Juliet Koss

Reflections on the Silent Silver Screen

Advertising, Projection, Reproduction, Sound

To picture emotions must be the central aim of the photoplay.

Hugo Münsterberg, 1916[1]

In 1922, a full-page advertisement appeared in *Printers' Ink*, an established American monthly trade journal, aiming to elicit advertisers for the magazine *Photoplay*. Four drawn images in the guise of film stills illustrate how, as the slogan that spans the page insists, »Every Woman Lives *Herself* on the Screen.« (Fig. 1) The images tell a story conflating film spectatorship, advertising, and satisfied consumerism: after watching an actress on screen play a record, and after reading a magazine, a woman purchases a gramophone to play music for her own guests. A column of text at the right, imitating a newspaper layout, presents a series of diluted Freudian claims and the clichés of 1920s American advertising copy. Spectators project their own personalities on to the film screen, it reads, with the woman viewer especially prone to sensing her »hopes, dreams, desires ... behind the actual scenes portrayed.« An obscure but optimistic mirror, the screen reflects her aspirations for a rosy future; prompted by what she sees, she turns to traditional forms of advertising in an effort to channel her emotions. In this world of illustrated celluloid, you are what you purchase – especially if you are a modern woman. »With the spell of remembered scenes still strong upon her,« the text explains, »she finds in the pages of her favorite screen magazine, PHOTOPLAY, a welcome guide to the goal of her desires.«

A monthly journal established in 1911, *Photoplay* covered the glamorous side of the movie industry. While not the first fan magazine (an honor accorded to *Motion Picture Stories*, founded in 1909 and later renamed *Motion Picture Magazine*), *Photoplay* was by 1922 the genre's leading light, billing itself proudly as »the news magazine of the screen.« That year, it awarded its prestigious Photoplay Medal of Honor to Douglas Fairbanks's *Robin Hood* and published numerous stories on the private lives of cinema's public figures, including one presenting »Harold Lloyd's New Home.«[2] Both in the age of silent film and for several subsequent decades – through the era of the Hollywood studio system – *Photoplay* provided news, reviews, photographs, and gossip to legions of fans of the new form of mass cultural entertainment. Extending the visit to the cinema to the arena of the printed page, it offered a promising venue for advertisers hoping to influence the purchasing habits of American movie audiences, whose rapid expansion and rising social status were accompanied, at a time of post-War prosperity, by an impressive increase in disposable income. In 1922, 40 million movie tickets were bought in the United States each week, with women increasingly doing the purchasing.[3] The pages of *Photoplay* held particular promise for those hoping to turn spellbound female cinemagoers into consumers. Its advertisement in *Printers' Ink* concluded its sales pitch with the rhetoric of absolute confidence: »Every woman lives herself on the screen, finding there material of the surroundings of the home she longs to build. If your product in

Every Woman Lives *Herself* on the Screen

ONE secret of the far-flung fascination of the motion picture is that not only are pictures of the actors thrown on the screen, but there is also projected the *personalities of the spectators.* Hopes, dreams, desires—life made to the moulding of her most precious ambition—all these appear, in the mind of the woman behind the actual scenes portrayed.

And with the spell of remembered scenes still strong upon her, she finds in the pages of her favorite screen magazine, PHOTOPLAY, a welcome guide to the goal of her desires.

It is this unique opportunity to come so closely upon the heels of favorable impressions that has made the pages of PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE the accepted medium for the stories of so many higher quality products.

Every woman lives herself on the screen, finding there material for the surroundings of the home she longs to build. If your product in any way enters into the making of the American Home, no better background for its message may be found than PHOTOPLAY.

Picturize your appeal

In the layout of this advertisement, PHOTOPLAY has followed the principle of *continuity*, so ingeniously exemplified by producers of better class motion pictures. PHOTOPLAY believes that a great new field is opening up in the closer study of motion picture technique by leaders in latter-day advertising.

PHOTOPLAY

James R. Quirk, *Publisher*
C. W. Fuller, *Advertising Manager*

25 W. 45th St., New York — 350 N. Clark St., Chicago

1 **Advertisement for advertising in *Photoplay, Printers' Ink*, 1922**

any way enters into the making of the American Home, no better background for its message may be found than PHOTOPLAY.«

A review published in *Photoplay* in 1922 of *The Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino and Agnes Ayres, indicates the magazine's orientation towards a female cinema audience. The first of two paragraphs declared: »Here is romance. Red-hot. If you read the story you will go to see the filmization [sic]. If you haven't, you will go anyway. This is popular entertainment – that and nothing more. But that is enough. The best-selling story by E. M. Hull, scoffed at by the higher-browed critics, but read and re-read by two-thirds of the women in this country, has been made into a very exciting, very old-fashioned photoplay.«[4] The text establishes a hierarchy: reading is all very well, but the cinema is more vital; »higher-browed« (and, by implication, male) critics may scoff, but in the 1920s, women vote as they wish with their choice of reading material, as they are now poised to do at the movies. Rather than providing evidence of unoriginal taste, or a susceptibility to brainwashing – rather than being treated as a female weakness – the tendency to »read and re-read« a bestseller disparaged by critics is offered as evidence of independent thinking. Remarkable, too, is the equation of »very exciting« and »very old-fashioned.« In the world of the motion pictures (at least where popular entertainment and female audiences were concerned), to be up-to-date was, at the same time, to be traditional.

Drawing Film

The four drawings in the *Photoplay* advertisement present an allegory of the replacement of live music with recorded sound, an aural loop that parallels the film within a film. The first and largest image, labeled »reel 1,« occupies the top fourth of the page; it shows our heroine at the cinema, her husband seated beside her, watching a stylishly dressed woman who holds a gramophone record to play for her guests while half a dozen elegant figures dance in pairs in the grand, high-ceilinged room. The bright film screen, receding into depth at the center of the room in the upper right corner of the page, provides the advertisement's focal point, attracting our attention just as it does that of the drawn woman. Her absorption is unsurprising: the popularity of cinema is compounded by the presence on screen of a gramophone, the most advanced technology of sound reproduction in 1922.[5] In »reel 2,« the heroine appears in a domestic scene, reading a magazine as her husband reads the newspaper nearby, sharing the lamplight. The magazine, we are given to understand by the text, is *Photoplay*; she is looking at an advertisement for a gramophone. She next appears as a potential consumer, unaccompanied, sitting elegantly in a comfortable, overstuffed chair listening to a record played to her by a salesman. A large arched window echoes the architecture of the room in the first drawing. More significantly, a grand piano stands in the background, unused, with no piano bench beside it. Its lid is raised uselessly, in silent visual protest against the lid of the gramophone cabinet that is open on the salesman's other side; together these planes of wood form a triangle with the salesman's head at its apex. And in the fourth and final scene, below, she adopts the role of the actress she had been watching and plays a record for her own guests. The process is presumably complete: having watched the film,

read the magazine, and purchased the magic object, she has become her own screen heroine.

At first glance, the advertisement might appear to promote cinema attendance as much as any kind of consumer activity; neither the texts nor the images entirely make sense without the other's presence, and each requires prolonged attention to decipher. A cacophony of written and visual information, pseudo-psychological claims, cinema theory, and traditional drawings representing a series of film stills, it brings together a series of central themes in the history of modern spectatorship. Prominently displayed, in large boldface type at the center of the bottom of the page, is the *Photoplay* logo. Representations of gender, consumption, aesthetic reception, and identity formation thus ultimately serve both to promote *Photoplay* as a magazine – suggesting the publication as a venue for reaching potential consumers – and to advertise the very idea of advertising itself. An infinite circuit of commercial endorsement, a hall of marketing mirrors, it presents to the advertising directors who scan the pages of *Printers' Ink* in 1922 (a male audience) an idealized world where the »hopes, dreams, desires« of female moviegoers might be harnessed for financial gain. Through a combination of psychological insight and commercial savvy, the advertisement explains, the vague female desires that lurk »behind the actual scenes portrayed« could be replaced with desires for particular commodities that might be seen to contribute to »the making of the American Home.«

Even once the advertisement has been read through and absorbed, however, several things remain unresolved. Published three decades after photography became widespread in American print advertising, the use of drawing seems at odds with the modern world, a perverse return to the old-fashioned visual forms of the late nineteenth century.[6] Furthermore, the images are incorrectly labeled as numbered »reels,« rather than frames. And instead of appearing in neat descending order, as in a filmstrip, they vary in size and shape, sometimes overlap, and once are even aligned at one edge. The idea of film is represented, in other words, but the representation itself resists the signifying features of this mass cultural form. Such a combination of film and drawing, with photography made conspicuous by its absence, reflects a significant shift underway at the time in American advertising. Women were now making most of the purchasing decisions in the domestic arena, including those concerning such expensive objects as washing machines and gramophone cabinets, and new research revealed (or perhaps researchers were now willing to acknowledge, now that they studied female consumers) that purchases were often based as much on emotional as on rational factors.[7] Photography was still used in the early 1920s to sell products bought by men – table saws and adding machines, for example – as it signified the authority of facts and figures. But when advertisers targeted or described the emotional responses of female consumers, they relied increasingly on drawings to suggest the promised fantasy realm. The advertisement for *Photoplay* that ran in *Printers' Ink* courted a male audience with film stills, but evoked a female audience with drawings.

In the early 1920s, advertisements aimed explicitly at women, such as those for fashion and cosmetics, relied on hand-drawn images to provide an aura of creativity and artistic originality. Where photographs were used, they signified authenticity, the authority of the real; usually they showed celebrities (a film star, a Rumanian countess) and were accompanied by personal testimonials or reproduced signa-

tures.[8] Two advertisements for Pond's creams demonstrate the symbolic values of photography and drawing. The first, published in *The New York Times* in 1922, presents a drawing of an anonymous young woman seated at a dressing table wearing an elegant peignoir, her long hair tumbling in tendrils down her back. (Fig. 2) The left side of her body is visible from behind, while a decorative panel covers the right side of the image, as if to suggest that we have peered behind a folding screen to catch her in a private moment. Framed within a mirror at the center of the image, meanwhile, she is seen from the front, sweetly regarding her own face as she applies cream with her left hand from a jar she holds in her right. Favoring legibility over visual logic, the drawing includes the words »Pond's cold cream« in tiny writing on the jar's label, although we are seeing a mirror image of it in her hand. »This cream removes every particle of dirt after a dusty trip,« a caption to the right of the image explains, in imitation of a newspaper layout. The headline declares, »FOR THOR-

2 Advertisement for Pond's Creams, *The New York Times*, 17 September 1922

Your smooth fresh face—what are you doing to keep it young?

Many famous and lovely women depend on this method

IN your mind you picture yourself always the same. But one, two years from now will your face be as fresh and smooth as it is today? Or will it be a little coarsened? With fine lines growing deeper around the eyes, the nose, your mouth? Will you discover one day, while you are still young, that your skin has grown old?

To save women's skin from this early ageing, to keep it young and soft in spite of modern strain and exposure, two famous formulae were developed.

Two creams, each so wonderful in its *results* that now literally millions of women depend on them.

Today in 56 different countries these women have decided that no other method gives quite that transparent freshness and velvet smoothness. And that no other has quite that magic efficacy against the drying and coarsening influence of the out-of-doors, or that extraordinary effect of freshening the complexion.

Photo by Brown Bros.

Marion Davies, whose complexion is extraordinarily fresh and young and who is now playing so charmingly in "When Knighthood Was in Flower," says—"My skin is constantly exposed to trying lights and I have to use a great deal of make-up, yet my complexion has kept young and beautifully smooth with Pond's Two Creams. I have used this method for years and know I can depend on it."

The cleansing cream that has doubled its users every two years

So marvelous is the softening, clarifying effect of Pond's Cold Cream on the skin that the number of women using it has actually doubled every two years.

Its special light consistency agrees with your skin. Its fine light oil gives your skin perfect suppleness and then is wiped off with the loosened dirt, so that your face has the exquisite freshness you want. It is never left heavy with cream.

In the whole world the most used of all vanishing creams

But the miracle of one cream's success is no greater than that of its sister cream. So unfailing is Pond's Vanishing Cream in its protection of the skin, so marvelously does it freshen the complexion and keep it lovely through the day that last year the women of the United States alone wanted several millions of jars!

This cream contains such a wonderful soothing ingredient that the minute it is put on you feel your face soften and relax. In the mirror you see how fresh and smooth it has made your skin—almost in an instant. You go out in the severest cold or hottest sun and your skin does not chap or burn.

TRY THIS METHOD— *the difference will convince you today*

Do this tonight. With the finger tips apply Pond's Cold Cream freely. The very fine oil in it is able to penetrate every pore of your skin. Let it stay a minute—now wipe it off with a soft cloth. The black on the cloth will show you how carefully this cream cleanses. Your skin looks fresh and is beautifully supple.

Then, in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream lightly over your whole face. If you wish, rouge—powder. How smooth and velvety your face feels to your hand! How new and charming the reflection in your mirror! The powder is even, not in patches, because it clings evenly to the delicate film of cream. The appearance of your skin for the whole day will prove to you how wonderful for your skin these two creams are.

When you are tired in the evening use these two creams together before you go out. They soften out the lines and smooth away the worried tightness of your face. And always after a motor or railroad trip, cleanse with Pond's Cold Cream and then finish with the Vanishing Cream and powder.

To see how these two creams will actually improve your skin use this method regularly. Begin now by buying a jar or tube of each cream.

You will get them in any drugstore or department store. Neither can possibly clog the pores or cause the growth of hair. The Pond's Extract Company, New York.

These are the troubles that mar and age your skin

Read how this famous method corrects them

Sunburn, Windburn, Chapping

The daily repetition of weather damage does more to age your skin than any other single factor, but the process is so gradual you do not notice it until your skin has definitely coarsened. Do not let this happen. Be careful before the harm has taken hold. Keep your skin clean and soft and properly oiled with a nightly cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream. Then, always in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. It forms a delicate but sure protection against any weather condition and the trying changes in temperature. This method will keep your skin soft and smooth always.

Premature Wrinkles, Scaling, Peeling

These are especially the troubles of a dry skin. To avoid them you must keep your skin soft day and night. Cleanse with plenty of Pond's Cold Cream nightly and leave some on over night. This will give your skin the oil it needs so badly. Now it cannot scale and peel. It will not develop the little lines that grow into wrinkles.

But do not let the day undo the results of this nightly oiling. Every morning smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream liberally. It contains a wonderful daytime softening ingredient and prevents your skin from drying out again.

That Distressing Shine

Shine is often the result of excess oil in the glands. Your careful nightly cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream carries out this excess together with the dirt. This light cream wipes entirely off. Now in the morning smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream. You can use plenty of it, because it has no oil. This will keep your skin lovely and fresh right to the end of the day.

But sometimes shine is due to a dry, tight skin. You must apply an extra amount of Pond's Cold Cream at night after the cleansing and let it stay on. See how gladly your skin will absorb the fine light oil of this cream, how it will soften and relax and the shine disappear. Put on the Vanishing Cream in the morning to keep this suppleness through the day and to hold the powder.

MAIL COUPON

WITH 10c.

TODAY

The Pond's Extract Co.
133 Hudson St., New York

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name ....
Street ....
City .... State ....

Photoplay - May, 1923

When you write to advertisers please mention PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE.

3 Advertisement for Pond's Creams, *Photoplay*, May 1923

OUGH CLEANSING – *a special cream,*« with five sentences below ominously recounting the horrors of dirty skin. »Dust and find particles of dirt bore into your pores and ordinary washing cannot remove them,« they maintain, ushering readers to two neat columns of text below that extol the virtues of Pond's Vanishing Cream (»for cleansing«) and Pond's Cold Cream (»to hold the powder«). Finally, the product's name appears once again, in large type at the center of the bottom of the page: the only indication that this is not a newspaper article, but an advertisement.

By contrast, an advertisement for the same two products in *Photoplay* in 1923 uses a photograph, a heavily backlit portrait of the film star Marion Davis, to achieve a different effect. (Fig. 3) With copious amounts of text and almost no blank space, the page mimics that of a newspaper even more closely than did the advertisement placed in *The New York Times* the previous year. A headline, prominently positioned like a masthead across the top, reads: »Your smooth fresh face – what are you doing to keep it young?« Two ersatz advertisements are found at the bottom, visually separated from the rest of the page with black outlines. »These are the troubles that mar and age your skin,« one headline announces: »Read how this famous method corrects them.« The testimonial provided by an actual film star – as opposed to a drawn model, fictional and anonymous – is reinforced with the sense of authenticity offered by photography. The caption below the image of the actress both praises her current role and presents her opinion of Pond's creams:

Marion Davies, whose complexion is extraordinarily fresh and young and who is now playing so charmingly in »When Knighthood was in Flower,« says – »My skin is constantly exposed to trying lights and I have to use a great deal of make-up, yet my complexion has kept young and beautifully smooth with Pond's Two Creams. I have used this method for years and I know I can depend on it.« With careful reciprocal product endorsement, this mutual, reflexive celebration melds the twin realms of advertising and cinema. Pond's creams become more glamorous by their association with a movie star, whose latest role is subtly promoted with a pretence of objectivity. The audience for both products is identical; at the cinema, women gaze at idealized versions of the faces they examine in their mirrors at home. The advertising directors at Pond's would seem to have studied the advertisement placed by *Photoplay* in *Printers' Ink*.

Projecting Emotions

The structural logic of the sequence of images in the *Photoplay* advertisement is itself described by a text near its lower left corner, framed by a decorative border and vignette. »Picturize your appeal,« the words enjoin. «In the layout of this advertisement, PHOTOPLAY has followed the principle of *continuity*, so ingeniously exemplified by producers of better class motion pictures. PHOTOPLAY believes that a great new field is opening up in the closer study of motion picture technique by leaders in latter-day advertising.« Would-be practitioners of the modern science of advertising were well advised to study film technique, and particularly that of the »better class of motion pictures,« which approached cinema as an art and not merely as a form of mass cultural entertainment or a shallow imitation of theatrical performance. Analysis of film technique would not only improve the layout of print adver-

tisements (the sequence of events illustrated by a series of images could be based on film's »principle of continuity,« for example) but also further the understanding of the psychological effects of visual imagery – an achievement that could only benefit the business of advertising. If to »picturize« literally meant to turn the indefinable appeal of a particular product into an image on the printed page, into an advertisement for potential consumers to examine, it also signified something more abstract, but potentially more effective: the association of a product with the glamour of the moving pictures. By implication, both of these goals might be achieved by placing an advertisement in *Photoplay*.

The advertising copywriter at *Photoplay* was not the first to advocate a study of film technique from the point of view of both aesthetics and psychology; Hugo Münsterberg, Professor of Experimental Psychology at Harvard University, had published an important book on the topic in 1916. Münsterberg had established his reputation in his native Germany with his four-volume *Contributions to Experimental Psychology* (1889–92); in the United States, he helped develop the emerging field of applied psychology with such works as *American Traits from the Point of View of a German* (1901) and *On the Witness Stand: Essays on Psychology and Crime* (1908). Until 1914, he had never been to the cinema, as he noted the following year in *Cosmopolitan* with a certain bashful pride: »I may confess frankly that I was one of those snobbish late-comers. Although I was always a passionate lover of the theater, I should have felt it as undignified for a Harvard Professor to attend a moving-picture show, just as I should not have gone to a vaudeville performance or to a museum of wax figures or to a phonograph concert.«[9] Vaudeville was merely live theater for lower class audiences, while wax figures and, especially, phonograph recordings represented another kind of aesthetic fakery: what Walter Benjamin would describe more enthusiastically two decades later as the work of art in the age of mechanical reproducibility. »Last year,« Münsterberg continued, however, »I and a friend risked seeing *Neptune's Daughter*, and my conversion was rapid. Surely I am now under the spell of the ›movies‹ and, while my case may be worse than the average, all the world is somewhat under this spell.« Rather than scanning the advertisements in his favorite fan magazine in this spellbound state, however – as so many women already were doing – he wrote a book prompted by his experience. In *The Photoplay: A Psychological* Study, he distinguished film from such other art forms as theater and music, argued that it should »be classed as an art in itself under entirely new mental life conditions,« and analyzed the nature of its engagement with its audience.[10]

Like the 1922 advertisement for *Photoplay*, Münsterberg's book of the same name emphasized the role of psychological projection and suggestibility in spectators' experience of film. »The spellbound audience in a theater or in a picture house is certainly in a state of heightened suggestibility and is ready to receive suggestions,« he explained, but whereas a dependence on realism ultimately rendered live theater »extremely limited in its means,« film could produce a stronger aesthetic effect.[11] Far from being a drawback, the physical shallowness of its screen proved advantageous. By calling attention to the artifice of the images it showed, it demanded a greater effort from its spectators, who were forced to confront their simultaneous awareness of flatness and depth. »That idea of space which forces on us most strongly the idea of heaviness, solidity and substantiality must be replaced by the

light flitting immateriality,« Münsterberg declared; this perceptual alteration helped create a successful work of art.[12] He explained the phenomenon metaphorically: »If we stand three feet from a large mirror on the wall, we see our reflection three feet from our eyes in the plate glass, and we see it at the same time six feet from our eye behind the glass. Both localizations take hold of our mind and produce a peculiar interference. We all have learned to ignore it, but characteristic illusions remain which indicate the reality of this doubleness. In the case of the picture on the screen this conflict is much stronger. *We certainly see the depth, and yet we cannot accept it.*«[13] Like a mirror hanging on a wall, the film screen presented both a static flat surface and a moving image of depth. At the cinema, spectators were constantly aware of this spatial doubleness – especially, one imagines, those unused to the new visual experience. They watched, simultaneously, a stationary, flat screen at a fixed distance from their eyes and the activity occurring in the space that appeared to exist beyond it.

Like a mirror, too, film reflected the feelings of its audience. »In the photoplay,« Münsterberg wrote with deceptive simplicity, »our imagination is projected on the screen.«[14] Crucially, spectators were actively involved in producing an emotional experience, rather than passively receiving impressions and sensations from the images and activities they watched. »If we start from the emotions of the audience,« he explained, »we can say that the pain and the joy which the spectator feels are really projected to the screen, projected both into the portraits of the persons and into the pictures of the scenery and background into which the personal emotions radiate.«[15] In terms that evoke the late nineteenth-century German aesthetic discourse of *Einfühlung*, or empathy, which combined the research and arguments of philosophical aesthetics, perceptual psychology, and optics, Münsterberg legitimized film spectatorship as an aesthetic activity, as opposed to a shallow pastime. To be spellbound at the cinema was not only to be in »a state of heightened suggestibility,« but also to radiate one's own emotions. The *Photoplay* advertisement that appeared in *Printers' Ink* in 1922 likewise emphasized projection – as opposed to reception – while shifting attention to the nebulous and symbolic »every woman« who saw herself on the screen. Despite the claims of its slogan, however, the heroine of the advertisement placed in *Printers' Ink* did not so much live *herself* on the screen as absorb the life she watched into her own – and she did this only later, assisted by an advertising campaign. Merging the psychological process of identification, passive suggestibility, and the apparently feminine activity of consumption, the advertisement showed a woman's efforts to become the film character she has seen: to »picturize« her own life, as it were. Like Münsterberg's book, its slogan emphasized the agency of those who were targeted by advertising, adding a veneer of self-control to their spellbound experiences.

In his effort to legitimize film as an art form, Münsterberg insisted on its separation from daily life, and consequently from all traces of commerce. Spectators who actively projected their emotions onto the screen did so in a realm that remained as isolated from the real world as any traditional painting. »The interior decoration of the rooms,« he maintained, »is not exhibited as a display for a department store. The men and women who carry out the action of the plot must not be people whom we may meet tomorrow on the street ... A good photoplay must be isolated and complete in itself like a beautiful melody. It is not an advertisement for the newest

fashions.«[16] Like the actors who played within its scenes, the objects on view in a film were not to be confused with those one might come across outside the cinema. Such arguments are surprising, given Münsterberg's recent work on the relation of psychology and advertising. In 1913, for example, he had devoted a chapter of his book *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* to »Experiments on the Effects of Advertisements,« likewise attending to the psychological features of spectatorship.[17] In *The Photoplay* three years later, however, he denied any connection between film and commerce; the aesthetic arena was to remain conceptually distinct from practical life.

Reproducing Sound

Perhaps the most striking feature of the *Photoplay* advertisement is its reliance on sound as a unifying theme – a choice especially remarkable given its publication date several years before the release of the first talking picture. A woman is impressed by a gramophone record played on the cinema screen, listens to a record played for her by a salesman, and plays music for her guests. But the film she watches is a silent film, and as readers we are unable to hear a sound. In fact, the only representation of a silent moment within the advertisement appears in its second image, when our heroine quietly (as far as one can tell) reads a copy of *Photoplay*. The other drawings are visual representations of sound – and the prerecorded sounds provided by gramophone records, at that. In 1922, a visit to the cinema was also not a silent occasion, but the music on offer was live.[18] If every woman lived *herself* on the screen, her spellbound absorption was accompanied by the music of a piano, an organ, or a full orchestra. The *Photoplay* advertisement thus conflated not only drawing and film, but also the live music heard in public at the cinema and the recordings played privately at home.

»The transformation of the piano from a musical instrument into a piece of bourgeois furniture,« Theodor Adorno declared in 1928 with regard to the German context, »is recurring in the case of the gramophone but in an extraordinarily more rapid fashion.«[19] The bourgeois family of the nineteenth century had owned a piano, with well brought up young ladies especially proficient at its keyboard, but the music heard in the 1920s home was more likely to be recorded, with the gramophone the new cultural marker of bourgeois domesticity. This transformation, as Adorno described it, was visible even in gramophone design; »in better social circles,« for example, projection horns »were quickly muffled into colored masses or wood chalices. But they proceeded to make their way into private apartments,« where they served as »loudspeakers and shrouds of the emptiness that people usually prefer to enshroud within themselves.« If such designs reflected a move to the bourgeois interior, the objects themselves mirrored bourgeois subjectivity more metaphorically, their presentation of prerecorded sound confirming the unoriginal existence of their owners and operators. »What the gramophone listener actually wants to hear is himself,« Adorno argued, »and the artist merely offers him a substitute for the sounding image of his own person, which he would like to safeguard as a possession. The only reason that he accords the record such value is because he himself could also be just as well preserved. Most of the time records are virtual

photographs of their owners, flattering photographs – ideologies.« Like photographic likenesses, sound recordings were not legitimate works of art, but shallow facsimiles: prerecorded music for predetermined lives. Their reflective tendency prompted Adorno to conclude: »The mirror function of the gramophone arises out of its technology.«[20]

By the mid-1920s, however, broadcast sound was challenging the popularity of gramophones in bourgeois American homes. Radios not only offered higher quality sound than scratchy records could, but also permitted continuous enjoyment without the hassle of changing disks every few minutes – or the expense of purchasing new recordings. An advertisement printed in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1927 (Fig. 4) might well have caught the eye of our *Photoplay* heroine. »A Mirror of Musical Tone,« reads the slogan at the top of the page, above a logo for Zenith radios with a flurry of electrified lines. »Musical tone is a delicate and elusive thing,« the text below declares. »Only such fine precision as Zenith builds into radio can catch all the subtle and intricate shadings of voice or instrument. ... In Zenith Radio you will find your ideal of radio enjoyment.« By implication, every woman could hear *herself* in a song

4 Advertisement for Zenith Radios, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1927

on the radio. A photograph takes up more than half the page of the advertisement: a wooden radio set rests on a carved wooden side table and a mirror hangs in an ornate frame on the wall above, its fuzzy reflection containing only a couple standing together like partners on a dance floor. A soft image in a self-conscious pictorialist style, the photograph conveys a sense of both technological advancement and artistic creativity, although the objects it depicts exude bourgeois respectability. Its curved outline even suggests the shape of a piano lid, a haunting reminder of the quintessential musical instrument of a bygone era.

Music suffused Münsterberg's book on film as well. His embrace of recorded images did not extend to recorded sound, however, a lapse of logic that allowed him to argue that film failed when treated as a substitute, rather than as an art form in its own right. »When the gramophone repeats a Beethoven symphony,« he wrote, »the voluminousness [sic] of the orchestra is reduced to a thin feeble surface sound, and no one would accept this ... as a full substitute for the performance of the real orchestra.«[21] Live music appeared frequently in the book's similes: good film was »complete in itself like a beautiful melody,« for example, while three successive scenes produced the effect of »three tones blended into one chord.«[22] Beyond such clichés, Münsterberg also argued more seriously that, as a form of art, film most closely approximated music. »Musical tones,« he noted, »have overcome the outer world and the social world entirely, they unfurl our inner life, our mental play, with its feelings and emotions, its memories and fancies, in a material which seems exempt from the laws of the world of substance and material, tones with are fluttering and fleeting like our own mental states.«[23] Because music was usually an abstract art, it provided a parallel context for understanding film's status as a site for the projection and reception of human emotions. »Of course,« he added, »a photoplay is not a piece of music. But the photoplay is not music in the same sense in which it is not drama and not pictures. It shares something with all of them.«

By treating film in relation to other forms of art, Münsterberg hoped in *The Photoplay* to legitimize it as an art form. »Of painting, of drama, and of music, we had to speak,« he pompously declared, »because with them the photoplay does share certain important conditions and, accordingly, certain essential forms of rendering the world.«[24] Film not only was allied with other forms of art by virtue of its distinction from them, but also could best be understood through its effect on its spellbound audience. Such arguments evoke the notion of the Gesamtkunstwerk, the total work of art famously promulgated by Richard Wagner. And as Siegfried Kracauer argued in 1926, the modern-day Gesamtkunstwerk relied on technological reproduction to combine the arts and achieve its effect. »Like the program sheets which have expanded into fan magazines,« Kracauer wrote, »the shows have grown into a structured profusion of production numbers and presentations. A glittering, revue-like creature has crawled out of the movies: a *Gesamtkunstwerk* of effects. This Gesamtkunstwerk of effects assaults all the senses using every possible means. ... Until finally the white surface descends and the events of the three-dimensional stage blend imperceptibly into two-dimensional illusions.«[25] Flatness and depth coexisted with uncanny effectiveness on the film screen, offering its spectators a total work of art and overflowing into the pages of such magazines as *Photoplay*. Like Münsterberg a decade earlier – but with more felicitous prose – Kracauer described the experience of going to the cinema in terms of psychological and emotional intoxication. Films,

he maintained, »drug the populace with the pseudo-glamour of counterfeit social heights, just as hypnotists use glittering objects to put their subjects to sleep,« with women particularly prone to falling under their spell.[26]

Using a highly traditional form of visual representation to depict the most technologically advanced form of art, the *Photoplay* advertisement presents the consumer activity of a modern woman as a Gesamtkunstwerk; it offers a narrative of what might be called »the total work of shopping.« In keeping with the »principle of continuity« that it posits as central to both film and advertising design, the story appears sequentially, leading its heroine from initial inspiration to final purchase. The experience is unified by the intoxicating presence of music, silent but central, whether implied at the cinema or played on a gramophone. »The task of music,« Adorno would argue with regard to Wagner, «is to warm up the alienated and reified relations of men and make them sound as if they were still human. This technological hostility to consciousness is the very foundation of the music drama. It combines the arts in order to produce an intoxicated brew.«[27] By the early 1920s in the United States – if not already in mid-nineteenth-century Germany, as Adorno believed – the Gesamtkunstwerk relied not only on technology but also on commercialism. Elegantly attired and affiliated with a man, but capable of a certain independence, our heroine established her credentials as a modern subject through a combination of spectatorship, passive suggestibility, and consumer's will. Made spellbound by the movies, where she has seen a reflection of the self she hoped to become, she looks in the pages of her favorite film magazine, *Photoplay*, and finds an advertisement that guides her to the gramophone, the instrument of modern technology that, in turn, prolongs her – or is it our? – intoxication with the cinema.

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Notes

1 Hugo Münsterberg: The Photoplay (1916). In: Hugo Münsterberg on Film: The Photoplay: A Psychological Study and Other Writings. Ed. Allan Langdale. New York 2002, p. 99.

2 »Harold Lloyd's New Home,« in: Photoplay, July 1922, p. 68-69.

3 »In 1920,« Melvyn Stokes has written, »a *New York Times* writer estimated that 60 per cent of movie audiences were women. The trade press, in subsequent years, opted for even higher figures. An article in *Photoplay* in 1924 set the proportion of women at 75 per cent; one in *Moving Picture World* in 1927 thought they made up an astonishing 83 per cent of cinema audiences. Whether women really formed a considerable majority of the cinema audience of the 20's and 30's, however, may actually be of less importance than the fact that Hollywood itself assumed that ... they were its primary market.« Stokes: Female Audiences of the 1920s and Early 30s. In: Identifying Hollywood's Audiences: Cultural Identity at the

Movies. Ed. Stokes and Richard Maltby. London 1999, p. 43.

4 Review of *The Sheik*. In: Photoplay. Vol. XXI, no. 2 (January 1922), p. 67.

5 On the history and significance of the gramophone, see Friedrich A. Kittler: Gramophone, Film, Typewriter. Stanford 1999; Andre Millard: America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound. New York 1995.

6 On photography's appearance in advertising in the 1890s, see David Clayton Phillips: Art for Industry's Sake: Halftone Technology, Mass Photography and the Social Transformation of American Print Culture, 1880–1920. Ph.D., Yale University 1996.

7 »As advertising matured as a profession,« Elspeth Brown has argued, »executives also began to recognize the advertising audience as female ... As the twenties unfolded, new audiences came into view, such as the massive working class female readership of Bernarr Macfadden's *True Story* magazine.« But as Roland Marchand has convincingly argued, admen tended to collapse class distinctions into a composite portrait: the typical consumer was not only a ›she,‹ but a lazy, emotional, and stupid ›she‹ at that.« Brown: The Corporate Eye: Photography and the Rationalization of American Commercial Culture, 1884–1929. Baltimore, forthcoming 2005, p. 225; Marchand: Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940. Los Angeles 1985, p. 52-87.

8 On the status of photography in 1920s advertising, see e.g. Brown (see note 7), p. 222-64.

9 Münsterberg: Why We Go to the Movies. In: The Cosmopolitan. 60, no. 1, December 15, 1915 (reprinted in *Hugo Münsterberg on Film* (see note 1), p. 172).

10 Münsterberg 1916 (see note 1), p. 63.

11 Ibid., p. 97. Films »*are not and ought never to be imitations of the theater* ... To imitate the world is a mechanical process; to transform the world so that it becomes a thing of beauty is the purpose of art. The highest art may be furthest removed from reality.« Ibid., p. 113 and 114-115 (emphasis in the original).

12 Ibid., p. 132-33.

13 Ibid., p. 70 (emphasis in the original).

14 Ibid., p. 91.

15 Ibid., p. 105.

16 Ibid., p. 137.

17 See Münsterberg: Psychology and Industrial Efficiency (1913). Bristol 1999, p. 255-271.

18 »In a 1922 survey of movie theaters by *Motion Picture News,* exhibitors were asked about the musical accompaniment in their theaters ... Of those who answered the question, 46 percent used theater organ, 25 percent used piano only, and 29 percent had an orchestra.« Such categories were clearly not mutually exclusive, as many theaters provided different kinds of accompaniment for different occasions. Rodney Sauer: Photoplay Music: A Reusable Repertory for Silent Film Scoring, 1914-1929. In: American Music Research Center Journal. Vol. 8/9 (1998-99), p. 60-61.

19 Theodor W. Adorno: The Curves of the Needle (1928). In: The Weimar Republic Sourcebook. Ed. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimendberg. Berkeley 1994, p. 606.

20 Ibid., p. 607.

21 Münsterberg 1916 (see note 1), p. 111.

22 Ibid., p. 95.

23 Ibid., p. 127.

24 Ibid., p. 126.

25 Siegfried Kracauer: Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces (1926). In: The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays. Ed. and trans. Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, Mass., 1995, p. 324 (emphasis in the original).

26 Kracauer: The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany (1929). New York 1998, p. 94. On gender and attention among Weimar audiences, see Miriam Hansen: Early Cinema: Whose Public Sphere? In: Space, Frame, Narrative. Ed. Thomas Elsaesser, Adam Barker. London 1990, p. 229-46; Juliet Koss: Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls. In: The Art Bulletin. Vol. LXXV, no. 4, December 2003, p. 734-36; Patrice Petro: Perceptions of Difference: Woman as Spectator and Spectacle. In: Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture. Ed. Katherina von Ankum. Los Angeles 1997, p. 41-66.

27 Adorno: In Search of Wagner (1937–38). New York 1991, p. 100.