From Whose Face.
Virginia Woolf & The Impossible Task of Criticism

Abstract
In 1929 Woolf remarked that "to write criticism is now like keeping my hand clenched." Just eight years later she was dreaming of "a new method of writing criticism" that might take the form of an "essay-novel."

"From Whose Face" explores this very particular Woolfian dream and does so, indeed, in the style of an essay-novel. The door is thereby opened not only to such familiar inter-war figures as the literary critics of Cambridge (F. R. Leavis et al) but also to such obscure or even fictional figures as a woman and a man from the northern town of Huddersfield. The woman is a mill-worker with whom Woolf corresponded, the man stands in a public lecture-hall and was wholly imagined by Woolf.

What follows, then, is an attempt to capture something of literary criticism's extra-mural history or what Woolf calls "criticism […] without rules." This lawless school of criticism will be seen, in the first instance, to have questioned the rule of *form* that insist on the essay as the only way to do academic criticism. Woolf's lawless school will then be seen also to question various other kinds of rule or code that inform the emergent discipline of English Literature.

These include a number of now-very-familiar codes relating to gender, class and sexuality. But also included are a number of less familiar codes such as Englishness, militarism, seriousness, propriety, marriage and (above all) realism.

All these codes are brought into question as Woolf's anarchistic dream shows inter-war literary criticism to house (or attempt to house) such lawless forces as chance, error, laughter, blasphemy, orality, fear, the body, war and even the unemployed, the hungry and the dying.

In sum, "From Whose Face" explores what Woolf calls "the dancing agony […] of criticism" and in so doing speaks to recent and major books on the very nature of criticism by such as Gerald Graff, John Guillory and Ross Wilson

These studies, sensing the seeming end of literary criticism, all share my interest in the past of literary criticism. What, though, distinguishes my own raid on this history is that, by virtue of its fictionality, it incorporates pasts that never happened or were never allowed to happen. Until now, perhaps.

‘From Whose Face’
Virginia Woolf & The Impossible Task of Criticism

Part One*

> It reads to me a little too like the kind of lecture on the Novels of Virginia Woolf that earnest young men sometimes deliver at Huddersfield.
> -- Virginia Woolf, 1936.[1]

In strode a harried-looking man, a man from whose face […] the […] impossible nature of his task had removed all traces of ordinary humanity. […] Everybody gazed at him. […] He cleared his throat and the lecture began.[2]

Yes, it began, he thought, somehow. Around ten minutes ago. I am not sure how, as I have not much to say upon the novels of Virginia Woolf. Not here, at least.

Some there are, I gather, who believe that *the provinces read enthusiastically.*[3] I, though, am doubtful. After all, why concern oneself with the novels of Virginia Woolf when, instead, one could *talk about football* or *think of your moors.* [4] Yes, *think of your moors*, I say to them, my so-called audience. But they just sit there and nod, as if *think of your moors* were a quotation, a quotation from one of the novels of Virginia Woolf – which in fact it *is*, they chorus. As if by some local miracle.

> Between the wars, Huddersfield, a northern mill-town surrounded by moorland, was best known for football and unemployment; however, there was also a very strong culture of public lectures on a host of erudite topics.[5]

So, there they sit, right there, examining me, or rather my face. And they are thinking, why does his face look like that? Why does he not wear a mask? A gas-mask would do. That, I am sure, is what they are thinking, not least the women.

Ah, the women, *it always puzzles me to know why the women come, unless perhaps they like sitting in a room not their own.*[6] Yes, it puzzles me. After all, does not Mrs Woolf advise that every woman

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* In Part One, all italicised words are from the writings of Virginia Woolf

needs a room that *is* their own? She forgets, however, that in the lecture-room both *gas and light* [come] *free.*

Moreover, she has no idea how I fascinate the women. This is perhaps because, as I now remind them, *I […] improvise my […] lecture […] in the bath.*[7] Yes, I say to them, think of that. In the bath, I say, the bath. But nothing. Silence. They all look away.

But, I say*, don't I lecture you nicely?*[8]

Still nothing. Nothing. It is all too clear, I fear, that they have little real interest in books.

> There is much evidence of extensive reading in inter-war Huddersfield. In 1932, for example, the *Huddersfield Examiner* reports upon "a club for that doomed battalion, the unemployed" which provided "a free library containing 2000 books"[9]

Yes, to lecture here may yet, I think, prove an impossible task. I had been promised it would *not* be impossible. I was told *the lecture can run itself* – like a machine, a machine-gun, say.[10] Just *an hour for 30 typists,* I was told.[11] That would be enough. Trouble is, they do not look like typists to me – not all thirty of them. I can tell, by their hands.

Besides, *preaching in obscure yet enlightened northern towns* is one thing, but to *lecture* in such towns is another.[12] And what chance has English Literature here? Yes, dear comrades, what chance Huddersfield if even *Leeds as a seat of learning was laughed to scorn*?[13]

I see them nodding again. *Another quotation?*[14]

Ah yes, I resume, what chance has a lecture in Huddersfield? Mind you, comrades, what chance has any lecture anywhere? I mean, *how* ***does*** *one lecture?*[15] How, that is, does anyone lecture? To be frank, *I loathe lectures -- to hear or to give.*[16] Indeed, comrades, tonight *I have come to the conclusion that lecturing is not my line.*[17] No, not my line.

But, you will say, *oh […] the quotations!*[18] And you will be right -- I do appear to have a way with quotations, a way not only of somehow chancing upon them but also of somehow surmounting *the difficulty of making* [the] *quotations fit.*[19] Indeed, it is often admiringly said that *I* [can] *murder* […] *a quotation*, not merely make the poor thing fit.[20] However, comrades, I fear that

I cannot really lecture; or at least, not like that E.M. Forster. Mrs Woolf says E.M. Forster *lectures like an angel.*[21]

Ah, they (the assembled) again steal a glance at me. No, I say, don't be thinking that I myself am an angel. It is true that I now bear few *traces of ordinary humanity;* however, as a rule, I am deemed not so much angel as fairy, yes, *the Fairy of Eng. Lit.*[22] I am not quite sure why this is said, but be warned, dear comrades, it is *odd how this fairy works*. Very odd. Think magic, comrades. That is to say, my lecture may yet leave you bewitched, even doomed, a doomed battalion, as it were. I suggest, therefore, that you go. Depart, comrades. While you can.

Silence. No-one moves, no-one. At last, though, one of the battalion raises a hand, then rises to his feet. He is a typist, I can tell. One of the theoretical thirty.

No, kind sir (says he) we shall not depart. We are, you see, in many respects already doomed and, what is more, our one remaining desire is to hear your lecture, your lecture upon the novels of Virginia Woolf. All other lectures, the *fire lectures and the Gas lectures*, do little to offer comfort, not even the *Gas lectures,* those *queer little excursions into the dark world of gas.*[23] Your own lecture, however, may yet provide succour; for only English Literature, we hold, can save us.

The typist loosens his fingers, then resumes. Some there are, he says, who scoff at us (he gestures to his fellows). These scoffers laugh and say of us that *we hold religious meetings together praising Shakespeare* or that we nightly wander the world with a *loudspeaker proclaiming the virtues of literature.*[24] Ah well, let the scoffers scoff. We would, sir, endure most anything for *the honour of English Literature.*[25] In fact, some among us, sir, are ready even to take up arms. Yes, arms. And, in this regard, we are not unlike the famous Septimus Smith, of whom it is derisively said that *he went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays.*[26] Many, sir, think this ridiculous; and yet we would say, Why *not* seek to save such an England?

Ah yes, I reply, but the England which poor, mad Septimus Smith hobbled off to save was *an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays* ***and*** *Miss Isabel Pole.*

Pardon? says the typist.

Miss Pole, I say, *Miss Isabel Pole.* Did you not know of her?

No, says the typist, alarmed.

Why, she was the Siren charged with *lecturing […] upon Shakespeare* and under whose spell Mr Septimus Smith fell even as she was doing so -- yes, even as she was *lecturing in the Waterloo Road* all the while *walking in a green dress in a square.*[27] Mr. Smith, you see, was moved to enlist by love not merely of Shakespeare but also of she who *lectured* upon Shakespeare. *In the Waterloo Road.*

> From 1905 to 1907, Virginia Woolf taught in London at an institute for working men and women; here, once a week, she taught, without pay, History, English Composition, and Poetry Appreciation.[28] The institute was Morley College, in the Waterloo Road.

I now resume, saying: I do hope, by the way, that none among yourselves should ever lay down your life *for me.* Heaven forbid. It is true that I lecture, but I am no Miss Pole. I may walk in a square, but I do not wear a dress.

No, I do not wear a dress. By no means. In this regard, comrades, I am fully aligned with *ordinary humanity.*

The assembled, of a sudden, now arise and head for the door. I ask why they leave, but they do not say and soon I am left alone. I do, though, have the consolation that I can speak now not merely *about* Virginia Woolf but *to* her; for she is, I am sure, in some sense present. And so to her I say, Please, don't you too abandon me. No, please stay, Mrs Woolf, if only for the sake of my theme, the burden of my song, being as it is --

The devil.[29]

Pardon?

Literature is the devil, I said.

Devil?

Yes, *I loathe novels.*[30]

But I had thought --

No, *I want to write criticism.*[31]

Pardon?

I want to write criticism. Indeed, were I another person --

Which other person? Who exactly? A man without a face?

(Silence).

Were I another person, I would say to myself, Please write criticism.[32]

Please write criticism.

But I can't.

Why not?

It hurts -- hurts my hand.

> To write criticism is now like keeping my hand clenched.[33]
> --Virginia Woolf, 1929.

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> In her diary for 28 August 1940, Woolf records enduring two air-raids, one of which took place whilst she was reading *Scrutiny*, the Cambridge quarterly of literary criticism: "Two [raids] in London. One caught me in the L. Library. There I sat reading […] *Scrutiny*."[34]

Mrs Woolf looked about. Yes, she thought, *I loathe novels.* All around her sat half-scholarly types, readers, bent double, gas-masks to hand. It was true that she had written what people *called* novels; however, she thought, *I'm not a novelist,* not really.[35] She now noticed how *most of the readers seemed to have rubbed their noses off & written their eyes out.*[36] Ah, she thought, how a face is transformed by study, by having so little actual work to do, so little real employment. *That young man for example.* W*hat had he got to do except copy out poetry?* [37]

No, she thought (again), I am not a novelist. Or rather, I have always wanted to call my novels something else, to re-christen them, re-baptise them, in the bath, perhaps. Yes, *I want […]*

a name […] I can use instead of "novel."[38] In the future, if there is one, people will talk about *a new _____ by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?*[39] She paused, wrote something down and s*omebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness.*[40] Yes, Elegy, she thought, and clenched her hand.

She now lifted her head and, without thinking, spoke aloud. *My typist's office,* she said, [is] *destroyed,* bombed to smithereens.[41] No one responded.

Or maybe, she thought, it could yet be called an *Essay-Novel.*[42] Yes, *the next stage* [is] *the essay-novel.* Many *implore me to write only novels or only criticism, and* [yet] *I want to do both* and indeed at the same time, in the same book, same sentence.[43] A man *raised his right hand mysteriously high in the air, and let it fall upon his knee again as if he were conducting some secret symphony*. Clearly, she thought, *I have here in the egg a new method of writing criticism.*[44] She saw that now the man *was reading something that moved him very much, […] perhaps he was thinking himself the person in the book.*[45]

This new method, the one in the egg, would doubtless be odd, may even scandalise. Regardless, she thought, *let us commit any blasphemy of […] criticism.*[46] She looked about and recalled her typist, poor sod. Christ, his whole office had gone. She then again found herself speaking aloud, as if now mad, mad with elegy. *Let us commit*, she said, *any blasphemy of laughter.*

Silence. As before, no one stirred. Until, that is, again s*omebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness.*

Yes, she thought, she would pursue *a new criticism*, a new *kind of critical book: quotations?* (what else?) *comments* (why bother?).[47]

She looked up at the rank-upon-rank of books. Alpine, it was. Sublime. Not unlike her day, what with the rain & the shops & the tradesmen & the telephones & the typist & the rubble & the sobbing. Ah, she thought, *why not write a book --- of Cr[iticis]m in this style?* [48] This quick-fire memoir style. It is true that I am *thinking of a critical book,* [but] *suppose I used the diary form*?[49] A woman now stood up. Yes, I could simply note what I've read just-as-and-when I chance to read it. The woman sat down. Yes, let us imagine I *am to transfer […] to Random reading.*[50]

> From the late 1920s, Woolf increasingly spoke about writing a wholly new kind of critical book. By 1939, she was provisionally calling it "Reading at Random."[51]

Besides, how else *could* one now read? What with the bombs and *half listening for the siren.*[52] She rose and strode, man-like, toward a bookcase, any bookcase. And, as she went, she glanced at the occasional newspaper that lay upon the occasional desk. *Buck Palace bombed.*[53] Like cracking an egg, she thought. *Altar exposed.* As if caught in the bath, she thought. A revelation of a kind. However, there was, she saw, *no invasion,* not yet, and *took down a book of […] criticism.*[54] Yes, a revelation it was, unlike the book which would, no doubt, be about *the influence of something on somebody.*[55]

Mrs Woolf sidled back to her desk. More occasional newspapers. *A shell exploded and twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France.*[56] No altar exposed, she thought, just bowels, the bowels of the twenty or thirty. Such is the influence of a shell. She now sat down, *opened the book and began reading here and there at random.*[57] She then coughed as if she had in-breathed Buck Pal. itself. *Is all lit. crit.,* she wondered, this *kind of exhausted air?*[58]

Perhaps. Trouble is, lit. crit. is like breathing, it cannot be helped. Not even when *half-listening for the siren*. Yes, even then "criticism is as inevitable as breathing."[59] Ah, another quotation, *a very good quotation* -- in fact, a borrowing from a beggar, poor Tom.[60] Poor Tom Eliot. No surprise there, she thought, seeing that *I REPRESENT T. S. ELIOT,* or at least, had done so the other day, at that funeral (not his own), the one he could not attend.[61] Yes, she had stood-in-for him, mourned for him, quoting his quotes, sighing his sighs, breathing his breath, his air, exhausted air, London Library air.

She coughed again and, *half listening for the siren*, returned to the *book of […] criticism*. About Shakespeare it was and Tennyson and all the others (though not the ladies). Ah, Tennyson, she thought, *Someone had blundered,* she thought.[62] Yes, yet another quotation that, *Someone had blundered*. Tennyson, it was, The Charge of the Light Brigade. Into the valley of death etc. More exhausted air, she thought, *half listening for the siren*. Poor sods, she thought, caught in the valley of

death. All that *shot and shell*, air worn thin.[63] *Shot and shell, shot and shell.* Egg-shell? No, mortar, it being The Charge, the charge of the doomed brigade. Disaster it had been, whatever was said. Like Dunkirk, she thought, *half listening for the siren.* Yes, yet again *Somone had blundered,* she thought, *half listening for the siren.* A disaster it was, Dunkirk. Like this book of criticism, she thought, *half listening for the siren.* As inevitable as breathing it was.

SIREN. Damm, she thought. SIREN. Shall have to leave, find a shelter. SIREN. SIREN. It should not, though, be like this. Not life, nor criticism. SIREN. Yes, *about war, about Shakespeare*, they were so wrong. [64] SIREN. Yes, *about war; about Shakespeare; […] about how there is no death,* they had blundered. SIREN. She gathered up the broken shell of herself (pen, ink, gas-mask etc.) and stole one last glance at the book, the frontispiece. "*Readers are requested to point out any defects they observe to the local librarian."*[65] Ah, she thought, *England's way of saying, "If I lend you books, I expect you to make yourselves critics.*" SIREN. Momentarily, she considered seeking a librarian to whom she might point out one very particular defect or omission – namely: that although England expects (SIREN), expects readers to become critics of England's *books* (SIREN), she, England, did not expect readers (SIREN) also to become critics of England herself.

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> Many of the lectures given in interwar Huddersfield promoted Pacifism, often of an Absolute kind and motivated by Communist or even Anarchist beliefs. Indeed, in World War One, Huddersfield had been widely known for its Pacifism, particularly when, in March 1916, the local Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal considered twenty-six representations. The majority were refused, with two cases deferred, two cases adjourned and four men given non-combatant service.[66]
>
> "Did you see that 4 conscientious objectors were exempted on condition they worked at agriculture? -- it was somewhere in the country, I forget where."[67]
> --Virginia Woolf, 26 March 1916.

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The *harried-looking man […] cleared his throat and the lecture began* again. And so, dear comrades, such of you as have returned, I should confess that my concern tonight is not only the novels of Virginia Woolf but also the pitiless pity of war.

A woman, I see, now rises to her feet. She wears a green dress and her head is bowed, as if mournful, even penitent.

I, though, continue, declaring that I am altogether absolute in my opposition to war. Absolutely absolute, as it were. That is to say, comrades, I shall refuse to fight even though I am, I see, not so much *lecturing to a room full of feathers and white gloves* but to a room full of gloves and white feathers.[68] My expanded theme remains, however, Mrs Woolf and the pity of war.

But what, says the woman, has war to do with the novels of Virginia Woolf? She does not look up. It had been my hope, she continues, that Mrs Woolf composed *sentences that don't budge though armies cross them.*[69] The woman, head still bowed, begins to walk the room.

Ah, I reply, alas the influence of armies upon Mrs Woolf's sentences is now such that they *do* increasingly budge, tremble and even crack. Yes, crack. Crack. Crack open, wide --

But what, says the woman, shall we then do? She continues to walk, as if giving a lecture of her own, though silent.

Is it not obvious? I say.

No, she says.

Well, I say, when rehearsing my lectures, syllabling them in the bath, should ever an ARMY dare to tramp across a sentence that I happen to be parsing, I – I …

Yes?

I close my eyes.

Pardon?

I close my eyes. Screw them tight. Tight shut.

But why?

Because these days *nobody reads with their eyes open.*[70] Not all the time. One dare not.

The woman makes a sharp left turn.

Some scholars, indeed, have quite *written their eyes out.*

Does it not hurt? she says.

Why, yes. It is, though, just part of the *dancing agony […] of criticism, the grind & the screw & the torture* of it all.[71] Hence my tortured face.

The woman makes yet another sharp left turn. She is, I finally see, walking a square, a perfect square.

Yes (I say) I confess that now so often when *I read […] I slip & skip.*[72] Yes, I skip, skip the occasional word. And why not (I add) skip any mention of an ARMY? What need has a sentence for an ARMY? *Literature […] is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there.*[73] In short, no armies *should* be there.

But, says the sorry woman, is that the *right way of reading*?[74]

Perhaps not, but it is, I imagine, the right way of living-and-dying. And if the Right way to live-and-to-die is the Wrong way to read then I shall forever seek out *The Wrong Way of Reading.*[75] And I shall do so whether, say, *reading the wrong* **emotions** *into the text* or even the wrong *person.* And into the work of Virginia Woolf I am quite prepared to read, or rather to misread, the very particular person or character that is Mr J. Flanders.[76]

> The central character of Woolf's 1922 novel, *Jacob's Room*, is a young man from Scarborough (just 80 miles from Huddersfield) whose name is Jacob Flanders; in 1906, he goes up to Cambridge and, soon after, is killed in the Great War. *As it happens, one of Huddersfield's Conscientious Objectors is also called Flanders, Joseph Flanders.* This J. Flanders was an Anarchist-cum-Communist who publicly burned his call-up papers in May 1916.[77] Nothing, though, is known of him thereafter, which suggests he went on the run. A significant number of C.Os. did this, often changing identity. In at least one case, this included dressing as a woman.[78]

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Mrs Woolf hurried through the door and descended to the street. St James's Square. Charming quad, she thought. She then paused to realise that the siren was sounding. All Clear. It had been (apparently) a False Alarm. Ah, someone had once again blundered. For no good reason, then, her reading had been disrupted and the Library abandoned. And *here we are,* she thought*, bedraggled in the midst of hairdressers, omnibuses, & so on.*[79]

There was only one thing to do: walk. Anywhere. And so off she walked until, within a few minutes, she found herself in Wardour Street. Here she stopped to examine the window of one particular shop, a shop in which *the parts of a woman were shown.*[80] She then turned to see that *coming along Gerrard Street was a tall man in a shabby coat.* Seconds later *a shadow fell across [… the shop] window -- Jacob's shadow, though it was not Jacob.*

Mrs Woolf turned to view the tall shadow. He was *a shock headed but fresh coloured ardent man of perhaps 22, either hiding from the Police or a C.O.*[81] Or possibly both. Either might explain the mud on his boots and all the white feathers.

But, she wondered, was it only the *Great* War to which he had objected? Or did he eschew all world wars, even the present one? Perhaps so, given that he carried no gas-mask. He did, though, wear white summer gloves, as might a woman in fact. And, tight to his chest, he clutched a couple of books.

Ah, she thought, there are hereabouts so many *young men […] holding their books as if they had hold in their hands something that would see them through* – through the day, or the War, or even (good heavens) University.[82] That, though, might not be easy, *they being all in a torment, coming from midland towns* -- Huddersfield, for instance. Except that Huddersfield is not in fact in the Midlands, but rather the North. Ah, she thought, *my Geography is rusty, but romantic.*[83] If, that is, Huddersfield can be said to be romantic. Can it?

A policeman neared and, for a moment, she considered asking him if Huddersfield were romantic; however, in the end, she determined that she would ask Jacob's shadow. After all, Jacob came from the North. Yes, *Yorkshire.* Where, as it happens, dear *Leonard has to disappear on*

Monday. Yes, he was going there to lecture, as well as to disappear. [84] The policeman now stood in the road, amidst the traffic, and the tall man in the shabby coat had begun to speak.

Huddersfield, he said, is certainly romantic. He knew because he himself hailed from Huddersfield and was, indeed, a Literary Critic. His face momentarily twitched.

Ah, *the dancing agony*, thought Mrs Woolf. She knew the signs.

Yes, I am a critic, a Literary Critic, he said.

Good heavens, said Mrs Woolf, she had no idea. None. Might, though, she ask him what, as a Literary Critic, he had discovered?

I have discovered that *Mrs Coleridge wore a wig – a short dry wig in the morning.*[85]

Good heavens, she said again.

Indeed. *Explains a lot*.

Such as what?

That *even the sex was now in dispute,* said the man.[86] I refer to the *parts of a woman*, he added.

Mrs Woolf was not sure she understood. Regardless, she felt that she would ask the Literary Critic another question. A little more specific. Tell me, she said, *where does "Die like a rose in aromatic pain" come from? Pope?*[87]

Why yes, he said, it *does* come from Pope. Although it was, in fact, "Die *of* a rose in aromatic pain."[88] She was to think, therefore, not of dying *in the manner* of a rose but *because* of a rose, as if its aroma could kill. We are intended, he said, to *suspect* Pope's rose; it might, that is, prove as fatal as gas. He then hissed, as if a gas-attack.

Astonished by the man's gaseous way with *the eternal Pope*, Mrs Woolf felt she must ask his name.[89]

Flanders, he whispered, eyeing the policeman. *Flanders.*

Moll? she said.[90] ***Moll*** *Flanders*? She glanced at his womanly gloves.

J. Flanders, he whispered.

Ah, Jacob, she thought.

J. Flanders, he whispered again, but she was not to tell.

Mrs Woolf nodded, though wondered why she was not to tell. After all, *she had read his name in the papers.*[91] Moreover, *the young gentleman was dead. He had been killed by the splinter of a shell.*

She now paused, still more astonished by the man, Jacob's shadow, Jacob's Critical shadow. Then, without thinking, she said, *But d'you think criticism is any use? […] I mean of the living, by the living?*[92]

The man stiffened and said he would not know. He did, though, wish to explain that Mrs Woolf was not to reveal his name because, as a rule, it was best that a Critic remain anonymous. *As a critic*, he said, *what we want is impersonality.*[93] Yes, Anon is best. Yes, consider me Anon.

Again the man eyed the policeman.

But, she said, *Anon is sometimes man; sometimes woman.*[94]

Certainly, said Anon, dusting his gloves. There are, these days, many a woman critic.

So, aren't I a critic too? said Mrs Woolf. *Aren't I a woman?*[95]

Ain't I a woman? echoed *a passing brown woman.*[96]

Mrs Woolf may not, though, have quite heard the passing woman, for she now turned to again examine the shop, its window and (within it) all those *parts of a woman.* Then, as if almost to prove *herself* a woman, Mrs Woolf told the man of how once, at a party, her *suspenders came down, dragging with them an old rag of chemise.*[97]

The man nodded, hitched up his trousers and brushed the chest of his shabby coat (no medals, just torn).

Mrs Woolf now returned to the subject of women critics. She thought, as ever, of *the Cambridge ladies*, such as dear Enid Wellsford or Enid's good friend Miss Irvine, also *a trained critic*, *trained in English literature.*[98] Miss Irvine, added Mrs Woolf, is both *direct & sensible,* and *gives her opinion precisely & methodically*. This, though, was only to be expected of one so given to the new, scientific criticism. Had the man heard of such? Had the news yet reached Huddersfield?

Yes, said the man.

> The meaning of meaning is different to each person on account of the mass of associations stored up in the individual's mind. Such an approach to poetry is known as the scientific approach. It is a new departure in the field of literary criticism.
> --*Huddersfield Examiner*, December 17, 1934.

In that case, said Mrs Woolf, he would be unsurprised to learn that Miss Irvine is not only methodical in her literary criticism but also *goes to the W.C. frankly.*

The man stiffened. He was disquieted by Miss Irvine's frankness. It was not, he felt, the kind of road a Literary Critic should walk or even dance along (in agony or not). Indeed, if it was the path now being taken by University types then they should, he said, be ashamed.

Ah, said Mrs Woolf, is that *why* […] *all professors of English literature* [are] *ashamed?*[99]

I fear so, he said. They waste, alas, such wind as they have upon books that are overly concerned with, as it were, Bedroom Situations. For instance, *no decent man ought to read Shakespeare's sonnets.* [100]

Why ever not?

Because, he said, *it was like listening at keyholes.*

A gentleman, in a hat, entered a hairdresser's.

Ah, she said, but perhaps Literary Critics should *not* be decent. Perhaps that was, paradoxically, the way to Moral Criticism. Had he not read *The Ethics of Indecency?*[101]

The man shook his head. And two young women on a passing omnibus called out, something it was about a Fairy. Then blew a kiss.

However, continued Mrs Woolf, among modern Literary Critics there is, alas, quite a lot of Decency about. Take, for instance, *Professor Bulteel of Leeds*, who has *issued an edition of Wycherley without stating that he had left out* [or] *disembowelled,* […] *several indecent words.*[102] Indeed (she said) dear little Univ. of Leeds also numbers among its lit. men one *Bonamy Dobrée,* all *spick & span, with a rainbow of medal ribbons.*[103] (The man eyed the tear in the breast of his coat). Mind you, she added, there are, thank God, some *less* well-behaved critics, such as the colourful William Empson.

The gentleman (in the hat) came out of the hairdresser's.

William Empson?

Yes, *Mr Empson*. He once *came* [in fact] *to see us. A raucous youth.*[104] Had been a Fellow or Something, in Eng. Lit., at Cambridge, but was recently banished. Now lives on the run, as it were.

The policeman held up his hand.[105]

> In 1929, William Empson, a brilliant exponent of the Cambridge school of close-reading also known as Practical Criticism, was found to have within his College rooms a number of condoms. He immediately had his Fellowship revoked, was removed from the College lists and forbidden to live within the town bounds.[106]

The man prepared to speak. Huddersfield knew nothing, he said, of Mr Empson, nor of his desperate flight. The man thought of the moors. However, he said, Huddersfield *did* know of Lord David Cecil.

Ah, she said, and what does Huddersfield know of *Lord David*?[107]

That he had an original honeymoon.

> Lord David Cecil, a fellow in English Literature at the University of Cambridge, is spending an original honeymoon […] engaged on a lecture tour of Central Europe.
> --*Huddersfield Examiner,* 17 November 1932

Apparently, added the man, Lord Cecil mistook a series of lectures for his honeymoon. Imagine the scene: *Read Chaucer. […] Bed.*[108] Original, he said.

Quite, said Mrs Woolf. However, *the sex was [not…] in dispute.*

Pardon?

Well, *what's bed without --?* [109]

Balzac? said the man.

No, she said.

Analysis? he said.

Of what? she said.

Macaulay, he said.

Macaulay? she said.

Yes, Macaulay. Why, only the other day, *after tea, Lytton and Carrington* (comrades both) *left the room* (lecture room) *ostensibly to copulate*; [however …,] *on listening at the keyhole it was discovered that they were reading aloud Macaulay's Essays.*[110] The man now beamed as if to declare, What could be better than for two young comrades, having had their tea (dumplings, say) and now at last alone, settling down to read Macaulay on, say, Milton? After all, what could be better than to *read in the evening after the day's work?*[111] It was what nights and beds were built for. Was it not?

Mrs Woolf tapped at her gas-mask. *I should* [very much] *like,* she said, *an analysis of your sex life.*[112]

Pardon? he said.

I am interested, she said, in the relationship between Literary Criticism and domestic arrangements.

Pardon? he said, again.

Take, for instance, dear Peter Lucas. *He sees life with great ardour through books. And […] he is now all agog to copulate.*[113] Soon enough, I feel, *he will marry* [and …] *become Prof. of Engl. Lit. at Camb.*

The man (as before) hitched up his trousers.

Indeed, she added, it seems to me that, for a Literary Critic, marriage is now all-but obligatory -- at least, *within the Polar region of Cambridge.*[114] Naturally, the results are hilarious. Witness *Mrs Leavis […] and her husband.*[115] There they are, Q.D. and F.R., Literary Critics both, living happily ever-after. Imagine the scene: not Chaucer then bed, but Eliot then bed. Yes Eliot, not Woolf, she said. Bed, she said (again). Goodbye, she added. And vanished.

> From the early 1930s, the Cambridge critics, Q.D. and F.R. Leavis were enormously influential. For both, the essential task of criticism was to identify authors whose work was seriously engaged with the moral complexity of contemporary life. These authors did not include Virginia Woolf.

*

It had begun to rain and the man eyed the shop. Or rather, its window. And there he saw not only *the parts of a woman* but the reflection of an approaching policeman. The rain grew heavy and, for a moment, he considered entering the shop. Cover was needed. He then turned to see an eating-house. A corner house. He had little money, but there, at least, no-one would want to speak with him. Not at length.

So, in he strode, head low. The place was crowded and *somewhat obscured by steam from a tea-urn.*[116] At last, however, he discerned an abandoned table, sat down and (soon enough) his thoughts moved to the *rhythm of the eating house. It is like a waltz*, he thought, and looked for a waitress.

Ah yes, Leavis, he thought. F R. Leavis. Had been a pacifist, they say. Not absolute, mind. Had clowned around in some Ambulance-Thing at the Front (or the Back). Until gassed, they say, in Cambridge. You can tell, some say, when he lectures. Gas Lectures, as it were.[117] The steam from the tea-urn grew worse.

He looked down at his books, both of them, placed neatly side by side. Scott and Balzac. Shall *I,* he thought, *prop my book against a bottle of Worcester*? No, he thought. I shall, in fact, prop up *both* my books. And this, by a miracle, he did. He then opened both and, being eager to be *reading two things at the same time,* he began to switch from one novel to the other.[118] Soon, though, his mind returned to the woman. A veritable decadent she was, an howling bourgeois. Indeed, her salacious literary opinions were nothing but distraction, seeing that *the whole of life did not consist in going to bed with a woman, he thought, returning to Scott and Balzac.*[119]

Admittedly, for Dr Leavis, a part of life *did* consist in going to bed with a woman. It was, though, a case of going to bed with another Literary Critic. And that, perhaps, might yet sharpen Dr Leavis's critical eye, make him see more clearly, see more clearly not only things as they *are* but also things as they are *not.*

The waitresses, balancing trays, swing in and out.[120] They hardly, though, look at the man.

Yes, what was it that Comrade Wilde had said? Ah yes, "The primary aim of the critic is to see the object as in itself as it really is *not*."[121] Which is to say, Yes, *there are 6 apples in the Cézanne picture,* but (more importantly) *what can 6 apples* ***not*** *be*?[122]

The waitresses, balancing trays, swing in and out. They hardly, though, look at the man.

Now *that*, he thought, is surely the Literary Critic's great impossible task -- to discern what six apples can *not* be. Yes, one must always ask what *else* could be there, in place of the apples. Six Edens? Six Falls? Six Bibles? Why not? *Reading six books at once* [was] *the only way of reading.*[123] Or (perhaps) not six Books or Bibles but, say, the six Days of Creation, or (even) re-Creation.

He now tapped at the Worcester and wondered if there was still a world to re-create. That is to say (he thought), let us not presume that *there's a world -- what's the quotation[?] – There's a world* ***outside***?[124] No, "a world *elsewhere."* Yes, it's a "a world elsewhere." Huddersfield, for instance. And the waitresses waltzed. Dancing agony, he thought.

The man looked about, taking in what he could of the people sat around, so many now obscure, such was the steam. He turned to peer outside. *Motor-cars, vans, motor-omnibuses -- they pass the window.* Ah, "a world outside," he thought. Correction, "a world *elsewhere*." No room for errors; errata must always be noted and emendations made. He pulled out a pen. Its ink was red.

Yes, he thought, if the critic is ever to see the text as it is *not*, he must first see the text as it *is* – complete, entire, unblemished. The man tugged at his gloves and thought of every Professor Bulteel, every errant editor and all the poor books they had disembowelled. Ah, so many would need their bowels returned to them, stuffed back into them. Why, there could well be millions of them, poor things. He himself must not, therefore, eschew the *scholar's life, correcting,* restoring, reassembling etc.[125]

In this regard (he thought) he was not unlike Miss Pole, she to whom Mr Smith, apparently, *wrote poems*, love poems, *which, ignoring the subject, she corrected.* [126] Yes, *corrected in red ink.*

The man looked down, looked down at Scott, his poor Everyman Scott, now horizontal, face-upward. But, ah, two horrors he now saw, *two misprints: senitive and romatic.*[127]

The waitresses, balancing trays, swing in and out. They hardly, though, look at the man. Nor he at them.

Ah, *senitive, romatic* – how dreadful; he would see to these horrors right now and do so even if bombs were to fall and he had to enter a shelter. Yes, he would just continue with the task even if someone were to come up and say, *I've no fears for your chastity in the shelter* -- I might fear for your *life,* as *there you sit with the bombs falling round you,* but not for your chastity.[128]

Part Two†

Mrs Woolf looked up and surveyed the room. Settee, radiogram, telephone. The table at which she sat was covered with the usual, books, upon books, like sandbags. She eyed a mirror (a cheval glass) and smiled at her reflection, as if at a party.

Ah yes, she said (to the mirror), *I am […] planning oh such an amusing book on English literature.*[129] And it will be oh so unlike any other such book. *I must,* therefore*, put my head to the gallop,* she added, looking down again. Yes, she thought, I must get on with it, my *experiment* […my] *critical excursion.*[130] She shook her head, the nag must gallop. Giddy-up nag, she said, and stared down at what she had written, then laughed. And blasphemed.

Mrs Woolf looked up again and once more addressed the mirror. Trouble is, she said, *I can't write criticism, only talk it.*[131] Indeed, *I have lost all belief in written criticism.*[132] She eyed her pen. Even so, she continued, *I would here launch into a dissertation upon literature, but […] I am not only without the illusion that I am speaking the truth, but my pen has run out of ink.*[133] Black, it had been.

† In Part Two only the italicised words attributed to Mrs Woolf or V are from the writings of Virginia Woolf.

Ah, she resumed, no doubt, the dear lady in the mirror is thinking (like Pilate), What *is* the truth? Or rather, What is the truth with respect to a dissertation upon literature? Well, I shall tell you -- *the truth is I can't resist the telephone.*[134] Not when attempting a dissertation upon literature.

*

Scene, sitting room after tea.[135] *V.W. hoping to read Chaucer. Telephone rings.*

V *Oh my God, why do we live in London?*

(V.W. *tosses Chaucer on the floor,* rises, moves to telephone, picks up receiver, listens, puts down receiver, returns to seat and addresses audience).

No one. No one there. Again. Yes, *our telephone sometimes rings all night, and when you go to answer it, there is no one there.*[136] One wonders who it is. Cambridge perhaps?

(Enter Leonard.)

Leonard and I would certainly *like* it to be Cambridge. Cambridge on the telephone.

(Leonard retrieves Chaucer.)

Ah, yes how we wish it were Cantab., dear youthful Cantab. Do we not, Leonard?

L Yes, dear.

V Often, indeed, have *we tried* [even…] *to* ***overhear*** *young Cambridge* and yet so often have we failed.[137] Have we not, Leonard?

L Yes, dear.

V The thing is, I am hopelessly drawn to the youth of Cambridge, not least those *trained in the art of letters at Cambridge.*[138]

> In the 1930s, Cambridge English resounded to the voices of not only the Leavises and Empson but also I. A. Richards and, indeed, his students; for, in 1929, Richards had published *Practical Criticism*, which famously included many verbatim undergraduate responses to various unidentified poems.

I cannot, you see, resist the Cantabrian lure; notwithstanding the fact that *I am sick to death of criticism.*[139]

Cantab *Absolute tripe. Frightfully hackneyed.*‡[140]

V Yes, sick of all that screw & torture over meaning.

Cantab *I don't mind obscurity, but* --[141]

V I mean-to-say, why not just *enjoy* a poem? Why fight over the poor little thing?

Cantab *I prefer feeling martial.*[142]

(Enter Q.D. Leavis, sits down. She too addresses audience.)

Q *Mrs Woolf* is, I fear, one of those *objectors to criticism.*§ [143]

L Conscientious?

V By no means. It's simply that *in criticism* [I …] *go altogether without "rules."*

L Indeed.

V However –

L Yes?

V *Is not the decision [to go without rules …] merely another rule?*[144]

Q I fear that *Mrs Woolf's mental processes […] affect me like […] dialectic.*[145]

L Indeed.

Q *Nazi dialectic.*

L Pardon?

Q *Nazi dialectic. Mrs Woolf's mental processes […] affect me like Nazi dialectic.*

L Is that not a little strong?

Q Sadly, no. You see, *her most cherished project is to uproot criticism root and branch in a Nazi manner.*[146]

L (To V.) Did you hear that, darling? Mrs Leavis believes you are uprooting criticism in a Nazi manner.

V Ah, yes. Do tell her I am most sorry. The trouble is, the *flow & ebb of consciousness* [has]

---

‡ All italicised words attributed to Cantab are from the undergraduates's responses to the poems.
§ All italicised words attributed to Q. are from Q. D. Leavis's writing.

made all criticism (she hesitates) …

L Unstable?

V Exactly. *Unstable.*[147]

L But unstable, dear, in a *Nazi* manner?

Q (Intervening) Indeed.

(Exit Q.D. Leavis. Virginia and Leonard stand and prepare, together, to give public lecture. Both clear throats and lecture begins.)

V To explain …

L What Mrs Leavis fears is this …

V That if criticism is exposed to …

L Flow and ebb…

V The flow and ebb of …

L Consciousness…

V Then criticism will be wide open.

L Wide open to anything.

V Or, indeed *anyone.*

L Such as, for instance …

V Some incoming …

L Mr Hitler.

V To be precise …

L Some incoming Mr Hitler cunningly disguised or masked, as …

V *A great critic.*[148]

(Pause. Telephone rings. No one answers.)

One admits, of course, that *a great critic […] is the rarest of beings. But should one miraculously appear* …

L As, say, a ghost …

V *How should we --*

L Follow him?

V No*, feed him.*

L Pardon?

V *On what should we feed him? A great critic. Should one miraculously appear.*

L Ah, is he malnourished, dear? Half-starved, like a tramp.

V Why not? *My own criticism always seems to me hand-to-mouth,* a kind of beggary or disaster.[149]

And criticism of such a kind is, I think, far from uncommon.

> Virginia Woolf's beloved nephew Julian Bell was a literary critic of both great promise and, indeed, failure. In 1927, he went up to Cambridge to read History, before changing to English Literature in 1929, the year of Richards's *Practical Criticism*. During these years he was elected to the Cambridge Apostles and published a volume of poetry. He then produced no less than two dissertations: one on Pope and one on ethics and aesthetics, here drawing on both Richards and Empson.[150] Sadly, however, neither dissertation succeeded in securing a Fellowship. This was not, perhaps, surprising given Julian's unorthodox manner; in his second dissertation he declares, "I have stolen ideas wherever I came across them, usually in conversation, and used them without acknowledgement."[151] In 1935, soon after this second failure, Julian took up a two-year post as Professor of English Literature in China.

(Enter Julian, miraculously, as might a Great Critic.)

V Ah, *my dear Julian,* […] *I saw Dadie yesterday and he praised your Pope highly.*[152]

J I am flattered -- as is my Pope.

(Virginia turns to Leonard.)

V (Sotto voce) *The Keynes […] say Julian's dissertation is […] quite uneducated.*[153]

J (Overhearing) Ah, dear Aunt, how kind of the Keynes; my dissertation, I am delighted to say, is indeed quite unburdened by *received* ideas. In fact, I have not so much *received* ideas as *scavenged* them, even stolen them.

L Pardon?

J *I have stolen my ideas.*

L From books?

J No, conversation

L Conversation?

J Yes, you know, I-speak, You-speak, etc.

L Ebb and flow?

J Exactly.

L You mean, your dissertation goes something like: I–You, I–You, I–You?

J Not quite. I tend not to mention You.

L Not to mention *me,* Julian?

J No, Uncle, not not-You as such but rather not any Tom-Dick-or-Other-You, any Tom-Dick-or-other with whom I might ever have conversed. I do not acknowledge them. I erase them, as it were.

(Pause. Virginia takes Leonard aside.)

V Leonard dear, I think it might one day be said of Julian that *I–I–I […] was all that his criticism […] amounted to. I–I–I.*[154]

J (Again overhearing.) Indeed, dear Aunt. In fact, it is also all that my *lectures* amount to.

L You lecture!

J Constantly. *I am a hardened lecturer and can stand up and gas and gas.*[**155]

L Gas and gas? Is that not dangerous?

J Well, I certainly hope so. You see, I make it all up as I go. I even make up who I am.

L You do?

J Indeed. *I've had to grow a whole new literary character in the process of improvising my lectures.*[156]

L And what character would that be? To be precise.

[**] All italicised words attributed to J are from Julian Bell's writing

J Well, I'm not altogether sure.

V (Intervening) How about, say, a man from Huddersfield?

(Knock at door.)

J What kind of a man from Huddersfield?

(Knock at door.)

V One whose *face has lost all traces of ordinary humanity.*

J Ah, well in that case --

V So much so, in fact, that he might just be a *woman* from Huddersfield.

> From November 1938 until her death in 1941, Woolf corresponded with a woman from Huddersfield called Agnes Smith who lived alone and, when employed, worked in a cotton-mill. Agnes commented not only on Woolf's books but on academic literary criticism and once sent to Woolf her own "attempt of criticism." Agnes also wrote about her extreme hunger and how, at times, she felt she was enduring a "death in life," adding that "I cannot live, I cannot die." The two women hoped to meet, but never did so.[157]

(Enter Agnes Smith, in a manner.)

V Good heavens. What *strange miracle! I was* [just] *wetting my pen to write you* […] – *and there's yourself in person.*[158] Or not. Not --

Agnes *I cannot live, I cannot die.*[††]

V Why ever not?

Agnes *This death in life* –

V Yes?

Agnes *This death in life comes* …

V Yes?

Agnes *Of having nothing to do, nothing to do* save study the novels of Virginia Woolf, which is

[††] All italicised words attributed to Agnes Smith are from her letters to Woolf.

to say that one still has *nothing to do,* not really, seeing that *the study of literature,* [at least] *as pursued by the University […], teaches criticism rather than encourages creation.*[159] It is true that one is given the half-work or un-work of *Criticism*, thus leaving-the-world-just-as-one-finds-it, but never is one given the real and holy work of *Creation,* the great and terrible work of NOT-leaving-the-world-just-as-one-finds-it. And so it is that, having *nothing to do*, I cannot live and cannot die.

V Ah, did you hear that, Julian? Did you?

*

> Although Julian Bell had been a pacifist, this changed in 1936 once the Spanish Civil War began and the new Republic's bloody struggle with the right-wing Nationalists became seen as a proxy-war with Nazi Germany. In September 1936, therefore, Julian abandoned his university post, writing that it was better to "finish with a decent fight […] than just going phut in a lethal chamber." By July 1937, he was in Madrid driving ambulance lorries.[160]

(Exit Julian. Long pause.)

V (Finally, dreamily) *Julian is going to immure himself in Cambridge.*[161]

L I know.

V *With all the books of all the ages.*

L I know.

V And, *in the intervals* [… he] *takes Helen for drives in the fog.*

L Ah, there's nothing like a spin in a --

Cantab *Two-Seater sonnet.*[162]

Cantab *You and him alone.*

Cantab It is *like falling in love.*

Cantab In a *Two-Seater sonnet.*

Cantab But *I* myself *have never been in love. Never.*

Cantab In a *Two-Seater sonnet.*

Cantab *I struggled* [and…] *crashed.*

Cantab In a *Two-Seater sonnet*

(Long pause.)

V *Julian* [is] *now all in favour of a settled job.*[163]

L Excellent. He has left Cambridge, then?

V Indeed. *He is learning the mechanics of lorries.*

L Excellent.

V He *hadn't even been taught* ***that*** *at Cambridge.*

Cantab *Struggled* [and…] *crashed.*

Within two weeks of arriving in Spain, Julian was dead; *The Times* reported that he was killed whilst driving.

V *I hope* [Leonard, that …] *you are going to find a job for Julian.*[164]

L Ah, but he --

V You might *make him* [perhaps …] *drive his car through hostile crowds.*

Cantab *Struggled* [and…] *crashed.*

V It could not be worse than driving in fog.

L Or in Spain

Cantab *Struggled* [and…] *crashed.*

(Pause. Exit Leonard. Agnes and Virginia sit side by side, as if in Two-Seater sonnet, and face audience.)

Agnes Every day –

V Yes?

Agnes Every day, *I rose at five a.m, and went out into […] the whiteness of a howling blizzard – scared sometimes at the strange shapes I saw.*[165]

V Indeed.

Agnes But *even strange shapes must be faced.*

(Half-pause.)

Cantab *If* [the author here …] *alludes to my death --*

V Ah, who said that? Julian? Was it you?

Cantab *If* [the author here …] *alludes to my death, I see no real reason why I, a grown man, should allow myself the luxury of tears.*[166]

(Long pause.)

V [To Agnes] *Did I tell you I'm reading the whole of English literature through?*[167]

Agnes No.

V *By the time I've reached Shakespeare the bombs will be falling.*

Agnes Quite possibly.

V *So I've a arranged a very nice last scene.*

Agnes Namely?

V *Reading Shakespeare* [and], *having forgotten my gas mask, I shall fade far away.*

Cantab *Into another world, more pure and white.*[168]

V Alas no. For, you see --.

Agnes *Strange shapes must be faced.*

V Indeed. Albeit not with a mask. No, not with a mask, notwithstanding the gas. I shall, that is, forget my mask, go without it, read Shakespeare without it, notwithstanding the gas. And, even as I fade, fade away, I shall face the strangest shapes. Unmasked.

> In December 1938, Parliament debated the remarkable case of an unemployed man from Huddersfield whose opposition to war was such that he refused even to work in a cotton mill because the cotton being made was intended for gas-masks.[169]

[1] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 16 January 1936, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols, ed. Nigel Nicholson and Joanne Trautmann (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975–1979), 6.5).

[2] Woolf, "Why?" [1934] *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols, ed. Andrew McNeillie and Stuart N Clarke (London: Hogarth Press, 1987-2011) 6.32.

[3] Woolf, 17 October 1931, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols, ed. Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1977–84) 4.49.

[4] Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room* [1922], ed. Kate Flint (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 121, 244.

[5] For example, in just one week in December 1935 there were seven such lectures on topics including Alpine Climbing, Science and Sacrament, and Ancient Necromancy -- see *Huddersfield Examiner*, December 7, 1935.

[6] Woolf, 14 November 1917, *Diary*, 1.76

[7] Woolf, 19 January 1940, ibid., 5.258.

[8] Woolf to Vita Sackville-West, 19 November 1926, *Letters,* 3.303.

[9] *Huddersfield Examiner,* 18 December 1932.

[10] Woolf, 7 March 1940, *Diary*, 5.271.

[11] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 22 April [1940], *Letters,* 6.393.

[12] Woolf, 16 May [1913], *Diary*, 2.27.

[13] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 93.

[14] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 12 July 1931, *Letters,* 4.357.

[15] Woolf to Hugh Walpole, 23 April 1940, ibid., 6.394 (my emphasis).

[16] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 31 January 1930, ibid., 4.131.

[17] Woolf to H.A.L. Fisher, 6 January 1935, ibid., 5.361.

[18] Woolf to Janet Case, 12 June [1937], ibid., 6.135.

[19] Woolf to Mrs R C Trevelyan, 4 September 1940, ibid, 6.426.

[20] Woolf, 27 October 1928, *Diary*, 3.200.

[21] Woolf to Margaret Llewelyn Davies, 7 October [1928], *Letters,* 3.543.

[22] Woolf, 17 April 1935, *Diary*, 4.301.

[23] Woolf to Angelica Bell, 12 July [1940], *Letters,* 6.405*;* Woolf, 7 March 1919, *Diary*, 1.250.

[24] Woolf to Katherine Arnold-Foster, 12 August [1919], *Letters,* 2.383; 5 November 1935*, Diary*, 4.351.

[25] Woolf to Clive Bell [13 September 1921], *Letters*, 2.483.

[26] Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* [1925], ed. Stella McNichol (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 94.

[27] Ibid, 93.

[28] See Hermione Lee, *Viginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1997) 222-24

[29] Woolf, 7 June 1921, *Diary*, 2.124.

[30] Woolf to Janet Case, Christmas Eve 1936, *Letters,* 6.95

[31] Woolf, 30 November 1929, *Diary*, 5.271.

[32] Woolf, 1 June 1937, ibid., 5.91

[33] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 12 February [1929], *Letters,* 4.21.

[34] Woolf, 28 August 1940, *Diary*, 5.313.

[35] Wool to Hugh Walpole [20 October 1939], *Letters,* 6.365.

[36] Woolf, 7 May 1926, *Diary*, 3.80.

[37] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 145.

[38] Woolf to Sackville-West [16 November 1925], *Letters*, 3.221.

[39] Woolf, 27 June 1925, *Diary,* 3.34,

[40] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* [1927], ed. Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172.

[41] Woolf, 10 September 1940, *Diary*, 5.317.

[42] 2 November 1932, ibid., 4.129.

[43] To Janet Case [23 June 1925], *Letters,* 3.191

[44] Woolf, 19 February 1937, *Diary*, 5.57.

[45] Woolf, *Lighthouse*, 158.

[46]Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964) 228

[47] Woolf, 6 August 1937, October 14, 1938, *Diary,* 5.105, 180.

[48] 10 September 1933, ibid 4.179.

[49] 16 March 1939, ibid., 5.210.

[50] 17 October 1940, ibid., 5.330.

[51] See James King, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994) 602-3.

[52] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 8 September [1939], *Letters*, 6.357.

[53] Woolf, 14 September 1940, *Diary,* 5.320

[54] Woolf, 16 September 1940, ibid., 5.321

[55] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 19.

[56] Ibid., 181

[57] Ibid., 160

[58] Woolf, 17 September 1940*, Diary*, 5.232

[59] T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* [1920] (London: Methuen, 1972), 49.

[60] Woolf, 22 August 1929, ibid., 3.248

[61] Woolf to T.S. Eliot, 26 May [1938], *Letters*, 6.231

[62] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 27.

[63] Ibid., 25.

[64] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 153.

[65] Woolf, "The Leaning Tower" [1940], *Essays*, 6.276.

[66] See Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience* (London: Francis Boutle, 2001) 4, 140.

[67] Woolf to Duncan Grant, 26 March [1916], *Letters,* 2.85.

[68] Woolf to Ottoline Morrell, 1 November 1922, ibid., 2.579.

[69] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 193.

[70] Woolf to Julian Bell, 1 December 1935, *Letters*, 5.450.

[71] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, April Fool's Day [1932], ibid., 5.40.

[72] Woolf, 28 November 1928, *Diary,* 3.210.

[73] Woolf, "Leaning," *Essays*, 6.278.

[74] To Janet Case [18 September 1925], *Letters,* 3.211.

[75] Woolf, "The Wrong Way of Reading" (1920), *Essays*, 3.218.

[76] Woolf, 19 August 1918, *Diary,* 1.184

[77] See Pearce, *Comrades,* 245.

[78] See Cyril Pearce, *Communities of Resistance* (London: Francis Boutle, 2020) 451.

[79] Woolf to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 30 May [1928], *Letters,* 3.*504*.

[80] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 166-7.

[81] Woolf to Vanessa Bell, 17 January [1918], *Letters,* 2.211

[82] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 55.

[83] Woolf to Clive Bell, 21 January [1928], *Letters*, 3.447.

[84] Woolf to V Sackville-West [31 August 1924], ibid., 3.128.

[85] Woolf to David Cecil, 4 September [1940], ibid., 6.427.

[86] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway,* 17.

[87] Woolf to Julian Bell, 5 April 1934, *Letters*, 5.288

[88] See Alexande Pope, "An Essay on Man" [1733-4], *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963), 511.

[89] Woolf, 4 May 1937, *Diary,* 5.86.

[90] Woolf, 12 April 1919, *Diary,* 1.263

[91] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 190, 210.

[92] Woolf to Stephen Spender, 12 May [1935], *Letters,* 5.392

[93] Woolf, 6 January 1935, *Diary,* 4.273.

[94] Woolf, "Anon," [1940], *Essays*, 6.582.

[95] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 22 November [1933], *Letters*, 5.251.

[96] Woolf, 8 April 1925, *Diary,* 3.7.

[97] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 18 February 1927, *Letters*, 3.333.

[98] Woolf to Ethel Smyth [11 September 1938], ibid., 6.271; 2 September 1929, *Diary*, 3.249-50.

[99] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 7 February 1926, *Letters*, 3.242.

[100] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 82.

[101] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 105.

[102] Ibid., 93.

[103] Woolf, 6 April 1940, *Diary,* 5.277.

[104] Woolf to Julian Bell, 17 February 1930, *Letters*, 4.140.

[105] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 11.

[106] See John Haffenden, *William Empson Among the Mandarins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243

[107] Woolf, 9 December 1928, *Diary,* 3.213

[108] Woolf, 29 April 1939, ibid., 5.217.

[109] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 8 July 1931, *Letters,* 4.356.

[110] Woolf to Vanessa Bell, 17 January [1918], ibid., 2.212.

[111] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 92.

[112] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 24 December 1940, *Letters,* 6.453.

[113] Woolf, 22 September 1929, *Diary,* 3.257.

[114] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 16 October [1930], *Letters*, 4.230.

[115] Woolf to Margaret Llewelyn Davies, 6 September [1935].

[116] Woolf, *The Waves,* 79.

[117] See Ronald Hayman, *Leavis* (London; Heinemann, 1976) 2

[118] Woolf [5 September 1926], *Diary,* 3.106.

[119] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 162.

[120] Woolf, *The Waves*, 80.

[121] Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist" [1890], *The Complete Works of* Oscar Wilde, vols 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 4. ??

[122] Woolf, 18 April 1918, *Diary*, 1.140.

[123] Woolf to Saxon Sydney-Turner, 12 August 1928, *Letters,* 3.515.

[124] Woolf, 9 February 1940, *Diary*, 5.266

[125] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 22 August [1933], *Letters,* 5.218.

[126] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 93.

[127] Woolf to David Cecil, 15 November [1933], *Letters,* 5.246

[128] Woolf to Hugh Walpole, 29 Sep[tember] [1940], ibid., 6.435; Woolf to V. Sackville-West [30 August 1940], ibid., 5.424.

[129] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 14 November 1940, ibid., 6.445.

[130] Woolf, 10 June 1940, *Diary*, 5.294.

[131] Woolf to Stephen Spender, 7 March [1940], *Letters,* 6.384

[132] Woolf to May Sarton, 19 May [1938], ibid., 6.228.

[133] Woolf to Gerald Brenan, 4 October 1929, ibid., 4.98.

[134] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 27 March [1936], ibid., 6.23.

[135] Woolf to V. Sackville-West, 14 March [1939], ibid., 6.322

[136] Woolf to Vanessa Bell, 13 November 1921, ibid., 2.494.

[137] Woolf, 9 January 1918, *Diary,* 1.103.

[138] Woolf to Ethel Smyth [10 August 1935], *Letters,* 5.423.

[139] Woolf to Stephen Spender, 1 January [1936], *Letters,* 6.1.

[140] I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism* [1929] (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004) 50.

[141] Ibid., 159.

[142] Ibid., 47

[143] Q. D. Leavis, Review of *Three Guineas,* [1938], *Virginia Woolf. The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1997) 413.

[144] Woolf, "Creative Criticism," [1917], *Essays*, 2.124.

[145] W*oolf Critical Heritage,* 410.

[146] Ibid., 413.

[147]Woolf, 8 November 1930, *Diary*, 3.329.

[148] Woolf, "How it Strikes a Contemporary" [1923], *Essays*, 3.355.

[149] Woolf to Stephen Spender [29 October 1934], *Letters*, 5.341.

[150] See Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *Julian Bell* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012) 50, 119, 129.

[151] Ibid., 125.

[152] Woolf to Julian Bell [14? March 1932], *Letters*, 5.33

[153] Woolf, 26 February 1932, *Diary,* 4.78.

[154] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 143.

[155] Julian Bell, *Essays, Poems, and Letters* (London: Hogarth Press, 1938) 93.

[156] Ibid., 47.

[157] "*The Three Guineas* Correspondence," ed. Anna Snaith, *Woolf Studies Annual* 6 (2000) 105, 106, 103.

[158] To Violet Dickinson [27 November 1919], *Letters*, 2.401-2.

[159] *Woolf Studies Annual,* 6.106.

[160] Stansky and Abrahams, *Julian Bell,* 229, 278.

[161] Woolf to Quentin Bell, 5 January 1931, *Letters*, 4.276.

[162] Richards, *Practical Criticism*, 76, 28, 149, 58, 137.

[163] Woolf, 4 May 1937, *Diary*, 5.86.

[164] Woolf to Katherine Arnold-Foster, 27 December [1933], 5.265.

[165] Snaith, *Three Guineas*, 99.

[166] Richards, *Practical Criticism*, 141.

[167] Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 1 Feb[ruary] 1 [19]41, *Letters,* 6.466.

[168] Richards, *Practical Criticism,* 95.

[169] See *Hansard*, 8 December 1938.
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