

# READING WOOLF IN EUROPE

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with the CBCP – Centre for  
Book Cultures and Publishing,  
University of Reading.



*"Sometimes I think heaven must be one continuous unexhausted reading."*

## ABSTRACT BOOKLET

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**Helen Southworth, University of Oregon, USA**

**“Il faut absolument que ce livre soit publié en français”: Virginia Woolf’s First French Translators.**

I take the title of this talk from a letter sent by Mme M[adeleine] T. Guéritte in 1930 in which she inquires about the possibility of translating Woolf’s 1929 *A Room of One’s Own*. Guéritte was one of a legion of women who approached Woolf herself and the Hogarth Press, (some with success, others not) with the hope of translating Woolf’s work and disseminating her ideas and her thought across the Francophone world. Using folders from the Hogarth Press Archives at the University of Reading, I outline Leonard Woolf’s often fraught negotiations with early translators and French publishing houses in his capacity as Hogarth Press co-founder and manager and the closest thing Woolf had to an agent. As the HPA folders suggest, relations were often complicated by unpaid rights and royalties. The archival documents also reveal an interesting tension between French press editors, who projected a gap between Woolf’s English vision and the taste of French readers, and the insistence of women like Guéritte that women writing in France “absolutely needed” Woolf’s work in translation. (Guéritte translated Katherine Mansfield’s work, but did not ultimately translate Woolf’s). Time permitting, I will profile several early French translators, including Rose Celli (1895-1982) (*L’Art du roman*, 1963) and Hélène Bokanowski (*La Maison hantée*, 1946), who form part of a rich network of early female French translators of Woolf (and other modernist writers) who have yet to receive any sustained scholarly attention.

**Helen Southworth** is a Professor in the English Department at the University of Oregon. She has written on Virginia Woolf and France in *The Intersecting Realities and Fictions of Virginia Woolf and Colette*. She is also author of *Fresca: A Life in the Making*, coauthor of *Scholarly Adventures in Digital Humanities*, editor of *Leonard and Virginia Woolf, The Hogarth Press and the Networks of Modernism* and cofounder of the Modernist Archives Publishing Project. She is at work on a new book about Virginia Woolf and France.

**Henrike Krause, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany**

**The rediscovery of Virginia Woolf  
Woolf's works at the S. Fischer Verlag in the German post-war era**

In the last two decades Virginia Woolf's reception in Germany has been examined by several scholars: Ansgar and Vera Nünning in their detailed study 'The German Reception and Criticism of Virginia Woolf: A Survey of Phases and Trends in the Twentieth Century' (2002) or Wolfgang Wicht in his pioneering essay 'Installing Modernism: The Reception of Virginia Woolf in the German Democratic Republic' (2002). While Ansgar and Vera Nünning concentrate on general trends and scholarly criticism of Virginia Woolf's works Wolfgang Wicht explores the official and unofficial circumstances under which some of Woolf's novels and essays could be published in East Germany. Emily Hayman (2012), Daniel Göske (2018, 2021) and Christian Weiß (2019, 2021) approach Woolf's German reception from a similar angle and explore how publishers, literary agents and translators have shaped the way in which Woolf's works were presented and received by the reading public. Göske and Weiß concentrate on Woolf's early translations in interwar Germany whereas Hayman foregrounds the role of Woolf's translators after 1945, namely Herberth E. and Marlys Herlitschka. Since the Herlitschkas did not only translate Virginia Woolf, but also D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, David Garnett, and others, Hayman gives a broad overview of their translatory work. Newly discovered archival material of the prestigious publisher S. Fischer Verlag reveals that Herberth E. Herlitschka was also the driving force behind S. Fischer's rediscovery of Virginia Woolf in West Germany after the Second World War. My findings at the Deutsche Literaturarchiv (German Literary Archive) led me to conclude that Herlitschka's role at the S. Fischer Verlag cannot be underestimated and that his activities went far beyond those of a translator. He not only initiated the idea of a complete edition of Virginia Woolf's works in German, but also secured the exclusive translator rights for himself and his wife. The archival material indicates that Herberth E. Herlitschka developed the status of an expert on Virginia Woolf's works during the 1950s and 1960s and acted unofficially as editor and marketing expert for the S. Fischer Verlag. In my paper I will discuss Herberth E. Herlitschka's activities for the S. Fischer Verlag in the light of two examples: the first is a collection of essays entitled *Granit und Regenbogen*. This volume caused much trouble because it was not the translation of Leonard Woolf's 1958 essay collection *Granite and Rainbow* but an entirely different book. The second example is S. Fischer's 1961 edition of *Orlando*. The publishing process of *Orlando* is well documented in the publisher's archive and Herlitschka's paratexts for this volume demonstrate how he shaped the way in which Virginia Woolf's 'mock biography' was perceived. My discussion of both examples will be accompanied by contemporary press reviews.

**Henrike Krause** is a PhD candidate at the Peter Szondi Institute for Comparative Literature at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her PhD has been supported by several institutions, e.g. the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Academic Scholarship Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes). Her thesis investigates the reception of Virginia Woolf in the former German Democratic Republic with a focus on the works of Christa Wolf. She was Research Assistant to Professor Claudia Olk and has taught several classes at the Peter Szondi Institute on literary theory as well as English and German literature of the twentieth century. She contributed to the volume *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature* and delivered papers at the 28th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf (2018, University of Kent) and the international conference *Recycling Woolf* (2019, Université de Lorraine).

### Virginia Woolf's Greek experience: an early gem lately discovered

"A Dialogue upon Mount Pentelicus" is a case of Virginia Woolf's juvenilia which was probably written in 1906 and remained long unpublished after her death. It was only in 1987 that Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum rearranged the seven pages manuscript in the Monks House Papers archive and printed the whole work for the first time in two London literary periodicals giving it a title and adding useful information about the context. Two years later, Susan Dick made the story widely available for readers and scholars including it in the second edition, emended and annotated, of her collection *Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf* (1989). Hard to define as a specific literary genre, this brief narrative imitates the form of a platonic dialogue and parodies the encounter of a group of English schoolboys with contemporary Greek culture during an excursion on the famous mountain near Athens. The plot takes inspiration from Woolf's life experience, in particular by events happened during the writer's first visit to Greece with her siblings and friend, documented in diaries and letters. Specifically, a report of the journey appears in "Greece 1906", a section of her adolescent chronicle *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, 1897-1909*, also posthumously published by Mitchell Leaska in 1990. These texts represent the evidence of an embryonal phase of Woolf's writing, in which she experimented with a style of metaphorical narration that turns out to be instructive of the development of her own literary style and ideas about tradition, education and sense of cultural belonging. Such elements are the germs of a poetics that will be well evident in more mature production of the author, both literary and essayistic like *The Perfect Language* (1917) and *On Not Knowing Greek* (1925). Concerning the broader reception of these works, it is interesting to note that although translations of Dick's compendium (or the greatest part of it) containing "A Dialogue upon Mount Pentelicus" have been made in the most popular European languages since 1990's the Italian one *Tutti i racconti* (La Tartaruga) had to wait until 2003 to be completed. Also, the 2011 volume *Diari di viaggio in Italia, Grecia e Turchia* (Mattioli 1885) is the first and only that presents the Italian version of some of the early journals, including the Greek one, and has subsequently been incorporated in *Diari di viaggio in Italia e in Europa* (Mattioli 1885 2016), a travel chronicle which includes also later accounts.

**Cristina Testa** is a scholar in the field of English Modernism and currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Florence. Her research focusses on the fascination with and influence of Greek language and culture in some lesser-known works by Virginia Woolf, among them, an unpublished translation of Aeschylus' Agamemnon. From 2012 to 2018 she studied foreign languages, in particular English and German, and comparative literatures at the University of Perugia, where she was conferred with both a Bachelor's and Master's degree. For the latter, she submitted a thesis entitled *Some Examples about the Myth of Philomela in English Literature*, for which she was awarded the maximum grade. During her academic studies, she also took part in three Erasmus+ traineeship programs respectively in England, Germany and Scotland and tutored younger students as a teaching assistant in English literature. She attended conferences such as "La rappresentazione della coscienza nel modernismo europeo" held by the Centre for European Modernism Studies in Perugia in 2017 and "Science in Culture. Arts of Welfare and European Cultures of Care. The Role of the Arts in the Evolution of Health Care and Education (1752 – 1948)" that took place at the University of St Andrews in 2018, the organisation of which she also contributed to.

**Paulina Pająk**, University of Wrocław, Poland

### **Absent Presence: Woolf's Reception in Interwar Poland**

In the 1920s and 1930s, Virginia Woolf appeared in more than forty articles, interviews, and reviews published in Polish newspapers and magazines – her fiction was admired, criticised, and discussed by diverse readers in interwar Poland. Woolf's novels were early associated with dazzling Modernist experiments and technological innovations: in November 1929, the journalist "M. Z." observed that "Woolf looks upon life as if out the window of a speeding train – or rather of a flying aeroplane" while in January 1935, the travel writer Hanna Skarbek argued that Woolf's works "masterly render her control of the internal radio-apparatus, these inner cinematographic processes". And yet, none of Woolf's novels was then published in Poland – her interwar readers received only translated excerpts, such as the opening passages from "Time Passes", the middle section of *To the Lighthouse*, translated by the experimental novelist Aniela Gruszecka in her essay on the modern novel published in 1933. Woolf's "absent presence" in the Polish literary marketplace is surprising and intriguing in the context of interwar Polish translations not only of her British contemporaries (including James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, and Daphne du Maurier) but also her Bloomsbury friends (Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster, Vita Sackville-West, and David Garnett). Drawing on archival and text materiality studies, my paper presents Woolf's early reception in Poland, with the main focus on her interwar readers and British-Jewish-Polish modernist publishing networks. By using both the interwar press publications (articles, reviews, interviews) and the previously unexamined correspondence between the Hogarth Press and Polish/Jewish publishing houses, literary agents, and translators, I will be able to answer two essential questions: how Woolf was received by diverse readers in Poland and why Polish/Jewish publishers failed in their attempts to provide Woolf's audience(s) with Polish translations.

**Paulina Pająk**, PhD, is a lecturer at the University of Wrocław. She has co-edited *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature* (2021) and published in several volumes and journals, including *Virginia Woolf and Heritage* (2017), "Woolf Studies Annual" (2018), *Virginia Woolf and the World of Books*, and "Politeja" (2019). She explores memory in Virginia Woolf's works, Central-European modernist publishing networks and modernist legacies in contemporary Polish literature.

**Maria Rita Drumond Viana, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil**

**The use of periodical versions as copy-texts in translations of Woolf's essays into Brazilian Portuguese: an editorial mystery investigated**

Even after Virginia Woolf's works became public domain in Brazil (a signatory of the Berne convention), her essays are rarely translated in editions that follow her original Hogarth Press volumes. Whenever they have appeared in the national market, with few exceptions, the essays are selected – sometimes creatively so – by various editors/translators from multiple sources, often also mixing “genres”, such as the inclusion of a 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 1939 letter to Shena Dorothy Simon in a collection of Woolf's writing about “patriarchy and militarism”, published in 2019 by Autêntica. While this approach reveals an understanding of editors and translators as very active mediating agents in the reception of Woolf's non-fictional *oeuvre* in Brazil and other Lusophone countries, there is another consequence to not adhering to the volumes as published in the UK by the Woolfs' own press or in the US by Harcourt: the choice of copy-text for translation. Surprisingly, although often identifying in their paratexts the scholarly *Collected Essays* volumes edited by Andrew McNeillie, many individual essays are translated from the earlier versions published in periodicals, not the often considerably reworked versions that Woolf herself or her literary executors later produce for the book format volumes by Hogarth or Harcourt, in apparent contradiction of the still prevalent logic of the “authors' last intention” explored by Jerome McGann in the 1980s.

**Maria Rita Drumond Viana** is a Professor D2 at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil, where she lectures and conducts research with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. She also supervises MA and PhD students at the Postgraduate Programme in English (PPGI/UFSC) and the Postgraduate Programme in Translation Studies (PPGET-UFSC).

## Virginia Woolf - Nathalie Sarraute: typologie d'une influence

Une œuvre littéraire ne naît jamais *ex nihilo* et même les tempéraments les plus singuliers tel Dostoïevski à propos duquel Sarraute écrit – « Il est unique ! » – ou Beckett, qui réfute l'idée d'une conception chronologique de la littérature – « TS ELIOT était partout à Dublin, parlant [...] sur la Relation entre les Littératures, tralala » – possèdent un lien avec le passé. Cependant, que l'œuvre littéraire ne naisse pas *ex nihilo*, ne suffit pas à affirmer qu'il y ait parenté – qui songerait à rapprocher Duras de Zola ? – ou que parenté il n'y ait pas. Parfois, des auteurs bémolisent la bipolarité parenté/non parenté. C'est le cas de Virginia Woolf et de Nathalie Sarraute car si points de contact il y a, la déclaration suivante de Sarraute étant aisément applicable aux *Tropismes* : « Cet écrivain peut comprimer le temps ou le dénouer infiniment sur trois siècles, comme dans *Orlando...* », points de rupture il y a également, énoncés encore une fois par Sarraute elle-même : « Pour moi, nos actes s'élaborent avant les mots. Je mets au jour la sensation, je la guide... Chez Virginia Woolf, l'espace et le temps se télescopent. »

Le but de cette communication n'est pas de lister les points d'ancrage et les points de rupture entre l'œuvre woolfienne et l'œuvre sarrautienne, mais d'illustrer le lien de parenté indéniable entre ces deux auteurs : un écrit littéraire de la romancière française apparaissant comme étant la réécriture d'un essai de la romancière anglaise si bien que lire Sarraute, c'est lire Sarraute ayant lu Woolf.

Doctorante contractuelle, **Virginie Podvin** consacre une thèse à l'Esthétique de Samuel Beckett à la lumière de la correspondance sous la direction de Madame Sophie Guermès, à l'Université de Brest. Ses travaux de recherche portent sur la littérature du XX siècle, plus précisément, sur l'œuvre de Woolf, Sarraute et Duras, notamment dans leur interaction avec la musique et les arts visuels. Elle est membre de la Société d'Études Woolfiennes, du Beckett Circle et de la Société Internationale Marguerite Duras – elle fait partie du conseil d'administration, de l'équipe de rédaction et est responsable du bulletin de la société. Elle est, depuis cinq années, chargée de cours à l'Université de Brest en Licence Arts (Littérature et Arts - Sémantique de la musique dans le cinéma), Licence de Lettres Modernes (Littérature du XX siècle) et Licence Humanités (Les mouvements esthétiques en Europe du XVII siècle au XX siècle).



**Nathalie Sarraute, Virginia Woolf and the Anxiety of Influence**

Though partly overshadowed by the genius of James Joyce, who occupied pride of place on the Parisian intellectual scene of the 1920s and 1930s, Woolf's *oeuvre* had a significant impact on the thought and literary production of the *Nouveaux Romanciers*, a generation of writers emerging nearly a decade after her death. Among these, Nathalie Sarraute holds a significant, but often uncertain, position. While in some essays and *entretiens* she explicitly mentions Woolf among her models and precursors, or does not hesitate to express her own admiration for the great achievements of Woolf's art, on other occasions her attitude is not devoid of contradictions. In several interviews, Sarraute credits Woolf with playing a key role in the radical transformation of twentieth-century fiction (to which, of course, she contributed herself), but at the same time she refuses to acknowledge, with ill-concealed *anxiety of influence*, the conspicuous similarities between Woolf's style or sensibility and her own. Despite strenuously defending the originality of her own creative vein, Sarraute's words have often implicitly brought to the fore the aims and beliefs she shares with Woolf, who can be said to represent "a deep source of fascination and influence hidden and dealt with in the most complex registers of ambivalence" (Villeneuve 2002: 29). On close analysis, both writers almost exclusively focus their attention on the depiction of the inner world, on the imperceptible reverberations of thoughts, fleeting sensations and unspoken words, or the anonymous, preverbal movements of the psyche that Sarraute names *tropisms*. When praising the fluidity and rhythmic quality of Woolf's writing, Sarraute recalls the transient, evanescent, amorphous nature of the inner reality her fiction strives to capture through an idiosyncratic style that, in spite of her claims, is for both of them fluent and at the same time discontinuous, or fragmented by a peculiar overabundance of dashes, ellipses and juxtapositions of images. As shown by their shared conception of literary creation as verbal transposition of thoughts and sensory perceptions, and by their idea of language as surface manifestation of a deep, psychological reality, their aesthetics is not entirely inwardly-focused, but rather poised on a mutual tension between consciousness and reality, subjectivity and objectivity, unity and fragmentation. For both writers, literary creation presupposes a certain "permeability" of the self, a sort of osmosis between the inner and the outer world, and language plays a crucial role as the medium of composition conceived as "transmuting process", or verbal equivalent of a reality which is primarily non-verbal. This paper, therefore, aims to explore the multiple analogies linking Woolf and Sarraute, which have been largely overlooked by criticism. These extend far beyond the close connection between life and art, between their sensibility on the one hand and their particular way of conceiving fiction on the other, also concerning specific aspects of their literary production, as well as shared formal features and stylistic devices.

**Annalisa Federici** holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Perugia. Her main research areas are literary Modernism, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, formal aspects in fiction, and the relationship between writing and psychological processes. She is the author of the books *Il linguaggio e la realtà. La narrativa modernista di Virginia Woolf e James Joyce* (2011) and *"In a Kind of Retrospective Arrangement": Essays on James Joyce and Memory* (2016), as well as of a number of critical essays on Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Ford Madox Ford, Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor. She is currently working on Joyce, little magazines, expatriate autobiography and celebrity culture in interwar Paris.



**Monica Latham, Université de Lorraine, Nancy, France**

### **Virginia Woolf in the French Imagination**

I would like to explore several novels written in French in which Virginia Woolf appears as a fictional character: Christine Orban, *Virginia et Vita* (2014); Christine Duhon, *Une année amoureuse de Virginia Woolf* (1990); Anne-James Chaton, *Elle regarde passer les gens* (2016); Emmanuelle Favier, *Virginia* (2019); Anne-Marie Bougret, *Intrigue chez Virginia Woolf* (2019) and Gabriel Thoveron, *Qui fait peur à Virginia Woolf ? Élémentaire, mon cher Lupin !* (2006). This paper examines how French writers, mostly women, have borrowed and transposed Woolf's real life events, as well as portions of her oeuvre, in their works and have negotiated the fusion of fact and fiction. By studying a variety of representations, the aim of this paper is to investigate if there is a French specificity to writing biofiction and if the character of Virginia Woolf displays particular features, transformations or variations when portrayed by French writers who do not necessarily continue Woolf's literary tradition like many Anglo-American writers (see Latham 2021). It is essential to analyse what kind of literary, cultural and political heritage the character of Woolf brings with her in the French imagination. The paper studies the different scenarios in which the character of Virginia Woolf evolves, the French writers' portrayal techniques, and the messages that their fictional Woolf addresses the French reader. The paper concludes that in the French context, too, Woolf has become an iconic figure and has entered the public consciousness. Her numerous representations as a heroine in French literature proves that she has acquired a global reputation that goes beyond geographical borders and has the capacity to adapt to other literary and cultural backgrounds.

**Monica Latham** is a Professor of British literature at the English Department of the Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France, and a specialist of Virginia Woolf and genetic criticism. She obtained a PhD in 2003 from Université de Nancy, France. Her thesis analysed the genesis of Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, and was entitled 'De *Melymbrosia* (1908) à *The Voyage Out* (1915): l'invention allotropique du projet woolfien d'écriture'. Since then, Latham has published over sixty articles on modernist and postmodernist authors in many international journals and academic publications. She is the author of *A Poetics of Postmodernism and Neomodernism: Rewriting Mrs Dalloway* (2015) and *Virginia Woolf's Afterlives: The Author as Character in Contemporary Fiction and Drama* (2021). She is the co-editor of the series 'Book Practices and Textual Itineraries' (Editions Universitaires de Lorraine), 'Biofiction Studies' (Bloomsbury) and 'Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks' (Brepols).

## **Legitimacy through Images and Words: Graphic Novels and Comics Host Virginia Woolf.**

Virginia Woolf's role in the popular world has raised important questions amongst scholars, especially in light of the great influence that Woolf seems to constantly exert in several non-academic contexts. The pros and cons deriving from the dissemination of Woolf and her works have been highlighted along with the apparent aversion to popular culture that Woolf could have as a "high modernist" writer. Nevertheless, Woolf's involvement in the popular world was already active during her life, giving rise to a gradual process of celebrification of her own *persona*.

This paper will investigate the interconnections between Woolf's literary prestige and her appearances in popular contexts by focusing on her presence in some graphic novels and comics. Specifically, the present analysis will regard the following works: *Una stanza tutta per tre* (2013) by Alessandro Bacchetta and *Virginia. Vita di Virginia Woolf* (2017) by Lucrèce and Tonani Lorenza, both in Italian; the English *Virginia Woolf* (2016) by Arsenault Isabelle and MacLear Kyo; the French *Virginia Woolf* (2011) by Cicciolini Bernard and Gazier Michèle—regarding the latter, given Gazier's country of origin, the Spanish translation will be considered. As will be observed, these graphic novels and comics are in line with other forms of dissemination as they reflect some of the dynamics concerning the diffusion (and reception) of Woolf in the popular realm. At the same time, more than other popular works, graphic novels and comics on Woolf seem to be empowered by a constant doubleness: images and words coexist harmoniously as writers/illustrators silently do with Woolf. The graphic novels and comics mentioned above will thus be considered as a multimodal attempt of literary self-legitimacy. Indeed, as will be discussed, graphic novels and comics invoke legitimacy via Woolf and her works, at times even through processes of appropriation and manipulation of her image, name and writing. By strengthening their own value via Woolf's influential textures, moreover, graphic novels and comics detach themselves from a merely popular market while putting common readers in contact with the "high" Woolf. After analysing the ways in which graphic novels and comics deal with Woolf's *persona*, her life and some of her works, this paper will also shed light on the role that culture may play in this treatment of Woolf. Evidently, Woolf acts as a common source and topic in the graphic novels and comics here read—even though each author may have met Woolf differently. At the same time, the existence of a *unique* Woolf, who can overcome any cultural gap between the four works, may be partly undermined by the authors' (and readers') different cultures. From this perspective, images will be seen as a powerful glue that, besides speaking by themselves to readers, are able to reunite all of them in a non-verbal territory where Woolf has just to be shown.

**Cristina Carluccio** completed her PhD in English Literature at the Università del Salento (Lecce) after defending a dissertation which explores the connections between gaze and movement in selected works by Virginia Woolf in the light of Vernon Lee's Psychological Aesthetics. She has written some essays on Woolf and *flânerie*, Woolf and Victoria Ocampo and Woolf's involvement in popular culture.

She has been nominated "Cultore della Materia" in English Literature at the Università del Salento and is currently teaching English in a high school.

**'My Profession is Literature': The legacy and influence of Virginia Woolf on Irish feminist intellectual networks of the mid-twentieth-century.**

The debates about women's right to 'earn a living' and women's role in the professions link Irish feminists with their Anglophone counterparts. In Britain, discussions on women in the professions were on-going during the early thirties with polemical texts such as Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Woolf's speech on 'Professions for Women' (1931) identifying obstacles for women writers in the form of finance and tradition.<sup>1</sup> As Woolf stated, "And if this is so in literature, the freest of all professions for women, how is it in the new professions which you are now for the first time entering?" The battle for financial independence was part of an overall goal to empower women to become fully participating citizens. This plan failed to materialize, despite the success of achieving suffrage and the removal of barriers to education. Women responded by setting up professional groups for women whom they could join according to trade or industry. In Ireland, leading Irish women writers collectively united to form the Women Writers' Club, embodying many of the principles and ideas espoused by Woolf. They aimed to improve material conditions for the professional women writer and foster a space for women writers in the public sphere. Their sense of themselves as professional writers mattered to them, as it did to Woolf, as they battled against a conservative and censorious society. This paper explores the influence of Woolf on Irish literary networks and her role in influencing intellectual debates and feminist cultural practices of the mid-twentieth century.

Dr **Deirdre Brady** currently teaches at the University of Limerick having completed her PhD in 2014. Her research focus is on Irish literary coteries of the mid-twentieth century. Recent publications include 'The Gayfield Press' published in MAPP, the digital Modernist Archives Publishing Project (2020); 'Writers and the International Spirit: Irish P.E.N. in the Postwar Years', published in *The New Hibernia Review* (2017); '*The Road to Cuzco*: An Irish woman writers' journey to the 'navel of the world' published in *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* (2018), and 'Modernist Presses and the Gayfield Press' published in *Bibliologica* (2014). She has also published articles in *The Irish Times* and has presented at several international conferences. Forthcoming publications include her monograph entitled *Literary Coteries and the Irish Women Writers' Club (1933-1958)*, due for publication by the Liverpool University Press in July 2021. Her research interests include Irish female print culture, intellectual networks, private printing presses and the history of the book in the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Professions for Women' is an abbreviated version of the speech Virginia Woolf delivered before a branch of the National Society for Women's Service on 21 January, 1931; it was published posthumously in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. This excerpt is taken from a reprint in 1974. Woolf, V. (1974) *Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, London: Harcourt Publishers, p.241.

Luca Pinelli, Università di Bergamo, Italy

**Thinking back between our mothers:  
reading Woolf through Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex***

Although Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir are often gestured to in one and the same breath, studies detailing a possible matrilinear reception have often tended to focus on their legacy to subsequent feminist movements instead of connecting the dots between the two authors. This proposal intends to be a first attempt to draw attention to Beauvoir's reading of Woolf in her landmark text *The Second Sex*.

Woolf was one of the English women writers Beauvoir read and appreciated in their original language, as emerges from Beauvoir's interview with the Paris Review. In *The Second Sex*, there are ten occurrences of Woolf, which range from references to *A Room of One's Own* to complete quotations from *The Waves* or *To the Lighthouse*. However, a closer look at her occurrences in *The Second Sex* reveals that the French philosopher found Woolf instrumental in her discussion of woman as Other in patriarchal ideology. In particular, my paper will show how Beauvoir saw in Woolf three important personae: (1) a fundamental precursor for *The Second Sex*, with special reference to *A Room of One's Own*; (2) a writer who gave voice to women's diverse 'lived experiences' through her female characters (*The Waves*, *Mrs Dalloway*); (3) a successful woman writer who was able to see what paths were to be taken by women writers in the XX century. By drawing on the work of reception studies and intertextuality, my paper will assess the impact of Woolf's oeuvre on Beauvoir's philosophical investigation of womanhood. It will argue that Woolf's clarion call for women writers and thinkers was received, refracted and amplified by Beauvoir in ways that have come to shape our own understanding of what it means to deconstruct patriarchal ideology through thinking, both in philosophy and in literature. By highlighting the role Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* played in the reception and reproduction of Woolf's oeuvre in feminist circles, this contribution will emphasise the importance not just of "thinking back through our mothers", but also of thinking back *between* our mothers, as it were: making room for the interstice between Woolf and Beauvoir is an essential part of a feminist revision of literature and thought.

**Luca Pinelli** has recently started a PhD in Transcultural studies in the humanities at the University of Bergamo, Italy, after reading German at St Peter's College, Oxford, and Modern, Comparative and Postcolonial Literatures (English & German) at the University of Bologna, Italy. His research project looks at the intersections between the two mothers of second-wave feminism(s), Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir. In particular, his intention is to look at Woolf's protagonists through a feminist and phenomenological lens borrowed from Beauvoir's seminal feminist text *The Second Sex* (1949, tr. 1953). Outside of academia, he contributes regularly to the Italian student project l'Altrosessuale ("the Othersexual"), which focuses on 'Other' forms of gender and sexuality in literature, thought, and across the arts. For l'Altrosessuale, he has written social media posts on, amongst others, Woolf, E.M. Forster, Oscar Wilde, Jean Rhys, Duncan Grant, and Simone de Beauvoir; he has also discussed Woolf's *Orlando*, Wilde's *Salomé*, and Beauvoir's *The Woman Destroyed* through a live streaming platform called Decamerette.

**Marie Allègre, University of Birmingham, UK**

**Virginia Woolf Beyond the Phallus:  
Reading Psychoanalysis with Woolf on Both Sides of the Channel'**

In 'Phases of Fiction', Woolf writes: '[T]he enormous growth of the psychological novel in our time has been prompted largely by the mistaken belief [...] that truth is always good; even when it is the truth of the psychoanalyst and not the truth of imagination'. This begs the question: Is 'the truth of the psychoanalyst' hospitable enough for 'the truth of imagination' to emerge? I came to Woolf through Lacanian psychoanalytic theory in French academia. The teacher whom I studied Woolf with for the first time was an English Professor, and a psychoanalyst. I wrote my master's dissertation on the rendering of the unspeakable in *To the Lighthouse*. Four years later, my research explores the impact of psychoanalytic discourses on Virginia Woolf's works using feminist, queer, new materialist, and posthumanist lenses. What happened in between? A growing suspicion of, first, terminologies, then methods and aims, led me to wonder whether oedipal, and especially Lacanian, theory, really helps carve interpretative routes. What is the effect of reading Woolf using metaphors and concepts such as 'the phallus', Oedipus, and consorts? Woolf was a thinker as well as a creator but hers was not a theoretical, categorising, approach. Confirmation bias is a universal danger, but psychoanalytic criticism has a strong tendency to try and make her texts fit its founding narratives. If the pervasive, albeit occasional, reduction of Woolf to a mentally ill genius goes beyond the province of psychoanalytic criticism, and if it would be difficult to know the extent to which psychoanalytic discourses participate(d) in this reification, their participation in it must be scrutinised. Overall, Lacanianism has gained and retained prominence in European psychoanalytic cultural criticism (Campbell 2000, 27). The return of feminist critics to Woolf in the 1970s-1980s (notably through some of her autobiographical writings made available at that time) also coincides with both the height of Lacan's fame in the 1980s and an increased use of psychoanalytic theory in feminist theory. However, the centrality of psychoanalysis to France's intellectual and cultural life as a whole is a rarity. The first French psychoanalytically inclined readings of Woolf date back to the late 1920s-early 1930s (Mauron 1927; Delattre 1932), about the time of the first French translation of her work (Colin 1923). On the other hand, Bloomsbury is psychoanalysis' entry way in the UK but psychoanalytic engagements with Woolf per se are more marginal than in France until the 1950s and psychoanalysis remains first and foremost a therapeutical practice. In this paper, I give the early conclusions of my research, focusing on the French context. I show that a significant part of Woolf's psychoanalytic reception evidences an unqualified binding of the textual with the biographical, one that serves the purpose of confirming pre-existing theoretical insights. This appropriation is at once concealed and perpetuated by the fact that the Lacanian frameworks that are used rely on structural metaphorization. Woolf's phenomenological and aesthetic insights are either overlooked or pathologised by a (more or less metaphorical) association with a psychotic discourse or at least in rupture with a symbolic inscription in shared reality.

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