Hearing Cinematic Modernism:

Sound, Film, and Modernist Women's Prose

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation focuses on the relationship between sound cinema and literary modernism in the interwar period. Recent scholarship on cinema and literature has provided important grounds of comparison between these two media. However, scholars have defined cinema as a visual medium when, in fact, perceptions and valuations of the cinematic medium were historically shaped by sounds as much as images. In this project, I read aural and visual representations in the literary texts of the British writers Vernon Lee, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf in the context of contentious debates on the meaning of sound cinema in the 1910s and 1920s. Exploring the sounds of cinema in women's writing, I argue, asserts the importance of this medium to interwar prose without reverting to visual concepts (like the gaze) that claim a subject and object dichotomy along gendered lines. I conclude by focusing on two early women filmmakers, Alice Guy-Blaché and Germaine Dulac, showing how their development of film sound resonates with the literary texts of Lee, Richardson, and Woolf. My central aims in this project are to explain the value of cinema for women writers in the interwar period and to establish a new means of conducting intermedia research between literature and film through a focus on the audiovisual as well as the visual elements of cinema.

Preface

Friedrich Kittler, in *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900*, argues that, in the nineteenth-century, the reader of literature reconstructs the real through audiovisual "hallucinations" provoked by the text. This literary function will then be usurped by cinematic and gramophonic technologies emerging in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century. He writes, "Movies thus took the place of the fantasy of the library. All the tricks that once magically transformed words into sequential hallucinations are recalled and surpassed" (247). Given this displacement by new technologies of perception, according to Kittler, literature either becomes part of a mass market structured by this media or it "reject[s] them, along with the imaginary and real aspects of discourse to which they cater, and which have become the province of popular writers . . . ." (248).

In her final novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), Virginia Woolf simultaneously anticipates and dispels Kittler's argument by framing her narrative of a multimedia outdoor performance within a country house with an abandoned library. This is an intentionally jarring juxtaposition, for, as the narrator suggests, books are no longer the "heart of the house" nor are they the "mirror of the soul" (16). Woolf was thinking a great deal about the meaning of the book as she wrote her final critical and fictional texts. Her concern with the past and the future of the written medium was hardly academic (the bombs raining down on England at the onset of another world war precluded such detachment), but was, rather, an attempt to revalue the redemptive aspects of British literary history for a "book-shy" generation while also acknowledging the relationship between this literary inheritance, patriarchy, class stratification, and war. As she was writing the drafts of the novel that would be published posthumously as *Between the Acts*, Woolf had also begun a literary history of Britain in which she carefully historicized the literary as a medium

emerging from the more communal, immediate productions of the theater. She writes in a draft of the essay "The Reader" (1941), "The reader then comes into existence some time at the end of the sixteenth-century, and his life history could we discover it, would be worth writing, for the effect it had upon literature. At some point his ear must have lost its acuteness; at another his eye must have become dull. . . . As time goes on the reader becomes distinct from the spectator" (428). [1] This new protagonist becomes immersed not in the immediate sensory world of the theater but, rather, in the written word. While his senses might be dulled, "[h]is sense of words and their associations develops" (428). The reader who then emerges as the counterpart of the writer is formed by the connotative power of written words and the unique requirements of multiple interpretive communities.

In a contemporary world in which technologies of perception have produced experiences that compete with the written word, however, this conversion of immediate sensory experience to the piquing of associations through reading is challenged. Woolf writes, "And the curious faculty—the power to make places and houses, men and women and their thoughts and emotions visible on the printed page is always changing. The cinema is now developing his eyes; the Broadcast is developing his ears" (428). Contemporary technology (as postwar media theorists like Marshall McLuhan likewise maintained) transforms the human sensorium and, hence, experience. This sensual transformation affected by cinema and radio, Woolf implies, produces a new reader. At the same time, Woolf suggests, these new technologies transform the role of the writer who must both build on and transform a literary tradition. In this essay, Woolf

[1] Despite the many manuscript versions of both essays archived at the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library and in the Monks House Papers at the University of Sussex Library, I will refer in this section to the versions collated and published posthumously by Brenda Silver, who also includes a comprehensive apparatus of notes on the variants between manuscripts, in *Twentieth Century Literature* in 1979.

ambiguously shifts from the reader to the writer. She begins a paragraph by tracing the birth of the reader, but ends with the conjunction of reader and writer. Woolf states, “His importance is gauged by the fact that when his attention is distracted, in times of public crisis, the writer exclaims: I can write no more” (428). The reader is the subject of this sentence (as she is the subject of the paragraph). However, when it is read in isolation, the writer is seemingly the sentence’s subject. The reader and writer are thus inextricably linked even at the level of sentence structure although it is the writer who faces the crisis that would occlude their relationship and, hence, the existence of both. The distraction of the reader’s attention by “public crisis” prompts the writer’s statement “I can write no more.” Or, alternatively, the distraction of the writer in the face of modern war casts doubt on the continued efficacy of her medium. Their shared end would be, of course, for Woolf, a tragic loss. She does not endorse a return to the precursor of the writer, Anon, nor does she suggest that a new aesthetic medium should overtake the institution of literature. Aware of its historical contingency as a medium, Woolf defends the value of the book. Her essay draft ends, “There is a long drawn continuity in the book that the play has not. It gives a different pace to the mind. We are in a world where nothing is concluded” (429). The book enables the reader to imagine, within the “theatre of the brain,” the “spectacle” that she herself controls. The reader, for example, “can read directly what is on the page, or, drawing aside, can read what is not written” (429). While it forfeits sensual engagement, the written text is more multivalent than the play, or, implicitly, the movies.

I introduce this project by juxtaposing Kittler’s and Woolf’s theories of the relationship between literature and technologies of perception in order to complicate Kittler’s narrative while also acknowledging that media like cinema did transform the way writers conceived their medium of words. My project fundamentally skirts the boundaries between these two media,

literature and cinema, and inquires into their intrinsic relationship in the first half of the twentieth-century. In undertaking this comparative media study, the central methodological question is how to conceive this relationship. Do we claim media specificity and map out the boundaries and the bridges between media in this period? Do we focus on the impact of perceptual transformations elicited by the cinematic medium on literary construction? Do we frame the question of the relationship between cinema and literature as one between mass culture and high art? Kittler's and Woolf's media histories suggest all of these methods, and these questions are further engaged by the contemporary scholars of "cinematic modernism" whose work I consider in the following introduction.

In this project, I will both contribute to and reconsider this discourse on the relationship between cinema and literature through complicating the concept of the cinematic medium with a focus on sound cinema. Rick Altman claims:

> It is regularly assumed that a single term (like cinema) covers a single object. If our theories are to become sufficiently sensitive to historical concerns, we must abandon that assumption, recognizing instead that historical development regularly occurs within an apparently single object . . . . Cinema changes, and the action of sound is one of the prime reasons for that change. (36-7)

What if we were to conceive of the relationship between cinema and literary modernism not only through visual, but also through aural culture? This focus enables us to recast our inquiries into media specificity, perceptual transformations, and the relationship between mass culture and high art by complicating our formulations of these questions. When we focus on sound as much as image, for example, we perceive in the cinema writing of Dorothy Richardson and Woolf, addressed in chapters two and three, an investment in the silent cinema for its purported silence

and visual possibilities. How does the elision of sound in their cinema writing relate to the cinematic aspects of their fiction? Imbricated within this question, and often overlooked in studies that focus on the relationship between cinema and literature as media rather than as means of representation, is the question of aesthetics and film as art. Did these writers themselves assume silent film as art or as recording media? What import do early-twentieth-century conceptions of cinema aesthetics have on the medium's relationship to literary modernism, and how did the global introduction of the synchronized-sound film in the late 1920s challenge or transform these conceptions? Connections between cinema and literature in the early twentieth-century (as Woolf was well-aware) are intricately linked to changing concepts of aesthetic value that can, in turn, reveal the constitutive influence of the social and political, as well as technological, disruptions of this period. In exploring the provocations of sound cinema, I maintain that we can better elucidate the aesthetic values, and their undergirding causes, that prompted literary modernist responses to the changing cinematic medium.

In the following chapters, I explore representations of sound cinema in the prose texts of three writers—Vernon Lee, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf—and constructions of sound in the cinematic texts of two filmmakers—Alice Guy-Blaché and Germaine Dulac. My project is structured to suggest several resonances, or narratives, about the intersecting values of sound and cinema in the texts of women producers in these different media. By aligning Lee, Richardson, and Woolf in chapters one through three, I construct a roughly chronological narrative ranging from Lee's valuation of the sound cinematic apparatus as an antidote to wartime aesthetics through Richardson's promotion of silent cinema (against sound cinema) as a female aesthetic to arrive at Woolf's movement from cinema aesthete to her late modernist reconsideration of recorded sound and spectacle in *Between the Acts.* Concluding with my fourth

chapter on transformations in conceptions of sound from the early cinema of Guy-Blaché through the avant-garde cinema of Dulac, I elucidate how producers in the cinematic medium addressed not only the technological, but also the aesthetic and cultural problem of film sound. A second resonance emerges across the first three and the final chapters between early permutations of synchronized-sound cinema engaged by Lee in her hybrid text *Satan the Waster* (1920) and by Guy-Blaché in her early sound-film experiments and between Richardson, Woolf, and Dulac as ostensible high modernists with allegiance to the silent film against the sound film in the late 1920s. I have chosen to focus solely on women writers and filmmakers in this project because, as I will explore in the following introduction, sound cinema had strong implications for the representation of gender that we can see resisted in many of the following texts. At the same time, we cannot draw neat conclusions based on gendered responses. Rather, we will see competing as well as resonating valuations of the sound cinematic medium and its aesthetic possibilities. Pace Kittler, turn-of-the-twentieth-century technologies of perception did not displace the representational functions of literature, but, rather, offered provocations that, in their adaptation or resistance, both transformed and were transformed by the literary.

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Introduction

The Sounds of Silence: Rethinking Cinematic Modernism

"[Cinema] is the only new [art] mankind has ever known. The others evolved with Man himself were ready only when he was ready."—Eric Elliott, *Anatomy of Motion Picture Art* (1928)

"[W]hile all the other arts were born naked, this, the youngest, has been born fully clothed." -- Virginia Woolf, "The Cinema" (1926)

As Elliott and Woolf evidence in the quotes above, cinema could be conceived by the mid-1920s as new in two oppositional ways—both as technologically advanced and as a primitive, or "savage," medium in the midst of modernity.[2] Both Elliott and Woolf describe the medium's "birth" as organic but untimely. Even as these two cinema theorists speculated in the late 1920s on the medium's aesthetic meaning, however, Dorothy Richardson, in her column for the little film magazine *Close Up*, decried the birth of what she saw as a wholly new medium—synchronized-sound cinema. Richardson writes, "We were about to see the crude, the newly-born" (193). She likewise describes the medium in biological terms, writing, "We remembered . . . Miss Rebecca West's noble confession of willingness to grow accustomed to listening to speakers all of whom suffer from cleft-palate . . . Cleft-palate is a fresher coin of the descriptive currency than the 'adenoids' worn almost to transparency by the realists" (193). Thus the medium of silent cinema, in the interwar period, was simultaneously nascent and superseded by what Richardson saw as the "monstrous" new medium of sound cinema. What, however, were the new media of silent and sound cinema perceived as embodying, and why was this embodiment couched in such ambivalent terms by modernist theorists in the 1920s?

[2] While they are interchangeable in some instances, cinema, as noted by the Oxford English Dictionary, generally defines the institutional structures and collective body of cinematic texts. Film can be defined as both the story or incident captured or the material object ("the film") itself.

It is unsurprising that, given the developments of the cinematic medium and the temporally concurrent textual constructions of literary modernism, the relationship between modernist literature and cinema was conceived and theorized even before modernism became canonized as such.[3] This relationship has been most recently addressed in texts like Garrett Stewart's *Between Film and Screen* (2000), Susan McCabe's *Cinematic Modernism* (2005), David Trotter's *Cinema and Modernism* (2007), Michael North's *Camera Works* (2005), and Laura Marcus's *The Tenth Muse* (2008). All of these studies consider the connections between different forms of textuality (cinematic and literary) as well as the cultural links between literary modernists and cinema. However, even with their awareness of the hybridity of a medium derived from contested aesthetic and social origins, many of these scholars continue to assume the primacy of the visual in their discussions of cinematic modernism. North and Marcus focus in part on the coming of synchronized sound cinema in the later 1920s, but their texts still predominantly center on the camera eye. The cinema was indeed conceived as a visual medium tacitly isolated from other sensory experiences, as the example of the French avant-garde filmmaker Germaine Dulac demonstrates in the last chapter of this project, and this visual definition of cinema dominates its modernist reception which, in turn, has influenced critical studies of cinema and modernism. However, conceptions of cinema through sound enable a different perspective. Just as we might define the cinema through visual abstraction, for example, we might also consider this "silent" cinema's relation to the synaesthetic, or the melding of sensory perceptions of hearing and seeing, as an avant-garde cinematic ideal. Furthermore, even as the rapid global diffusion of sound cinema in the late 1920s seemingly solidified the dominance of realist theater and the novel in a film aesthetics reliant on the "transparency" of

[3] We might think, for example, of Winifred Holtby's chapter on Woolf's work entitled "Cinematograph" in her 1932 biography.

speech, filmmakers with a close relationship to modernist writers (like Sergei Eisenstein) imagined new possibilities for a sound cinematic medium. In focusing primarily on cinema as an aspect of visual culture, we risk losing sight of the aural dimensions of the medium and, as a result, also of its influence on conceptions of narrative and the unique representation of spatial dimensions and temporal location in the modernist novel.[4]

A focus on associations and dissociations of sound and image considered in light of the contested developments of the cinematic medium not only offers a more specific cultural contextualization of what we might call cinematic modernism, but it also speaks to our contemporary environment with its own contested spaces created by media likewise new and "primitive." One means of conceiving of these new media environments is through the idea of "habit," an important concept within late-19th-century and early-20th-century psychology.[5] Walter Benjamin explicitly links habit, cinema, and space in his famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," which argues that perceptual transformations elicited by new media, film in particular, promise social revolution. Towards the end of his essay, Benjamin makes an analogy between cinema and architecture. He writes, "Buildings are received in a twofold manner: by use and by perception. Or better: tactiley and optically . . . Tactile reception comes about not so much by attention as by habit. The latter determines even the optical reception of architecture, which takes the form of casual noticing rather than attentive

[4] "Modernism" is, of course, a famously protean term with multiple definitions and interpretations. My own project is informed by a new modernist studies' turn toward contextualizing literary modernism within cultural studies. As my constellation of authors and filmmakers attests, I use "modernism" as a heuristic that includes, for example, Vernon Lee, a late-Victorian writer not usually found in modernist canons. At the same time, I follow the general definition of modernism as an evinced self-consciousness of textual innovation in the early-twentieth-century period, a definition which can be applied to all the subjects of this study.

[5] William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890) might be the most obvious citation of the importance of the concept of "habit" in fin-de-siècle psychology, but we might also consider the influence of German psychologists Wilhelm Wundt's and Hugo Münsterberg's work on habit.

observation" (40). What if we were to follow Benjamin's claim further in our inquiry into the relationship between cinema and literary modernism, a desire that itself stems from not only a theoretical but also a historicist need to understand the "tactile reception" of the recent past? What might it mean to conceive of cinema spatially and "tactiley"? Furthermore, how do the medium's contested aural dimensions factor into this spatial conception? In short, what new habits did cinema create and what old habits did it challenge, and how can we see these manifested and critiqued in interwar fiction?

We can find Benjamin's analogy between cinema and architecture literalized in the film theorists Siegfried Kracauer's and Dorothy Richardson's treatises on ideal movie theater architecture, written in 1926 and 1927. Kracauer prescribes that the Berlin movie palaces "should rid their offerings of all trappings that deprive film of its rights and must aim radically toward a kind of distraction that exposes disintegration instead of masking it" (328). Richardson, on the other hand, in her essay "There's No Place Like Home," writes, "For the local, or any, cinema the garage shape is the right shape because in it the faithful are side by side confronting the screen and not as in some super-cinemas in a semi-circle whose sides confront each other and get the screen sideways. The screen should dominate" (169). Both writers call for the same kind of cinema architecture for opposite reasons. For Kracauer, the cinema should revel in its mimesis of modern distraction, while, for Richardson, the screen should absorb the spectator, auratically demanding her attention. We have here fundamentally different visions, yet their occupancy in a theater described as humble and "garage shape" reveals how, in the early-twentieth-century, distracting fragmentation, on the one hand, and immersive engagement, on the other, are dialectically related. Contemporary theorists such as Jonathan Crary and Mary Ann Doane have described this dialectic as one of attention and distraction (in Crary's case) or control and

contingency (in Doane's), but it is a familiar structuring element in cultural studies of modernity.[6]

The undertheorized importance of cinema theater space, however, is not my primary concern. Rather, I am interested in the cultural effects of the virtual space constructed on the screen within the theater. This space is determined not only by its moving images, but also by its sounds. Early "silent" cinema was in fact informed by heterogeneous sound practices including synchronization, in-house lectures and dialogues, recorded and live music, and live sound effects. As Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault have argued, the "narrativization" of silent cinema beginning in 1907 demonstrated an increasingly sophisticated visual language that moved control of the film screening from the exhibitor to the producer and promoted the accompaniment of music. Synchronized sound cinema arose in the late 1920s with new technologies for writing sound directly onto the film (such as the Movietone, used by Fox beginning in 1927) and improved sound-on-disc technology (such as the Vitaphone adopted by Warners in 1926 and used to produce the famous "talkie" *The Jazz Singer* (1927)).[7] This new

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[6] See Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (1999) and Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive* (2002). This dialectic is also evidenced in H.D.'s writing on the "leaven and the lump" in *Close Up.* H.D. writes, "The word cinema (or movies) would bring nine out of ten of us a memory of crowds and crowds and saccharine music and longdrawn out embraces and artificially enhanced thud-offs of galloping bronchoes" (105). The silent screen star, embodied in Greta Garbo, however, commands attention within the distracting movie theatre amongst the "lump." H.D. writes, "I, like the Lump, am drawn by the slogan 'Beauty'" (106). Evidenced here as well is how the British writers of *Close Up* extolled the absorptive power of the cinema while German theorists like Benjamin and Kracauer argued for the shocking, distracting aspects of the cinema in its mimesis of modern life.

[7] For accounts of the technological and economic transitions produced by these synchronized-sound film developments, see Douglas Gomery, *The Coming of Sound* (2004) and Charles O'Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound* (2004). For discussions of the implications of recorded sound more generally in modernity, see Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity* (2004) and Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (2003). Essay collections on sound in cinema studies include the seminal "Cinema/Sound" issue of *Yale French Studies* edited by Rick

technology transformed the spaces of the silent cinema in multiple ways.[8] Sound cinema was seen as the apotheosis of what the aesthetic theorist Rudolf Arnheim called the "complete film," or a copy of the world providing an almost total (save for the lack of color or stereoscopic, three-dimensional technology) experience of reality for the spectator. At the same time, in embodying a "complete film," sound cinema seemingly sealed popular cinema's fate as a storytelling medium derived from the stage and the novel, from which many avant-garde and aesthetic theorists had hoped that it would escape. The synchronized sound cinema also foreclosed the possibility that cinema would become a new international visual language, splintering its intelligibility and eventually leading to the spread of English as a global language. As North writes, "Recorded sound 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 . . . it also brought cultural specificity, in the form of language, back into film . . ." (85). Finally, while the sound cinema was a "complete film" fully claiming a realist representation, the shaky new technology of sound on film also reminded the spectator that the cinema was a technological medium, precluding her full absorption in its images and sounds and paradoxically reminding her of the film's material apparatus. As Laura Marcus writes, "[S]ound was a mechanical intrusion into the medium, and a mechanism too far, making apparent . . . the

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Altman (60:1980), John Belton and Elisabeth Weis' anthology *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (1985), and Rick Altman's anthologies *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (1992) and *The Sounds of Early Cinema* (2001). Important monographs include Michel Chion's *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (1994) and *The Voice in Cinema* (1999), Sarah Kozloff's *Overhearing Film Dialogue* (2000), and Rick Altman's *Silent Film Sound* (2007). As the case of *The Jazz Singer* exemplifies, this transition to sound had strong implications for representations of race and ethnicity as well as gender in the late 1920s.

[8] As a shorthand, I will hereafter refer to the synchronized sound cinema arising in the late 1920s as "sound cinema" and pre-synchronized sound cinema as "silent cinema," despite the inaccuracy of these terms.

human itself as . . . 'a function of the operation of an artificial apparatus or the illusion of habit'" (405).

Women modernists were particularly interested in the spaces of silent cinema and particularly dismissive of the "talkies."[9] The interest of women writers such as such as Colette, Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Rhys, H.D., and Bryher, as well as Lee, Woolf, and Richardson, in the cinema suggests that gender was relevant to women's cultural criticism of cinema. Cinema was a medium that, at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, like the novel before it, not only hailed a female spectator, but also provided an opportunity for women directors and critics. As Leslie Kathleen Hankins writes, "Perhaps because movies were at first scorned by the largely male highbrow culture industry, women were welcome to write as public intellectuals, as critics and theorists of film. As long as no elite cultural institutions like 'Oxbridge' offered credentials for the study of cinema, males were not in a privileged position" (813). Writing of who should produce cinema, the interwar film critic and the first curator of film at New York's Museum of Modern Art, Iris Barry, commented, "They would be women rather than men, because (a) women are more visually-minded on the whole, and (b) because the cinema is more for women than men" (176). Women, particularly working and middle class women, as Miriam Hansen, Anne Friedberg and Giuliana Bruno have explored, were the hailed audience of much early cinema and women film critics like Barry and Caroline Lejeune, as well

[9] The result of a 1929 survey, reprinted in Rachael Low's *The History of British Film*, reveals that only half of the men and a third of the women interviewed preferred the talkies, while only one-fifth of the individuals described as "people of prominence" did (16). This survey reinforces evidence of modernist dislike of the sound film found in publications like *Close Up* (1927-33).

as the women writers of *Close Up*, were at the forefront of defining the new medium as an art form.[10]

The sanguine responses of the many female critics and theorists writing on silent cinema needs to be considered through a social positioning that takes into account class, race, sexuality, and geographic location, as feminist recovery work on women modernists has taught us. Many modernist women theorists of the cinema, for example, wrote for a more niche audience than film reviewers in newspapers and magazines. As Georgina Taylor writes of the modernist women writers of the little film magazine *Close Up*, "[F]or these women writers debate around literary texts, as well as the texts themselves, had become a source of sterility and repetition, while the world of cinema opened up a creative forum of experimentation and critical discussion" (127). Taylor's description of a "public sphere" of modernist women writers nicely articulates the dilemma that these modernist women contributors found themselves in between high modernism and mass culture. On the one hand, their endorsement of experimental cinema as "a pure and uncontaminated space," suggests elitism and a skepticism of the "masses," while, on the other, this desire to keep cinema as an experimental space resistant to dominant images represents a fear not so much of the masses as of the control exercised by central institutions (like Hollywood). As Germaine Dulac, who found herself in the same predicament, put it, "The avant-garde film does not appeal to the mere pleasure of the crowd. It is at once too egoistic and too altruistic. Egoistic because it is the personal manifestation of a pure thought; altruistic because it is interested only in progress" (qtd. in Flitterman-Lewis 80).

Close Up, modeled on literary little magazines as well as French cinema journals and founded in 1927 by Bryher, H.D., and Kenneth Macpherson, most exemplifies this ethos. The

[10] For a detailed description of Barry and Lejeune's contribution to cinema criticism, see Marcus, *The Tenth Muse*, 234-319.

journal was intended both to be a forum for international cinema discourses and to promote a British film culture (despite being published in Switzerland). *Close Up*, published until 1933, corresponded to the rise of sound cinema and gave voice to the modernist dislike of the new medium. The publication also aimed to introduce British and American literary worlds to the art of cinema. As Anne Friedberg writes in the introduction to the *Close Up* anthology, "Taking up the challenge to pioneer a new English-language critical discourse about this fledgling art-form, *Close Up*'s initial agenda was to bring the English literary world to the cinema" (13). In addition to publishing regular columns by modernist writers like H.D. and Richardson, *Close Up* also solicited writing on cinema from authors as varied as Gertrude Stein, Osbert Sitwell, Arnold Bennett, and André Gide. Bryher, H.D., and Macpherson also published books on film and made one feature-length film, *Borderline* (1930), starring Paul Robeson, through their imprint Pool. The cinema discourses produced in *Close Up* should be contextualized in terms of the British nationalist, as well as internationalist, ambitions of its founders. Furthermore, the magazine had a small circulation and its independent financing was enabled by Bryher's significant inheritance. In addition, we might generatively consider the productions of *Close Up* and Pool through the lens of sexuality, for, as Barbara McBane notes, H.D. and Bryher "sprang from the center of the sapphic modernist literary world," and queer sexuality is an explicit theme in *Borderline* (155). *Close Up* thus evidences a female modernist investment in cinema discourse while also calling our attention to the other allegiances (connected to but not determined by gender) inherent to this engagement.

It is also no accident that *Close Up* was published parallel to the rise of sound cinema in the late 1920s, and, further, that sound cinema's greatest critics were H.D., Bryher, and Richardson, the regular women contributors to the magazine. Bryher, for instance, attributed the

folding of *Close Up* in her memoir *The Heart to Artemis* (1962) to the rise of sound cinema and its occlusion of the possibilities of silent cinema. At the same time, however, debates on the rise of sound cinema in *Close Up* evidenced complex responses to the medium. MacPherson, in an October 1929 column on Alfred Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929), one of the first British talkies, acknowledges the possibility of "acoustical montage" suggested by the film. By the conclusion of his column, he has come to argue that cinema is an aural as much as a visual medium. He writes, "[Sound] can only be rendered symbolically always. The million sounds you hear have a special timbre, rhythm, sight-sound significance. What a complicated, vast, never-ending science the investigation and psychology of sound is going to present to us, and some of us are already beginning to say that the talkies are an art" (92). MacPherson had lost his initial skepticism of the sound film. Michael North argues of the sound cinema debates in *Close Up* that 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. . . . This opposition also reveals . . . the very tentative embrace of technology at *Close Up*, and the residual discomfort there with the idea of art being made by machines" (90). However, as MacPherson's conversion attests, debates on sound in *Close Up* were less definitive than North implies, and, while the tension between modernist literary production and mass culture is evident in *Close Up* and its associated publications and cinema productions, the question of responses to sound cinema at the journal might be more obviously categorized through the lens of gender.[11] In this project, I will explore why women critics were particularly wary of sound cinema and, through my focus on the medium's aurality, will offer a fresh inquiry into the relationship between modernist women producers and cinema.

[11] See Marcus, *The Tenth Muse,* 404-408, for a brief but insightful analysis of responses to sound cinema published by women writers in *Close Up.*

Aside from its accessibility to female cultural critics as a new aesthetic form, film has ostensibly enabled women writers to revise the "gaze" that, as Laura Mulvey claims, fixes women as visual objects. Studies of Woolf and the cinema by Emily Dalgarno and Maggie Humm and of Richardson and the cinema by Carol Watts and Susan Gevirtz, for example, primarily focus on the visual aspects of their subjects' work in relation to the eye of the camera, conceived as both an indifferent recording mechanism and as the agent of new point-of-view perspectives. This reading of a literary engagement with cinema only through the visual, however, risks overlooking other aspects of the cinema spectator's experience, especially the aural. Giuliana Bruno reminds us that the cinematic is not only a way of seeing, but that it is also a "haptic" experience. She describes an "affect of spatiality" effected by the cinematic image that removes it from the dominance of the visual. Bruno writes, "Locked within a Lacanian gaze . . . the film spectator was turned into a *voyeur* . . . [B]ecause of film's spatio-corporeal mobilization, the spectator is rather a *voyageur*, a passenger who traverses a haptic, emotive terrain" (15). In this project, I aim to show how the aural is intimately connected with what Bruno calls the "haptic," challenging conceptions of cinema as a purely visual medium and the subsequent analyses of the "camera eye" as the only cinematic factor in literary modernism.

A comparative exploration of aural and visual manifestations in literary and cinematic texts enables us to perceive phenomenological links between literature and cinema in this period. Furthermore, in emphasizing this relationship within the texts of women writers, we can conceptualize a cinematic reading of their texts that does not privilege the gaze or even, primarily, the visual. A focus on the conjunctions of sound and moving images suggested by the cinema, in short, enables us to explore other forms of embodiment—and disembodiment—in the literary text. In this introduction, I will set the stage for the following four chapters through

exploring means of comparative analysis between cinema and literature that take into account the aural dimensions of the cinematic. In the first section of this chapter, I put Rita Felski's recent exhortation for a "neophenomenological" reading practice into dialogue with Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological cinema theory in order to suggest a reading of cinematic sounds and images in literary texts. Particularly illuminating for my argument here is Sobchack's concept of the "cinesthetic subject," a subject constructed by sensual immersion in a text yet also aware of its mediation. In the second section of this introduction, I ask how the phenomenological insights of Felski and Sobchack might contribute to the methodological contests in contemporary studies on the relationship between cinema and literary modernism, focusing particularly on conceptions of cinema as an aesthetic medium, a recording medium, and as an embodied experience. In the third section, I move from "cinesthesia" to synaesthesia as an aesthetic ideal informing the development of silent cinema as well as aspects of literary modernism. The final section proceeds to explore what was at stake in the literary modernist response to the rise of the talkies and considers both the strong objections to this new technological development as well as its purported possibilities.

1. The "Cinesthetic Subject" and Reading across Media

As Melba Cuddy-Keane suggests, it is vital to conceive of a vocabulary for sound as well as for vision in literary texts. Cuddy-Keane defines sound in Woolf, for example, through "diffusion," the multiple directions that sound travels and "auscultation," the focalization of sound through character as an interweaving of interior and exterior spaces. For Cuddy-Keane, this concentration on the aural in Woolf provides a means of interconnecting apparently disparate media. Her attempt to define a new auditory vocabulary through Woolf's writing exemplifies how an attention to the textual representations of aurality enables us to connect

technologies of perception to constructions of hearing as well as seeing in literature. While Cuddy-Keane focuses on radio, I would like to suggest that we might also consider the connection between literature and cinema through manifestations not only of vision but also of sound, for this medium had the greatest impact on conceptions of sensory separation and conjunction in this period.[12]

In her recent manifesto *Uses of Literature* (2008), Rita Felski calls for a "neophenomenological" reading of literature that "respects the intricacy and complexity of consciousness without shelving sociopolitical reflection" (18). Diverging from the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Felski advocates readings founded on diverse experiences of recognition, enchantment, knowledge, or shock. In her performance of these readings, Felski attends to aural as well as visual elements of the text. Writing of enchantment in literature, for example, Felski claims, "The notion of the soundscape underscores that attending to the materiality of language is far from a soulless formalism; a soundscape is an auditory environment, a lived world composed of interwoven sound patterns that resonate inside and outside the self" (72). Felski's attention to the text's aurality, the sounds made by words and sentences themselves, is an important means of conceiving of sound in literature outside of its metaphorical aspects. Felski provides a crucial reminder that sensory experience is key to

[12] Soundscape studies is a rich and growing subfield in literary research. A reader might ask why I have not positioned my dissertation wholly on soundscape and where my project sits in relation to this subfield. My work is focused on the aesthetic effects of sound cinema as evidenced in literary texts because both media provide reconstructions of space and time that influence navigations of the world. Furthermore, the contestations of sound in cinema help defamiliarize its effects in literature. For introductions to soundscape studies in modernism, see Emily Thompson's *The Soundscape of Modernity* (2004) and Angela Frattarola's "Developing an Ear for the Modernist Novel" in *Journal of Modern Literature* (33:1, 2009).The anthologies *Hearing Cultures* and *Hearing History* (both 2002), published in the disciplines of anthropology and history respectively, both provide essays on the auditory as a corrective to an emphasis on vision in modernity.

reading and, hence, to theorizing the complicated relationships between text, author, and reader. This observation as to the value of sensory experience, however, is not one that returns us to an unmediated appreciation of the literary text free from political or social considerations. Rather, Felski recognizes that the sensual is itself mediated and culturally defined.

Like cinema, literature can be a visual and an aural, as well as a haptic, medium. Felski's "neophenomenological" method of reading can be put into productive dialogue with phenomenological studies of cinema in order to think through how literary and cinematic texts are defined by their mediums' sensory possibilities and limitations as well as how writers and readers navigate these possibilities and limitations in their constructions and reconstructions of textual worlds. Vivian Sobchack, for example, explores, through an experiential phenomenology adopted from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, what is at stake for the spectator in cinema as an embodied virtual experience. Sobchack's "cinesthetic subject" describes the mutual connection between spectator and cinematic text as a calibration of culturally-defined sensory experience. She defines cinesthetic subjects as:

> bodies [that] subvert their own fixity from within, commingling flesh and consciousness, reversing the human and technological sensorium . . . We might name this subversive body in the film experience the *cinesthetic subject*—a neologism that derives not only from *cinema* but also from two scientific terms that designate particular structures and conditions of the human sensorium: *synaesthesia* and *coenaesthesia*. Both of these structures and conditions foreground the complexity and richness of the more general bodily experience that grounds our particular experience of cinema, and both also point to ways in

> which the cinema uses our dominant senses of vision and hearing to speak comprehensibly to our other senses. (67)

For Sobchack, cinema constructs an embodied viewing experience using sounds and images. Sobchack quotes neurologist Richard Cytowic's definition of synaesthesia as an "*involuntary experience* in which the stimulation of one sense perception cause[s] a perception in another" (67). She defines "coenaesthesia" as a "cross-modal sensorial exchange" connected to the "prelogical and prehierarchal union of the sensorium" that "exists as the carnal foundation for the later hierarchal arrangement of the senses achieved through cultural immersion and practice" (69). In other words, "whereas synaesthesia refers to the exchange and translation between and among senses, coenaesthesia refers to the way in which equally available senses become variously heightened and diminished, the powers of history and culture regulating their boundaries as it arranges them into a normative hierarchy" (69). Sobchack's description of the spectator as a "cinesthetic subject" in the context of cinema can illuminate how images and sounds appeal both to characters within literary texts and to the readers without them. Exemplifying media as neither deterministic of experience nor as unrelated to the definition of experience, Sobchack's concept of the "cinesthetic subject" allows us to interpret cultural transformations provoked by technologies of perception through a focus on the collaborations of sound and image in the novel.[13] It might contribute a new way of conceptualizing the "neophenomenological" reading practice for which Felski argues in cinematic terms. This is not to say that the movement between cinema spectatorship and literary readership can be made

[13] At the same time, this intermediality ignores important distinctions between media and the intertextual references and rewritings particularly evinced in literary modernism. Nonetheless, intertextuality and the rewriting of a body of inherited national literature, as Jane Marcus has comprehensively explored in Woolf, can be conceived as an aural as well as a verbal and written activity, as with the ironic use of early British poetry in Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) and *Between the Acts* (1941).

seamlessly, but it does call our attention to the sensory appeals made in literature for it is here that we find not only the cultural implications of cinema, but also an interrogation of this medium's meaning-making techniques through literary composition.

When we return to the turn-of-the-twentieth-century aesthetics that preceded phenomenology, we find an anticipation of the sensual immersion described by Sobchack in late-19th and early-20th-century aesthetic theory. What cinema exemplifies is, on the one hand, an impersonal perspective through the camera eye, but also, on the other, what Vernon Lee would call (although not in the context of cinema) a "psycho-physiological aesthetics" stitching the spectator into an environment formed of images and music.[14] In her concept of "psycho-physiological aesthetics," Lee maintained that the work of art solicited a disinterested interest in its spectator, listener, or reader in the Kantian sense while, at the same time, impacting her body to an extent that could be empirically studied.[15] Lee's aesthetics emerged from the work of the German philosophers and scientists Theodor Lipps (whose work subsequently inspired the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserl), Karl Groos, and Hugo Münsterberg, all of whom she first introduced to an English audience. In turn, while she did not write a great deal about film, her concepts of beauty and salutary aesthetics influenced the early American cinema theorist Victor Freeburg.[16] Without such a direct citation as Freeburg's, early writing on the silent cinema, as I will explore in the following chapters, not only found value in the formal

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[14] Grant Allen's *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877) was also a key text in the elaboration of a "psycho-physiological" aesthetics. Both Lee and Allen described an aesthetic that inspired indifferent interest in the subject while also impacting the body at a visceral level. As Allen writes, aesthetic enjoyment is "unconnected in thought with our own personality and wholly cut off from actuality" (211). At the same time, this aesthetic experience is mediated through and thus felt within the body.

[15] Lee, with Kit Anstruther-Thomas, conducted these empirical studies of art on herself and others. See, for example, *The Beautiful: An Introduction to Psychological Aesthetics* (1913).

[16] See Marcus, *The Tenth Muse*, 216-20.

visual qualities of film, but also in these psycho-physiological transformations. The aesthetic was thus reconceived in this period as both indifferent and, at the same time, as possessing a psychological and physiological purpose through sensory appeals. For many early cinema theorists, particularly Münsterberg, the cinematic medium would come to best exemplify this turn-of-the-twentieth-century aesthetic. Münsterberg 's "psycho-physiological" aesthetic theory, applied to cinema, would influence the development of the cinematic medium while, in turn, being shaped by it. Felski's and Sobchack's contemporary phenomenological studies allude back to these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century aesthetics in constellating embodied experience with aesthetics through the structures of media.

Conceptions of an aesthetic influence on the body inform the assumptions of media specificity or hybridity underwriting the literary constructions of the writers in the following chapters. All of the writers on whom I focus in this study were intimately concerned with the effects of media on inherited genres of prose writing. In Richardson's essay "About Punctuation," for example, she writes that with the "mechanical writing" of the typewriter, it is necessary to transform the very structure of the sentence to enable an embodied (and aural) reading.[17] Richardson writes that "in the slow, attentive reading demanded by unpunctuated texts, the faculty of hearing has its chance, is enhanced until the text *speaks* itself. And it is of this

[17] Of the typewriter she writes that "it is not to be denied that the machinery of punctuation and type, while lifting burdens from reader and writer alike and perfectly serving the purposes of current exchange, have also, on the whole, devitalized the act of reading; have tended to make it less organic, more mechanical" (991). The typewriter has been an important instrument for media studies. As Joseph Tabbi and Michael Wutz write, "[T]he early modern period offers no clearer site for intermedial boundary conflicts than the typewriter, the machine that—by unlinking the hand, the key, and the imprint of the letter—breaks up the compositional fluidity of handwriting and with it the creative continuity between conception and articulation" (4).

enchantment that the strange lost charm is born" (990).[18] An unpunctuated sentence (what Woolf would call Richardson's exemplary "female sentence") emerges as a means of negotiating a new writing technology. In this essay and in her other work, Richardson anticipates Friedrich Kittler's claim that "[m]edia 'define what really is,' they are always already beyond aesthetics" while at the same time countering his media determinism through her self-consciously aesthetic decisions. Nevertheless, this (gendered) media determinism haunts Richardson's alter-ego Miriam Henderson in her novel *Pilgrimage*. She writes, for example, that the "mechanical" writing of the pen can only provide a "man's view" and that the quill "squeaks out an important sense of *writing*, makes people too objective, so that it's as much a man's pen, a mechanical, see life steadily and see it whole man's view sort of implement as a fountain pen" (*Revolving Lights* 370). Paralleling her strong dislike of the talkies, Richardson also invokes the telephone as a technology for exteriorizing the interior voices of reading and thought. She writes that "by inventing the telephone we've damaged the chances of telepathy" (*Revolving Lights* 370). If reading is a form of telepathy then the telephonic, in exteriorizing voice, challenges the empathetic experience of the internal speech of reading. Richardson's distrust of, as well as pleasure in, different writing technologies and in the writing process should be considered alongside her interest in the cinema.[19] Bryher, in her review of the *Pilgrimage* novel-chapter *Dawn's Left Hand*, likewise described the novel as the "real English film for which so many are waiting" (210). Just as Germaine Dulac, along with other members of French cinema avant-garde, conceived of filmmaking as *cinégraphie*, or a form of writing, modernist writers such as

[18] The writer she cites as exemplary of this is Henry James who, indeed, composed through dictation in his later novels.

[19] The journey of *Pilgrimage* is that of Miriam becoming a writer. There is also evidence that Richardson enjoyed multiple writing media. Typewritten letters in the Beinecke Collection evidence Richardson's experimentation with this technology for the fun of it, as she spatially manipulates words, repeats letters to form nonsense words, and plays with phonetic spellings.

Woolf and Richardson sought new models of novel composition. The cinema, as I will argue, suggested to these writers different calibrations of the sensory experiences of seeing and hearing. The cinematic impressions of movement and light that have, rightfully, often been conceived as strong influences on literary modernism, should also be put into context with the multiple sounds of cinema. Vacillating between shock and immersion, the interwar "cinesthetic subject" grappled with the sensory transformations enacted by technologies of perception like the sound cinema.

2. Cinematic Modernism: Phenomenology, Aesthetics, and Comparative Media

In her survey of the recent spate of scholarship exploring the relationship between cinema and literary modernism, Heather Fielding pinpoints the methodological question inherent to this research as one of "whether or not it is critically sound to think of literature and cinema as two comparable but inherently separate media" (958). The question of the relationship between these two media, cinema and literature, is one that fundamentally interrogates the category of literature as an assumed object of study. Contemporary scholars developing the subfield of what has been called "cinematic modernism," following the title of Susan McCabe's 2005 book, are charged with defining the grounds for comparative study across media without sacrificing the methodological rigors of disciplinary boundaries. Theorists of cinematic modernism risk defending the field of literary studies generally and literary modernism specifically so thoroughly that the literary becomes insulated from other cultural currents or, alternatively, they risk collapsing media into an undefined object of study. While Fielding rightly considers this question of media specificity to be a central point of contention in cinematic modernism, I would like to frame my approach, rather, by focusing on how cinema is perceived as an aesthetic or as a recording medium in these various studies. In other words, is cinema perceived through its transforming aesthetics or through the indifferent recording capacity of its technology?

The subfield of cinematic modernism can be categorized through three central focal points that map on to the question of whether or not cinema was perceived by literary modernists as an aesthetic or as an indifferent recording medium. David Trotter claims that it is the impersonality of the cinema as a recording medium that most influences literary modernist constructions, an argument that can be traced back to Stanley Cavell's *The World Viewed* (1971). Susan McCabe, on the other hand, emphasizes shared conceptualizations of the body (including sensory perceptions) between cinema and modernism. In focusing on the sensual impact of technology on the body and its iterations in modernist literature, McCabe's study contributes to more general studies of technology and literary modernism by Sara Danius and Tim Armstrong. Finally, Laura Marcus, Michael North, and Garrett Stewart elide the question of aesthetic indifference and bodily engagement by focusing on cinema and literary modernism as related forms of writing.[20]

In *The World Viewed,* Cavell explicitly connects the productions of the cinema to literary modernism through the modernist ideal of autonomy. For Cavell, every artistic medium is an "automatism" in the sense of having an unconscious allegiance to traditional structures, the inheritance of forms. Modernism, aiming to construct new means of signification, likewise aims to develop new traditions, and, hence, new media. Cavell writes that "calling the creation of a medium the creation of an automatism is to register the sense that the point of this effort is to free me not merely from automatisms I no longer acknowledge as mine . . . but to free the object

[20] In this section (with the exception of Cavell, who I believe is instructive in positioning Trotter's work on cinema and modernism), I am leaving out several important earlier studies of the relationship between these media including Alan Spiegel's *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel* (1976), Keith Cohen's *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* (1979), and P. Adams Sitney's *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature* (1992). These studies, with their insightful emphases on the shared visual aspects of cinema and literature, also elide the question of film sound.

from me, to give it new ground for its *autonomy*" (108). The divorce of subject and object through this aesthetic process is found in modernist calls for autotelic art such as T.S. Eliot's "process of depersonalization" which describes the mind of the poet as "medium," "catalyst," and "receptacle" through which art realizes itself as "a living whole" (40-41). As Cavell points out, new media embody the indifferent engagement Eliot describes and prescribes for the poet. Any media, like the cinematograph, "based upon successions of automatic world projections do not . . . have to establish presentness to and of the world: the world is there. They do not have to deny or confront their audiences: they are screened. And they do not have to defeat or declare the artist's presence: the object was always out of his hands" (118). In establishing this relationship between technique and technology, Cavell suggests that the apotheosis of modernist aesthetic formalism lies in the productions of a machine.

Like Cavell, Trotter perceives the intersection between cinema and modernism as one informed by cinema as a "recording medium" rather than by the development of cinema aesthetics as means of representation. Arguing that rather than being conceived as aesthetically analogous, cinema and literary modernism should instead be conceived through a relationship of "parallelism." Trotter posits that cinema and literature are fundamentally different media—whereas cinema is a "recording medium," literature is a "representational medium." Literary modernism thus "look[s] back in [its] affinity with cinema, to that original neutrality of film as a medium, rather than forward to montage as the apotheosis of cinematic narrative art" (5). In claiming that cinema and literature should be seen as "parallel," but separate media, Trotter goes even further than Cavell in disengaging constitutive formations between the two media.

If we can claim that Cavell's and Trotter's theories of the interrelation of cinema and literary modernism are predicated on a technological disembodiment, then Susan McCabe's

theorization of their intermedial relationship can be seen as offering an alternative embodiment thesis.[21] For McCabe, it is psychoanalysis that articulates the conjunctions of cinema and literary poetics to "reveal a paradox at the heart of modernism—the desire for bodily immediacy and the consciousness of its necessary fragmentation in both poetry and film" (231). Her account of the restructuring of the body and of sensory perceptions by cinema suggests the tracing of a "neophenomenology" formed by the new media of modernity through the aesthetics of high-modernist literary texts. Her study joins two other important books on the relationship between technology and literary modernism, Tim Armstrong's *Modernism, Technology, and the Body* (1998) and Sara Danius' *The Senses of Modernism* (2002). Claiming that technology and high-modernist aesthetics are constitutively linked, Danius and Armstrong have conceived of literary modernism through the lens of sensory perceptions (in the former case) or of the human body as "re-energized, re-formed, subject to new modes of production, representation, and commodification" by 19th- and 20th-century technologies (in the latter case) (2). Attempting to dismantle the apparent oppositions of modern technology and high modernist literature, Danius reads in the development of modernist aesthetics "a historically specific crisis of the senses, a sensory crisis sparked by, among other things, late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century technological innovations, particularly technologies of perception" (3). Returning to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century discourses on health, gender, and technology, Armstrong argues that

[21] Both Trotter and McCabe, however, acknowledge, in Trotter's terms a dialectic of "immediacy" and "hypermediacy" (11) and, in McCabe's terms, a dialectic of "tactile immediacy" and "an insistence upon disjunctive mediation" (10) inherent to the cinematic medium. Beginning his book with an exploration of stereoscopic images as simultaneously abstract and haptic, Trotter does not wholly divorce the cinematic experience from the body. Nor, on the other hand, in her interest in the mechanical vision of the camera eye, does McCabe elide disembodiment. In fact, this disembodiment is an integral part of her dialectic of wholeness and fragmentation through cinema. However, Trotter still focuses on the medium of cinema itself, while McCabe's explicit interest is in the representational aesthetic aspects of cinema and their impact on the body.

a "revolution in perceptions of the body in the nineteenth-century" is both reflected and transformed within literary modernist texts. While the assumption of disembodied seeing in Trotter often emerges from the early actuality (or documentary) films in which the camera records an event, the incarnation of cinematic aesthetic experience addressed by McCabe derives from the film aesthetics of avant-garde films.[22] We can thus posit within these critical accounts a dialectic between disembodiment and embodiment, on the one hand, and between cinema as a recording medium or a medium of aesthetic representation, on the other.[23]

Inherent to this dialectic is also the relationship between subjectivity and embodiment. As Sobchack's phenomenological approach to cinema suggests, consciousness, manifested through perception, is indivisible from the lived body. At the same time, cinema has been perceived as constructing or enabling subjective positions outside one's own body.[24] This question of subjectivity and embodiment is particularly important for understanding the responses of women

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[22] Following Cavell, Trotter adopts the realist approach to cinema aesthetics conceived by André Bazin. The third chapter of his book is focused on D.W. Griffith, the ostensible inventor of the cross-cut. However, Trotter explicitly writes that he perceives Griffith's work through "film's neutrality as a medium" as much as through its aesthetics. He writes that "Biograph films are usually seen as a laboratory for the development of the techniques which transformed film from a medium into an art. I value them for the *sense* they make of the world, by a deliberate reversion to cinema's neutrality as a medium, as well as for the *meaning* they make on its behalf by the elaboration through montage of a mediated (or even hypermediated) cinematic discourse" (11). McCabe, on the other hand, writes that "early films, especially but not exclusively those created by the avant-garde, could foreground their spectral materiality, shatter a comfortable or seamless verisimilitude, and return the spectator to her serialized, 'dislocated limbs'" (10).

[23]This opposition reiterates Siegfried Kracauer's claim about the "two tendencies" of early cinema, the "realist" and the "formative." The Lumière brothers' actualities, or documentary films, exemplify the realist tendency, or the camera's capture of an extrafilmic world as a recording witness. The "trick films" of Georges Méliès, on the other hand, exemplify the formative tendency in their creation of impossible, almost dreamlike spaces manifested through the trick photography of early motion pictures. See Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 30-37.

[24] This perception has been mostly critical of cinema's ability to manifest subjective positions outside the viewer's body. See, for example, Laura Mulvey's canonical and much-critiqued article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), which argues that classic cinema interpellates spectators into male subject positions regardless of their sex.

producers to the medium. The women who wrote about and produced films in the first part of the twentieth-century did not exhibit a coherent celebration of cinema as disembodied subjectivity or as a means of embodied aesthetic experience but, rather, they vacillated between finding in the medium both embodiment and disembodiment conceived, at turns, as liberating and constraining. By focusing on the meaning that each individual producer ascribed to the medium, we can adopt both Trotter's disembodiment thesis and McCabe's embodiment thesis, showing what the contextual understanding of cinema for an individual producer reveals about aesthetics, gender, and media in the interwar period. At the same time, these narratives and valuations cannot be wholly divorced from, but, rather, reflect the multiple and often contradictory developments of the cinematic medium. I focus on cinematic sound in this project because this aspect of the medium most reveals the underlying tensions inherent to its evolution.

Laura Marcus' *The Tenth Muse* (2008), Michael North's *Camera Works* (2005), and Garrett Stewart's *Between Film and Screen* (2000) provide a third means of conceiving of the relationship between cinema and literary modernism. These texts consider this relationship neither through the impersonal limits of the machine nor through transformations of embodiment and sense perceptions affected by new technology, but, rather, through modes of writing and textuality. Like Trotter, Marcus aims to move away from models of analogy between cinema and modernist literature, particularly those that privilege a shared montage aesthetics between the two media. Rather, Marcus' comprehensive study compares writing about cinema in the early-20th-century with cinematic passages in literary modernist texts. In focusing on how cinema transformed conceptions of writing, Marcus concentrates on several inquiries into the relationship between cinema and literature "including questions of time, repetition, movement, emotion, vision, sound, and silence" and looks at how these cinematic aspects are "threaded

through. . . . discursive and fictional writings" (2). North goes further than Marcus to look at visual texts as forms of writing in the modernist period. He writes, "Recording technologies such as film and photography . . . provided their users with a vastly more powerful, more extensive indexical sign . . . . These new media seemed to bridge the gap between language and visible phenomena, a language impossibly more flexible and various than any of the written languages" (8). The conception of photographic and cinematic images as new forms of writing to be read informed, North claims, literary modernism's meaning-making techniques and suggested new media through the conjunction and transformation of inherited visual and literary forms. Finally, Stewart argues that cinema influences modernism through its central paradox as a medium--its movement composed of still images. What we learn from this medium's paradoxical textuality is that reading the literary we might be "alert to the continual—not quite continuous—winning out of the lexeme, and then (ultimately) the mental image, over the phonemes that generate it" (271). Yet, just as the cinema still underlies the movement of the cinematic image, the phoneme is a fact of reading. The example of cinema, for Stewart, leads to the "undoing of lexical integrity" in the constructions of literary modernism. The paradox of the cinematic still likewise promotes an awareness in literary modernist texts of the phoneme as the integral unit of language which, nevertheless, lacks meaning in isolation. These studies simultaneously narrow and broaden the category of what qualifies as writing in modernism, discursively locating this practice within its historical context.

By focusing wholly on sound (and Armstrong, Marcus, and North do focus at least partially on it), I intend to further complicate the question of cinema's relation to literary

modernist textual practice.[25] If we focus on sound in cinema, we can begin to trace a narrative of audiovisual effects in modernist prose texts that asserts the aesthetic hegemony of silent cinema but also hints at the phenomenological transformations wrought by sound cinema as well as the new aesthetic (and unaesthetic) possibilities suggested by this medium. While, given my interest in aural as well as visual phenomenological connections between cinema and literature, I am sympathetic with the embodiment thesis outlined above, I also maintain that the unique capability of cinema as a defamiliarizing and disembodying medium, as well as its relation to concepts of writing, are invoked by literary modernists exploring the limits and aesthetic possibilities of their own literary medium. When we conceive of cinema as an aural as well as a visual medium, we can better articulate what is at stake when modernist writers adopt or resist the aesthetic practices of this medium, or, following Trotter, when they choose to engage the neutrality of medium (as, I will argue in chapter one, Lee does) rather than its meaning-making techniques. By concentrating on the multiple meanings of cinema for the subjects of my study, as well as complicating cinema as an object of study through my focus on sound, I aim to demonstrate that literature should not be the only questioned object of study in the cinematic modernism equation, but that cinema, too, provided rich, multiple, and changing meanings within the literary field.

3. Coenaesthetia, Synaesthesia, and the Multisensory Experience of Cinema

The "silent" cinema was, of course, never silent. Lecturers, early experiments with synchronized sound, and music accompanied the motion pictures from their inception. In an attempt to legitimize cinema as an art form, and the most modern one at that, cultural critics claimed that the relationship between music, moving images, and the written word realized the

[25] See Marcus, 157-71 and 404-37, Armstrong, 220-47, and North, 83-105, for chapters and sections that focus on the impact of sound cinema on literary modernism.

multimedia experience of the total work of art envisioned by Richard Wagner. Writing in the American trade publication *Moving Picture World*, for example, the columnist Clarence E. Sinn claimed in 1910, "Just as Wagner fitted his music to the emotions, expressed by words in his operas, so in the course of time, no doubt, the same thing will be done with regard to moving pictures" (590).[26] In his film-script/novel *The King Who Was a King* (1929), H.G. Wells writes, "Behind the first cheap triumphs of the film to-day rises the possibility of the spectacle-music-drama, greater, more beautiful, and intellectually deeper and richer than any form humanity has hitherto achieved" (13). For Wells, however, it was not the correlation of music, image, and text that produced this experience, but was, rather, the sound film. The oft-cited connections that Theodor Adorno, pessimistically, made between the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the cinema were earlier invoked by American and British writers on the cinema in a much more sanguine tone. The total work of art suggested a suturing of the divide between performance and spectator as well as a renegotiation of aesthetics, sense perception, and conceptions of reality.

The production of a synaesthesic experience that transcended the boundaries between art and life was central to Wagner's ideal of the opera as a multimedia experience in which the aural, visual, and verbal transcendently combined to form a new aesthetic which he called the "artwork of the future." Adorno defines the dialectic central to Wagner's operas as "the magic work of art dreams its complete antithesis, the mechanical work of art" (98). For Adorno, the "phantasmagoric" nature of the total work of art, its insistence on the "absolute reality of the unreal," emerges from its illusionistic suturing of sense perceptions. He writes, "For an advanced

[26] I am concerned here only with how the relationship between the Wagnerian total work of art and cinema has been conceived, not with its historical accuracy. For an excellent account of the misperception modernist critics made in comparing Wagner's works to the cinema, see Scott D. Paulin's "Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity" in *Music and Cinema* (2000).

bourgeois civilization, every sense apprehends, as it were, a different world, if not indeed a different time, and so the style of the music drama cannot entrust itself to any single sense, but must instead transform one into the other in order thereby to bring about something of the harmony they lack" (93). Adorno claims that it is, indeed, the Hollywood sound film arising in the late 1920s that exemplifies (with fascist aesthetics) the realization of Wagner's vision.[27] This suspicion of the total work of art, which can be seen as an aestheticizing prototype of 20th-century fascist and totalitarian aesthetics as well as what Slavoj Žižek calls the "capitalist realism" of Hollywood cinema, however, deviates from an early-20th-century perspective taken on the total work of art as enabling the salutary absorption and temporary transformation of its spectator. The total multimedia aesthetic experience, in short, suggested a fundamental relationship between conceptions of reality and their aesthetic realization that were not necessarily dangerous.

Further, new models for integrating sound and image arose in the context of the sound cinema. The Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, who was a contributor to *Close Up* and who was familiar with many of the American, British, Irish, and European modernist writers (he even planned to film James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922)) was the exemplar of montage aesthetics, which he defined as the "collision" of images. In 1928, at the inception of synchronized sound cinema, Eisenstein issued a statement on sound, translated and reprinted in *Close Up*, with two other Soviet filmmakers, Vsevolod Pudovkin and Grigori Alexandrov, encapsulating the literary modernist dislike of the sound film. In this manifesto, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov

[27] We continue to see an almost Adornian suspicion of the suturing elements of the Hollywood film, born of synaesthesia, in the later claims that the Hollywood film hails an ideologically-bound spectator through producing an illusion of wholeness. Kaja Silverman, for example, writes, "The system of suture functions not only constantly to reinterpellate the viewing subject into the same discursive positions, thereby giving that subject the illusion of a stable and continuous identity, but to re-articulate the existing symbolic order in ideologically orthodox ways" (221).

lament the rise of synchronized sound in film, but they also suggest that it has possibilities for aural and visual montage, or the "collision" of sound and image. In *The Film Sense* (1942), Eisenstein, returning to the late-19th-century ideal of synaesthetic experience, calls this counterpoint of sound and image "vertical montage" rather than the "horizontal montage" of image collision. He traces a synaesthetic desire for the conjunction of human sensory experiences within the body of the text as the "dreams of a picture and sound fusion that have disturbed mankind for so long" (87). The sound cinema, according to Eisenstein, possesses multiple axes of synchronization such as natural recording, rhythmic, melodic, and tonal relationships. Thus, the medium potentially realizes long-standing synaesthetic ambitions through its unique capability of visualizing sound.

Eisenstein's fascination with synaesthesia emerges from and revises the late-19th-century and early-20th-century avant-garde fascination with synaesthetic experience that Kevin T. Dann describes as part of a "Romantic" legacy. Dann writes, "The apparent release from reality that accompanies synaesthetic . . . perception has attracted the attention of a variety of thinkers over the last century, all of whom might be considered 'Romantic' for aspiring to a theory of knowledge that gives primacy to the human imagination" (13). "Synaesthesia" became an important object of psychological study in the late-19th-century, exemplified in Francis Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (1883), and representations of its intrasensory experiences were adapted by modernist groups ranging from the French symbolists (who inspired Germaine Dulac's conception of the musical image) to Russian constructivists to Italian futurists. Eisenstein's interest in synaesthesia, however, might be seen as attempt to imbricate "human imagination" and reality to envision a new world from the old. As Cytowic defines it, synaesthesic experience represents the "ineffable" and "that which cannot be put into

words," implying that the phenomenon can be as related to an as-of-yet unarticulated version of realism as well as Romanticism (119). [28]

Attempts to develop synaesthetic appeals further blurred the boundaries between media and genre. The cinema was conceived by many modernist theorists as a synaesthetic medium in which sensory experiences were abstracted and blended. For many of cinema theorists, such as the writers of *Close Up,* the "silent" cinema's potential depended on its correspondence with music and not dialogue. Douglas Kahn describes synaesthesia, a late-19th-century ideal exemplified by Wagner's attempts toward the total work of art, as an experience which transforms the spectator's sense of time and space into an immersive, virtual world. He writes, "A sound was always elsewhere, and this elsewhere would ultimately become the cosmos as repeated deflection from one register to another generated a totalizing space. Such deflection was commensurate with the ephemerality, temporality, movement, and spatial character of sound in general . . ." (117). Kahn claims, however, that there is a countervailing impetus in modernity to harness and localize this diffusion of sound produced through aesthetic and technological effects. He categorizes conceptions of sound in modernity three ways—through the vibrational, the inscriptive, and the transmissive. The synaesthetic experience epitomizes the vibrational as founded on "deflection, deference, and relationality" (43). Inscription, manifested through the phonograph in the late-19th-century, is "apperceptual, empirical, scriptural, and technological, capable of being seen, read, written, and drawn directly" (44). Transmissive sounds, emerging with the wireless in the 1920s, combined both vibrational and inscriptive elements, "fusing the spatial features of vibration with the objecthood and corporeality of inscription" (45). Kahn's

[28] We might also consider Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of "embodied perception" here, his idea that "synaesthetic perception is the rule" and that "sensory experience is achieved with the whole body at once" (266).

categories are a useful analytic for understanding many modernists' dislike of the sound film, which inscribed and located sound (technologically inscribing, or writing, sound onto the film itself), ostensibly divesting it of its vibrational possibilities while also enabling new transmissive possibilities.

Sound can be divided into music, noise, and voice, and it is to these elements I return in my close readings of texts in the following chapters. The importance of music to the synaesthetic qualities of the cinema has been briefly discussed, and the description of film as music by early avant-garde filmmakers like Dulac parallels the conception of the novel based more on rhythm than plot that Woolf describes in her letters. Music as a model of aesthetic experience is likewise emphasized in Lee's work with rhythm as the essential relation between the body and the work of art as conceived in her psycho-physiological aesthetics. Kahn claims that synaesthesia manifests in non-musical art forms like literature and painting at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century through transforming apparently unassimilable noise into musical patterns. He writes, "A sound could never exist autonomously but once invoked would immediately be deflected to its corresponding stations among other traits of the system" (117). From the mid-1920s through the 1930s, however, the union of sound and image in the talking picture, which Kahn sees as the precursor of television, enabled a turn from the "musical thinking" that he finds from the mid-1800s through the early 1920s. At the same time, I argue, following Kahn's own categories, that the introduction of film sound not only tied voice to body, but also suggested a more complex, transmissive representation of sound.

Of particular interest to this project as a counterpart to "musical thinking" is the manifestation of noise to invoke the experience of lived space. I posit that noise both gives spatial dimensionality to a represented environment as well as locating it within history,

connecting the internal and the external, the individual and the social, world. Sound recording technologies, emerging in the 19th-century, could, further, inscribe these sounds to be replayed in the future. David Tomas writes in a review of the BBC-released record of lost industrial sounds like factories and trains, *Vanishing Sounds of Britain:*

> If we have not yet learned to turn our ear toward those worlds and their alien 'semiologics' . . . to appreciate the extent of those other sensory revolutions that we have inherited . . . then it is time we attend to the sensuousness and 'erotic' corporeality of the '*shimmering'* acoustic signifiers that drift continuously in and out of our own range of hearing. (qtd. in Carter 62)

By characterizing noise as sensuous and erotic, Tomas suggests that it forms connections between the self and environment. We might think not only of Woolf's use of urban street, as well as rural country, noises to embody space in her fiction, but also of the "buzzing" and "roaring" sounds that pervade her texts, both as the sound of life and as a representation of human chatter.[29] Recorded environmental sounds, whether divorced or tied to image, simultaneously enliven the sensorial experience of the past and emphasize its separation from the present. Represented sound can also interpellate a spectator or reader into the text. Steven Connor writes, "The self defined in terms of hearing rather than sight is a self imagined not as a point, but as a membrane; not as a picture, but as a channel through which voices, noises, and musics travel" (57). Music (and noise) as much as movement provided the haptic experience of cinema that Bruno describes, and this idea of self as membrane pervades Richardson's and Woolf's writing. As Kahn writes, "[S]ounds can be heard coming from outside and behind the range of peripheral vision, and a sound of adequate intensity can be felt on and within the body as a whole, thereby dislocating the frontal and conceptual associations of vision with all around

[29] The importance of historical London street sounds in Woolf's fiction, those "acoustic signifiers" of the past, is evident in both *The Years* (1937) and *Between the Acts* (1941). The sellers of "any old iron" and "lavendar" in *The Years* are captured on the phonograph album "London street cries. . . A Pot Pourri" preceding the Victorian scenario in the latter novel.

spatiality and corporeality" (27).[30] We might think, for example, of Clarissa Dalloway's spectatorial list of London visions or Peter Walsh's "cold stream of visual impressions" against the temporally discreet and spatially unifying sounds of the car backfiring, the plane "boring" into the sky, and Big Ben's "leaden circles" in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) as an example of how noise can be used to construct space within and against the visual.[31]

It should be emphasized, furthermore, that a modernist objection to sound film was not really an objection to sound, but rather to dialogue. For many modernist filmmakers, recorded ambient sound and even dialogue offered new potential for the medium. For Eisenstein, who was briefly writing a sound-cinema adaptation of Theodor Dreiser's *American Tragedy* for Paramount before his replacement by Josef von Sternberg, the possibility of sound cinema lied in articulating an "inner voice" in the style of literary stream-of-consciousness and was thus not dialogic and external, but monologic and internal. In his contribution to the newly-formed British Film Institute guide *For Filmgoers Only* in 1933, Andrew Buchanan acknowledged that speech made film a "national medium." However, he writes, "I feel that dialogue will vanish, and, in its place, we shall have sound and music weaved together and forming an integral part of the

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[30] Of course, the unique "spatiality" of hearing is up for debate. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes, "Just as sight is usually regarded as a spatial sense, dominated by a field more than an object, hearing is understood as a temporal sense, in which duration is a major characteristic. . . ." (qtd. in Grosz 98). Merleau-Ponty proceeds to state that vision produces "iconic representations" while hearing "functions indexically. There must be a cause, object, or event producing a sound, although sound in no way resembles it" (qtd. in Grosz 98). Also, see the list of assumptions about seeing and hearing that Jonathan Sterne challenges in his introduction to *The Audible Past* (20-1). While I am making many of these assumptions he challenges here, I would argue that this assumptions underwrite the textual representations of sensory experience that I consider in the following chapters.

[31] As Alexander Walker shows, the early use of Vitaphone synchronized-sound technology in the sound studio was dependent on the eradication of noise, as the "noises-off" of ambient street and radio sounds interrupted the recording of dialogue, prompting the construction of a "sound-proof shed." Walker writes, "Instead of transmitting emotion, the first edict of the new order was to smother noise" (10).

moving images, all creating a perfect unity as easily understood in Burma as in Brixton" (46).[32] Thus, the possibility inherent to the sound cinema was perceived as unrealized by commercial film practices.

Voice, in the form of dialogue, defined the "talkies." The contrast between human speech and writing has occupied media and poststructural theorists in the post-war period. In media studies, voice became the vehicle, through media like radio, synchronized sound cinema, and television for a new orality (and aurality) and post-print culture. This thesis was advanced in a number of post-World War II publications including Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), Jack Goody and Ian Watts's paper "The Consequences of Literacy," (1963), and Walter Ong's *The Presence of the Word* (1967). At the same time, theorists like Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida posited speech as an illusory presence founded on absence. This absence is overdetermined by what Derrida calls the "gramophone effect," or the "intrinsic threat" to speech, "its mimetic, mechanical double, an incessant parody" (276). For Richardson in particular, as I will explore in chapter two, voice becomes distinctly separated from music and noise as invasive of interiority and "silence." In Lee and Woolf, as I will show in chapters one and three, the disembodied voice represents both totalitarianism and its subversion. At the same time, it could be argued that, in Hollywood cinema, voice was too tied to bodies, confining them within the narrative and determining a spectator's imagination of internal subjectivity through techniques like the voice-over. Wireless at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century and the rise of radio in 1920

[32] The reference to Burma as an extension of British Empire is not accidental. R.S. Lambert introduces the volume *For Filmgoers Only* with the hope that good films "will circulate abroad and particularly in the Empire, giving a truer picture of our national life and culture than many of the purely entertainment films now sent forth" (19). The essays of Lambert and Buchanan evidence a particular strain of 1930s' nationalism, or what Jed Esty calls the "anthropological turn" amongst British intellectuals. Lambert's hope, further, intersects with the modernist desire for cinema as an international language.

indeed enabled speech to emerge seemingly from the ether in what Kahn calls the “transmission” of sound as both pervasive and graphic. The classic sound film arising in the late 1920s, on the other hand, could write speech directly onto particular bodies as well as circumscribe them in spoken discourse. This technology, in transforming the cinema theater experience and the narrative structures of cinematic texts, suggested a new version of cinematic realism explicitly derived from the literary.

4. Synchronized Sound Cinema: The Artwork of the Future

It is my contention that the modernist fascination with “silent” cinema, which actually means film images with musical accompaniment, gestures toward the synaesthetic possibilities of sound at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century foreclosed by the “talkies’” ascription of sound to visible bodies. Just as “silent” cinema enabled the translation of sound into image and image into sound, synchronized sound cinema localized sound in character and plot. The detractors of sound cinema thus considered it a turn from the aesthetic potential of the cinematic and an impoverished return to the dramatic and the novelistic. Tim Armstrong writes of the division between silent and sound film, “As sound is ‘goat-glanded’ in, film as the extension of seeing and as the vehicle for a new language—even, one might say, a prosthetic language, is replaced by the embodied voice, discursively located and owned. The experimental possibilities of writing the body offered by cinema give way to a commercialized desiring-machine with its total (but virtual) prosthesis” (247). The semiotic and phenomenological possibilities of the cinema were considered lost to a realism seen to be determining its consumption by the spectator.

This is not at all to suggest that the response of British writers in the period was uniform. In fact, amongst the participants in the construction of the Film Society of London in 1925, many of the Edwardians Woolf had set the Georgians against in “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” saw

much more potential in the talkies than in silent films. George Bernard Shaw and Arnold Bennett both, for example, saw the talkies as enabling a cinematic space for writers. Shaw became particularly interested in working with cinema after the development of synchronized sound, and wrote of the talkies in 1929, "Here begins something new and interesting. It is not yet free from dull mechanism and it acts in the same manner as one winds the mechanism of a doll, but the mere fact the importance of words in the film is recognized, will pave the way for writers because ultimately one will be able to distinguish between good and bad texts" (59). Likewise, Bennett wrote in the December 1927 issue of *Close Up* that the cinema producer must find good writers, "young men who . . . will take to the screen as a duck takes to water," so that cinema's storytelling elements might keep pace with its visuals (59-60). In *The King Who Was a King* (1929), Wells wrote his novel/screenplay for the synchronized sound cinema. While Shaw, Bennett, and Wells appreciated the increasing objective realism of the sound cinema, most cinema theorists lamented synchronized sound's inability to represent subjectivity and its destruction of a clear aesthetic framing of that defamiliarized reality.[33]

In one of the first texts presenting the cinema as an aesthetic medium defined not by its ability to objectively record an outside world but, rather, to subjectively record an inner, *The Photoplay* (1916), Hugo Münsterberg defines the cinema's aesthetic value as its paradoxical independence from and revelation of reality. He writes, "The massive outer world has lost its weight, it has been freed from space, time, and causality, and it has been clothed in forms of our

[33] It wasn't just the Edwardians who found great possibility in sound cinema, however. In the 1930 issue of *transition* that included the translation of Antonin Artaud's scenario for *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, Eugène Jolas writes, "The writer has new forms at his disposal, a fusion of forms in which all senses come into their own. One of these is the acoustic scenario. The development of the talking film and radio will doubtless have a revolutionary influence 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" (104).

own consciousness. The mind has triumphed over matter and the pictures roll on, with the ease of musical tones" (95). This removal from reality and its mimesis, instead, of William James's internal psychological faculties of attention, memory, imagination, and emotion, also actualizes the aesthetic possibility of cinema as a salutary medium. Münsterberg lauds the new medium for this pedagogical aesthetic value. He states, "Hardly any teaching can mean more for our community than the teaching of beauty where it reaches the masses" (99). Warning against the introduction of sound into the medium, Münsterberg defends its "visual purity," which can be underwritten with music, but not synchronized dialogue. He claims, "To imitate the world is a mechanical process; to transform the world so that it becomes a thing of beauty is the purpose of art. The highest art may be the furthest removed from reality" (62). As in Lee's "psycho-physiological" aesthetics, inspired in part by Münsterberg's research, art must be removed from "real action" in order to achieve its aesthetic effects. In this, Münsterberg also parallels the aesthetics of British formalist Roger Fry, whose writing on cinema would influence Woolf's conception of the medium in the 1920s. Münsterberg writes, "As long as we have the desire to change anything, the work is not complete in itself. The relation of the work to us as persons must not enter into our awareness at all" (69). At the same time, however, as for Fry, the "silent" cinema enables this aesthetic ideal to be most exposed in documentary images of reality. The cinema is an aesthetic medium for its indexical, inhuman claim to reality. Only through its revelation of what Benjamin calls the "optical unconscious," do these moving images of reality, divorced from engagement, acquire a unique status as the first truly modern art form challenging habit and inherited conventions.[34] For Münsterberg, as for Fry and Woolf, cinema is an

[34] For Benjamin, the "optical unconscious," is the correspondence between unconscious human perception and the recording of the cinematic apparatus. As he defines it in "The Work of

exceptional art form because it has not yet hardened into habit and it can therefore elicit an awareness traditional art forms no longer can. Poised within the seeming contradiction between, on the one hand, psychological verisimilitude founded in freedom from "the massive outer world" and, on the other, the indifferent capture of reality, silent cinema comes to represent new aesthetic values.

On the other hand, with the coming of sound cinema, a gap between the aesthetically realized and the real is filled with voice, eliminating the "formative potentialities" that defined cinema's aesthetic separation from the real even as cinema's claim to the real enabled its unique appeal. The influential art historian and perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim would echo Münsterberg as late as 1932 as sound film displaced silent cinema. In his defense of silent film, Arnheim writes:

> The complete film is the fulfillment of the age-old striving for the complete illusion. The attempt to make the two-dimensional picture as nearly as possible like its solid model succeeds; original and copy become practically indistinguishable. Thereby all formative potentialities which were based on the differences between model and copy are eliminated and only what is inherent in the original in the way of significant form remains to art. (133)

By ostensibly replicating the perceived world with a "complete" verisimilitude, sound film, for Arnheim, becomes merely a "copy," requiring the same habits of perception as "its solid model." Münsterberg posited that the cinema could make the subjective objective and the objective subjective, challenging habitual experience. The "copy" of reality suggested by the sound cinema, however, merely replicates these habits.

Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," the "optical unconscious" is "another nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye" (37).

At the same time, this "complete film," or a perfect replication of reality, initially revealed the machine itself rather than a perfect replication of reality produced by the cinematographic apparatus. Adorno and Hanns Eisler claim in *Composing for the Films* (1947), for example, that "the talking picture, too, is mute. The characters in it are not speaking people, but speaking effigies; endowed with all the features of the pictorial, the photographic two-dimensionality, the lack of spatial depth. Their bodiless mouths utter words in a way that may seem disquieting to anyone uninformed" (76). H.D., in her *Close Up* essay "The Mask and the Movietone," points to this fundamental paradox at the heart of her commentary on the synchronized dialogue of the talkies—it is both too real and too fake. As Laura Marcus notes, H.D. relies on the gendered image of the talking doll to assert her discomfort with the "new toys" of the sound cinema.[35] She writes, "Our old doll became replaced by a wonder-doll, singing with musical insides, with strings that one may pull, with excellent wired joints. But can we whisper devotions to this creature? . . . . I didn't really *like* my old screen-image to be improved (I might almost say imposed) on. I didn't *like* my ghost-love to become so vibrantly incarnate" (115). While sound renders the ghostliness of the image "vibrantly incarnate," it is the robotic incarnation of a "wonder-doll." H.D. corrects the technological narrative of improvement to state that voice is, rather, an imposition from without than a manifestation from within. The speaking actor thus becomes an odd amalgam of the internal and the external. The novelist Marguerite Duras, who had written the screenplay for *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959), expresses this paradox as simultaneous realism and deception. She claims, "Something about the silents is lost forever.

[35] This recalls the actresses who can't survive the transition to sound, as represented in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) because their voices can't compete with the desirability of their images.

There is something vulgar, trivial . . . in the unavoidable realism of direct dialogue . . . and the inevitable trickery it involves" (qtd. in Chion 9).

In order to skirt this uncanniness, voice must be aligned with character and overheard by the spectator in the cinema. As Mary Ann Doane puts it, "The fantasmic visual space which film constructs is supplemented by techniques designed to spatialize voice, to localize it, give it depth, and thus lend to the characters the consistency of the real" (164). The result of these transformations and the hailing of the "spectator-auditor" is what Michel Chion sees as "our brains . . . entirely accustomed to plugging sounds into whatever images we see—sounds whose real localization is much more dispersed and dissociated with respect to what we see" (11). The synchronized sound film is thus not so much a "copy" of reality as it is an aesthetic, social, and technological transformation of the synaesthetic virtual spaces of silent film into a new virtual cinematic space dependent on the ascription of voices to actors.

As Kaja Silverman and Doane have both explored, this manifestation of realism through sound cinema has consequences for representations of gender. Silverman notes the paradox of voice at the heart of Western metaphysics in *The Acoustic Mirror*—voice as ontology, or being and presence, and voice as, in Lacanian terms, the production of absence, not presence, as a symbolic discourse. She writes, "This concentration of contradictory values and functions within a single organ would seem almost to encourage conceptual slippage from one 'side' to another—from the 'voice-as-being' to the 'voice-as-discursive-agent'" (44). In her careful reading of classical Hollywood sound films from the 1940s and 1950s, she illustrates how female characters are bound by ontology and presence in narratives circumscribed by disembodied masculine discourse. For Silverman, masculinity and femininity are defined in the sound film by dominance and subordination structured through acoustic layers of diegetic dialogue and the extradiegetic

voice over. Female characters in these sound films, Silverman asserts, are consigned to interiors—the interior of the film, the interior of their gendered bodies inextricable from their verbalized psyches. Masculine characters, on the other hand, are given exteriorized, universalized voice both within and without the film's diegetic narrative.

Doane, on the other hand, considers not just interior and exterior space in the construction of synchronized sound film, but, rather, the "spatializing" of multiple relationships diegetically and within the cinema theater. The possibility of sound within the theater, for example, is manifest through its acoustic space in which "sound is not 'framed' in the same way as the image. In a sense, it *envelops* the spectator" (166). Exploring film theorist Pascal Bonitzer's interest in the destabilizing effect of the "voice-off," or a voice from off-screen space unaccompanied by the image, in classical film, Doane asks if a "political erotics of voice" can be developed in the context of classical Hollywood cinema in contradistinction to the image. In other words, does sound introduce a space for female characters to speak against or beyond the image? Her conclusion is that such an "erotics" is suspect for its suggestion of a "mind/body dualism" and for its invocation of the "spectre of feminine specificity, always recuperable as another form of 'otherness'" (174). This question of synchronized voice and gender in classic Hollywood cinema that preoccupied feminist film theorists like Silverman and Doane in the 1970s and 1980s suggests the risks (as well as the possibilities) that a new cinematic realism predicated on synchronized sound and image may have had for modernist women writers.

Just as a consideration of sound complicates our conception of cinema, the imagination of audiovisual apparatuses in the texts of women writers in the interwar period offers us competing narratives of the relationship between media, aesthetics, and gendered embodiment. My first chapter, "Aestheticization and the 'Babel' of Sound Cinema," centers on a text not often found

in the modernist canon—Vernon Lee's anti-war closet drama, essay, and prose text *Satan the Waster* (1920). While this work demonstrates the self-conscious rupturing, which we have come to associate with modernism, of past forms of representation, it remains out of print and generally forgotten in scholarship on interwar literature.[36] I begin with this text written by Lee, a literary figure usually identified with the late Victorian period, not just to challenge periodizing assumptions, however, but to look at Lee's reconstruction of her aesthetic theory through an early synchronized sound cinematographic apparatus. Lee significantly revised her aesthetic theory, which was a strong influence on Virginia Woolf, as she witnessed the aestheticization, or romanticizing, of World War I by both traditional and avant-garde camps. In *Satan the Waster*, the unaesthetic productions of a sound cinematographic apparatus provide an antidote, through their obvious mechanical mediation, to this aestheticization, while, at the same time, suggesting an immediate, because indifferent, recording of reality that escapes social control. Lee's valuation of sound cinema as a "neutral" and unaesthetic medium provides an important counterpart to Richardson's and Woolf's extolling of the aesthetic potentials of the silent cinema and thus provides us with an often unconsidered angle on the relationship between literary modernism and cinema aesthetics. I posit that Lee's epilogue critiques postwar culture through the representation of technological mediation and the dialectic that she sets up between the aesthetic and the unaesthetic, between art and technology. *Satan the Waster* exemplifies a crucial reconsideration of aesthetic values and the meaning of the relationship between cinema and literature following the war.

In chapter two, "The Pathway to Reality and Its 'Adenoidal Barrier,'" I explore the British modernist Dorothy Richardson's 13-volume novel *Pilgrimage* (1915-67) alongside her

[36] The recent anthology *Gender in Modernism* (2007) has been the only modernism anthology to reprint even a part of it.

film commentary for *Close Up.* Reading *Pilgrimage*'s heroine Miriam Henderson's journey toward a transcendent "reality" beside Richardson's lauding of the silent cinema as a "feminine" medium against the "masculinity" of sound cinema, I consider what is at stake in Richardson's gendering of silence and speech. Several Richardson scholars have considered *Pilgrimage* in the context of her interest in silent cinema. I will, however, look at the novel in terms of sound cinema. It is precisely in Richardson's resistance to the "talkies" that I find revealed most explicitly the generative contradictions that appear throughout her vast novel as it moves towards the eternal while painstakingly locating its characters in the lived environments of fin-de-siècle Britain within gendered, classed, and raced identities. Essentialism and its concomitant questioning, inextricably connected, inform Richardson's fiction and cinema writing through sound as well as image. Speech becomes, for Richardson as well as her character Miriam, a not wholly assimilable exteriority that marks the individual without touching the silent "centre" that Richardson conceives as the reality underlying objective identities. While Lee and Woolf attempt to negotiate an intransigent exterior reality, invoking technologies of perception as they do so, Richardson assumes an internal more than external concept of reality. She sees the silent cinema as a manifestation of this reality, while the synchronized sound cinema simultaneously reinforces socially-determined identities and calls attention to the technology underlying its illusions, thus interrupting contemplative absorption into the film. The desire for an "eternal" that reconciles separated senses into a synaesthetic whole as well as imbricating binaries of essence and identity, real and virtual space, and exterior and interior conceptions of time is contrasted throughout *Pilgrimage* with barriers to this reconciliation that we can map onto Richardson's dislike of the sound film.

My third chapter, "Modernist Synaesthesia and Late Modernist Megaphonics," argues that we can read in Virginia Woolf's critical and fictional texts both the (syn)aesthetic values that Richardson had found in silent cinema and an exploration of the unaesthetic limits of sound cinema technology introduced in Lee's *Satan the Waster*. This chapter begins by comparing two of Woolf's early critical texts on the opera—"Impressions at Bayreuth" and "The Opera" (both 1909)—with her later 1926 essay on the (ostensibly silent) cinema. Despite being written seventeen years apart, all three essays grapple with the meaning-making possibilities of audiovisual, non-literary culture received collectively, and all three conclude with an ambivalence that we can read even in Woolf's final essays on a cultural history of British literature, "Anon" and "The Reader" (both 1941). At the same time, Woolf invokes throughout her novels of the 1920s and 1930s the sonic capture of inhuman urban and rural environments, constructing an enveloping noise within and against shifting and non-omniscient points of view. We can see in these representations of sound (as has often been noted of narrative voice in Woolf's fiction) an attempt to construct a realism unfocalized by human perspective. These currents in Woolf's work—her critical interest in media spectacles, on the one hand, and her literary invocations of ambient noise on the other—culminate in her final, generically hybrid text *Between the Acts* (1941). *Between the Acts* reveals not solely a distrust of what Woolf calls the "megaphonic" voice of an increasingly fascist modernity, but also a dialectical engagement with this voice in conjunction with sound technologies, noise, and music. While in his cinema writing in the early 1940s, Eisenstein argues that the sound film enables the cinematic realization of literary modernist stream-of-consciousness monologue, Woolf's final text imagines instead a leveling imbrication of interior and exterior voices, of noise and command, of literary history and technologies of perception, that, I argue, would be impossible without the example of the sound

film. At the same time, Woolf's ironic deployment of technology within this text defends the literary for its dialogic possibilities ostensibly foreclosed by mass media like the sound cinema.

My project ends not with writers, but with filmmakers who positioned themselves as cinema authors. I also move from interwar Britain to France, for, despite their contextual divides, the women filmmakers in this chapter exemplify modernist means of constructing sound that resonate with the fictions of Lee, Richardson, and Woolf. Furthermore, their film texts reveal how women filmmakers were exploring the same dialectics of disembodiment and embodiment, image and sound, and absorption and shock that occupied British modernist women writers. Thus, my fourth chapter, "Women's Film Authorship and Extrasensory Perception," focuses on the French "pioneer" filmmaker Alice Guy-Blaché, whose films evidence the importance of sound to the early evolution of the medium, and the French avant-garde filmmaker Germaine Dulac, whose assertion of the importance of silence is belied by her films of the 1920s. I end with these self-proclaimed women cinema authors to complicate the question of women's authorship not only in film but also in literature. Furthermore, given the indifferent mechanisms of the cinematic medium which purportedly influenced literary modernist ideals of autonomy (as Cavell and Trotter, for example, claim), it is important to see how film authorship, in fact, underwrote this ideal of mechanical indifference. It is vital to focus on these women's developments of the medium in order to evidence its multiplicity and to attribute authorial marks to a medium often assumed in literary studies to emerge from an industrial ether. The examples of Guy-Blaché and Dulac further provide a particularized lens through which transformations in aural film aesthetics from the apparently straightforward recording of sound in Guy-Blaché's Chronophone pictures to its synaesthetic diffusions in Dulac's films *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (*Smiling Madame Beudet*) (1922), *La coquille et le clergyman* (*The Seashell and the*

Clergyman) (1927), and *Thème et variations* (1929) can be elucidated within the cinematic medium.

The three British women writers who are the focus of this study were all, as women, insider-outsiders in their networks with state-educated men and they evince an awareness of femininity as at least partially masquerade. As Lee puts it in "The Economic Parasitism of Women" in *Gospels of Anarchy* (1909), inspired by Charlotte Perkins Stetson's (later Gilman's) *Women and Economics* (1898), "women are over-sexed," by which she means that women are identified by their gender rather than by any other individualizing characteristic, and "women, hitherto, have been as much the creation of men as the grafted fruit tree, the milch cow, or the gelding who spends six hours pulling a carriage, and the rest of the twenty-four standing in the stable" (294).[37] Rejecting the "over-sexed," Lee appealed to the "neuter" in her writing just as Woolf appealed to androgyny and Richardson to a "third sex."[38] We find both a feminist self-awareness of gender and a desire to avoid gendered definition in this work. The development of sound cinema further enabled the cultural hegemony of classic cinema and the stitching of female characters and spectators into subordinating narratives. At the same time, the "talkies" also disrupted the combination of music, image, and text presented in the silent cinema and destroyed a new form of aesthetic aura through technological interruption. As the examples of

[37] However, Lee was skeptical of an explicit late-19th-century feminism which she saw as composed of "those disconnected and disjointed personalities who are attracted by every other kind of ism" ("Economic Parasitism" 265). While many of her close female friends were involved in the women's suffrage movement in Britain, Lee focused on pacifist activism. When Ethel Smyth asked Lee to contribute something to the *Suffragette* in 1913, for example, she didn't, instead publishing widely against going to war (Beer 112). Beer convincingly argues that Lee was suspicious of the militancy of British suffragists which she aligned with the militancy of the war.

[38] All three of these writers were also bisexual or lesbian women who may have conceived of a male-female synthesis due to turn-of-the-twentieth-century sexological theories like Havelock Ellis' concept of inversion.

Guy-Blaché and Dulac evidence in my final chapter, introducing real or imagined sounds into the cinematic narrative was by no means a predetermined or contradiction-free practice. Likewise, responses to this hybrid medium form by no means an easily traceable narrative. Nevertheless, the relationship between the sounds of cinema and modernist prose is an important narrative to trace for it illuminates a turn-of-the-twentieth century fascination with the imbrication of aesthetics and reality. This imbrication, furthermore, informs the textual innovations of women modernists seeking new forms of narrative signification and inquiring into, in the process, the relevance of an interwar "cinesthetic subject" formed of sensorial calibrations provoked by technologies of perception.

Chapter One

Aestheticization and the "Babel" of Sound Cinema: Vernon Lee's *Satan the Waster*

In Vernon Lee's anti-war play *Satan the Waster* (1920), she revises her influential aesthetic theory in the face of cultural productions that justify war. For Lee, the centering of the self through aesthetic experience had been necessary for a healthy relation to reality, but she reconsiders this position in her play to critique the aestheticization of war that appears both in nationalist propaganda and in modernist aesthetics that promote regeneration predicated on destruction. The clunky recordings of what she calls a "magic apparatus" of cinematograph and gramophone belie this aestheticization of World War I in *Satan the Waster* because they represent a fragmented capture of reality intended, as the play's central character Satan states, for an "eye accustomed to Eternities," not for the synthesizing limitations of the human eye. It is not only this distanced eye that the sound cinematic apparatus in *Satan the Waster* appeals to, however, for it also requires an ear that can do justice to discord in the midst of consent.

A return to Vernon Lee's *Satan the Waster*, which has been out-of-print since 1930, challenges the positioning of the late Victorian Lee in relation to interwar modernism.[39] Critics such as Gill Plain, Vineta Colby, and Christa Zorn have acknowledged a "modernist Lee" emerging at the end of her fifty-year career. This Lee, until recently, had been eclipsed in literary studies (much like Lee herself), largely due to her dismissal by modernists like Virginia Woolf who, as Zorn and Talia Schaffer have shown, often rejected while borrowing from late-

[39] In the fall of 2010, Nabu Press, a small South Carolina publisher that reprints noncanonical texts that have long been unavailable, did reprint *The Ballet of the Nations* in paperback.

nineteenth-century women writers.[40] *Satan the Waster* allows for more than the positioning of Lee as a modernist writer, however. This text also reveals aesthetic fractures and continuities between the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. It is significant in this regard that *Satan the Waster* is an explicitly anti-war text, as World War I is often assumed to be the great break ushering in 1920s-era modernism. *Satan the Waster* indeed assumes this rupture, as Lee claims to abandon her earlier theories in the face of an unprecedented war rendered comprehensible through both nationalist propaganda and certain strains of modernist culture. However, Lee also continues to argue for the nineteenth-century intellectual's modern values of humanist atheism, rational thought, and belief in evolution. She posits the new technology used in the war and in the transforming culture, in notes surrounding *Satan the Waster,* as simultaneously stunting and generative.

In the epilogue to the play, Lee contrasts the aesthetic experience of a spectacular ballet with the fragmented recordings of a sound cinematic apparatus, dramatizing what is politically at stake in forms of aesthetic representation following a culturally-shattering war. It is not the art of cinema that is valuable to Lee, but, rather, the medium. David Trotter has recently argued that the relationship between cinema and modernist literature is not an analogic one of formal influence, but rather a parallel one of mutual interest in automatism and inhuman vision. While Trotter overlooks the signifying aesthetic value of cinema for modernist writers like Dorothy

[40] Woolf regards Vernon Lee briefly in *A Room of One's Own*, citing "Jane Harrison's books on Greek archaeology; Vernon Lee's books on aesthetics; Gertrude Bell's books on Persia" as evidence that women don't only write novels (137). However, Woolf wrote negative reviews of Lee's collections *The Sentimental Traveller* (1908) and *Art and Life* (1909). Christa Zorn claims that Woolf "sees Lee's subjectivity as emulation of an egocentrism which modernist aesthetics tried to neutralize through an unmarked, 'androgynous' viewpoint dissipated in different parts of speech" (75). It is this "unmarked . . . viewpoint," ironically, that Lee plays with in *Satan the Waster*. Woolf's letters throughout the 1930s to Ethel Smyth, who was also a close friend of Lee's, further evince Woolf's continued interest in Lee.

Richardson and Virginia Woolf, however, Lee's approach toward cinema exemplifies his claim. Her invocation of early synchronized sound cinema in her play's epilogue, further, challenges the general modernist concept of the sound cinematic medium as the apotheosis of a more perfect, and more manipulative, cinematic realism. On the one hand, Lee invokes this recording apparatus to represent her satirical explanation of what *really* happened behind closed doors to instigate the war. On the other, she suggests that recording media is the antidote to the multimedia spectacle of the ballet at the center of her text.

The seeming paradox of immediacy and profound mediation evinced by the cinematic medium, and explored by scholars of "cinematic modernism" from Trotter to McCabe, enables Lee both to make a (satirical) truth-claim as to the realities undergirding the war and to call human comprehension into question through faulty technological mediation. By 1920, (silent) cinema had been conceived as an aesthetic medium, as the 1916 book, *The Photoplay*, by Hugo Münsterberg (one of Lee's influences in the development of "psycho-physiological aesthetics") exemplifies. The very little that Lee had written about the cinematic medium before *Satan the Waster*, on the other hand, assumed its scientific over its aesthetic value. In her short 1913 introduction to psychological aesthetics, *The Beautiful*, for example, Lee introduces the "cinematographic" as either a technical way of seeing or as a scientific means of measuring vision opposed to aesthetic experience.[41] She carries this concept of the medium into *Satan the Waster*. The capacity of a cinematographic apparatus synchronized with a gramophone to record reality rather than to aesthetically center a spectator is precisely its value in this play. At the same

[41] Not that the obvious implications of Lee's aesthetic theory for the cinema wouldn't be elaborated elsewhere. The American film theorist Victor Freeburg directly and frequently references *The Beautiful* in his 1918 study of film aesthetics *The Art of Photoplay Making.* See Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse*, 216-220. Oddly, there is no mention of specific films or cinema in general in her extensive antiwar notebooks in the Colby College archives.

time, this cinematic production is framed and manipulated by its exhibitor, Satan, for the comprehension (and tacit persuasion) of its spectators, Clio, the Muse of History and the Ages-to-Come. Lee represents in her epilogue to *Satan the Waster* not the aesthetic medium of the silent cinema with (or without) expository subtitles, but, rather, an audiovisual cinematic apparatus, ten years before the international rise of sound cinema in the late 1920s. The "wheezing" gramophone that accompanies the cinematic discs both allows the spectator to overhear the dialogue that makes sense of the moving image and, at the end of the epilogue, contextualizes the image beyond Satan's intentions. In adopting an early sound-synchronized cinematic apparatus, Lee belies film aesthetics and proposes that recorded sound and image, in concert, can escape aesthetic centering, and, hence, aestheticized persuasion.

I will begin this chapter with an exploration of Lee's revision of her short, elaborately illustrated 1915 text *The Ballet of the Nations: A Present-Day Morality* into her lengthy, text-heavy, and ponderous hybrid prose and dramatic text *Satan the Waster*, asking how these revisions reflect her reconsideration of aesthetics in response to the war. In the second section of this chapter, I maintain that Lee's jettisoning of artist Maxwell Armfield's stylized illustrations in *The Ballet of the Nations* not only for a dramatic, ekphrastic description of the "Ballet of the Nations," but also for an added epilogue focused on the "magic apparatus" of sound cinema technology in *Satan the Waster,* evidences Lee's rethinking of aesthetics through perceptual technologies. The final section of this chapter considers the implications of these revisions for Lee's overall aesthetic theory as well as for our conceptualization of interwar aesthetics. Lee's arguably obscure anti-war text provides an underexplored counter-narrative of the relationship between cinema and literary modernism, for this medium, in Lee's conception of its manipulative exposure of the real, negates aestheticization and, indeed, aesthetics, while, at the

same time, suggesting evolutionary transformation through technology. The aesthetic crisis between realism and aesthetic idealism that Lee exposes in *Satan the Waster* undergirds the more solidly modernist novels of Richardson and Woolf explored in the next two chapters, and, furthermore, evidences that questions of aesthetics are indivisible from the cultural, social, and political ruptures that inform them.

1. From *The Ballet of the Nations* to *Satan the Waster*

Satan the Waster is derived from an illustrated text called *The Ballet of the Nations* which Lee composed in 1915 with the artist Maxwell Armfield while trapped in Britain during the war. In *Satan the Waster*, Lee incorporates her 1915 text into the center of a play bookended by a newly written prologue and epilogue. What had been a short illustrated book with highly stylized drawings in 1915 transformed in 1920 into a text-heavy drama surrounded by ponderous mini-essays. Lee published her drama in the midst of 200 pages of essayistic fragments, what she calls her "notes," on aesthetics, politics, and war. In the play at the heart of *Satan the Waster,* Lee's central character Satan presents a performance called the "Ballet of the Nations," to an audience consisting of the allegorical figures of Clio, the Muse of History, the Ages-to-Come, and various Virtues like Wisdom.[42] Lee sets Satan's ballet in "The World: A Theatre of Varieties" off the

[42] Jay Winter argues that representations of World War I, both lowbrow and highbrow, drew from traditional references like the apocalypse to construct a comprehensible narrative for a culturally-shattering war. He writes, "Art and ceremony helped shore up these symbols, through which grief was expressed and bereavement experienced" (226). In *The Ballet of the Nations* and *Satan the Waster*, Lee explicitly satirizes these traditional references as well as inverting the sacred to turn God's will into Satan's, making her response unique even within a canon of anti-war cultural responses. Furthermore, in subtitling *The Ballet of the Nations* "a present-day morality," Lee both gestures toward the premodern moral universe she sees as undergirding the war and, again, slyly inverts the values of this universe to make Satan the persuasive allegorical figure. Lee's use of the allegorical in this text also recalls Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory as constellating ideas as ruins constellate "the realm of things" (178).

square of "No Place, Nowhere."[43] The spectacle of the ballet, an ornate choreography of the war, mutually implicates the representation of war and its reality, and, through this performance, Lee explicitly critiques the aestheticization of World War I.

Just as *The Ballet of the Nations* is easily transposable into *The Battle of the Nations*, the theater of war was a model in World War I that could reverse real and virtual between stage and battlefield. For example, in his prologue to the play *Heartbreak House*, George Bernard Shaw writes that the battlefield was mistaken for the theatre, that there "was a frivolous exaltation in death for its own sake, which was at bottom an inability to realize that the deaths were real deaths and not staged ones" (29). On the other side of this aestheticization of war, the modernist aesthetics that Lee implicates in Satan's "Ballet of the Nations" envisioned the glorious arrival of the new through the violent destruction of the old in performances likened to battle. Satan's criticism of his ballet in *The Ballet of the Nations*, for example, could pass for a review of Diaghilev's notorious 1913 ballet *Rites of Spring*'s modern primitivism: "The music is not always very pretty, at once too archaic and too ultra-modern for philistine taste, and the steps are a trifle monotonous. But it gives immense scope for moral beauty, and revives religious feeling in all its genuine primeval polytheism" (15-16).[44] The same might be said, not only for the Russian ballet, but also for the productions of modernist movements like futurism.[45]

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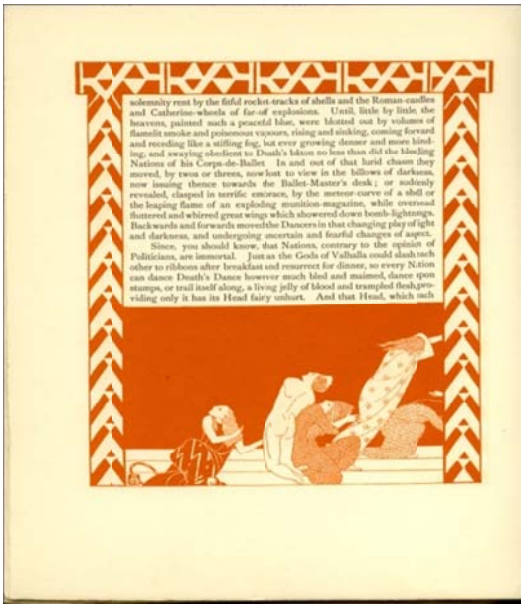
[43] Lee revised this setting as well as she transformed *The Ballet of the Nations* into *Satan the Waster*. The "Theatre of the West" in *The Ballet of the Nations* became a "Theatre of the World" in *Satan the Waster*.

[44] The title and idea of national types in *The Ballet of the Nations*, in fact, provides another historical reference to the late-17th-century, in which the French composers Jean-Baptiste Lully and André Campra composed *Ballet des Nations* (in 1670 and 1697, respectively) representing national stereotypes.

[45] F.T. Marinetti, whose 1909 "Futurist Manifesto" had inspired controversy throughout Britain and Europe, often sped through the streets of Florence in a motor car, distributing futurist pamphlets calling for the modernization of Italy's cities. At the same time, Lee resided somewhat reclusively in a British expatriate's community living in Florence for its Renaissance past.

Both *The Ballet of the Nations* and *Satan the Waster*, derived from the same text, present the production of the "Ballet of the Nations" by Satan, conducted by Ballet Master Death. All of the characters, such as Heroism, the Ages-to-Come, Wisdom, Sin, Hatred and Self-Righteousness are allegorical, and the ostensible aesthetics—in terms of costume, form of dance, music, and set design—are a temporal jumble of historic reference. *The Ballet of the Nations*, for example, begins, "[W]ith the end of the proverbially *bourgeois* Victorian age, there set in a revival of taste, and therefore of this higher form of tragic art, combining, as it does, the truest classical tradition with the romantic attractions of the best Middle Ages" (1). While the text of *The Ballet of the Nations* includes an exposition of the hideous, spectacular ballet interspersed with dialogue between the allegorical figures, *Satan the Waster* adds the framing prologue in Hell and the epilogue in the theater's green room that follow the interaction of Satan and Clio, the Muse of History, a new character. The central text of the ballet is relayed to the reader by Clio in *Satan the Waster* rather than through the exposition of an omniscient narrator and related images as in *The Ballet of the Nations*. Thus, Lee further emphasizes the importance of a complicit audience (suggested in *The Ballet of the Nations*) in *Satan the Waster*. At the same time, she denies the reader the visual pleasure of the illustrations of *The Ballet of the Nations*, further defamiliarizing its performance.


solemnity rent by the fitful rocket-tracks of shells and the Roman-candles and Catherine-wheels of far-off explosions. Until, little by little, the heavens, painted such a peaceful blue, were blotted out by volumes of flame-lit smoke and poisonous vapours, rising and sinking, coming forward and receding like a stifling fog, but ever growing denser and more blinding, and swaying obedient to Death's Idiom no less than did the bleeding Nations of his Corps-de-Ballet. In and out of that lurid chasm they moved, by twos or threes, now lost to view in the billows of darkness, now issuing thence towards the Ballet-Master's desk; or suddenly revealed, clasped in terrific embrace, by the meteor-curve of a shell or the leaping flame of an exploding munition-magazine, while overhead fluttered and whirred great wings which showered down bomb-lightnings. Backwards and forwards movedthe Dancers in that changing play of light and darkness, and undergoing uncertain and fearful changes of aspect.

Since, you should know, that Nations, contrary to the opinion of Politicians, are immortal. Just as the Gods of Valhalla could slash each other to ribbons after breakfast and resurrect for dinner, so every Nation can dance Death's Dance however much bled and maimed, dance upon stumps, or trail itself along, a living jelly of blood and trampled flesh,providing only it has its Head fairy unhurt. And that Head, which each

Figure 1. Vernon Lee and Maxwell Armfield, *The Ballet of the Nations* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1915) 13.

Lee intended to compose a longer text without illustrations following the publication of *The Ballet of the Nations* (Brockington 143). In addition to a flurry of pacifist articles and pamphlets that she began publishing even before the war in 1911, she kept multiple notebooks filled with anti-war commentary intended for publication.[46] Her working relationship with the symbolist artist and actor, Armfield, as Grace Brockington has shown, was determined by shared pacifist commitment but plagued by aesthetic disagreement. The only reading of the text that forms, with revision, the heart of both *The Ballet of the Nations* and *Satan the Waster* was for the pacifist organization the Union of Democratic Control at Armfield's Glebe Studios and the neighboring Margaret Morris Theatre at the beginning of the war. Following this reading, the publisher Chatto & Windus offered to publish the text and requested that Armfield illustrate it (Brockington 154). Thus, the marriage between author and illustrator was planned by the

[46] These notebooks are currently housed in Colby College's Special Collections and date from 1914-1919.

publisher, to Lee's dissatisfaction. *The Ballet of the Nations* contains, as Brockington convincingly claims, "not one, but two books, two conflicting interpretations of art's role in defending international peace" (144). Armfield's "art for art's sake" symbolist aesthetics aimed to instill a desire for peace through the therapeutic realization of aesthetic ideals beyond everyday life. Lee, on the other hand, perceived aesthetics as an integral (and integrating) approach to everyday life. Armfield's aestheticism came, perhaps, too close to aestheticization, or the idealization of war, despite his committed pacifist politics, for Lee.

As Brockington notes, while *The Ballet of the Nations* is not directly presented as a play, its origins were theatrical although the design of the text reinforces a separation between image and dialogue. Armfield's images, further, do not correspond directly to the violence depicted in the text. For example, in response to Lee's writing that the Nations continue to dance "Death's Dance however much bled and maimed, . . . a living jelly of blood and trampled flesh . . .," Armfield visualizes figures looking at (or turning away from) this horrific vision rather than representing the vision itself (fig. 1). When Lee cuts these images in *Satan the Waster*, she, like Armfield, explicitly denies the visualizations of the scenes described in the ballet, but, further, she also denies visual representation entirely, depending, instead, on ekphrastic description.

At the end of her notes in *Satan the Waster*, Lee writes

> Thinking over the war, and trying to understand its spiritual phenomena, would have cured me of any anthropocentrism of any kind . . . [F]eeling and striving have a warm, an inner, an intimate quality; while on the contrary *seeing* (especially mental seeing) is somehow extraordinarily cold, external, a sort-of half-way meeting point between what is and what is not ourself. (299)

While Lee still regards inner warmth as integral to a sane connection to the world, her hesitancy regarding seeing (with words like "somehow," "sort-of," and "half-way") suggests an ambivalence toward the idea of incomplete projection, or a cleavage between subject and object. When one's will is defined only in terms of the self or the nation as an extension of the self, without a larger social investment that incorporates otherness, Lee implies, this cold seeing might be necessary to undermine the centricity of one's own point-of-view through distancing vision. The externalization of seeing rather than feeling becomes, when Lee writes *Satan the Waster*, "sort-of" an ethical project that belies aesthetic pleasure.

As a response to the aestheticization of war, Lee emphasizes the coldness of seeing alongside the warmth of feeling, a coldness reflected in her distancing, "Brechtian" (to use Gill Plain's description) aesthetics in the play. Lee's cold vision is like her definition of aesthetic empathy in its projection between subject and object but, meeting at the "half-way point," the empathetic projection is not completed. The object keeps its otherness to be looked at rather than felt. In this tension between empathetic identification and the distancing-effect of "cold" seeing, Lee reaches an aesthetic crisis that is played out in the epilogue following Satan's spectacle through the apparatus of a cinematograph synchronized with a gramophone. Had a performance of *Satan the Waster* ever been staged, the productions of Satan's "magic apparatus" following the ballet would be the only visual and the central aural spectacle that an audience would share with Satan, Clio, and their entourage of the Ages-to-Come. Despite Clio's vivid retelling of the ballet's spectacle as she watches it (her script is taken from Lee's text in the 1915 *Ballet of the Nations*), Lee notes at the end of the play right before the epilogue:

> In the event of the play being performed, it is the author's imperative wish that no attempt be made at showing the Dancing of the Nations. The stage upon the stage

> must be turned in such a manner that nothing beyond the footlights, the Orchestra and auditorium shall be visible to the real spectators, only the changing illumination which accompanies the Ballet making its performance apparent. Similarly, none of the music must be audible . . . except the voice and drum of Heroism. Anything beyond that would necessarily be hideous . . .” (57)

In replacing Armstrong’s illustrations in *The Ballet of the Nations* with Clio’s ekphrastic descriptions in her drama, Lee denies the spectator any opportunity of suture into or titillating shock at the spectacle of the ballet. She does, however, allow that a spectator might witness the recorded fragments behind the performance. Her emphasis on “cold seeing” in the notes to *Satan the Waster* is manifested as denied seeing during the play itself until the epilogue, in which, Lee’s stage directions suggest, the spectator might be able to view the “neutral,” unaesthetic recordings of a sound cinematic apparatus.

2. Satan’s “Magic Apparatus”: The Epilogue to *Satan the Waster*

The “magic apparatus,” described by Satan to Clio as the “paltriness of the mysterious machinery behind the ballet,” and “one of my finest bits of poetic irony,” reveals the scenes taking place around dinner tables, in boardrooms, and in factories that initiate and support what Satan calls the “tragic splendor” of the ballet (106). While the figures in these synchronized sound films might be “mere humble specimens of the Investor, the Homo Ecomonicus who sways the modern world,” they are also the world’s “Supermen,” the true “Heads of State” (64).[47] Initially, however, Clio cannot perceive this show. The stage directions read that the apparatus projects instead “[v]iews of buildings, rather out of perspective, jerk[ing] across the

[47] The “head” of each nation is also what continues to survive in the Ballet, even as the limbs are torn off and the body is disemboweled. In the epilogue, Lee again calls attention to the importance of the “head” in the body politic of the nation, and her imagined, dialogue-heavy cinematic scenarios consist of these talking “heads.”

screen. People come in and out, showing more of their boot soles than one usually sees; and voices gabble nasally on the gramophone" (66). When Clio becomes angered by this disjointed vision and sound, Satan acknowledges that, "real Reality . . . *is* boring, nine-tenths of it at least, and therefore unrecorded" (66). In order to compose these fragments into a sequence, to make sense of them, Satan has to "manipulate Reality" for Clio, and "make the recorded acts and words which were scattered, interrupted, or too long drawn out gather up into scenes intelligible to a critic of the drama like you" (67). Satan teaches Clio, the recorder of monumental history, how to see his own recordings from the "magic apparatus." The bodiless heads that remain at the end of the *Ballet of the Nations*, after the limbs have been rent and the bodies exploded, are, Satan claims, mere cardboard stylizations compared to these real heads. The gramophone, "marked 'His Master's Voice,'" in a sly allusion to the British Gramophone Company trademark, wheezes throughout the screening and Satan frequently stops to change the disc, but Clio is nevertheless delighted by Satan's appeal to the real once it has been ordered to make sense to her.[48] The perspective enabled by Satan's "magic apparatus," however, exposes the ballet as spectacle even as Satan is able to manipulate Clio's perception to understand the machines' productions.

The first fifteen sequences that Satan shows to Clio depict the causes of the war, slipping in and out of thinly veiled allusions to nations ("Leviathan," for example, is England) and incidents. Lee describes the setting and characters with each disc change in stage directions, and

[48] "His Master's Voice" refers to the trademark image of the British Gramophone Company and the American Victor Talking Machine Company—a depiction of the fox terrier Nipper gazing into the bell-mouth of the machine at the sound of his master's voice. Lee borrows this advertising slogan in an ironic reference to Satan as master. The wheezing of the gramophone, however, undermines his assumption of great or obvious power. Interestingly, Woolf likewise uses this reference in her diaries to describe Hitler's voice, "less truculent than expected," on the radio (5: 204). Apparently, the marketing slogan lent itself well to metaphors of disembodied, monologic communication through audio technologies.

then proceeds to relate their dialogue (without any further visual description), revealing the economic and political impetuses behind the war as well as their cultural and religious supplements. If the ballet is composed of visual description in *Satan the Waster,* then the productions of the epilogue rely heavily on exposed dialogue. These sequences make sense of the war, and express Lee's understanding of its causes as the result of oligarchic planning between England, Germany, France, America, and other involved Western nations to justify continued economic growth and undermine democratic and socialist movements. These decisions are further justified, as a sequence depicting a Vicar attempting to persuade his mother to buy stock in armaments rather than Canadian apples evidences, by a cultural apparatus tacitly invested in the dominant powers. Satan's structuring of these imagined documentary sequences builds Lee's argument through the cross-cutting possibilities of early film narrative. For example, a sequence in which sugar, iron, steel, and cotton manufacturers beg their Minister to start a European war in order to expand their access to the colonies' markets is followed by a sequence in which the assassination of the "Heir-Apparent of the most Ancient and most Christian Empire of Felix-Nube" (or Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) is announced to a stunned Emperor Wilhelm as an exhortation for war.

Lee might structure these sequences according to the cross-cutting logic of film narrative, but this is the only cinematic aesthetic device that she suggests in her epilogue. There are no close-ups or unusual juxtapositions within imagined shots, for example. She does, however, call attention to the technological constraints and possibilities of the apparatus itself not only in the first part of the epilogue when Clio must learn to see and hear its mechanical productions, but also in Satan's segue from the first fifteen sequences depicting the causes of the war to the final seven "taking place behind the World's Stage when the Ballet is already raging," and at the end

of the show (95). As the "magic apparatus" transitions from the pre-war buildup to wartime developments, the machine itself moves too quickly for comprehension. As Satan tells Clio, "What's coming ought to be reeled off at a tearing pace, but I shall slow my machine so that you may be able to follow . . ." (92). The rhythms of the machine reflect the noise-inducing chaos of the impending war. Satan finally proceeds to tame the apparatus to show Clio fighting over colonies and the refusal of "peace without victory" (101). However, the cinematograph and the gramophone also capture and display beyond what Satan intends—an off-screen cry for "peace and bread," for example, nearly ends his presentation. It is as if a "cold" reality has seeped in despite his manipulation of the apparatus.

Nevertheless, Satan is able to change the disc once more before the apparatus breaks down entirely with cries for peace guaranteed by fighting to the last ("Last man! Last penny! Last drop of blood! Last war!" (106)). On his final disc, Satan shows Clio the 1917 Russian Revolution crosscut with devolving international peace talks and the criminal trial of the lesbian dancer and suspected German spy Maud Allan. The film ends when the machine becomes a "Babel" of voices and images, the montage quickening and threatening to become again incomprehensible, auditory and visual noise, a "horrible row" as Clio and the Ages-to-Come cry. Satan apologizes, stating that it will "take fifty years in fifty archives to clear up the muddle" (106). Lee was a historian as well as an aesthetic theorist, and she emphasized that history is determined by evolutionary contingencies rather than a linear progression. In *Satan the Waster,* Lee implies that the productions of the cinematic apparatus that wind up in the archives will be framed in terms of a comprehensible and well-rendered narrative just as the ballet transforms war into an aesthetic experience. The montage of images and sound and the intrusion of off-screen sound, however, provide another, more troubled and troubling, recording. The referential power

of the cinematic image and the recorded sound give archival film, however framed, a direct indexical claim to an otherwise inaccessible reality. The apparatus records indifferently beyond the frame, and this babble of aural and visual perspectives points to the incomprehensibility of reality. The wheezing of the gramophone's disc also recalls the material base from which the apparatus' productions emerge, as this raspy "Master's voice" reminds those who are captive to the "magic apparatus" that its productions come from machines akin to the machinery used in the war.

At the conclusion of the epilogue, the "blind boy," Heroism, awakens and throws the skeletal figure of Ballet Master Death, who had been sleeping drunk on his chest, from the stage. While Heroism begs for "some kindly surgeon to cut away at last the veil of blindness from my eyes!," Ballet Master Death, as the stage directions read, *"wheezes responsively like a broken bellows"* (109). The final scene of the epilogue thus alludes back to the productions of the sound cinematic apparatus, with Heroism's blindness akin to Clio's initial and final inability to understand the machine's recordings and with Ballet Master Death's wheezing akin to the gramophone's punctuating wheeze. The final words of this performance are Satan's, who announces, "And if, by any chance, that Blind Boy should be surgeoned into seeing . . . why, then, this will have been the last of our Ballets of the Nations!" (110). It is not accidental, I maintain, that this possibility of Heroism regaining his vision is raised following the productions of the "magic apparatus," for Lee suggests that its recordings might not only reveal the "real" material behind the ballet, but might also defy this performance's interpellating power.

In *Satan the Waster*, the aesthetic that shapes the formlessness of reality for human comprehension and health becomes aestheticization, blinding human comprehension to the formlessness of reality. A disorienting vision accompanied by the wheezing voice of the

gramophone provides a possible model for overcoming blindness and deafness, or the partitioning of reality into sides and sequences that are only synthesized through an aesthetically appealing illusion that sutures the spectator into war. The visions of the "magic apparatus," are necessarily disordered at the beginning, middle, and end of the epilogue to mimic the disordering of experience in the war. Lee's epilogue suggests that perception requires distance as the war has turned clarity to chaos and chaos to clarity. The "magic apparatus" provides this distance in being too close to reality to fully achieve its aesthetic ordering. In her introduction, Lee claims that the war had swept away her "moral and intellectual moorage"—her belief in "ever-stable impersonalities called Principles and Ideals" (xxxii). The apparent antidote to lost "Principles and Ideals," for Lee, is possible through mechanical interventions into unshaped reality.

The most unsettling revelations of the machines for the reader (although the most pleasurable for Clio) are in the depiction of the architecture of the war, the sequences that may or may not wind up in the archives, or be cut and sutured according to the demands of the "heads" of state themselves. However, the visual and auditory fragments and moments of unintentional cinematic capture at the beginning and the end of the films' showing that so disturb Clio and the Ages-to-Come suggest that the machine captures beyond what is intended. These moments of visual and auditory waste, incoherent and unusable or unintended and censored, reply to the ballet's spectacle as a remainder of reality and it is in these accidental and unsynthesizable recordings that, contrary to being a reduction to fact, the "magic apparatus" of cinematograph and gramophone is too much fact and too much disorganized reality.[49] It is this apparatus, if any, that will give lie to an aestheticized war for Lee, just as, not ten years later, the ascendancy of

[49] In Roger Fry's and Virginia Woolf's writing on the cinema, the documentary cinema image would acquire an aesthetic value for both its indexical capture of reality and its separation from reality. For Lee, on the other hand, the value of the documentary image is not in its aesthetic, but in its unaesthetic, or "noisy," qualities.

synchronized sound film would be perceived as threatening to center an individual with propagandistic seamlessness into the totalizing and totalitarian environments of modernity.

Lee's choice of a sound cinema apparatus in this epilogue is telling not only for the obvious reason that it enables her to write out the dialogues that would otherwise be gestured or less thoroughly written into subtitles in silent film. While the practical value of this medium to forward her understanding of the architecture of war cannot be underestimated, I maintain that this choice was also motivated by the aestheticizing of silent cinema in the interwar period. Furthermore, the fragmented noises of her soundtrack enable her to contrast the dissonances of wartime discourse with the ostensibly coherent dialogues that maintained the war. Lee's invocation of this apparatus is untimely—her play is neither early enough to directly reflect the prevalence of patented synchronized-sound film machines like Léon Gaumont's Chronophone or Thomas Edison's Kinetophone, generally out of use by 1914, nor late enough to reflect the rise of sound cinema technologies in the late 1920s. Rather, as (silent) cinema had become an aesthetic medium by 1920, Lee further resisted these aesthetic appeals to reach back to an early sound cinema apparatus of the "cinema of attraction" [50] period, in which it was the technological marvel itself, and not its aesthetic realization, that most defined by the medium.

3. Lee's Aesthetic Revisions and Unaesthetic Sound Cinema

[50] For Tom Gunning, the "cinema of attraction" describes films made before 1907. Between 1907 and 1913, according to Gunning, a "narrativization" of cinema takes place which nevertheless subsumes elements of spectacle from the earlier period. Gunning characterizes the "cinema of attraction" as an "exhibitionist cinema" that is "willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator" (230). This non-narrative or proto-narrative version of cinema corresponded to (and often formed a part of) vaudeville, music hall, and café programs. While Gunning focuses on the visual in his article "The Cinema of Attraction," he also suggests its implications for early film sound experiments. For example, he writes that "[e]arly audiences went to exhibitions to see machines demonstrated" as much as, or more than, to view films themselves. Furthermore, Gunning notes the heterogeneity of early film exhibition and viewing practices, which often included sound effects and lectures.

The mobilization of beauty and narrative to make sense of war that Lee protests necessarily forced her to revise her earlier aesthetic theory. Empathy, an idea gleaned from the German psychologist Theodor Lipps' *Einfühlung*, or "feeling into," is central to Lee's conception of the aesthetic. Empathy is the divestment of the will from the center of the self and its reinvestment in an object, a projection of the self into the non-ego and of the non-ego into the self in a mimesis of subject and object. Gill Plain argues that the political impetus of *Satan the Waster* belies Lee's aesthetic theory of empathy. In comparing Lee's aesthetics in *Satan the Waster* to Brechtian aesthetics, Plain claims that a "strategy of distancing discourages empathy and facilitates the recognition of otherness, enabling people to gain a new perspective and resist their manipulation by the puppet masters of war," adding that the association of women with emotion has blinded critics to "noticing that although she may have mobilized the concept [of empathy], it is a notion completely alien to her literary practice" (14). While Lee's use of alienation effects through allegory, satire, and the staging of the audience rather than the stage in *Satan the Waster* seem to support Plain's thesis, I would argue that Lee's idea of empathy is not denied but, rather, is revised both in the play of *Satan the Waster* itself and in its apparatus of notes. While Plain aligns empathy with the emotional, the human, and Aristotelian catharsis, Lee's conception of empathy as "inner mimicry" also implies by virtue of its very definition its converse—the inhuman and a lack of cathartic relief. Empathy is the collapsing of distance through projection as the ego sees itself as the non-ego, but its inverse suggests the interiorization of the alien, the loss of the self in non-ego. It is this inverted definition of empathy that Lee invokes strongly in *Satan the Waster* to defamiliarize an experience of war.

In her aesthetic theory, Lee attempted to formulate a relationship between the psychological experience of art and historical transformations in concepts of art and beauty. Her

work presages contemporary concerns between what Isobel Armstrong calls the "descriptive-structural analysis" and the "evaluative-affective analysis" of the aesthetic (19). Lee saw the stratification of modern culture as indicative of alienation while, at the same time, she posited a practical aesthetics as central to individual and social health. Critiquing *art pour l'art* movements as a sign of alienation, for example, Lee writes:

> [T]he separation of a class of 'artists' (with its corresponding class of 'art-lovers') from ordinary craftsmen and average mankind has always brought about aesthetic uncertainty, since this independent class has invariably tended to what is called "art for art's sake," that is to say, art in which technical skill, scientific knowledge, desire for novelty or self-expression have broken with the traditions resulting from the unconscious sway of spontaneous aesthetic preference. (*Beauty and Ugliness* 32)

While art as an institution has become separated from everyday life, Lee maintains that an "aesthetic irradiation" between subject and object is necessary to human health. Aesthetic experience, defined by rhythm and empathy, helps shape the human mind through an interior relation with exterior space while providing an aesthetic and ethical space exterior to what Lee regards as the delusion, shared by all human beings, of the immutability of one's own centered self. She writes that "artistic emotion is of practical importance, not because it discharges itself in action, but because it produces a purely internal rearrangement of thoughts and feelings; because, in short, it helps to form concatenations of preferences, habits of being" ("Beauty and Sanity" 128).

Lee initiated empirical research not only into psychological aesthetics, but also into a physiological aesthetic responsiveness that takes place through the body. The tension between

aesthetic stimulation as a mediator of perception and aesthetic stimulation as an immediate bodily experience in its own right defines her aesthetic theory. After the war, however, Lee revised her earlier theories, moving from an emphasis on empathetic identification to an ambivalent advocacy of "cold" vision. In *Satan the Waster*, Lee transforms her idea of the aesthetic through an (aesthetic) critique of aestheticization. Only mediation, Lee suggests, the cleaving of a full union between subject and object, can dialectically rescue the subject from the dangers of "anthropocentrism," the failure to see outside the self. Mind and body should no longer be interpellated or sutured into a postwar world through an aesthetic stimulation that enables one to live at peace with war.

This "cold" vision revises her earlier advocacy of absorbed feeling in the aesthetic treatise *Beauty and Ugliness*. In her physiological investigations into art reception she posits three states in which she perceives art works in a gallery: 3/10ths of her experiences are defined by "rhythmical obsession," the work of art taking over her attention which is already inclined to be closed to the outside world; 6/10ths of her experiences, when she is open to the outside world, require her effort, an "artificially-induced attention" to produce an enjoyment that nevertheless "lacks the inner excitement, the complete satisfaction, the exaltation" of the first group of experiences; finally, in 1/10th of her experiences, the work of art remains "external or foreign . . . almost hostile" (246). It is this hostility that she comes to explore in her epilogue to *Satan the Waster* through sound cinematic technology.

In her notes to *Satan the Waster*, Lee, despite her ambivalence toward modern technology, posits that the human capacity for the aesthetic contains the possibility of producing a different kind of feeling, thinking, and being between technology and the human sensorium. Lee claims that aesthetic experience is alternatively innate and historical. Her empirical

physiological studies of art reception, undertaken with her lover Kit Anstruther-Thomson, forward the idea that the human experience of the aesthetic takes place in the body as well as in the mind. Sense perception, the Greek *aesthesis* from which Alexander Baumgarten initiated his discourse on the aesthetic in the eighteenth-century, is this locus between body and mind. Human psychology and physiology are also mediated by the subject's environment and, in this sense, perception is historical. In *Satan the Waster,* Lee writes:

> All this amounts to saying that machinery has grown and mankind has grown not so much with, meaning proportionately, as *into it*. Mankind's thought and imagination and will and effort have grown, precisely fitted, to that machinery's requirement; grown thanks to machines themselves, to telegraphs, telephones, marconigrams, and even those latest mechanical toys which display to all belligerent stay-at-homes bowdlerized battles and film-faked atrocities almost at the very minute of their taking place. Nor by positive methods only, but by more potent negative ones of omission and suppression: ideas, wishes, facts allowed diffusion only insofar as their diffusion increases, without producing friction, the immeasurable, complicated automatism of our thoroughly mechanized existence. (127)

Elsewhere in her notes, cosmopolitan Lee, despite her dashed hope for an international rather than national model of political and social organization for Europe following the war, sees the usefulness of modern communication technologies interconnecting the world, introducing woman to woman and worker to worker. However, the expansion of possibility opened by science becomes, through applied science, also a reduction to fact. Body and mind are shaped from without into the instrumental. The battles brought to homefront theaters in this first widely

filmed war are likewise trapped within their limited framing as their claims to virtual immediacy confuse the fictional and the real through "bowdlerized battles and film-faked atrocities."[51] However, gifted with an aesthetic sensibility, the human might also surpass instrumentality through evolution:

> In this automatism, in all other respects more like a machine than a living organism, there lurks, however, the saving grace of sensitiveness to pain and pleasure; and hence the power of adaptation. This being so, we may be sure that, even at this moment, there is evolving some small unsuspected organ or quality, most likely a by-product even as the human hand and jaw and hence the human brain were once by-products of adaptations in lower creatures; some unseen factor destined to alter for the better this dreadful latter-day organism wherein man's muscles and man's mind, and the sinews and food and lubricants of machines, are interlocking coordinated parts, and whose latest achievement we can watch in our war. (129)

The aesthetic, "the saving grace of sensitiveness to pain and pleasure," continues to work through the evolving body, if not through the mind trapped by applied science and the one-sidedness of nationalism.

In the well-known conclusion to his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," Walter Benjamin cites F.T. Marinetti, the forefather of fascist aesthetics, as expecting war to gratify "a sense perception altered by technology . . . .

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[51] This fear was informed by the use of what Walter Lippman called in his 1929 *Public Opinion* media "fictions" from the Boer and First World Wars. These filmed "fictions," Lippman maintained, shaped collective memory despite their manipulation. Lee would refer to such "fictions" throughout her notes as "film-faked atrocities."

[Humankind's] self-alienation has reached the point where it can experience its own annihilation as an extreme aesthetic pleasure. *Such is the aestheticizing of politics as practiced by fascism. Communism replies by politicizing art*" (42). *Satan the Waster* anticipates Benjamin's point by implying that the unaesthetic potential of cinema might have a political value in exposing reality even as it is also a product inseparable from the mechanics of the war. In a manifesto on futurist cinematic aesthetics, written by Anton Giulio Bragaglia in 1911, "photodynamism" is described as the antithesis of cinematography. "Photodynamism" is "the synthesis of action that fascinates our senses, a vertiginous lyrical expression of life which vividly invokes the magnificent dynamic feeling with which the universe incessantly vibrates" (377). On the other hand, the cinematograph "subdivides [movement] without rules, with mechanical arbitrariness, disintegrating and shattering it without any kind of aesthetic concern for rhythm—its coldly mechanical power is incapable of addressing such concerns" (368). However, this is precisely why the cinematograph is valuable for Benjamin and for Lee—because it belies a deadly aesthetic with a jarring distance that is also an intimate exposure of reality.

In her handwritten, unpublished manuscript *Myself,* composed in November and December of 1917, Lee opens with the question, "[H]ow have I myself come by what I think about the war? And why in this respect do I skew aside from other folk?" Lee's tireless pacifist activism throughout the war rendered her politically suspect even amongst her former socialist and feminist allies, like H.G. Wells and Ethel Smyth, who had become fervent supporters of Britain's intervention in the war. Even following the war, Lee's *Satan the Waster* was not a popular book and received few favorable reviews, with the notable exception of Shaw's praise in *The Nation.* Reissuing the text ten years later in 1930 (the last time *Satan the Waster* was in print), Lee adds in the foreword:

> And Heroism, with the voice of the real young poets and novelists, from Sassoon to Remarque, Hemmingway [sic.], Williamson, Aldington, and Graves, has been repeating bitterly or sorrowfully the same thing ever since. And people have listened without being scandalized, except with the war itself and its former promoters. But this book was originally published ten years ago when such things could not be said without impiety . . . So, pending a possible relapse of Heroism's constitutional cataract, I have asked my publishers to reissue the unsold edition instead of using it to make parcels of other people's books. (i)

Lee cites male witnesses of war as enabling her text to be received without censure. At the same time, as Gillian Beer argues, "Soldiers have a blood-boltered authority. But a non-combatant woman, a writer on aesthetics, what does she [have] here?" (37). Lee was not authorized to speak as a direct witness to war, but, instead, she sought authority in her own exceptional position. Despite her continental and cosmopolitan upbringing, Lee perceives herself as formed from without by the discourses of nineteenth-century British nationalism. How, she asks, did she come into these pacifist values so foreign to her cultural conditioning? She looks to aesthetics, psychology, and European intellectual history for answers. In the process, she reconsiders the relationship between the inherited and the modern, a reconsideration exemplified in her use of technologies of perception in her drama's epilogue.

In *Myself,* Lee writes, "Looking into myself . . . I find a tendency to flare up in contradiction. But oddly mixed with it, a clinging to consecrated ideas; a belief . . . in 'normality,' an aversion to the new-fangled . . . an aesthetic and sentimental love for the <u>past</u> as such. Indeed,

until very lately, an almost physical domination by the taboo—feeling" (20-21).[52] Lee links the "dogmatic morality" which continues to influence her as a product not of the Victorian period that she characterizes by Matthew Arnold and Leonard Elliott-Binns, but, rather, as an 18th-century development of Enlightenment thinkers like Kant and Pope. This morality combines with nationalism, the idea of "we English," framing even Lee's peripatetic early years on the continent.[53] However, in Lee's account, she came to realize a "feeling" alternative to her exterior experience. The psychology she constructs to understand this relationship of exterior, cultural determination and the deviations of interior response finds its foil in Freudian psychoanalysis by 1933. In her later notebooks, Lee writes, "There's more than a difference, there's an opposition between what [Freudians] call analysis, which is, I think, merely digging into their patients' lapsed biography, and my own attempt to isolate and compare the more elementary items of consciousness."[54] During the war, Lee emphasizes the necessity of parsing an exterior national inheritance with an internal feeling predicated on the alien.[55]

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[52] Indeed, Lee evidences a self-awareness here of how she would be represented by the next generation of modernists in the 1920s. In an excised passage of *The Waste Land*, for example, T.S. Eliot constellates Lee with Symonds and Walter Pater as exemplary of a late Victorian generation fascinated by "[u]nreal emotions and real appetite." As he writes: "For varying forms, one definition's right:/Unreal emotions, and real appetite./Women grown intellectual grow dull,/And lose the mother wit of natural trull./Fresca was baptized in a soapy sea/Of Symonds—Walter Pater—Vernon Lee" (26-7).

[53] Lee was born in France to expatriated British parents and spent much of her adult life in Italy.

[54] Freud's focus on sexuality is particularly objectionable to Lee. Given the assumed heterosexual economy on which Freud's writings are based against Lee's lesbian identity, this objection makes sense. Furthermore, Lee points out in her 1933 notebooks that sex, "banned from articulate speech," finds misplaced expression through the works of Freud and his disciples and fascinates only because it has for so long been unspeakable.

[55] In the short piece "The Heart of a Neutral" that she wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1915, Lee writes of her cosmopolitan upbringing and identity, "[W]ith the knowledge of the good of each nation, this child shall know in sadness the weakness and folly of them all. And every national shall say to her, 'You are an alien, and though you love me, shall have no power over my heart'" (687). She concludes this essay with the strength of her positioning, writing,

In Lee's epilogue to *Satan the Waster*, the sound cinematic apparatus appears as documentary, indifferent, and noisy, despite Satan's framing of it for Clio. In the notes surrounding this drama, Lee asks what happens when reality inevitably transforms through its aesthetic (and aestheticized) capture. The inhuman recording apparatus, albeit one manipulated by Satan for Clio's historical narrative, simultaneously interprets and interrupts the spectacle of the Ballet of the Nations. Lee invokes this apparatus in her revision of *The Ballet of the Nations* to present the networks of causality responsible for the war and to extend her critique of its architects. Her use of this medium, however, also serves to question forms of aesthetic representation following the war. Lee denies the visual pleasure of the images that had initially accompanied *The Ballet of the Nations* and she emphasizes the prosaic nature of her play. The sound cinematic apparatus serves as a means of accessing reality beyond and outside the aesthetic even as its framing threatens a new form of manipulation.

In her notes surrounding this central text, Lee reiterates the aesthetic theory she developed at the turn-of-the-twentieth century while also calling it into question. For Lee, art integrates the individual with her environment and renders reality comprehensible. In her notes to *Satan the Waster*, Lee writes:

> Reality is perpetually offending our taste by anti-climaxes, lack of unity of effect, of symmetry, of 'composition,' etc. For it is always changing and flowing while we, small, ephemeral, are always in the clutch of the *here* and the *now*. And at this point comes in the supreme use of *art* . . . Art furnishes us with the homogenous, the adequate, the corroborating, the consistent, the repetitive or

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"'When all the nations shall welter in the pollution of warfare, this child's eyes shall remain clear from its fratricidal fumes; she shall drink deep of sorrow, but recognize and put away from her lips the sweetened and consecrated cup of hatred" (687).

> stable, the schematic, the symmetrical, the centralized, the antithetical, the high lights, and the dots on the i's; the focuses, the intensifications and steadying (181).

This passage suggests that art informs reality for us through making what is essentially meaningless meaningful. Art synthesizes our experience, as Lee demonstrates in the listing of adjectives by placing the apparently contradictory "centralized" next to "the antithetical." This is the humanizing effect of art that makes one sane and can heal but that can also reduce otherness. Different media have different potentials for this humanization. In her notes, Lee writes that, while music summons feelings directly, words call up "memory-images" aligned with qualities and things. Through this mediation of memory, this recalling of things, "literature's playing upon our feelings so often becomes a tampering with our sense of realities. Words tell us of a world outside ourself; but in so doing turn that world's relations within itself into relations to our likings and disliking" (133). In short, crafted words can "rearrange" the reader's mind and make reality intelligible, but, for Lee, giving form to reality does not necessarily challenge habit and perception.[56] Given the persuasive impact of words and images on perceptions of the war, Lee seeks a medium that elides "dot[ting] the i's" or containing, even in dialectical union, "the schematic, the symmetrical, the centralized" (181).

Satan the Waster has remained beyond the purview of modernist studies in general and of studies on the relationship between cinema and modernism in particular. Yet, Lee's text evidences a unique response to cinema in interwar literature. Neither metaphoric nor

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[56] As Carlo Caballero has pointed out with regard to music, Lee "posits two modes of musical appreciation—'listening' and 'hearing,' the first active and externalized, the second passive and internalized . . . . to music's murky command over the subject's intimate autonomy . . . Vernon Lee qualifies 'listening' as ethically superior to the compliance of 'hearing'" (395). The distinction made between active "listening" and passive "hearing" in Lee's musical aesthetics corresponds to her move towards early reader response theory in literature in her 1927 *The Handling of Words and Other Studies in Literary Psychology*.

aesthetically instructive, the cinematic medium, for Lee, is valuable for its literal recording capabilities. It is not film aesthetics that are ekphrastically described in the epilogue to the play, as the performance itself is described at its heart, but, rather, either technological confusion or the literal unveiling of illicit or domestic conversations behind closed doors. Furthermore, Lee introduces a synchronized-sound cinematic apparatus to simultaneously emphasize the recording capacity of the machine and call it into question through the "wheezing" voice of the gramophone. This medium challenges aesthetic experience for its indexical claim on reality and for its ability to decenter as well as center its spectator. Sara Danius writes, "Technology helps change not only the world but also the perception of that world. This is partly why the image of the machine enters modernism together with problems of intelligibility" (189). For Lee, the perceptual is already imbricated with the historical and change is evolutionary. She presents her own conservatism in response to machine culture in *Satan the Waster*, yet this is an ironic conservatism, one capable, unlike, arguably, the mythical conservatism of T.S. Eliot in his contemporary, postwar "The Waste Land" (1922), of suggesting a liberating potential within the machine.

As (silent) cinema became increasingly recognized as an aesthetic medium, and the most modern one at that, throughout the 1910s and 1920s, modernist responses tended to either dismiss or embrace its aesthetic value. Thus, we have inherited conceptions of literary modernism as either an elitist reaction to mass culture disseminated through technologies of perception or as an aesthetic development analogous or parallel to film aesthetics or recording technology.[57] Lee's epilogue in *Satan the Waster* evidences both a lack of consideration of

[57] See, on the one hand, Andreas Huyssen, *Across the Great Divide* (1986) and Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (1992), and, on the other, Alan Spiegel's *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel* (1976), Keith Cohen's *Film*

cinema as an aesthetic medium and an enthusiasm precisely for this aesthetic lack, a unique response in the interwar period. As Dorothy Richardson's imbrication of film aesthetics into her novel *Pilgrimage* exemplifies in the next chapter, cinema had become an important discursive and aesthetic space through which to reconceptualize literary construction. Richardson values silent cinema for its absorption and aesthetic centering of the spectator, while she is wary of sound film for encapsulating and rendering real a false world that excludes the agency of the spectator. Furthermore, she frames this discourse in gendered terms between the feminine and the masculine in both her film writing and in *Pilgrimage.* Lee, on the other hand, suggests that aesthetic suturing into a text has rendered modern war meaningful, and to see outside this aesthetic centering requires unaesthetic technological intervention. This unaesthetic gramophone reappears, as I explore in chapter three, in Virginia Woolf's final, late modernist novel *Between the Acts* (1941) as a means of calling cultural inheritance into question. Of course, not only was Lee not a filmmaker, but she exhibited little knowledge or interest in cinema aesthetics in her writing. As the filmmaker Alice Guy-Blaché (the focus of chapter four), who did work with the early synchronized-sound cinema apparatus the Chronophone at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, exhibits, this early sound cinema technology represented as much as recorded sound. In assuming a transparent recording as a counterpart to technologically-mediated exhibition, Lee tacitly reveals in *Satan the Waster* her own particular fantasy of this "magic" medium.

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and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange (1979), P. Adams Sitney's *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature* (1992), Susan McCabe, *Cinematic Modernism* (2005), David Trotter, *Cinema and Modernism* (2007), Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse* (2007), Michael North, *Camera Works*, and Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen* (2000).

Chapter Two

The Pathway to Reality and "Its Adenoidal Barrier": Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* and the Talkies

In this project, I have posited that cinema informs interwar fiction in dialectically opposed ways. On the one hand, cinema was conceived as a recording device that exposed a reality inaccessible to human perception, and, on the other, it was seen as a new aesthetic, one that might suture its audience into a "cinesthetic" experience. Both Vernon Lee and Virginia Woolf, for example, invoke cinema as a means of accessing a reality that is exterior to human interests even as they explore how humans relate to this otherwise inaccessible reality through aesthetic constructions. For Dorothy Richardson, on the other hand, reality is more internal than external. Richardson's 13-part novel *Pilgrimage* (1915-67), in its four complete volumes, is currently out-of-print. [58] Her prominence in the development of what we have come to call British literary modernism, on the one hand, and her disappearance from print, on the other, make her a prime candidate for a recovery project, while also raising the question of what is being recovered from an already well-known text.[59] *Pilgrimage* might be cited for eliciting two

[58] The thirteen novel-chapters include *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), *Honeycomb* (1917), *The Tunnel* (1919), *Interim* (1919), *Deadlock* (1921), *Revolving Lights* (1923), *The Trap* (1925), *Oberland* (1927), *Dawn's Left Hand* (1931), *Clear Horizon* (1935), *Dimple Hill* (1938), and *March Moonlight* (undated, but published after Richardson's death in a collected edition released by Dent in 1967). The volumes were published independently until Dent released a purportedly complete collected edition in 1938 to Richardson's consternation. The novel as a whole is currently out-of-print. The last publication of all four volumes was Virago Press' 1979 edition, reprinted in 1992. The first volume of the Virago edition was published in the United States by University of Illinois Press in 1989. Hard Press published *Pointed Roofs* in 2003 and reprinted it in 2006. This edition is also currently available as an eBook through Kindle. In this chapter, all citations refer to the 1967 volumes save references to the introduction of the 1938 volumes of *Pilgrimage* and to *Backwater*.

[59] Richardson appears prominently in two recent anthologies of modernist literature, Blackwell's *Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (2008) and *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel* (2007). She also appears in Deborah Parsons' *Theorists of the Modernist Novel: James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf* (2007). She is

definitive descriptions of literary modernism--Sinclair's "stream-of-consciousness" and Woolf's "female sentence." However, it is hard to imagine a semester course devoted to it. Due to its length and challenging sentence and narrative structure, *Pilgrimage* has often been accused of being unreadable in its entirety.[60] Nonetheless, as Woolf's reviews of *Pilgrimage* attest, Richardson's long novel is an exemplary text for exploring the relationship between narrative innovations and gender politics within British modernism. The novel aims to both objectively document its environment and to translate female subjectivity. This inherent tension between the objective and the subjective likewise parallels interwar discourses on the cinema.

Richardson, who wrote a series of columns entitled "Continuous Performance" for the little film magazine *Close Up* from 1927-1933, was explicitly interested in cinema.[61] Both the novel and silent cinema, for Richardson, are perceived as eliding through new constructions of the gaze a determined division of subject and object. The sound film, or the "talkie," on the other hand, despite its ostensible technological evolution toward a greater realism, interrupts the achievements of silent film. The images of silent cinema are transformed by voice, which represents an exteriority that cannot be wholly assimilated through what Richardson calls the

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perhaps best-known for eliciting, through May Sinclair's 1918 review of her novels, the first application of the term "stream-of-consciousness" to literature. Richardson herself did not like this term and did not believe that consciousness could be represented as a "stream."

[60] Richardson parries accusations of unreadibility in her 1938 introduction to *Pilgrimage* by apologizing for a text that is "unpunctuated and therefore unreadable," although she then proceeds to align her novel with what she describes as the "feminine prose" of Charles Dickens and James Joyce (12).

[61] Richardson, who had become friends with one of *Close Up's* founders, Bryher, through Sylvia Beach (Bryher was a fan of *Pilgrimage*) wrote for *Close Up* from its first issue in July of 1927 through its final year of publication in 1933. In this chapter, all citations from Richardson's "Continuous Performance" columns are taken from the 1998 *Close Up* anthology edited by James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus, 160-209.

"inward eye."[62] Silent film has been read by Carol Watts, Susan Gevirtz, and Maggie Humm as inextricable from *Pilgrimage*'s privileging of an experiential phenomenology through a female consciousness.[63] What I intend to do in this chapter, however, is look at *Pilgrimage* in terms not only of silent, but also of sound cinema. Such a reading might not seem intuitive, given Richardson's strong dislike of the sound film. However, it is precisely in her resistance to the "talkies" that I find revealed most explicitly the generative contradictions that reappear throughout her novel between objectivity and subjectivity.[64] In exploring manifestations of image and sound in *Pilgrimage* next to Richardson's writing on cinema, I intend, on the one hand, to elucidate some of the generative paradoxes of *Pilgrimage* that make it a text worth studying and teaching, and, on the other, to situate Richardson within my constellation of women modernists grappling with aesthetics and modernity through the new medium of sound cinema.

1. *Pilgrimage* and the Value of Cinema

In her 1938 introduction to *Pilgrimage,* Richardson describes her version of literary realism as the "feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism," which she defines through

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[62] Throughout her fiction, Richardson plays with the homophones "eye" and "I," as does Woolf. See, for example, in Bernard's final monologue in *The Waves*, "My wandering and inquisitive eye then shows me an awe-stricken child; a shuffling pensioner; or the obeisances of tired shop-girls burdened with heaven . . ." (282).

[63] Carol Watts writes, for example, that the "mobile impressionism of *Pilgrimage* subjects its world to a form of optical testing in a manner that does indeed suggest 'a historically significant formation of spectatorship.' In one woman's quest for a relationship to the image that articulates her sense of self . . . we witness a continual refusal of the 'patriarchal choreography' of vision which attempts to define it" (82). Likewise concentrating on the gaze and its reconstruction in Richardson, Susan Gevirtz writes, "Richardson, who saw questions about the formal and phenomenological terms of gendered identity everywhere, used this new medium to investigate the nuances and mechanics of her own and other women's desire to see and be seen . . . ." (61).

[64] Barbara McBane, in her dissertation *Asynchronicities: Sound-Image Disjunctions, Deviant Meanings, and Euro-American Cinema,* argues that Richardson has been overlooked as an important sound-film theorist. I agree with McBane, and I maintain further that Richardson's interest in cinematic sound can be traced through her evocation of lived environments and female subjectivity in *Pilgrimage.*

the work of Honoré de Balzac and Arnold Bennett. As George H. Thomson has shown in his careful reading of Richardson's short introduction, she refers here to the negotiations between, on the one hand, a naturalist bent toward objectivity and, on the other, the "novel of ideas" popular in the 1910s through which the writer explores his own ideas through the subjectivities of his characters. As an alternative to this "masculine realism," Richardson proposes "a new, inwardly directed, minutely realistic feminine fiction" (Thomson 354).[65] Richardson indeed agreed with Ford Madox Ford's description of the realism of *Pilgrimage* as "a minuteness of rendering of objects and situations perceived through the psychologies of the characters and not, as it were, motivated by the temperament of the writer," as an assessment of her work akin to what she herself had written about *Pilgrimage* (773).

This question of a renegotiated relationship between reality and realism is undertaken more famously in Woolf's canonical essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924), in which she opposes the objectivity of Edwardian writers Bennett, H.G. Wells, and John Galsworthy to the Georgian search for a new means of representation. Maintaining that "human relations change" (and did change in 1910), Woolf exhorts the modern novelist to "[t]olerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure" (337). In short, she endorses a complex psychological verisimilitude over exterior indicators of character. In her 1919 review of Richardson's *The Tunnel*, Woolf acknowledges Richardson's contribution to this end while faulting her for a lack of conventions. She writes, "We want to be rid of realism, to penetrate without its help into the

[65] Of course, as other critics, including Elaine Showalter, have acknowledged, this proposal skirts any legacy of previous women writers, who Richardson dismisses in her choice between "following one of her regiments and attempting to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism" (4).Tellingly, for it is easy to read Richardson's introduction as not only an apology, but also as an attempt to define her own importance, other women writing in a realist vein are repressed, and, as the repressed is liable to return, the use of the word "regiments," as Thomson notes, refers back to Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1890) without mentioning it outright (Thomson 348).

regions beneath it, and further require that Miss Richardson shall fashion this new material into something which has the shapeliness of the old accepted forms" (81). Nevertheless, Woolf is more sanguine about Richardson's experiments in her 1923 review of *Revolving Lights,* which she wrote less than a year before "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." This is the review in which Woolf ascribes to Richardson's texts the famous "female sentence." She writes, "It is a woman's sentence, but only in the sense that it is used to describe a woman's mind by a writer who is neither proud nor afraid of anything that she may discover in the psychology of her sex. And therefore we feel that the trophies that Miss Richardson brings to the surface, however we may dispute their size, are undoubtedly genuine" (367)**.**

The narrative structure of *Pilgrimage* beyond the sentence-level might also accord with Woolf's new definition of character. The narrative of *Pilgrimage* can be characterized in Gerard Genette's terms by "narrative stasis," on the one hand, and "ellipses" on the other. "Narrative stasis" is the protracting of dramatic action through the elaborate description of people and things, while ellipsis is the elision of narrative events in the text. In *Pilgrimage*, everyday experiences like work, walking the streets, and eating are often relayed in moments of narrative stasis while ostensibly life-altering events, like Miriam's mother's death or her miscarriage, are learned by the reader only retroactively, sometimes a few "novel-chapters" later. Focusing on the objects and impressions that envelope her central character, Richardson attempts to create a new valuation of experience. The narrative silences that she enacts in her novel through elliptical exclusion might be read, for example, as an editing that privileges interstitial space and time rather than the events that had structured the plots of preceding forms of the novel. Using this narrative form, Richardson's novel presents the "continuous performance" that she likewise valued in the cinematic medium.

The visual cinematic qualities of Richardson's version of realism and its focalization through her novel's heroine, Miriam Henderson, paradoxically have made *Pilgrimage* seem both too divorced from character and too subjective. Although he is tacitly credited within *Pilgrimage* for encouraging Miriam to write a documentary novel, H.G. Wells, for example, would criticize what he saw as a "mirror-focus" within her novel, writing that she presents a "series of dabs of intense superficial impression; her heroine is not a mentality but a mirror . . . [h]er percepts never become concepts" (qtd. in Matz 83).[66] Richardson's emphasis on detailed visual descriptions of environment indeed attests to what she herself called the "mirror-focus" of the cinema in her *Close Up* columns. Richardson extols the cinema in her film column "Narcissus" for "being a mirror for the customary and restoring its essential quality" (202). For Richardson, cinema must remain true to its roots in the documentary. She cites the work of the Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov as one of the few cinematic attempts still "engaged in directly representing anything and everything without selective interference beyond that dictated by the enchanted eye" (202). Jane Garrity has noted this cinematic valuation in *Pilgrimage* as well, claiming that the protagonist Miriam functions in the novel as a "camera eye," or the site from which a fascinated, mobile visual field emanates. In her work on silent film as the exemplary "aesthetic form" of *Pilgrimage*, Watts likewise maintains that the "theatre of Miriam's consciousness" is a "cinematic space" (60). This "cinematic space" is defined by the imbrications of the documentary and an individual

[66] The character based on Wells in *Pilgrimage*, Hypo, encourages Miriam to write because she needs to produce, from her experience as a dental assistant, the "first dental novel." He tells her, "You have in your hands material for a novel, a dental novel, a human novel, and, as a background, a complete period, a period of unprecedented expansion in all directions. You've seen the growth of dentistry from a form of crude torture to a highly elaborate and scientific and almost painless process. And in your outer world, you've seen an almost ceaseless transformation, from the beginning of the safety bicycle to the arrival of the motor car and aeroplane . . . You ought to document your period" (*Dimple Hill* 397).

female subjectivity. "Narcissism," for Richardson means, through the cinematic, an identification of the self with the recording power of the cinema camera.[67]

In its defamiliarizing of the known world through bringing it closer and its familiarizing of the far through bringing it near, silent cinema enables a connection to reality (in Richardson's terms) that is interrupted by the introduction of speech in the sound cinema. In "The Film Gone Male," for example, Richardson claims that silent film is "nowhere and everywhere, nowhere in the sense of having more intention than direction and more purpose than plan, everywhere by reason of its power to evoke, suggest, reflect . . ." (206). What Richardson describes is a realism unmoored from linear narrative. Silent cinema embodies the apotheosis that Miriam finally reaches in the last novel-chapter of *Pilgrimage, March Moonlight*, through the communal silence of Quakerism—her "conviction of the wonder of mere existence, the amazingness of there being anything anywhere" (635).

Richardson's writing on sound film, on the other hand, read alongside *Pilgrimage,* exposes a complex and often contradictory nexus of gender, ethnic, and class identification in the novel. Voice enforces the external realities that place "something somewhere" is distinction to Richardson's desire in her silent film writing and Miriam's desire in the novel for "anything anywhere." Miriam searches for an underlying internal "reality" beyond these determined social identities, but, in the process, she continually reifies these very categories she longs to escape. Gevirtz explains Richardson's fear of sound film as a threatened "disenfranchisement of the female speaker" (93). She claims that Richardson's "interest in the rich possibility couched in this mechanism of projection is based in the simultaneous presence and absence that cinema displays—the 'escape' from discourse that cinema frames" (93). By reproducing gendered

[67] We might recall Gilles Deleuze's description of cinema in *The Movement Image* as an abandonment of "figures and poses" for the "any-instant-whatever" (6-7).

divisions of speech, the sound film returns the cinema to a reality defined by "women's cultural positioning in relation to the hierarchic structures of language and the resultant link between women's public speech and the sight of woman" (93). However, Richardson isn't only afraid of a return to realism that narratively subordinates women along the aural lines Kaja Silverman describes in *The Acoustic Mirror.* In aligning Richardson's "mobile impressionism" with the unfettered imperialist gaze, Jane Garrity writes, "The most pronounced formal consequence of this radical restructuring [of literary realism] is the novel's search for a pictorial language that might capture Richardson's desire for a common language . . ." (87). In short, Richardson's emphasis on the "sensual experience of boundlessness" through the visual (and its synaesthetic combination with music) aims to occlude the differences which often interrupt Miriam's fascinated eye and musical ear in *Pilgrimage* (127).

Speech in the novel not only divides men from women through their different capacities for speaking and listening, it also reveals class and ethnic identities. These divisions interrupt the "boundlessness" that Richardson had found in silent cinema and that she attempts to translate in her novel. As Richardson writes in her culminating novel-chapter *March Moonlight,* "Words are separators, acknowledgement of separateness" (620). *Pilgrimage* moves towards the "eternal," defined as an internal reality undergirding objective identity, while painstakingly locating its characters in the lived environments of fin-de-siècle England within gendered, classed, and raced identities. Essentialism and its concomitant questioning inform Richardson's film and fiction writing through representations of voice as well as synaesthetic experiences of sound, music, and images. Speech becomes, in *Pilgrimage* and in Richardson's cinema writing, a not wholly assimilable exteriority that marks the individual without touching the "center" that Richardson conceives as the reality underlying objective identities.

In Richardson's cinema writing, sound cinema is simultaneously too real and too unreal. Instead of enabling a greater access to reality through the recording of real sound, synchronized sound instead reveals the artifice of the machine, the "[a]pparatus rampant" (194). Voice, rendered through the insufficient technology of early sound film interrupts absorption and hence, for Richardson, makes the film unreal in calling attention to the material cinematic apparatus. When synchronized with the image, voice reduces the multiplicity of sounds, musical and imagined, that Richardson had heard in the silent cinema. The integration of voice into the early sound film is an uneven development from the "film-opera" of silent cinema to the "adenoidal barrier" of dialogue ("Dialogue in Dixie" 194). For Richardson, sound cinema occludes immersion into the film through disrupting the "continuous performance" of the silent cinema with the material reality underlying it.

In *Pilgrimage'*s sensory hierarchy, the visual, along with music and silence, dominate over speech. In her novel, Richardson aims to create an embodied and immersive world. Abbie Garrington conceives of the linkage between cinema and *Pilgrimage* through the haptic as both "kinaesthetic" and "emotionally touching." As Garrington writes, "In her intention to make use of the haptic, Richardson can be seen to be answering Benjamin's call for a shift in the mode of perception in the modernist period. At her most radical, Richardson moves beyond mere *depiction* of haptic experience, in order to appeal to the haptic sense of her own readership" (95). However, while the novel offers visual and sonorous appeals to the reader as means of producing haptic absorption, external voice interrupts this absorption, threatening, on the one hand, a return to the old "masculine" realism defined by the monologic expression of the author's ideas, and, on the other, the shock of inassimilable otherness.

The "eternal" toward which Miriam Henderson quests in *Pilgrimage* is interrupted by foreignness—whether it is the foreignness of purportedly masculine forms of knowledge or of racial, national, and ethnic otherness. The desire for an "eternal" that reconciles separated senses into a synaesthetic whole as well as imbricating binaries of essence and social identity, real and virtual space, and exterior and interior conceptions of time is contrasted throughout *Pilgrimage* with barriers to this reconciliation that, I argue, we can map onto Richardson's distrust of the sound film. Between situated knowledge and a desire for transcendence into the "eternal," *Pilgrimage* provides a superb case study for looking at a historically-located modernist claim for an inward "centre" or outward "eternity" outside this location.

2. Sensory Divisions and Synaesthesic Sutures: Image, Music, and Voice

Oddly, despite the influence of cinema on its narrative structure, the medium doesn't appear explicitly in *Pilgrimage*. The novel moves from the 1890s through the early years of the 1900s, when cinema was becoming a popular amusement in London.[68] The early films of this transitional period perhaps defied the "boundlessness" that Richardson would find in the silent films of the 1910s and 1920s. As Racheal Low catalogues, films shown in London from 1896-1906 fell into four categories: short actualities, or the filming of everyday scenes for the pleasure of recording and watching movements (as with the Lumières' train film); topical films, or news stories; comedies; and trick films, or films that exploited the camera's capacity for illusion. The Gaumont films directed by Alice Guy-Blaché (the subject of chapter four), for example, were popular in London (Low 45). In other words, the short films that dominated the period in which *Pilgrimage* is set could be characterized as a "cinema of attraction," in Tom Gunning's terms. It wasn't until the development of cross-cutting and then continuity editing around 1905 that

[68] The first film was shown in London in 1896 and, David Atwell notes, films were a leisure activity akin to roller skating in London in the early 1900s.

narrative films would begin to fully develop their own self-referential significations. Richardson, based on her *Close Up* columns, is apparently most drawn to these proto-classical examples of silent cinema. To find evidence of what she values from the cinematic within *Pilgrimage*, then, we need to look to protocinematic spectacles like the Wagnerian "music-spectacle-drama," photography, and synaesthetic experiences with music rather than to early cinema itself. These cultural artifacts enable the representations of interior reality that Richardson found in the silent cinema "with musical accompaniment," of the 1910s and 1920s.

In her critique of *Pilgrimage*, Elaine Showalter writes, "By placing the center of reality in the subjective consciousness, and then making consciousness a prism that divides sensation into its equally meaningful single colors, Richardson avoids any discussion of sensation itself, especially as a unified and powerful force" (261).[69] However, the transcendence of this sensational division appears throughout *Pilgrimage* and in Richardson's film writing with the invocation of synaesthesia. One of Richardson's criticisms of the talkies is, in fact, that they divide sensation. She writes that sound promotes "the theatre, ourselves, the screen, the mechanisms, all fallen apart into competitive singleness" (194). Synaesthesia, on the other hand, is enacted through the image and through music, but not through the spoken voice which is simultaneously disembodied and reduces the individual to his or her identity. In the next chapter, I will explore Woolf's engagement with synaesthesia and with disconnected images and sounds, arguing that these apparently oppositional manifestations are deeply interconnected in her fiction,

[69] While I am focused on sense perception more generally, Showalter also implies that this disembodiment into the subjective skirts eroticism, a charge often leveraged against *Pilgrimage* to which Kristin Bluemel provides an excellent counterargument in *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism* (1997). Claiming that *Pilgrimage* represents the desire for a new means of expressing lesbian identity and eroticism, Joanne Winning also challenges this idea that *Pilgrimage* is focused only through Miriam's head, and not also through her body, in her 2000 study *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson.*

a connection that springs from an interrelationship between synaesthesia and the concomitant separation of seeing and hearing as integrated senses within media environments of modernity. In his study of *Pilgrimage*, David Stamm likewise focuses on sensory elements of seeing and hearing in Richardson's novel, culminating in a synaesthetic sensibility realized at an (unnamed) Wagnerian opera in *Dawn's Left Hand.* Miriam Henderson, the heroine and controlling consciousness of *Pilgrimage*, attends the opera with Hypo and Alma, the characters representing H.G. Wells (Richardson's lover) and his wife. Miriam thinks, "There is no possible representation that can compete with the vast scenes this music brings to your mind. I shall see, with the lit stage behind me, instead of the Queen's Hall orchestra in front, much bigger scenes than the stage could hold. No one can see and hear to perfection at the same moment. And the wonder of Wagner is that through your ears he makes you see so hugely" (170). Like a young Woolf experiencing the transcendence of the moment at Bayreuth, Miriam, perceiving synaesthetically, becomes transported to other experiential possibilities through a melding rather than division of sensory perception.[70] Stamm notes that "[o]pera in general and Wagner in particular are sometimes defined as the prototypical synaesthetic works of art in the 19th-century (with film as their 20th-century equivalent): this very open understanding of the term 'synaesthesia' simply implies the simultaneity of different sense perceptions that are not necessarily put in parallel . . ." (222). In Richardson's case, the conjoining of sense perceptions

[70] This passage in *Dawn's Left Hand*, together with a passage in the next novel-chapter *Clear Horizon* in which Miriam refuses her lover Michael Shatov's marriage proposal a second time while at a concert, can be read as a rewriting of a passage in Wells' suffrage novel *Ann Veronica* (1909). In this passage, Ann Veronica is distracted from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* by an acute awareness of her suitor Ramage's physical presence. Wells writes that Ann Veronica "woke out of her confused dream of involuntary and commanding love in a glory of sound and colors to discover that Ramage was sitting close beside her with one hand on her waist" (201). Unlike Ann Veronica, when Michael asks Miriam to marry him in the midst of the concert, she "was aware of Michael only as an embodied commentary on what was in her mind" (305).

that Miriam finds in Wagner is what aligns opera with silent film and separates it from sound cinema as a parallel tracking of image and voice.

Even purely visual technologies in *Pilgrimage* induce an experience of synaesthesia. Optical devices in *Pilgrimage* include miroiramas in *Pointed Roofs* and the kaleidoscope and stereoscope in *Interim*.[71] The photograph also appears as, on the one hand, anticipatory of the indeterminacy and translation of interiors of the silent cinema, and, on the other, as a static technology trapping its subjects in definitive representation. In *The Tunnel*, for example, Miriam attends a lecture on Daguerre with her employer, the dentist Mr. Hancock. Miriam's attention is fully won when "the colour photographs came" to make her "too happy for thought" (107). Contrasting Miriam and Mr. Hancock's experience, Richardson writes:

> Miriam felt that he understood, as her ignorance could not do, exactly what it all meant scientifically; but there was something else in the things as they stood, blinding, there, that he did not see. It was something she had seen somewhere, often.
>
> 'They'll never touch pictures.'
>
> 'Oh, no—there's no atmosphere; but there's something else; they're exactly like something else.'
>
> Mr. Hancock laughed, a little final crushing laugh, and turned away skeptical of further enlightenment.
>
> Miriam sat silent, busily searching for something to express the effect she felt. But she could not tell him what she felt. There was something in this intense hard rich colour like something one sometimes *saw* when it wasn't there, a sudden

[71] For a comprehensive reading of these visual instruments, see Carol Watts' chapter "Miroiramas: Film and Richardson" in her study *Dorothy Richardson.*

> brightening and brightening of all colours till you felt something must break if they grew any brighter—or in the dark, in one's mind, suddenly, at any time, unearthly brilliance . . . the one real certain happy thing. And he would not have the patience to hear her try to explain; and by that he robbed her of the power of trying to explain . . . His own thoughts were statements . . . They were not *things*. It was only by pretending to be interested in these statements and by taking sides *about them that she could have a conversation with him. He liked women who thought in these statements.* (italics in text, 108)

In this passage, the colored daguerreotype becomes representative of the "something" that can't be spoken in "statements," like the "thing itself" that pervades Woolf's fiction. Framed in terms of light, brilliance, and color, this unsayable image becomes more real than the reality of statements, as ineffable and transcendent as the silence of the Quakers. There is movement in the colored daguerreotype, the breaking of light and color into darkness that removes this technology from the "pictures" that Mr. Hancock says they will never touch, the paintings that have often represented women "as works of art," objects rather than subjects of vision.

Later, however, in *The Trap*, Richardson writes of the photograph, "Things are there, set out clearly, stating their essence . . . [I]t is all written in the book of consciousness. Written indelibly. Because one can look to and fro, from one thing to another, and each remains in place, presenting always one face, like a photograph" (503). In this passage, the photograph comes to represent stasis rather than movement, fixing things in writing, consciousness, and destiny, rather than enabling their movement and transformation. Acting upon the individual rather than with her, the photograph signifies the impossibility of escape, entrapment in identity and in a historical moment. In this passage, the photograph is factual, presenting "always one face" rather

than real in Richardson's terms because it doesn't break through stasis with movement or darkness with light as the images do in the daguerreotype passage. The paradox at the heart of cinema, as Laura Marcus, Garrett Stewart, and Mary Ann Doane have convincingly demonstrated, is that it is a moving photograph—an illusion of movement composed of still images. In her first *Close Up* column, Richardson explicitly privileges the moving image (with sound accompaniment) over the photograph when she writes, "Music is essential. Without it the film is a moving photograph and the audience mere onlookers. Without music there is neither light nor colour, and the test of this is that one remembers musically accompanied films *in colour* and those unaccompanied as colourless" (161).[72] In putting photographs in motion to music, the cinema transcends its photographic base. Given Richardson's interest in reality as movement through interior space and through the time of memory, it is understandable that the cinematic paradox between the photographic still and cinematic movement reveals itself in Miriam's consideration of the photograph in the novel. In Richardson's cinema writing, the technologies of sound cinema reintroduce the fixity of the photographic still through tying character into linear narrative. She writes in "Dialogue in Dixie," "In becoming suddenly vocal, *locally* vocal, amidst a surrounding silence, photograph reveals its photographicality . . . all, cinematographically, is lost" (195). The movement she had found in the silent cinema again becomes static with synchronized sound.

[72] Although, when comparing "pictures" (or paintings) to films and (high art) films to the (popular) movies, Richardson uses "snap-shots" as an analogy for the visually valuable but culturally denigrated, writing that "the movies will remain. The snap-shots will go on all the time. And there will always be people who infinitely prefer the family album of snap-shots to the family portrait gallery" (189). See Maggie Humm, *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures*, for an elucidating explanation of how the family snapshot formed a "modernist syntax" important for women writers like Woolf as well as Richardson.

In *Pilgrimage*, music provides another means of transcendence predicated on synaesthesia that anticipates Richardson's extolling of the silent cinema "with musical accompaniment" in *Close Up.* Playing the piano alone in a rooming house, for example, Miriam produces images from sound:

> The notes sounded soft and clear and true into her mind, weaving and interweaving the sight of moonlit waters, the sound of summer leaves flickering in the darkness, the trailing of dusk across misty meadows, the stealing of dawn over grass, the faint vision of the Taj Mahal set in dark trees, white Indian moonlight outlining the trees . . . over all a hovering haunting consoling voice, pure and clear, in a shape, passing, as the pictures faintly came and cleared and melted and changed upon a vast soft darkness . . . (*Interim* 334).

Recalling the chiaroscuro of brilliance and darkness evoked by the daguerreotypes, the piano music sets images moving in which darkness and light (represented here by an Orientalist conception of India) are set in meaningful and fluid contrast by the "voice" of the instrument.[73] Absorption in a sense, whether image or musical sound, paradoxically also produces a transcendence akin to synaesthesia. In *Backwater*, for example, when Miriam plays the piano, "everything was dissolved, past and future and present and she was nothing but an ear . . ." (31). In Miriam's becoming "nothing but an ear," Richardson recalls Lee's "eye accustomed to Eternities" in *Satan the Waster* and Woolf's "gigantic ear stuck to a gigantic head" in *Between the Acts*, a sensory "pathway to reality" that makes the eternal (and the internal) accessible.

[73] She is likely playing *Four Indian Love Lyrics,* poems by Laurence Hope set to music in the early 1900s. These poems were also made into several silent films in both the UK and USA, beginning in 1907. Thank you to Talia Schaffer for this reference.

Unlike music, however, human voice as speech appears throughout *Pilgrimage* as simultaneously disembodied and entrapping, locating the individual in a national, class, and gender identity. At the same time, Richardson is fascinated by accents, dialects, and the facial expressions that accompany forms of speech.[74] The text is so full of observations like the one that the voices of Russian anarchists are "chalkily smooth and toneless against all the Cockney sounds vibrating in the crowded space, *all* harsh and strident, *all* either facetious or wrangling," that it is unsurprising that the Quakers' silence at the end of *Pilgrimage* provides Miriam a reprieve from the cacophony (314). While Miriam determines others through their voices, noting class, regional, and national distinctions, her own voice alienates her from herself. In one passage, for example, Richardson writes:

> I must create my life. Life is creation. Self and circumstances the raw material. But so many lives I can't create. And in going off to create my own I must leave behind uncreated lives. Lives set in motionless circumstances.
>
> A voice sounded in the hot darkness. Just outside the window. Almost in the room.
>
> "I'll do you *in.* If I get in, I'll do you *in.*" Sound of furniture violently collided with. Perrance. Mrs. Perrance.
>
> And I'm sitting up trembling. This, the beginning of this, is what woke me a few moments ago. The end of their Bank Holiday.

[74] Richardson was purportedly an excellent mimic, and she had a memorable "voice" and "ear." Recollections of Richardson often focus on her voice or her aural abilities over her appearance. Her friend and sister-in-law Rose Odle, for example, in a 1957 talk following her death, states, "How did she look? To me then she was voice—a golden voice and joyousness . . . [I]t could be caressing or thunderous—but in its deep and resonant tones was always great beauty." John Cowper Powys, in the first critical study of *Pilgrimage* published in 1931, writes, "One deeply rooted trait in Miriam stems backwards, it is hard not to feel, directly to her author. I refer to her abnormal ear for musical euphonies and dissonances" (41).

> Again a crash.
>
> I'm full of horror. Too full of horror for pity. It is *my* voice this time that must sound the awful cry from the window.
>
> With her feet on the floor and her hands feeling for garments, she listened. (508).

This moment is primarily auditory, as the visual is occluded by voice and the space of contemplation is interrupted by unseen horror. At the same time as Miriam considers how she has not reproduced and has thus left "uncreated lives" in "motionless circumstance" in pursuit of her own self-creation, she hears the scene of domestic violence, so that familial life becomes itself evidence of a "motionless circumstance." Speech is frequently aligned not only with masculinity, but also with violence and contamination in both Richardson's writing on sound cinema and in *Pilgrimage.* In response, Miriam's voice separates from her reflective self to occupy the subject position, so it is not the "I," or Miriam, who cries, but, rather "*my* voice." As if to reinforce this separation, the passage then moves from the first to the third person as Miriam becomes other to herself.

While the silent cinema, music, and images transcend lived divisions to reveal what Richardson considered a real, interior reality, speech forms barriers within *Pilgrimage* as well as within her cinema writing. It is these barriers I will skirt in the next sections, focusing first on Richardson's distinction between "talkies" as mass, mechanical entertainment and the "play-spirit" of silent cinema as communal "boundlessness." I will then explore how Richardson's perception of the talkies' as reinforcing "foreignness" and gender divisions maps onto the narrative of *Pilgrimage.* I conclude this chapter by considering the reality that Richardson

believed sound cinema obscured, a reality simultaneously conjoining virtual and real spaces and lived time and memory just as synaesthesia conjoins sound and image.

3. Talkies and the "Play-Spirit" of Silent Cinema

In an early article, "Wanted: The Play-Spirit," written for *Plain Talk* in 1913, Richardson qualifies "amusements," like "theatres, music halls and picture palaces" as distractions akin to "stimulants and drugs," writing:

> Walk down the queue outside any London theatre, watch the crowds streaming into the picture palaces, and the strongest impression left with you will be the expression of emptiness and boredom on most of the faces—emptiness and boredom varied here and there by that wretched strained look in the eyes that means expectation of excitement. But for the most part emptiness—absolute emptiness. (6)

This early article contradicts Richardson's sanguine celebration of the silent cinema as a spiritually-invigorating medium in *Close Up*, recalling instead the critiques of modern leisure culture by Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin. What Richardson calls the "meek, well-drilled body" of the crowd, for example, corresponds to Benjamin's claim that "[w]hat the Fun Fair achieves with its Dodgem cars and other similar amusements is nothing but a taste of the drill to which the unskilled laborer is subjected in the factory" (*Illuminations* 176). However, even in this early article critical of distraction, Richardson finds a possibility for modernity's amusements not in the externalizing and defamiliarizing effects of shock imagined by Kracauer and Benjamin but in the active participation of the spectator, realized through the "play-spirit."

As Laura Marcus notes, Richardson's film writing reintroduces aura to cinema. She frequently describes the cinema theater as a "congregation" or "sanctuary," and emphasizes not

the fragmentary but the holistic, the continuity (exemplified in the title of her column, "Continuous Performance") of the medium. In "The Play-Spirit," she writes:

> Amusements, as most of us have them at present catered for us, at so much a head, are a loss of life. Life, indeed, has grown to many of us a poor thing—because we ourselves have grown poor. We have no stake anywhere. We are tired, helpless bits of the machinery of machine life. We are dying, in so far as this is all, dying individually and collectively. But there is the margin, there are the divine faculties hidden within us, and there *is*—leisure, be it ever so little, for some. If we will, we can, with that little lever of leisure, transform ourselves and move away in time the mountains that obstruct the way to freedom. People who can 'play,' who know the joy that comes from faculties trained and controlled and used, will not long tolerate slavery. (6)

The "play-spirit" is the responsibility of the spectator as much as the "loss of life" is the ostensibly external transformation of human beings into "tired, helpless bits of the machinery of machine life." Imaging individual agency, however, Richardson points to a "margin" and sees within an apparently bankrupt "leisure" the seeds of its spiritual renewal. In making this the responsibility of the individual spectator rather than calling for a collective politics in the Marxist tradition, Richardson exposes her emphasis on individualism and a "female egoism." It is this individualism that leads Miriam to strongly disagree with the Fabians with whom she otherwise sympathizes in *Pilgrimage*.

Despite her bleak perspective on modern mass "amusements" in 1913, however, by the time she wrote back to Bryher about writing for her journal *Close Up*, Richardson revealed herself as a cinema spectator who saw for seeing's sake. While the majority of the contributors

of *Close Up* ascribed to co-founder Kenneth Macpherson's aestheticist "film for film's sake" ethos, Richardson was, as she put it, more interested in "FILM" than in individual films. She wrote to Bryher's request of her contribution to the journal fourteen years after "The Play-Spirit" in 1927, "We are thrilled by the prospect of the Film paper. High time there was something of the sort. I can't however see myself contributing, with my penchant for Wild West Drama & simple sentiment . . . However: I have some notes somewhere and will look them up" (234). Richardson's "audible running commentary," as Marcus calls it, might be seen as an enactment of this "play-spirit," a critical commentary at the margins that rhetorically calls into being what Richardson had originally hoped for modern "amusements." Thus, while she is critical of explicitly pedagogical cinema, Richardson tacitly positions her work as aesthetically educational, a position not dissimilar from Hugo Münsterberg's hope that the silent cinema would aesthetically educate Americans en masse.

This aesthetic education is dependent upon hailing an active spectator against the "bits of machinery of machine life." In her first *Close Up* column, Richardson begins her exploration of cinema through contrasting it with the theater. Cinema is qualitatively different than theater for Richardson because it is voiceless. She claims that cooperation between the audience and the spectacle cannot take place "unless the audience is first stilled into forgetfulness of itself as an audience. This takes power. Not force or emphasis or noise, mental or physical. And the film, as intimate as thought, so long as it is free from the introduction of the alien element of sound, gives this co-operation its best chance" (161). While "[p]oetry, epigram, metaphor, chit-chat social, philosophic or scientific . . . are for the stage," cinema enables "all dramatic moment," for "even upon the stage, the actual drama moves silently, speech merely noting its moment" (167). With the talkies, however, sound renders the cinema less able to call the active spectator into being

than the theater. In her *Vanity Fair* essay, "Talkies, Plays, and Books" (1929), Richardson critiques Wells' claim in *The King Who Was a King* that sound cinema is the art of the future. She now writes of the theater, "For the uniqueness of a single living and developing work of art the film is no substitute. It appears, finished and uncheangeable. You may applaud or disapprove, but your collaboration is passive and helpless. Nor can you hand a bouquet to the film star" (56). With the talkies, the "only pull of film over stage that is beyond question, is the economic pull," or the accessibility of cinema to a larger audience across classes. The talkies effectively remove the spectator from active participation in the cinematic.

Likewise, literature surpasses the talkies in enabling privacy and the active control of the reader. In her *Close Up* column "Almost Persuaded" and in "Talkies, Plays, and Books," Richardson brings up Erich Maria Remarque's World War I novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) as an example, perhaps because the war novel seems rife for sound film adaptation. Indeed, Remarque's novel was made into an early American sound film (accompanied by a silent version) in 1930 by Lewis Milestone. This film utilizes, as Richardson imagines, the whining of shells and the explosion of mortars to produce a disturbing realism. As a contemporary *New York Times* critic put it, the film "bears witness to the improvement that audibility has wrought in screen offerings, for not only are the performances of the players more intelligent and their appearances like real soldiers, the annexing of sound to the battle scenes surely causes them to be infinitely more stirring than such flashes would be in a silent production" (Hall X5). Richardson writes, on the other hand, in anticipation of the production:

> A stereoscopic film, complete with sound imagery, might enormously enhance and deepen typical episodes, and, by generalizing the application of the whole, shock whatever onlooker—for a moment—into horrified recognition. But for that

> onlooker there would not be the intimate sense of having shared an irrevocable personal experience that is the gift of Remarque's quiet book. (191)

Acknowledging the possibilities of "sound-imagery," Richardson nonetheless hesitates for fear of diegetic sound as a division between spectator and spectacle, a threatening of the "play-spirit" she had earlier extolled. This "shock" into "horrified recognition," which had precisely been the radical value of the cinema for many theorists, is elided by Richardson's privileging of the intimacy of the "quiet book" and her lauding of interior connection over an uncanny recognition of the war's destructive noise.[75] In her column "A Thousand Pities," Richardson alludes to diegetic film sound as a violent interruption by citing bomb noises as examples of a "wrong direction" in the development of film sound. She writes:

> The sounds that have so far been added to film, of falling rain, buzz and hoot of motors, roll of thunder, pistol-shots and bombs, are sometimes relatively harmless. And if they were an indication of experiment, suggesting that sound is to be tested and used with discrimination, their presence might cease to be disturbing. But they are being introduced not in any spirit of experiment or with any promise of discrimination. . . . The bombs are the forerunners, evidence of a blind move in the wrong direction, in the direction of the destruction of the essential character of the screen-play. (167)

[75] Of course, Richardson's concept of the novel as a silently read communion with the reader is a historically specific, even modernist, concept. Garrett Stewart and Don Ihde have both evidenced the historic specificity of reading as a visual, rather than an aural, activity. While Stewart and Ihde place this transition from the aurality to visuality of text in the late-medieval period, we might also consider the multiple roles the Victorian novel served, including being read out loud before an audience, in contrast to Richardson's conception of the novel as read silently.

In her later critiques of the synchronized-sound film in "Dialogue in Dixie" and "The Film Gone Male," Richardson describes synchronized speech as dangerous and destructive. The sounds of bombs threatening "the destruction of the essential character of the screen-play," for example, later sublimate into the war references of Richardson's column "The Film Gone Male."

Richardson claims that the silent film "with musical accompaniment," on the other hand, like the opera, enables the spectator transcendence through promoting a capacity to "see hugely." This synaesthetic experience is, paradoxically, predicated on sensory division. In her *Close Up* column, "A Tear for Lycidas," Richardson writes:

> The two eloquences, the appeal to the eye and the appeal to the ear, however well-fused, however completely they seem to attain their objective—the spectator-auditor—with the effect of a single whole must, in reality, remain distinct. And one or the other will always take precedence in our awareness. And though it is true that their approximate blending can work miracles the miracle thus worked is incomparably different from either alone. (197)

While Richardson deviated from the other *Close Up* contributors (like H.D., Bryher, and Kenneth Macpherson) through her acceptance of the film star and happy endings and her interest in working-class female audiences, she aligns herself with the magazine's modernist ethos in "A Tear for Lycidas" by claiming that talkies can only ever be "diversions." On the other hand, "[t]o this peculiar intensity of being, to each man's individual intensity of being, the silent film, with musical accompaniment, can translate him" (200). In her inversion of subject and object, the silent film (which is not truly silent, for it is accompanied by music) acquires an agency capable of rendering "individual intensity of being" visible, and, as she suggests with the verb "translate,"

legible. It is not "man" who translates the silent film, but rather the film that renders him, and the talkies interrupt the transfixing of this interior movement.

Richardson writes of her trepidation over the possibility of the sound film, "Why do we hesitate? Is it that the interference between seer and seen is to be too complete? The expressionism, the information, the informatory hint altogether too much of it? The onlooker too overwhelmingly conducted?" (192). She concludes that if "beside the film grown solid and sounding the silent magic lantern show persists as we are told it will" then both forms might be worthwhile together. However, she fears the extinction of the silent cinema for its loss of economic feasibility before the sound cinema which returns, on the one hand, to "amusements" or "distractions" and, on the other, to the declarative statements and conducting "metaphors" of stage or literature. What I argue in the following sections is that Richardson's distrust of the divisions between sound cinema and spectator can be found in the complex negotiations of identity in *Pilgrimage* and Richardson's (and Miriam's) desire to circumscribe these identities until she finds in silence a fundamental escape into a reality otherwise foreclosed by division. At the same time, this reality is predicated on the divisions that Richardson writes over. Speech is the most telling intrusion into the text as well as into Richardson's response to sound cinema.

4. The "World-Citizen" and the Alien: Foreignness in *Pilgrimage* and in the Talkies

In *Interim*, Miriam reflects on the "cosmopolis," thinking:

> [O]ver the globe, dotted here and there, were people who read and thought, making a network of unanimous culture . . . Yet it was an awful thought that the world might gradually become all one piece; perhaps with one language; perhaps English if those people were right who talked about Anglo-Saxon supremacy . . . It sounded secure and comforting, like a police station; it would be wonderful to

> belong to a race whose language was spoken all over the world. All the foreigners would simply have to become English. But that brought a dreadful loss. (343)[76]

In Richardson's *Close Up* columns, cinema becomes a means of constructing "world-citizens" outside the divisions of language and outside the "police station" of English feared by Miriam. In her column, "Cinema in Arcady," Richardson writes of an increasing world-awareness affected through cinema that "though doubtless something is lost, and the lyric poet is shedding many an unavailing tear, much undeniably is gained. These youths and maidens in becoming world-citizens, in getting into communication with the unknown, become also recruits available . . . for the world-wide conversations now increasingly upon us" (186). Rather than any individual language, the visual language of silent cinema provides a means for the negotiation of world culture. Elsewhere in her cinema writing, Richardson compares the cinema audience to a congregation engaged in silent contemplation. In "Cinema in Arcady," however, as in several of her other columns, the cinema becomes an agora enabling communication beyond language.[77] While Richardson admits that it is "not possible perfectly to disentangle from . . . the wireless, the newspaper and the gramophone, the influence of cinema in the rural districts" enables a

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[76] While Miriam's reflection certainly seems prescient of the contemporary hegemony of English as a world language, at least partially effected through institutions like Hollywood cinema, it is also important to look at her assumption of English as an unchangeable given in this passage. The rise of English has not made "all the foreigners" English (an assumption disproven in Miriam's own time by the multiple colonial and post-colonial cultures speaking English); rather, it has produced world Englishes that have adapted and changed the language in location-specific contexts. The "police station" of English, "secure and comforting," might likewise evidence Miriam's own contested relationship to the masculinist "statements" of spoken language in *Pilgrimage.* In *Dawn's Left Hand*, on the other hand, Miriam does acknowledge the multiplicity of English, thinking, "when people discuss the possibility of English becoming a world speech, I always wonder which English they have in mind" (164).

[77] Richardson, although unique in her expression of it, was not alone in this sentiment. In his chapter on *Close Up* in *Camera Works*, Michael North explains how the desire for a universal language in modernity influences modernist and avant-garde responses to sound film as a perceived foreclosing of internationalist possibilities. See pages 83-109.

language-transcendent dialogue (although, as Michael North has shown, Richardson, like the other *Close Up* writers, ignores the cultural-specificity of visual languages).

If it does not seem intuitive that silent film could form a conversation, Richardson believed that cinema spectators helped develop the medium even as they were educated through it in a dialogic exchange. Gevirtz, Marcus, and McBane point out that, while she fears the exteriority of synchronized-sound speech, Richardson privileges "inner speech" in her film columns. This interior speech is conceived of not only within the individual, but also between the audience and the screen. In "The Front Rows," for example, Richardson writes of the young boys who occupy the front of the cinema, "They are there in their millions, the front rowers, a vast audience born and made in the last few years, initiated, disciplined, and waiting" (174). In "The Spoon-Fed Generation," Richardson asks if the "scare-mongers" who see popular film as an end to literate civilization have considered that "film-audiences, popular picture audiences, growing by the bread they have eaten, are maturing, are themselves cultivating and improving the medium from which they have drawn life?" (205). Combining the cinematic agora with the cinematic congregation, Richardson emphasizes the missionary possibilities of all movies, their extension of "cramped consciousness" in "The Cinema in the Slums." She writes that the "irreducible minimum of whatever kind of goodness is in any kind of picture not deliberately vicious . . . is civilization working unawares" (181).[78] The cinema provides, for Richardson, a new, mass, and dialogic cosmopolis complicated by the arrival of sound film. Of course, as Garrity and Rebecca Egger note, it is in "The Cinema in the Slums" that Richardson's democratic, universalizing desire for the cinema confronts most problematically her missionary

[78] Richardson was active in *Close Up*'s movement against British film censorship, endorsing the missionary qualities of film in general rather than any specifically didactic film in particular.

aims. Garrity claims, “Hers is a fundamentally revisionary project that may be indebted to imperialism for its metaphorical basis, but seeks to recast it as a trope of inclusivity rather than conquest” (96). While I agree that an imperialist ethos informs Richardson’s cinema writing, it is precisely in this recasting of cosmopolitan union as inclusive that Richardson envisions the dialogic, the active spectator as world citizen, and, hence, possessing an agency to talk back. Richardson’s lament for the loss of silent cinema as a “boundless” and totalizing cosmopolis is inextricable from her objection to the sound film as a bounded and totalizing text reinforcing subject and object positions.

Pilgrimage’s cacophony of voices is elided within the cosmopolis of the cinema until the talkies again reintroduce difference. Even as she resists this introduction of difference, however, Richardson participates in it through schematizing silent and sound film along lines of race and gender.[79] While Richardson aligns the feminine with silent film, as I will explore in the next section, she defines the ostensible authenticity of “Negro” voice as a counterpoint to the technological reproduction of speech. In “Dialogue in Dixie,” Richardson’s first column on the synchronized-sound cinema, the reproduction of spoken voice opposes the laughing and singing of black voices in the early sound film *Hearts in Dixie* (1929). “[R]ich Negro-laughter” represents “[p]ure film alternating with the emergence of one after another of the persons in the drama into annihilating speech” (194). Richardson here echoes and qualifies the sentiment of

[79] While in most of *Pilgrimage*, women are generally assumed to be of European and non-Jewish descent (confirmed by Miriam’s general reference to Jewish women as “Jewesses”) in *Revolving Lights,* Miriam equates women with “Hindus,” recalling the Hindu servant in the suburban North London home of her friends the Brooms. She thinks that “the ‘civilized woman of the future’ [will] be either bright obedient assistants or providers of illusion for times of leisure. Two kinds, neatly arranged, each only having one type of experience, while men have both, *and* their work, into which women can only come as Hindus, obediently carrying out tasks set by men, dressed in uniform, deliberately sexless and deferential” (367). The analogy Miriam makes between women and Hindus, however, is one which reifies the servile status of Indians in England while protesting that (English) women shouldn’t be put in it.

Close Up's August 1929 race issue that objections to sound film should be reconsidered in the case of "Negro" films. Elmer Anderson Carter, for example, writes of *Hearts in Dixie* that "the rich resonance of the Negro voices in speech and in song prove that in the field of the 'talkie' they cannot be surpassed" (119). Richardson's column deviates from those of the "race" issue, however, in that, while she lauds black voice singing and laughing, it is the speaking black voice that most exposes sound cinema's aesthetic, philosophical, and technological barriers. A passage in *Deadlock* that reveals a complex nexus of foreignness and identity through the silent image of a black man at a café in the East End illustrates why Richardson might separate "Negro" laughter and song from reproduced speech in her writing on the sound film. In *Deadlock,* Richardson writes:

> Miriam sat, appalled by the presence of a negro . . . Mr Shatov's presence was shorn of its alien quality. He was an Englishman in the fact that he and she could *not* sit in the neighbourhood of this marshy jungle. But they were. They had. They would have. Once away from this awful place she would never think of it again. Yet the man had hands and needs and feelings. Perhaps he could sing. He was at a disadvantage as an outcast. There was something that ought to be said to him. She could not think what it was. Every time she sipped her bitter tea, it seemed that before she should have replaced her cup, vengeance would have sprung from the dark corner. Everything hurried so. There was no *time* to shake off the sense of contamination. It *was* contamination. The man's presence was an outrage on something of which he was not aware. (217)

In this passage, the black man becomes a scapegoat for the ambivalence Miriam feels towards her Russian-Jewish lover Michael Shatov. With his racial otherness, this presence turns the alien

Michael English by virtue of contrast. As part of her interior dialogue on the man's offensiveness and her questioning of why she should find him offensive, she thinks that "[p]erhaps he could sing," as if such a performance would restore balance since dialogue is foreclosed by Miriam's inability to think of the "something [that] ought to be said to him," a foreclosure that threatens a punishing violence of "vengeance" and promotes "contamination."

Rebecca Egger claims that in "Dialogue in Dixie," Richardson "registers her anxiety about the speaking black subject by opposing the sound film as a dangerously mixed medium; sound is thus critiqued as a technology of miscegenation" (19). The passage in *Deadlock* bears out Egger's point, although refracted through the fictional construction of Miriam. While Richardson plays with rendering foreign accents and regional dialects throughout *Pilgrimage*, the novel's sole black presence is silent and cannot be spoken to. Furthermore, this is an uncomfortable and anticipatory silence, not the silence providing a "pathway to reality" that Richardson extols in her novel. For Richardson, singing and laughing black voices in *Hearts in Dixie* "translate" blackness, rendering it intelligible. In forcing an awareness of the cinematic apparatus as well as the particularity of speech, dialogue, on the other hand, reinforces the separation that she fears in *Deadlock.* Richardson writes in her film column, "Now for dialogue. Now for careful listening to careful enunciation and indistinctness in hideous partnership. A mighty bass voice leapt from the screen, the mellowest, deepest, tenderest bass in the world, Negro-bass richly booming against adenoidal barrier and reverberating: perfectly unintelligible" (194). Combining a failure of technology with the representation of "black voice," sound film disrupts the cosmopolis of silent film through not only a reduction to particularity but also through an introduction of the alien, the "adenoidal barrier" that entraps and mystifies. Just as the silence Miriam encounters between herself and the black character is a bad silence rife with

threat, the isolated and prolonged moment which is elsewhere transcendent in the novel becomes here the bad moment, realized through an anxiety in which there is "no *time*," not in the sense of an eternity outside of time that Miriam seeks in *Pilgrimage*, but in the sense in which time has run out, interrupting interiority with the threat of otherness revealed through an unintelligible voice.

In "Dialogue in Dixie," Richardson writes that a "soloist, the simulacrum of a tall sad gentleman . . . gave us, on behalf of the Negro race, a verbose paraphrase of Shylock's specification of the claims of the Jew to be considered human" (194). Invoking *The Merchant of Venice*, Richardson recalls a flashback of Henry Irving playing Shylock in *The Tunnel*, a scene that could be read as a foreshadowing of the appearance of Michael Shatov and the concomitant anxieties he brings her. In *Pilgrimage*, Miriam's desire to surpass ethnic and national difference in favor of the self-possessing individual is countered by the inscrutability of the alien represented by Michael. While rendered familiar through default in the passage quoted above, Michael signifies an alien encounter. The intensity of this encounter between Miriam, as an emancipated new woman free to make her own romantic choices, and Michael, as a radical Russian Jew, have made *Pilgrimage* an exemplary text for parsing British modernist women's writing with interwar anti-Semitism. Miriam both identifies with Michael as an outsider and, in turn, identifies him simultaneously with the alien outside of her Englishness and with the most insidiously oppressive patriarchal elements within English culture that she feels are alien to her. Jacqueline Rose, Jean Radford, and Maren Linett have all discussed how Miriam's femininity, Englishness, and ethos of individualism are complicated in relation to Michael's foreignness and Jewishness. Linett, for example, claims, "*Deadlock* uses the Jew as a screen on which to project Miriam's deep ambivalence about gender" (205). Likewise, Rose maintains that gender and

Jewishness are inextricably connected in turn-of-the-twentieth-century modernity in that both women and Jews exemplify simultaneously a private and extra-nationalist identity. Just as the man in the East End café becomes a screen for Miriam's most abject feelings about Michael, Michael becomes in *Pilgrimage*, as Linett claims, a screen onto which Miriam projects a knot of anxieties about femininity and masculinity and about the English and the alien.[80]

In "The Woman and the Jew," Jean Radford explores Miriam and Michael's connections and disconnections through one of Miriam's touchstone texts, Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1906). Weininger's influence "challenges" Miriam. Richardson writes in *Pilgrimage*, "Shadows were there. The shadow of Nietzsche, the problem of free-love, the challenge of Weiniger [sic.], the triple tangle of art, sex and religion" (186). This text explicitly yokes women and Jews as embodiments of lower forms of life, casting both beneath the ideal of Aryan masculinity. Weininger writes that Jews, "like women, because they are nothing in themselves . . . can become everything. The Jew is an individual, not an individuality; he is in constant close relation with the lower life, and has no share in the higher metaphysical life" (320). In accepting Weininger's "challenge," Miriam adopts his masculine/feminine binary while inverting its ideals. While Garrity argues that Miriam as a camera eye represents an all-encompassing imperialist gaze, we might also see Richardson's engagement of "nowhere and everywhere" as a celebration of what Weininger denigrates, women's (and Jewish) "nothingness" and concomitant "everythingness." Slavoj Žižek has explored how Weininger, with his virulent misogyny, racism, and anti-Semitism, inadvertently hits on a key point for feminists in his

[80] In addition, McBane makes a convincing argument for Richardson's (mis)-identification with blackness in her "Dialogue in Dixie" column. Looking at discourses of "sapphic modernism" in which the lesbian writers of *Close Up*—H.D., Bryher, and Richardson--participated, McBane claims that Richardson's racism in her first essay on the synchronized-sound film needs to be considered in the context of "racialized tropes in which 'the primitive' is imbricated with sexual deviance" (197).

acknowledgment that an identity defined as ulterior, whether it be Woman or Jew, doesn't really exist at all in that such an identity can be everything or nothing, a mere projection. While Žižek's Lacanian approach of dismantling the subject might contradict the political necessity for group identification (although Žižek's point is, of course, exactly that there is no contradiction) his contention illuminates Miriam's own conflict between the "eternal" and the alien as it manifests within *Pilgrimage*. In her novel and in her cinema writing, Richardson appeals to an underlying authenticity, or essence, to reverse the qualitative distinctions between a binary of masculinity and femininity. In paradoxically embracing Weininger's concept of women "as nothing in themselves" who can then "become everything," Richardson turns the tables by assuming this indeterminacy as an ideal opposed to masculine definition.

The problem of Jewishness is less easily resolved, however, because Miriam identifies it with the patriarchal and the tribal as well as with the feminine and the individualist, as Linett shows. She is also, although fascinated by Michael, deeply anti-Semitic, identifying herself as English only against him. Through this self-definition as negation, Miriam implicitly ascribes to Weininger's qualitative fear of Jewish "nothingness" and "everythingness" even as she reverses his terms in favor of women. The racial or ethnic other, embodied by the "negro" male or the Russian Jewish lover is simultaneously too determined and too ungraspable, just as the voices of sound film foreclose the open-ended possibilities of the "continuous performance," and, at the same time, are inscrutable, like the "adenoidal barrier" making voice fuzzy. The alien is often identified with masculinity in *Pilgrimage,* although the definite contours of Anglo masculinity become situational and fluid in terms of other ethnicities and races. While rendered suspect in the case of foreign identities, against which Miriam continually identifies herself as English, this

indeterminacy and fluidity is celebrated in the feminine, which is aligned with the "unconquerable, unchangeable eternal feminine" of the silent film.

5. Women's Chatter, Silence, and "The Film Gone Male"

In a later *Close Up* column devoted to synchronized-sound cinema, "The Film Gone Male," Richardson positions silent film, representative of feminine expression, as an important contribution to an expanding cosmopolis. In this column, however, unlike in "Cinema in Arcady," an increasingly interconnected world space is conceived of as a battlefield:

> It has always been declared that it is possible by means of purely aesthetic devices to sway an audience in whatever direction a filmateur desires . . . It is therefore comforting to reflect that so far the cinema is not a government monopoly. It is a medium, a weapon, at the disposal of all parties and has, considered as a battlefield a grand advantage over those of the past when civil wars have been waged disadvantageously to one party or the other by reasons of inequalities of publicity, restrictions of locale and the relative indirectness and remoteness of the channels of communication. The new film can, at need, assist Radio in turning the world into a vast council-chamber and do more than assist, for it is the freer partner. And multitudinous within the vast chamber, as within none of the preceding councils of mankind, is the unconquerable, unchangeable eternal feminine. Influential. (207)

Richardson's description of film as a "battlefield" in which partners are evenly matched or as a "vast council-chamber" implying that film is a form of influence akin to "Radio," suggests vocal as well as visual communication and rhetorical power. Nevertheless, the thesis of her column retains the superiority of silent over sound cinema. Richardson's casting of the mass medium of

cinema as a battlefield recalls the rhetorical (and physical) struggles of the "sex wars" of the 1910s as well as the two world wars. Miriam is not involved in suffrage movements in *Pilgrimage*, but her lover Amabel is. Richardson provides a harrowing description of Amabel's imprisonment for her radical political activity in the novel, but the ultimate aim of women's enfranchisement into the state disinterests Miriam who seeks transcendence through "female egoism," or an individualism so intense that it paradoxically subverts the boundaries of selfhood.[81] Likewise, the rhetorical power of silent cinema for Richardson is its refusal to speak in proclamations.

In "The Film Gone Male," Richardson states that the silent film is "essentially feminine," characterized by its "being" and its "insistence on contemplation . . . [as] a pathway to reality" (206).[82] The sound film, on the other hand, represents a masculine "becoming" which results in the conversion of film into a "vehicle of propaganda" (206). Richardson's gender essentialism in this column has been oft-cited, and this essentialism, as well as its questioning, appears throughout *Pilgrimage* in reflections on how women speak and listen differently than men. For Richardson, silent cinema enables the private, unspoken experience of women to enter the public

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[81] Throughout *Pilgrimage*, Miriam evinces distaste for organized political action not only in the context of suffrage, but also in her involvement with Fabian socialist circles. While understanding the socialist argument for economic equity through her own sense of entrapment in a low-wage job and her hard-scrabble lifestyle, she balks at what she sees as a socialist denial of individualism.

[82] "Pathway to reality" is a reference to Richard Burdon Haldane's 1902-1904 Gifford Lectures, which Miriam attends, anachronistically, in *Deadlock* (163-64). In this series of lectures, Haldane attempts to articulate the "Ultimate Reality" outside bounds of time and space, a singular reality approached through millennia of philosophical thought and criticism but not yet achieved. Haldane also questions language as the means through which to achieve this reality, writing, "It is not for our senses that the world is an aggregate of self-subsisting parts, possessing independent reality. It is only for thought, and as relations in thought, that these parts exist. Language leaves out of account that being made what it is through reflection which is the essence of reality, and speaks as though the object were exhaustively defined apart from this relationship" (199).

sphere. As Watts writes, "[F]ilm provides a space of imaginative negotiation in Richardson's work, whereby the private dimensions of one individual's self-realizations resonate in terms of a wider public horizon of experience" (82). This "public horizon" of cinema becomes, however, complicated by the introduction of sound film. In associating the "international" or "universal" language of silent cinema with femininity, Richardson aligns sound with nationalism, a separation reflected in *Dawn's Left Hand* when she writes, through Miriam, that "[t]hought of all together, reverberating all over the world in all its languages, they [men's voices] seemed just an unpleasant noise, as if they were born deaf" (150).

Women, however, also "chatter" both in the cinema theater and in *Pilgrimage.* The difference between men's and women's talking for Richardson is that women do not speak in the "statements" that men recognize as valid. Miriam recognizes this female "chatter" at the Daguerre lecture she attends with Mr. Hancock when a beautiful woman walks into the room, captivating his attention. Acknowledging the mechanisms underlying Mr. Hancock's gaze and its hailing by the woman, Miriam thinks, "[W]omen will talk shamelessly at a concert or an opera, and chatter on a mountain top in the presence of a magnificent panorama . . . " (*The Tunnel* 106). She thinks that, if men critique women for their "shameless" talking before the auratic, then "men mustn't stare at [women] and treat them as works of art" (106). In "The Film Gone Male," women's chatter likewise indicates a mask constructed for men. Richardson claims that women "[c]hatter, chatter, chatter, as men say. And say also that only one in a thousand can *talk.* Quite. For all these women use speech, with individual differences, alike: in the manner of a façade" (206). While she explores the possibilities of silence in her film writing and in *Pilgrimage*, women are paradoxically defined by their "façade," their fulfillment of a role. Their talk is thus recognized by men, as by Miriam and Richardson, as mere "chatter" covering an inscrutable

center. In *Interim*, Richardson writes, "Women who had anything whatever to do with men were not themselves. They were in noisy confusion, playing a part all the time" (321). Defending women before Michael Shatov, Miriam states, "Views and opinions are masculine things . . . [W]omen can hold all opinions at once, or any, or none. It's because they see the relations of things which don't change . . . and mostly the importance to men of the things men believe. But behind it all their lives are untouched'" (*Revolving Lights* 259).[83]

In a column about the problem of women talking at the movies, Richardson writes that "so long as she is there, gone is the possibility of which any film is so delightfully prodigal: the possibility of escape via incidentals into the world of meditation or of thought" (176). On the other hand, "the dreadful woman asserting herself in the presence of no matter what grandeurs unconsciously testifies that life goes on, art or no art and that the onlooker is part of the spectacle" (176). In this column, women's chatter forms an important resistance to art, her maintenance of a "centre" from which she is an "amateur realist" parrying the "illusions of art" (176). While this point seems to contradict Richardson's conceptualization of silent cinema as a "pathway to reality," it corresponds to her promotion of an active spectator in her writing on cinema and her hailing of an active reader in *Pilgrimage*.[84] Marcus claims that this "chatter" provides an "audible running commentary" on the film akin to Richardson's own writing on the cinema. Words and images are not always antagonistic if their association is appropriately constructed. Captions, for example, testify that, as Richardson writes, "art is still a word about life and

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[83] The dinner party in *To the Lighthouse* seemingly exemplifies Miriam's point and attests to both Woolf's and Richardson's response to Victorian conceptions of femininity. We might also recall Mrs. Ramsay's "wedge-shaped core of darkness" and her pleasure in losing herself.

[84] This might also explain Richardson's valuing of audience speech elsewhere, as in "The Front Rows," in which she notes that the young boys' "audible running commentary is one of the many incidental interests in a poor film" (173).

literature never ceases to be pictorial" (165).[85] Inner speech, for Marcus, McBane, and Gevirtz, helpfully differentiates forms of speech as Richardson differentiates forms of silence in *Pilgrimage.* Casting writing as an "adventure," "journey," or "quest," much of Richardson's ethos is the paradoxical search for a silent center in the midst of language. She produces hundreds of pages over more than twenty years in search of silence, weaving silence into her novel through ellipses, both at the sentence and narrative levels, and through a focus on interstitial spaces and times rather than on linear narrative. By focusing on the "chattering" woman who testifies that "the onlooker is part of the spectacle," Richardson turns toward the margins to find significations stitched into an immersive experience of cinema.

This "centre" beneath "chatter" defines, for Richardson, women's "being" against masculine "planful becoming." The distinction likewise appears in *Pilgrimage.* In *Revolving Lights,* Richardson writes, "Man's life was bandied to and fro . . . from *word* to *word.* Hemmed in by women, fearing their silence, unable to enter its freedom—being himself made of words—cursing the currents of careless speech with which its portals were defended" (278). Foreignness enters the text through, on the one hand, a divide of incomprehension and, on the other, talking that merely reduces essence to a particularized identity. Unbounded subjectivity is threatened with objective delimitation. Richardson's gender divisions privilege, however, women's greater interiority conceived through silence. She writes:

[85] Marcus claims that Richardson's film writing adopts three forms which attempt, in fact, to translate image into words: "the 'inner speech' which silent film, in particular was held to enable"; "the ventriloquizing of a form of demotic, unpunctuated speech intended to represent a feminized, mass cultural consumption"; and a "free associative form of writing which, in its production of perceptual and cognitive connection and dissociation, became a way of acting out, and thinking through, the forms of attention and distraction brought into being by the cinema" (359).

> Men weave golden things; thought, science, art, religion, upon a black background. They never *are*. They only make or do; unconscious of the quality of life as it passes . . . But there is a moment in meeting a woman, any woman, before speech, when everything becomes new; the utter astonishment of life is there, speech seems superfluous, even with women who have not realized that life is astonishing. (*Revolving Lights* 280).

These differences are cast in terms of depth and surface in which women's superficiality masks an interiority more capable of accessing reality than men's knowledges of "science, art, religion." While these male means of encountering reality appear to have depth they are, in Richardson's reversal of the qualities of each side of the binary, superficial through depending on a forward movement, a "becoming," predicated on separation rather than simultaneity.

In her essays, as in *Pilgrimage* through Miriam's "mirror-focus," Richardson interrogates a gendered binary of surface and depth evidenced not only in Edwardian "masculine realism," but also in late-Victorian impressionism. Scholars such as Kathy Psomiades and Rita Felski have noted how a surface/depth binary defined femininity at the fin-de-siècle. The figure of the femme fatale, for example, evidences the poles of these divides in her embodiment of deceptive appearances. Walter Pater's ultimate femme fatale in *La Giaconda* from *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), for example, displays "beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions" (9). In her essay "Women and the Future," Richardson rewrites Pater's reading as "more than the portrayal of essential womanhood. The secondary life of the lady is clearly visible. Her traffic with familiar webs, with her household and the external shapings of life. When Pater said that her eyelids were a little weary, he showed himself observant. But he misinterpreted the weariness"

(39). Richardson wrests *La Giaconda* from Pater's reading through demystifying the cause of this weariness, seeing revealed through the image not the fantastic world of the revenant conceived by Pater, but, rather, a domestic world of lived reality generally unexplored by men through their "science, art, religion."

Richardson's interpretation of the figure of *La Giaconda* as "weary" recalls her observation of the "onlookers," the female audience that she finds herself amidst in her first film column for *Close Up*, an audience of "[t]ired women, their faces sheened with toil . . . Many of the women sat alone, figures of weariness at rest . . ." (160). In her memorial of Richardson, her sister-in-law Rose Odle recounts perhaps the same Monday to which Richardson refers in her *Close Up* column, writing that cinema was "*[a] new thing* . . . for women to have such a break was new. She scarcely saw the picture for dwelling on their shining eyes and rested faces." Although the interiority Richardson imagines for *La Giaconda* is as inaccessible as that imagined by Pater, it is the reality captured by Da Vinci, its expression of an everyday world, that is most instructive for Richardson, not its suggestion of fantastic mysteries. Instead, Richardson imagines an interior reality that she knows cannot be fully represented, perhaps like the interiority of Mrs. Brown speculatively explored by Woolf.[86]

Woolf's review of Richardson's *Pilgrimage* is best-known for citing it as a prime example of "a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender"

[86] In *Pilgrimage*, Miriam even speculates on a union across gendered divisions, rethinking essentialism in her acknowledgement of historical location. She writes, "Ought men and women to modify each other, each standing, as it were, half-way between the centre and the surface, each with a view across the other's territory? Or should they accentuate their natural differences? *Were* the differences natural?" (*Revolving Lights* 271). Miriam's description of herself as a "third term," of gender, "as much man as woman," nicely described in Garrity and Joanne Winning's work, attests to a simultaneous manifestation and undoing of a binary of gender and of surface and center.

(367). The less cited part of Woolf's review, however, is the most salient for defining how and why both their projects might conjoin in a shared approach to cinema as a new means of signification. Woolf writes, "[W]e are often made uncomfortable by feeling that the accent upon the emotions has shifted. What was emphatic is smoothed away. What matters to Maggie Tulliver no longer matters to Miriam Henderson . . . The heart is not, as we should like it, a stationary body, but a body which moves perpetually, and is thus always standing in a new relation to emotions which are the same" (368). What separates the modern woman writer as conceived by Woolf, in other words, is movement, and it is the cinema as well as new forms of writing that enable this transformation. For Richardson, sound film threatens to make the body stationary, to form of the "continuous performance" a discreet narrative with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and to replace an eternal, feminized knowledge with a counter move toward linear narrative, promoting, on the one hand, a return to realism, and, on the other, an interruption of totalizing, immersive, and "boundless" experience.

6. Memory, Silence, and Reality

Richardson begins "The Film Gone Male" with an invocation of memory as an alive and atemporal entity. She writes, to quote the first paragraph in whole:

> Memory, psychology is to-day declaring, is passive consciousness. Those who accept this dictum see the in-rolling future as living reality and the past as reality entombed. They also regard every human faculty as having an evolutionary history. For these straight-line thinkers memory is a mere glance over the shoulder along a past seen as a progression from the near end of which man goes forward. They are also, these characteristically occidental thinkers, usually found believing in the relative *passivity* of females. And since women excel in the

> matter of memory, the two beliefs admirably support each other. But there is memory and memory. And memory proper, distinct from a mere backward glance, as distinct from prolonged contemplation of things regarded as past and done with, gathers, can gather, and pile up its wealth only round universal, unchanging, unevolving verities that move neither backwards nor forwards and have neither speech nor language. (206)

In Richardson's recasting of values attributed to each side of a masculine/feminine binary, it is the feminine that reflects the temporal simultaneity of a lived memory. In equating this "continuous performance" of memory with the cinema, Richardson anticipates André Bazin's claim that cinema transcends the "mummy complex" of painting and sculpture through the reanimation of movement (9). For Bazin, cinema is the "creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real" (10). His spiritually-inflected approach to the realism of cinema illuminates a similar ethos within Richardson's cinema writing. Richardson, however, unlike Bazin, gives agency to the audience as an indivisible part of the cinema. In her redefinition of "memory proper" as an active experience, rather than a passive one, she analogously describes cinema spectatorship as both active and contemplative.

Richardson identifies the cinema as the realm of this living memory in her column "Tears for Lycidas." In this column, written as sound film began to replace silent film in London in the late 1920s, the silent film is memorial. "Again and again, in this strange 'memory' (which, however we may choose to define it, is, at the least, past, present and future powerfully combined) we should go to the pictures; we should revisit, each time with a difference, and, since we should bring to it increasing wealth of experience, each time more fully, certain films stored up within" (196). The silent cinema exposes linear time as an illusion. Memory

simultaneously becomes a separation between actors in time and a conjoining that sutures temporal divisions. Unlike paintings and sculptures, but like the novel, the cinematic object can be brought back to life, although always with a difference. Woolf, in her 1926 essay on the cinema, sees cinematic images as dissociated both from their referent and from the spectator, and, hence, occupying a netherworld in which the documentary becomes aesthetic. In Richardson's cinematic vision, however, film is more akin to the memory apparatus Woolf whimsically invokes in her autobiography *Moments of Being:*

> Is it not possible--I often wonder--that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence? And if so, will it not be possible, in time, that some device will be invented by which we can tap them . . . Instead of remembering here a scene and there a sound, I shall fit a plug into the wall and listen to the past. I shall turn up August 1890. I feel the strong emotion must leave its trace; and it is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves again attached to it, so that we shall be able to live our lives from the start. (75-6)

For Richardson, however, a relived experience is both identical to and separate from its memory. Cinematic spectatorship is analogous to the thin separation between dreaming and awakening. It divides the self between "onlooker," or spectator, and actor. In a column on lucid dreaming, "A Sculptor of Dreams," Richardson describes a state like her definition of cinema spectatorship as she writes:

> On that one occasion I awoke undisturbed from the midmost of sleep—is there anything stranger than the waker's immediate knowledge of the distance from either day?—to find myself . . . busily alive in the past, and at the same moment

> onlooker at myself living . . . As actor, my known self, who, if consulted beforehand, would have refused the experience with groans and tears, was living through whole strands of life, not in succession, but as if it were all in one piece, superficially disconnected portions woven together, and was at the same time aware of the inquisitor presenting them. (426)

This could also describe the movement of *Pilgrimage* between narrative and reflection. As Jacqueline Rose notes, there are three temporal dimensions interwoven into the text—the lived time of Miriam (which, as George H. Thomson's reader's guide attests, is rigorously chronological despite the subjective focus), the time of the reflective narrator recalling her quest into writing, and the time in which Richardson herself composed her complexly autobiographical novel. The tritemporalities of *Pilgrimage* illuminate the problem of autobiography which feminist critics have found simultaneously so rich and so problematic in *Pilgrimage.* Just as the cinematic is a kind of doubling, an "absent presence," so is Dorothy Richardson the absent referent for her alter ego, Miriam Henderson, and both are mediated through the novel's narrator.

Memory's other is, of course, forgetting, and these two phenomena are indivisible in *Pilgrimage*. Forgetfulness creates memory as an awareness transcending the lived moment. In *The Trap,* for example, sensory description enables access to memory beyond the instrumentality of active experience. Richardson writes:

> Another spring vanished . . .
>
> A sheet of crocuses singing along the grass alley. White, under trees still bare. Crocuses dotting the open grass with June gold . . .
>
> Suddenly a mist of green on the trees, as quiet as thought. Small leaves in broad daylight, magic reality, silent at midday amidst the noise of traffic.

> Then full spring for three days. Holding life still, when the dawn mists drew off the sea and garden and revealed their colour.
>
> Every one had loved it, independent of other loves. Become for a while single. Wanting and trying and failing utterly its beauty. Every one had had those moments of reality in forgetfulness. Quickly passing. Growing afterwards longer than other moments, spreading out over the whole season; representing it in memory. (498).

In this passage, reality becomes "magic" through forgetfulness and enters memory as a lengthening of the moment. This reality universalizes through the particular, appealing to "every one" driven toward a higher-order reality, the "every one" likewise hailed by the cinema. Initially, this passage seems to stage the confrontation of active and contemplative life in Henri Bergson's terms, enabling an access to a *mémoire pure* through everyday experience.[87] As Eveline Kilian notes in her contrast of Bergson and Richardson's sensibilities of time, "But whereas for Bergson movement *is* the essence, for Miriam Henderson and for Richardson movement is *the means* to get to the essence. It is a catalyst that helps dislodge the subject from its spatial and temporal moorings, and sets it free to travel to its centre of being, which is in itself stable and immutable, however" (45). This seems to be Richardson's intrinsic project, and she explicitly identifies such an access with the feminine.

The infusion of urban space with memory through Miriam's *flâneuse*'s experience of London aligns with Richardson's experience of silent cinema, as if film were an ideal space for etching a "magic reality." Anne Friedberg's connection between city wandering and the cinema

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[87] Richardson maintained, however, that she was unfamiliar with Bergson's work. See Gloria Fromm's biography, 391. Nevertheless, the infusion of Bergson into British intellectual circles undoubtedly exposed Richardson to his ideas. She was familiar with T.E. Hulme, who was heavily influenced by Bergson, for example.

through a "mobilized virtual gaze" is particularly salient here. Friedberg claims that "cinema developed as an apparatus that combined the 'mobile' with the 'virtual.' Hence, cinematic spectatorship changed, in unprecedented ways, concepts of the *present* and the *real*" (3). Applying *flânerie* to the cinema as much as the urban street, Friedberg maintains that "cinema spectatorship offers a spatially mobilized visuality, but, also, importantly, a temporal mobility" (3). Friedberg's claim accords with Bryher's assessment in *Close Up* of *Pilgrimage* as the "real English film for which so many are waiting" (210)**.** Bryher elaborates this statement by positing that "in each page an aspect of London is created that like an image from a film, substitutes itself for memory" (210)**.** The urban and cinematic mobilities of the new woman, of the *flâneuse*, influenced new constructions of gender. For Miriam, a turn-of-the-twentieth-century British new woman in the city, the private dissolves into the public as the middle-class angel of the house is turned out into the streets. Richardson presents a more complicated version of impressionism (evidenced, for example, in her rewriting of the Paterian interpretation of *La Giaconda* in "Women and the Future") than Fredric Jameson finds in Joseph Conrad, who tacitly realizes his impressionism as "a kind of utopian compensation for capitalist rationalization and reification" endemic to modernity (Matz 41). In *Pilgrimage*, Richardson celebrates an impressionism defined by Miriam's assertion of modern female subjectivity inextricable from the movements of modernity.

Richardson's version of impressionism is also manifested in her ambivalence towards linguistic tropes. At the end of *Pilgrimage*, Miriam reflects on the way thought "depends upon the source of one's metaphors. We all live under a Metaphorocracy. . . . I'm giving up thinking in words" (607). Richardson herself echoes Miriam in referring to the Metaphorocracy in her letters, writing, "Oh the helplessness surrounding the helpfulness and manifold uses of speech,

the dangers within the delights of metaphor. By their metaphors ye shall know them. Metaphorocracy, that is what nearly all thought lives under, all philosophies" (661). Elisabeth Bronfen, in her spatial study of *Pilgrimage,* claims:

> The subject of metaphors is brought into play, firstly, at the thematic level of Miriam's explicit statements on metaphors. Secondly, it also emerges in the text where different imaginative techniques which aim to create a simultaneity of events (such as the memory or fantasy of an imaginary space, an encounter in a third space of creative activity as a simultaneous gathering of different events) clearly employ a method analogous to that used in metaphors and thus also describe a metaphorical process. (192)

Miriam's desire for a new form of expression realizes itself in Quaker silence even as the narrator of *Pilgrimage* begins her long writing project, effectively "thinking in words" (although, as McBane notes, her desire might best be described as the search for a "voice without words") (223). As Bronfen claims, metaphor becomes a means through which Miriam judges approaches to reality, rendering tropes fluid and rhetorical, almost nominalist, rather than fixed. What is fixed, however, is the unavoidable necessity of "thinking in words," of using words to construct worlds, in Bronfen's terms, for oneself and others. Poetics situated on metaphor, as the French and Russian avant-garde filmmakers (who wrote for *Close Up* and were a perennial fascination for its British writers) attest, was also a concern for a cinematic avant-garde seeking a new visual language. Eisenstein's montage, for example, is a visual corollary to metaphor making meaning from two different images conjoined in space and time. For Richardson, however, the supremacy of the cinematic over the literary is not centrally its capacity to enable new metaphors,

but is, rather, its capacity to mirror the real and, in this defamiliarizing process, to suggest a new relation to reality that can escape, or synaesthetically transform, words.

Synchronized sound threatens a return to the symbolic realm of language and an invasion into a silent cinematic world "with musical accompaniment." It represents for Richardson a return to foreclosed identities, the world predestined by what Richardson saw as determined, masculine statements. The cinema, and by cinema Richardson meant the "movies," including westerns, melodramas, and crime films as well as avant-garde films, enabled a different relation to reality, one in which the happy ending was not false or pandering, as it was for many modernist cinema critics, but, rather, brought to the surface the fundamental goodness of life. Just as *Pilgrimage*'s ending is the narrator's coming into writing, an ending that enables the novel to be reread on a continuous loop, Richardson may not have minded the happy ending because, for her "continuous performance," it wasn't an ending. Sound, on the other hand, signals an end—the end of the development of silent film, the end of its perceptual transformations in favor of the linearly narrative and the symbolic, the end of a quasi-synaesthetic experience with an audience in theater space for an awareness of a clunky, technologically-determined apparatus. Sound cinema introduced an outside, an other, to silent cinema. What Richardson's cinema columns remind readers of *Pilgrimage* is that in the opposition between silence and speech exists a struggle with both past forms of articulation and with the construction of future forms deeply imbricated with questions of identity. Richardson picks up again and again the question of the relationship between representation and reality, almost endorsing moments of their collapse in her terms, while fearing this collapse in the terms of the other (either alien or masculine) as a fundamental falseness like that which Miriam finds when she looks up "Woman" in the dictionary. Vocal interruption threatens to destroy a silent

"boundlessness" through pointing to the intransigent historical and social identities underwriting Miriam's (and, arguably, Richardson's) search for an eternal and internal reality.

Chapter Three

Modernist Synaesthesia and Late Modernist Megaphonics: Audiovisual Environments in the Novels of Virginia Woolf

Dorothy Richardson had perceived (silent) cinema aesthetics as enabling an active, absorbed spectator freed from symbolic language. The medium seemingly achieved by its inherent structure what Richardson had attempted to do with words in her exhaustively long novel *Pilgrimage*. However, the spoken dialogue of the talkies foreclosed the possibilities of cinema for Richardson. Woolf, in the 1920s, also saw cinema as constructing new forms of signification through its privileged, visual access to reality. Unlike Richardson, however, Woolf's perspective toward technologies of perception valued the cinema for exposing a reality exterior rather than interior to the human. While Richardson balked at the talkies, Woolf accepted their challenge more dialectically. If we read her final novel *Between the Acts* (1941) in the context of the international rise of sound cinema, we can trace, as I will argue in the final section of this chapter, an exploration of the meaning of an audiovisual technology that simultaneously engages an audience and exposes inhuman otherness. Woolf has proven an important figure for theorists forming intermedial bridges between cinema and literary modernism. What if, however, we heard cinema as well as saw it in her literary texts? I will argue, in this chapter, that listening for the sounds of cinema in Woolf's fiction reveals her debt to the multimedia aesthetics of opera and film, and, furthermore, that she translates these aesthetics into fiction in order to interrogate inherited cultural values.

Focusing on the importance of photography and cinema to Woolf's fiction, Maggie Humm and Emily Dalgarno have argued that these media enabled Woolf to develop a feminist aesthetics challenging experiential and epistemological assumptions of reality. Humm reads Woolf's fiction against her family snapshots and photo albums, arguing that, within the

apparently pedestrian productions of family photographs, Woolf finds a "modernist syntax" that distinguishes her representation of family relations and identity from male modernists. Dalgarno likewise argues that Woolf's feminism prompts her to explore new means of seeing through visual media. She writes that Woolf's fiction dramatizes a conflict between an inherited "mathematical perspective" of perception and "the mechanical regulation of light" introduced by the photographic and cinematic camera. While "mathematical perspective," or the single-point perspective initiated in the Renaissance is, according to Dalgarno, a "visible that is modeled on the desiring subject," camera vision exposes "a quite different visible in which the subject is witness to an event created by light, that exceeds the parameters of retinal vision" (6). Camera vision allows Woolf to explore meaning outside what Dalgarno calls the "master signifiers" of an inherited visuality predicated on the universal (male) subject looking at a feminized object. In both Humm's and Dalgarno's accounts, Woolf's feminism is aesthetically apparent in its challenge, learned from the camera, to traditional ways of seeing. This feminism is explicitly tied to the reconstruction of the gaze through the mechanical agency of the photographic or cinema camera.

In their recent work on cinema and literary modernism, Laura Marcus and David Trotter have devoted chapters to the influence of cinema on Woolf's writing practice, framing this influence not as a revision of the gaze, but rather as the enabling of a (genderless) narrative voice predicated on absent presence. Trotter argues that it is the recording capacity of the cinematic medium rather than its representative capacity, its art, that most interests literary modernists. While Winifred Holtby, for example, in her 1932 biography of Woolf entitles the chapter on *Jacob's Room* (1922) "Cinematograph," claiming that Woolf uses cinematic stylistic techniques like cross-cutting, flashbacks, and close-ups in her novel, Trotter argues that it is rather the

moments in Woolf's fiction in which human beings are not central subjects that most exemplify the "cinematic" qualities of her novels. Exploring Woolf's interest in "eyeless" worlds, or worlds as they appear when "we are not there," Trotter claims that the ontological status of the cinema as a present absence allows Woolf to construct a narrative voice unfocalized by a human subject. Marcus likewise writes that the "relationship between presence and absence . . . at the heart of filmic ontology" is essential to theorizing the influence of the cinematic medium on Woolf's fiction, while she also explores Woolf's aesthetic interest in the cinema as a new form of language (135). The decentering camera vision engaged by Humm and Dalgarno manifests in Trotter's and Marcus' account of cinema's impact on Woolf's fiction as a conceptualization of present absence, a perspective emerging from the automatism of the machine rather than through human perception.

Woolf's fictional use of the camera eye has been perceived as a challenge to inherited ways of seeing and an adoption of an inhuman vision, but it has yet to be placed centrally in context with her invocation of aural recording technologies.[88] The considerable engagement with both urban and rural soundscapes in Woolf's fiction, for example, suggests that the cinema camera was not the only recording device that impacted her literary construction. Lamenting a lack of vocabulary for writing about the narratological effects of sound in literature, Cuddy-Keane proposes the terms "diffusion" and "auscultation," or the focusing of character perception through sound. Exploring the use of sound in Woolf's novels, Cuddy-Keane posits that sounds (urban and rural) produce "worldliness" as autonomous, inhuman voices and connect characters in their "web" or "hive," lending spatial dimensions to the social relationships represented in her fiction. In short, if the "camera eye" vision in Woolf's texts is disembodied, then we might say

[88] Laura Marcus does devote one section of her chapter on Woolf to suggestions of sound cinema in *The Years* (1937) (157-71).

that sound embodies even as, in her novels of the 1930s, Woolf introduces a disembodied, "megaphonic" voice addressing not only the reader without the text, but also the audience within.

To put a sound cinematic reading into narratological terms, we might begin by pointing out that the camera eye provides one answer to Erich Auerbach's famous question in *Mimesis*, asked of *To the Lighthouse*, "Who is speaking?" Auerbach notes the "multipersonal representation of consciousness" as well as the "polyphonic treatment of the image," the differing representations of time, and the importance of everyday events in the novel (540-41). Considering Auerbach's question from a cinematic perspective, we might argue that the camera likewise perceives through character perspectives (without occupying them fully), develops new temporal experience both through story and through technical tricks (like slow motion), and captures and transforms, from its inception, the everyday event.[89] This cinematic narrative perspective is particularly evident in the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse*—a section in which Mrs. and Mr. Ramsay even become quasi-cinematic images, seen by Mrs. McNab as "faint and flickering" on the walls.[90] What does "Time Passes" sound like, however? Woolf writes, "Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence" (195). These are thus the sounds of silence and they might be characterized in the terms of the film theorist Béla Balász, who hoped that recorded film sound could capture "the noise of the alien world . . . We accept seen space as real only when it

[89] The German film theorist, Siegfried Kracauer, was in fact indebted to Auerbach's section on *To the Lighthouse* in the articulation of his theory of cinema's "redemption of physical reality" through its capture of everyday moments (Trotter 162).

[90] In the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse*, Auerbach's question becomes particularly salient with respect to Mrs. McNab who, as Anna Snaith claims, competes with the voice of the narrator to undermine the class prejudice of the narrative (76-8).

contains sound, for these give it dimensions of depth" (119). Woolf anticipates Balász's interest in enfolding "dimensions of depth" produced by recorded sounds in her own medium, emphasized by the silence in the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse* that "folded them round" or, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, by the "leaden circles" of Big Ben striking. Woolf writes in her diary, while composing *The Waves*, "Could one not get the waves to be heard all through? Or the farmyard noises? Some odd irrelevant noises?" (3: 236). If the camera eye can be seen as an analogue to Woolf's construction of narrative voice, then recorded sound is likewise an important analogue for Woolf's representation of enveloping and multivalent environments in her fiction.

While Woolf suggests cinematic experience with the dissociated visual images of a narrative camera eye in her novels and likewise invokes recording technologies through the introduction of ambient noises, we should also look to her early reviews of proto-cinematic multimedia spectacles like the opera to complete what I have pinpointed in earlier chapters as a dialectic of sensory division and sensory union inherent to this period. As Jane Marcus writes, "The critics failure to 'hear' Woolf's novels, although they 'see' them so well that they have concentrated on her ability to render words as painting, comes in part from ignoring the fact that her college was Covent Garden Opera House" (51). The contrast between reality and its aesthetic realization is apparent throughout Woolf's literary career beginning with her early journalism on the operas of Richard Wagner. A return to these reviews alongside a consideration of Woolf's relationship with the British opera composer Ethel Smyth throughout the 1930s elucidates the influence of these late-19th-century proto-cinematic spectacles on her fiction. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Woolf's novels exemplify a concern with both detached visual aesthetics and with an immersive aesthetics predicated on sound as much as vision.

I realize, in this chapter, that I am perhaps dangerously collapsing media and ignoring the very obvious fact that Woolf's medium is the literary, not the cinematic. Furthermore, it might be objected that my "sound cinematic" reading is historically unanchored, as there is no evidence of Woolf having anything to say about this development and her only article on film, "The Cinema," suggests that, if she did pay any attention to the rise of sound cinema, she probably did not approve of its technological evolution from the silent. I admit that I am returning to the analogic argument that Trotter objects to—the idea that developments in one media might be mapped onto another without rigorous historical and biographical justification. However, the example of sound cinema, with its hybrid origins, provides a means of synthesizing inquiry into technologically-reproduced vision and sound in Woolf's work. Furthermore, the rise of sound cinema and the aesthetic and political implications of its development greatly concerned modernist writers, including, implicitly, Woolf, who put a premium on the aesthetic value of nonverbal and visual (hence "silent") cinema. The synaesthetic ideal of the total work of art is dialectically constituted by the sensory divisions of recording technologies, and these constitutive possibilities of disunion and union, as I will argue in this chapter, are profoundly evidenced in Woolf's work. In the first section of this chapter, I will trace the rich contrasts that Woolf presents in both her critical and fictional texts in the 1910s and 1920s between multimedia, even synaesthetic, immersions into operatic spectacles and the sensory dislocations of the cinema. In the 1930s, Woolf's novels begin to more clearly imbricate these contrasting sensorial experiences through technologies of perception, culminating in her final novel *Between the Acts* (1941). This novel, as I argue in the second section, simultaneously critiques the mass media institution of sound cinema and recognizes its dialogic (rather than dialogue-based) possibilities.

1. "Lifted Out of the Ordinary World": "Impressions at Bayreuth," "The Opera," and "The Cinema"

Virginia Woolf's 1926 essay "The Cinema" has recently been subject to critical interest in the rethinking of the relationship between literary modernism and the visual environments of modernity.[91] I would like to open this section with what I read as a neglected companion piece to "The Cinema," her only essay on the medium, published seventeen years earlier and right before that purportedly fateful year of 1910—Woolf's 1909 article published in *The Times* on Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, "Impressions at Bayreuth." Woolf ends "The Cinema" claiming:

> [W]hile all the other arts were born naked, this, the youngest, has been born fully clothed. It can say everything before it has anything to say. It is as if the savage tribe, instead of finding two bars of iron to play with, had found, scattering the seashore, fiddles, flutes, saxophones, trumpets, grand pianos by Erard and Bechstein, and had begun with incredible energy, but without knowing a note of music, to hammer and thump upon them all at the same time. (843)

The opening of "Impressions at Bayreuth," however, reveals that the cinema isn't the only art form that Woolf sees as "infant." Her article on Wagner begins, "The commonplace remark that music is in its infancy is best borne out by the ambiguous state of musical criticism" (288). In "The Cinema," Woolf uses the musical metaphor to make clear what she means by cinema being "born fully clothed"—the technical capabilities of the medium have exceeded aesthetic technique, the development of new forms of signification through the medium. What could she mean by the "commonplace remark on" the infancy of music, however? Surely, as suggested by her later comparison between cinema and music, technology and technique have developed

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[91] See Leslie Kathleen Hankins, "'Across the Screen of My Brain': Virginia Woolf's 'The Cinema' and the Film Forums of the Twenties" (1993); David Trotter, *Cinema and Modernism* (2007); Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse* (2008); and Maggie Humm, *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures* (2003).

mutually in the production of music as an art form. Since she is writing about Wagner, however, Woolf might be alluding to the multimedia form of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the total work of art, as an infant form of music, or a new conceptualization of what music is and does.

Both the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the cinema enable Woolf to imagine a new language outside of her own medium of words. In the case of the cinema, she theorizes the possibility of representing a "residue of visual emotion . . . [s]omething abstract, something which moves with controlled and conscious art, something which calls for the slightest help from words or music to make itself intelligible, yet justly uses them subserviently . . ." (843). In "Impressions at Bayreuth," she writes that the value of music is its ability to signify without words and that "music owes something of its astonishing power over us to this lack of definite articulation" (291). Woolf's valuing of this escape from words in other media is reflected in her descriptions of her own writing practice. In a letter to Vita Sackville-West while she worked on *To the Lighthouse* in March of 1926, for example, Woolf writes:

> Now this is very profound, what rhythm is, and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it; and in writing (such is my present belief) one has to recapture this, and set it working (which has nothing apparently to do with words) and then, as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it . . . (3: 247).

Writing to Smyth while she worked on *The Waves*, Woolf likewise describes her process for the novel as "writing to a rhythm and not to a plot. And thus though the rhythmical is more natural to me than the narrative, it is completely opposed to the tradition of fiction. . . ." (4: 204). Attempting to rethink formal boundaries, Woolf conceives of the novel itself as a new medium. According to Sara Danius, "new perceptual and epistemic realms" opened by technological

innovation in the late-19th-century resulted in a synaesthetic ideal and provoked an attempt to "transcend genre" in both high and low forms of art, even as these technologies fragmented sensory experience, reifying sound and vision, for example, as discreet experiences (3-4). Danius' claim is born out in Woolf's writing on the "infant" medium of music reconceived as a total work of art, on the untimely awkwardness of the cinema as an art form, and on her desire to construct a new form of literary composition. These new media enable new means of signification, and, hence, new modes of experience.

"Impressions at Bayreuth" ends in a synaesthetic unity miming the experience of the total work of art:

> [W]e wander with *Parsifal* in our heads through empty streets at night, where the gardens of the Hermitage glow with flowers like those other magic blossoms, and sound melts into colour, and colour calls out for words, where, in short, we are lifted out of the ordinary world and allowed to breathe and see—it is here we realize how thin are the walls between one emotion and another; and how fused our impressions are with elements which we may not attempt to separate. (292)

This synthesis of experience through the operatic form is, for Woolf, a liberating aesthetic. *Parsifal* enables new conjunctions of sound and image, new rhythms hailing an original, if vicarious, experience. The opera lifts her "out of the ordinary world" in a unifying moment connecting art and life, sound and image, image and word. Writing again of Wagner for the *Times* in 1909, however, Woolf distances herself from the stage to focus on the audience. Here she would find "[s]trange men and women . . . in the cheap seats . . . [T]here is something primitive in the look of them, as though they did their best to live in forests, upon the elemental emotions, and were quick to suspect their fellows of a lack of 'reality' as they called it" ("The

Opera" 271). Anticipating the "modern savages" at the cinema, the "strange men and women" with their primitive appearances and confusion between the real and the represented evidence Woolf's critical perspective on the total work of art.[92]

It is now difficult not to see in this mesmerized crowd what Walter Benjamin would call the "aestheticization of politics," or the collapsing of art and life that defines fascism. According to Theodor Adorno, Wagner's total work of art is defined by its obscuration of itself and contains within it the seeds of classical Hollywood sound cinema as well as of fascist aesthetics. In *In Search of Wagner* (1938), Adorno writes that the total work of art aims to transform the aesthetic into phantasmagoria, or the "illusion of the absolute reality of the unreal" (79). While Woolf seems to anticipate this argument in turning to look at the crowd in "the cheap seats," she also represents the aesthetic effects of Wagner as salutary, enabling a synaesthetic conjunction of only apparently separated senses. Woolf's phantasmagoric experience allows her to "breathe and see" through the synaesthetic transcendence of, to borrow Adorno's terms, reified senses. This transcendence is one that links feeling and sensory existence ("breathing") with contemplative disinterest ("seeing"). The distinction that she makes between the audience and herself as spectator is that this audience descends to the "elemental" and the "primitive" in its engagement with Wagner while she ascends, lifted "out of the ordinary world." She finds this Wagnerian spectacle aesthetically instructive in providing space for the renegotiation of an inherited emotional and sensory vocabulary that had defined experience. As Marcus asserts, "Her Bayreuth essay expresses a longing to imitate music with words, to build a structure to house the human longing for sublimity as Wagner had done" (51).The conjunction of sound and image into

[92] As Hermione Lee suggests, this perspective on Wagner was shared by Woolf's family who may have influenced her reversal of position on his work (273). Woolf, indeed, presents Wagner's operas in *The Years* as proto-fascist.

an apparently seamless unity, as well as the obscuration of the mechanical and technological supports of the performance, enable a reflection on real reality through its aesthetic production. At the same time, however, Woolf, focusing on Wagner's audience, suggests that this experience can also confuse reality and the aesthetic.

The same question of the relationship between art and life appears in her work on the cinema. However, it is now the documentary, the apparently unaesthetic capture of real reality that becomes the site of aesthetic experience. In her essay "The Cinema," published in the New York journal *Arts* and in *Nation and Atheneum* and as "The Movies and Reality" in *The New Republic* in the summer of 1926, Woolf emphasizes not a new language, a new means of signification, built from synaesthetic experience, but rather a signification arising from disjunction, from the inaccessibility of reality rather than its transcendence:

> We are beholding a world which has gone beneath the waves. Brides are emerging from the Abbey—they are now mothers; ushers are ardent—they are now silent; mothers are tearful; guests are joyful; this has been won and this has been lost, and it is over and done with. The war sprung its chasm at the feet of all this innocence and ignorance, but it was thus that we danced and pirouetted, toiled and desired, thus that the sun shone and the clouds scudded at the very end. (841)

Through the moving image, a world is given back to us, dislocated in time and retrospectively transformed by the war.[93] The cinematic medium not only has implications for the relationship between art and reality, but also for the role of the artist and the spectator in the perception of

[93] In the holograph manuscript version of this essay, entitled "The Movies," Woolf also references in this passage documentary images of "suffragettes marching up and down before the gates of Holloway. . . Time . . . has lent them some proud dignity as champions of a victorious cause." Her removal of this explicitly political reference serves to refocus her published version of the cinema essay so that the cinematic image is presented less as a historical document than as an aesthetically expressive (and indifferent) documentary image.

reality. Julia Briggs has shown how the painter Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* composes according to Roger Fry's elucidation of aesthetic values in "An Essay in Aesthetics" (1909). Lily considers mass, light, rhythm, color, and space to be central painterly concerns just as Fry does (181). Woolf's construction of *To the Lighthouse* evidences concerns similar to Lily's. The novel engages a careful consideration of mass (as Briggs notes, it is composed in the form of an "H" with a day carefully elucidated at each end of the "Time Passes" section), light, rhythm, color, and space with time being the central additional element. I will argue, however, that Woolf also borrowed from Fry's essay the concept of cinema as the exemplary aesthetic producer.

Fry writes that the "imaginative life" determined by perception and emotional response rather than action finds a mirror in the cinematograph. The apparatus enables us to "*see* the event much more clearly; see a number of quite interesting but irrelevant things, which, in real life, could not struggle into our consciousness, bent, as it would be, entirely upon the problem of our appropriate reaction" (18). Fry cites the 1895 Lumière actuality of the train arriving in the station as an example of this receptive spectatorship. While most contemporary spectators were impressed with the kinetic realism of the train (initiating what has been called the "founding myth of cinema," the false notion that early audiences were terrified by what they thought was a train crashing through the theater), Fry focuses on the bodies turning around to orient themselves as they left the train in "an almost ridiculous performance, which I had never noticed in all the many hundred occasions on which such a scene passed before my eyes in real life" (18). Transferring his example from cinema to a street scene framed in a mirror, this apparently agentless vision, Fry claims, allows us to "abstract ourselves completely" so that "we become true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances, which would have escaped

our notice before, owing to that perpetual economizing by selection of what impressions we assimilate" (20). The production of the cinematograph is not itself a work of art, but it mimics one in enabling a contemplative spectator who ceases to see habitually. While the original audience of the Lumière film, according to Tom Gunning, regarded the arrival of the train as a thrilling spectacle akin to the pleasures of the amusement park, Fry engages his anti-representational aesthetics in this case to emphasize the camera's exposure of reality, its leveling effect, rather than the emotions of excitement or fear elicited by the technological marvel of the moving image. The emphasis on "design and harmony" over representation in his post-Impressionism, on the cultivation of an aesthetic faculty capable of finding pleasure in form rather than an ever-more accurate representation of reality, ironically appears in Fry's writing on the cinema as an endorsement of the documentary for its formal qualities, its framing of a reality removed from reality.

In "The Cinema," Woolf imagines an aesthetic possibility for cinema and, like Fry, she finds its most salient realization in documentary recordings. As she writes, cinematic images "have become not more beautiful, in the sense in which pictures are beautiful, but shall we call it (our vocabulary is miserably insufficient) more real, or real with a different reality from that which we perceive in daily life" (841). Just as Fry chose to recall an early actuality from 1895 in his essay, Woolf introduces actuality films from several years previously as enabling an opening of our "minds wide to beauty and register[ing] on top of it the queer sensation—this beauty will continue, and this beauty will flourish whether we behold it or not" (841). In "The Cinema," Woolf speculates on the future of the medium through grasping at these old, and ostensibly now irrelevant, moving pictures. Although she is unclear in her speculation of what the cinema might become, Woolf is very clear that she does not like how it has evolved in the years since those

actualities. Like the French avant-garde filmmakers whom, as Leslie Kathleen Hankins claims, she also echoes (without citing) in her essay, Woolf critiques a cinema dependent on literature and on narrative conventions. Unlike Fry, however, she finds in the cinematic medium not so much "relations of appearances" as the capture of the moment, the flash of beauty or the transfixing of a nonverbal signifier through the image.

Woolf dismisses the "story film," that anathema of modernist writers. She references the film *Anna Karenina* (which may have been one of six made from 1910-1919) as exemplary of the inadequacy of the cinematic medium for the reproduction of the novel. Woolf critiques this film for, on the one hand, producing dissonance between the brain and the eye, and, on the other, for depending on an "illiterate" and unidimensional symbolic visual vocabulary ("A kiss is love. A broken cup is jealousy. A grin is happiness. Death is a hearse" (842)). She thus proposes the value of cinema for the construction of a nonverbal visual language while taking the filmed novel to task for reducing the potential of this vocabulary. Documentary cinema, on the other hand, can remove the spectator from the "pettiness of actual existence" (841). We might recall the awakening of Peter Walsh's brain at the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*—this awakening involves turning off and tuning out the city's "cold stream of visual impressions" that "failed him now as if the eye were a china cup that overflowed and let the rest run down its china walls unrecorded" (250). The documentary moving image of city streets, instead, enables brain and eye to function together. Woolf writes that "the ordinary eye, the English unaesthetic eye, is a simple mechanism, which . . . provides the brain with toys and sweetmeats to keep it quiet, and can be trusted to go on behaving like a competent nursemaid until the brain comes to the conclusion that it is time to wake up" ("The Cinema" 841). She indeed invokes figurative cinematic representations of street scenes in this essay, writing, "We get intimations only in the chaos of the streets, perhaps, when

some momentary assemblage of colour, sound, movement suggests that here is a scene waiting for a new art to be transfixed" (844). As Marcus notes, she alludes here to the cinematic city symphony genre (of which, indeed, *Mrs. Dalloway* is the literary equivalent).[94] The cinematic documentary, defined by its simultaneous division from and occupation of the spectator's present, as in Fry's essay, becomes in Woolf's essay the central means of engaging both eye and brain. The story film, on the other hand, again divides what Woolf suggests are inherently incompatible organs, replacing the voice of the characters with stereotyped imagery. The only valuable moment Woolf finds in *Anna Karenina* is an image of the "gardener mowing the lawn" (842).

Woolf's vision for achieving a "controlled and conscious," ostensibly unrealized, cinematic art manifests both through the captured contingencies of everyday life and through engagement with the material (specifically the celluloid print) of cinematic technology. Watching the German expressionist film *The Cabinet Dr. Caligari* (1920), Woolf's attention is caught not by the conscious artistry of the sets or the stylizations of the acting, but instead by a "tadpole"-shaped shadow.[95] This "accidental" shadow "swelled to an immense size, quivered, bulged, and sank back into nonentity. For a moment it seemed as if thought could be conveyed by shape more effectively than words. The monstrous, quivering tadpole seemed to be fear itself and not the statement 'I am afraid'" (842). Like Antonin Artaud and the surrealists, Woolf conceives of cinema's possibility as not just a nonverbal but also as an unmediated language. Her citation of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* in this context is particularly striking, as this film was

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[94] The best-known cinematic city symphonies of the 1920s include Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler's *Manahatta* (1921), Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: The Symphony of a Great City* (1927), Jean Vigo's *A propos de Nice* (1929), and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

[95] Marcus and Trotter have convincingly argued that Woolf likely saw both *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and the old news reels, as "Williamson's Animated Gazettes," at a Film Society of London program on Sunday, March 14, 1926 (Marcus 109, Trotter 166-69).

considered groundbreaking for its revelation of psychological reality for many film theorists. Paul Rotha, for example, lauds the film as "reality both imaginative and creative" for the "mind of the spectator could be brought into play psychologically" (26).[96] Woolf, however, isn't interested in this visualization of interior "reality." She suggests instead that an intervention with the material of cinema itself (which, of course, avant-garde artists including Man Ray, Viking Eggeling, and Hans Richter were already engaged in) could produce an aesthetic signification both abstract and material. She writes, for example, that "[a]nger is not merely rant and rhetoric, red faces and clinched fists. It is perhaps a black line wriggling upon a white sheet" (842). Thus her sympathies (if not her citations) are both with the documentary and the most abstract, or experimental, films. She does not articulate how the cinema she envisions in this work of film theory might integrate the documentary and abstract elements she describes, but she does write that a film language should be built of "collisions" and "contrasts" (843).

Woolf did not write "The Cinema" in a "critical vacuum" (Hankins 152). Hankins convincingly argues that Woolf must have been aware of avant-garde films and film theory in the 1920s—Roger Fry and John Maynard Keynes helped establish the Film Society of London in 1925 and French avant-garde film and film theory were charged topics in British intellectual circles. In "The Cinema," Woolf, as Hankins claims, positions herself with cinema's avant-garde to resolve the "tension between cinema and literature" into the "traditional hegemonic order, which placed high literary art, high cinematic art, and popular art in a descending order of value" (176). At the same time that filmmakers like the French feminist avant-garde filmmaker Germaine Dulac, however, were exploring the aesthetic possibilities of the medium, Hollywood

[96] See Laura Marcus, 123-27, on the contentious contemporary responses to this film. Gilbert Seldes, who wrote the article "The Abstract Movie" in *The New Republic* in the fall of 1926 in response to Woolf's essay also tracks contemporary responses to the film and Woolf's deviation from them.

became the predominant film industry throughout the world in the 1920s. This institution sutured the spectator into narrative in the continuing development of the "story film," which became ostensibly even more derivative of the novel and theater with the introduction of dialogue.

Throughout the 1920s, Woolf mocks the socialite Sibyl Colefax's enthusiasm for Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and the Hollywood moving picture in her personal letters.[97] In the 1930s, her letters to British novelist Hugh Walpole, who also worked as a Hollywood screenwriter, evince no affection for American narrative cinema. She does suggest, with a heavy dose of irony, the impact of Hollywood narrative cinema in her diary and in a letter to Quentin Bell following an outing with her niece Ann Stephen to see the 1935 film, starring Gary Cooper, *Lives of a Bengal Lancer,* a nostalgic recollection of British empire. Woolf proclaims her relief that her niece finds the film terribly boring. Despite herself, however, Woolf falls for what she recognizes as its propagandistic nostalgia. She writes, wryly, "You could imagine the old Colonel gashing his arm on a wild boar's tusk and saying A mere scratch—for the honor of the Regiment. Now I shed a tear; I what comes of being one generation nearer to Uncle Fitzy" (vol. 5 383).[98] This film serves as a generational litmus test in that it induces affect only in the representative of the generation steeped in the myth-making of empire and the "reality" it constructs and conceals. The camera as a recording device, on the other hand, can reveal, Woolf claims in her cinema essay, an intransigent and inhuman reality that, in turn, might undermine cultural myths like those constructed in the film.

[97] Of course, Woolf also deviates from many modernists in finding no intrinsic value in Chaplin, the darling of many modernist writers and artists. See Trotter, *Cinema and Modernism,* 181-201, for a discussion of Chaplin's importance in this period.

[98] "Uncle Fitzy" is, of course, a reference to James Fitzjames Stephen, a Victorian colonial administrator in India and Virginia Woolf's uncle on her father's side.

Cinema, like the opera, suggests a new means of signification, of expressing (and, hence, inventing) otherwise inexpressible emotion, and of enabling this emotion to become visible (and legible). Reading "The Cinema" alongside Woolf's much earlier reviews of Wagner's opera reveals that, in both cases, Woolf self-fashions herself as a spectator given a new means of capturing and articulating reality through a new aesthetic. Furthermore, these essays, despite being written years apart, present a voice that both sets itself within and removes itself from an audience of modern primitives or "savages" before what Woolf conceives as a new medium. While the opera, however, lifts the critic "out of the ordinary world" through its musical and synaesthetic appeals, the cinema reveals "a different reality" defined strictly visually and through a separation between cinematic image and spectator in time and space. What these essays present together, I maintain, is a dialectic between sensory unification and sensory division connected to questions of the relationship between art and life.[99] Woolf develops narrative techniques in her novels of the 1920s to stage both the sensorial connections and divisions that she describes in these essays. Peter Walsh, at the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, reflects that the ambulance he hears (coming to take Septimus' body after his suicide) is the ultimate symbol of civilization, the urgency of the siren a promise of the almost corporeal integrity of the city. This aural image (for lack of a better word) offers a good description of the sensory effects Woolf produces—on the one hand, the ambulance is conceived as conjoining the city (like the "leaden circles" of Big Ben) while, on the other, it blares out emergency—alluding to the emergence of disjunction, or the trauma (from war, colonialism, the upper-middle class family) upon which the unity of the city is built. This "unity and dispersal"—of the multiple sensory experiences of characters,

[99] We might see this as another permutation of Woolf's striking image of the "granite and the rainbow," that constitutively linked dichotomy of fact and fiction, truth and personality, reality and art.

narrator, and reader, of character focalizations (and auscultations) within the novels, of time and space—is a narrative means of questioning inherited forms of representation and the values that uphold them. Woolf's representations of sensory experience are, furthermore, modeled at least partially on new technologies of visual and aural perception, particularly the cinema, as well as on the synaesthetic experiences of late-19th-century opera.

2. "Unity and Dispersal": *Between the Acts*

Woolf's three postwar novels of the 1920s—*Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927)—engage both the immersive connections that she had found through opera, on the one hand, and, at the same time, they invoke the mechanical vision that fascinated her in "The Cinema" of "a world which has gone beneath the waves," inaccessible and mute. In her three novels of the 1930s, *The Waves* (1931), *The Years* (1937), and *Between the Acts* (1941), Woolf presents not only dissociated images, but also disembodied voices. The presence of these voices might be read as a tacit response to what Woolf perceived as the didactically political male poets of the 1930s who she describes in "The Leaning Tower" (1940) as exemplifying a "loud-speaker strain" in their poetry (175). This disembodiment of voice also references the influence of mass media like cinema and radio.[100] The invocation of a disembodied, and magnified, human voice, on the one hand, and a concomitant interwar fear of suture into a totalitarian environment, on the other, parallel discourses around the sound cinema prevalent in Britain at the time. Woolf's depiction of artist, audience, and voice in her novels of the 1930s engages the same complex nexus of aesthetics and politics that served as the context

[100] For detailed studies of Woolf's relationship to new auditory media in the 1930s, see Sonita Sarker, "*Three Guineas*, the In-Corporated Intellectual, and Nostalgia for the Human," Melba Cuddy-Keane, "Virginia Woolf, Sound Technologies, and the New Aurality," and Bonnie Kime Scott's "The Subversive Mechanics of Woolf's Gramophone in *Between the Acts*" in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2000), and Michele Pridmore-Brown, "1939-40: Of Virginia Woolf, Gramophones, and Fascism" (1998).

for a modernist fear of sound cinema. At the same time, a focus on Woolf's later novels, particularly her final novel *Between the Acts* (1941), reveals not solely a distrust of what she calls "megaphonic" voice, but also a dialectical engagement with this voice in conjunction with sound technologies, noise, and music.

The "sound cinematic" representations in Woolf's later novels owe a great deal to the new significations enabled by this new medium as well as to the aesthetics of multimedia opera productions. Woolf's relationship with the opera composer Ethel Smyth was highly contentious and influential throughout the 1930s. As with cinematic productions, Smyth's English-language "music-spectacle-dramas" were intended for a mass audience and imbricated textual, visual, and aural dimensions. This is not to say that her operas were quasi-cinematic, but they did share with cinema an appeal to a popular audience and a hybrid aesthetic characterized by voice, music, text, and performance. Woolf's relationship with Smyth provided not only personal prompting but also an aesthetic example for her exploration of audience, media, and authorship in the construction of aural soundscapes and visual spectacle in her novels of the 1930s.

Smyth's story as a groundbreaking female opera composer in the late-Victorian period (her first opera, *Fantasio,* written in 1894, was staged in 1898) has been retold through her six memoirs, written from 1919 through 1940 (she left behind a seventh, incomplete memoir at her death in 1944). Indeed, she acquired as much fame through these popular memoirs, with their entertaining sketches of famous late-Victorian and Edwardian figures like Lady Ponsonby, Henry James, and the Empress Eugénie as well as German composers Brahms and Mahler, as through her operatic works. Woolf was taken with Smyth before their first meeting in 1930. In a 1919 letter to Lytton Strachey she writes, having read Smyth's first memoir *The Impressions that Remain* (1919):

> It's a pity she can't write . . . . But it fascinates me all the same. I saw her at a concert two days ago—striding up the gangway in coat and skirt and spats and talking at the top of her voice. Near at hand one sees that she's all wrinkled and fallen in, and eyes running blue onto the cheeks; but she keeps the figure of the nineties to perfection. (2: 405).

In short, Woolf positions Smyth as a living artifact of the near past, the late Victorian era removed from the present aesthetically and politically. Her bravado embodies the confidence of this lost era. She is also the exemplary woman producer and author despite what Woolf sees as her lack of literary ability.

Despite her initial fascination with (and accusation of) Smyth's allegiance to the late-Victorian period, their relationship through the 1930s influenced the evolution of Woolf's interest in new means of representing a social conglomerate through the chorus, culminating in her final novel *Between the Acts* and her final critical texts, "Anon" and "The Reader." Elicia Clements claims that, through Smyth, Woolf "radicalized her own ideas about subjectivity, society, and sound" (51). Invoking Mikhail Bakhtin's "apperceptive listener," Clements maintains that Smyth encouraged Woolf to engage in "hearing otherness" and move from the "singular subject" to the "crowd" (56). Miss La Trobe, modeled on Smyth (but also recalling Woolf's own role as an author) in *Between the Acts*, however, evidences the ambiguities inherent to Smyth and Woolf's relationship. Jane Marcus and Vanessa Curtis have sketched the vacillations between intense affection (many of their letters are love letters) and passionate debates about religion, aesthetics, and war within their epistolary relationship.[101] I believe that Clements is right that Woolf was highly influenced by Smyth's use of the chorus and a multitude

[101] As Curtis puts it, "[o]ver the last decade of Virginia's life, she [Smyth] was to become both a much-needed tonic and a dose of the worst possible medicine" (169).

of voices in her musical works. At the same time, Smyth's role as a centripetal force in Woolf's life is also an important component of the novel *Between the Acts* and of her later critical works on authorship. Woolf writes to Smyth on May 25, 1930, following one of her performances:

> [A]n image forms in my mind; a quickset briar hedge . . . intricate and spiky and thorned; in the center burns a rose. Miraculously, the rose is you; flushed pink, wearing pearls. The thorn hedge is the music; I have to break my way through violins, flutes, cymbals, voices, to this red burning centre. Now I admit that this has nothing to do with musical criticism . . . I am enthralled that you, the dominant and superb, would have this tremor and vibration of fire around you . . . that you should be able to create this world from your centre. (4: 171)

This dialectic between community and a controlling central figure is manifested in the character, at once dissident and controlling, of Miss La Trobe, known as "Bossy" in *Between the Acts*, who "seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a recreated world" (153). In Woolf's novels of the 1930s, the recuperation of social fragmentation through suture into what Michele Pridmore-Brown calls "subjunctive worlds" is dialectically contrasted with the threat of a totalitarian orchestration of individuals within the crowd. Smyth's modern operas provided Woolf with an aesthetic that enabled her to explore the same questions of spectacle and mass culture that occupied film theorists in this period.

At the same time, Woolf continues to invoke throughout her novels in the 1930s the enveloping, inhuman sounds that appeared in her earlier novels. These sounds provide a choral element in contradistinction to the chorus of human voices. In *The Waves*, Bernard explicitly calls ambient noise a "chorus." He states, "I am also drawn irresistibly to the sound of the chorus

chanting its almost wordless, almost senseless song that comes across courts at night; which we hear now booming round us as cars and omnibuses take people to theatres. (Listen; the cars rush past this restaurant; now and then, down the river, a siren hoots" (246).[102] We hear similar sounds in the final present-day section of *The Years*, a novel dependent on the repetition of street sounds like the sellers' cries of "any old iron," to both distinguish and establish continuity between decades. Woolf writes, "Their laughter ceased. Feet thudded, dancing on the floor above. A siren hooted on the river. A van crashed down the street in the distance. There was a rush and quiver of sound; something seemed to be released; it was as if the life of the day was about to begin and this was the chorus, the cry, the chirp. . . ." (425). Cuddy-Keane writes of *The Waves*, "The novel gradually builds an aural density out of layers and textures of sound widely diffused in space—conveying in this 'music' an apprehension of ongoing, interrelational life" (88). This description could likewise be applied to *The Years*, a novel in which Woolf also depicts "noises treated as voices" (Cuddy-Keane 90). Human voices—monologic in *The Waves*—are stitched into this "aural density." Woolf's reconception of the novel-genre in these two texts—of *The Waves* as a "play-poem" and of *The Pargiters* (the initial version of *The Years)* as a "novel-essay" (based on a speech)—further attests to the importance of aurality in these texts and of Woolf's attempts to form a genre possessing the dialogic diversity of the novel while pushing its boundaries.

Between the Acts is likewise hybrid generically. This novel brings to the fore the complexity of the relationship between author, audience, and technologies of perception.

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[102] The noises of London are visualized in one of Louis' monologues in *The Waves*: "'The roar of London,' said Louis, 'is around us. Motor cars, vans, omnibuses, pass and repass continuously. All are merged in one turning wheel of single sound. All separate sounds—wheels, bells, cries of drunkards, of merry-makers—all churned into one sound, steel-blue, circular. Then a siren hoots. At that shores slip away, chimneys flatten themselves, the ship makes for the open sea'" (135).

Pridmore-Brown contrasts Woolf's exploration of "subjunctive worlds," or worlds that might be, in *Between the Acts* against the fascist *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or total work of art. Assuming Adorno's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as proto-fascist, Pridmore-Brown writes, "To the idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*—a permanent and totalizing work of art orchestrated by an artist figure who, through rhythm, rhyme, and charismatic lure, imposes form on the raw energy of the masses—Woolf opposes a pluralist politics of location" (419). Woolf's attention to noise, as well as the choral arrangement of human voices, throughout her novels supports Pridmore-Brown's assertion. At the same time, in her very early critical piece on Wagner, "Impressions at Bayreuth," Woolf perceives the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a means of synaesthetically realizing what Pridmore-Brown calls "subjunctive worlds," a unifying and transcendent aesthetic that she simultaneously invokes and problematizes in her novels throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Pridmore-Brown marks the distinction between the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and Woolf's aesthetics in her reading of *Between the Acts* as advocating the "act of listening" rather than the suturing of the individual into a mass spectacle.[103]

As in Lee's *Satan the Waster, Between the Acts* plays with genre conventions to examine the mechanics of national identity and the spectacles that drive war. Gillian Beer suggests, in fact, that *Satan the Waster* may have influenced Woolf's novel (128). Whether or not this is the case, reading *Between the Acts* alongside *Satan the Waster* reveals not only a shared interest in

[103] This "act of listening," like her invocation of empathy in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, recalls Lee's writing on aesthetics. In her writing on music, Lee likewise forwards a theory of "listening" versus "hearing." In "Music and Its Lovers," for example, she writes, that "whereas 'listening' to music is eminently active, 'hearing' (or what I shall continue to call 'hearing') is, in so far as *merely* hearing, completely passive" (107). Gillian Beer's suggestion that Woolf's last novel might be influenced by *Satan the Waster* makes sense in terms of Lee's and Woolf's engagement of a dialectic that brings together, without synthesis, the unification of art, on the one hand, and the decentering of a self hailed by wartime appeals to nationalism on the other.

spectacle, but also a shared interrogation of aesthetic assumptions and the reality that they construct. As in Lee's anti-war text, technologies of perception are introduced to undermine aesthetic illusion while, at the same time, enabling new forms of access to a reality underlying human representations. In *Between the Acts*, a gramophone, hidden in the bushes, both calls attention to its own materiality, through the noise of its apparatus, and replays cultural scripts. It speaks with the voice of the "other" while "braying" out that which is already assumed, the rhythmic marches and folk songs that accompany the pageant. This gramophone is a counterpoint to the figure of Miss La Trobe, a figure based at least partially on Smyth.[104] The woman producer, in this novel, attempts to synchronize the gramophone, exemplifying both authorial control and a celebration of that which escapes it.

Miss La Trobe's pageant, until its climax set in the present-day, is a variation on the British pageant-play that Jed Esty characterizes as "the Hollywood epics of their day, complete with ornate special effects, the proverbial cast of thousands, and the stock figure of an eccentric, dictatorial director" (57). Esty traces how the subgenre of the British pageant-play grew in literary popularity in the Edwardian period and, again, in the 1930s. Miss La Trobe plays an ostensibly paradoxical role in Woolf's novel—she is simultaneously a dissident and the producer of a nationalist pageant. Dissidence and the recuperation of British literary history, however, are not mutually exclusive positions in *Between the Acts*. As Esty claims, "The novel's irony reflects Woolf's interest in redefining, not eschewing, national tradition" (93). From her initial

[104] Jane Marcus and Elicia Clements claim that Miss LaTrobe is based on Smyth. This assertion is supported by Miss La Trobe's resemblance to Smyth in the novel (like Smyth, Miss La Trobe is an unrepentant lesbian and has a militant streak), a resemblance even more pronounced in the holograph manuscript and early typescript of *Pointz Hall*, in which Miss La Trobe is also characterized as a dog breeder, likely alluding to Smyth's great love of dogs.

introduction in the novel, Miss La Trobe is fundamentally an outsider marked by queerness and racial otherness. Woolf writes:

> But where did she spring from? With that name she wasn't presumably pure English . . . Only her eyes and something about her always made Mrs. Bingham suspect she had Russian blood in her. . . . She had bought a four-roomed cottage and shared it with an actress . . . Very little was actually known about her; Outwardly she was swarthy, sturdy, and thick-set. . . . (58)

Miss La Trobe is an "outsider" to the dynamics of Pointz Hall, and, indeed, to the community that forms the audience of her production. At the same time, she is at the center of the narrative and of the pageant, controlling it with her invisible presence.

The narrative which frames the pageant in *Between the Acts* takes place within the country house of Pointz Hall and is focused on the middle-aged couple Isa and Giles, the elderly Bart and Lily Swithin, and their guests Mrs. Manresa and William Dodge. Each of these figures might be characterized, as Karen Jacobs argues, as "allegorical," and they are antithetical in terms of gender, generation, sexuality, and race (as defined by traceable origin). Together, they form an audience in miniature replete with different degrees of attention to the performance of the pageant.[105] Giles, for example, the London stockbroker intolerant of both his father Bart's

[105] These six characters can be splayed across multiple yet synthesizing axes. Esty, for example, posits that the intergenerational couplings of Bart/Lucy and Giles/Isa can be divided along gender lines as "a contest between redemptive tradition and barbaric regress" represented by "two anglicized, domestic women and two metropolitan, aggressive men" (88). The brash, libidinous colonial Mrs. Manresa and the gay artist William Dodge upset this order, according to Esty, for they "repeat the novel's basic symbolic antagonism between genteel insular culture and imperial libido, while reversing the previous association of the former with femininity, the latter with masculinity" (90). The positions articulated through these characters inform a collective representation. The transformation of the pronoun "I," which Woolf distrusts throughout her letters, fictions, and diaries, to the "we" of a collective subject in *Between the Acts* is recorded in her diaries as she begins to imagine the novel in 1938. She writes, "Why not *Poyntzet Hall:* a

imperial memories and his aunt Lucy's dreamy insularity, regards his witnessing of the performance as being "manacled to a rock . . . and forced passively to behold indescribable horror" (60). Nevertheless, despite their different spectatorial relationships to the performance, these characters come together as parts of the audience. Unattributed quotes state, in the text, "'We remain seated'—'We are the audience'" (59). As the broader audience, a much more expansive swath of individuals across generations, classes, and regional backgrounds, arrives for the performance, Miss La Trobe organizes her performers, themselves culled from this larger audience. Her authority as director and writer of the pageant is an election determined by her otherness. The narrator states, "No one liked to be ordered about singly. But in little troops they appealed to her. Someone must lead. Then they too could put the blame on her . . . She splashed into the fine [social] mesh like a great stone into the lily pool. The criss-cross was shattered" (64).

Michael Tratner asks, provocatively, why *Between the Acts* isn't, in fact, a movie, with its focus on spectacle and the construction of the audience. I would further qualify his statement by emphasizing that, were it a film, *Between the Acts* would need to be a sound film, despite (or because of) the fact that, within the play-within-the-novel, the chorus' words are often "blown away" by the wind and cannot be heard by the audience (78). Sounds are central to this novel's thematic and narrative structure. Not only does the reader overhear the audience's dialogue, but characters also overhear the interior monologues of others, forming a skein of interior and exterior auscultation, to borrow Cuddy-Keane's term for sound focalization. Even as the novel constructs this complicated overlay, spoken words themselves are called into question as

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centre: all literature discussed in connection with real little incongruous living humour: and anything that comes into my head; but 'I' rejected: 'We' substituted: to whom at the end there shall be an invocation? 'We' . . . the composed of many different things . . . we all life, all art, all waifs and strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole—the present state of my mind?" (5: 279).

vehicles for conveying meaning. In one passage, for example, the characters in the audience overhear, as if privy to a narrator's free indirect discourse, each other (wordlessly):

> He said (without words), "I'm damnably unhappy."
>
> "So am I," Dodge echoed.
>
> "And I too," Isa thought.
>
> They were all caught and caged; prisoners; watching a spectacle. (176)

We might further consider the sound technology—the gramophone—that suggests the aural model for Woolf's multivalent literary representation of voice. This outdated aural model of the gramophone, as well as the obvious influences of opera and theater, do not immediately suggest contemporary sound cinema as a model for Woolf's final novel. However, just as her earlier novels evidence enveloping noises and streaming images that correspond to cinematic discourses, her final novel suggests the disruptions and possibilities enabled by the sound cinematic apparatus that had arose to international prominence throughout the late 1920s and 1930s. In *Film Form*, the Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein claims that a stream-of-consciousness interior monologue and the recording of "inner voice" offer the greatest possibilities for the sound film, citing James Joyce as the exemplary modernist literary model for this realization (105). In her final novel, however, Woolf occludes this depiction of a stream-of-consciousness "inner voice" by exteriorizing voice in fragmented dialogic exchanges nevertheless caught in the same, leveling conversations (analogous to the parts of the whole that represent her audience). This maneuver certainly contributes to the characterization of *Between the Acts* as a postmodernist or late modernist text, as has been widely argued.[106] The visual significations of silent cinema that Woolf had lauded in the mid-1920s are traded in this novel, I would argue, for

[106] See, for example, Jed Esty's *The Shrinking Island* and Tyrus Miller's *Late Modernism* (1999).

an unruly gramophone and the coordination of disparate voices suggesting the aural possibilities of sound cinema. She turns the relationship of audience to spectacle inside-out, furthermore, so that we hear the audience as part of the performance, simultaneously connected and removed.

It is, tellingly, the gramophone (sometimes unsuccessfully) manipulated by Miss La Trobe that commands audience attention within the text and provides the aural queues that a performance is happening. In *Three Guineas* (1938), an anti-war text addressed to a leftist solicitor of funds for the Spanish Civil War, Woolf invokes the gramophone as a stuck record and as a "braying" voice. She writes to the solicitor, from the assumed perspective of the "daughters of educated men" who will form her Society of Outsiders, "[I]t seems both wrong for us rationally and impossible for us emotionally to fill up your form and join your society. For by so doing we should merge our identity in yours; follow and repeat and score still deeper the old worn ruts in which society, like a gramophone whose needle has stuck. . . ." (72). Woolf critiques habit through the image of the stuttering gramophone. The assumed rituals of British society, reproduced in the text's photographs, are followed blindly. However, as Cuddy-Keane points out, a very different gramophonic voice appears in *Between the Acts*. With its "tick, tick, tick" and "chuff, chuff, chuff," this gramophonic voice becomes part of a soundscape contributing to the "world without us" invoked in the novel. The gramophone provides its own "off-screen," and inhuman, voice while introducing Miss La Trobe's plays derived from four periods of British literary history—the Elizabethan, Restoration, the Victorian, and the "present"—and playing marches, folk songs, and nursery rhymes between each act.[107]

[107] Woolf might be invoking Smyth's own use of British folk material in operas like *The Wreckers* (1902) and *The Boatswain's Mate* (1916). While it is not addressed in their letters, Smyth also mentions a series of performances of the Pageant of Surrey chaired by her friend Betty Balfour. Smyth includes the invitation to the pageant in her diary in a July 11, 1937, entry.

The gramophone, hidden from the view of the audience in the bushes, "chuff, chuff, chuff's," making the "noise a machine makes when something has gone wrong" (76). Finally, introducing the first act of the pageant, the "pompous popular tune brayed and blared" (79). Once the music begins, it is associated with the "braying" gramophone that Woolf had earlier referenced in *Three Guineas*. The chorus of villagers performing as medieval pilgrims in the pageant, on the other hand, are unheard by the audience for "half their words were blown away" (78). During the scene change to the Elizabethan period, the "tick, tick, tick" of the gramophone consolidates the audience, and "seemed to hold them together, tranced" (82). Its staccato repetition is replaced again by music, although this time the "tune on the gramophone reeled from side to side as if drunk with merriment" (85). The gramophone continues to "blare" throughout the scene until it releases (alongside a voice on the megaphone) the audience for the first interval, chanting "dispersed are we" to the crowd breaking for tea, a "wailing" that weaves in and out of the voices—overheard as dialogue and as interior monologue through free indirect discourse—talking during the intermission. The narrator relates that "[t]o the valediction of the gramophone hid in the bushes the audience departed" (98). Like the ascription of human agency (in terms of voice or vision) to Big Ben in *Mrs. Dalloway* and the lighthouse in *To the Lighthouse*, an agency is likewise ascribed to the gramophone in *Between the Acts*. Hidden in the bushes like a cheap imitation of a Wagnerian orchestra, it nevertheless calls attention to its meaningful, but inhuman, materiality as it both organizes and participates in the chorus of audience voices throughout the intermission.

Just as the gramophone disperses the audience, it also reassembles them. Woolf writes, "The inner voice, the other voice was saying: How can we deny that this brave music, wafted from the bushes, is expressive of some inner harmony?" (119). This "other voice" is dialectically

related to the disparate voices of the audience, fragments stitched into one another and separated in the text by ellipses. In this passage, Woolf connects interior and exterior—"inner harmony" is transported through an exterior voice. The "other voice" conjoins even as human voices separate into the apparent nonsense of overheard snippets of conversation. This consolidating voice is the gramophone's begging attention in the midst of dispersal. Following a surprise sun shower at the end of the third scenario, the Victorian, the machine again calls the audience together through its "other voice." The narrator states, "[I]t was the other voice speaking, the voice that was no one's voice" (181). Both the medium and its message, the familiar nursery rhymes and songs, are sutured uncannily into an intimate otherness through this machine.

The narrator states, as the audience is again brought together following the first interval, "For I hear music, they were saying. Music wakes us. Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken. Look and listen. See the flowers, how they ray their redness, whiteness, silverness, and blue. And the trees with their many-tongued much syllabling, their green and yellow leaves hustle us and shuffle us" (120). As color delves into sound, the crowd likewise feels a unity, although this unity is belied by the narrator's use of the pronouns "I" and "they" rather than "we." This passage is also an ironic rendition of Woolf's reported transcendent synaesthetic experience at Bayreuth with its short sentences and rhyming. Tellingly, a nursery rhyme on the gramophone opens the next scene of the eighteenth-century. Rhymes form a rhythm within *Between the Acts*, counterpointing invoked "cacophony" and reflecting, perhaps, Woolf's reading of Freud on Gustav Le Bon's "group mind" in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Le Bon claims of the group mind, as Freud paraphrases, a "similarity with the mental life of primitive people and of children" (9). Such rhymes, like cultural mnemonics, allude to both the rhythmic centering of community and its confinement. At the same time, rhyme dialectically enables

sense-making in the novel—whether through the rhythm of the scales practiced throughout the first interval, through multiple poetic allusions, or through Isa's unfinished and mentally inscribed poems.

The pastoral songs that play through the second sequence of the pageant—a play in the style of the Restoration comedy—are compared to the "view." Woolf writes, "The view repeated in its own way what the tune was saying. The sun was sinking; the colours were merging; and the view was saying how after toils men rest from their labours; how coolness comes; reason prevails . . ." (134). The inhuman perspective that Trotter perceives in Woolf's novels of the 1920s manifests in *Between the Acts* through the intractable, seemingly unchanging "view." This "view" is also presented with its inverse in the novel—looking without a subject is introduced in the pictures on the walls of Pointz Hall, the paintings of the man (the commissioned portrait of an ancestor) and a woman (a work of art depicting an unidentified lady), those representations of timeless Englishness that "looked at nobody" and "drew them down paths of silence" (45). Looking out the window, Mrs. Swithin comments that the view, unchanged through centuries, outside will "be there . . .when we're not" (53). The grounds are thus not so much pastoral as ahistoric and prehistoric, existing outside timely human interventions. At the same time, just as the pageant is about typified episodes from British literary history, Woolf's novel also explores how history is represented and transmitted. The "view" and its pastoral soundtrack, ostensibly free from history, are, in fact, revealed as deeply historical not only within the narrative but also through their technological means of representation.[108]

[108] As Karen Jacobs writes, "By presenting these two competing temporal frameworks of [cyclical and progressive] history dialectically, Woolf is to stage a remarkably complete deconstruction both of history as either cyclical or progressive, and of nature in the alternate capacities in which it upholds each conception" (224).

During the scene change between the Restoration and Victorian, Woolf writes of Miss La Trobe, “Illusion had failed. ‘This is death,’ she murmured, ‘death’” (140). She demands that the voices of the performers, blown away by the wind, speak “[l]ouder, louder!” and she is satisfied that, instead, the cows rescue the performance with “the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment” (139-40). A gap in this part of the performance and the stealing of the chorus of voices by the wind is rescued by the cows who “took up the burden . . .annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion” (141). In this performance of “reality,” Woolf hearkens back to her cinema essay and the value of the visual medium for being “more real or real with a different reality from that which we perceive in daily life” through its framing (841). This reality that becomes defamiliarized through entering the performance is akin to Woolf’s perception of the cinema camera as, paradoxically, producing “distances annihilated” through visually removing reality from its everyday experience (“The Cinema” 843). In this gap, the cows that fill (to Miss La Trobe’s relief) the stage collapse illusion and reality in a pastoral scene that anticipates Miss La Trobe’s scripted introduction of reality following the Victorian scene.

This scene, following another interval, is introduced by the gramophone playing a “pompous march tune” that “brayed” out the introduction of the Victorian era scene alongside the “real swallows” that flit in and out of the performance. At the end of the Victorian play, a melodrama about Christian hypocrisy, the Victorian family, and empire, the gramophone “warble[s]” “Home, Sweet Home,” and reality takes center stage. Miss La Trobe wants to “expose them, as it were, to douche them, with present-time reality” (179). Miss Swithin again looks at the view and thinks, “Sheep, cows, trees, ourselves—all are one. If discordant, producing harmony—if not to us, to a gigantic ear stuck to a gigantic head” (175). Just as Lee

conceived of reality as formless before a human perspective, Swithin invokes the "gigantic" ear like Lee's "eye accustomed to Eternities" with which Satan introduces his spectacle in *Satan the Waster*. For Miss La Trobe, however, this reality is another failure. " 'Reality too strong,' she muttered . . . She felt everything they felt. Audiences were the devil. O to write a play without an audience—*the* play. Every second they were slipping the noose . . . This is death, death, death, she noted in the margin of her mind, when illusion fails" (180). Only the "tick, tick, tick" of the gramophone holds the audience at attention. In *Between the Acts*, the "world without us" that reappears throughout Woolf's fiction and that Trotter argues is informed by the recording capacity of the cinema camera becomes the fantasy of the spectacle made by a single producer—Miss La Trobe—without the audience. She is saved by a sun shower, a literal douching by reality, and her performance resumes with the nursery rhyme again on the gramophone as the scene of a rebuilt wall and the different races representing the League of Nations begins.

There is much at stake is Miss La Trobe's (ironic) capture of reality in *Between the Acts.* This is a reality foregrounded by its separation from the audience—a reality *with* an audience rather than a reality that contains it. This section not only recalls Lee's interest in reality and the impossibility of its full representation in *Satan the Waster*, but it also tacitly comments on the documentary as a predominant genre in fiction and film in the 1930s. Laura Marcus notes that the novel engages (at its finale) the "disembodied voice" characteristic of 1930s documentary film (171). The "filmgoers' guide" issued by the British Film Institute after its founding in 1933 evidences this investment in documentary as a means of conceiving and sharing national life. As R.S. Lambert writes in his introduction, "They [British documentary films] will circulate abroad, and particularly in the Empire, giving a truer picture of our national life and culture than many of the entertainment films now sent forth" (19). Such an interest in documentary attests to what

Esty posits is the "anthropological turn" in British culture in the 1930s. Miss La Trobe's scripted "exposure" to reality is, on the other hand, not explained to the audience (which is, perhaps, why Miss La Trobe perceives it as a failure). The "reality" that saves Miss La Trobe's pageant is, rather, accidental and contingent.

Against the labile productions of the machine and the response of the audience, Miss La Trobe vacillates between lamenting her failure and relishing her power over the crowd. For her, the first part of the performance is unsuccessful because she "hasn't made them see . . . Her vision escaped her" (98). Balancing "illusion" with "reality," she recalls the total work of art even as she destabilizes both terms. During the interval before the penultimate scene of the Victorian era, it is Miss La Trobe, at work in her dressing room in the bushes, who "auscultates" (to borrow Cuddy-Keane's term) the multiple voices of the audience. She hears "stray voices, voices without bodies, symbolical voices they seemed to her, half hearing, seeing nothing, but still, over the bushes, feeling invisible threads connecting the bodiless voices" (151). Just as, at the denouement of the pageant, an anonymous voice addresses the visually fragmented audience, here its fragmented voices connect, unseen, but consolidated within Miss La Trobe's hidden space. If we assume (as is suggested) that Miss La Trobe's is the hidden voice at the megaphone, then this passage presents an inverse address. Rather than a magnified monologue directed toward an audience reflected in broken glass, this passage presents broken, invisible voices entering the behind-the-scenes space of the spectacle. In contrast, later in this interval, Miss La Trobe's control of the production is celebrated by Mrs. Swithin who tells her that "'[y]ou've stirred in me my unacted part'" (153). Woolf writes of Miss La Trobe, "Glory possessed her. Ah, but she was not merely a twitcher of individual strings; she was one who seethes wandering bodies and floating voices in a cauldron, and makes rise up from its amorphous mass a re-created

world. Her moment was on her—her glory" (153). She thus sees her "illusion" as successfully interpellating, as she perceives it doing, the audience into "a re-created world" balanced between illusion and reality.

As Miss La Trobe's performance nears the present, the tune on the gramophone becomes a waltz and then switches to a foxtrot and jazz with quick changes. Jazz is described as a "cacophony" that only the young can understand. The jazz "cacophony" and the rhyme set the stage for the culminating anonymous voice (186). The sounds of modernity are fast and mixed into a montage. They splinter, like the fragmented mirrors reflecting the audience at the climax of the performance, through speed, as characters appear on the stage in both British and colonial garb to build the wall representing the League of Nations in the final act. The production concludes with a "megaphonic" voice accompanied by cracked mirrors showing the audience themselves—this voice is a didactic sound experience nevertheless disorienting, unlocalizable. Woolf writes, "Whose voice it was no one knew. It came from the bushes—a megaphonic, anonymous, loudspeaking affirmation" (186). The source might be Miss La Trobe or the gramophone, and, I would argue, it could be read even as a metafictional moment—one in which Woolf's own writerly concerns with imbricating individual and community are divorced from their textual transparency and proclaimed outright in a jarring defamiliarization.[109]

This voice silences and confronts the audience uncomfortably reflected in fragments by broken mirrors. It asks them to "*break the rhythm and forget the rhyme. And calmly consider.*

[109] If we do read this as a metafictional moment, then we might recall Woolf's experimentation with the "novel-essay" form in *The Pargiters*, an attempt to conjoin, as Grace Radin points out, the "truth of fact" with the "truth of fiction" (13). Obviously lacking the eloquence of the essays in *The Pargiters* (which would come to form *Three Guineas*), Woolf's use of the "megaphonic voice" in *Between the Acts* suggests a deconstruction of this "novel-essay" form in which the essayistic is cut (at the sentence-level and through the use of words of one syllable) into the fictional world, analogous to the cutting of reality into Miss La Trobe's performance.

Ourselves" (itals. in text 187). The jazz "cacophony," that anticipates the entrance of the actors carrying the broken mirrors and the "megaphonic" voice is described as "an outrage; such an insult; And not plain. Very up to date, all the same. What is her game? To disrupt? Jog and trot? Jerk and smirk? Put the finger to the nose? Squint and pry? Peak and spy?" (183). Now, the voice urges talk in "*words of one syllable*," as if learning from jazz disruption while breaking from its rhythms. The audience is asked to "*[c]onsider the gun slayers, bomb droppers here or there. They do openly what we do slyly.*" For this, the voice does not exonerate itself, but suggests rather that it also contributes to "*this wall, the great wall, which we call, perhaps miscall, civilization*" (188). How, the voice asks, can this wall be built of "*orts, scraps, and fragments like ourselves*?" (188). As the megaphonic voice asserts, the audience (implicated and uncomfortable) is unified through disunion, through splintered awareness that can be conjoined only by an aesthetics valuing collective consciousness as a unified disunion.

It is perhaps here, with the fragmented image of the audience members and consolidating, challenging "megaphonic" voice, that Woolf finds an adequate representation of the "mass" connected yet fragmented. The character North in *The Years* speculates in the present-day section, "Not halls and reverberating megaphones; not marching in step after leaders in herds, groups, societies caparisoned. No; to begin inwardly, and let the devil take the outer form, he thought . . . Why not down barriers and simplify? But a world, he thought, that was all one jelly, one mass, would be a nice rice pudding world, a white counterpane world" (410). In *Between the Acts*, the audience, despite their class and gender divisions, is reflected (to themselves) not as a "nice rice pudding" or a "white counterpane world," but, rather, as "orts, scraps, and fragments" in a broken mirror (188). While the mirrors provide this new visual model of the "mass" (at the same time, transforming the spectacle into the audience themselves), the "megaphonic" voice

challenges them to perceive themselves as part of this mass. This voice recalls Hitler's on the radio, which Woolf referred to as "His Master's voice" (vol. 5 204). It also invokes Leonard Woolf's 1935 exploration of dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini entitled *Quack, Quack!* In reference to their "quackery," but also implying with its onomatopoeic title the meaningless vocal expressions of these leaders at rallies and on the radio.[110] The monosyllabic "quack, quack" is addressed in the finale of *Between the Acts* in the "*words of one syllable"* ironically encouraged by the voice. The voice in the novel, however, while it maintains power through its invisibility and the captivity of the audience, uses this platform to call itself, like the audience, into question.

To end its speech, the anonymous voice hands off to the gramophone, stating, "*All you can see of yourselves is orts, scraps, and fragments? Well then listen to the gramophone affirming . . .*" (188). The gramophone, unlike the "megaphonic" voice, does not "affirm" at the end of this monologue, however, as Jimmy, who is in charge of the music, has mixed the records. When he finally finds one it is "the right one—was it Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart or nobody famous, but merely a traditional tune? Anyhow, thank heaven, it was somebody speaking after the anonymous bray of the megaphone" (188). The "other voice" of the gramophone, ironically, becomes more human, more identifiable against the domineering voice-off from the bushes. While Woolf writes of the "bray of the gramophones" against the "voice of the poets" in *Three Guineas,* this "braying" is recast in *Between the Acts*. The "braying" megaphonic voice exposes the audience, revealing them as the ultimate reality of this pageant as well as the pageants undergirding war. The gramophone, on the other hand, conceals its mediation through "speaking" at the end as if with a human voice. The voice of the gramophone, nevertheless, has

[110] In *Quack, Quack!*, Woolf also calls into question history as progress and modernity as civilization.

the authority to bring the audience together, like "quicksilver sliding, filings magnetized, the distracted united" that the Reverend Streatfield, "mounting a soap-box," lacks (189). Sound again interpellates the audience into a visual spectacle that confuses reality and representation. Moving between a provocative and commanding invisible voice and the babbling of a humanized technology, Woolf echoes the hand-wringing over sound cinema in journals a decade earlier. However, her presentation of this use of sound is much more ambivalent. The "braying," monologic voice necessarily implicates a complacent audience while the humanized gramophone commands attention with known scripts. The challenge Woolf suggests, like the voice, is to maintain a splintered coherence.

Reverend Streatfield's ending summary of the performance, an attempt to ascribe a lesson to it, merely confuses audience. "The whole of them, gentles and simples, felt embarrassed for him, for themselves. There he stood their representative spokesman; their symbol; themselves; a butt, a clod, laughed at by looking-glasses; ignored by the cows . . ." (190). He speaks only as "one of the audience" (as if replying to the gramophone voice). "We act different parts; but are the same . . . 'Scraps, orts, and fragments! Surely, we should unite?' (192). His attempt to ascribe meaning, however, is a failure. The "megaphonic" voice is simultaneously didactic and without a message that can be easily paraphrased. Furthermore, as the reverend speaks, he is drowned out by planes, an aural reminder of the war-torn world beyond this pastoral grove. The gramophone concludes Streatfield's summary with "Save the King" and then plays, "Dispersed are we—Unity—Dispersity" until it "gurgled *Un . . . dis . . .* And ceased" (201). The failure of the gramophone, however, returns the narrative again to the human figure of the pageant playwright Miss La Trobe.

Gathering her records, Miss La Trobe feels ultimately that her performance has been a failure. However, the world itself suddenly becomes a stage "when the starlings attacked the tree behind which she had hidden . . . . The tree became a rhapsody, a quivering cacophony, a whizz and vibrant rapture, branches, leaves, birds syllabling discordantly life, life, life, without measure, without stop devouring the tree" (209). In this moment, the real becomes lyric, hearkening back, again, to a synaesthetic ideal even as the elemental threat of "devouring" undergirds this ideal. The jazz cacophony of the gramophone becomes the electric, lived cacophony of a reality both accessible to human beings through the aesthetic, but also divorced from human perception. Miss La Trobe recognizes this "cacophony" as "life, life, life," against the "death, death, death" of what she sees as the performance's failure. Woolf again introduces the environmental sounds of the birds at the end of her novel perhaps as the response of an inhuman world to human representations of reality.

The significations of ambient noise in Woolf's novels of the 1920s and 1930s, the voiceover of the "megaphonic" voice circumscribing the play in *Between the Acts*, the "off-screen" voice of sound technologies—all of these forms of aural construction might be aligned with discourses on sound cinema in the late 1920s and in the 1930s centered around the question of reality, its technological capture, and its representation. As cinema became more invested in tying voices to bodies, in embodying a new realism on screen, Woolf invented hybrid literary genres for exploring authorial control within and against collective and monologic voice. The third term of her exploration of authorship and chorus in *Between the Acts* is the technological medium and inhuman agent of the gramophone. Reality had been the value that Woolf, like Lee and Fry, found in the cinema, and this question of reality and its reconstruction is evident in Woolf's interest in both visual and aural recording technologies. These technologies suggested

the possibility of defamiliarization through reframing reality. This defamiliarization was aimed to provoke a shattering recognition. Eisenstein may have claimed that the sound film was the exemplary means of translating modernist stream-of-consciousness through interior monologue, but, in *Between the Acts*, Woolf introduces instead the multiple possibilities inherent to interweavings of exteriorized and interiorized monologues as dialogues interposed within polyphonic soundscape. In doing so, she alludes to (and deconstructs) both the immersive multimedia experience of the opera and the dissociated perceptions of new media.

Woolf, throughout her literary career, thus exemplifies both Richardson's excitement over the signifying aesthetic possibilities of the (silent) cinematic medium and Lee's valuation of cinema as a recording medium capturing inhuman realities and representing the habitual, automatic reactions underlying "anthropocentric" perspectives. Woolf's interest in cinema was explicitly tied to her simultaneous allegiance to and skepticism of an inherited British literary tradition. Her novels of the 1920s and 1930s reflect on questions of reception raised by collectively-consumed media like the opera and cinema. She also evidences, throughout her career, the importance of literary appeals to senses like seeing and hearing in connection with the cultural values underlying aesthetics. While, ultimately, in her final critical and literary texts, Woolf launches a strong defense of words and the book, her own practice is informed both by audiovisual technologies and by multimedia genres like the opera. Brenda Silver remarks how, when she first heard a recording of Woolf, she was shocked to confront a voice so foreign from her own, the voice she had heard in her head as she read Woolf. This example of a disjunction underlying union is a fitting one on which to end, because it stages a drama between internal imagination and external storage, between self and other, and between word, image, and voice to which Woolf herself continually returns.

Chapter Four

Women's Film Authorship and Extrasensory Perception: Sound and Silence in the Films of Alice Guy-Blaché and Germaine Dulac

"But the play has outgrown the uncovered theatre where the sun beats and the rain pours. That theatre must be replaced with the theatre of the brain. The playwright is replaced with the man who writes a book. The audience is replaced by the reader. Anon is dead."—Virginia Woolf, "Anon" (398).

"*Le Cinéma est un oeil grand ouvert sur la vie, oeil plus puissant que le notre et qui voit ce que nous ne voyons pas*." ("The cinema is a large eye open to life, an eye more powerful than ours which sees what we cannot see.")—Germaine Dulac, "L'Essence du Cinéma—L'Idée Visuelle" (65).

In 1888, the American inventor Thomas Edison introduced his moving picture device, the kinetoscope, claiming that it will "do for the eye what the Phonograph has done for the ear." From its inception, Edison intended his visual instrument to be conjoined with the phonograph, inventing a kinetophone, or early sound cinema apparatus, six years later in 1894. The example of this early apparatus evinces, as Tom Gunning reminds us, the "ontological insecurities" inherent to new recording technologies. On the one hand, the phonograph and the kinetoscope effectively split the human sensorium between sight and hearing. On the other hand, as Gunning writes, "[T]he relation between the phonograph and motion pictures shows both the process of the separation of the senses . . . and an anxiety about this separation, a desire to heal the breach" (16). While cinema is inarguably a visual medium, Edison's kinetophone indicates that it was also, at its origins, an ambiguously aural one as well. The kinetoscope and the phonograph, unified in the kinetophone, evidence both the sensory separations, the "technological doubling" of late-19th-century modernity and the desire for a transcendence of this separation through the integration of the senses of seeing and hearing.

The sensory revolutions of modernity have been exhaustively theorized. On the one hand, the modern sensorium is ostensibly split by new perceptual technologies like the gramophone or cinematograph which isolate and heighten a single sense perception. On the other hand, a desire for the conjunction of seeing and hearing defines these new media from their inception. The history of the cinematic medium, more than any other medium, embodies both the splitting of visual and aural perceptions and their suturing. The influence of cinema as a visual medium on literary modernism has been well-documented, but the multiple meanings of the sound film have yet to be thoroughly explored. This exploration is vital, however, because it enables us to consider how turn-of-the-twentieth-century cinema aesthetics enabled new perceptions and representations of reality.

I believe that the aural and visual connections promoted by sound cinema are as important to the textual innovations of literary modernism as are the sensory divisions effected by technologies of perception. The cinematic medium was never truly silent—it was always accompanied by music, lectures, dialogues, and forms of synchronized sound. If we return to cinema's origins, as the example of Edison evidences, we find that the movement in the late 1920s from silent to sound cinema (bemoaned by many modernists) is hardly as linear as it is often conceived it to be. As Edouard Arnoldy claims, "Too often, the history of (sound) cinema is considered separately from its roots or artificially circumscribed to a period of transition, *to the change of one type of cinema to another*, or inordinately thought of in terms of progress or revolution. . . ." (58). Rather, as I have explored in this project, sound cinema was a contested technological and aesthetic medium. Struggles over the meaning of sound within this new, ostensibly visual, medium, furthermore, parallel invocations of sensory divisions and unifications in modernist prose texts.

It is my contention that these parallels between forms of sound cinema and the prose texts that I have considered in this project are particularly important for theorizing the interest of women modernists in the cinema. Both sensory dissociations and unifications, culminating even in synaesthesia, or the transformation of one sense into another, provided a means of interrogating gender and other forms of identity. If we consider the intricate imbrications of sound, voice, and body—both the individual body and the mass as a body—within film and modernist prose, then a new means of conceptualizing the importance of cinema, outside the visual realm of the gaze which has long been a dominant method for explorations of gender, emerges.[111] In this final chapter, however, I end not with literary modernists, but, rather, with two filmmakers. In doing so, I intend to elucidate the multiple meanings of sound in cinema that resonate within the literary texts that I have explored in the previous chapters.

The example of the filmmakers I consider here contributes to, while also problematizing, one of the founding assumptions of my project—that modernist women's authorship remains an important analytic for exploring texts from the interwar period. On the one hand, the collaborative production of cinema suggests that literary texts might also be conceived as somewhat collaborative productions in the sense that they emerge from the publishing apparatus as well as from an individual author. On the other, the question of authorship, which arguably no longer consumes literary studies, nevertheless remains a point of contention in film studies. In particular, the incredible contribution of women producers to early cinema was overlooked at the height of recovery work on women literary modernists in the 1970s and 1980s. Only now is

[111] Andreas Huyssen's well-known (and critiqued) claim that women and the masses are aligned in modernist discourse is salient to our examination of the cinema as an intrinsic aspect of both mass and interwar high modernist culture. We might consider how both women and the working class were the hailed audiences of much early film while, at the same time, through a focus on women producers, we can assert that cinema should be considered not just through the lens of consumption, but also through the lens of production.

archival scholarship beginning to recount the importance of women producers to the development of the medium. As Jane Gaines asks, "We would want to know why 1970s feminist film theory explained symbolic subjugation to men but not the power some women in the early industry exercised over others" (113). An Elaine Showalter moment was never reached by feminist film theorists in the 1970s nor, indeed, as Gaines points out, did theorists strive for it. Instead, the rich body of feminist film theory from the 1970s and 1980s focused on the codes of classic Hollywood cinema, usually beginning in the 1930s, and on the work of feminist filmmakers in the 1970s and 1980s who attempted to formulate new viewing practices outside dominant systems of vision in their cinematic texts. The state of recovery work on women producers in film studies is thus out of sync with recovery work on women authors in the discipline of English. The authorship model clearly remains a relevant, if imperfect, lens for this recovery work while, at the same time, providing a reminder that there are structures outside of authorial control not only in cinematic but also in literary production.[112]

The question of authorship also remains relevant to cinema studies for reasons suggested in the Woolf and Dulac quotes above.[113] As the cinematic medium developed, it was perceived as exteriorizing the "theater of the brain" and, at the same time, as enabling human access to inhuman perceptions through the technological. How might we theorize cinematic production? Do we resurrect the dead author or dead Anon? This question is a variation on Gunning's assertion that the cinematic medium initiates "not simply a desire to reproduce the 'outside

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[112] Gaines is publishing an upcoming book on this gap in historical research and women filmmakers and she has also, fittingly, spearheaded a digital archive of research on the forgotten women filmmakers of the first years of the twentieth-century at Columbia University's Center for Digital Research and Scholarship.

[113] For an overview history of auteur theory and authorship questions in film studies, see the recent anthologies *Authorship and Film* (edited by David Gerstner and Janet Staiger) and *Film and Authorship* (edited by Virginia Wright Wexman), both 2002.

world,' but more immediately to reproduce the human subject in its movements and to imitate its functions of perception and memory" (14). Through looking at two early women filmmakers, Alice Guy-Blaché and Germaine Dulac, in very different milieu, I will explore how the question of access to reality which consumed writers from the turn-of-the-twentieth-century is further troubled by the questions of film authorship, formal storytelling techniques, objective recording, and psychological verisimilitude in the development of the cinematic medium. Such an inquiry into women's cinema authorship might help us rethink what female authorship means, how it changes historically and across media, what it enables, and what it precludes as an analytic for studying texts. At the same time, looking at the developments of film aesthetics, technology, and narrative through these early figures allows us to return to a provisional period in cinema history that reminds us both of the historical contingencies integral to the development of the cinematic medium and of the human agencies that influenced these developments.

1. New Mediations and the Meaning of the Woman Cinema Author

Alice Guy-Blaché, inarguably the world's first woman filmmaker and possibly the first narrative filmmaker, was unable to find a publisher for her memoir during her lifetime.[114] A large part of the impetus for writing this memoir, as she makes clear throughout, is to secure her place in film history despite her omission from authoritative texts like Georges Sadoul's ostensibly comprehensive history of French film. The first few sentences of Guy-Blaché's text are remarkable for their rhetorical modesty. She writes:

> I have no pretense to making a work of literature, but simply to amuse, to interest the reader by anecdotes and personal memories concerning their great friend the

[114] Her memoir was published posthumously in 1976, nearly ten years after her death. It was translated into English in 1986. All quotations are taken from the English translation of the memoir.

> cinema, at whose birth I assisted. I have often been asked why I chose so unfeminine a career. Yet, I have not chosen this career. No doubt my destiny was traced from my birth and I have merely followed a Will whose name I do not know. (1)

Guy-Blaché simultaneously claims and denies authorship in this passage, just as she simultaneously claims and denies that her aim in this memoir is to rewrite the film historical narrative that had forgotten her. Rather than a mother, she is a midwife. Rather than the agent of her own career, she is the subject of its undeniable calling.[115] In these opening lines of her memoir in which she presents herself as simultaneously observer, agent, and vessel, Guy-Blaché anticipates contemporary feminist inquiries into film authorship. Despite writing her memoir in the middle of the twentieth-century, further, she represents a self akin to the professional women memoirists of the fin-de-siècle studied by Jane Marcus. Like these women, Guy-Blaché combines a testament of her own historical importance with an intimate and modest voice. Also like these late Victorian and Edwardian memoirists, she "anticipate[s] the coming of the resurrecting reader and speak[s] directly to her . . ." (Marcus 122).

Amelie Hastie writes of her memoirs, "Guy-Blaché was indeed a filmmaker and a writer. As such a dual author, she produced both cinematic narratives and a written history . . . [T]he memoirs link these media because, in written form, they tell the history of her authorship as a filmmaker. Additionally, the filmmaker's writings have provoked historians to seek out her films so that her place in history is further secured" (51). Indeed, Alison McMahan, Guy-Blaché's

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[115] Interestingly, in both the original French and in English translation, while the first clause in the sentence, "No doubt my destiny was traced from my birth and I have merely followed a Will whose name I do not know" is passive, the second clause is in active voice. Using the active to claim that one "merely followed a Will" rather than that "a Will was merely followed" is yet another revelation of how disingenuous this passage is.

biographer, followed her through archives across the United States and Europe for a decade, reconstructing film history through weaving together Guy-Blaché's then 110 extant films (of the 1,000 she is purported to have made) into an important body of work.[116] Marquise Lepage's 1995 feature-length documentary *The Lost Garden: The Life and Cinema of Alice Guy-Blaché* continued to question why Guy-Blaché had been uncredited for her contributions to the development of cinema. The first Guy-Blaché retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2009-2010 has finally established her place as one of the first cinematic auteurs to write, direct, and produce narrative motion pictures. I will delve further into the details of Guy-Blaché's career and innovations in the next section of this chapter, but I invoke her critical repositioning here, her return to authorship, because it is both enabled by and troubled by the question of whether or not a filmmaker, even a filmmaker engaged in so many aspects of cinematic production from scriptwriting to scenery design to direction, can be an author.

Even as it claims to establish her originating role in cinema history, Guy-Blaché's memoir also tacitly raises the question of collaborative production. For example, she writes of the hand-tinters of her early Gaumont pictures (who were mostly women): "I regret not remembering the names of those workers. They surely merited listing as collaborators in the early phase" (32). With this simple statement, Guy-Blaché once again alludes to her own lost authorship (which, she suggests, has been misplaced or displaced in history like the names of those anonymous workers) while undermining this allusion with the suggestion that cinema is the result of collaborative and not merely individual labor. As Gaines argues, basing her claim on Guy-Blaché's ostensible first film *La Fée aux choux* (*The Cabbage Fairy*, 1896 or 1900):[117]

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[116] There are now 130 known films attributable to Guy-Blaché (see Whitney catalogue).

[117] Guy-Blaché claims this as her first film made in 1896, but subsequent evidence suggests that the actual date might be 1900. This is particularly important to the debate of

> The practice of locating and attributing authorial marks in the text and the speculation about the something that elevates the work is certainly the residue of an outmoded humanism. Furthermore . . . a blind presumption of authorship can have the effect of negating whatever agency we want to assert on behalf of early film industry workers . . . Giving credit to women missing and eclipsed means rewriting the cultural history of the century of the industrially produced fantasy . . . Instead of looking exclusively for and to (psycho)analyzable subjects, we need to figure in the machines, the industrial practices, and the materiality of the mise-en-scene. More interesting than the equation between author and text is their inequivalency, or, rather, the impossibility of equivalency produced by layers of intervention and entwinement, both human and mechanical. (110-11)

Not only is film produced through collective labor, but its industrial origins (reflected in the beginning of Guy-Blaché's narrative filmmaking career as a novel attempt to sell cameras) preclude models of authorship for its own sake. Furthermore, the collective reception of cinema and the constraints inherent particularly to a large scale of production, distribution, and exhibition limit the filmmaker's control within the context of a particular system.

We might consider three generative means of circumventing this impasse between women's authorship and collective industrial production and consumption, finding each of them compelling, but not entirely adequate to Gaines' challenge. First, we might consider Judith Mayne's point (in the context of the Hollywood studio director Dorothy Arzner) that the "challenge of female authorship in the cinema for feminist theory is in the demonstration of *how* the divisions, overlaps, and distances between 'woman' and 'women' connect with the

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whether, in fact, Guy-Blaché can be credited with having made the first fiction film. See McMahan, 13-16, for a detailed discussion of this debate.

contradictory status of cinema as the embodiment of both omnipotent control and individual fantasy" (98). Such a claim, like Kaja Silverman's point that feminist theorists should look through the codes of classic cinema, for "not just the author 'inside' the text, but also for the text 'inside' the author—for the scenario of passion or, to be more precise, the 'scene' of authorial desire" (216), seems most salient in the context of an auteur theory of Hollywood cinema that does not take into consideration the collaborative nature of production. We might also look at women's cinema authorship in David Gerstner's terms as *techne*, "the symbiotic relationship between the body (cultural producer) and technology" (17). However, *techne* still doesn't consider the other bodies involved in film labor—the actors, crew, and post-production workers for example. Finally, we might follow Hastie's recent expansion of authorship in *Cupboards of Curiosity* (2007) to include ephemeral items like the scrapbooks, cookbooks, and marginalia of female film stars as well as the work of women filmmakers attempting to write themselves into film history. However, Hastie's response still doesn't answer Gaines' anti-authorial stance in the context of actual film production and reception.

Perhaps, however, with Gaines' important contention in mind, we should see the construction of female authorship as itself a productive analytic allowing us to rewrite history through, to borrow Rita Felski's term, "the lens of gender." McMahan's pursuit of Guy-Blaché through the archives, for example, reminds one of Giuliana Bruno's pursuit of the Italian silent filmmaker Elvira Notari in *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map*.[118] As Bruno writes of the provisional function of authorship for feminist scholarship, "[T]he death of the paternal author in the 1960s has emerged in conjunction with an increased readership engaged in actively rewriting and repositioning the female texts. The female reader is now effectively engaged in a double

[118] *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map* (1993) was the first feminist film history to explore the work of a woman filmmaker working before 1920.

construction of the female authorial subject" (235). Because cinema is a collaborative medium, any conception of authorship is especially indivisible from the social context of cinematic production. Nevertheless, the idea that women's cinema authorship signifies differently than male cinema authorship has preoccupied theorists at least since the institutionalization of cinema in art establishments and its acceptance as an art form. For example, the March 16, 1930, Film Society of London program was devoted to cinema directed by an international collection of women including Great Britain's Mary Field and Dinah Shurey, Germany's Lotte Reininger, France's Germaine Dulac, and the USSR's Olga Preobrshenskya. This ongoing inquiry into women's cinema authorship, particularly as it extends to the years before the rise of classic Hollywood cinema, inevitably meshes with formal inquiries into the meaning of cinema aesthetics and the evolution of the medium.

The marginalization of women as producers within dominant film industries and institutions beginning in the 1920s has paradoxically assisted the recognition of their authorship in film criticism and theory. Dorothy Arzner, for example, the only woman director in the classic Hollywood studio system in the late 1920s and 1930s, was a particularly important touchstone for feminist film historiographers and theorists seeking alternative discourses within Hollywood cinema through the conventions of studio film production in the 1970s.[119] On the other end of the

[119] Scholars Claire Johnston and Pam Cook, in *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: Towards a Feminist Cinema*, first reclaimed Arzner as a feminist auteur working within patriarchal Hollywood strictures in 1975, identifying moments of critique across her oeuvre as a "feminist counter-cinema." In 1979, Janet Bergstrom critiqued the examples of this conception of a "feminist counter-cinema" claiming that the "gaps, fissures, ruptures" cited by Johnston and Cook are inherent to all classic film texts in their aim of "containing sexual difference" (88). These gaps, Bergstrom argues, are always at the end recuperated into patriarchal systems within Hollywood narrative cinema. Judith Mayne continues to explore this question of Arzner and authorship by foregrounding the importance of Arzner's lesbian identity. She also argues for the necessity of perceiving studio cinema as the site of multiple discourses and pleasures. She writes, "If the cinema is understood as a one-dimensional system of male subjects and female objects,

cultural spectrum from Arzner, the Soviet documentary film producer and editor Esfir Shub, who worked in the film factories in the 1920s and 1930s, likewise exemplifies cinema authorship through her unique positioning in the industry as a woman producer. For example, Martin Stollery has shown how Shub's gender made her a more viable model for socialist aesthetic production in the Soviet art journals of the 1920s than Sergei Eisenstein, who not only maintained wide contacts in Europe and the United States, but who also embodied an individualist genius-centered model of authorship. Film editing was women's work in the Soviet film factories in the 1920s, and it was Shub's background as a cutter that enabled her to embody the "author as producer," or engineer, in Walter Benjamin's terms, rather than Eisenstein's Western model of the author-genius. Arzner and Shub, despite the radical differences of their contextual positionings, nevertheless acquired agency through their gender even as this acquisition of agency was defined by the general exclusion of women from cinematic production in Hollywood and the Soviet film factories. The example of these two well-known women producers, so important to feminist film theorists, provides us with an exceptionalist model of women's production in two powerful (and ideologically oppositional) film industries in the 1920s. However, does this exceptionalist positioning work in considering women's cinema authorship before 1920 and in alternative structures of cinema production like the French avant-garde in the 1920s? How are we to position women who claim that they *are* film authors between authorship and industrial constrictions in the development of early film form?

The writers who I explored in the preceeding chapters of this dissertation were consumers and theorists of cinema who were influenced by transformations in technologies of perception

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then it is not difficult to understand how the irony of Arzner's films is limited, or at least how it would be *read* as limited. While rigid hierarchies of sexual difference are indeed characteristic of dominant cinema, they are not absolute, and Arzner's films represent other kinds of cinematic pleasure and desire" (103).

and who were particularly effected by the synchronization of cinematic sound and image. I would like to end by asking how to locate the woman cinema author within this developing visual and aural medium. What I offer in the following sections is a contextualized account of how the filmmakers Guy-Blaché and Dulac, within their specific milieu, made their own claims for cinema authorship while also determining the direction of the medium's development between sound and image, sensory division and sensory suturing, and the manifestation of subjective and objective realities. In what follows, I focus on the aesthetic, narrative, and technological transformations developed by Guy-Blaché as an early cinema "pioneer" and by Dulac as a modernist cinema aesthete just as I have considered how technologies of perception influenced narrative constructions in modernist prose texts in the earlier chapters. The new medium of cinema, because it was undefined as an art, offered unique possibilities for women writers, journalists, and directors. In addition, women actresses and screenwriters often had a great deal of control over film production before divisions of labor were strongly effected in the 1920s. I have chosen to focus in this chapter on Guy-Blaché and Dulac, however, precisely for their self-conscious and documented claims to cinema authorship as well as their attempts to define, through writing, what that authorship means vis-à-vis the medium's ability to capture reality.

Guy-Blaché is recognized as the first woman filmmaker as well as one of the world's first filmmakers. As she writes in her memoirs, she began her work before cinema was conceived as an art, and was, rather, valued primarily for its scientific and commercial possibilities. As she was a "midwife" at the birth of cinema, Guy-Blaché engaged multiple early genres including narrative comedies and melodramas, documentary, and travel films. She also experimented with early synchonized sound film technology and her later narrative cinematic reflections on these

early experiments, such as her 1912 short film *Canned Harmony*, offer us a unique perspective on the development of sound in cinema. Not only does Dulac share important similarites with the women modernists I considered earlier in this project, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson, in her participation with an avant-garde filmmaking community that developed its own system of production, distribution, and exhibition, she also, despite her self-consciously avant-garde and impressionist ethos, bears a strong resemblance to Guy-Blaché in her attempts to occupy the position of the female cinema-author. At the same time, as cinema became conceived as an aesthetic form in the 1910s, the significance of this authorship likewise transformed from "innocent" technological and narrative experimentation to the construction of a sophisticated and (syn)aesthetic visual language. In concluding with Dulac and her synaesthetic vision for the cinema as a "symphony" and as a modern form of writing, I intend to tie this inquiry into women's cinema writing back into my former chapters' focus on women writing cinematically.

2. The First Woman Auteur: Alice Guy-Blaché

Alice Guy-Blaché claims in her memoir that she wrote, directed, and produced her first film, *La Fée aux choux* (The Cabbage Fairy), in 1896, a year after the Lumière brothers had initially demonstrated their 35-mm. cinematograph in France. Guy had been working as a secretary for Léon Gaumont, who sold cameras in the 1890s, since 1894 and she suggested to him that they should film a story to generate interest in the cinema camera. Thus, Guy's career, like many early filmmakers', began as an attempt to sell narrative cinema as an adjunct to the technology rather than the technology as a vehicle for narrative cinema. In her memoirs, she claims that had narrative cinema been an established genre and not merely a sales strategy, she wouldn't have been entrusted with its production. She writes of her first film staging:

> Daughter of an editor [of books], I had read a good deal . . . I had done a little amateur theatricals and I thought that one might do better than these demonstration films.

> Gathering my courage, I timidly proposed to Gaumont that I might write one or two little scenes and have a few friends perform in them. If the future development of motion pictures had been foreseen at this time, I would never have obtained his consent. My youth, my inexperience, my sex, all conspired against me. (24)

Because of her early work on the rapidly developing genre of the narrative motion picture, however, Guy-Blaché was made head of Gaumont's film production in 1897, holding the title for the next ten years until her emigration to the United States. Her work precipitated Gaumont's transformation from a company selling photographic apparatuses to one of the world's largest film production companies. Guy-Blaché's Gaumont films include actualities (some of which are remakes of Lumière films), early fiction films (comedies and melodramas), presentations of dance, vaudeville, and theatrical acts, and travel films. Her career at Gaumont culminated in 1906 with her ambitious *La Vie du Christ* (The Life of Christ), which recalled the birth, life, and death of Christ with twenty-five constructed backdrops and written scenarios.

Guy-Blaché's early experiments with film narrative in the 1890s had enabled her to become head of production at one of the two major French film studios (the other being with Pathé). Her early work with the Chronophone, Gaumont's patented sound-synchronized cinematic apparatus, led to her emigration to the United States which, in turn, led to the eventual establishment of her own studio, Solax. Guy-Blaché accompanied her new husband, Herbert Blaché, to Cleveland in 1907 to establish the Chronophone system in the United States for Gaumont. In 1908, Gaumont opened a new studio for the production of English-language *phonoscènes* (Chronophone productions, often of theatrical performances) in Flushing, New

York. Gaumont hired Blaché to manage it.[120] Because little production actually wound up happening there, however, Guy-Blaché, who had focused on raising her daughter Simone (born in 1908), asked if she could begin using the studio for her own film work. Due to the success of the films that she began making in 1910, she was soon able to move out of the Gaumont studios and into her own studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Despite the eventual fate of the Chronophone technology, it was vital to the establishment of Guy-Blaché's studio and the construction of her American career.

In this section, I will focus, first, on Guy-Blaché's experimentation with over 200 *phonoscènes* made with Chronophone technology. These early experiments are quite different from her early silent (with musical accompaniment) narrative films. I read her short 1912 film *Canned Harmony* as a reflection of the evolutions both of early sound film and of a divergent silent film narrative form dependent on visual signification. Guy-Blaché's filmmaking career had ended by the time the sound-on-film talkies took over theaters in the late 1920s. Nevertheless, the illustrated and dialogue-heavy scenarios that she wrote for French fashion magazines in the late-1930s exemplify her participation in a version of cinema writing as anonymous as she herself came to be in this period. I will conclude this section by looking at some of this writing, as these magazine pieces provide us with yet another example of the connection between cinema, negotiations of sound and image, and literary narrative, albeit one troubled yet again by the questions of gendered authorship and aesthetic value.

[120] In 1908, the company announced that they had 139 *phonoscènes* in English, mostly taken of vaudeville performers and exhibited at two theaters in New York City as well as touring through the East Coast (see McMahan, "Madame Blaché in America," 51).

3. Talking Pictures and Pure Films: Guy-Blaché's Chronophone Experiments

Like later avant-garde filmmakers and modernist film theorists, Guy-Blaché invokes the "purity" of the silent medium in her memoirs. She writes:

> In the silent cinema, we had discovered a fresh, clear spring . . . Its prattle murmured of things, no doubt childish, which she pressed us to repeat in our turn. . . . Our spring has followed its course, swollen by currents less pure. It has become a rivulet, then a river, has crossed great cities, which dirtied it with their gutters. (28)

In this passage, Guy-Blaché somewhat disingenuously invokes the globalization and corporatization of the cinematic medium. By "gutters" she claims to mean the investment of money into narrative motion pictures and the "dirtying" effect of this investment. However, as stated above, Guy-Blaché's own company, Gaumont, had global ambitions and made films because they made money. Guy-Blaché, however, hearkens back to the "purity" of a medium that she knew was neither wholly silent nor innocent of its commodity status. She thus places her own role in cinematic production at the intersection between experimental and innocent authorship and the historical developments of the film industry over which she claims to have had no control. Her gender, excluding her from the corporate echelons of that industry in the mid-1890s, freed her to claim a "purity" in her production of motion pictures.

In her memoir, Guy-Blaché would also write of the contemporary talkies:

> One begins to recognize that the talking-pictures, in arresting the very promising, very encouraging development of the silent cinema, have deprived it of a great deal of poetry . . . In the theatre drama limits itself to the human world. With cinema, it is all life

> that lends itself to the spectacle, communicating a total resonance to the soul. But today's talking-pictures, you know, are filmed theatre. (68)

How might we parse this defense of silent cinema with Guy-Blaché's participation in early synchronized sound film production at Gaumont? This is an especially interesting question since the list of Guy-Blaché's *phonoscènes* with Gaumont are specifically theatrical acts like "the Mante sisters, very fashionable popular dancers at that time; Rose Caron of the Opéra, with her singing class. With Mme. Mathieu-Luce and Marguerite Care of the Opéra-Comique . . . and others, we recorded *Faust*, *Mignon*, *Carmen*, *Les Dragons de Villars*, *Mireille* and many others. The Café-Concert itself was made to contribute, with Mayol, Dranem, Polin, Fragson, and many others" (Guy-Blaché 44). Furthermore, the filming of these acts seemingly replicated the staging of the theater in its stationary and frontal focus on the performers. This long-shot frontal framing is partly due to technological and structural limitations on cutting and editing. However, the framing also attests to the fascination of this early sound technology as an end in itself, aligning these short films with what Gunning calls the "cinema of attraction."

While Guy-Blaché's *phonoscènes* were filmed theatrical acts, their reliance on the spectacle of technological reproduction separated them from what Guy-Blaché called the "filmed theatre" of films that concealed their sound reproduction through tying voices to characters in an ostensibly realist environment. In short, the *phonoscènes* are non-narrative. This is not to say, however, that Guy-Blaché did not anticipate the use of this synchronized-sound technology for the "talkies." As McMahan points out, she scripted (unproduced) dialogue films for the Chronophone and her later magazine stories and translations, as will be further explored below, relied on dialogue to accompany their illustrations, creating similar effects to the synchronized-sound cinema arising in the late 1920s. She moved, in her later career, from what we might call

the "phonotext" of the *phonoscènes* to phototexts attempting to replicate the synchronized-sound film. We might see this contradiction between Guy-Blaché's own work and her later dislike of the "talkies" as a generative paradox reflecting her engagement with the development of the motion pictures between science and art, spectacle and narrative, and the artificial and the real. Guy-Blaché's work with Gaumont's early synchronized sound technology attests not only to the importance of sound in early cinema production but also to the contestations and uncertainties inherent to a developing medium related to music, plastic arts, theater, and literature and poised between entertainment, education, art, and industry.

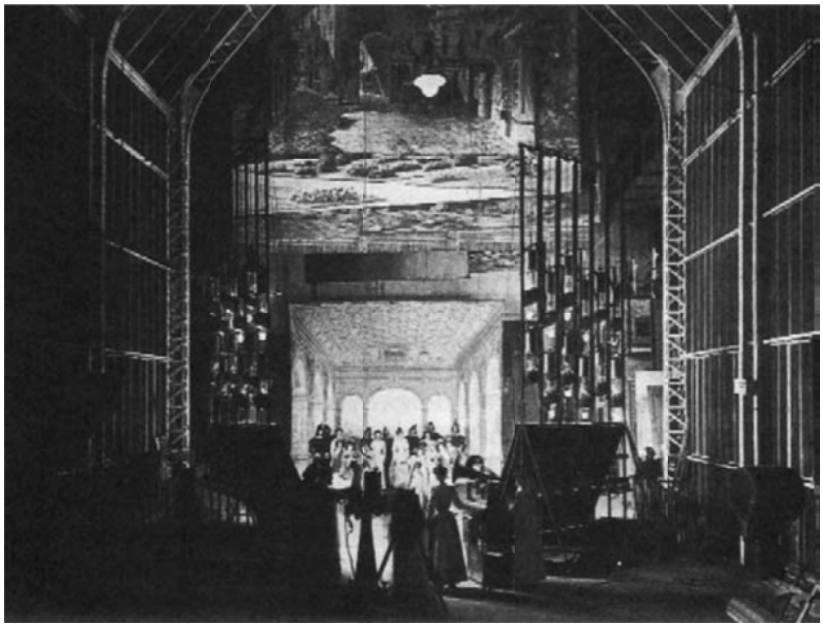

Figure 2. Alice Guy-Blaché directing a phonoscène. Gaumont Studio, ca. 1906. Courtesy of the Musée Gaumont.

Gaumont's Chronophone technology (patented in 1901) conjoined a cinematograph with a phonograph, connecting them through two shared electronic motors. In the production process, a recording was made of a singer, opera, ballet, or orchestra. Guy-Blaché would then receive the wax cylinder record and play it back in rehearsals until the actors or performers could match the recording (see fig. 2). The *phonoscènes* emerge as much from Thomas Edison's initial invention

of the kinetoscope's moving images as an accompaniment to his phonograph as they anticipate the subordination of sound to image in the later synchronized-sound films of the 1920s. They were both evidence of what the technology could offer, a democratizing of theater and opera scenes, and an entertainment all their own akin to French café-concerts or vaudeville. Jeffrey Klenotic claims that early dialogue pictures continued to mediate between "well-rehearsed and absorbing theatrical realism" and a "showman's tradition of sensational attractions" (157). The *phonoscènes* exemplify these "sensational attractions" of early sound film (along the lines of a number in a musical or a music video). At the same time that Guy-Blaché produced the *phonoscènes*, she also continued to work on the development of visual narrative cinema, the form that would become predominant in American and European cinema in the early 1900s.

Guy-Blaché's 1912 silent comedy short *Canned Harmony*, made for her own studio Solax, reflects back upon the hybridities and contradictions inherent to her early cinema productions, calling into question the artificial and the real through presenting live music as indistinguishable from the mechanical reproduction of a phonograph. *Canned Harmony* takes place within the couple narrative that had come to define much early narrative cinema. In this film, the heroine Evelyn's father the Professor wants her to marry a professional musician despite her desire for her suitor Billy. Billy's roommate suggests that he reinvent himself as Signor Tremelo and perform on a violin in time to a phonograph recording to win over the Professor. A disguised Billy presents himself as Signor Tremelo, a violinist suitor, to Evelyn's father. She sits at the table to listen and her father sits at the piano. Signor Tremelo raises his bow and the film cuts to a close-up of Evelyn's hand at a phonograph hidden under the table as she turns it on. The Professor is unable to distinguish the recording from a live performance and he is delighted, offering the violin virtuoso his daughter's hand in marriage. At Evelyn and

Billy's wedding in the final segment, however, a maid turns on the phonograph and the Professor realizes his mistake. The wedding guests follow him into the parlor where the father pulls off Signor Tremelo's mustache. As the couple is already married, however, it is too late for him to deny Billy. Without any other recourse, the father accepts his new son-in-law. This silent film plays with imagined sound not only through the narrative function of the hidden phonograph, but also through intertitles composed as musical puns. When the angry Professor finds Billy in Evelyn's room, for example, he hears "harmonious lip-music."

Canned Harmony, which is preoccupied with sound and sound technologies, calls into question both the legitimacy of recorded sound and the authenticity of live music. Even the Professor, defined by his cultural capital, is tricked by the phonograph. Particularly given Guy-Blaché's later heralding of silent cinema, we might read this short film as a parable of the triumph of image over sound in the cinema. The dramatic irony of the visual close-up on Evelyn's hand switching the phonograph to "on" puts the spectator in a privileged position compared to the Professor. In its detachment from its supposed source—the violinist—at the end of the film, the phonograph is revealed as the medium of an elaborate ruse designed to trick the spectator within the film, the Professor (who, tellingly, listens with his eyes closed) while the spectator without the film, seeing without hearing, manages a suspension of disbelief complicit with the film's narrative. Gunning writes of Thomas Edison's early experiments in visual reproductions to accompany his phonograph, "The desire to supplement the phonograph responds not simply to an idealist need for perfect representation or a bourgeois desire for coherence, but to a deep anxiety aware of the manner in which technology, in doubling the human, also seems to be splitting it up, transforming the nature of human subjectivity" (29). Nevertheless, in *Canned Harmony*, the spectator's imagination fills in what is missing to suture

division—whether it be making sense of a duplicitous image in the Professor's case or hearing unheard sound in the spectator-without-the-film's case.

At the film's climax, Guy-Blaché alludes back to her own position as the producer of these images and sounds, her own hand at the phonograph and the fundamental split between seeing and believing. Barbara McBane writes that the cinema of the early 1910s both "looked back on an older 'cinema of attractions' practice with eclectic or competing entertainments" and "looked forward toward the 'integrated narrative' synch-sound aesthetic of classical Hollywood cinema, where sound was presumably subordinate to image" (186). *Canned Harmony* appears at the intersection of both these movements in which Guy-Blaché intimately participated. Just as the synchronization of phonograph and performance is analogous to the narrative resolution of familial drama through heterosexual marriage in *Canned Harmony*, we might likewise posit that the disconnection between visual and aural reality and representation in the film undermines any resolution. *Canned Harmony* questions the value of live music as an art form while also calling into question the reality behind synchronizations of technology and performance. We might see *Canned Harmony* as the aural equivalent of the masquerade, Joan Riviere's conception of femininity as both real and unreal. Riviere writes in her 1929 article, "Womanliness as Masquerade": "The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing" (417). Guy-Blaché had played with this idea of a visual gender masquerade in her gender role-switching short films *Les Résultats du féminisme* (The Consequences of Feminism, Gaumont, 1906) and *In the Year 2000* (Solax, 1912). In *Canned Harmony*, even as she follows the narrative arc of the couple, she likewise calls identity into question through the dislocation of the phonograph's sounds. Guy-

Blaché was concerned with developing a film realism that undermined seemingly certain realities, including determined gender roles and the auratic experience of art, for the exposure of other realities, like qualities of gesture and appearance in the performance of gender and an acknowledgment of the industrial reproduction of art and its inherent uncanniness in the early-twentieth century. The move, at the end of her career, from being an early cinema author to being subsumed into a system of cinematic production exemplified by the printed word provides an additional layer of generative complexity to Guy-Blaché's long involvement with a transforming medium.

4. The Death of a Career and Ghost Writing: From Alice Guy-Blaché to Alix Guy

Solax was bankrupt by 1920 following transformations in the American film industry, a few poorly received films, and the dissolution of Guy-Blaché's marriage. She returned to France in 1922 to look for work in the film industry she had been an agent in initiating, but she couldn't find a position anywhere, so she came back to the United States in 1927 hoping to find copies of some of her old films that she could bring back to France to increase her chances of finding employment. Unfortunately, she was unable to locate any existing prints. She remained in the United States for the next ten years, returning to Paris with her daughter Simone in 1937. To supplement Simone's income, Guy-Blaché wrote short scenarios for women's magazines and translated American films into French novelizations in the late 1930s under the masculine nom de plume Alix or Antoine Guy (she only used her own name to sign her films). In the midst of renewed interest in Guy-Blaché's memoir thanks to her recently recovered films and repositioning within film history, her commercial writing of cinema has been overlooked. However, this writing is important for both conceptualizing links between writing and cinema

and for Guy-Blaché's later self-fashioning in the early 1960s as she attempted to get her memoir published.

Printed in the fashion magazine *Mode du Jour* and in short editions called *Le Film Complet*, Guy-Blaché's stories read like a textual invocation of the "talkies." An episode of her story "Ruse de guerre" (Trick of War), for example, published in September, 1939, in *Mode Du Jour* begins with an "establishing shot" paragraph describing the balcony of a Paris apartment. Its female protagonist (the story is written in first person) sits and reads women's fan letters to her husband, a famous singer. A maid interrupts to tell her that an agitated man has arrived and demands to see her. A young man enters and thrusts a letter at her, begging her to help him. The letter, from his fiancée, states that she has run off with the woman's husband. The melodramatic episode ends with the protagonist trembling over the letter in her hand. Written episodically, these short magazine pieces can be read as sequences of the talkie Guy-Blaché never made. This episode, like most of them, is printed on one page and illustrations of the narrative, the man watching nervously while the woman reads the letter in the upper left-hand corner, a "close-up" on the woman's disturbed face in the lower right-hand corner, occupy as much space as the text itself. These stories are not significantly different from "Antoine Guy's" French novelizations of Hollywood films, including *Man of the World*, *Rose of Broadway*, and *Return of the Cisco Kid*, with dialogue and film stills from 1939-1940 (before the German occupation). These pieces are intended as entertainment eclipsing standard conceptions of literary authorship. As such, they can be read as Guy-Blaché's reincorporation into a system of cinematic production, albeit one foreign to her own experience as an early auteur—a cinematic producer who wrote, directed, and produced her own films. Had Guy-Blaché found film work at Gaumont or Pathé, it's possible that her contribution might have been as anonymous as the magazine texts she wrote due to the

increasing specialization of the film industry and the dearth of women producers in the interwar period. Interestingly, despite distancing herself from these productions with her male pen name, Guy-Blaché, when she saved them in her scrapbook, crossed out “Alix Guy” and “Antoine Guy” in each clipping and wrote her own (married) name over them, “Alice Guy-Blaché,” as if reclaiming an authorship that she had forsaken.

In the 1950s, Guy-Blaché again began to enjoy some recognition for her contributions to early cinema. After notice from a few French film historians and an acknowledgment by Léon Gaumont’s son Louis that she had been unjustly forgotten, Guy-Blaché was awarded a Legion of Honor in France in 1955 and in 1957 was the subject of a television interview and a retrospective at the Cinémathèque francaise. In the early 1960s, as she entered her 90s, Guy-Blaché furiously sent off the manuscript of her memoir to French publishers, including Flammarion, Hachette, Éditions du Seuil, Éditions Payots, and L’Herminier, hoping to see it in print before she departed for “le grand voyage.” She was turned down by all of the publishers, unless she was willing to pay to self-publish it or include it as part of a much larger anthology. Her work was not literary enough, was too slight, or, in the terms of L’Herminier’s rejection letter, exhibited the “*peche par modestie*” (‘the sin of modesty”). Guy-Blaché promised illustrations and scenarios, including “Fiancailles d’Ukraine,” (“Engagement in the Ukraine”), a magazine scenario she’d written about a Polish wolf hunt in 1939. Ultimately, Guy-Blaché did not see her memoir in print before her death. The text wasn’t published until 1976 as *Autobiographie d’une pionnière du cinema* by Denoël/Gonthier, shepherded by the French feminist film historian Nicole-Lise Bernheim. The English edition, translated by Guy-Blaché’s daughter Simone and her daughter-in-law Roberta Blaché and edited by feminist film historian Anthony Slide, was published by Scarecrow Press in 1986. Neither of the publications is illustrated and they do not include Guy-Blaché’s scenarios,

which were offered as lures to a much different readership than the eventually published editions. Nevertheless, both the French and English editions, which print a memoir that is as visually engaging as a typescript, capture the cinematic through Guy-Blaché's written anecdotes and her rewriting of film history through a self-consciously personal perspective. This writing is itself a retrospective, a revision of film history. As she looked back on the "purity" of cinema past, her printed-word film scenarios of the late 1930s attest that the industry had radically changed. Silent narrative film had led to the synchronized-sound dialogue film of the late 1920s, the "talkies" that Guy-Blaché purported to dislike in her memoir and that she had translated onto the page in the last, pseudonymous stage of her career.

5. *Cinégraphie*, Silent Cinema, and Feminist Inscription: Germaine Dulac

If Guy-Blaché provides us with an intriguing early model of the female film artist-engineer-writer, then her countrywoman Germaine Dulac is the consummate modern female film aesthete. Both women evidence, however, what is at stake in models of authorship in the context of a technological medium. Their framing of filmmaking as a form of writing provides a complementary counternarrative to the productions of modernist writers who, as I have argued, skirt filmmaking practices in their prose texts. While Guy-Blaché attempted to find film work in the United States and France in the 1920s and 1930s, the French filmmaker Dulac, a touchstone figure for feminist film historians since the 1970s, became prominent in French avant-garde film circles. The rise of Hollywood following World War I had splintered France's once world-dominant film industry. With the loss of international commercial power, however, came a vibrant avant-garde which, throughout the 1920s, published bodies of film theory in cinema magazines and books and organized multiple ciné-clubs throughout France, becoming a model

for intellectual cinema culture particularly in Britain.[121] Dulac, working within a network of filmmakers including Louis Delluc, Jean Epstein, Marcel L'Herbier, and Abel Gance, aimed to develop a "pure" film independent of all other art forms. At the same time, she produced commercial films and acted as director of the newsreel division at Gaumont in the 1930s. These parallel film careers evidence the value of cinema for Dulac in both representing subjective states and in capturing objective reality.

While the purity of cinema in Guy-Blaché's memoirs had been defined as a "childish" fascination with technological experimentation, by the 1920s, the desire to construct a "pure" film meant abstracting the essence of the medium in order to develop new forms of signification. Attempts to articulate *cinégraphie*, or a writing particular to cinema, abounded in French avant-garde film journals in the 1920s. This *cinégraphie*, for Dulac as for many other avant-garde filmmakers, was defined by silence. As Dulac began a 1924 lecture, "The cinema is a silent art. We, the authors of films, must assume the difficult task of describing *without words, without phrases. . . "* (Abel 305).[122] As her emphasis on the wordlessness of "pure" cinema reveals, silence predominantly meant the absence of speech and text. The apex of cinema, for Dulac, as for much of the modernist 1920s cinema avant-garde, was the realization of musical rhythms through images in a synaesthetic transformation. This valuation of cinema paralleled Dulac's new definition of film authorship as inextricable from technical expertise. As Rosanna Maule claims, "[Dulac's] wish to unify creative responsibilities in the figure of the filmmaker insists upon the need to break away from the literary and theatrical notion of authorship in French

[121] British intellectuals attempted to build a film culture on the French model in the 1920s, opening the Film Society of London in 1925 and producing the little film magazine *Close Up*, modeled on French film discourse in 1927.

[122] All Dulac quotes taken from translations within Richard Abel's anthology of French cinema writing will not appear in the French original. Quotes derived directly from Dulac's cinema writings will appear in French with my translation following in parentheses.

culture. For Dulac, abolishing the expression *metteur en scène* . . . would have meant dispensing with a concept that at the time was . . . almost exclusively identified with male authorship" ("The Importance of Being a Film Author"). As cinema became a site of aesthetic debate, authorship likewise acquired a new value. Thus, the French avant-garde was defined by two important aspects of cinematic production predicated on the status of cinema as an art form—the necessity of silence (rhetorically, if not in actual film practice) and aesthetic authorship.

In focusing on three films that exemplify different aspects of Dulac's career—*La Souriante Madame Beudet* (*Smiling Madame Beudet*) (1922), *La coquille et le clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman)* (1927), and *Thème et variations* (1929)—I intend to exemplify the importance of sound, as well as of images, in the construction of a determinedly modernist silent cinema. I maintain that Dulac's films not only reveal the metaphoric value of music for the construction of avant-garde film images, but that they are also tacitly dependent on imagined sound and intermedia and intertextual allusions founded on sound. Furthermore, I ask what new perspective such a focus on sound might give us on Dulac's established cinema authorship. The examples of Guy-Blaché and Dulac, exemplary female film authors, enable us to contrast transformations in the aesthetic and cultural meaning of the cinematic medium and the influence of these transformations on concepts of film authorship. Dulac's aesthetic ethos in many ways parallels that of the modernist writers Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis writes that "Dulac's particular emotional emphasis, her enduring belief in the evocative power of cinematic technique and the proliferation of meanings implied, suggests that against the tyranny of hierarchical meaning the filmic image could counterpose a celebration of flux" (95). A corresponding challenge to "hierarchical meaning" and "a celebration of flux" might likewise characterize Woolf's and Richardson's fiction, revealing a nexus of shared

influences and contemporary concerns. Contrasted with the examples of Guy-Blaché, as well as with Vernon Lee's valuation of the medium in *Satan the Waster* as explored in chapter one, however, we can see these modernist productions as part of a larger cultural field in which the meaning of film sounds—whether defined by music, noise, or dialogue—derived from contested forms of representation between interior and exterior, subjective and objective, conceptions of reality.

6. Intertextual Sounds and Female Subjectivity: *Smiling Madame Beudet*

La Souriante Madame Beudet (*Smiling Madame Beudet*), Dulac's critique of a bourgeois provincial marriage, is her most overtly narrative independently-financed film.[123] The film's plot centers on an unhappy woman whose bullying husband frequently enjoys a joke in which he puts an unloaded revolver to his head and threatens to kill himself. He leaves her at home to attend a theater performance of the opera *Faust* with another couple, and, while he is gone, she realizes her entrapment in her marriage and their home. She loads his gun so that he will accidentally kill himself when he returns. The next day, she puts the gun back in his office. He interrupts her before she has a chance to unload it, however. Grabbing a ledger of the household expenditures and settling at his desk, he calls her back into his office to interrogate her spending. When she enters, he jokingly points the loaded gun at her and shoots. Shocked at finding the gun loaded and assuming that she wants to kill herself, he runs to embrace her, asking her why she wants to die when she has him to live for.

In *Smiling Madame Beudet*, Dulac reinscribes stereotypically bourgeois female desires through engaging fantasy and psychological spaces overlapping the realist mise-en-scène of the

[123] Throughout the 1920s, Dulac financed her own experimental films as well as undertaking commercial projects. In 1932, after the rise of the talkie, she developed a newsreels division at Gaumont.

bourgeois house and the exterior shots of provincial streets. The appetites attributed, often pejoratively, to bourgeois women, such as their consumption of consumer goods and literature, their susceptibility to advertisements and romantic literary sentiments, and their dilettantish artistic hobbies are recast in *Smiling Madame Beudet* as means through which the circumscribed wife realizes her entrapment even as she escapes it. This realization is not only invoked through visual techniques like the close-up point-of-view shots (which Dulac characterizes as "psychological shots" in her film writing) from Madame Beudet's perspective and Dulac's play with acute camera angles and superimpositions, however. Intertextual and intermedia references to aural, as well as visual, experiences pervade the film. These references serve as markers of taste (or a lack of taste) defining the husband and the wife. At the same time, they cannot be wholly separated from their acoustic origins. This "silent" visualization of Madame Beudet's psychology is, in fact, rife with sound.

Psychological tension is introduced early in the film when, upon receiving an invitation to *Faust*, we see, as M. Beudet's vision, an image of the opera singers gathered around Marguerite, an angelic and beautiful focal point for M. Beudet's imagined vision, the spectator's vision, and the vision of the male singers surrounding her in the fantasy image. The next shot depicts a medium close-up of Mdm. Beudet's face and we then see her vision: Mephistopheles' face dominates the left-hand foreground in a close-up, while Marguerite, separated from him to the right and juxtaposed in a medium-long shot to create a location in the background, attempts to push him away from her. Unsurprisingly, Mdm. Beudet then tells her husband that she does not want to go see the opera with him. This operatic version of *Faust*, written by Charles Gonoud, Jules Barbier, and Michel Carré in 1859, represents the bourgeois, middlebrow taste of the Beudets while also acting as a rich imaginary space. In her husband's fantasy, Marguerite,

occupying the central spectacle, sings, while, in Madame Beudet's, she silently rejects the oppressive, laughing face of Mephistopheles which reflects the close-up, laughing face of her husband.[124]

When M. Beudet leaves to attend the performance of *Faust*, he locks Mdm. Beudet's piano so that she cannot play the Debussy that she loves. In 1928, Dulac would attempt to translate one of Debussy's *Arabesques* into the visual rhythms of a short abstract film. Here, the foreclosed impressionist piano piece suggests a counterpoint to the bourgeois spectacle of the opera. Instead of playing her piano, Mdm. Beudet, silenced like the figure of Marguerite in her daydream, picks up a copy of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. While looking at magazine images in an earlier sequence, Mdm. Beudet supplements her constricted setting with fantasy, imagining a tennis player in an advertisement transformed into a superimposed lover. Baudelaire's poem "La Mort des Amants" ("The Death of Lovers") prompts Mdm. Beudet's awareness of what her life lacks rather than offering the escape of the magazine images. Dulac stages this realization through a close-up on each of the first three lines of the poem—" *Nous aurons des lits pleins d'odeurs légères/Des divans profonds comme des tombeaux//Et d'étranges fleurs sur des etageres*" ("We shall have beds full of subtle perfumes/Divans as deep as graves, and on the shelves/Will be strange flowers that blossomed for us")—followed by close-ups of Mdm. Beudet's troubled face and then a close-up of the couple's bed, their pillow, the vase of flowers that he moves to the center of the table and she moves to the side. Angered, Mdm. Beudet throws the volume down on the floor. Just as Dulac reenvisions women's consumerist

[124] This French opera version of *Faust*, very popular in mid-19th-century New York, is depicted in the opening chapter of Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence* (1920). This chapter illustrates the central importance of the female star playing Marguerite, as well as the male gaze through Newland Archer who looks between the female opera star and the social world of the opera house.

desires in the earlier fantasy sequence, she here rewrites cinematically the silliness of bourgeois female fantasies gleaned from reading too many novels, the Madame Bovary affliction. This reenvisioning is realized through the imbrications of text—Baudelaire's poem—and image—the "psychological shots" from Mdm. Beudet's point-of-view.

Following the Baudelaire sequence, Mdm. Beudet's fantasy briefly reappears as the superimposed figure of a man comes to her, a lover to whom she holds her outstretched arms. However, the superimposed M. Beudet suddenly interrupts this apparition as he enters, in slow motion, through the window. The realization of the poverty of her surroundings, her entrapment in limited horizons, prompts Mdm. Beudet to desire an escape that Dulac depicts as necessary. Tellingly, despite M. Beudet's inaccurate interpretation, Mdm. Beudet does not plan to kill herself like Flaubert's heroine, but rather to kill him. The film ends with M. Beudet comforting his stricken wife. In a frame above them, the faint and bobbling heads of embracing Punch and Judy puppets appear in an ironic mirroring of the restored couple. A theater curtain closes on the frame-within-the-frame, visually imagining the end of their performance of bourgeois marriage. The final scenes of the film, like the beginning, depict the streets of the town that enclose the house in a claustrophobic exterior shot. The final intertitle announces that the streets are the limits of the horizon and the activity of the town and its residents continues habitually, counterposing the tensions and threatened violence we have seen within these middle-class houses. In *Smiling Madame Beudet*, Dulac constructs overlapping spaces that are controlled by rhythms of the habitual, of the shared daily life of a village or a city that circumscribes the movements of the individual. Intertextual aural elements—the opera, the piano, and the Baudelaire poem—contribute both to these inherited strictures surrounding Madame Beudet and to their escape through her perspective.

Figure 3. Germaine Dulac, *Smiling Madame Beudet* **(**1922).

Dulac characterizes *Smiling Madame Beudet* against her increasingly abstract, "pure" film experiments of the late 1920s as "psychological and sentimental." She writes, "*Dans* La Souriante Madame Beudet*, les harmonies visuelles expriment l'action. . . . au contraire. . . .* [in the abstract films] *par des correspondences visuelles a créé une action*" ("In *Smiling Madame Beudet,* the visual harmonies express the action . . . on the contrary, [in the abstract films] visual correspondences create an action": Dulac 139). In other words, *Smiling Madame Beudet* evidences an increasingly sophisticated visual film grammar tied to psychologically-inflected narrative while Dulac's more abstract films evidence a film for film's sake ethos, a realization of the intrinsic potential of the medium ostensibly divorced from other art forms. The represented inner life of a central (female) character is traded for the exteriorization of an almost mystical essence attributed to the union of the cinematic apparatus and the film author. In the process, intertextual representations of musical works and poetry become the rhythmic music of images themselves. Whether narrative or abstract, however, the controlling aesthetic consciousness of the film-author remains, for Dulac, vital to understanding the cinematic image.

7. "A Reality That Seems to Destroy Itself": *The Seashell and the Clergyman*

Dulac's *La coquille et le clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman*), often credited with being the first surrealist film, was made from a scenario written by Antonin Artaud. The ostensibly contentious authorial pairing of Dulac as filmmaker and Artaud as scenarist provides insight into the question of film authorship and gender. At the same time, this film enables us to explore the nexus of visual rhythms, cinematic abstractions, and silence promoted by Dulac in her film writing. Two versions of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* arguably exist—Artaud's scenario, first published in the November 1927 *La Nouvelle Revue française* and translated in the June 1930 issue of the international little magazine *transition* (the same issue in which editor Eugène Jolas announces that synchronized sound cinema has enabled the future of the word), and Dulac's film. This is not to say the versions are wholly separate. On the contrary, Artaud's intentions for his surrealist scenario evidence their shared ideal of the cinematic image constructing rather than representing reality. Dulac, however, makes a more aestheticist appeal to a nonverbal film art while Artaud writes in his preface to *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, "The essence of the visual language should be presented and the action should be such that any translation would be out of the question: the visual action should operate on the mind as an immediate intuition" (64). Like Dulac, Artaud sought the silent purity of the cinematic medium. Artaud, like others in the surrealist movement, aimed for an unmediated integration of art and life, in this case through moving images. Because cinema provided a nonverbal language composed of indexical images of reality, it could, as Naomi Greene writes, "give birth to a new language free of the traditions and constraints of verbal and literary language" (28).

Maule, citing a 1927 letter to the editor of *La Nouvelle Revue française* in which Dulac asserts her authorship of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* alongside Artaud's, writes, "Dulac's objection to the journal's omission of her authorial status points to a more general issue at the

centre of her—and other avant-garde filmmakers at the time—approach to cinema: how to translate subjective expression and account for an artist's creative input in a collective and mechanical art form such as cinema" ("The Importance of Being a Film Author"). The alignment of film authorship and technical expertise appears throughout Dulac's writing on cinema. As she asserts in her 1924 lecture, for example, "The composition of the image is our rhetoric. . . . Thanks to the image, the sensibility of the film's author is emitted, just like the artist's in his work" (305). These proclamations of film authorship accompany the definition of the medium as an art form akin to, but distinct from, other forms of aesthetic production.

If *Smiling Madame Beudet* presents the social and psychological confines of the provincial housewife, then *The Seashell and the Clergyman* more ambitiously explores the manifestations of historical and social changes within psychic life. The film redefines cinematic reality neither as objective recording nor as psychological verisimilitude, but rather aims to reveal the imbrication of social and psychological perception. It begins with a general appearing in full regalia to a clergyman who has been filling beakers from an oyster shell and then breaking them on the floor in an underground chamber. The clergyman, crawling through cobble-stoned city streets, follows the general to a church, where a woman appears dressed as if from the 18th-century. The general suddenly becomes a priest, and the clergyman attempts to strangle him in the confessional and proceeds to throw him off of a cliff. He rips off the woman's bodice to expose her breasts, which in the next cut are covered by a shell-shaped bra. The film then cuts to the clergyman at a party where modern couples furiously dance. The general and the woman arrive and sit on thrones. The next sequence depicts the clergyman running down a country road which becomes an underground labyrinth through which he chases after the woman. He arrives finally at a room with a large crystal ball in the center and he places the woman's captured head

inside the ball. He chases the royal couple through the labyrinth back out into the country road. Suddenly, he is on a ship watching them kiss. He moves his hands to strangle the superimposed image of the woman but, instead, his hands frame images of islands, ships, and castles. In the next sequence, a series of maids, followed by a series of butlers, enter the room with the crystal ball. The woman reappears in modern dress to oversee them. The clergyman and the woman become a wedding couple in a ceremony officiated by the general. The clergyman, headless, is shown walking down stairs holding the ball. When he re-enters the room with the waiting maids, he drops the ball, and, when it shatters, his own face is revealed within. The film concludes with the clergyman picking up and drinking his own image from a shell.

The Seashell and the Clergyman, which, unlike *Smiling Madame Beudet,* doesn't possess intertitles or any explicitly verbal or written signification, exemplifies the "rhythmic" cinematic language Dulac aimed to develop. For Dulac, film should become a silent symphony with the nonverbal signifying power of music. She argues, in 1928 at the cusp of the rise of synchronized sound cinema, that the "talkies" are a regression in cinematic development because they introduce barriers of language and confound a film-going public that has learned to "read" the significations of silent cinema. She writes, "*Les modifications techniques qui résulteraient de l'avènement des films parlés seraient de nous ramener aux temps préhistoriques du cinema. . . . Mais, le grand progrès sera sinon le film parlé, du moins le film musical. Harmonie d'images. Harmonie de sons. Deux modes d'expressions profondément humains et internationaux dépassant les frontiers du langage*" ("The technical transformation resulting from the advent of the talking films would bring back the prehistoric period of cinema. . . . [G]reat progress will not be made in the talking cinema, but in the musical film. Harmony of images. Harmony of sounds. Two modes of expression deeply human and international exceeding the borders of language":

Dulac 114). The "talkies" are thus cast as a "prehistoric" development, tacitly hearkening back to cinema's unaesthetic origins in industry and entertainment, the origins which, ironically, Guy-Blaché had regarded as "pure" in her memoirs. What Dulac, like many of her modernist contemporaries, objects to, however, is not sound but dialogue. Against the talkies, she promotes the "musical film," ostensibly a balance (or "harmonies") of nonverbal expressions. This lyrical emphasis on harmonies of music and image contributed to Artaud's proclaimed distrust of Dulac's production of his surrealist script, for he believed that her version was too aestheticized even as he, too, objected to the sound film.

The actions of Artaud and his surrealist friends at the first public screening of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* have been interpreted as evidence of his misogynistic disdain for Dulac's feminist vision of his script.[125] As Flitterman-Lewis points out, however, the evidence for this disdain is scant. Rather, she chooses to read Artaud and Dulac as a "correspondence of authorial voices" (118). As she points out, Dulac stays faithful to the images of Artaud's scenario, although she may have deviated somewhat from his ultimate vision. In his preface to the scenario *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, Artaud writes:

> The outer skin of things, the epidermis of reality: these are the raw material of the cinema. In glorifying the material it reveals the profound spirituality of matter and

[125] Artaud, along with several friends, allegedly disrupted the opening night (February 9, 1928) screening of *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, shouting offensive names at Dulac and interrupting the film. The nature of this disruption and of Artaud's disappointment with her film remains unresolved, however. He did write, after a screening in November 1927, that "this scenario is not the reproduction of a dream and must not be considered as such. I will not seek to excuse its apparent incoherence by the easy escape route of dreams" (qtd. in Greene 35). Naomi Greene also suggests that Artaud had intended to play the clergyman and that Dulac's casting of "someone for the part who looked weak and perhaps even simple-minded" deviated significantly from Artaud's vision (36). For different perspectives on this complicated authorial relationship, see Wendy Dozoretz, "Dulac v. Artaud" in *Wide Angle* 1 (1979), Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *To Desire Differently* (1996), 118-30, and Naomi Greene, "Artaud and Film" *Cinema Journal* 23.4 (1984), 28-40.

> its relation to the mind of man whence it is derived. The pictures come to birth, each the offspring of its predecessor, *qua* picture, and the objective synthesis which they depict is more authentic than any abstraction. They create an autonomous world of their own . . . and from this interplay of images, a transubstantiation of elements, there arises an inorganic language which works on our minds by an osmosis and demands no translation of words. A perpetual movement of objects, shapes and appearances is best realized in the grotesque convulsions, the death-throes, of reality, lacerated by an irony which is the cry of the human soul stretched to its breaking point. (65)

Artaud lauds a silent cinema both "inorganic" and immediate, unmediated and signifying by "osmosis." What Artaud's skein of images create, however, is a "cry," an aural metaphor used in a manifesto for a purely visual cinema. This "cry" could be aligned with the visual shock engaged in other surrealist films (for example, the opening shot of the razor slicing the woman's eye in *Un Chien andalou* (1929)). For Dulac, on the other hand, the displaced aurality of cinema is conceived through the harmonious rather than through a shocking scream. Artaud, and surrealist filmmakers like Buñuel, aimed to enable new perceptions through shock while Dulac's unique contribution to the vision of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* might, indeed, be in trading Artaud's shattering cry for a focus on what a potent image, like the image of femininity, might generate in associative signification. In her films in the final years of the 1920s, concurrent to the international rise of synchronized sound cinema, Dulac would emphasize this vision of the harmonious "musical film" further, producing abstract shorts based explicitly on musical compositions.

8. "Pure" Film and the Synaesthesia of Visual Music: *Thème et variations*

If Artaud aimed to achieve a direct access to reality through shock in his cinema writing, Dulac developed, rather, a nonverbal language intended to rhythmically suture the spectator into the cinematic text. Like *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, Dulac's short abstract "visual symphonies" that she made in the late 1920s manifest rhythm through the editing of associative visual resonances. Dulac made these films in response to the rise of synchronized-sound cinema. Of *Disque 957*, for example, she writes, "Passionately fond of music and film, I use the sound film to realize my conception: to make a synchronous recording of sounds and images and not a banal and bastardized recording of music" (qtd. in Flitterman-Lewis 356). Two of Dulac's "visual symphonies" referenced their own intertextual basis—*Arabesques* (1928) was named after a Debussy piece and *Disque 957* (1929) for specific compositions by Chopin. *Thème et variations* bore no such musical reference, which had to be invented by the accompanying musician.[126]

The images of *Thème et variations* are composed around the movements of a female ballet dancer, although Dulac attempts to make her significance abstract.[127] She writes, "I'm evoking a dancer! A woman? No. A line leaping about to harmonious rhythms. I'm evoking a luminous projection! Precise matter? No. Fluid rhythms. . . ." (qtd. in Flitterman-Lewis 66). After an initial, angled shot of the dancer's figure, the following shots focus on isolated movements of parts of her body—her arms, her legs, her feet. These images alternate with the rhyming images of machines. For example, a shot of the dancer's twirling legs is followed by the twisting of gears in a similar circular motion. The montage is filmed at unusual angles, with the images of machines sometimes out of focus. About halfway through the seven-minute film, the

[126] See Flitterman-Lewis, 330-31, on the composer Neil Brand's construction of an accompaniment to this film when it was shown in 1995 at the National Theatre in London.

[127] The female dancer is an important subject of Guy-Blaché's and Arzner's films as well.

"movement" between dancer and machines shifts to an image of leaves in the wind. The last half of the film intersperses these "natural" images of quickly growing seedlings and water (reflecting the similar water images in *The Seashell and the Clergyman*). The dancer's face is also shown, ghosted over the image of a country road. The shots shorten and the montage intensifies until the film's ending shot on the dancer's feet. This transformation, from the initial analogies of machine and dancer's body to images of organic growth and pastoral roads is intended to create a synaesthetic visualization of musical sound. At the same time, the analogous images suggest that the film itself is an autonomous body linking the organic and the technological. Dulac writes, "Lines, surfaces, volumes, evolving directly, without artificial devices, in the logic of their forms, stripped of all meaning that is too human, in order to aspire more successfully toward abstraction and give more space to feelings and to dreams: total cinema" (qtd. in Flitterman-Lewis 66).

The question of gender is raised, as in *The Seashell and the Clergyman* by the dancer's female body, even as Dulac attempts to remove this image from its habitual significations and introduce it into the visual and musical signifying structure of her short film. Flitterman-Lewis claims that "the image of the woman is crucial in the film, not only for the way in which it functions to redefine the aesthetics of motion but for its invention of new metaphors for both the cinema-machine and the cinematic fantasm" (332). Dulac, despite her deconstruction of femininity exemplified in *Smiling Madame Beudet* and *The Seashell and the Clergyman* presents her female dancer in this film as a generative image—one capable of being perceived formally and creating formal associations.[128] In *Thème et variations,* the dancer's body is, however, most

[128] The representation of the female dancer in *Thème et variations* can be compared to Fernand Léger's much better known "pure" cinema short *Ballet mécanique* (1924), an abstract film which also cross-cuts a woman's fragmented image with machine images. The "mechanical ballet," employing movement up and down as well as images swinging toward and away from the spectator, imbricates movement studies with an exploration of consumer goods, mechanical

valuable for being aesthetically productive. Dulac begins with the dancer and proceeds to abstract her movements through an exercise into the mysteries of cinematic form. She writes that this short film is a "*jeu d'images de simples correspondences visuelles et rhythmées*" ("play of images of simple visual and rhythmic correspondence": Dulac 139). Rather than the objects themselves, she emphasizes visual forms and movements. This is completed through a synaesthetic appeal to the musical as a nonverbal aesthetic freed from an ostensibly habitual language derived from literature and theater.

What we might call the aestheticization of an explicitly silent cinema, or its realization as an art form evinced in the work of Dulac, corresponds to the developments of interwar literary modernism. At the same time, as I have hoped to show in this final chapter, early cinema offers rich aural contrasts to interwar "silent" cinema, or the orchestration of music and images. Intrinsic to this cinematic transformation, and, as I have suggested in the preceding chapters, to developments in literary modernism, is a complicated and often contradictory web of discourses on internal subjectivity and external reality. Cinema, as it grew into an art form, was the medium most conceived as revealing both internal subjective psychologies and an external, inhuman reality. Sound, whether musical, verbal, or ambient, was perceived as key to both these internal and external revelations.

Dulac's search for a new cinematic language binding exterior to interior and external structures to internal psychology parallels aspects of both Richardson's and Woolf's literary ethos. Furthermore, her desire for a "pure" cinema predicated on music evinces a shared synaesthetic aspiration within both Dulac's avant-garde films and in the literary constructions

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motion, and the fantasy initiated by images of femininity. Léger's film aligns images of women with objects of consumption, inanimate objects that take on a life of their own like the lifelike image of the woman (who perhaps represents the film star).

explored in the earlier chapters. Her filmmaking practice is one which, despite her rhetoric of "pure" cinema, is dependent on other media as well as on conceptions of authorship beholden to these media. While Dulac suggested that literature as an aesthetic and as an institution would be overcome by the cinema, she couched her description of cinematic practice as *cinégraphie*, or as writing, maintaining of the cinematic apparatus that a "mechanical device, an originator of expressive forms and new sensations hidden in its gears, existed, but even in those of supple mind, no spontaneous release of feeling was summoned by the rhythms of a moving image and by the cadence of their juxtaposition, as by the vibrations of a long-desired and long-sought keyboard" (qtd. in Flitterman-Lewis 390). As Flitterman-Lewis has written, furthermore, we might see Dulac's feminism as inextricable from her formalism, her "search for a new cinematic language capable of expressing female desire" (99). This search perhaps parallels Woolf's desire for a "female sentence" (which she applied to Richardson's writing) as she claimed it captures the ephemeral rhythms of everyday existence.[129]

This analogy between these British modernist women writers and this French avant-garde filmmaker might be explored through the new "visual syntax" that all three aimed to employ. However, this comparison transforms when we explore it through the question of sounds within and against images. All of the women I have considered in this project were music lovers (like Woolf and Richardson, Dulac was a fan of Wagner). Woolf and Dulac explicitly sought words or images predicated on music, a form of signification least bound to rigid signifiers, in their cinematic or fictional explorations through new sensory imbrications of visual, aural, and synaesthetic perceptions. While there is no evidence that either Woolf or Richardson were aware of Dulac, Hankins has shown that Woolf may have encountered Dulac's work in the 1925

[129] Dulac, like Woolf and Richardson, was involved in feminist concerns (she wrote as a journalist for French feminist periodicals through the 1910s).

cinema issue of *Les Cahiers du Mois* that Leonard Woolf reviewed for *Nation and Atheneum* shortly before Woolf wrote her own cinema essay.[130] In particular, Hankins theorizes that Woolf read Dulac's essay "The Essence of Film: The Visual Idea" included in the *Les Cahiers du Mois* volume. In this essay, Dulac writes, *"[D]'un base toute scientifique et toute matérielle nous pouvons échafauder les theories d'un art nouveau, art de l'idée visuelle qui prend ses raciness dans la nature, dans la réalité et dans l'impondérable*" (""From a wholly scientific and material ground we can erect theories of the new art, the art of the *visual idea* that finds its roots in nature, reality, and the unknowable": Dulac 65). It is this "visual idea" that Woolf suggests in her own 1926 essay on the cinema. This emphasis on the visual, however, occludes the aural implications of the avant-garde and modernist desire for a "silent" cinema defined, nevertheless, through the musical. Aural technological experiments like Guy-Blaché's early Chronophone films had given way to the desire for an aesthetic vigorously defined by the ostensible absence of sound but with a tacit allegiance to synaesthesia. This aesthetic possessed an allure for modernist women producers seeking new ways of negotiating sensory appeals to both embodiment and disembodiment in literary and cinematic texts. As I have hoped to trace with the constellation of women producers in this project, the cultural landscape transformed by the sound film offered new possibilities for the representation of modernity even as it foreclosed the possibilities suggested by the ostensibly silent moving image.

[130] *The Seashell and the Clergyman* was also shown at the Film Society of London in 1930.

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