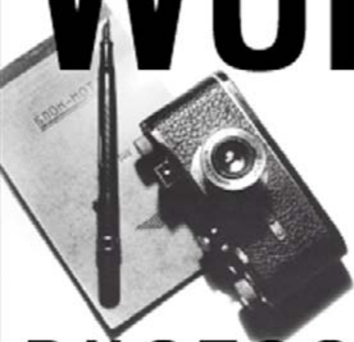
CAMERA WORKS



MICHAEL NORTH

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY WORD

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PREFACE

That there should be some significant relation between aesthetic modernism and new media seems true almost by definition. Modernism, after all, stakes its initial claim to fame on new modes and new methods, innovations so drastic they seem not just to change the old arts but to invent new and unrecognizable ones. But the sheer impossibility of remaining new has most definitely caught up with innovations like free verse and pictorial abstraction, which retain very little of their original challenge in a time when the new media include hypertext novels and on-line simulations.

As Lev Manovich has shown, however, the conceptual basis of the most current new media can only be strengthened by reference to the times in which the very concept of new media first arose.[1] The checkered history of the electronic book, for example, ought certainly to include the Readies of Bob Brown, conceived in the late 1920s, a time even more gullibly fascinated by new means of transmission than our own. Brown's reading machine managed in some ways to make literature even more linear than did the conventional codex, and thus it remained light years away from hypertext, but the excitement and the doubts it inspired both seem almost uncannily familiar in the early twenty-first century. In other words, many of the issues current in discussions of the new media predate the personal computer; some arise as early as the invention of mechanical recording in the nineteenth century.

Of course, that invention has inspired a tremendous amount of commentary, but astonishingly little of it concentrates on the fact of mechanical recording itself. "The photograph," as Patrick Maynard

calls it, using quotation marks to designate a popular idealization, is imagined primarily as a picture, and its influence in histories of the arts thus remains limited to technical issues such as perspective and to philosophical debates about mimesis.[2] Even the notion of mechanical reproducibility made so influential by Walter Benjamin has generally led to a concentration on the dissemination of images, not on the means by which they are originally produced. That a photograph is a method of mechanically rearranging, codifying, storing, and perhaps producing sense impressions now seems a great deal more significant in the presence of so many electronic methods of doing the same. Understanding of the photograph, that is to say, should not stop at the surface of the image itself, any more than understanding of the computer could stop with the monitor.

One of the preliminary claims of this book, then, is that the wholesale reorganization of human knowledge that we think of as arriving with the computer actually begins with mechanical recording. Perceptions that have not and could not have been experienced by any human observer have been relatively familiar since Eadweard Muybridge set up his line of cameras at Leland Stanford's farm. The interposition of "machine languages" between the mind and physical phenomena began when James Watt first invented a primitive gauge to measure pressure variations in his steam engine. Saying so, however, is not meant to diminish the emphasis currently placed on new media. On the contrary, the purpose of historical connections of this kind is to extend the discussion so that it has less to do with the particular powers and limitations of the computer and more to do with the whole issue of mechanical mediation in general, an issue we should understand at least a bit since it has been with us for so long.

Some of that understanding is encoded in the works of literary and artistic modernism, which can largely be defined, I think, by the influence of mechanical mediation on the old media. Of course, anything so complicated and various as an aesthetic movement must be the result of innumerable influences, some of them too obscure, some too near to be visible. But if modernism is to serve as a general term at all, if it is to remain serviceable in all the disciplines that use it while still defining its subject in historical and formal terms, then I think it must take very seriously the significant formal innovations provided by material history itself, especially those provided by the new media that followed the photograph. This does not mean, at least to me, that the nature of human experience changed at some point in time, influenced by speed, industrial organization, or the mechanization of the senses. I agree with

skeptics who feel that something as fundamental as eyesight or hearing does not change decade by decade, much less year by year. On the contrary, mechanized sense impressions could hardly have presented the challenge they did if they had not conflicted so obviously with what had come to be accepted as unmediated experience. The revelations that arise from that conflict seem to me to provide much of what still lives in modern literature and art, on which a general theory of the aesthetics of modernity might still be constructed.

None of this would be very interesting, however, if it did not also help us understand particular works of art. There is not much point in providing historical background merely for its own sake or simply to confirm received opinion about familiar works. For me, in fact, this project began with particular works, some of them utterly unread, like the Readies of Bob Brown, some of them securely canonized but little read, like Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*, and some of them, most obviously including *The Great Gatsby*, almost painfully familiar. I cannot say that the works ultimately considered here make up an exhaustive or inevitable list, but I do hope that the mix of unknown and familiar works will at least pose a significant test for the ideas proposed here, which should, if they have any relevance at all, shed the sort of light that makes obscure works seem interesting and common touchstones look a little different.

The chapters that follow are therefore organized in three parts. There is a general introduction, the purpose of which is to determine the formal and historical significance of mechanical recording for the modern arts. For at least two different reasons, the next three chapters focus on little magazines rather than individuals. A good deal of recent research in literary modernism has shown how useful investigations of little magazines can be, in part because a magazine is very much like a movement. The problem of accounting for a collective product like a magazine is therefore much like the problem of accounting for modernism itself: inevitably it involves including various individuals, works, and positions within a general effort. The policies of these magazines also allow us to see literary modernism in its practical relations with photography, film, and the visual arts, relations that often had to be worked out in a very immediate way, as illustrations were included with written text and text attempted to evoke visual materials. These three chapters are also arranged to follow the association of literature with the new media as it developed from an initial fascination through a series of more complex and difficult interactions.

Though most of the individuals considered in these chapters were

born in the United States, the magazines themselves—*Camera Work, transition, Close Up*—were international in scope, and so there is extended discussion here as well of the way the new media were thought to provide new global languages, appropriate to a movement that saw itself as transatlantic. The next four chapters are more conventionally focused on individual American writers. My purpose here is to question not just the commonplace association of photography with American literary realism but received opinion generally where these writers are concerned. I would like, for example, to use Fitzgerald to challenge some commonly accepted ideas about the status of the visual within literary modernism, as well as to use this discussion of modernism to demonstrate how certain writers, not usually considered technically adventurous, might be included within that movement. Finally, these writers have a great deal to tell us about the social implications of the new media, particularly about the complex relationship of technological change and social progress. Accordingly, the final two chapters move away from the camera itself to more general issues raised by a spectatorial society. The steps by which spectatorship leaves its original position at the eyepiece of the camera and becomes a general practice, even something of an occupation, can be traced throughout these chapters, most especially in the interesting case of Ernest Hemingway, whose work, in my opinion, is one extended attempt to make looking seem as active and involved as doing. The theory of language that arises in the process is not as obviously insurrectionary as that advertised in the pages of *transition*, nor is it as closely associated with the camera itself, but it is just as thoroughly marked by the conditions of modern visuality and in some ways even more relevant to the current state of media society.

Earlier versions of several of these chapters have been delivered as lectures, and I am happy to have benefited from the questions they have prompted. Chapter 2 was first presented in rather different form at the Material Modernisms conference held in the summer of 2001 at the University of British Columbia. Chapter 3 was originally presented, also in an earlier form, at the second Modernist Studies Conference, held in the fall of 2000. I would like to thank the organizers and participants of both conferences. Chapter 2 has since appeared in *Modernism/Modernity 9* (April 2002) as "Words in Motion: The Movies, the Readies, and the Revolution of the Word," and Chapter 3 has appeared in *Literature and Visual Technologies* (Palgrave 2003), as "International Media, International Modernism and the Struggle with Sound." I thank the publishers for permission to reprint these essays.

I would also like to thank Erin Templeton, for her help in preparing the index, and the staff of Special Collections, Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, for unstinting help of various kinds, not least in agreeing to catalogue the Bob Brown Papers, heretofore in a state of disarray just a hair's breadth from total chaos.

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We need the twentieth century word. We need the word of movement, the word expressive of the great new forces around us.
Eugene Jolas, *transition*, 1929

Introduction

Mechanical Recording and the Modern Arts

In historical terms, at least, photography is the first of the modern arts. The very existence of a modern period, broken away from the time before, is to some extent the creation of photography, which has made all time since the 1840s simultaneously available in a way that makes the years before seem that much more remote. As Carlo Rim maintains, "the advent of modern times dates from the moment the first daguerreotype appeared on the scene. … Thanks to the photograph, yesterday is no more than an endless today."[1] In this most basic sense, art and literature have had to emulate the modernity of the photograph, attempting in their various ways to achieve the instantaneous newness that photography first brought to the cultural scene.

Photography and the modern arts are linked in a number of other ways as well, as several recent studies have shown. Whenever the issue of faithful mimesis is raised, the example of photography is apt to be influential, in a positive or a negative way.[2] It is also clear that the habit of seeing photographically has affected modern experience to such an extent that certain oddities of the camera, especially its tendency to frame particular points of view and to isolate one moment from another, have become second nature for human observers as well. Recent studies of photography and literature have therefore shown in some detail how camera vision affects the motives and perhaps even the perceptions of influential modern writers.[3]

In showing how the camera has affected modern writing, however, scholars may have missed the more fundamental fact that photography is itself a kind of modern writing. One of the most revolutionary effects of the new medium was in offering hope of new methods of representation,

neither linguistic nor pictorial but hovering in a kind of Utopian space between, where the informational utility of writing meets the immediacy of sight. If, as Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss have long maintained, it is the mutual interference of the linguistic and the optical that makes modern art distinctive, then perhaps the common beginning of modernism in literature and the arts is to be found in the recording technologies that brought the whole relationship of word, sound, and image into doubt.[4]

Photography began to trouble this relationship from the very beginning, from the 1839 diary entry in which Fox Talbot jotted down the phrase "Words of Light." Talbot was working out the technical problems of a new procedure he was still calling "photogenic drawing," but the neologism caused much dissatisfaction, and the happy metaphor "words of light" inevitably provided what became the accepted name for the new medium.[5] Talbot's metaphor has been dead for so long that no one looking at a photograph today thinks of it as "light drawing," much less "light writing," but in fact the oldest of Talbot's photographs to survive is a picture of his own handwriting, tracing out the alphabet.[6] And though this particular subject was most probably necessitated by the practical limitations of Talbot's early method, it is the case that photography was originally promoted as a replacement for writing as well as a rival to painting. The famous bill placed before the French Chamber of Deputies in 1839 t o secure Daguerre's invention for the state actually listed the reproduction of graphic notes as one of the new mediums primary uses.[7] Talbot offered his invention as a superior means of copying written documents, but even when it bypassed writing it could be used, he suggested, for keeping inventories, as a system of notation superior to writing but playing much the same role of information storage and retrieval.[8] In these early days, the sense that the "graph" in "photograph" pertained to writing rather than drawing was so strong that Elizabeth Eastlake could say the medium offered a "new form of communication … neither letter, message, *nor picture*."[9]

The sense remained strong throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth that photography provided a sort of notation suspended somehow between letters and pictures, a new alphabet, as it were. Impressed by Nadar's photographs of nineteenth-century Paris, Mallarmé exclaimed that light had become "photography's own form of 'writing.'"[10] In the next century, even as the new, more purely optical style of "straight" photography took hold, an underlying belief remained, as Sadakichi Hartmann put it, that "photographic illustration has become a new kind of writing."[11] Thus photography was strongly

associated from its very beginnings with hieroglyphs, another form of writing that, in the popular view, bypassed sound and spoken language to reach the mind directly through the eye.[12] One of the first projects suggested for photography in France was a new expedition to Egypt, where it might record and bring back more Rosetta Stones,[13] but in a sense every photograph was felt to be a Rosetta Stone, decoding every written language by reference to a visual language common to all. Photography, Oliver Wendell Holmes predicted, was to become "the card of introduction to make all mankind acquaintances."[14] The new medium created a hopeful fascination with new forms of notation, revolutions that would also return to an ancient purity and directness, a pre-Babelic unity of word and thing.

In so doing, though, photography was just the first in a series of technologies that promised new and better forms of writing, some of which, like the phonograph, staked out that territory with their very names. Historians of the phonograph often note Edison's surprise that it might be used for music, since his original purpose for it was primarily stenographic.[15] All the early applications for this invention imagined it as a repository of language, reading aloud books and newspapers, recording speeches, taking letters. Even the music critic of the New York *Post*, as Lisa Gitelman notes, imagined phonographic newspapers and not recorded music.[16] This expectation recalled and reinforced the original association of photography with language: the common suggestion that Edison's new invention photographed sound depended on the idea that legible recording had in some way to be visible recording, like writing. Edison himself was mildly obsessed with the idea that phonograph records should be readable, not just by his own machines but by human beings, and he spent many hours with a microscope trying to find the letter *a* impacted in the indentations of a record.[17] Despite his failure, artists began to speculate about the possibility of phonographic writing through direct incision of what Laszlo Moholy-Nagy called "the language of the groove."[18] Among the general public there was widespread speculation about a phonographic alphabet, a set of patterns in the grooves that might be direct and specific yet also regular enough for iteration and recognition, and there was much consternation, popular and legal, when this hope was disappointed, and the idea had to be confronted of a notation, a writing, that could not in fact be read.[19] Thus phonographic inscription also came to be associated with hieroglyphs, which had themselves resisted being read for centuries, though they were finally found to be legible.[20] The direct transcription of sound into any visible form, no matter how variable,

seemed to promise a new universal language, or at least a universal alphabet, on which a fully motivated and wholly transparent language might be based.[21]

The rhetoric surrounding these two technologies is so similar because they represent popularly successful versions of an older and far more various project to induce nature to transcribe itself directly and automatically and therefore perfectly. To some extent, this project violates the currently accepted boundary between science and superstition, and to some extent it represents a profound shift in the way science defines and uses signs. The scientific method itself, according to Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, involved a repudiation of language in favor of firsthand sensory observation.[22] The old magical notion that words and things were necessarily linked was replaced by a desire to remove the subjectivity introduced into observation by language. As early as the sixteenth century, however, scientists needed to "observe" phenomena not particularly amenable to the physical senses, objects too small or too far away to be seen with the naked eye. Soon the telescope and the microscope were followed by other instruments, which did not just alter sense data but rather represented it, often in graphical form. Thus the problem of language was reintroduced into the research situation, for these instruments occupied a curiously ambiguous position as indices of physical phenomena that did not always iconically resemble what they were supposed to represent. What were they, then, languages or things? What were products like graphs to be considered to be, pictures or words?[23] New systems of notation, such as the graphs of Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville, seemed simultaneously to make pictures that were conventional and writing that was somehow motivated. Though the whole purpose of such scientific instrumentation was to codify and thus objectify investigation, it had the curious unintended effect of making observation seem dependent on mediation, while simultaneously presenting the possibility of languages that would, like the old magical languages, be linked necessarily to reality. The whole notion that there are two quite different ways in which human beings relate to reality, immediately through the senses and indirectly by means of symbols, began subtly to alter, with consequences so far-reaching they might be considered fundamental to the modern condition.

Hankins and Silverman place photography and phonography as episodes in a long history, in which science attempts to replace words with graphs, particularly graphs drawn by automatic recording devices. Perhaps the earliest attempts to perfect direct graphical notation are to

be found in eighteenth-century projects for a kind of "traceology," a method of analyzing the gait of horses and human beings by preserving and schematizing the prints they make.[24] The first truly successful technology of this kind—the prototype, therefore, of all subsequent recording media—were the sound figures of Ernst Chladni, produced by vibrating thin plates of glass or metal dusted with sand. Early in the nineteenth century, these figures were celebrated as "the script-like-Ur images of sound," allowing scientists to "re-discover, or else to find the primeval or natural script by means of electricity."[25] At about the same time James Watt perfected an automatic indicator diagram to record variations in the pressure maintained by his steam engine, but this, the first automatic recording instrument, was kept a secret and therefore had little influence.[26] Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, experimentalists tinkered with dozens of such machines meant to induce transcriptions directly from nature, many of which occupied the ambiguous territory between entertainment and science.

Perhaps the most commonly remembered of these researchers is Etienne-Jules Marey, now primarily thought of as a major figure in the prehistory of moving pictures. Early in his career, Marey invented a whole series of complex mechanisms designed to transform the muscle contractions of a frog, the flight of a bird, or the walk of a human being directly into graphic notation, "to coax a graphic language directly from living things."[27] To capture more detail, he turned to photography and then film, developing in each case sophisticated techniques to schematize and graph the movements he wanted to study.[28] Marey's followers and assistants expanded his experiments in several directions, attempting to photograph speech or transcribe human locomotion, establishing a new scientific discipline of physiological registration that Francois Dagognet has called "biogrammatology."[29] The unifying aim of all such experiments, no matter what sense they addressed or what medium they exploited, was to induce nature to record itself, to extract from visible objects what Talbot called "self-representations" that would necessarily be encoded, insofar as they were encoded at all, in "nature's own script."[30]

The idea that these experiments in "biogrammatology" had yielded what Marey himself called "a kind of universal language"[31] depended on the apparently automatic connection between the subject and its self-transcription. "The 'trace,'" as Dagognet puts it, "was to be considered nature's own expression, without screen, echo or interference: it was faithful, clear and, above all, universal."[32] Photographers, from the earliest inventors such as Talbot to modern commercial artists such as

Harry Holmes Smith, continued to make such claims for their art through two centuries of change in aesthetic practice and ideological estimation.[33] Even among the avant-garde, who might have been expected to exercise some skepticism about any apparent transparency in a signifying medium, the photograph was celebrated as a triumph of autography: "As a mirror throws back an image without effort, as an echo throws back a voice without asking why, the beauty of matter belongs to no one: from now on it is a product of physics and chemistry."[34] This idea, of a sign system belonging to no one and thus able to leap all boundaries of class, race, and nationality, fueled the most radical projects of the modernist avant-garde, even as it did the pretensions of the most successful film capitalists. Just as D. W. Griffith defended *Birth of a Nation* by contending that the language of film is by nature universal, Dziga Vertov introduced *The Man with the Movie Camera* as an "experimental work … creating a truly international absolute language of cinema based on its total separation from the language of theater and literature."[35]

Recording technologies such as film and phonography thus provided their users with a vastly more powerful, more extensive indexical sign, a kind of trace previously produced only by nature and then only in special circumstances, as in the case of footprints. These new media seemed to bridge the gap between language and visible phenomena by making a language *of* visible phenomena, a language impossibly more flexible and more various than any of the written languages. At one stroke, it would seem, the invention of photography "converted all things that emit, reflect, or otherwise modulate light, into potential tools,"[36] first for making images and then, since those images were also conceived as implicitly alphabetical, for writing. In other words, the very concept of "nature's own script" suggests that nature is already a script, that it is inhabited by, perhaps even constituted by language. However, this collapse of the distinction between sign and world, though it might in one way serve to substantiate the sign, could just as easily destabilize the world, or at least all possible perceptions of it. When all potential sense perceptions became implicitly recordable, according to James Lastra, they were

> "inhabited" by writing in the sense that, even if understood as ontologically identical to "normal" perceptions, they could be cited and repeated, linked to new contexts, and forced to signify in ways contradictory to their original meanings. In short, they confronted the world with a form of *experience as written*—as

enabled and endangered by the possibilities of writing as described in philosophy.[37]

Instead of attaching to itself all the liveliness of nature, writing transfers all its belatedness, its artificiality, to nature itself, which thus becomes the “gigantic photographic machine” that Benjamin found predicted in the work of Blanqui, endlessly taking its own self-portrait.[38]

This is the paradox peculiar to photography, as Krauss suggests, “the paradox of reality constituted as sign—or presence transformed into absence, into representation, into spacing, into writing.”[39] It is due to this paradox that the very technologies that were supposed to achieve a perfectly symmetrical and transparent relationship between reality and a renewed system of notation have also brought about a century of skepticism about reality itself, or at least about human perceptions of it. As Martin Jay has argued, “the invention of the camera … helped ultimately to undermine confidence in the very sense it so extended.”[40] First of all, the claim of the camera, and of the other recording media after it, to complete objectivity was only too easy to dispute. In the beginning, of course, photographs could not even reproduce color, and the distortions introduced by lenses, lighting, and the variable photosensitivity of the necessary chemicals were abundantly obvious. Even so, acceptance of this inevitable fallibility occasioned some anxiety: “Can the sun lie?” asked the *Photographic News* in 1885.[41] Having put such great emphasis on recording as an automatic and therefore impartial transcription of the real, apologists for the new technologies were faced with the threatening idea that the distortions obvious in their recordings revealed an inherent instability in the relationship of human perception to reality.

Even when the recording media extended and perfected human perception, however, they had the ironic effect of undermining confidence in it. No matter how distorted camera vision might be, it does nonetheless take in a great deal more of any particular scene than any human observer can. Viewers of the first photographs were at first captivated and then disconcerted by the new medium's power to capture every detail, no matter how trivial. Art critics complained that there was “too much infinitesimal and often meaningless detail” in photographs, which they found dense and busy in comparison to painting.[42] In the same way, phonograph recordings picked up every sound within their range, regardless of meaning, so that elaborate systems of damping had to be invented that could distinguish desired sounds amid the ambient noise. Very early on, photographers also proposed the same sort

of damping, purposely sacrificing detail to tone so as to make their photographs look more like paintings, or, as it was also argued, to make them truer to actual vision, which inevitably sacrificed inessential, fleeting details in favor of overall impressions.[43] As Moholy-Nagy put it, "it is said that 'the camera does not lie,' and this is true in the objective sense … but it does lie constantly in the subjective sense, because it cannot separate what is important from what is quite unimportant."[44]

Unfortunately, the same formula suggests that the eye also constantly lies in giving the important its due prominence. By recording levels of detail usually ignored and moments in processes usually perceived as fluid wholes, photography exposed the unnoticedfilteringand processing that transforms phenomena into useful perceptions. As Patrick Maynard says, "a feature that struck people initially about photographic processes, and continues to impress (or oppress) them, is how easily they record that unattended background of perceptual experience, and what effort it requires to *filter* or *suppress* that record or to keep it down *as* background."[45] Perhaps the most famous formulation of this idea is Benjamin's:

> Whereas it is a commonplace that, for example, we have some idea of what is involved in the act of walking (if only in general terms), we have no idea at all of what happens during the fraction of a second when a person actually takes a step. Photography, with its devices of slow motion and enlargement, reveals the secret. It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.[46]

As the parallel to psychoanalysis would suggest, the knowledge of what happens during that fraction of a step is actually suppressed, since paying attention to every second of every process is a psychological and not a physiological impossibility. If vision actually takes place as much in the mind as in the eye, then that means that the eye is subject to all the mind's powers of reasoning and to its rationalizations as well, so that vision can be thought of as purposely formalized, much as a language is, and also as subjective, opinionated, and opaque to itself.[47]

For many artists, however, the peculiar power of photography lay precisely in its differences from ordinary vision, which gave it the ability to expose the irrational underside of what had come to be accepted as reality. Vertov, perhaps most famously of all, imagined a "kino-eye" that "has the possibility of making the invisible visible, the unclear clear, the hidden manifest, the disguised overt, the acted non-

acted; making falsehood into truth."[48] Moholy-Nagy once listed eight types of photographic vision, each of which exceeded ordinary vision in a particular way: "abstract seeing, rapid seeing, slow seeing, intensified seeing, penetrative seeing (radiography), simultaneous seeing, and distorted seeing."[49] And it was a commonplace of the earliest intellectual enthusiasm about film that it shared some essential techniques with psychoanalysis, "making the invisible visible, the familiar unfamiliar, the distant proximate."[50] But this meant that the same medium that had come to represent the possibility of an ideal language, transparent to reality and intelligible to all, was also associated with the most opaque and distorted activities of the mind and that the artistic products of this enthusiasm, from Moholy-Nagy's photomontages to Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, resembled fantasies or nightmares more than they did everyday eyesight.

Thus the camera, celebrated from the first as objectivity incarnate, also came to serve as one of modernity's most powerful emblems of the subjectivity of perception and of knowledge. Once it became clear that eyesight is selective, it was also inescapably obvious that patterns of selectivity vary according to place and time: "the separation between what is significant *(signifiani)* and what is merely noise is not absolute, but depends on the situation."[51] It even began to seem that in certain significant ways vision itself is a kind of writing, selecting as it does from the welter of visual experience those elements that are usably intelligible because they match patterns recognized from the past. As Berkeley had argued two centuries before, whatever the eye receives the mind perceives as sign and not as immediate reality.

What this meant for the modern arts, however, is that there are all sorts of possible new languages held in potential within the optical unconscious. Photography came to be admired and emulated, not so much for what it revealed directly about reality but for what it implied about the ignored and unexpected within ordinary perception. Machine vision appealed to many modern artists and writers, to be sure, because it seemed to perfect the human senses, but it appealed to the more radical because it showed the rich possibilities left to art by the very imperfection of our sensory filters. Thus the twentieth century developed what Patrick Maynard has called "an aesthetic of visual noise"[52] very much like the more literal aesthetic of noise to be found in music. But in both cases the noise is meant to become information at another level, intelligible communication about the unused potential of the human senses.[53]

Beginning with photography, then, the recording media pose a

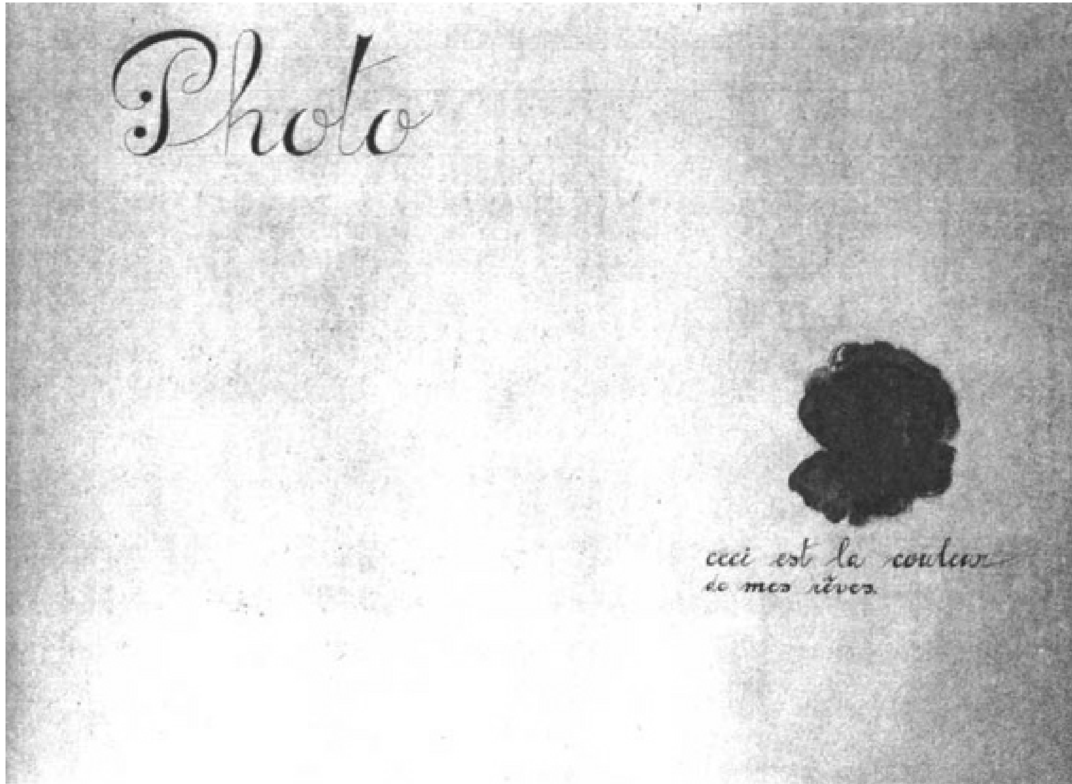
fundamental challenge to literature and the arts, confusing writing and images by confounding the seemingly elementary distinction between language and perception. Many of the most radical formal experiments of the twentieth century can be traced back to the new association of word and image suggested by the photograph. In fact, it would not be too far wrong to say that modernism itself, as a panartistic movement, begins with the critical interrogation of the relationship between text and image, brought equally into literature and the visual arts by mechanical recording. This is not to say, of course, that any such history of modernism could account for all that is new in the art and literature of the twentieth century or that attention to new media should entirely displace other topics in aesthetics, psychology, sociology, or history. However, the new media did influence modern art and literature at a very basic and material level, as alternate methods of inscription, and for this reason they offered to modernism a formal model and not just another type of subject matter. The influence of that model can be seen first in the fundamental renovations of the visual arts that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

One of the most notable developments in the art of the early twentieth century was the introduction into it of alphabetic signs, sometimes mere numerals or simple letter forms, sometimes slogans, sometimes whole columns of type appropriated from newspapers or magazines. For the catalogue of a 1989 exhibition of the Dada and Surrealist word-image, Judi Freeman and John Welchman assembled a wealth of information about this extraordinary introduction of writing into the artistic projects of the avant-garde. Still, despite careful study, this eruption of alphabetical signs and written messages remains for them something of a mystery, almost a religious one: "And suddenly there was the word."[54] But a quick look at the artwork chosen as frontispiece to the catalogue provides at least a possible clue to one source of this new practice: it is a 1925 painting by Joan Miró entitled *Photo: Ceci est la couleur de mes rêves* (fig. 1).[55]

This work consists of the title, inscribed elegantly in the upper left corner of a white canvas, and the subtitle, inscribed in the same hand in the lower right, just below a single loose rosette of blue paint. Presumably the subtitle functions as a caption for the paint, designating blue as the color of the artists dreams, but then again if the word *ceci* is taken as referring to itself, then the subtitle suggests that the artist dreams in black and white, the color of print and also, not incidentally, of photographs.

In comparison to the incontestable blue of the paint, the word *couleur* seems impossibly narrow and inadequate, and yet in comparison

Figure 1. Joan Miro, *Photo: Ceci est la couleur de mes rêves* (1925). (©2004 Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York / AD AGP, Paris)



to the simple blueness of the paint, *couleur* contains all sorts of possibilities within its visual black and white. The artwork thus poses a serious question as to whether it is language or visual imagery that affords the imagination a greater freedom. Is blue or black and white *la couleur de mes rêves?* Yet the whole debate between word and paint takes place under the sponsorship of another form, designated by the title, which suggests with weird discursivity that this work *is* a photograph. The whole competition of word and image, the title suggests, takes place within the boundaries of the photograph, which is as visual as the patch of paint and as black and white as the print. The appearance of the title as script within the artwork itself suggests the dual role the photograph plays as both representation and reference, as simultaneous icon and symbol. And Miró's choice of this particular term as both subject and title of his work suggests that the explanation for the otherwise rather mysterious introduction of the word-image may be found in what Rosalind Krauss called some twenty years ago "the paradoxical writing of the photograph."[56]

The idea that photography might play such a role would have been hard to imagine in the nineteenth century. Though the birth of photography coincided with the very earliest years of what would come to be called modernism, the earliest representative of that movement, Charles Baudelaire, disdained photography as slavishly realistic.[57] For Baudelaire, the camera merely captured facts, whereas the artist of modern life was a collector of signs, as much a reader of the cityscape as an observer of it. Even in making this distinction, however, Baudelaire defined a peculiarly modern form of perception that would later come to seem essentially photographic. By the time Benjamin came to revise Baudelaire, it was the camera that was best suited to reveal "the literarization of the conditions of life," the transformation of everyday details into inscriptions demanding to be read.[58] When Benjamin repeats the old saw that "the illiteracy of the future will be ignorance … of photography," he does not mean that photographs will necessarily replace writing as a method of communication but rather that photography, having made everything into a potential inscription, has made modern experience itself into a kind of literacy to be learned.

It is certainly true that the first and most obvious impact of photography on painting was to correct certain habits of composition that turned out to be visual conventions and not accurate transcriptions of reality. Thus Degas, Meissonier, Eakins, and Remington all used Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies as guides in correctly portraying human and animal locomotion.[59] However, even painters whom Baudelaire would have considered above mere mimesis took easily to photography as a visual aid. Delacroix, for example, took lessons in the daguerreotype and kept albums of photographic studies, as did Moreau and Rodin.[60] The impact of photography on the established visual arts was, however, only temporarily in the direction of a greater realism. Even straightforward emulation of the look and feel of early photographs had the effect of removing modulations of tone and value from paintings such as Manet's *Olympia*, producing the flattened, highly contrasted shapes that seemed both artificial and roughly unfinished to early viewers. As Michael Fried has argued, these unmodulated shapes give Manet's paintings the look of having been stamped, not painted, much the way Japanese woodblock prints are stamped, but the comparison suggests that what photography produced in Manet's work is stylization of a very particular kind, inseparable from the fact that photographs and woodblock prints are both techniques of reproduction.[61] Evoking the flat, stamped-out quality of a print or photograph is deliberately to mimic the reproducibility of the other media, even to suggest

that what painting should represent is the new way so much experience comes to individual viewers in reproduced forms. This is perhaps what Thierry de Duve means in asking: "Was it not Manet who let the simulation of the photographic simulacrum infect painting from within?"[62] In his most recent book, *Suspensions of Perception*, Jonathan Crary has posed the same question in regard to a series of modern painters, from Manet to Cézanne. What Crary calls "the modernization of the observer" has attuned these painters and their audience to "a world in which artifice has preempted the memory of the 'natural' and vision is fully attuned to the subtleties and textures of this perpetually modernized present."[63]

A very particular aspect of this modernized visual texture was the indiscriminate mixture in it of text and image. Though it has been true for centuries that a great deal of writing is meant to be read from vertical surfaces, as inscriptions, broadsides, and signboards, there was a noticeable increase in the mid—nineteenth century in the amount of type on display. Though Benjamin exaggerates when he says, "the letter and the word which have rested for centuries in the flat bed of the book's horizontal pages have been wrenched from their position and have been erected on vertical scaffolds in the streets," he is nonetheless faithfully representing a predominant feeling of his time.[64] Many visual artists and writers from Mallarmé to the Lettrists were inspired by the newly visual role in which modern advertising put writing. Type meant to catch a great many eyes from a distance had to appeal first to visual qualities quite independent of discursive sense, and type mixed with pictures naturally revealed its own purely pictorial qualities. At the same time, the introduction of photolithographic methods of printing brought pictures down from the vertical to the horizontal plane previously reserved for reading. Thus one of the most striking things about photography to many modern artists was its constant association with type. "New objects," as Salvador Dali put it in 1927, "photographed amidst the agile typography of advertisements!"[65] Even if photography had not been presented as an alternative form of inscription from the beginning, its close association with type in the twentieth century would have established an affinity, as the constant presentation of photographs in newspapers and books suggested that photographs, like type, might be read.

The photography with the greatest influence on the visual arts, then, was not necessarily the photography that aspired to that status but rather die vernacular photography that went into advertisements, illustrated magazines, and, ultimately, cinema. It was certainly the convergence of

these that contributed to what many felt was the rediscovery of photography in the years immediately after World War I.[66] Krauss has commented in regard to surrealist photography that "throughout Europe in the 1920s there was the experience of something supplemental added to reality,"[67] and this experience was so strong and so widespread as to inspire almost immediate backlash. Thus *bauhaus* magazine published in 1929 a dry commentary on "photo-inflation": "a jubilant transformation of photography as the only visual experience conducive to human happiness."[68] Backlash notwithstanding, the situation of the avant-garde at this time was still what Osip Brik called "an eclectic, artistic-cum-photographic culture that has mixed up all the old painterly clichés and the new experiments in photo-cinematographic creativity."[69]

Photography, in this extended sense, was much more than a medium. It was the context, simultaneously technical, social, and aesthetic, within which both writers and artists in the avant-garde worked out their ideas about representation. Because it had long been considered a new alphabet as well as a new visual medium, because its most timely manifestations—in advertisements, magazines, and in silent film—occurred in close association with type, it was easy to exploit photography so as to stage a confrontation between radically different methods of representation and thus to question anew that difference. Particularly in Dada and Surrealism, but also generally in art movements across Europe, works of art were "hybrids searching for a language in the very clash of languages,"[70] combinations of writing, sound, film, photography, gesture, painting, and action, in which photography and film enjoyed a priority because they linked the avant-garde, technological modernity, and mass culture.[71]

The artistic prototypes for all such work were the *papiers collés* that Picasso and Braque began to produce in 1912. Among the printed materials pasted into these revolutionary works were the announcements for two programs at the Tivoli Cinema, which opened at Sorgues in 1913.[72] Though there is no actual evidence that Braque or Picasso actually attended any showings of these films, the most substantial of which was entitled *La Petite Fifi*, they had been followers of film in general from at least 1904.[73] It is entirely possible that the primary attraction of these early films for Picasso and his friends lay in their subject matter: cowboys, comedians, cops and robbers; but Natasha Staller has suggested that the films of Georges Méliès, at least, provided an important aesthetic model as well, partly with dizzying shifts of perspective and scale, partly by fragmenting and distorting the human body, and partly by inserting into filmed performance alphanumeric characters, sometimes as

actual actors in the drama.[74] What Méliès stages in such instances, however, is simply a burlesque of a very basic convention of silent film: that it must alternate between words and images. By the time of Duchamp's *Anémic Cinéma*, P. Adams Sitney has argued, the avant-garde was clearly intrigued by "the recognition that by and large the cinematic experience during the silent period was one of an alternation of reading and looking at images in an illusionistic depth,"[75] but it seems entirely possible that this recognition is registered in much earlier work, which also staged "an alternation of reading and looking at images in illusionistic depth": the *papiers collés.* When Braque pastes his Tivoli program into an assemblage suggesting a café table, juxtaposing text against illusionistic imagery, he may be invoking the cinema as an aesthetic as well as a social experience.

The most essential, and the most disorienting, aspect of this juxta-position, however, is inherent in photographic imagery itself, whether it explicitly includes text or not. A common and developmentally crucial material in the early *papiers collés*, the *faux bois* wallpaper that appears in Braque's first assemblage, *Fruitdish and Glass* (1912), startles in part because it is so clearly printed, not painted. In fact, it resembles, in both color and texture, the cheap newsprint crowded with type that was to provide such a common contrast to the drawn and painted forms in these works. But the wallpaper is also a kind of photograph, a photomechanical reproduction, and simply by virtue of that fact it also comes to play a role analogous to that of type. The wood grain in these commercial products resembles actual wood grain, Christine Poggi points out, only in a conventional and abstract sense, divorced from specific color, texture, perspective, and lighting. In this way, it stands less as an instance of wood grain and more as a sign for it, a sign made all the more conventional "by its very origin in mechanical reproduction."[76] The wallpaper thus provides a middle term between marks that are meant to mimic wood grain, which Picasso and Braque provide abundantly in the early *papiers collés*, and marks that represent purely by convention, like the letters of a cinema program. That middle ground is occupied by, if it is not in fact actually invented by, the photograph, which prints visual signs with all the flatness and reproducibility of type.

Even ordinary snapshot photography, by some accounts the very epitome of mimetic resemblance, played an important role in the development of Cubism. Anne Baldassari has shown how frequently Picasso relied on photographic studies, even for paintings that seem to have little mimetic fidelity to their models. The most important such studies,

which will be discussed in the next chapter, are the snapshots Picasso took in Horta, Spain, in 1908 and that seem to have formed the basis for his first essays into Cubist landscape. As Baldassari also points out, however, Picasso often staged scenes to photograph and then rather frequently photographed his paintings and sketches, sometimes in grand compositions stretched out across a full wall. This practice suggests that photography had some basic affinity with assemblage, and that it helped Picasso develop the essentially critical visual sense that shifted and juxtaposed elements, sometimes from very different representational media, in the same space.[77] In fact, the intriguing term for the *papiers collés* that Picasso accepted from Jean Paulhan, who called them "seeing machines,"[78] suggests that these assemblages were in essence photographic, that the experimental shifting about of images and signs can take place only when both are incorporated into the same arena by the original "seeing machine," the camera.

Like a camera, Picasso and Braque composed their assemblages by choosing, not necessarily by creating: as Poggi notes, many of the early *papiers collés* had no hand-drawn elements at all.[79] This process of creating art merely by "selecting, cutting, and pasting preformed materials" drastically destabilizes accepted notions of individual creativity and seems to set art itself on edge. With the same gesture, however, the same stroke of the scissors, Picasso levels artistic representation with ordinary perception and raises the most ordinary objects to the status of art. If mere seeing can be thought of as in part representational, then the slightest act of attention is sufficient to make the artfulness of the ordinary apparent. By incorporating "preformed materials" directly into their canvases, then, Picasso and Braque begin a process completed by Duchamp, a process both dependent on and illustrative of "the linked logics of the photomechanical, the readymade, and abstraction."[80] The conflation of word and image in the photographic context turns to be a special case of a more general conflation by which the conventions of art and the supposedly unmediated perception of ordinary reality change places: art can become mere appropriation because every inch of reality has been rendered aesthetic in principle by the possibility of photographic appropriation.

The idea that Cubism had somehow bridged the time-honored gap between imagery and text occurred in quite different forms among the artists and writers to follow. Apollinaire's dictum that "geometry is to the plastic arts what grammar is to the art of writing" inspired a whole series of commonplaces about Cubism, the most significant of which is probably the belief, expounded by Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant,

in a universal shape grammar, in which certain primary sensations become the *"fixed words"* of a "formal, explicit, universal language."[81] For a few years at least, the hopes inspired by this "language" were so widespread in Europe they did in fact establish a kind of international language, if only with a restricted geometric vocabulary. As part of a group of Hungarian activists, Moholy-Nagy published a call for "an elemental, universal language of art," to be derived from Cubism, and as a participant in Berlin's branch of Dada, he coauthored the "Manifesto of Elemental Art," demanding the same.[82] Bauhaus utopianism, the Neue Sachlichkeit, De Stijl, and Neoplasticism all referred at one time or another to what Mondrian called the "universal plastic means … discovered in modern painting."[83] The same hopes helped to transform artistic photography into the "straight" variety championed by Paul Strand in the United States, but they contributed as well to more complex hybrids such as the "typophoto" postulated by Moholy-Nagy.[84] Originally designating a dynamic combination of type and photography, "typophoto" came to suggest a synthesis of the two and then a purely photographic language, since, as Jan Tschichold put it, "we can express many things better and faster with the help of photographs than by the laborious routes of speech or writing."[85] The faith behind this substitution is that photographs provide a language superior to speech or writing in clarity, timeliness, and neutrality.

At the moment such ideas seem not just deluded but also potentially authoritarian, as they iron out all linguistic difference and reduce communication to a model of automatic, invariable recognition. At the same time, however, the idea of a language rooted in reality also made reality itself seem artificial and therefore manipulable, unstable, and wildly variable. In "The ABCs of Cinema," for example, Blaise Cendrars celebrates Griffith's notion that the close-up and the cutback are but the first two letters of a new cinematic alphabet, and then goes on to imagine new letters and new numerals in profusion:

> A hundred worlds, a thousand movements, a million dramas simultaneously enter the range of the eye with which cinema has endowed man. And, though arbitrary, this eye is more marvelous than the multifaceted eye of afly. The brain is overwhelmed by it. An uproar of images. Tragic unity is displaced. … Reality no longer makes any sense.[86]

The possibility that "animals, plants, and minerals are ideas, emotions, digits" suddenly introduces an element of the conventional and the arbitrary into reality and makes it seem infinitely changeable. Thus the

notion of a visual alphabet sanctioned by the camera also appears in the revolutionary art movements of this time and in the most anarchistic corners of the avant-garde.

In Russian Constructivism, for example, the concept of the typo-photo reappears as what was usually called "polygraphy." Mixing type, photography, and graphic elements produced a hybrid form of communication in which letters seemed to take action and pictures to make statements.[87] Malevich, Rodchenko, and Stepanova all produced assemblages directly inspired by Cubist *papiers collés*, and the last two particularly tended to play commercial and news photographs off against type.[88] Perhaps the most thoroughly polygraphic works, however, were those produced by El Lissitzky, especially the "bioscopic" books *About 2 Squares* and *For the Voice*, in which pictograms, geometric shapes, and letters chase one another across the pages and through the book. Though there are no photographic elements in these books, the designation "bioscopic" suggests production and/or reception by means of an optical device,[89] and in fact Lissitzky's expectation that these books would be read in "continuous page-sequence" makes them implicitly cinematic. They seem, as Bois has suggested, like "animated film[s] from which the best moments have been excerpted," an interpretation confirmed by the fact that Viking Eggeling once suggested that *About 2 Squares was* actually to have been a film.[90] Had it been realized in this medium, it might have seemed a drastic realization of the Utopian desires of Soviet filmmakers of the time, the stark, monochromatic circles, triangles, and squares schematic examples of the immediate, international visual language Vertov was trying to find with his "kinoeye.

Lissitzky shares with Vertov the belief that political change requires a change in the means of human communication and the faith that material changes, such as the creation of photography, conspire to make those other changes possible. For Cendrars, photography was the culmination of a third world revolution, as fundamental a change as the original introduction of writing and the invention of print: "Finally the good fight of white and black is going to begin on all the screens in the world. The floodgates of the new language are open. The letters of the new primer jostle each other, innumerable. Everything becomes possible! … Look! The revolution."[91] In Lissitzky's bioscopic books, the jostling characters of the new alphabet mimic, advance, and announce the revolution all at once.

However Utopian the hopes of artists like Lissitzky, the aim of their work is material change, and the focus on the means of communication

is an aspect of their materialism. The combat acted out by the basic geometrical shapes of *About 2 Squares* suggests the material power of the signifier itself, and thus the potential of material changes in it to effect political and social change beyond the scope of the signified and its messages. For writers like Cendrars, however, the changes to be hoped for were spiritual or metaphysical, and the power of the new photographic alphabet came from its ability to bypass conscious thought. What Dali called the "photographic imagination," what Moholy-Nagy called in the same connection the "mechanical imagination," exploited the automatism of machine perception to extract from the unconscious something more significant than suppressed imaginings or unknown thoughts: an unknown language. "When hands cease to intervene, the mind starts to know the absence of murky digital flowerings; inspiration is extricated from the technical process, which is entrusted solely to the unconscious calculations of the machine."[92]

Automatic perception of all kinds, but especially photography, helped Surrealism achieve one of its principal goals, to "resolve the dualism of perception and representation."[93] As Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, photography plays a central role in Surrealism because it, unlike any other kind of art, "is an imprint or a transfer off the real."[94] In forming this impression Man Ray's rayographs and Moholy-Nagys photograms played a particular role, since these were produced without lenses or cameras and thus seemed more truly indexical, as marks made directly by the objects themselves.[95] But these came to seem simply the purest examples of a quality native to all photographs, which seemed as autographic to the Surrealists as they had to Fox Talbot a hundred years before. For the Surrealists, however, the notion that reality could inscribe itself directly, could make of itself a form of writing, not only collapsed the distinction between perception and representation but also suggested that the perceptible world was itself a ceaseless fund of representations. As Pierre Naville put it in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, "the street, kiosks, automobiles, screeching doors, lamps bursting in the sky./ Photographs."[96] Once everything came to seem a potential photograph, then every bit and piece of reality could seem as fungible as a sign, with the same odd distance from itself that is characteristic of signs.

The apotheosis and the ultimate ironization of this whole line of reasoning is achieved at once in the work of Marcel Duchamp. Even during the few years he spent as a painter, Duchamp was vitally interested in the possibilities of the "mechanical imagination," most particularly in the biogrammatology of Marey, whose studies contributed directly

to *Sad Young Man on a Train* (1911) and *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912).[97] As Linda Henderson has shown in some detail, Duchamp's interest in scientific registering instruments was almost as extensive as that of Marey himself, and he shared, in his own way, in Marey's desire to achieve by photomechanical means a precision unavailable to the unaided senses.[98] Like Marey as well, Duchamp imagined a script emerging from his experiments, a "language of phenomena themselves"[99] that would be as immediate as a picture but distilled and abstracted like a language. What he was looking for were the "elementary signs" of a new, visual language, an "ideal stenography"[100] with which he could demonstrate the interdependence of the eye and the mind.

Photography provided the model for this new stenography, and the readymades were the first instances of it. The "specifications" for the readymades describe them as achieved by a "snapshot effect,"[101] which suggests that, in creating this entirely new form, Duchamp has simply moved the logic of the photograph one step: instead of capturing the object on film, the artist acts as his own camera and captures the object itself. However, the process of capture is also described as an inscription, perfectly appropriate for the action of recording on film but even more suggestive of writing. Thus the readymade is captured as a sign of itself, a citation, as it were, in the flesh. And what this citation demonstrates, since it does not differ from the object itself in any way, is that, under the regime of the snapshot, every bit of reality exists as a potential citation, a potential copy, displaced from its own center of gravity by the knowledge that it is effortlessly and automatically recordable and retrievable. The triumph of the readymade, therefore, is achieved with *Fountain*, which now exists only as the photograph taken of it by Alfred Stieglitz. Though it is usually held in contemporary art criticism that it is the mere act of Duchamp's choice that transforms this ordinary urinal into a work of art, it may be that its survival in photographic form is a clue that photography has already effected this transformation, since any object can be a work of art if the camera eye chooses to make it one.

The most complex achievement of the new stenography, however, occurs in the project generally referred to as the *Large Glass*, which was conceived, as Krauss has suggested, as a kind of photograph.[102] At one time, this aim might have been realized in quite literal terms: Duchamp considered having the upper half of the *Large Glass* coated with silver bromide so that he could have it printed photographically. In the end, he settled for paint, but in a scale of grays meant to mimic the look of a

photograph.[103] Even in this state, the whole piece has been referred to as a "giant photographic plate," which also depicts within itself the act of photography, with the lower half resembling a photographic apparatus trained at the upper half.[104] If this is a tenable interpretation, it would suggest a parallel between the desire of the "bachelors" in the lower half of the glass for the "bride" in the upper and the ocular appetite of the camera, and its audiences, for visual images. Not surprisingly, then, this relationship is also explicitly cinematic, with the Bride puffing out across the top of the *Glass* an "inscription" that resembles a frame-by-frame rendering of a film and which Duchamp referred to as a "cinematic blossoming."[105]

Looking itself thus seems the real subject of the *Large Glass*, and all the fanciful machinery that Duchamp invented for the project seems intended to dramatize the way in which the erotics of looking had come to be mechanized in the photographic era. But another effect of this mechanization is the confusion of looking with reading, and another way to imagine the relationship between the Bride and the Bachelors is as if it were a kind of sexual broadcasting system sending out "alphabetic units" on some kind of erotic carrier wave. Duchamp's interest in the possibility of "prime words," linguistic units that might carry like Morse code across national boundaries, results in the coded communication that the Bride carries on with her Bachelors, which is just as much linguistic as it is visual and erotic. The same sort of mixed experience is offered by the *Glass* itself to its viewers, who experience the ultimate in visual freedom when they look right through the glass, only to realize that the *Glass* is as much to be found in the "literature" with which Duchamp surrounded it. As Duchamp insisted, "the glass in the end was not made to be looked at (with 'aesthetic' eyes); it must be accompanied by a text of 'literature' as amorphous as possible, which never takes form."[106] The link between this "literature" and the sexual games played out between Bride and Bachelor, the ghostly presence of the linguistic within the eroticized visuality of the *Glass*, is effected by the photographic, which brings its long history of promising "prime words" to this work, helping to make it the furthest development of a modernized visuality.

If Duchamp turns out to have been just as intrigued by the possibility of "prime words" as Lissitzky or Le Corbusier, then the distance between the two tendencies branching off from Cubism seems to have diminished considerably. The Utopian belief in a universal shape grammar, an absolutely clear international visual language, with its necessary emphasis on the ultimate rationality of phenomena, shades off into

Duchamp's notion of a visual world permeated by language, and therefore perturbed by linguistic variability: puns, jokes, and codes. If one side makes the signifier transparent and the other emphasizes its materiality, there is still no sure way to keep these programs separate in particular cases. Raoul Hausmann, for example, one of the originators of Berlin Dada, "believed in a common universal new language" while also pushing automatic writing and Dada performance to the farthest reaches of linguistic nonsense.[107] In photography itself, the realist and the surrealist tendencies were related as closely as "breathing in and breathing out," to take a metaphor from Franz Roh.[108] What this means in a larger sense is that there is no sure way to separate what is usually called "modernism"—where this term means something like Purism, De Stijl, and the Bauhaus—from the "avant-garde," which usually means Dada, Surrealism, and Duchamp. The rethinking of the relationship of word to image motivated by the new recording media makes a common history for both. By the same token, the *Large Glass*, with its interest in "prime words," suggests that these movements in the visual arts share a history with similar developments in modern literature.

When Ezra Pound wanted a quick shorthand term to disparage some lines in the drafts of *The Waste Land*, he scribbled down "photography."[109] A little less than twenty years later, Christopher Isherwood established a kind of motto for his generation when his protagonist and alter ego began *Goodbye to Berlin* by saying, "I am a camera. … "[110] The difference seems to sum up the differences between the 1920s and the 1930s, between two literary generations, and perhaps between modernism and the literature that surrounds it. Modernism sometimes seems unique in aesthetic history for its disdain of the mimetic, and it is often argued that the arrival of photography, with all it brings in the way of mass-produced and mass-consumed art, is a large part of the cause. To argue in this way, however, is to ignore certain basic facts of twentieth-century history, among them the fact that Pound was probably more vitally interested in photography itself than was Isherwood. As I will show in the next two chapters, to disdain the conventionally photographic is not at all the same as disdaining photography. In fact, writers like Pound, who hoped to change the language of poetry, had far more to gain from the photographic model than the more conventional writers around them.

Recent research has lent a good deal of specific support to common critical belief in a connection between photography and literary realism.

It has been shown that Hardy, George Eliot, James, Hawthorne, and Dickens, among others, shared an interest in visual technologies and in the implications these suggested for the art of literature.[111] The strongest critical restatement of this interest has come from Nancy Armstrong, whose recent book *Fiction in the Age of Photography* stoutly maintains that in the Victorian period photographic images "supplanted writing as the grounding of fiction."[112] Since the photograph became the norm of truthful representation, the gold standard for realism, literature naturally came to base its own claims of fidelity on photographic models and analogies. Once modern writers began to disclaim realism, Armstrong argues, they also rejected photography and the essentially positivistic relation to reality that it suggested.[113]

The problems with this formulation are twofold. First of all, the literary prestige of photography often depended as much on its status as index, on its necessary connection to the real, as on its iconic qualities, which, even when they were not in question, often seemed to give the photograph a disorienting hyperreality. Early experiments were able to show, for example, that the daguerreotype was particularly unfaithful in transcribing colors, and the stiff poses required by long exposure times were frequently derided.[114] Even at its best, it was clear that photographic vision had a distancing and aestheticizing effect, to such an extent that it was often a troubling example for writers concerned with the problems of realistic representation.[115] Camera vision made the problem of point of view visibly apparent, and if there is a strong affinity between it and writers such as James, that affinity must be based on the notion of perspectivalism, where "real" can only mean "real as seen from a particular vantage point."[116] Early film, before current conventions of point of view had been established, had an even more disorienting and destabilizing effect, scrambling not just received notions of resemblance but space and time as well.[117] But even the very earliest photographs displayed to the eye sights it could not ordinarily see, objects too small, too distant, too fine, too foreign, all of which were the stock-in-trade of professional photography from the earliest days, making it as much a cabinet of wonders as a faithful reflection of the real.

Second, therefore, modern writers came to photography not as to a slavish realism but rather as if it were the first significant break in the facade thrown up by the senses. As Man Ray insists, "photography is not limited to the role of a copyist. It is a marvelous explorer of those aspects that our retina never records … "[118] A good case can be made for the idea that this has been the role of photography from the beginning, that photography meant to record an objectively understood reality has

always been a specialization of the medium, but certainly by the time modernist literature arrives, photography is well on the way in the project assigned to it by Rodchenko: "We who are accustomed to seeing the usual, the accepted, must reveal the world of sight. We must revolutionize our visual reasoning."[119] Where photography has appealed to modern writers, therefore, it has done so because it seemed an ally in their attempt to see the world anew and to represent it in different terms.

Of course, most twentieth-century writers have had more or less involved relationships with new media, simply as ordinary citizens of their time period, but many of the most significant modern writers have had far more substantial interests in photography, cinematography, and phonography. The works of Proust and Mann, as Sara Danius has shown, are unimaginable without these new devices.[120] Danius also argues that Joyce's interest in film extended beyond his well-known desire to manage a movie house, so much so that it affected the form of *Ulysses* itself.[121] Gertrude Stein made much the same point about her own works when she compared the "continuous present" of her verbal portraits to the stillness within motion of the motion pictures.[122] Virginia Woolf, niece of the pioneering photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, took a great many of her own photographs and wrote one of the first intellectual assessments of the future of the cinema to be published in England.[123] Such lists could be extended a great deal even without including writers such as E. M. Forster, who seem to have been "cinematographic" without particularly knowing it.[124]

It still might seem necessary to except a few truly high modernists, such as T. S. Eliot, from this catalogue, and thus to preserve the impression that modernism in its quintessence remains aloof from mechanized popular art. And it is certainly true that the interest Eliot showed in popular music, though it extended beyond the music hall to gramophone records, did not extend much beyond that to other forms of mechanized entertainment.[125] Yet it was Eliot who was among the very first to express literary envy of the new visual media, when the protagonist of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" exclaims: "But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen."[126] Though Eliot's protagonist may be somewhat queasy about the possibility of such public revelation, this image of inner thoughts projected on a screen anticipated a whole series of such images in the works of writers such as H.D. and Eugene Jolas.[127] The feeling that the magic lantern and its near descendants have the power to express the hidden continued to motivate a century's worth of literary interest in film and photography, even among writers seemingly most antipathetic to popular art.

Pound, to take another such example, famously attacked the cinema as well as disparaging photography. As early as 1916, however, Pound was fiddling with an invention he called the vortoscope, which "frees the camera from reality," as he put it, "and lets one take Picassos direct from nature."[128] Though the experiment was quite short-lived, Pound and his collaborator, Alvin Langdon Coburn, spent much of the winter of 1916–17 producing vortographs, some of which were exhibited at the London Camera Club in 1917.[129] Pound's ambivalence about these experiments is characteristic, for he was clearly fascinated by the tinkering that went into producing these images, while remaining troubled by the relative lack of human control over the results. These mixed emotions remained when Pound later became involved with film, through his friendship with Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars in Paris. Though he had declared himself flatly against the cinema in 1918, Pound found himself drawn into a Parisian literary world that was fascinated by it.[130] In 1923, he took a rather hesitant look at *La Roue*, the Abel Gance film for which Cendrars produced some celebrated scenes of machinery in motion, and quite soon thereafter he found himself appearing, perhaps unwittingly, in Maurice L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine*, for which Léger did some of the set designs.[131] Subsequently, he was to serve as chief go-between linking Dudley Murphy and Léger, thus making possible their classic film *Ballet mécanique*. In fact, this film includes several prismatically manipulated sequences that are clearly indebted to the vortographs and for which Léger credited "a technical novelty of Mr. Murphy and Mr. Pound."[132]

Pound, of course, had many interests, especially during his Paris years, and his own work was far too advanced by this time to have received any significant impetus from this relatively brief association with film. But it may be that the enthusiasms of the Paris years are far more appropriate to his own work than the grumpy disdain he tended to voice in London. Vachel Lindsay would have thought so, at any rate, for he had been insisting since 1915 that there was a fundamental commonality of interest between Imagism and the new medium of film. For Lindsay, silent films, which used gestures, camera movement, editing, and selective focus instead of writing, were perfecting the same poetic language as the Imagists: a language of pictures.[133] Lindsay called these pictures hieroglyphs, and he declared that America was becoming more and more hieroglyphic every day. In fact, America had always been rather hieroglyphic in this sense, because the language theory behind Lindsays proclamations, which preached of an ancient unity of picture and word, was indebted to the Transcendentalists, whose theories were

thus given new life as Lindsay's polemic was taken up by D. W. Griffith in defense of the new medium.[134] In this way, Lindsay and Griffith found in each other the promise of a new language and a way of making that language legitimate by linking it to ancient prototypes.

The camera helped in this effort, however, not when it passively recorded reality but when it allowed the photographer to penetrate beneath its apparent surface, to manipulate and use visual imagery, to make of it another kind of writing. As Daniel Tiffany argues, the vorto-scope project reveals how far Pound was in his poetry from any simple desire to record the empirical object.[135] For Pound, according to Tiffany, vision is "'creative' or *constitutive*"; it stitches together what it sees in sentences every bit as formal as those of an essayist. The necessary program for a modern poet, therefore, is to make this constitutive visual process apparent and thus to renovate the language of eyesight and through it the language of poetry. As Tiffany puts it, the program of Pound's early poetry and polemic is "to transform vision or perception itself," a program for which the most radical kind of photography provided crucial models.[136]

Pound, of course, had many such models, and it is hard to argue that photography was chief among them, but there were many other writers of the time, some to be discussed in the chapters that follow, for whom photography was a leading example of the search for a new language. To some extent, the works of such writers simply made explicit and active a fact that implicitly affected all writing of this period, once most books, newspapers, and magazines began to be published photo-mechanically. In a very literal sense, *all* written literature after a certain time is photographic. Patrick Maynard calls the introduction of photomechanical printing around the turn of the century "that most important reinvention of photography … without which even 'the photograph' today would have a diminished historical significance."[137] Certainly, what Maynard carefully and ironically calls "the photograph" would not have anything like its current influence if it were not for its secondary mode of reproducibility, not from original negatives but from photomechanical printing plates. But the appearance of "the photograph" in the same compositional space with typography, which is now to be constituted by the same photographic means, transforms type as well. "Indeed we regard photography," says Jan Tschichold, "as the mark that distinguishes our typography from all its predecessors. Exclusively planar typography is a thing of the past. By adding the photograph we gain access to space and its dynamism."[138] Moholy-Nagy's "typophoto" is, it thus turns out, merely an exaggerated version of an

everyday publishing reality, in which “the photograph” might even be a solid block of type.

Even that block of type could now appear in a drastically different form. The “collage sensibility” so characteristic of modern visual poetry exploits what Johanna Drucker calls “the breakdown of … discreet letterpress space” following “the invention of photographic printing methods.”[139] Type can now run diagonally or in circles, and it can jostle and interfere with itself, overlap and invade. In what must be the most dramatic such piece, Marinetti's “Tumultuous Assembly” (1919), blocks of text adopt graphic shapes, undercut and overlap figures and other blocks of text, slant, turn, and pile up, until the whole issue of discursive meaning has been left so far behind that the “poem” might as well be considered a “painting.” Or, rather, a “photograph,” which is more literally the case, since, as Drucker points out, such a composition is simply unthinkable without the possibility of photographically engraved plates.[140] The visible resemblance between a “poem” like “Tumultuous Assembly” and a “painting” such as Picasso's *Glass and Bottle of Suze* (1912) thus turns out to depend on something more fundamental than influence and emulation. The medium equally behind Picasso's painting and Marinetti's poem is the photograph, written here without quotation marks to suggest a much larger category than the art object itself, a category stretching back to the earliest experiments in traceology and spreading out to include a number of mark-making technological processes that sought to replace words and transform pictures.

Writers who were not so self-conscious about their medium also felt a strong influence from the camera at this time. Pound's vortoscope experiments, which suggest a fascination for the ways recording technologies can alter perceptions, have their analogues even in the works of some fairly conventional modern writers. When F. Scott Fitzgerald notes the “spectroscopic gayety” of a crowd at Gatsby's, for example, he suggests that even the face-to-face vision of the crowd is mediated in some way by a machine, that the members of it observe one another as if through some kind of “scope.”[141] The word *gayety* is also unexpected, because it suggests sheer, giddy enjoyment of an experiential dissociation that moderns are supposed to fear and loathe. It suggests the existence, even in so formally conventional a modern writer as Fitzgerald, of a kind of visual experience in which the involvement of the crowd with a machine produces an entirely unprecedented, and possibly revolutionary, sensory enjoyment.

The profound sense of perspectivalism injected into literature by the example of photography is, therefore, not just a limitation to be suffered,

an inevitable failing in our quest for perfect mimesis. It represents, alongside the scientific quest for objectivity so influential in the modern period, an alternate "scopic regime," as Martin Jay puts it, a *"folie du voir"*[142] that delights in the destabilized sights and sounds produced by the machine world. Fitzgerald's spectroscope is, like the camera as celebrated by Dali, "ESSENTIALLY THE SUREST VEHICLE OF POETRY, and the most agile process by which to perceive the most delicate osmoses that take place between reality and surreality."[143] Fitzgerald's narrator and his crowd experience this osmosis as a form of freedom, a disorder that leads to new possibilities, imaginative, cultural, and even political, as "unperceived modes of sensory perception and experience" suggest "a different organization of the daily world."[144] Camera vision, in short, was essentially modern precisely because it was not perfectly mimetic, because it opened up to human perception possibilities unnoticed by the eye and displayed the "social fantastic"[145] that had lived unnoticed inside the restrictions of everyday reality.

To say this is not to argue that human perception was somehow changed in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though arguments to this effect have been both influential and controversial in art history and film studies. Crary, for example, maintains in *Suspensions of Perception* that the industrialization of the workforce in the nineteenth century also required an industrialization of the senses, leading to a pattern of attention that can be found later in painters such as Cezanne. In film studies, David Bordwell has argued most vigorously against the idea that something as fundamental as human perception can change in a very few years, while Ben Singer has tried to make what has come to be called "the modernity thesis" stronger by limiting and sharpening it.[146] But it is hardly necessary to find fundamental changes in human perception to substantiate the effect of the camera on modern society. In fact, the modernity thesis might be all the stronger if it left human vision alone, so that it would be precisely the differences between it and camera vision that have made such an impact. Camera vision mattered to Fitzgerald, as it did to Vertov and Moholy-Nagy, because it challenged human vision and conventional habits of visualization, something it could hardly have done if human beings had deterministically adjusted to it.

Camera vision is therefore a liberating example for modern writers, providing much of the excitement that material progress brings to their works. But there is also a very strong countercurrent even in the writing most excited by the possibilities of the new media. In Pound himself, as Tiffany has argued, the visual image is almost always apparitional, evident

of some absence or even of death: "The Image, in this respect, is an apparition, a phantom, because it represents the return of a lost or dead object, a moment when the poet is *haunted* by reality. The spectral Image presents life imaged as death, a living death."[147] What, in fact, could be a better definition of photography than "life imaged as death"? From its very beginnings, photography has been haunted itself by the essential paradox that it can make the present seem to live forever, but only by stunning it into a deathlike immobility. Even film, as Garret Stewart has argued, is troubled by its dependence on still imagery, which returns in all sorts of compulsive narrative devices, even as it is effaced by the projector.[148]

Mechanical recording, even as it seems to triumph over older forms such as alphabetic writing, also seems to make the essential pathos of memory all the more acute. The more vividly preserved is the moment, the more striking is its still quite absolute absence. This is an especial torment for modern writers, for it makes the new media simultaneously into servants of the past. Thus there runs through even those works most inspired by the new media a mistrust of them, even a covert hatred, as of a betrayal. There is sometimes a literal corpse, as in Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*, to mark the spot on which these negative emotions converge. The return of this corpse, its refusal to disappear, seems to literalize the paradox of the new media, which preserve the present forever, but only as a dead thing whose persistence mocks the possibility of change. For some American writers there is also a racial hatred that attaches to this corpse as well, a kind of scapegoating, in which the failure of modernity to renew human life seems to be blamed on others. At the very least, this inert physical remnant marks the limits of the powers of photography to transform the real, and it remains as a kind of confession of failure even in those works most inspired by modern promises of change.

Though writers of all kinds have often appealed to the visual arts as if to a more transparent and immediate method of inscription and communication, the new visual media that arrived with and followed the camera actually complicated the process of representation, and with it all the older arts, both visual and literary. That there could be an entirely new way of inscribing and recording sense impressions made it impossible for any of the arts to take their own representational routines for granted. In this way, the purely chronological modernity of the photograph is communicated to the other arts as a new and far more radical modernity of means, the effects of which can be seen all across the art and literature of the twentieth century.

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PART I The Logocinema of the Little Magazines

1 Camera Work

The Hieroglyphics of the New Photography

The influential role of Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* in introducing modern art and literature to an American audience has been noted, studied, and celebrated for many decades now.[1] Despite all this attention, however, the most pertinent question has rarely been asked: why should it have been a camera magazine that played such an influential role in bringing abstract art and experimental literature from Europe to the United States? By some accounts, Stieglitz's initial interest in painting was motivated by nothing more elaborate than his fear that there was not enough good photography to fill his magazine and the gallery associated with it.[2] On the other hand, Stieglitz often claimed that exhibiting and printing paintings along with photographs would help define photography more precisely and make its place more secure among the arts.[3] And yet, the publications and exhibitions mounted by Stieglitz in the early years of this century are now considered most significant because of the aid they gave to a general attack on the very category of art, as if photography had somehow communicated its own equivocal status to the paintings associated with it, instead of gaining some of their artistic status for itself.

As inconsistent as they are, these various positions all share the basic assumption that photography, art, and literature are independent entities to be put in some sort of relation to one another. Perhaps, on the other hand, modern art and literature appeared in this particular camera magazine because the medium of photography itself had already brought them into a new relation. Stieglitz himself suggested something like this in 1912 when he declared to one puzzled reader that Gertrude Stein's prose portraits of Matisse and Picasso would explain

"What Picasso & Co. have to do with photography."[4] By this he did not mean that Stein has commented in any explicit way on photography. In fact, she hardly comments in any explicit way on Picasso and Matisse. What Stieglitz may have meant instead is clarified by his editorial statement in *Camera Work* that Stein's prose provides "a Rosetta Stone of comparison" between the unknown visual language of the modern painters and the common tongue of the contemporary spectator.[5] The metaphor implies that Stein's verbal portraits of these painters "attempt to fuse word and image," as Marjorie Perloff puts it,[6] or perhaps that they put word and image in a mutually interpretive context, as the Rosetta Stone did in juxtaposing hieroglyphics and Greek text. But how would this explain what "Picasso & Co. have to do with photography"?

What is most remarkable about Stieglitz's metaphor is that it is perhaps the very oldest to be applied to photography itself. When Francois Arago first presented the daguerreotype to the French Chamber of Deputies in 1839 he invoked the Rosetta Stone and proposed Daguerre's copper plates as superior versions of the stone tablet that had made Egyptian hieroglyphics intelligible to modern Europe.[7] A variation of this metaphor has become perhaps the most famous to be applied to Stieglitz's own work. As Egmont Arens put it in 1924, Stieglitz captures with his camera "a symbol which is as convincing as any brush stroke, or any arrangement of words, rhythmic or otherwise. These pictures of his are the hieroglyphics of a new speech … "[8] More than fifty years later, writing of the same photographs, Rosalind Krauss is drier and more technical, but she uses the same metaphor:

> In calling this series *Equivalents*, Stieglitz is obviously invoking the language of symbolism, with its notions of correspondence and hieroglyph. But what is intended here is symbolism in its deepest sense, symbolism as an understanding of language as a form of radical absence—the absence, that is, of the world and its objects, supplanted by the presence of the sign.[9]

Krauss's purposeful invocation of the hieroglyphic metaphor of another era is a reminder that photography has always seemed to promise a new sign system, a medium neither precisely alphabetic nor pictorial.

The idea that photographs are somehow hieroglyphic was conventional even in Arens's time, and it seems quite likely that Arens would have been familiar with the most famous contemporary version of the idea, for he published poetry by its popularizer: Vachel Lindsay. The first issue of *Playboy*, Arens's magazine of "Art and Satire," which appeared

in 1919, contained Lindsay's hymn of praise to Mary Pickford, who was one of his most cherished cinematic hieroglyphs.[10] The throne she uses in the 1914 film *Such a Little Queen* figures in the chapter entitled “Hieroglyphics” in Lindsay's pioneering book *The Art of the Moving Picture*, which made widely influential the idea that “American civilization grows more hieroglyphic every day.”[11] In Lindsay's mind, and for those like D. W. Griffith who eagerly accepted his analysis, the movies revived a primitive unity of pen and brush, lost when writing split itself off from decorative painting.[12] The picture language Lindsay thus imagined for the screen was certainly supposed to be more direct and concrete than alphabetic writing, but it was at the same time more abstract and conventionalized than mimetic painting. Movies mattered so much to Lindsay because they brought pictures and writing into contact, to make a continuously unrolling Rosetta Stone that translated back and forth between images and linguistic constructs.

However, the most significant connection between Lindsay's polemic and Stieglitz's magazine would not become apparent until long after both men were dead. Invited out to Hollywood in the mid-1920s, Lindsay was overwhelmed by the movies he saw in production, especially Douglas Fairbanks's *Thief of Bagdad*, of which he wrote a lengthy analysis, delivered as lectures at the University of California, Los Angeles and then forgotten.[13] Lindsay found in this reworking of the *Arabian Nights* a self-reflexive parable of the hieroglyphic ancestry of the movies. The three treasures on which the drama turns—a magic crystal, a flying carpet, and a golden apple—are at once emblematic summaries of the conflicting aims of the characters and simultaneously shorthand symbols for the film medium itself, “a new alphabet, or a very, very old one,” as he puts it.[14] In one sense, these treasures are instances of a kind of picture language mythologized in European accounts as old as Herodotus.[15] In another sense, they are self-reflexive representations of the powers added to human experience by photography: the power of the crystal to see far away, of the carpet to travel to distant places, of the apple to revive the dead.

Lindsay puts special emphasis on the apple, which, together with a scepter containing a poisonous serpent, provides a perfect shorthand illustration of the “hieroglyphic method,” one of the “fundamental, structural principles of the motion picture play,”[16] and this emphasis, quite unbeknownst to him, brings his discussion back to the hieroglyphics of Stieglitz and *Camera Work*. For the Court Magician, who enacts the “hieroglyphics of death” by finding the magic apple and then testing it on an innocent fisherman killed by the snaky scepter, is played

by Sadakichi Hartmann, who had published in *Camera Work* what is close to the earliest aesthetic appreciation of the movies to appear in the United States, preceding even Lindsay's own (fig. 2).[17]

After a long career spent in close association and sometime rivalry with Stieglitz, Hartmann had come to Hollywood himself, where he knew Fairbanks well enough to be offered a part in *Thief of Bagdad*.[18] It is a more appropriate part than anyone involved could have known, for Hartmann, deploying his apple and scepter, becomes a kind of hieroglyph himself, which is fitting, since he had long been referring to photography as "a new kind of writing."[19] Perhaps Lindsay is so impressed by the hieroglyphic power of the apple and scepter because they are wielded by a fellow critic, one who had long since recognized in still photography the symbolic possibilities that Lindsay found so exciting in the movies.

The presence of these two figures, poet and art critic, on either side of the screen, joined together in their hieroglyphic situation, suggests how various and complex was the photographic context in which words and images met in the early years of this century. The advent of photography as a representational medium inevitably altered the relation of the visual arts to language, sending Lindsay back to ancient times for an analogue to this new situation in which the two seemed to merge. The arrival of moving photographs as the single most influential mass medium of the modern age also altered the relation of art to its audience, in so fundamental a way that understanding the new relation became one of the defining tasks of modernism. *Camera Work* achieved the iconic position it still enjoys not just because it published Picasso, Matisse, and Stein but also because, as a magazine devoted to photography, it offered a conceptual space in which the relations between them could be realized, in polemics and in works of art. Though it is impossible to take literally the idea that photography is hieroglyphic, the insistence that it is represents the radical change it brought to the relation between language and image, a change that *Camera Work* helped to advance in a number of ways, some of them hidden even from Stieglitz himself.

Throughout his long career, in all his publications and at each of the several galleries he directed, Stieglitz tirelessly sought to clarify and solidify the status of photography, first in relation to the other arts and then in relation to its audience. It is all the more remarkable, then, that his ideas on both of these relations should have been so inconsistent and so poorly defined. Perhaps this very vagueness was the source of his

Figure 2. Sadakichi Hartmann in *Thief of Bagdad*. (Photograph from the Sadakichi Hartman Archive is used with the permission of the Special Collections, University Library, University of California, Riverside)

influence, however, for it reflected what was truly exciting about photography in the early years of the twentieth century, that it could not be easily inserted into the traditional economy of the arts, that it was modern in a very basic sense, since it demonstrated how new inventions could require a wholesale reorganization of the artistic and cultural apparatus. That Stieglitz had no idea what that reorganization would look like did not prevent him from becoming indispensable to its beginnings.

Perhaps the simplest and most straightforward of all the positions taken in *Camera Work* on the aesthetic and representational nature of photography is that which also conflicts absolutely with Lindsay's notion that it is essentially hieroglyphic. When Roland Rood insists, in the very title of his 1905 article, on "The Evolution of Art from Writing to Photography," he means to put photography at the furthest remove from writing, at the very end of an inevitable evolutionary process that has faithful mimesis as its goal. Rood agrees with Lindsay that in ancient times art was barely distinguishable from writing, but he insists that as humanity developed it left behind the schematic, conventional representations of its infancy for faithful reproductions of the actual sensuous qualities of things. Photography, since it most fully and faithfully reproduces these qualities, stands at the pinnacle of human aesthetic evolution: "it can not possibly be denied by anyone who has studied the evolution of the art of any country, that this evolution unfolds itself in but one manner: from literature (picture-writing) at the one end, to full tonality (photography) at the modern (more civilized) end."[20] It is hard to imagine from this account how *Camera Work* could have helped anyone to discover modern literature, because for Rood literature is by definition primitive, even savage, while all good modern art strives toward a "non-literary, non-savage, photographic quality."[21]

Rood's is an extreme and somewhat eccentric version of a common, obvious, and straightforward opinion about art, which was especially congenial to photographic polemicists at this time because it made all art essentially photographic. As Charles Caffin put it in 1908, "the point of view of all painters who affect truth to nature is photographic and has always been so."[22] Caffin is certainly aware that there have always been painters who do not "affect truth to nature," but these, in such accounts, are held to be sports and side shoots, deviations from the essential development of art toward complete mimesis, which is often thought to have brought photography into being.[23] Similar accounts of photography as the accomplishment of art's drive toward

mimesis are to be found throughout *Camera Work*, including the polemics of Stieglitz himself: "The Photo-Secession stood first for a secession from the then accepted standards of photography and started out to prove that photography was entitled to an equal footing among the arts, with the production of painters whose attitude was photographic."[24]

If the goal of art is nothing more than accurate reproduction, however, it is easy to see that photography is not just equal to painting but vastly superior to it, so that Stieglitz found it difficult not to overshoot his original goal. As he says in the same statement, "having proved conclusively that along certain lines, pre-eminently in portraiture, the camera had the advantage over the best trained eye and hand, the logical deduction was that the other arts could only prove themselves superior to photography by making their aim dependent on other qualities than accurate reproduction."[25] Caffin made the same point, awarding the mimetic entirely to photography, so that painting had to move beyond it simply to survive.[26] Stieglitz managed to carry the point, even in the popular press,[27] and it did establish a direct connection between photography and the adventurous painting that began to take up more and more space in his galleries. Unfortunately, that connection was an entirely negative one. According to Francis Picabia, one of Stieglitz's closest allies in the French art world, photography had helped define the new art by opposition, showing traditional artists what they should no longer do: "art and photography are opposites."[28]

Common though it was, this argument hardly seems a very significant endorsement of the aesthetic potential of photography. Stieglitz began to suggest, in fact, that he exhibited painting and photography together in order to illustrate what photography is *not*, which seems a distinctly backhanded way of making an argument for its aesthetic significance.[29] In terms of this argument, the new art exhibited at Stieglitz's gallery, 291, is not just nonphotographic but even antiphoto-graphic, and it joins in the general effort of the Photo-Secession only by a curious process of inversion: "the Photo-Secession can be said now to stand for those artists who secede from the photographic attitude towards the representation of form."[30] Taken seriously, this statement would suggest that the group formed to establish the claims of photography to be taken seriously as art was now dedicated to demonstrating the foolishness of those claims. Some of the *Camera Work* critics not only asserted something like this but maintained further that Stieglitz's shift of ground was part of a diabolically clever strategy. As Caffin described it,

> after claiming for photography an equality of opportunity with painting, [Stieglitz] turns about and with devilishly remorseless logic shows the critics … that they are again wrong. … Mr. Stieglitz proves, what he has known all along, that photography is powerless to continue its rivalry with painting. He has, in fact, called the bluff on the recent pretensions of painting by showing that it is in its motive essentially photographic.[31]

Unfortunately, calling the bluff of "recent pretensions in painting" requires first calling Stieglitz's own bluff and demolishing the prior pretensions of photography. Making an argument for recent advances in painting, it seems, required a fairly serious demotion of photography, which is no longer, as Rood had it, the pinnacle of artistic evolution but just the beginning point for any true art, which can be defined by its distance from the photographic. It is hard to imagine that as proud an artist as Stieglitz could ever have been serious in consigning photography to this role, in which it exists primarily to show what true art has superseded.

In fact, Stieglitz just as frequently insisted that his photography and that published in *Camera Work* shared common aims with the painting he reproduced and exhibited. Sometimes this involved claiming that modern painting is in fact as realistic as photography, as he did in regard to the Cézanne watercolors he exhibited in 1911.[32] At other times, Stieglitz or those associated with him maintained that his photography exceeded the superficially mimetic in the same way that the new painting did.[33] Often, however, Stieglitz simply asserted, without much argument, that he and the painters were allied in a common effort, as he did in proudly reporting Picasso's approval of *The Steerage*, shown to him by Marius de Zayas in 1914. Though de Zayas merely reported to Stieglitz that Picasso "understood and admired" the famous photograph, Stieglitz remembered a much stronger and more significant endorsement: "Picasso was reported to have said, 'This photographer is working in the same spirit as I am.'"[34] It is rather hard to see how Picasso's work can have been nonphotographic, even antiphoto-graphic yet also have shared in spirit with the most famous photographer of the period. In short, anyone looking to Stieglitz himself for an explanation of the presence of modern painting in his camera magazine would find at least two very different answers, one based on contrast, the other on similarity.

There are a number of possible explanations for these inconsistencies, the most likely of which may be that Stieglitz simply changed his

ideas about photography under the pressure of modern painting and then changed, through the force of his influence, what others felt as well. But there is also apparent in these disputes a more fundamental indecision about photography, brought about by its ambiguous position between writing and painting. Where Rood wants to distance photography from writing as much as possible, to make it virtually synonymous with perception itself, Hartmann, to take one relevant example, sees it as a new form of representation, a kind of writing. Implicitly, the association of *Camera Work* with abstract painting also associated it with the latter position, with photography as schematic and symbolic rather than purely sensory. But the tension within *Camera Work* and within Stieglitz's own ideas about photography persists, not simply because Stieglitz himself had mixed feelings and inconsistent aesthetic predilections. It was so hard to determine whether photography should be considered realistic or representational because it had in fact scrambled those very categories. The photograph, standing somewhere between perception and representation, unsettled all the categories of art and even the seemingly fundamental distinction between art and writing. The hieroglyphic metaphor is in part an expression of the hope that modernism might put all these possibilities into some sensible relation, but the tension persisted because it was in fact the uncertainty itself that made photography such an influential presence among the modern arts.

Despite the critical inconsistencies apparent in *Camera Work*, Stieglitz himself has always been associated with a particularly serene kind of photography based on the rigorous examination of meticulously selected physical details. His own desire to establish and perfect the practice of photography is often taken as accomplished fact, as part of a general modernist desire to perfect each medium within its own proper boundaries. But it often seems that Stieglitz's work is more interesting and challenging, in theory and in practice, where it demonstrates just the opposite: the unsettled and unsettling nature of the medium. Artistic photography in the twentieth century was always in some kind of conflict with itself, and Stieglitz's own work is generally more successful when it comes out of this conflict, not perfecting the medium but participating in its confusion.

The first step in making photography into an art has always been to deny one or more of the fundamental characteristics of the medium. The first observers of the daguerreotype were struck by its infinite depth of detail, so much so that fine detail came very early on to be a

hallmark of the new art form.[35] However, the ability of the camera to retain far more detail than any individual human being could perceive, much less record accurately, which was first a marvel, soon became something of an embarrassment, because it advertised so obviously the mechanical nature of the medium. Left to its own devices, as Peter Henry Emerson argued influentially toward the end of the nineteenth century, the camera is not only inartistic but unnatural. The eye itself sees selectively, in greater detail toward the center of its field of vision, and rarely in sharp outline. Thus the technically perfect camera lenses that show infinite detail in unvarying focus across a field of vision distort nature while also producing inartistic, poorly composed jumbles.[36] Faithful mimesis required the selective suppression of detail, while the canons of art demanded an arrangement of detail that the poorly supervised camera almost never produced.

Thus there was a disciplined attempt to require photographers to give up these details, a theory of sacrifices, as it was called, "that held that the art of photography lay in the selective sacrifice of detail."[37] To make photography into an art seemed to require a serious redirection, so that details could be recorded selectively, in response to human dictates, rather than automatically. The story of "Photography Before Stieglitz" that R. Child Bayley tells in the tribute volume *America and Alfred Stieglitz* is, therefore, the story of a war on "that excessive and unnecessary detail which is one of the bugbears of the modern photographer."[38]

The movement that arose out of this war has come to be known as Pictorial photography, or Pictorialism, though most of its practitioners were so averse to the usual procedures of the medium that they longed for a different name.[39] In technique, Pictorialism amounted to a disciplined reduction in the visual resources made available by the camera. Since photography, by its very nature, seems to draw attention more to the subject of a picture than its rendering, Pictorialism purposely concentrated on a small set of fairly bland subjects, mostly people and rural landscapes.[40] Even these, simple as they were, were treated in such a way as to trim them down to a few rather bulbous shapes. Hard edges and sharp contrasts were removed by the use of special lenses that produced infinite depth of field at the same soft focus.[41] The purpose of all these practices was, as Clive Holland put it in 1905, "the softening and modifying of the uncompromising character of the results usually obtained by the camera; the power of elimination of the crude or superfluous (so far as possible) on the actual negative, and afterwards on the print itself. … "[42] In other words, photographic art had to work, as best it could, to defeat the basic nature of photography.[43]

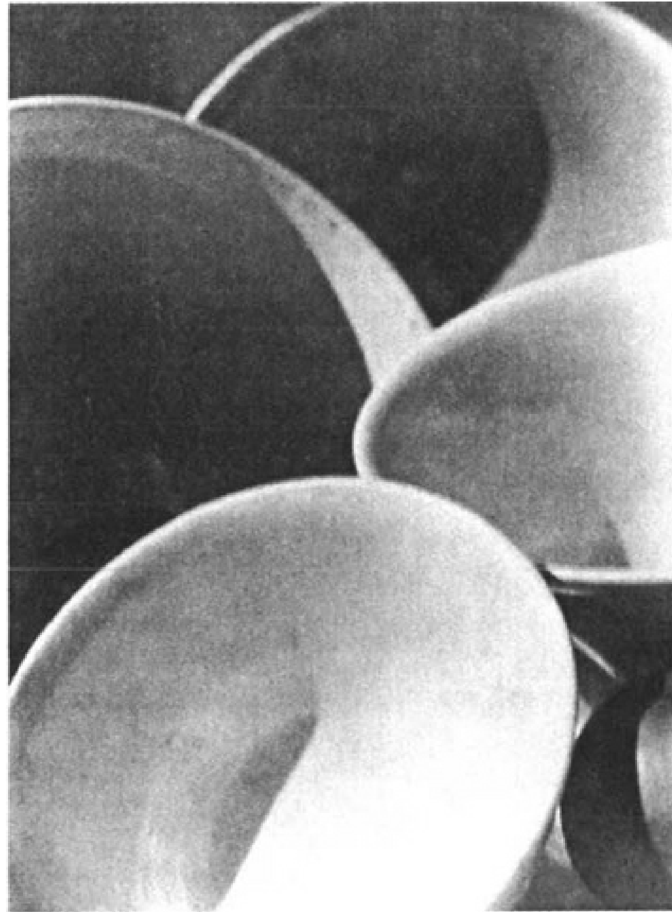
In its early days, the group of photographers Stieglitz called the Photo-Secession would have agreed with Holland in every respect; even in its later days, Stieglitz would have excluded from *Camera Work* only direct manipulation of the negative or print. Selective suppression of detail by careful composition remained the heart of artistic photography. "The problem that is presented is practically one of elimination," as Stieglitz put it himself in 1905. Lacking composition, "a picture becomes restless and irritating, and the beholder turns from it with a sense of relief."[44] Other writers for *Camera Work* were equally concerned to avoid disturbing and irritating the spectator. Hartmann had lamented back in 1898 the "tiresome chaos" that so often results from undisciplined photography.[45] And Caffin also emphasized the necessity of "eliminating or moderating the less important."[46]

In his early days as a polemicist, Stieglitz had campaigned against "the 'absolutely sharp' imbeciles" on the grounds that "sharp outlines … are untrue to Nature, and hence an abomination to the artist."[47] An early issue of *Camera Work* prints as an epigraph the assertion that "the hard outline and the flat silhouette do not exist," which Stieglitz took so seriously that he also included in the same issue an essay more or less in praise of myopia.[48] Even in the heyday of *Camera Work*, when Stieglitz was associating himself with the daring of Cubism, suppression of the inessential was accomplished very largely by selective soft focus. In some cases, this was accomplished by special lenses, such as the one that Karl Struss adapted from a projector and later marketed as the Struss Pictorial Lens.[49] In cases where the camera itself was sharply focused, Photo-Secessionists often exploited the tendency of rain, snow, mist, or darkness to soften outlines and blend tones, so that their works often resemble the most hackneyed efforts of turn-of-the-century picturesque art.[50]

To a casual eye, the photography published in *Camera Work* seems to break with this precedent finally at the very end, with the publication of Paul Strand's famous photographs from 1916. These, it would seem, do finally embody the "straight photographic methods" for which *Camera Work* has become famous.[51] But it may be, on the other hand, that Strand, having sensed the exhaustion of snow, rain, and fog as devices for screening out detail, simply found a new way of reducing the tiring and annoying randomness inherent in photography. In one of the earliest issues of *Camera Work*, Hartmann had urged photographers "to learn to eliminate facts and at the same time to subordinate the daubs and dashes which accomplish it, to the greater elements of composition, of proportion, and of dark and light."[52] This Strand seems to

have done, letting composition do the work of elimination once performed by direct manipulation of the print and then by soft focus.[53] In the very last photograph published in *Camera Work*, for example, soft focus and composition clearly collude to dilute the referential just enough to make four bowls into a work of art (fig. 3). The back bowl in particular is both cropped and softened, fading off into the soft darkness of the background and colliding with the picture edge at the same time, as if to demonstrate two seemingly different methods of transforming a utilitarian object into an abstract shape. Before the bowls can be rendered as curves, the troublesome tendency of the camera to reproduce them absolutely as bowls must be deflected, and this can be accomplished just as effectively by cropping as by soft focus.

Figure 3. Paul Strand, *Abstraction, Bowls*, Twin Lakes, Connecticut, 1916. (© 1971 Aperture Foundation Inc., Paul Strand Archive; All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Rosalind Krauss has suggested as much in her essay on Stieglitz: "So if Stieglitz grew to dislike soft-focus, he had also to recognize that framing—or perhaps fwframing—was a concomitant issue."[54] Cropping, particularly in the cloud photographs, plays essentially the same antiphotographic role for "straight" photography that soft focus had played for Pictorialism. The difference, of course, is that cropping emphasizes the act of exclusion, evoking the very detail that it eliminates. This is how the cloud photographs become hieroglyphic for Krauss, by emphasizing the fact of selection, so that any particular slice of sky appears openly as a sample, a mere sign of the entire firmament. Nonetheless, the Strand photographs still achieve their effect by studious selection, going even farther than their Pictorialist forebears to tame the randomness of machine recording. Elsewhere in *Camera Work*, however, and frequently outside it, the Stieglitz group produced a certain amount of work that actually emphasized the random, chaotic detail intrinsic to photography.

Even Stieglitz himself did not entirely disdain the idea of snap-shots, though he did not always want to accept the aesthetic implications of the term. The three snapshots published in *Camera Work* for October 1907, for example, all use rain, fog, snow, or smoke to soften particular urban scenes, in a very conventional Pictorialist style. Though two of these are taken from rather high upstairs windows, and thus have a slightly unplanned, random quality appropriate to the urban scenes, the overhead point of view has much the same effect as the atmospheric blur, simplifying and softening the scene, so that it is difficult to imagine that the walkers or the streetcars actually have the power to move.[55]

Quite different is the Paris snapshot taken in 1911 and published in *Camera Work* for January 1913 (fig. 4). For this picture, Stieglitz has accepted a certain number of basic photographic blunders: there is a good deal of lens distortion in the immediate foreground; the very strange composition makes the space at the left almost impossible to reconcile sensibly with the street next to it; the figures in this space are illegibly cramped, jostled, and magnified, in harsh contrast to the isolated figure in the middle distance, who also seems to be out of scale, both with the figures next to her and those behind; while a carriage races off the lower right-hand edge of the picture, leaving only an anonymous trace of one of its corners. The whole picture seems to hover uncertainly about the eternally raised foot of the isolated woman in the middle foreground, whose lack of balance symbolizes both urban life and the snapshot aesthetic so well suited to it. This picture is not just full of the extraneous

Figure 4. Alfred Stieglitz, *A Snapshot, Paris* (1911). (George Eastman House)

detail that Pictorialist convention abhorred; it is also about that detail, far more than the accompanying Paris snapshot, in which the woodhauler's horse is every bit as stationary as the cord of wood stacked beside it. The illegible combination of incompatible spaces, the spatial and temporal incompletion, the uncalculated fuzz and blur, all bring this photograph much closer than any of Stieglitz's more celebrated productions to the avant-garde art he was also publishing by this time, in part because that art had been more influenced by such inadvertent snapshot effects than by the more artful compositions of Pictorialism.

Camera Work did not publish very many photographs at all like this one. Even Strand's celebrated abstractions published in the last issue seem more like Pictorialism accomplished by other means, with the oddities and inadvertencies of the snapshot rigorously eliminated rather than indulged in. Only one of the remarkable New York photographs taken by Karl Struss in 1912 made it into the magazine, and this is one of the most radical works Stieglitz ever published, with its

wooden pier so dissociated from the shore it could be a barge afloat, drifting toward the tug coming in from the right and not vice versa.[56] Struss made a specialty, for a few years at least, of such urban dislocations, of which the most startling is probably *The Ghost Ship* (1912; fig. 5.). Here the left-hand wall thrusts forward toward the row of pilings on the right and dissolves at the same time, punctured by the shadow of an oncoming ship, which would be in grave danger if it were actually where it seems to be. The whole visual episode is presided over by an isolated arc of the Brooklyn Bridge, seemingly launched from that same wall and held up by absolutely nothing as it crosses the frame.[57]

There is so much implied movement in Struss's New York photographs, not just of the objects in them but also of the point of view they imply, that it is no surprise that Struss became the most significant link between the Photo-Secession and the movies. By means of the Struss Pictorial Lens, he helped bring soft-focus techniques to American cinematography,

Figure 5. Karl Struss, Ghost Ship (1912). (Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection)

which began to adopt certain Pictorialist conventions in its own attempt to achieve acceptance as an art. But the technical influence also worked in the opposite direction as well, at least from the time that Struss began to use movie film in a snapshot camera while on a publicity shoot in Bermuda.[58] The rapid-fire snapshot aesthetic fostered by these tools certainly informs even the work that made Struss the last Photo-Secessionist. It is quite instructive, in fact, to compare Struss's photographs, as Bonnie Yochelson has recently done, to much more famous counterparts by Stieglitz, Strand, and Alvin Langdon Coburn. In every case, Struss's version of the urban scene is less conventionally composed and cropped, so that his overhead shot of Madison Square, for example, teems with people, cars, shadows, and trolley tracks, where Coburn's famous *Octopus* seems a serene and disembodied shape.[59]

In such works as these few photographs by Stieglitz and Struss, *Camera Work* had harbored, even within its Pictorialist aesthetic, another far more truly modern brand of photography, one that was neither mimetic nor artistic in a conventional sense but used the camera as a means of questioning and reordering visual experience. But this snap-shot aesthetic had another, even more significant, presence in *Camera Work* as well, a cryptic and ironic one, for it was contained in the painting whose prestige Stieglitz was hoping to borrow for his own medium and his magazine. That painting belonged in *Camera Work* in part because it had already felt the influence of photography, albeit a very different kind of photography from that generally favored by Stieglitz.

According to Kirk Varnedoe's rather exasperated retelling, the influence of photography on modern painting is an “oft-told story,” repeated again and again despite the manifest weakness of the connection.[60] Varnedoe especially disputes the notion that photography might have contributed to “the breakdown of the Western perspectival tradition,” in part because he does not believe that any such breakdown took place.[61] That the story is an old one is apparent to any reader of *Camera Work*, which published versions of it as early as 1909, but the supporting evidence has, if anything, grown stronger and more detailed since Varnedoe attempted to quash it.[62] The influence of protophoto-graphic techniques on painting before the actual development of photography itself remains a lively topic of debate, and evidence continues to accumulate about the use of photography by specific painters, including Degas, a particular focus of Varnedoe's skepticism.[63] But the most significant weakness in Varnedoe's brief against photography's influence

is his very restricted notion of what photography might mean, and the resulting limitation of its influence to "the breakdown of the Western perspectival tradition."

When Picasso declared that he had "absolutely entered into the field of photography,"[64] what he had in mind was not Photo-Secessionist artwork but amateur snapshot photography and commercial advertising work of the kind Stieglitz most particularly disliked. In fact, much of the painting included in *Camera Work* at least in part because it seemed to raise the status of photography had already been influenced by the sort of work Stieglitz was most hoping to leave behind. Though photographers from the Pictorialists on had hoped to elevate their medium to the status of art by rigorously controlling the welter of automatic detail that the camera recorded, painters had been inspired by the detail itself, particularly if it seemed to contradict ordinary sensory experience or the canons of art. Complaints about the tiring, confusing level of detail in photographs betray the very high level of noise returned by photography until it could be conventionalized as an art. But it was precisely by retaining so much noise that photography changed the practice of art itself.

One very obvious, large-scale example is provided by the famous photographic demonstration that Eadweard Muybridge arranged to show that horses do sometimes raise all four feet off the ground. Though human beings had watched horses run for millennia and painters had been painting them in particular ways for centuries, Muybridge's pictures showed a visual fact that had remained unknown while apparently in plain sight. This information was invaluable to painters who wished to correct their work, but at the same time it raised interesting questions about phenomenological accuracy itself and about the proper goal of the visual arts.[65] By confounding ordinary visual experience, photography suggested that vision is itself filtered and schematized, so that certain aspects of reality are beyond its ken. Thus photography became especially important to painters who wanted to transcend ordinary visual experience, to the Symbolists and ultimately to the avant-garde. For the visionary painting of Khnopff and Kupka, as well as the ironic gamesmanship of Picabia and Duchamp, the camera provided compelling evidence of alternate realities beyond or within the senses, to which painting might refer.[66] In these cases, the example of photography did not prompt painters to attempt to perfect their own mimetic powers but rather helped them to question mimesis itself by challenging the sensory experience that had been its goal.

Painters also found subtler, finer ways to use the apparently nonsensical

visual noise discovered by the camera. If Philip Steadman is correct in asserting that Vermeer used some kind of camera obscura for help in rendering his interior scenes, then the result is only partly a more faithful rendering of the evidence available to the eyes. As Steadman points out, telltale evidence of the camera obscura is often to be found in apparent inaccuracies—blurred passages, viscous highlights, apparently exaggerated scale—all due to the limitations of the lenses available at the time and the differences between technical perspective and everyday vision.[67] But even with a theoretically perfect lens, Vermeer might have rendered certain images in a confounding manner. Steadman notes the frequent oddity of the hands in Vermeer's paintings, the homely familiarity of which is negated by extreme foreshortening and rather stark lighting so that they sometimes become strange alien bulges instead of hands. For Steadman, this oddity is evidence of the camera, which presents hands to the painter's eye in unexpected situations, for impersonal transcription as wedges of unidentifiable dark and light: "What do men call this wedge of light? A nose? A finger? What do we know of its shape? To Vermeer none of this matters, the conceptual world of names and knowledge is forgotten, nothing concerns him but what is visible, the wedge of light."[68] In other words, Vermeer has *become* a camera, taking the impact of light and dark without regard for the ordinary methods by which we organize them into a legible world.

This practice, seemingly so odd when ascribed to Vermeer, is, of course, increasingly the common course of painting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and some of this is certainly due to use of the camera and a great deal more to emulation of it. The characteristic flattening of Manet, for instance, mimics the reductive tonality of photography, producing in his work a curious unreal quality unavailable before the camera produced it.[69] Again, "the conceptual world of names and knowledge is forgotten," and objects are rendered as disassociated patches of light and dark. Later painters such as Cézanne and Seurat, according to Richard Shiff, developed an exquisite sense of the grain of the canvas and of the brushwork laid over it partly by reference to the finer grain of photographs. Any representational medium, Shiff argues, has a characteristic grain, a resolution beyond which it cannot focus. That of painting, obscured by centuries of craftsmanly adequation, is exposed by comparison to photography and brought to the very surface of the canvas by "Seurat's sedimented dots."[70] The brushstroke as a unit of resolution appears in its own right, a visible emblem of the filter dirough which any representational medium must sieve its contents.

The purpose of making the filter visible in itself is not merely to draw attention to it but also to tease the eye with the suggestion of all that is filtered out. Painting becomes less a triumphant demonstration of the power of the senses than a critical dissertation on their limitations.

The effect of photography, therefore, is not, as is so often argued, to produce a new way of seeing but rather to inspire a new self-consciousness about eyesight and its relation to phenomena. In these examples, at least, photography does not lead the visual arts toward a greater or more perfect realism but closer to the condition of writing, since the marks that make up a visual image are seen to be as schematic and as formalized as the marks that make up a word. As Natasha Staller suggests, reducing the resolution as Cézanne and Seurat did, making a painting largely out of regularized marks, breaks down "any organic relation between the signifier and the sign" and makes painterly technique into "a kind of anti-orthography," a mock alphabet that seems both universal and unreadable at the same time.[71] Though Staller draws her closest comparisons to Volapuk and Esperanto, universal languages invented and proposed at about the time these painters were working, she might have looked as well to the new visual alphabets, such as Isotype, developed a bit later, or, in fact, to the ancient example so often cited in such contexts: the hieroglyph.

The irony of this brief history in relation to *Camera Work* should be clear, since the photography that came to have such an influence over the other visual arts was that against which Stieglitz had always campaigned: the amateur, the scientific, the commercial, all of which retained and even relied on the very extraneous details that Pictorial photography worked so hard to remove.[72] Stieglitz's starkest opposite in this respect might be Louis Lumière, who devised a dry-plate process in the 1880s that made instantaneous photography into a European craze. Not only did this capability draw a vast army of amateurs into the field, but it also allowed them to produce an endless series of photographs violating accepted standards of composition and even of decorum. Instantaneous photography, as Tom Gunning reports, became synonymous with embarrassing, astounding, and uncanny poses, as bourgeois observers began to explore the unknown perceptual territory previously frequented only by Muybridge and Marey.[73] To the amateur and the scientific was added the commercial when instantaneous photography developed into cinematography. As Gunning notes, the sensitive emulsion that had made instantaneous photography possible was also used when the Lumières developed their cinematograph, which would not have been possible without this means of registering motion.[74] The

early Lumière films thus relied on the same sorts of situations that amateur photographers had been recording: ordinary bourgeois activities made new and intriguing by the unfamiliar perspective of the movie camera.

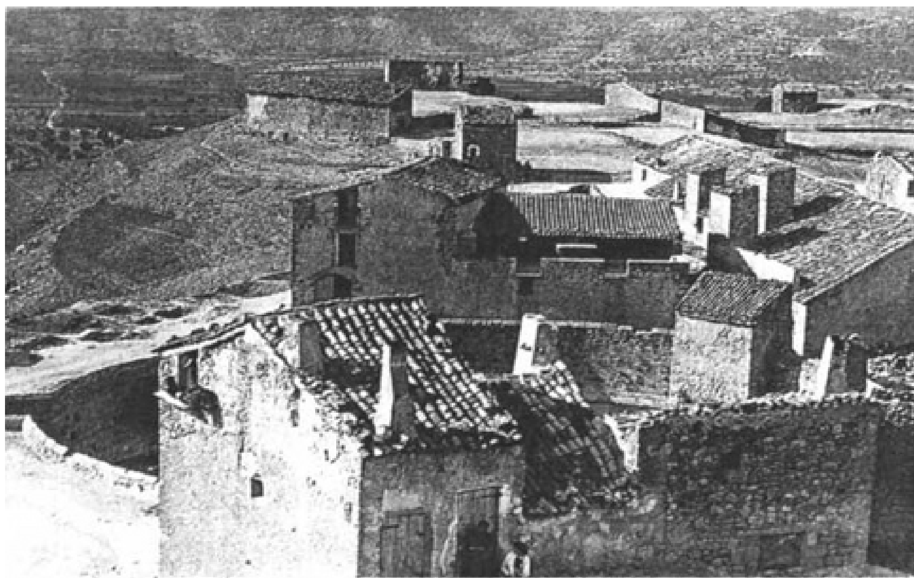
Though these were precisely the developments in photography that seemed least artistic to the Pictorialists and then to Stieglitz's Photo-Secession, they had in fact exerted considerable influence over the very artists who were to create such a stir when they appeared in *Camera Work*. Many of the artists who exhibited at 291 or were featured in *Camera Work* used photography for studio purposes.[75] For a few of these, however, photography became much more than a tool. Picasso, for example, a fanatically devoted moviegoer who also collected commercial photographs, began to take his own snapshots around the turn of the century.[76] By the time he told de Zayas he had "absolutely entered into the field of photography," Picasso had begun to use these snapshots not just as raw material for later paintings but also as a means of critiquing his works in progress. Apparently unbeknownst to Stieglitz, many of the Picassos reproduced in *Camera Work* were based on the artist's snapshots.

The most significant of these is certainly the painting reproduced as *Spanish Village* in a *Camera Work* special number of 1912. Now known as *The Reservoir* (1909), this painting has long been associated with the photographs Picasso took of the village of Horta in the summer of 1909 (fig. 6). As early as 1928, Gertrude Stein induced *transition* to publish *Houses on the Hill* (1909) next to another photograph of Horta that she claimed resembled it very strongly (fig. 7).[77] In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and in her 1938 essay on Picasso, Stein claimed that all the Horta landscapes could be matched to Picasso's photographs in such a way as to dispel the notion that Cubism was ever artificial or counterfactual.[78] Stein was in a position to know because Picasso had sent her many of the photographs he took during the summer, including those now studied in relation to his paintings. She apparently enjoyed showing these to visitors skeptical about Cubism, as a way of proving that the paintings "were almost exactly like the photographs."[79]

Stein's visitors certainly must have taken her to mean that the paintings were almost exactly like the village represented in the photo-graphs, but it is at least possible that she actually meant something much more like what she said. Paul Hayes Tucker has argued as much, suggesting that Picasso's Horta photographs matter as photographs, not merely as transcriptions of the Spanish countryside. Tucker points out

Figure 6. Pablo Picasso, The Reservoir (1909). (© 2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

Figure 7. Pablo Picasso, *Landscape, Horta de Ebro (The Reservoir)* (1909). (© Reunion des Musees Nationaux/Art Resource, NY ©2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)



how specifically the imperfections of Picasso's rather modest equipment resemble the important features of the early Cubist works he did in the summer of 1909.[80] There are, for example, perspective distortions around the edges of the photographs that alter certain orthogonals, and these, combined with the general flattening inherent in any photograph, produce the odd spatial jostling that Stein must have had most in mind when she found Cubism here. Picasso seems in at least one case to have purposely accentuated this effect by lining up the buildings of Horta in a spatially ambiguous way. As Anne Baldassari points out, the high viewpoint taken of this hill village distressingly places the lower houses above those that are actually higher.[81] The crude contrast and reduced tonal range of the photographs also seem to produce inconsistencies of shading and lighting like those in the paintings. The arbitrary lighting is further accentuated by a phenomenon known as halation, produced in areas of high contrast when bright areas bleed into dark shadows closely adjacent to them. As Tucker notes, camera guides frequently cautioned the amateur against this effect, so that Picasso either neglected his lessons or purposely exploited the very defects in camera vision that artistic photographers fought so hard against.[82]

Even those critics most impressed by these resemblances do not want to scant the obvious artistic precedents for Picasso's procedures, particularly those to be found in Cézanne, or to diminish Picasso's genius by tracing it back to a machine, but it is hardly necessary in this context to argue that photography causes or even inspires these early Cubist works. The point to be made here is that the painting called *Spanish Village* belonged in *Camera Work* for reasons entirely unknown to Stieglitz and contrary to all the arguments he offered, not because it rivaled photographic mimesis or because it demonstrated how far painting had to exceed the crude realism of photography, but rather because it shared those habits of photography that seemed most contrary to conventional visual experience.

Though equally specific connections cannot be made in every case, it is a remarkable fact that almost all the Picasso works reproduced in *Camera Work* have photographic counterparts. The Cubist portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler reproduced in the same special issue as *Spanish Village* has been studied in conjunction with the photograph Picasso took of Kahnweiler in 1910, and enough specific similarities have been discovered to suggest at the least that the photograph preserves the situation used for the painting.[83] The *Woman with Mandolin* reproduced in the special issue for 1913 is a 1909 portrait of a model named Fanny Tellier, but the pose exactly reproduces one assumed by

Marie Laurencin in a 1911 photograph of her standing in front of a painting that has long been called *Man with a Mandolin*. T. J. Clark suggests that the photograph is an elaborate in-joke rather than the record of an actual portrait session, and this seems entirely likely, except that the earlier *Woman with a Mandolin* must be part of the joke as well.[84] If, as Clark suggests, the joke is a joke about likeness, then the photograph stands in the very middle of it, for Marie Laurencin's photographic portrait is both the copy of one painting and the source of another, so that the "reality" supposedly rendered so well by photography is actually determined on both sides by art.

Even the dramatically abstract charcoal drawing that pleased Stieglitz so much he reproduced it twice in *Camera Work*, exhibited it twice in his galleries, and purchased it himself has an elaborate photographic context.[85] This 1910 drawing, usually called *Nude Figure* or *Standing Female Nude*, can be seen pinned to the wall of Picasso's boulevard de Clichy studio in a whole series of photographic portraits taken in 1910: of Kahnweiler, Max Jacob, Ramon Pichot, and Picasso himself.[86] But it may also be a portrait as well. Baldassari suggests that the drawing, the painting for which it was a preliminary sketch, and a set of engravings that illustrated Max Jacob's *St. Matorel* might all have been inspired by photographs, found among Picasso's papers, of Bella Chelito, a Spanish cabaret singer with whom he had been distantly infatuated early in the century.[87] In illustration of this claim, she reproduces a pencil-and-ink study for the 1910 *Portrait of Mademoiselle Léonie*, which quite clearly renders the hairstyle Chelito wears in one of Picasso's postcard images of her.[88]

Generally speaking, of course, what seems most important about the drawing is the distance it has traveled from the original postcard, if in fact that postcard is to be considered a source at all, and it may seem farfetched to suggest that it can have had any significant effect as a photograph. And yet the study Picasso produced from this picture seems to begin its process of Cubist abstraction from the schematization that Chelito has already worked on herself. The elaborate hairstyle worn in these images is clearly a kind of trademark, an exaggeration meant to identify the performer as she appears in reproductions. The hairstyle, in other words, is already calligraphic in the photograph, and the quick pencil gestures with which Picasso transcribes it for his study show how easily it can be turned into a kind of shorthand notation, which is itself but one step removed from the severe Cubist dislocations in the middle of the sketch. Thus even this photograph may be less important as a reference than as an example, a source of techniques rather than of imagery,

and Picasso may have responded to it so extensively because of an affinity for the aesthetic schematization that makes an ordinary face into the photogenic image of a star.

It is interesting to reflect, therefore, that even the image that figures in *Camera Work* as a virtual banner of Cubist abstraction might have had its roots in the sort of cheap commercial photography that Stieglitz dedicated his career to opposing. At the very least, it seems obvious that the advanced painting reproduced in *Camera Work* was extensively intertwined with photography, but for reasons quite different from those advanced by Stieglitz, in part because the photography important to painters like Picasso was so different from that published in Stieglitz's magazine. In an odd way, all the paintings and drawings included in *Camera Work* were more photographic than the photographs, since they were more obviously reproductions, printed by the same halftone process Stieglitz used for merely documentary photographs, while all the more important works were done as photogravures. Using this process, Stieglitz did his best to make the Pictorial photographs in his magazine unique works of art, indistinguishable from prints made by the photographer, whereas the paintings were far more frankly presented as reproductions.

In this respect, the precise intersection of modern photography and avant-garde art is to be found in a photograph that Stieglitz took but did not publish himself: the celebrated photograph of Duchamp's *Fountain*, which appeared in Duchamp's publication *The Blind Man* in 1917. It is appropriate that this work, perhaps the most consistently influential and provocative of the twentieth century, does not survive in its original state but only in the form of the photograph Stieglitz took of it.[89] For Duchamp's desire to remove hand and eye from the making of art was always implicitly photographic, emphasizing as it did an original choice of subject for appropriation, which was then simply submitted to various processes of mechanical processing and reproduction. Thus Duchamp referred to his adoption of certain ordinary items, which he called "readymades," as an inscription, so instantaneous and automatic that it had a certain "snapshot effect."[90] In fact, he often referred to the readymades themselves as snapshots. *Fountain* was, therefore, already something of a photograph before Stieglitz got to it, and the challenge it poses to the conventional art world is that of photography, which troubled artists because it seemed to require so little of the practitioner beyond choice and appropriation.[91] Indeed it might be suggested that Stieglitz's photograph at least attempts to turn this snap-shot back into art, posing the original item against a painted backdrop,

lighting it in such a way as to emphasize its contours, turning it into the quasi-sacred presence that Louise Norton memorialized as “The Buddha of the Bathroom.”[92] At the same time, however, Stieglitz includes the rough wooden plinth, on which the urinal sits off-center, its identification tag still attached, and the scrawled mock signature of “R. Mutt” in black paint. In this way, Duchamp's “snapshot” is merged with and posed against painting simultaneously, in a second photograph that seems designed to demonstrate the various ways in which photography confirms traditional aesthetics and also calls it into question.

Perhaps it is appropriate that Stieglitz's photograph, like *Fountain* itself, has mysteriously disappeared, to survive only in progressively degraded reproductions whose tonal quality would have given Stieglitz fits. For the photograph is as much a landmark in the history of its medium as Duchamp's readymade is in the history of the visual arts in general. It depicts the peculiar process whereby Stieglitz embraced an avant-garde that had already taken the impact of a very different photography than his own. It also demonstrates all the tensions that arose as Stieglitz attempted to collaborate with an art that was already something of a collaboration. Posing *Fountain* against one of Marsden Hartley's paintings neatly symbolizes the way Stieglitz hoped to unify photography and painting within a shared aesthetic, while the dangling tag and the sloppy signature betray those still suspicious aspects of appropriation and automatic reproduction that made photography both an insult and a challenge to the other arts. In the end, both the influence and the insult of photography had little to do with perspective or perhaps with any optical principle at all, and everything to do with the entirely different way in which a photograph is made.

Fountain appeared at a time when *Camera Work* was in a kind of suspended animation, superseded to some extent by *291* and other Dadaist-influenced publications, and it is hard to imagine how Stieglitz's photo of it would have looked in the pages of the older publication. The photographs featured in *Camera Work* were printed as photogravures on tissue tipped into the magazine individually, with extra tissue overlays to protect them, so that they sometimes seem only lightly related to the rest of an issue, as if purposely separated from it. As Alan Sekula has pointed out, the history of *Camera Work* parallels rJiat of the introduction of offset printing, which made photography feasible for mass-market publications, but, like true parallels, these histories never intersect, since *Camera Work* painfully maintained its chosen processes precisely to keep

the very little artistic prestige that photography enjoyed.[93] Maintaining a kind of purposeful uniqueness in the photographs also meant, however, keeping a distance from the text.

Especially in the early years, issues of *Camera Work* tended to begin with an appreciation of the photographer most heavily represented in that issue. After that, however, the table of contents usually spirals into inconsequence, and the articles have little to do with particular photographs or with one another. The literary offerings are especially lonely. Prior to Stein's short pieces on Picasso and Matisse, the literary side of *Camera Work* was primarily satirical. For some reason, there were two dialect pieces, both byj. B. Kerfoot, and both utterly unrelated to photography.[94] The purely verbal humor of these pieces aptly represents the general lack of significant connection between pictures and text in *Camera Work*, especially in comparison to the humorous piece that Kerfoot supplied for *291:* the calligramme "A Bunch of Keys." Though this is hardly a very sophisticated work, using the type to sketch out the shape of a ring of keys, it is at least cognizant of the two very different means of representation offered to an illustrated magazine and of the avant-garde predilection for playing with the similarities and differences between them. If nothing else, the visual-verbal pun emphasizes how rarely, given its chosen methods of reproduction, *Camera Work* could bring its literary contributions into any radical relationship to its visual contents.

It was therefore something of a departure for Stieglitz to insist that the Post-Impressionist reproductions and the Stein "articles" that appeared together in a special issue in 1912 were precisely analogous contributions in a single artistic effort. Stieglitz might certainly have believed that Stein enjoyed some special access to the meaning of Picasso's work, since it was through the Steins that he had originally come to learn of it.[95] He almost certainly did not mean to suggest that since Stein's words and Picasso's painting were printed in the same ink, in contradistinction to the photographs in each issue of *Camera Work*, they therefore had something fundamentally in common. Despite his description of Stein's writing as a Rosetta Stone, Stieglitz seemed relatively unaware of the radical implications of the new printing technologies, which tended to make every printed page into a potential Rosetta Stone. In other, far more radically composed publications of the next few decades, however, the close relation of photography and text forced into the open fundamental questions that Stieglitz, for all his devotion to modernism, had only suggested.

2 transition

The Movies, the Readies, and the Revolution of the Word

The artistic status of the photograph remained such a lively topic of controversy, for all Stieglitz's efforts, that when Erwin Panofsky lectured on the topic "The Motion Picture as an Art" at the Metropolitan Museum late in 1936, contemporary news reports treated the occasion as something between a novelty and an affront.[1] Though the reaction of the New York papers, stirred by this plebeian invasion of the precincts of the Met, may have been a bit extreme, Panofsky's lecture is still considered a breakthrough in the intellectual history of the movies. A revised version of the lecture, entitled "Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures," has been reprinted dozens of times, in so many different contexts that it has been called not just Panofskys most popular work but "perhaps the most popular essay in modern art history."[2] In fact, the essay has been so frequently reprinted that it has lost contact not just with its original state as a lecture at the Met but also with its first publication, which took place, as it happens, in *transition*, the avant-garde literary magazine edited by Eugene Jolas, where the lecture appeared alongside an installment of Joyce's then untitled *Work in Progress*, the first English translation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, James Agee's work "In Memory of My Father," and illustrations by Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Fernand Léger, Wassili Kandinsky, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Henry Moore, and Alexander Calder.[3]

Restoring this groundbreaking essay to its original published context creates a concatenation at least as interesting as the one that provoked the New York papers in 1936. For it resurrects a relationship between international modernism and the movies that is in its own way as unfamiliar as the idea that the Met might have enjoyed such a relationship.[4]

In fact, Panofsky's lecture comes not at the beginning but some-where toward the end of a long fascination with photography and film on the part of modern writers, artists, and critics. It is only to be expected, of course, that writers who considered themselves modern would have an interest in a medium invented and developed wholly within the modern period, and it should not be much of a surprise that an avant-garde literary journal such as *transition* helped to legitimize the movies as an accepted art form. But it is also the case that the example offered by the camera played a reciprocal role in the aesthetic transformation of modern literature and art. Film and still photography provided models of an up-to-date art form, made with wholly modern materials by industrial processes unknown before the modern period, but they also seemed to present artists and writers with a completely new representational form, a new sign system, and an entirely new way to communicate. It was this possibility that stirred such revolutionary interest in the little magazines that followed *Camera Work* in bringing new art and literature to the American audience.

By the end of its publishing history, *Camera Work* was being attacked not just by established newspapers and magazines that found it outrageously advanced but also by other small press publications that made much more imaginative use of photography as a provocation to text. Robert Coady, whose magazine *The Soil* lasted only from 1916 to 1917, competed with Stieglitz as both editor and entrepreneur, and he lampooned *Camera Work* directly and indirectly, simply by integrating text and photographs in such a way that neither was absolutely primary. Quite a few of Coady's most polemical articles are made up almost entirely of photographs, and he was particularly fond of making satirical juxtapositions of which the point is to be taken simply by comparing two or more pictures. One of the most cutting of these attacks Stieglitz by reprinting Marsden Hartley's *Motion* next to a child's drawing entitled *A Busted Ford*, with the caption “Which has—the motion?”[5] For Coady, the motion was actually to be found in motion pictures and in the industrial machinery he called “moving sculpture.”[6]

Nothing much like *The Soil* appeared in the American avant-garde until *Broom* moved to Berlin in 1922 and secured new printing facilities that allowed it to adequately reproduce photographs.[7] Thereafter a journal that had been satisfied with a few rather feeble line drawings suddenly included dozens of pictures by photographers such as Paul Strand, Man Ray, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. The March 1923 issue in particular seems to have been dedicated to the idea that photography was to be “the ‘plastic art’ of the future.”[8] This conviction naturally led

to the movies, since, as Moholy-Nagy observed in that issue, the aesthetic possibilities of photography become more and more complex "as we proceed from static representation to the motion-pictures of the cinematograph."[9] Thus *Broom* began to include articles such as "The U.S.A. Cinema" by Philippe Soupault, "Motion Picture Dynamics" by Robert Alden Sanborn, and "Sculptural Kinetics" by Slater Brown, and it even published a few film stills among its illustrations. In this respect, however, *Broom* never quite caught up with *The Soil*, which had included not just stills from the early serial *The Girl and the Game* but also critical articles by its director and star, J. P. McGowan.[10]

Perhaps because of its European orientation, however, *Broom* was far more aware of the formal implications that film and photography presented to literature. As early as 1922, *Broom* published a manifesto by Jean Epstein in which he declared that "the most important conditions under which the contemporary literary phenomenon comes into being" were those determined by the new media. Thanks to the camera, and particularly to instantaneous photography and the cinema, "we have no longer a simple, clear, continuous, constant notion of an object" but rather "infinite planes of projection."[11] Though there were a few attempts in *Broom* to produce literature in English that would reflect this influence, it remained the case, as Harold Loeb complained later in 1922, that "the influence of the cinema as well as that of the mechanical marvels of the age has scarcely begun to show any repercussions in literature."[12]

By the time *transition* began publishing in 1927, however, the situation was dramatically different. In fact, the publication life *of transition*, which appeared regularly from 1927 to 1932 and then sporadically until 1938, coincided with a dramatic peak in the intellectual prestige of the movies. What had been something of a lonely effort when *The Soil* began it in 1916 became almost a commonplace of the avant-garde in the later 1920s. Film magazines such as *Close Up*, which advertised itself in the September 1927 issue of *transition* as "the first review to approach films from the angles of art, experiment and possibility," appeared all over Europe between 1921, when *Cinéa* appeared in France, and 1930, when *Film Art* began publication in England. Film societies were founded in most European capitals—in Paris in 1920, in London in 1925, in Amsterdam in 1927—and theaters showing classic and experimental films were established in many large cities, including several in the United States.[13]

Though it may be a little hard to discern any serious reason why Picasso and Braque might have attended *La Petite Fiji* in 1913,[14] or why

Coady gave such significant coverage to *The Girl and the Game* a few years later, significant aesthetic issues were in fact raised by these early films quite apart from subject matter and film technique. Many writers felt, as Epstein did, that "the instantaneous photograph has discovered gestures which the eve now divines and the hand reproduces," and many felt, as Slater Brown wrote in 1923, that film had a "distinctive power of deforming motion which gave it promise of developing a new and formidable art."[15] But the strongest aesthetic challenge posed by early film may have come from what we would now consider its most limiting, outmoded feature. Before the arrival of sound, watching a movie also required a good deal of reading, as intertitles alternated with filmed action. Sometimes filmmakers such as Méliès purposely violated the boundaries between the two by making signs or alphanumeric figures into fanciful characters in the film,[16] but even when nothing so overt was done, silent film constantly placed written language in a new, dynamic relation to visual images. As P. Adams Sitney insisted some years ago, this "interaction of photographic realism with the language of intertitles was to produce in artists, and particularly in writers, fascinating and complex attitudes toward the cinema."[17] In its turn, however, this complex reaction to film fundamentally affected modern conceptions of the eternally variable relationship between words and images.

On the one hand, silent film seemed to demonstrate far more thoroughly than still pictures the narrative power of visual imagery. Thus it was quite common at this time to insist that movies depend on a visual lexicon distinct from and in many ways superior to written language. Boris Eikenbaum's theory of inner speech, offered in 1927, is just the most substantial and serious example of an idea offered in a dozen different forms in these years,[18] one that led to a widespread antagonism toward intertitles, which were thought to interfere with the development of a properly visual film art.[19] On the other hand, intertitles seemed to demonstrate anew the forgotten visual qualities of writing, which, in its progress across the silent movie screen, could become a moving image itself.[20] Thus Marcel Duchamp produces "films" like *Anémic Cinéma* almost entirely composed of intertitles, in which verbal expressions printed on revolving discs move in exactly the same spirals as the graphic images they interrupt. Though there is a great deal of purely verbal humor in this film, it nonetheless erases the static distinction between filmed images and printed intertitles, and in so doing restores to language a graphic, even a visceral, dimension it generally loses as a conveyor of meaning.[21]

By showing how images might be codified and arranged as if they were semiotic elements and by revealing the extent to which written language is a visual artifact, silent film helped the avant-garde to achieve its fruitful disruptions of this time-honored opposition,[22] disruptions that, beginning with the calligrammes of Apollinaire and ending with Duchamp's *Large Glass*, seem synonymous with the avant-garde itself. For this reason, 1927, the year in which *transition* began publication, represents a crisis in the relation of the avant-garde to film, for this is the year in which the intertitles began to disappear. The arrival of sound, which was actually an uneven and protracted process that dragged out over several years, has, according to David Bordwell, a kind of mythic importance in histories of avant-garde film, abruptly halting the development of this new visual art form.[23] It is certainly the case, as will be discussed in the next chapter, that sound was resisted by most artists and writers who cared about movies.[24] Generally speaking, this resistance based itself on the belief that sound violates the visual autonomy of film, which is, as Antonin Artaud declared in *transition*, "an inorganic language which works on our minds by an osmosis and demands no translation into words."[25] But it is also possible that just the opposite is true, that the arrival of sound removed a basic semiotic tension from film, introducing along with spoken dialogue an apparent unity of speech and vision, and that the controversies attending it may have as much to do with this loss as they do with the technical and dramatic changes that followed.

In any case, the most active years in the publication life of *transition*, 1927–33, coincided with an extended crisis in the avant-garde's relation to film, a crisis that played an important role in the aesthetic project most commonly associated with *transition*, the celebrated Revolution of the Word.[26] At *transition*, which is most commonly remembered now for its serial publication of *Finnegans Wake*, the word was to be considered as an optical as well as an aural phenomenon, and film and photography were to provide much of the momentum behind the revolution. In fact, it might be possible to apply much more broadly an invented term that Jolas applied to one of his own poems and call *transition* itself a "logocinema," since it was a hybrid object, not only multilingual but visual as well as verbal.[27] Always an illustrated journal, *transition* was, Jolas proudly claimed in 1930, "the first of the Anglo-Saxon reviews to introduce the art of creative photography."[28] Though it is difficult to credit such a claim, given the obvious precedence of so many publications, *Camera Work* not the least among them, *transition* did insist from the very beginning on a strong association between photography

and the other arts. "For us," Jean George Auriol insisted in 1927, "a photograph is as good as a poem," and Jolas himself emphasized "the importance of cinema in modern art and literature" in the same issue.[29] Beginning with its third issue, *transition* enjoyed an especially close relationship with Man Ray, whose experimental films *Emak Bakia* and *L'Etoile de Mer* are featured in the issues of September 1927, January 1928, Summer 1928, and February 1929 and whose photographs and photograms appeared in a number of other issues. There were multiple appearances as well by Moholy-Nagy and Francis Bruguiere and single works by photographers from Matthew Brady to Tina Modotti, with articles or film stills from directors such as Eisenstein and Chaplin.

The original impetus for this involvement must have come from Jolas himself, whose early poetry provides an instructive example of the shift of word into moving image, for his first book of poems was entitled *Ink* and his second *Cinema*. The poems in *Ink* clearly stem from Jolas's experiences as a newspaper reporter, which he tried to get into the very materials of the poetry: "I thought in terms of machine words and tried to make the newspaper rhythm the basis of my inspiration."[30] But even poems with titles like "Linotype" seem to look forward to another medium. In this poem, the endless, associative unrolling of one episode into another is meant to mimic the river of newsprint emerging from the linotype machine, but it also begins to suggest the more continuously fluid form of the movies: "dynamically the film of the world rolls along."[31] This tendency for ink to become cinema, for "machine words" to become moving images, seems to have been part of Jolas's aesthetic from the very beginning. In his autobiography he recounts his rediscovery of English as a "new vocabulary" useful "for living in a *camera obscura* world of my own invention."[32] This notion, that a new language provides a distanced perspective on reality much like that offered by the camera, and vice versa, is perhaps the kernel from which the whole "logocinema" begins.

In his years as editor of *transition*, Jolas wrote a number of poems, including "Transcendental Feature Film," from August 1927, that further illustrate this tendency for ink to emulate cinema. On the other hand, he frequently used his editorial appearances to campaign against what he called "the photography of events" or "verbal photography."[33] In the June 1936 issue, an issue that included three film stills in a new section devoted entirely to the cinema, Jolas committed his journal forthrightly against "the photographic" in literature.[34] What may seem a fairly basic contradiction, or at least a serious tension, is resolved by the simple fact that for Jolas photography was not particularly photographic.

As René Crevel once put it, in a little aphorism quoted by Salvador Dali, "painting is not photography, the painters say. But photography is not photography either."[35] That is to say, in a journal as seriously under the influence of Surrealism as *transition*, photography is not the most mimetic of all art forms but rather the one most intimately acquainted with the unconscious. In a single essay, therefore, Jolas can denounce "the photographic representation of life" and also declare that cinema "can give us possibilities for hallucination that check successfully the pedantry of the puritan."[36]

When *transition* celebrates photography, then, it celebrates an art form that, at least in principle, enjoys special access to what Jolas called "the subconscious world."[37] The very automatism that, in some accounts, makes photography the most truly mimetic of all the arts frees the camera eye from conventional patterns of human perception, removing, as Man Ray puts it, "inculcated modes of presentation, resulting in apparent artificiality or strangeness."[38] For the writers and artists who published in *transition* in these years, photography is most properly an art of the unseen, "the enigmatic and the marvelous," as Jolas proclaimed in 1929.[39] Simply by capturing with machinic perfection every ray of light available to the lens, the camera makes it disconcertingly clear how much ordinary eyesight depends on involuntary and unconscious filters. As Stuart Gilbert put it in a 1937 issue *of transition*, "the art of living is largely an art of elimination and selection; we are constantly narrowing down, sometimes deliberately, sometimes automatically, the field of our attention, in order to cope with the exigencies of daily life."[40] The role of photography, therefore, is to restore to consciousness all that is filtered out and in so doing to disrupt the invisible routines of perception, "to inflict," as Man Ray says, "cruel contradictions on the adorers of familiar visions."[41]

Perhaps the most complete development of this argument was contributed by Louis Aragon in a public debate sponsored by the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists in 1936, selections of which were published in *transition* in the fall of that year. Aragon argues that the full potential of the camera as a creative tool was only realized when movies began to influence the snapshot:

The cinema seizes millions of fleeting, impermanent aspects of the world around us. It has taught us more about man in a few years than centuries of painting have taught: fugitive expressions, attitudes scarcely credible yet real, charm and hideousness. What revelations concerning our own movements, for example, do we not

owe to the slow-motion picture? What did we understand of human exertion before the slow-motion picture, what of the expressions resultant from abominable suffering?

According to Aragon, technical advances brought to still cameras from the movies and aesthetic influences from film technique transformed photography in the 1920s, making it into an entirely new art of physical and psychic revelation: "it has gone everywhere taking life by surprise: and once again it has become more revealing and more denunciatory than painting … It arrests moments … that no one would have ventured to imagine or presumed to see." In short, "the photograph teaches us to see—it sees what the eye fails to discern."[42]

The revelation Aragon attributes to the camera, that eyesight itself is not faithfully mimetic, that it must actively suppress a great deal of what might otherwise be seen, was widely felt and widely influential at this time. Benjamin's "optical unconscious" is simply the most familiar version of an idea that had become something of a commonplace in the 1920s.[43] The suggestion embedded in Benjamin's term that ordinary eyesight is produced and maintained by some kind of psychic effort had aesthetic implications far beyond photography itself. Most radically, it tended to collapse the distinction between seeing and representation, as James Johnson Sweeney suggested in *transition* in 1936. For Sweeney, the fact that "we are forced to make our visual approach to the world about us selectively" means that seeing is itself a process of representation. Going back to Berkeley for support, Sweeney maintains that "visible ideas" are but "arbitrary signs" or even "ideographs, of which the interpretation cannot escape the subjective."[44] For Sweeney's purposes, the most significant implication of this fact is that it tends to erase the apparent distinction between abstract and representational art, which become in his analysis nothing more than two different systems of arbitrary signs. Implied, but not insisted on, in Sweeney's analysis is the far more radical reduction of the difference between the visual arts and writing. If, as Sweeney insists, vision itself is linguistic, as a process of representation based on arbitrary signs, then writing and visual art confront one another like two different languages, or perhaps two different methods of inscription.

This is precisely how photography and film were treated in *transition*, as modern methods of inscription, rivals to writing as much as they were rivals to the arts of the past. Just as *transition* purposely juxtaposed French, German, and English and drew from this conflict entirely new, synthetic words, it used photography as a lever against all

written language, hoping to draw from this conflict a renovation so basic it would be alphabetic. “We need new words, new abstractions, new hieroglyphics, new symbols, new myths,” Jolas demanded in 1927, “new symbols and sigils,” as he put it a few years later, “new hieroglyphs to express what to many seems the inexpressible.”[45] What he wanted in short was a new script or, better yet, an entirely new form of representation, one conditioned by the development of new media: “The mutation now going on, which is helped dynamically by the new technological means such as the cinema, the radio, and other mechanical forces, is about to create a linguistic interpenetration that will doubtless have its effect on the final morphological process of modern languages.”[46] What Jolas means here is not only that the new media, simply as vastly powerful methods of communication, facilitate the interpenetration of national languages but also that as languages themselves the new media merge with the existing national languages to create entirely new forms:

The writer has new forms at his disposal, a fusion of forms in which all the senses come into their own. … The development of the talking film and radio will doubtless have a revolutionary effect on the drama, among other things. And since sound seems to be the basis of the hear-play and the cinema-drama, it is safe to say that the problem of the new form will be the word.[47]

Trilingual himself, raised in Alsace-Lorraine and New Jersey, Jolas saw the Revolution of the Word as one result of the clash and combination of languages resulting from the vastly increased scope of modern migration. Even more basic, however, than the clash of languages was the clash of scripts, of representational forms, resulting from the development of the new media, not just because the letter is more basic than the word but also because the clash of scripts makes everyday life in any modern country constantly translational, as writing meets recordings, pictures, and films.

Among the polylingual forms published in *transition* were written works reflecting the influence of photography or film, works such as Henri Poulaille's “Mad Train,” which, according to Jolas, “uses the dynamics of the screen.”[48] Following the example of the *Nouvelle Revue Frangaise*, Jolas announced in 1928 that *transition* would be trying to encourage “the form of the scenario” rather than the short story or the novel “because it seems a most elastic combination of all the various forms.”[49] He had already published Elliot Paul's scenario “The Ninety and Nine,” which attempts to tell its story entirely through shots of

disembodied hands, and h e was in subsequent issues to include scenarios by Robert Desnos, John Herrman, Antonin Artaud, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Philippe Soupault, and himself, under the nom de plume Theo Rutra. In a 1936 issue, Jolas reprinted from Hugo Ball's "Dada Diary" a fragment declaring: "The word and the image are one. Painting and composing poetry belong together"—which might have seemed a motto at this point for the journal itself. The issue also included work from five photographers, contributions to the debate on painting and reality by Aragon, Le Corbusier, and Fernand Léger, and ten pages of stills from Paul Strand's movie *Redes*, shot in Mexico.

Some of the best examples of both the possibilities and the limitations of this effort are to be found in the poetry copiously contributed by Jolas himself.[50] Not only is this poetry generally trilingual, but it is also full of verbal promises of a visual text— "flamewriting," as he called it in one poem. "Soon the logotype will lightshriek bingbangbing letters in scarlet," he proclaims in a poem published in 1933.[51] Of course, the very fervor with which the poet proclaims these coming transformations, especially since it is combined with very little in the way of typographical experiment, raises the question as to whether or not poetry can ever do any more than merely promise the sort of dynamic logocinema that Jolas has in mind. It is clear that Jolas thought of these poems, perhaps even of the whole semantic revolution, as depending on a "*montage in words*"[52] frankly based on cinematic models. Of "one or two modern film creators" he admired, Jolas once observed:

> Through mechanical means they flash before our eyes a series of rhythmitized images which produces illuminations without slavish reference points in our sensual lives. … Poetry, using the word as mechanics, may, like the film, produce a metaphoric universe which is a sublimation of the physical world.[53]

The synesthetic portmanteau words on which Jolas's mature poetry depends so heavily are certainly indebted to *Finnegans Wake*, but they are also attempts to produce a verbal montage that would mimic the juxtapositional syntax of modern film editing. Using words as if they were frames of film was perhaps as close as Jolas could get to turning poetry into a cinematic art form.

For this reason, Jolas is frequently forced merely to evoke a cinematic situation, as at the end of a poem called "Choirprair": "We stand listening to village-rounds, paradise-animals, gleam and glast of flicker-hymns."[54] The gleaming flicker hymns in this poem seem synesthetic movies, but since they obviously cannot be seen in this medium, Jolas

dramatizes the act of watching and listening to them. There is quite a bit of this sort of dramatization in Jolas's poetry in *transition*, perhaps the most revealing example of which occurs in number 13: "transatlantic testament rises towards me from the electric sign-board."[55] The poem describes and also hopes to mimic words that are cinematized by their movement across the electric sign, which movement also makes them transatlantic or multilingual. But what is also important about this and other examples of dramatized spectatorship in Jolas's poetry is its public character. The electric sign, like the flicker hymns of "Choirprair," is perceived outdoors in a collective situation, like a movie or an advertisement, unlike the actual poem itself, which is read in silence by the solitary subscriber of *transition*. The setting is important because it illustrates one additional way in which the new media served as examples for Jolas's revolutionary project. The new script he imagined would fuse all known languages together in an "intercontinental synthesis" and "thus become the truly universal language." But its universality would rely on more than linguis tic synthesis. By jumping the gap between the verbal and the visual, the new language would reach its audience collectively, as movies and radio do, and thus "bind the races in a fabulous unity." In other words, Jolas imagined the revolutionized word as a mass medium, "an inter-racial language … to express the collective inner vision of mankind."[56]

Overcoming the difference between writing and the visual carries in this context much the same significance as translating between national languages. Thus Syd Salt proposes in 1928 that the slogan most associated with *transition*, "Internationalism in the arts," be exchanged for one he feels is even broader: "The breaking down of all snobbish barriers between all arts."[57] For many artists and writers at this time, however, photography was not so much one of the arts to be integrated with the others as it was already the medium within which they had been combined. As a visual language, photography seemed to Moholy-Nagy "universally valid."[58] Jolas speaks in a 1929 issue of the "supra-earthly imagination" expressed by the camera. The "twentieth century word" he celebrates in this essay is dynamic, technological, and "suprematic," a language created largely out of the new media of the century and therefore fit for "the future intercontinental man."[59] At this point, however, it should be clear that the significance of photography has undergone a dramatic shift. What had been considered a particular language, valuable precisely because of its disconcerting difference from conventional languages, has somehow become a universal language. The particular virtue of this language had formerly been its obliquity,

its disorienting unfamiliarity, but in these latter passages it seems to have become utterly transparent. Photography becomes one of the gesture languages Robert McAlmon celebrates in a 1929 article, "an esperanto of the subconscious"[60] that makes the underside of conventional daily life as ordinary as sunshine.

It is little wonder, then, that *transition* began including special sections on "Cinema" and on something called "Inter-racial Documents" at about the same time. Though there were no overt connections drawn between the frame from *Steamboat Willie* that appeared in June 1936 and the Eskimo dance mask in the same issue, it is clear that both were to be seen as "inter-racial documents," instances of universal form languages, tokens of the "super-language" that Jolas foresaw emerging from the "inter-racial synthesis now going on" in North America.[61] "Primitive myths and the modern mythos are fused," as he put it in 1929.[62] Both film stills and Eskimo masks are inserted into *transition* without commentary, as if they were equally self-explanatory, though the Eskimo dance mask is faced disconcertingly by an article on the Fox Indians of Iowa. The very oddity of these juxtapositions reveals something, however, about the ambiguous role of the visual in *transition*. On one hand, visual imagery provides a fundamental tension within the general category of the linguistic. On the other hand, pictures are universal, and the difference they incorporate into the situation of writing exists only to disappear, as the difference represented by the Eskimo mask dissolves into the difference represented by the Fox Indians of Iowa and then into an "inter-racial and inter-continental synthesis" so massive nothing can be foreign to it. One of the reasons *transition* is itself such an intriguing document, one of the reasons it is so revealing an example of the tensions within aesthetic modernism, is that its editors and contributors are never forced to decide between these alternatives, so that photography stands for everything common sense leaves out and at the same time for a kind of sense so common it leaves nothing out.

For Jolas, this contradiction was rather frequently resolved by a very particular kind of cinematography, by writing that actually moved and in so doing became universally readable and revolutionary at once. Type made out of light, especially moving light, appears in many of the visionary poems Jolas published in *transition*. In "Walk through Cosmopolis," for example, which appeared in 1928, "The sky was garlanded with obscure designs that brought the sting of a desire." These designs, it seems, are on the most literal level neon signs, electrified marquees, and lighted billboards, and they appear to Jolas like gigantic nighttime

movies made out of type: “The revolution of my senses blazed across your towers. … There I watched you in the vertigo that made me see the distorted films of my vision.”[63] Often in Jolas's poetry these signs seem themselves to have accomplished a revolution of the word, simply by lighting it up and putting it in motion:

You brought me the gift of the new century, divine affirmer, sirocco of electricity, pulsing of radio, express train, cinema, television! … Immensely the world lies before me, x-rayed in every fibre of its cosmic magic. I am no longer alone, for the electric signs paint the nocturnal screens of my visions, and the wireless strangles time and space.[64]

The ability to project language across time and space, to make it available for collective consumption, makes electric signs and the wireless harbingers for Jolas of entirely new forms of literature that would somehow turn the private vision into a public spectacle and thus bridge the gap of incomprehension that usually divides different languages and different individuals.

Lit up and put in motion in this way, type acquires the essential formal characteristics of the movies, at least as they were identified in *transition.* According to Panofsky, “the primordial basis of the enjoyment of moving pictures was … sheer delight in the fact that things seemed to *move* no matter what things they were.”[65] Movement itself, especially when added to otherwise stationary objects, formed for Panofsky the essence of film as an art, because that movement constituted the almost folkloric appeal of film to its audience. Thus Panofsky explains the connection between the most advanced recording technology and the widest possible popular audience, for this delight in movement is in his view so basic a human quality as to be universal. Motion had also been for the avant-garde the most modern characteristic of the movies, one that Coady, for example, hoped to extend to art and literature.[66] Other writers for *transition* also insisted that “mobility” is the essence of film art, and several also demanded a literature that would mimic that movement: “It has to come, if our art is to have any relation to this rhythmic, moving cinematographic age of ours.”[67] Or, as Jolas put it, “we need the twentieth century word. We need the word of movement, the word expressive of the great new forces around us.”[68] Words need to move, to become a literal cinematography, because only in this way can they cut against old, accepted literary usages and also reach a wide popular audience.

Jolas's demand for “the word of movement” was answered most literally

by an essay that appeared in *transition* for June 1930, along with scenarios by Artaud, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Soupault, and Jolas himself, writing as Theo Rutra, and an essay on "The Cinematographic Principle and Japanese Culture" by Eisenstein. The essay, entitled "The Readies," announced a new project by one of the American avant-garde's most elusive expatriates, Robert Carlton Brown.[69] For a good part of his life, Brown was little more than a hack writer, turning out jingles, advertisements, news stories, and popular novels, one of which, *What Happened to Mary*, was perhaps the very first film novelization, adapted from the very first movie serial, issued by Edison in 1912.[70] In the latter part of his life, Brown turned to cookbooks like *The Complete Book of Cheese* or *Let There Be Beer*. In between these two stints in the netherworld of popular journalism, Brown became one of the more intriguing of the eccentric writers filling out the edges of the transatlantic avant-garde. As early as 1914, he met Marcel Duchamp and contributed a hand-drawn poem called "Eyes" to Duchamp's New York magazine *The Blind Man*. After the war, Brown, like so many other American writers, found himself in France, where he fit quite naturally into the expatriate group around *transition*. Like Jolas, he thought of constant travel, exposure to new languages and customs, as an essential aesthetic influence on his work, an influence signified by the title of his most significant book of conventional poems, *Globe-Gliding*, which was republished in the United States in 1931 as *Nomadness*.

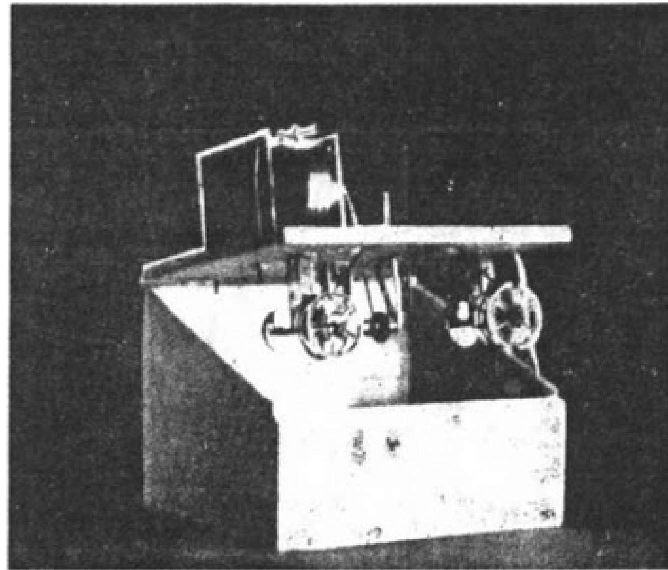
If Brown is worth remembering, however, it is not because of the poems printed in *Globe-Gliding* or anywhere else but rather for his attempt to do away with printed poems altogether. One of the original contributors to *transition's* Revolution of the Word, Brown attempted to take that campaign in a direction in which *transition*, as a mere letterpress publication, could not follow. Brown imagined what was for him a natural convergence of new media and modern writing, influenced equally by "the moving electric news and advertising signs on top of great newspaper buildings,"[71] "the possibilities of the movies" (A, p. 160), the writing of Gertrude Stein (A, p. 160), and the calligrammes of Apollinaire (A, p. 153). One of the most significant aspects of Brown's writing on behalf of the Revolution of the Word is this almost automatic assumption that new technological developments in the media should converge with experimental writing like that of Stein and Joyce, but for Brown this convergence had not progressed far enough, not even in the typographical experiments of Apollinaire. Changing type size or position amounts to very little in comparison to Brown's desire that the type actually move. Giving words their freedom,

to adapt Marinetti's famous slogan, could only be accomplished by putting “type m motion” (A, p. 153).

There is so much sheer boosterism in Brown's writing, and so much repetition, that it is easy to miss what is in fact its essential insight, for Brown realized that printing itself had already been changed by the new media: “we have advanced from Gutenberg's movable type through the linotype and monotype to photo-composing.”[72] In other words, many of the pages still being read as if they were traditional print were in fact photographs, a fact only obscured by an outmoded tendency to think of word and image in oppositional terms. Many of Apollinaire's calligrammes and virtually all of Marinetti's *parole in libertà* are actually photographs partially composed of words, since the extreme distortions visited on text in these works are unthinkable without the techniques of photo reproduction.[73] Virtually alone at this time, Brown recognized the implications of this change, for it meant that in technological terms a significant Revolution of the Word had already been accomplished by the very machine in which Jolas had invested so many of his hopes for the future. Recognizing this, Brown also realized that far more drastic distortions could be accomplished than those already achieved by Apollinaire and Marinetti: “By photographic composition, which is rapidly taking the place of antiquated methods, type since 1925 has been turned out which is not readable without the aid of a magnifying glass” (R, p. 32). If type could be manipulated photographically in this way, then, Brown reasoned, it could also follow photography in its development into movies. Hence the readies.

As Brown put it in one of several self-advertisements published around 1930, “modern word-conveyers are needed now, reading will have to be done by machine; microscopic type on a moveable tape running beneath a slot equipped with a magnifying glass and brought up to life size before the reader's birdlike eye”(R, p. 13). At least one such machine was actually constructed; from the photograph included in the anthology *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine* it appears to have anticipated the microfilm reader (fig. 8). Whether this was an actually working prototype, however, is rather doubtful. Brown imagined stories, novels, and even whole magazines printed as single continuous lines of type rolled up on spools, but he never solved the problem of actually printing the type in this manner, nor did he have a flexible medium that would be strong and yet fine enough to roll up. Though he made numerous attempts to solve these problems, including offering the entire idea to the Russians, Brown never managed to transform his enthusiasm into an actual, working machine.[74]

Figure 8. Robert Carlton Brown's Readie Machine. (From *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine*, edited by A. Lincoln Gillespie [Cagnes-sur-Mer: Roving Eye Press, 1931])



The promotional rhetoric Brown generated, however, anticipates with uncanny prescience current hoopla around the e-book: “To continue reading at today's speed I must have a machine. … A machine as handy as a portable phonograph, typewriter or radio, compact, minute, operated by electricity” (R, p. 28). The advantages Brown imagined for his machine sound remarkably familiar today, as do the objections voiced by his more doubtful collaborators. The Russian government seems to have been particularly inhospitable, responding to Brown's offer with nine distinct objections, among them the fact that readies could not be annotated by hand, that finding one's place would be difficult, and that it would be more tedious to spool back and forth than simply to flip conventional pages.[75] The chief difference from contemporary electronic books, however, is that Brown's would not have tried to mimic the conventional page but would actually have made the type move in long, continuous lines: “they move in on me, unroll before my mental eyes, just the same as the endless flow of words ebb and flow on my inner eye-ball” (A, pp. 157–158). Thus the readies, which Brown imagined as a new genre, a sort of modernist movie constructed of type: “The word ‘readies’ suggests to me a moving-type spectacle, reading at the speed-rate of the present day with the aid of a

machine, a method of enjoying literature in a manner as up to date as the lively talkies" (A, pp. 176–177).

Brown called for "a literary renaissance through the Readie" (A, p. 186), and he did succeed in filling one anthology of contributions, many of them from well-known modern writers. Most of these, including Stein, Pound, and Williams, sent previously published works or squibs like Williams's "Readie Pome, " which didn't even pretend to take the new invention very seriously. But a few prominent writers, including James T. Farrell and Kay Boyle, "translated" earlier works for the readie machine, and at least a few of these seemed to be carried along by Brown's faith that his was the most promising front in the Revolution of the Word. In his analysis, making the type move somehow transformed letters into pictographs and made reading into a visual activity as immediate and direct as watching a film. He called it "a new kind of writing direct to the mind through the eye" (A, p. 161), a definition echoed in some of the readies themselves, including one contributed by George Kent: "perhaps the reading machine. … will be the maxim silencer of words. … thoughts will go right into the head.… heart.… stomach.… depending upon the aim.… without a sound" (R, p. 75). Giving words this kind of immediate relation to consciousness also meant, of course, transcending the cultural limitations that hinder particular languages. Inevitably, the readies were said to "approach closer the hieroglyphic mysteries" (A, p. 168) and in so doing to become a universal method of communication: "conventional word-prejudices will be automatically overcome" (R, p. 39).

Phrased in such a bald and obvious way, Brown's claim seems painfully naïve, and yet it is simply an extreme formulation of an ambition that had held great sway over European society since the days of the earliest photographs and which had come to be a common motive of modern artists and writers. The very extremity of Brown's claims and the eccentricity of his machine are valuable in exposing certain inevitable blind spots in the machine vision of transatlantic modernism. To begin with, Brown has astonishing faith in the effect of speed to overcome the conventional nature of alphabetic text. He seems to ignore the fact that the machines he envies, and on which he intends to model his reading machine, were based on new technologies of recording, not just of presentation. Despite Norman Macleod's stated intention in his readie to "write-with-Kodaks,"[76] there was in fact no machine particularly designed to produce a readie, and Brown apparently had no intention of inventing one.

Without any such innovation, Brown was reduced to pretending

that speeding ordinary text past a magnifying glass would amount to "broadcasting with no words at all" (R, p. 3). This is perhaps what he meant by his frequent claims that the reading machine would make language purely optical for the first time in history. The influence of the movies over the new medium is so strong that it allows Brown to feel that mimicking the movement of cinema would somehow short-circuit the conventional meanings of words and letters, allowing other, more genuine meanings immediate access to the eye. Thus the readies are the purest and most extreme realization of Jolas's dream of a logocinema. But even the apparently simplistic claim to operate with no words at all contains an intriguing complication, for it actually differs quite substantially from the aims of most avant-garde typography and from the actual effect of the readies themselves, which tend to make the type disturbingly apparent. On the static page, most of the readies are in fact quite difficult to read, and it is very hard to determine what, if anything, a particular readie is about, so that attention quite naturally focuses on the words themselves and on the surface effects—dashes, crosses, arrows, and other dingbats—with which the readies are liberally decorated. This is, of course, exactly the effect that much avant-garde typographical experiment seeks to achieve, bringing the text itself to consciousness by making it opaque to ordinary decoding and interpretation.

In this way Brown's readies come to resemble, at least superficially, *Anémic Cinéma*, the virtually contemporaneous project of Marcel Duchamp, which is a film largely made out of moving words. Together, Duchamp's film of words and Brown's words made into film seem to exemplify the way in which the visual arts and literature converged at this time within the common space opened up by the movies. But there are also significant differences between the two projects, for Duchamp turns his words into moving objects as a way of exposing the materiality, even the gross sensuality, of what is supposed to be a transparently signifying medium, while Brown is hoping that movement will finally make his medium as transparent as it has always longed to be. Perhaps these differences demonstrate the very different stakes that artists and writers had in the new media. On the other hand, Brown's readies, even in their static printed form, end up resembling *Anémic Cinéma*., as the devices adopted to suggest movement carry no meaning but become opaque, unreadable visual forms. Within the very desire for pure transparency there is a formal emphasis on the signifier itself that prevents the mind from gliding effortlessly through it to die referent beyond. This is not just a simple inconsistency, a failure of practice to

match theory, but rather the expression of a fundamental irony imported into modern art and literature along with the photographic model, an irony whereby Utopian transparency tends to produce the avant-garde disruption that seems its opposite.

At the level of content, there is a similar irony that is even more obvious and far more disconcerting. Anyone attempting to read the readies finds that celebration of the medium itself is perhaps the most common topic, so that many individual contributions, such as Norman Macleod's "Ready: Revolution" or George Kent's "Re…Readies," tend to exhort the reader to discover what should have been implicitly apparent in the very form of the work. Thus these Utopian texts often carry a message of international amity achieved through perfect communication, which is entirely appropriate for a medium that was to guarantee that "conventional word-prejudices will be automatically overcome."

The next most common subject after the readie revolution itself, however, is one that casts considerable doubt of a very particular kind on this Utopian promise. Though "word-prejudices" may have been banished from this new form of literature, other kinds of prejudice clearly remain. There are in fact quite a few readies like "Jeff," by James T. Farrell, which is about "Jeff the fat jewboy [who] pimped for black babies in the black belt."[77] It is one of the peculiarities of the stripped-down telegraphic form of the readies that it is very difficult to distinguish authorial comment from first-person narration, and it is interesting to speculate that one of the things that the form acquires from its photographic model is an absence of irony. Thus, to be fair, it is difficult to determine exactly how Farrell wants us to take his celebration of the death of Jeff, or how Samuel Putnam wants us to take his readie, "Dirty Nigger," though it seems somewhat clearer in this case that we are being given a quasi-photographic glimpse into the mind of a bigot. Perhaps this is even the case with Laurence Vails "Pogrom," which intersperses blunt imperatives such as "club lowly Loeb" or "pop off Oppenheim" with lines of asterixes, dollar signs, and percentage marks.[78] Even this charitable interpretation, however, does not explain why a medium that was in and of itself to defeat prejudice should take racial hatred and violence as one of its most common subjects. And even the most charitable interpretation cannot do much with contributions like Nancy Cunard's wretched "Dlink," a wholly stereotypical look at a Chinese laundryman, replete with the most ridiculous lambdacisms, which actually ends *"No* ticky *no* land'y."[79]

As wholly reprehensible as this contribution is, it does represent

some very significant general inconsistencies in the readies as a collective project. For the particular stereotype that Cunard relies on here has to do entirely with pronunciation, with speech, which it would seem could have no force in a purely optical medium. But, in fact, a great many of the readies include large sections of speech, and many are imagined, as this one is, entirely as monologues, interior and otherwise. Cunards piece is particularly revealing because it shows how closely even these writers, dedicated apparently to Brown's project of turning language into film, rely on purely verbal phenomena, and how much these phenomena are associated with racial and ethnic specificity of the kind the readies were supposed to overcome. The return of speech in this supposedly visual medium also marks the return of specific social characteristics to the visual text that was to be universal. Perhaps the particular returns in such virulently prejudicial forms precisely because it is denied any other, more positive expression.

Yet this return to the specifically racial in what was supposed to be "inter-racial" is not an aberration or an accident, for Brown actually suggests elsewhere that race is intrinsic to his innovations. The very few contemporary critics who have commented on Brown's work usually rely rather heavily on the metaphor for moving type that Brown borrows from Stephen Crane's first book of poems, *Black Riders and other lines.* But even Jerome McGann, who takes the phrase as the title of his excellent book on the typography of modernist literature,[80] does not mention that Brown's "black riders" were not just moving lines of type or symbolic soldiers but also Africans or African Americans. Brown was entranced by the contrast of "inky words at full gallop across the plains of pure white pages" (R, p. 32–33), and he often drew on certain racial stereotypes to particularize the contrast:

commaless-Cossacks-astride-mustang-bronchs- - - - -
vocabularies-leaning-farout-into-inky-night- - - - -
picking-up-carefully-placed-phrases-with-flashing- - - - -
Afric-teeth. (R, p. 38)

Words in motion, words under renovation, often appear to Brown quite literally as black bodies, as in his opening essay in *The Readies*, where he says that authentic words show themselves when dropped in alcohol like "little ivory-toothed nigger boys diving for pennies" (R, p. 4). Certainly the most spectacularly literal of such identifications appears as the colophon to Brown's book *1450–1950*, a collection of handwritten visual poems that identifies itself as having been

printed in the year
Gutenberg 479
Going on 500 years
A LITTLE NEGRO BOY BEING
DUELY RUBBED OVER THE
TYPE TO GIVE THE PROPER COLOR
AND AFTERWARD DESTROYED[81]

What makes the text visible, that is to say, is race, conceived in the most prejudicial and stereotypical way possible. Brown's riders are black because the transformation of type into a visual image seems to involve a change of race as well, as if mute, purely optical characters would have to come from the continent Europe always considered to be silent, without history.

What Brown confesses here strikes at the heart of his own project and at the whole program for the visual renovation of literature pursued in the pages of *transition*. For he confesses, even proclaims, that the visual is not the most "automatic," least acculturated of the senses but rather the sense to which most prejudicial claims are traditionally made. The visual is not innocent but rather deeply implicated in the history and culture of the observer, which is, as Martin Jay maintains, one of the things that the twentieth century discovered in its long experience with the camera.[82] In fact, the close identification of ink with race in Brown's books suggests that without prejudice there would almost literally be nothing to see, as if it were precisely the mote in the eye that gives it something to perceive.

Brown's colophon also expresses a common modernist ambition to transform particulars into pure form, to make specificities such as race disappear into the abstractions of a universal sign system. The persistence of race as a subject in the readies, however, demonstrates how difficult it is to transmute the actual and incidental into form. Race, in this sense, is the subject that refuses to be formalized, for the black body simply cannot be ground up into ink. This is not simply a failure in Brown's ambitions, however, but a necessary effect of the whole Utopian project to reduce specific verbal languages to a single Utopian visual script. In Brown's project, race exemplifies the inevitable noise, the static, the pure particularity that is the necessary complement of modernism's transparently pure forms. The drive toward a purified, universal language, in other words, did not have the result of banishing all the extraneous cultural material that had heretofore cluttered and

encumbered international communication. Instead, this project emphasized recalcitrant, residual subject matter in the very process of trying to bring it over into form.

It was, in fact, in playing out this paradox that the modernist Revolution of the Word most closely resembled the new mechanical arts of photography and film. Hailed from the very beginning as a new, perfectly transparent means of inscription, as "words of light" in Fox Talbot's famous phrase, the photograph also disconcertingly recorded and preserved a welter of accidental detail that seemed not only opaque but meaningless. Taming this detail was the task of those who hoped to transform a mechanical recording medium into an art, but, as Benjamin insisted, "there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that cannot be silenced…and will never consent to be wholly absorbed in 'art.'"[83] The arrival of film renewed all of photography's original Utopian promise as a medium that, in showing all, could reach everyone, and at the same time dramatically disordered what was on the very threshold of becoming, in the hands of Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession, an accepted formalist art. At the beginning of the twentieth century, then, mechanization repeated the paradoxical process whereby it creates entirely new forms of representation, apparently perfect in their automatism, while also bringing into being entirely new categories of nonsense, noise produced by mechanized powers of attention and retention that vastly exceed the human. Emulating film helped Jolas and Brown to modernize their writing only in this sense, that it involved them and their Revolution of the Word in the typically modern impasse of pure form and resistant detail.

3 Close Up

International Modernism's Struggle with Sound

When Karl Struss, who was the last card-carrying member of the Photo-Secession, moved to Hollywood in 1919, the movie capital must have seemed not just distant from but even antithetical to the world of modern art centered on Stieglitz and his gallery. Eight years later, however, when Struss shared the first Academy Award for cinematography, the situation was considerably changed. In the course of the 1920s, serious writers not only contributed ideas about film as a medium to literary magazines like *Broom* and *transition* but also published regular film reviews in the daily papers. Carl Sandburg was a regular film reviewer in Chicago throughout the decade, while Iris Barry, at the *Spectator*, became the first daily film reviewer in England.[1] Matthew Josephson, one of the editors of *Broom*, for which he wrote regular essays on art and literature, also contributed regularly to *Motion Picture Classic*, as did Kenneth MacGowan, who had been writing film criticism since the days of *Seven Arts*.[2] By 1927, in other words, there was considerable convergence of the literary world and the no longer quite so new medium of the movies.

The film for which Struss won his award exemplified this convergence and also helped to bring about the first serious crisis in the relationship between the avant-garde and film. *Sunrise*, which Struss helped to shoot under the direction of F. W. Murnau, was commonly referred to on its release in 1927 as "the most important picture in the history of the movies."[3] Though this claim must sound to the twenty-first century like nothing more than industry hype, it was repeated almost verbatim as late as 1969, when *Cahiers de Cinema* called *Sunrise* "the single greatest masterwork in the history of the cinema."[4] One source of the contemporary

prestige of *Sunrise* was the fact that it could be billed as the "first international" film production,[5] and a good deal of its continuing influence depends on the way it melds European aesthetic modernism with American industry practices. Murnau brought to Hollywood a film technique that was so conspicuously different from that of most American studios that it was received as if it were another language.[6] Low-key lighting, "free" camera movement, and a complete avoidance of intertitles had made Murnau's final German production *Der letze Mann* (1924) a sensation, not just in Hollywood but also among amateur filmmakers and the aesthetic avant-garde.[7] When James Sibley Watson, who was a film hobbyist as well as publisher of the *Dial*, set out to make a film of *The Fall of the House of Usher* in 1928, it was to Murnau that he looked for a stylistic model.[8] By bringing German expressionism to Hollywood, therefore, Murnau was also bringing one of the most conspicuous of avant-garde film techniques to a big-budget, mass-market production. One of the borders crossed by *Sunrise* on its way to becoming the "first international" film was that between the avant-garde and modern mass culture.[9]

At the same time, however, *Sunrise* helped to threaten the very convergences it exemplified, largely because it was the first original feature to appear with Fox's Movietone sound system. At this point in the evolution of the Movietone system, Fox had not incorporated speech into any of its films, but *Sunrise* was notable because it came equipped with a recorded, synchronized, professionally arranged orchestral score, one that was actually crafted at one or two key points to take the place of speech.[10] The lack of speech itself was made up, to some extent, by two Movietone shorts, one of which featured Benito Mussolini delivering a "message of friendship" to the American film audience in both Italian and English.[11] Ironically, considering Mussolini's future role in world politics, this speech was also supposed to lend support to Fox's notion that *Sunrise* was inaugurating a new international era in film.

For the avant-garde of the time, however, the addition of sound to film threatened the very internationalism on which Fox put so much emphasis. Before the arrival of sound, film had become for many artists and writers, such as the contributors to *transition*, the most powerful promise of an art form that might become a universal language, mediating between national languages as it mediated between words and images. The complete removal of the intertitles from *Der letze Mann*, in particular, seemed to many a thrilling fulfillment of film's promise as an international art language, "the only universal, common world language understood by all," as Bela Balazs put it in 1923.[12] In this analysis,

film took part in the search for a universal language of visual forms, a search so much a part of international modernism that the paintings, designs, and buildings inspired by it still seem the highest expressions of "high modernism." The International style in architecture, Bauhaus design, and certain kinds of painting, particularly that of Mondrian, all stake a great deal on the play of certain irreducible solids, which come to constitute the *"fixed words"* of a "formal, explicit, universal language."[13] Film, especially if it could be freed of the written language of the intertitles, seemed to many the most advanced and complex of the international form languages, and as such it attracted a great deal of Utopian comment, some of which sounded a lot like the Hollywood boosterism to which it might seem diametrically opposed.

Recorded sound, therefore, was not by any means an unambiguous addition to the technological sensorium. While it seemed the last important step in constructing a fully represented, fully recorded humanity, and thus was publicized as finally making ubiquitous communication possible, it also brought cultural specificity, in the form of language, back into film and thus into the visual art that meant so much to modernism. Though Hollywood embraced sound as completing its conquest of the world, the unfortunate reality of linguistic difference meant that for a time at least Hollywood's grip on audiences in other countries was considerably loosened. The arrival of sound is therefore a revealing moment in the history of globalization, for it highlights some of the most basic ambiguities of a historical trend that seems to increase sectional tension even as it effaces difference, and it highlights as well the different implications that international modernism, the mass media, and modern political totalitarianism have in a world system that they all seem, on different levels, to foster. This is also a revealing, if heretofore obscure, moment in the history of aesthetic modernism, for the arrival of sound illuminates the way the aesthetic innovations of modernism were supposed to relate to the technological and political changes of the modern era. The crisis provoked by the arrival of sound disrupted what had become a close relationship between the avant-garde and film and provoked a controversy about the nature of the new sign systems and their relation to the modern audience.

The addition of sound to American film was not by any means the instantaneous conversion experience that appears in Hollywood mythologies of this time. Sound arrived slowly, gradually, and in a number of different forms, aesthetic and technological, and there was a fairly strong belief, even in the early 1930s, that silent films would continue to

be made alongside talkies. There was a good deal of opposition, nonetheless, even within the studios, to what Stanley Cavell has called "the loss of silence."[14] Directors such as Sam Taylor, Herbert Brenon, and Fred Niblo, stars such as Lilian Gish, Lon Chaney, and, of course, Charlie Chaplin, and even studio executives, including Joseph Schenck of United Artists and Monta Bell of Paramount, expressed strong conservative distrust of the film voice.[15] As late as the premiere of Chaplin's *City Lights* in 1931, there was some nostalgic hope in Hollywood that the silent film might be revived.[16] There is a good deal of irony in this opposition, since film itself had originally been imagined, at least in the mind of Edison, as a supplement to the phonograph, but this did not stop any number of film industry figures from insisting that film could only remain faithful to itself by remaining silent.[17]

For such film industry diehards, one of the strongest practical arguments against sound was offered by the "foreign problem," a whole set of difficulties brought about by the fact that language was now to be integrated into a film in spoken form, not added on later in written form.[18] The "foreign problem" had at least two distinct aspects: with the integration of English dialogue, American films were suddenly much more difficult to export, not just because of audience incomprehension but also because of governmental opposition in many countries to the invasion of English;[19] on the other hand, it was also more difficult to follow the time-honored Hollywood practice of importing European film talent, which often spoke English, if at all, with accents the American public found objectionable or comic.[20] True to form, Hollywood devised a number of ingenious expedients to circumvent these difficulties. For a few years, most Hollywood studios actually made, either here or in Europe, multiple versions of most feature films, sometimes in as many as five different languages. Props, costumes, and scenery would be reused, with translated dialogue delivered by native-speaking actors, some of whom established brief careers standing in for established Hollywood stars.[21] Some studios experimented with voice-over narration, and others concentrated on elaborate musicals, which were often shown abroad widiout alteration.[22]

There was a good deal of speculation in these years about a permanent solution to these problems. Not the least impractical, by any means, was the suggestion that Esperanto subtitles might be added to all films, with short lessons in Esperanto to be given after the newsreel.[23] One enterprising aesthete suggested that films might achieve international intelligibility by speaking in the Esperanto currently being invented by James Joyce in his *Work in Progress*.[24] But the most Utopian

of all solutions was suggested by Rudolf Arnheim in 1930, when he predicted that moviegoers in all countries would begin to learn other languages in order to understand the films they loved: "To speak several languages will become just as usual as reading and writing; and in consequence the various languages will soon grow to have a great deal in common. An important advance will thereby have been made towards universal peace."[25]

What actually happened, of course, was a good deal messier and less Utopian. After a brief reverse, Hollywood reasserted its domination of the world film market, partly by using subtitles, partly by using dubbing, partly by using stars whose voices attracted a worldwide audience whether they were intelligible or not, and ultimately by helping to spread English as a second language. Most European film stars man-aged to make themselves heard in English, but European films were more or less banished from general distribution in the United States.[26]The same fate befell amateur filmmakers in the United States and Great Britain, few of whom had the money or the expertise to convert to sound.[27] The result was a general stratification of the film world, with the foreign and the avant-garde banished together to the commercial periphery and fewer opportunities for the general audience to see movies that did not conform to the classical Hollywood model.[28]

For this reason, among others, those in the literary world who followed film greeted sound with great disdain. As Donald Crafton puts it, "sound came just when critics were elevating the silent cinema to 'art,' and it was difficult for them to conceive how talking was conducive to the kind of filmmaking they revered."[29] The talkies, according to Francis Ambrière, writing in the little magazine *Tambour* in 1930, are "the negation of cinematic art" and a violation of "the spirit of our times."[30] For film enthusiasts who had long hoped to do away with the written language of the intertitles, which Elliot Paul and Robert Sage denounced in 1928 as "foreign matter," the arrival of spoken language seemed a profound artistic setback.[31] Of course, this put such critics in the paradoxical position of opposing the word, of objecting, as many did, that the introduction of language to film would rob it of all its intelligence and its wit. But this is just what was asserted by John Gould Fletcher, charter member of the Imagist movement, who ringingly insisted in 1929 that "a complete boycott of 'talking films' should be the first duty of anyone who has ever achieved a moment's pleasure from the contemplation of any film."[32] In 1930, James Sibley Watson went to all the trouble of making a sound-film spoof that included all the idiocies that critics ascribed to sound: poorly synchronized dialogue, egregious

sound effects, stilted and poorly delivered speeches.[33] Watson's former managing editor at the *Dial*, Gilbert Seldes, who probably wrote more thoughtful articles on the coming of sound than anyone else at this time, took only very slight exception to the trend when he said, of the silent film, "the aesthetes are weeping over its demise as the populace turns to the talking picture."[34]

The most consistent and the most complex of such criticisms came from what Seldes called "the fascinating international magazine of the cinema-aesthetes,"[35] a magazine published from 1927 to 1933 under the name *Close Up*. Describing itself as "the first review to approach films from the angles of art, experiment and possibility,"[36]*Close Up* had at its core the editorial team of Kenneth Macpherson and Bryher; they produced, with the more-or-less constant assistance of H.D., a monthly from 1927 to 1930 and a quarterly from then to 1933. Any claim that *Close Up* might have had to speak for the "aesthetes" on the subject of film was based primarily on the presence of H.D. but also on the very considerable contributions of Dorothy Richardson, as well as occasional pieces by other writers such as Gertrude Stein and Marianne Moore. Because the magazine was published in Switzerland, it was well situated to report on European films, which it covered almost to the exclusion of the commercial American product. The pronounced internationalism of the magazine therefore sometimes took the form of a panEuropeanism designed to offset the gigantic influence of Hollywood.[37] Mainly because of this European orientation, *Close Up* looked at the developments exemplified by Murnau's *Sunrise*, which premiered the year it began publication, with a highly critical eye.

The general position of *Close Up* could probably be summarized by Bryher's later reference to silent film as "the art that died."[38] Another contributor, Ernest Betts, called the acceptance of sound "the most spectacular act of self destruction that has yet come out of Hollywood."[39] Macpherson in particular was bitterly hostile to what he sarcastically called "noises with films,"[40] at least in part because the coming of sound made film-viewing in Switzerland far more difficult than it had been when *Close Up* started. By 1930, films simply weren't being distributed as freely across borders as they had been even a few years before, so that Switzerland, which had once been "an open market for the world," was now limited to French and German films, and even those were in the process of being divided up between French- and German-speaking areas.[41]*Close Up*, in other words, was suffering from its own version of the "foreign problem," and the arguments it mounted as it struggled with the various aspects of the problem tell a lot about the

complicated relationship of international modernism to the new media and the popular audience.

On the surface, at least, internationalism meant variety in the pages of *Close Up*, and opposition to sound meant opposition to the industrial monolingualism that sound was bringing to film. Sound was frequently criticized in these years as “mechanical,” which meant in part that the re-production quality was so low that voices sounded unnatural, but the term also betrayed a marked resentment that what many considered an art form should be subordinated to a mere invention. In this sense, the arrival of sound merely revived all the doubts once raised by photography itself, which decades of use and familiarity had finally somewhat laid to rest. Resentment of the “mechanical apparatus”[42] also meant resentment of the industrial system behind it and of the American companies that exemplified that system. Thus *Close Up* followed like a watchdog Hollywood's attempts to solve its “foreign problem,” attempts that it interpreted, not at all unfairly, as part of a concerted plan to “dominate the entire foreign market in talking films.”[43] At this level, opposition to sound meant opposition to the further industrialization, centralization, and standardization of film—to what Macpherson denounced as “the militant imperialism of the screen.”[44]

Though this meant that Macpherson often represented the Hollywood moguls as swaggering Romans bullying “intellectual Greece,” he varied his rhetoric into other more ambiguous metaphors. At one point, concerned that so many of his favored filmmakers were being tempted away to the United States, he denounced “that Salome (surnamed Hollywood)” whom he imagines dancing for the decapitated head of the German film school.[45] The shift in gender stereotypes that feminizes Hollywood transforms sound from a military threat into a sexual seduction, and it also betrays how easily Macpherson's opposition to American cultural imperialism could shift over into fear of the American public. Thus there is among the *Close Up* principals a great deal of frankly elitist opposition to “popular appeal,” which is consistently seen as the enemy of intelligence or ideas.[46] Bryher confidently informs her readers in 1931 that even in America the “middle classes” do not go to the movies but leave them to “children and the unskilled, whose parents probably could not speak English.”[47] It is no surprise to the group at *Close Up* that sound films are puerile, since they are, according to another contributor, “made by half-wits for half-wits.”[48] All this despite the fact that the addition of sound was perceived in the U.S. industry as calling for more intelligent performers, who could no longer simply mug their way through a film but would actually have to

enunciate whole sentences, and for more attentive audiences, who often complained of the "added strain" of listening to spoken dialogue. Sound, it was commonly thought within the industry, would force Hollywood to "go in for brains."[49]

Though it is entirely possible that Hollywood's idea of a "brain" would have been *Close Up's* idea of a "half-wit," the fact remains that the editorial staff of the magazine opposed sound in large part because it was popular and because they associated the popular with instinct and appetite instead of intellection. Opposition to American cultural imperialism turns into what it may in fact have stemmed from originally, fear and suspicion of the American mass public, and internationalism becomes nothing more than a vast rewriting of class on a global scale. This generalization can not be extended to some of the most notable of those who contributed to *Close Up* from outside its base in Switzerland, including Dorothy Richardson in Great Britain, Harry Potamkin in the United States, and Clifford Howard, reporting from Hollywood itself, who discerned in this opposition to sound a covert cinemaphobia at the heart of this journal devoted to cinema.[50] Even so, a good deal of the unexpectedness of a modernist journal devoted to film evaporates as the crisis caused by sound exposes within this project the old opposition of expatriate modernism to mass culture, where the appeal of the international resides largely in the distance it offers from the masses of one's own country. This opposition also reveals, as Howard suggested, the very tentative embrace of technology at *Close Up*, and the residual discomfort there with the idea of art made by machines.

Close Up also argued against sound for more purely aesthetic reasons, which were related in complex and sometimes contradictory ways to the implicit politics of the journal. Film theorists from the time of Hugo Münsterberg, which is to say from the very beginning, had argued for the intrinsic visuality of film, for a "visual purity" that could only be violated by the spoken word.[51] These arguments were dusted off by Hollywood conservatives who opposed the introduction of sound, by European filmmakers in France, Germany, and Russia, and by public intellectuals like Seldes in the United States.[52] They appear rather liberally in *Close Up* as well, voiced even by Dorothy Richardson, who declared in one issue that "cinematography is a visual art reaching the mind through the eyes alone" and warned that "concentrated listening is fatal to cinematography."[53] These arguments are partly psychological, for they depend on the rather counterintuitive notion that human beings cannot watch and listen at the same time; partly aesthetic, based on distributions of artistic labor going back to classical

times; and partly semiotic, since they argue that visual images offer a fully functional, wholly motivated sign system that can only be polluted by the conventionality of sound. By this argument, every language is foreign to film, which is already complete, intelligible, and without need of supplement.

The "foreign problem" faced by *Close Up* was therefore much more complex than that faced by Hollywood, for the writers at this magazine were arguing not just that the addition of language to film made particular films unintelligible to those who did not speak the particular languages in which they were recorded but also that any language tended to make any film less eloquent for all viewers. Film, in this analysis, is already a universal language, the "universal interpreter," as Ambriere put it, to which the addition of sound means incomprehension and linguistic division.[54] The editors of *Close Up* clearly had a vested interest in these arguments, since the very existence of their publication as an international film magazine depended on access to examples from all over the world. Thus in one of Macpherson's first comments on sound, he maintains: "it will impose the restriction of language on films, whereas now their language is universal."[55] Dorothy Richardson makes the same argument in *Close Up's* firstyear of publication; she also claimed a bit more intricately a year later that "the film, with its freedom from the restrictions of language, is more nearly universal than the book and can incorporate…the originality of each race unhampered by the veil of translation."[56] Exactly how film is able to preserve the "originality of each race" while remaining universal is a mystery, but other writers for *Close Up* rather frequently asserted something like this, not just that film was *a* language but also that it was *all* languages: "the film, being silent," as Rudolf Schwartzkopf put it, "speaks all languages of the world."[57] Film, in this analysis, depends on a visual alphabet, the characters of which are intelligible to all, from which particular filmmakers might choose in particular ways to express individual or national idioms. Film, in other words, was held to be hieroglyphic, by an argument familiar since Lindsay advanced it in 1915.[58] This term, as Laura Marcus so ably shows, was especially congenial to H.D., whose writings on the hieroglyph, though brief, provide an intriguing link between the dream interpretation of Freud, the ideogram as used in modern poetry, and the film theory of Eisenstein.[59]

In fact, the notion that film depended on some sort of universal script was so popular by the time it appeared in *Close Up* that it also featured prominently in the publicity sheets of the lowliest studio hacks. In Hollywood, the coming of sound had little impact on this line of

reasoning, so that the very argument *Close Up* was mounting against sound was frequently used in studio propaganda for sound films. In a little book appropriately titled *See and Hear*, published in 1929, Will Hays confidently proclaims that "the motion picture knows no barriers of distance nor of speech. It is the one universal language."[60] Though this may simply have been Hays's way of blustering his industry past its "foreign problem," the universal language argument was used at least a few times in relation to recorded or transmitted speech. The phonograph, of course, was originally praised for registering speech and making it retrievable without the aid of writing, or for writing sound directly, as its name implies, and this was often seen as a way to circumvent alphabets, if not language itself. But even the radio, which did not itself inscribe or store, was sometimes spoken of as if it could somehow universalize the language it transmitted. Thus Edward Van Zile pro-claims, along with movies and the Esperanto of the Eye, "the coming of the wireless and the Esperanto of the Tongue," as if the mere act of distant transmission could make a language universally intelligible.[61]

The very ease with which the universal language argument moves from technology to technology helps to isolate the crucial element on which it depends. What photography, phonography, the telephone, film, and radio all have in common is the automatic and therefore ostensibly indiscriminate registering of sense data possible only for machines. As Kenneth Macpherson puts it, speaking of the movie camera in an early volume of *Close Up*, "one turn of the handle and a complete series of pictures is made, no matter who turns that handle."[62] This is to repeat, in regard to film, the claim originally made for photography by Fox Talbot at its very birth, when he called these new works "self-representations." The same claim was made in the very name chosen for die curious device, invented in the 1850s by Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville, called the *phonautographe*.[63] The name suggests what Talbot also asserts of the photograph: that these are media in which phenomena inscribe themselves, without the messy intervention of human senses or sign systems. Thus for Jean Epstein, writing in 1925, the camera "is an eye without prejudices, without morality, free of influences; and it sees in the face and in human movement traits which we, weighted down by likings and dislikings, by habits and considerations, can no longer perceive."[64]

This is actually a rather curious notion, especially when it leads to the corollary idea that only machine inscription can yield a natural language. As W.J.T. Mitchell has suggested, it is somewhat incoherent to call natural only that which can be produced by a machine.[65] And it is

hard to see how our machines can be neutral and unprejudiced if we can't be. The appeal of recording, however, at least in this analysis, is not so much that it removes the prejudices of any individual observer but that it avoids the prejudices and habits of thought congealed within conventional languages. Recording devices seem to remove the layer of mediation that inscription and preservation had heretofore required. Not only might reality be perceived directly, and therefore uniformly, but it could also be preserved in perfect memory without recourse to the selectivity and condensation of conventional languages. The universality of the recording technologies begins with the fact that they sense and preserve universally; that is to say, they take in everything.

Unfortunately, this is where the whole concept of a universal language breaks down, in the oxymoronic relationship between the adjective and the noun. In empirical terms, of course, the notion of a universal language makes no sense at all, if we assume, as many linguists do, that a language is not just a system of registration but also a way of life. Language acquires and exercises its intelligibility within a particular social system, and without that particularity a system of inscription is simply inert, as all invented universal languages have so far proven to be. There is a more general conflict as well between universality and the linguistic, which appears precisely in the notion that recording technologies can communicate universally because they inscribe indiscriminately. The technologies themselves express this contradiction as the competition between signal and noise. The more faithfully a recording preserves every sense impression within its scope, the less legible is the result, information drowned out by insignificant noise. The more indiscriminate a recording is, then, the less it can carry the burden of information, emotion, or expression that would make it like a language. In the early days, photography was often criticized precisely for these reasons, because it could not discriminate and therefore presented to the viewer an overwhelming welter of detail, much of which no human observer would have cared to notice. According to James Lastra's expert discussion of this issue in regard to early sound technology, this is precisely what industry engineers discovered as they tried to adapt sound recording to film: fidelity, which tended to register every sound created during a take, favored noise and reduced legibility, whereas to achieve legible sound the fidelity of the recording had to be limited in various ways— by damping, by particular microphone placement, and finally by skillful editing.[66] On the visual side, filmmakers had already made and even codified such adjustments, moving far beyond the days when the camera had simply been set up in front of a brief skit, which it then

watched impassively on behalf of the ultimate spectator. Part of the scandal of sound is the way it makes these adjustments apparent by forcing a new series of them in order to integrate sound into the developed Hollywood system. This is the truth behind the curious argument that the addition of sound somehow made film less eloquent, for in the early days film sound was, both literally and theoretically, mere noise, and the addition of it to the developed language of silent film introduced an incoherence that felt to many early audiences like gibberish and which many film critics of the time treated with the sort of xenophobic prejudice usually reserved for foreign languages.

Opposition to sound thus reveals within the internationalism of *Close Up* a complex and conflicted resistance to the foreign. This contradiction appears most neatly in the very term *Close Up* adopted to epitomize itself. In one sense the journal was appropriately named, for the close-up was considered, in Jean Epstein's words, "the soul of the cinema."[67] Once disdained as distorting and unnatural, the close-up had come to be particularly associated with the experimental European cinema, of which *Close Up* was the chief English exponent. It was also in the form of the close-up that film most nearly approached the hieroglyphic. As Bela Balazs puts it in a frequently cited discussion, the close-up "reveals the most hidden parts in our polyphonous life, and teaches us to see the intricate visual details of life as one reads an orchestral score."[68] In this analysis, film makes the visual world legible by directing attention to carefully circumscribed parts of it: the close-up, in Epstein's words "limits and directs attention."[69]

The term taken for the title of this magazine was also meant, however, to designate its international scope. As Laura Marcus says, *Close Up* promised to bring its readers news of faraway places, to make "the distant proximate."[70] In this, it simply reproduced the technological promise on which the film industry had always based its claims to modernity. Sound in particular, it was claimed, would annihilate distance and bring the cultural productions of the globe into every hamlet and town.[71] But this impulse toward geographical extension and inclusion does conflict with the technique of the close-up, insofar as it works, as Epstein suggests, by limiting and directing attention. In other words, there is a conflict in the very title of *Close Up* between film language, the legibility of which is achieved by blocking out noise, and the international scope the magazine hoped to achieve by extending its attention to every part of Europe and beyond.

Some of the conceptual strain caused by this conflict is evident in a very strange column written by Macpherson in 1929, ostensibly reporting

on a stereoscopic demonstration given by RCA. The new system, complete, of course, with sound, also seems to have allowed for extended telescopic shots, which provoked Macpherson to worry: "the close-up will vanish and the far-off will take its place." As it turns out, the "far-off" is a metonym for everything that Macpherson fears in the new technology, and the column ends with what must be one of the first diatribes against TV: "An expedition through Nicaragua will necessitate no greater hazard than a ride round the suburbs or a rostrum on the roof. We shall be able to sit at our desks and photograph Titicaca and the fauna of Popocatepetl."[72] What precisely is wrong with photographing Titicaca from afar is never made entirely clear, but the column explains a lot nonetheless by pitting the close-up, and perhaps therefore *Close Up* itself, against the "far off." The indiscriminate way in which images from all over the world could come together in a single space caused Macpherson the same sort of cultural vertigo that it currently inspires in critics of TV. That aspect of the new media, the international aspect, turned out to be not only subordinate to the legibility offered by the close-up but even inimical to it.

This conflict between the close-up and the far off appears more frequently in the magazine's illustrations, which were mostly stills from German or Russian films unavailable to the English-speaking audience. In the last two years of its existence, at a time when the campaign against sound and therefore the universal language argument had almost disappeared from its pages, *Close Up* supplied these stills with trilingual captions, thus rather vividly demonstrating the necessity of translation, even for the visual. Early on, however, the captions sometimes explicitly state the problem of visual interpretation and translation that their very presence implicitly indicates. Of a certain still from Pudovkin, published in 1928, the editors conclude peremptorily, "it is unnecessary to state to which party this man belongs." And for most readers this is probably true, since the man wears a tail coat, carries a top hat and cane, and appears in a movie by Pudovkin. Two pages deeper into the same picture spread, however, the caption muses of another man, "it would be interesting to know what readers who have not seen the film would imagine, and what meaning they would read into this particular scene."[73] Utterly bemused by its own curiosity, the caption does not relieve any of ours, and there is no other information given about this still. For the most part, the captions in *Close Up* manage to avoid these two poles, of confidence and mystification, because in either case, of course, the very presence of the caption is an embarrassment. The difference between the readability of the first photograph

and the mystery of the second so clearly depends on particular, even partisan knowledge that the whole notion of silent film as an independent language of its own is called into question.

Thus even the most cryptic close-ups convey at least one stinging revelation, and this is never more true than when the editors publish publicity stills for their own films. The very first issue included two stills from *Wing Beat*, a short film starring Macpherson and H.D., made in 1927. In one case, the caption asserts: "The feeling of 'something about to happen' pervades the whole, reaching a climax at the point from which this 'still' is taken" (fig. 9). The picture itself, of Macpherson staring rather dyspeptically off into one corner, seems rather to portray ennui than climax, but the pose does seem to match, in its tense inwardness, a conflict in the caption, which is apparently trying to be both vague and revelatory at the same time. The caption wants to celebrate the photograph, to demonstrate its eloquence, but it remains tongue-tied by the guilty knowledge that the picture should be able to speak for itself.

The situation is even more complex in the other still, which shows H.D. slightly raising her hands (fig. 10). The caption says nothing

Figure 9. Kenneth Macpherson in *Wing Beat*. (From *Close Up* 1,1 [1927])

FROM "WING BEAT"

A film of telepathy. The feeling of "something about to happen" pervades the whole, reaching a climax at the point from which this "still" is taken.

Figure 10. H.D. in *Wing Beat.* (From *Close-Upi*, 1 [1927])

FROM " WING BEAT "

A portrait of H. D. illustrating an incident from *Wing Beat*, a POOL film now in preparation. This is H. D.'s debut in films, and her many admirers will welcome the opportunity to see her. The same clear genius is in her acting that sets her so high among contemporary poets and authors. Works by H. D. appear in this issue.

about the dramatic situation at all, but it does insist of the actress that "The same clear genius is in her acting that sets her so high among contemporary poets and authors." The picture is apparently meant to portray this clarity, in and of itself, to be found in the rather severe profile shot and the spare elegance of H.D.'s pose, clothing, and hairstyle. The connection between this clarity and a certain kind of Imagist aesthetics hardly needs to be made, though the caption insists on it. In her acting as in her poetry, H.D. epitomizes an aesthetic of the close-up, an image whose utter legibility depends on a severe excision of extraneous detail. But the caption, in its eagerness to praise, reveals how much this supposed clarity depends on a prior familiarity: the appearance of H.D.'s "clear genius" here in the film still depends on the "same clear genius" well known from her writings. Without this push from the caption, it's entirely possible that one might read the still as signifying confusion or

indecision. In fact, an anonymous reviewer for *Hound and Horn* found the picture "quite…funny," though it is just as hard at this remove to find the humor in it as it is to sense the profundity announced in the caption.[74] In the very gesture with which it celebrates the sufficiency of the picture, the caption betrays how much this visual legibility depends on written language outside the frame.

At the same time, these stills help excavate another layer in the culture of the close-up, which seems in so many ways to depend on the exclusion of the far-off. Immediately after the photographs of Macpherson and H.D., there are two stills from Marc Alleégret's documentary of Gide's *Voyage to the Congo*, printed here almost as if they were also excerpted from *Wing Beat* (fig. 11). But these are standard ethnographic photographs, full-figure shots showing two groups of naked Africans, identified only in geographical terms. There is no celebration of clarity here but rather a caption, of a kind quite uncommon in the pages of *Close Up*, which did not tend to use stills as mere illustrations, directing the reader to an accompanying article by Jean Prévost. It is little wonder, though, that these film images require an entire article's worth of explanation, for, as Prévost says in that article, the visual language of Africa takes a European great labor to understand:

The everyday happenings so commonplace to those who do not understand their significance are set here in their essential picturesqueness. The disappointed fiancé[e] who rubs her belly to express and soothe her grief, the caresses of her small sister, are here no mere native custom nor the language of a savage; one had to know what they meant, and now for the first time an exotic film explains this to us without being pedantic.[75]

Thus in the very first issue of *Close Up*, the universal language argument receives its fullest disconfirmation, for if the language of gestures and images must be learned, then it is just as particular and as culturally specific as written language, on which it turns out in any case to depend. What is most telling, however, is not the disconfirmation itself but rather the fact that it does not appear until the visual attention of the close-up passes from Europe to Africa.

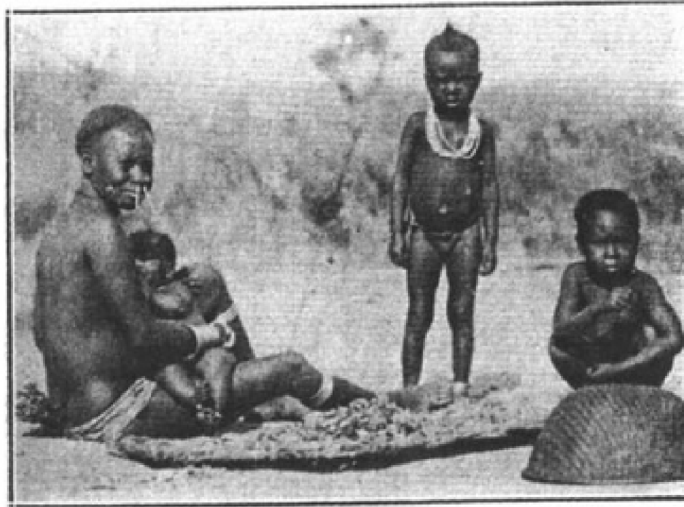
What is revealed in these stills is not, therefore, just that visual language is ultimately no less culturally specific than verbal, but that the designation of the visual as a language at all depends on excluding from it the extraneous, the irrelevant, the foreign, which in a European context ultimately means the racial. As Miriam Hansen suggests, Griffith began to assert the universality of the language of film after widespread

Figure 11. *Voyage to the Congo* stills from Close-Up. (From *Close Up* 1,1 [1927])

VOYAGE TO THE CONGO

See page 38

On the Chari river



A Baya family, tribe of the Sanga river
French Equatoriala Afric

criticism of the racism of *Birth of a Nation.*[76] In fact, *Birth of a Nation* itself had seemed a perfect example of the universal language of film to Thomas Dixon, author of *The Clansman*, on which the film was based.[77] In this case at least, it seems that the universal does not accidentally omit a great many particularities but rather that it exists precisely so as to allow their rejection.

This is not to say that *Close Up* can be charged with the frank racism of Griffith and Dixon, though Macpherson did dislike sound enough to lose his balance at least once. In one of his many public attempts to reconcile himself to the inevitable arrival of the talkie, Macpherson finally blurts out: “The one thing that is awful is the thought that [sound] may become a vehicle for those polite, not even dimly Creole ‘negro’ rhythms of the East Side Jew composers for impeccable though androgynic rendering by Argentines and Dagoes.”[78] Within the generally romantic approach to race visible in Macpherson's film *Borderline*, there may lurk this sort of all-inclusive prejudice, brought out in this case by the association of sound with everything Macpherson can think of as deviant. The denunciation of sound as Jewish, homosexual, ethnically repellent, and racially suspect shows how much must be excluded to make film into a “universal” language and how much the close-up has apparently to fear from the invasion of the far-off.

Sound comes to be identified with particularity itself, as if it were entirely noise, the extraneous, nonsensical, opaque material that must be excluded in order for the visual to be made legible.[79] But this also means, as it did in the case of the readies, that sound comes to stand for the socially particular and the culturally specific. Thus the opposition to sound among *Close Up* writers such as Ernest Betts seems very closely related to a latent fear not just of cinema but even of the international idea itself, which for Betts acquires a fearful and a prejudicial coloration:

For we cannot separate our vision of the future film from the transatlantic idea which has inspired and directed it for the world's use, nor conceal from ourselves that the ideas of to-morrow, multiplied to the *n*th power in film terms, and absorbed by the white, yellow, and black races of the earth, are to be, for a good many years to come, mainly transatlantic ideas.[80]

At this point, the conflicts in the *Close Up* project are such that the universality of film as an international form language seems in utter conflict with the social and cultural internationalism also promoted in the magazine.

Of course, arguing that film is a universal language open to one and all was always a fairly contradictory thing for a magazine to do, since the argument itself must be communicated in words and not pictures. For most proponents, particularly for Griffith, the argument was merely a

kind of boosterism, designed to scare off critics and frustrate potential censors, and it flew in the face of the well-known fact that early films frequently needed oral or written accompaniment in order to be understood.[81] Film criticism itself is a kind of extension of the intertitle, the last and most highly developed supplement to the visual language of film. Even as it argued for the visual sufficiency of the medium, *Close Up* also intended to explain film to its audience, even to educate an audience for audacious and innovative films, and it is a little hard to see why this should have been necessary if film was already, as H.D. once claimed, "a universal art open alike to the pleb and the initiate."[82] If it is part of film's universality that it does not require any particular kind of literacy, then why did *Close Up* put so much effort into the development of what James Donald calls "skilled spectatorship"?[83] There seems to be a real conflict between two of the most cherished aims of this publication: to defend the visual sufficiency of silent film and to develop a skilled audience capable of receiving difficult and unfamiliar works.

Thus the writers at *Close Up* also promoted a very different argument against sound, a variant quite at odds with the main line, to the effect that sound threatened the "picture sense" developed by the experience of attending silent films.[84] Filmgoers would become lazy, in other words, and lose a visual acuity built up when pictures carried almost the entire burden of the film. If sound is inevitably to come, Macpherson suggests, at least we are fortunate "to have had the silent film first, for without it our eye would not have been trained to see."[85] The idea that the eye needs to be "trained to see" is actually rather a common theme in *Close Up*. As Zygmunt Tonecky puts it, in an article heavily indebted to Balazs, "the film has refined and trained our sight; we have learned to perceive fugitive situations; we perceive at once the tiniest details and understand in a moment the symbolic significance of the pictures; we know how to 'think optically,' to create associations of ideas and optical metaphors."[86]

Though Tonecky represents this training as a more-or-less automatic and painless process, it was not, according to *Close Up*, happening universally. Bryher, for example, is amazed by the frank bafflement with which English audiences greet the Russian films she has come to love. Russian audiences, she assumes, "have been trained by several years of good among bad films,"[87] but the difference is not simply that between bad and good, as Robert Herring discovers in a different article on Russian film, for any interpretive regime that must be learned is also inevitably cultural specific: "Things mean this, things mean that.…

Shells are shells to one race; so they are to another, but because of that they are also money to it."[88] Russian film imagery, in other words, is more opaque to English audiences because of cultural distance, so that learning to see or to "think optically" is intertwined with learning to read a different culture.

Most of the film criticism published in *Close Up* is not really analytic; where it has any purpose beyond polemic, it is usually to recreate the experience of seeing a particular film, and this experience rather frequently resembles the act of reading. H.D., for example, recalls a figure from *Student of Prague:* "He is a symbol, an asterisk, an enigma. Spell the thing backwards, he seems to be saying, spell it right side to or back side to or front or behind and you'll see…his little leer means something."[89] As a letter to be spelled out, this figure seems the antithesis of the hieroglyph, and the tortured process H.D. undergoes of trying to read him aright is far more appropriate to written language than to its visual rivals. At the same time, this attempt to find the right way to "spell" the figure mimics the film critic's necessarily difficult task of translating film imagery into words. The very act of film criticism, that is to say, depends on skilled reading and rewriting, and it would neither be possible nor necessary if film itself were an independent, self-sufficient language.

The contributor who was the most attentive to the actual experience of watching a film, Dorothy Richardson, was also the one most aware of the dependence of "picture sense" on written language. Though she follows the dogma that film is essentially visual and therefore should not be sullied with sound, she also calls film images and their intertitles "Siamese twins [that]…have never yet been separated." For her, this relationship also implies the more general relationship of language and the visual, "art and literature," brought together by film in "a script that was a series of pictures."[90] Thus it often seems for Richardson, as for a number of other modern writers drawn to film at this time, that it was not the exclusion of language from movies but rather the new, unfamiliar relation of words to pictures within film that was most interesting in the medium. Richardson is also aware that the implication of language in the visual imagery of film means that film is never universal. This, in fact, is one of its chief virtues for her, that the development of a skilled spectatorship is dependent on "the insensibly learned awareness of alien people and alien ways."[91] The film sense thus developed is not universal but rather transnational, as Laura Marks maintains all film is, "in that its audiences will not be able to decode its images perfectly, insofar as they originate from other places and

times."[92] In quite a few of the essays she published in *Close Up*, Richardson finds this transnational quality, which she calls "the breath of otherness," even in domestic films, and her notion of skilled spectatorship is one in which filmgoers "become for a while citizens of a world whose every face is that of a stranger."[93] In this analysis, film internationalizes even the familiar by translating it into an unknown language, not by making visual experience transparent but rather by requiring that even the apparently transparent be read.

Thus *Close Up* registers the crisis of sound in two diametrically different ways, and the distance between these measures the space in which international modernism comes to terms with the social and cultural implications of the new media. The arrival of sound provoked such strong and varied responses because, as Stanley Cavell says, it "broke the spell of immediate intelligibility."[94] That is to say, sound made film temporarily illegible. Anguished complaints about the violation of the universal language of film suggest that this crisis is both accidental and unnecessary, but what they ignore is that the legibility of film had to be achieved in the first place. Like photography, film originally returned a very high proportion of noise; only with time did certain standards of selection and combination succeed in taming this noise into something like a language. The first really serious attempt to analyze the linguistic nature of film, Boris Eikhenbaum's essay "Problems of Film Stylistics," appeared in 1927,[95] and though there seems to be no direct connection between it and the arrival of sound, there is a telling irony in the coincidence of this investigation with the campaign against sound. The coincidence suggests that the contradictions of the universal language argument come from its simultaneous recognition and denial of the linguistic nature of film, and that sound made such a conflict inevitable by drawing attention to a system that had succeeded in making itself invisible.

The technical history of film itself is rewound, in a manner of speaking, and replayed in regard to sound in the years of crisis and controversy between 1927 and 1931. As Donald Crafton and James Lastra show in their splendid studies of this process, recording engineers recognized early on the mutual conflict of fidelity and legibility, for the most faithful and sensitive recording was also the most difficult to understand.[96] Gradually the aim of sound recording changed, as Crafton puts it, "away from producing a faithful recording of the filmed event to constructing a noise- and distraction-free sound track which assigned priorities to the voice and other sounds."[97] Of course, this was not a simple, directional process, and many engineers, filmmakers, critics,

and ordinary filmgoers realized that sound in actuality is hardly ever fully legible,[98] but gradually a consensus developed in favor of fore-grounding speech and suppressing most other sound as background noise. The aim of recording, according to Rick Altman, who first suggested what seems the crucial distinction in this whole discussion, was no longer to reproduce sound but rather to represent it,[99] which is to say that sound recording had ceased to be a merely autographic mechanism and had become a language. The ultimate integration of sound into the apparently inevitable product we watch at the present time was achieved by subjecting it to the same regime of radical reconstruction that had been developed for the visual images themselves.

One important conclusion to be drawn from the controversy, though, is that the artificial recording and transmission of sense impressions is not as different a process from writing as is often believed. This means something more than the familiar fact that images need some linguistic context in order to be understood, a bit more even than the notion of "inner speech" made prominent by Eikhenbaum, whereby language provides the combinatorial patterns that a film must follow in order to be interpreted. It means that the purely reproductive powers of the autographic media always turn out to be more or less useless to human beings, whose perceptions are never quite as raw as those of a machine, which ultimately have to be subjected to the same processes of selective attention that make our own sense impressions useful to us.

The recording media thus call into question an even more fundamental assumption, that there are two quite different ways in which human beings relate to reality, immediately through the senses and indirectly by means of symbols. Photographs, films, and sound recordings are but subsets of a huge category of unclassifiable representations beginning in the late eighteenth century with the sound figures of Ernst Chladni and extending to contemporary cloud chamber diagrams. As direct inscriptions of real phenomena that must nonetheless be read, these recordings occupy a curiously ambiguous position between sense impressions and representations, and between images and text. These new forms of inscription don't make the world somehow more artificial, more fraught with representation; instead they force on us, through conflicts like the crisis over sound, an awareness of the variable and uncertain border between representation and perception, which is why they challenge us much as a foreign language does.

Thus there may be something appropriate, if we accept the Hollywood rhetoric, in the fact that the "first international film" was also one of the first to incorporate sound. The sort of internationalism that

brought Murnau to Hollywood, of course, is that provided by American cultural imperialism, by the centralization, standardization, and industrialization of global experience that American aesthetic might made such a feature of the twentieth century. The controversy over sound suggests, however, that there is always something inherently transnational even within this sort of internationalism, even perhaps that the transnational disturbance of experience that Hollywood called its "foreign problem" is a dialectical effect of that other internationalism. The new media may promise to bring everything Close Up, but the very means they use to do so have the distressing tendency to make it seem far off again.

It was this kind of "far off" that Macpherson and his colleagues at *Close Up* finally found the most difficult to accept. The internationalism of this magazine often depended on a film aesthetic that denied the transnational by insisting on the immediacy and transparency of the visual image. In this they represent a very general tendency in international modernism, where a universal form language, with its promise of a universal Utopian future, somehow results in the sort of totalitarian architecture that gave postmodernism its reason for being. At the same time, however, even in its haughtier and more elitist moments, *Close Up* registers an awareness in modernism of the strangeness opened up within ordinary experience by the new media, which, instead of establishing a new universal language, had exposed the inherent unfamiliarity of languages long in use. In its confused and contradictory attempts to solve the "foreign problems" presented by sound, *Close Up* shows how intricately modernism is implicated in the complex transnationalism created by the new media.

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PART II Spectatorship, Media Relations, and Modern American Fiction

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4 F. Scott Fitzgerald's Spectroscopic Fiction

Though the arrival of talking pictures may have seemed a catastrophe to many in the literary avant-garde, it also presented a new opportunity for writers, who were suddenly called on to provide extensive dialogue and not just the brief title cards of the silent era. Though Hollywood had always been willing to cannibalize even the least likely literary works, it now turned even more frankly to models in drama and fiction, to the consternation of the avant-garde and the satisfaction of novelists and short story writers, who were recruited by the industry at astonishing salaries. Thus sound helped to bring about the most notorious of all relationships between modern literature and photography, a story told over and over, of greed, compromise, waste, and even, in the most tragic cases, early death. It seems appropriate that the greatest of all Hollywood novels, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon*, remains unfinished, for the implication of Fitzgerald's own experiences in Hollywood is that the commercial demands of the movie industry simply extinguish good writing and then even the lives of those who try to produce it.

Most scholarly work on this relationship thus tends to consider film primarily as an industry and focuses on the formal and practical compromises demanded of fiction by the industry's need for profit. The lives of prominent American writers in Hollywood are exceedingly well documented, as are the stages by which their contributions were adapted to film, or even TV.[1] But the possibility of some more significant formal connection between cinema and modern American writing remains largely unexplored, partly because the common biographical pattern, in which the already famous writer brings his or her works and

talents to Hollywood, supposes that fiction and film develop in isolation from one another. In fact, writers of the age of Fitzgerald, who was given a "moving picture machine" at the age of ten, grew up and learned to see in a society already permeated by film imagery.[2] Hemingway, to take another significant example, clearly began to think of himself as a published image from the time he returned home from World War I in a picturesque though undeserved military cape. Both writers were made quite self-conscious very early in their careers of the extent to which their chosen craft had been affected, perhaps even preempted, by new mechanical media, and this self-consciousness became a significant part of their respective literary styles.

The significance of the spectatorial point of view is quite obvious in the case of a writer like Dos Passos, though the famous Camera Eye sections of *U.S.A.* may not be as simply photographic as they claim to be. But even Hemingway seemed to see his works with an implied camera eye, not because the camera sees more clearly or honestly than the human eye, but because it publishes what it sees. Despite the mythology of literary realism that still attaches to his works, Hemingway, perhaps more than any other American novelist of the time, tended to see everything as if it were already seen, or as if it were to be seen in published form by a spectatorial audience. Tracking the "spectroscopic" point of view through some prominent American examples should therefore accomplish a little more than restoring to notice a forgotten relationship with the camera. It should also help to establish the modernity of this important branch of twentieth-century American writing, which is to be found in the debt it owed to the new media of the time.

When Nick Carraway first moves to West Egg, he intends to spend the summer of 1922 catching up on his reading: "volumes on banking and credit and investment securities" and also those "rather literary" things that had enticed him in college. Like many other well-intentioned programs of literary self-improvement, however, this one never quite gets off the ground, and Nick's retrospective account of it, given at the very beginning of *The Great Gatsby*, suggests that in the course of the summer he even loses faith in the principles that had motivated it: "I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the 'well-rounded' man. This isn't just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all."[3] Apparently, something happens to Nick that undermines his faith in the whole notion of the "well-rounded" man and convinces him that life can only be perceived from a particular, limited

point of view. Something, that is to say, turns Nick into a modernist narrator, one who is capable of looking back with indulgent irony at his earlier belief in disinterested omniscience.

Perhaps Nick got as far in his program of reading as James's preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, which introduces the famous "house of fiction," fitted, as James puts it, not with "one window but a million," each one "affording an impression distinct from every other."[4] If so, Nick literalizes James's metaphor to such an extent that he comes to think of himself not as a reader at all but as a looker, and the metaphor of the "single window" suggests that his new adherence to a subjective definition of truth is accompanied by, perhaps conditioned by, a shift from the literary to the visual. Perhaps, however, Nick's shift in this direction was motivated by an even more appropriate source, one for whom the window was more than a metaphor. In 1915, D. W. Griffith had imagined that all future programs of serious reading would be carried out at single windows:

> Imagine a public library of the near future, for instance. There will be long rows of boxes or pillars, properly classified and indexed of course. At each box a push button and before each box a seat. … Instead of consulting all the authorities, wading through a host of books, and ending bewildered without a clear idea of exactly what did happen, you will merely seat yourself at a properly adjusted window in a scientifically prepared room, press the button, and actually see what happened.[5]

Like Bob Brown a few years later, Griffith imagines a world in which the literary has given way entirely to the visual, in which James's window is no longer a figure of speech but a reality. Movies, in his futuristic vision of them, will replace the uncertain welter of books with an immediate, first-person view of things, one whose subjectivity is no longer a limitation, since the "single window" gives directly onto history.

Fitzgerald may never have read this particular article, but he had met Griffith and had toured his studio in Mamaroneck, New York, where he no doubt received the same gospel on the power of the movies that Griffith delivered to all such visitors.[6] Before writing *Gatsby*, Fitzgerald had also met David Selznick and had submitted a story outline to him and had even written the intertitles for a filmed version of Edith Wharton's *Glimpses of the Moon*.[7] It is doubtful that any number of such experiences could have convinced him that Griffith was right and that film would entirely replace the written word, but it is still possible that Nick's shift from his desk to the window may have been influenced

by these experiences with film. In fact, Nick's very first impressions of this summer supposedly devoted to reading begin with a striking description of the new leaves bursting from the trees “just as things grow in fast movies” (*GG*, p. 7). The metaphor suggests that Nick is already so much a member of the modern audience, an onlooker in a society of spectacle, that even the excitement of settling down to read is expressed in terms of film.

The metaphor also suggests, however, that Nick is not as interested as Griffith was in a “properly adjusted window.” It seems, instead, that it is the possibility of visual maladjustment that excites him, not the ability to see “more successfully,” as he puts it himself, but rather the power of seeing improperly and strangely, in ways made possible by the trickery of film. As it happens, almost everything that truly excites Nick in the course of this summer will be expressed in cinematic terms that make the mechanical and artificial nature of film imagery the very basis of its appeal. Progress, in particular, will be associated with the illusory speedup offered by “fast movies.” A serious reversal is implied, then, when Fitzgerald reworks his metaphor nine years later in *Tender Is the Night*, giving it an ominous twist of direction. When Dick Diver compares the course of his life to “the quick re-wind of a film,”[8] he seems to retract, almost onto the same reel, all the hopefulness of the earlier novel. In these two books, between fast forward and quick rewind, Fitzgerald expresses the full range of modern literary reactions to this new medium that threatened to replace reading with looking.

Nick's self-consciously ironic epigram introduces what turns out to be one of the most common dramatic motifs of *The Great Gatsby*, in which a good deal of information is gained by looking through windows. The most important such scene is certainly the one at Wilson's garage, when Nick looks up to discover Myrtle Wilson glowering down on the party grouped around Tom Buchanan's car:

> In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. (*GG*, p. 97)

Nick's belief that “life is much more successfully looked at from a single window” seems cruelly mocked in this scene, and not just because Myrtle jumps to the incorrect conclusion that Jordan Baker is Daisy and that Gatsby's car is actually Tom's, a mistake that will eventually lead to her death. Like a poor window-shopper, Myrtle can only look at what

she cannot afford to buy, the glass and air that separate her from Tom representing the equally invisible and no less substantial differences of class and wealth that keep her out of his real world, as opposed to the demimonde of their apartment in the city. From her isolated window, Myrtle seizes all she can get of Tom, a quick visual misapprehension, a bad snapshot rather like the ones displayed by the amateurish photographer McKee, who has been longing to photograph Myrtle herself. The irony of his ambition appears in this scene, when it seems that for Myrtle life is already little more than a photograph.

Nick, who sees all this, is no less isolated in his insight than Myrtle in her incomprehension, for he tells no one but the reader what he has seen and thus misses a chance, perhaps, to prevent the catastrophe that ensues. Like the very similar scene in which Nick looks on silently while Gatsby gazes at the green light at the end of the Buchanans' dock, this one dramatizes the isolation of the onlooker, the subjectivity of whose notions about the object of contemplation can only be registered by another observer, whose own subjectivity can only be registered by another, and so on ad infinitum. The limited subjectivity of each "single window" is apparent only from outside, but there is no point of observation, certainly not that of the narrator, perhaps not even that of the reader, from which all such limitations might be viewed at once.

The lack of any such omniscient or neutral point of view is dramatized in another closely related window scene. After Myrtle is killed trying to stop the car she mistakenly thinks is carrying Tom, her husband loses control and dissolves in pathetic recriminations:

> "I told her that she might fool me but that she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window—" With an effort he got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it, "—and I said 'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me, but you can't fool God!'" (*GG*, p. 124)

What Wilson wants to show his wife is the huge and ridiculous sign that sits just outside the ash heaps, the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, which can be seen from their window and which apparently represent to Wilson a God-like vantage point from which everything is seen for what it is. Looking out his window at those huge eyes in their disembodied eyeglasses, Wilson says, "God sees everything," to which his friend Michaelis replies, with apparently unconscious irony, "That's an advertisement" (*GG*, p. 125). Michaelis merely means to remind the half-deranged Wilson that the eyes he sees are the painted eyes of a billboard

and not those of God himself, but his statement can also be taken as referring to Wilson's statement of belief in a God-like point of view, a window from which all things may be seen as they truly are. In a world dominated by advertisements, the claim to omniscient neutrality itself appears as just another advertising claim, another biased and self-interested message. For anyone with an ordinary degree of awareness, like Michaelis, it is no longer possible to believe in a message without an ulterior motive, a picture without a purpose.

Something more specific and more secular than the death of God is being registered in this passage. The eyes to which Wilson submits his experience are rightfully associated with the disembodied spectacles of Dr. Eckleburg because they abstract the pure act of looking from any specific being or vantage point. For Wilson the glasses represent what Sartre calls the "pure subject," the seer whose look fixes the individual as an object without itself ever being seen because it has no real location in space. In Sartre's very influential account of what is usually called in English "the gaze," looking becomes free somehow of any pair of eyes; it floats in front of the eyes, without real position or substance.[9] In Lacan's equally influential extension of Sartre's account, the gaze is so much more disembodied that it is represented as pure light.[10] Norman Bryson, Martin Jay, and many others have associated this gaze with Renaissance perspectivalism, which situates the point of view outside the bodies and events trapped within the picture frame, and thus also with a certain kind of rationality, which substantiates its claims to neutrality and independence by reference to the metaphor of sight.[11]

The eyeglasses of Dr. Eckleburg are Fitzgerald's version of this generalized, impersonal form of eyesight; the fact that they are also merely an advertisement suggests how commonly the authority of that eyesight was adapted to the designs of modern commerce and how thoroughly its authority was undermined as a result. Here Fitzgerald is simply dramatizing what was being said discursively all around him at this time. For example, Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, a work that Nick Carraway is quite likely to have taken with him for his summer of reading in 1922, begins with the sad thesis that human beings cannot see things from a neutral and disinterested perspective, or, as Lippmann puts it, "Man is no Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance." Paradoxically, what convinces Lippmann of the inevitable limitations of the individual point of view is the extension of physical eyesight made possible by inventions such as the camera. Mankind, Lippmann says,

> has invented ways of seeing what no naked eye could see, of hearing what no ear could hear, of weighing immense masses and infinitesimal ones, of counting and separating more items than he can individually remember. He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember.[12]

Even by Lippmann's time, photography and film had enormously extended the possibilities of disembodied seeing, but in doing so they had also discredited the idea that such eyesight is neutral and objective. The extension of modern eyesight by artificial means had for Lippmann the paradoxical effect of undermining faith in the visual itself, in part because photographs can be so easily manipulated, and in part because photography and film had become such indispensable tools of commercial and political indoctrination, but also because the prevalence of mechanical eyesight at a distance exposes the fact that all eyesight works at a distance. By isolating particular moments of time and particular angles of vision, photography made it newly obvious how dependent the eye is on particular conditions and how little it can be counted on for an immediate and unbiased record of events. Skepticism about photographic evidence leads, sooner or later, to skepticism even about actual eyewitness accounts, so that people hardened to the misrepresentations of photographs come also to distrust their own eyes.

For Lippmann, this is a catastrophic state of affairs, since loss of faith in pictorial objectivity has undermined faith in objectivity of any kind. The fact that so much information comes to the modern individual in filtered or mediated forms seems to make intelligent motivation of a responsible public impossible; even a widespread awareness of this fact can only lead, as it seems to have done with Michaelis, to a cynical disinterest in common truths. As a novelist, of course, Fitzgerald is only too likely to be more indulgent than Lippmann toward the notion of subjective truth, and yet his embrace of the subjective point of view seems to go far beyond self-interest and convenience. Nick, at any rate, is so sincere in his insistence on looking “from a single window,” despite all the grief caused by its inevitable limitations, that, at a number of points in the novel, he goes out of his way to view things from a distance.

Narrative necessity by itself often puts Nick in the unseemly role of the voyeur. At Gatsby's behest and for the benefit of the reader, he tip-toes up the Buchanans' drive in time to witness their reconciliation, a

feat that requires him to find "a rift" where the window blind doesn't quite meet the sill (*GG*, p. 113). Though this peeping Tom act seems as unnecessary as it is undignified, it does at least give the reader some crucial information. At other times, Nick seems driven by an entirely unmotivated and unnecessary desire to get away from a scene so as to view it through the window:

> I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the park through the soft twilight but each time I tried to go I became entangled in some wild strident argument which pulled me back, as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. (*GG*, p. 30)

Nick seems almost wistfully to imagine himself as watching from a distance, through a window, the scene of which he is in fact a part, and the phrasing, with its emphasis on the "secrecy" that entices the "wondering" observer, suggests that it is precisely the difficulty of seeing properly through a window that attracts him.

It is not unfair, then, to suggest that Nick has what is sometimes called a "roving eye"; he confesses as much himself, but when he does so, it seems that this sort of voyeurism is so much a part of his character that he actually *becomes* a roving eye:

> I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. (*GG*, pp. 46–47)

Nick's peripatetic restlessness and his ocular restlessness merge in a general sense of fidgety energy, and it might seem that when the women disappear into darkness both man and eye should be abashed. But the satisfaction craved by this restless eye is actually provided, it seems, by darkness and obstruction. At least, there is a persistent emphasis in this description on twilight, dusk, and silhouette: "Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside"

(*GG*, p. 47). Seeing through a window is like looking through a screen, where the difficulty of seeing clearly provides some of the excitement, but it is also like looking *at* a screen. Nick sees these forms as he later sees Tom and Daisy, as if they were pictures projected on a movie screen, playing out a drama that has to be read in their gestures, since there is no sound. The "flicker" that entices the restless eye is in general the play of light and dark in the city streets, the glimmering of faces as they pass, but it is also, more specifically, the play of the shutter over the movie screen, which seems to have provided for Nick a model of visual indulgence. What Nick most especially relishes is the peculiarly disconnected kind of seeing provided most commonly by pictures, and what he looks for when he looks through windows is a real sight that he can experience as if it were a picture. What Nick looks for, in short, is precisely the kind of mediated visual experience that Lippmann so laments, and he looks for it in order to enjoy the very distance and disconnection that Lippmann fears the most.

Critics have long charged Nick with the very common literary crime of unreliable narration.[13] At the very least, they have noticed how often visual evidence comes to him in mediated and often distorted forms.[14] In general, however, such mediation is considered to be a defect, one generally viewed in the narration itself satirically or ironically. After all, Nick does advertise himself as "one of the few honest people I have ever known" (*GG*, p. 48), and he also distinguishes himself from both Gatsby and Tom by virtue of his greater resistance to what he tellingly calls "blinding signs" (*GG*, p. 63). If Nick is himself blinded by signs, as he so often is, then this might naturally be viewed as a lapse, a flaw, or a defect. But this very conventional evaluation leaves no way of accounting for the many times in the novel when the indirection of eyesight is experienced with pleasure. Nick's use of the word "flicker" certainly suggests the movies, as Ronald Berman has noted,[15] but making this suggestion as Fitzgerald does is to highlight for especial appreciation what was at the time the most obvious limitation of film, the defect that stood most obtrusively in the way of a perfect visual illusion.

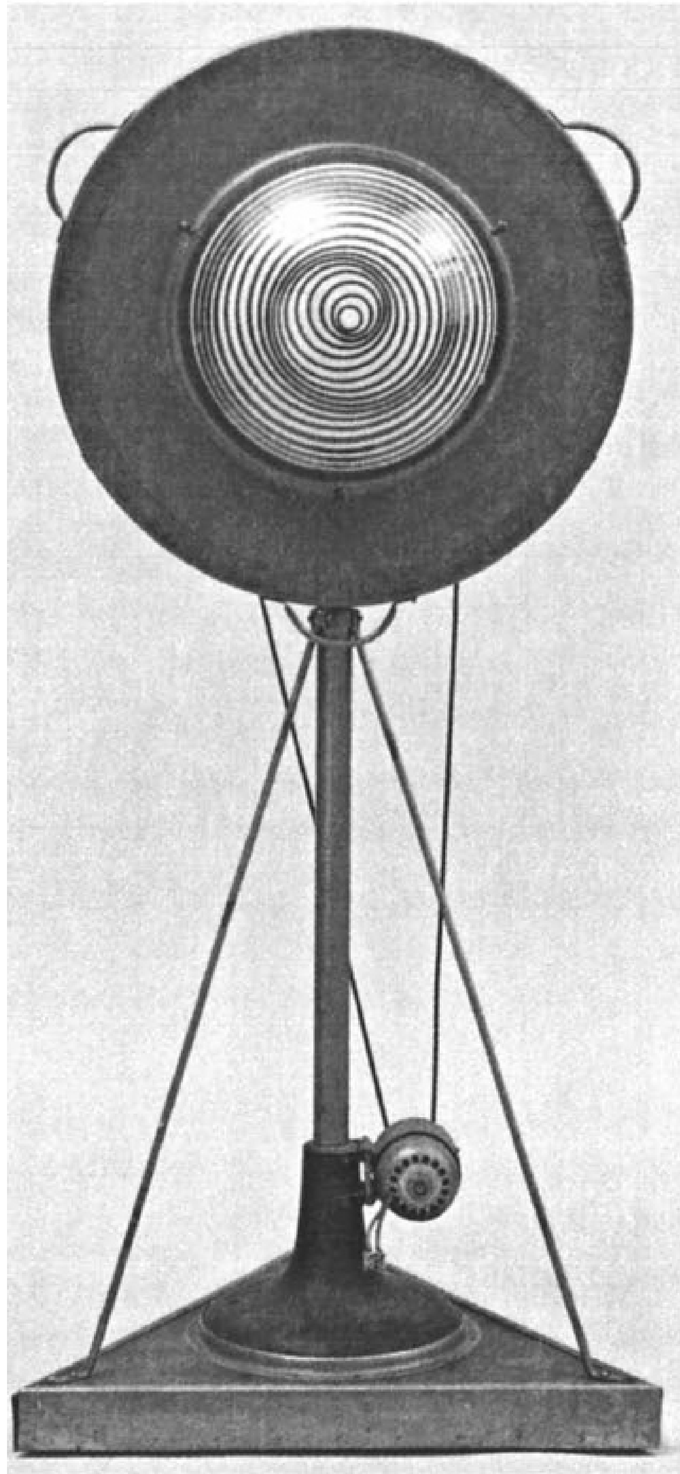
"Flicker" was already in 1925 a disparaging term for the movies, one that Griffith admonished his actors and actresses never to use because it diminished the dignity of the new art form.[16] Griffith disliked the term, no doubt, because the shaky flickering of the silent film disrupted the illusion he so painstakingly built: that the film spectator was actually immersed in the action, viewing it from some magically incorporeal vantage point. For Nick, on the other hand, the flicker of film is so enticing

he sees it even when it is not actually there: he imagines actuality as if it were shakily projected on a screen always just before him. The difference is telling, for Griffith wants to eliminate flicker so as to make the processes of film representation themselves disappear, while Fitzgerald seems to imagine an eye that actually enjoys the feeling of some interceding medium. By the same token, Griffith hopes to make the spectator disappear, dissolving individual viewers into a generalized model of impersonal eyesight, while Nick seems to enjoy most the sensation of watching himself watching.

Nick's credo, that “life is more successfully looked at from a single window,” is, therefore, more than an admission of narrative subjectivity. Nick's vantage point is also that of a mass audience formed around images, and the argument of *The Great Gatsby* seems to be that for at least one member of that audience the allure of mechanical imagery comes not from any illusion of reality it may provide but rather from the way that new media create new visions, varieties of eyesight unavailable to unaided eyes. Read in this way, *Gatsby* shakes itself free of Lippmann's anxieties about truth and illusion and comes to resemble certain far more radical modernist projects of the same time. The year that *Gatsby* was published, Duchamp produced his *Rotary Demisphere*, a motorized optical illusion machine whose purpose was to abstract the flicker from film and offer it as a visual experience in itself (fig. 12).[17] Rosalind Krauss associates this and Duchamp's other rotoreliefs with Max Ernst's incorporation of the zootrope into his collage novels of this period, the purpose of which was, she says, to evoke the peculiar dissociation at the heart of film movement, which is made as much of the interruptions between the frames as of the frames themselves. For Krauss, an entire school of avant-garde modernism is to be found in these projects, which challenge what she and others have called the dominant scopic regime of the modern period, one founded on the figurative association of clear and unobstructed eyesight with impartial rationality. Duchamp and Ernst poke a stick, as it were, into this imagined field of vision, importing into it what Krauss calls a pulse or a beat, this “hiccup, this jerkiness, this twitch” found in the “stop-and-go flicker” of early film.[18] Insisting on the flicker, making eyesight conscious of itself, undoes all of Griffith's work and frustrates his program for the movies by making the mediated nature of the film image obvious and also by making the observer conscious of the particularity, the bias, of his or her point of view.[19]

Such projects help to constitute an alternative visual culture within the one that Griffith was establishing at the same time. As Martin Jay

Figure 12.. Marcel Duchamp, *Rotary Demisphere* (1925). (© 2004 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Estate of Marcel Duchamp)



has characterized it, this visual culture "self-consciously revels" in all the disjunctions Griffith was hoping to obscure, "disparaging as a result any attempt to reduce the multiplicity of visual spaces into any one coherent essence." Jay borrows Christine Buci-Glucksmann's term "folie du voir," originally applied to the baroque, to describe the pleasurable disorientation that results when the disunity of vision is exposed, and he suggests by adapting the term that there is also an appetite in the modern period for "the opacity, unreadability, and the undecipherability of … reality."[20] For Krauss, such folie du voir is to be found first in the response of a mass audience to the new visual culture made possible by the mechanical reproduction of images, which then provides a model for the projects of the modernist avant-garde. It is within this alternative visual culture, in other words, that modernism and the modern media meet, in which Nick's confessed limitations as a modernist narrator and his unconfessed position as a member of the modern audience converge.

This is not to ignore the obvious differences between visual media and the novel. If Duchamp can actually reproduce the flicker of film, Fitzgerald, it would seem, can only write about it, and his practice as a relatively conventional novelist seems light-years away from the radical projects of Jolas and Brown. And yet Nick, in his capacity as narrator, also injects into the novel some of the flicker he so much enjoys as a character. So many of the key scenes in *The Great Gatsby* have the peculiar structure of the famous one in which Gatsby gazes out at the green light, a scene in which Gatsby's un-self-conscious visual absorption is mediated for the reader through a secondary onlooker. Looking as intently as he does has the effect of making Gatsby invisible to himself: he has no idea that he can be observed. Nick, however intently he may look at Gatsby, or at Myrtle, or at Tom and Daisy, all of whom are utterly unaware of being observed, can never enjoy this unawareness himself, for he is always conscious of the fact that he is making a book for readers to read. Nick is in the position made famous by Sartre of the voyeur looking through the keyhole, who is able to imagine himself as the center and circumference of an entire world until becoming aware that he is in turn observed.[21] The viewer, as Lacan puts it in his equally famous adaptation of Sartre, is no longer outside but inside the field of vision, blocking the light, as it were.[22] Nick's function is to block the light, to make the imperceptible point of observation usually offered by narrator to reader obvious to itself, and thus to produce in narrative terms some of the flicker that he enjoys as a character. Nick succeeds so well as a literary creation not because he succeeds in the traditional narrator's

task of telling the truth but because he gets in the way of the truth and in so doing stages narratively the visual relationship that is so much a part of the drama of the novel.

All this is a rather more elaborate way of saying that Nick is a modernist narrator, one like Conrad's Marlow, who calls attention to himself and to the particular angle from which he sees things. But in Nick's case the visual metaphor so often applied to narrators is also literalized in such a way as to suggest that it might have originated in a visual experience common in the twentieth century. If so, then the very subjectivity of Nick's point of view is itself the result of objective social conditions and as such may have a social significance beyond that of literary history. Something like this is suggested in the novel itself by the way Fitzgerald insistently generalizes Nick's condition and by generalizing it portrays a society in which unbridled visuality has become a new and disruptive social force.

For Sartre, the loss of transcendence that comes when the voyeur is himself observed is also a loss of freedom; even to see the world as seen by another, as Nick so often does, is to be separated from it and abandoned by it: "everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object."[23] But for Nick, who is very much unlike Sartre's voyeur in being quite open and unabashed about his visual proclivities, the tendency of the visualized world to come unfixed under the gaze of another is actually the occasion of "gayety" (*GG*, p. 47). Elsewhere, Fitzgerald uses this word in a context that suggests that Nick's feelings in this respect have a general social basis, perhaps even a class character. At one of Gatsby's parties, Nick joins a small and quite boring group that had "assumed to itself the function of representing the staid nobility of the countryside—East Egg condescending to West Egg, and carefully on guard against its spectroscopic gayety" (*GG*, p. 37). The term "spectroscopic" is a bit difficult to fix in this context, though it seems most likely that Fitzgerald was thinking of the spectroscope mainly as an instrument used for studying the composition of the sun and other stars. Powerful new spectroscopic instruments had played an important role in the quantum theory of Max Planck and in Einstein's investigations of the nature of light, and these experiments had made the spectroscope an item of interest to the artistic avant-garde, especially to Duchamp.[24] Spectroscopic vision would thus be a modernized way of looking, one that goes beyond conventional visuality to see in spectrums formerly undiscovered. Of course, it is also possible that Fitzgerald is simply exploiting for its connotative value a term that brings together both the Latin and Greek root words meaning

"to look." "Spectroscope" thus would link together all sorts of English words having to do with the visual: it is especially tempting to think of it as meaning something like "the look of the spectator"—not terribly inappropriate considering the context. Read in this way, "spectroscopic gayety" might designate a very common modern phenomenon, the peculiar exhilaration that occurs when members of the audience see in the flesh someone they have seen dozens and dozens of times in pictures.

On one level, such gaiety derives simply from a sense of satisfied curiosity, but Fitzgerald's insistence on an odd, ungainly term like "spectroscopic" seems, in part merely *because* of its ungainliness, to emphasize the mechanical nature of this visual experience. "Spectroscopic" vision would be even more indirect and remote than telescopic vision, since a spectroscope provides a view of its subject that doesn't correspond to unaided visual experience at all. The spectroscope also divides the apparent unity of conventional eyesight even more fundamentally than does a movie camera, importing a disorienting flicker into the very structure of light itself. Using this term as he does, Fitzgerald thus inserts an ocular instrument into what is actually a direct visual experience, suggesting that the West Egg spectators see their envied East Egg neighbors as if through a lens. What makes East Egg visually enticing, then, is that it carries with it, even in the flesh, the sense of being viewed on a screen or in a magazine: it looks looked at. And it is perhaps this trace of its own prior viewing that West Egg comes to see.

Fitzgerald thus seems to be depicting something very near the opposite of what Sartre suggests in his seminal description of the gaze. Fitzgerald's group of party-goers experiences a sense of exhilarating freedom because eyesight has breached a social barrier: the rich and hereto-fore secret world of East Egg is suddenly opened to the shabbier denizens of West Egg. The completeness, self-sufficiency, and autonomy of that wealthy world are destroyed when they are looked at, as the completeness and independence of the individual's world is destroyed in Sartre's anecdote when it is seen by another. What feels like loss to one, however, is sheer gain for the other, and the multiplicity and relativity that invade the world of the observer in Sartre's account feel like opportunity more than defeat. And though the visual experience in this instance is an immediate one, it is quite clear from *The Great Gatsby* in general that Fitzgerald realizes how commonly it occurs in a mediated form, so commonly, in fact, that seeing in the flesh actually seems the special case. The most common, the most socially significant, "spectroscopic gayety" is that produced by pictures, which theoretically subject

the entire world to the gaze of a mass audience. The gaiety that Nick experiences in New York is thus in Sartre's terms the most threatening emotion possible: the sense of living in a world in which everything is already seen, already set free in an unfixed, multiple world whose impalpability is itself a visual phenomenon, a flicker.

The full social implications of that flicker are exposed by yet another instance of "spectroscopic gayety," this one in the scene that carries Nick and Gatsby into New York for lunch:

> Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world. (*GG*, pp. 54–55)

Once again, the city becomes a movie of itself, the peculiar mixture there of freshness and repetition rendered even in the syntax, which brings the city around to be seen for the first time again and again. For Nick the pleasure that the city affords is associated with this kind of visual experience, and he enjoys seeing so much that he wants to share it. When they pass a funeral procession, to be gaped at by the assembled mourners, Nick says, "I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their sombre holiday" (*GG*, p. 55). Being viewed in this way by another is not the terrifyingly disorienting experience it is for Sartre but seems almost necessary to Nick's enjoyment.

In this he is the appropriate companion for Gatsby, who seems incapable of appreciating his own possessions and accomplishments unless they are looked at by others. If it seems at first a bit of an under-statement when Jordan Baker describes his ambitions with Daisy—"He wants her to see his house" (*GG*, p. 63)—that does in fact turn out to be a good deal of what he wants from her; as Nick puts it, "I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes" (*GG*, p. 72). Nick is himself such a useful interim companion for Gatsby in part because of his propensity to visualize. When Gatsby first tells the semifantastic story of his past life, Nick mistrusts it, but when Gatsby produces a single photograph, Nick not only drops his disbelief— "Then it was all true"—but goes on to visualize in his mind's eye details that Gatsby hasn't even described: "I saw the skins of tigers flaming in his palace on the Grand Canal; I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted

depths, the gnawings of his broken heart" (*GG*, p. 53).[25] The implausibility of Gatsby's story matters relatively little in relation to the opportunities it provides for visual license. Thus Gatsby appeals to Nick's eagerness to visualize, and Nick, in his turn, provides what Gatsby needs in order to believe in himself: an audience.

This is part of what Nick means when he says as they cross the Queensboro Bridge, "'Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge … anything at all … ' Even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder" (*GG*, p. 55). In this effusion, "Gatsby" stands metonymically for the whole process of celebrity and spectator-ship in which "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere," to quote Tom Buchanan, can become famous without a shred of social background simply because he provides an intriguing spectacle. Gatsby is the most obvious example of a social system in which status is no longer established by birth or even primarily by money but rather by persuasive display, and Nick feels on their drive into New York the almost giddy freedom that can be realized under such a system. "Anything can happen" is his version of "Anything goes," his formula for the feeling of anarchic possibility that was so much a part of American modernity in the 1920s that it became a slogan even in Brecht's City of Mahagonny.[26]

For Tom the end of this new anarchy, the last taboo to be violated, is that against racial mixing: "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next day they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white" (*GG*, p. 101). Nick's feeling that "anything can happen" seems a positive inversion of Tom's fear that "they'll throw everything overboard," and both exaggerations seem naturally and inevitably, if very differently, connected to race. For the sight that convinces Nick that "anything can happen" is actually the sight of himself and Gatsby reflected in a racial mirror: "As we crossed Blackwells Island a limousine passed us, driven by a white chauffeur, in which sat three modish Negroes, two bucks and a girl. I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled toward us in haughty rivalry" (*GG*, p. 55). This scene provokes Nick to laughter in part because he feels, just as Tom would have in the same situation, that the whole notion of African Americans in a limousine is ridiculous but also in part because he realizes that he and Gatsby are no less incongruous in *their* limousine, that a world in which Gatsby might become rich and famous is also a world in which African Americans might ride while white men chauffeur. Thinking as he watches this other car that "even Gatsby could happen," Nick makes Gatsby the final term in a series that includes both the European immigrants at the funeral and the

African American automobile passengers, and he also makes Gatsby into a metonym for the whole process of social upheaval that has brought these disparate groups into contact.[27]

The emphasis in this scene on the eyeballs of the black passengers is an instance of racist humor, but it is also something else, since it carries to conclusion the suggestion in this passage that what makes all these different social groups roughly similar, if not exactly equal, is their visual proximity to one another. First of all, Nick's own enjoyment of the ride into town is so intensely visual that he naturally projects that enjoyment onto those he sees, so that for a time at least he is able to be both spectacle and audience and to enjoy the exquisite sense of vicariously watching and admiring himself. But Nick is also aware, as'he is in the earlier scene at Gatsby's party, of the "rivalry" inherent in looking. Like Sartre, he knows that being looked at means being displaced from the center of your own visual universe. Nick violates Sartre's paradigm, however, not only by accepting this displacement but also by generalizing it, since he sees that displacement in general can favor him as much as it might favor those previously his social inferiors. The "spectroscopic gayety" he enjoys on the Queensboro bridge is not just a personal experience or an individual indulgence but also a general social phenomenon, in which the widely multiplied opportunities offered to eyesight help to violate old social exclusions and segregations.

It is no accident that the most anarchic of these visual experiences occurs while the protagonists are in a moving car. For it was common even at this time to equate the experience of driving a car with that of attending a movie. As Vachel Lindsay put it in 1925:

> None of us has perhaps realized how closely akin is the moving picture to the all-conquering Ford car. The most inert soul in the world once learning to drive a car, even a Ford, is swept relent-lessly past his own resolutions and convictions. … The motion picture does the same thing to the human mind. To the inevitable speeding-up process of the motion picture quite recently has been added the speeding up of all other things in America.[28]

The speed that Lindsay speaks of here also has the effect of "making one nation of all the tribes and tongues under this government," effacing social distinctions as it sweeps away other "resolutions and convictions."

In *The Great Gatsby* as well, the visual experience of riding in a car provides an opportunity for bringing different social classes into contact: Wilson's garage is the crossroad where Myrtle and Daisy finally meet. In part, this is due simply to the greater physical mobility that cars afford,

but the scene on the Queensboro Bridge also shows how this physical mobility creates a new, socially anarchic visual situation, a kind of "spectroscopic gayety" that is an everyday experience. As Mitchell Breitwieser puts it, such scenes demonstrate "that on the highway everyone will see and be seen by everyone, that the asphalt heterotopia will not submit to the discriminations, protocols, and segregations that will otherwise continue to govern American social space."[29] Breitwieser also points out what many other readers, including Ralph Ellison, have noticed, that the only other African American in this novel, the "pale, well dressed Negro" (*GG*, p. 109) who is apparently the only one actually to see Gatsby's car after it hits Myrtle Wilson, is also introduced as an eyewitness.[30] The freedom of the road, in other words, is as much visual as it is physical, and one effect of this freedom is to expose social restrictions to new forms of emulation and rivalry. Nick's almost giddy feeling that "anything can happen" begins with his own folie du voir and then extends that disorder to the social world and even to the racial discriminations that are so important to the psychic well-being of those like Tom.

In so doing, Fitzgerald produces a strikingly different version of the scene of onlooking so common in his novel. For the most part, the other instances of looking and onlooking are solitary and asymmetrical, as one lone observer watches someone else, who is generally unaware of being observed. Even when the looking is candid and collective, as it is at Gatsby's party, there is still a perceptible separation of onlooker and subject. Here, however, Fitzgerald depicts a situation in which everyone is looking at everyone else from behind glass; the distinction between subject and object seems impossible to sustain once everyone is in motion. The addition of motion also makes this visual experience resemble that of seeing a movie, as Lindsay suggests, except that seeing while moving is a bit like watching a movie while also being in one. Nick's rather giddy feeling that "anything can happen" is in a sense the feeling of passing beyond reality into the illusory world of film, where the boundaries of time and space can so easily be defied. And once those boundaries are down, once ceaseless motion has hopelessly confused subject and object, time and space, then all sorts of odier boundaries are likely to fall as well. The social reciprocity that Nick imagines here is founded on the notion that everyone is simultaneously onlooker and subject, and that constant motion ceaselessly rearranges the roles. As Miriam Hansen puts it, speaking of the promise of early film, "the mobilization of the gaze that transcends physical laws as well as distinctions between subject and object, human and nonhuman nature, promises

nothing less than the mobilization of the self, the transformation of seemingly fixed positions of social identity."[31]

Fitzgerald thus associates Nick, as a character and as a narrator, with a modernized visuality that undoes the old association of vision with reason and authority by emphasizing all the ways that visual pleasure misleads and disarranges. In so doing, he provides a powerful counterexample for a great many theories about the role of vision in modernist literature and art. In many such theories, modernism marks the final step in a long process by which a certain kind of disembodied perspectival vision comes to represent a pure and disinterested rationality. For Rosalind Krauss, to take one very persuasive example, "mainstream modernism" tries to perfect and purify the visual, to establish it as "an autonomous realm," whose austere independence would then help establish the independence of art itself.[32] The abstraction of the visual from any sort of specificity also insulates it from social tension and change, which some critics would argue is the purpose of abstraction in the first place. As Chris Jenks puts it, "the programme set within modern culture for the supposed unification of seeing obviates the disruptive abrasion of conflict and the necessity for discussions of difference."[33] What Fitzgerald presents in *The Great Gatsby*, however, seems the exact opposite: the infinite division of eyesight into a myriad of individual "windows" creates entirely new ways for difference to manifest and assert itself. Looking provides new ways to violate social boundaries, but it also establishes new social systems in which hierarchy and precedence are so manifestly artificial, in which fame and spectatorship are so intimately interdependent, that precedence is unmasked by the very process that establishes it. By situating his narrator from the very outset as an onlooker, by generalizing that narrator until he seems a typical case, Fitzgerald aligns his novel structurally with the new public world that distressed Lippmann because it had put unreliable representations where earlier societies had agreed there was at least the possibility of reliable truths.

Nick's vision on the Queensboro Bridge marks the high point of his relationship with Gatsby, as it marks the most intense visual elation he will experience this summer. Of course, as it works out, this moment of "spectroscopic gayety" is relatively brief, and Gatsby does not "happen," as it were. It proves only too easy for Tom Buchanan to reassert the privileges of birth and with them an older version of truth, still strong enough to sweep Gatsby away as if he had never existed. The effect of his life remains, though, not so much in the substance of Nick's account as in the aesthetic convictions that shape it. If, as Nick

asserts at the very outset, "personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures" (*GG*, p. 6), then the effect of a personality like Gatsby's will be primarily visual, and the attempt to tell about it in words is likely to strain the ordinary discursive means of the novel. When Nick begins his narrative by renouncing his books, he is also signaling how different his means and motives will be from those of the conventional novelist.

Though Nick says more than once that the purpose of his account is to tell the truth about Gatsby, that is clearly impossible and even undesirable, considering that the truth cannot be told without incriminating Daisy. Nick is in fact incapable of telling this truth even to Tom, the one person least likely to repeat it (*GG*, p. 79); how much less could he publish it in a book, as Fitzgerald has him feign to do at the very beginning of *The Great Gatsby*?[34] The real purpose of Nick's account is, rather, to recreate the experience of "aesthetic contemplation," the sheer visual bewilderment created by the spectacle of Gatsby's life, which he repeatedly calls "wonder" (*GG*, pp. 140–141). At the very end of his account he links Gatsby's own wonderment back to that of the first Dutch explorers, metonymized like so many other characters in this book as a set of eyes. The way that Long Island flowers first for the eyes of those sailors and then for Gatsby's is made to seem a timeless process, and yet it should be linked back to the very beginning of the book, to Nick's own first visual bewilderment at the greenery of Long Island, which bursts forth for him "just as things grow in fast movies" (*GG*, p. 7). The very sensation of timelessness that links Gatsby back to the explorers is itself modeled on the modern trickery of film, and the experience of boundless creativity that Nick associates with the New World is made possible by a camera. Nick, like any other moviegoer, knows this trickery for what it is, just as he knows that seeing from a single window can, and does in this account, lead to untold misery, and yet die sense of possibility opened up within the field of vision by the new media is simply too strong to resist. That "anything can happen" in film fosters in him an edgy, elated, and tenuous feeling that anything can happen in life as well.

Fitzgerald became a famous writer because he was able to relate this feeling of possibility and, almost in the same breath, its utter disappointment. As he tried to follow *Gatsby* with another novel, however, disappointment began to predominate so heavily in his own life that the former balance was almost impossible to sustain. Alcohol, marital tension, the complex mental condition of his wife, and increasing alienation

from friends all helped to protract the difficult business of finishing *Tender Is the Night.* At the same time, Fitzgerald's relation to the movies became closer and more complex. Movies continued to provide a necessary alternative to stern reality, especially such movies as the mock Dada production that Fitzgerald helped to produce at the Murphys' villa in 1926.[35] Fitzgerald also began to profit from his association with film during a first, relatively successful stint in Hollywood a year later. But even in the course of this new and productive association, the crushing failure of his later Hollywood years was already evident. While in Rome correcting the proofs of *Gatsby* in 1924, Fitzgerald was drawn into an association with the MGM crew that was unsuccessfully trying to film *Ben Hur* there. Leaving a cast party one night in December of that year, quite drunk, he provoked the humiliating battle with the Italian police that was to become the negative climax of *Tender Is the Night.*[36] Before he even knew it, therefore, the movies helped to provide him with the dismal conclusion to his next novel.

Biographical accident merely reveals, however, an inherent complexity in Fitzgerald's relation to film and perhaps in the very nature of film itself. For all the newness promised by the instantaneity of film simply marks a more fundamental repetition inherent in recording. When the present is seized for its freshness, there it remains very nearly forever, mocking its own contemporaneity each time it is replayed, and getting farther and farther out of date. There is something compulsive about the relationship that recording makes possible with the past, and Fitzgerald was to focus on this particular form of mental instability in his next work. All the quickness that seems so brilliantly to annihilate time in the “fast movies” now rebounds on itself in an endless rewind, a metaphor that seems to withdraw all the promises of film and simultaneously to retract the optimism of Fitzgerald's earlier work.

Much of the difference between *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*, between the mythic possibility sustained through all the tragedy of the first and the sour shame hidden even in the brightest moments of the second, is expressed, it seems, in the metaphor of broken glass. The party that Dick Diver and Rosemary Hoyt attend in the Rue Monsieur is a version of the parties given at Gatsby's, with the same emphasis on seeing and being seen, but here the “spectroscopic gayety” of the fashionable crowd has shattered against something hard. Thus the attempts of the guests to make sense of the decorative style of the room, and of their companions, are compared by the narrator to “a human hand picking up jagged broken glass” (*TN*, p. 71). The metaphor signifies not only the jolting nature of the modern style of the room, implicitly associated

as it is with the Art Deco exhibition of 1925, but also the shocking nature of a modernity that is more than mirrors, chromium, and black bakelite. The room seems to be changing before their eyes, moving into an unknown future, "evolving into something else, becoming everything a room was not; to exist in it was as difficult as walking on a highly polished moving stairway, and no one could succeed at all save with the aforementioned qualities of a hand moving among broken glass" (*TN*, p. 72). The confusions of rapid social change are expressed here in visual terms as a kind of chaotic mirroring, and if the hand that moves among the broken facets of experience instinctively recoils, so much more so does the eye, which, unlike the eye in *Gatsby*, finds no pleasure in these multiplications of viewpoint.

Instead, there is something repellent, unreal, even morally distorted in this "Frankenstein" (*TN*, p. 72) of a room, "perverted as a breakfast of oatmeal and hashish" (*TN*, p. 71). This illegitimate mixture is both temporal, confusing past, present, and future, and spatial, since the crowd at the party is largely made up of American and English expatriates wasting their time in Paris. The confusion is sexual as well, presided over as it is by three cobra-headed women whose appraising gaze makes them seem both languid and predatory, and it is also, almost inevitably, racial. The girl "with a lovely boy's face" (*TN*, p. 72) who attempts to interest Rosemary is described in the current text as "slick," which Matthew Bruccoli insists is an unauthorized emendation of Fitzgerald's original "spic."[37] The word itself is almost more shocking than the insult it intends, for it is stylistically off key, too colloquial for a third-person narrator, too personal in its animosity. It is, in fact, so closely associated with Dick that Nicole disdainfully calls it "your word" (*TN*, p. 260). Dick defensively responds that he hadn't purposely used it, only "the tongue slipped," but as a psychiatrist he should know that slips of the tongue are more personally revealing than purposeful statements, as Fitzgerald's apparent slip of the pen here reveals a private motive beneath several more superficial layers of disdain. This is one of several points at which *Tender Is the Night* seems as if it had been taken over by Tom Buchanan, who associates modernization with mongrelization and social progress with atavism.

Though Rosemary finds this room just as gratingly unfamiliar as the narrator does, she also finds it oddly recognizable, for it "had the detached false-and-exalted feeling of being on a set" (*TN*, p. 71). Attending the party is like being in the movies because everyone is acting a part, but it is also like being *at* the movies because reality in this room shifts and cuts like the reality represented in a film. The confusion of

time and the conflict of multiple points of view are explicitly cinematic, as the hand picking gingerly through broken glass is the spectator trying to make sense of a visual world made of fragments. In this case, the intervention of mechanical instruments into the apparent unity of eye-sight stands for, and perhaps even helps to make possible, all sorts of social dislocations that afflict the observing narrator like vertigo.

A kaleidoscopic version of the spectroscopic vision that is so exhilarating in *Gatsby*, this broken glass also represents the shattered remains of the window through which Nick intentionally views the events of that novel. Though Dick Diver is not the narrator of *Tender Is the Night*, he reproduces Nick's intensely voyeuristic relationship to the events around him. Dick does not go to great lengths to view people through windows, but he is just as strongly stirred as Nick was by "the white excitement of the event viewed from the outside" (*TN*, p. 88). Events viewed from a distance, through a medium, have a particular charge for him, a charge that is always associated with dimly perceived women but which may have as much to do with the sensuality of perception as it does with sex. Like Nick, he finds himself following women in the street, drawn by little more than an afterimage in the corner of the eye, or a shadow: "He was in love with every pretty woman he saw now, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall" (*TN*, p. 201). He wonders himself why he is more deeply provoked by "a wraith … a fragment of my desire" (*TN*, p. 202) than by the real women he might have had, and the answer seems to have at least two contradictory parts. For Dick is drawn to the sense of possibility inherent in the unknown, "the unprobed, undissected, unanalyzed, unaccounted for" (*TN*, p. 202), but he is also strongly stimulated by the interposition of barriers, the physical versions of which—curtains, shadows—often merely symbolize more intangible impediments such as age or propriety. In the end, "the white excitement of the event viewed from the outside" comes from the tense combination of these two feelings, of perception held in a state of heightened temptation, which is essentially spectatorial, if not particularly cinematic. Thus it is appropriate that the girl who finally pushes him over the edge is a movie actress, one whose practical unavailability may merely stand for a more important, and more enticing, unavailability as an image on the screen. All the women that Dick sees and desires as "shadows on a wall" are versions of Rosemary in this sense, projected women viewed on a screen even if they are physically present.

Even the repetitive, serial nature of the women in Dick's life seems implicitly cinematic: Nicole is reproduced by Rosemary, who is followed

by "that special girl" (*TN*, p. 174) whom Dick always seems to see out of the corner of his eye, or even behind him where he can't actually see at all. The endlessness of the series is a large part of its appeal, but Dick, perhaps because he is the creation of a much older Fitzgerald, is far more conscious than Nick of the tendency of the series to collapse on itself. Thus the most explicit cinematic metaphor in *Tender Is the Night* seems a purposeful, even literal, reversal of the most explicit such metaphor in *The Great Gatsby.* Where Nick imagines Long Island flowering "just as things grow in fast movies," Dick reflects that "for him time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush, like the quick re-wind of a film" (*TN*, p. 180). At first this seems a simple repetition, as Fitzgerald turns once again to cinema for a metaphor of accelerated time, but something happens midsentence, and he somehow comes up with a deeply inappropriate analogy: rewind instead of fast forward. Yet this slip does express the exact shape of Dick's life and career, which declines and repeats at the same time, in ever narrowing arcs, and it also describes quite efficiently the difference between *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*, where the endlessness of the series leads not into an unlimited future but down into the tight prison of repetitive madness. The power of film to reproduce, which is so much a part of the spell it can cast, comes to be seen as the compulsion to repeat, and the medium that had seemed to offer so much freedom, not just to the eye, symbolizes impotence and failure.

Oddly twisted as it is, the analogy of the "quick rewind" also offers a peculiarly appropriate metaphor for the narrative structure of the novel, which is turned back on itself in such a tortured way that readers and scholars have often preferred the more streamlined edition published under Malcolm Cowley's direction in 1951.[38] There is a major flashback at the beginning of book 2, which doubles back to tell the story of Dick Diver's early life, and which many reviewers complained was strategically misplaced. Within this flashback there is yet another, covering about four pages (*TN*, pp. 121–125), in which Dick falls into a muse at Franz Gregorovius's desk and somehow recalls with photographic precision several letters he had received from Nicole at the beginning of their acquaintance. Beside these temporal shifts, there are a number of other breaks in the narrative continuity of the novel, including several abrupt shifts in point of view. Strictly speaking, *Tender Is the Night*has an omniscient, third-person narrator, but the narration of the opening chapters is so closely associated with Rosemary's point of view that when it starts to wander it must be conspicuously wrenched back: "To resume Rosemary's point of view … " (*TN*, p. 28) Yet there is a

permanent shift to Dick's point of view not very much later, rather abruptly at the beginning of chapter 12. This is itself interrupted by three pages of Nicole's interior monologue, which serves as a strange suture to bring the narrative back to 1925 after Dick's long flashback.

If there is any method to this narrative mess at all, it may very well be that of madness. Parts 1 and 2 each end with a character in breakdown: Nicole gibbering in the bathroom at Tarmes in the first case, Dick raving against the Italian police in the second. The suggestion that there is an analogy between the narrative instability of the novel and the mental instability of the characters makes sense if both are suffering primarily from reminiscences. The inappropriate, disturbing flashbacks in the narrative seem to be large-scale structural versions of that peculiar process Dick describes as a "fast rewind," especially since both novel and character seem to slip unknowingly into the wrong gear. If a certain kind of madness can be described as the inability to escape unpleasant memories and the involuntary repetition of physical behaviors caused by those memories, then both the characters and the text of *Tender Is the Night* can be considered mad.

By this definition, Dick is far more truly disturbed than Nicole, his wife and ostensible patient. Afflicted throughout the novel by memories, flashbacks, and repetitions of all kinds, Dick is most powerfully affected by an experience that is not even actually his own. Told by Collis Clay about a highly conjectural episode in which Rosemary misbehaves with another man in a closed train compartment, Dick is carried away on "waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation" (*TN*, p. 88). Somehow, he is forced both to witness and to reenact this event endlessly, the line of dialogue he imagines for his rival— "Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?"—standing both for the suspicion that tortures him and for his own desire to witness life as projected on a screen. Dick cannot get this scene out of his mind, and he cannot stop repeating the line that he imagines for it, partly because he cannot separate his desire to possess Rosemary from his desire to see her as possessed, and thus he becomes a kind of filmed image of himself, stuck in rewind.

The odd, dual role of the curtain, which is both an actual curtain, obscuring the scene, and a figurative screen on which the scene is projected, reveals the twisted nature of Dick's desire for Rosemary, who appeals to him even in the most innocent of times primarily as an image. At their first meeting, she is said to live "in the bright blue worlds of his eyes" (*TN*, p. 12), and the important stages of their relationship are all performances, including the one on actual film, when they come together before the image of Rosemary as *Daddy's Girl* (*TN*, p. 68). The

uncanny, rather smarmy way in which the film title recapitulates the actual incest that is the source of Nicole's illness also reveals how redundant Rosemary is, as if she were a filmed version of the older woman. Though it seems unnecessary for any structural purpose to repeat the story of Dick's attraction to younger women, Fitzgerald repeats it over and over, as if to underscore for his readers the fact that the attraction comes from its repetition. Dick is not attracted to the innocence of these young women but to an image of someone, not himself, possessing them, so much so that when he hears of the rape of a five-year-old girl he cannot help absurdly assuming the role of the rapist: "I want to explain to these people how I raped a 5-year-old girl. Maybe I did—" (*TN*, p. 235). Unlike Nicole's father, who is drawn, however illegitimately, to Nicole herself, Dick is drawn to incest itself, to the ingrown and repetitive nature of it, even to the distanced and removed feeling of participating in an illusion and not a real act. The secondary nature of his relations to all the women he loves recapitulates that of the narrator and in this way restages the voyeuristic nature of fiction, not as the thrill it was for Nick but rather as a kind of impotent madness.

This feeling, Fitzgerald proclaims rather loudly with the title of Rosemary's first screen success, is essentially cinematic, since on some level every film could be called *Daddy's Girl*. On the surface, Fitzgerald suggests, in a rather commonplace and priggish way, that movies are responsible for a general lowering of artistic standards in response to the "youth worship" (*TN*, p. 291) of the times, as if he were not himself one of the primary beneficiaries of this fashion.[39] Less overtly, however, Fitzgerald suggests that film infantilizes its audience not just as plot but more insidiously as form. Since it is recorded, film is incestuous at its heart, and it fosters in its audience an appetite for repetition, for the pure experience of mediation itself, which is essentially destructive because it does not even seek actual satisfaction. However superior he may be to the ordinary American filmgoer, Dick is typical of this syndrome, repeating the incest of Devereaux Warren with Nicole, then reenacting that incest with a film image, and then spiraling down through smaller and smaller circles of the same plot, in more and more obscure parts of the rural United States, where he becomes entangled with less and less prepossessing women, like a recording degraded by repeated rerecording. John Callahan calls this last, brief look at the end of Dick's life a "cinematic projection," but the cinematic technique that it resembles most is the iris shot that often narrows the last frame of a silent film to a dot or perhaps the fadeout that serves the same purpose in more recent films.[40] Or perhaps the best metaphor is Dick's own, since the

novel does seem to go into "fast rewind" at this point. In any case, "projection" does not enlarge or extend Dick's life but shrinks it past the vanishing point.

In *Tender Is the Night*, then, the spectator sees, as if through broken glass, the spatial and temporal fragmentation characteristic of the movies and the repetitive nature of the recording medium itself producing a jumbled experience that is personally and socially fatal. The most peculiar and the most particularly threatening instance of this kind of eyesight also turns out to include another element, hidden but also somehow expressed by the fragmented light. When Rosemary returns to her hotel room at the end of part 1, she finds the objects in it suddenly expressive of something she can't actually see:

> In an inhabited room there are refracting objects only half noticed: varnished wood, more or less polished brass, silver and ivory, and beyond these a thousand conveyers of light and shadow so mild that one scarcely thinks of them as that, the tops of picture-frames, the edges of pencils or ash-trays, of crystal or china ornaments; the totality of this refraction—appealing to equally subtle reflexes of the vision as well as to those associational fragments in the subconscious that we seem to hang on to, as a glass-fitter keeps the irregularly shaped pieces that may do some time—this fact might account for what Rosemary afterward mystically described as "realizing" that there was some one in the room, before she could determine it. (*TN*, p. 109)

As it happens, however, even this realization is in error, for the unseen inhabitant of the room is Jules Peterson, an Afro-Scandinavian, who is dead. The object spread out on Rosemary's bed is no longer Peterson himself but merely his "remains" (*TN*, p. in), which have to be disposed of as quickly as possible to avoid scandal. Bundled up in the bed-spread and hustled offstage, Peterson is in fact the least expressive object in the scene, serving merely as catalyst for a breakdown of relations among the three main characters in the novel.

In commonsensical terms, it does not seem that an uninhabited room should look much different from an inhabited one, and so it is not at all clear how Rosemary can become aware of Peterson's body simply by half noticing the highlights bouncing off reflective surfaces. It seems more likely that she has unconsciously reversed the process, half-noticing Peterson's body and then suddenly perceiving the objects in the room as already perceived by someone else. As Sartre suggests, things as seen by

another seem visually different to us, "traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object."[41] Since Peterson is very obviously dead, however, he cannot see anything, and so it may be the intimation of someone else's view of the scene that obtrudes itself on Rosemary. In fact, Rosemary is very used to looking at things in this secondary way, since she is an actress, trained by looking at herself in films. When the melodramatic appearance of Peterson's body transforms her otherwise ordinary hotel room into a crime scene, Rosemary immediately begins to imagine herself in a movie, and to see her room as if it had been photographed and presented to an audience.[42]

At the rawest, most physical level, the vision that Rosemary has of this room is also cinematic, since the obtrusive, oddly "refracted" highlights bouncing off these objects are characteristic of camera vision and not ordinary eyesight. As Martin Kemp maintains, in a discussion speculating on the use of the camera obscura in Dutch painting of the seventeenth century,

> the camera image does typically exhibit certain visual characteristics which are not apparent, or less apparent in nature. … Nuances of light and shade which seem too diffuse or slight to register in the original scene are somehow clarified, and tonal effects gain a new degree of coherence. … Gleaming highlights exhibit a propensity to "jump" from their surfaces, particularly in foreground planes when the focus is on more distant objects. … Small highlights tend to coalesce and expand as circular globules of light, technically known as circles of confusion.[43]

In other words, Rosemary, trained as she is by looking at herself in films, sees her room suddenly as if it had been photographed, so that otherwise unnoticed highlights leap out and congregate in "circles of confusion."

Within those circles, invisible to the unaided eye, there is some sort of presence also hidden from the conscious mind. Within the optical circles of confusion, in other words, there is to be found that unknown side of ordinary life that Benjamin, in an essay published while Fitzgerald was working on *Tender Is the Night*, called the optical unconscious.[44] That Fitzgerald also associates these "subtle reflexes of the vision" with the unconscious need not imply any influence, however, for the idea was virtually a commonplace in Europe at this time. Ossip Brik put it most bluntly in the year that Fitzgerald started work on this novel: "The task of the cinema and the camera is not to imitate the human eye, but to see and record what the human eye normally does

not see."[45] What Benjamin named the optical unconscious was also celebrated by Pierre Mac Orlan as the "social fantastic," by Ernst Junger as a "second consciousness," by Tristan Tzara as the dream world of objects.[46] For these writers, camera vision introduces, precisely by breaking up the glass of ordinary vision, an unknown but no less actual world full of revolutionary possibility.

As of *The Great Gatsby* that world was also full of possibility for Fitzgerald, but in this later novel the optical unconscious is as terrifying as if it were surrounded by actual broken glass. The spectroscopic gaiety of the crowd in *Gatsby* has given way to dread of the unseen. It is another, especially telling, measure of the difference between these two books that where the one places African American characters in positions of unwonted prominence, the other puts an Afro-Scandinavian in the grip of death. This is certainly the least explicable event in a novel with a great many bizarre kinks in its narrative, but in this case at least the quasi-magical quality of the event seems to have a certain symbolic purpose. The dead black body appears here at the edge of the optical unconscious because it is that which conscious eyesight has suppressed. Its appearance is a visual parapraxis, an optical version of the slip of the tongue that thrusts the word "spic" into a glittering social scene where it does not seem to belong. Where the movies might put what apparently strikes them as the most pleasing sight possible, that of a white woman on a bed, the unconscious secretes an unwonted image, apparently its very opposite. At the end of part 1, where the narrative itself breaks down, this opposite emerges, putting death where Dick's movie narrative would have put sex, the black male body where he had repetitively installed one young woman after another.[47] Peterson is the human embodiment of what Dick tellingly calls "the Black Death" (*TN*, p. 219) later in the novel, when his love for Rosemary and his confidence have both evaporated.

Fitzgerald's biography offers all sorts of ugly reasons why Jules Peterson might have appeared in such an unappealing role. Surreal as it is, the Peterson episode is based on an actual scuffle between Fitzgerald and Louis Mitchell, a prominent African American musician and restaurant owner long resident in Paris.[48] Fitzgerald seems to have provoked a number of such drunken brawls during his stay in Europe, many of them having a distinctly racial character. The most spectacular of these is the epic battle with the Italian police that now serves as the climax of Dick Diver's breakdown in *Tender Is the Night*, a fight that in real life confirmed Fitzgerald's prejudicial notion that "die Italians have the souls of blackamoors."[49] As Felipe Smith has very ably argued,

these fights bring into the novel an obscurely realized conflict in which a “mature Aryan” (*TN*, p. 233), weakened and confused by drink, challenges a racial rival and loses.[50]

Still, it is not a very sophisticated reading strategy, nor perhaps a very fair one, to identify the character so entirely with the author, no matter how closely they share experiences, and Smiths suggestion that Peterson's body introduces into the novel the scandal of inter-racial sex actually seems a bit too sensible. Popping up as it does like a horrific jack-in-the-box, Peterson's body also serves as a wicked advertisement of Dick's own desire for Rosemary, which is one reason why it must be whisked offstage so quickly. As elsewhere in Fitzgerald's work, the racial figure that appears here represents a certain kind of license, even a pattern of social change that leads toward moral and ethical relaxation. The attraction of this sort of license for Dick is obvious, but its appearance in a black form also reveals his ambivalence, even a bit of self-disgust. Though his desire seems to liberate Dick, at least into a fantasy world of potential license, it also reveals him to himself as a material being, a body, and an increasingly aged one at that. Peterson's corpse is an advertisement of the leaden, deadly side of desire, which reduces a human being at times to nothing more than dead weight to be disposed of.

In this sense, the black body is the pivot on which Fitzgerald's hopeful ideas about modern visuality turn and confront the equally real fears caused in him by modernity in general. Even in *Tender Is the Night*, in which urban modernity often seems visually threatening and disturbing, there is a vestige of the relish for the unexpected that makes Nick such an engaging observer of the modern scene. As in *The Great Gatsby*, the element of the unexpected, of the visually amazing, is represented here by a black presence, which suggests a social reordering within the perceptual disorder brought about by the modern media. At the same time, however, Peterson's body seems to mark a real blind spot, a sight that the protagonist cannot bear to see. Where the freedom and mobility of the African Americans in *Gatsby* suggest a general release from the constraints of time and space, the dead body of Jules Peterson represents the inevitable return of these physical limitations. Here, as in the pages of *Close Up* and in the readies, the black body represents a material reality that cannot be aestheticized by any medium, no matter how modernized.

If this scene is more overtly prejudicial than similar scenes in *Gatsby*, it is also more realistic, in an ethical sense, than the rather irresponsible sensations that speed African American characters into and

out of that novel. The uncanny reappearance of Jules Peterson in Rosemary's bedroom allegorizes the reappearance of race itself in the rest of Fitzgerald's work, especially in *Tender Is the Night*, where the subject comes up again and again in ever more weirdly inappropriate ways. Race, like Peterson's murder, is a mystery that can't be solved and thus a story that has to be retold over and over. But Peterson's reappearance also allegorizes repetition itself and thus makes tangible the retrograde movement within Dick's life. The stages of Dick's decline, from this episode with Rosemary to the battle with the Italian police and even to the humiliating late visit with Mary Minghetti, have an oddly forced racial quality, as if Dick's own compulsive behavior in these scenes were being replicated at the formal level. As in its overall narrative organization, the text itself seems to suffer from compulsive repetition, attached in this case to the racial theme that seems to represent a reality that can never finally be transmuted into art.

Fitzgerald thus brings to focus on this single spot two very different feelings about a modernized visuality, motivated by two very different aspects of it. As an entirely new way of seeing, the camera seems to offer liberating revelations, but as a recording medium, film seems to lock the spectator in a closed world of repetition. Thus there has crept into Fitzgerald's spectatorial feelings the suspicion that modern visuality does not in fact offer anything new, that whatever novel sights it has to offer are balanced out only too well by the inherent incestuousness of the medium. The peculiarly confused metaphor of the "quick rewind" may therefore turn out to be unexpectedly apt, mixing as it does an intended meaning of speed and progress with the confession of repetition and regress. The "flicker" that seemed to promise so much to Nick, as it did to so many modern artists and writers, turns out to harbor within it a principle of repetition so profoundly regressive as to seem to many synonymous with death. In the end, then, it may not be that Fitzgerald loses heart and abandons his interest in the folie du voir unleashed by the camera but that he begins to fear that this particular madness is circular and constricting and thus modern only in the most ironic sense.

5 An Eyeminded People

Spectatorship in Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*

Of all the expatriate American writers of his generation, John Dos Passos had perhaps the closest acquaintance with the art movements that made Paris the capital of the international avant-garde. A student of art and architecture, Dos Passos was an illustrator and set designer as well as a writer, and this practical involvement seems to have made him particularly responsive to the changes that transformed the arts early in this century. The Armory Show of 1913 was, as he put it, looking back from the standpoint of the middle 1930s, "a jolt," and the work he saw later in Paris by Picasso, Modigliani, Marinetti, and Chagall seemed like missiles fired from behind "cubist barricades."[1] These experiences seem to have contributed to the extraordinary visual orientation of Dos Passos's great trilogy *U.S.A.*, which achieved its early notoriety and remains well known primarily for its experimental use of visual techniques such as montage.

Dos Passos also brought to his use of montage a close acquaintance with the actual practice of filmmaking. His knowledge of Eisenstein, whom he met during a visit to Russia in 1928, has long been considered a source of his interest in film technique, but it is also quite possible that he became acquainted at the same time with the work of Dziga Vertov, whose writings on the "Kino Eye" seem very close in spirit to the celebrated "Camera Eye" sections of *U.S.A.*[2] Vertov s *Man with a Movie Camera*, which appeared while Dos Passos was in Russia, anticipates the "Camera Eye" sections in a number of ways, most notably in its self-conscious obsession with the camera itself, which often becomes the most important character in the film. Years later, Dos Passos had a chance to work on a film himself, and though this project, the Joris

Ivens film eventually released as *The Spanish Earth*, was hardly a success for Dos Passos, it did at least give him a chance to train his own camera eye on a scene of social and political struggle.[3]

As taken as he was by the formal possibilities of these innovations in the visual arts, however, Dos Passos was also aware that they were accompanied by social changes that were at the very least politically and aesthetically ambiguous. The Armory Show was such a shock, as he said in the middle 1930s, because it confronted a society in which even the more conventional visual arts were very thinly distributed:

> The people my parents knew had hardly any direct visual stimulants at all. There were engravings on the walls and illustrated magazines and reproductions of old masters even, but the interest in them was purely literary. The type of drawing current in the late nineteenth century had such meager conventions of representation that it tended to evoke a set of descriptive words instead of a direct visual image.

Since that time, he says, "a change has come over the visual habits of Americans," a change so thorough and so widespread that "from being a wordminded people we are becoming an eyeminded people."[4] The visual awakening that Dos Passos dates in his own case from the Armory Show and which he associates in his own life with the "cubist barricades" is mirrored, as he says in a number of different places, by a more general awakening caused by new techniques in marketing and advertising: "In New York the visual attack of the showwindows of Fifth Avenue stores almost equals in skill and scope that of the windows of the picture dealers on the Rue de la Boètie in the heyday of the school of Paris."[5] But this is not just a coincidental parallel. Shop windows resemble modernist paintings because "the discoveries of cubists and sur-realists in painting have become the commonplace of the window-dresser and designer."[6] Dos Passos was aware, in other words, that the innovations exhibited at the Armory Show had coincided with and were in time consumed by innovations in technology, marketing, and entertainment that extended and provoked a visual appetite that had barely existed at the turn of the century.

For Dos Passos, the subsumption of avant-garde techniques within this newly industrialized and commercialized visuality was clearly retrogressive. In fact, the whole turn of an "eyeminded people" toward ever more powerful visual representations distressed him. As early as 1925, he was lamenting the power of "the movies and radio and subsequent mechanical means of broadcasting entertainment and propaganda" insofar

as they drove out of existence "what might be called the arts of direct contact." Live drama, sporting events, and jazz dancing still provided what "the chilly fantasmagoria of the movies" could not: palpable social experience.[7] Like Lippmann, among many other writers before and since, Dos Passos feared the mechanical intermediation that movies and radio insert between human beings both because it obscures the real relations within society and because it seems to put those relations beyond human control: "We're not men enough to run the machines we've made."[8] It is, in short, "mass production" that Dos Passos fears and mistrusts, especially as it has begun to produce ideas and experiences in addition to more tangible products. For an "eyeminded people" is not awakened to the world by the expansion of its visual sense but is actually separated from it, screened from it, by visual representations whose immediacy is paradoxically and impossibly greater than that which they represent.

Dos Passos was thus politically and socially mistrustful of the very techniques he put to such innovative use in *U.S.A.* His ambivalence presents an opportunity, however, to investigate the complex relationship of aesthetic modernism to the larger modernity of which it was a part and which it helped in turn to shape. This is especially true in that Dos Passos's politics, and the politics of *U.S.A.*, relate so uncertainly to the aesthetic modernism of which he was such a pronounced proponent. At least on the surface, the formal enthusiasm for popular visual arts like photography and newsreels so evident in *U.S.A.* corresponds directly to the populism of its content, for *U.S.A.* is unusual among modernist masterpieces in being unabashedly on the left. In a way, then, *U.S.A.* might almost seem a kind of throwback to a time when the avant-garde in art and politics could be thought to coexist, instead of contradicting one another as they seem to do in the works of writers like Pound and Eliot. In time, of course, Dos Passos became notorious for a conservatism every bit as deep as Eliot's, and it may be that this turn can be glimpsed in the half-submerged mistrust with which he views the popular forms on which he bases *U.S.A.* Or it may be that the three-way relationship of avant-garde art, popular visual entertainment, and populist politics is too complex for these easy equations and that reading *U.S.A.* carefully is one of the best ways to find this out.

Though *U.S.A.* is composed in four different formats, including fictional narration and factual biography, the "Camera Eye" sections and the vaguely historical montage sections called newsreels have always drawn the most attention. When a selection from *U.S.A.* appeared in

Esquire in 1936, an editor's note called the piece a "verbal equivalent of the inclusive techniques of photography."[9] It is common even now to associate the trilogy with the documentary movements of the 1930s, on the supposition that it takes an objective visual approach to social issues of the time. In this, critics are simply taking the trilogy at its word, for the "Camera Eye" and "Newsreel" sections are certainly meant to give the impression of unmediated visual documents.

One of the first results of a careful reading of *U.S.A.*, however, is the suspicion that it is not nearly so visual as it claims to be. The "Newsreel" sections, for example, seem to be misnamed, for they are not actually newsreels at all. As every quick and cursory description of the "Newsreel" sections says, they are made up of newspaper headlines, stories clipped from newspapers, and scraps of song lyrics. As Donald Pizer notes in his study of the trilogy, Dos Passos constructed these sections by physically clipping bits from newspapers of the day and arranging the bits in a loose collage.[10] In doing so, Dos Passos is simply following what had been a common avant-garde practice since Picasso and Braque had first inserted such clippings into their paintings.[11] In this case, however, the visual impact of the type has entirely displaced any pictorial elements, so that the "Newsreel" sections resemble a printed page much more than a series of photographs. How Dos Passos's composition process was supposed to result in a newsreel, which is after all a montage of pictures and not a collage of words, is one of the major mysteries of the composition of the trilogy, as uncritical repetition of this inappropriate title is one of the major mysteries of its reception. Dos Passos himself seemed to think of newsreels in terms of sound and not in terms of pictures, which is especially odd, considering that for most of the time covered by the trilogy the newsreels would have been silent. As he said late in his life, "The Newsreels were intended to give the clamor, the sound of daily life. In the Biographies, I tried to produce the pictures."[12] This seems to shift the emphasis very much toward the song lyrics that make up a significant part of every newsreel section, but in doing so it makes even more questionable the title Dos Passos chose to give them.

Perhaps Dos Passos was less interested in the visual quality of newsreels than in what Brian Winston has called a "newsreel notion of what counts as news."[13] Newsreels were notoriously bereft of anything that could be considered actual news, concentrating instead on scandals, ceremonies, sporting events, and human interest stories. As Siegfried Kracauer huffed in 1928, "the 'newsreels' spliced together by various well-known companies—shots of ship christenings, destructive fires,

sports events, parades, and idyllic scenes of children and animals—may well contain items of current news, but certainly not events worth watching a hundred times."[14] Actually, Dos Passos's newsreels usually contain a decent ration of important world events, interlarded with publicity stunts, crime stories, and sports, an amalgamation that in certain instances they seem to mock overtly:

clad only in kimono girl bathers shock dairy lunch instead of first class cafe on amusement dock heavy losses shown in US crop report Italians cheered as Austrians leave hot rolls in haste to get away giant wall of water rushes down valley professor says Beethoven gives the impression of a juicy steak.[15]

The "newsreel notion of what counts as news" does not, in this version at least, exclude important world events so much as it puts them on the same level as "girl bathers," a "giant wall of water," and a "juicy steak." Beethoven, a crop report, and the Austrian withdrawal from Italy all occupy about the same mental space as the hot rolls in a first-class café. Obviously, Dos Passos is telling his readers that information offered in this way is meant to be consumed, not considered.

It is perhaps in this extended sense, then, that the newsreel sections can be considered "visual." For the newsreels create and then speak to "an eyeminded people," to an audience that has been encouraged to look rather than to read. Reading implies sequence, hierarchy, causality, all the effects of the basically linear organization of print. When Dos Passos cuts up and spatially rearranges the words from his newspapers he is acting out the triumph of a spatial organization, a visual organization, in which elements can be arranged in many different ways without any particular consequence. Subtracted along with sequence, however, is the causality that might make events intelligible and, along with it, the space in which the observer's own actions might have perceptible effect. In other words, Dos Passos is not as interested in representing the appearance of the visual, a rather difficult matter for a book in any case, as he is in representing the effects of it on social life. And these effects are decidedly ambiguous, leading out toward a revolutionary reorganization of modern life and at the same time backward into a regressive and implicitly conservative repetition.

Similar mixed feelings may lie behind the "Camera Eye" sections, which are also a good deal less overtly and literally visual than their title implies. Dos Passos claimed in his 1937 introduction to *The42ndParallel* that the "Camera Eye" sections were "to indicate the position of the observer,"[16] and a few of these sections do carry out this program by

rendering as narrative the visual experience of a particular individual. Camera Eye 3, for example, limits itself to the immediate visual impressions of a "little boy," transcribed as directly and naively as possible: "it's black dark and the blue tassel bobs on the edge of the dark shade shaped like a melon and everywhere there are pointed curved shadows" (p. 29). But there are in fact many more "Camera Eye" sections that are predominantly or even exclusively aural, some of which might more appropriately have been named for the phonograph: "and the needle went rasp rasp and far away a band played and out of a grindy noise in the little black horn came *God Save the King* and the little dogs howled" (p. 56).[17] Dos Passos rather frequently has his Camera Eye record onomatopoeic sounds like the rasp of the phonograph needle or the airraid siren that goes "ayayoooTO" in Camera Eye 34 (p. 509), and he also rather frequently focuses attention on the ears of his observer: "ears dazed by the crash of alien gongs the chuckle of rattles the piping of incomprehensible flutes the swing and squawk of ununderstandable talk" (p. 932). Other "Camera Eye" sections seem devoted exclusively to the other senses, as Camera Eye 9 concentrates on smells: "all day the fertilizerfactories *[sic]* smelt something awful … and the smell of cornstalks and the reek of rotting menhaden from the fertilizer factories" (pp. 86–87). Taking the camera eye metaphor literally is, of course, a senseless procedure in any work of literature, much less a work as various as *U.S.A.*, but even taking it seriously becomes difficult when so many of the sections insist so obviously on sensory experience that a camera cannot record.

Apparently the camera eye metaphor meant something else to Dos Passos besides pure visual impressionism. Part of what it may have meant is indicated by a comment in a late interview to the effect that the "Camera Eye" sections were "a safety valve for my own subjective feelings."[18] This helps to make some sense of these enigmatic sections, for they do seem to concern a single protagonist who can be addressed as "Jack" (p. 369), as Dos Passos was, and who shares with Dos Passos a great many particular experiences. But it is a peculiar comment in at least one other respect, since it has been more common, from Fox Talbot right down to Roland Barthes, to consider the camera as essentially objective rather than subjective. At the time when *U.S.A.* was published, of course, cameras inevitably suggested documentary realism of the kind made so famous by Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange. In literature, particularly in American literature, the camera is associated more usually with this kind of realism than with the sort of impressionistic interior monologues that constitute the "Camera Eye" sections of

U.S.A.[19] There are certainly some other celebrated associations of an intensely subjective first-person narration with the camera, notably Christopher Isherwood's in *Goodbye to Berlin*, but even here lip service is paid to the conventional notion that the camera is a disengaged and dispassionate recording instrument.

Actually, Isherwood's use of the camera metaphor brings out one of the more important discontinuities in it, particularly in the 1930s, when documentary photography was somehow supposed to be simultaneously objective and engaged. For the supremely confident, simply recording reality was a politically committed act, since the truth of social conditions could ostensibly be read straight from the face of things, but for those, like Isherwood, who were less sure, observation was almost essentially distinct from action. The objectivity of the camera eye becomes a kind of subjectivity, not because it is slanted or distorted but because it is isolated and detached. And this seems very close to what Dos Passos has in mind in associating his camera eye with a subjective point of view: that there is something structurally isolating in eyesight itself, something that the camera exaggerates by separating the other senses from the visual, physical presence from the act of seeing, and one moment in time from every other.

Eyesight is associated with this kind of isolation even before the first “Camera Eye” section, before the trilogy itself properly begins. The introductory vignette that Dos Passos wrote in 1937 to help frame the finished trilogy sets an unnamed young man walking through a crowd “with greedy eyes, greedy ears taut to hear, by himself, alone” (p. 1). The eyes, in fact, never receive the “answering flicker of eyes” they search for, “only the ears busy to catch the speech are not alone” (p. 2). Because, as Dos Passos famously says at the end of this vignette, “U.S.A. is the speech of the people” (p. 3), sociality is inherently aural, which seems to make the visual, especially the silent visual contact of the modern crowd, inherently isolating. As the trilogy progresses, then, other eyes seem less to answer the Camera Eye than to threaten it. From the “old men bowing with quick slit eyes” (p. 90) in Camera Eye 10 to the “big man with eyes angry in a big pumpkinface who sits and stares at us” (p. 1209) in Camera Eye 51, the trilogy assembles a crowd of hostile eyes, or rather a string of them, like “the probing eyes jerking along in the rush hours in front of her like beads on a string” (p. 876) that depress Mary French. Thus many of the “Camera Eye” sections seem in a sense to turn the camera around and focus it on the ostensible observer, so that these sections are not about looking but rather about the discomfort of being looked at. Of course, the two experiences cannot be so

neatly separated, and one of Dos Passos's points seems to be that multiplying and extending the experience of looking sooner or later makes everything seem already looked at, a quality it wears almost as if it were the look itself. Thus the one who stares lives in a world of stares, and the camera ends up recording a kind of general self-consciousness, on both sides of the lens, that comes from living with cameras around.

The Camera Eye persona, in other words, represents a particular kind of subjectivity, the kind also explored with such ambivalence by Fitzgerald, a self-consciousness polarized to the rest of the world by mutual regard. It's a self-consciousness that sometimes shrinks to a point under its own examination, as when the persona, sitting in a trench somewhere near the Marne, feels his "shyly tingling fingers feel out the limits of the hard immortal skull under the flesh … inside the new khaki uniform inside my twentyoneyearold body" (p. 421). What eye-sight tends to do in these vignettes is trace out the boundary of this self-consciousness, as when "daylight enlarges … into my sweet darkness" at the beginning of Camera Eye 39 and virtually forces the eyelids open (p. 649) or, more revealingly, after the Paris General Strike of 1919 when the protagonist finds himself peeping "out from under the sliding shutter that's down over the door into the hard rain on the empty streets" (p. 700). There is perhaps a submerged pun on "shutter" in this particular episode, one that makes the shutter of the camera eye into a kind of barrier, a barricade, behind which the persona can hide, where the desire to look out contends with the dread of being seen. The utter disengagement of this particular camera eye from the revolutionary events around it illustrates again the way the progressive possibilities of the new visual media give way to isolation, impotence, and retrogression.

This spectatorial notion of the self is based in part on the experience of a tiny group of American expatriate writers, who felt isolated as college students in the United States because they were incipient aesthetes and then even more isolated in Europe because they were expatriates. It was a group that, according to Malcolm Cowley, derived much of its character from the experience of noncombatant service in World War I, an experience that was shared by Dos Passos, Hemingway, e. e. cummings, Harry Crosby, Louis Bromfield, Robert Hillyer, Dashiell Hammett, and Cowley himself, not to mention the persona of the "Camera Eye" sections of *U.S.A.* The chief result of this experience was what Cowley calls "a *spectatorial* attitude." Observing the war from a distance, unsafe though it may have been, turned them into "watchers" of what seemed "a special circus … a spectacle." Cowley clearly

considers this spectatorial attitude to be part of the “monumental indifference” that the 1930s would have to wring out of the remnants of the 1920s, part of a class attitude peculiar to young Harvard men of the prewar era, who had grown up with the idea that their lives were charmed and couldn't shake it even for something like a war.[20] Even as limited a contextualization as this goes to show that the isolating subjectivity of the Camera Eye is in some sense also an objective condition, related to general social changes. For Dos Passos, however, those changes are not limited to obvious calamities like the war, and they have an effect well beyond the lost generation that acquired its spectatorial attitude along the fringes of it.

The spectatorial Camera Eye is actually just an especially intense case of the “eyemindedness” that Dos Passos decried in 1936, while he was finishing *U.S.A.* The problem of the trilogy is not just the decay of language, as has been persuasively argued by a number of critics, but the replacement of language in the social world by visual imagery and the attendant change when Americans shift from being “a wordminded people” to being “an eyeminded people.” The breadth and depth of this change can be seen when the working-class characters in the trilogy go to the movies. In the earliest stages of the Charley Anderson narrative, Charley and his girlfriend Emiscah are turned to “jelly inside” by *Birth of a Nation* (p. 331). Later in the trilogy, Joe Williams and Delia have the same experience at *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (pp. 416–417), but in this case their excitement is mixed up with the “Belgian war pictures.” The excitement that they feel with “the war and everything flickering on the screen” is clearly sexual, but it is also oddly isolating and enervating: “Del said wasn't it terrible and Joe started to tell her about what a guy he knew had told him about being in an air raid in London but she didn't listen” (p. 416). As excited as they are, the characters are actually connected to one another only through the screen, in a way that anticipates Guy Debord's analysis of thirty years later: “Spectators are linked only by a one-way relationship to the very center that maintains their isolation from one another.”[21] When Dos Passos laments the demise of the “arts of contact,” he does so at least in part because these arts, unlike movies and the radio, help keep their audiences in contact and thus foster a viable social world.

An even more serious isolation striking an eyeminded people is, however, an isolation in time. In 1927, Dos Passos complained:

> One of the most extraordinary things about industrial society of the present day is its idiot lack of memory. Tabloids and movies

take the place of mental processes, and revolts, crimes, despairs pass off in a dribble of vague words and rubber stamp phrases without leaving a scratch on the mind of the driven instalment-paying, subway-packing mass.[22]

Thus Dos Passos echoes Kracauer's analysis of about the same time:"the flood of photos sweeps away the dams of memory."[23] For Kracauer, photography, which isolates one moment out of the stream of time, is simply incapable of rendering reality with any of its significance intact, but its visual images are so powerful that they actually supplant authentic memories, leaving the modern audience with a kind of amnesia. Thus the Camera Eye persona seems to carry nothing with him from segment to segment, so much so that it would be difficult to argue, without the parallel episodes from Dos Passos's own life, that these segments do in fact represent a single character. But the same is true of the far more naturalistic characters in the narrative sections of *U.S.A.*, who travel much more continuously in time but manage to retain just as little of it.

In fact, it would not be far wrong to say that the narrative of *U.S.A.* itself suffers from "an idiot lack of memory." As Donald Pizer has noted in his excellent study of the trilogy, each narrative segment seems experientially isolated from all the others, even the others devoted to the same principal character. There is no narrative summary or recapitulation, indeed no reference at all from segment to segment, no sense of surprise when some new twist of fate takes a character on a wholly unexpected path, no sense of recognition when prior acquaintances reappear.[24] Without this kind of cross-reference, the lives of the characters are lived in what Michael Denning calls "a kind of continuous present"[25] in which actions have no consequences and effort no effect against the general, vague tidal pull of disaster and death. Even within this continuous present, the characters are frequently surprised by their own actions, as if they were as incapable of anticipation or reflection as the text itself: "Before they knew it Larry and Joe were singing" (p. 492). Dos Passos's characters seem so singularly incapable of choice or agency in part because there is no time for it; swept along from one discontinuous moment to the next, they are in a state of constant, bewildered surprise: "Almost at his hotel he ran face to face into a girl who seemed remarkably pretty, before he knew it he was asking her what she was doing out so late" (p. *666).* Here the comma splice makes for a kind of rudimentary montage, a juxtaposition of moments, but it also stands in for the missing logic that would give these two moments

some causal connection. This sense of always living life one beat behind gradually builds up in the characters a general feeling of stunned defeat, a feeling Joe Williams sums up by saying, "All my future's behind me" (p. 297). Joe's practical failure is thus directly related to his inability to recognize the present until it is upon and then past him.

A metaphor frequently used by critics for this inexorable yet atomized kind of time is that of the assembly line, a metaphor that ClaudeEdmonde Magny intriguingly mixes with another: "this fate is always the same goddess in different disguises, the same one that alternately exalts and casts down the characters of *U.S.A.*, that turns the cameras with the toc-toc of a coffee grinder or a machinegun."[26] The suggestion in Magny's odd metaphor is that the turning camera does not simply record but actually produces the behavior of the characters in *U.S.A.*, that the movie camera is a kind of assembly line of behavior. It is, in other words, the quick rewind so unconsciously deprecated by Fitzgerald, a pattern of repetition begun in film and then extended to the lives of its viewers. The assembly line and the camera share a rhythm, an inexorably steady repetition of the same, but the camera extends this rhythm from work to play, from the factory to the whole of life. In other words, the temporal and experiential discontinuity of the lives in *U.S.A.* is a feature not merely of their having been lived under industrialism but also of their having been lived in a field of vision delimited by the camera. The spectatorial consciousness that seems so peculiar a feature of the Camera Eye persona is in fact characteristic of the whole varied population of *U.S.A.*, a population whose "eyemindedness" is apparent not just in its visual habits but also in the very structure of its experience. All the revolutionary possibility that was so exciting to artists like Vertov is lost, not just because movies become an industrialized entertainment form but also because mechanical recording is by nature conservative and repetitious.

If this is the case, however, the structure of *U.S.A.* itself seems to acquire a fairly equivocal significance. For what purpose would the trilogy pay homage in its own forms to the social and aesthetic forces responsible for the paralysis of its characters? Or are these forms, the "Camera Eye" sections and the newsreels in particular, to be read as satirical, cautionary, even homeopathic, in their relation to spectacle? Has Dos Passos tried to confine in one sprawling work the mixed feelings about modern media society that Fitzgerald spreads out over *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night?*. A great deal of the celebrity of *U.S.A.* comes, of course, from the excitement caused by its modernistic reference to cameras and newsreels and its mimicry of film montage.

What to make of the disjunction between this excitement and the hopeless, even nihilistic, view taken of the life lived in a spectatorial society? It is precisely in posing this last question that *U.S.A.* becomes most interesting, for this is the question posed by most important modernist works, most obviously by *The Waste Land*. In what way could modernist works of art derive their own sense of exhilarated technical freedom from social conditions that also seemed to mean oppression and even experiential paralysis? And what relationship would the aesthetic freedom thus wrung from social conditions bear to any more general freedom? Answering these questions seems to be one of the most important, if one of the most thoroughly submerged, ambitions of *U.S.A.*

When the trilogy finally hits the low point toward which it has been spiraling for over a thousand pages, when Sacco and Vanzetti are executed, the Camera Eye gives up observation for oratory and cries out “all right we are two nations” (p. 1157), thus identifying what has been the great flaw underlying all the little faults in *U.S.A.*: class division. It is not just the case that working-class lives are different from those of the managerial intelligentsia, or that these are so isolated from one another, but that they seem to suffer in two completely incompatible ways. The central feature of working-class life in *U.S.A.* is its isolation. Dos Passos's quintessential working-class characters are actually vagrants and wanderers: Fainy McCreary in *The 42nd Parallel*, Joe Williams in 1919; Ben Compton in 1919 and *The Big Money*, and finally the anonymous “Vag” whose story frames the trilogy. In some cases, Dos Passos seems to want to attach a little of the romance of the road to the futile wanderings of his working-class characters; in others the irony of their isolation rises to the surface. This is particularly true of Ben Compton, who works most assiduously toward a class solidarity, only to be split off, turned out, and driven from pillar to post by the law. The fitfulness of working-class association thus becomes one of the understated tragedies of the trilogy, and one of its critiques, for the isolated, formless wanderings of these characters are surely meant to represent the social and temporal atomization that industrialism visits on those it turns into individuals and the strategic way it pits individuality against the class organization that might bring actual change. For the middle-class characters, on the other hand, the great danger is not isolation but conformity. The ruin of characters like Charley Anderson and Richard Ellsworth Savage occurs at parties, not on the road, and the sickness they sufFer from begins when they are drawn easily and effortlessly

into some large organization that gradually extracts both individuality and self-respect.

That this class division is also a stratification, that the middle-class characters suffer from what is in other terms sheer luxury while working-class suffering, ironic though it may be, is still indistinguishable from unadulterated want, is not lost on Dos Passos, who depicts this difference quite graphically at the end of the trilogy, when the transcontinental air passenger, stuffed full of business and pleasure, vomits it all back into his empty lunch container, while the vagrant waits all alone in the desert below, without anything, even a ride (p. 1240). And it is rather frequently simply this stratification that matters, for characters like Savage and Anderson are often alone and very lonely, even as they become mere office functionaries, and characters like Mac and Joe feel the pull of conformity as well, most often in the form of matrimony. At the same time, however, the division splits apart for examination what Dos Passos clearly feels are contradictory effects of capitalism, which welds together and splits apart at the same time, isolating its workers in the very act of fixing them in functional positions. To map these two effects off onto different classes is in one sense a confusion, but it is also a useful device for exposing a division that Dos Passos feels is more fundamental than class itself.

The same division is represented formally in the trilogy by the "Camera Eye" and "Newsreel" sections. For Dos Passos, these apparently represented a fundamental contrast between individual and collective experience: " *The Camera Eye* aims to indicate the position of the observer and *Newsreel* to give an inkling of the common mind of the epoch."[27] It seems to go without saying that these will be somehow distinct from one another, that two quite different techniques are required to represent individual and collective experience. On the one hand, the "Camera Eye" sections evoke the snapshot, made and apparently consumed in private; on the other hand, the "Newsreel" sections replicate film, which is not only a formal amalgamation of still pictures but also a form that is made and consumed collectively. At the same time, however, these two techniques are ostensibly derived from the same source, the camera, which seems naturally associated with individual isolation on the one hand and with collective experience on the other. The truth of the matter, of course, is that the camera has conspired with capitalism in such a way as to make its contradictions more painful and less obvious at the same time. The machine-made individuality that emerges from the snapshot is easy to amalgamate into a movie crowd, and the crowd quite easily dissolves into distant individuals, especially

since the conditions of moviegoing already prevent individuals from seeing one another or conversing. The contradictory and yet necessary relationship between loneliness and conformity is thus cemented more firmly into place by visual habits that the camera has made pervasive.

If it is true, then, as J. Ward Moorhouse says rather vauntingly in 1919, that "there isn't any public since the war" (p. 617), it is also the case that there aren't any real individuals, and the force behind this paradox is to be found very largely in Moorhouse himself. In fact, Moorhouse stands in the place, both formally and sociologically, left empty by the demise of the public. Characters who otherwise have almost nothing in common, like Joe Williams, whose sister gives her life as secretary to Moorhouse, and Richard Ellsworth Savage, who becomes Moorhouses chief toady, find a connection in him. But the connection is in every way a false one, for it robs individuals of their independence without giving them any common interest in return. When Moorhouse insists on "the eradication of prejudice" (p. 1171), he is quoting almost directly from the real public relations counsel Edward Bernays, and he means by this eradication precisely what Bernays meant: the erasure from the public of its memory, its character, so that advertising could work its will on the blank consciousness of a faceless individual. Turning individuality into this sort of blankness is the first step in merging it back into a uniform collectivity.

In the forefront and among the first to be enlisted, Moorhouses natural associates and also his obvious targets are the young people of Dos Passoss generation who had already thrown off their prejudices in favor of what they fancied were "private morals" (p. 688). The young people in *U.S.A.* so naturally follow a path from aestheticism to expatriation to advertising in part because they are simply mimicking the path actually taken by young modernists such as Cowley.[28] Not surprisingly, that path is usually represented as a decline or at least as a compromise, so that "the poet-advertiser" serves, according to Michael Denning, as a cautionary obsession for a whole generation of American writers.[29] But Dos Passos actually seems to see a kind of ironic fulfillment in the way the desire of someone like Savage to be a "private individual" (p. 686) leads him, by a series of abdications and self-indulgences, to a life in public relations. In the end, as Sartre points out, there is simply nothing left of the individual Savage once set out to be: "There is no single one of Dick's or of Eleanors gestures which is not a public demonstration, performed to a humming accompaniment of flattery." As Sartre goes on to explain, Savage has simply become an advertisement, a newspaper notice, reporting or declaring his reactions instead of experiencing

them.[30] He is also, at this point, an utter cad, whose individualism has congealed around a single principle, as enunciated by his female alter ego, Eveline Hutchins, "Never do anything difficult" (p. 692). This purely privative notion of the private leads in one direction to Eveline's suicide and in the other to Savage's intellectual and moral extinction in Moorhouse's ad agency, where Savage is so successful precisely because he has first practiced on himself the erasure he now visits on his audience.

Along with these life histories, Dos Passos also charts the transformation of the art that played such a large role in them. The drift of young would-be poets and artists like Savage and Hutchins toward advertising also represents the adaptation of modernist techniques to the demands of business, an adaptation Dos Passos was already talking about as he worked on the trilogy:

> The music of Stravinski and Prokofieff and Diageleff's Ballet hail from this same Paris already in the disintegration of victory, as do the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue, skyscraper furniture, the Lenin Memorial in Moscow, the paintings of Diego Rivera in Mexico City and the newritz styles of advertising in American magazines.[31]

What Dos Passos himself calls "newritz styles of advertising" Moor-house calls "a modern campaign of scientific publicity" (p. 625), and though it is a little difficult to tell what such a campaign would have looked like within the fictional world of *U.S.A.*, Moorhouse's own speech patterns tell a great deal. For Moorhouse speaks in fluent ellipsis: "I think he can be brought to appreciate the advantages connected with the name … dignity … established connections … " (p. 1172). The disconnection of Moorhouse's speech into asyntactical nuggets is itself a bizarre kind of montage, and it represents both the influence of montage on advertising and the penetration of that advertising aesthetic into Moorhouse's own consciousness. Even in what pass for intimate moments, Moorhouse speaks in the same elliptical style: "why, I'm an old newspaper man myself … Eveline, permit me to say that you look so charming and understanding … this illness of my wife … poor Gertrude … I'm afraid she'll never be herself again … " (p. 624). And it is clear from the easy way that such confidences drift into pure public relations talk, organized on the same principle, that the asyntactical disconnection of one idea from another is as much a part of the persuasive technique as any of the words employed. In fact, Dos Passos employs an ellipsis to trick the technique into exposing

itself: "my aim was to get the big interests to take the public in … to take the public into its confidence" (p. 624). Moorhouse is himself so thoroughly taken in, he has so thoroughly insulated one thought from another and himself from his listener, that he notices nothing odd in the drifting nonidentity of these two phrases. In this he is the best example of Sartre's contention that the people in *U.S.A.* speak always as if for publication, but only if it also be specified that the advertisements they speak are modernist advertisements formed on the principle of montage. In the end, even the seemingly liberating aspects of montage, which seems able to disarrange and redefine reality, lead back to the essentially isolated, spectatorial condition that cements the present into place.

If the social problem that *U.S.A.* is supposed to confront is not just class division but also the fragmentation of the public into a mass of individualized spectators, then how could the form of the trilogy itself be read except as another symptom or a collection of symptoms? If modernism itself is so thoroughly implicated in the bemusement of the public, then how would it have been any different if the partially autobiographical Savage had gone on to write *U.S.A.* instead of enlisting in Moorhouse's advertising army? Is the form of *U.S.A.* perhaps a form of despair, of acquiescence in the face of social facts, as leftwing critics have long claimed in the case of other modernist masterworks? In this case, wouldn't it also be fair to say that the modernist form of *U.S.A.* is not modern at all but backward-looking and belated, gripped by a past it cannot change?

Perhaps some unexpected answers to these questions are to be found where the trilogy violates its own form, where the boundaries between the sections give way a little and the montage form begins to reveal some of the potential that its proponents have always found in the spaces between individual elements. The narrative sections of *U.S.A.* are rife with such violations: it seems part of the atomization of capitalism, especially in its more transnational stages, that seemingly separate plot-lines will sometimes cross almost purely by accident. Thus certain characters, especially old Doc Bingham, who appears only at the very beginning and the very end of the trilogy, will reappear in new plot-lines almost as if they were entirely new to the narrative. There are often odd dislocations, shifts or jumps backward or forward in time, when characters with their own narrative lines appear suddenly in the narratives of others. Thus a considerable section of Richard Savage's story is telescoped unmercifully when it reappears again in Anne Elizabeth's chapter covering the same period of time (pp. 702–703). Joe Williams's

rueful admission, "All my future's behind me," is actually literally true for the reader, who has already seen Joe's future in the narrative of his sister Janey. The sense of asynchrony this gives, as if the characters were all living at slightly different speeds, reflects the isolation within which they live, the lack of a mutually referable standard, even of time, but it also makes the trilogy read rather cinematically, with flashbacks and parallel stories interrupting one another, until the main narrative becomes the story of these interruptions.

In a very few cases, however, dislocations of this kind seem to reveal something else entirely, a hidden order, a truth that is social in a very strict sense, since it seems to take more than one person to apprehend it. Such an episode, an eminently visual one, seems to occur in 1919 when an American oil tanker catches fire in the harbor at Genoa. This is one of many experiences shared by the Camera Eye persona and Richard Ellsworth Savage, who feel virtually the same misapprehension when they see the flames: "was the ancient ducal city burning?" (p. 487); "Judas Priest … the goddam town's on fire" (p. 525). But the Camera Eye persona also seems to share this experience with another character, for the strangely dislocated question fragment "why don't they scuttle her?" (p. 487) that pops up in Camera Eye 33 is quoted almost verbatim from the bosun of the tanker, with whom the Camera Eye persona has had no apparent contact. Indeed, the bosun is befriended by none other than Joe Williams, who is with him in a dinghy when he wonders out loud "Why the hell don't they scuttle her?" (p. 557). How does this rather professional-sounding comment make it from Joe's narrative to Camera Eye 33?

There is no commonsensical answer to this question, since there seems to be no way for anyone else to have overheard this conversation, transpiring as it does in a dinghy floating in the open bay. But there is a conduit of a kind between Joe's narrative and the "Camera Eye" sections, a medium between them, as it were, because Joe eventually stumbles into "a couple of Americans in khaki uniforms" (p. 559), who turn out to be Richard Ellsworth Savage and his Harvard chum Steve Warner. Not that this is at all apparent from Joe's point of view, of course, but the attentive reader will remember from an earlier section that Savage and Warner have encountered "a young fellow who was a sailor on an American boat" and who shows them "some silk stockings he'd salvaged off the burning oilship" (p. 527). In fact, this young sailor tells the two Harvard men much of the story related several chapters later in what turns out to be the concluding pages of Joe Williams's life in 1919.

Though this may seem to be simply one more random encounter in a book full of such incidents, Savage's meeting with Joe turns out to play a pivotal role in his life. Though Joe, who is quite drunk, remembers very little of the conversation that takes place, Savage recalls a long diatribe against the war: "This whole goddam war's a gold brick, it ain't on the level, its crooked from A to Z. No matter how it comes out fellers like us gets the s—*y* end of the stick, see?" (p. 527) Joe's expansive phrase "fellers like us," may or may not be meant to include Savage and Warner, who certainly have not gotten the s—y end of the stick, but Savage takes the sailor's words very much to heart notwithstanding. He later repeats them almost verbatim in a letter home, quoting Joe: "As the young fellow we had that talk with in Genoa that night said, it's not on the level, it's a dirty gold-brick game put over by governments and politicians for their own selfish interests, it's crooked from A to Z" (p. 529). Savage concludes that "if it wasn't for the censorship I could tell you things that would make you vomit," but he has already gone too far and is soon called on the carpet to explain "the tone of certain letters" (p. 535).

This is, as it turns out, the defining moment in Savage's life, for he is drummed out of the Red Cross as a pacifist. In his elaborately romantic reaction, Savage comes most closely to resemble the Camera Eye persona, quoting the same lines from Swinburne's "Song in Time of Order" to express his detestation of governments (pp. 538, 447), as well as Dos Passos himself, who had his own run-in with wartime authority over the tone of certain letters.[32] In fact, Savage seems determined to become Dos Passos, or at least constructs an elaborate daydream of "living in a sunscorched Spanish town, sending out flaming poems and manifestoes, calling young men to revolt against their butchers" (p. 538). That he does not become a famous revolutionary writer, that he does not, for that matter, write *U.S.A.*, is due to another of those unhappy accidents, in the course of which he meets an old friend, gets drunk, and sheepishly abandons his daydream of revolt. The section ends with Savage dropping overboard the compass that was to guide him into Spain (p. 540), an act that brings to a conclusion the long, tangled line of narrative that starts when Joe Williams drops his Navy uniform overboard at the very beginning of *1919*. The revolt implied in that act of desertion has finally sputtered out and died, like a torch dropped in passing from hand to hand.

However, the circuitous way that spirit of revolt moves from section to section, mode to mode, and life to life is clearly supposed to imply a different possible outcome. The random encounter between

Williams and Savage, especially the easy way Williams speaks of the two of them as "fellers like us," overcomes for a moment the class division that is the major social ill identified in *U.S.A.*. In the same process, the more or less visceral insights of an incipient working-class consciousness are passed over to someone who is actually fairly close to power and who will come to occupy a position with some influence over public opinion. But the most important insight passed over in the course of this random encounter is that it is not random at all, that the seeming disorder that characterizes wartime Europe simply disguises an order too large and impersonal to grasp. In fact, the apparently random fate that attends characters like Joe Williams, what he calls getting "the s—y end of the stick," is simply the expression of an iron necessity: it is something that always happens. Much later, when Savage is congratulated for his success, he counters "All a series of accidents" (p. 670), but the reader is well aware that it hasn't been a series of accidents at all, but the result of family pressure, military loyalty, and class privilege. And this may very well be why Savage cannot finally benefit from his meeting with Williams, because to really admit that "it ain't on the level" is to confront his own privileged status. To assert that everything is an accident is to obscure that privilege and simultaneously to obscure from himself the particular loss of freedom that privilege exacts, for Savage must also pay very dearly for being cosseted by the powers-that-be.

The way this insight must be pieced together from evidence scattered throughout the narratives and shared between the modes suggests, of course, that reading *U.S.A.* properly means penetrating its apparent randomness to the oppressive order that expresses itself in the random.[33] The very possibility of such a reading further suggests that the disorientation inherent to capitalism may sometimes overcome itself by throwing individuals, and the facts they possess, into new association with one another. The way this happens with Joe Williams and Richard Savage is dependent on the conditions of wartime Europe, which threw together people who might never have come in contact otherwise. But even these conditions are enclosed within a larger pattern of migration that keeps Williams on the run even after he deserts the Navy, and the suggestion in *U.S.A.* is that such migration exposes individuals to different classes as well as different nations. Migration, in this respect, becomes a kind of experiential montage, in which the very randomness that does sometimes disorient and confuse also occasionally throws things together in such a way as to illuminate the necessity they express.

In the case of Joe Williams and Richard Savage at least, this illumination is quite literal, for the event that brings them together is a visual

spectacle. The description of the Genoa fire in Camera Eye 33 puts particular emphasis on the visual impact it has on the crowd:

> Genoa eyes flared with the light of the burning tanker Genoa what are you looking for? the flare in the blood under the moon down the midnight streets in boys' and girls' faces Genoa eyes the question in their eyes (p. 488)

The quest and the question in this case seem frankly sexual, and the flare of the firelight seems primarily to motivate a similar flare in the blood of the boys and girls in the crowd. What the boys and girls are looking for, apparently, is some sign of sexual availability in one another. Simply by putting a question in people's eyes, however, the fire excites an interest that is not so simply carnal. The questions raised by the unexplained spectacle of the fire— "was the ancient ducal city burning?" "why don't they scuttle her?"—link the various different spectators and their accounts together and form the basis for the more important questions that arise when Williams and Savage compare notes: "This war's hell ain't it de truth?" (p. 527). Even the visceral excitement of the visual spectacle, in other words, can lead to a critical conclusion by focusing the interest of different people on the same part of the puzzle.

And yet there are certain ways of putting together this puzzle that Dos Passos seems reluctant to make explicit. There is another version of the meeting of Joe Williams and Richard Savage embedded even more deeply in the text, dispersed even more widely across its pages. Joe's half of the encounter occurs in Port of Spain, when a young man who says his name is Warren Jones catches Joe's eye and strikes up an acquaintance (p. 376). Jones is a wandering expatriate, much like Savage and his friends, and he romanticizes the expatriate life because it can produce such accidental encounters: "seeing the world like that, meeting all kinds of fellows, going to all kinds of joints, [one] must see some funny sights" (p. 380). As it turns out, however, the "funny" stuff he is most interested in is distasteful to Joe, who spurns a final, unmistakable advance and flees back to his ship. Not only is this encounter a prefiguration of his later meeting in Genoa with Savage and Warner but also it is the source of the abused motto he passes on to them almost two hundred pages later: "Whatever happens, wherever you are, the seaman gets the s—y end of the stick" (p. 383). In its original context, the metaphor has a graphic, though apparently unconscious, sexual connotation, which is not in fact at all inappropriate, since Jones so clearly uses his wealth and class status to sexual advantage. What he rather lamely tries

to typify as "funny," that is to say lawlessly extraordinary, is, from Joe William's point of view, just another expression of the one invariable law that dominates his life.

When Joe repeats his motto, two hundred pages later, to Savage and Warner in Genoa, it should give the encounter a rather different cast than it superficially seems to have. The question that hangs in the fiery air of Genoa, what the Camera Eye 33 calls "the question in their eyes," the question of sexual availability, should acquire a different, and a riskier, meaning. In doing so, it would forge a link, through this episode, with another in Savage's past, for he has also had a rather similar encounter in a seemingly different context. Back at Harvard, out for a night of carousing with his friend Ned, Savage almost literally stumbles into "a thuggylooking individual and a sailor whose legs were weaving" (p. 439). Though Ned strikes up an acquaintance and goes with the two to a Turkish bath, Savage panics and bolts for home. What seems to motivate Savage here is neither disinterest nor disapproval but rather sheer fear of exposure. Later he berates Ned for his indiscretion: "picking up a sailor in Scollay Square … so damn risky" (p. 440). His fear is apparently the same one that torments Warren Jones, the fear of blackmail, which is precisely the course of action urged on Joe Williams by his shipmate Tiny: "Blackmyl 'im, that's what I'd do, Yank" (p. 383). Passed through the mirror in this way, class status becomes a liability, because it must be protected, and the cash advantage passes to the other side, which can become rich since it does not fear exposure.

The meeting in Genoa between Joe Williams and Richard Savage therefore stands in stead of another meeting, the two torn halves of which it cannot or dare not bring together. When Williams flees his sexual encounter for fear of exploitation and Savage flees his for fear of blackmail, they leave empty in the middle a sort of Utopian encounter in which both sides realize the coercive power of class and cash and in realizing it throw it off. And something of the sort does happen, as Williams embraces Savage with the term "fellers like us," but the sexual implications of that phrase, which would have been so clear in either of the two rehearsals for this scene, are scarcely allowed to reach the surface. And it may be that the political rebellion that comes out of this meeting is so short-lived because it leaves untouched in its protagonist a deeper level of hypocrisy, one concerning sexual identity, that would have to be reached before any political conviction could take.

Savage breaks through that level, appropriately enough, only in his dreams. Back in Paris for the peace talks, he falls asleep to the drone of G. H. Barrow pontificating about President Wilson's plans and imports

some of his phrasing into a dream of "industrial democracy in a bath-house on the Marne in striped trunks, with a young Texas boy with pink cheeks who wanted to … like a string bean … with a twitching adamsapple … " (p. 668). In Barrow's Wilsonian spiel, "industrial democracy" apparently means something like "new understanding between capital and labor," but in Savages dream version it must stand for the overcoming of those class tensions that always interrupt his sexual encounters elsewhere. "Industrial democracy in a bath-house" links the camaraderie of the armed forces with the egalitarianism of Wilson's idealistic postwar aims and a sexual Utopia of free and unfettered release with multiple partners. But this is far too easy, even for a dream. Coming as it does from Barrow, the most fatuous and self-interested blowhard in a book rife with them, the phrase "industrial democracy" can only be ironic. Any "understanding between capital and labor" that it might imply would have to be merely conjectural or coercive, since industrial relations as they actually stand in the 1920s illustrate the actual antipathy of capital and labor. And it is not at all clear that "industrial democracy in a bathhouse" is much different from industrial democracy elsewhere. The apparent multiplication of unnamed sexual partners may seem industrial in a purely invidious sense, as repetitious as the quasi-incestuous encounters of Dick Diver, especially since individuals seem to have been reduced here to body parts. Thus the apparent multiplication carries with it a corresponding reduction and even a corresponding interruption, as indicated by the ellipses, so characteristic of the disconnected and hesitant life Savage tends to lead. Savage awakes from this dream "with a nightmarish feeling that somebody was choking him," though it is not at all clear whether the nightmare has more to do with the realization or the frustration of his true sexual desires. All that is clear from this dream is that industrial democracy and the bathhouse cannot be separated, that capitalism, democracy, and sexuality are mutually implicated, that class, money, and sexual identity can only be unraveled by some purely idealistic process.

To put it more briefly, and to return to the original scene of these reflections, Joe Williams and Richard Savage cannot have the sexual encounter that is implied by their respective histories because the inclusively egalitarian message that "fellers like us gets the s—y end of the stick" is crossed by another message, conveyed by the same words, but with the entirely different meaning that sexuality is inevitably invaded by money and class privilege. In purely personal terms, Savage's homosexual desires both spurn and require class difference: the very notion of

freedom from class is attached to a subset of humanity defined by class, the working class that someone like Savage can only imagine as the absence of everything that makes him what he is.

That this same logic has its racial counterpart is made only too obvious by Savage's final descent into the netherworld of Gloria Swanson, the black male prostitute who robs him near the end of the trilogy. Swanson occupies much the same position in *U.S.A.* that is occupied in *Tender Is the Night* by Jules Peterson, only in this case Dos Passos's peculiar choice of name makes even more insistent the connection between film vision, sexual transgression, and racial scandal. The oddly disconnected quality so characteristic of the montage style of *U.S.A.* allows Swanson, like Peterson, to appear as if by magic, though it is clearly Savage's own desire that takes him back to the bar where they had originally met. Without precisely knowing how one moment connects to the next, Savage finds himself "dancing cheek to cheek with Gloria Swanson who was humming in his ear: Do I get it now … or must I he … esitate" (p. 1203). The line from the famous song means two quite different things that take the same form: Swanson waits to rob, or at least profit from, Savage, while Savage hesitates to satisfy his own desires. The gap in the word, the hesitation in hesitation itself, is part of the disconnected cinematic logic of the scene, the importation into it of the breaks characteristic not just of montage but of film recording itself as a form. For Savage, this gap precisely records his own sexual ambivalence. For the novel as a whole, it seems to mark another limit, at which the liberating reorientation of cinematic experience meets the fear of recording, with the endless deferral it involves.

As in *Tender Is the Night*, racial and sexual transgression mark the outer limit at which the social dislocations motivated by the new media meet the equal and opposite regression inherent in them. Political insight, both for the characters within *U.S.A.* and the reader outside it, seems to arise from the chance juxtaposition of atomized experiences. Though the smooth continuation of dominance depends on keeping people apart, driving them to the ends of the earth sometimes has the unanticipated effect of ricocheting them together and thus exposing the force that drives the whole. This seems to be the trilogy's strongest argument on behalf of the new media as well, that the very atomization enforced on the audience brings about, in chance episodes, a new commonality. The meeting of Joe Williams and Richard Savage is one of the clearest exemplifications of this process in *U.S.A.*, but if it is easy to see from their experience how both are contained within the war machine, it is correspondingly difficult to reconstruct the way they are linked

within the machine that runs a certain kind of sexuality. The homosexual connection within the text remains as unavowed, unacknowledged, and underground as it is in the life of Richard Savage. No one, it seems, can be free enough to make this connection, not even in the dream world of the movies.

6 Du Bois, Johnson, and the Recordings of Race

Racial prejudice sets a limit to the revolutionary effects of the new media in so many of the examples considered so far—not just for Dos Passos and Fitzgerald but also for Bob Brown and the group at *Close Up*—that it begins to seem an almost inevitable counterweight. In fact, it seems as if race gives a specific form to all sorts of contradictory feelings about the new media, for reasons that may have as much to do with the recalcitrance of American racial injustice as with photography. But the power of the new media to promulgate and magnify conventional racial prejudice has been so great that photography has a particularly fraught position in African American art and literature. As bell hooks asserts in her contribution to the anthology *Picturing Us*, photographic imagery has played such a role in creating and enforcing stereotypes that it has acquired a kind of social radioactivity for many African Americans.[1] The complexity of that reaction, and its relation to other media beyond the photograph, can be seen even in some of the earliest literature on race to be produced in the twentieth century.

The Souls of Black Folk, to take a very influential example, begins with a scene of visual segregation and self-discovery so powerfully emblematic that it seems to initiate not just Du Bois's own story but also twentieth-century African American narrative in general. The experience Du Bois relates, that of being set aside as different, also occurs at the beginning of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a sequence that suggests the abiding power of Du Bois's influence. But there are also certain differences in the latter two examples that suggest the emergence of something so peculiarly modern that Du Bois in 1903

was only faintly aware of it. The experience is much the same—in all three cases a young person is suddenly and unexpectedly identified as racially different—but as the prototype is altered in repetition, the puzzle of racial difference comes to be expressed in more and more distinctly visual terms. Johnsons protagonist reenacts Du Bois's scene of shock and self-examination in front of a mirror, as if racial difference were strictly an optical phenomenon, and Hurston's main character discovers her racial identity by examining a photograph. The shift from the face-to-face encounter that begins *Souls of Black Folk* to Janey Crawford's confrontation with a photograph seems to make racial differentiation even more alienating in the process of making it more purely visual. The dispossessing self-image that Du Bois acquires when he sees himself through other eyes becomes, in the form of the photograph, concrete, reproducible, and public. Wha t this sequence of episodes exposes, then, is the way in which particular acts of social segregation would be vastly augmented as they were repeated in the visual media of the twentieth century and the shock of seeing oneself through other eyes became for African Americans, and for many others, an inescapable part of the experience provided by the new media.

Writing as early as he does, even before the shock of *Birth of a Nation*, Du Bois is innocently unaware of the segregating power the visual was soon to acquire through film and television. But he was well aware of the cultural power of photography, and he concentrated a good deal of his effort as editor of the *Crisis* on combating visual stereotypes. Even earlier, as compiler of the American Negro exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Du Bois had hoped to use photography, as it were, against itself, assembling such a wide variety of African American portraits as to make physical stereotypes and even visual generalization impossible. Shawn Smith has argued that Du Bois compiled and exhibited the 363 photographs of African Americans in this exhibit as a purposeful counterweight to the composite photographs used since Galton to establish the visual types of criminality, mental deviance, and racial character in contradistinction to an unpictured white normality.[2] In itself, the sheer variety of these portraits calls into question any attempt to stereotype the race.

As Smith argues, the photographic portrait can be used to reassert the presence of the individual in face of the stereotype and even to establish the existence of other types, positive and particular where the old stereotypes were negative distortions. Of what use, however, could the visual be in establishing the character of the race itself, given the fact that visual discrimination has been so large a part of American segregation?

Du Bois seems to answer this question at the very outset of *Souls of Black Folk*, where the positive indices of the race are all aural. When he reaches back to the “sorrow songs” for his paradigmatic examples of African American culture, Du Bois inaugurates a distinction that would be basic for many African American writers to follow. In fact, it has been possible for contemporary critics such as Craig Werner to define an African American aesthetic based on sound in contradistinction to a Euro-American modernist aesthetic based on the image. Taking vocal performance as its model, “drawing on the examples of folk artists and singers generally ignored by Euro-American aestheticians,” this aesthetic is both communal and historical, avoiding the isolating privacy Werner associates with the spatial forms of modernism.[3] Whether this is a valid distinction or not, and Werner is careful to qualify it in a number of ways, something like it can be discerned as early as *Souls of Black Folk*, where the alienation of modern life seems inextricably associated with the bewildering visuality of modern experience. For Du Bois, Johnson, and Hurston separation is primarily a visual phenomenon; for Guy Debord, writing some sixty years later, the visual is itself the primary mode of modern separation.[4] In other words, what Werner sees as a distinction between an African American aesthetic and Euro-American modernism may actually be a resistance to modernity itself, especially the alienation, distortion, and historical innocence that have come to be associated with modern visual media.

Sound becomes the positive alternative primarily because it is associated, first and most famously by Du Bois, with collective performances rooted in the past. But what is to become of this distinction in face of the very obvious fact that, even as Du Bois was writing, the phonograph was doing to sound what photography had done to the image? How could vocal performance survive as an antimodern model of communal participation and historical continuity once sound had become codified and transmittable and the relation between performance and audience had been reoriented in accordance with that fact?[5] These are questions that hardly arise, for fairly obvious reasons, in *Souls of Black Folk*, but they become insistent in the sequence of works indebted to it, particularly in Johnson's *Autobiography*. At least in part because Johnson had been closely associated with a performance tradition very diflFerent from the one represented for Du Bois by the sorrow songs, sound for him is not so easily separable from the generally spectatorial trend of the arts in the twentieth century. It is partly for this reason, in fact, that the *Autobiography*, unlike its predecessor and prototype, seems so bereft of hope. It is also for this reason that the *Autobiography's*

consideration of race and its relationship to culture and the arts still seems so peculiarly modern.

Though the scene with which Du Bois begins *The Souls of Black Folk* is one of the most famous in American literature, there is a certain inconsistency in the telling of it that seems to have gone unnoticed. When the young Du Bois is spurned and separated from his classmates, he comes to a sudden disorienting and alienating self-consciousness, an experience that is first referred to as a "revelation."[6] The etymological basis of this word, which literally means "unveiling," would matter rather little if not for the very famous metaphor Du Bois then applies to the same experience: "I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil" (*SBF*, p. 8). That the experience is to be figured in optical terms is clear; what is not so clear is whether the experience is an unveiling or a veiling. Is the young Du Bois seeing clearly now for the first time, or has he been forced, as a result of this experience, to see obliquely forevermore? The answer seems to be a complex combination of the two, for the experience is actually something like the unveiling of a veil. In his naive state, Du Bois imagines that there is nothing separating him from his classmates: what is revealed in this incident is the scrim of difference that actually separates them.

Thus the famous description of what it is like to live with "double consciousness" combines veiling and unveiling: the Negro, as Du Bois puts it, is forced to "see himself through the revelation of the other world" (*SBF*, p. 8). Ordinarily it would not seem necessary to see *through* a revelation, since a revelation, an unveiling, removes whatever might stand between the eye and its object. But this revelation must be seen *through* because it is actually something like a reveiling, an occlusion or distortion of "true self-consciousness." An African American is always shown to himself or herself through the intervening medium of an inimical point of view. What has happened, then, in this crucial scene, is that Du Bois has come to see for itself the ostensibly transparent medium of eyesight: when the veil is lifted from his eyes what he sees is that very veil, which he now realizes can never be lifted.

On one level, of course, Du Bois is describing what it is like to live with prejudice and discrimination, a situation in which the sense of sight is purely incidental. To a certain kind of white observer, black skin will itself seem a kind of veil, as it does, for example, in Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the "Narcissus*, "published about the time Du Bois began work on *The Souls of Black Folk*. There the dark skin of the imperious and

provocative James Wait is described as if it were the “repulsive mask of a nigger's soul.”[7] Repellent as it may be, the word “repulsive” does show how quickly negative value judgments can attach to that which eludes immediate understanding, as the metaphor of the mask shows how easily the observer's incomprehension comes to befixedas a quality of the person observed. But for Du Bois, the real horror lies in the way this incomprehension can be internalized as if it actually were a quality of the person observed, so that instead of “true self-consciousness” there is only “this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others” (*SBF*, p. 8). Looking “through the eyes of others,” however, is not precisely the same as looking through a veil, since the real threat of prejudice comes from the way it transfers its own ignorant obliquity to its object. As in Conrad's formulation, in which the black mate becomes an empty mask, the black subject in Du Bois's account actually *is* the veil, not just that which is misunderstood but also that which makes understanding impossible.[8]

In this sense, eyesight is simply the most convenient, because the oldest, metaphor for understanding, but even as Du Bois was writing, race, prejudice, and eyesight were coming to form a more specific linkage. In cultural anthropology, the close association between the participant-observer and the camera reinforced the notion that the confrontation of different societies is primarily an optical phenomenon, an exchange of glances.[9] One result, of course, was a significant augmentation of the traditional respect accorded eyesight as the sense most responsible for establishing the truth: the photographs and films accumulated by anthropologists and amateur ethnologists all seemed to constitute the raw materials of research. On the other hand, the same proliferation of visual “evidence” tended, by its sheer bulk and variety, to undermine the idea of neutral truth. Even while offering apparently neutral evidence, a photograph also dramatizes the existence of a very particular point of view, an angle of vision, and a visual frame, a selectivity without which the photograph could not exist. Thus the very methods that were augmenting the power and prestige of the visual were also simultaneously undermining it, so that the early twentieth century is also marked by a significant suspicion of the visual and a corresponding conviction of the biased and distorted nature of all observation.[10] In short, while increasing its traditional association with objectivity and truth, vision was also becoming inextricably associated with subjectivity and cultural specificity.

Some of this ambiguity is apparent in the convolutions of the visual metaphor in *Souls of Black Folk*. The apparent contradiction in the

terminology of revelation betrays an even deeper indecision as to whether Du Bois, as a result of his experience, has come to see truly or falsely. And this indecision is but the concrete embodiment of the question at the heart of most critical commentary on this episode: is "double consciousness" simply false consciousness, or is it a doubling of perspectives in which the two particularities cancel one another out or reflect on one another so as to leave something more neutral and objective?[11] Perhaps the episode has remained so influential precisely because it does not answer this question, because it gives a sense of simultaneous revelation and reveiling, suspending the protagonist and the reader in the void opened up between the objective and the subjective. The ambiguity as to whether the visual is a source of truth or the producer of error turns out to be a perfect metaphor for the undecideable question posed by the discovery of cultural perspective: is the awareness of the inevitable subjectivity of any point of view the beginning or the end of objective truth?

For Du Bois himself, for whom "the revelation of the other world" is simply the beginning of his work, the question poses itself in another way as well. For the purpose of *Souls of Black Folk* is to begin the resolution of the doubled consciousness of African Americans into "a better and truer self" (*SBF*, p. 9). It is interesting to note how often Du Bois represents that "truer self" in terms of obscured light: "The shadow of a mighty Negro flits through the tale of Ethiopia the Shadowy and of Egypt the Sphinx. Throughout history, the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness" (*SBF*, p. 9). The whole mystery of cultural difference, of the advance of some people over others, remains, rather tellingly, obscured behind a veil: "So wofully unorganized is sociological knowledge that the meaning of progress, the meaning of 'swift' and 'slow' in human doing, and the limits of human perfectibility, are veiled, unanswered sphinxes on the shores of science" (*SBF*, p. 189). Du Bois uses these veiling metaphors to argue that the true worth and character of his race has yet to be seen, but the veiled, shadowy sphinx is also his figure for the mystery of cultural specificity and difference, for a cultural character that may not be discernible by means of sight at all. The metaphors constitute an argument against judging by appearance, against cultural or racial definitions that are purely optical in character, and perhaps against the visual itself.

It is hardly an accident, then, that the terms in which Du Bois frames his argument for the race are primarily aural. Steering his way between biological determinism and cultural relativity, Du Bois typifies

the race by means of what he calls its "message" (*SBF*, p. 9).[12] The character of the race, then, is not to be seen but rather to be heard, in speech and song, and the closing lines of the first chapter seem almost consciously to motivate a shift by means of a mixed metaphor from the visual to the aural: "And now what I have briefly sketched in large outline let me on coming pages tell again in many ways, with loving emphasis and deeper detail, that men may listen to the striving in the souls of black folk" (*SBF*, p. 15). The metaphor of the sketch needs to be completed, it would seem, by some reference to the rest of the book as a finished painting, but Du Bois abandons this metaphor in midsentence apparently because it is so obvious to him that "striving" cannot be seen but only heard. And it is heard in the chapters that follow, each of which begins with a musical quotation from one of the "sorrow songs." So strongly does Du Bois identify his own writing project with these songs that *Souls of Black Folk* itself constantly approximates itself to song, especially toward the end, when the chapter on "The Sorrow Songs" finishes with a page of music. There is some disagreement among critics as to how completely Du Bois makes his own text into a counterpart to the sorrow songs, a set of new lyrics for them, as Hazel Carby argues, but there is little disagreement, it seems, about the advantages offered by the aural metaphor.[13] Some years ago, Robert Stepto distinguished the participatory nature of Du Bois s project from the merely spectatorial status of the narration in Jean Toomer's *Cane*.[14] Since then there has been substantial emphasis on the way in which Du Bois seems to cast himself as "bard, or *griot*, as a communal singer and historian."[15] The strength of this position is made clearest perhaps by Carby, who argues that Du Bois enters into a call-and-response relationship with African American culture in general in order to make his work productive instead of merely reflective. Though Carby herself does not draw this distinction, the contrasting counterpart in analyses from Stepto to Werner is the spectatorial role associated with the visual, a role that is, not incidentally, typified by modernist works like *Cane*.

Since the original experience of alienation and self-dispossession is essentially visual in nature, since racial discrimination has most commonly relied on visual cues, and since the whole problem of modern cultural particularity has been figured in visual terms, it seems inevitable that the visual will come to seem alienating in and of itself, and that the participatory, productive aesthetic that is the positive contribution of *Souls of Black Folk* will be rendered in aural terms. A disembodied notion of racial spirit, leaving behind the gross biological determinism of traditional racism, would seem naturally to seek out evidence in

sound, as opposed to those visual indices of blood descent usually relied on by social discrimination. But the production of this dichotomy leaves behind a number of unresolved difficulties, both practical and theoretical. First of all, as Du Bois himself admits, the songs he uses were not a part of any culture immediately available to him but "came out of the South unknown to me" (*SBF*, p. 180).[16] The role of "communal singer" must always have been metaphorical for the writer of a book, but it is doubly so in this case, when the songs are not actually remembered experiences. Du Bois's relationship to the songs is inevitably a little anthropological, for, like many anthropologists of this time, he hopes to salvage something of a culture on the verge of disappearing. Much of the "Sorrow Songs" chapter of *Souls of Black Folk* is about the difficulty of apprehending and reviving the true message of the songs, which is, of course, the "message" of the race as well. Significantly, that message is also "naturally veiled and half articulate" (*SBF*, p. 185). The return of the visual metaphor suggests that the whole problem of double consciousness might persist in the songs, simply to be recreated in aural terms.

It is finally rather difficult to imagine why it should be otherwise. Surely there have always been purely sonic characteristics, such as accent, that have been just as invidiously identifying as color. To hear someone else pronounce a word differently from the way one pronounces it oneself is an extremely common experience of distinction and embarrassment, if not of alienation. In some ways, oral language is even more fruitful of such distinctions than the visual codes that have been used to determine race. The special power accorded to sound in *Souls of Black Folk* is, therefore, not fundamental to it but rather an effect of particular aural situations. The young Du Bois, alone amid a white crowd, is contrasted to a choir of African American singers, whose songs are so strong not because they are songs but because they are produced chorally and transmitted collectively.

Even as Du Bois was writing, however, the choral nature of the songs was itself becoming an object for spectatorial attention. The Hampton and Jubilee singers were making the sorrow songs famous by touring to places in which such music had been unheard if not entirely unheard-of. And though some, including Zora Neale Hurston, would insist that there could be no genuine performance of the spirituals as long as there was any distinction at all between singers and audience,[17] it was already a fact of modern life that many more people of all races would hear these songs performed than would sing them for themselves. Writing about these performances, as Du Bois does, is doubly

alienating, for not only are the acts of writing and reading inherently solitary but also there is no accurate way of transmitting the sound of the songs from one to the other.[18] This problem, of notation, may seem to have been solved by recordings, but only at the price of a much greater dilution of the original performance ethic, for records sever the act of listening fundamentally from that of producing the original sounds. In fact, they call into question the notion of "original" sound itself and fracture the "original" performance, however participatory it may have been, into innumerable versions of itself. As Lisa Gitelman has pointed out, phonograph recordings also complicate the relationship between vocal performance and racial identity, using technological distance to substitute for the visual blackface of the minstrel era. The voice becomes such an independent entity that the racial identity of its owner becomes a mystery, even a tease, as it was in many of the early race records produced by white imposters.[19] In short, the basic distinction between the aural, conceived as genuine presence, and the visual, thought of as alienation itself, depends on a careful sequestration of vocal sound from any of the modernized versions of it that were already available even as Du Bois was writing.

For Du Bois himself, consciously harking back as he is to the forgotten and neglected, this strategic ignorance of certain facts of modern life is hardly a detriment. As his work becomes a prototype for later writers, however, the issues left unresolved by his recourse to an unmodernized version of the aural come to the fore. That this happens first in James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, the first significant work to show Du Bois's influence, simply demonstrates how insistent the issues were.

Even for the first readers of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, who had no idea who the author was and no notion that it was not an actual autobiography, its debt to Du Bois was fairly clear. Late in the narrative, Johnson's protagonist explicitly names *The Souls of Black Folk* as a prototype for new fictional treatments of African American life, but the fact of its influence on the *Autobiography* itself should have been obvious from the first few pages.[20] The real story of the unnamed protagonist begins with a scene of segregation so close to that in *Souls of Black Folk* as to seem a deliberate gesture of homage. For reasons that are never explained, the "white scholars" in the protagonist's schoolroom are asked to stand, and when he does so the protagonist is instructed to sit back down with "the others" (*A*, p. n). Thus he is marked for the first time, in his own eyes as well as those of his classmates, as "colored."

What is different in Johnson's version of this scene is the extended self-examination that follows. Unlike Janey Crawford, in Hurstons version of the scene, who reacts to the evidence of her photograph with the simple declaration "Ah, I'm colored," Johnson's protagonist is dumbfounded and confused. When he rushes home to examine himself in a mirror, it is apparently to see for himself the visual evidence that has been used to classify him as different, but everything that is to happen in the narrative to follow depends on the fact that there is no such evidence. The narrator's immediate, unexplained desire to look in the mirror depends on the idea, so utterly assumed that it needs no articulation, that racial character can be verified optically, but the evidence in the mirror is so ambiguous it belies that assumption. In fact, in simply visual terms, the narrator appears no less "white" to himself than he did before. The difference now is that whiteness is no longer the same as transparency: made self-conscious, it becomes opaque and appears as a color in its own right.

Actually, what the narrator sees first in the mirror is his "beauty," apparently unmarked by any particular racial characteristic: "I was accustomed to hear remarks about my beauty; but now, for the first time, I became conscious of it and recognized it" (*A*, p. 11). Once it is "recognized," however, beauty is no longer neutrally descriptive but turns out to be but a covert synonym for "white." In the next sentence, "the beauty of my mouth" and "the ivory whiteness of my skin" are paralleled in such a way as to make it obvious that "beautiful" mouths are those whose shape corresponds to "ivory whiteness" in skin color. On one level, such terminology shows how deeply the narrator has internalized Euro-American standards, not just of beauty but of almost everything else as well. On a deeper level, however, Johnson is demonstrating how thoroughly those standards depend on what they seem to exclude. The way the narrators "dark hair" falls "in waves over my temples, making my forehead appear whiter than it really was" (*A*, p. 11) is a little allegory of the way his whiteness in general appears only in response to the imputation that he is black. Thus the very considerable difference between this scene and the one from *Souls of Black Folk* on which it is modeled: where Du Bois is made to feel for the first time what it means to be black, Johnson's narrator comes to see the whiteness he had been taking utterly for granted. What had been invisible before, through sheer lack of comparison, now appears as one color set off against another.

Adapting Du Bois's originary scene to a protagonist who is visually "white" thus has considerable consequences. First of all, it allows Johnson

to call into question the presumed transparency of the white subject position. It is the essence of both these scenes of segregation and self-discovery that the white majority regards itself as the unspecific norm, while those who must sit down or stand aside are marked as "nonwhite." As Fanon has argued most famously, it is blackness that is produced by comparison, while whiteness is "a self-identical, self-producing term [which] draws its ideological power from its proclaimed transparency, from its self-elevation over the very category of 'race.'"[21] But this is not the case in Johnson's scene, in which the protagonist discovers the white skin and European features he had never thought to notice before. The attempt to split him off as nonwhite has produced, in his mind at least, a split within himself and thus created for him the categories of whiteness and blackness simultaneously. By questioning the presumed transparency of the white point of view in this way, Johnson also questions the possibility of transparency itself. In other words, since white is just as much a color as any other, there is no such thing as an uncolored point of view and thus, ironically, no such thing as an "excolored man."

The visual evidence discovered in the mirror thus unsettles the narrator, not by convincing him that he is in fact black but rather by showing him that even the seemingly unmarked characteristics he had been taking for granted are in a very significant sense "colored." Subsequently, Johnson will use this term, the key term in both the title and the body of his narrative, in strategically ambiguous ways. He does so first in his version of Du Bois's "double consciousness" passage: "From that time I looked out through other eyes, my thoughts were colored, my words dictated, my actions limited by one dominating, all-pervading idea which constantly increased in force and weight until I finally realized in it a great, tangible fact" (*A*, p. 14). Like Du Bois, Johnson's narrator describes the experience of seeing "through the revelation of the other world," but where Du Bois uses the metaphor of veiling, Johnson uses the even more ambiguous one of coloring. In a quick reading of the passage, "colored" may seem an adjective and the color it refers to an intrinsic quality, but any careful consideration of the syntax makes it clear that "colored" is a participle and the color it describes an imposition from without. The color in what he later calls "the viewpoint of a *colored man"* is not actually a physical characteristic at all but rather the distortion forced by self-consciousness.

Color, then, is that which qualifies or particularizes what otherwise seems a transparently neutral point of view. As he says in the next paragraph, color is "an additional and a different light" brought to bear on

every subject. In this sense, looking in the mirror is what makes the narrator a colored man, because it is not until he begins to look with a troubled self-consciousness that he *sees* himself as particular in any way. One odd result of this usage is that it makes color more or less synonymous with bias or prejudice. In a later chapter, speaking very much in the voice of Johnson himself, the narrator will extend his analysis of color to include the racism of Southern whites, whose thoughts, he says, are also colored in the sense that they run "through one narrow channel … impassably limited by the ever present 'Negro question'" (*A*, p. 55). What he is suggesting here is that African American and Euro-American self-consciousness are both distorted by the racism of the latter, but this extension also serves to make the notion of color more general and less concrete. Color comes to represent any particularity that qualifies or inflects the apparent neutrality of truth.

Candor, we may be reminded at this point, is etymologically white and color therefore whatever damages that which is true and honest, and though this usage would seem to have such a prejudicial cast that Johnson would avoid it, this is not at all the case. In fact, when his mother finally comes to tell the narrator who his father is and thus reveals to him in full his racial background, her account, in the narrator's redaction, is "so limited by reserve and so colored by her feelings that it was but half truth" (*A*, p. 26). In part, Johnson seems to be falling back on a traditional opposition between feeling, which can be so easily swayed, and truth, but the use of the term "colored" in this sentence seems not lax but purposeful. It almost seems as if the "half truth" is the narrator himself, half white and half "colored" by the feelings he shares with his mother. But Johnson is not content to let this notion of color as distortion apply only to one side of his narrator's heritage. Later in the narrative, when the narrator struggles with himself over whether or not to propose to the white woman he loves, and whether or not to do so in the character of the white man he has become, he says, "Then began the hardest struggle of my life, whether to ask her to marry me under false colors or to tell her the whole truth" (*A*, p. 146). "Colors," in this sense, has nothing actually to do with race or skin color, since the phrase "false colors" designates flags or banners, an idiom that Johnson slyly deploys here to confuse what seems the obvious meaning of the passage. For the color that is false in this case is actually white, which thus turns out to be opposed, and not identical to, the truth. Color, it seems from these passages, is any specificity at all, and if it is by nature a falsification it is nonetheless impossible to escape.

All of Johnson's subtle equivocations around the term "color" come

to bear finally on the odd circumlocution he has chosen for his title. As striking as it is, "ex-colored" seems cumbersome, indirect, and even inaccurate. It oversimplifies the narrative, which actually follows as the narrator is expelled from his early life as a white child, through a middle period in which he is variously taken for either race, and then into his middle age as a prosperous but dissatisfied white man. And it seems to invite, by its emphasis on one phase in this drama of passing back and forth, the sort of racist comment it received from some quarters, to the effect that no "colored man" can ever escape the biological inferiority supposedly signified by his darker color.[22] But Johnson actually means to suggest that an "ex-colored man" is an impossibility for very different, even diametrically opposed, reasons. For "ex-colored" is certainly not a euphemism for "white." Johnson has demonstrated throughout the book, by working on this very term, that white is itself a color, not a norm to be tinted by other particularities. In any case, the narrator does not actually decide to pass for white but rather hopes to live without a race: "I finally made up my mind that I would neither disclaim the black race nor claim the white race" (*A*, p. 139). He means, then, to be an "ex-colored man" in a very particular sense, to live as it were without racial character at all, as the blank his mother can never bring herself to fill in.

Johnson insists on the negation in "ex-colored" to make it clear that this neutral state is reached only by subtraction, even by maiming, and to argue that the point of view without "color" or bias is purely a privative one. The raceless life the narrator begins to lead even before his big decision is a purely spectatorial life, an "overtly ethnological" one, as Eric Sundquist puts it, based on "his own self-protecting disengagement from rural black culture."[23] There is, of course, a close yet ironic relationship between this position and the status of the narration itself, since certain parts of the story, most notably the lynching scene that becomes the fulcrum of the narrator's tilt toward whiteness, can only be told by a narrator who can already pass for white. The apparent invisibility of this narrator is directly related to the racial neutrality that makes him for all practical purposes a nonentity. The real issue, however, is not really that of action, since no one would expect the narrator to step forward and magically stop the atrocities he witnesses, but rather that of perspective, since the ability to see these things at all seems to depend on a willingness to see them as if from a neutral point of view. What is privative about the spectatorial role, in other words, is not just that it is passive but also that it is without character, as if being seen as "ex-colored" necessarily also involved seeing as "ex-colored."

This, then, is the double bind that the narrator tumbles into when he first looks into the mirror. Seeing himself reflected in the eyes of others is in fact what first makes the narrator visible to himself, and though the character he receives from their gaze, the coloration of it, seems a false and prejudicial imposition, without it he becomes invisible not just to others but also to himself. Color is, in other words, both false and necessary, since the result of eliminating the particular is not truth but inexistence. Even more tightly and concretely than Du Bois, Johnson explores the ironies of "revelation," of the simultaneous veiling and unveiling that comes from discovering the partiality of any and all points of view. His interrogation of the concept of color is meant, on the most immediate level, of course, to demonstrate how inconclusive visual evidence can be when it comes to determining race. In addition to this rhetorical point, however, Johnson is demonstrating something else: that in addition to being arbitrary and unstable, racial particularity is also inescapable and even necessary. Whether it stands for racial character or for cultural point of view, color is simultaneously subjective and objective, variously relative and indefinable while also being a vast and incontrovertible fact.

Considered in visual terms, then, race seems very much a double bind, suspending the narrator between the distortions that make him "colored" and the evasions by which he vainly tries to become "ex-colored." It is little wonder, then, that Johnson also follows Du Bois in imagining another mode of racial identification and solidarity, one that would not only avoid but even repudiate the visual. At the end of the narrative, the wreck of the narrator's life is exemplified by the purely visual relationship he has had with "my mother's people": "I have been only a privileged spectator of their inner life" (*A*, p. 153). And the life he might have led if things had turned out differently is represented by music, by the box of "fast yellowing manuscripts" (*A*, p. 154) left over from his ambitious days as a composer. This final contrast suggests a lifelong conflict between the visual in its spectatorial aspect and music, which promises the same sort of participation it did for Du Bois. Even before he has any notion that the "old Southern songs" (*A*, p. 5) his mother plays have a particular racial origin, the narrator feels a visceral response to them, and he often ends up "sobbing" (*A*, p. 18) in his mother's arms after a session at the piano. Music, as pure feeling, heals the split between subject and object even before the narrator knows that it exists.

Music continues to have this kind of immediate, physical effect on him, right up to the grand turning point of his life. Johnson constructs

this climax as a contrast between a revival meeting and a lynching: the first provides the narrator with what he feels sure is a vocation and a project, based on the music of his mother's people, while the second sends him in the opposite direction, toward the raceless life he will actually lead. The contrast thus constructed is also that between sound and sight, for though the revival meeting is in some ways a visual spectacle, its real power derives from the songs, which touch the narrator in the same viscerally emotional way as the songs sung by his mother. As if to underscore this difference, Johnson makes his song leader, whose name, significantly, is "'Singing' Johnson," one-eyed, and then has him sing with that one eye closed (*A*, p. 132). The contrast to the lynching could hardly be more obvious, for the narrator's relationship to the nameless man who is burned to death in this scene is distantly and horribly visual. Though he groans and screams at first, these cries are soon stifled, "but his eyes, bulging from their sockets, rolled from side to side, appealing in vain for help" (*A*, p. 136). Unlike the appeal made through sound, the appeal of the eyes goes too easily unanswered, though the narrator stands "fixed to the spot where I stood, powerless to take my eyes from what I did not want to see" (*A*, p. 136). The bond formed by the singing is thus dissolved by the alienation of eyesight, as if this were the original mirror scene repeated and the division between the narrator and the lynching victim the division produced within when the narrator is himself made a spectacle for the first time.[24]

One of the many ways Johnson follows Du Bois, then, is in this insistent association of community with sound and of alienation with sight. There is in Johnson as well a more particular suspicion of spectacle, of an impotence that comes from being forced to see and to be seen, that seems to make explicit a reaction to modern media that Du Bois cannot quite articulate. At the same time, however, Johnson has a great deal to say about musical forms and performance practices that simply explodes this neat dichotomy between the visual and the oral. The most important of these is obviously ragtime, "a liminal art," as Sundquist puts it, whose liminality puts it in violation of a number of dichotomies.[25] Ragtime occupies a paradoxical position in the social system of the *Autobiography*, in the aesthetic project of the protagonist, and in the socioaesthetic program of the author, which is clearly meant to be a successful enactment of the abandoned projects of his alter ego in the antiautobiographical *Autobiography*.

As a musical form and as a social practice, ragtime occupies a kind of middle ground between the spirituals that signify authentic African American culture for Du Bois and European art music. Even in Johnson's

presentation, however, the relationship between these forms is not a lateral one, and so the median position occupied by ragtime between *them* seems to lie somewhere between the high and the low, the intellectual and the purely physical. On first acquaintance, ragtime seems a purely visceral music, one "that demanded physical response" (*A*, p. 72) and one that is composed, rather significantly considering the emphasis put on the aural effect of the spirituals, "by ear alone" (*A*, p. 74). But as the narrator himself becomes an adept ragtime performer, it begins to seem a more sophisticated art, civilized or even hypercivilized in the way it transforms "familiar classic selections" (*A*, p. 84). Learning to produce and perform these transcriptions, the narrator comes to be known as "the professor," an ironic title, surely enough, but one in which at least half the irony acknowledges the learning it takes to master this art. The narrator thus comes to experience, and perhaps even to embody in his own person, the oddly contradictory effects of this music, which is prized by white enthusiasts because it seems fresh and primitive even while it is producing arch parodies of semiclassical chestnuts like Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*.

In choosing ragtime as the focus for his protagonist's life project, Johnson does not resolve these inconsistencies but rather exacerbates them. Ragtime is one of his standard examples of the distinctive contribution of African American art: the list produced in *the Autobiography* appears in almost identical form in the preface to the *Book of American Negro Poetry* and elsewhere in Johnson's writings. And yet the project of the protagonist is to take ragtime and also that other distinctively African American musical contribution, "the old slave songs," and make them "classic" (*A*, pp. 103–104). As he puts it at the peak of his enthusiasm for this project, "I also felt stirred by an unselfish desire to voice all the joys and sorrows, the hopes and ambitions, of the American Negro, in classic musical form" (*A*, p. 108). Both narrator and author seem unaware of the irony of this ambition, which comes clear when "classic" is put beside other seemingly neutral terms like "greatest" and "best" (*A*, p. 12), which are used by the narrator's mother as painfully obvious euphemisms for "white." In fact, this irony surreptitiously infects the ending of the work itself, and the whole dichotomy suggested there between the narrator's spectatorial life as a raceless cipher and the musical project he might have pursued instead; for that project, involving as it does making ragtime and the spirituals "classic," would have meant passing for white just as surely as its alternative.

Ragtime, then, turns out to be a musical form that simply recreates in aural terms the disconnection that Du Bois associates particularly

with sight. That it does so is due in some measure to its hybrid nature as a musical form but much more so to the fact that it is, unlike the sorrow songs, a commercial music meant to be performed before an audience. Certainly, one of the reasons the *Autobiography* seems so much more modern than *Souls of Black Folk* is that it takes place in a world of performance, a world recognizably at the threshold of the media explosion of the twentieth century. The racial project of Johnson's protagonist is for this reason more complex and more difficult than that suggested by Du Bois, because it must begin with the music that makes the ex-colored man as much a solitary spectacle as he had ever been and work through it to the solidarity both Johnson and Du Bois desire. Perhaps because Johnson had lived, at least tangentially, the life of a performer himself, his definition of that solidarity and his notion of how it might be served by art could never be quite the same as that of Du Bois.

Johnson is, of course, responsible for one of the classic cultural pronouncements of the Harlem Renaissance, one he first formulated in the *Autobiography*, well before there was a renaissance to inspire. It was there that he insisted for the first time that there are “four things that refute the oft-advanced theory that [African Americans] are an absolutely inferior race, which demonstrate that they have originality and artistic conception” (*A*, p. 63), these four being the Uncle Remus stories, the spirituals or sorrow songs, which he calls here “the Jubilee songs,” ragtime, and the Cakewalk. Johnson was to blow his cover as the anonymous author of the *Autobiography* by repeating this list with the identical claim of artistic originality a number of times over the years,[26] and he was also fond of asserting the associated claim that white America is in fact merely a copyist where art is concerned, a parasite on the originality of those it despises and persecutes.[27] In the *Autobiography he* illustrates this claim dramatically as well in a number of different episodes, most comically perhaps when the protagonist inspires a roomful of white socialites to get up and do “an impromptu cake-walk” (*A, p*. 87).

There is also an oddly self-reflexive moment when the anonymous Johnson, under the cover of his anonymous narrator, actually instances himself indirectly as another example of the originality of African American art:

> But I have learned that since that time a number of colored men, of not only musical talent, but training, are writing out their own melodies and words and reaping the reward of their work. I have

learned also that they have a large number of white imitators and adulterators. (*A*, p. 73)

Surely one of the most obvious such cases, as of 1912, would have been the team of Johnson, Cole, and Johnson, in which James Weldon Johnson played the role of lyricist for the songwriting and performing team of his brother Rosamond and their associate Bob Cole. The three had a string of hits and were successful enough by 1910 to make a claim strikingly similar to that in the *Autobiography*:

Cole and Johnson claim and it is a well-known fact they have originated every vogue or cycle in the evolution of ragtime.
When they wrote "The Maiden with the Dreamy Eyes" for Anna Held, the success of this song was followed by thousands of similar "eye" songs. When they wrote "Lazy Moon" for George Primrose and "Nobody's Looking But the Owl and the Moon" for Christie McDonald, two melodies destined to live as long as any of Stephen Foster's, they started the countless "moon" songs. When they wrote "Under the Bamboo Tree" for Marie Cahill, they were followed by other composers with myriad "tree" songs. When they wrote "The Congo Love Song," they started a rage for "jungle" songs, and now that they are the first to put out their so called Franco-American song "M'aimez vous?" ("Do You Love Me?") we shall no doubt find a host of imitators closely following or trailing after this style of love ditty.[28]

Made as it is in this personal and utterly self-interested way, the claim to originality almost seems to satirize itself. The hyperbole is so transparent it hardly even asks to be taken seriously. What it does illustrate, however, is that in the competitive world of ragtime performance the very notion of originality, by which Johnson later seems to set such store, had undergone a transformation.

As Thomas Riis has shown in his study of black musical theater at the turn of the century, there was very little in the ragtime business pursued by Johnson, Cole, and Johnson that could be called original in the traditional sense of the term. Though it is certainly the case that the team's biggest hit, "Under the Bamboo Tree," was widely imitated, they were not themselves the blameless originators they pretended to be. Their borrowings ranged from the announced parody of "Tell Me, Dusky Maiden," which was based openly on a Leslie Stuart song entitled "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," to an unacknowledged quotation from *Aida* in "My Castle on the Nile."[29] In fact, the aesthetic of ragtime, as a

performance practice on the popular stage, depended on a delicate balance of familiarity and innovation, in which motifs, subjects, even entire songs were repeated with variations for an audience that was always kept on the edge between expectation and satiety. In this context, nothing was less original than the claim to originality itself, which appears to signify the complete absence of the quality it advertises. Even originality itself, in other words, became a kind of imitation.

If this seems to throw a rather confusing sidelight on one of the most important and influential passages in Johnson's writings, it may clarify one of the most confounding. For in addition to praising African American originality, the narrator of the *Autobiography* also praises what seems to be an almost antithetical quality:

> It is remarkable, after all, what an adaptable creature the Negro is. I have seen the black West Indian gentleman in London, and he is in speech and manners a perfect Englishman. I have seen natives of Haiti and Martinique in Paris, and they are more Frenchy than a Frenchman. I have no doubt that the Negro would make a good Chinaman, with exception of the pigtail. (*A*, p. 112)

For a number of reasons, this is an almost inexplicable claim. Not only does it seemingly contradict the idea of African American originality so important to Johnson here and elsewhere but also it seems to confirm one of the most damaging assertions made by institutionalized racism, though that assertion could be made in two apparently incompatible forms. Whether it was held that African Americans could never do any more than imitate Euro-American behavior, or whether it was more charitably asserted that they might rise in the world by doing so, the same relationship was being asserted, in which the very notion of African American originality was beneath consideration.[30] Thus one of the central assertions to be made by Du Bois is that African American culture "is not a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon culture, but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals."[31] Johnson himself says something like this from time to time in his nonfictional writing, but he also repeats the litany of the "adaptability" of the African American so many times and in such an unvarying form as to make it seem a central article of belief. In fact, the only variation in these repetitions, which range from a speech given in 1915 to a *New York Age* editorial three years later, comes in the punchline about the pigtail, which in some instances he is willing to grant to his people as the final index of their innate ability to imitate.[32]

The pigtail seems an almost perverse flight of fancy, a purposeful

non sequitur, except in relation to a certain kind of ragtime performance. According to an anonymous reviewer, the Cole-Johnson show "A Trip to Coontown" included a whole variety of similar imitations:

> The first act ended with the most astonishing demonstration of the facility with which the African face can be made to represent other dark-skinned races. It was an elaborate ballet. Four misses looked and acted more like Japanese girls than most white chorus girls in comic opera. A group of men made perfect Arabs. Three more girls were vivid Egyptians, with sinuous suggestion. Two men represented Chinamen.[33]

This is not the only instance in which the traditional blackface routine was varied into other races: Rosamond Johnson also helped arrange a show for Bert Williams that included a number entitled "Chink, Chink, Chinaman."[34] On the surface, these instances suggest that Johnson's assertions of the international adaptability of the African American echo stage performance and not reality. In fact, the very assertion itself seems to echo the surprise purposely created by displays such as that in "A Trip to Coontown."

Whatever the source, the assertion that the African American is an "adaptable creature" bears a very strange relationship to the plot of the *Autobiography*. If an African American can become perfectly English, or French, or even Chinese, without any sense of loss, then what prevents the narrator of the *Autobiography* from becoming a perfectly adapted Euro-American? Or, to put it another way, once an African American becomes Chinese, right down to the pigtail, what remains to signify that this is in fact still in some sense an African? What would be the common denominator in the African become English and the African become French and the African become Chinese? This, of course, is in some sense the question both Du Bois and Johnson struggle to answer, though Du Bois would hardly have pushed its terms to this extreme. The answer in both cases lies in a culture exemplified by music, which creates and sustains ties of commonality that subsist within geographical, regional, and perhaps even national difference. But this, as these examples from ragtime performance have shown, is precisely what music does not do in Johnsons case. In fact, it is musical performance, in the form of shows like "A Trip to Coontown," that restates the whole concept of identity and authenticity in such a novel way as to make it twice the problem it previously was for Du Bois.

The *Autobiography* is therefore hopeless and defeated where *Souls of Black Folk* is inspirational, even now, so many years after its publication.

There is an unstated hopelessness beneath the obvious lament voiced by the narrator, for his regret at having made the wrong choice masks the fact that there was never a real choice to make: the music that represents full racial participation to him has already been made into a spectacle, one that makes racial identity itself into a performance, even a stunt. The way Johnson himself wavers on this issue, both defying and defending the idea of imitation, suggests the influence that such performances would have on the crucial idea that culture could come to represent in some authentic way the identity that biological definitions of race had made both oppressive and intellectually indefensible. For culture in the twentieth century could not mean what it had in the nineteenth, when it seemed somehow to fuse the practical and the spiritual and thus also the people and their artists.

In the *Autobiography*, culture cannot provide an alternative to the alienation imposed by racism on Du Bois and Johnson because it incorporates that alienation into the very structure of its products. The musical theater in which Johnson-Cole-Johnson thrived presented its songs and routines for reception simultaneously from two different points of view: as original works to be enjoyed for the first time, as it were, and as fashionable, popular, or even stereotypical works that were to be enjoyed precisely because they could be fancied as already having been enjoyed by others. Identity, racial or otherwise, in this context has the same dual aspect, as if the very sense of self-division and self-betrayal that so oppresses the ex-colored man as a spectator were being enacted on stage as itself a most engrossing spectacle. This puts a final twist in the ending of the *Autobiography*, for the narrator's regret at having neglected his musical pursuits in favor of a life passed for white ignores the fact that the great subject of the musical theater of the time was in fact the very act of passing, literally and visually, or, in the borrowing of musical motifs, implicitly and aurally.

Dissolving the narrator's "choice" in this way severely limits the inspirational and the cautionary power of the *Autobiography*, but it also allows it to express a crucial fact of the early twentieth century. For the point of the *Autobiography* turns out not to be the possible dichotomy of popular art and the racial dilemma but rather their identity. To abstract both seeing and hearing from their un-self-consciously biological basis, to make these senses into the vehicles for particular "media," was to make these senses obvious to themselves in an unprecedented way. Watching in this new way was to receive impressions "through the revelation" of another world that was simultaneously the original world itself. That this reorientation of the senses coincided with a general realization

of cultural particularity and of the instability of racial difference cannot be purely accidental: it was in fact the greater range of experiences made possible by the media that brought disparate cultures together and made them self-conscious. It was Johnson's particular experience as a popular entertainer and racial crusader that allowed him to see the relationship of race to the new media and to make the *Autobiography* such a telling account of their association.

7 Ernest Hemingway's Media Relations

Of all American writers, the one least likely to feel at home in the world of spectatorship and performance adumbrated in the previous chapters is certainly Ernest Hemingway, for whom literary authenticity was apparently such a powerful fetish that it helped to kill him in the end. Hemingway's prose also seems to put such emphasis on careful observation that recourse to camera tricks of any kind would seem out of the question. On the other hand, however, Hemingway became more thoroughly a creature of the media than any other writer considered here, and, though he was usually lionized for his determined participation in individual sports ranging from fishing to writing, he also helped to make watching such sports into new national pastimes. Though his interest in films, either the Hollywood adaptations of his own works or more personal projects like *The Spanish Earth*, over which he quarreled with Dos Passos, was always strictly practical, Hemingway may have done more to legitimize spectatorship itself as a pastime than any other modern American writer.

If the standard histories are to be believed, Hemingway was a creature of the media in two almost completely different ways. As the bearded literary icon of *Life* and *Parade*, he became the twentieth century's most prominent example of a writer transformed into a mere signboard for himself, one whose writing style was so recognizable it inspired an adjective that became virtually a brand name. Alongside this most photographed author were similarly photographed versions of his works that usually bore the same distant relation to their originals. On the other side, at what might seem the furthest remove from this sort of ephemeralization, stands the omer Hemingway, still closely associated

with the media but in this case apprenticed to the hard-nosed journalism of the Kansas City *Star* and disciplined by the constraints of the telegraph. The effect of electronic mass communication in this respect is the fine-tuning of a literary style without excess, terse, direct, and as real as the harsh events it describes. In most accounts of Hemingway's career, these two versions are linked together by a narrative of compromise and decline, as one modernized Hemingway, the lean younger one, gives way to the other, puffed up and distorted by excessive publicity. A closer look at Hemingway's media relations might show, however, that these two extremes are more closely linked than they might seem to be, and that Hemingway reacted to and expressed the spectatorial society of his time in one consistent, though complex, way throughout his career.

For anyone raised on the notion that Hemingway's work as a journalist taught him to produce the lean and hard-edged sentences that made his fiction so popular and influential, an actual look at some of that journalism can come as quite a surprise. The first lines Hemingway published in the Toronto *Star* read more like an oily sales pitch than a battlefield dispatch: “Have you a coming Corot, a modern Millet, a potential Paul Potter or a Toronto Titian temporarily adding whatever the new art adds to your home? If not it is possible to obtain one of the finest works of the moderns for a limited time for a mere fraction of its value.”[1] That the piece is written with tongue well in cheek seems only to compound its overall offense against sincerity, directness, and economy of means. Yet it is but the first of many such offenses committed over the three years in which Hemingway wrote for the *Star*, ending finally with a brief comic piece about the stir supposedly caused by his German fedora. Though the writing republished in *Dateline: Toronto* is relatively simple and straightforward as to sentence structure, it is also arch, affected, chatty, and frequently overblown. If this writing truly represents Hemingway's apprenticeship, then it seems that apprenticeship was served not on the front pages in stories of crime and battle but somewhere in the back sections with the fashion reviews, the humor columns, and the latest recipes. The literary “camera eye” that Hemingway developed as a reporter was not, therefore, a coolly objective one but rather a highly self-conscious one that captured a great deal besides the thing itself.

As startling as it is, this realization needn't invalidate the common idea that Hemingway's early journalistic writing significantly prefigures his fiction, but it should challenge common assumptions about the meaning of that connection. Critics seem to have believed from the

very first Hemingway's cordial praise of the no rules issued to those who came, as he did in 1917, to work for the Kansas City *Star*. Hemingway's testimony, delivered in an interview with the *Star* itself in 1940, became the basis of one of the first critical studies of his work, Charles Fenton's book *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway*, published in 1954. Fenton was the first of many to reprint the famously short imperatives to brevity: “Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative.”[2] And he influentially argued that these rules formed the basis for the terse style of Hemingway's early fiction. Though Fenton maintained that “nothing Hemingway might learn in the next decade of apprenticeship would supplant this precept,” there was one important supplement to it, which has become almost as legendary. While working as a European correspondent for the Toronto *Star*, Hemingway is supposed to have been excited, not frustrated, by the brevity enforced when his dispatches had to be cabled home. “Cablese,” he apparently said to Lincoln Steffens, “is a *new* language.”[3] Together, these twin disciplines are held by most critics to have produced in Hemingway a “tight, compact, concise” prose, one in which simple declarative sentences describe reality as faithfully and economically as possible.[4]

One major difficulty with this account of Hemingway's apprenticeship is that the facts do not always sustain it. As Ronald Weber has discovered, from evidence contained in Fenton's own notes, the celebrated Kansas City *Star* style sheet was neither so well known nor so authoritative as has been supposed. Two of the reporters Fenton queried disclaimed all knowledge of a style sheet and a third maintained that it was distributed only in a very limited way.[5] Whether the style sheet was or was not circulated widely enough to be a constant guide may matter relatively little in the end, however, since Hemingway actually had little opportunity to put its precepts into practice. Though a very small number of *Star* stories have been reliably associated with him, it seems that most of these were actually phoned in to be rendered into print by more experienced rewrite men.[6] Hemingway did write his own copy for the Toronto *Star* and had in fact been writing it for over two years before he discovered “cablese” at the Genoa Conference in 1922. Even after the conference, however, the vast bulk of Hemingway's pieces were mailed, not cabled, for the simple reason that they were not timely enough to require extra speed.[7] If Hemingway ever cabled very much material at all, it was not for the *Star* but for the International News Service, where it appeared, if it appeared, without a byline.[8]

It seems possible, then, that there are, strictly speaking, almost no

surviving examples of journalism directly produced by Hemingway under the influence of the *Star* style sheet or the telegraph. And what does survive from his service with the Kansas City and Toronto papers differs quite markedly from the standard of concise directness supposedly inculcated by those two early influences. As Elizabeth Dewberry puts it, "many of the *Kansas City Star* pieces reveal at least as great an interest on Hemingways part in testing the limits of the style sheet's rules as in abiding by them."[9] The most notable of these pieces, and the ones apparently most admired at the *Star* itself, are actually character sketches, like "Kerensky, the Fighting Flea," or brief short stories, like "Mix War, Art and Dancing."[10] Such pieces show, according to Matthew Bruccoli, that from the beginning Hemingway "was more interested in color stories and character sketches than in straight reporting."[11]

If so, then Hemingway found the perfect spot for himself in Toronto. For the most part, his writing there was not actually for the *Star* itself but rather for the *Star Weekly*, which is to say that it was not really newspaper reporting at all. The *Star Weekly* was a feature magazine that was almost completely separate from the *Star*[12] and that relied heavily on cartoons, photographs, humorous sketches, human interest stories, and publicity stunts. Among its legendary triumphs was the six-week fly-swatting contest conducted in 1912, in the course of which 3,367,680 flies were summarily executed by eager *Star Weekly* readers.[13] The *Star Weekly* was filled up with such "froth,"[14] or "fluff,"[15] stories whipped up out of nothing in which every word was, in a manner of speaking, in excess of the facts. Accordingly, Hemingway's early stories for the *Star Weekly* concentrated on recent fads such as the "Circulating Pictures movement" (*Dateline*, p. 3) or the photographic miniature (*Dateline*, p. 38). These stories frequently adopt a rather arch tone about the tendency of the "man in the street" to be "swayed by a series of fads" (*Dateline*, p. 17), but they assume nonetheless that the reader will want to know what the "latest fad" is (*Dateline*, p. 37). This remains true even when Hemingway moves to Europe and begins reporting on more substantial matters for the *Star* daily. From Genoa, where he was ostensibly covering the international peace conference, Hemingway reported as well on the newest betting game (*Dateline*, pp. 164–165), and from Paris he sent dispatches on the newest aperitif (*Dateline*, p. 182).

A brief story filed in 1922 on the sparrow hat (*Dateline*, p. 109) is probably the only pure fashion reporting Hemingway did in Paris, but his writing is never entirely free of the fashion consciousness inculcated by the *Star Weekly*. Even his dispatches from Genoa diverge from the conference proceedings to notice the beautiful fur coats and Paris hats

of the spectators and the fashionable bobbed hair of the secretaries of the Russian delegation (*Dateline*, pp. 144, 146). In fact, Hemingways sense of the strength and variability of fashion served him well in his more serious reporting of this time, which witnessed the birth of an entirely new kind of international public relations. Walter Lippmann influentially enunciated what had become common wisdom by 1922 when he said: “men respond as powerfully to fictions as they do to realities, and … in many cases they help to create the very fictions to which they respond.”[16] In his concentration on personalities, on appearances rather than issues, Hemingway often seems to be missing the real story at Genoa, and yet the real story of this time, when the Versailles settlement was becoming more and more controversial, had to do with public opinion in Germany and France, which seemed to be swayed as much by symbols as by policy or self-interest. If there is something peculiarly modern about this reporting, it is most certainly not that it is harsh, clear, and realistic but rather that it is exquisitely sensitive to the power of appearance, to the shift in influence, for example, as Tchitcherin, in a new overcoat and a better haircut, becomes more comfortable in front of the cameras (*Dateline*, p. 254). Hemingway's association with photojournalism thus begins at the very beginning of his career, and from the beginning he is highly aware of the way photographs themselves have become a new kind of news.

The prose style that Hemingway developed for such occasions was appropriately skeptical, humorous, and flippant. At its best, it negotiated perfectly the modern journalistic paradox whereby fads are popularized and debunked at the same time and a canny and even cynical public opinion is built up out of its own credulity. A knowing exaggeration, the hallmark of a certain kind of friendly American irony, and not understatement, is the chief method of this style. In its pure form, it debunks by egregious overstatement some minor modern shibboleth, such as “the gift as an expression of personality” (*Dateline*, p. 85), or the necessity of regular vacations to good health (*Dateline*, pp. 71–72). At times, however, the irony disappears from Hemingway's knowing irony and he becomes a simple know-it-all. From reporting on shifts of taste he switches to trying to dictate them, to become an “arbiter of taste.”[17] The idea that in its fickleness taste might be humorous disappears from these pieces on the right way to fish, camp, or canoe, and Hemingway's prose becomes sternly didactic. These pieces, more than any others, anticipate episodes in Hemingways fiction, and yet the overwhelming presence in them of the imperative marks them off from both fiction and reportage.

A decade or so after he left the *Star*, when he was writing on a regular basis for *Esquire*, Hemingway tried to pretend that writing a column was an unexpected luxury:

> Your correspondent is an old newspaper man … and as such used to envy the way columnists were allowed to write about themselves. When the papers would come over your correspondent would read a long blob-blobs by his then favorite columnist on the columnist himself, his child, what he thought and how he thought it, while on this same day your correspondents output would be something on this order: KEMAL INSWARDS UNBURNED SMYRNA GUILTY GREEKS, sending it at three dollars a word Eastern Cable urgent. … [18]

But the easily humorous style of this piece itself shows how practiced Hemingway was in what he sarcastically called "those I, me, my pieces" (*By-Line*, p. 179), dozens of which he had contributed to the *Star Weekly*. In another piece for *Esquire*, he complained: "To write this sort of thing you need a typewriter. To describe, to narrate, to make funny cracks you need a typewriter. To fake along, to stall, to make light reading, to write a good piece, you need luck, two or more drinks and a typewriter. Gentlemen, there is no typewriter" (*By-Line*, p. 159). The implication here is that nothing is more foreign to Hemingway's sort of writer than to "fake along, to stall, to make light reading," but this is in fact a perfect description of the vast bulk of the work he did as a journalist. Hemingway was a master at writing news stories about absolutely nothing, as he did for example on October 16, 1922, when he managed to wring almost eight hundred words out of catching a taxi and getting on a train. Instead of taking a few terse words of description and inflating them into a news story, as he implies in *Esquire*, the *Star* actually dignified this piece of barefaced piffle with the headline "Balkans: A Picture of Peace, Not War" (*Dateline*, p. 224).

None of this, of course, was hidden from Fenton or from other scholars influenced by his point of view. Though he concedes that the sort of writing Hemingway did in Europe for the *Star was* useful practice for a future writer of fiction, Fenton cannot help but exude disapproval of the "froth" that Hemingway was supposed to provide. In his influential account of Hemingway's apprenticeship, however, the froth finally evaporates so that the Kansas City *Star* style sheet can exert its influence across the years on the early fiction. Considering the relative bulk of the writing Hemingway did for the *Star Weekly*, and given the fact that he continued to produce material of this kind all his life, quite

masterfully for *Esquire*, it might make more sense to put the style sheet back in the drawer it most probably occupied and reconsider the whole relationship of Hemingway's journalism to his fiction. Such a reconsideration might begin by putting Hemingway's early writing in an entirely different institutional context.

One part of Hemingway's life that is usually given almost no attention at all is the period he spent in Chicago during the summer and fall of 1920, utterly at a loss for a profession. The possibility suggested by his closest friends of the time was advertising. Bill Home, with whom Hemingway had served during the war, and Y. K. Smith, the older brother of his longtime Michigan friend Bill Smith, were both in advertising, and both thought it a natural option for Hemingway.[19] According to Fenton, Smith attempted to find Hemingway a job at an agency that had once employed Sherwood Anderson,[20] and though this did not pan out, Hemingway did meet Anderson, as well as Carl Sandburg, in the group of literate young advertising men that tended to collect at Smith's apartment.[21] The meeting with Anderson was, of course, the turning point in Hemingway's life and the beginning of his career as a writer, and it is worth at least noting the context in which it occurred. For it was not a literary salon that brought them together but a rackety collection of young men making a living out of a relatively new profession that was just beginning to make itself felt.

The development of advertising from a relatively staid and limited practice into the social juggernaut of today accelerated perceptibly in the early 1920s. Advertising volume boomed as income rose and installment buying became more acceptable. In 1922, the trade journal *Printers Ink* announced "The Dawn of the Distribution Age," an age in which advertising would take over the central role once occupied by industry itself, as the focus of the economy shifted from production to consumption.[22] With this shift, advertising was to occupy the very heart of the modern age, rightly so since it defined and publicized the current mode. As Roland Marchand puts it, the advertising man "proclaimed himself an expert on the latest crazes in fashion, contemporary lingo, and popular pastimes."[23] Considering how closely this description fits the persona that Hemingway worked out for himself at the *Star Weekly*, it is little wonder that his friends felt he had a future in this coming profession.

Hemingway never actually worked at this profession, from which Anderson had very famously departed, but when the two met he was writing for a publication that was, to say the least, on the shadow-line between advertising and journalism. The *Cooperative Commonwealth*,

where Hemingway worked from the fall of 1920 to the spring of 1921, is, for certain obvious reasons, the one publication in Hemingway's early life to have received almost no scholarly attention. It might be considered, in fact, the evil twin of the Kansas City *Star*, representing the polar opposite of everything that paper has come to stand for in accounts of Hemingway's writing. While the *star* and is admired as a model of journalistic probity, the *Cooperative Commonwealth* was in fact fraudulent. The Co-operative Society of America, the organization that the *Commonwealth* ostensibly served as house organ, had been created to resemble the legitimate cooperative movement, but it was actually an elaborate swindle.[24] Even if the Society had been legitimate, however, the *Commonwealth* was nothing more than a publicity sheet, and Hemingway's job there was to manufacture enough plausible filler to make it seem a legitimate journalistic enterprise. As Fenton notes, however, all this involved was a continuation of the kind of writing he had already been doing for the *Star Weekly*.[25] Hemingway had long since become adept at generating human interest stories, and though he was apparently appalled to find that the whole *Commonwealth* enterprise was crooked, he was in some ways the ideal young writer for it at the time.

Though the files of the Kansas City *Star* and the Toronto *Star Weekly* have been combed for evidence of Hemingway's early genius, the *Cooperative Commonwealth* has been despised and generally ignored by biographer and scholar alike: there have been few attempts to disentangle Hemingway's work from the general mass of propaganda and self-promotion. From what has been done, however, it is clear that at the *Cooperative Commonwealth* Hemingway was part public relations man and part advertising copywriter. He did in fact "push products sold in the Society's cooperative stores," an activity he carried over into burlesque for the visitors at Y. K. Smith's.[26] One of these, Donald Wright, who made a lifelong career of advertising, later remembered a particularly ludicrous scheme that had to do with selling bottled blood from the Chicago stockyards.[27] The satirical attitude behind such mock projects suggests that Michael Reynolds correctly summarizes Hemingway's own attitude toward his brief brush with the advertising game: "This was not the writing that mattered."[28]

On the other hand, publicity did matter to Hemingway, from the very beginning. Hemingway had himself been a creature of publicity from the moment he was wounded on the Italian front in 1918. Writing to his parents about his condition, he rather blandly observed, "I suppose the papers say something about it."[29] By the time he had been in

the hospital only a very short while, however, he was keenly aware, according to James Mellow, that what he wrote home "would find its way into public print,"[30] and when he returned from Europe he was immediately met by reporters, whose need for newsworthy copy he was all the more able to meet because he had been a reporter himself.[31] The fact that such needs can conflict with a newspaper's dedication to the truth must have been abundantly clear to him as he began to embellish, exaggerate, and then to falsify his war experience.

Perhaps the eeriest and most unpleasant of all the "how to" articles that Hemingway did for the *Star Weekly* was the one he wrote in 1920 on the theme "How to Be Popular Although a Slacker" (*Dateline*, p. 10). The steps it ironically prescribes to the slacker who wants to be thought a war hero are almost exactly those Hemingway had actually taken in order to transform himself from a Red Cross ambulance driver into a lieutenant in the Italian army: "A good plan is to go to one of the stores handling secondhand army goods and purchase yourself a trench coat. A trench coat worn in winter-time is a better advertisement of military service than an M.C." (*Dateline*, p. 10). The only difference is that Hemingway chose as advertisement a rather magniloquent cape rather than a trench coat and had his bogus army uniform constructed by a tailor instead of buying it off the rack. Otherwise, the article is a confessional blueprint of the process by which Hemingway constructed the story of his war service that persisted virtually unchallenged for decades. What makes the story so unsettling, though, is the double duplicity of it, the way it coolly relies on confession to reinforce the very deception that is being confessed, counting on the reader to assume that the directions given can only be ironic, since no one who had ever actually followed them would have the gall to proclaim it.

Hemingway's use of the term "advertisement" in this context may be incidental, and it predates by a few months his exposure to the advertising world in Chicago, but it prefigures, in an inverted and uncanny way, what was to be the most notorious characteristic of his career as a famous American author. Hemingway advertised himself more adeptly than any other American writer ever had, so much so that he would become virtually synonymous with the mass market publications, such as *Life*, that featured him and his works. "Critics and college professors lament this state of affairs," as Scott Donaldson says,[32] implying that for such readers there is an unpleasant gulf between the vulgarity of mass-market notoriety and the achievement of great literature. As Leo Braudy puts it, "Hemingway remains the prime case of someone fatally caught between his genius and its publicity."[33] This very common

formulation of Hemingway's life implies a definitive contradiction between genius and publicity, but it should be obvious that at least in part Hemingway's genius *was for* publicity. If Hemingway's career as a writer is seen to start with the pufF pieces he wrote for the *Star Weekly*, then his later career as a creature of the slick magazines makes perfect sense, and his genius as a writer comes to have a more intelligible relationship to the modernity of which it was a defining part.

For the usual accounts of Hemingway's journalism are wrong not just about Hemingway but also about the journalism of his time, which was changing in its devotion to fact partly because of changes in what counted as facts. In certain obvious and vulgar ways, journalism was caught up in the expansion of promotionalism and public relations exemplified at this time by Edward Bernays. The founder of public relations, at least in having given it that name, Bernays delighted in manufacturing news by provoking legitimate journalistic concerns into giving what amounted to free ad copy. And advertisers became more adept at designing ads that seemed to be news stories or editorial features.[34] But even in legitimate and responsible ways, journalism was changing as Hemingway joined it. What counted as news was no longer purely objective, when it was abundantly clear, as Lippmann had asserted, that subjective reactions had, in important cases like the Great War, played as important a role as objective conditions. It little mattered in the end that some such reactions were the result of manipulation or even fraud since they came in practice to acquire the force of fact.[35] Public sentiment of the kind that fed both fad and fashion was becoming a fact worth reporting, a condition that newspapers participated in reflexively by helping to make the opinions they reported on. Hemingway's taste for publicity and his free and easy way with the truth would have made him a rather unreliable reporter of the traditional kind, but it suited him perfectly to the management and readership of the *Star Weekly*, which became instrumental, by fostering these traits, in developing Hemingway's mature style.

Hemingway's journalism has mattered so much because it has anchored certain accounts of his fictional style. The reportorial style, with its utilitarian lightness, is associated with the ostensible aim of most reportage, which is to tell the truth about events. Thus Hemingway's terseness comes to indicate, if not exactly truth itself, always a problematic quality in a work of fiction, at least an ethic of truthfulness, a devotion to authenticity that links form and content in a seamless whole. As Walter Michaels puts it, words in Hemingway's works “serve not to represent

the experience but to testify to its authenticity."[36] But terseness, in and of itself, need not indicate a devotion to accuracy or authenticity. Advertising copy, even at this time when pictures were used much more sparingly, was notably terse, and there was an ethic of brevity at most ad agencies of the 1920s much like that of the Kansas City *Star*: "short words and shorter sentences."[37] Such writing, be it ever so short, had a very complex relationship to the sort of authenticity Michaels invokes, as did the fiction Hemingway began to write while he was still working for the *Star* and *Star Weekly*.

Hemingway and his publishers both made an attempt to associate his early work with his experience as a reporter. *In Our Time* intersperses among the short stories what often seem to be fragmentary news accounts, some of which were taken directly from stories Hemingway had covered as a reporter, and the first edition splashed newspaper cuttings across its cover as if to underscore the timeliness of the vignettes inside. As scholarship has discovered, however, rather few of these vignettes, even the ones republished from newspapers, represent actual eyewitness testimony. One of Hemingway's journalistic specialties, several scholars have noticed, was the production of plausible firsthand accounts of events he had not seen for himself, and this talent carried over into *In Our Time*, where even the bullfight description is secondhand.[38]

However, any narrow focus, positive or negative, on the truthfulness to experience of these vignettes would risk missing the sophisticated yet uncertain way in which the whole collection speculates about the fidelity of language. In its very arrangement, *In Our Time* oddly smudges the line between fact and fiction, for, though the named short stories are all in the third person, a good many of the italicized inter-chapters, generally closer in substance and tone to news stories, are in the first. And the two ostensibly separate lines cross in the middle when Nick, the focus of many of the short stories, appears in an italicized vignette. In fact, there is a very peculiar knot in both the chronology and the narrative mode of *In Our Time* at precisely this point, as Nick's wound in chapter 6 seemingly leads into the hospital stay of "A Very Short Story," in which the protagonist is not named, and then seemingly doubles back in chapter 7 to the earlier batdefield cowardice of another unnamed protagonist, who pleads with God not to be wounded. It is possible to rearrange and rewrite these three installments so that they form a very familiar story, much like *The Red Badge of Courage* or perhaps Hemingway's own war experience, in which a young man's first fears are followed by a satisfactory wound and then new disillusionment, but to rework them into this far more conventional

arrangement is to miss the sign that something fundamentally troubling has tangled the fiction.

Chapter 7 presents a rather complicated situation, even in isolation from the stories around it. Though it is clearly written in the third person, the way the soldier's speech is run into the narration without quotation marks makes it seem far more personal:

> While the bombardment was knocking the trench to pieces at Fossalta, he lay very flat and sweated and prayed oh jesus christ get me out of here. Dear jesus please get me out. Christ please please please christ. If you'll only keep me from getting hurt I'll do anything you say.[39]

And a first-person narrator does make a one-line appearance, but then in a collective form ("We went to work on the trench … ") that makes it impossible to determine if the original soldier is included or not. The only thing that seems clear from this complicated pronominal situation is that Hemingway was unsure how close he wanted to be to this act of cowardice. Because it associates garrulity and repetition with a failure of nerve, this vignette seems to mark the very antithesis of the verbal "grace under pressure" with which Hemingway and his style are usually associated, and yet it is a vignette he rewrote in the first person when Fredric Henry breaks down at the end of *A Farewell to Arms*, which is itself an elaborate rewriting of "A Very Short Story": "Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die."[40]

Something keeps this act of verbal excess at the center of the episode that in life and fiction formed the heart of the Hemingway persona. It is not just the excess, however, that makes this speech act radioactive but also the fact that it is a lie, or rather a whole nest of lies. For though the young soldier promises God "I believe in you and I'll tell everyone in the world," he goes back on his word: "And he never told anybody." But this line, the last in the vignette, is vague enough to confess another lie as well, the lie of omission that comes when he keeps the story of his cowardice to himself. It is not necessary to indict Hemingway of battlefield cowardice to suggest that this lie bears an interesting relationship to some other lies as well, which Hemingway may be confessing here precisely as he confessed them in his journalism, wearing the presumption of irony rather like the army uniform to which he had no legal right. Hemingway had been heroically wounded in the war, but not in the Italian army as he liked to claim, and though this is perhaps merely a pardonable exaggeration, other claims, such as having

witnessed the death of “my very good friend” on the Italian front, were simple fabrications (*Dateline*, p. 180). These lies seem to shadow the story of heroism throughout Hemingway's life, constructing behind it another story and another verbal order, in which human faithlessness robs language of every strength that good courageous use can give it.

The broken promise in chapter 7 is in a sense the bad seed from which the rest of *In Our Time* grows. For the real linguistic issue at stake within the stories is never the faithfulness of language to reality but rather the faithfulness of speakers to the language they use. This is to adjust Michaels's formula, to the effect that Hemingway uses words “not to represent the experience but to testify to its authenticity,” by placing all the emphasis on the verb “to testify.” In other words, Hemingway is not as interested in constatives as he is in performatives, to take a distinction from J. L. Austin. Hemingway is particularly interested in promises, which Austin calls one of “the more awe-inspiring performatives.”[41] Promises are perhaps central to Austins notion of the performative in that they bind the speaker not to his or her intention but rather to the receiver of the promise, and in this way they reflexively create the “bond” on which successful performativity depends. For performative utterances have no force outside the convention that gives them meaning, a situation that is sustained merely by the social solidarity that keeps conventions in effect.

Austin defines performatives by exhaustively imagining all the possible ways they can go wrong, much the same procedure Hemingway follows dramatically in his fiction. It is as if the broken promise between God and man in chapter 7, whatever it may imply about the loss of faith in the course of the war, has put the whole notion of a single, verifiable reality, ultimately sanctioned by the word of God, out of bounds, to be replaced by a series of provisional conventions agreed on ad hoc between individuals. The difficulty and unhappiness of this situation is reflected in “A Very Short Story,” in which the unnamed soldier and the nurse he loves want to get married but can't: “They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it, and to make it so they could not lose it” (*Time*, p. 65). They want, in other words, to make their private promise to one another public and objective, so that they will be truly bound to one another, but they can't and so they do “lose it,” just as Harold Krebs loses “everything” a few pages later in “Soldier's Home” by lying about his experiences in the war (*Time*, p. 70).

“There isn't any good in promising,” as Nick says in “Cross-Country Snow” (*Time*, p. 112). Promises are always provisional and

temporary because they depend on the strength and faith of individuals, which are likely to be unreliable. Promises are also situational. As chapter 7 shows, God makes no promises to humankind, and human beings cannot sustain their promises to God, and as "A Very Short Story" shows, without that religious sanction human promises are only good for a particular time and a particular place. This means that there is likely to be a conflict between promises, which is why Nick is so rueful in "Cross-Country Snow." He has made a promise to Helen by getting married, and the circumstances surrounding that promise prevent him from making another reliable one about skiing someday with George. Most of the stories in *In Our Time*, in fact, involve a real or putative triangle, so that Nick's commitment to Marjorie in "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow" conflicts with his commitment to Bill, as his boyhood commitment to his father in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" had clashed with his responsibility to his mother.

The utterances that really matter in Hemingway's stories, then, are performative utterances, and his focus on them implies a particular notion of linguistic truth. The truth concerned in these stories is not the fidelity of language to some set of extralinguistic facts but rather the fidelity that language enforces between people. This is why so much of the language used by the characters in Hemingway's works is, by any strict standard of communicative utility, quite unnecessary. The lovers' conversations between Catherine Barkley and Fredric Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* are perhaps the most extreme examples of the kind of conversation so often found in Hemingway: repetitive, formulaic small talk that in its utter pointlessness seems to fly in the face of everything that has been said about the efficiency of his prose style. But the purpose of these conversations, as Margot Norris has recently pointed out, is to produce between the lovers a textualized version of themselves, a performed version of perfect lovers to which they can bind themselves.[42] Henry says early on, before he is really in love: "This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards. Like bridge, you had to pretend you were playing for money or playing for some stakes."[43] And their conversations remain a game, become, in fact, even more game-like later on, with the single difference that once Catherine becomes pregnant the stakes have finally been named. What these conversations are, almost from beginning to end, is one long promise, one single expression of faithfulness, as if to reverse by sheer insistence the failure of "A Very Short Story."

What is true of the language *in* Hemingway's works, the language

used by his characters, is also often true of the narration as well. In “Big Two-Hearted River,” Nick talks to himself as the lovers talk to one another in *A Farewell to Arms*, creating by careful, ritualistic repetition a version of himself on which he might rely. In its massive redundancy, the language of Nick's meditations sometimes becomes almost purely phatic, like the language used to calm a nervous horse:

> Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the good place. He was in his home where he had made it. (*Time*, p. 139)

The real subject of this passage, whatever mental trauma it is that Nick is trying to escape, is simultaneously suppressed and indicated by the repetition. This is one of many episodes in which Hemingway designates his subject in the least reportorial way possible, by insistently and unnecessarily talking about something else, and it points out as well as any how oddly that technique, the celebrated “iceberg” principle, sorts with an overall aesthetic of linguistic efficiency. As Norris suggests, the practice of “leaving out” has in such stories been encoded as candor, suppressing the other possibility, quite obvious in chapter 7, that “not saying” is often the same as lying.[44]

The apparent incompatibility between these two equally celebrated tendencies in Hemingway's prose can be composed, and not saying can become pretty much the same thing as saying efficiently, if language gets its truthfulness by human agreement and not by correspondence to extralinguistic reality. In its vagueness, Hemingway's writing appeals to the prior knowledge and the implied agreement of his readers, and with these it transforms gaps and absences into designations that are precise as need be. In *The Sun Also Rises*, for example, Hemingway frequently flatters his readers by writing as if they too are seasoned habitues of the artistic haunts of Paris. All this takes is a strategic use of the definite article and the flexible, colloquial American “you”: “On the right was the Pare Montsouris. The restaurant were they have the pool of live trout and where you can sit and look out over the park was closed and dark.”[45] But Hemingway extends this trick to presume certain values as well as certain knowledge. In both speech and narration, Jake has the tendency to use the word “nice” as if it needed no elaboration, as it usually does not in ordinary conversation. However, it is one thing to end the day by noting that “It was a nice hotel, and the people at the desk were cheerful, and we each had a good small room,” and something else

to insist that Brett Ashley is "very nice" when she most certainly does not fit at least one commonly used definition of that term.[46] Words like "nice" and the "swell" that crops up so frequently in *In Our Time* are simply the most obvious examples of a kind of language that acquires its specificity by implication within a particular social group. In a sense, you must be nice to know what "nice" means, as Robert Cohn so obviously does not. As Walter Michaels points out, there is a tendency in Hemingway's work to use words like "nice" as if they meant pretty much the same thing as "real,"[47] but in fact they are not only different but indicative of entirely different linguistic regimes, for "nice" is quite openly a term of subjective social approval, variable by time, space, and social circumstance, while "real" supposes an unchanging correspondence to the facts.

This tendency to write as if matters of taste were matters of fact begins with Hemingway's journalism. The pervasive concern there with fad and fashion, with what's currently being "done," is often an ironically assumed pose, but where it touches Hemingway more personally the pose begins to seem more genuine. The "how to" pieces on fishing and camping are as obsessively concerned with style as the more ironic pieces on the current fads, and it does seem at times that this obsession is based on a practical concern for the best results. The little tips that make up the article entitled "Trout Fishing Hints," which ran in the *Star Weekly* in the spring of 1920, are supposed to "make the difference between getting a small and foolish trout who will strike at anything … and fooling some big old-timer" (*Dateline*, p. 23). But there is another concern in these pieces as well, the fear of being thought a "tyro," which Hemingway seems to be fighting simultaneously in himself and in his supposed reader. The bluster with which he informs this reader that "there is a good and bad way of frying" trout (*Dateline*, p. 45) is so familiar, the authoritative recipe is such an unquestioned institution, that few will stop to think that, since cooking is by definition a matter of taste, there can be no "good and bad" about it. A few years later, in fact, Hemingway will regale his *Star Weekly* readers with an entirely different but equally definitive way of cooking trout, discovered in Europe (*Dateline*, p. 367). In such cases, the real "good" that is being pursued has nothing to do with practical results, which are simply the necessary preliminary to the mysterious induction he celebrates in a 1922 story on tuna fishing in Spain:

> But if you land a big tuna after a six-hour fight, fight him man against fish until your muscles are nauseated with the unceasing

> strain, and finally bring him up alongside the boat, green-blue and silver in the lazy ocean, you will be purified and you will be able to enter unabashed into the presence of the very elder gods and they will make you welcome. (*Dateline*, p. 93)

To gain this sort of welcome, and not simply to fill up one's bag, is the purpose of all expertise for Hemingway. This is, in part, what made him such a likely writer for the *Star Weekly*, that his aesthetic values and his standards of authenticity were primarily social, that the truth he cared about was the truth determined by social practice. His writing, like the writing in advertisements of the period, both evoked and helped to create the sort of unspoken social agreement that constitutes the fashion of a time.[48]

For many years, Hemingway's writing derived some of its authority from the very source that now seems most commonly to demean it: his performances in the field. That Hemingway so famously lived what he wrote about—fishing, fighting, drinking, hunting—once seemed to make the act of writing about those things another physical performance and thus authentic in the relatively simple way that physical performances can be when they yield a trophy of one kind or another. This opinion depends, however, on the notion that Hemingway wanted to achieve in his work a relatively simple kind of linguistic truth, a correspondence to fact, and that his life helped to provide the facts. If, on the other hand, Hemingway's language, like the language so often used by the characters in his works, is meant to be valid in performative terms rather than true in constantive terms, then the authenticity of the performances, in and out of the work, is of very little relevance. What matters, where fashion and performative utterances are concerned, is whether or not a particular practice is *right*; from this, it acquires the kind of truth it needs.

This kind of fashion consciousness penetrates Hemingway's work even when it seems most aloof and remote. In "Big Two-Hearted River," for example, Nick Adams is all alone, and it seems that every move he makes is meant to construct a perfectly self-sufficient private world. But it may be that this carefully ritualistic fishing trip is also a first step back into the social world from which Nick seems so distant. Certainly, the reason he follows each step in his fishing and camping etiquette so carefully is not in order to catch more fish or even to avoid discomfort. Actually, the most positive feeling that Nick achieves in the story is that of being "professionally happy," adorned with all his fishing

gear (*Time*, p. 147). The satisfaction of having all the right gear in all the right places comes in part from the sense of professional validation it provides, the sense of belonging to an exclusive crew, just as fishing can be ruined by the presence of other, amateurish men: “Unless they were of your party, they spoiled it” (*Time*, p. 149). Nick's excessive care is meant to reassure himself that he is “of [that] party”; his return to the river is not a turn toward solitude or toward nature but back toward the only sort of social organization whose values still seem consistent and valid.

Though Nick is alone, he evokes and honors those other men by remembering their recipes. Actually, Nick cannot quite remember how his old friend Hopkins insisted coffee had to be made, though he does remember a bitter argument on the subject. Nonetheless, he is determined to make it “straight Hopkins all the way” (*Time*, p. 141), though the result is both messy and bitter. The episode seems a commentary on the rest of the story and on Hemingway's “how to” journalism, with which it is closely associated. For it is fairly clear that it doesn't matter what Nick does on this camping trip as long as it is “straight … all the way,” and this includes the pancake recipe cribbed almost word for word from the feature story the *Star Weekly* headlined “When You Camp Out, Do It Right” (*Time*, p. 146; *Dateline*, p. 46). Though the *Star Weekly* story makes it sound as if cooking and camping in any other way simply means disaster, Nick shows by toasting Hopkins in his own messy, bitter coffee that doing it “right” does not mean doing it well. Doing it right is in fact a great deal more important, since Nick needs the sense of being “one of the party” much more than he needs a good breakfast or a decent cup of coffee.

Bullfighting, the most famous of the many physical performances in Hemingway's fiction and his life, acquires its central, almost obsessive importance from the way it gives a sense of deadly necessity to this kind of purely social correctness. Those who are “of the party” in *The Sun Abo Rises* are said to have *aficion*, a term Hemingway tellingly translates as “passion,” ignoring another equally valid possibility: “taste.” But the beauty of this purposely murky term is the way it elevates matters of mere taste to the level of national instinct. Though it is fairly obvious that Jake Barnes must have learned to like bullfighting at some point—it is rather doubtful that there was much of it back in Kansas City—he is represented as simply “having” aficion in much the same way his Spanish friends do. Thus an acquired taste is made to seem hereditary, and a rather specialized affection for a peculiar kind of sport is made to seem not just fated but also morally necessary. At the

same time, aficion elides the very crucial opposition in *The Sun Also Rises* between watching and performing: both bullfighters and bullfight fans are said, when their feelings are authentic, to have aficion.[49]

This last is most important in Jake's case, for by the magical ambiguity of aficion the very loneliness that marked him off from his European acquaintances becomes an index of his belonging in Spain, and the spectatorial impotence that was so demeaning in France ("I have a rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of my friends")[50] becomes active and dynamic. Judged by the standards of aficion, watching is something that can be done well or ill, just like bullfighting itself. Jake gives his friends such detailed instructions on how to watch properly that Brett gets nervous, but his teaching takes in the end, and she becomes "absorbed in the professional details."[51] Thus absorbed, she becomes a kind of professional herself, as Jake is, though another possible translation of the term *aficion* is "amateur." Hemingway's method here, as so often in his journalism, is to make a matter of taste seem a matter of professional expertise, to make, in a very strange but particularly modern way, the mere expression of preference seem a practical act. In the case of bullfighting, it is the presence of blood in the ring that makes this transfiguration possible, as it is the possibility of death that makes the purely conventional and formal exercises of the matador seem to have something to do with "truth."

To some extent, these elisions explain why Hemingway has remained crucial to discussions of modernism even as his popular reputation has made him seem a little suspect to the academy. Bullfighting, to take the ideal instance of performance in his work, gives to the purest sort of formalism a seemingly deadly necessity. Because, as Hemingway explains it, the bullfighter comes closer to death the surer his aesthetic sense, art becomes a matter of life and death without having to be connected to any sort of practical activity. But the same elisions can explain what turns out to be the closely associated position Hemingway held in the popular press. As a journalist, Hemingway helped to break down the distinction between watching and acting, between consumption and agency. At *Esquire* in the 1930s, Hemingway participated in what the editor Arnold Gingrich portrayed as "a new kind of magazine … a magazine dedicated to the improvement of the new leisure."[52] To inaugurate his magazine in the most authoritative way possible, Gingrich had called on Nicholas Murray Butler, then president of Columbia University, to pronounce on "the new leisure." Somewhat incongruously, considering that this was 1933 and the very depths of the Depression, Butler maintained the *Esquire* code, that the "art of living" had to

be acquired, that the wise use of leisure time was almost a new kind of academic assignment. Hemingway's articles were every bit as didactic as Butler might have required of one of his professors, except that they taught marlin fishing, bullfight watching, or lion hunting. Despite *Esquire's* generally upscale look and feel, however, very few of its readers could have been in a position to actually use this advice. Instead, their leisure time was to be taken up with reading about Hemingway's exploits and the similar exploits of others. Because Hemingway continually mixed up writing with fishing and hunting, his readers were invited to mix up reading with them as well:

> When you have loved three things all your life, from the earliest you can remember; to fish, to shoot and, later, to read; and when, all your life, the necessity to write has been your master, you learn to remember and, when you think back you remember more fishing and shooting and reading than anything else and that is a pleasure. (*By-line* 187)

In the odd mixture of "fishing and shooting and reading," Hemingway gives his version of the modern paradox of rapt, sedentary consumption of increasingly violent and extreme performances. Hemingway was an ideal proponent of this consumerist ethic because he had for his own purposes already turned watching into a new kind of doing.

In this way, Hemingway helped his readers over one of the major ethical hurdles of the American twentieth century. As Roland Marchand shows, there was a good deal of resistance, even within advertising circles, to the consumerism that was the metaobject of most advertising in the 1920s and 1930s. Many advertising men were themselves ethically disdainful of the "weakness" they were purposely instilling in their sales targets, and some manufacturers, notably Henry Ford, publicly disclaimed ad campaigns because they depended so heavily on qualities extrinsic to the product. American business still clung to what Marchand calls a "producer ethic," the pillars of which were "efficiency, self-control, rationality, practical common sense, and a hatred of waste."[53] These virtues were also implicitly male, while their polar opposites in the "consumer ethic," appetite, waste, impulsiveness, irrationality, were implicitly feminine.

Of course, the virtues encoded as the "producer ethic" are also those generally associated with Hemingway's prose and with its purported background in the hard-bitten masculine world of the Kansas City *Star*. The writing Hemingway actually did for the *Star Weekly*, however, was generally about taste and was itself as fickle, arbitrary, excessive,

and impractical as taste generally is. But the real key to the power of these articles, and of so much of the writing Hemingway would do later, is the way they fuse the basic qualities of the old producer's ethic with the new practices of consumerism, so that taste might be exercised efficiently and consumption handled with the practical common sense that once went into actually making something. What might have looked like Epicureanism at another time now becomes the American's practical dedication to getting the most out of life. That there is actually a proper way of drinking, of watching a bullfight, of buying bullfight tickets, even of securing hotel rooms is the overt message of much of Hemingway's journalism and the implicit message of a good deal of the fiction, and what this does is to make consuming things into a profession all its own. At the same time, the spectatorial point of view that is so much a part of books like *The Sun Also Rises* ceases to be a mere device and becomes the basis of a modern ethical system, in which to watch well is almost a moral act.

As a profession, consumption can offer those who belong to it the professional pride that is so much a part of Hemingway's ethic, from Nick's campsite to the bullring at Pamplona. The incessant drinking in *The Sun Also Rises* is often read as if it were the defining characteristic of an empty existence, but the reader has only to shift to Spain, where the wine must be drunk expertly out of wineskins, to see how seriously Hemingway takes this simple act of indulgence and how so mundane a practice as drinking can make one a member of a quasi-religious congregation. What makes all the difference is expertise and the fellowship created by the rules of expertise, which also have the convenient effect of lifting consumption free of the nasty problem of exchange. Most readers notice how obsessive *The Sun Also Rises* is in its accounting, but it is also true that the most blissful moments in it come when the Spaniards refuse to take Jake's money and everything is free. It is as if translating consumerism out of the money economy purifies it and makes the relationship between product and consumer perfect by removing any interceding medium.[54] As advertisers have long since realized, it is much easier to define people in terms of what they buy if the awful abstraction of money is removed. That this happens so often in Spain marks it as ancient, precapitalist, in contradistinction to the overtly mercantile Paris, but also as paradisiacally postcapitalist, money dropping out to allow people and products to merge in a perfect identity.

The social world implied by Hemingway's fiction is therefore very much the one defined by the glossy magazines with which he was so

closely identified. Though this may seem to debase the fiction, it does also, at the very least, help to establish its modernity. For fashion is modern in an old and simple sense of the word, since it is concerned only with being up to date, a la mode, but is also modern in another, related sense, since it is, like sports, a rule-based activity, with no purpose or sanction outside the observance of its rules. As Wittgenstein most famously noted, most modern social practices are rule-based in this way, the rules themselves being the essence of the system in the absence of any metaphysical meaning. Hemingway's very substantial place in the modern consciousness may very well come from the way his insistent physical expertise gave a whole series of purely rule-based activities, from tarpon fishing to social drinking, an aura of authenticity. The distinctively modern aspect of his writing is certainly the way it brings to the page a kind of language that often has no purpose beyond keeping speaker and listener, and often writer and reader, in touch.

Conclusion

Utterly frustrated by his inability to "say just what I mean," the speaker in T. S. Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" blurts out what might be taken as the plea of a whole generation of modern writers: "But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen."[1] Whether the speaker himself actually wants this revelation or fears it, the shift from the verbal to the visual depends on the same assumption: that pictures, especially those projected by technological magic, create a direct connection between people, and between the inner life and the outer world, far beyond that possible for mere words.

Because this assumption is so common in the literature of the twentieth century, the visual has often been given a privileged place in accounts of literary modernism.[2] It is commonly believed, for example, that many modern poets attempt to do nothing more than recreate the immediate visual impression made by an object or scene. Criticism of William Carlos Williams's poetry is especially crippled by this assumption, since it must ignore the incessant effort that Williams gave to the visual impression made by his words themselves, which cannot achieve their effect if they become merely transparent references to a visual object.[3] Ideas about the visual in literary modernism, that is to say, have remained fairly well imprisoned within larger ideas about the central status of the optical in modernism as a whole. Since the clarity and directness of the visual, in this analysis, also depends on its status as "an autonomous realm,"[4] belief in its centrality has also helped produce a version of modernism free of social and historical conflict. This, as Chris Jenks would have it, is the reason the visual gets such emphasis in

the first place, because it seems to provide an aesthetic experience independent of all the particularities of history.[5]

Ever since Leo Steinberg attacked the very notion of an independent and autonomous visual realm, insisting in the very title of his 1953 essay that "The Eye Is a Part of the Mind," art history has progressively weakened and qualified the idea that any art can be purely optical.[6] In fact, scholars of "visuality" have done such a good job of placing vision within historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts that many art critics now write quite nostalgically of a time when sheer visual beauty was at the center of their discipline.[7] But these developments have had far less influence on studies of the visual in literary modernism. Rather oddly, considering the strong conflict in the criticism of Clement Greenberg between the literary and the optical, literary modernism has come to be the last bastion of the purely visual. It is still quite common to imagine, as Nancy Armstrong does, a modernist resistance to photography, supposedly based on its inevitable implication with the actual facts of modern social change.[8]

What I have tried to show, on the other hand, is a deep and wide modernist interest not just in photography but in new media of all kinds, based precisely on the novelty these introduced into the age-old evidence of the senses. This is not to say, of course, that every modern writer, from T. S. Eliot to Bob Brown, embraces new technologies with the same ardent desire, but personal opinion and commitment are not the major issue in any case. Mechanical recording brings with it a certain experiential challenge that society is forced to cope with at a general level, the stresses and strains of which appear in social controversies like that arising with the addition of sound to film. The anxiety that sound caused among the literati may be taken as a paradigmatic instance of the way recording technologies introduced complications into the supposed autonomy of the visual and thus into the supposed autonomy of the aesthetic, challenging both personal predilections and aesthetic programs. For the avant-garde, these challenges were the modern in its most concentrated form, but even for such aesthetically unadventurous writers as Fitzgerald they constituted an element of modern experience that could hardly be ignored.

In general, recording introduces new complications into the ancient relationship between writing and the other arts. Where it might have been possible in an earlier era for writers to appeal to the visual as to a more immediate version of reality, once most visual images came to viewers in recorded form—codified, standardized, stylized—they came to seem as indirect as writing itself, not unmediated but differently mediated.

The effect of this influence on writing was, I think, to make it more self-conscious, more aware of its own visual resources, more wary of sensory experience itself. In short, the effect of new technologies on modern writing is not to efface the intervening layer the linguistic seems to apply to the real world but rather to make it clear how deeply linguistic any possible version of that world must be.

For many American writers, this revelation seems to have taken a very particular social form. It can hardly be an accident that the optical unconscious of so many of these writers seems to have been occupied by a figure with dark skin. It would be logical, of course, to think of this figure in purely optical terms, as obscurity itself, which Europe has traditionally associated with other parts of the world. But the African American eyewitness in *The Great Gatsby* cannot very well stand for obscurity alone, though his testimony doesn't finally count for much in the judicial system of the novel. The ink that Bob Brown syringes from black skin is certainly darkness itself, but it is also a darkness that makes writing possible and thus stands for revelation as well. The ironies of this particular racial situation are not within the control of these writers, perhaps because they reflect historical and social situations that Euro-American culture has not resolved. It is perhaps for this very reason that the black figure recurs as the particularity that no amount of aestheticization can efface. Even in its most prejudicial forms, however, that figure is not an absence. Instead, it often seems a kind of confession of literature's tie to a complex social reality, one that emerges through all the obfuscations of media technology, and which even the most Utopian aesthetic scheme must somehow address. Thus the almost giddy hieroglyphic hopes of enthusiasts such as Jolas are inevitably brought back to earth by a reminder that social relations cannot be made transparent by art if they are not so in reality.

It would be interesting to associate this moment, when the inescapable specificity of the material world reinserts itself into the supposed transparency of the visual, with the fact of recording, which often seems a purposely forgotten aspect of the recorded media. The camera has been associated so often in these pages with the new that its equally old association with death has almost been forgotten, only to emerge from time to time as writers such as Fitzgerald and Dos Passos qualify their commitment to film. The fact, commented on most famously by André Bazin,[9] that photography mummifies its subjects, has a very equivocal significance for aesthetic modernism, since it means that the very rage for seizing the instantaneous that motivates much interest in recording will also lumber the modern world with an ever-increasing

stack of recorded corpses, moments that were once new and now remain unchanged as the world around them advances. The power of modern technology to seize and preserve the present makes it all the harder, in a way, to escape the past. The force of this paradox can be felt in a number of modern works, particularly those that rely on citation, quotation, and intertextuality, some instances of which, like the songs in *The Waste Land*, are explicitly associated with recording instruments. Even when the newness of the new media was a great deal fresher, that is to say, it was obvious that it brought along with it a very powerful recrudescence of the old that sends a chill through works like *The Waste Land* and *Tender Is the Night*.

Recording technologies seemed to bring social and scientific modernity to bear directly on literature and the arts, to challenge and inspire them to become modern in turn, and for many writers and artists this revolution in aesthetic form promised a simplification in which art might become solid and transparent at the same time. But the simplicity and directness of the recorded media was only apparent, not real, so that writers and artists who cared found themselves in an aesthetic situation that had been immensely complicated by the new media. This complexity, consciously included or unwillingly accepted, is one of the factors that helps to keep aesthetic modernism alive.

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NOTES

PREFACE

1. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
2. Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 17–18.

INTRODUCTION

1. Carlo Rim, "On the Snapshot," in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940*, edited by Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), p. 38.
2. See, in particular, Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).
3. Karen Jacobs, *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture*(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Paul Hansom, ed., *Literary Modernism and Photography* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).
4. See, for example, Yve-Alain Bois, "The Semiology of Cubism," and Rosa-lind Krauss, "The Motivation of the Sign," both in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium*, edited by Lynn Zelevansky (New York: Abrams, 1992). There are a number of excellent recent studies considering the collaborative or interartistic aspects of modernism, including Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Other such studies will be cited in the course of the discussion.

5. Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*(Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), p. 68. See also Larry Schaaf, *Out of the Shadows: Herschel, Talbot, and the Invention of Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) for Herschel's role in naming the new medium.
6. Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, p. 144.
7. Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 73.
8. Carol Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library. Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843–1875* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 141; Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 74; Schaaf, *Out of the Shadows*, p. 65.
9. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 128. The original date of Eastlake's statement is 1857.
10. Rosalind Krauss, "Tracing Nadar," *October* 5 (Summer 1978): 45.
11. Quoted in John Pultz and Catherine B. Scallen, *Cubism and American Photography, 1910—1930* (Williamstown, Mass.: Clark Institute, 1982), p. 3.
12. See Jan Assmann, "Ancient Egypt and the Materiality of the Sign," in *Materialities of Communication*, edited by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, translated by William Whobrey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 15.
13. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, pp. 71–72.
14. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), p. 77.
15. Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 63. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, notes that Edison listed musical recording as fourth in a set of possible uses, after dictation, talking books for the blind, and the teaching of public speaking (p. 69).
16. Gitelman, *Scripts*, p. 64.
17. Gitelman, *Scripts*, p. 132.
18. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Production-Reproduction," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 81.
19. Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), p. 92.
20. Gitelman, *Scripts*, pp. 139–140.
21. James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 28–31.
22. Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 8–9.
23. Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, p. 10.
24. François Dagognet, *Etienne-Jules Marey: A Passion for the Trace*, translated by Robert Galeta with Jeanine Herman (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p. 70.
25. Johann Wilhelm Ritter, quoted in Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery, eds.,

Imagining Language: An Anthology (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 477. See also Lastra, *Sound Technology*, pp. 73, 217, and Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, pp. 130–132.

26. Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, p. 128.
27. David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910–1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 54.
28. The most complete study of Marey's work, and especially of its implications for the history of photography and film, is Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
29. Dagognet, *Etienne-Jules Marey*, p. 86. See also Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 136, and Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*(Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 25–26.
30. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 229; Lastra, *Sound Technology*, p. 217.
31. Braun, *Picturing Time*, p. 222.
32. Dagognet, *Etienne-Jules Marey*, p. 63.
33. Joel Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation: American Criticism of Photography in the Modernist Period* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 13, 191.
34. Tristan Tzara, "Photography Upside Down," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 6.
35. D. W. Griffith, "Innovations and Expectations," in *Focus on Griffith*, edited by Harry M. Geduld (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 56.
36. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 230.
37. Lastra, *Sound Technology*, p. 58.
38. Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 33, 35.
39. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 112. See also Lastra, *Sound Technology*, p. 58.
40. Martin Jay, "Photo-Unrealism: The Contribution of the Camera to the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," in *Vision and Textuality*, edited by Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 345.
41. Quoted in Lastra, *Sound Technology*, p. 81.
42. Lastra, *Sound Technology*, pp. 50–51; Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, p. 164.
43. Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, pp. 18–19.
44. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Sharp or Unsharp?" in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 133.
45. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 208.
46. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," *Selected Writings, 1927–1934*, translated by Rodney Livingstone, edited by Michael W. Jennings,

Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 511–512. Note the same idea in Paul Valery, speaking at the centennial of the invention of photography: "It must be admitted that we cannot open our eyes without being unconsciously disposed not to see some of the things before us, and to see others which are not there. The snapshot has rectified our errors both of *deficiency* and of *excess.* It shows us what we would see if we were uniformly sensitive to everything that light imprints upon our retinas, and nothing else." "The Centenary of Photography," in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, p. 196.

47. This notion, the founding insight of what has come to be called visuality studies, was enunciated most influentially for our period by Leo Steinberg in "The Eye Is a Part of the Mind," first published in 1953 and since included in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press).
48. Quoted in Eleanor M. Hight, *Picturing Vision: Moholy-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 199.
49. Quoted in Hight, *Picturing Vision*, p. 200.
50. Laura Marcus, "Introduction: Cinema and Psychoanalysis," in *Close Up 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism*, edited by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 243.
51. Isabelle Stengers, quoted in William R. Paulson, *The Noise of Culture: Literary Texts in a World of Information* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 105.
52. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 213.
53. Paulson, *Noise of Culture*, p. ix; Gitelman, *Scripts*, p. 183.
54. Judi Freeman, "Layers of Meaning: The Multiple Readings of Dada and Surrealist Word-Images," in *The Dada and Surrealist Word-Image*, edited by Judi Freeman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), p. 13.
55. Freeman, "Layers of Meaning," p. 12.
56. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 118.
57. Charles Baudelaire, "The Modern Public and Photography," in Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays*, pp. 83–89.
58. Benjamin, "Little History," p. 527. For a comparison of Baudelaire and Benjamin in this respect, see Johanna Drucker, *Theorizing Modernism: Visual Art and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 9–23.
59. Douglas R. Nickel, "Photography and Invisibility," in *The Artist and the Camera: Degas to Picasso*, edited by Dorothy Kosinski (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 37.
60. Elizabeth C. Childs, "The Photographic Muse," in Kosinski, *The Artist and the Camera*, p. 27; Dorothy Kosinski, "Picturing Poetry: Photography in the Work of Gustave Moreau," in Kosinski, *The Artist and the Camera*, pp. 60–69; and Jane R. Becker, "Auguste Rodin and Photography: Extending the Sculptural Idiom," in Kosinski, *The Artist and the Camera*, pp. 90–115.

61. Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism, or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 325–329.
62. Thierry De Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 263.
63. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), p. 83.
64. Quoted in Rasula and McCaffery, *Imagining Language*, p. 5.
65. Salvador Dali, "Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind," in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, edited by Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 483.
66. Phillips, introduction to *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. xii.
67. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 118.
68. Ernö Kallai, "Photo-Inflation," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 141.
69. Ossip Brik, "From the Painting to the Photograph," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 229. For an excellent visual anthology representing this period, see *Fotografia Publica: Photography in Print 1919–1939* (Musee Nacionale Centra de Arte Reina Sofia, 2000).
70. John C. Welchman, "After the Wagnerian Bouillabaisse: Critical Theory and the Dada and Surrealist Word-Image," in Freeman, "Layers of Meaning," p. 87. See also the later version of this essay in John C. Welchman, *Modernism Relocated: Towards a Cultural Studies of Visual Modernity* (Si. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1995), pp. 61–102.
71. Phillips, introduction to *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. xii.
72. Robert Rosenblum, "Cubism as Pop Art," in *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low*, edited by Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik (New York: Abrams, 1990), p. 127. The works in question are Braque's *Checkerboard: Tivoli-Cinéma* (1913) and *Guitar and Program: Statue d'épouvante* (1913). Similar programs appear in Picasso's works as well. See Jeffrey Weiss, *The Popular Culture of Modern Art: Picasso, Duchamp, and Avant-Gardism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 26.
73. Natasha Staller, "Melies 'Fantastic' Cinema and the Origins of Cubism," *Art History* 12 (June 1989): 209.
74. Staller, "Méliès 'Fantastic' Cinema," pp. 214–215. See also Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso's Cultures and the Creation of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 137–160.
75. P. Adams Sitney, "Image and Title in Cinema," *October* 11 (winter 1979): 103.
76. Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 104.
77. Anne Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror*, translated by Deke Dusinberre (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1997), pp. 106–123. See also Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting*, p. 79, and T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea:*

Episodes from a History of Modernism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) pp. 168–169.

78. Pierre Daix, "Discussion," in Zelevansky, *Picasso/Braque*, p. 76.
79. Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting*, p. 12.
80. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 194. The link to Duchamp has also been suggested by many others, including Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting*, p. 12, and Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated by Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 77–78.
81. Guillaume Apollinaire, "The New Painting," and Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, "Purism," in Caws, *A Century of Isms*, pp. 120 and 438.
82. Hight, *Picturing Vision*, pp. 20, 44.
83. Piet Mondrian, "Neoplasticism in Painting," in Caws, *A Century of Isms*, p. 426.
84. Pultz, p. 4, and Hight, *Picturing Vision*, p. 184.
85. Jan Tschichold, "Photography and Typography," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 126.
86. Blaise Cendrars, "The ABCs of Cinema," in Caws, *A Century of Isms*, pp. 152–153
87. See Varvara Stepanova, "Photomontage," and Alexei Fedorov-Davydov, "Introduction to Moholy-Nagy s *Painting Photography Film*," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, pp. 234, 276.
88. John E. Bowlt, "A Brazen Can-Can in the Temple of Art: The Russian Avant-Garde and Popular Culture," in Varnedoe and Gopnik, *Modern Art and Popular Culture*, pp. 134–159.
89. Kai-Uwe Hemken, "For the Voice and for the Eye: Notes on the Aesthetics in *For the Voice,"* in *Voices of Revolution: Collected Essays*, edited by Patricia Railing (London: British Library, 2000), p. 226.
90. Yve-Alain Bois, "El Lissitzky: Reading Lessons," *October* 11 (Winter 1979): 119.
91. Cendrars, "ABCs of Cinema," pp. 154–155.
92. Dali, "Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind," in Caws, *A Century of Isms*, p. 482. The phrase from Moholy-Nagy is to be found in "Unprecedented Photography," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 84.
93. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 94.
94. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. no. 95.
95. See Hight, *Picturing Vision*, p. 70. On automatism, see Man Ray, "The Age of Light," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 54.
96. Quoted in Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 214.
97. See Braun, *Picturing Time*, pp. 287–291, and Dagognet, *Etienne-Jules Marey*, 149–150.
98. Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the "Large Glass"and Related Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 106.

99. Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, p. 55.
100. Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, pp. 175–176.
101. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 205–206; Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, p. 72.
102. Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 205.
103. Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, p. 80.
104. Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, p. 119.
105. Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, p. 78.
106. Quoted in Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, p. 73.
107. Caws, "Berlin Dada," in Caws, *A Century of Isms*, p. 311.
108. Franz Roh, "The Value of Photography," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 162.
109. T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 11. See Jane M. Rabb, ed., *Literature and Photography: Interactions 1840–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 253. Pound clearly did not mean that these lines were too visually mimetic, for they are lines of quoted speech.
110. Christopher Isherwood, *The Berlin Stories* (1935; reprint, New York: New Directions, 1954), p. 1.
111. Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 29.
112. Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 3.
113. Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, p. 248. Interestingly, Miles Orvell makes exactly the opposite claim, that the Victorian period was a time of photographic artifice and that modernism reacted against it in quest of "the real thing."
114. Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, pp. 164–166.
115. Carol Shloss, *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer: 1840–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 81.
116. For a discussion of camera angles and realistic representation, see Rudolf Arnheim, "Excerpt from *Film as Art*," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, pp. 190–191.
117. Lastra, *Sound Technology*, p. 140.
118. Man Ray, "Deceiving Appearances," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 12.
119. Alexander Rodchenko, "The Paths of Modern Photography," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 262. Patrick Maynard argues that some of the most important and influential forms of photography, including, for example, xerography and the photolithography of computer microchips, are not meant to produce images at ail.
120. Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

121. Danius, *Senses of Modernism*, pp. 147–188. For a recent discussion of Joyce and film, see Thomas Burkdall, *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
122. Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America* (1935; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. 179. See Susan McCabe, "'Delight in Dislocation': The Cinematic Modernism of Stein, Chaplin and Man Ray," *Modernism/Modernity* 8 (September 2001): 429–452.
123. Virginia Woolf, "The Cinema," in *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), pp. 180–186. For a number of excellent discussions of Woolf's involvement with new media of various kinds, see *Virginia Woolfin the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, edited by Pamela L. Caughie (New York: Garland, 2000).
124. Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, edited by Seamus Deane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 53. See also the discussion in Stewart, *Between Film and Screen*, p. 281.
125. For a very strong argument to the contrary, see David Chinitz, "T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide," *PMLA* 110 (March 1995): 236–247, reprinted as part of *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
126. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963), p. 6.
127. For relevant examples from Jolas, see Chapter 2.
128. Harriet Zinnes, ed., *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, (New York: New Directions, 1980), p. 241.
129. Richard Humphreys, "Demon Pantechnicon Driver: Pound in the London Vortex, 1908–1920," and John Alexander, "Parenthetical Paris, 1920–1925: Pound, Picabia, Brancusi and Léger," both in *Pound's Artists: Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts in London, Paris and Italy* (London: Tate Gallery, 1985).
130. Zinnes, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, pp. 78–80.
131. Pound's remarks on *La Roue* appeared in his "Paris Letter" for the *Dial*, February 1923, which is reprinted in Zinnes, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, pp. 175–177. The story of his involvement in "L'Inhumaine" is recounted in Standish D. Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), pp. 114–115.
132. See Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema*, pp. 117 and 137. See also Alexander, "Parenthetical Paris," pp. 109–113.
133. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 2000).
134. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
135. Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 36.
136. Tiffany, *Radio Corpse*, p. 30.

137. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 18.
138. Jan Tschichold, "Photography and Typography," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 125.
139. Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 102.
140. Drucker, *Visible Word*, p. 138. See also Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting*, p. 29.
141. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 37.
142. Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), pp. 17–18.
143. Salvador Dali, "Photographic Testimony," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 35.
144. Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 6 (1999): 9.
145. The term belongs to Pierre Mac Orlan. See Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 27.
146. David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 141–146; Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
147. Tiffany, *Radio Corpse*, p. 53.
148. Stewart, *Between Film and Screen*, pp. 75–115.

CHAPTER 1

1. Perhaps the strongest claim is to be found in Jonathan Green's introduction to his *Camera Work: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Aperture, 1973): "*Camera Work's* constant search 'for the deeper meaning of Photography' nourished the avant-garde attitude and initiated the formal modernist revolution in America" (p. 16).
2. Sarah Greenough, "Alfred Stieglitz, Rebellious Midwife to a Thousand Ideas," in *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries*, edited by Sarah Greenough (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2000), p. 27.
3. Greenough, "Alfred Stieglitz," p. 29.
4. Letter to Heinrich Kuhn, reprinted in *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings*, edited by Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1983), p. 194.
5. Editorial, *Camera Work*, special no. (August 1912): n. p.
6. Marjorie Perloff, *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 103.

7. Dominique Francois Arago, "Report," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), p. 17. See also Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 72. One of the first photo-graphically illustrated books to be published in England was Fox Talbot, *The Talbotype Applied to Hieroglyphs* (London, 1846). See the illustration in Larry Schaaf, *Out of the Shadows: Herschel, Talbot, and the Invention of Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 22.
8. Egmont Arens, "Alfred Stieglitz: His Cloud Pictures," *Playboy* 9 (1924): 15. See also Bram Dijkstra, *Cubism, Stieglitz, and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams* (1969; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), epigraph, p. 160. In the first edition, the quotation from Arens is part of the title. For the paperback reissue, it has been silently removed.
9. Rosalind Krauss, "Stieglitz/*Equivalents*," *October* 11 (Winter 1979): 140.
10. Vachel Lindsay, "To Mary Pickford," *Playboy* 1 (1919): 22.
11. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1922; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 2000), p. 14. The first version of this book was published in 1915. The second, which appeared in 1922, reprinted the original text with a lengthy prefatory chapter bringing the analysis up to date.
12. Lindsay, *Art of the Moving Picture*, p. 122.
13. In manuscript form, on deposit with Lindsay's papers at the University of Virginia, this study is called "The Greatest Movies Now Running." It has been edited and published as *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, edited by Myron Lounsbury (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1955). Another American poet very much taken with *Thief of Bagdad was* Carl Sandburg. See Dale Fetherling and Doug Fetherling, eds., *Carl Sandburg at the Movies: A Poet in the Silent Era, 1920–1927* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985), pp. 103–106, 125–126.
14. Lindsay, *Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, p. 246.
15. In citing Herodotus's account of a dispatch from the Scythians to the Persians, Daniel Albright asserts that "almost every mixed medium art form in Europe justified itself by trying to assume the glamour of the hieroglyph." *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 41. See also the discussion of hieroglyphs in relation to word-picture relations in W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 28–29.
16. Lindsay, *Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, pp. 177–178.
17. Sadakichi Hartmann, "The Esthetic Significance of the Motion Picture," *Camera Work* 38 (April 1912): 19.
18. *The Life and Times of Sadakichi Hartmann* (Riverside: University of California, Riverside Library, 1970), p. 6. There are two production stills of Hart-mann in his role on p. 64. These do not appear to correspond exactly to the actual scenes in the film, which is now readily available on DVD as well as video.
19. Sadakichi Hartmann, "On the Possibility of New Laws of Composition,"

Camera Worky 30 (April 1910): 23. Reprinted in Green, *Camera Work*, p. 199.

20. Roland Rood, "The Evolution of Art from Writing to Photography," *Camera Work* 12 (October 1905): 43.
21. Rood, "Evolution of Art," p. 45.
22. Charles H. Caffin, "The Camera Point of View in Painting and Photography," *Camera Work* 24 (October 1908): 24.
23. Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*(Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).
24. [Alfred Stieglitz], "Photo-Secession Notes," *Camera Work* 30 (April 1910): 54. See also Eduard J. Steichen, "Painting and Photography," *Camera Work* 23 (July 1908): 3, and Paul B. Haviland, "Conception and Expression," *Camera Work* 33 (January 1911): 33–34.
25. Stieglitz, "Photo-Secession Notes," 54.
26. Caffin, "Camera Point of View," 26. See the discussion in Joel Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation: American Criticism of Photography in the Modernist Period* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 37–38.
27. For a journalistic repetition of this idea, see Greenough, p. 132.
28. Charles Brock, "The Armory Show, 1913: A Diabolical Test," in Greenough, *Modern Art and America*, p. 136.
29. Richard Whelan, *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes* (New York: Aperture, 2000), p. 193. See also Paul Strand's insistent celebration of the fact that Stieglitz "knew nothing about painting" and was not interested in rivaling it. "Photography and the New God," *Broom* 3 (November 1922): 253.
30. Greenough, "Alfred Stieglitz," p. 38. See also the letter quoted in Timothy Robert Rodgers, "False Memories: Alfred Stieglitz and the Development of the Nationalist Aesthetic," in *Over Here: Modernism, the First Exile 1914–1919*, edited by Kermit S. Champa (Providence: David Winton Bell Gallery of Brown University, 1989), p. 60. in which Stieglitz maintains that he is using the "antiphotographic" attitude of Matisse and Picasso to "emphasize the meaning of photography."
31. Charles H. Caffin, "Exhibition of Prints by Baron Ad. de Meyer," *Camera Work* (1912): 43. Reprinted in Green, *Camera Work*, p. 217.
32. Jill Kyle, "Paul Cezanne, 1911: Nature Reconstructed," in Greenough, *Modern Art and America*, p. 108.
33. Marius de Zayas, for example, said of Stieglitz: "He is trying to do synthetically, with the means of a mechanical process, what some of the most advanced artists of the modern movement are trying to do analytically widi the means of art." See Charles Brock, "Marius de Zayas, 1909–1915: A Commerce of Ideas," in Greenough, *Modern Art and America*, p. 147.
34. Alfred Stieglitz, "The Magazine *291* and *The Steerage*" in Whelan, *Stieglitz on Photography*, p. 217. See also Kyle, "Paul Cézanne," p. 103. De Zayas's own version of this encounter is to be found in Marius de Zayas, *How,*

When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York, edited by Francis Naumann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 176–177.

35. Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, pp. 199–202.
36. Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, p. 22; Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, pp. 211.-212, 268–269. See also Douglas R. Nickel, "Photography and Invisibility," in *The Artist and the Camera: Degas to Picasso*, edited by Dorothy Kosinski (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 36–37.
37. Eisinger, p. 19.
38. R. Child Bayley, "Photography Before Stieglitz: 1839–1900," in *America and Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait*, edited by Waldo Frank, Lewis Mum-ford, Dorothy Norman, Paul Rosenfeld, and Harold Rugg (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1934), p. 95. See also Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, pp. 199–202, 274.
39. See, for example, A. Horsley Hinton, who lamented in *Camera Notes* in 1902 that Pictorial photographers had to go by the same name as "the man who delights in its chemical and optical aspects." Christian A. Peterson, *Alfred Stieglitz's Camera Notes* (New York: Norton, 1993), p. 25.
40. Peterson, *Camera Notes*, p. 19.
41. Christian A. Peterson, *After the Photo-Secession: American Pictorial Photography 1910–1955* (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 25.
42. Clive Holland, "Artistic Photography in Great Britain," in *Art in Photography*, edited by Charles Holme (London: The Studio, 1905), p. GB 2.
43. See the summation of Caffin's position in Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, p. 34.
44. Whelan, *Stieglitz on Photography*, pp. 183–184.
45. Sadakichi Hartmann, "Art Photography in Its Relationship to Painting," in *Sadikichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist: Collected Art Writings*, edited by Jane Calhoun Weaver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 89.
46. Quoted in Dijkstra, *Cubism*, p. 97.
47. Whelan, *Stieglitz on Photography*, pp. 30. 41.
48. Sidney Allan [Sadakichi Hartmann], "The Influence of Visual Perception on Conception and Technique," *Camera Work* 3 (July 1903): 23. The epigraph appears on the unpaginated end paper of this issue.
49. Barbara McCandless, Bonnie Yochelson, and Richard Koszarski, *New York to Hollywood: The Photography of Karl Struss* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1995), p. 2O
50. This is the basis of the harsh criticisms to be found in Abigail SolomonGodeau, "Back to Basics: The Return of Alfred Stieglitz," *Afterimage* 12 (summer 1984): 21–25, and Ulrich F. Keller, "The Myth of Art Photography," *History of Photography* 9 (January—March 1985): 1–39.
51. Whelan, *Stieglitz on Photography*, p. 224.
52. Sidney Allan [Sadakichi Hartmann,], "The Value of die Apparently Meaningless and Inaccurate," *Camera Work* 3 (July 1903): 17. Also available in Weaver, *Sadakichi Hartmann*, p. 153.

53. See Maynard, *Engine of Visualization*, p. 212. for an argument connecting P. H. Emerson and "straight photography."
54. Krauss, "Stieglitz," p. 134.
55. Alfred Stieglitz, "Snapshot: From My Window, New York, 1907," *Camera Work* 20 (October 1907).
56. Karl Struss, "On the East River, New York, 1912," *Camera Work* 38 (1912).
57. The most complete representation of Struss's photography and the best account of his life and work is to be found in McCandless, Yochelson, and Koszarski, *New York to Hollywood*.
58. McCandless, Yochelson, and Koszarski, *New York to Hollywood*, pp. 28–29.
59. McCandless, Yochelson, and Koszarski, *New York to Hollywood*, pp. 110–111, 122.
60. Kirk Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (New York: Abrams, 1990), p. 29.
61. Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard* pp. 29–30.
62. [Sadakichi Hartmann], "Unphotographic Paint: The Texture of Impressionism," *Camera Work* 28 (October 1909): 20–23. Also available in Weaver, *Sadakichi Hartmann*, pp. 189–193. Though Varnedoe complains about the consistency with which this connection is asserted, his list of supporting sources is remarkably short and dated. See Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard* p. 280.
63. Peter J. Hutchings, "Through a Fishwife's Eye: Between Benjamin and Deleuze on the Timely Image," in *Impossible Presence: Surface and Screen in the Photogenic Era*, edited by Terry Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 108; Elizabeth C. Childs, "Habits of the Eye: Degas, Photography, and Modes of Vision," in Kosinski, *Artist and the Camera*, pp. 72–87. Varnedoe's assertion that the photographs available to Degas simply do not look much like his paintings is belied by the evidence of Degas's own photographs, available in Childs. Certainly the most concerted and convincing discussion of the use of protophotographic techniques in painting is Philip Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera: Uncovering the Truth behind the Masterpieces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
64. De Zayas, *How, When, and Why*, p. 177.
65. Dorothy Kosinski, "Vision and Visionaries: The Camera in the Context of Symbolist Aesthetics," in Kosinski, *Artist and the Camera*, pp. 16–17.
66. Douglas R. Nickel, "Photography and Invisibility," in Kosinski, *Artist and the Camera*, pp. 36–39; Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in context: Science and Technology in the "Large Glass" and Related Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 11, 13–14, 42–43, 87, 106.
67. Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera*, pp. 27–28, 30–36.
68. Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera*, quoting Lawrence Gowing, p. 159.
69. See Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism or, the Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 325–329.
70. Richard Shiff, "Realism of Low Resolution: Digitisation and Modern Painting," in Smith, *Impossible Presence*, p. 141.

71. Natasha Staller, *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso's Cultures and the Creation of Cubism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 196.
72. The studio photographs taken by nineteenth-century painters, according to Ulrich Pohlmann, differed from the art photography of the time in accepting a certain snapshot aesthetic and thus "are astonishingly close to the style of snapshot and amateur photographers." Ulrich Pohlmann, "Another Nature, or Arsenals of Memory: Photography as Study Aid, 1850–1900," in Kosinski, *Artist and the Camera*, p. 54.
73. Tom Gunning, "New Thresholds of Vision: Instantaneous Photography and the Early Cinema of Lumière," in Smith, *Impossible Presence*, pp. 89–91.
74. Gunning, "New Thresholds," p. 74.
75. Greenough, "Alfred Stieglitz," pp. 39–41.
76. Anne Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror*, translated by Deke Dusinberre (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1997), pp. 20–21. For Picasso's interest in film, see Staller, *A Sum of Destruction*, pp. 137, 143, 145.
77. E.H.P. [Elliot Paul], [untitled comment], and Pablo Picasso, "Photograph," and "Painting," *transition* 11 (February 1928): [90] and between 92 and 93
78. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1960), pp. 90–91.
79. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso: The Complete Writings*, edited by Edward Burns (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 34–35.
80. Paul Hayes Tucker, "Picasso, Photography, and the Development of Cubism," *Art Bulletin* 64 (March 1982.): 288–299.
81. Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography*, p. 74.
82. Tucker, "Picasso," p. 294.
83. Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography*, p. 87. For side-by-side reproductions of both portraits, see pp. 92–93.
84. T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 188–191.
85. Brock, "Armory Show," p. 120. De Zayas referred to this work as the "clou" to the Picasso exhibit. See p. 124.
86. See Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography*, pp. 90–95.
87. Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography*, p. 250. n 301.
88. Baldassari, *Picasso and Photography*, pp. 100–101.
89. The most complete catalogue of the various reproductions Duchamp made *of Fountain* and of Stieglitz's role in the original controversy is to be found in Douglas Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp Fountain* (Houston: Menil Foundation, 1989).
90. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp Fountain*, pp. 38. 67. For an analysis tracing this interest back to the "painting machine" of Raymond Roussel, see Henderson, *Duchamp in Context*, pp. 54–55.
91. Krauss, "Stieglitz," p. 130.
92. Camfield, *Marcel Duchamp Fountain*, p. 39.

93. Alan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Thinking Photography*, edited by Victor Burgin (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 93.
94. J. B. Kerfoot, "Uncle Rastus on the Situation," *Camera Work* 4 (October 1903): 26, and "Uncle Rastus on the Origins of Trouble," *Camera Work* 9 (January 1905): 53.
95. Brock, "Armory Show," p. 124.

CHAPTER 2

1. "Films Are Treated as Real Art by Lecturer at Metropolitan," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 16, 1936. Quoted in Thomas Y. Levin, "Iconology at the Movies: Panofsky's Film Theory," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9, 1 (1996): 27
2. Irving Lavin, introduction to *Three Essays on Style*, by Erwin Panofsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 10. Quoted in Levin, "Iconology," p. 29.
3. Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures," *transition* 26 (1937): 121–133. According Levin, the essay had its beginnings as an informal talk, published as "On Movies," *Bulletin of the Department of Art and Archaeology of Princeton University* (June 1936): 5–15. The revised and most commonly reprinted version of the essay first appeared as "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," *Critique* (New York) 1, 3 (January-February 1947): 5–28.
4. In fact, Panofsky's lecture was arranged by Iris Barry, who had moved from the fringes of the Vorticist movement to the *Spectator*, where she became the first regular newspaper film critic in England. In the early 1930s, Barry moved to the United States and was hired by the Museum of Modern Art, where she established the Film Library, arranging Panofsky's lecture as part of the inaugural ceremonies. See Bruce Henson, "Iris Barry: American Film Archive Pioneer," *Katharine Sharp Review* 4 (Winter 1997): 2, and Levin, "Iconology," p. 27.
5. *The Soil 1* (March 1917): between 138 and 139.
6. R. J. Coady, "American Art," *The Soil* 1 (January 1917): 55.
7. See the announcement at the end of *Broom 3* (October 1922).
8. See the announcement at the end of *Broom 4* (February 1923).
9. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Light: A Medium of Plastic Expression," *Broom* 4 (March 1923): 284.
10. J. P. McGowan, "The Motion Picture," *The Soil* 1 (April 1917): 173–176. For a brief discussion of this serial, see Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 218. 227–230.
11. Jean Epstein, "The New Conditions of Literary Phenomena," *Broom* 2 (April 1922): 6–7.
12. H.A.L. [Harold Loeb], "Foreign Exchange," *Broom* 2 (May 1922): 179.

13. David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 22–24.
14. Braque's Le Damier (1913) contains as one of its elements a program from the Tivoli Cinéma at which *La Petite Fifi was* one of the main offerings.
15. Epstein, "New Conditions," pp. 6–7; Slater Brown, "A Note on Sculptural Kinetics," *Broom* 5 (September 1923): 124.
16. Natasha Staller, "Méliès' Fantastic Cinema and the Origins of Cubism," *Art History* 12 (June 1989): 214–215.
17. P. Adams Sitney, "Image and Title in Avant-Garde Cinema," *October* 11 (Winter 1979): 97.
18. For a contemporary discussion, see Noël Carroll, "Language and Cinema: Preliminary Notes for a Theory of Verbal Images," in *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 187–211.
19. Thus Elliot Paul and Robert Sage insist in *transition* that "the degree to which a picture is true or false cinema is in approximate proportion to the number of subtitles which have to be used." "Artistic Improvements of the Cinema," *transition* 10 (January 1928): 133.
20. This did sometimes happen quite literally. In the 1907 film *College Chums*, for example, the contents of a telephone conversation are related by means of moving letters floating across the screen between vignettes of the two participants. See Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema 1907–1915*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 65. and, for a similar example from a 1914 film, p. 249.
21. Sitney, "Image and Title," pp. 103–105. See also the discussion of Duchamp's *Machine Optique* in Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the AvantGarde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 200.
22. For a contemporary discussion that asserts the impossibility of surely separating writing from pictures, see James Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
23. Bordwell, *History of Film Style*, p. 18. For the most complete study of this transformation in American film, see Donald Crafton, *The Talkies: American Cinemas Transition to Sound 1926–1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
24. Rachael Low offers the results of a British survey conducted in 1929 in which half the men and 30 percent of the women favored the talkies, though only 19 percent of those described as "people of prominence" felt as favorably. *The History of the British Film 1918—1929* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 16.
25. Antonin Artaud, "The Shell and the Clergyman: Film Scenario," *transition* 19/20 (June 1930): 65.
26. This famous manifesto appeared in *transition* 16–17 (June 1929): 13. It has been reprinted a number of times and remains influential. See, for example, Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery, *Imagining Language: An Anthology* (Cambridge: MIT Press), pp. 3–47.

27. Eugene Jolas, "Logocinéma of the Frontierman," *transition* 23 (July 1935): 187–191.
28. Eugene Jolas, "Literature and the New Man," *transition* 19–20 (June 1930): 14. Despite the obvious presence of visual materials in *transition*, the emphasis in it on "the Word" has led to a general opinion aptly summarized by Douglas McMillan: "the *transition* revolution restored the word to a position of respectability that it had relinquished to the image." Douglas McMillan, *transition: The History of a Literary Era 1927—1938* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1980), p. 122.
29. Jean George Auriol, "The Occident," *transition* 2 (May 1927): 157, and Eugene Jolas, "Glossary," *transition* 2 (May 1927): 184.
30. Eugene Jolas, *Man from Babel*, edited by Andreas Kramer and Rainer Rumold (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 49.
31. Eugene Jolas, *Cinema* (New York: Adelphi, 1926), p. 68.
32. Jolas, *Man from Babel*, p. 24.
33. The Editors, "Suggestions for a New Magic," *transition* 3 (June 1917): 178, and Eugene Jolas, "Transatlantic Letter," *transition* 13 (summer 1928): 276. See also Eugene Jolas, "On the Quest," *transition* 9 (December 1927): 194, "Logos," *transition 16/17* (June 1929): 29, and "Paramyths," *transition* 23 (July 1935): 7.
34. Eugene Jolas, "Glossary," *transition* 24 (June 1936): 109.
35. Salvador Dalí, "Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind," in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, edited by Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 482.
36. Jolas, "On the Quest," 194, 195.
37. Quoted in Paul Clavel, "Poetry and the Cinema," *transition* 18 (November 1929): 170.
38. Man Ray, "The Age of Light," in *Photography in the Modern Era*, edited by Christopher Phillips (New York: Aperture, 1989), p. 54.
39. Eugene Jolas, "Super-Occident," *transition* 15 (February 1929): 14.
40. Stuart Gilbert, "The Subliminal Tongue," *transition* 26 (1937): 149.
41. Man Ray, "Deceiving Appearances," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 12.
42. Louis Aragon, "The Quarrel over Realism," in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, pp. 73, 75. See also "Painting and Reality: A Discussion," *transition* 25 (fall 1936): 93–103.
43. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Selected Writings 1927–1914*, translated by Rodney Livingstone, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 512. Another formulation of the same idea appears in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), p. 29.
44. James Johnson Sweeney, "Seeing and Representation," *transition 24* (June 1936): 62–66.

45. The Editors, "Suggestions for a New Magic," *transition* 3 (June 1927): 179; Jolas, "Super-Occident," 15.
46. Jolas, "Workshop," *transition* 23 (1935): 46.
47. Eugene Jolas, "Towards New Forms?" *transition* 19–20 (1930): 104.
48. Eugene Jolas, "Glossary," *transition* 2 (May 1927): 185.
49. Jolas, "Transatlantic Letter," 277. According to Richard Abel, the *Nouvelle Revue Française* had begun publishing scenarios in 1919. See Richard Abel, *French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 245.
50. For an excellent discussion of Jolas's poetry in light of his transatlantic ambitions, see Marjorie Perloff, "'Logocinéma of the Frontiersman': Eugene Jolas's Multilingual Poetics and Its Legacies", *Kunapip* 21 (1999): 145–63. Also of interest is Jean-Michel Rabaté, "Joyce and Jolas: Late Modernism and Early Babelism," *Journal of Modern Literature* 22 (1999): 245–252.
51. Eugene Jolas, "Old Century Pt. 27 Takes a Vacation", *transition* 23 (1934–1935): 186.
52. Jolas, "Workshop", 45.
53. Eugene Jolas, "Logos", 26.
54. Eugene Jolas, "Choirprair", *transition* 22 (1933): 23.
55. Eugene Jolas, "Walk through Cosmopolis", *transition* 13 (summer 1928): 136.
56. Jolas, "Workshop", 46.
57. Syd S. Salt, "Antheil and America", *transition* 11 (February 1928): 177.
58. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Photography in Advertising", in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Era*, p. 88.
59. Jolas, "Super-Occident", p. 14.
60. Robert McAlmon, "Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Prose Ballet", *transition* 15 (February 1929): 130.
61. Eugene Jolas, "Race and Language", *transition* 24 1936): 112.
62. Eugene Jolas, "Notes on Reality", *transition* 18 (November 1929): 19.
63. Jolas, "Walk through Cosmopolis", 136.
64. Eugene Jolas, "Construction of the Enigma", *transition* 15 (February 1929): 60.
65. Panofsky, "Style and Medium", p. 121.
66. Robert Coady, "American Art", *The Soil* 1 (January 1917): 55.
67. Samuel Putnam, "Leopold Sauvage, Colored Rhythm and the Cinema", *transition* 6 (September 1927): 183.
68. Jolas, "Super-Occident", 15.
69. That Brown is still known at all is almost entirely due to the brief account of his Roving Eye Press in Hugh Ford, *Published in Paris: American and British Writers, Printers, and Publishers in Paris, 1920–1939* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 302–311.
70. Robert Carlton Brown, *What Happened to Mary: A Novelization from the Play and the Stories Appearing in the Ladies' World* (New York: Grosset and

Dunlap, 1913). For a discussion of *What Happened to Mary*, see Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, pp. 213–214, 223, 276, and Richard Kosarski, *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture 1915–1928* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 164. As the subtitle reveals, *Mary*, like many early serials, was issued simultaneously in movie form and as a series of short stories in a popular magazine. It also appeared on the stage as well as in novel form.

71. Bob Brown, appendix to *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine*, edited by A. Lincoln Gillespie (Cagnes-sur-Mer: Roving Eye Press, 1931), p. 172. Hereafter identified in the text as A.
72. Bob Brown, *The Readies* (Bad Ems: Roving Eye Press, 1930), p. 28. Hereafter identified in the text as R.
73. Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 138; Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 28. See also the general discussion of the implications of this fact for any complete definition of photography in Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 18.
74. Brown's personal papers, on deposit in Special Collections at the University Research Library, UCLA, contain several rounds of correspondence pertaining to these attempts. The most extensive attempt to make a readie machine was sponsored by Clare Brackett, a friend of Brown and president of the National Machine Products Company of Detroit. Between 1930 and 1932, Brackett and his chief engineer, Albert Stoll, studied Brown's plans and identified a number of engineering difficulties that would have to be solved. Stoll s letter of June 3, 1931, sent to Brown in France, lays these out in what must have been discouraging detail. See Bob Brown Collection (no. 723), box 32, Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.
75. See Brown's reply, signed "Comradely yours" but annotated unhappily in pencil "The Russian double cross." Bob Brown Collection (no. 723), box 32.
76. Norman MacLeod, "Ready: Revolution," in Gillespie, *Readies for Bob Browns Machine*, p. 54.
77. James T. Farrell, "Jeff," in Gillespie, *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine*, pp. 25. 29.
78. Laurence Vail, "Pogrom," in Gillespie, *Readies for Bob Brown's Machine*, p. 15.
79. Nancy Cunard, "Dlink," in Gillespie, *Readies for Bob Browns Machine*, p. 124.
80. Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 85–97.
81. Bob Brown, handwritten colophon, *1450–1950* (Black Sun, 1929).
82. Martin Jay, "Photo-Unrealism: The Contribution of the Camera to the

Crisis of Ocularcentrism," in *Vision andTextuality*, edited by Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 347–348.

83. Benjamin, "Little History," p. 510. For a relevant discussion of this passage, see Peter J. Hutchings, "Through a Fishwife's Eye: Between Benjamin and Deleuze on the Timely Image", in *Impossible Presence: Surface and Screen in the Photogenic Era*, edited by Terry Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 109.

CHAPTER 3

1. See Dale Fetherling and Doug Fetherling, eds., *Carl Sandburg at the Movies: A Poet in the Silent Era, 1920–1927* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985). Barry's film reviews have not been collected, but a good range of opinions is available in her book, *Let's Go to the Movies* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1926).
2. Myron Lounsbury, *The Origins of American Film Criticism 1909–1939*(New York: Arno Press, 1973), pp. 185–188.
3. Scott Eyman, *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926–1930* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 150.
4. Lucy Fischer, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p. 69.
5. James Morrison, *Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 31. This distinction had been claimed by any number of earlier films, including *Le Demon de la Haine* (1922), a coproduction of Paramount and Perret Productions, which was shot in France and the United States. See Richard Abel, *French Cinema, The First Wave 1915–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 27.
6. For a definition and a discussion of the "German influence" on Holly-wood film production, see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*(New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 73.
7. The film without intertitles was an important ideal for much of the European film avant-garde. See P. Adams Sitney, *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 21.
8. Lisa Cartwright, "U.S. Modernism and the Emergence of 'The Right Wing of Film Art,'" in *Lovers of Cinema: The First American Film Avant-Garde*, edited by Jan-Christopher Horak (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), p. 163. For other evidence of Murnau's prestige among "the first American film avant-garde," see p. 149. German film, in the form of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, had converted many literary aesthetes. See, for example, Clive Bell, "Art and the Cinema," *Vanity Fair*, November 1922, pp. 39–40.

9. Morrison, *Passport to Hollywood*, p. 58. Lucy Fischer constructs her BFI guide to *Sunrise* around a series of "border-crossings."
10. Donald Crafton, *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926–1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 94.
11. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 96.
12. Bela Balazs, *Theory of the Film*, translated by Edith Bone (1952; New York: Arno Press, 1980), p. 45. Chapter 5 of this book is a series of quotations from Balazs's *Der sichtbare Mensch*, published in 1923.
13. Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, "Purism," in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, edited by Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 438.
14. Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*(New York: Viking, 1971), p. 147. It has become something of a credo among scholars of early film that "the silents were not silent," since there were so many different ways in which audio accompaniment could be added during the showing of a film. For a number of relevant discussions, see *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, edited by Richard Abel and Rick Altman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
15. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 166–167, 172 For Chaplin, see pp. 296. 348, 374.
16. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 378.
17. Bart Testa, *Back and Forth: Early Cinema and the Avant-Garde* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1992), p. 64.
18. For an unattributed use of the term, see Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 151.
19. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 439.
20. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 461–463.
21. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 424–430; Nataša Ďurovičová, "Translating America: The Hollywood Multilinguals 1929–1933", in *Sound Theory Sound Practice*, edited by Rick Altman (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 138–153. Similar practices were adopted in the French industry as well. See Abel, *French Cinema*, p. 63.
22. C. H. [Clifford Howard], "Hollywood Notes", *Close Up* 4, 3 (March 1929): 99; Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 424.
23. R. d'E.B., "A Thought", *Close Up* 3, 5 (November 1928): 68.
24. O. B. [Oswell Blakeston], "Anthology", *Close Up* 7, 1 (July 1930): 76.
25. Rudolf Arnheim, *Film*, translated by L. M. Sieveking and Ian F. D. Morrow (1930; London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 280.
26. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 544. See also Herman G. Weinberg, "The Foreign Film in the United States", *Close Up* 10 (June 1933): 167–181.
27. Patricia R. Zimmerman, "Startling Angles: Amateur Film and the Early Avant-Garde," in Horak, *Lovers of Cinema*, p. 146.
28. Williams, "Historical and Theoretical Issues in the Coming of Recorded Sound to the Cinema," in Altman, *Sound Theory Sound Practice*, p. 136. For the establishment of this version of film history, see David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 18, 24.

29. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 448.
30. Francis Ambrière, "Variations sur le Cinéma," *PMLA* 115 (2000):1024. See also Crafton, *The Talkies*, 448.
31. Elliot Paul and Robert Sage, "Artistic Improvements of the Cinema," *transition* 10 (January 1928): 133. For similar reactions in France, see Abel, *French Cinema*, p. 65.
32. John Gould Fletcher, *The Crisis of the Film* (n.p.: University of Washington, 1929), p. 28.
33. *Lovers of Cinema*, p. 168.
34. Gilbert Seldes, *An Hour with the Movies and the Talkies* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1929), 124. Seldes's distinction is borne out by research done at the time in England. Rachael Low offers the results of a British survey conducted in 1929 in which half the men and 30 percent of the women favored the talkies, though only 19 percent of those described as "people of prominence" felt as favorably. *The History of the British Film 1918–1929* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 16. See Bordwell, *History of Film Style*, p. 37. for a discussion of Seldes's role at this time.
35. Seldes, *An Hour with the Movies*, p. 116.
36. Pool advertisement, *transition* 6 (September 1927): front.
37. See, for example, Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 1, 6 (December 1927): 14, and "As Is," *Close Up* 2, 1 (January 1928): 11.
38. Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs* (London: Collins, 1963), p. 247.
39. Ernest Betts, *Heraclitus or The Future of the Films* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1928), erratum slip at p. 88. This slip was inserted to signify that Betts's hopes, during the composition of his book, that sound could be stopped had been frustrated.
40. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 1, 5 (November 1927): 5. Pool did publish one book, Eric Elliott's *Anatomy of Motion Picture Art* (Territey: Pool, 1928), which was relatively hospitable to the idea of sound, and even Macpherson wavered as the years went by and the inevitable became clear.
41. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up, 6* (Dec. 1930): 367–368.
42. Wilbur Needham, "The Photography of Sound", *Close Up* 3, 2 (August 1928): 31.
43. C. H. [Clifford Howard], "Hollywood Notes", *Close Up* 6, 6 (June 1930): 529
44. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 5, 1 (July 1929): 6.
45. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 5, 5 (November 1929): 349.
46. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 7, 6 (December 1930): 369.
47. Bryher, "The Hollywood Code", *Close Up* 8, 4 (December 1931): 281.
48. A. W. "All Talkie!" *Close Up* 5, 1 (July 1929): 58.
49. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 450. See also pp. 29. 485–488.
50. Clifford Howard, "Cinemaphobia", *Close Up* 5, 1 (July 1929): 59–65. See also the contributions of Harry Potamkin, most of which have been collected

in *The Compound Cinema: The Film Writing of Harry Potamkin*, edited by Lewis Jacobs (New York: Teachers College Press, 1977).

51. See the discussion in Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 172.
52. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 167, 379. Seldes, *An Hour with the Movies*, pp. 145, 149.
53. Dorothy Richardson, "Dialogue in Dixie", *Close Up* 5, 3 (September 1929): 215.
54. Ambrière, "Variations sur le Cinéma", p. 1024.
55. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 1, 5 (November 1927): 8.
56. Dorothy Richardson, "Films for Children", *Close Up* 3, 2 (August 1928): 24
57. Rudolf Schwartzkopf, "Volksverband fur Filmkunst", *Close Up* 2, 5 (May 1928): 28.
58. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1922; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 2000). See also Miriam Hansen, *Babel to Babylon: Spectator-ship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 184–185.
59. Laura Marcus, introduction to part 3, in *CloseUp 1927–1993: Cinema and Modernism*, edited by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 96–104.
60. Will H. Hays, *See and Hear* (n.p.: Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, 1929), p. 36.
61. Edward S. Van Zile, *That Marvel—The Movie: A Glance at Its Reckless Past, Its Promising Present, and Its Significant Future* (New York: Putnam's, 1923), p. 198.
62. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 2, 2 (February 1928): 13.
63. James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 47.
64. Quoted in Sitney, *Modernist Montage*, p. 35.
65. W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 37.
66. Lastra, *Sound Technology*, pp. 49–50.
67. Jean Epstein, "Magnification", in *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology 1907–1939*, edited by Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 235. Quoted in Donald, Friedberg, and Marcus, *Close Up 1927–1933*, p. 1.
68. Balazs, *Theory of the Film*, p. 55.
69. Epstein, "Magnification", p. 239. quoted in Donald, Friedberg, and Marcus, *Close Up 1927–1933*, p. 243.
70. Donald, Friedberg, and Marcus, *Close Up 1927–1933*, p. 243.
71. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 72–73.
72. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 5, 1 (July 1929): 10. Note also

Ernest Betts's objection to telecinematography: "This new device of long-distance sight should prove a distinct contribution to the soullessness of modern life." Betts, *Heraclitus*, p. 70.

73. *Close Up* 2, 4 (April 1928): between 32 and 33.
74. [Anonymous], "Periodical Review", *Hound and Horn* **1** (September 1927): 66.
75. Jean Prevost, "Andre Gide and Marc Allegret's Voyage to the Congo", *Close Up* 1, 1 (July 1927): 40.
76. Hansen, *Babel to Babylon*, pp. 164–165.
77. Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 82.
78. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 7, 2 (August 1930): 89.
79. By the same token, sound also comes to be associated with the body. See Tim Armstrong's discussion of *Close Up* in *Modernism, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 226–234.
80. Betts, *Heraclitus*, p. 41.
81. See especially Charles Musser, "The Nickelodeon Era Begins: Establishing a Framework for Hollywood's Mode of Representation", in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker (London: British Film Institute, 1990), pp. 260–263.
82. H.D., "Conrad Veidt: The Student of Prague", *Close Up* 1, 3 (September 1927): 44.
83. Donald, Friedberg, and Marcus, *Close Up 1927–1933*, p. 32.
84. "Robert Herring Gives Four Points about *Hearts in Dixie*" *Close Up* 5, 2 (August 1929): 162.
85. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 5, 6 (December 1929): 449.
86. Zygmunt Tonecky, "The Preliminary of Film-Art", *Close Up* 8, 3 (September 1931): 193.
87. Bryher, "How I Would Start a Film Club", *Close Up* 2, 6 (June 1928): 34.
88. Robert Herring, "Film Imagery: Pudokvin", *Close Up* 3, 4 (October 1928): 37
89. H.D., "Conrad Veidt", 35.
90. Dorothy Richardson, "Continuous Performance: Captions", *Close Up* 1, 3 (September 1927): 55.
91. Dorothy Richardson, "Continuous Performance: This Spoon-Fed Generation?" *Close Up* 8, 4 (December 1931): 307.
92. Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 94.
93. Dorothy Richardson, "Continuous Performance: The Cinema in Arcady", *Close Up* 3, 1 (July 1928): 55–56.
94. Cavell, *World Viewed*, p. 150.
95. In Paul Willemen, *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 41.
96. Crafton, *The Talkies*, pp. 245–246.

97. Crafton, *The Talkies*, p. 235.
98. See, for example, the observations of James G. Stewart, “The Evolution of Cinematic Sound: A Personal Report”, in *Sound and the Cinema: The Coming of Sound to American Film*, edited by Evan William Cameron (Pleasantville, N.Y.: Redgrave, 1980), pp. 61–62.
99. Rick Altman, “The Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound”, in Altman, *Sound Theory Sound Practice*, p. 29. See also Lastra's extension and elabo-ration, *Sound Technology*, p. 137.

CHAPTER 4

1. Especially useful examples include Gene D. Phillips, *Fiction, Film, and F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986), and Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Cinematic Vision of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986).
2. Phillips, *Fiction*, p. 12.
3. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 7. All citations hereafter from this novel will be from this edition, referred to in the text as *GG*.
4. Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, edited by R. P. Blackmur (1934; reprint, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984), p. 46.
5. D. W. Griffith, “Five Dollar ‘Movies’ Prophesied”, *Editor*, April **24**, 1915. Quoted in Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 181. See also Anne Friedberg, “‘A Properly Adjusted Window’: Vision and Sanity in D. W. Griffith's 1908–1909 Biograph Films”, in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker (London: British Film Institute, 1990), pp. 326–335. For specific discussion of Fitzgerald's interest in Griffith, see Ruth Prigozy, “From Griffith's Girls to Daddy's Girl: The Masks of Innocence in *Tender Is the Night*”, *Twentieth-Century Literature* 26 (1980): 189–221.
6. James R. Mellow, *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), pp. 123–124.
7. Phillips, *Fiction*, p. 13; Mellow, *Invented Lives*, p. 170
8. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*(1934; New York: Scribner's, 1962), p. 180. Hereafter citations in the text are identified as *TN*.
9. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 258–259.
10. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 89. See also the useful discussion of this point in Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*(New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 168.

11. Martin Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity”, in *Vision and Visuality*, edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), pp. 6–10.
12. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), p. 29.
13. Milton R. Stern, *The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald*(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 191–192.
14. Ronald Berman, *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 103–106.
15. Berman, *Great Gatsby*, p. 9.
16. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 77.
17. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), p. 129.
18. Krauss, *Optical Unconscious*, p. 206.
19. The relationship between film viewing and voyeurism is one of the most productive concepts in film criticism. What I am suggesting here is something like what Miriam Hansen suggests in contrasting “early film,” in which voyeurism was rather frequently an open topic, to “classic film” as rationalized by Griffith: “With this emphasis on display, early films are self-consciously exhibitionistic, whereas classical cinema disavows its exhibitionist quality in order to maintain the spell of the invisible gaze.” Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p. 17.
20. Jay, “Scopic Regimes”, p. 17.
21. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 259.
22. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 97. See also Krauss, *Optical Unconscioius*, p. 88.
23. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 255.
24. Eleanor M. Hight, *Picturing Modernism: Moholy-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 72. and Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the “Large Glass”and Related Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 109.
25. For an analysis of this scene, and of the power of objects generally in *The Great Gatsby*, see Ross Posnock, “A New World, Material without Being Real: Fitzgerald's Critique of Capitalism in *The Great Gatsby*,” in *Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's “The Great Gatsby*” edited by Scott Donaldson (Boston: Hall, 1984), p. 205. and fora brief discussion of the “scopic” relationship between Nick and Gatsby, see John T. Irwin, “Compensating Visions: *The Great Gatsby*” *Southwest Review* 77 (1992): 541–542.
26. For a discussion of Brecht's formula, “alles dürfen darf,” see Theodor W. Adorno, “Those Twenties”, in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, translated by Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 43.
27. For a similar analysis of this scene, one not much noticed in the criticism, see Jeffrey Louis Decker, “Gatsby's Pristine Dream: The Diminishment of the Self-Made Man in the Tribal Twenties”, *Novel* 28 (Fall 1994): 57.

28. Vachel Lindsay, *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, edited by Myron Lounsbury (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1995), p. 235.
29. Mitchell Breitwieser, " *The Great Gatsby: Grief, Jazz and the Eye-Witness", Arizona Quarterly* 47 (Autumn 1991): 50.
30. Breitwieser, *Great Gatsby*, pp. 42–43.
31. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p. 112.
32. Krauss, *Optical Unconscioius*, p. 124.
33. Chris Jenks, "The Centrality of the Eye in Western Culture: An Introduction", in *Visual Culture*, edited by Chris Jenks (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 7.
34. There are a number of points at which Nick comments on the actual writing of his account (*GG*, pp. 29. 46, 79). George Garrett has suggested that Fitzgerald takes this rather unusual step to highlight the stylistic differences between a written account and a spoken one. The "composite style" that results has as its purpose demonstrating "the inadequacy of any single style." See George Garrett, "Fire and Freshness: A Matter of Style in *The Great Gatsby: New Essays on the Great Gatsby*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 114.
35. Mellow, *Invented Lives*, p. 273.
36. Mellow, *Invented Lives*, pp. 226–227; Prigozy, "Griffith's Girls", p. 195. At one time, this episode was to have furnished the opening for *Tender Is the Night*. See Matthew J. Bruccoli, *A Reader's Companion to Tender Is the Night* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1996), p. 2.
37. Bruccoli, *Readers Companion*, p. 166.
38. For a useful summary of Fitzgerald's own wishes in this respect and a description and evaluation of "The Author's Final Version," see Bruccoli, *Reader's Companion*, pp. 37–46.
39. In "Pasting It Together", Fitzgerald also complains that film has led to a deemphasis on the written word in favor of images. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* (1931; reprint, New York: New Directions, 1956), p. 78.
40. John F. Callahan, "'France Was a Land': F. Scott Fitzgerald's Expatriate Theme in *Tender Is the Night*" in *French Connections: Hemingway and Fitzgerald Abroad*, edited by J. Gerald Kennedy and Jackson R. Bryer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 176. See Prigozy, "Griffith's Girls", p. 255.
41. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 255.
42. As Richard Godden puts it, Rosemary is not particularly self-aware, but she is quite strongly "audience-aware." *Fictions of Capital: The American Novel from James to Mailer* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 121.
43. Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 193–194.
44. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, 1927–1934*, translated by Rodney Livingstone, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 511–512.

45. Ossip Brik, "What the Eye Does Not See", in *Photography in the Modern Age: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940*, edited by Christopher Phillips (New York: Aperture, 1989), p. 219.
46. See the selections in Phillips, *Photography in the Modern Age*, pp. 31. 207, and 55.
47. Felipe Smith intriguingly suggests that Peterson replaces not Rosemary but rather Dick, an idea that does give extra resonance to Dick's identification of himself as "the Black Death." "The Figure on the Bed: Difference and American Destiny in *Tender Is the Night,"* in Kennedy and Bryer, *French Connections*, pp. 208–209.
48. For this identification, see Smith, p. 211. n 7.
49. Andrew Turnbull, *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* (1962: reprint, New York: Ballantine, 1971), pp. 153–154. Fitzgerald's opinion of "the Italians" is contained in a 1911 letter, discussed in Smith, p. 29.
50. See Smith, especially pp. 196–197, for an excellent discussion of this conflict.

CHAPTER 5

1. John Dos Passos, *The Major Nonfictional Prose*, edited by Donald Pizer (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), pp. 174. 134.
2. See Michael Spindler, "John Dos Passos and the Visual Arts", *Journal of American Studies 15* (December 1981): 402–403, and Carol Shloss, *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer: 1840–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 150–151.
3. For Dos Passos's unhappy experience with this project, see Shloss, *In Visible Light*, pp. 164–165.
4. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 173. The rather strange phrase may well have been somewhat common at the time. Harry Potamkin claimed in 1933 that "most people are eye-minded." "The Eye of the Movie," in *The Compound Cinema*, edited by Lewis Jacobs (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1977), p. 244.
5. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 174.
6. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 180.
7. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 75.
8. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 147.
9. Quoted in Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940* (Chapel Hill: MIT Press University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 261.
10. Donald Pizer, *Dos Passos's U.S.A.: A Critical Study* (Chaxlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp. 80–81.
11. Orvell also suggests that Gerald Murphy's decorations for the ballet *Within the Quota*, produced in Paris in 1923, might have been an influence. See *The Real Thing*, p. 266.

12. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 283.
13. Brian Winston, *Media Technology and Society: From the Telegraph to the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 1986), pp. 64–65.
14. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, translated and edited by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 311.
15. John Dos Passos, *U.S.A.*, edited by Daniel Aaron and Townsend Ludington (New York: Library of America, 1996), p. 268. All citations hereafter are given in the text by page number.
16. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 179.
17. For other examples, see *Camera Eye* 25 (pp. 262–263), 34 (pp. 507–509), 46 (p. 892–894), and 47 (pp. 931–932).
18. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 247. See
19. Stanley Corkin, *Realism and the Birth of the Modern United States: Cinema, Literature, and Culture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), for an example.
20. Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (New York: Viking, 1951), pp. 38–43.
21. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone, 1995), p. 22.
22. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 99.
23. Kracauer, *Mass Ornament*, p. 58.
24. Pizer, *Dos Passos's U.S.A.*, pp. 65–66.
25. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 177.
26. Claude-Edmonde Magny, "Time in Dos Passos", in *Dos Passos: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Andrew Hook (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall,) p. 135. See also Denning, *Cultural Front*, p. 177.
27. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 179.
28. See Cowley, *Exile's Return*, pp. 207–209.
29. Denning, *Cultural Front*, pp. 180–181.
30. Jean-Paul Sartre, "John Dos Passos and 1919", in Hook, *Dos Passos*, pp. 66–67.
31. Dos Passos, *Prose*, p. 134.
32. Pizer, *Dos Passos's U.S.A.*, p. 150.
33. See Orvell, *The Real Thing*, p. 268. and Shloss, *In Visible Light*, p. 158.

CHAPTER 6

1. bell hooks, "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life", in *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography* (New York: New Press, 1994), p. 47.
2. Shawn Smith, "'Looking at One's Self Through the Eyes of Others': W.E.B. Du Bois's Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition", *African American*

Review 34 (2000): 581–599, and *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 157–186.

3. Craig Hansen Werner, *Playing the Changes: From Afro-Modernism to the Jazz Impulse* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 165.
4. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone, 1995), pp. 20, 22, 120.
5. For a discussion of these changes, see the work of Friedrich Kittler, especially *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
6. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 7. Citations in text hereafter identified as *SBF.*
7. Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, edited by Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 11.
8. See Ernest Allen, Jr., "On the Reading of Riddles: Rethinking Du Boisian 'Double Consciousness,'" in *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy*, edited by Lewis R. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 50, 52, and "Ever Feeling One's Twoness: 'Double Ideals' and 'Double Consciousness' in The Souls of Black Folk," Contributions in Black Studies 9/10 (1990–92): 59–60.
9. See, for examples, Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).
10. See, for example, Martin Jay, "Photo-Unrealism: The Contribution of the Camera to the Crisis of Ocularcentrism", in *Vision and Textuality*, edited by Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995). pp. 344–360.
11. See the discussion in Allen, "Reading of Riddles", and "Ever Feeling One's Twoness."
12. For discussions of this conflict in Du Bois, in specific relation to this passage, see Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race", in *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 25. and Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 486.
13. See Hazel Carby's response to Sundquist, in *Race Men* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 88–91.
14. Robert B. Stepto, *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), p. 65.
15. Sundquist, *Wake*, p. 488.
16. For commentary on this passage, see Sundquist, *Wake*, p. 527.
17. See Sundquist, *Wake*, p. 533.
18. See Sundquist, *Wake*, pp. 531–532.
19. Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 133–135.
20. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, edited

by William L. Andrews (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 123. Citations in text hereafter are identified as *A*. Houston Baker calls the *Autobiography* a "fictional rendering of *The Souk of Black Folk." Singers of Daybreak: Studies in Black American Literature* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974), p. 22.

21. Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 144.
22. See Aldon L. Nielsen, *Writing between the Lines: Race and Intertextuality* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 176–177.
23. Eric J. Sundquist, *The Hammers of Creation: Folk Culture in Modern African-American Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 12. See also p. 43.
24. See the discussion of "spectacle lynching" in Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890—194O* (New York: Pantheon, 1998), pp. 203–209.
25. Sundquist, *Hammers*, p. 19.
26. See, for example, *The Selected Writings of James Weldon Johnson*, edited by Sondra Kathryn Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1:287.
27. See Johnson, *Selected Writings*, 1:285, 2:14 410
28. Quoted in Thomas L. Riis, *Just before Jazz: Black Musical Theater in New York, 1890—1915* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), pp. 64–65.
29. Riis, *Just before Jazz*, pp. 65. 88.
30. See Sundquist, *Wake*, esp. pp. 254–255.
31. W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races", in *Writings*, edited by Nathan Huggins (New York: Library of America, 1996), p. 820. Quoted in Allen, "On the Reading of Riddles", p. 55.
32. Johnson, *Selected Writings*, 1:173, 2:15
33. Riis, *Just before Jazz*, pp. 77–78.
34. Riis, *Just before Jazz*, pp. 122–123.

CHAPTER 7

1. Ernest Hemingway, *Dateline: Toronto*, edited by William White (New York: Scribner's, 1985), p. 3. Hereafter all quotations from this text are identified parenthetically as *Dateline*.
2. Charles A. Fenton, *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954), p. 31.
3. James R. Mellow, *Hemingway: A Life without Consequences* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), pp. 180–181.
4. Cecelia Tichi, *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America* (Chapel Hill: MIT Press University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 220.
5. Ronald Weber, *Hemingway's Art of Non-Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 20.

6. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, pp. 46–47.
7. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, p. 120.
8. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, pp. 187. 281 n. 26.
9. Elizabeth Dewberry, "Hemingway's Journalism and the Realist Dilemma", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, edited by Scott Donaldson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 19.
10. Matthew Bruccoli, ed., *Ernest Hemingway, Cub Reporter* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970), pp. 15–19, 56–58.
11. Bruccoli, *Hemingway*, p. xiii. One of the best short accounts of Hemingway's career as a journalist is Scott Donaldson, "Hemingway of the Star," in *Ernest Hemingway: The Papers of a Writer*, edited by Bernard Oldsey (New York: Garland, 1980), pp. 89–107, which fully acknowledges the extent to which this work was "color" rather than factual reportage.
12. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, p. 79.
13. William Burrill, *Hemingway: The Toronto Years* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1994), p. 47.
14. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, p. 121.
15. Burrill, *Hemingway*, p. 46.
16. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1992), p. 14.
17. John Raeburn, *Fame Became of Him: Hemingway as Public Writer*(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 40–41.
18. Ernest Hemingway, *By-Line: Ernest Hemingway; Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades*, edited by William White (New York: Scribner's, 1967). Quotations hereafter are identified in the text as *By-Line.*
19. Mellow, *Hemingway*, pp. 126–127.
20. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, p. 110.
21. Mellow, *Hemingway*, p. 133.
22. Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 6. See also Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions: Literature, Advertisement, and Social Reading* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 172.
23. Marchand, *American Dream*, p. 1.
24. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, pp. 96–98.
25. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, pp. 106–107.
26. Michael Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway* (New York: Blackwell, 1986), p. 177. It also seems that advertising left at least one distinct, if minor, mark on his later work. The bizarre jingle that Bill Gorton concocts in *The Sun Also Rises*, "The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are Lesbians under their skin" (121) is, of course, a corruption of Kipling, but it is also a variant of what Roland Marchand calls "one of the advertising profession's most common figures of speech" (65). Advertisers were fond of the formula taken from Kipling because the notion that all women are "sisters under the skin" made their job much simpler.

27. Fenton, *Apprenticeship*, p. 108.
28. Reynolds, *Young Hemingway*, p. 178.
29. Mellow, *Hemingway*, p. 62.
30. Mellow, *Hemingway*, p. 64.
31. Mellow, *Hemingway*, p. 88.
32. Donaldson, “Hemingway of the Star,” p. 88.
33. Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 547.
34. Marchand, *American Dream*, p. 17.
35. Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 171.
36. Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*(Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 73.
37. Marchand, *American Dream*, p. 56.
38. Mellow, *Hemingway*, p. 187; Burrill, *Hemingway*, pp. 116–117.
39. Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (New York: Scribner's, 1930), p. 67. References hereafter are identified in the text as *Time*.
40. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), p. 330.
41. J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisá (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 9.
42. Margot Norris, “The Novel as War: Lies and Truth in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*”, Modern Fiction Studies 40 (Winter 1994): 700.
43. Hemingway, *Farewell*, pp. 30–31.
44. Norris, “Novel as War”, p. 697.
45. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Abo Rises* (1926; reprint, New York: Scribner's, 1954), p. 35.
46. Hemingway, *Sun*, pp. 95. 46
47. Michaels, *Our America*, p. 73.
48. “Although ads portrayed people having fun at restaurants, ballrooms, nightclubs, and dinner parties, the major satisfaction they conveyed was that *of simply being there*, securely installed in the proper class setting, among the proper people, and appropriately defined as ‘belonging’ by their attire.” Marc-hand, *American Dream*, p. 200.
49. Hemingway, *Sun*, pp. 136–137.
50. Hemingway, *Sun*, p. 21.
51. Hemingway, *Sun*, p. 215.
52. Raeburn, *Fame*, p. 46.
53. Marchand, *American Dream*, p. 158.
54. For an excellent discussion of the role of exchange and of commercial forms generally in Hemingway's work, see Richard Godden, *Fictions of Capital: The American Novelfrom James to Mailer* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 39–77.

CONCLUSION

1. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963), p. 6.
2. Karen Jacobs, *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture*(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 24. For other recent work on the topic, see Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
3. For a more complete development of this point, with a pertinent example, see my essay "The Sign of Five: Williams' 'The Great Figure' and Its Background", *Criticism* 30 (summer 1988): 325–348.
4. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), p. 124.
5. Chris Jenks, "The Centrality of the Eye in Western Culture: An Introduction," in *Visual Culture*, edited by Chris Jenks (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 7.
6. Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 293.
7. For an example, see Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 88. 213–214.
8. Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 244–248.
9. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* translated by Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 14.

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