Communication in Transition: Telegraphs and Telephones in Anglophone Literature, 1880-1913

Anglophone literature between 1880 and 1913 marks a key turning point in the content, form and style of fiction. However, because it falls between two major literary moments, Victorian and Modern, fiction from the intervening years is often lost in the shadows of these two great fields. There is therefore little assessment of the distinct elements of the literature from this timeframe. Although the transitional period is often overlooked, I believe that understanding how in literature we move from one major movement to another is the key to understanding the whole. This is particularly true of the move between Victorian and Modern literature. As we see elements of Victorian Literature begin to shift, it puts in relief what makes the previous work truly Victorian. Additionally, one comes to understand how Modernism built atop Victorianism and was created, in many ways, to be a contrast to it. Thus, understanding this link between the two periods gives readers a better understanding of both. Unfortunately, texts from this time are often tacked onto the very beginning or end of studies of the period, if they are included at all. These works, however, often contain more complexity, as they are made up of both Modern and Victorian elements in the same text; thus for some, making these works of a more interesting genre for study.

Additionally, the extant literary criticism on the era's budding and developing communication technologies almost exclusively focuses on one or the other monoliths on either side of the transitional period. Certainly, these critical texts often include a chapter or so on the transition; however, there remains a noticeable lack of criticism centering on the development and growth of telecommunications. There is no published criticism that examines precisely the relationship between telecommunications and Anglophone literatures of the 1880s through to the

outbreak of the First World War. This gap in the research is significant because it is in this period that the popularity of the telegraph reached its apex and the public began to transition between the telegraph and the telephone; this period also witnessed the introduction of the Marconigraph, or wireless telegraph. By 1880, the telegraph was broadly used and widely available. While there is research on the early introduction of the telegraph, there is less on its normalization. What we can see in the last decades of the century is how the telegraph began to play a role in a variety of activities. This, then, paved the way for the wireless telegraph and the telephone.

John Durham Peters opens his book *Speaking into the Air* with the following statement: "Though humans were anciently dubbed the 'speaking animal' by Aristotle, only since the late nineteenth century have we defined ourselves in terms of our ability to *communicate* with one another" (1). As Peters here shows, communicative technologies such as the telegram and telephone have become an integral part of human connection - not only because of their practical applications but also in the ways we understand and *think* about communication. This moment in history is an important turning point in human communications, yet it is often overlooked. The study at hand will focus on telecommunications and their representation in literature at the turn of the century and show that they are worthy of independent scholarship, separate from other moments of literary or technological development.

Other research has discussed the importance of telecommunications; but the telegraph, wireless telegraph, and telephone are most often included in a longer list of new technologies from the late 19th and 20th centuries from the bicycle to the internet. The goal of this study is to elevate these three interrelated communication technologies from the menagerie of inventions and examine them in more detail and from a variety of angles. Due to their uses and effects, the

telegraph, Marconigraph, and telephone are similar to each other yet different from other innovations of the time such as the penny post, the camera, the phonograph, and the radio. All three work to collapse the distance between individuals by allowing a near-immediate ability to communicate, which lead to a dearth of symbolic and interpretive resonance in a variety of fields. It is in this way that we can best see what is extraordinary about these technologies and how they fit into or defy the broader claims made about them. Like Peters above, some see the telegraph and telephone as the source of our modern conception of communication/ miscommunication. This study seeks to take that historical argument and observe how it works in the literatures - in texts like *Howards End* by E.M. Forster, *The Octopus* by Frank Norris, *In the Cage* by Henry James, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* by William Dean Howells, and *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton, to name a few. Ultimately, this project will show that the use of telecommunications in the fiction is symbolic of major socio-historic changes taking place at the turn of the century and that the technology itself created many changes, including individuals' conceptions of time, space, and place.

Of particular note in this study is the interplay between budding telecommunications and other sociological movements of the era. In addition to providing verisimilitude, the uses of these technologies in the literature are intertwined with criticisms and the fall of the nobility, the rise of the business class, and the entrance of women into the workplace. In the fiction, one will see that the telegraph and telephone are integrated into these events in tangible ways. For example, in Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*, Sir Felix Carbury's fall into debt and Melmotte's meteoric rise are in part indicated or foreshadowed by their uses of telecommunications. Carbury sends a telegram to his mother telling of his arrival time at the train station, but he never

actually takes the train. He wastes the cost of the telegram and the time of Sir Roger who waits for him at the station in the same way that wastes all of his fortune - through carelessness. At the same time, Melmotte employs telegrams as a part of his business ventures, using them to grow his accounts instead of dwindling them. In this way, we see that the use of telegrams in the text plays an important role in the development of these characters, who for Trollope represent the power shift he felt occurring in England. In this way, authors use the technologies both as a verisimilitude of life and simultaneously as symbols of change.

These new modes of communication also created a wide variety of problems and concern for their users. In addition to simple cases of mistaken identity and missed telegrams, the previously inconceivable feats of instantaneous distance communications caused in some users crises of place and person, in which users experienced confusion and/or interruption in their understanding of location, distance, and even embodiment. As H. G. Wells writes in *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress Upon Human Life and Thought,* "The world grows smaller and smaller, the telegraph and telephone go everywhere" (199). This may seem metaphorical to readers, but to many users in the 19th century, the world literally felt to them like it was shrinking. Distance was measured, informally, by length of travel. But how far away is somewhere if a message or even a voice can be relayed instantaneously? These concerns often play out in the form of spiritual narratives and ghost stories. As Jill Galvan shows in *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies 1859-1919*, it is no coincidence that the rise in spiritualism coincides with the growth of telecommunications. This is particularly evident in Kipling's story "Wireless," with the parallel narratives of spiritual channeling and wireless telegraphing.

Moreover, as the telegram and telephone became more prevalent, other concerns over the uses, overuses, and misuses of the technologies grew as well. Like many new inventions, individuals fretted over their ability to be used as objects of vice. Readers can see this in *In the Cage* where the telegram is used between Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen as a means to arrange their elicit love affair. All of these elements, combined, helped to generate an unprecedented sphere of intrigue and concern around communication and invention that has never been replicated. I argue that understanding turn of the century telecommunications is critical because of their role in the era's historic sociological changes and how that relationship is displayed in the literatures. In addition, I will show how these technologies differ from the other developments of the time, evidenced by instantaneous (and in the case of the telephone, voiced but faceless) communication causing feelings of disembodiment and displacement for users and the birth of concerns over disruption, information overload, and miscommunication.

Geography often plays an integral role in representations of telecommunications. The Victorian era is well known for its extreme changes: the growth of industrialization; the rise of science and fall of religion; the introduction of new technologies including the automobile, bicycle, passenger train, electric motor, telegraph and telephone. Additionally, the death of Queen Victoria and the installment of Edward ended one of the last remnants of "Old England." This upheaval helped to foment the nation's complicated relationship with the past and future. Many citizens of the era strove to find a balance between the safety of Victorian standards and the fears and promises of modernity, and writers were no exception. Authors often integrated these developments into their texts through the introduction telecommunications. For many British texts, particularly those written in the first decade of the 20th century, the appearance of telegraphy and telephony displays the tension between past and future. We see the crisis of

change echoed in many of the literatures' concerns over developing technologies and the changes they engender in everyday life, particularly how these changes demonstrate the moral and economic fall of the noble classes.

The United States, similarly, was undergoing its own major changes: the great push west had exponentially grown the size of the country, and people and cities were more spread out than ever before. The development of the railroad helped to connect the now-large nation, and with the railroad came telegraph lines. For those writing about the expansion of the nation, the ways in which the pioneers maintained connection or were disconnected from the rest of the country were a common concern. This is evident in such texts as *The Octopus* by Frank Norris and *Oh Pioneers!* by Willa Cather in which characters are both connected and disconnected from the rest of the nation due in large part to their access to telegraphy. Meanwhile, for those living in cities and along the East Coast, communication was no less of a topic. Though urban American literature seems to have much more in common with its British counterpart than the expansion literatures, and as this study will show, uses telegraphy and telephony similarly to the themes of London writers, urban American literature also provides some unique elements such as commentary on American industrialization, issues of slavery and race, and Puritanism. The growth of Naturalism as a form of literary theory and style also ensured a focus on the plight of the poor in American city centers. These are all important elements of the relationship between telecommunications and American fiction that will be explored in this study.

Research makes it clear that the canonical emphasis of novels transitioned in this time period from England to America. Part of my interest in anglophone literatures lies in this geographical transition. What changed in the literature and/or the world that caused this shift? I

argue that one small element of the shift was technology. The ability to communicate across the

Atlantic connected the United Kingdom and America in new and exciting ways. International

communications became quick and easy, which facilitated information sharing. These

connections over the water in small ways helped facilitate the shifts in artistic emphasis. The

comparisons and contrasts between the ways in which these technologies were used mirrors, I

argue, some ways in which the two nations were developing and changing. In both nations,

telecommunications became a resource for the business class. In England, this class found itself

in conflict with the nobility, each vying for the same space at the top. In comparison,

commercial telegraphy was, for decades, managed by the British government. In both cases, the

old structures stultified the growth of new areas of work and invention. In America, however,

successful businessmen were able to rise to the top, and families such as the Vanderbilts and

Rockefellers became the American version of nobility. Telegraphy, similarly, was privatized,

thus integrated into American capitalism, and allowed to grow and expand to every corner of the

nation. Telegraph wires became part of the American landscape, just as telegraphic narratives

became part of American story-telling.

Though there have been a handful of excellent studies on the use of technologies in

Victorian Literature and American Modernist works, more research is required. The assessment

of these past tele-communicative concerns seems particularly important now. We live in a time

of developing technologies, and many are concerned with how these technologies will affect

their lives. Adults often say how grateful they are that social media didn't exist when they were

children, and writing students frequently choose to write on topics like the effect of technology

on attention spans, children's development, language skills, or personality. We talk about the

chemical reaction our bodies have to Facebook "likes" and about phantom vibration syndrome.

We are worried about technology. The concerns surrounding telecommunications in the literature from 1880-1913 are strikingly familiar and echo many of the questions we have today. In *Howards End*, for example, the Schlegel's uses of the phrase "telegrams and anger" suggests some of the disconnectedness that individuals feel today concerning cell phones and social media. The phrase mirrors the mental clutter created by contemporary inventions that were supposed to make life easier but now require one to be available at all moments. Captain Everard's use of telegraphs to arrange dalliances and liaisons in *In the Cage* by Henry James reflects our fears about a culture where OK Cupid and Tinder are the primary ways for couples to meet and mirrors the social concerns of catfishing and putting child locks on web browsers to protect children from online predators. Like the Schlegels, we fear what the increased speed of information does to ourselves and our ability to connect, and like James shows, we worry that new technology creates new opportunities to follow ones' vices. Therefore, this study is significant because it will illuminate the concerns and fears related to technology in the texts and provide useful context and parallel for the contemporary reader, thus helping readers better understand the works at hand, but also how those works relate to today's world.

In addition to the many similarities between contemporary telecommunications and its fore bearers, there are, however, some intriguing elements that seem to be unique to the telegram and telephone and to this period, compared to other telecommunications at other points in time, such as the mobile phone or internet. For this work, I have chosen to focus on these elements, which is a step past the comparative work from which this study grew. By examining what is *different*, I believe that the similarities will also become apparent, while ensuring that we do not oversimplify the situation by forcing parallels too far.

Specifically, this study will evaluate both English and American texts, with an emphasis on novels and short fiction. I plan to analyze a variety of works and to study the mentions of the telegraph, wireless telegraph, and telephone in order to better understand how they were used as narrative devices and how they integrate into or challenge the daily lives of characters. These instances often come in the form of particular scenes in the fiction, but there will also be some study of how the language of telecommunications is used metaphorically or when telecommunication is implied. In some texts, such as the short story "Wireless" by Rudyard Kipling and *In the Cage*, telecommunications play a central role. However, there are many more works in which telecommunications are only on the periphery or the use of such technology is only suggested or metaphorical. These texts are of equal interest to this study as they display the ways in which the technologies were becoming normalized and integrated into lives and thought.

As mentioned above, existing scholarship tends to look at this transitional period as either the beginning or the end of one of the larger movements on either side. *Victorian Soundscapes* by John Picker, *The Victorian Internet: the Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers* by Tom Standage, and *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* by Richard Menke, for example, all address literature after 1880 in only one or two chapters. Transitional works are presented almost as a postscript, a decline from high Victorianism, instead of a distinct and interesting period. On the other side, *Beautiful Circuits: Modernism and the Mediated Life* by Mark Goble focuses on Modernism, and includes pre-World War I works mainly as stage-setting for Goble's main argument. Many secondary texts, too discuss the telegraph and telephone as part of a large string of technological developments. *Victorian Soundscapes, Beautiful Circuits, Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*, and *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* by Stephen Kern all

discuss the telegraph and/or telephone by placing these technologies in the context of other developments such as the development of the penny post, the camera, and the phonograph or radio, even sometimes the bicycle or hot air balloon. While this work is certainly important, less attention has been paid to what makes telecommunications unique, which is the emphasis of this project. There are critical texts of narrower scope, such as *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* by Jill Galvan, that are more comparable to the research proposed here. However, Galvan's text still covers a broader timeframe, and splits the focus of the text between technology and spiritualism. The relationship between these two elements is certainly interesting and helps to inform projects such as this one. However, Galvan's text and those like it focus on specific elements of telecommunications; the research at hand seeks to focus specifically on telecommunications in the literature of the specified time period but also to cover the proposed topic in a way that encompasses a variety of elements.

In contrast to the works discussed above, this project will focus on a narrow thirty-three year time frame and devote its focus specifically to the telegraph, wireless telegraph, and telephone. By doing so, the research will be able to provide a more comprehensive view of the uses and effects of these telecommunications as displayed in the fiction. Because these technologies play a pivotal role in modern conceptions of communication and function as symbols of other sociological changes at an important turning point in history, it is important that they be studied further than what has here-to-fore been presented. This study intends to do that.

The goal of this research project is to be inter-disciplinary. Although the focus of the work will be on literature and its criticism, I aim also to make the outcome of this project applicable to researchers in the fields of History and Communication. To this end, I will be

drawing on theories from these fields to complete the literary interpretations that will be presented. This study will utilize two overarching methodologies, both with an emphasis on Literary Studies, but one with an eye towards History and one towards Communication Studies, for Parts I and II respectively. For Part I, which will explore the historical interplay between text and context, the methodology of the study will be to prioritize what the primary texts can teach modern readers about the turn of the century. The interpretive mode will be influenced in part by Literary New Historicism, as exemplified by Stephen Greenblatt; however, for the work at hand, I am more interested with what the works show about the history, not what an author's history can teach us about the works. Therefore, I will also draw inspiration from neo-historicism, which follows a "linguistic turn," exemplified by Hayden White's *Metahistory* and the works of Frank Ankersmit, both of which place emphasis on hermeneutics, narrative, subjectivity, and cross-disciplinary research. These approaches will inspire the critical work of this study without replacing independent assessment. In Part II, in which I discuss elements of communication and miscommunication, I will turn, not surprisingly, to the field of Communication Studies and plan to develop a methodological approach which includes elements from the theories Media Ecology (McLuhan), and Cultural Studies (Anderson). Finally, in the ultimate chapter, a discussion of "displacement," I will also refer on Henri Lefevbre's concept of Thirdspace.

I recognize that integrating such a variety of interpretive lenses is not the ordinary process for this kind of research. There is, however, a reason for this approach. For many studies, the theoretical lens sets the parameters for the research. One may choose a feminist approach to read the texts by a certain author or in a certain genre and period. The choice of reading via feminism helps set the boundaries of the research; it helps narrow the research question into an size that is manageable. For the project at hand, the parameters are set by the

narrow, thirty-three year time period and the focus on telecommunications. Therefore, the added level of interpretive theory is not necessary as a way to define parameters. In contrast, the project seeks to choose a small subject and then examine it from every angle, thus the confluence of a variety of inter-disciplinary approaches. As for the interpretive theories chosen, I have striven to identify philosophies that are both contemporary and align well with the subject at hand. These theories focus on the impact of communication on societies and the importance of literature in furthering understanding in other fields.

I have chosen to bookend the topics discussed in my dissertation with a close analysis of two texts: *In the Cage* by Henry James and *Howards End* by E. M. Forster. Both of these works fully integrate telecommunications and in a variety of manners. In terms of understanding telecommunications in this time period, both are certainly key texts. I will utilize these works as a way to bring together into a single study a variety of the topics covered. Part I will open with an analysis of *In the Cage*, which will serve as the introductory example of the sociological and historical context displayed by telegraphy. It brings together topics of socio-economic boundaries, women in the workforce, and characterizations/critiques of telegraph users, particularly the wealthy. This analysis will serve as a strong introduction for the remaining chapters in Part I. This text works particularly well as the introduction because it brings together the uses and effects of telegraphy between various classes. The overlapping lives of the telegraph operator, known only as "the girl," and the telegraph sender Captain Everard is a prime example of the interplay of these important historical moments. Through *In the Cage*, I will be able to discuss how the use of telegraphy symbolizes the (im)mobility of the classes, as well as assess how the technology plays a different role for those who can afford to send them verses those who work as part of the infrastructure. These topics tie in directly with the growth of

women in the workplace, as readers will see in the experiences of "the girl," which will be supported in this study with historical documents of the time. It will also prepare readers for the discussion in the chapter to follow, which will draw in additional narratives such as *The Odd Women* by George Gissing and *The Story of a Modern Woman* by Ella Hepworth Dixon. Additionally, an analysis of Captain Everard will also serve as a primer for the later discussion on the fall of the middle class, and will serve as the introductory example of the common characterization of nobles as spendthrifts. Though each of these elements are ubiquitous enough to require individual chapters, the ways in which the coalesce and interact in *In the Cage* make this text one of the strongest sources for this research and a useful gateway into the topics of Part I.

At the other end, I plan to close with a close assessment of *Howards End*, a text that includes elements of technological interruption and disruption, information overload, and the fears of miscommunication. This study will serve as a conclusion to the project, as it brings together topics from both Parts I and II. It will show that the socio-historic uses of telegraphy and the more psychological concerns over the new technology were not mutually exclusive. *Howards End* has a particular emphasis on the problems of miscommunication (the focus of Chapter 6 in the dissertation), and this closing reading will show how these concerns overlapped with the growth of the middle class and elevation of the New Woman. For example, the phrase "telegrams and anger" is used in refrain to refer to the "outer life," the type of life lead by men like Wilcox who place an emphasis on money and mobility. This life both beguiles and repels the Schlegel sisters, who struggle to find their footing, both in a world of shifting class status and new technology. *Howards End* employs both practical and metaphorical examples of

telecommunications that will help to draw together many of the ideas discussed and close out the overall study.

In the more detailed chapters, a variety of other texts will be discussed, including *A Hazard of New Fortunes, The Way We Live Now,* "The Telegraph Girl," selections from *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes*, *The Odd Women*, "Wireless," *The Octopus*, *Peter Ibbetson*, *Daniel Deronda*, *What Maisie Knew, The Story of a Modern Women,* and "A Call." The variety of texts listed here will work to show the proliferation of telecommunications in the literature across genres, decades, and national boundaries. Though a small number of texts will be chosen for close analysis, it is also important to put these within a broader context in order to show that the use of telecommunications in not unique to only a handful of texts. Some of the works listed above have telecommunications as a central theme; however, many others do not. It is often from the novels in which the telegraph or telephone play only a small role that we can begin to see how the technology became normalized, integrated, and then, in some ways, overlooked.

Part One of the text, titled "What is Changed: Telecommunications and Literature in a Historical Context," will begin with the analysis of *In the Cage* as described above. The following chapters will then focus individually on the two key elements highlighted in James' text: the dichotomy between upper and middle class users of the telegraph and the influential role telecommunications played in the entrance of women into the workforce. Chapter Two, titled "Telegrams, the Irresponsibly Wealthy and the Upwardly Mobile" will highlight the use of telegrams by different characters and how these actions help to create the readers' understanding of the character and socio-historical setting. This chapter will be divided into three sections, the first of which will focus on the fall of the noble class in this period. The primary examples of

this will be drawn from Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* and will show how the use of

telegraphy echoes the wastefulness practiced by characters like Sir Felix Carbury, leading to a

collapse of their noble lineage. Secondly, I will show how entrepreneurs and businessmen use

telecommunications in the literatures in order to build their income instead of as an expression of

their wealth. Examples will be drawn from *Howards End*; this practice is reflected in American

literatures as well, as will be shown through analysis of *The Octopus* and William Dean Howell's

A Hazard of New Fortunes. Drawing together these two elements, this chapter will close with

showing how the upwardly-mobile business men succeed in pushing out the old money and the

role telecommunications play in this action, with samples drawn from *The Way We Live Now* and

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton.

The third chapter of Part One, "The New Working Women," will explore the growth of

the number of women in the workplace and its relationship to telecommunication positions. The

chapter will draw from sources at a variety of points on the literary spectrum. A foundation will

be set with the article "The Telephone Girl," by Stephen Baxter, which provides historical data

and commentary on women working as telephone operators at the turn of the century. The study

will then turn the canonical text *The Odd Women* by George Gissing to explore the experiences

of women in the workplace, the necessity of such work, and the benefits that a knowledge of

typing could afford. Ultimately, the chapter will turn to writings by those in the field, drawing

samples from *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes*, a collection of writings by telegraph

operators edited W. J. Johnston.

Part Two of this study, titled "What is Lost," will turn from the historical to the

experiential elements of the telegraph and telephone. These new communicative technologies

created a new set of concerns and disconnects in their users. Chapter four will focus on the

phenomena of disembodiment, both spiritual and physical. Most illustrations for this chapter will be drawn from the short story "Wireless" by Rudyard Kipling, though other texts will be brought in to show the breadth of this concern, including *Peter Ibbetson* by George DuMaurier and Ford Madox Ford's "A Call," among others. The study will then move from disembodiment to feelings of displacement in Chapter Five. This chapter will be divided into two sections, one American and one British, in order to unpack how this experience affected both nations' writers, though in different ways. The first section will devote itself to the topic of American spread with discussions on the relationship between telegrams, telephones, and trains and well as the spread of corporate power via these three inventions. The main examples for this argument will be drawn from *The Octopus* and *Oh Pioneers!*. The later half of this chapter will discuss the English experience, that of convergence. For this, we will turn to *Anticipations* by H.G. Wells and *Peter Ibbetson*.

The final chapter in Part Two will turn to more practical concerns for what is lost: our ability to truly communication. Chapter Six is titled "Miscommunications," and will address the three key elements of miscommunication in this time period: interruption and disruption, information overload, and the missed communique. The texts for these chapters are, respectively, "A Call," "Wireless" and *Parade's End* by Ford Madox Ford, and *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes*. In Ford's "A Call," a character's extra-marital dalliance is interrupted by a phone call, causing the character to have a mental breakdown, thus disrupting his entire way of life. In "Wireless" and "No More Parades," book four of *Parade's End*, characters become overwhelmed by the speed and dearth of information relayed to them via telecommunications. Lastly, selections from *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes* show readers some of the disastrous outcomes that can occur when one relies too heavily on telecommunications. This

study will conclude with an assessment of *Howards End* that draws together elements from across Part Two. Drawing primarily from the refrain "telegrams and anger," the novel will also be used to show how telecommunications moves from the tangible into the metaphorical, indicating a move past solely concrete thinking about these technologies. This final analysis will show how the communicative technologies here discussed have ultimately become normalized to the point of abstraction and how the telegraph and telephone become metaphors for other actions and ideas. This, then, brings the study past 1913, showing how those metaphors have, in some contexts, replaced the original artifacts in today's language.

Outline:

Introduction: The study at hand will focus on telegraphy, wireless telegraphy, and telephony and their representation in literature at the turn of the century and show that they are worthy of independent scholarship, separate from other moments of literary or technological development. The goal of this study is to elevate these three interrelated communication technologies from the menagerie of inventions and examine them in more detail and from a variety of angles. All three work to collapse the distance between individuals by allowing a near-immediate ability to communicate, which lead to a dearth of symbolic and interpretive resonance in a variety of fields. It is in this way that we can best see what is extraordinary about these technologies and how they fit into or defy the broader claims made about them. Some see the telegraph and telephone as the source of our modern conception of communication/miscommunication. This study seeks to take that historical argument and observe how it works in the literatures. Ultimately, this project will show that the use of telecommunications in the fiction is symbolic of major socio-historic changes taking place at the turn of the century and that the technology itself created many changes, including individuals' conceptions of time, space, and place.

Part I. Economic, Historical Context
    Chapter 1: Introduction - *In the Cage*
        A. Wasteful male character
        B. The business of telegraphy
        C. Women in the workplace
    Chapter 2: Telegrams and the Irresponsibly Wealthy and the Upwardly Mobile
        A. Fall of nobility to vice and wastefulness (*Way We Live Now*)
        B. Business men using technology as a tool (*Howards End, Octopus, Hazard of New Fortunes*)
        C. Upwardly mobile business men pushing out the old money (*Way We Life Now, House of Mirth*)
    Chapter 3: The New Working Women (the growth of women in the workplace and the emphasis on typing positions.)
        A. "The Telegraph Girl"
        B. *The Odd Women*
        C. Selections from *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes*

Part II. What is Lost - Disembodiment and Displacement, Miscommunications
    Chapter 4: Disembodiment - "Wireless"
        A. The spiritual
        B. The physical
    Chapter 5: Displacement
        A. American Spread - *The Octopus* and *Oh Pioneers!* - Trains and power
        B. English Convergence - "everyone pulling up to the same hearth" Wells and *Peter Ibbetson*

Chapter 6: Miscommunications
      A. Interruption and Disruption - "A Call"
      B. Overload - "Wireless" and *Parade's End* (?)
      C. Missed Communications - *Howards End* and *Lighting Flashes*
Chapter 7: *Howards End* - how these elements tie together.
Conclusion: Metaphors as an indication of moving beyond the concrete - the technology becomes so normalized that it is abstracted and the telegraph and telephone become metaphors for other actions and ideas.

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