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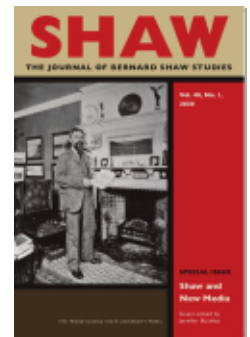
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## Common Senselessness about the War: On Shaw's Media Delirium

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# Common Senselessness about the War

## *On Shaw's Media Delirium*

JOSHUA REEVES

**ABSTRACT:** This article analyzes how biases in Shaw's media environment are reflected in his experiences and representations of the First World War. After turning to contemporary media theory to assess the ways in which war mediates the legibility of one's surroundings, this article discusses Shaw's critique of war delirium in "Common Sense about the War." After examining excerpts from "Joy Riding at the Front" and the preface of *Heartbreak House*—which diverge in interesting ways from "Common Sense"—this article concludes by offering some speculative insights into what Shaw's war ambivalence contributes to new media theory.

**KEYWORDS:** media theory, new media, mediation, Kittler

"Media such as literature, film, and sound recording," according to media theorist Friedrich Kittler, "are all at war."<sup>1</sup> While it is true, of course, that these media technologies have each had a dramatic impact on military engagements, with this statement Kittler hopes to turn our attention to a subtler matter. Reflecting on how new media guide our actions and perception, Kittler urges us to "recall the military history of the objects it studies. It could be that the narrativity—that is, the entertainment—that media seem to offer is only a screen for semiototechnical operations."<sup>2</sup> For Kittler, the modern civilian technologies we love and enjoy are all at war. Not only do many of them originate from military research (to take only a few important contemporary examples: radio, GPS, and the Internet), they carry on

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a sort of epistemological battle each time we engage them—they impose biases on our perceptual fields, they introduce new enemies into our range of observation, and they seize control of our senses. We might say, then, that their range extends far beyond the battlefield—or, as Kittler might prefer, that the battlefield itself extends far beyond the battlefield. Shaw, for whom “press criticism [was] a munition of war,”<sup>3</sup> would seem to agree. Media technology and weaponry, inseparable throughout modernity,<sup>4</sup> wreak havoc on the battlefield; but they also carry out more surreptitious engagements on civilians back home.

Shaw’s “typically paradoxical”<sup>5</sup> approach to World War I offers unique insight into this relationship between war, media technology, and the world-crafting processes of mediation that shape how we live in and decode our surroundings. In the early years of the war Shaw offers a distinct, mediating vision of this conflict. If bomb warfare was like “a world premiere” to Robert de Saint-Loup and Marcel Proust, who in 1915 sat on a Parisian balcony to admire a zeppelin attack,<sup>6</sup> then to the GBS of 1914 the war is more like an evening special edition. In the words of Lawrence Switzky, “Shaw belongs to an age of mechanical reproducibility”<sup>7</sup>—that is, to an age dominated by media like the typewriter and the mass-circulation newspaper.<sup>8</sup> The “writing machines” on which Shaw produced his war information, in fact, possessed their own military significance. It’s no coincidence that the first mass-produced typewriter emerged from E. Remington and Sons—the same company that also gave us Remington semiautomatic rifles.<sup>9</sup> Shaw’s Remington, as well as the newspapers he held before his face, shaped his war reflections in at least two notable ways:<sup>10</sup> (1) they provided him with the means to safely consume the war in a sober, cool fashion from behind a shield of paper, and (2) they stoked his fear about propaganda-driven “war delirium,”<sup>11</sup> which, of course, is a media-dependent anxiety accordant with the rise of “mass society” (that is to say, accordant with the rise of mass newspaper production and mass literacy). When Shaw personally experiences the war on a 1917 trip to the western front, however, his impression at least temporarily shifts. The technical objects mediating his perception change from typewriters, chairs, and newspapers to flamethrowers, trenches, tanks, and rifles.<sup>12</sup> The war ceases to be miniature, still, and disposable and takes on, instead, the urgent character of a live grenade. Hence the question of Shaw’s take on war media is not simply a question of media technology; it’s also a question of *environments of mediation*, of how war—with all its attendant bloodshed, emotional intensities, inked depictions, and technological blitzes—alters one’s sensory perception as well as one’s decoding and representation of past experiences.

The present article analyzes how Shaw's shifting theaters of engagement impacted his sometimes ambivalent approach to the World War I.<sup>13</sup> I focus particularly on how biases in Shaw's medialogical environment are reflected in his experiences and representations of the war. After turning to contemporary media theorists like Alexander Galloway (et al.) and John Durham Peters to discuss mediation—particularly the ways in which war mediates the legibility of one's surroundings—this article then discusses Shaw's anxieties about war delirium in "Common Sense about the War." After examining excerpts from "Joy Riding at the Front" and the preface of *Heartbreak House*—which diverge in interesting ways from "Common Sense"—I conclude by offering some speculative insights into what Shaw's war ambivalence contributes to new media theory. Ultimately, I invite the reader to consider how artificial intelligence and related new media technologies might offer an exhilarating solution to war delirium and other limitations of the human sensorium.

### Mediation and the Great War: "War Is Madness"

While media theory and Shaw studies have only rarely crossed paths,<sup>14</sup> recent theorizations of new media invite a closer look at Shaw's explicit and implicit reflections on technology and mediation. The ongoing turn to mediation in media theory, in particular, offers novel ways to reconsider Shaw's potential contributions to new media theory (and, on the other hand, new media theory's potential contributions to Shaw studies). In a recent attempt to break a stalemate of "stagnation and repetition" they observe in contemporary media theory, Alexander Galloway, Eugene Thacker, and McKenzie Wark observe that media theory "generally understands media along two interconnected axes: devices and determinacy."<sup>15</sup> For Galloway, Thacker, and Wark, these axes tightly constrain media studies' objects of inquiry, leaving scholars with a prefigured host of concerns: "On the one hand, media are understood as synonymous with media devices, technological apparatuses of mediation such as the phone, the file, or the printing press. And yet such technological devices are imbued with the irresistible force of their determinacy. . . . For media studies generally, media are, in short, determinative devices, and they are thus evaluated normatively as either good influencers or bad influencers."<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, most media scholars find themselves preoccupied with discrete devices and their "good or bad influence" on the social and political spheres. While this has proven to be a highly generative focal point for media studies, it leaves less room for inquiry into the subtler question of *mediation*.

To bolster this move to mediation, Galloway, Thacker, and Wark venture through familiar terrain in media theory, starting with Plato's *Phaedrus*. Their fresh reading of the dialogue explores mediation vis-à-vis its counterpart, *immediacy*. Socrates's idealistic fondness for the commingling of souls privileges a relation of immediacy, a noetic symbiosis unburdened by the mediations of subjectivity, time/space, or technology—in Derrida's words "an undeferred logos . . . , purely present, unveiled, naked, offered up in person in its truth, without the detours of a signifier foreign to it."<sup>17</sup> For Galloway, Thacker, and Wark, this is the original sin of media theory, as inaugurated by Plato: the fantasy of communication-as-immediacy, and hence a preoccupation with the technical obstacles that prevent or facilitate that immediacy. This preoccupation bleeds into philosophical trends (take, just for example, Kantian critical epistemology and ideology critique),<sup>18</sup> as well as into the popular literary imagination, as epistemologists, journalists, playwrights, and others set out to excavate the layers of distortion that lie above pure, immediate reality. Yet opposed to this perspective are different approaches that highlight the evolving, media-dependent nature of the real, positing that different media environments reveal and conceal the surrounding world in *different*—which is not to say more or less felicitous—ways. Accordingly, this view eschews the popular anxieties over epistemological "distortions" because it abandons the fantasy of the immediate. As media theorist John Durham Peters reminds us, media are "things in the middle"<sup>19</sup>—and there is, necessarily, always "something" between our sensory organs and the objects of our perception. The question thus turns from immediate (or distorted) reality to how events and technical environments mediate our experience of the world—that is, how through their status as "the middle," as the in-between, they manipulate the time/space axis, modulate our sensory perception, and constrain our fields of action.

At different points in his reflections on the First World War, Shaw exhibits sympathies with both these approaches to media. Before his 1917 visit to the front, in particular, Shaw treats the war as a complex of representations, institutions, and personalities that together formed a pervasive core of the public's epistemological "middle." For the Shaw of 1914, this middle had distorting epistemological effects that prevented people from accessing the immediate truth of the war. In "Common Sense about the War," for example, Shaw claims to offer a distanced, tempered critique of the conflict—a mission that allegedly separates him from his more excitable peers in the journalism industry. As Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel puts it, "Shaw well knew the dangers of a sensationalizing press, even more so if inflamed by politicians using the press to incite the public into blindly accepting

a war for nothing but King and Country, or for some other patriotic placard.”<sup>20</sup> While Shaw might be right to criticize his peers’ popular journalistic accounts of the war, he overlooks a more basic commonality he shares with them. Gazing into his newspaper, and hacking away at the keys of his typewriter, with characteristic virtuosity Shaw consumes—and produces—the war like an item stacked on a shelf. Despite Shaw’s typically brilliant grasp of World War I, the war remains, in a certain sense, pure object: it is paper and a tiny machine, designed to fit into his lap so that he can possess it “like a sailor with his lass.”<sup>21</sup> By way of this machine, during World War I Shaw took his place in the greatest military information assembly line the world had ever seen. In the words of Paul Virilio, “[The Allied war effort] relied on a division of labor and intensive production methods to organize a factory-style output of war information.”<sup>22</sup> This factory-style data production engages and presents the war in a unique way: not in a way that necessarily biases it either for or against the war, but in a way that establishes the war as a mass-produced object poised for widespread public consumption. When Shaw lambastes the war from behind his chair, therefore, he not only treats the war like a stable, reproducible object presented to his distanced critique but also frets that the simpler masses are simultaneously consuming this potentially toxic product. This capacity for mass mis-consumption fills Shaw with anxiety, as he worries over the public’s symptoms of war delirium. For Shaw, the war’s representations injected epistemological distortions into the popular sensorium. Shaw’s media environment, accordingly, fuels his tendency to approach war information from a critical epistemological lens.

In “Common Sense,” Shaw elaborates his critique of this delirium, arguing that the war is making his peers lose touch with reality: “We cannot be just; we cannot see beyond the range of our guns. The roar of the shrapnel deafens us; the black smoke of the howitzer blinds us; and what these do to our bodily senses our passions do to our imaginations.”<sup>23</sup> These weapons wreak havoc on buildings and the bodies of soldiers, to be sure; but they also have a terrible epistemological effect on the civilian population. Shaw lists the sensory distortions unleashed by these weapons—they degrade their vision, damage their hearing, and scramble their passions. The war mediates their experience in such a way that it prevents their sensory apparatus from accurately apprehending reality. Moreover, Shaw argues that the imaginations of the British people have been distorted by the war’s epistemological assault. Therefore, not only have their sensory organs—their means of capturing reality—been damaged, but their “imagination”—their capacity to store and process reality—have also been corrupted. Each component of

Kittler's classic triumvirate of media capacities—the capture, storage, and processing of data<sup>24</sup>—has been assaulted by the war. This epistemological attack, therefore, has important ethical and political implications: because Europeans “cannot see beyond the range of their guns,” they “cannot be just.”<sup>25</sup> For Shaw, any society forced to see, hear, and touch the world through the military's technological leftovers will suffer the associated epistemological distortions.

In response, Shaw attempts to recruit an outside observer who has not suffered this epistemological assault. He appeals, therefore, to the fresh objectivity of the neutral American outsider—an outsider who, at this time in 1914, hadn't been tainted by entanglement in the war. In a letter to American president Woodrow Wilson, he appeals to the United States' “advantage of aloofness”—a condition of supposed *immediacy* that allows for a more precise consumption of reality. The Americans, untainted by the perceptual interventions of war and its promoters, can help Europe clear away the epistemological clutter: “In America these things can be said without driving American mothers and wives mad. . . . For justice, we must do as the medieval cities did—call in a stranger. You are not altogether that to us; but you can look at all of us impartially. And you are the spokesman of Western democracy. That is why I appeal to you.”<sup>26</sup> According to Shaw, justice demands the immediacy of distance, detachment, and estrangement. In fact, America acquires its epistemological clarity from its status as a stranger; its citizens have not been driven “mad” by the disorienting effects of the war. And because the hostile nations have been blinded and deafened by the onslaught of military technology, America must become the “spokesman” for a muted and epistemologically crippled Europe.

Hence, of course, Shaw's frequent allusions to war delirium and “war fever.”<sup>27</sup> According to GBS, the journalists and opinion makers around him “never tell the same story for two weeks running. Nay, you cannot find one of their newspapers that does not on the same day and in the same edition contradict itself absurdly.”<sup>28</sup> These journalists are condemned to view the world through the lens of illusion—a lens that jumbles the data presented to their senses *and* scrambles their output. They cannot help but continuously contradict themselves. As Shaw put it in his October 1915 lecture in King's Hall, “We are in a condition of illusion. We are like the Bacchantes in Euripides' play; and the awakening will be just as terrible.”<sup>29</sup> For Shaw, the war has distorted the Europeans' grasp on reality by titillating their emotions with bloodlust. Like Euripides's recklessly foolish Bacchantes, their uncontrollable passions lead them to apprehend reality in a destructive way—and, moreover, to conform their conduct in accord with that destructive

apprehension of reality. Only once their emotions have settled will they be able to truly see the historic tragedy their passions have tricked them into supporting—the mangled bodies and destroyed cultural treasures around them truly intelligible for the first time. It is only in the felicitous relation to reality facilitated by peace that this scene can be apprehended in all its tragedy.

### The Illuminating Aesthetics of Battle

When reflecting on war fever, Shaw finds that the “mental stress” of living amid battles and bloodshed drove Europeans mad. Yet Shaw, of course, is proud to announce that he won’t have to suffer the reality hangover that will surely befall the European general public in the postwar years. “Truth,” according to Shaw in 1915, “has no such awakenings as that. It is this steadfastness of truth and self-possession that gives it the advantage over illusion and romance. Those of us who have kept our commonsense and stuck to the facts since the beginning of the war have been reviled for our self-possession.”<sup>30</sup> At first, Shaw contrasts his own self-possession with the frantic gullibility of the war supporters. Yet in the postwar years, Shaw occasionally slipped into a rare moment of humility, going so far as to admit that he himself was suffering from a war-induced “hyperaesthesia.” While asserting that he—given his superior intelligence and wit—should have been able to keep a strong grip on reality, he acknowledges that war delirium had started to affect even him. In the preface to 1920’s *Heartbreak House*, Shaw reflects on the early years of the war: “I do not know whether anyone really kept his head completely except those who had to keep it because they had to conduct the war at first hand. I should not have kept my own (as far as I did keep it) if I had not at once understood that as a scribe and speaker I too was under the most serious public obligation to keep my grip on realities; but this did not save me from a considerable degree of hyperaesthesia.”<sup>31</sup> It is most interesting, of course, that Shaw reflects on the war in aesthetic terms; it is no longer simply a matter of psychological distortion, but one of revelatory intensity.

This shift hints at a different approach to war and mediation, as Shaw abandons his Platonic/Kantian epistemological preoccupation with the immediate in favor of a perspective more sensitive to medialogical revelation. Shaw’s firsthand immersion in the war, which involves a dramatic shift in his medialogical environment, fosters a nonrepresentational engagement with the war. When Shaw made his extraordinary visit to the front lines in January 1917, he encountered an entirely different sort of sensory and



affective engagement—one characterized by light, intensity, revelation, and even joy. In the words of Gordon N. Bergquist, “[For Shaw] the Great War was to become the Great Eye Opener.”<sup>32</sup> Invited to the front by Field Marshal Douglas Haig, in January 1917 Shaw traveled to Ypres, the hotly contested Flemish city that had already suffered two devastating battles earlier in the war. Although his hosts were hesitant, they accompanied Shaw, along with war correspondent Phillip Gibbs, to the strategically crucial town near the French border. As Shaw and his compatriots made their way through the nearby French town of Étaples, the lingering effects of a gas attack left Shaw with “no thrill.” He reflected on the experience with noted boredom: “I was taken through a trench in a which a tear shell had been exploded, and came out weeping profusely. But there was no thrill about Étaples, or indeed in any place out of earshot of the guns.”<sup>33</sup> Even upon entering Ypres, Shaw observed the brutal scene with a critic’s distance: walking past a headless corpse in a ditch, he remarked, with no thrill: “Well, in time of peace he might have lost it much more painfully and mischievously. There are worse ways of ending one’s walk in life.”<sup>34</sup> When live fire erupts nearby, however, Shaw abandoned his distanced, consumptive posture. The experience transcended the literate discourse he typically pounded on the page; it was, instead, musical: “There was no Belgian carillon, but plenty of German music: an imposing orchestration in which all the instruments were instruments of percussion. I cannot honestly say I disliked it: the bug drum always excites me. . . . Boom! Whizzzzzz!!! Boom! Whizzzzzz!!! Boom! Whizzzzzz!!!—all *fortissimo diminuendo*; then, *crescendo molto subito*, Whizzzzzz-bang clatter! In such bang and clatter had the gentleman by the roadside lost his head.”<sup>35</sup> The acoustics of Shaw’s surroundings had been completely emptied of their semantic content, transformed into percussive music.<sup>36</sup> For Shaw, this assault was chiefly aesthetic—it spoke in a foreign language, in onomatopoeia, in the booming exclamations of a bug drum and the “dazzling brilliancy” of a flamethrower. His reflections bring to mind Paul Virilio’s discussion of the epistemological impact of weaponry, in which he asserts, “Weapons are tools not just of destruction but also of perception—that is to say, stimulants that make themselves felt through chemical, neurological processes in the sense organs and the central nervous system, affecting human reactions and even the perceptual identification and differentiation of objects.”<sup>37</sup> The typically cool, collected Shaw was now confronted with a war undomesticated by the constraints of foldable paper and methodically arranged Roman letters. The weapons surrounding him provided a different sort of mediation—an intensification of his experience and recalibration of his sensory perception.

Although in the comfort of his Torquay hotel GBS was incensed by the war, the Shaw of the brutal front was entranced by the call of machine gunfire and tank roar. As J. L. Wisenthal and Dan O'Leary remark, "Shaw loathed this war and all war, but he was capable of responding with apocalyptic excitement to the sounds of military violence."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Shaw's representation of war at the front was characterized by an unrepentant, ecstatic joy that expressed itself in the enduring assault of sound: "I spent a week in the survey of all this ruin [on the western front], with the booming and whizzing of its unrelenting progress continually in my ears. And I am bound to state plainly, as a simple fact to be exploited by devils or angels, according to its true nature, that I enjoyed myself enormously and continuously."<sup>39</sup> The war infiltrated his experience by captivating his senses and demanding the attention of his ears long after he had fled the chaos of battle. In fact, to transition out of the war's environment of aesthetic stimulation, Shaw had to remediate the encounter by deafening his senses: after the attack died down, Shaw tried to rid himself of its lingering sensory effects by shoving a pair of collar studs into his ears.<sup>40</sup> Then, as Shaw and his coterie fled the scene, he noted that his surroundings gradually lost their luster: "When our car had left the town far behind, and I took the collar-studs out of my ears and exchanged the helmet of Mambrino for a cloth cap, I found the world suddenly duller. From this I infer that Ypres and its orchestra had been rather exciting, though I had not noticed it at the time."<sup>41</sup> As Shaw removed his makeshift earplugs and regained his "common sense," the sounds of the countryside did not flood into his ears with increased clarity. Instead, the world away from the symphony of battle was dreary and dull.

As Judith Evans points out, Shaw seems to have gathered some appreciation for this aesthetic intensity. "Shaw acknowledges," she writes, "the strange fascination that terror and suffering may sometimes have."<sup>42</sup> In a letter to his friend Augusta Gregory, whose son had just died in the war, Shaw admits how his personal view of the war had evolved following his trip to the front. Consoling his friend, GBS writes, "These things made me rage and swear once; now I have come to taking them quietly. When I met Robert at the flying station on the west front, . . . he told me that the six months he had been there had been the happiest of his life. To a man with his power of standing up to danger—which must mean enjoying it—war must have intensified his life as nothing else could."<sup>43</sup> Raging and swearing, as he had done in "Common Sense," was no longer his default response to the tragedy of the war; Shaw's range of war reflection, recalibrated by his direct experience of the technology and terror he'd encountered at Ypres, had evolved. He represented the war, at least at this moment, in terms of happiness and enjoyment. According

to Shaw, in standing up to the danger of the trenches, the young man's life had reached an extraordinary level of intensity—perhaps akin to the intensity Shaw felt as bullets whizzed past him on the western front. After all, those bullets and bombs were not only agents of destruction but agents of spatio-temporal mediation that manipulated Shaw's capacity to reflect on and make sense of his personal experience. This manipulation of the time/space axis ended in the deaths of millions killed by the industrial velocity of bullets and bombs. It also provided an exhilarating perceptual assault on those in its wake, commandeering their senses and reorienting them toward their typically dull surroundings. At that moment, then, the true nature of the war no longer lay at the bottom of a colossal waste pile of distortions; the war, instead, reveals itself in fits and remnants of perceptual intensity.

### Conclusion: Losing Our Heads

Before his trek, Shaw relied on his “superior brains” to provide a distanced objectivity to the war. Yet as he reflected in his letter to Augusta Gregory, that distance served as its own form of distortion: the illusion of objectivity provided by newspapers, typewriters, and lounge chairs provided its own biased mediation of the war experience. While Shaw's Ypres experience did not provide him with some transcendent or immediate grasp of the truth of war, it did illustrate—for us, if not for him—that even his romanticized objectivity reflected the biases of a particular media environment (one characterized, primarily, by mass media and their attendant practices of consumption and production).

To be clear, this article does not argue that visiting the front unilaterally transformed Shaw's views on war, or that it can explain what Matthew Yde refers to as Shaw's “simultaneous hatred of and fascination with war.”<sup>44</sup> Shaw's views on the war, of course, were expectedly complex. Yet despite this complexity, Shaw's representations of and reflections on the front invite us to consider how shifting biases in his mediological environment facilitated different implicit reflections on media and mediation. In “Common Sense,” GBS insisted that only a thoughtful, distanced objectivity could provide a proper relation to the war: “The time has come to pluck up courage and begin to talk and write soberly about the war. At first the mere horror of it stunned the more thoughtful of us; and even now only those who are not in actual contact with or bereaved relation to its heartbreaking wreckage can think sanely about it, or endure to hear others discuss it coolly.”<sup>45</sup> In this 1914 iteration of Shaw, only those who have remained geographically and emotionally distant from the war can have a suitably felicitous grasp of it. The

realm of the sane was limited to those who were spared proximity to battle. Yet merely a few years later, in 1919, Shaw offered a more nuanced take on the war's mediation of sanity: "I do not know whether anyone really kept his head completely except those who had to keep it because they had to conduct the war at first hand."<sup>46</sup> For this iteration of Shaw, immersion in the war was the sole condition of sanity. In the end, however, perhaps Shaw's ambivalent, "seemingly confused and confusing reflections on war and peace" are not so mysterious after all.<sup>47</sup> As Kittler reminds us, "The military-industrial complex has always already transcended all wartime fronts."<sup>48</sup> Who can be expected to keep a level head when the battle is being waged all around us?

If the war is truly surrounding us, variously distorting, manipulating, and intensifying our sensory data, then perhaps "losing our heads" is a foregone conclusion. The timing, however, might prove to be just right. If new media theory of the Kittler variety has taught us anything, it is that, contrary to Marshall McLuhan's "extensions of man" thesis, media tend to act more like amputations.<sup>49</sup> For McLuhan, the typewriter could be an extension of the hand, as it extends our capacity for written communication. Yet as McLuhan (and Kittler) also realized, the typewriter can also cut our hand off—it prevents us from developing the capacities to use our hands like we once did.<sup>50</sup> (Of which the ongoing abandonment of handwriting in primary schools is an excellent contemporary example.) If the typewriter/keyboard has amputated our hands, then the personal computer and smart-phone have certainly cut off our heads. That does not necessarily mean, however, that we will collectively share in the fate of that headless corpse Shaw saw in Ypres. It is just as likely that our decapitations will serve as some kind of astral liberation from our bodies, as posthuman theorists like Rosi Braidotti, Katherine Hayles, and *Back to Methuselah's* She-Ancient have suggested.<sup>51</sup> In the end, perhaps it is fitting that war, the root of so many sensory distortions and manipulations, should drive the technological escalation that will make possible this deliverance from our bodies.<sup>52</sup> Maybe one day soon our neurological hardware will safely depart from the "tyranny" of our delirious embodiment,<sup>53</sup> and we will be free to pursue the dream/night-mare that Shaw and Kittler seemed to share: that upon this liberation from our heads, our bodies, and our tyrannical "common sense" we can ascend "to the interception of possible intelligences in space."<sup>54</sup>

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## NOTES

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1. Friedrich A. Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," in *The Truth of the Technological World: Essays on the Genealogy of Presence*, trans. Erik Butler, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 86.

2. Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," 86.

3. Bernard Shaw, "More Common Sense about the War," in *What Shaw Really Wrote about the War*, ed. J. L. Wisenthal and Daniel O'Leary (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

4. Jeremy Packer and Joshua Reeves, *Killer Apps: War, Media, Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

5. Terry Eagleton, "A Row of Shaws," *London Review of Books* 40.2 (2018): 22.

6. Friedrich A. Kittler, "World-Breath: On Wagner's Media Technology," in *The Truth of the Technological World*, 136–37.

7. Lawrence Switzky, "Media and Technology," in *George Bernard Shaw in Context*, ed. Brad Kent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143.

8. For more on Shaw's relationship to the early twentieth-century media landscape, see Christopher Wixson, *Bernard Shaw and Modern Advertising: Prophet Motives* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

9. Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 190. Also see Ned O'Gorman and Kevin Hamilton, "Eg&G and the Deep Media of Timing, Firing, and Exposing," *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 9.2 (2016): 182–201.

10. See Michael Holroyd's description of Shaw's Remington typewriter at a later date, during the Second World War, in *Bernard Shaw, Volume III: The Lure of Fantasy, 1918–1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1991), 441. For more on Shaw's relationship to the typewriter, see Jennifer Buckley, "Talking Machines: Shaw, Phonography, and Pygmalion," *SHAW: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies* 35.1 (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 21–45.

11. Just for example, Bernard Shaw, "Preface to *Heartbreak House*," in *Complete Plays with Prefaces*, vol. 1 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), 457–58. Also see Kay Li, "Heartbreak House and the Trojan War," in *Shaw and Other Matters: A Festschrift for Stanley Weintraub on the Occasion of His Forty-Second Anniversary at the Pennsylvania State University*, ed. Susan Rusinko (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 85–87.

12. For an analysis of Shaw's domestic space, see Alice McEwan, "George Bernard Shaw and His Writing Hut: Privacy and Publicity as Performance at Shaw's Corner," *Interiors: Design/Architecture/Culture* 2.3 (2015): 333–56.

13. See Lagretta Tallent Lenker, "Shaw: The Bellicose Pacifist," *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 28.1 (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 1–10.

14. A very notable exception, from the media studies side, includes Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 27, which includes a fresh reading of *Pygmalion*. On the Shavian side, see Buckley, "Talking Machines."

15. Alexander R. Galloway, Eugene Thacker, and McKenzie Wark, *Excommunication: Three Inquiries in Media and Mediation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 7.

16. Galloway, Thacker, and Wark, *Excommunication*, 7.

17. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone, 1981), 71.

18. For more on the relationship between Kantian epistemology and ideology critique, see Slavoj Žižek, "Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology," in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Žižek (London: Verso, 2012), 17.

19. John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 6.

20. Nelson O'Ceallaigh Ritschel, *Bernard Shaw, W. T. Stead, and the New Journalism: Whitechapel, Parnell, Titanic, and the Great War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 159–60.

21. This is how Shaw describes his typewriter in a letter to actress Molly Tomkins. See A. M. Gibbs, *Shaw: A Life* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 86.

22. Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989), 21.

23. George Bernard Shaw, "Common Sense about the War," in *Current History of the European War*, vol. 1, no. 1: *What Men of Letters Say* (New York: New York Times Company, 2014), 79.

24. See Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*.

25. Shaw, "Common Sense," 79.

26. Shaw, "Common Sense," 79.

27. For a discussion of this "fever," see Allen Chappelow, *Shaw—"The Chucker-Out"* (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 360–64.

28. See Chappelow, *Shaw*, 361.

29. See Chappelow, *Shaw*, 361.

30. See Chappelow, *Shaw*, 361.

31. Shaw, "Preface to *Heartbreak House*," 457.

32. Gordon N. Bergquist, *The Pen and the Sword: War and Peace in the Prose and Plays of Bernard Shaw* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1977), 115.

33. Bernard Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," in *What I Really Wrote about the War* (New York: Brentano's, 1931), 217.

34. Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," 221.

35. Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," 221.

36. This is mirrored in the closing moments of *Heartbreak House*, when Mrs. Hushabye and Ellie revel in the Beethovenesque rhythm of the bombardment. Once the bombing ceases, Hector disgustedly observes "how damnably dull the world has become again suddenly!" Shaw, *Heartbreak House*, 597.

37. Virilio, *War and Cinema*, 6.

38. J. L. Wisenthal and Daniel O'Leary, "Introduction: Shaw's Theatre of War," in *What Shaw Really Wrote about the War*, 8.

39. Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," 199.
40. Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," 221.
41. Shaw, "Joy Riding at the Front," 223.
42. Judith Evans, "A New Arena: *What I Really Wrote about the War*," in *The Politics and Plays of Bernard Shaw*, ed. Judith Evans (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 96.
43. Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1911–1925*, vol. 3, ed. Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1985), 527, quoted in Peter Gahan, "John Bull's Other War: Bernard Shaw and the Anglo-Irish War, 1918–1921," *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 28.1 (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 211.
44. Matthew Yde, *Bernard Shaw and Totalitarianism: Longing for Utopia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 113.
45. Shaw, "Common Sense," 7.
46. Shaw, "Preface to *Heartbreak House*," 457.
47. Gareth Griffith, *Socialism and Superior Brains* (London: Routledge, 1993), 218.
48. Kittler, "Media and Drugs in Pynchon's Second World War," 88.
49. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).
50. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 198–201.
51. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2013); N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, in *Complete Plays with Prefaces*, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), 255–56.
52. See Kittler's discussion of the relationship between media escalation and war in "Media Wars: Trenches, Lightning, Stars," in *Literature, Media, Information Systems*, ed. John Johnston (London: Routledge, 1997), 121. Also see Packer and Reeves, *Killer Apps*.
53. Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, 255.
54. Friedrich A. Kittler, "The History of Communication Media," *CTheory* (1996), [www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=45](http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=45).