

Cambridge University Press  
0521846218 - Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film  
Susan McCabe  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## CINEMATIC MODERNISM

Susan McCabe juxtaposes the work of four American modernist poets with the techniques and themes of early twentieth-century avant-garde films. The historical experience of the First World War and its aftermath of broken and shocked bodies shaped a preoccupation with fragmentation in both film and literature. Film, montage, and camera work provided poets with a vocabulary through which to explore and refashion modern physical and metaphoric categories of the body, including the hysteric, automaton, bisexual, and femme fatale. This innovative study explores the impact of new cinematic modes of representation on the poetry of Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, H. D., and Marianne Moore. *Cinematic Modernism* links the study of literary forms with film studies, visual culture, gender studies, and psychoanalysis to expand the usual parameters of literary modernism.

SUSAN MCCABE is Associate Professor of English at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Poetics of Loss* (1994) and a member of the Board of the Modernist Studies Association.

Cambridge University Press  
0521846218 - Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film  
Susan McCabe  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# CINEMATIC MODERNISM

*Modernist Poetry and Film*

SUSAN McCABE

*University of Southern California*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
0521846218 - Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film  
Susan McCabe  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Susan McCabe 2005

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*Typeface* Adobe Garamond 11/12.5 pt.    *System* L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> [TB]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 84621 8 hardback

Cambridge University Press  
0521846218 - Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film  
Susan McCabe  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
Introduction: Cinematic modernism	i
1 Modernism, male hysteria, and montage	18
2 “Delight in dislocation”: Stein, Chaplin, and Man Ray	56
3 W. C. Williams and surrealist film: “a favorable distortion”	93
4 H. D.’s borderline bodies	133
5 Marianne Moore: film, fetishism, and her <i>Ballet Mécanique</i>	184
Conclusion: Modernist dissociation and all about Eve	226
<i>Notes</i>	232
<i>Bibliography</i>	264
<i>Index</i>	275

## *Illustrations*

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1  | G. W. Pabst's <i>Secrets of a Soul</i> (1926).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive. <i>page</i> 26                          |     |
| 2  | From <i>Secrets of a Soul</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.  | 27  |
| 3  | Vsevolod Pudovkin, <i>Mechanics of the Brain</i> (1926).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.                               | 29  |
| 4  | René Clair's <i>Entr'acte</i> (1924).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.  | 31  |
| 5  | Man Ray, <i>Emak Bakia</i> (1926).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 66  |
| 6  | Fernand Léger, <i>Ballet Mécanique</i> (1924).<br>Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.  | 69  |
| 7  | Chaplin in <i>The Rink</i> (1916).<br>Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 71  |
| 8  | Man Ray, <i>Emak Bakia</i> . Still of camera of multiple lenses with eye superimposed.<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive. | 85  |
| 9  | Buster Keaton in <i>Sherlock Jr.</i> (1924).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 109 |
| 10 | Luis Buñuel, <i>Un Chien Andalou</i> (1928).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 112 |
| 11 | From <i>Un Chien Andalou</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 114 |
| 12 | Germaine Dulac, <i>The Seashell and the Clergyman</i> (1927).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of the Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.                      | 119 |
| 13 | From <i>The Seashell and the Clergyman</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 120 |
| 14 | Carl Dreyer, <i>The Passion of Joan of Arc</i> (1928).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.                                 | 149 |

*List of illustrations*

vii

- |    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 15 | From <i>Borderline</i> (1930).<br>Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library /<br>Schaffner Family Trust.                                 | 166 |
| 16 | G. W. Pabst, <i>Pandora's Box</i> (1928).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.   | 167 |
| 17 | From <i>Borderline</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library /<br>Schaffner Family Trust.                                       | 169 |
| 18 | From <i>Borderline</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library /<br>Schaffner Family Trust.                                       | 173 |
| 19 | Léger, <i>Ballet Mécanique</i> .<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive.  | 200 |
| 20 | The cross-dressed Manuela in Leontine Sagan's <i>Maedchen in<br/>     Uniform</i> (1931).<br>Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive. | 218 |

## *Acknowledgments*

I owe my deepest gratitude to Cassandra Laity whose belief in this project made it possible. Without her urging, the book in its present form would not exist.

I thank the College of Letters, Arts and Science at the University of Southern California for funding some of this work through a Zumberge Research Grant. I thank the staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University for its archival materials as well as for its providing several stills. I am grateful as well to the Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive for its assistance. Portions of this book have been published in other forms in journals: “The *Ballet Mécanique* of Marianne Moore’s Cinematic Modernism” in *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, vol. 33 no. 2 (2000), “‘Delight in Dislocation’: The Cinematic Modernism of Stein, Chaplin, and Man Ray” in *Modernism / Modernity*, vol. 8 no. 3 (2001), and “Borderline Modernism: Paul Robeson and the Femme Fatale” in *Callaloo*, vol. 25 no. 2 (2002).

Among my colleagues in the English Department at USC, I would like to thank my dear friends, Joseph Allen Boone for his attentive scrutiny of the manuscript, Carla Kaplan for her unrelenting encouragement and support, and Tania Modleski, whose film scholarship and friendship served as guiding lights. I also thank Leo Braudy for his kind and tutelary words (they came at the right moment), David St. John, whose immediate and abiding excitement about my writing, kept me afloat throughout these labors. I appreciate as well Annalisa Zox-Weaver (my tireless Cesare) who proofread and helped edit the manuscript.

In addition, I owe much thanks to the anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press for their suggestions and observations, and to my editor, Ray Ryan.

Among the academic community at large, I thank Judith L. Sensibar whose friendship consistently provided me with searching and stimulating insights. Others who have helped this work in various ways include Steven

Cambridge University Press  
0521846218 - Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film  
Susan McCabe  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Acknowledgments*

ix

G. Axelrod, Sam Girgus, Cynthia Hogue, Laura Hinton, Cristanne Miller, Robin Schulze, and Marjorie Perloff.

My sister, Marilyn McCabe, gave an inexhaustible array of emotional and intellectual help, sharing her knowledge of psychoanalysis and reading the manuscript in its multiple incarnations. I could count on Brian Lizotte, an honorary family member, to accompany me to many silent screenings. His wise and quirky perceptions have certainly contributed to this book.

Finally and always, I am grateful to Kate M. Chandler beyond the power of words to express. She is the book's veritable midwife and muse, who shepherded, inspired, criticized, questioned, admired, and begot all phases of it. Without her, mind and body would not be together.



## *Abbreviations*

<i>SE</i>	<i>Freud</i> , Standard Edition
<i>CU</i>	<i>Close Up</i>
<i>CPP</i>	<i>The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Spring and All</i> , William Carlos Williams
<i>KH</i>	<i>Kora in Hell</i> , William Carlos Williams
<i>CP</i>	<i>The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams volume 1</i> (chap. 3)
<i>CP</i>	<i>Collected Poems 1912–1944</i> , H. D. (chap. 4)
<i>CP</i>	<i>Complete Poems</i> , Marianne Moore (chap. 5)