" and still leave a little room for individual reflections, for Woolf is aware of her reaction as part of a general sentiment, indeed, she adds: "I should like to be able to take scientific notes of reactions". It seems that Woolf values the attempts at unifying the British people, mainly because it is for the right cause and works against the real totalitarianism of Hitler. Indeed, the BBC contributed to a love of England that even Woolf felt and suffused with her own outsider's patriotism (Froula 290). Nevertheless, even though the voice of Britain is regarded as better than the voices coming from the Continent, it still dictates and imposes.

Moreover, the trained voice of the BBC remained propagandistic in certain ways as it worked in close alliance to the Ministry of Information (Brigs 584) Shortly after the start of the war, Woolf claims of the news; "we shall have it served up for tonight" by the "eyes of the whole world (BBC)" (D5:251). This already points to a loss of critical thought; for it reminds one of cinema where cutting techniques directed the audience into a specific interpretation (Benjamin 148). Here, the eyes of the world cut the news up for the wireless and present it ready to be digested and indeed, the BBC is thereby capable of creating, even in Britain, a herd mentality; "we are beginning to feel the herd impulse" (D 5:166, cf. 231). Something Woolf absolutely opposed, as becomes visible in all her fictional work. As the war develops in 1940, this continues, for Woolf starts to talk about the BBC's "myth-making stage" presenting the people with the image of the "laughing, heroic, Tommy" (D 5:292). Pridmore-Brown asserts that Woolf saw these broadcasts as bypassing the intellect and an attempt to transform the audience into a machine (411). The risk of transforming the British masses into means of mechanical reproduction increases. Though Woolf appreciated the raising of a collectivity against fascism, the fear for these totalizing capacities of the wireless seems to become dominant.

In fact, immediately after the start of the war, Woolf had already described Hitler's voice as "Our Masters Voice" (D 5:204). This phrase stems from an early twentieth century advertisement for the gramophone which shows the painting of a dog, Nipper, who listens to the voice of his dead master. This picture is accompanied by the caption: "His Master's Voice" (Fig. 3). According to Knowles this



Figure 3. "His Master's Voice"

image symbolised the presence of the dead and a loss of authenticity (6f), for the voice that is preserved by the gramophone is a ghostly voice that belongs to an absent person. This voice, that signifies a message from the dead, is now ascribed to Hitler. Moreover, it is no longer a master that rules other people, but the voice now signifies 'our' master. The fear of Woolf for this image becoming reality is fed by the likeness between Hitler and Churchill and the mechanized herd mentality created in Britain. The wireless, and the BBC, can easily prepare the British audience for the authoritarianism of fascism and thus the fight against the dictators cannot be properly fought over the official radio channels as they are exploited by the BBC. The novel as machine, on the other hand, seems very suitable to fight totalitarianism, since Woolf had always tried to fight unification and stasis of the mind, moreover, with her writing she wanted to create responsibility in both author and audience. Thus, the rise of Hitler and totally unified and mechanized society appears to form the ultimate challenge for Woolf's art-technologies in fiction that try to oppose Hitler with similar means.

Indeed, where in *The Years*, published in 1937, the threat of war finally makes way for a salute to the London dawn and its present (372), in *Three Guineas* this changes. The latter was originally meant to form an essay-novel with *The Years*, titled *The Pargiters*, about the sexual lives of women (D 4:6). But as this project did not succeed, the novel developed into *The Years* and the essay became *Three Guineas* that combined the reflections on women's sexuality (Froula 259) with the question of war. In this essay, an educated gentleman asks a woman "how in her opinion war can be prevented" (117). It is answered by the daughter of an educated man in the form of a letter. Woolf as narrator presents this reply as a three-fold argument that develops from a personal battle against patriarchy into a public battle against fascism. Indeed, Karen Schneider asserts that it "exhorts [the] reader to recognize the fascism inherent in patriarchal culture, England's in particular" (93). For in fact, Woolf argues that it is not just the wireless that prepared society for the rule of a dictator, it is also the societal structure, defined as patriarchy, that carries within itself its own downfall, caused by totalization. However, Woolf attempts to fight this threat of war and totalitarianism and though *Three Guineas* is not a novel, it does encompass several kinds of technology that support its argument. Photography is the most important one.

Indeed, Woolf inserts several photographs into her text that correspond to the different levels on which patriarchy and fascism should be fought. First of all, the daughters of educated men have had to fight the patriarch of the private house; fathers, brothers and husbands. This patriarch strongly resembles a dictator, states the narrator, for he commands his wife, daughters and sisters (cf. Schneider 96f) simply because he believes "that he has the right whether given by God, Nature, sex or race is immaterial, to *dictate* to other human beings how they shall live; what they shall do" [my emphasis] (TG 175). This resulted in the fact that women were barred from public institutions

that could provide them with education and the means to earn their own livings. They were kept separate and ignorant in the private house. However, women have fought their personal dictators and their battle, Woolf argues, has largely been won, for since 1919 women have the right to vote, and since 1870 to enter systems of education, thereby the possibility to earn their own living has increased (129, 147); which provides the means to escape the patriarchal home. However, this personal victory was not the end of their struggle, but only the beginning, for where the private fathers have yielded, in public they have massed together even more (266). Though women are, in 1938, theoretically able to access public realms of education and the profession, in fact, they are still reduced to bystanders “looking at the picture of the lives of others [men].” (121) The private fight against patriarchy has to become public. This is where the first type of photograph inserts itself; actual images of men performing the public duties and functions still denied to women.

In this context, the picture of a general in full uniform is both shown and described: “Tabards embroidered with lions and unicorns swing from your shoulders; metal objects cut in star shapes or in circles glitter and twinkle upon your breasts” (134, 135). This “public attire” moreover is “dazzling” and works very strange on the woman observing them, for she is used to “the comparative simplicity of dress at home” (134). Especially in their finest dress, the military uniform, men appear to women as “ridiculous, a barbarous, a displeasing spectacle” (138). Thus, this photo creates an opposition between male and female costume and exposes the male version as ridiculous (Froula 262) This difference in dress, moreover, points to a deeper antagonism between male and female spheres, for the masculine public space is characterised by uniformity in body, indeed the phrase ‘in uniform’ can be defined as ‘in one body or flock’ (OED), or as Woolf’s narrator states: “whole bodies of men dressed alike” (134). The photographs underline this by showing several groups of men in ceremonial clothes or uniforms (figure 4). The uniform, however, is denied women.



Figure 4

Moreover, when looking at a photograph of men representing the law (185) Woolf asserts that not only their bodies are dressed in uniforms, but so are their brains, for here she looks at the herd of educated brothers and “most of them kept in step”; they do not only look the same, they act the same (183). Both photograph and text thus underline what the men's clothes signify, they “serve to advertise the social, professional, or intellectual standing of the wearer.” (137) This standing,

however, the images proof, has become a unified male identity that is blind to its own barbarity and ridicule.

Furthermore, as a great massive body these public men have become very susceptible to a lethal form of mechanical reproduction. As is already shown, the reason for this lies in the massive character of the male groups. For, as Cadava has asserted, both the art work and the masses have their origins in technologies of reproduction (49). However, this means that they can also both become a means of reproduction; the masses can turn into recording apparatuses (48) that signify, as Froula adds, a human race, not of progress, but of repetition (268). This is underlined in *Three Guineas* as well, where Woolf repeatedly evokes “the old tune which human nature, like a gramophone whose needle has stuck, is now grinding out with [...] disastrous unanimity.” (181) Here, male human nature is indeed described as a recording apparatus, a means of mechanical reproduction that conveys “no progress, only repetition” (190). These mechanized masculine public masses of repetition have become disastrous for women, who are crushed by this male machine. This is again illustrated in the photographs that completely exclude women from their depiction of “social, professional, or intellectual standing”. Photographs themselves are, moreover, art works created by mechanical reproduction and thus by their very nature as technology, they underline the threat that these male bodies will be perpetually reproduced while endlessly excluding women. Thereby, these images appear very aggressive as they seem to underline the threat of totalization more than they undermine it.

Nevertheless, in *Three Guineas* as form of undermining, created out of technological dialectics can be found, but it takes a different form than in Woolf's peace time novels. In *Orlando*, for instance, the photographs used the idea of their own aura to create the expectation of authenticity which they then undermined by proving to be artificial frauds. In *Three Guineas*, however, the images are not exposed as fraudulent, rather they represent a threatening reality for women. The 'aura' of their authenticity signifies an Aura of Totalization that refuses to expose itself as false. Indeed, Gillespie already argues that where in *Orlando* Woolf still operates photography in a playful way, in *Three Guineas* she uses it much more aggressively (136). Even so, in this epistolary essay the photos can still be undermined, however, instead of an attenuation from within, here Woolf calls for the help of outsiders. These outsiders are the people not in the photographs; women and more specifically, the daughters of educated men. These daughters have to enter the photographs of the masculine public sphere. However, if “we go ourselves” into that stream of educated brothers (184), the risk is that “we shall acquire the same qualities” (191) and thus become part of that machine of mechanical reproduction (cf. 231). Therefore, women can enter the male images only as different.

Consequently, Woolf incites women to form their own Society of Outsiders that is based on

their difference as women. This society has no funds, committees and is anonymous (232). This brings to mind the bodiless voices of the radio that can still produce creative thinking, whereas the voices of Hitler and Churchill are out to hypnotise the masses into willing silence. Moreover, where male societies conglomerate people (Froula 273) and are inherently barbarous, inhumane and inclined to fighting (TG 228, 230) this society has as its most important weapon “independent opinion based on independent income” (162). It is a form of thinking that fights conglomeration and the herd mentality that characterised mechanized bodies of men. Thus, Woolf advocates a society of multiplicity that opposes the uniformity that is presented in the masculine pictures. In fact, it fights the death that is often produced in a mass-like society that nullifies thinking and as such the female struggle becomes important to the whole world, for where men in their herds are already very susceptible to the rule of a fascist dictator, it are the women who have the responsibility of fighting these dictators, by producing new thoughts and creativity in men. It is at this point that the women's fight against patriarchy most clearly asserts itself as a fight against fascism. For, “as a woman, I have no country [...] as a woman my country is the whole world” (234). The society of outsiders should not only fight the dictator in the house, but also the monster abroad where it “has come more openly to the surface” as fascist civilization (228).

Thereby, this society strongly resembles the new future civilization that Woolf and her Bloomsbury friends envisioned. Yet, even in 1938 this civilization still lies in the future and women have to fight to contribute to it. The best means of doing so is provided by the profession of literature, the only profession that is largely open to women (213). By creating a literature of outsiders, Woolf argues that women can “single it [the public] into separate people instead of massing it into one monster” (223). However, in the expanded battle against fascism, men are also called upon to join forces with the daughters of educated men, for they can both become victims of the dictators that are now working abroad. It is here that another kind of photograph asserts itself in the text, a photograph that is created from the outside. This photograph is not present as an actual reproduction, but is merely described as it is seen in a newspaper in relation to the Spanish Civil War. The photo depicts “dead bodies for the most part”, it might “be a man's body, or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig” (125). Like the Outsider's Society, this picture is inclusive and can lead to multiple interpretations, but in a negative way: it is a threat of death and ruin. This picture thereby functions as aggressive means of showing how both men and women here become subject to the camera's gaze (Gillespie 136, 138) and to fascist destruction. Indeed, in the event of war, both men and women become victims, regardless of their sex.

Thereby, this second form of photography brings the fight of the outsiders to an insider level again. This is even more so in “another picture [that] has imposed itself upon the foreground” in

Three Guineas. This is “the figure of a man”, “his body, which is braced in an unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform”. Moreover, he “is called in German and Italian Führer or Duce; in our own language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined houses and dead bodies” (271). But, this figure is not the fascist dictator alone, it also signifies that we “are ourselves that figure” (272). Precisely because this photograph is described, rather than reproduced, it can come to include everyone as possible dictator (Gillespie 139). Where Woolf first warned women not to become immersed in the herds of educated brothers, here she calls upon both men and women to resist this dictator figure. A special warning is given to authors, who can operate both fiction and technology and thus run the greatest risk of turning into dictators. But they can resist by “[their] thoughts and actions”, incited by their position as outsiders. Only then can they oppose the unity of fascist masses by creating a “unity out of multiplicity” (271). Thus, the obscure photographs of victims and perpetrators, apart from becoming “unalterable documents of death and destruction” as Gillespie defines them (139), also become alterable documents that signify changes in the future. The multiplying textual photographs illustrate this and thereby become representations of what the Outsider's Society is meant to achieve.

Thus, the obscure images of victims and dictators perform the undermining function that is initially, but not finally, created by women as outsiders to the male society represented in the photographs of men in public functions. Though the totalizing actual pictures create room for this attenuation to be created, it are the obscure and imperfect images that do the real undermining; for they underline the text's most important elements; to be self-critical and thereby to escape the herd mentality. Therefore, the dialectics of mechanical reproduction is more complicated, but still present in this text. For finally, both forms of photography together undermine totalization from the outside and within, thereby supporting the text's central arguments; always remain partially an outsider to society and always be self-critical. Thus, the essay and its technologies, still cooperate in order to create a civilisation of “unity out of multiplicity” (271), as did Woolf's peace time writings. Nevertheless, the belief in progress that was present in all of Woolf's former writings is here weakened. The glimpses of the future once contained, as in the car, highly mechanical civilisations that were able, to show things in themselves. Now, the future threatens with a total destruction of even those technologies; “dead bodies and ruined houses”. Thus, the photographs do not so much signify progress, but rather threaten with regression. Indeed, the hope that is expressed by Woolf's narrator in the end of her letter is that poets will help to prevent war “by finding new words and creating new methods” (271f). Technology might still be contributing, but with its progressive element taken away, the emphasis in the art-technology seems to shift towards art; it is art that has the final word.

The importance of words in the fight against fascism is also suggested in Woolf's war time diaries. On September 10, 1938 Woolf introduces a metaphor for Hitler's Third Reich that appears like "a child's sand castle which for some inexplicable reason has become a real vast castle, needing gunpowder & dynamite to destroy it" (D 5:167). This metaphor reappears two years later, when on November 18 Woolf writes about: "Little boys making sand castles. This refers to H. Read; Tom Eliot; Santayana; Wells. Each is weathertight, & gives shelter to the occupant. [...] But I am the sea which demolishes these castles." In fact, these castles are not so much weather proof as "word proof". (D 5:340) They are vast edifices of fiction that, in Hitler's case, encompass the whole of society. Civilization becomes an art work of words that impose itself on others. Woolf posits herself outside these fabrications where "I also see the man who makes it." For that is how she sees her own authorship, where "I'm fundamentally, I think, an outsider." (D 5:189) She criticizes the authors of these sand castles who, by their intricate word structures cover up the fact that their buildings are still man-made. As in *Three Guineas* where the men believed so much in their own fabricated ceremonies that they no longer doubted them and turned into herds of uncritical followers, here too the sand castles threaten to become real for that very same reason. However, the sand castle metaphor also creates an opportunity for resistance, precisely because it is made up of words. For words are the weapons Woolf has used all her life. Moreover, by 1938 she has firmly established her fiction as a form of art-technology that undermines the totalizing functions of mechanical reproduction. By treating Hitler's Reich too as art work creative of mechanical reproduction, Woolf can fight it with her literature exactly on its point of imposition.

This is exactly what Woolf does in her last novel, *Between the Acts*. Froula agrees that Woolf's later works indeed "voyage toward a 'whole world' as beautiful in its unfathomable purposes as a work of art" (324). Though Woolf's final novel was not published until after her death in 1941, she had already started writing it in 1938 (Froula 287). The story is set on a June day in 1939, when a village pageant takes place in the country house Pointz Hall, owned by the Oliver family. And in this art work of society formed by *Between the Acts*, technology is still present; in fact, already at the first page of the novel an aeroplane is evoked by the old Mr. Oliver. When he talks with his guests about the location of the cesspool of Pointz Hall, located on an old Roman road: "From an aeroplane [...] you could still see, plainly marked, the scars made by the Britons; by the Romans; by the Elizabethan manor house" (1). The aerial view presented here goes beyond the totalizing view the plane offers in "Flying over London", as it shows not only the contemporary cesspool, but also the history that influenced and preceded it. Even so, this outlook on history presents a form of regression, since a beautiful Roman road has made way for a cesspool; instead of traffic in motion, there is now a static pit full of dirt. As in "Flying over London" this aeroplane too seems to form a symbol of warning.

Soon after the scene is set with this flying machine announcing regression, another technology appears in the form of a car that drives past Pointz Hall; it is a car with chauffeur and the people in it ask: “I wonder if that'll [Pointz Hall] ever come into the market?”. However, “the chauffeur didn't know”, because the Olivers belong to the new rich that have no connections in the country (3). Thus, this car represents those 'big cars' that Woolf disapproved of; transporting people that, unlike Woolf, think about possessions and wealth rather than the deeper philosophies of life. With this car, another form of regression appears, as Woolf had tried to leave such grand vehicles behind. Now, however, big cars again dominate the scene, for, shortly after the first car has passed Pointz Hall, another car stops there. It is a “great silver-plated car [...] with the initials R.M. twisted so as to look at a distance like a coronet.” (28) Its rich owner is Ralph Manresa, whose wife has just stopped to visit the Olivers. Just the look of this car touches Giles's training and tells him to change before lunch, as the rules of society would have it. Therefore, merely by what it signifies, this car dictates a certain form of behaviour and is intricately linked to societal structures.

It are these kinds of big cars that, later that day, transport the local gentry to Pointz Hall in order to form, together with the Olivers and their guests, the audience of the village pageant (cf. Pridmore-Brown 409). Their cars clog the drive way and seen from above by Lucy Swithin their roofs form “the blocks of a floor” (44). Like at a traffic jam that stops motion, the cars signify a standstill. However, unlike during a traffic jam in London, here the passengers leave their cars. Thought the vehicles appear as static and all look alike from above, they bring a variety of people to Pointz Hall, there are widows, a colonel and his wife, a reverend and new rich families (46). All these people are “streaming along the paths and spreading across the lawn” (46). They show a fluidity and variety that opposes the connotations brought about by their cars. Moreover, these upper and middle class people add themselves to the villagers performing the pageant, thereby supporting the creation of “a laboratory for [...] every day life” that could signify change (Froula 296). But then the play starts and the audience that before was assembling in motion now “all looked at the bushes” as one single body of spectators (47). The villagers, in their turn, now become united as actors.

A person that stands apart in this pageant is Miss La Trobe. She is the author and director of the play. This double function immediately suggests that La Trobe is a rather complicated figure, for as author she is creative, but as director she is also the “One who or that which directs, rules, or guides” (OED). Of La Trobe is said that she lives together with an actress and is rather “swarthy, sturdy and thick set”, “perhaps, then, she wasn't altogether a lady?” (36). Her androgynous character underlines La Trobe's position as an outsider (Froula 298), but so does her behaviour that is described as bossy, for with “the look of a commander pacing his deck” she “barked out” decisions at the actors “in guttural accents” (39). Here, La Trobe resembles the figure of a dictator,

in fact Hitler too was described by Woolf as barking (D 5: 169). It recalls the picture of the dictator in *Three Guineas* that illustrates the complicity of every human being; the dictator within ourselves has to be fought (cf. Pridmore-Brown 413). Even so, it is initially the figure of the dictator that seems to determine La Trobe. Moreover, in order to control the audience she does not only subject them to her writing, but she also uses tunes selected on the gramophone (413) that, hidden in the bushes, will form a central element of her pageant (BA 39). The audience, moreover, is already united into the mass of the audience and so a further subjection to the artwork of the director seems inevitable and indeed appears to take place during the first acts of the play. In these acts, scenes of English history are shown that evoke the grandeur of imperialism and the Victorian Age. The tunes on the gramophone that accompany these scenes are described by Pridmore-Brown as “the familiar tunes [that] blare, the audience members are lulled into a tranquilized complacency”(413). Indeed: “muscles loosened; ice cracked. The stout lady in the middle began to beat time with her hand on her chair” (BA 49). People are immersed in the music and as a result, become immersed into the play as well, Mrs Manresa even transforms into “the Queen of the festival” (49).

Furthermore, after the intervals, it is the music is “effectively shepherding the audience” (97). Indeed, it summons them and with it awakens inner voices in the public that are “expressive of some inner harmony” (74); a harmony they all feel. Froula asserts that La Trobe thus strives to bring out the community's hidden voices (303), but in fact she brings out only the one voice of community. Pridmore-Brown argues that the use of rhythm is a very important element here, for like Hitler who uses rhythm and rhyme to magnetize his audience (411), so in *Between the Acts* it is the rhythm of the tunes that carries the spectators along “to the strains of the gramophone” (74). This disengages their minds from reality, as happens too with Hitler's mass audience (Pridmore-Brown 414). So far, the use of the gramophone in *Between the Acts* resembles that of the phonograph in *The Years*, where this instrument functions as a means of summoning and commanding people as well. Nevertheless, La Trobe, as has already been hinted at, is not merely this bossy dictatorial figure, she is also a creative author who functions as a self-reflexive artist figure for Woolf herself (410). And though her dictating side first asserts itself, it is the creating side that takes over and becomes dominant.

Indeed, when the gramophone is first switched on it draws attention to itself as a machine: “Chuff, chuff, chuff, sounded from the bushes. It was the noise a machine makes when something has gone wrong.” (47) Moreover, the chuffing sound might also remind the audience of the noise made by trains, thereby emphasising the machine-like character of the gramophone, rather than its musical functions. This makes the audience nervous and they wonder if the play has begun; they look at the context rather than the play itself. In fact, only when actual music sounds the spectators relax into their state of complacency as described above. During the entire play the gramophone

keeps inserting silences or random sounds that disturb the unity that the mechanical music has created (Pridmore-Brown 414). In fact, Pridmore-Brown asserts, randomness encourages the play of the intellect (412). Moreover, the ticking of the gramophone incites the audience to a variety of thoughts, especially as to the *constructedness* of their unity and dispersal, for it is in relation to the ticking of the gramophone that the audience becomes itself aware of being “held together” by a machine and begins to wonder about the gramophone's unifying capacities (93, cf. Pridmore-Brown 414). Their attention is thereby directed to the thing behind the music; they become aware of the fact that their unity is constructed. As they start to realize this, the phonograph inserts its other function; it becomes dispersive. In fact, the next interval is accompanied by a phonographic voice that sings “dispersed are we” (61). This dissembles the audience and accompanies a cacophony of rhythms formed by their thoughts and conversations about the reality of war, trees, history and tea (Pridmore-Brown 416). This cacophony also includes question as to the construction of reality; “D'you believe what the papers say?” (75) Thus, all these voices, recorded by the narrator, form a diverse unity that Froula describes as “wireless talk” (314).

Thus the wireless voices, that indeed appear to La Trobe as bodiless and symbolical (94), oppose the actual voices on the radio. For the latter are imposed upon a collective audience in a form of one-sided communication. During the entr'actes, however, the voices are sent into the air by many different people, thereby already implying more multiplicity. Even though Froula has used the concept of 'wireless talk', the voices of the audience really travel through the air without being sent as electrical impulses. Indeed, nature regularly inserts itself as supporting the functions of technology and, like the gramophone, points attention to itself by interrupting the play. The wind, for instance, frequently “blew gaps between their [the villagers'] words” and makes the choir of villages inaudible (86). La Trobe sees this as a failure of illusion, but then cows start bellowing and thereby fill the gaps of the villager's words with “the primeval voice” (87). It is a voice without meaning provided by nature that here asserts itself and thereby undermines La Trobe's control of words. The author's control further diminishes in the final act of the play, titled “Present Time. Ourselves.” (109) where she begins with an experiment defined in the script as “ten mins. Of present time.” (111) This experiment, however, initially seems to fail as La Trobe exclaims: “Reality too strong.” As she had already produced in the audience, various thoughts and voices, La Trobe seems to have expected that in this silence, the audience would expand those thoughts. Instead, however, they find the scene ridiculous. They start looking for La Trobe, “there she is, behind the tree” in order to gain some form of meaning from her, whereupon she laments: “This is death, death, death [...] when illusion fails.” (111)

La Trobe's illusions were meant to convey various thoughts, this seems to fail, but only so that her humility is assured. For, it is at that moment that nature again asserts itself and saves the

scene with an outpouring rain. Both Froula and Pridmore-Brown argue that here the death of the author is presented (310, 417). However, this is only a partial death as La Trobe gives up complete control in order to let the randomness of nature help her undermine the idea that art conveys a unified totality. The audience experiences the rain as universal signifying “all people's tears, weeping for all people” and for “human pain unending” (111, 112). This rain, moreover, seems to have called a universal voice “it was the other voice speaking, the voice that was no one's voice” (112). In fact, this voice recites a nursery rhyme that had already sounded before, but now the audience is capable of seeing what is behind this voice and this verse signifying British tradition; it is the very scene that is presently displayed on stage: the wall of civilisation in ruins. But, even though the spectators recognize all this, they are still inclined to look elsewhere for solutions to this ruined society. For people bring in the voice of the *Times*: “Homes will be built. Each flat with its refrigerator [...] Each of us a free man; plates washed by machinery; not an aeroplane to vex us” (112). This glimpse of a free future, shared with technology, brings to mind Woolf's own hopes and beliefs for the future, but by 1939 this hope has already faded.

La Trobe indeed realizes this and, as Pridmore-Brown argues, she refuses the audience to settle down in any fixity, including this dream of the future (415). For, the audience is now capable of seeing through the structures of the play and its scenes of British history. Like Lucy Swithin, who told La Trobe: “You've stirred in me my unacted part.” (95) it becomes clear that wherever scenes and acts are written, there are always other parts waiting to be played; indeed, what lies between the acts becomes important as is illustrated by the randomness of the gramophone and the primeval voice of nature. Nevertheless, this is not all. The spectators now have to take responsibility for the acts they have played in their own life and in society. This is why, as the gramophone breaks down, the actors re-enter carrying mirrors that reflect: “Ourselves! Ourselves!” (114) Moreover, the actors repeat sentences uttered by the audience during the play and intervals, and thus bring their speech on stage as well (cf. Froula 313). This however, appears too much for them, for it is “cruel. To snap us as we are, before we've had time to assume [...] And only, too, in parts.” (114) The identity of the audience is exposed as constructed and incomplete. Indeed, when the mirrors stop moving they fix the audience, in “orts, scraps and fragments”.

Nevertheless, it is only as fragments that the spectators become meaningful in the play, that now asserts itself as the play of life. This is underlined by an anonymous voice that sounds from a megaphone and awakens reflections on the rebuilding of civilisation. For it is 'we' that have to rebuilt the wall shown on stage: “how's this wall, the great wall, which we call, perhaps miscall, civilization, to be built by [...] orts, scraps and fragments like ourselves?” (116) The megaphone here parodies totalitarianism by opposing the megaphonic speeches of Hitler in an unidentifiable voice (Froula 315). Where Hitler imposes his orders on the masses that have to help built a solid

sand castle of reality that lives up to his fantasies. Here, the voice asks the people to actively contribute to a society that will be fragmentary and fluid, as the societal wall is visible to everyone as a mere piece of cloth (112).

The megaphonic voice dies down, but its echo remains present in the audience that keeps wondering: "Was that voice ourselves?" (117) Finally, the spectators start thinking about the acts they play themselves. Reverend Streatfield, who climbs on stage to offer his interpretation of the play, articulates this as: "We act different parts; but are the same." (119) But he provides no final meaning, for: "I leave that to you. I am not here to explain." Neither is La Trobe, when the audience turn for her to thank her, she cannot be found; nobody is capable of offering a final explanation. In consequence, the spectators depart with a cacophony of thoughts and voices that never settle in unison, while the gramophone continues its "dispersed are we". It are the dispersion and difference that are here emphasised as the audience goes forward, united "on different levels" (117). As in *Three Guineas*, they start to create unity out of their own multiplicity, and with respect to each other's differences: "Did you understand the meaning? Well, he said she meant we all act all parts [...] Ah, but you're being too exacting" and "if we're left asking questions isn't it a failure [...] or was that, perhaps, what she meant?" (123, 124) Indeed, it is what she meant, but she did not produce these questions alone; it was the combination of random sounds and silences produced by the gramophone, interruptions made by nature and scenes written by La Trobe that lets the audience depart on different levels. Thus, she has given up her authorial authority to create meaning out of randomness and multiplicity and as such she has become an anti-führer who has resisted the dictator within (Pridmore-Brown 415).

In the greater structure of the novel that frames La Trobe's pageant, Woolf herself expresses a similar self-critical attitude toward authorship and creation. For she assures her readers, the audience of La Trobe's audience (Pridmore-Brown 409), that new scenes will continue to be created out of "words without meaning" (131). As La Trobe envisions a new scene, listening to bodiless voices in the pub, the narrator reveals that the young Olivers act out La Trobe's directions: "Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born." It brings the novel to its final sentence: "Then the curtain rose. They spoke." (136) Both La Trobe's scene and the narrator's descriptions, are not final or total. Instead, they leave the ending of the novel open for various interpretations. It is the beginning of a new play that will continuously start. Thus, the framework of the novel functions like the pageant it depicts. Moreover, both the novel and the play encompass literature, technology and nature that together embody the play of life and civilization; a play that is recognizable as something that is always in the making. As Woolf looked at Hitler's Third Reich as a fictional art work of life, her novel here contradicts this by exposing its own being as fabrication.

This can be taken a step further by looking at the Wagnerian concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk that Pridmore-Brown evokes in this context. This art work is defined as “a permanent and totalizing work of art orchestrated by an artist figure” and used by Nazis and Italian Fascists “to create the nation as a work of art in which one perspective prevailed” (419). This totalized art work encompasses not only fiction, but also uses technology in an active way. As Hitler's architect, Albert Speer, has put it, Hitler “facilitat[ed] the 'mechanization' and orchestration of the body movements of the masses.” He did so by staging himself and his massive audience around his megaphonic voice, that either directly or through the channel of the wireless uses its rhythm and rhyme to magnetize and hypnotize the audience (cf. Benjamin 168). Thus, the audience is reduced to one single animalistic mind that becomes a product of mechanical reproduction, as Benjamin warned it could; this negative form of mechanical reproduction leads only to repetition, not to progress. Moreover, the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk is that nobody can escape this great work of art that is expanded over the whole of society (411). A combination of Woolf's sand castle metaphor and the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk underlines that Hitler's Third Reich was rightfully regarded by Woolf as an art work created by mechanical reproduction and capable of reproducing itself as a totalized civilization of mechanized masses. Woolf answers Hitler by offering her version of the incomplete art work, the novel capable of undermining totalitarianism by offering the other side of mechanical reproduction. She creates a space where spectators become actors who can actively resist totalization (Pridmore-Brown 419).

With the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk, moreover, another aspect of Woolf's reflection on her fiction as art-technology asserts itself. For as she fights Hitler with his own means, she uses different technologies than she did in her peacetime novels. Indeed, as Hitler uses the wireless, phonographic march tunes and even the cinema (cf. Benjamin 168), Woolf uses her version of the wireless in the voices of *Between the Acts*, she offers photography in *Three Guineas* and the march tunes of the gramophone are undermined and deconstructed in her final novel. The car, on the other hand, formerly the most positive of all technologies in Woolf's novels, starts to lose his aura in *Between the Acts*. One reason for this might be that the car had, by the time Woolf wrote *Between the Acts*, already so firmly established itself as a metaphor for the novel as a vehicle of transportation that a constant reference to this technology was no longer necessary. Indeed, both La Trobe's play and Woolf's novel contain most of the car's, or train's, qualities as they appeared in Woolf's peace time novels. Both transport within themselves a variety of thoughts that are multi-interpretable, they include reflections on the author and they also transport the audience as a complicit element in the creation of a meaningful literature.

However, the aura that Woolf evoked in relation to the car as novel, an aura that offered ever-changing glimpses of a highly developed future full of technology, disappears in her final

novel. The technologized civilisation of the future that is evoked by the *Times* has to make room for new reflections on the future. Indeed, as in *Three Guineas*, the future is mainly painted in negative terms as “disturbing our present”(51) for “the doom of sudden death [is] hanging over us” (71). A sense of doom already implied by the first aeroplane offering a historical outlook on regression. Later in the novel, planes announce a much more aggressive setback as Giles sees in the landscape that forms the stage of the pageant, a “vision of Europe, bristling with guns, poised with planes.” (33) These aeroplanes, announcing doom, effectively invade the play when Reverend Streatfield ends it by soliciting donations for his church (119). It makes one of the spectators wonder: “Are machines the devil, or do they introduce discord?” (124) This sense of immanent doom takes away the most positive reflections on technology; since it is technology that announces the approaching doom of regression and no longer signifies progress. In this context, technology, though still meaningful and present, loses something of its former function. As the audience returns to its big cars: “... so many Hispano-Suizas... That's a Rolls... That's a Bentley... That's the new type of Ford” (124), it is literature in itself that gets the final word; “the curtain rose. They spoke.” (136) After all technology has left the stage, a future is still imagined, but as a future of dialogue. Where the whole world is envisioned as a work of fiction, technology shifts a little to the background. Indeed, as Woolf finishes her last novel, the war breaks out and influences technology more than she could have imagined. War is transported into her writing on September 3, 1939.

Blackout and Bombs

In October 1939, the second war month, Woolf notes in her journal: “Also theres the war; or rather the non-war” in which “nothing happens. All is held up.” (D 5: 240) In consequence, the first months of the war were often defined as a 'phoney war' (Lant 119, Rawlinson 202); though war was declared, the fight had not yet been transported to British soil which created in people a feeling of suspense and a “creeping paralysis”(Lant 119). This paralysis was exacerbated by the blackout, that was imposed immediately after the war declaration and severely affected British social life. Though the blackout was deemed necessary for military aims, a country without visible lights would hinder the navigation of enemy aircraft and thus impede air attacks, air raids did not take place on a large scale until the summer of 1940. Until then, the British population had to learn to deal with its consequences without seeing any benefits to the blackout system. Nevertheless, a form of habituation to living in a completely darkened society was no luxury, for, according to Antonia Lant who has analysed blackouts in wartime movies, the blackout was a phenomenon specific for the Second World War and thus was new to the countries at war (128).

Even so, the Great War too had known a weakened form of blackout, also defined as “brownout” (127). Woolf describes this in her novel *The Years*. In the London of 1917 “no lights

shone, save when a searchlight rayed round the sky" (244). Still, the lights were not entirely blacked out, but rather "shrouded in blue", which lead to an incomplete darkness that "muffle[s] sound as well as sight" (244). The imperfect blackness gave the city a ghostly appearance in which people looked "cadaverous" and "unreal" (263). This image of the capital reappears in Woolf's diary where she claims: "London on a Sunday night now, with all its electric globes half muddled in blue paint, is the most dismal of places." (D 1:6) The brownout in the First World War was, like the later blackout, intended to impede navigation of enemy aerial aircraft. However, even with lights that were darkened rather than obliterated, the air attacks of the Great War were not always that effective. When Eleanor, in *The Years*, is asked if she minds air raids she answers: "Not at all", for "the chances of being hit oneself are so small" (253). Hence, a total blackout was not yet necessary. Still, by the end of the First World War, Woolf and her friends did recognise that aerial bombings in the future might severely change these circumstances, for as Herbert Fischer tells Woolf: "Why in 10 years they could blot out London by their aeroplanes." (D 1:204) Indeed, the later developments of aerial navigation would lead to destroy many cities in Britain, even though they responded to new aeroplane technologies by completely obliterating all their lights.

The blackout that was thus inserted in 1939 was to be total. *Everyman's Guide to the War Regulations* (1939) instructed that "lights are not effectively screened unless it is impossible for an observer outside the premises to know whether the lights inside are on or off". This regulation applied to "a period of time extending 'from half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise'" (qtd. Lant 128). The term 'blackout' carries with it several meanings, first of all it refers to "the fabric or paint used to cut out light, and to the government regulation of blacking out." However, behind these practical uses and consequences of the blackout, there was a more profound meaning of blackout, both as concept and situation. Lant asserts:

It also designated, in an older use, the condition of being without information or news, and the temporary, complete failure of memory or loss of consciousness [...]

As a verb, it meant to obscure or obliterate, particularly light escaping from a window. (128)

In the context of flying, moreover, it can also point to a form of transient blindness (128). These various meanings of the blackout concept illustrate that behind the literal darkening of windows, there was the idea that the darkness erased more than just light; it could also obliterate sight, memory and consciousness. As Woolf asserts in her diary: "At last no light at all. This was symbolic" (D 5:292)

In her peace time writing, Woolf had used a lot of metaphors connected with electric lighting. For Woolf, electric lights supported the motion in her novels. Moreover, they could be used to expose negative "dark patches" in people and create shades and valleys in their minds (D

2:239). The transmission of light therefore created motion in society and in people's thoughts. Light, moreover, was something Woolf associated with a progression from the dark Victorian age into a modern age she enjoyed so much. Thus, an absence of light also points to a regression of modernity. Indeed, when the blackout has just been inserted, Woolf writes: "London after sunset a mediaeval city of darkness & brigandage." (D 5:236) But even before the war had begun, in 1938, Woolf already connected a new conflict with a return to the situation of 1914: "A single step [...] like the Austrian Archduke in 1914 & again its 1914." (D 5:164) Thus, a new war embodied a reversion to the Great War, but this regression was exacerbated by the blackout that lead society back into the Middle Ages. The absence of light, moreover, was supported by the lack of other technologies that equally signified medieval scenes: "Very few buses. Tubes closed. No children. No loitering. [...] A reversion to the middle ages with all the space & the silence of the country set in this forest of black houses." (D 5:242) The silence created by the absence of traffic and people enjoying the lighted night life of London seem to set the city back into its earliest existence. In addition, this quote illustrates that a very close association was made by Woolf between the obliteration of light and the blacking out of traffic.

The disappearance of London's stream of traffic, moreover, is also linked to a personal loss for the Woolfs; that of their car. Virginia notes: "Theres no petrol today; so we are back again with our bicycles at Asheham 1915." (D 5: 237) As has become clear the car embodied for her a feeling of personal progress. In fact, the Woolfs had been able to buy a car, because of Virginia's success in writing and her ability to make her own money. Thus, as the car falls away this means another regression of Woolf's personal victories; the positive connotations of her financial independence disappear. Woolf had said just after they got their car: "Soon we shall look back at our pre-motor days as we do now at our days in the caves." (D 3:151) Just as a loss of light sets London back in medieval times, the loss of the car too is linked to a regression into pre-history. Nevertheless, though the blackout is total, the Woolfs do not completely lose their car, rather, they become dependent on a rationed supply of petrol which often meant: "No petrol at the pumps [...] only served a dribble" (D 5:296). But, even though petrol was scarce, the Woolfs, from the beginning of the war, kept a small supply in the garage for special usage: "L. says he has petrol in the garage for suicide shd. Hitler win" (D 5:284) Woolf adds: "I dont want the garage to see the end of me. I've a wish for 10 years more." (D5:285) Although Woolf did not want to die in her garage, the space of the car transforms into a location of future death as the car itself comes to signify the threat of suicide should Hitler invade Britain.

However, there is also a more direct form of death linked to the wartime car and the problems that arose from wartime driving: "it was blackout driving for the first time. Like fog driving, one cant see people. All the cars have small red eyes. The margins of the road are lost." (D

5: 250) This caused a lot of car accidents. Lant underlines that the blackout formed a “social menace” that caused the “number of people killed in road accidents to rise in September 1939 by nearly one hundred percent”. Indeed, during the phoney war, more people were killed by road accidents than on the front as a result of enemy action (129). Among the victims was Herbert Fischer, a personal friend of the Woolfs (D 5:280). Therefore, where in peace time, Woolf saw car accidents largely as secondary to the motion and life created by cars (cf.D 3:298), now it is the accident that comes to control life. Even though during the drive Woolf is “thinking of a dozen things as usual”, she does so in a piece of empty machinery with red dots signifying blind eyes unable to see people. Before the war the car was used to include people, but now human beings are in great danger of being ignored and erased by it. Thus, the car as metaphor and inspiration for the novel as a vehicle of multiplicity and transportation slowly reverses into a symbol of death caused by a lack of transportation and a stasis of life. The car causes accidents, becomes a means of suicide and disappears from the traffic of daily life that kept society in motion. These connotations that Woolf linked to the car in wartime explain the more negative view on cars that appeared in *Between the Acts*. In this last novel, the car is again reversed to the symbol of the big car that Woolf developed in *Mrs Dalloway* and parodied in *The Years*. Though the audience in *Between the Acts* still holds possibilities for the future, the car as technology has lost the positive new aura Woolf associated with it.

But, the car was not the only technology that became restricted during the war. The train service, for instance, was often uncertain. Trains were bombed and rails were wrecked (D5:301). Throughout the hours of blackout, moreover, people frequently fell off the platforms as they could not see where they were going (Lant 129). All these factors made travelling by train rather difficult and dangerous. Furthermore, the phone service too was no longer reliable. Woolf describes a phone conversation with Vita that was suddenly broken off, with the message “restricted service” (D 5:314). Even the wireless sometimes ceased to function (D 5:242). Indeed, all the technologies that linked Woolf to society, most notably her friends, had become unreliable. In this context she asserts: “All our friends are isolated over winter fires. [...] Chance of interruption small now. No cars. No petrol. Trains uncertain.” (D 5:329). Indeed, most of the technologies of transportation and transmission were thus obliterated by the war and the blackout. The loss of these technologies thereby signifies a loss of motion, for it were traffic, cars, lighting and other forms of mechanical transmission that Woolf used to support and underline the motion of life she tried to embody with her novels. Moreover, the absence of these technologies explains the shift towards art in Woolf’s art-technologies that appeared in *Three Guineas* and *Between the Acts*. Where so many technologies were destroyed, their support of literature, even if only metaphorical, decreases and slowly disappears.

Nevertheless, Woolf's final novel still included the technology of the gramophone to undermine a totalization of the masses. Indeed, as a form of mechanics that could be used by single people in their private home, this instrument was one of the few technologies still available in wartime society. But more importantly, the concept of the novel as vehicle for transportation, inspired by the car, remains present in *Between the Acts*. Though it loses its positive aura that points to a highly developed future civilization, it still includes elements of transportation that were important to Woolf: the author, the audience and a text producing multiple interpretations in both. However, as the war progressed it took away yet another element of the novel that by that time had come to symbolise the whole of civilization. As Hitler, on the Continent, suppressed and unified his mass audience into a herd of mechanized followers, the war he initiated also took away Woolf's audience in Britain. By the end of August 1940 Woolf reports that sales have gone down rapidly because of the air raids (D 5:312). This leads to frequent lamentations such as "No audience. No echo." or "No printer to consider, no public" (D 5:293, 351). Though, in *Between the Acts* Woolf still inserts an audience into her text, in the larger fiction of civilization this audience can no longer be taken for granted. Indeed, this last novel was not published until after Woolf's death and thus during her lifetime never received an audience of readers. Thus, the influence of the readers disappears and with it their responsibility of looking at the author critically, as Woolf, in "Character in Fiction", had argued they should. The risk is that the author of the fiction of society becomes invisible; his sand castle might become vast and real. Yet, Woolf's means to fight such a totalized sand castle of civilisation dwindle because of the war and its blackout. Thereby, the outlook on civilization and its future becomes more and more grim. This idea is shared by Woolf's Bloomsbury friends, as Clive Bell illustrates when he states that "the light [is] going out gradually" on civilisation (D 5:268). A metaphorical blackout.

However, civilisation was not only threatened by a lack of technology caused by war and blackout. In fact, there was one technology, also directly linked to the blackout, that became almost omnipresent because of its central function in the war; the aeroplane. Woolf always already associated planes with war, ever since the First World War brought them along. Even during the interbellum period the aeroplane was used by Woolf to warn against the totalizing uses of technology and it became a symbol for the death of the soul. The plane, as a soul going, was connected to the folkloric belief that birds signified souls flying towards the afterlife. This association between planes, birds and dead souls remained present in Woolf's war time writing. In 1940, for instance, Woolf notes: "Instantly wild duck flights of aeroplanes came over head" (D 5:289). Furthermore, as enemy aircraft starts to invade British airspace from 1938 onwards, Woolf begins associating planes with other, more unlikely, animals as well: "Aeroplanes growling overhead in the cloudy blue sky. They look like sharks, seen through our way window." (D 5:142)

Looking at the sky as a sea traversed by aeroplanes brings to mind Woolf's essay "Flying over London" in which the narrator sees the plane transform into the boat of Charon, a mythological ferryman who transports dead souls to the underworld. The boat as aeroplane, moreover, transports dead souls through an aerial realm that also signified death; "where there are gulls only life is not" (208). Therefore, the sky is presented as offering dead and totalizing views on civilization. Civilization and its humanity are thus opposed to the realm of the sky.

Woolf upholds this opposition between earth and sky in her wartime diaries. However, the plane transforms further from a boat into a shark. It no longer simply transports dead souls to the other world, but it now actively seeks to kill. This shark moreover, is attributed with dog-like qualities as Woolf notes in August 1940: "I looked at the plane, like a minnow at a roaring shark." (D 5:312) The shark of the sky is growling and roaring, verbs that are usually not associated with fish, but rather with dogs or even human beings. Indeed, the aeroplane is also compared to the bloodhound, an image that makes its character as a predator complete. The name 'bloodhound', is significant for this type of dog was often used for "tracking large game, stolen cattle, and human fugitives" and could even refer to man as "a hunter for blood" (OED). Woolf played with these connotations as she wrote in her diaries: "aeroplanes are on the prowl, crossing the downs." (D 5:167) and later she adds: "at night the bloodhounds are out" (D 5:302). It underlines her view on aeroplanes as hunters, or predators, actively seeking and transporting death to Britain. Furthermore, the aeroplane as a roaring and growling dog brings to mind the description of both Hitler's barking voice and Churchill's furious oratorical skills. The planes therefore also seem to signify fascism or dictatorship in general; in their hunt for prey, both enemy and friendly planes bring death to civilization.

During the first war months these aerial predators kept up the opposition and separation between the realm of the earth and that of the sky. Nevertheless, they were noticed, for especially the presence of enemy aircraft was emphasised by night time searchlights that directed attention upwards and the blackout, that made horizontal viewing impossible (Lant 150). The planes thereby formed a spectacle, acted out on an aerial stage in the distance. It brings to mind the final scene of *Between the Acts* where "the play [hung] in the sky of the mind" is still visible to the Oliver family longer after La Trobe's pageant has ended (132). But, when La Trobe's play reaches the audience it is able to create new meaning in others; the aeroplanes, however, obliterate all meaning when they eventually invade the earthly realm on July 10, 1940. On this day the Battle of Britain begins, and planes start dropping bombs on various parts of Britain, especially London. It are these bombs that finally connect the aeroplanes with the society on earth. Woolf notes: "A planed had passed dropping its fruit." (D 5:326) The predator plane appears pregnant, but the fruit it drops brings not new life or new meaning, but the end of life in death and destruction. The Woolf's experienced this

destruction personally, for their London house, on Mecklenburg Square, gets hit by a bomb, just like many houses of friends and family. Vanessa Bell's studio, for instance, is completely destroyed by an air raid (D 5:322, 325).

Thus, the private realm has been completely invaded by the public realm of war. Woolf even goes as far as to imagine, in her most private realm; the mind:

how one's killed by a bomb. I've got it fairly vivid – the sensation; but can't see anything but suffocating nonentity following after. [...] It – I mean death; no, the scrunching & scrambling, the crushing of my bone shade in on my very active eye & brain: the process of putting out the light, - painful? Yes. Terrifying. (D 5:326f)

Again, the image of light that is extinguished appears, but here this is not created by the blackout, but by bombs and planes. Even so, it is not death in itself Woolf fears most, but rather the reducing of "my very active eye & brain" to a "suffocating nonentity". Being killed by a bomb thereby brings about the death of the soul that Woolf had always connected to aeroplanes as they transport the mind to a realm that signifies an end to thinking. This loss of the active brain was already hinted at by Woolf at the beginning of the war, where she wrote that the war cut off creative power and "my brain stops" (D 5:234f). However, with the loss of almost all technologies as a consequence of the blackout and the war, followed by the loss even of an audience able to read and reflect upon Woolf's novel as art-technology, her creative mind is the only weapon she has left to fight fascism and war. It is now thinking, more than writing, that defines her as a creative human being which is confirmed by Woolf's journal entry of May 15, 1940: "This idea struck me: the army is the body: I am the brain. Thinking is my fighting." (D 5:285) And with this brain she still attempts to influence the body of the army, as can be seen in her essay "Thoughts on Peace During an Air Raid", written in the late summer of 1940 (SE 244). In this essay the aeroplanes transform into yet another animal, a hornet, that signifies both "an insect of the wasp family" and "An enemy that attacks persistently and with virulence" (OED). Where the aeroplane as a bloodhound brought to mind the barking of Hitler and Churchill, here the virulence and horn of the wasp illustrate the more general masculine qualities Woolf ascribes to planes.

In "Thoughts on Peace" Woolf complains that both enemy and friendly aeroplanes interrupt cool and consecutive thinking (216). In the same summer in which she wrote this essay, Woolf also noted in her diary: "I thought, I think, of nothingness, flatness" as aeroplanes pass overhead and "the air saws, the wasps drone" (D 5:311f). Yet, she manages to replace this nothingness with thoughts on how to "think peace into existence", of which her essay is proof (216). As one of her last pieces of writing, this text repeats some of the issues Woolf raised in *Three Guineas*. In the latter Woolf argued that war was inherent in patriarchy, and in "Thoughts on Peace" men are equally regarded as both generators and operators of the war instruments; most notably the plane,

already defined as a virile hornet. In both essays, moreover, Woolf detects a “subconscious Hitlerism in the hearts of men” (217), a dictator within. Yet, unlike in *Three Guineas*, women are not included in the dictatorial figure Woolf evokes in “Thoughts on Peace”, nor are they incited to be complete outsiders. In fact, where in *Three Guineas* Woolf called upon women not to contribute to war, not even by making arms or nursing the wounded (232), now she argues that making arms, clothes and food is one possible way of contributing to the struggle for freedom (216). Though Woolf sees male character as the cause of war, she also understands that the fight of the British men is necessary, for they fight for her freedom as well. Both men and women are now immersed in the war whereby neither can be complete outsiders to the war effort.

Even so, the British men need all their thoughts and concentration to stay in their aeroplanes and fight the enemy, thus their mind becomes fixed on the struggle and the complete body of the army is thereby unified into one single fighting machine. Women, however, living in relative passivity on the ground, can use this situation to become the brain of the army and imagine the concept of peace in the future. As such, women can both contribute to the fight against fascism, yet also to a future civilization of peace once this fascism will be conquered. In fact, women are inside the current war, yet can also think “against the current” to prevent the future society from being unfree as well (218). The current here refers to the British side of the war, therefore a thinking against the current is still a thinking within British society. For, Woolf argues, even though the British pilots fight for freedom, neither men nor women are really free in a society in which war is inherent in half the population. She claims that the male heroic dream of earning “undying honour and glory by shooting total strangers” is as fixed in men as is the maternal instinct in women (218). It is an inclination “fostered and cherished by education” (218), but an instinct nevertheless that cannot easily be fought. It is up to women to perform the hard battle against this impulse and replace it with something else in order to ensure peace in the future. As such, “we have to compensate the man for the loss of his gun.” (218) However, as the sexual connotations of this quote already imply; this has to take the form of a castration. Since war is an element of male character as such, part of his masculinity has to be replaced before peace can even be considered. The difficulty of this unmanning is already foreshadowed in *Three Guineas* where Woolf describes how men detest the women they look upon as 'man manque' (Froula 276). Yet now, they have to be such unmanly men themselves.

This notwithstanding, Woolf believes that with the support of women, men will be able to lay off their guns, especially if offered a new source of energy and creativity. However, like Woolf's narrator, women are lying in dark rooms threatened by the droning of planes while thinking about this new creativity. Thus, “since the room is dark it [the mind] can create only from memory.” (219) In the dark it are thoughts of former travels, friend's voices and scraps of poetry that come to

her. As in *Between the Acts* it are again orts, scraps and fragments that insert themselves to produce a new creativity able to oppose the lust for war that appears fixed in men. Through women, “man must have access to these creative feelings to free him from the machine.” (219) The word machine can point both to the aeroplane and to the machinery of war, that Woolf had already defined as a “killing machine” in her diaries (D 5:235). It brings to mind Woolf’s reflections on Hitler’s Third Reich as a product and generator of mechanical reproduction. Indeed, what Hitler created with his Reich was a killing machine that kept reproducing itself as killing machine, even abroad. Woolf had tried to fight fascism’s mechanical reproduction by offering her novels as another form of technological reproduction creating multiplicity instead of totalizing the masses of the audience into uniformity. As we have seen, with the threat of war increasing, Woolf shifted the attention in her writing as art-technology towards the first part of this compound while still maintaining the novel as a vehicle for transportation, though less positive than before. As the war came, however, and both the blackout and the bombs took away technology, the audience and the future, the hope of freeing man from the killing machine appears further away than ever.

Furthermore, in “Thoughts on Peace”, one of the last pieces of writing Woolf created before her death in 1941, she calls up the fragments from the past only to send them to “the men and women whose sleep has not yet been broken by machine-gun fire” while she, “in the shadowed half of the world, [goes] to sleep.” (219) Whereas *Three Guineas* and *Between the Acts* culminated in “new words” and dialogue, this essay ends with sleep and thus a stasis of the mind. Indeed, as Woolf thinks “we live without a future” (D 5:355) it appears that it is her own future as a writer she doubts most of all. Though in “Thoughts on Peace” she still wants to incite women to think and use their creative minds to oppose the male totalitarianism brought on by fascism and war, by the end of her essay she hands over this task to others. She undermines her own function as author by giving instructions for others to continue her fight for the future. Furthermore, though in *Between the Acts* she still inserted an audience into her novel, the audience as readers did not read this book during her lifetime, since it was published only after her death. Moreover, by 1940 Woolf no longer has an audience or an echo for her thoughts as a consequence of the war. Thus, *Between the Acts*, though negative about the car technology, still formed a vehicle of transportation as Woolf once envisioned the car to be. “Thoughts on Peace” on the other hand, no longer has an audience and is looking elsewhere for the creation of new authorship. Woolf is tired from fighting and is slowly giving up. In March 1940 she already noted in her diary: “for in God’s name I’ve done my share, with pen and talk, for the human race.” (D 5:276) Now, it is up to others to fight for new civilizations.

Thus, under the threat of war, Woolf was able to maintain her novel as a machine that undermines mechanical reproduction from within. However, the actual war crushed first the technologies Woolf used to underline her positive and fluid visions for the future. Then it took away

the writing around these technologies as it cut off the audience and finally the war obliterated the light Woolf had always seen in the future and undermined her own authorship. Thereby, the novel as a vehicle for transportation seems to go under as the war consolidates its grip on society. Nevertheless, even without author and audience, Woolf still attempts to transport something into the future; the hope for a peaceful civilization yet to come is not given up completely. Rather, it is no longer within Woolf's reach. Yet, her writing, if it can again reach an audience, will be able to create an afterlife for the soul she has put into her work. A soul that enjoys luxuries, technologies and writing and combines them all to create a fiction of its own that functions as an artwork of mechanical reproduction that undermines from within the totalizing mechanics of civilization. Indeed, as the multiple interpretations of her work show, this afterlife was as rich and diverse as she could have wished for. Still, Woolf herself, suffering from private depression (D 5:346) and public war, can no longer envision any future and drowns herself on March 28, 1941. One of her last diary entries reads: "I will go down with my colours flying." (D 5:358) Finally, Woolf's soul takes flight , it escapes the sinking ship of civilization and transports her novels to a very long afterlife.

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