Introduction

'The short story', Elizabeth Bowen declared in 1944, 'is a young art: as we now know it, it is the child of this century.' Since 1900, the young art had been taken up assiduously, and often to superb effect, by most if not all of the British and American writers whom we would now characterise as modernist. It had, in Bowen's view, a visual counterpart, or rival. 'The cinema,' she went on,

> itself busy with a technique, is of the same generation: in the last thirty years the two arts have been accelerating together. They have affinities – neither is sponsored by a tradition; both are, accordingly, free; both, still, are self-conscious, show a self-imposed discipline and regard for form; both have, to work on, immense matter – the disorientated romanticism of the age.[1]

The short story as a literary form will only feature intermittently in this book. But the argument I aim to advance is based on the premise Bowen floats: that there were significant affinities between early cinema and literary modernism. Bowen's categories of affinity are perhaps too lightly sketched to sustain extensive analysis of the relation between literature and cinema during the modernist period. Even so, they point us in the right direction. During those years, literature and cinema were indeed, in her adroit phrase, busy with a technique; and they did self-consciously seek out new forms, at once fragmentary and encyclopaedic, to fit the immense matter of modern life. Bowen herself will reappear in the argument as the author of one of the finest short stories ever written about movie-going.

Modernist writing in English constitutes a capacious and by no means stable historical and theoretical category encompassing a wide variety of engagements with the idea of the new in texts published (for the most part) during the first half of the twentieth century.[2] Cinema has been proposed with increasing frequency as an illustrative or explanatory context for some or all of those engagements.[3] The great majority of the enquiries into literary modernism's relation to cinema undertaken during the past thirty years have been committed implicitly or explicitly to argument by analogy. The literary text, this argument goes, is *structured like a film*, in whole or in part: it has its 'close-ups', its 'tracks' and 'pans', its 'cuts' from one 'shot' to another. Writers and film-makers were engaged, it would seem, in some kind of exchange of transferable narrative techniques. The transferable narrative technique which has featured most consistently in debates about

modernist writing in English is montage. Michael Wood, indeed, proposes that the 'principle of montage', together with the 'construction of imaginary space through the direction of the gaze', was 'quintessentially modernist'.[4] It is a principle active, according to an already voluminous scholarship, throughout the work of James Joyce. *The Waste Land* has recently been described as the 'modern montage poem par excellence'.[5]

There has always been an advantage in thinking of the modernist literary text as though it were a film structured by the principle of montage, if montage is understood in its basic sense as the juxtaposition of two or more images. Moments in that text do seem to invite, indeed almost to require, analysis in terms of the 'construction of imaginary space' either through montage or through camera-movement (pan, track, tilt).[6] These are affinities I intend fully to acknowledge. However, I do also believe that recent criticism has been at once too loose, in its attribution to the modernist literary text of just about any cinematic technique going (including some which were not going at all when the work in question was written); and too tight, in its insistence on one particular kind of montage as that text's primary method. There are historical and theoretical reasons for scepticism on both counts.[7]

Louis MacNeice remembered encountering the poems of T. S. Eliot for the first time in 1926, when he was in his final year in school: 'we had seen reviews proclaiming him a modern of the moderns and we too wanted to be "modern".' To someone his age, MacNeice recalled, *The Waste Land*'s literary allusions and 'anthropological symbolism' meant nothing. What did help was a ticket to see the movies. 'The cinema technique of quick cutting, of surprise juxtapositions, of spotting the everyday detail and making it significant, this would naturally intrigue the novelty-mad adolescent and should, like even the most experimental films, soon become easy to grasp.'[8] That might have been, and yet be, entirely true; and still not tell us anything at all about how the poem came to be written as it was written. For experimental cinema did not arrive in Britain until the founding of the London Film Society in 1925 (a development whose consequences I explore at length in chapter 6). The view the novelty-mad adolescent reading *The Waste Land* in 1926 would have taken of its 'cinematic techniques' already differed significantly from the view the author took (if he took a view) in devising them. In chapter 5, I show that Eliot was familiar with montage practice as developed in mainstream cinema during the period immediately before and during the First World War. But that is in itself no reason to read *The Waste Land* as though it were an experimental film (indeed, it's a reason not to).

There is a history, in short, to literature's affinities with cinema. I shall argue throughout this book that such affinities should only be established – and put to use in literary criticism – on the basis of what a writer might conceivably have known about cinema as it was at the time of writing. Historically, the term 'montage' acquired in a short period of time a range of

not always entirely compatible meanings.[9] For the most part, it came to be understood as referring either to the combination of two shots in such a way as to generate an effect or meaning not discernible in either shot alone, or to the sort of conceptual or rhythmical cutting associated in particular with Sergei Eisenstein. P. Adams Sitney identifies reverse angle cutting as the 'montage formula' which by the end of the First World War had become the basis of narrative continuity in cinema. Modernist montage arose out of the reinvigoration of this formula through 'playful hyperbole' and other means in films made from the mid-1920s onwards.[10] Michael North's meticulous survey of small magazines has made it clear that the intellectual prestige of the movies, and thus of montage as transferable narrative technique, peaked during the late 1920s, when Eugene Jolas's *transition* found room for various experiments in 'logocinema'.[11] Whatever its virtues, no account of modernist montage along these lines can tell us how and why works of literature conceived during the previous decade, works such as *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, came to be written as they were written.

Where literature and film are concerned, argument by analogy fails not only on historical but also on theoretical grounds. Literature is a representational medium, film a recording medium. The freedom modernist literature sought was freedom from the ways in which the world had hitherto been represented in literature. The freedom film sought (initially, at any rate, if not for very long) was freedom from representation: the freedom merely to record. For the recording arts constituted, as James Monaco has put it, 'an entirely new mode of discourse, parallel to those already in existence'. The new mode of discourse eventually made it possible to record, on film, tape, or disc, any event whatsoever that could be seen or heard. From the beginning, Monaco adds, film and photography were neutral; the media existed before the arts. The art of film thus developed by a process of replication. 'The neutral template of film was laid over the complex systems of the novel, painting, drama, and music to reveal new truths about certain elements of those arts.'[12] Film as medium before film as art: that fact, or the awareness of that fact, made all the difference, from literature; and continues to make all the difficulty, for arguments by analogy. 'For the first time,' André Bazin was to observe of the photographic image, 'between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent.'[13] The relation between cinema and literature can best be understood as a shared preoccupation with the capacities and incapacities of that which distinguishes one from the other: the instrumentality of a nonliving agent.

I propose here to substitute for the model of an exchange of transferable techniques the model of parallelism. In my view, the literature of the period and the cinema of the period can best be understood as constituting and constituted by parallel histories.[14] Some early film-makers shared with some writers of the period a conviction both that the instrumentality of the new recording media had made it possible for the first time to represent (as

well as to record) *existence as such*; and that the superabundant generative power of this intrumentality (the ever-imminent autonomy of the forms and techniques it gave rise to) put in doubt the very idea of existence as such. The conviction's ground was technological fact: film as medium before film as art. When modernist writers thought of cinema, they thought of an image of the world made automatically: an image which, due to the original and durable excess in it of record over representation, contains either more or less of the world than would the image which would occur under comparable circumstances to a human observer. Film, Marianne Moore pointed out in 1933, 'like the lie detector of the criminal court, reveals agitation which the eye fails to see'.[15] In his essay on 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), Walter Benjamin drew an influential distinction between the 'pictures' obtained by painter and cameraman: the painter's is 'total', whereas the cameraman's consists of 'fragments' assembled under a new 'law'. For Benjamin, the camera was a surgeon's scalpel which laid bare the 'optical unconscious'.[16] By obstinately seeing as the human eye does not see, film became a meta-technology: a medium whose constant subject matter was the limits of the human.

'Any effective account of modern culture', Jonathan Crary has maintained, 'must confront the ways in which modernism, rather than being a reaction against or transcendence of the processes of scientific and economic rationalization, is inseparable from them'.[17] Modernism has generally been understood, in recent scholarship, as a peculiar openness to modernity at its most enabling (sometimes a fearsome prospect).[18] Hugh Kenner argues that the affinity Eliot and many of his contemporaries felt with technological change had profound consequences for their writing. 'If Eliot is much else,' Kenner notes, 'he is undeniably his time's chief poet of the alarm clock, the furnished flat, the ubiquitous telephone, commuting crowds, the electric underground railway'. There is even a hint at cinema. For the 'hooded hordes' which swarm over endless plains, in the final section of *The Waste Land*, stumbling in the cracked earth, 'may', Kenner adds, 'have been literal impressions of World War I newsreels.'[19]

Garrett Stewart has recently offered an admirably challenging description of modernist literature's affinity with cinema which promises to move the whole debate decisively beyond argument by analogy, in the direction of the idea of parallel histories. During the course of a wide-ranging enquiry into the 'material transformations' of photography into cinema, Stewart brings a reading of literary experiment to bear on a reading of film in order to clarify the 'special kind of newness' accruing to photographic imprint when it enters into the 'motorized disappearance', frame after frame, which constitutes cinematic process. His emphasis is on the 'shared modernist strain, in every sense, of literary and filmic textuality': on the 'photogrammatic track' as the 'underlying stuff of the apparition'; and on writing as *écriture*, as text in production. The 'filmic', Stewart proposes, stands to the 'cinematic' as *écriture* to 'classic narrative'; one is modernist,

the other merely modern.[20] Stewart's insistence on textuality has in effect reanimated the poststructuralist readings of Eliot, Pound, Joyce and others prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s. To think in terms of photographic imprint or 'photogrammatic' track is to think once again in terms of what Maud Ellmann has called a 'poetics of impersonality'.[21]

We might say, then, that modernism's axiom or formula was literature as (recording) medium *before* literature as (representational) art: an axiom or formula sprung, at that particular 'moment' in history, by the sudden pre-eminence of a medium which was from the outset, and remained at least for the ten years or so after its invention in 1895, a medium rather than an art. Film did not easily relinquish its neutrality. To begin with, the uses to which the medium was put ranged from scientific enquiry through education and reportage to light entertainment. The Lumière camera-projector was in itself all of these things: a prototype, an exhibit, and a stunt. Only from 1903, at the very earliest, did film become primarily a narrative art. The production of fictional films outstripped the production of factual films for the first time in 1907.[22] I shall argue that what fascinated modernist writers about cinema was the original, and perhaps in some measure reproducible, neutrality of film as a medium. Texts by Eliot, Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, and Virginia Woolf look back, in their affinity with cinema, to that original neutrality of film as a medium, rather than forward to montage as the apotheosis of cinematic narrative art. Dorothy Richardson, in an essay published in January 1929 in *Close Up*, the first British journal of film theory, spoke of the 'innocence' of the first movies.

> They were not concerned, or at any rate not very deeply concerned, either with idea or with characterisation. Like the snap-shot, they recorded. And when plot, intensive, came to be combined with characterisation, with just so much characterisation as might by good chance be supplied by minor characters supporting the tailor's and modiste's dummies filling the chief roles, still the records were there, the snap-shot records that are always and everywhere food for a discriminating and an undiscriminating humanity alike.[23]

Richardson's evocation of the 'snap-shot record' – of the image not yet bound up with and into narrative – eloquently expresses the motive for modernism's investment in cinema. Even in 1933, long after the transition to sound, and thus to enhanced narrative plausibility, Marianne Moore still held, as we have seen, to the medium's potential as a mode of scientific enquiry. To what extent, then, did these writers succeed in disintegrating their own literary art back into (the fantasised trace of) text's original neutrality as a medium? And how?

In defining modernist textuality, Stewart draws productively on Fredric Jameson's analysis of a passage in E. M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910). The novel's opening chapter consists of three letters from Helen Schlegel to her sister Margaret, describing her visit to the Wilcox family at Howards End,

and the sudden strong attraction she feels towards the younger son, Paul. Chapter 2 ends with the arrival of a telegram from Helen announcing the end of the affair. The telegram, however, has arrived too late. For their aunt, the formidable Mrs Munt, is already in a train on the way down to Howards End. Chapter 3 finds Mrs Munt installed at one and the same time in a comfortable seat (facing the engine, but not too near it) and, Jameson explains, a 'cinematographic kind of space'. Gazing out of the window, she gazes into a framed scene; or frames the scene by her gaze. What is significant about this moment, Jameson adds,

> is not some possible influence of nascent cinema on Forster or on the modernist novel in general, but rather the confluence of the two distinct formal developments, of movie technology on the one hand, and of a certain type of modernist or protomodernist language on the other, both of which seem to offer some space, some third term between the subject and the object.[24]

For Jameson, Stewart observes, that third term is in effect the (literary/ photographic) apparatus, the 'disembodiment of perception by technique'. 'Modernist writing is neither predominantly impressionist nor expressive (since both imply the intervening subjectivity of an author) but in some new way strictly technical, a prosthesis of observation in the mode of inscription.' What Stewart discerns in *Howards End*, and then in an enhanced form in *Heart of Darkness* and *Finnegans Wake*, is 'an *automatism* of language beneath the intentionalities of inscription'. There was, he claims, a 'cultural commonality' between 'automated image projection' and 'the depersonalized verbal techniques of a modernist stylistic "apparatus"'.[25]

Stewart's broad 'textualist theory' of the 'adjacent inscriptive media of film and literature' strikes me as consistently illuminating. Since the argument turns on 'confluence' alone, rather than a conjuncture more often asserted than proven, he is able, as the proponents of montage as transferable narrative technique are not, to read each medium closely, and often to brilliant effect, in terms appropriate to its specific 'textuality'. The very broadness of the theory, however, can create problems.

In the first place, Stewart's programmatic lack of interest in the author (or Author, or author-function) damagingly flattens out his analysis of the literature of the period. In Forster and Joseph Conrad, Stewart argues, as in Joyce, the 'mechanisms of linguistic articulation' have been 'brought forward' as the 'suppressed material basis (phonemic even when not phonic or oral) of all lexical processing'.[26] But brought forward *how*, and to what effect? By whom? And why, at this moment in history? Forster, in particular, seems an odd choice as the vehicle or screen for a display of the 'mechanisms of linguistic articulation'. He surely owes his inclusion less to anything he might himself actually have said or done than to Jameson's

need to fill the proto-modernist slot in an abstract scheme of the evolution of literary practice during the first years of the century.

'The train sped northward,' Forster wrote of Mrs Munt's journey, 'under innumerable tunnels.'[27] Stewart discerns in this sentence a 'writing beneath the written' which offers 'the near equivalent in prose for the filmic beneath the cinematic'. Trains, he notes, ordinarily pass through rather than under tunnels. Forster, perhaps, was aiming at assonance; that is, at literary *style*. He could, however, have squeezed out a little more assonance still if he had substituted 'numberless' for 'innumerable'. Stewart's conclusion is that he was not, in fact, after style. He had put the 1890s behind him. What happens instead, in this sentence, is something altogether more modern. The unexpected 'under' ruffles narrative transparency just enough for writing to emerge for an instant from beneath the written. What 'innumerable' does, in conjunction with 'tunnels', as 'numberless' would not have done, is to bring forward into view the modernist apparatus of depersonalised technique. For each word incorporates a 'pictogram' – '*nn* and then again *nn*' – of side-by-side tunnels.[28] Forget the *fin-de-siècle*. This could be a line in a poem by Ezra Pound. There, at the centre of Jameson's 'cinematographic kind of space', exactly where it ought to be, Stewart has spotted an irruption of textuality.

Forster, of course, did not conceive of himself as an Imagist *manqué*. *Howards End* was a (mildly) polemical fiction designed, as its nineteenth-century precursors had been before it, to alert a middle-class readership to the extent of the damage done to the body politic by the increasingly bitter antagonism between two separate 'nations': 'England', founded on 'local life' and 'personal intercourse'; and 'Suburbia', glossy product of the 'superficial comfort exacted by businessmen'.[29] Arnold Bennett thought that the book had been a success because it had got itself 'talked about' by the 'right people'.[30] The function of the paragraph describing Mrs Munt's journey was to give the right people something to talk about. Mrs Munt herself could not be considered up to the task. Engrossed in her mission, she has, we are told, neither the will nor the ability to grasp the social and political significance of the world she gazes out at through the carriage window. 'To history, to tragedy, to the past, to the future, Mrs Munt remained equally indifferent.'[31] Forster, however, has already demonstrated his superiority to her by discovering in the terrain through (or 'under') which she is conveyed a figure for her state of mind. The assonance created by the unexpected 'under' throws enough emphasis on to those 'tunnels' for them to remain in our minds until the paragraph's unfolding enables us to convert descriptive detail into metaphor. Mrs Munt, engrossed in her task, suffers, of course, from tunnel-vision. In this novel, the author alone, and then with great deliberation, rises above engrossment, above partiality. He does so again, once Mrs Munt has arrived at her destination, by distinguishing in an absolute manner between England and Suburbia. The paragraph, in short, constitutes a traditional exercise in the use of literary

style (assonance) for rhetorical purposes (to establish the authority of the narrative voice). Any irruption of the modernist apparatus within it is insignificant.

A comparable doubt must attend Jameson's discovery in Forster's description of Mrs Munt's train journey of a 'cinematographic kind of space'. We surely cannot establish what it might have meant to propose such a 'space', in a novel published in 1910, without some reference, however tentative, to the spaces proposed in films its author could actually have seen. Such enquiries have been hindered by gaps in the historical record: lack of information about the nature and extent of a writer's interest in cinema. They have also been hindered in theory, or by theory. There has been a systematic failure, in discussions of early cinema and literary modernism, to take proper account either of films made before the First World War, or of films made after it for a mass audience.[32] The second objection to Stewart's theory is that it applies only to films based on the deliberate (self-conscious) 'multiplication of shots through editing': French and Russian experimental cinema of the 1920s, and the 'modernist valedictions' of the 1960s and 1970s.[33] The theory is, in this respect, representative. I know of no study of early cinema and literary modernism which does not restrict itself to the avant-garde.

Stewart does acknowledge the historical significance, as something 1920s modernism sought to 'retrieve' from its own rapid 'normalisation', of what Tom Gunning has termed a 'cinema of attractions'. Gunning proposes that the films made during the cinema's first ten years or so, whether in the documentary mode associated with Lumière, or in the narrative mode associated with Georges Méliès, should be understood as presentations compatible with – and indeed to some extent derived from – popular entertainments such as variety theatre and the magic-lantern show.[34] What counts, in them, is not that absorption of the spectator into diegesis undertaken by classical Hollywood cinema: cinema as voyeurism, or unacknowledged scopophilia, in Christian Metz's terms.[35] What counts, instead, is exhibitionism: the display of views or accomplishments to an audience authorised, in turn, to exhibit itself.

These very early films require consideration in their own right – rather than as something lost, and then retrieved – for two reasons. The first is that, as I have already indicated, the writers who should interest us most gave them plenty of consideration, and not just for nostalgia's sake. The second is that film's neutrality as a medium was not erased by, or in, its constitution as a narrative art. To the contrary, the narrative films which became the industry's staple product from 1907 onwards artfully reintroduce or re-enact the medium's founding neutrality as and when they can. The writers who will most concern me here were a great deal more interested in cinema, as Stewart defines it, than they were in film. We need to take full account of the gradual and uneven development of a cinema of attractions into a cinema designed above all to tell stories. I shall

accordingly devote separate chapters to particular phases in the careers of two film-makers who made very substantial contributions to that development, D. W. Griffith and Charlie Chaplin. In chapter 4, I examine narrative films by George Loane Tucker, Griffith, Abel Gance, King Vidor, and Carl-Theodor Dreyer which, although varying widely in scope and tone, all exploit the lateral tracking shot as an artful departure from 'natural' lines of sight which brings back into view the medium's neutrality as a medium.

My hypothesis is that some modernist writers found in film's neutrality as a medium a stimulus to the reintroduction or re-enactment of the neutrality of literature, or in some cases of writing itself, as a medium. It was not cinema which made literary modernism, but cinema's example. If that was indeed the case, as I hope to show, we need to ask why. What was so wonderful about neutrality, about the automatism of the camera's-eye view? To answer those questions, we must first set aside the current understanding of technology's appearance on the scene as always and everywhere a matter of 'crisis' or 'threat'. Sara Danius, for example, has argued that the modernist aesthetic informing the work of Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce was 'inseparable from 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'.[36] According to James Lastra, cinema has 'come to stand for "modernity" itself, seeming to emblematize in the most compelling and even visceral way the frequently violent shifts in social and cultural life, especially the newly possible (if not inevitable) forms of spatial, temporal, and sensual restructuring'. The 'threat' posed by the emergence of new media during the early years of the twentieth century, Lastra concludes, was that of the 'spectre' of the inhuman within human experience.[37] I have no doubt that cinema's exposure of the inhuman within human experience was often conceived as threat or crisis. But there is as far as I am aware no reason to assume, as so many commentators have done, that it could not be conceived otherwise.

According to R. L. Rutsky, technology comes to life, or is willed into life, in modernism. Modernist machines are often the product of an occult or supernatural knowledge, a black magic (a white magic, even), rather than of engineering and of the dystopian representations which surrounded engineering in Romantic aesthetic theory. If modernism saw the 're-emergence of the technological in the aesthetic sphere', Rutsky notes, this was a 'realm still haunted by a transcendent, living "spirit", by the desire for the eternal and the immutable'. Thus, the doctor-magician figures in German Expressionist cinema not only reduce human beings to automata, but bring objects to life. In either case, the result is a combination of the scientific-technological and the spiritual-magical figured as a living machine.[38] The spectres inhabiting German Expressionism are cause for concern, to be sure, but not necessarily for panic.

The attitude Eliot, Joyce, Woolf, and Lewis took to visual technologies and their exposure of the inhuman within human experience was by no means utopian, of course. They were above all, I think, *curious*: apprehensive, perhaps, and often scornful, but also convinced that the camera's-eye view – the re-enactment, artfully or not, of film's neutrality as a medium – would prove a fruitful addition to the repertoire of ways in which the world might be known. Their literary modernism was an acknowledgement that existence as such (the only topic left for literature, they felt) would never appear otherwise than out of proportion: at once personal and impersonal; at once impossibly close (too much presence), and marked indelibly by remoteness, by what has been left out of the picture, by what has gone missing (too much absence). Cinema's defining drama of inclusion and exclusion showed them the way to existence as such, which was now all there was, or could be, virtually. The point was not – or not only – to match the fidelity of the photographic (or phonographic) record. It was, rather, to change the angle (a camera-thought, this, already) on the human as thus far constituted in the archive of representations.

Cinema's example provoked in some modernist writers a will-to-automatism. These writers *chose*, in certain texts, the 'disembodiment of perception by technique'. For literary modernism should not be regarded as the product of a machine age.[39] It was, rather, a wilful enquiry into the age's wilful absorption in the kinds of automatic behaviour exemplified by machinery in general, and by the new technologies of perception in particular. 'But, of course,' as Eliot famously observed in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), 'only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things'.[40]

The will-to-automatism, it hardly needs saying, is still with us. How could it not be, in the era of the World Wide Web, text messaging, virtual reality technologies, and windowed desktop multimedia applications? Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have discerned in the process of remediation by which new digital media define themselves in relation either to older analogue media, or to each other, a 'double logic' of immediacy and hypermediacy. Remediation takes a variety of forms. The new medium can act as a vehicle for the old; or refashion it by incorporating it in part; or absorb it entirely. In each case, though, a double logic operates. 'Our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them.' Each new medium must be at once transparent as never before, a window on a homogeneous world; and opaque as never before, its own object, a windowed array of heterogeneous representations.[41] There is no shortage of will-to-automatism in remediation's double logic.

It is not my purpose to argue that literary modernism remediated cinema: that it took on montage in order to render itself at once newly transparent and newly opaque. Modernist writers did something far more

interesting than that. Cinema's example enabled them to discern in the process of mediation itself, in the original and recoverable neutrality of the new medium's approach to existence as such, the double logic Bolter and Grusin discern in the process of remediation. They understood that this double logic is driven by contrary but mutually dependent desires: to be utterly transparent, to be utterly opaque. The will-to-automatism was the instrument with which writers and film-makers explored the double desire at once for presence to the world and for absence from it. Modernism, then, should not be regarded as the 'pre-history of cyberspace'.[42] But it gives us as good an idea as we are likely to get of what it is that we look for when we enter cyberspace: to be at once a window, and windowed.

My subject is the scavenging for presence- and absence-effects which so decisively informed the work of early twentieth-century writers and film-makers. The chapters which follow offer a general though far from comprehensive account of that activity. Future research into the topic may well prove more particular. It may well find in historical instances of the representation of class, race, and gender a focus for enquiry in the circumstances under which mediation's double desire made itself felt.[43] What I have attempted here is an introduction to the topic, by way of case-studies, rather than a fully grounded history.

Chapter 2 describes what some writers (Henry James, Frank Norris, D. H. Lawrence, Elizabeth Bowen) saw in the new medium of cinema. What they saw made them think about the lack of proportion necessary to any attempt to view the world as it actually is: too much presence, too much absence. I also suggest that stereoscopy, a visual medium remediated both in literature (Joyce, Proust) and in film, put to spectacular use the conflict between immediacy and hypermediacy constitutive of mediation itself. The 'world' viewed through the stereoscope is at once abstract – a receding arrangement of separate planes – and very nearly tangible. Chapter 3 discovers both abstraction and tangibility in some of the films D. W. Griffith made for the Biograph Company between 1908 and 1913. Griffith's Biograph films are usually seen as a laboratory for the development of the narrative 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 film'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.

Tangibility, however, was not what most film-makers had in mind, or what would have been visible in their films, during the long transition, after 1907, to a cinema of narrative integration. Chapter 4, accordingly, shifts the emphasis from the desire to be transparent to the desire to be opaque. Its topic is the remediation of the first Dublin documentaries in the 'Wandering Rocks' episode of *Ulysses*. The ceremonies of recognition and acknowledgement which begin and end the episode burlesque into opacity the very similar ceremonies which structured the films Dubliners were most likely to

see, in Dublin in 1904. I compare the absence-effects generated by its hypermediacy to those generated by the lateral tracking shots which found favour with some film-makers from 1913 onwards. The lateral tracking shot is the least anthropomorphic, and therefore most opaque, of all camera-movements.

Eliot and Woolf, I argue in chapters 5 and 6, were keen students of cinema's equal accommodation as a medium to experiences of near-tangibility, on one hand, and of otherwise unimaginable remoteness, on the other. Tiresias, in *The Waste Land*, a mere observer, and yet the poem's chief protagonist, throbs between the desire for presence and the desire for absence. In that respect, he resembles Prufrock, the observer-protagonist of his own 'love song'. But he is, for all his antiquity, the more modern of the two. Prufrock's visual technology of choice had been the magic lantern, staple of Victorian home entertainment; Tiresias's, I shall suggest, is the mutoscope. What came between them was Eliot's rapidly developing interest in cinematic technique. Woolf found in cinema a way to conceive death, rather than desire. The key passage in her brilliant essay on 'The Cinema' (1926), written at the same time as the 'Time Passes' section of *To the Lighthouse* (1927), concerns documentary cinema's definitive capacity to show us people as they are when we are not there in person to witness their behaviour. 'We see life as it is when we have no part in it.'[44] Prompted by her reflections on that capacity, I think, Woolf was able to imagine constitutive absence in *To the Lighthouse*, as she had not been able to in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). Between them, Eliot and Woolf can be said to have taken full measure of the potent implications of cinema's 'disembodiment of perception by technique'.

Bolter and Grusin unequivocally align modernism with an opaque hypermediacy.[45] This seems to me an opinion worth revising. I have tried hard throughout this book not to associate Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf with some kind of 'deconstruction' of the mimetic techniques which, from Albertian perspective to photorealism, have underwritten immediacy in art. These writers took as much (if not more) pleasure in presence-effects as they did in absence-effects, for reasons which I have begun to sketch. The operation of a double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy produced in literature and film a descriptive method which, rather than deconstructing mimesis, as modernism is routinely said to, actually enhances it; an enhancement I shall define, in chapter 7, with reference to Lewis's *The Childermass* (1928), and to films by Charlie Chaplin, as hypermimesis, or imitation for imitation's sake.

These are all rather abstract formulations. I want now to add some historical detail. The enquiry will range widely, in the chapters which follow, through and around the parallel histories of early cinema and modernist literature. But its focus will remain on the kinds of curiosity registered in F. T. Marinetti's 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature', of 11 May 1912:

> Nothing more interesting for the Futurist poet than the movement of a keyboard on a mechanical piano. The cinematograph gives us the dance of a thing that divides and reassembles without human intervention. It gives us the backward plunge of a diver whose feet rise out of the sea and spring violently back onto the diving board. It gives us a man running at 200 kilometers an hour. So many movements of matter beyond the laws of intelligence ...[46]

Notes

1 'The Short Story', in Elizabeth Bowen (ed.), *The Faber Book of Modern Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 7–19, p. 7.

2 For a succinct and authoritative account of what the category as currently defined might or might not be thought to include, see Tim Armstrong, *Modernism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), ch. 2.

3 See, for example, Susan McCabe, *Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). McCabe explores the 'impact' of 'new cinematic modes of representation' on the poetry of Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, H.D., and Marianne Moore.

4 'Modernism and Film', in Michael Levenson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 217–32, pp. 222–3.

5 Thomas L. Burkdall, *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* (London: Routledge, 2001), 8–17; McCabe, *Cinematic Modernism*, 40.

6 For an illuminating example of this approach, see Keith Williams, 'Short Cuts of the Hibernian Metropolis: Cinematic Strategies in *Dubliners*', in Oona Frawley (ed.), *A New & Complex Sensation: Essays on Joyce's 'Dubliners'* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2004), 154–67.

7 Maria DiBattista makes the theoretical case for not 'conflating' the literary with the cinematic persuasively in 'This Is Not a Movie: *Ulysses* and Cinema', *Modernism/Modernity*, 13:2 (2006), 219–35. But her own use of cinematic terminology in relation to *Ulysses* is itself, strictly speaking, anachronistic.

8 'Eliot and the Adolescent', in Tambimuttu and Richard March (eds), *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium* (London: Frank Cass, 1948), 146–51, pp. 146, 150.

9 For a start, the term meant different things in different languages. In German, as James Pettifer pointed out thirty years ago, it can refer to simultaneous as well as successive assemblage: James Pettifer, 'Against the Stream: *Kuhle Wampe*', *Screen*, 15 (Summer 1974), 49–64, p. 64.

10 *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 17–19, 38.

11 *Camera Works: Photography and the Twentieth-Century Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 2.

12 *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, Multimedia*, 3rd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 38–9.

13 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', in *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967–71), vol. 1, 9–16, p. 13.

14 For a comparable approach to the relation between cinema and psychoanalysis, see the essays collected in Janet Bergstrom (ed.), *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

15 'Fiction or Nature?', in *Complete Prose*, ed. Patricia C. Willis (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 303–8, p. 308.
16 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217–52, pp. 233–4.
17 *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 85.
18 Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
19 *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 25, 34.
20 *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 266. For an alternative account of relations between the emergence of new communication technologies and modernism's 'unbinding of textuality', see Donald F. Theall, *Beyond the Word: Reconstructing Sense in the Joyce Era of Technology, Culture, and Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); and *James Joyce's Techno-Poetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
21 *The Poetics of Impersonality: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987). Ellmann's argument, like Stewart's, derives in part from Jacques Derrida's reflections on Plato and Stéphane Mallarmé: 'The Double Session', in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 189–316. See *Poetics of Impersonality*, 83–4; *Between Film and Screen*, 273. Derrida's essay is also an important point of departure for Christophe Wall-Romana's argument that Mallarmé, a keen observer of technological development, either wrote or made plans for various 'cinematic sublations of the page and the book': 'Mallarmé's Cinepoetics: The Poem Uncoiled by the Cinématographe, 1893–98', *PMLA*, 120 (2005), 128–47, pp. 141–2. Wall-Romana's use of the term 'montage' is not supported by analysis in detail either of his primary text, *Un coup de dés*, or of films Mallarmé might conceivably have seen.
22 The most complete data available relate to the American film industry. For a concise account, see Charles Musser, 'Moving towards Fictional Narratives: Story Films Become the Dominant Product, 1903–1904', in Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (eds), *The Silent Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 87–102.
23 'Pictures and Films', in James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (eds), *Close Up 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism* (London: Cassell, 1998), 186–9, p. 188.
24 'Modernism and Imperialism', in Terry Eagleton (ed.), *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 43–66, p. 53. Cinema's kinship with the railroad has been the subject of a good deal of scholarship. See Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997).
25 *From Film to Screen*, 281, 283, 285.
26 Ibid., 286.
27 *Howards End* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1941), 15.
28 *From Film to Screen*, 283.
29 *Howards End*, 16.
30 *Books and Persons* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1917), 291–2.
31 *Howards End*, 15.

32 In the latter respect, Miriam Hansen's emphasis on classical Hollywood cinema as a vernacular modernism could yet prove salutary: 'The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity*, 6 (1999), 59–77. Her description of the shaping of that vernacular will have to be modified to take into account the consequences of an insistent return to the 'pre-classical'.
33 *From Film to Screen*, 311, 282, 293.
34 Gunning developed the idea of the cinema of attractions in a series of highly influential essays first published during the 1980s. See, for example, 'An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space in Early Film and its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film', in John Fell (ed.), *Film Before Griffith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 355–66; and 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde', reprinted in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI Publishing, 1990), 56–67.
35 *Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. Celia Britton et al. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), 58–80, 91–7, p. 63.
36 *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 3. Danius's reference, it is worth noting, is consistently to film theory of the 1920s and after: Leger, Vertov, Eisenstein, Moholy-Nagy, Benjamin.
37 *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 4, 7.
38 *High Techne: Art and Technology from the Machine Aesthetic to the Posthuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24, 36.
39 Danius mounts an effective critique of the various highly influential commentaries, by Marshall Berman, Stephen Kern, Friedrich Kittler, and others, which characterise literary modernism as no more than a reaction to technological modernisation: *Senses of Modernism*, 43–6. For a comparable debate concerning early cinema's openness to modernity, see Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), ch. 4; and Charlie Keil, '"To Here from Modernity": Style, Historiography, and Transitional Cinema', in Keil and Shelley Stamp (eds), *American Cinema's Transitional Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 51–65.
40 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *Selected Prose*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 37–44, p. 43.
41 *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 45–9, 5–6.
42 Theall, *Beyond the Word*, 21.
43 Karen Beckman, for example, has usefully proposed the 'vanishing woman' who appeared (and disappeared) in so many turn-of-the-century vaudeville acts, and subsequently became a staple of the cinema of attractions, as just such a focus: *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). 'Hovering in the space between absence and presence,' Beckman observes, 'she challenges us to think not only about the "presence" of particular women, but also about the very possibility of presence per se' (p. 68). I propose the films D. W. Griffith made with Blanche Sweet as a comparable focus: 'The Space Beside: Lateral Exposition, Gender, and Urban Narrative Space in D. W.

Griffith's Biograph Films', forthcoming in Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson (eds), *Cities in Transition* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007).

44 'The Cinema', in *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993), 54–8, p. 55. It is characteristic of the retrospective cast of literary reflections on cinema that her examples should be taken from newsreels made in 1926, and in 1910.

45 *Remediation*, 38–9.

46 *Selected Poems and Related Prose*, trans. Elizabeth R. Napier and Barbara R. Studholme (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 77–80, p. 79.