

*Woolf and Realism**Pam Morris*

‘We want to be rid of realism,’ Woolf wrote in her appreciative review of Dorothy Richardson’s experimental novel, *The Tunnel* (Duckworth, 1919).¹ That clear expression of impatience with earlier fictional conventions would find general acceptance among most of Woolf’s present-day readers and critics as offering a succinct summary of her modernist rejection of the realist tradition. Recent Woolf studies have produced a wealth of evidence as to her comprehensive engagement with the social and political issues of her day.² Yet this critical re-evaluation seems to have prompted relatively little reconsideration of the consensual view of Woolf as an anti-realist.³ Contrary to this general opinion of her fiction, I suggest that Woolf does not abandon realism, understood both as an epistemology and an aesthetic. Moreover, she is wary of aspects of subjective interiority and of the metaphorization of language, even though these are often regarded as defining features of modernist writing.

In her many essays discussing literary styles, Woolf is always insightful and generous, but invariably she expresses an oscillation of perspective that effectively resists any final judgemental position. In her review of *The Tunnel*, the apparent dismissal of realist art in favour of Richardson’s experimental interiority is preceded by an admission that ‘the old method seems sometimes the more profound and economical’, and the review concludes with a plea that the new be fashioned into ‘the shapeliness of the old accepted forms’ (E 312). Woolf does not use the terms ‘realism’ or ‘realist’ in either of the influential essays ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ (1924) or ‘Modern Fiction’ (1925), both regarded as seminal modernist manifestoes. Furthermore, in both essays she praises the art of realist writers like Austen, Dickens, Tolstoy, and Hardy, among others. ‘Our quarrel ... is not with the classics,’ she insists in ‘Modern Fiction’ (E4.158). Even the famous injunction in ‘Modern Fiction’ which appears to call for a new novelistic attention to interiority – ‘Look within ...’ – is followed by a characteristic shift of position (E4.160). She singles out James Joyce

as pre-eminent among the new generation of writers who are 'concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame'. He does 'undoubtedly come ... close to the quick of the mind,' she affirms. Yet, she continues, the experience of reading Joyce's writing is not one of imaginative expansion. Rather, there is a 'sense of being in a bright yet narrow room, confined and shut in, ... *centred in a self* which, in spite of its tremor of susceptibility, never embraces or creates *what is outside itself and beyond*' (E4.161, 162, emphasis mine).

The opposition that Woolf sets up in 'Modern Fiction' between 'materialists' like Arnold Bennett, and 'spiritualists,' typified by Joyce, needs to be understood in the context of a philosophical and political debate in which Woolf was well versed. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, a resurgent idealist mode of thought had been opposed by materialist philosophers and writers from Leslie Stephen to G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell.⁴ Russell attacked idealism in terms not unlike those of Woolf's criticism of Joyce. It is a form of self-assertion, he claims, that attempts 'to force the universe into conformity with what we find in ourselves.' What idealists call knowledge, Russell continues, is nothing but a set of prejudices and desires that make 'an impenetrable veil between us and the world beyond. The man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law'.⁵ The image of a veil imposed on reality is recurrent in Woolf's writing, as is the suggestion that political tyranny is domestic bullying writ large. British idealists were more directly influenced by Hegel than by Plato, and critics accused them of 'subordinating the individual to the state, and of propagating a moral absolutism, the implications of which in international relations were imperialism and irresponsible militarism'.⁶

Realism is based upon a materialist epistemology in so far as it is predicated upon the existence of an objective world outside the mind about which we can communicate various kinds of knowledge, even though the knowledge will always be fallible and subject to revision. Realism, however, has to be distinguished from a crude reductionist materialism which denies the power of human agency, intentionality, and creativity. It also differs from empirical actualism which claims as knowledge only what can be testified to by the senses. The materialism of Arnold Bennett is largely actualist in this sense rather than realist. Realism, as Georg Lukács claimed, is not photographic; rather it offers knowledge of social structures and historical processes.⁷ This definition of realism, as opposed to actualism or primitive materialism, has been cogently argued by philosopher of science Roy Bhaskar.⁸

Politically and epistemologically, Woolf adheres to a realist materialism. Yet she is undoubtedly drawn to that aspect of idealism, mediated through the Romantics, which offers a view of art as expression of timeless truth and beauty, transcending mutable, fleeting human existence. The tension between these two forces is sometimes expressed in her essays as an opposition between poetry and prose, at other times between abstraction and fact, or interpretation and observation, or between vision and life, dream and detail, universal and particular. She considers the greatest but most difficult achievement in novelistic prose as that which maintains a perfect balance of the two demands. The idea is articulated most fully in 'The Novels of Turgenev'. Woolf writes,

[Turgenev] is asking the novelist not only to do many things but some that seem incompatible. He has to observe facts impartially, yet he must also interpret them. Many novelists do the one; many do the other – we have the photograph and the poem. But few combine the fact and the vision; and the rare quality that we find in Turgenev is the result of this double process. . . . With his infallible eye he observes everything accurately. . . . But he stops when he has shown us the glove exactly; the interpreter is at his elbow to insist that even a glove must be relevant to the character, or to the idea. But the idea alone is not enough; the interpreter is never allowed to mount unchecked into the realms of imagination; again the observer pulls him back and reminds him of the other truth, the truth of fact.⁹

Woolf's sense of the political necessity to be true to the objective material world, as well as to the imaginative vision, dictates her preference for free indirect speech over interior monologue and stream of consciousness. The narrative may 'look within' but it never stays within. None of her novels is without a third-person perspective; none are centred wholly in a subjective self. To understand Woolf's realist aesthetic more generally, it is helpful to map the tension in her writing between idealism and materialism onto Roman Jakobson's account of the metaphoric and metonymic modes of language use.¹⁰ Jakobson aligns metaphor to the principle of similarity that orders selection of signs at the vertical, paradigmatic axis of linguistic structure. He aligns metonymy, in which he includes synecdoche, with the principles of contiguity and combination governing the horizontal axis. As an operation of contiguity and combination, metonymy undoubtedly maps easily onto a materialist perception of reality. This is probably why Jakobson links metonymy with realist art when he remarks that 'the predominance of metonymy . . . underlies and actually determines the so-called "realistic" trend'.¹¹ As subjects of a gravitational world, our direct experience of physical reality is largely contiguous and continuous. As we shall see, moreover, Woolf's imagination is frequently

ordered by a metonymic sense of the continuity of existence, of an absence of boundaries and divisions.

Metaphor has occupied a privileged place within literary discourse. Yet it has not wholly escaped criticism. Notably, Jacques Derrida has accused metaphor of insidiously underpinning the whole of Western metaphysics. Many of the fundamental concepts that support this idealist tradition, he argues, have their basis in a sensual, concrete term which is then metaphorically transposed to an abstract, spiritual, universal level.¹² Woolf, too, recognises the way forms of idealism utilise metaphor and symbolism to veil or transform the material basis of life into a quasi-religious metaphysics. A glaring example in her own time was the rhetorical religiosity of nationalistic and imperial discourse. In the early pages of *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf provides a comic illustration of the pervasive willingness among people of all classes to metaphorically elevate the particular and concrete into symbols of the abstract and metaphysical. The large car that passes down Bond Street is invested by onlookers with mystical import that ruffles their faces with the 'dark breath of veneration'.¹³ The car is transformed into 'the enduring symbol of the state,' of 'greatness' and 'the majesty of England'. Despite the satiric treatment, the language hints at the sinister functioning of this metaphoric mode. The diverse faces of the passersby become rapt in uniformity for 'the spirit of religion was abroad with her eyes bandaged tight and her lips gaping wide' (12). The overflow of this militant nationalistic zeal leads to racial violence in a public house and a patriotic fervour for self-sacrifice in 'the cannon's mouth' (15–16).

Characters in *Mrs Dalloway* transform cars into symbols of abstract ideals like the state or, in the case Sir William Bradshaw's Silver Ghost Rolls Royce, into symbols of status and power. Yet cars operate in the text as a metonymic structure. There are references to motor vehicles on almost every page of *Mrs Dalloway*. Woolf humorously even calls two characters Mr Bentley and Mr Morris. The names indicate the Woolfian opposition between idealism and realism. Mr Morris (who owns two cars) is, as the saying goes, down to earth, with a daughter going into the family business and a son with a scholarship at Leeds University (135–36). Mr Bentley, in keeping with the elite connotations of the car, is an idealist seeing the plane over London as 'a symbol of man's soul', of the desire to transcend the materiality of the body (24). Of another unnamed idealist in the text, the narrator comments, 'Such are the visions which ceaselessly float up ... put their faces in front of, the actual thing' (49). In so doing, the passage continues, they take away a sense of the earth, transforming the fever and multiplicity of life into a unified ideal order.

As readers of *Mrs Dalloway*, then, we need to read the many car references neither symbolically, nor as actualist realism providing merely factual verisimilitude, but metonymically, as denotative tracks to the structures and processes of the social world in which Woolf was writing. Clarissa Dalloway's moment of tranquillity in the flower shop is shattered by a 'violent explosion' (12). It is, of course, the car so quickly symbolised by the crowd. But the explosive force links it metonymically with the violence of the first industrialised mass war. Cars are also metonymically related to the transformation in mass-production practices in the early decades of the twentieth century known metonymically as Fordism. Henry Ford, a notable idealist, aimed to transform not only working processes but also the human worker.¹⁴ He insisted upon a disciplined, morally conforming workforce, using brutal, strong-arm tactics to prevent unionisation and employing investigators to check that his employees met his strict standards of sobriety, thrift, and orderliness. As social and industrial unrest grew in England during the 1920s (Clarissa's daughter watches the unemployed marching in London), there was considerable interest in Henry Ford's philosophy and methods. On 8 August 1923, *The Times* carried an article advocating the adoption of Ford's industrial relations by British industry with the aim of converting the unruly poor into an homogeneous, disciplined body such as Peter Walsh admires, where a single 'will worked legs and arms uniformly' (44).

Clarissa Dalloway, who insists she would never try to convert anyone (107), resists the closure of a unified social identity. Instead, she understands self metonymically as part of a much larger non-homogenised multiplicity: 'she felt herself everywhere; not "here, here, here;" ... She waved her hand going up Shaftesbury Avenue. She was all that. So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the place, ... some woman in the street ... even trees and barns' (120). Woolf's inclusive metonymic syntax expresses the epistemological open-endedness and materiality of Clarissa's perception of reality: 'in the swing, tramp and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands, barrel organs; ... was what she loved; life, London, this moment of June' (4). Clarissa's sensuous delight in the sheer thingness of the world is in sharp contrast to the response of Septimus Warren Smith.

He, too, experiences the materiality of sights and sounds with intensity, yet he elevates these out of the sensory domain into mystical testimony of a 'new religion' (19). Septimus thinks in metaphors, as does another religious idealist, Doris Kilman (81, 110). As a visionary, Septimus 'interprets'

symbolic meanings hidden behind the appearance of things. Both Kilman and Septimus are driven to seek refuge from a fleshly materiality they experience as repugnant. Shortly before his death, Septimus experiences a poignant moment of release from the horror of metaphysical delusion. To use Woolf's terminology, Septimus stops interpreting and starts observing. He becomes a realist, attending to things as they are, stripped of the symbolic meaning he has been imposing on the world: 'And so gathering courage, he looked at the sideboard; the plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, at the mantelpiece, with the jar of roses. None of these things moved. All were still; all were real' (120).

Septimus is impelled into the madness of a self-enclosing idealism by the physical horror of modern trench warfare. Not so the other idealist in the text, Sir William Bradshaw, who worships the Goddess of Conversion. In religious terminology, conversion changes flesh into spirit, sin and foulness into perfect grace. The zeal for conversion that drives Bradshaw, veiled under such august abstract names as progress, science, proportion, rationality, is in fact the craving 'for dominion, for power,' a will to subdue the populace and impose upon that material multiplicity a unified submissive face that reflects back his own authority (85–86). In the actual world of 1920s Britain, increasing unemployment, vagrancy, and political and industrial agitation aroused fears in the respectable classes as to the moral health of the nation. In the text of *Mrs Dalloway*, the unnamed idealist seeks relief from the physical actuality of 'these miserable pigmies, these feeble, these ugly, these craven men and women' (48). In the social world beyond the text, the feeble, ugly bodies of the massed poor seemed to symbolize their deformed lack of spiritual grace. For many in the prosperous classes, of all political persuasion, the 'progressive science' of eugenics appeared to offer a means of safeguarding national identity from engulfment in the huge body of the unfit, the deformed and the degenerate.¹⁵

In *Mrs Dalloway*, figures from the lowest strata of social life appear fleetingly but recurrently at the margins of the narrative, representing an encroaching material otherness at the perimeter of the enclosed nation of the well-to-do. The woman who sits drinking in a doorway (4), the pub brawl (15), Moll Pratt selling flowers in the street (16), Mrs Demster with knobbed lumps for feet (23), the seedy-looking unemployed man at St Paul's (24), the battered woman at the tube station (68), the superfluous youth Lady Bruton intends to ship abroad (93), the costermongers and prostitutes harassed by the police (98), the female vagrant Richard Dalloway smiles at (99), the marching unemployed men (117), the shindy

of brawling women (139) – all these figures and events are perceived as troublesome to national order. Psychiatrists were closely involved in public campaigns and legislation to regulate mental deficiency, vagrancy and insanity, categories that lacked clear dividing boundaries.¹⁶ In *Mrs Dalloway*, Sir William Bradshaw consults with those in high political power. His ‘scientific’ social policy is couched in the rhetoric of utopian idealism, but his means derive from the chilling technologies of eugenics as practiced on embodied subjects. He will make England prosper, he boasts, by secluding lunatics, forbidding childbirth, and making it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views (84). For Woolf only a realist knowledge of the metonymically interconnected worlds of power, science, and religion can provide the understanding necessary to oppose the sinister visions of perfection that veil an often visceral intolerance of all that is unregulated, contingent, and recalcitrant.

To claim that *Mrs Dalloway* is underpinned by a realist epistemology and aesthetic may not seem so surprising given that Woolf’s stated aim was ‘to criticise the social system ... at its most intense’.¹⁷ Not so *The Waves* of which she declares her intention is to eliminate ‘this appalling narrative business of the realist’ (*D3*,209). She also writes in her diary that the new novel will be ‘an endeavour at something mystical, spiritual; the thing that exists when we aren’t there’ (*D3*,114). Read out of context, this sounds like idealism, the desire for timeless truth beyond material reality. Yet this would be to mistake her meaning. When she expands on this ‘mystical side,’ she concludes ‘it is not oneself but something in the universe that one’s left with’ (*D3*,113). In other words, whereas idealism veils the materiality of the world by imposing self-assertive mental visions upon it, Woolf’s desire is to experience the universe as it is when we’re not there, without the screen of self. Of another similar experience she writes of gaining ‘a consciousness of what I call “reality”: a thing I see before me; ... residing in the downs or sky’ (*D3*,196). In *The Waves*, Woolf expresses a materialist and metonymic view of human life as part of the whole physical world. The interludes move from sea and sky, metonymies of the universe, to the house, with its table laid with plates and cutlery, as metonymies of the socio-cultural world. Yet the plates set out ready for food point metonymically to the corporal basis of cultural life, while the windows of the house transact the movement backwards and forwards between the two interconnected realms. The garden, where the children’s first social experiences occur, is another metonymic site of cultural and physical contiguity.

Moreover, underlying the text of *The Waves*, like a palimpsest, is Lucretius' long poem *De Rerum Natura*, which opens, like the novel, with a powerful evocation of the engendering light of the sun. Lucretius' imagination, like Woolf's, is energised by vast skies and immense clouds 'swimming through the air'.¹⁸ Most importantly, *De Rerum Natura* is assertively materialist and anti-idealist. Lucretius' aim in writing the poem was to free human life from the need to grovel to superstition.¹⁹ Abject fear of mythic powers, Lucretius claims, causes most of the cruelty, ambition and greed that curse human existence.

Woolf has similar aims in writing *The Waves*: to express a wholly materialist understanding of culture and self with a view to opposing idealist mythologies. Idealism works to elevate nation and empire into metaphysical entities thereby veiling the corporal forms of subjugation these coercive formations depend upon. There can be few novels more crammed with images of bodily sensation than *The Waves*. The opening dramatises John Locke's insistence that knowledge is empirical, resulting from sensations produced by experience of the object world. The first word of the first sentence each character speaks initiates the grammar of subject/object separation as the child registers the sensations of the world external to self. 'I see a slab of yellow,' says Susan.²⁰ Bernard describes the process precisely, 'I am not part of the street – no, I observe the street. One splits off therefore' (94). This separation is necessary for identity to form but inherent in it is the risk thereafter of disowning the embodied nature of human life as still part of the physical world.

Throughout *The Waves*, Woolf insists upon the corporal basis of cultural activity by mapping events in the characters' lives onto their bodily sensations. Jinny describes the farewell dinner to Percival in physical terms: 'our senses have widened. Membranes, webs of nerve ... spread themselves' (110). Bernard ascribes his contentment at breakfast time to the superb functioning of 'muscles, nerves, intestines, blood-vessels' (217–18). When the phone rings, however, he notes complacently how swiftly his mind adjusts itself: 'it might be ... to assume command of the British Empire; I observed my composure'. Slyly satirized here is the easy slippage from corporality to the supremacy of the disembodied mind. It was belief in superior intellectual mastery that underpinned ideological justification of Western imperialism. Woolf's political insistence upon embodiment suggests the reason she uses 'said' rather than 'thought' for each character's monologue. Thought is the register of the mental realm. Speaking is a physical act. Speech is one of those liminal sites where there

occurs a metonymic transaction across the porous boundaries of self and world, the biological and the cultural.

Idealism seeks to deny this necessary connection and impose a mental system upon the unruly heterogeneity of the world. In *The Waves*, the two characters whose early experience was of cruelty and physical suffering become idealists. Rhoda and Louis seek 'a world immune from change' (86). Louis identifies himself with Plato, and Rhoda says, 'So terrible was life that I held up shade after shade. Look at life through this, look at life through that' (138, 170). Rhoda's tragedy is that having rejected embodied life, her 'ill-fitting body,' she is permitted, as a woman, no other recognised social identity. Susan finds a sense of self in maternity, Jinny as a courtesan. Their identities are culturally produced from their biological bodies. Louis, however, is able to assume intellectual, as opposed to physical, status, and power in the world, and it is through him that Woolf makes her strongest political critique of idealism. Louis seeks to 'make a steel ring of clear poetry that shall connect the gulls and the women with bad teeth, the church spire and the bobbing billycock hats' (105). Louis does not run away from aspects of physical life that Rhoda finds repulsive. He is fascinated by commonplace conversations and trays of apricots and custard, but the impulse he brings to this common life, as the image of the steel ring of poetry suggests, is a desire to 'reduce you to order' (77).

As a schoolboy, Louis is fearful of 'beatings and other tortures' (139). At public school, the boasting boys 'make little boys sob in dark passages' (36). While Woolf was writing the novel, Mussolini was conscripting boys in Italy into fascist youth organizations as part of his will to impose his vision of disciplined uniformity upon the nation. The boasting boys in *The Waves* march 'in troops with badges on their caps; they salute simultaneously passing the figure of their general' (36). Louis longs to be accepted into this unified, disciplined order. As a man of power, he is determined to impose his dream of regularity upon the recalcitrant otherness of life. Like all idealists, he asserts that the world must see reality 'through our eyes' (140). The possessive 'our' refers, of course, to British military and financial imperialism, the ideal from which Louis constructs his own identity of Western rational superiority.²¹ 'I roll the dark before me,' he claims, 'spreading commerce where there was chaos in the far parts of the world' (139).

Bernard resists Louis' authoritarian urge to 'roof us all in ... confine us, make us one, with his red ink,' by noting a curious gargoyle or absurd tombstone (235). As a schoolboy, he similarly deflates the headmaster's pompous sermonizing by watching a bee buzz around his head (46). Once Septimus Warren Smith attends to things as they are, he is able share jokes

and laughter with his wife again (121). The achievement of Woolf's realism in what are often considered two of her most important 'high modernist' novels is to oppose the heterogeneity, contingency, and comic incongruity of material existence to the steel ring of totalitarian rationalism. Yet, equally, she communicates knowledge of the discursive formations and structures of worldly power that elevate some into coercive authority over others.

NOTES

- 1 *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., ed. Andrew MacNellie (vols. 1–4); ed. Stuart N. Clarke (vols. 5–6) (London: Hogarth Press, 1986–2011), 3.12.
- 2 See, for example, Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Linden Peach, *Virginia Woolf* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000); Anna Snaith, *Public and Private Negotiations* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality and Myth* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Michael Whitworth, *Virginia Woolf* (Oxford University Press, 2005); David Bradshaw's introduction to *Mrs Dalloway* (Oxford University Press, 2000) and Gillian Beer's introduction to *The Waves* (Oxford University Press, 1992); and the Cambridge University Press Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf (launched 2011).
- 3 Among the few discussions of Woolf as a realist see, Susan Dick, 'Literary Realism in *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*' in Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, *Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 50–71; Hintikka Jaakko, 'Virginia Woolf and Our Knowledge of the External World,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 38 (Fall, 1979–80), 5–14; S. P. Rosenbaum, 'The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf' in S. P. Rosenbaum, ed., *English Literature and British Philosophy* (Chicago University Press, 1971); Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
- 4 Leslie Stephen, 'Ethics and the Struggle for Existence', *The Contemporary Review*, 64 (1893), 155–70; G.E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism' (1903) rpt. in G.E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), pp. 1–30; Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* [1912] (Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 89–94. For an account of the influence of Bertrand Russell on Woolf, see Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 5 Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 92–3.
- 6 David Boucher, ed., *The British Idealists* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. xxi–xxii.
- 7 Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism*, trans. Edith Bone (London: Merlin Press, 1972), p. 60.
- 8 Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism: A Personal Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 51–73; Andrew Collier,

- Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London: Verso, 1994).
- 9 Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, 4 vols., (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), I, 249.
 - 10 Roman Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance' in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1956) and 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics' rpt. in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language* (London: John Wiley, 1960).
 - 11 Jakobson, 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance', p. 78.
 - 12 Jacques Derrida, 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy' in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. with additional notes by Alan Bass, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 226.
 - 13 *Mrs Dalloway*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 14.
 - 14 In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci describes Ford's production methods as 'the biggest collective effort to date to create, with unprecedented speed, and, with a consciousness of purpose unmatched in history, a new type of worker and a new type of man,' quoted in David Harvey's chapter on 'Fordism' in Harvey, *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Conditions of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 126. Aldous Huxley expresses the same idea in his dystopia, *Brave New World* (1932) which dates the beginning of a genetically engineered society as A.F. – 'after Ford'.
 - 15 During the time Woolf was writing *Mrs Dalloway* there were frequent articles in newspapers, often enthusiastic, on the subject of eugenics; see for example *The Times*, 18 January, 20 June, 21 October 1922.
 - 16 For an account of psychiatry as a profession in the early twentieth century, see Matthew Thomson, *The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy and Social Policy in Britain c. 1870–1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
 - 17 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols., ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew MacNellie (London: Hogarth Press, 1979–85), 2, 248.
 - 18 *De Rerum Natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse [1924], revised by Martin Ferguson Smith, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 309. Woolf records 'stumbling through Lucretius' in early 1907 (L1 280; see also 284), and was reading him again in September 1918 (D1 192). There are a number of translations of Lucretius in Woolf's library, now in Washington State University Library.
 - 19 *De Rerum Natura*, pp. 7–9. I discuss the intertextual relationship of *The Waves* and *De Rerum Natura* at greater length in my forthcoming study of Woolf and realism. See also Susanna Rich, 'De Undarum Natura : Lucretius and Woolf in *The Waves*', *Journal of Modern Literature* 23.2 (Winter 1999–2000): 249–57; and James Morland, 'The Influence of Lucretius on Unity in *The Waves*', *Virginia Woolf Bulletin* 38 (September 2011): 23–28.
 - 20 *The Waves*, (Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 5.

- 21 Both Jane Marcus, 'Britannia Rules *The Waves*' in Karen Lawrence, ed., *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century 'British' Literary Canons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 136–162, and Linden Peach, *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 155–167, point out the anti-imperialism of the novel but neither connects this to Woolf's larger critique of idealism which she sees as the underlying mode of thought and rhetoric that provides the intellectual and emotive force to all forms of totalitarianism.