

## Guest Editor's Note

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The articles collected in this issue of *Monatshefte* were selected from a series of presentations at the conference “Modernism’s Multiple Media: Text, Image, Sound” held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in February 2005. The transatlantic encounter organized by Marc Silberman (German) and Ben Singer (Film Studies) together with colleagues from the Zentrum für Literaturforschung in Berlin focused on the role of the senses in modernist practices. The point of departure for our dialogue concerned the specific hierarchies and interrelationships of the senses in modernist aesthetics, and the degree to which they might be understood as historically contingent or culturally determined by the broad context of modernity. It was striking to observe how a set of rarely posed questions emerged from the conference around the sense of hearing and the status of the auditory in relation to language and visual images. The acoustic has received less attention in the scholarly discourse on modernism, a development that may be explained by the explicit thematization of writing and textuality on the part of modernist artists and by the parallel media innovations in the visual realm. Yet this blind (or deaf) spot opens up possibilities for exploring the functions of voice, the resonances of noise, and the technologies of sound reproduction for the acoustic imagination. The revised papers together with the short responses included in this issue reflect the curiosity and energy that came to focus our attention on the specificity of the aural as a consequence of the “cultural turn” in the humanities.

Successful conferences are possible only when they are adequately funded. We wish to mention the generous financial support of the following co-sponsors: Anonymous Fund of the University of Wisconsin, Madison; Zentrum für Literaturforschung, Berlin; Max Kade Foundation, New York City; Center for German and European Studies, Program of European Studies, departments of German and Communication Arts, all of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. We were especially grateful that the University Cinematheque screened Dziga Vertov’s experimental sound film *Enthusiasm*, in the

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version restored by Peter Kubelka and provided by the Austrian Film Archive. Really successful conferences are the result of the lively and rigorous input of the participants. Therefore we wish to thank especially the presenters, the respondents, and the truly attentive and talkative audience that gathered together on this occasion.