

'From autumn to spring, aesthetics change': Modernity's Visual Displays

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In this article, I explore the topic of new visualities and new visual spaces at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through questions of advertisement, spectatorship, display, and the pictorial 'language' of modernity. In recent decades, there has been significant critical discussion of, on the one hand, literature and advertising and, on the other, literature and cinema. There has been little exploration, however, of the ways in which these three terms — literature, advertising, cinema — might function together. Yet it is certainly the case that many of the early twentieth-century literary texts which are most fully in dialogue with the medium of film are also those which are most directly engaged with the visual and verbal dimensions of advertising culture. Central examples from British, Irish, and American fiction include Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). The connection between film and advertising in these texts is suggested, or secured, in a number of ways: through the representation of the shop or display window as a kind of screen; through the depiction of the mobile spectator in the urban sphere, caught by what he or she sees in passing and, in texts such as Dos Passos's, having a new subjectivity or identity modelled upon it; through a focus on gesture and physiognomy; through various forms of projection, as in the aeroplane episode in *Mrs Dalloway*, in which advertising letters are written on the sky; through the construction of 'a new alphabet', comprised of both words and images; through a focus on fashion, as in *Ulysses*, in which, as Jennifer Wicke has argued in her important study *Advertising Fictions*, fashion becomes 'a kind of compact with modernity'.¹ *Ulysses* is indeed the text in which modernist

¹ Jennifer Wicke, 'Joyce and Consumer Culture', in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 234–53 (p. 247).

literature intersects with the culture of advertising most completely and most radically. The discourses of advertising both compose and flow through the inner and outer worlds of Leopold Bloom, an advertising canvasser, shaping sound, vision and, above all, language.

While these connections underlie my thinking about the culture of modernity, I have chosen in this essay to focus not on literary texts but on that early twentieth-century film theory which has connections to theories of advertising. Central texts in this context include the American poet and artist Vachel Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Image* (1915/1922) and his *Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, written in 1922 but unpublished in his lifetime, as well as the psychologist Hugo Münsterberg's *Art of the Photoplay* (1916). I'll close with a brief discussion from a different cultural context — the Polish-French film theorist and director Jean Epstein's early writings on literature and cinema.

Vachel Lindsay will be a familiar name to those with an interest in early writings on cinema. Lindsay, an artist and poet, published *The Art of the Moving Picture* in 1915 — a revised version was published in 1922. The book has the claim to be the first English-language book of film theory or film aesthetics. Writing against the view that film was closest as an art to stage drama, Lindsay emphasized its relation to art and the art gallery, and with sculpture. His central preoccupation was with the 'hieroglyphic' dimensions of silent film, which led him in two, interconnected dimensions.² Firstly, film was to be understood as a 'hieroglyphic' language, a 'new universal alphabet', 'a moving picture Esperanto' (pp. 118, 119). Movies, in their pictorialism, are, Lindsay wrote in a letter,

as revolutionary in their own age as the invention of Hieroglyphics was to the cave-man. And they can be built up into a great pictorial art. The Egyptian tomb-painting was literally nothing but enlarged Hieroglyphics. We now have Hieroglyphics in motion — and they can be made as lovely as the Egyptian if we once understand what we are doing.³

'It would profit any photoplay man to study to think like the Egyptians, the great picture-writing people' (*Letters*, p. 121). Lindsay claimed that he found the decipherment of hieroglyphics 'extraordinarily easy' (though

² Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), p. 118.

³ Letter to George Brett, cited in *Letters of Vachel Lindsay*, ed. by Marc Chénétier and Burt Franklin (New York: Franklin, 1979), p. 121.

significant doubt was later cast on his ability to interpret them) ‘because I have analyzed so many hundreds of photoplay films’ (*Letters*, p. 121). *The Book of the Dead* (the most significant collection of ancient Egyptian funerary texts), to which Lindsay repeatedly returned, ‘is certainly the greatest motion picture I ever attended’ (*Letters*, p. 121). Not only film, but modern American civilization in its entirety is to be linked to Ancient Egyptian culture. He wrote that

American civilization grows more hieroglyphic every day. The cartoons of Darling, the advertisements in the back of the magazines and on the billboards and in the street-cars, the acres of photographs in the Sunday newspapers, make us into a hieroglyphic civilization far nearer to Egypt than to England. (*Art of the Moving Picture*, pp. 13–14)

Lindsay’s hieroglyphic preoccupations place him in a tradition of philosophical and cultural theorizing, from the writings of the American transcendentalists (for whom hieroglyphics represented a unity of word and image and a form of occulted knowledge) through to Jean Epstein’s references to film as Egyptian hieroglyphics and Sergei Eisenstein’s writings on the filmic ideogram, extending further to writers of the Frankfurt School, notably Siegfried Kracauer and Theodor Adorno, with their interest in ‘mass-cultural hieroglyphics’.

Lindsay, for all his eccentricities was, I would argue, producing a significant form of cultural commentary or cultural critique. The critique is heightened in *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, in which Lindsay wrote of American modernity, with its ‘extreme fanaticism in the worship of raw light and raw action’.⁴ He argued that

action and speed and blazing light must alternate with moments of mellowness and rest. Even between each heart-beat, there is a split-second of absolute rest, which the American spirit would deny. It is the American idea to destroy that split-second of rest, which is between every heart-beat [...]. No one to whom the moon is sufficiently dear will permit his nerves to be chopped into little pieces $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch long, and no longer, nor his time chopped into little pieces $\frac{1}{16}$ of a second long, and no longer. (pp. 187–88)

⁴ Vachel Lindsay, *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies: A Second Book of Film Criticism*, ed. by Myron Lounsbury (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1995), pp. 187–88.

This image was taken up later in Lindsay's manuscript in a brief discussion of Chaplin's artistry, located in his films' 'intimate passages, some of them not longer than the split second between every heart-beat, but long enough to give the touch of eternity in time, the hint of moonlight interrupting broad sunlight' (*Progress and Poetry*, p. 271). The heartbeat was a way of giving human measure to mechanized modern time, including the factory-time of a society dominated by Taylorist and Fordist models of 'scientific management', with its automatization of the human body and its energies, and to cinematic time (projection at $\frac{1}{16}$ of a second). For Lindsay, film was both continuous with the world of 'action and speed and blazing light' and resistant to it, in its imagined creation of 'rests' or intervals, whose identity overlapped with that of the passages through which 'beauty' could be 'glimpsed.'

His account finds an echo in the writings on photography of Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes, in which the medium's 'aura' was perceived to diminish as the duration of exposure time decreased and photography became increasingly instantaneous. There are also connections to the late twentieth-century writings of Paul Virilio, in which the contrast between modernity and postmodernity is often predicated on the idea that the greater the speed of the image, the more absolute the loss of a contextualized time, and in which we find a nostalgia for a slower speed of projection/representation. The destruction of human consciousness, Virilio suggests, comes with the closure of the interval, temporal and spatial, between the representation and what it records.⁵

The claims for film 'beauty' in Lindsay's writings, as in Hugo Münsterberg's, were to some extent linked to the granting of a high-art status to film. Nonetheless, it would seem that for Lindsay, in particular, 'beauty' was also credited with the 'social task' of giving human measure to modern time, and of penetrating the seductive surfaces of modernity. In *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies*, the 'glimpse' (p. 317) (of beauty) was contrasted, though the distinction was not absolute, with the 'magical glitter' that created a continuum between the film, the plate glass windows of commodity culture, and the glass architecture of the modern city:

Now this impression of looking into a crystal, which gives a magical glitter to everything within it, is the impression a true movie should convey [...]. The first story of the principal streets is becoming all glass. It is not the glass itself that is

⁵ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. by Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), p. 104.

desirable in the eyes of the American. It is the film of light upon the surface of the glass which has become his luxury [...]. We have come to a time when we are slaves indeed to this glamor. There is many a gigantic shop which owes its influence to the elimination of all but the transfiguring glassy surface between the customer and the goods displayed. [...]. This madness of the crystalline is getting to be more and more a habit of the American eye. (p. 326)

While ‘the glimpse’ and ‘glitter’ are both forms of ‘beauty’, the former was not held to be collusive with a commodified modern time and modern vision. In this sense the ‘glimpse of beauty’ in the film could be said to anticipate some of the perceived functions of a montage aesthetic, which disrupts surfaces (through fragmentation, collision, or the creation of new conceptual relationships) and ‘awakens’ the spectator.⁶

For Hugo Münsterberg, as for so many writers on film in its first decades, cinema was ‘a new art’ and a ‘new form still undeveloped and hardly understood’.⁷ ‘For the first time’, Münsterberg writes,

the psychologist can observe the starting of a new aesthetic development, a new form of true beauty in the turmoil of a technical age, created by its very nature and yet more than any other art destined to overcome outer nature by the free and joyful play of the mind. (p. 31)

Münsterberg published his account of the ‘new art’ of the film, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*, in 1916, the year of his death. It was written during the summer of 1915, when Münsterberg’s personal and professional situation, as a patriotic German living in the US, was becoming increasingly untenable. Münsterberg was, he wrote, a very recent convert to the film — on going to the cinema for the first time in 1914, ‘I recognized at once that here marvellous possibilities were open, and I began to explore with eagerness the world which was new to me’ (*Münsterberg on Film*, p. 172). While he represented his ‘conversion’ to the moving pictures as of recent date, the preoccupations he brought to his writings about film were not. He had left Germany for the US in 1892 when William James invited him to take charge of the psychological laboratory at Har-

⁶ Elements here draw on work first published in my book *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷ *Hugo Münsterberg on Film*, ed. by Allan Langdale (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 160.

vard (where his students included the young Gertrude Stein) and was centrally concerned with the psychology of vision and perception, though his extensive publications also included work on aesthetics, American culture, the ‘applied psychology’ of law, advertising, industry, and ‘scientific management’. *The Photoplay* drew on a number of his long-standing interests: optical technologies and the physiology and psychology of perception; the philosophy of attention; the relationship between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ realities; a neo-Kantian ‘aesthetic of isolation’, and an affirmation of eternal and absolute values in art.

His study of film is divided into two major parts — ‘The Psychology of the Photoplay’ and ‘The Aesthetics of the Photoplay’ — which follow on from introductory chapters on its outer and inner development. In the Psychology section of the study, Münsterberg devoted separate chapters to ‘Depth and Movement’, ‘Attention’, ‘Memory and Imagination’, and ‘Emotions’: the categories closely following the chapter titles of William James’s *Principles of Psychology*. In *The Photoplay*, Münsterberg’s interests lay in ‘the mental processes which this specific form of artistic endeavour produces in us’, and he was particularly concerned with the ways in which we invest the film with a depth and movement which it does not itself possess: ‘we create the depth and the continuity through our mental mechanism’ (*Münsterberg on Film*, p. 78). In Münsterberg’s argument, we give more than we receive, and film spectatorship entails an encounter between an abundance of inner processes and ‘the world of impressions’.

I want now to focus for a moment on the concept of ‘attention’, defined by Münsterberg as an internal function which is the most central of all the internal functions that create the meaning of the world around us. The world of impressions is a ‘chaos’ given order and meaning by our acts of attention, ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’. A fundamental tenet of *The Photoplay* is that the close-up defines the art of the film — it is the point at which film leaves all stagecraft behind. For Münsterberg, it can be identified with the mental act of attention — the close-up is indeed the ‘projection’ or ‘objectivation’ of ‘the mental act of attention’: ‘Whenever 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’ (*Münsterberg on Film*, pp. 87–88).

The issue of the film close-up is overdetermined in Münsterberg’s study, as it is in the writings of the film theorist and film-maker Jean Epstein, whose writings on cinema in the 1920s and 1930s established many of the central terms for film aesthetics. The close-up is firmly connected,

for Münsterberg, with the philosophy and psychology of attention of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the work of Théodule Ribot. Ribot's *Psychology of Attention* (translated into English in 1890), defines 'attention' (in its two forms — spontaneous and voluntary) as 'an exceptional, abnormal state, which cannot last a long time, for the reason that it is in contradiction to the basic condition of psychic life; namely, change'.⁸ Attention is, Ribot argues, a form of inhibition. Jonathan Crary has suggested, in *Suspensions of Perception*, that 'attention becomes a fundamentally new object within the modernization of subjectivity',⁹ and that the problem of *attention* becomes a fundamental issue in the late nineteenth century, directly related

to the emergence of a social, urban, psychic and industrial field increasingly saturated with sensory input [and one in which the constituent elements of perceptual experience would be identified as 'mobility, novelty and distraction' (p. 30)]. Inattention [...] began to be treated as a danger and a serious problem [...]. It is possible to see one crucial aspect of modernity as an ongoing crisis of attentiveness. (pp. 13–14)

The work of the psychologists of attention, including Ribot, was drawn on extensively by the psychologists of advertising in the early twentieth century: the American William Dill Scott is the central figure here. Scott, writing in his 1908 study, *The Psychology of Advertising*, wrote that

one aim of every advertisement is to attract attention. Therefore the entire problem of attention is one of importance to the advertiser, and an understanding of it is necessary for its wisest application as well as for a correct understanding of advertising.¹⁰

The experiments Scott describes include tests on the relative efficacy of repetition and novelty, and the ways in which attention is attracted by features including the size of the advertisement and the size and font of its lettering.

⁸ Théodule Ribot, *The Psychology of Attention* (Chicago: Open Court, 1890), p. 8.

⁹ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 17.

¹⁰ William Dill Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising* (London: Pitman, 1913), p. 260.

'Attention' also becomes a key term, if a somewhat conceptually reduced one, in an early work on cinema advertising, Ernest Dench's 1916 handbook for 'the modern business man', *Advertising by Motion Pictures*. 'It will probably seem rather strange to you', Dench writes in his introduction, 'that an invention like the cinematograph, which has achieved widespread fame as a form of entertainment, can perform the functions of advertising, but it is nonetheless a fact.'¹¹ His discussions of the most efficacious forms of film advertising bear in interesting ways on perceptions of cinema more broadly at this time, as in the argument that 'when adopting motion-picture advertising, everything has to be visualized by means of animated photographs, so, therefore, the appeal is presented through the eye. As for the printed word, this takes a back seat' (p. 11). This insistence on the essentially visual and pictorial qualities of cinema is at one with Lindsay's arguments, while Dench also makes very direct allusion to the significance of silent film as a 'universal language' in the contexts of the low levels of verbal literacy among working people and of the immigrant culture of the early twentieth century in the US:

If you overload your films with titles, you will befog a good number of foreigners who have not been long enough in our country to master the English language, so that their probable patronage is lost just because the international language of the film has been abused. (pp. 12–13)

Used strategically, however, the cinema provides the most effective context for the advertiser, because it has an audience

already waiting to be tackled. Their attention is literally glued to the screen. No matter what species of film you adopt to get over your arguments, then the spectators will give it the self-same attention. They can not do otherwise, since only one thing appears on the screen at the same time, and the hall is too dark for them to do anything else. (pp. 86–87)

Münsterberg, whose book on film appeared in the same year as Dench's handbook, used advertising and the lure of the shop window as direct analogies to the close-up in the cinema, showing how 'attraction' could shape 'attention':

¹¹ Ernest Dench, *Advertising by Motion Pictures* (Cincinnati: Standard, 1916), p. 8.

As we are passing along the street we see something in the shop window and as soon as it stirs up our interest, our body adjusts itself, we stop, we fixate it, we get more of the detail in it, the lines become sharper, and while it impresses us more vividly than before, the street around us has lost its vividness and clearness. (*Münsterberg on Film*, p. 86)

He had focused on the psychology of advertising in his earlier texts, including *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* (1913) and on the ways in which advertising succeeds, or fails, by its appeals to memory and attention. This study brought together film and the urban scene in the laboratory experiments described, designed to reduce the number of accidents on the electric railway by testing the motormen's responsive speeds and the quality of their attention to 'the quickly changing panorama of the streets'.¹² Underlying his analysis of film was undoubtedly an interest in the ways in which film motion and cinematic spectatorship might aid the eye of the viewer in the organization — spatial and perceptual — of 'the chaos of experience', 'training' the eye and the mind to deal with the rapid, visually orientated tasks demanded by modern industry and commerce and essential for the successful management of modern life, with its unprecedented motion and speed. Yet a neo-Kantian 'aesthetic of isolation' continued to lie at the heart of Münsterberg's theories of art — in which he sought to include film. It is possible that Münsterberg perceived film as the means by which the tensions between his psychophysical preoccupations — central to his engagement with the new forms of mental and physical life demanded by modern industrial society — and his idealist aesthetics could finally be resolved. Film was indeed to be a 'new form of true beauty in the turmoil of a modern age'.

It was not a role he had been prepared to grant to the realm of advertising, and despite the connections Münsterberg draws between the advertisement (or the shop window) and the film, he was adamant that an advertisement should not aim for beauty:

It is surely a mistake to believe that pure beauty best fulfils the function of the advertisement [...]. The very meaning of beauty lies in its self-completeness. The beautiful picture rests in itself and does not point beyond itself. [...] If the [advertising] display is to serve economic interests, every line and every curve, every form and every color, must be subordinated to

¹² Hugo Münsterberg, *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* (London: Constable, 1913), p. 66.

the task of leading to a practical resolution, and to an action, and yet this is exactly the opposite of the meaning of art [...]. The aesthetic forms are adjusted to the main aesthetic aim, the inhibition of practical desires. The display must be pleasant, tasteful, harmonious, and suggestive, but should not be beautiful, if it is to fulfil its purpose in the fullest sense [...]. This of course stands in no contradiction to the requirement that the advertised article should be made to appear as beautiful as possible. (*Psychology and Industrial Efficiency*, pp. 272–73)

There are clear tensions here, which indicate something of the ways in which the entry of advertising and cinema into the literary and visual spheres was disrupting traditional aesthetic categories. In *The Photoplay*, we see Münsterberg attempting to ‘frame’ this new art in traditional aesthetic contexts, which it continually seems to elude or disrupt.

‘To picture emotions must be the central aim of the photoplay’, Münsterberg wrote, and he represented this picturing through the power of the close-up to enlarge the ‘emotional action of the face to sharpest relief’, or ‘a play of the hands in which anger and rage or tender love or jealousy speak in unmistakable language’ (*Münsterberg on Film*, p. 99). This is the language of ‘gestures, actions, and facial play’, and Münsterberg provides an account of an essential physiognomic basis for filmic expression, which would be powerfully developed in the writings of, among others, Jean Epstein and Béla Balázs. I have noted some of the striking connections between Münsterberg’s and Epstein’s film theories, including their essentially physiognomic account of film representation, their concepts of film as the drama of physiology and motion and their intense focus on the filmic close-up.

Yet Epstein, unlike Münsterberg, had little commitment, in his early writings at least, to the eternal values of art. The film, ‘like contemporary literature, [...] hastens unstable metamorphoses’, Epstein wrote: ‘From autumn to spring, aesthetics change.’¹³ These words come from his 1921 book, *La poésie d’aujourd’hui: un nouvel état d’intelligence*, a text which T. S. Eliot read and admired, and on which he commented in his 1921 essay ‘The Metaphysical Poets’. Epstein’s argument, in this essay or letter (the book was written for his friend Blaise Cendrars), on ‘Le cinéma et les

¹³ Jean Epstein, ‘Cinema and Modern Literature’, trans. by Audrey Brunetaux and Sarah Keller, in *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. by Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), pp. 271–76 (p. 276).

lettres modernes', was that both modern literature and cinema were linked by their opposition to theatre (by which Epstein meant classical French theatre). In the theatre, he argued, the actor is drowned under verbiage, whereas on the cinema screen we are given the extraordinary drama of human movement and the human face.

'Cinema and the new approach to literature', Epstein declared, 'need to support each other by superimposing their aesthetics' (p. 272). These aesthetics, as he enumerated them, included 'the aesthetic of proximity', instanced in 'the succession of details with which modern authors have replaced narrative development and the first close-ups generally attributed to [D. W.] Griffith', and which create a 'theater of flesh' (p. 272).

Epstein also defined 'an aesthetic of suggestion' — 'one no longer tells; one shows' — and 'an aesthetic of succession'. In cinema and literature, 'everything moves': 'A rush of details constitutes a poem; and the editing of a film gradually intertwines and combines shots [...]. The physiological utopia of seeing things "together" is replaced by an approximation: seeing them quickly' (p. 273). Related to this is what he terms an aesthetic of 'mental quickness' (p. 273). It is possible, Epstein suggested, that in the course of a life, and in successive generations, a human being could develop speed of thought. Not all human beings, he asserted, think at the same speed. The slowness of Italian films, he argued (in a reference, perhaps, to the 'Italian Diva' films which flourished between 1910 and 1920, in which the movement of the film was the drawn-out enactment of the diva's postures, poses, and attitudes), was a result of the slowness of thought of the Italian brain: 'That which mysteriously interests and deceives the Italian spectator, we, the French, catch onto in a matter of seconds. For this and many other reasons, there will never be an international cinema for the elite' (pp. 273–74). Films shown quickly, Epstein argued, lead us to think quickly; perhaps a form of education: 'This speed of thought, which the cinema records and measures, and which in part explains the aesthetic of suggestion and succession, can also be found in literature' (p. 274).

Epstein further delineated 'an aesthetic of sensuality' (not sentimentality) and 'an aesthetic of metaphors' (p. 274). Here he drew a connection between screen images and poetic metaphor. 'Within five years', he wrote, 'we will write cinematographic poems: 150 meters of film with a string of 100 images that minds will follow' (p. 275). Finally, he outlined 'a momentary aesthetic' (p. 275). Forget Racine, Epstein argues, for three hundred years, after which 'a new audience will rediscover him':

The written word always ages, but more or less rapidly [...]. This is not intended as a criticism. [...] One style doesn't suffice for a whole generation. In the last twenty years the path of beauty has reached a new turning point. [...] Like contemporary literature, film hastens volatile metamorphoses. From autumn to spring, aesthetics change. One speaks of eternal canons of beauty whereas any two successive catalogues from Bon Marché give the lie to such nonsense. Nothing appeals to our sensuality with as keen a sense of the times and as fine an ability to adapt as fashion. From here, film adopts some of the same magnetic charms, and it is such a faithful image of our childlike infatuations that five years later, it is only suitable for the fairground lantern. (pp. 275–76)

Epstein's image of film's transience was also articulated, in 1924, in rather more melancholy terms by the film director René Clair, who wrote that

cinema lives under the sign of relativity. Its makers, its actors, the films themselves and the ideas that inspired them, pass quickly. It looks almost as though the cinematograph, that apparatus designed to capture the transient moments of life, has thrown out a challenge to time, and that time is taking a terrible revenge by speeding up its effects on everything pertaining to the cinema.¹⁴

For Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, photography and film were also bound to time and to the transience of fashion:

The photograph becomes a ghost because the costumed mannequin was once alive [...]. This terrible association which persists in the photograph evokes a shudder [also] evoked in drastic fashion by the pre-World War I films screened in the avant-garde 'Studio des Ursulines' in Paris — film images that show how the features stored in the memory image are embedded in a reality which has long since disappeared.¹⁵

¹⁴ René Clair, *Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. by Vera Traill (London: Kimber, 1953), p. 59.

¹⁵ Siegfried Kracauer, 'Photography', in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 47–64 (p. 56).

For Kracauer, the shudder induced by the photograph and film is that of lost time, the divorce between present reality and the temporalities of the memory images we carry with us. Epstein, by contrast, celebrated cinema, contemporary writing, and fashion/advertising as a drama or adventure of transience and change, an 'unstable metamorphosis' which stages a constant becoming and which was part of, in Jacques Rancière's words, 'the great ode to energy that his epoch sung and illustrated in myriad ways'.¹⁶

¹⁶ Jacques Rancière, 'Prologue: A Thwarted Fable', in *Film Fables*, trans. by Emiliano Battista (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 1–20 (pp. 3–4).