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14. Virginia Woolf

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2023 saw the publication of a smaller number of titles focused on Virginia Woolf than 2022, with two dedicated monographs and a significant edited collection. The latter is the impressively comprehensive *The Oxford Handbook of Virginia Woolf*, edited by Anne E. Fernald and first published in hardback in 2021 (but not reviewed in this title that year), and now available in a paperback edition. The collection begins with an introduction by Fernald that emphasizes Woolf's 'feminism and her experiments in language as foundational to her legacy' (p. 1). It also briefly but effectively situates Woolf in relation to her work's challenge to conventional genre boundaries, her education and upbringing, her friends and social networks, and her relationship to feminism, gender and race, all of which are topics central to the contributions that follow. The collection is organized into six parts: 'Life', 'Texts', 'Experiments in Form and Style', 'Professions of Writing', 'Contexts' and 'Afterlives'.

Part I, 'Life', begins with Urmila Seshagiri's chapter on 'Family and Place', which situates Woolf not only in relation to her various homes or addresses but more significantly as a writer who profoundly questioned the meaning and experience of home across her works. Kathryn Simpson's chapter, 'Friends and Lovers', considers Woolf's many relationships, platonic and otherwise, through focusing on six of her friends: Violet Dickinson, E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Katherine Mansfield, Vita Sackville-West and Ethel Smyth, considering the mutual impact they had on each other's life and work. Regina Marler's wide-ranging chapter, 'Traditions and Transformations' looks at the many ways that Woolf's childhood and upbringing, and her more general relationship to, and memory of, the Victorian era, continued to shape her later self and writing in complex ways.

Part II, 'Texts', opens with Caroline Pollentier's theoretically deft chapter, 'Private Writings', which reads Woolf's notebooks, letters and diaries as 'techniques of living' (p. 64, quoting Foucault) that conjoin aesthetics to ethics via quotidian practices of everyday life (writing). Jocelyn Rodal's chapter 'Early Novels and Stories (1915–1923)' situates Woolf's essays and fiction of this period in relation to Victorian precedents, while at the same time

showing how their thematic representations of reading, writers and writing, gestures proleptically towards literary modernism, including Woolf's own. Gabrielle McIntire's chapter 'Mature Works I (1924–1927)' reads Woolf's essays and fiction of this period in relation to its intervention into an array of philosophical questions spanning ethics, morality, ontology and epistemology, with a particular focus on how Woolf's high modernist experiments in genre, mode and style were committed to representing the truth of what Woolf called the soul. Elsa Högborg's chapter 'Mature Works II (1928–1932)' conceives the lyrical features and 'formal-generic hybridity' (p. 102) of Woolf's work as the most powerful site of her social and political commitments, demonstrating how the lyrical prose of both *Orlando* [1928] and *The Waves* [1931] engages in a feminist and anti-imperialist textual politics. Alice Wood's chapter 'Late Works (1933–1941)' takes a thematic approach to Woolf's work of this period, organized into sections on 'Mixing Art and Politics', 'Patriarchy and Fascism' and 'Nationalism and War', and focusing on *The Years* [1937], *Three Guineas* [1938] and *Between the Acts* [1941].

Part III, 'Experiments in Form and Style', begins with Dora Zhang's chapter 'Stream of Consciousness'. Zhang expands this central category of modernism from a narrow conception as interior monologue into a broader genre with three key attributes: free indirect discourse, the narration of collectivity and the use of analogy to represent 'being conscious' (p. 134), a quality that affiliates Woolf with William James. Amy Bromley's chapter 'Character, Form, and Fiction' traces Woolf's conception of character through essays such as 'Character in Fiction' [1924] and 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' [1923] before turning to three novelistic examples of character in *Jacob's Room* [1922], *Mrs Dalloway* [1925] and *Orlando*, demonstrating throughout the connections between characterization and broader questions of literary form. Jesse Matz's chapter 'Time' contextualizes Woolf's many experiments in literary temporality in relation to material and philosophical changes in the organization and phenomenology of time, and develops a Ricoeurian conception of the historical dialectic between temporal and narrative form throughout her works. Janine Utell's chapter 'Narrative Ethics' explores three interrelated ethical strands of Woolf's work: the relationship between the good life and reading, the recognition of alterity and unknowability and the limits of humanist ethics, with a particular focus on *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Years*. Jane de Gay's chapter 'Allusion and Metaphor' considers how Woolf's use of allusion departed from male modernists such as Eliot and Joyce in its focus on creative transformation rather than canonical authority, and argues for the importance of metaphors of nature in conceptualizing allusion across Woolf's literary works. Laura Marcus's chapter 'Biography and Autobiography' unpacks Woolf's innovations in both these modes with particular attention to *Orlando* and *Roger Fry* [1940], and in relation to questions of truth, identity, embodiment and memory.

Part IV, 'Professions of Writing', opens with Helen Southworth's chapter 'Literary London', which traces Woolf's movements from Kensington to Bloomsbury to Richmond (and then back to Bloomsbury) between 1905 and 1924, considering how these different physical places and social milieus filtered into Woolf's writing. Alice Staveley's chapter 'The Hogarth Press' surveys the changing trends in scholarship about the press and the Woolfs' roles in it, as well as offering a materialist feminist reading of how the manual and professional labour of printing shaped the emergence of Woolf's modernist style in 'The Mark on the Wall' [1917] and elsewhere. Eleanor McNees's chapter 'Woolf as Reviewer-Critic' tracks her critical and review essays across her career, identifying core formal features such as metaphor, analogy, character and ventriloquism, as well as the displacement of the model of the reviewer-critic by that of the common reader. Beth C. Rosenberg's chapter 'The Essays' develops an account of Woolf's feminine and feminist appropriation of the essay form from male predecessors such as Walter Pater, Max Beerbohm, Montaigne and Hazlitt, with an

extended reading of *A Room of One's Own* [1929] and its use of a personal voice and embodied emotion. Claire Davison's chapter 'The Lyrical Mode of Translating' draws a suggestive parallel between Woolf's recurrent figure of 'Anon' and the historical role of translators, often also anonymous, female and elided, using this to frame a broader investigation into Woolf's representation of, and work in, translation, via what she calls the 'lyrical mode' (p. 292).

Part V, 'Contexts', starts with Stephanie J. Brown's chapter 'Woolf's Feminism'. Brown traces Woolf's feminist commitments across her life and writing, considering how these commitments traverse the changing landscape of feminism at large, and how they intersect with other concerns such as race, class and literary aesthetics. Chris Coffman's chapter 'Queer Theory' takes a comparative approach to Woolf, reading *Orlando*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *A Room of One's Own* in conversation with mid-century Indian and late-century North African fiction, as well as contemporary British literature by Jeanette Winterson, to reveal the full range and scope of Woolf's imagination of 'new possibilities for desire and gendered embodiment' (p. 342). Anna Snaith's chapter 'Woolf and Education' is split into three sections, the first tracing Woolf's own engagement with formal educational institutions, the second her critique and reconceptualization of education in her novels and essays, and the third her thinking of education beyond institutions, in forms such as public libraries and common readers. Barbara Green's chapter 'Woolf and Suffrage' reads the backward-looking temporalities of the suffrage movement in *Night and Day* [1919] and *The Years* as a sign of Woolf's ambivalence towards its progressive impulses, but also de-exceptionalizes that ambivalence by locating it as a common feature of more mainstream movement novels. Tamar Katz's chapter 'Impressionism and Post-Impressionism' traces the influences and changing iterations of these styles across Woolf's oeuvre, with a particular focus on *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* [1927]. Maxwell Uphaus's chapter 'Oceans and Empire' reads Woolf's figurations of the ocean as a key site of her feminist anti-imperialism, as well as its limitations, focusing on *The Voyage Out* [1915] and the 1931 short story, 'Scenes from the life of a British Naval Officer'. Madelyn Detloff's chapter 'Biopower' offers a Foucauldian interpretation of *Three Guineas* and 'Thoughts of Peace in an Air Raid' [1940], demonstrating how they both challenge and reaffirm the logics underpinning state racism and genderism. Cliff Mak's chapter 'The Natural World and the Anthropocene' reads Woolf's attachment to the aristocratic sport of fly-fishing in her 1936 review of John Waller's *My Sporting Life* [1936] as both disrupting and reinforcing the limits of human-centred conceptions of ethics and agency, connecting this discussion to her more well-known essays, short stories and novels such as *Flush* [1933] and *The Waves*. Beryl Pong's chapter 'War and Peace' argues that prolepsis provided Woolf's novels with 'a narrative style that responds to the temporal politics of war with a pacifist politics of time' (p. 455). Mary Wilson's chapter 'Work' demonstrates Woolf's vexed proximity to the labour of domestic service, which both supported her own writerly work—and the work of her middleclass protagonists—at the same time as being demoted to the periphery of her fictions' narrative edges. Elizabeth M. Sheehan's chapter 'Consumer Culture' considers Woolf's complex relationship to fashion and consumerism—and their intersection with sexual, gender and class politics—across an array of biographical and literary contexts, with a particular focus on the Omega Workshops and *Orlando*.

Part VI, 'Afterlives', starts with Jean Mills's chapter 'Feminist Theory', which offers a rich survey of Woolf's influence on feminist criticism and theory, including contemporary concerns such as gender identity in the age of the internet and the political uses of gendered affects such as rage. Elizabeth Outka's chapter 'Disability, Illness, and Pain' brings together medical humanities and disability studies approaches to better understand Woolf's contradictory relationship to 'non-normate' bodies (p. 508)—as one of both 'othering and selving'

(p. 507, quoting Linett)—with a focus on her diaries, on essays such as ‘On Being Ill’ [1926] and on *Mrs Dalloway*. Vara Neverow’s chapter ‘The Academy and Publishing’ provides a helpfully detailed overview of Woolf’s critical reception and reputation from Winnifred Holtby’s 1932 memoir to the present day, distinguishing between UK and US reception contexts. Novelist Roxana Robinson’s chapter ‘Modern Woolfian Fiction’ argues for Woolf’s influence on contemporary writers Michael Cunningham, Rachel Cusk, Ian McEwan, Zadie Smith, Tessa Hadley and, finally, upon her own novel, *Cost* [2008], inspired by Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Laura Ma Lojo-Rodríguez’s chapter ‘Magic Realism and Experimental Fiction’ tracks how Woolf’s influence ‘affects the construction of alternative ontological realms that both coexist with and transcend identifiable historical sites’ (p. 553) in the work of Victoria Ocampo, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Toni Morrison, Michèle Roberts and Jeanette Winterson. Tonya Krause’s chapter ‘Virginia Woolf in the Canon of Women’s Literature Narrative Futures of The Feminist Novel’ assesses Woolf’s impact on a wide array of twentieth-century feminist authors via three (Woolfian) archetypes: the Angel, the Artist and the Girl, arguing that the latter—embodied by figures such as Elizabeth Dalloway, Cam and Orlando—has been the most generative for authors plotting new feminist narratives based on interconnection and community. Stacey D’Erasmus’s chapter ‘Creative Non-fiction and Poetry’ shows how stylistic features of Woolf’s essays and novels such as ‘digression, associative logic, a diffident or disappearing central subject, collective narration, the use of flickering perceptions and an emphasis on the liminal’ (p. 591), have provided a style and an ethics for a range of contemporary writers, from Susan Sontag to Maggie Nelson. Jacqueline Shin’s chapter ‘Virginia Woolf, Filmmaker’ moves beyond the consideration of film adaptations and biopics to consider Woolf’s broader formal influence on contemporary filmmakers such as Mark Cousins, François Ozon, David Lowery and Alex Garland, with a particular focus on themes of identity, loss and survival. The final chapter of the book, Laura Smith’s ‘Woolfian Afterlives’, considers Woolf’s relationship to visual artists of her time such as Vanessa Bell and Dora Carrington, as well as her influence on more recent artists such as the painter Laura Owens, sculptor Aleana Egan, and choreographer and director Wayne McGregor. The handbook as a whole is impressively comprehensive and diverse in its contributors and topics, and will no doubt be a valuable resource for critics and readers of Woolf for decades to come.

There were two monographs with a central focus on Woolf from 2023. Amber Jenkins’s *Virginia Woolf, Literary Materiality, and Feminist Aesthetics* examines how Woolf’s experience of literature’s materiality through her work as a writer, printer, book designer and publisher came to affect the literary and feminist aesthetics of her novels. Drawing on the fields of print culture, the materialist turn in Woolf scholarship, and the historicist shift inherent in the ‘new modernist studies’, Jenkins demonstrates the ‘interdependence between the materiality and aesthetics of Woolf’s modernist works, while outlining how her involvement in textual production informs her theorization of textuality in material terms’ (p. 7). Split into two parts, ‘Materiality’ and ‘Aesthetics’, the book’s introductory first chapter lays the groundwork for the argument by outlining Woolf’s relationship to literary materiality in her reading practices and book-binding education as an adolescent and young adult, in her subsequent development of these concerns via the Hogarth Press and the Omega Workshops, and in her contribution to (rather than derivation from) the aesthetic practices and theories of the Bloomsbury Group. These contexts provide a vignette of how Woolf’s persistently close attention to the paratextual aspects of books such as covers, bindings, typeface, illustrations and textiles informed an aesthetic practice in which visual and textual modes of expression are intimately connected. Chapter two develops this argument in more detail by exploring the multi-modality of two of Woolf’s early works, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ and *Kew Gardens*

[1919], both of which were accompanied by woodcut illustrations by Dora Carrington and Vanessa Bell, respectively. Jenkins shows how the illustrations amplify many of the formal and feminist features of the written text, while the text itself engages visual and pictorial modes of expression, resulting in a uniting of the 'sister arts through collaboration and exchange' (p. 61). Chapter three turns to both the manuscript and the first edition of *Jacob's Room* to explore how the textual aesthetics of the novel were influenced by Woolf's experimental printing methods at the Hogarth Press, including editions by Hope Mirrlees and T. S. Eliot. Disarticulating *Jacob's Room* from what is often described as its derivative relationship to Cubist painting and/or Bloomsbury aesthetics, Jenkins instead reads it as articulating Woolf's own theory of form, one which foregrounds the pictorial and material qualities of the text and the dialogic relationship between character and reader. Chapter three turns to *Mrs Dalloway*, and to the multiple manuscripts and versions of the novel, composed between competing projects and commitments, to develop what Jenkins calls a 'quick change theory' of composition to help explain the 'instability of both language, communication, and textuality in the published editions of Mrs Dalloway' (p. 109). In this reading, Woolf's 'moments of being' emerge as a palimpsest of layered memories, texts and intertexts, 'which threaten to seep beyond their material confines', disrupting 'any notion of an established, authoritative work' (p. 116). Part II, 'Aesthetics' opens with chapter 5, which explores the influence of Vanessa Bell's painting (and particularly her *Studland Beach* [c.1912]) upon the compositional process and feminist aesthetics of *To the Lighthouse*. Jenkins argues that Woolf's representation of Lily Briscoe's painting—and of its emotional source in her recollection of Mrs Ramsey—'outlines a movement from the purity of [Fry's] significant form to a [feminist] formalism founded upon human emotion and memory' (p. 146). Chapter six turns to *The Waves*, providing a reading of the novel in light of Woolf's feminist theory of form. Countering readings that understand the novel as disengaged from politics, Jenkins reads the text's use of colour, form and imagery, especially as clustered around the character of Susan, as harbouring 'a latent feminist potential for resistance and change' (p. 174). Chapter seven concludes the book by turning to a number of Woolf's late works, theorizing them not, as most critics have, as incomplete, but as fragmentary and mutable, and thus exemplary of the theory and practice of Woolf's materialist and feminist literary art. The book as a whole will offer readers and scholars of Woolf new ways to read and interpret her works in light of the material processes of their composition and publication.

Marlene Dirschauer's *Modernist Waterscapes: Water, Imagination and Materiality in the Works of Virginia Woolf* examines both the material and symbolic significance of water to Woolf's fictional and non-fictional writing. Approaching this topic from the perspectives of philology, ecocriticism and intertextuality/allusion, Dirschauer seeks to 'expand the hitherto dominating [critical] focus on the sea to a more encompassing exploration of the various manifestations of water and to trace their importance across her whole oeuvre, from her early fiction, through her letters and essays, to her very last story and covering almost all of her novels' (p. 15). The introduction situates this argument in relation to an extensive array of existing scholarship on Woolf and modernism. The second chapter triangulates Woolf's diaries and several pieces of autobiographical, non-fiction writing with the figure of water in writings by both English Romantic poets and with Gaston Bachelard's 1942 study, *L'eau et les rêves, essai sur l'imagination de la matière* [*Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, trans 1983]. Contrasting Woolf's writing on water with Bachelard's psychoanalytic approach, Dirschauer develops a poetics of water from Woolf's life and work, demonstrating its importance not only as a connection with her literary predecessors, but also as a source for some of her works' most significant aesthetic qualities, including impersonality, ambiguity and the dialectic of surface and depth. Chapter three turns to Woolf's early short stories,

essays and her novel *Jacob's Room* in order to show how water became a key metaphor for her well-known rejection of the solidity of Edwardian realism and, instead, a way to explore 'a more abstract, impersonal and poetic form of narration' (p. 70). Chapter four takes up a more explicitly ecocritical approach to consider how the materiality of water influences Woolf's representation of time in *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and *The Waves*. Contextualizing this reading in relation to contemporaneous philosophical debates on the nature of time, Dirschauer argues that water is a key medium for conveying its protean, complex and immaterial qualities, as well as its existence independent of human agency and perception. Chapter five develops the ecocritical approach of the previous chapter into an ecofeminist reading of waterscapes in *The Voyage Out*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, considering how Woolf reclaims water from a patriarchal tradition associating women with matter (and men with mind/spirit) by transforming it into a key figure for representing female identity, subjectivity and creativity. Chapter six turns to Woolf's late works, *The Waves*, *The Years*, *Between the Acts* and 'The Watering Place' [1985] to explore the connection between water and silence in these works, arguing that this conjunction becomes a powerful site for Woolf's vision of a posthuman world, yet one which is ambivalently associated with a failure of language and, ultimately, with death. A brief conclusion expands on this note, emphasizing the 'crucial ambivalence inherent in Woolf's poetics of water', which is at once creative and destructive, expressing 'the potency and inadequacy of language' (p. 215). This study will be valuable both to ecocritical scholars of modernism and to those seeking to better understand the key figure of water in Woolf's work.

In addition to these extensive studies, there were also several book chapters published on Woolf. The lengthiest of these is Marjorie Garber's 'The Shakespeares of Virginia Woolf' in her book *Shakespeare in Bloomsbury*. Spanning over 100 pages, Garber's in-depth account of Shakespearean allusions in, and influences upon, Woolf's work will be of interest to both scholars of Woolf and modernism, as well as to those of Shakespeare and his reception. Split into three sections, the first is a detailed survey of references to Shakespeare in Woolf's letters and diaries, paying particularly close attention to her exchanges with Vita Sackville-West and Ethel Smyth. The second looks at Woolf's essays and reviews, demonstrating how their topics and judgments are often implicitly or explicitly informed by Shakespeare's work. The third section covers the span of Woolf's major fiction and her two long essays, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, providing an extensive survey of Shakespearean allusions, as well as careful discussion of their significance for our understanding of Woolf's work.

The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism, Myth and Religion, edited by Suzanne Hobson and Andrew Radford, contains two chapters focused on Woolf. The first is Jane de Gay's 'Virginia Woolf and Christianity', which develops a more nuanced understanding of Woolf's relationship to religion beyond the binary of atheist/believer. De Gay explores Woolf's varied relationship to multiple expressions of Christianity, from her feminist criticisms of the Church of England in *Three Guineas* to her recuperation of Christian traditions and narratives in 'Modern Fiction' [1919], 'On Being Ill', *A Room of One's Own* and 'A Sketch of the Past' [1939], as well as in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, with their biblical intertexts and allusions to the Passion, the Crucifixion and Salvation. De Gay concludes that Woolf was deeply invested in transforming—rather than negating—religious narratives to relocate divinity within human relationships and experiences.

The second chapter focused on Woolf in the collection is Gabrielle McIntire's 'Virginia Woolf's Agnostic, Visionary Mysticism: Approaching and Retreating from the Sacred'. Also turning to 'A Sketch of the Past' as a key text, McIntire defines Woolf's 'moments of being' as a kind of 'secular-sacred epiphany' in which rational judgement is displaced by proximity to the 'thing itself', as well as by an ontological self-awareness and mysticism (p. 200, original

emphasis). McIntire traces this secular-sacred mode through Woolf's fiction, including *Mrs Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, concluding that 'her posture toward sacrality ... exists on a spectrum of mystery, uncertainty, unknowing and conviction, where the precise articulation of belief or faith is ultimately a self-alienating and impossible task' (p. 210). (For more on *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism, Myth and Religion*, see 'T. S. Eliot' and 'James Joyce'.)

Hannah Freed-Thall's chapter, 'Intertidal Woolf' in her book, *Modernism at the Beach: Queer Ecologies and the Coastal Commons*, explores Woolf's coastal spaces as harbouring possibilities for sociality and intimacy outside or at the edges of normative conceptions of gender and domesticity. Opening with a reading of Woolf's short story, 'Solid Objects' [1920] as 'her most explicit meditation on the beach as a space of nonpatriarchal practices and affiliations' (p. 68), the chapter then develops an extended reading of the beachscape of *To the Lighthouse*. Drawing on queer theory as much as Woolf scholarship, Freed-Thall helpfully expands the attention usually focussed on the novel's queer hero, Lily Briscoe, to further investigate Nancy Ramsey's playful exploration of the beach as a 'parenthesis in the plots of both marriage and ambition: an experimental aside in which to test out other temporal patterns and ways of looking' (p. 97). Her reading of the novel suggests new approaches to understanding and appreciating the queer dimensions of Woolf's work.

Jane Goldman's 'Can Flush Count?: Virginia Woolf, Animality and Numbers' (in Alex Goody and Saskia McCracken, eds., *Beastly Modernisms: the Figure of the Animal in Modernist Literature and Culture*) traces the dissemination—following Derrida's use of the concept—of the signifier 'Flush' in Woolf's work, from the various actually existing dogs, to the numerous representations of them, to the titles of those representations, in order to stage a problem of counting, of whether and how animals count (in every sense of that word). Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog, Flush, could reportedly count numbers (and play dominoes!) but the Flush represented by Woolf in *Flush: A Biography* [1933] could not. Woolf's text 'counted' in another sense, though: it counted *for* its early readers, reviewers and critics, who could not get enough of it, even if the academic establishment quickly discounted it. Goldman's essay accounts for this counting *for*—this flush of popularity—through attending to the figure of the kiss. From Browning's poetry and letters, via Catullus's love lyric against counting, to Woolf's *Flush*, the kiss signifies the entanglement of animal and human desire that still counts for us, but which exceeds the logic of the countable. 'Better to be kissing than counting!' (p. 52), Goldman concludes her essay, a meditation as thought-provoking as it is playful.

Flush, and *Flush*, also appear in 'Satire and Significant Otherness in Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography*' by Saskia McCracken (in Robert McKay and Susan McHugh, eds., *Animal Satire*). McCracken compares the earliest manuscript draft of *Flush*—which she has transcribed for the first time—with the published edition of the novel to demonstrate Woolf's ambivalent engagement with Darwin's work on dog and human racial pedigree, later developed by the social Darwinist Francis Galton. As Woolf developed the manuscript she became more aware of the racist and classist tropes of social Darwinism, excising many of these tropes from the finished version, or else retaining them but making them the object of satire, or, in some cases, leaving them problematically unaltered. McCracken speculates that Woolf's journey through Italy with her husband in 1933, and her opposition to Italian fascism and its eugenicist and antisemitic racism, might have been one significant source for this shift towards a more critical, anti-eugenicist stance. Further work will no doubt suggest others.

Aaron Rosenberg's chapter 'Virginia Woolf and the Problem of Generations', from his book *Scale, Crisis, and the Modern Novel*, situates Virginia Woolf alongside *fin de siècle*

authors like H. G. Wells. While Woolf tends to be characterized as an antagonist to Wells—favouring the precision of the small scale and the psychological to the grandiose conceits of romance—Rosenberg shows how this account is not apposite to Woolf's genre fictions, with their distant, multi-scalar forms of connection. Focusing on *Orlando* and *Between the Acts*, he shows how these works pastiche 'climate' as a form of collective experience inclusive of both weather and social temperament, navigating 'climate change' (a term that Rosenberg applies anachronistically) in this double sense over local, national and global scales. The chapter concludes by suggesting that while Woolf did not perceive the dangers of anthropogenic global warming in contemporary terms, her novels' reimagining of history and scale provides ways of rethinking current climatological risks. For Rosenberg, this allows us to see Woolf as our contemporary, shaping the kinds of scalar reading needed for the Anthropocene. (For more on *Scale, Crisis, and the Modern Novel*, see 'Fiction 1900–1930'.)

Scale and the Anthropocene are also the subject of David Shackleton's chapter 'Virginia Woolf and the Pageant of History' in his book *British Modernism and the Anthropocene: Experiments with Time*. Shackleton argues that Woolf's fiction offers us ways to rethink scale in the Anthropocene via what he calls 'feminist scale critique' (p. 122). The chapter first compares *To the Lighthouse* with the experimental historiography of the Annales school, arguing that both used multiple time scales to displace men and great events from historical method. Where the Annales rejected narrative as a viable historical method, however, Woolf experiments with plot to represent history unfolding at multiple velocities and across different scales. Shackleton then turns to *Between the Acts*, discussing not only its Forsterian anxieties about the destruction of the countryside but also its capacity to imagine animal agency beyond the human. The chapter suggests new ways of thinking about the environmental and scalar affordances of Woolf's work. (For more on *British Modernism and the Anthropocene Experiments with Time*, see 'General'.)

Heather A. Love's chapter 'Black Box Subjectivity: Associative Language, Affect, and Radio Blindness in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*' in *Cybernetic Aesthetics: Modernist Networks of Information and Data* contextualises Woolf's 1937 broadcast on BBC radio, 'A Ramble about Words', and her 1931 novel *The Waves* alongside emerging cybernetic theories of psychology, language and communication. Turning to the work of the cybernetic theorist Silvan Tomkins, Love demonstrates how his post-Freudian understanding of affect placed the emphasis on the 'blindness, uncertainty, and complexity' (p. 80) of psychological experience in ways comparable to both Woolf's early essays on character and her modernist style in *The Waves*. Likewise, Tomkins's emphasis on 'the embrace of knowledge gained from multiple perspectives, none of which is assumed to offer a complete vantage point' (p. 88) speaks to Woolf's aesthetic project of displacing a singular narrative voice and source of epistemological truth. For Love, this has implications not only for Woolf's novelistic aesthetics but also her understanding of the technology of the radio. Turning back to Woolf's 1937 broadcast, Love argues that Woolf implicitly challenges the BBC's monopoly on radio broadcasting, advocating instead for a media ecology of multiple, decentred voices, one foreshadowed, aptly enough, by the earlier 'radiophonic' novel, which Woolf described as 'eyeless' (p. 89). The chapter concludes by suggesting that Woolf is a kind of early theorist of media ecology *avant la lettre*, an argument that will no doubt spark further scholarship and debate in Woolf studies and in media studies. (For more on Love's *Cybernetic Aesthetics* see 'General' and 'Fiction 1930–1945'.)

Paulina Pająk's chapter 'Neither peace nor haven' (in Ewa Kęłowska-Ławniczak et al. eds., *Literary and Cultural Representations of the Hinterlands*) examines the representation of Sussex as both imaginary and material hinterland in Woolf's letters, essays and fiction, especially *The Years* and *Between the Acts*. After a short overview of Bloomsbury in Sussex, the

chapter delineates interwar changes to housing and development, demonstrating how Woolf engaged with these social transformations through modernist hybridity and irony. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the development of the Beddington Landfill Site, resulting in the demolition of Asheham House, one of Woolf's country abodes and sites of inspiration. Pająk demonstrates how this loss filtered into Woolf's late novels and their concerns about housing, development and erosion of rural communities. The chapter will be of interest to scholars of Woolf, of late modernism, and of the history of the countryside and rural development.

Teresa Bruś's chapter 'Virginia Woolf and Debora Vogel: A Season of Fragments' in her book *Face Forms in Life-Writing of the Interwar Years* provides a reading of Woolf's representation of the human face in her non-fiction essays. Seeking to historicize the representation of faces within the changing media landscape of the 1930s, especially in response to its photographic reproduction, Bruś demonstrates how Woolf's essays present the face as a complex signifier of social meaning and ethical value. She concludes that Woolf's representation of the face challenges its aesthetic unity, presenting instead a face always split, fragmented and estranged from the 'the socially constructed "I"' (p. 102). For Bruś, following Donna Haraway, this results in a 'feminist optics' (p. 102, quoting Haraway) that mediates between rational discourse and fantastical imagination, public debate and radical social change. The second part of the chapter compares Woolf's representation of the face with that of her lesser-known contemporary, the Polish writer Deborah Vogel, drawing similarities and differences in the pair's figuration of the human face.

J. Daniel Elam's 'Buzz, Mob, Crowd, Life: Writing the Riot in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*' (in Jumana Bayeh, Helen Groth and Julian Murphet, eds., *Writing the Global Riot: Literature in a Time of Crisis*) reads Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* alongside Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Elam places both in the context of early-twentieth century sociology to argue that in tandem with that discipline these works gave form to the quasi-political phenomenon of the crowd. Theorizing the crowd as a literary character in its own right, Daniel unpacks how some of *Mrs Dalloway*'s most startling formal innovations arise through its effort to represent the crowd as a 'viable form of collectivity' in which 'human subjectivities could be reimaged' (p. 95). In Woolf's work, these new subjectivities most often constellate themselves around the concept of 'life', which Daniel reads as marking the conjunction of individual selves with broader human and non-human environments and collectivities, real and imagined (p. 95). Positioned at the juncture of individual and society, Daniel also reads the Woolfian crowd as a historical form, a space in which individual memory and collective history are conjoined without one becoming subordinated to the other.

Lucy Stevens's 'Raising Her Voice: Presenting the Lives and Writings of Virginia Woolf and Dame Ethel Smyth for a Contemporary Theatre Audience' (in Adrian Curtin et al., eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism in Contemporary Theatre*) focuses on her own small-scale theatre production *Virginia Woolf: Killing the Angel* [2020]. Written for a single female performer with a solo pianist playing pieces by female composers contemporary with Woolf, the play compiles excerpts from Woolf's essays, letters and diaries into a dramatic structure using a stream-of-consciousness monologue. Stevens provides a description of the play's staging, acting and music that will be helpful for theatre scholars and practitioners seeking to understand the possibilities of dramatizing Woolf's life and work.

Shareena Z. Hamzah-Osbourne's 'The Smallest Room of One's Own: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson in Close Quarters' (in Gina Wisker, Leanne Bibby and Heidi Yeandle,

eds., *Legacies and Lifespans in Contemporary Women's Writing*) situates Winterson as the principal inheritor of Woolf's feminist and aesthetic project in the present. The chapter traces similarities and differences between their work across a wide array of topics, including gender, sexuality, class, and literary genre and form. This chapter will be of interest to scholars interested in Woolf's literary afterlives in the twenty-first century. (For more on *Legacies and Lifespans in Contemporary Women's Writing*, see 'Fiction Post-2000'.)

There were also a number of articles published about Virginia Woolf in 2023 across a variety of journals. Sangam MacDuff's "'The Right Use of Reason': Virginia Woolf, Isaac Watts, and Logic" (*ELH* 90:ii[2023] 457–490) examines Woolf's engagement with Isaac Watts's *Logick* [1786]. MacDuff argues that Woolf's early engagement with Watts shaped her later challenges to the logical thinking of Leslie Stephen, G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, creating a productive tension that would also come to shape *To the Lighthouse*.

Benjamin Bagocius's 'Queer Mrs. Ramsay, or Virginia Woolf's Geomorphic Family' (*MFS* 69:iv[2023] 614–643) questions the critical consensus of Mrs Ramsey from *To the Lighthouse* as the prototypical Victorian woman by attending to the geological language used to describe her. For Bagocius, this lexicon, borrowed from Leslie Stephen's mountaineering tracts, subjectivizes Mrs Ramsey less as a gendered woman and more as a subject of queered geological form.

'Outside Joke: Virginia Woolf's *Freshwater* and Coterie Insularity' by Michelle Alexis Taylor (*ModCult* 18:iii[2023] 241–260) reads Woolf's play *Freshwater* [1923/1935] not as a satire of Victorian culture but rather of the coterie culture of Bloomsbury itself. Reading the development of the playscript between its earliest draft in 1923 and its final form in 1935, Taylor shows how reading it in the restricted context of its Bloomsbury circulation and performance reveals a narrative of disappointed hope in both Bloomsbury's queer kinship and in modernism's aspirations to cultural and social change more broadly.

Jennifer Spitzer's 'Scaling the Detail: Woolfian Proportions' (*MLQ* 84:ii[2023] 169–185) examines Woolf's work's propensity to use narrative detail to move across different scales. Focusing on 'The Mark on the Wall', *To the Lighthouse* and *A Room of One's Own*, Spitzer demonstrates how Woolf's attention to details moves the reader between the particular and the abstract, the mundane and mystical, internal thought and feeling and external action, with implications that are not only aesthetic but political.

Annika J. Lindskog's article 'Woolf's *Night and Day* and the Free-Union Novel' (*TCL* 69:iv[2023] 437–464) reads Woolf's 1919 novel as a narrative in transition from Edwardian to modernist fiction, mediating between the older conventions of courtship culminating in marriage and emerging plots of free union (coupledom without marriage).

Emily M. Hinnov's article "'Thinking peace into existence": Virginia Woolf and Jessica Dismorr' (*FemModSt* 6:i[2023] 67–72) compares Woolf's 'Thoughts of Peace in an Air Raid' [1940] with Dismorr's series of paintings *Related Forms* and *Superimposed Forms* [c.1936–1939], arguing that they both engage in a critique of the patriarchal, militarist roots of war and imagine nurturing and communal forms of peace.

This year's *Woolf Studies Annual* included the following articles: 'Belated Epiphanies: Intersectionality and Education in Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* and Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*' by Celia R. Caputi; 'Virginia Woolf's "As to criticism": An Annotated Transcription' by Danielle N. Gilman; "'the real flower; part earth; part flower": Virginia Woolf's Statuesque Form in *Jacob's Room*' by Lingxiang Ke; 'Not So "Solid Objects": Monuments and Character in *Jacob's Room*' by John Pedro Schwartz; and "'Driven by An

Unseizable Force”: Virginia Woolf and the Invention of the Death Drive’ by Kathryn Van Wert.

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British Fiction 1945–2000, covering materials published in 2023

Katherine Parsons

Several short pieces in 2023 considered Doris Lessing’s work. In the paper, ‘Body as a Metaphor in Doris Lessing’s “To Room Nineteen”’ (ANQ 36[2023] 434–443), Zhongfeng Huang identifies that previous interpretations of ‘To Room Nineteen’ [1978] have overlooked a crucial aspect of one of the central characters of the text, Susan, due to not having paid due attention to Lessing’s representation of her body. Huang suggests that imagery of the body is significant to ‘Susan’s identity shaping experience as an individual’ (p. 434). In ‘What’s the Time, Anna Wulf? Crisis, Temporality and Feminist Untimeliness in Doris Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook*’ (MFS 69[2023] 593–613), Melanie Waters argues for the continued timeliness of *The Golden Notebook* [1962] through its figurations of time and positions the novels as ‘a site at which different forms of crisis [such as postwar nuclear politics and the demise of the Left] can be explored as temporal phenomena’ (p. 595). Lessing is brought into dialogue with Virginia Woolf by Laura Ritland in ‘Revolutionizing Criticism: Collage as Feminist Critical Practice in Doris Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas* (1938)’. Ritland observes Woolf and Lessing as developing a critical approach ‘grounded in subjective embodiment, juxtaposition, and endless, non-hierarchical particularity’ (p. 62), which ultimately ‘offers a complex recognition of the contingency of knowledge upon power and embodiment’ (p. 65). Matthew Taunton explores the ‘novel of ideas’ through Doris Lessing’s writings and archive in ‘Politics, Letters and the Novel of Ideas: Doris Lessing’s Archive’, particularly in light of Lessing’s complaint that ‘the parochialism of our culture [the British reading public] is intense’ (p. 70). ‘Reading Doris Lessing’s Short Story “England vs England” through the Lenses of Space, Trauma, and History’ by Maria Eugenia Berio identifies a lacuna in the scholarship regarding the poetics of space in Lessing’s short stories set in European places beyond London, by examining traumatic sites in ‘England vs England’ [1963]. Justine Mann provides an introduction to Lessing’s archive in ‘Lessing’s Legacy Explored Through Her Personal Archive’ (*CritQ* 65 [2023] 56–61). Nonia Williams has also written on Lessing’s extensive correspondence archives as ‘an exciting opportunity to rethink and resituate Lessing’ through the relation of tone and voice in her letters to her narrative perspectives as an essayist and writer of fiction in ‘Lessing’s Early Letters: A Prolific Personal Voice’ (*CritQ* 65[2023] 62–69). *The Figure of the Terrorist in Literature and Visual Culture* will also be of interest to scholars of this period due to its treatment of both Doris Lessing and Muriel Spark in its second chapter, ‘The Psychology of Post-War Revolutionary Terrorism in Muriel Spark’s *The Only Problem* and