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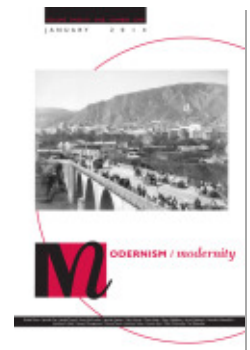
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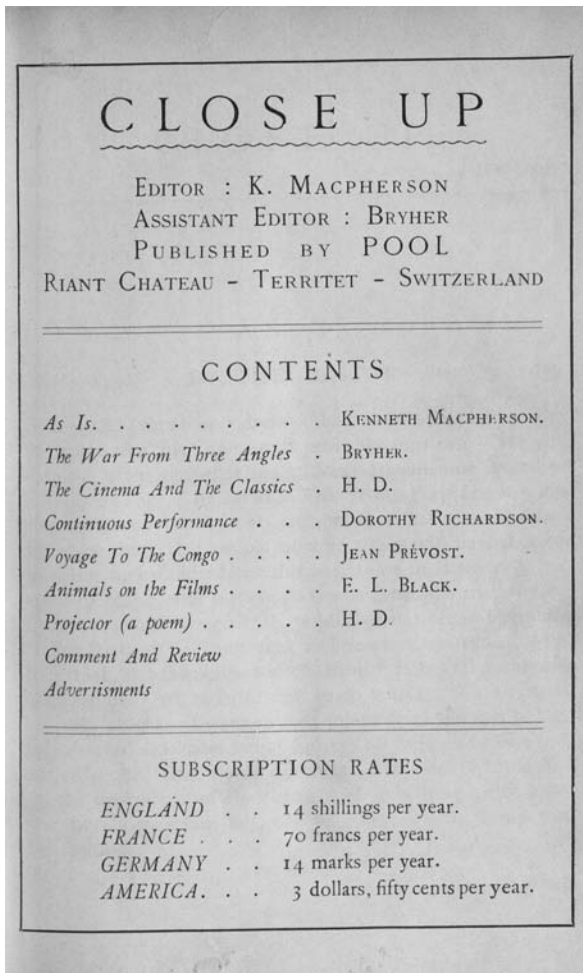


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# Shock and “Perfect Contemplation”: Dorothy Richardson’s Mystical Cinematic Consciousness

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Fig. 1. Table of Contents, *Close Up* 1, no. 1, July 1927. Image courtesy of Museum of Modern Art Library.



It was a Monday and therefore a new picture. But it was also washing day, and yet the scattered audience was composed almost entirely of mothers. Their children, apart from the infants accompanying them, were at school and their husbands were at work. It was a new audience, born within the last few months. Tired women, their faces sheened with toil, and small children, penned in semi-darkness and foul air on a sunny afternoon. There was almost no talk. Many of the women sat alone, figures of weariness at rest. Watching these I took comfort. At last the world of entertainment had provided for a few pence, tea thrown in, a sanctuary for mothers, an escape from the everlasting *qui vive* into eternity on a Monday afternoon.

—Dorothy Richardson, *Close Up* 1, no. 1 (July 1927)<sup>1</sup>

In her first contribution to the film journal *Close Up*, Dorothy Richardson recounts her inaugural trip to a picture palace in North London, where she is struck by a profound sense of restorative “quiet” and by the new kinds of communities forming around the cinema. When initially asked to contribute to the journal, Richardson is convinced that with her predilection for “simple sentiment,” she has nothing to offer, yet assures Bryher, *Close Up*’s assistant editor, that she knows she has “some notes somewhere & will look them up,” but fancies “they are simply about seeing movies, regardless of what is seen.”<sup>2</sup> Richardson’s odd notes quickly grew into a regular column, “Continuous Performance”—a title drawn from the early cinematic practice of running movies back to back, continuously. And over the journal’s six-year run (1927–1933), Richardson resolutely examines cinema’s propensity to move viewers into a new realm of consciousness, asserting in her 1931 article “Narcissus”: “the whole power of the film” rests in “this single, simple factor”: “the reduction, or elevation of the observer to the condition that is essential to perfect contemplation.”<sup>3</sup>

In espousing a contemplative, absorptive mode of perception, Richardson defends a mode of looking which is denigrated as uncritical, apolitical, sentimental, in short as “feminine,” in much historical film criticism, and by drawing on tenets of mysticism, in which absorption in the image is sought after and cultivated, succeeds in forging an alternative model of spectatorship. By creating a place for sympathetic identification within the avant-garde context of the journal,<sup>4</sup> Richardson breaks with the tradition of Brechtian defamiliarization now customarily associated with the political cinema and anticipates the late writing of Sergei Eisenstein (also a *Close Up* contributor), who argued that sympathetic absorption could impel the spectator to take a dialectical leap into a subject position antithetical to one’s own—therein bringing about social and political change.<sup>5</sup>

While *Close Up* critics were part of the same socio-cultural milieu as Eisenstein and German cultural critics Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin and were integrated into the Berlin/Neu-Babelsberg film scene in the 1920s and 30s, their criticism is seldom dealt with in the same context—a strange oversight, considering they were compelled by many of the same issues.<sup>6</sup> Over the journal’s six-year run, one common concern of Eisenstein and the Weimar critics emerged as a central focus: the connection between film and shock. Within the aesthetic debates of the 1920s and 30s, film’s propensity to induce shock was generally attributed to its ability to produce a state of distraction

in the viewer. Against this established position, the contributors to *Close Up* develop what I term an alternative “contemplative aesthetic”—locating film’s shock effect in its capacity to generate states of deep contemplative absorption.

In examining the unique aesthetic developed on the pages of *Close Up*, this essay seeks to restore a crucial perspective to the aesthetic conversations of the 1920s and 30s and to trace its historical and theoretical implications. In marked contrast to the Vorticists and Futurists, who celebrate violence, masculine militarism, and speed to lend their aesthetic arguments transgressive force, the writers of *Close Up* actively cultivate a contemplative mode of spectatorship and through their engagement with psychoanalysis, melodrama, and mysticism in particular, explore the ways in which art can bring about generational healing. Further, in advancing the shock/contemplation model, *Close Up* critics distinguish themselves from such contemporary theorists as Paul Virilio and Friedrich Kittler, who link the shock aesthetic to war by developing, respectively, a causal and a dialectical relationship between advances in military technology and experimental, avant-garde technique.<sup>7</sup> While Richardson and other writers of *Close Up* similarly reference events surrounding World War I in their exploration of the shock effect, they do so largely by examining static tableaux and images of individuals fixedly staring (classic devices of the melodrama) which serve as screens for viewers’ own memories and associations. Richardson’s criticism demonstrates that rather than retraumatizing the viewer, the “gentle shock” of recognition that arises from such moments of stillness, can produce therapeutic effects.

In theorizing film’s power to induce “perfect contemplation,” *Close Up* writers engage various strands of mysticism, a tradition which experienced a powerful revival during the first part of the twentieth century. Modernist writers like Richardson and H.D. were compelled by the ways mysticism could be integrated into everyday practices—one of which was cinema spectatorship.<sup>8</sup> The cinema provided the fostering conditions for the mystical experience (a quiet space for contemplation) as well as a means of re-animating the quotidian and could be integrated into the daily routine.

Richardson, a primary contributor to the development of the contemplative aesthetic, was a long-time devotee of numerous Quaker teachings, from which she derives much of her literary technique and innovative film theory. Richardson spent nearly three years on a Quaker farm in Sussex (1908-11), recovering from influenza and near nervous collapse and produced a series of sketches about the experience for the *Saturday Review*, in which she repeatedly evokes an atmosphere of “serenity,” “stillness,” and “shelter”—a mood which encapsulates the lure of Quakerism for Miriam Henderson, Richardson’s autobiographical protagonist in her thirteen-volume *Pilgrimage* series.<sup>9</sup> Richardson also authored two non-fiction books on Quakerism, *The Quakers* and *Gleanings from the Works of George Fox* (the founder of Quakerism), both of which praise the Quaker way of life for the remove it offers from “the stirring world” and for the generative silence it provides—qualities Richardson regularly praises in cinema.

While the writings of William James, Hugo von Münsterberg, and May Sinclair provide a crucial theoretical backdrop to Richardson’s development of the contemplative aesthetic, most influential on her mystically inflected film criticism is the work

54 of Evelyn Underhill, a contributor to the revival of mysticism whose erudition and careful treatment of mysticism in the works of poets, philosophers, and artists won her the admiration of modernist artists and intellectuals.<sup>10</sup> Indeed after offering a modest introduction to the mystical aspects of the Quaker faith in *The Quakers*, Richardson directs her readers to the work of Underhill, for “the boldest and clearest sighted, the most comprehensive and lucid descriptions” of the mystical genius. In many ways Underhill’s *Practical Mysticism* serves as a primer for the mystical cinematic consciousness developed on the pages of *Close Up* and for experimental modernism more broadly. In her preface to *Practical Mysticism*, which went to press during the first weeks of the Great War, Underhill offers a prescient explanation for the popularity her “little book” would eventually achieve and for the resurgence of mysticism more broadly. Underhill admits that she had initially intended to delay the book’s publication, fearing that in the current environment, readers would regard a work dealing with the “‘contemplative’ attitude” as “wholly out of place.”<sup>11</sup> She resolves to go ahead with publication, however, asserting that “the title deliberately chosen for this book—that of ‘Practical Mysticism—means nothing if the attitude and the discipline which it recommends be adapted to fair weather alone.”<sup>12</sup> The lessons of mysticism, Underhill argues, become more valuable in the face of war’s destruction and loss. The goal of practical mysticism, according to Underhill, is to increase “the total efficiency, the wisdom and steadfastness, of those who try to practise it,” to assist them in “discerning eternal beauty beyond . . . apparent ruthlessness,” and to “teach them to see the world in a truer proportion.”<sup>13</sup> Underhill’s preface underscores the appeal practical mysticism must have held for women modernists, confronted with the violence and destruction of the First World War, and hints at the healing impetus behind their experimental, contemplative aesthetic.

Much like Benjamin, whose intellectual and social milieu they shared, *Close Up* writers articulate a conception of filmic shock which draws on mysticism, but also emerges against the backdrop of the First World War, and responds to the violence and unsettling changes of a rapidly modernizing world. In an article predating Benjamin’s seminal “Artwork” essay by five years, Richardson links the film medium to shock and to social and perceptual change. She argues, “until to-day Everyman remained relatively self-contained . . . Himself, his house, street, town, nation, all were stable; and beyond these secure stabilities his imagination rarely wandered. The normal moral shocks awaiting him came gently.”<sup>14</sup> She maintains that now however:

A new mental climate is in existence. Inhabited . . . by the myriads who have been born into the new world and can remember no other. Uncertainty, noise, speed, movement, rapidity of external exchange . . . all these factors have helped to make the younger generation shock-proof in a manner unthinkable to their forebears. And more than any other single factors . . . the Cinema contributed to the change in the mental climate . . . the film is educating Everyman, making him at home in a new world.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly to Benjamin, who considers film “the art form” most “in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face,” Richardson recognizes film’s propensity to “train” or acclimate the viewer to the frenetic pace of modern life.<sup>16</sup> She

goes a step further than Benjamin, however, in fully articulating film's capacity to render the spectator "shock-proof." While fully acknowledging the desensitizing potential of film, Richardson argues that film's real power lies elsewhere. Film's greatest gift, she contends, is "the gift of quiet, of attention and concentration, of perspective . . . the gift of expansion, of moving, ever so little, into a new dimension of consciousness."<sup>17</sup>

This movement into a new realm of consciousness is what most strikes Richardson on her inaugural trip to the picture palace in North London on a Monday afternoon. In her characteristically autobiographical manner—one placing herself squarely within, rather than authoritatively above, the audience—Richardson evokes the transformative power of her first film:

The first scene was a tide, frothing in over the small beach of a sandy cove, and for some time we were allowed to watch the coming and going of those foamy waves . . . without the disturbance of incident . . . The rest of the scenes, all of which sparked continually, I have forgotten. But I do not forget the balm of that tide, and that simple music, nor the shining eyes and rested faces of those women.<sup>18</sup>

Richardson, who, by her own admission, tends to write "simply about seeing movies, regardless of what is seen," is "absorbed" by the image of the foaming waves. She forgets the title of the film, but remembers vividly the women's "escape" "into eternity on a Monday afternoon."<sup>19</sup>

In a manner similar to other *Close Up* contributors, Richardson focuses on the everyday world of women's spectatorship in prose rife with domestic allusion and metaphor. She is comforted by the faces of the exhausted women, free of older children and husbands, stealing time for their own well-being—and pleasure. In her description of these women slipping away on washday, Richardson alludes to the rebellious spirit incited by the cinema as well as to the compelling lack of distinction between public and private spheres it engendered. Miriam Hansen, in her discussion of the cinema as a public arena to which women had access, argues that the cinema "threatened to blur not only the boundaries maintaining the hierarchic distinctions of class, but also [those] . . . between individuals with access to social representation, by virtue of their economic position, and those traditionally confined to the domestic sphere."<sup>20</sup> In the outwardly quotidian aspects of this Monday-afternoon cinema scene, Richardson recognizes the cinema as a site of development for a critical public sphere and as a place of empowerment for female viewers. She maintains, "[I]t is not only upon the screen that this young woman has been released in full power. She is to be found also facing it, and by no means silent, in her tens of thousands."<sup>21</sup> Richardson reacts against the stereotype of the passively receptive female spectator by asserting her vision of the female masses—capable of newfound critical agency.

For Kracauer and Benjamin, the contemplative absorptive mode of viewing celebrated by Richardson was associated with the nineteenth century bourgeois cult of art and was considered outmoded. Distracted perception, on the other hand, was held to be more in keeping with modern urban life, replete with fractures and shocks and was associated with the cinema. In an early essay "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture

56 Palaces” Kracauer emphasizes the way the design of the “palaces of distraction” springing up in Berlin in the 1920s turned the cinema experience into a succession of shocks which, “assault[ed] all the senses using every possible means.”<sup>22</sup> “The interior design of movie theaters,” Kracauer maintains “serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewer’s attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulations of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation.”<sup>23</sup> While Kracauer hints at the absorption-inducing propensity of the medium, he argues that this tendency is mitigated against by the extravagant design of the picture palaces.

Like Kracauer, Richardson takes a critical interest in cinemas—from their architecture to their programming. In so doing, she plays a leading role in what Thomas Levin has called the transition from film theory to cinema theory, where cinema theory is understood as “a practice more historically reflexive and more sensitive to larger institutional factors.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, in keeping with her aspirations for a contemplative cinema experience, Richardson proscribes an environment strikingly different from that described by Kracauer. In her *Close Up* article “There’s No Place Like Home,” Richardson recommends that each cinema patron have a “local cinema”—“a congregational church” of sorts—which should be “small enough to be apprehended at a glance. And plain . . . the theatre may be as ornate, as theatrical as it likes, but the note of the cinema is simplicity.”<sup>25</sup> According to Richardson, the cinema and its parishioners, expressly welcome in any state, should be simple, so as not to distract. Richardson’s primary directive for cinema is that “the screen should dominate,” filling “the vista save for the doorways on either side, whose reassuring ‘Emergency Exit’ beams an intermittent moon light.”<sup>26</sup> While Kracauer foregrounds cinema’s glitz as a protection against being drawn into the “abyss,” Richardson actively cultivates the contemplative absorptive propensity of the cinema, advocating simplicity, with the caveat, that the spectator, whose active concentration is necessary to achieve such a state, be capable of extricating herself at will.

Benjamin, who takes part belatedly in the aesthetic debates of the 20s and early 30s, offers no comment on cinema design or exhibition practices. He does, however, draw on Kracauer’s notion of distraction, locating it in the medium itself. In his famed “Artwork” essay Benjamin explains, “The spectator’s process of association in view of these [film] images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film, which like all shocks, should be cushioned by a heightened presence of mind.”<sup>27</sup> By issuing this caution, Benjamin alludes to the psychoanalytic underpinnings of shock—a theme he develops three years later in “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.” In this essay, Benjamin examines the Freudian insight that consciousness functions as a shield, protecting the organism against excessive external stimuli, by preventing it from penetrating deeply enough, to leave a permanent memory trace, for as Freud explains in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, memory fragments are “often most powerful and most enduring when the process which left them behind was one which never entered consciousness.”<sup>28</sup> Applying Freud’s conception of the protective function of consciousness to his notion of experience, Benjamin differentiates between two modes of experience, *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, explaining:

The greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions, the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less do these impressions enter experience (*Erfahrung*), tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour of one's life (*Erlebnis*). Perhaps the special achievement of the shock defense may be seen in its function of assigning to an incident a precise point in time in consciousness at the cost of the integrity of its contents.<sup>29</sup>

For Benjamin, *Erlebnis* is a passively lived event, which is parried by consciousness, and subsequently forgotten. *Erfahrung*, on the other hand, occurs when a present experience converges with sense-memories of the past—with a transformative power to break down the polarization of consciousness and unconsciousness.<sup>30</sup>

If film is to assume the potentially redemptive role of reawakening the human sensorium, the relationship between *Erfahrung* and Benjamin's ambiguous notion of shock becomes primary. On the one hand, shock is a means of inducing moments of recognition and remembrance, and cinematic devices such as framing, camera speed, and montage can have a “therapeutic function,” capable of activating “layers of unconscious memory.”<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, however, shock can function to strengthen the protective shield, which mitigates against the possibility of *Erfahrung*. Thus, even in the avant-garde films of the 1920s, which employ experimental techniques taken for granted by Benjamin, the function of shock is indeterminate.

While sharing Benjamin's interest in filmic shock as a means of generating *Erfahrung*, *Close Up* writers do not assume it can be found in rapid cuts, shifting focal lengths, and jarring juxtapositions. Rather than jolting the spectator out of accustomed modes of existence, *Close Up* writers argue that such “shocks” would more likely desensitize the spectator, in effect strengthening the psyche's protective shield in the manner described by Freud. In her first article for the journal, “The War from Three Angles,” Bryher, for instance, criticizes how the German film *The Emden* portrays the war and explores how continued exposure to “shock effects” can have a dulling effect on the viewer, observing: “the battle at the end, very realistic, the broken machinery, corpses, fragments of bodies, builds up too heavy and monotonous a picture for the mind to retain a sharp enough impression of tragedy. Somewhere about the fourth reel from sheer repetition, the brain stopped recording.”<sup>32</sup>

Bryher's comparative analysis of war films identifies *The Emden* as an ineffective means of conveying the trauma of the war, for rather than functioning to reawaken the numbed human sensorium, the film's constant shocks are “parried by consciousness,” an exercise which strengthens the protective shield, therein undermining the possibility of *Erfahrung*. Rejecting the “giant spectacle” film in favor of a film which would represent the nature of trauma in a more intimate manner, Bryher suggests, “what a film could be made . . . related to the actual experience of people during those awful, hungry years . . . The war as it affected just one family. Rations, rumors, remoteness. A film could be made of trifling impressions seen through the eyes of any average person.”<sup>33</sup> According to Bryher, the sort of film which tells the story of the war as it impacted a single family or as perceived by an ordinary person, could most effectively portray the shock arising from the war by enabling a reconnection with memory traces of the past.

58 In her proscription Bryher seems to point to the genre of melodrama, in particular to G.W. Pabst's film *Joyless Street*, which recounts the devastation of post-war Austria. In "G.W. Pabst, A Survey" Bryher recalls, "I came late to the cinema and I came because of *Joyless Street* . . . [I] saw what I had looked for in vain in post-war literature, the unrelenting portrayal of what war does to life, to the destruction of beauty," "to the girl who murdered for her lover with the whole history of . . . oppression (race, person and idea) in her eyes."<sup>34</sup>

While male critics in the 1920s and 30s often described the cinematic perceptual experience in terms of disinterest and detachment, for many women viewers, just beginning to be addressed as spectators, the melodrama in particular provoked a very different reaction.<sup>35</sup> With their tireless exploration of family and war trauma, melodramas gave heightened expression to experiences women often endured in isolation. *Close Up* critics frequently looked to the genre of melodrama—with its ability to foster contemplative, sympathetic modes of spectatorship—as a means of transforming isolating traumatic experiences into shared cultural narratives. Rather than attributing women's sympathetic response solely to melodramas' thematic content, *Close Up* writers also explore how the genre's formal elements—static images and lingering shots of individuals fixedly staring—facilitate states of contemplative absorption in the viewer.

The high degree of absorption in the film image, frequently attributed to the female spectator in film criticism of the 20s and 30s, however, is not, generally associated with the kind of shock which generates a deeper level of experience, characterized by Benjamin as *Erfahrung*. Rather, in contrast to the male spectator's distanced, objective perspective, this absorbed female gaze is seen as regressive and naïve.<sup>36</sup> On the pages of *Close Up*, however, this absorptive mode of viewing images is taken up and skillfully re-appropriated.

In theorizing the relationship between a contemplative mode of spectatorship and shock, Richardson relies on the work of Evelyn Underhill, who in *Practical Mysticism*, describes what can happen in moments of quiet attention. Using her characteristic second-person mode of address, Underhill asks: "Do you remember that horrid moment at the concert, when you became wholly unaware of your comfortable seven-and-six-penny seat? Those were onsets of involuntary contemplation . . . Dare you call them the least significant moments of your life?"<sup>37</sup> Implicitly citing the work of Henri Bergson and William James, Richardson elaborates on the shock effect achieved through contemplation, explaining that when our "attention is arrested by something standing out from the cinematograph show of our accustomed surroundings, we fix upon this one point, and everything else fades away to the 'margin of consciousness,'" creating a "breach in the normal, unnoticed rhythm of the senses" which "allows our 'real self'—our larger and deeper being, to which so many names have been given—to flow up and flood the whole field of surface intelligence."<sup>38</sup> She cites as "typical instances of this phenomenon," "the effect upon the individual of beauty on all its levels—the experience known as falling in love and the experience of 'conversion.'"<sup>39</sup> For Richardson, these violent illuminations, which occur in moments of acute attention, are charged with the same disorienting intensity and *shock* linked by Benjamin to states of distraction and are capable of causing similar interruptions in normative operations of subjectivity.

Richardson, like Benjamin, acknowledges that such “times of illumination” can be “intermittent, fluctuating, imperfectly accountable, and uncontrollable.”<sup>40</sup> Unlike Benjamin, however, Richardson and Underhill assert the importance of making these “fleeting and ungovernable experiences,” which can “descen[d] with dreadful violence,” subject to individual control. Underhill asks, “Are you willing that your participation in Reality shall depend wholly on these incalculable visitations . . . You can, if you chose to turn your attention that way.”<sup>41</sup> In contrast to the shock effect induced by states of distraction, which is uncontrollable and can potentially desensitize the spectator, the shock sensation brought on by contemplation can be developed through disciplined and methodical practice. Underhill initiates the “practical man” into the first form of contemplation, instructing: “Begin therefore at once . . . with attention . . . poised, tense, ready for the work you shall demand of it—stretch out . . . towards one of the myriad manifestations of life that surround you . . . Pour yourself out toward it, do not draw its image toward you.”<sup>42</sup> Underhill elaborates: “We know a thing only by uniting with it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves. It gives itself to us, just insofar as we give ourselves to it.”<sup>43</sup> She instructs her reader to call up an “impassioned attentiveness,” which “soon transcends all consciousness of [one]self, as separate from, and attending to the thing seen.”<sup>44</sup> Underhill urges the mystic to become so completely absorbed in an image that a blurring between spectator and spectacle results.

Underhill and Richardson’s focus on attention as a means of exceeding the fixed boundaries of the self emerges against the backdrop of a rich discussion of attention beginning in the nineteenth century and parallels investigations of German psychologist Hugo von Münsterberg, a colleague of William James at Harvard.<sup>45</sup> In his analysis of film, *Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (1916), Münsterberg devotes an entire chapter to attention. Discussing the “concentration and focusing” power of the photoplay, he observes, “the events without have become obedient to the demands of our consciousness . . . *the close-up has objectified in our world of perception our mental act of attention.*”<sup>46</sup> Münsterberg explains that in the photoplay:

Wherever our attention becomes focused on a special feature, the surrounding adjusts itself, eliminates everything in which we are not interested, and by the close-up heightens the vividness of that on which our mind is concentrated. It is *as if* that outer world were woven into our mind and were shaped not through its own laws but by the acts of our attention. (emphasis mine)<sup>47</sup>

Münsterberg appears to emphasize spectator agency, portraying surroundings that adjust themselves to the viewer’s attention—merely heightening the power of concentration. By mentioning, however, that it is “as if” the spectator’s mind controls the outside world, Münsterberg alludes to the carefully wrought effect behind the pleasurable sensation of mind control. Münsterberg, who also authored *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency*, is aware of the dual aspects of attention, which on the one hand, affords the viewer a means by which to transcend subjective limitations, but on the other, makes her vulnerable to control by outside agencies.<sup>48</sup> Commenting on the ability of the close up to marshal and intensify attention, Münsterberg notes, “the melodrama

60 can hardly be played without it.”<sup>49</sup> Münsterberg links the state of heightened attention to the melodrama, a genre which uses devices like the close up to formally reinforce content conducive to an intuitive sympathetic mode of spectatorship. As observed by H.D., however, in a screening of Carl Dreyer’s *Joan of Arc*, spectators under the sway of the melodrama are also vulnerable to manipulation. H.D. complains that Dreyer’s film “bullied” her “as no film has yet done,” she “was forced to pity, pity, pity. [Her] affections and credulity were hammered.”<sup>50</sup>

Richardson is less wary than H.D. of the annexation of spectators’ attention, and in her discussion of mysticism, investigates states of heightened attention exclusively as a positive means of transcending subjective boundaries. In so doing, she follows Underhill and James, who specifically link heightened states of attention to spirituality. In *Principles of Psychology*, for instance, James characterizes the “spiritual self” as the “source of effort and attention,” asserting that our capability for attention is an indication of an “active element in all consciousness . . . a spiritual something . . . which seems to *go out* to meet these qualities.”<sup>51</sup> Underhill explains that the process of contemplative absorption is a means of achieving a fuller understanding of that which lies outside the self, complaining, “it is because our outflow toward things is usually so perfunctory and so languid, that our comprehension of things is so perfunctory and languid too.”<sup>52</sup> “Real knowledge” she asserts, “always implies an intuitive sympathy.”<sup>53</sup>

Underhill’s directive for overcoming the barrier between self and other, suggests an alternative to Freud’s model of incorporative identification and echoes philosopher/sociologist Max Scheler’s formulation of heteropathic identification developed in his *The Nature of Sympathy* (1912). In his analysis of “fellow-feeling” [*Mitgefühl*], Scheler distinguishes between ideopathic and heteropathic identification. He defines idiopathic identification as the “total eclipse and absorption of another self by one’s own,” where the other is ingested in the act of identification.<sup>54</sup> Heteropathic identification, on the other hand, occurs when the subject is “so overwhelmed and hypnotically bound and fettered by the other” that the subject’s “formal status as subject is usurped by the other’s personality.”<sup>55</sup> The difference in processes is directional: in idiopathic identification the subject “identifies the other with himself,” whereas in the heteropathic variety, the subject “identifies his own self with the other.”<sup>56</sup> But, while within idiopathic identification the other self is “completely dispossessed and deprived of all rights in its conscious existence and character,” within the heteropathic model, the subject retains an awareness of his distinctness from the other. Scheler expressly locates such a recognition of difference within “experiences characteristic of *spiritual mysticism*,” namely “the mystical union” or the “soul’s fusion with God,” arguing that “true mysticism of the spirit always retains at least a consciousness of the ontological gulf intervening between man and God as a limit of approach.”<sup>57</sup>

In advocating a process by which, rather than assimilating the other to the self, the subject, in a state of heightened attentiveness, moves out from her original position to that of the other, Underhill calls for the same “ex-corporation” as Scheler in achieving sympathetic understanding of the other.<sup>58</sup> The perceptual practice involving the subject’s merging with “qualities” and “images,” investigated by James, Underhill, and

Scheler is denigrated as a naïve and uncritical mode of viewing in much historical and contemporary film criticism. The same absorption in the image, however, is sought after and *cultivated* within mysticism and is frequently portrayed as a transcendent mode of seeing by women modernist writers.

In her 1918 review, "The Novels of Dorothy Richardson," May Sinclair, observes Richardson's exploration of mystical excorporation and her ability to break down the barrier between subject and object, commenting: "Miss Richardson seizes reality alive. The intense rapidity of the seizure defies you to distinguish between what is objective and what is subjective either in the reality presented or the art that presents."<sup>59</sup> Remark- ing on the ineffable quality of Richardson's reality-seizing prose, Sinclair remarks, "It can't be explained. To quote Mr. Beresford . . . 'explanation in this connexion would seem to imply knowledge that only the mystics can faintly realize.'"<sup>60</sup> In commenting on Richardson's ability to make possible the direct apprehension of "reality," Sinclair points to a mode of perception sought after and cultivated within mysticism.<sup>61</sup> Prais- ing Richardson's revelation of the quotidian mystical search, Sinclair maintains that within Richardson's prose, although "nothing happens, everything that really matters is happening . . . What really matters is a state of mind, the interest or ecstasy with which we close with life."<sup>62</sup>

In the same 1918 article where she explores the mystical aspects of Richardson's prose, Sinclair also makes her famous literary coinage, as she describes protagonist Miriam Henderson's "stream of consciousness going on and on."<sup>63</sup> As is commonly acknowledged, James employs the stream metaphor in *Principles of Psychology* as he explains that consciousness "does not appear to itself chopped up in bits": "It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.*"<sup>64</sup>

While Sinclair is generally thought to have taken the metaphor from James, the term "stream of consciousness" is used verbatim, rather than in the interrupted formulation found in James, in Underhill's *Mysticism* (1911).<sup>65</sup> The phrase surfaces in Underhill's criticism of the psychoanalytic term "unconscious," an arguably murky designation under which too many disparate entities are clustered. She explains that among these aspects are "all those 'uncivilized' instincts and vices, those remains of the ancestral savage, which education has forced out of the stream of consciousness and which now only send their messages to the surface in a carefully disguised form," which "in moments of lucidity . . . may reach the conscious field."<sup>66</sup> She explains, "hence in normal men the best and worst, most savage and most spiritual parts of character, are bottled up 'below the threshold.'"<sup>67</sup>

Particularly skeptical of psychoanalysts' employment of the term "unconscious" as an "equivalent of man's transcendental sense," Underhill maintains that although the mystics did not have at their command "the spatial metaphors of the modern school [of psychology]," they "displayed a more scientific spirit, a more delicate power of analysis, than the psychologists."<sup>68</sup> "For them," Underhill explains, "the emergence of this transcendental sense; its capture of the field of consciousness, and the opening

62 up of those paths which permit the inflow of a larger spiritual life, the perception of a higher reality . . . this was ‘contemplation.’”<sup>69</sup> Underhill explains that rather than remaining “bottled up” below the surface, a heightened spiritual sense emerging from one’s “depth of being,” could be brought into the “stream of consciousness” through the act of contemplation.<sup>70</sup>

In the preface to the first edition of *Mysticism*, Underhill acknowledges that substantial sections had been “kindly read” by May Sinclair, from whom she received “much helpful and expert advice.”<sup>71</sup> Given Sinclair’s high level of involvement with *Mysticism*, it is at least as likely that her importation of the term “stream of consciousness” into literary criticism derives from Underhill—a derivation which serves to reinforce the centrality of mysticism in experimental modernism as well as the influence of Underhill in the development of the shock/contemplation model.

In keeping with her commitment to provide readers with a practical mysticism which dovetails with everyday life practices, Underhill advocates a path to contemplation involving the mystical rediscovery of the everyday—assuring her readers that “looking at the spiritual world” need not involve “peering into heaven with the ghostly eye.”<sup>72</sup> Rather, she instructs initiates to begin their journey by looking at the habitual—differently: “[One] is not asked to look at anything new . . . only to gaze with a new and cleansed vision on . . . the ‘objects’ and ideas . . . among which it has always dwelt,” “obtain[ing] from this exercise a skill, and a control of the attention.”<sup>73</sup> Initiates’ first task, she continues, is to “re-examine the furniture of [their] home,” taking “a more starry view of it; standing back from the whirl of the earth, and observing the process of things.”<sup>74</sup> Following Underhill’s lead, Richardson locates the primary source of human discontent in our loss of “the power of focusing the habitual.”<sup>75</sup> She elaborates, “[D]istance is enchantment. It is a perpetual focus. And escape from the obstructive, chronic discontent we are considering the state of deadness to the habitual . . . is possible only to those who by nature or by grace have the faculty of ceaseless withdrawal to the distance at which it may be focussed.”<sup>76</sup> Lauding film’s propensity to deliver a proximate distance, she asserts, “I believe that mirroring the customary and restoring its essential quality is and remains the film’s utmost.”<sup>77</sup>

The mystical impulse elaborated by Underhill and Richardson and developed on the pages of *Close Up* can also be traced in the work of Béla Balázs and the writings of the French Impressionist filmmakers—although not with the same consistent elaboration or attention to the female spectator.<sup>78</sup> Much like Richardson, Balázs explores the re-animating quality of film, observing how film “not only reveal[s] new things, but show[s] us the meaning of the old.” The close up, he maintains, reveals “the speechless face and the fate of the dumb objects that live with you in your room and whose fate is bound up with your own.”<sup>79</sup> He describes how the unique faciality imparted by the close up, enables a heightened form of communication between subject and object. Film, he observes, transforms landscape into “a physiognomy,” “a face that seems to have a profound emotional relationship with the human beholder.”<sup>80</sup> French impressionist filmmaker Jean Epstein also focuses on the close up, referring to it as “the soul of cinema,” which “limits and directs attention.”<sup>81</sup> Pointing to the close up’s affective

potency—its propensity to bring about “intuitive sympathy”—he pronounces, “as an emotional indicator, it overwhelms me. I have neither the right nor the ability to be distracted. It speaks the present imperative of the verb to understand.”<sup>82</sup> Epstein’s sympathetic response is intimately bound up with French Impressionists’ conception of *photogénie*, film’s potential to transform and animate an object, revealing another realm of consciousness—a truth behind appearance. Struggling to convey the ineffable, revelatory power of film, Epstein pronounces, “the human eye cannot discover it directly, unless after long practice. A lens zeros in on it, drains it, distilling *photogénie* between its focal planes. Like the human eye, this one has its own perspective.”<sup>83</sup> While “the senses, of course, present us only with symbols of reality,” Epstein continues “the click of a shutter produces a *photogénie* which was previously unknown.”<sup>84</sup>

In terms strikingly similar to those of the French Impressionist filmmakers, Underhill maintains that the camera can be productively engaged to reveal new realms to the viewer. She explains that “the act of contemplation is . . . a method of going from one level of consciousness to another. In technical language it is the condition under which [one] shifts [one’s] ‘field of perception.’”<sup>85</sup> The camera, Underhill asserts, can aid in producing this shift by exposing the limitations of our powers of perception and “enlightening” us as to the “errors of the person who accepts [perception’s] products at face-value.”<sup>86</sup> Invoking the proto-cinematic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge by way of example, Underhill cites the camera’s startling revelation that “the galloping race-horse, with legs stretched out . . . is a mythical animal, probably founded on the mental image of a running dog” and concludes that “the plain man’s universe is full of race-horses which are really running dogs.”<sup>87</sup> Underscoring the passage from sight to blindness and revision, Underhill observes that “the camera of the photographer [is] more apt at contemplation than the mind of man.”<sup>88</sup>

Richardson’s discussion of the re-animating quality of film reads much like the criticism of Balázs and French Impressionist filmmakers. Richardson, however, goes a step further in attributing causation to the peculiar quality film lends to the quotidian. By giving a new quality to the every day, the cinema, she demonstrates, falls under the rubric of Underhill’s “practical mysticism,” a practice that fosters the mystical experience within the rhythms of daily life.

While relying on Underhill’s formulation of a practical mysticism, Richardson places considerably more emphasis than her mentor on the transformative powers of silence. Richardson engages Quaker doctrine, in which silence occupies a central position, as well as recent psychological scholarship in describing the transformation that “takes place in our minds in moments of silent attention.”<sup>89</sup> While Richardson attempts to make sense of the mysterious “silent Quaker meeting,” which has become “illuminated . . . by the light of modern psychology,” her rhetoric, much like that of Underhill, situates her at a slight remove from contemporary “scientific psychology.”<sup>90</sup> She asserts that although they knew nothing of such psychology, the “old-time mystics” had surpassed the territory charted by contemporary science, arriving “‘naturally’ at ‘their method of seeking in silence what modern thought is calling . . . ‘the independent spiritual life fulfilling itself within humanity’—‘the unformulated motive which is the greater part

64 of the mind.”<sup>91</sup> In order to achieve heightened moments of consciousness like those experienced at “conversion” or “falling in love,” or resulting from “the effect upon the individual of beauty,”<sup>92</sup> Richardson explains, “silence, bodily and mental, is necessarily the first step.”<sup>93</sup> “There is no other way of . . . transcending the rhythms of sense,” she asserts, and “[this] has been invariably the first step taken by the mystic upon his pilgrimage.”<sup>94</sup>

Richardson celebrates silence and its connection to mysticism throughout her fictional oeuvre, as for instance in *Dimple Hill* when Miriam Henderson stays with a “group of free mystics,” Quakers, in whose company she achieves a tranquility much greater than that which could be attained in isolation. She praises the “spiritual rhythm” and the sense of tranquility experienced within the silence of the Quaker meeting: “So many wing-beats of the out-turned consciousness on its journey towards stillness, a moment’s immersion within its pulsating depths, and the return. To a serenity flooding her being and surrounding it, far richer than the same kind of serenity achieved in solitude.”<sup>95</sup> She observes that the participants “emerge from the silence luminous. Given back to themselves renewed, freshly available.”<sup>96</sup> Miriam’s journey toward and immersion in the pulsating depths of silence yield a mystical experience, at once private and collective.

Richardson repeatedly returns to the theme of transformative silence, which is both individual and shared—often between women. Indeed, in her first contribution to *Close Up* Richardson evokes the profound power of silence experienced by mothers in a picture palace in North London and throughout her Continuous Performance column, disparages the sound film, taking issue with the way in which sound jeopardizes the mystical state of consciousness induced by cinema’s silence. She contends that the synchronized-speech film reduces the cinema experience to a “pudding of incompatible ingredients”<sup>97</sup> and argues that “vocal sound always a barrier to intimacy, is destructive to the balance between what is seen and the silently perceiving, co-operating onlooker.”<sup>98</sup>

In describing the restorative aspects the Monday-afternoon cinema experience for women viewers, Richardson notably emphasizes the presence of “simple music” as an essential accompanying element. While Richardson is unequivocally opposed to synchronized speech, her conception of silent film often assumes the unifying aesthetic of music, a position she states firmly in “Musical Accompaniment” (August 1927), arguing that music enables “concentration” which is “essential to collaboration between the onlooker and what he sees.”<sup>99</sup> She contends:

Music is needed and generally liked even by those who are not aware that it helps them to create the film and gives the film both colour and sound. In our small palace we object to any sound coming from the screen . . . And since the necessary stillness and concentration depend in part upon the undisturbed continuity of surrounding conditions, the musical accompaniment should be both continuous and flexible.<sup>100</sup>

Richardson, however, qualifies her call for musical accompaniment: “By whatever means, the aim is to unify. If film and music proceed at cross purposes the audience is distracted by a half-conscious effort to unite them.”<sup>101</sup>

Richardson emphasizes the role of concentration rather than passivity and contemplation over distraction in the cinema experience and asserts that music can heighten the imaginative capacity of the spectator.<sup>102</sup> In contrast to prerecorded music, which is associated with a homogenized Hollywood product, Richardson praises the live musical accompaniment and singing as “a spontaneous meditative appreciation of things seen.”<sup>103</sup> Richardson claims that “in its insistence on contemplation,” the silent film “provided a pathway to reality,” and throughout her *Close Up* criticism, denounces the sound film, which threatened the contemplative state fostered by cinema’s silence.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, much of the *Close Up* criticism is devoted to praising silent film, nostalgically, on the eve of its passing. Bryher, for instance, calls the 1920s and early 30s “the golden age of . . . ‘the art that died’” and attributes the cessation of *Close Up* to “the collapse of the silent film.”<sup>105</sup>

Throughout her criticism, Richardson is compelled by the power of silence and stillness and by the mystical states they induce. Against the wholly passive, absorptive spectatorship typically associated with female viewers, she promotes a state of active contemplation, through which spectators can harness a deeper level of experience, described by Benjamin as *Erfahrung*. Richardson shares Benjamin’s investment in the redemptive potential of the film medium, but pursues a different path to this illumination. Avoiding the fetishization of technology seen in the works of Kittler, Virillio, and Benjamin, she investigates viewing situations and filmic styles that trigger viewers’ memories and compel their active collaboration. Rather than relying on violence, militarism, speed, or novelty of artistic technique, she develops a contemplative aesthetic, focusing on moments of stillness, through which the viewer might access a deeper level of understanding. In the development of this unique aesthetic, Richardson offers a healing alternative to the poetics of destruction taken up by numerous artists of her generation and contributes an important and largely overlooked perspective to the aesthetic conversations of the 1920s and 30s.

Richardson draws on contemporary philosophy and psychology but often prefers the traditional language of mysticism in her formulation of the contemplative aesthetic as she describes experiences of attentive absorption and shock (“onsets of contemplation”) in the cinema. Reflecting on these moments of deep contemplation, Richardson describes how they promote a sense of unity with fellow human beings. She predicts that film will turn “the world into a vast council-chamber” and that “woman’s “gift of imaginative sympathy . . . will . . . make her within the council of nations what the Quaker is within the council of religions.”<sup>106</sup> While Richardson’s predictions might ring somewhat utopian, for her and the writers of *Close Up*, the act of contemplation had an ethical urgency, and film provided a means of focusing viewers’ active attention on the position of near and distant others.

## Notes

I would like to thank Sarah Cole, Marianne Hirsch, and Helmut Illbruck for their generous comments on this essay.

1. Dorothy Richardson, “Continuous Performance,” *Close Up* 1, no. 1 (1927): 35–6.

2. Gloria Fromm, ed., *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 134.

3. Dorothy Richardson, "Narcissus," *Close Up* 8, no. 3 (1931): 185.

4. While generally labeled high modernists, many of the contributors to *Close Up* cultivated an affiliation with the avant-garde in their writing on cinema. Writers like Richardson and H.D., known for their hermetic, elitist prose styles, strove in their *Close Up* criticism to make film an art form accessible to the masses, not by supporting unchallenging cinematic content, but through the aesthetic education of the audience. For Richardson in particular, the journal provided an alternative means of reaching a public, which her literary experimentalism often excluded. Bryher recounts Richardson's frustrated hope that *Pointed Roofs*, the first novel in her thirteen-volume series, might "help the mass of underpaid women workers whose life she had shared, she had no idea that she had invented 'continuous association' and she was afraid that by being labeled as experimental she had driven away the audience she wanted." Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), 238.

5. In his later writings, Eisenstein maintains that pathos-based film speaks most effectively to the political exigencies of his era and that rather than evoking distance, political cinema should elicit spectator identification on an emotional, physical, and intellectual register. See in particular Sergei Eisenstein "Film Form: New Problems," *Film Form*, trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1977), 122–149.

6. During their frequent visits to Berlin, the *Close Up* editors associated with numerous international film personalities—most notably G.W. Pabst. Pabst, an important friend and colleague, provided them access to the inner circles of the Berlin film world, where they met directors Fritz Lang, Sergei Eisenstein, Lotte Reiniger, Erno Metzner, actor Lotte Lenya, and psychoanalyst-cum-film consultant Hanns Sachs. Weimar critic Siegfried Kracauer admired *Close Up*, which "early recognized the artistic merits of German films." Siegfried Kracauer, *Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 4. Bryher also knew Walter Benjamin and was involved in assisting him in his unsuccessful flight from Nazi Germany. For an account of their relationship, see Bryher, *Heart to Artemis*, 277–290.

7. For an elaboration of this affiliation see Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Verso, 1989) and Friedrich A. Kittler, "Film," *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) 115–182.

8. While H.D.'s interest in mysticism is linked to her explorations of psychoanalysis, telepathy, and the occult and is frequently expressed through the mystical strands of the Hellenistic tradition, Richardson's investigation remains primarily within the Judeo-Christian tradition and is grounded in Quakerism.

9. Gloria Fromm, *Dorothy Richardson: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 60.

10. Suzanne Raitt, *Vita and Virginia: The Work and Friendship of V. Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 120.

11. Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism: A Little Book for Normal People* (New York: Dutton, 1915), vii.

12. *Ibid.*, viii.

13. *Ibid.*, xi. Emphasizing the efficacy mysticism lends to its practitioners, Underhill invokes principles of rationalization and scientific management, which often link heightened states of attention with productivity. See for instance Jonathan Cray, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 74. I would like to thank an anonymous reader for *Modernism/Modernity* for this insight.

14. Dorothy Richardson, "This Spoon-fed Generation," *Close Up* 8, no. 4 (1931): 305–6.

15. *Ibid.*, 306.

16. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 250.

17. Richardson, "This Spoon-fed Generation," 307.

18. Richardson, "Continuous Performance," 36.

19. Ibid. Laura Marcus offers an excellent discussion of Richardson's characterization of the cinema as a resting place for tired women and argues that the frequent depiction of crashing waves by early filmmakers became a means of representing "both the static or repetitive and the dynamic aspects of the cinema medium." Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 306, 352–53.
20. Miriam Hansen, "Early Silent Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?" *New German Critique* 29 (Spring/Summer 1983): 175.
21. Dorothy Richardson, "Continuous Performance VIII," *Close Up* 2, no. 3 (1928): 52.
22. Siegfried Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces," *The Mass Ornament*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 324.
23. Ibid., 325–6.
24. Thomas Y. Levin, "Introduction," *The Mass Ornament*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 25; cited in James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus, *Close Up 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 330.
25. Dorothy Richardson, "There's No Place Like Home," *Close Up* 1, no. 5 (1927): 46.
26. Ibid., 47.
27. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 238.
28. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), 27.
29. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 163.
30. Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," *October* 62 (Autumn 1992): 17.
31. Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,'" *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 211.
32. Bryher, "The War From Three Angles," *Close Up* 1, no. 1, (1927): 21.
33. Bryher, "The War From More Angles," *Close Up* 1, no. 4, (1927): 46.
34. Bryher, "G.W. Pabst: A Survey" *Close Up* 1, no. 6, (1927): 58–9.
35. For an insightful analysis of the different receptions of the melodrama by male and female audiences see Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 68–78.
36. This propensity can be seen, for instance, in Siegfried Kracauer's "The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies." In each section of this essay, Kracauer summarizes the plot of a movie from a representative popular genre and ends with a sardonic rendition of the "little shop girls" response. Siegfried Kracauer "The Little Shopgirls go to the Movies," *The Mass Ornament*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 291–304. For a detailed discussion of Kracauer's depiction of female spectators see Sabine Hake, "Girls and Crisis: The Other Side of Diversion," *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 147–166.
37. Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 31–32.
38. Dorothy Richardson, *The Quakers: Past and Present* (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1914), 33–34. In discussing the contemporary relevance of Quaker teaching and its focus on interiority, Richardson frequently draws on "modern psychology" particularly as it is articulated by Bergson and James. She tellingly chooses for the frontispiece of *The Quakers* an endorsement by James, describing the Quaker religion as "something which it is impossible to overpraise." William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982) 7.
39. Richardson, *Quakers*, 34.
40. Ibid.
41. Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 33.
42. Ibid., 93–94.
43. Ibid., 4.
44. Ibid., 94.
45. For a full discussion of the dual aspects of attention in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Jonathan Crary, "Introduction" and "Modernity and the Problem of Attention," *Suspensions of Perception: Attention*, 2–10, 11–79.

46. Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York: D. Appleton, 1916), 90.
47. *Ibid.*, 91.
48. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 5.
49. Münsterberg, *Photoplay*, 88.
50. H.D., "An Appreciation," *Close Up* 4, no. 3 (1929): 59. For an excellent account of H.D.'s interest in figures fixedly staring and the link between such moments of "cinematic stasis" and H.D.'s lesbian desire see Jane Gallagher, "H.D.'s Distractions: Cinematic Stasis and Lesbian Desire," *Modernism/Modernity* 9, no. 3 (2002), 497–422.
51. William James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1918), 297–8.
52. Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 4.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 18.
55. *Ibid.*, 18–9.
56. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 206. For an insightful discussion of heteropathic identification, particularly as it pertains to race see Jean Wyatt, *Risking Difference: Identification, Race, and Community* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 167–169.
57. Scheler, *Nature of Sympathy*, 33–4.
58. Not dissimilarly, Eisenstein explains in "Film Form: New Problems" that a work's pathos is the driving force of "trans-substantiation," bringing the spectator into a state of ecstasy: "We might say that the affect of a work of pathos consists in whatever 'sends' the spectator into ecstasy . . . *ex-stasis*—literally, 'standing out of oneself,' which is to say, 'going out of himself,' or 'departing from his ordinary condition.'" For Eisenstein, identification is a powerful means through which the spectator is positioned in a new social system and can assume a subjectivity antithetical to his or her own. Eisenstein explains, however, that such "ex-stasis" entails more than just a "departure from a condition":
- [T]o go out of oneself' is not to go into *nothing*. To go out of oneself inevitably implies a transition into something else, to something different in quality, to something opposite to what was . . . To leave oneself, to remove oneself from one's customary equilibrium and condition, and to pass over into a new condition—all this of course penetrates the affective conditions of every art that is capable of gripping a perceiver.
- "And so," Eisenstein continues, "in wishing to gain a maximum 'departure from oneself' in the spectator, we are obliged in the work to suggest to him a corresponding 'guide.' Following this guide he will enter into the desired condition." Eisenstein, "Film Form," 166–168).
59. May Sinclair, "The Novels of Dorothy Richardson," *The Gender of Modernism*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 446.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Underhill defines mysticism as "*the art of union with Reality*." Acknowledging the lack of clarity afforded by this definition, Underhill, anticipating the follow up question, "What is Reality?" offers "Only a mystic can answer it: and he, in terms which other mystics alone will understand." Underhill therefore advises the reader to bracket the question and to focus instead on the word "union," which rather than representing "a rare and unimaginable operation," is something one "is doing, in a vague, imperfect fashion, at every moment of his conscious life; and doing with intensity and thoroughness in all the more valid moments of that life." Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 3–4.
62. Sinclair, "Novels of Dorothy Richardson," 446.
63. *Ibid.*, 444.
64. James, *Principles of Psychology*, 239.
65. Raitt, *Vita and Virginia*, 138–9.
66. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1961), 52–3.
67. *Ibid.*, 53.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*, 52–53.

71. *Ibid.*, xv.

72. Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 49.

73. *Ibid.*, 49–50.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Richardson, “Narcissus,” 182.

76. *Ibid.*, 183. In her 1908 *Saturday Review* sketch “A Sussex Auction,” drawn from her excursion with two brothers from the Penrose family, Richardson writes with admiration of the way in which the brothers remained untouched by the heightened atmosphere of flirting women and gin-drinking men, calmly waiting for the bidding to commence. She remarks that they remained “less involved,” “less easily stimulated,” more “detached,” and consequently more observant (Fromm, *Dorothy Richardson*, 61). This notion of distance facilitating observation and, paradoxically, proximity also recurs throughout Richardson’s fiction as well as her literary and film criticism.

77. Richardson, “Narcissus,” 183–4.

78. This is not meant to minimize the work of French film theorists and critics like Germaine Dulac and Colette (who worked for the film journal *Le Film* for three months) but rather to suggest a concentrated continuation.

79. Béla Balázs, *Theory of the Film*, trans. Edith Bone (London: Dennis Dobson, 1952), 55. For an excellent elaboration of the physiognomic element Balázs attributes to the film medium, see Gertrud Koch, “Béla Balázs: The Physiognomy of Things,” *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 167–177.

80. Koch, “Béla Balázs,” 169–70.

81. Jean Epstein, “Magnification and Other Writings,” trans. Stuart Liebman, *October* 3 (Spring 1977): 9, 13.

82. *Ibid.*, 13, 15.

83. Jean Epstein, “The Senses 1 (b),” trans. Tom Milne, *After Image* 10 (Autumn 1981): 13.

84. *Ibid.* While the French Impressionists tended not to present a rigorous, consistent theoretical argument, their writing repeatedly returns to the phenomenon of *photogénie*, defined by David Bordwell as “the transforming, revelatory power of the cinema: transforming because *photogénie* surpasses sheer literal reproduction of reality; revelatory because it presents a fresh perspective upon reality.” David Bordwell, *French Impressionist Cinema: Film Culture, Film Theory, and Film Style* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 108.

85. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 49.

86. Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, 16.

87. *Ibid.*, 16–17.

88. *Ibid.*, 16.

89. Richardson, *Quakers*, 33.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*, 36.

92. In citing moments of falling in love and conversion, as well as the experience of beauty, Richardson draws from James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*—specifically from his chapters on mysticism and conversion. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 189–258, 379–429.

93. Richardson, *Quakers*, 35.

94. *Ibid.*, 35–36.

95. Dorothy Richardson, *Dimple Hill*, vol. 4 of *Pilgrimage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 470.

96. *Ibid.*

97. Dorothy Richardson, “Dialogue in Dixie,” *Close Up* 5, no. 3 (1929): 216.

98. Dorothy Richardson, “A Thousand Pities,” *Close Up* 1, no. 4 (1927): 62.

99. Dorothy Richardson, “Musical Accompaniment,” *Close Up* 1, no. 2 (1927): 61.

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid.*

102. In his description of mysticism, James explains that, “not conceptual speech, but music rather, is the element through which we are best spoken to by mystical truth.” For a description of the centrality of music in the mystical experience see James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 420–21.

103. Richardson, “Musical Accompaniment,” 59.

104. Dorothy Richardson, "The Film Gone Male," *Close Up* 9, no. 1 (1927): 37.

105. Bryher, *Heart to Artemis*, 245–46. *Close Up* began publication only months before the release of the *Jazz Singer*, the first large-scale internationally released synchronized-speech film. The film gave rise to heated discussion regarding the coming of sound, for which *Close Up* became a primary forum. *Close Up* was the first English language journal to publish Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov's famous statement on sound "The Sound Film: A Statement from USSR" (October 1928). For outstanding accounts of early debates surrounding the synchronized-speech film see Marcus, *Tenth Muse*, 404–437 and James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus, *Cinema and Modernism*, 79–82.

106. Richardson, "Film Gone Male," 38. Dorothy Ricardson, "Women and the Future," *The Gender of Modernism*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 414.