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Morris, Pam

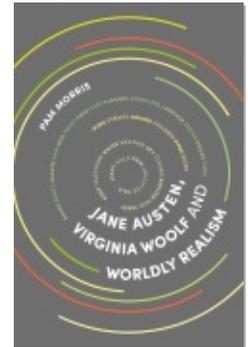
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Mrs Dalloway: The Spirit of Religion was Abroad

‘We think back through our mothers, if we are women’, Woolf famously said.¹ If Woolf has a literary mother it must surely be Jane Austen. The recurrent references to Austen throughout Woolf’s critical writing express a fascination with and admiration for her artistic achievements.² In the essay devoted to Austen in *The Common Reader*, Woolf’s language constitutes Austen’s writerly effect in terms that seem almost identical to her own aesthetic. From out of the stream of the commonplace in Austen’s narrative, Woolf claims, a moment is suddenly full of meaning, ‘It fills itself; it shines; it glows; it hangs before us, deep, trembling, serene for a second’ (*Essays*, 4.152). Had Austen not died young, Woolf suggests, her art would have continued to develop. She seems to draw Austen into a continuity with modernism, predicting she would have ‘devised a method [. . .] for conveying not only what people say, but what they leave unsaid [. . .] She would have been the forerunner of Henry James and of Proust’ (*Essays*, 4.155). *Persuasion* marks the beginning of a shift in Austen’s sensibility, Woolf claims, ‘the observation is less of facts and more of feelings’ (*Essays*, 4.152–3). Yet despite the apparent dichotomy here between facts and feelings, what Woolf most pervasively shares with Austen is an aesthetic of worldly realism and an antipathy to idealist modes of thought. As against a world ordered vertically and hierarchically, Woolf, like Austen, perceives self, social world, the world of things and the physical universe as a horizontal, material continuum.

Nevertheless, the emphasis upon subjective interiority rather than facts would certainly have seemed, to many of Woolf’s first readers, wholly applicable to Woolf’s own art. Early criticism of Woolf’s novels interpreted them within an idealist perspective as privileging

inner states of mind rather than an object world. According to idealist inflected readings, Austen was held to deal with universal and timeless moral values, albeit in a limited domestic sphere, whereas Woolf was read, yet more negatively, as a writer only concerned with a nebulous and class-privileged inner life. Again, as with Austen, Woolf's own family helped seal the negative image. In his biography, her nephew, Quentin Bell, wrote, 'Her gift was the pursuit of shadows, for the ghostly whispers of the mind and for Pythian incomprehensibility.'³ The only striking exception to early readings of Woolf as inward-looking and soulful, by both detractors and admirers, was Erich Auerbach's groundbreaking account of her narrative techniques in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946).⁴ *Mimesis* was not published in an English translation until 1956, but even then it had surprisingly little impact within Woolf studies in terms of realism as opposed to appreciation of her formal methodology.

During the 1950s and 1960s, serious scholarly studies of Woolf tended to consider her work from philosophical, Jungian and Freudian perspectives.⁵ Yet, while enhancing her status as a major writer, they did not challenge the idealist perception that her concern was with the inner life rather than the body and with universal abstractions like time rather than history. It was feminist studies, as with Austen, which began to situate Woolf's novels within the particularities of the time in which she was writing. Many of the feminist studies of Woolf published from the 1970s onwards took a psychoanalytic approach to the novels.⁶ While this focus did not directly undermine the dominance of idealist concentration upon interiority, the concern with gender identity and especially with issues facing a woman novelist in the early twentieth century did redirect Woolf studies to cultural realities. Undoubtedly, it was this earlier feminist work that gave impetus to the current recognition of, and scholarly investigation into, Woolf's concern as a writer with many of the most urgent cultural, political and social issues of her own time.⁷ The most recent scholarly edition of her work, for example, provides a mass of textual information relating each work in complex ways to Woolf's social and political world.⁸

Surprisingly, though, despite this detailed and rich body of studies demonstrating Woolf's imaginative and intellectual response to her world, there has been almost no concomitant re-examination of her views on realism. The critical consensus that, as a high modernist, Woolf was unquestionably intent upon a wholesale rejection of past forms, especially realism, remains veritably unchallenged. Linden

Peach, for example, in his illuminating study of Woolf's historical imagination, reiterates the critical orthodoxy, '*The Years*, despite its apparent concessions to social realism [. . .] can be seen in terms of her quarrel with realism in her essay "Modern Fiction".'⁹ Peach's dismissive phrase 'concessions to social realism' is typical of the pejorative attitude to realist writing that continues to inform much current critical discourse written from a modernist perspective.

In *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, Alex Zwerdling, one of the few critics to offer positive readings of Woolf's realism, asks why this aspect of her work has been so largely ignored. By way of answer he suggests that one cause is the smokescreen Woolf herself created in her classic essay 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown'.¹⁰ The quotation above from Linden Peach indicates that we should also include the other classic manifesto of modernist intent, 'Modern Fiction' as contributing to the misunderstanding. Peach's comment, however, equally indicates that it may be critics themselves in their selective reading of these two seminal essays that have created the smokescreen, not Woolf herself. As Jacques Rancière points out, it is a mistake, made by Barthes and similar critics, to understand a modernist aesthetic as a rejection of world for word, as a move to self-referential textuality.¹¹ Rather, Rancière argues, it is a new aesthetic regime, originating around the end of the eighteenth century, that opens up the text to the proliferating flood of people and things that constitute existence; a disorder that challenges the dominant hierarchical consensus.

Woolf's two essays, 'Modern Fiction' and 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' are so often and so confidently cited as articulating the break of modernism with realism that it comes almost as a shock to realise that in them Woolf nowhere uses the words 'realism' or 'realist'. The only terms of distinction she uses to characterise different conventions of novelistic writing are the 'Edwardians' and the 'Georgians', adding that the Edwardians, such as Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy, are 'materialists' while the Georgians, represented by the younger generation of Joyce, Lawrence and Forster, are 'spiritual' (*Essays*, 4.159, 161). She does, undoubtedly, express strong dissatisfaction with the novelistic aims of Bennett and his contemporaries to 'embalm' probability within a mass of factual detail, but this constitutes a criticism of what I suggest is actualist writing rather than realist. Indeed, in both essays she explicitly praises realists like Austen, Thackeray, Hardy, Chekov and Tolstoy. 'Our quarrel [. . .] is not with the classics', she says in 'Modern Fiction' (*Essays*, 4.158).

Woolf takes the oppositional terms ‘materialists’ and ‘spiritualists’ from her father’s usage. Leslie Stephen refers to materialists as those subscribing to the doctrine that matter is the ultimate reality, while spiritualists, he defines as those who believe that mind is the only reality.¹² In other words, spiritualists subscribe to idealism, a mode of thought to which Woolf is largely hostile. In this she follows her father but equally she is engaging with the public debates and contention of her own generation. This explains the ambivalence of her account of Joyce’s writing in ‘Modern Fiction’. Certainly, the famous injunction to ‘Look within’ seems to demand a shift of focus away from the material world of realist texts into the subjective states of consciousness that typify so much modernist fiction (*Essays*, 4.160). The declaration in favour of interiority in ‘Modern Fiction’ is undermined, however, as the essay continues. She singles out James Joyce as pre-eminent among the younger generation of writers in being ‘concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame’. He does ‘undoubtedly come so close to the quick of the mind’, she affirms. Yet, she goes on, the experience of reading him is not one of imaginative expansion. Rather, there is a ‘sense of being in a bright yet narrow room, confined and shut in [. . .] *centred in a self* which, in spite of its tremor of susceptibility, never embraces or creates what is *outside itself and beyond*’ (*Essays*, 4.162, my emphasis). The final sentence here constitutes the essential critique of idealism by opponents.

Woolf does, at times, although rarely, seem explicitly to reject realist forms. In her positive review of Dorothy Richardson’s experimental stream-of-consciousness novel, *The Tunnel* (1919), she exclaims, ‘We want to be rid of realism’ (*Essays*, 3.12). Yet, characteristically, the review constantly shifts position so that the viewpoint oscillates between seeming to yearn for the new while adhering to tradition. Although she welcomes Richardson’s ambitious experimental representation of interiority, she also admits ‘the old method seems sometimes more profound and economical’ (*Essays*, 3.12). The review concludes with a plea that the new be fashioned into ‘the shapeliness of the old accepted forms’ (*Essays*, 3.12). The implication of these oscillations of opinion that structure the review, seems to be that while a new generation of writers must be impatient with and critical of earlier forms of writing, they should retain, in some way, what is artistically powerful in the old. In her biography of Roger Fry, she says of him, ‘he could explain that it was quite easy to make the transition from Watts to Picasso; there was no break, only a continuation. [The post-impressionists] were only pushing things a little further’.¹³

She also quotes Fry's vigorous anti-idealism, 'I elaborated a good deal on my empiricism [. . .] So the scientific spirit really had the last word and a great triumph over the abstractionists and metaphysicians' (*Fry*, p. 268). Woolf does not, perhaps, seek a 'great triumph' over idealists but, as her critical comments on Bennett's and Joyce's writing suggest, she does believe that neither a wholly idealist nor a crudely materialist perspective is adequate for the writer. Rather, what is required is a disciplining balance of the two forces, as she explains in her essay on Turgenev. The great writer, like Turgenev, she claims in that essay, has that rare quality of being able to combine fact and vision, '[he] is never allowed to mount unchecked into the realms of imagination; again the observer pulls him back and reminds him of that other truth, the truth of fact' (*Essays*, 6.11). In 'Phases of Fiction', she warns that the 'two powers fight if they are brought into combination. The most complete novelist must be the novelist who can balance the two powers so that one enhances the other' (*Essays*, 5.83). As well as Fry, Woolf's thinking here is undoubtedly influenced by Bertrand Russell's assertion, in *Mysticism and Logic*, that the greatest achievements in human thought have been produced by a fusion of vision with empiricism.

Russell's quarrel with idealism was part of a widespread public debate over the relative social, political and epistemological merits of idealism as opposed to empiricism. In this sense, Woolf was writing within a strikingly similar intellectual context to that of Austen at the end of the eighteenth century. By the 1870s, idealism was becoming a powerful force in British intellectual, cultural and political circles. Publications by leading figures within the movement, like F. H. Bradley, T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet, offered a unified spiritual account of self and world that was welcomed by those late Victorians reacting against what they saw as the aridity and materialism of philosophies that had determined public thinking for much of the century: empiricism, utilitarianism and Darwinian naturalism.¹⁴ The idealists re-asserted the vertical hierarchy of spirit over matter, and gave priority to those concomitant virtues of reverence, obedience and duty towards authority and tradition. As idealists, they denied the possibility of a reality independent of mind, elevating purely rational sciences like mathematics over empirical observation. They propounded a revisionary theory of evolution, insisting that explanations of existence must necessarily move from higher forms of life down to the lower. It was impossible, they argued, for inferior matter to give rise to more elevated beings. For them,

evolution was the progress towards greater spiritual perfection and unification of ideal self with ideal world.

British idealists attacked utilitarianism for purveying a notion of self as atomistic and of society as merely an aggregate. They argued that the individual has no reality but as part of the ideal organic unity that is the collective mind and will of the nation inherited down the generations. By subordinating themselves to the ideal of the state or nation, individuals become one with the common Good and the common Will that constitutes its and their perfection. This hierarchical view of society was expounded most fully in a highly influential essay by F. H. Bradley, entitled, 'My Station and its Duties'. 'We have found ourselves when we have found our station and its duties', Bradley declares.¹⁵ In a later essay he asserts that a person's best self consists for the greater part in 'his loyalty, and according to the spirit, in performing his duties and filling his place as a member of a family, society and the state' (Boucher, *British Idealists*, p. 103).

The thinking of the British idealists became influential across a wide range of political opinion during the early part of the twentieth century. Some of the major idealists like T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet were active figures in the fields of education, welfare and social policy. Many of their students from Oxford became prominent in public life.¹⁶ British idealist thinking constituted an important force in British life until at least the 1930s and remains an influential strand of thought within modern conservative understanding of public policy. Undoubtedly, the identification of the mental with the spiritual, the mind with the Good, reinforces social class conservatism. It underpins a representational regime in which material indications of deprivation are transformed into symbols or symptoms of inner states, thereby losing their perceptibility as physical actuality. T. H. Green saw poverty as indicative of a moral deficiency of character (Boucher and Vincent, *British Idealism*, p. 115). Bernard Bosanquet argued that poverty was a breakdown of the will (*British Idealism*, p. 118). State intervention to relieve hardship, therefore, could be deemed injurious in increasing feebleness of character rather than self-reliance. If the fullest expression of the self was manifest in spiritual perfection, then the corollary cast those whose feebleness of will left them bereft of even the decencies of life into an underclass perceived as barely human. This representation of the poor as trapped by mental wretchedness shifts attention away from, renders imperceptible, those material inequalities of insanitary housing, endemic unemployment and chronic ill health

that actually determined the conditions of the labouring population in early twentieth-century Britain.

The philosophers G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, both members of the Bloomsbury group, published elaborate logical refutations of the idealists' claim that there was no reality independent of mind.¹⁷ Bertrand Russell additionally extended his arguments into a comprehensive political critique. In *Mysticism and Logic* (1918), he begins by castigating idealism's elevation of individual inwardness and denial of value to the shared material life of existence. Anyone who has experienced 'absorption in an inward passion', he suggests, has felt the strange sense of 'unreality in common objects, the loss of contact with daily things'.¹⁸ In its assertion of the priority of the individualist mental realm, idealism passes over the thingness of the world as beneath notice; common objects that give substance to a shared common life are rendered effectively imperceptible and insignificant. In *Problems of Philosophy*, Russell repeats this charge that idealism demotes from notice all that constitutes the material world. There is currently a widespread philosophical tendency, he claims, towards the view that 'Man is the measure of all things, that truth is man-made [. . .] and that, if there be anything not created by the mind, it is unknowable and of no account to us.'¹⁹

This denigration of material life is frequently driven, Russell claims, not by rationality as idealists like to think but by 'passion'. It is fleshly distaste for the messiness of life that leads idealists to seek otherworldly perfection, whether mental or religious. A system of thought promising unity, harmony and coherence produces 'a feeling of infinite peace', and such quietism goes along with an 'absence of indignation or protest' (*Mysticism and Logic*, p. 17). Social ills can be unnoticed or rendered inconsequential when perfection is sought in transcendence. There is a further, more active, danger present within idealist modes of thought, Russell asserts. The passion driving idealists is not only the desire for perfection, he argues, it is, not infrequently, the will for self-assertion and aggrandisement, the urge to impose self upon the world. What is claimed as knowledge in such cases, he says, is nothing 'but a set of prejudices, habits and desires, making an impenetrable veil between us and the world' (*Problems*, p. 93). This is precisely the folly of subjective idealism that Austen satirises throughout her fiction. It is also the passion of the man of system who, Adam Smith warns, will seek to enforce his will upon others as if they are merely pieces upon a chess board.²⁰ Idealist dismissal of empiricism ensures that inconvenient facts are excluded as

evidence against the system of thought. 'A man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law', Russell declares (*Problems*, p. 93). Woolf takes this insight much further, suggesting that the will to impose authoritarian systems of belief is often domestic tyranny writ large.

That Woolf shared much of Russell's criticism of idealism is made clear in an extended passage near the beginning of *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), the novel in which she sets out to attack the 'social system and to show it at work, at its most intense'.²¹ The word 'system' occurs frequently in anti-idealist critiques. In the passage in question, the narrator offers an account of the thoughts and feelings of an unnamed figure, 'an atheist perhaps'.²² The language and details provided are remarkably similar to those of Bertrand Russell. The 'solitary traveller', as he is called, experiences what Russell terms an 'inward passion' as moments of 'extraordinary exaltation'. These convince him that 'Nothing exists outside us except a state of mind' (p. 48).

That he is perhaps an atheist is Woolf's way of suggesting that it is not only the conventionally religious who seek otherworldly perfection and unity; unbelievers, scientists and others can equally experience that desire. Typically, this impulse felt so strongly by the 'traveller' in *Mrs Dalloway* is driven by distaste for actual fleshly life, a desire for 'something outside these miserable pigmies, these feeble, these ugly, these craven men and women' (p. 48). In seeking relief from such unwanted realities, he reassures himself that if he can only 'conceive' of a solacing perfection, 'then in some sort [it] exists' (p. 48). He proceeds to imagine an idealised image of majestic womanhood, showering down 'from her magnificent hands, compassion, comprehension, absolution' (p. 49). Woolf is clearly having fun here at the expense of all those male thinkers who deify women as abstract virtues and ideals while frequently denying dignity and value to their actual material lives.

There is a darker irony also in that even while bestowing a kind of religious reverence upon abstractions like compassion and comprehension, the traveller is turning away from actual people as contemptible and beneath regard. Idealism disavows the material conditions of human existence that could give substance to the values it claims to pursue. 'Such are the visions', the narrator comments, 'which ceaselessly float up, pace beside, put their faces in front of, the actual thing [. . .] taking away [. . .] the sense of the earth' (p. 49). No novelist is more aware of the actual thingness

of the world than Woolf, and in *Mrs Dalloway* things are represented as essential anchors holding the individual within shared social existence. But the 'solitary traveller' does not hanker for a shared, common world; his longing is to lose himself in a 'general peace, as if [. . .] all this fever of living were simplicity itself; and myriad things merged in one thing' (p. 49). This is desire for vision unchecked by fact.

Mrs Dalloway opens with a totally opposite view of 'this fever of living'. We are presented with Clarissa Dalloway's celebratory identification of the pulsing energy of London streets with the vitality of life itself. City streets, in all of Woolf's London novels, are represented as complex locations of multiple social forces. At the beginning of *Mrs Dalloway*, they evoke a surging space of possibilities, a heterogeneous flood of people and things, vividly suggestive of the demotic realism that, Rancière claims, challenges the vertical orderliness of classical representational modes. The 'bellow and uproar' of London makes audible as well as visible the teeming, random disorder of 'carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs [. . .] the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead' (p. 4). This is a new regime of the perceptible, a seen and heard material, horizontal, egalitarian continuity of being, the audibility of the common life.

Woolf's writerly style is equally fluid and inclusive, preferring non-subordinate conjunctions and constantly shifting perspectives. Yet, despite the motility of viewpoints, Woolf retains a third person narrator. She thereby reserves a space that is formally non-subjective to avoid the enclosure within subjective imagination that she criticises in 'spiritual' writers like James Joyce. The narrator's position, however, is never Olympian; it stays at the level of life in the streets. Woolf's representation of self is equally open and fluid. Sally Rosseter's exclamation that we are imprisoned in self and can only scribble on the walls of our separate private cells is treated ironically for its melodramatic egoism (p. 163). Clarissa Dalloway's sense of self as metonymic is underwritten by Woolf's own stylistic horizontal fluidity. Travelling up Shaftesbury Avenue by bus, Clarissa explains that 'she felt herself everywhere; not "here, here, here"; and she tapped the back of the seat; but everywhere [. . .] so that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places [. . .] some woman in the streets [. . .] even trees, and barns' (p. 129). This passage well illustrates the worldly realism of Woolf's artistic imagination; it evokes the egalitarian perception of

a material continuity between self, social world, the world of things and the physical universe.

There are, however, forces represented in the text that are hostile to disorder and heterogeneity, forces that are intent upon imposing systems of discipline and conformity on any unregulated form of existence. It is salutary that immediately after she has exulted in the common life of the streets, Clarissa Dalloway encounters Hugh Whitbread with his government-stamped dispatch box and his mission to take his cowed wife 'to see doctors' (p. 5). Yet the streets themselves contain impulses that run contrary to diversity and nonconformity. Woolf uses the episode of the imposing car, with blinds drawn down, that gets stalled in Bond Street to illustrate a general willingness among people of all classes to coalesce emotionally around idealised abstractions, and more especially around things metaphorically elevated into symbols of such abstractions. The mysterious car quickly becomes an object of veneration as the location of 'greatness', 'the majesty of England', 'the enduring symbol of the state' (p. 14). Caught up in this sense of awe for a power beyond themselves, 'faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly' are stilled. The heterogeneity of those in the street is erased: 'they had heard the voice of authority; the spirit of religion was abroad' (p. 12).

Woolf's mocking language to describe this mass emotional religiosity – 'mystery had brushed them with her wing' – undoubtedly pokes fun at idealist veneration of a spiritual or mystical common will that binds people under the 'voice of authority' into a cohesive organic state. What the episode demonstrates is that reverential passion is easily triggered by something, as the text says, 'so trivial'. The feeling, far from emanating from a communal best self, is merely irrational emotion sweeping through the crowd. Yet the effect is sinister and threatening. Just as the car has blinds drawn to shut out the world beyond its privileged enclosure, so the passions aroused are blind to actuality: 'the spirit of religion was abroad with her eyes bandaged tight and her lips gaping wide' (p. 12). The urge of the crowd to become one with an imagined majesty and greatness is 'formidable' the text concedes; the emotional fervour is dangerous to those so caught up but also to anyone perceived to dissent. The nationalist zeal aroused by the trivial incident of the car leads to xenophobic brawls in a public house and to a desire to sacrifice self 'in the cannon's mouth' (pp. 15, 16).

Not all of those influenced by a religious spirit of idealism are anonymous. Indeed *Mrs Dalloway* is peopled with characters who

are idealists. This takes a variety of forms but they all share a desire to impose a more orderly vision upon the imperfections of human existence. They seek to escape the 'fever of living' in a non-material realm. Doris Kilman's religious faith, expressed in her fondness for metaphor, is perhaps the most traditional form of idealism (p. 110). She is drawn to the 'bodiless' light of Westminster Abbey as escape from 'the infliction of her unlovable body' and all the pains of the flesh, the anguish of the hates and loves of earthly life it brings upon her (pp. 103, 109). Part of the misery she suffers is at the hands of Clarissa Dalloway. Woolf uses their fraught relationship to illustrate the power of abstract ideas when they become visions or veils blocking out actuality. Clarissa fears Doris Kilman is stealing her daughter's affections and under the influence of that passion of jealousy the tutor becomes a figment of her hatred rather than a real person, so that when 'the body of Miss Kilman was not before her, it overwhelmed her – the idea' (p. 107). Clarissa, however, just as Woolf demands in her essay on Turgenev, brings the truth of metaphor into contact with the truth of fact. When she makes herself look at the actual embodied person, there is a complete 'dwindling of the monster' (p. 107). Clarissa's response to this shift from imprisoning idea to observed reality is to laugh at the comic mismatch of vision to fact.

The carnage of trench warfare leaves Septimus Warren Smith with an overwhelming repugnance for embodied life. He recoils in horror from 'the sordidity of the mouth and the belly' and the 'filth' of copulation (p. 75). Yet Septimus is acutely sensitive to the materiality of the physical world, responding intensely and sensuously to the texture of sounds and sights. But he elevates these out of the horizontal realm of physical matter into a system of symbols to be interpreted as 'the birth of a new religion' (p. 19). Sir William Bradshaw deems this a highly dangerous symptom, indicative of insanity, unaware apparently of his own resort to metaphysics in worshipping the abstract Goddesses of Proportion and Conversion (pp. 84–5). Septimus's poignant moment of release from metaphysical delusion is brought about by material things. To use Woolf's terminology from the Turgenev essay again, Septimus stops interpreting and starts observing. He becomes a realist, shifting from the vertical metaphoric mode to the horizontal metonymic. 'And so, gathering courage, he looked at the sideboard; the plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort; at the mantelpiece, with the jar of roses. None of these things moved. All were still; all were real' (p. 120). Once grounded in this material thingness of actuality, he realises that

the voices of the dead that have been coercing him are nothing more than his own imposition of transcendent meaning upon mundane things like a curtain rustling, a mouse squeaking (p. 123). In this space of empiricism, recognising the comic incongruity of things as just things, Septimus, like Clarissa, begins to joke and laugh. 'He had become himself then,' Rezia thinks, 'he had laughed then' (p. 122). Contrary to idealism, self is produced in active relationship with the things that constitute a common daily life.

All of Woolf's novels bring perceptibility to things. In *Mrs Dalloway* there are two kinds of things in particular that recur on almost every page: cars and flowers. The two things are brought together at the start of the novel when Clarissa is in Miss Pym's flower shop selecting blooms for her party. She is startled by 'a violent explosion' (p. 12). The noise comes from the car outside in Bond Street, but Woolf's language links it metonymically with the violence of the first fully mechanised world war. The example of Septimus and of the idealist interpretations that passers-by so readily impose on the car, suggest that symbolic readings of these recurrent things in the text are best avoided. This is so, even though the description of Sir William Bradshaw's opulent grey car with silver-grey rugs, is clearly intended to evoke the highly prestigious Rolls Royce Silver Ghost and thereby point ironically to Bradshaw's boasted concern with souls while actually enhancing his own wealth and power.

The extended series of references to cars and flowers constitute a metonymic structure connecting Woolf's text dialogically to political, cultural and scientific forces in the world of 1920s Britain. Cars figure as metonymies for the whole transport revolution and increased mobility that constitute modernity. In 1924, the London Traffic Act was passed in response to public debate and concern about the threat posed by the ever-increasing volume of traffic on the streets of the capital. *Mrs Dalloway* contains references to every form of modern traffic: not just cars but buses, taxis, vans, an ambulance, a plane and the tube. Cars also serve as metonymies for the process of mass industrialisation, known metonymically as Fordism, which had become a determining force shaping the modern world. Methods of mass production also brought about transformation in means of warfare.

Flowers, understood metonymically as part of the whole biological system of life, might seem to assert a deliberate textual opposition to industrial mechanisation. Yet in the 1920s, horticulture was being transformed by advances in biological sciences into a mass

production industry. Human biology and reproduction were equally becoming the focus of scientific 'engineering'. Both industrial mechanisation and biological science were coming to be recognised as efficient means of managing potentially troublesome populations. While the conformist spirit of religion was much abroad in public rhetoric transposing material things like cars into symbols of abstract ideals, real politics was only too aware of the actual continuum of embodied selves, the social world and the physical universe. The two metonymies of cars and flowers in *Mrs Dalloway* are thus much over-determined, they are 'gatherings' bringing together multiple intersecting networks of meaning.

Peter Walsh is another of the text's idealists. Seeing the ambulance carrying Septimus Warren Smith's body, he thinks admiringly, with unwitting irony, that it is a symbol of 'civilization' which he associates with the further progressive-sounding abstractions of 'efficiency' and 'organisation' (p. 128). All these intangible ideals are substantiated for him by the busy yet orderly traffic in the streets of London. In her representation of characters like Peter Walsh, Woolf suggests that the religiously inflected idealism of her father's generation is in process of shifting into the new discourses of science and progress. With his belief in the abstract concept of 'civilization', Peter prides himself on his progressive idealism. His identification of futuristic efficiency and technology with a vision of glamorous and powerful modernity is illustrated as he stops to admire the 'great motor cars' through the plate-glass windows of a car sales room. 'How many miles on how many gallons?' he wonders (p. 41). Peter would have been at Oxford University when it was dominated by idealist thought and his approval of the 'communal spirit of London' suggests his affiliation with idealist social organicism (p. 128). Although he was sent down from Oxford for being a Socialist, he yet complacently assumes, 'with their love of abstract principle [. . .] the future of civilization lies in the hands of young men like that' (p. 43).

Immediately following this self-congratulatory thought (if I can think it then it must in some sense exist), Peter sees a troop of working-class boys marching to the Cenotaph. The 'weedy', ill-nourished condition of their physiques passes him unnoticed, a materiality rendered imperceptible within an idealist regime of representation. To Peter, their faces appear stamped with those abstract principles of 'duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England' (p. 43). It is 'a very fine training', he thinks as they march by him. The principles he mentally imposes on the boys' faces are precisely those that

British idealist F. H. Bradley invoked in his essay 'My Station and its Duties' as expressive of the best self. Yet Peter's use of the term 'training', here, indicates that it is the force of authority and discipline that has wrought this effect, not any spiritual recognition of the Common Good. Indeed, the impersonal narrator makes explicit the subordination of particularity and diversity, whether of class or person, that underpins the pursuit of idealised national unity. It was 'as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly, and life, with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreaths and drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline' (p. 44). Not only have the young men been put into uniform, they have been transformed from the heterogeneity of living beings into an almost mechanistic force. Their faces are 'unmixed with sensual pleasure or daily preoccupations', fleshly life has been converted into the will of duty and conformity (p. 43).

Peter's admiration for the 'fine training' of the working-class boys follows on from his admiration of the power and efficiency of 'great cars'. This suggests he would equally admire the kind of discipline that Henry Ford was imposing upon his industrial workforce in the name of efficiency and organisation. Another group of marching men also appear in the novel. They are the unemployed seen by Elizabeth Dalloway (p. 117). By the 1920s, the end of military conscription was resulting in rising unemployment and increasing political and industrial unrest and protest. With military training at an end, the disciplinary regimes imposed by new mass production methods were looked to in the British press and in governing circles as an alternative means of inculcating a regulated and productive labour force, 'one will working arms and legs uniformly', the body subordinated to the mind.

An article in *The Times*, in 1923, for example, the year in which *Mrs Dalloway* is set, advocated the adoption of Henry Ford's methods to address the problem of the unruly poor in Britain.²³ Ford also had many admirers within the growing Nazi party in Germany, including Adolph Hitler. He had opened his first British car plant in Manchester in 1911, and by 1923 the *Times* estimated that the plant was selling 40,000 to 50,000 cars a year in Britain. What particularly appealed to British authorities, though, was the systematic and rigorous regime of discipline Ford imposed upon his work force. Not only did he resort to brutal strong-arm tactics to prevent unionisation, he also employed a department of investigators to check that his employees were adhering to the strict standards of personal behaviour the company prescribed. These applied not only

while at work but also governed all aspects of behaviour outside the factory. Advocates of Ford's industrial relations couched their arguments in the abstract ideals of efficiency, progress and productivity, but what they sought in material terms were docile working bodies disciplined to the regulated order of machinery. J. B. S. Haldane, a leading British scientist, asked in 1923 whether 'the machine minder engaged on repetition work [is] the goal and ideal to which humanity is tending'.²⁴ Antonio Gramsci described Ford's production methods as 'the biggest collective effort to date to create, with unprecedented speed, and with a consciousness of purpose unmatched in history, a new type of worker and a new type of man'.²⁵

Mr Bentley is another idealist in *Mrs Dalloway* who admires machines as symbols of abstract values. This is, perhaps, unsurprising given the illustrious reputation of the Bentley car. Like Peter Walsh, the character of Mr Bentley also suggests that, by the 1920s, idealism was shifting its dominant location into the realm of science and visions of modernity. Not only does Mr Bentley see the plane over London as a symbol of human aspiration, of man's desire to 'get outside his body [. . .] by means of thought', the systems of thought he names are largely the abstract sciences: 'Einstein, speculation, mathematics, the Mendelian theory' (p. 24). To many people in the early part of the twentieth century, Einstein's theories seemed to offer conclusive scientific validation to idealism, since his work set out a field of knowledge that could only be comprehended by the intellect and was not, it was claimed, susceptible to empirical verification. The science of mathematics was expanding forms of knowledge derived entirely from closed-system abstract models of the sort that have come to dominate the present-day systems of macro-economics.

But why does Woolf include Mendelian theory in this list of speculative knowledge that Mr Bentley associates with the desire to leave the body for a realm of greater mental perfection? Mendel's genetic work on pea plants in the 1860s only came to prominence in the early part of the twentieth century when the scientist William Bateson recognised the significance of the work for agriculture. Bateson coined the term 'genetics' in 1905. He became director of the John Innes Institute, set up by a wealthy businessman of that name, who astutely recognised the vast commercial potential of the new science. The institute was soon at the forefront of international genetic research.

Bateson's successor at the John Innes Institute was J. B. S. Haldane, whose radical politics and enjoyment of controversy ruffled the

establishment but ensured him a public platform. In 1923, the year in which *Mrs Dalloway* is set, as we have noted, Haldane delivered a widely-published lecture to the Heretics Society at Cambridge. One year later, Woolf read a version of 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' to the Heretics. The title of Haldane's paper, 'Daedalus, or Science and the Future', suggests a more questioning view of the ideal of intellectual flight from material concerns than that of Mr Bentley in the novel. Haldane's starting point was the horrific destructive power witnessed in the First World War which had largely been made possible by scientific knowledge. Despite this, Haldane expresses cautious optimism that scientific research would lead to significant improvement in human life. Yet it would not be Einstein's theories that would achieve these benefits, he predicted. It would be advances in the science of biology, in particular, genetic research, that would transform the conditions of future existence by its revolutionary progress in the fields of food production, human reproduction and the eradication of diseases (*Daedalus*, pp. 57–68). When Elizabeth Dalloway is stimulated by her exciting first bus ride, to reject her mother's traditional woman's world and enter upon a career, her intention is to pursue this either in farming or medicine (p. 116). These were the fields of knowledge, agriculture and medicine, about to be radically transformed by Mendelian theory; the fields of genetic knowledge that Haldane believed would, in their turn, transform human life.

Throughout *Mrs Dalloway* there is an unobtrusive trail of references to plant breeding, at times explicitly related to Darwinian theory. Clarissa's aunt, old Miss Parry, who went botanising in Burma, was part of that generation, facilitated by imperial conquest, who scoured the world for exotic plants to enhance English estates. Her book on orchids was commended by Charles Darwin (p. 152). Sally Seton, who shocked Miss Parry by floating the heads of flowers in bowls, turns up years later as Lady Rosseter who breeds 'hydrangeas, syringas, very, very rare hibiscus lilies that never grow north of the Suez Canal' (p. 161). Part of the social satire here is that the rebel Sally, who chopped off heads, now aspires, by means of her husband's industrial wealth, to imitate the aristocratic pursuits she used to mock. Plant breeding, however, had become popularised since Miss Parry's time. Peter Walsh elicits approval from fellow diners in his hotel simply because he asks for a specific breed of pear, a Bartlett (p. 135). The family he impresses, the two-car-owning Morrises (another non-coincidental name; Morris was an early British popular car company), have

travelled down from Leeds to attend the Westminster flower-show (p. 136). The many different kinds of flowers in Miss Pym's shop that, left to nature, would bloom at different seasons, also point to the commercialisation of plant breeding.²⁶ Even Moll Pratt, a street flower seller, has bunches of roses, not the traditional violets, to sell. She is tempted to throw a bunch after the mysterious car, thinking the passenger may be the Prince of Wales (p. 16). The Prince's mistress, the Countess of Warwick, aptly nick-named 'Daisy', founded one of the first agricultural colleges for women at Reading. It may perhaps be another aspect of Woolf's humour with names in the novel that Peter Walsh's most recent conquest is named Daisy!

The war imposed a pause on the popularisation, among all classes, of flower cultivation and breeding. The government encouraged patriotic gardeners to turn their land over to vegetable production to help feed the nation. Royalty set an example by replacing the geraniums from the flower beds in front of Buckingham Palace with potatoes.²⁷ The end of hostilities heralded a renewed burst of enthusiasm for flower cultivation. Civic and domestic displays of colour in public parks and gardens seemed appropriate to the general celebration of peace. The Chelsea Flower Show and other municipal ones reopened to showcase the latest plant species produced by large-scale commercial producers like Suttons. In 1923, the novelist, Marion Cran, began broadcasting radio's first gardening programme (Uglow, *Little History*, p. 257). In *Mrs Dalloway*, post-war London is bright with flowers, in public areas, in hanging baskets, and bought in large bunches as gifts (pp. 46, 56, 79, 88, 97). The statue of Queen Victoria in front of the palace is again bedecked with geraniums (p. 16). Geraniums were, indeed, one of the earliest successes of plant hybridisation programmes.²⁸

However, not all references in the text to improved breeding by scientific means, and certainly not those in public discourse outside the text, were so innocuous. Septimus Warren Smith looks forward to a world entirely changed 'after all the toils of civilization – Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin' (p. 57). Darwinian ideas clearly influence his religious vision of evolutionary improvement in which dogs become men and flesh melts from the body leaving only nerve fibres. In Septimus's madness Woolf dramatises the fusion of idealist religiosity with scientific modes of thought. Septimus repeatedly insists that his vision of future redemption of the flesh, given only to him, must be understood 'scientific[ally] above all things' (p. 58). It is, he presumes, the effect of the heat

wave ‘operating upon a brain made sensitive by eons of evolution’ (p. 58). Public discourse in the non-fictional world of 1920s Britain was much pre-occupied with a redemptive vision of the future proffered by Social Darwinism, or, as it was increasingly called, eugenics. The rediscovery of Mendel’s work in the 1900s seemed to offer scientific credence to the project of Social Darwinism with its dream of human perfectibility. The Eugenic Society was formed in 1907 and its journal, *The Eugenic Review*, in 1909. The movement mounted a high profile public campaign in support of the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913. Opponents of the Act described it as the first attempt ‘in the scientific breeding of the poor’.²⁹ As here, the language of the eugenics debate drew heavily upon the popularised scientific discourse of horticulture; it combined that with the other new discourse of mass production processes.

In the 1920s, the Eugenic Society raised the stakes by campaigning for legislation that would permit the voluntary mass sterilisation of the feeble-minded poor. In addition to utilising the familiarised discourses of breeding and mass production, proponents of eugenics also made use of emotive abstractions such as ‘Civilisation’, ‘Nation’ and ‘Nature’, invariably capitalised, to impart a sense of threat to the physical integrity of national identity. On 20 June 1922, *The Times* printed a review entitled ‘Civilization’s Danger. The Revolt of the Underman’. The author of the reviewed book, *The Revolt against Civilization*, was American journalist and eugenicist, Lothrop Stoddard. *The Times* quotes him as warning that ‘racial misfits’ and ‘the congenitally unfit’ would seek to destroy what they cannot understand, namely the superior, more intelligent classes. On 21 October 1922, *The Times* reported the speech of William Inge, Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral, to the Society of Medical Officers of Health. To the cheers of his audience, Inge declared it mistaken philanthropy to allow those to survive whom Nature ‘might have preferred to die [. . .] The only way to eliminate [some diseases] was to discourage the propagation of infected stocks.’ Similarly, on 18 January 1922, an article in *The Times* declared ‘We may not agree on what is “best” but we can agree that the mental defective, the blind, the dumb are not the “best” and we can largely limit our production of them.’

In *Mrs Dalloway*, figures from the lowest stratum of social life appear fleetingly but recurrently at the margins of the narrative. They represent an encroaching otherness at the perimeter of the privileged community of those deemed the superior, more intelligent classes. From the woman who sits drinking in a doorway, to

the pub brawl with broken glasses, to Moll Pratt selling flowers, to Mrs Dempster with her knobbed lumps for feet, to the seedy-looking unemployed man at St Paul's, to the battered woman at the tube station, to the superfluous youth Lady Bruton intends to ship abroad, to the costermongers and prostitutes harassed by the police, to the female vagrant Richard Dalloway smiles at, to the unemployed men noticed by Elizabeth Dalloway, to the shindy of brawling women, all of these figures are perceived as troublesome or threatening to social order (pp. 4, 15, 16, 23, 24, 69, 93, 98, 99, 117, 139). Many of these unruly characters are women. One of the emotive anxieties driving support for the Mental Deficiency Act was the belief that feeble-minded women were invariably promiscuous, hence responsible for the increased breeding of defective children. After the Act was passed any poor, unsupported woman suspected of sexual misconduct was liable to be judged mentally defective and as such institutionalised for life. In the novel both Clarissa and Richard Dalloway express concern about the welfare of vagrant women they notice in the streets (pp. 4, 99). Clarissa is sure they cannot be dealt with by Acts of Parliament.

In the text there are idealists who find the messiness of unregulated fleshly life repugnant, especially that of 'miserable pigmies, these feeble, these ugly, these craven men and women' (p. 48). For Peter Walsh, the discipline imposed upon the troop of weedy youths converts their ugly feebleness into an image of patriotic nobility. In the 1920s world of Britain beyond the text, feeble, ugly life was repeatedly associated with vagrants, prostitutes, the mentally deficient, the poor, the insane, homosexuals and the racially degenerate. Psychiatrists were closely involved in public debates, campaigns and legislation concerning mental deficiency, vagrancy and insanity, categories which lacked any clear dividing distinctions. In the early twentieth century there was unease among psychiatrists that their professional discipline lacked the prestige of other branches of medicine.³⁰ As part of their campaign to raise their social and professional status, psychiatrists had a vested interest in working with government and legislators. Their science, they claimed, offered objective knowledge of mental disorder and their theory-based practice the means to control those whose deficiencies posed a threat to the common good of the nation.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Sir William Bradshaw is gratified to be seen in consultation with those in power. With his worship of the Goddess of Proportion, Bradshaw is undoubtedly the most sinister idealist in the text. He ruthlessly feeds his desire for power by forcing all those

who fall into his hands to submit to his authority, including his own wife. Once she had caught salmon freely, but ‘quick to minister to the craving, which lit her husband’s eye so oilily for dominance’, she had ‘gone under’ (p. 85). Bradshaw is one of those frightening types of idealist, as described by Bertrand Russell, who insists their word is law. In *Mrs Dalloway* and elsewhere in her fiction, Woolf represents this bullying insistence upon conformity as a coercive continuum from the domestic sphere to the public and political domains. In *Mrs Dalloway*, this desire for domination is termed ‘Conversion’, sister goddess to Proportion. It is a force that ‘feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace’ (p. 85).

Some such submissive process as this is illustrated in the rapt faces of the youths that Peter Walsh admires and in the faces, transfixed with veneration, of those who behold the large car as symbol of ‘the majesty of England’. While the aim is to impose conformity of will upon the populace, the force of Conversion is equally ready to ‘smite out of her way roughly the dissentient, or dissatisfied’ (p. 85). Clarissa Dalloway, who insists she would never try ‘to convert anyone’, feels instinctively that Bradshaw is ‘capable of some indescribable outrage – forcing your soul’ (pp. 107, 157). ‘Conversion’ is primarily a religious term; it is to renounce the world for the spirit, to subdue the body for the sake of the soul. Woolf’s choice of the word suggests the intolerant and fanatical zeal with which those like Bradshaw seek to force upon others their systems of belief, whether secular or religious. It points, also, to the idealist desire to transform the disordered imperfection of embodied life into a docile unity of conforming souls or wills, into what could be thought of euphemistically as the common Good.

Septimus Warren Smith also has religious visions of a brave new world in which flesh has melted away leaving only the nerves or will. It is a religion that, he insists, is based upon science above all. It is his duty, he believes, to communicate his knowledge to the Cabinet (p. 57). Sir William Bradshaw, ‘priest of science’, shares that vision of flesh brought under control of the will (p. 80). The parallels between Septimus’s insane delusions and the social visions of Bradshaw are deliberate, yet there is an important difference. Bradshaw seeks to impose his subjective prejudices as objective knowledge just as Bertrand Russell accused idealists of doing. Unlike Septimus, but like leading idealists in the real world, Sir William has access to the Cabinet and the legislative means to impose his will on all those who are in any way disempowered and vulnerable. ‘There was no

alternative. It was a question of law', he says relentlessly to Septimus (p. 82). Yet while his rhetoric is that of the irresistible authority of science and law that have 'made England prosper', his methods are the technologies of eugenics, practised upon the flesh. He 'secluded [. . .] lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views' (p. 84). Such measures are justified by his 'scientific' belief that all 'unsocial impulses [are] bred more than anything by lack of good blood' (p. 86).

For Woolf, any form of subjectivity or system of beliefs that avoids confrontation with the materiality of bodies and things risks succumbing to a will to power: the attempt to impose prejudices and passions upon others in the name of 'higher' values. In *Mrs Dalloway* she demonstrates the paradoxical regime of the perceptible that holds idealism in place. On the one hand, idealist rhetoric, whether of the nation's common Good or of the rational power of science and progress, depends upon the metaphorical functioning that allows things to provide tangibility to abstractions like nation, duty, civilisation. On the other, idealist emphasis upon the 'will' as the defining value of self and nation renders inconsequential, beneath notice, the physical suffering and damage inflicted on embodied persons and population by the brutalities of war, poverty and legalised coercion.

Elizabeth Hamilton, living through factional post-Revolutionary politics, suggested that the factitious self frequently shores up its precarious idea of self by imaginative identification with the nation or a system of values. Any challenge, criticism or perceived harm to these mental projections that enlarge and empower the idea of self will be experienced as a threat to the self's very existence. Woolf similarly suggests that those enjoying class privilege and power are wholly unable to distinguish between self and an ideal of the nation that sustains and reflects back their own imaginary 'best self'. Not surprisingly, anything or person that does not subscribe to the regulated homogeneity of that imaginary order has to be either excluded or compelled to conform. Peter Walsh excludes from the civilised efficiency that he imagines is England the otherness that he terms the chaos of India. There are moments when 'civilization' seems to him 'a personal possession' as, too, does 'pride in England' (p. 47). Lady Bruton's glorification of a mythic England of Shakespeare energises her ruthless drive to exclude, by means of emigration, 'the superfluous youth of our ever-increasing population'. This project has become an 'object round which the essence of her soul is daily secreted' (p. 92). It is for her a 'sublime conception', an abstract idea

in other words, but one which she, nevertheless, intends to impose upon those whom she never conceives as actual people with particular lives, hopes and incongruities. Her term 'superfluous' precisely registers the idealist regime of the perceptible in which those without status are denied the right even to material existence.

British idealists were accused by their critics of justifying the subordination of the subject to an ideal of the state as a spiritual unity. Instead of the horizontal mobility and heterogeneity of space, as Woolf represents London, with its democratic blare and uproar, idealists desire a controlled and bounded place structured vertically by lines of obedience to rank and duty, just as the clocks of Harley Street counsel 'submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion' (p. 87). The many idealists in the text of *Mrs Dalloway* do not by any means share the same vision of order, even though they all desire the imposition of the will upon what they see as the waywardness of physical being. The object of Woolf's attack is not any one specific school of idealism or even on any one form of social or political tyranny underwritten by it. Rather her critique is aimed at idealism as a pervasive ideological structure, sustaining a regime of the perceptible that allows visibility to the mass of the population only at the price of disciplined conformity. In just this way, Peter Walsh screens out from his view of the marching boys evidence of their malnutrition, seeing only disciplined uniformity. The novel suggests, moreover, that idealist systems of thought follow the discourses of power. From the moral and religious conceptions of the state and the self that dominated Woolf's father's late Victorian world, idealism, with its zealous spirit of religion, has moved into those modern forms of knowledge that operate from an Olympian perspective. From that disembodied distance, heterogeneity and diversity can be homogenised into a mass, or be conceptualised into abstract regularity.

In opposition to that imposed conformity from above, Woolf's writing fluidity offers a common horizontal world teeming with people and things. Only a democratic regime of the perceptible, as a shared world in which everyone and everything is visible and heard, can create a dissensus that resists totalising systems of thought. It is the non-reverent, secular, non-vertical visibility of a comic incongruity, so often prevailing between the vision and the fact, that allows monsters to be destroyed by laughter before the idea or abstraction takes substance through infliction upon actual bodies. As Woolf argues in her essays, the idea must always be brought back to the

truth of empirical fact. *Mrs Dalloway* suggests there are hugely crucial political imperatives at stake in this necessary adherence to empiricism. This is the insight underlying her aesthetic practice of worldly realism. The metonymic structures and stylistics of *Mrs Dalloway* enact an egalitarian recognition of the multiple interdependent force fields constituting self, social structures, things as ‘gatherings’ and the physical world. Her inclusive aesthetic lays bare the brutal coercion of ‘the social system at its most intense’. Equally, it constitutes a radical dissensus to the authoritarian vertical regime of the perceptible imposed by idealist ideology.

Notes

1. *Room of One's Own*, p. 57.
2. See, for example, *Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 2.9–16; 3.331–5; 4.41, 146–57, 390–3, 513; 5.59–63; 6.439. For a less sympathetic account of Woolf's fascination with Austen see Janet Todd, ‘Who's Afraid of Jane Austen’, in *Jane Austen: New Perspectives*, pp. 107–27.
3. Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2.186.
4. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, pp. 548–53.
5. See, for example, Jean Guiguet, *Virginia Woolf and her Works*; James Haffley, *The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist*; Shiv K. Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel*.
6. Among influential studies see Elizabeth Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*; Nancy Topping Bazin, *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision*; Rachel Bowlby, *Feminist Destinations*; Jane Marcus, ed., *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf, Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy*; Makiko Minnow-Pinkney, *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject*; Sue Roe, *Writing and Gender: Virginia Woolf's Writing Practice*.
7. See, for example, Gillian Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*; Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere*; Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality and Myth*; Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations*; Michael Whitworth, *Virginia Woolf*.
8. Cambridge University Press edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf (launched 2011).
9. Linden Peach, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 169.
10. Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, p. 15. Other discussions of Woolf and realism include Susan Dick, ‘Literary Realism in *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*’, in Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, eds, *Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*,

- pp. 50–71; Hintikka Jaakko, ‘Virginia Woolf and Our Knowledge of the External World’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Fall 1979–80, vol. 38, pp. 5–14; S. P. Rosenbaum, ‘The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf’, in S. P. Rosenbaum, ed., *English Literature and British Philosophy*.
11. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, p. 38.
 12. Michael Whitworth makes this point in his chapter on ‘Philosophical Questions’, p. 119.
 13. Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography*, p. 152.
 14. In what follows I am indebted to the accounts of British idealism offered in David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*; David Boucher, ed., *The British Idealists*; Peter P. Nicholson, *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists*; Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of British Idealists*.
 15. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* [1876], pp. 160–213.
 16. Boucher and Vincent (pp. 102–30) and Vincent and Plant (pp. 132–62) offer informative accounts of the widespread social, political and educational activities of idealist affiliates.
 17. G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies* [1922], pp. 1–30.
 18. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* [1918], p. 15.
 19. Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy* [1912], p. 92.
 20. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 275.
 21. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 2.248.
 22. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, p. 48.
 23. *The Times*, 28 November 1923; for an account of the expansion of mass assembly production from its inception at Ford’s Dearborn factory, see Mark Rupert, *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power*, pp. 63–7 and Douglas Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, his Company and a Century of Progress*, pp. 134–60.
 24. J. B. S. Haldane, *Daedalus, or Science and the Future*, pp. 4–5.
 25. Quoted in David Harvey’s chapter on ‘Fordism’, in *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, p. 126. Aldous Huxley makes a similar point in *Brave New World* (1932) where time in the futuristic world state is referred to as AF – After Ford.
 26. Elisa Kay Sparks, “‘Everything tended to set itself in a garden’”: Virginia Woolf’s Literary and Quotidian Flowers: A Bar-Graphical Approach’, in Kristin Czarnecki and Carrie Rohman, eds, *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World*, comments that the number of flower references in *Mrs Dalloway* ‘towers over other texts’ p. 44.
 27. Jenny Uglow, *A Little History of British Gardening*, p. 255.
 28. Maggie Campbell-Culver, *The Origins of Plants: People and Plants that have Shaped Britain’s Garden History since the Year 1000*, p. 356.

29. Quoted in Matthew Thomson, *The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870–1959*, p. 47. Thomson provides an excellent bibliography of the extensive number of books concerned with mental deficiency and with eugenics that were published during the early decades of the twentieth century.
30. Thomson, pp. 120–4; Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac*, pp. 65–6, 143.

