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Modernist writing has always been linked with cinema. The recent renaissance in early British film studies has allowed cinema to emerge as a major historical context for literary practice. Treating cinema as a historical rather than an aesthetic influence, this book analyzes the role of early British film culture in literature, thus providing the first account of cinema as a cause for modernism.

Shail's study draws on little-known sources to create a detailed picture of cinema following its 'second birth' as both institution and medium. The book presents a comprehensive account of how UK-based modernism originated as a consequence of_rather than a conscious aesthetic response to_this new component of the cultural landscape. Film's new accounts of language, endeavor, time, collectivity and political change are first considered, then related to the patterns that comprised modernist texts. Authors discussed include Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, H.D., James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson.