
Antonio Ballesteros
*Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha*
Antonio.Ballesteros@uclm.es

This volume is the first of a promising series devoted to the reception of British authors in Europe; forthcoming titles include the critical response to literary figures like James Joyce, William Beckford and Laurence Sterne, although the series will also integrate the study of philosophers, historians, scientists and political writers, as Elinor Shaffer, the general editor, expounds in her general Preface to the series. Edited and written by distinguished experts in each author, the books comprise a collection of articles devoted to specific aspects of the reception of him/her in different European countries. With respect to Virginia Woolf, it should be said from the very start that Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst have done a great job in editing and selecting the articles incorporated in this volume, which, in general terms, takes on an ample scope of Woolfian studies in Europe. In this context, the book will undoubtedly be useful for anyone interested in the apparently well-known, but still elusive figure of Virginia Woolf.

The volume begins with a somewhat brief Preface by Mary Ann Caws (“Virginia Woolf’s Crossings”), in which she tries to point out some of the main emphases of the entire collection of articles that follow this somewhat fragmentary foreword. These preliminary ideas are followed by an extremely helpful “Timeline” that lays out from a chronological perspective (ranging from 1923 to 2000) the most important translations of Woolf’s works into several European languages, the most significant critical contributions about her on the Continent, and other relevant aspects concerning Woolf’s life: her intertextual presence in some noteworthy European authors, some special circumstances connected with the British writer and her circle, as well as their relations with continental intellectuals, politicians, censors, and so on. This “Other” section (as it is called here) also compiles important translations of major early biographic material, like Quentin Bell’s biography of his aunt, or Leonard Woolf’s autobiography, together with worthwhile data about exhibitions, television programmes and other events related to the figure of Virginia Woolf. This section is invaluable and becomes the perfect preamble and referential framework for the chapters that follow.

In a less schematic way, the same can be said about Nicola Luckhurst’s clarifying introduction to the volume. Here the reader can find a lucid summary of what s/he is going to find in the whole book. Luckhurst, taking the remaining contributions to the volume into consideration, pays primordial attention to the early reception of Woolf’s works in Europe; to two essential meetings of Woolf in France (she met two of her French translators there in 1927) and Spain (where she had an encounter with Victoria Ocampo, the important Argentine intellectual, editor of *Sur*, which led to the expansion of Woolf’s works throughout the Spanish-speaking world from then on); to problems of translation, censorship and marketing in several European countries; to the feminist reception of the author (ultimately connected with any Woolfian matter); and to the academic production and popular consumption of Woolf’s figure, mainly in the latter years, when she has turned into a familiar icon even outside the academic or high intellectual sphere, thanks to the recent cinematographic versions of some of her most renowned works, together
with documentaries and films linked to the Bloomsbury Group and writers and artists related to them. Luckhurst has the gift of highlighting the essential, making continuous cross-references to the articles selected by Mary Ann Caws and herself, guiding the reader through the different parts composing the volume and emphasizing the universal appeal of Virginia Woolf. This is a good beginning indeed.

On the other hand, the first block of articles deals with the reception of the author in France. In this milieu, Pierre-Èric Villeneuve explores in “Virginia Woolf among Writers and Critics: The French Intellectual Scene” some interesting facets of the influence of the British writer upon the French cultural milieu from the 1920s and 1930s to more recent times, admitting that, at the very beginning, English studies in France during Woolf’s lifetime tended to centre on Joyce as the most significant exponent of British Modernism. After revising the first substantial critical responses to the study of Woolf in France (those of Floris Delattre and Maxime Chastaing), helped by early translations, Villeneuve carries out an exploration of the intertextual interaction between Woolf and some distinguished French authors like Simone de Beauvoir, Nathalie Sarraute and Maurice Blanchot.

It is scarcely surprising that de Beauvoir’s reading of Woolf is linked to feminist issues. In *Le deuxième sexe* (1949) and in later lectures, the French writer, taking into account the social, sexual and political implications of Woolf’s ideas, deems her voice “a moment of departure” (26–27). Women should be legitimised as public intellectuals, finding complete autonomy in their lives and fighting for an “I” that must be deprived of the connotations of the male-dominated literary tradition. The materialism of de Beauvoir made her dislike Woolf’s novels, to prefer her feminist essays. For her part, Nathalie Sarraute considers Woolf as a fascinating source of ambiguous influence. She, like her British counterpart, tries to find new roles for the reader and promotes the full autonomy of the speaking voice, especially in those texts written for the stage (*Le silence*, 1967) influenced by Russian authors, a literary attraction she shares with Woolf. With regard to Maurice Blanchot, this latter writer was more concerned with the Woolfian question of poetics and the future of the novel, according to Villeneuve. Blanchot appreciates in Woolf’s texts the mixture of extreme paradoxes and contradictions. Of the three French intellectuals studied in this chapter, Villeneuve finds that Blanchot is the one who better understands Woolf’s stylistic and poetic achievement.

In “The French Reception of Woolf: An *État Présent* of *Études Woolfiennes*,” as its title announces, Carole Rodier focuses her investigation upon the many critical responses to Woolf, Bloomsbury and British Modernism in the French academic world, which brings about a type of reception that parallels the intellectual one. Rodier analyses the role paid by the study of Woolf in French academic circles, paying attention to contemporary theoretical approaches like feminist criticism, narratology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology and many more. In general terms, it can be inferred from Rodier’s exhaustive account (producing a somewhat disturbing sensation of empty name-dropping) that, in French criticism, feminism has been subsumed by aesthetic concerns. Finally, Rodier says that: “There is a common awareness that Woolf’s art is open-ended, and that, consequently, any attempt to draw ready-made conclusions about it runs the risk of debasing it and stifling Woolf’s voice in theoretical logorrhea. The reader is challenged to respond to Woolf in an imaginative and creative way and is certainly not frustrated at having to leave her mystery intact” (53).

This should be applied to *any* great author, not only Woolf, and I am afraid that,
eventually, Rodier falls into the theoretical logorrhea that she wants to avoid. Maybe it
is not her fault, but that of the critics she comments upon, many of whom—I have the
impression—do not respond to literary writers in an imaginative and creative way.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to translations of Virginia Woolf into French. In a
succinct contribution, Françoise Pellan begins by stressing Woolf’s own distrust of the role
of translations with respect to her texts. After that, the critic goes on with an assessment
of some relevant versions of the English author’s works into French, praising above all
Charles Mauron’s translations of *Orlando* and *Flush* and commenting on Marguerite
Yourcenar’s peculiar translation of *The Waves*, which seems to be a very beautiful text
from a literary and stylistic perspective but an unfaithful rendition of the novel. Then, and
this is by far the most interesting part of her essay, Pellan writes a sensitive, but (alas!) at
the same time excessively short account of her own experience as translator of *To the
Lighthouse*.

In the following article, “A Virginia Woolf, with a French Twist,” Mary Ann Caws also
alludes to Mauron’s translation of Woolfian texts into French, paying special attention
later to the reception of Bloomsbury by French intellectuals in the light of a famous
“Colloque” at Cerisy-la-Salle devoted to the notorious group of British artists in 1974. This
is an impressionistic and personal sketch that, despite its circumstantial flavour, makes an
appropriate ending to the “French section” of the book.

The next part is composed of two chapters devoted to the German reception of Woolf.
In the first of them (“The German Reception and Criticism of Virginia Woolf: A Survey
of Phases and Trends in the Twentieth Century”), Ansgar and Vera Nünning accurately
and rigorously fulfil the task they propound in the title of their contribution. Where most
of the “French” contributors included in the volume are too vaporous and incomplete in
their appreciations, the Nünning’s scrupulously establish the main guidelines of Woolf’s
reception in Germany (West Germany in general terms, given that the following chapter
of the book deals with East German views about the British author) from a historical,
social and critical perspective, leading to “a very profitable and prolific Woolf industry”
(68) in the German-speaking world.

Thus, classifying the material into several systematic epigraphs, the Nünning’s examine
the early reception of Woolf’s works in Germany (mainly taking into consideration the
beginnings of stylistic, thematic and feminist criticism from the 1930s to the 1950s, with
a somewhat insufficient allusion to the prohibition of Woolf’s “experimental” prose in
Nazi Germany), the period of formalist approaches to her works (1950–1970, an interlude
deeply inspired by the publication of Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis* in 1953), criticism from
the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s (dominated by a shift from formalism to other analytical
modes, like, for instance, biographical research on Woolf), and recent trends in the
German reception and criticism of Woolf, aspects that the Nünning’s subdivide into other
closely intertwining categories that they denominate “the feminist discovery and
appropriation of Woolf as a feminist figurehead,” “the turn towards history,” “the
discovery of Woolf as a literary critic and thinker” and “the rise of theory.” This last part
takes into account the recent narratological turn of German Woolf criticism. Instead of
simply dropping names here and there, the authors of this chapter carry out a thorough
assessment of the specificity of German contributions to the comprehension and
understanding of Woolf’s texts from a critical point of view.
To a certain extent, the same can be said of Wolfgang Wicht in his revealing article “Installing Modernism: The Reception of Virginia Woolf in the German Democratic Republic,” a piece of writing which is not only significant from an academic perspective, but also from a social and historical angle. Wicht—himself one of the relevant figures of the late East German intellectual sphere and an editor of Woolf’s works—traces the intriguing story of the difficult relations of a socialist country with a writer like Virginia Woolf, many times mistakenly considered by those who do not know her works as an aesthetic author devoid of a “solid” social message (dictatorships always mistrust what they do not understand, or what they understand too well). He describes all the polemical phases that Woolf’s works had to undergo in the gloomy cultural environment of the German Democratic Republic since Mrs Dalloway was first translated there in 1977. Woolf was then depicted as one of the first socialist feminist critics, making her available to (regretfully) a still restricted public, for not many people could have access to the limited editions of the British author’s works. Wicht writes a personal vindication of his role as an editor and a theoretical critic of Woolf, and outlines the reasons for his commitment. Therefore, the chapter has a clear autobiographical thrust that makes it even more motivating. In this way, we learn some absorbing features about the process by which socialist intellectuals became more and more involved in bridging the long period between the 1920s and the 1970s, in which fascist and communist leaders had despised the experimental texts of Modernism. Wicht also studies in some detail, among other subjects, the political ambiguity of the essays of Virginia Woolf and the academic and philosophical response to her works, at the same time as, interestingly enough, he perceives the conflict in a system in which many intellectuals struggled to maintain a utopian Marxist ideology, which was being prostituted by the country’s rulers. In the end, Wicht observes lucidly that, attending to the reception and acceptance of western culture in East Germany, it can be deduced that this country “was in no small measure re-united with the West before the socio-political changes of 1989 became historical reality” (126). In short, this is a stimulating and thought-provoking article, one of the most adequately informative contributions to the volume.

Although Urszula Terentowicz-Fotyga’s “From Silence to a Polyphony of Voices: Virginia Woolf’s Reception in Poland,” for obvious cultural and political reasons, follows more or less a similar point of departure to that of the preceding article, there is in her sensitive and evocative account of Woolf’s reception in Poland a distinct nuance, probably due to the fact that her country was more oppressed by the Soviet tyranny than the German Democratic Republic from the end of the Second World War until the fall of the Iron Curtain. The author of this article reflects the progression of the response to Woolfian texts in Poland by means of a division into three phases. The first lasted until the late 1950s, when political and social pressures were strongest, and was a period of relative silence. The second, encompassing the next three decades, saw the translation of Woolf’s most significant works and read her as a canonical writer, more important from a historical point of view than from a literary perspective. Finally, the third phase—located in the last decade of the twentieth century—witnessed the reversal of this practice. Nowadays, in Poland as in many other countries, Woolf is perceived as both a literary figure and a comparatively celebrated personality, popularised by the cinema and other media, however equivocal this interpretation may be.
Chapters 8 and 9 are devoted to the reception of Woolf in two Scandinavian countries: Sweden and Denmark. In “‘Literature Is No One’s Private Ground’: The Critical and Political Reception of Virginia Woolf in Sweden,” Catherine Sandbach-Dahlström centres her arguments mostly upon the response of that “entity” so much loved by Virginia Woolf, “the common reader,” paying primordial attention to the critical and political reception in the press and in the universities, rather than upon Woolf’s influence on Swedish fiction. One wonders whether that could be a truthful appreciation of what the term “common reader” really means; I believe that this denomination should be applied to general readers, and ought not to be restricted to those impoverishing fields of the press and academia, where there are normally very few relevant things to say for readers outside those spheres (readers who, fortunately, pay little or no attention to what they say about how they have to read a text). In any case, Sandbach-Dahlström carries out her task with accuracy, and explains that Woolf’s influence on Swedish fiction has been of lesser importance for different reasons, one of them being that Swedish experimental modernist prose’s major debt is to the male modernists.

For her part, Ida Klitgard, in “Waves of Influence: The Danish Reception of Virginia Woolf,” presents an analogous situation to that of other so-called liberal European countries with regard to the general question that the whole volume poses. Woolf was considered less important than her male modernist counterparts until the 1990s, when her popularity increased because of her presence as myth and icon. She began to be studied in the 1950s and the 1960s, but it was in 1973, with a controversial feminist writer’s translation of *A Room of One’s Own*, that Woolf received more consideration, being thus “discovered” in the wide sense of the word. According to Klitgard, it was then the feminist emphasis that contributed to the study of the British author and her growth of readership in Denmark. In my view, it is this feminist prominence that the Danish critic hyperbolises in her article, where you can find sentences like the one that follows, referring to a biography of Woolf composed by a male author: “Hansen’s piece, however limited, is the first autobiographical response to Woolf that I have traced, and it is perhaps surprising that it should be written by a man” (180; my emphasis). On the whole, this is one of the most sexually prejudiced and less attractive articles of the entire book (the fact that I am a man, believe me, has nothing to do with my opinion here).

Quite on the contrary, Katerina K. Kitsi-Mitakou’s “‘The Country of the Moon’ and the Woman of ‘Interior Monologue’: Virginia Woolf in Greece” provides an interesting vision of the British writer’s reception in the cradle of western civilization. The Greek scholar begins by referring to Woolf’s journey to Greece in 1932, a place that she described as “the country of the moon” or “England in the time of Chaucer,” but that also was perceived by her as “far away the loveliest country now left—quite unspoilt—in fact uncivilized” (187). According to Kitsi-Mitakou, Woolf “discovered the past in what for Greece was the present” (188), and the author herself was to be discovered in the future by an important group of intellectuals that receive the name of the “School of Thessaloniki.” Later on, Kitsi-Mitakou explores Woolf’s influence upon contemporary Greek writers and critics. As is the general rule, it is by the end of the 1970s when interest in her as a woman author began to emerge, both for social and literary reasons, and the 1980s and the 1990s saw the rise of concern about her figure. This was evidenced by the various translations of her books into modern Greek and by the still scarce, but increasing flourishing of the “Woolf industry” in the Hellenic country.
On the other hand, Sergio Perosa’s “The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Italy” is a correct description of Woolf’s presence on the Italian intellectual scene since her own times, when, in contrast to other European countries, her works were appreciated as an example of bello scrivere, fashionable in Italy in the 1930s and early 1940s. In the following decade, with its emphasis on the prevailing neo-realistic trends of the period, Virginia Woolf was ostracized because of her being regarded “an elitist, escapist, snobbish, high-society and non-committed author” (201). It was in the late 1970s when, as in many other continental countries, Woolf became a relevant writer in the Italian publishing market and cultural framework for two main reasons: a renewed interest in her biography and personality, her fictional techniques and contribution to literature and the expansion of feminism. Himself an editor of Woolf’s texts, Perosa’s article is flawed due to his exhausting account of name-dropping related to translations and criticism of the English writer in Italy. The chapter improves when he expresses his own opinions about that material and tells the reader some noteworthy anecdotes about Woolf’s reception in Italy.

The following section of the book is devoted to the multiplicity of aspects linked to the reception of Woolf’s iconic persona and texts in Spain. This, however, has to be specified with further detail, for the first contribution to this part, “‘A Gaping Mouth, but No Words’: Virginia Woolf Enters the Land of Butterflies,” demonstrates how the British author’s texts came into Spain via Argentina. In this brilliant, evocative and magnificently documented article, Laura Lojo creates a fascinating account of the meeting between Virginia Woolf and Victoria Ocampo in London in 1934, an encounter that would lead to the first translations of Woolf’s works into Spanish in the influential Argentinian journal Sur. A young Jorge Luis Borges carried out those translations. Ocampo, encouraged by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, and inspired by her meeting and her passionate readings of Virginia Woolf—with whom she identified—became the intellectual muse of the Spanish-speaking world in the 1930s and the 1940s, fighting for the rights of women in conservative Argentinian society and publishing important works of indispensable literary figures which were surreptitiously read by a few intellectuals in Spain during the long and dark dictatorship of General Franco. As a woman author herself, and as an active feminist, Ocampo even wrote a beautiful text entitled “Carta a Virginia Woolf” in which she revises “Woolf’s analysis of women and literature while defining her own experience—which was to some extent different from Woolf’s—as a woman reader in a distant, ‘exotic’ and conservative Spanish-speaking country” (229). Laura Lojo also refers to Woolf’s journeys to Spain and evaluates Borges’s and others’ early translations of her texts, dealing also with their reception in the Spanish-speaking world, where the impact of Editorial Sur and Editorial Sudamericana was invaluable. As is unfortunately recurrent in our cultural framework, Ocampo’s efforts were ultimately ruinous from an economic perspective, but many other readers of Woolf followed her path in those difficult times. Laura Lojo’s article encompasses in a few pages a successful summary of Woolf’s reception in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. Her contribution is essential for anyone interested in this topic, and it is also a very enjoyable article.

On the other hand, an important point not directly or thoroughly tackled by Laura Lojo is accurately investigated by Alberto Lázaro in “The Emerging Voice: A Review of Spanish Scholarship on Virginia Woolf.” Written with the recurrent rigour and systematic clairvoyance of this Spanish scholar, the chapter deals with the academic reception of
Woolf in Spain, an aspect that, as the author states at the very beginning of his exposition, has not been very rich and varied, contrasting with the recognition of Virginia Woolf in Spain today as a significant writer and a leading promoter of the modernist movement. However, according to Lázaro, and as he will later reveal in his perceptive account of the matter, “an analysis of Spanish scholarship on Virginia Woolf shows how her writing has steadily risen to prominence, from the early passing references of the 1920s to the longer critical articles and book-length studies of the 1990s” (247). Lázaro is especially insightful in his examination of censorship and its relations with Woolfian works in Franco’s epoch, and in his assessment of the various critical responses to the British writer in Spain over a long period of time. As is the case for the most part, the majority of the contributions belong to the two last decades of the twentieth century.

María José Gámez Fuentes’s “Virginia Woolf and the Search for Symbolic Mothers in Modern Spanish Fiction: The Case of Tres mujeres” is quite a different kind of article. In her study, the author cleverly traces the intertextual and influential presence of Woolf in several Spanish women writers, paying particular attention to the volume of short stories Tres mujeres, by Ana María Navales (1942–). Concretely, the book contains three stories: “Regreso a Monk’s House,” “La dama escritora” and “Julieta de los espíritus”; in the first of them, Virginia Woolf plays the main role, whilst the other two texts evoke, respectively, the lives of two quite unknown Spanish women, both of them Aragonese: María del Pilar Sinués (1835–93), a writer of popular literature for women, and Julieta Aguilar (1899–1979), a painter. Apart from her sensitive account of Woolf’s presence in Navales’s work, Gámez Fuentes also briefly takes into consideration her influence upon other Spanish female authors, like Carmen Martín Gaite, Esther Tusquets, Rosa Montero and Lourdes Ortiz.

For her part, in “‘A Fastness of Their Own’: The Galician Reception of Virginia Woolf,” Manuela Palacios explains how, outside the academic world, “it has been the Galician feminist movement that has done the most to promote, study and discuss the writings of Virginia Woolf” (281). This process has been carried out mainly by two feminist periodicals in this northwestern region of Spain: Festa da palabra silenciada (coordinated by a well-known Galician writer, María Xosé Queizán) and Andaina. Palacios emphasizes the fact that the social and economic context for women writers in Galicia is not very different from that of Britain in the 1920s, and this is the major reason for the growing interest in the great modernist author. In her witty, and occasionally almost lyrical contribution, the author of this chapter also revises in an epigraph entitled “Lady Woolf in Compostela” Woolf’s intertextual, and even fictive presence as a character, in Ramón Otero Pedrayo’s brilliant novel Devalar, a narrative also permeated by Joyce’s fiction. Other Galician writers influenced by Woolf and mentioned in this article are Pilar Pallarés and Ana Romaní, together with the artist Dolores Padín, painter of a polyptych entitled “Vida, muerte y resurrección de Virginia Woolf.” Finally, the last part of Manuela Palacios’s contribution is devoted to give details about the criteria for her own translation of To the Lighthouse, carried out together with Xavier Castro, the only one of Woolf’s books that has been translated into Galician so far. Modesty prevents this outstanding scholar—also author of a magnificent thesis on visual imagery in Woolf’s fiction—from saying how poetically beautiful and how splendidly accurate her own and her colleague’s translation is. I can say so, and I wish to manifest it here as an act of mere justice.
The following article, very well documented and cleverly written, attempts to trace the presence of Virginia Woolf in Catalonia. In “Modernism, Nationalism, and Feminism: Representations of Virginia Woolf in Catalonia,” Jacqueline A. Hurtley presents the subject with care and precision, covering the long period between 1930 (when Cesar August Jornada’s translation of *Mrs Dalloway* was published) and 2000 (a year marked by an exhibition devoted to the British writer at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània in Barcelona). Hurtley also underlines the feminist emphasis of most recent translations and critical considerations of Woolf’s work in the Catalan sphere, and refers to the political problems of publishers in Catalonia for issuing works in the Catalan language in the grey times of Francoist censorship. Thus, Cardús’s translation of *Flush* in 1938 was the last to appear in Catalan until the 1970s. Hurtley assesses the early Catalan translations of Woolf’s texts and comments upon some of the recent ones, most of them carried out by women, and finishes her interesting contribution with a concise allusion to the Woolf exhibition in Barcelona mentioned above.

To complete Iberian responses to Virginia Woolf, in “The Portuguese Reception of Virginia Woolf,” Graça Abranches studies how the matter stands in Portugal. Probably due to the scarce number of translations into Portuguese (mainly for political reasons, with the long dictatorship of Salazar), and the comparatively limited influence of the British writer in her country as she depicts it, Abranches begins by providing the reader with an outline of the literary relations between Portugal and the United Kingdom and other countries in general terms. As a recurrent factor, Woolf’s contribution to Portuguese culture is twofold: through her poetics and through her politics, influencing feminist writers and thinkers. Abranches correctly assesses the most significant translations into her language of Woolf’s works (the first one appeared as late as 1951), interprets some non-academic intellectual opinions of note (no full-length studies have been published on Woolf in Portugal so far) and ends up by dealing with the intertextual links between Woolf and other Portuguese female writers, like Maria Velho da Costa. I personally consider a flaw in Abranches’s account her not even mentioning Woolf’s possible influence upon the narrative techniques and literary perceptions of contemporary Portuguese male writers, like José Saramago or Antonio Lobo Antunes (so different the one from the other, and both so wonderful), to name but two relevant exponents.

Finally, in my modest opinion, the last contribution to the volume is an unnecessary addendum. Laura Marcus’s “The European Dimensions of the Hogarth Press” is a well-documented and valuable article, but has nothing to do with the global aim of the book. This discussion, dealing with the translation and publication of Freud’s and other psychoanalytic texts, and translations from Russian literature, is evidently tangential to the topic of the reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe. Better than this, and although I am conscious of the fact that what I say may depend on several complex factors, the editors could have thought about the possibility of including a contribution dealing with the reception of Woolf’s texts in other Eastern European countries not incorporated in the volume, like Russia, for instance. The example of Poland, no matter how important, cannot lead to generalization. One wide-ranging article encompassing some of those countries would have been useful, but perhaps it is a difficult task to find cultured experts in comparative literature in the shortsighted context in which literary studies exist today, despite all the empty display of critical jargon and the deceitful euphoria surrounding the (for me) unfortunate Bologna syllabuses and all that stuff.
On the other hand, I particularly consider that someone should have written an article on the only novel by Woolf translated into Basque, *To the Lighthouse*, this region being the only place in the Iberian peninsula with no explicit representation in the book. But maybe this, too, was a complicated task to accomplish. In any case, the readers interested in this volume would have probably preferred an article dealing with the cinematographic versions of Woolf’s novels and their fashionable dimensions rather than the article about the Hogarth Press. These films (together with the successful version of Michael Cunningham’s *The Hours*) have contributed to Woolf’s popularisation. Suffice it to say that, as I write these reflections, in Spain, a paperback edition of *Mrs Dalloway* (probably not the best; María Lozano’s scrupulous and imaginative edition of Woolf’s narrative for Cátedra is undoubtedly a better choice) is in the top ten of the best-selling paperbacks, according to the cultural and literary supplements of the most important newspapers.

To sum up, in spite of some (possible) omissions and the inclusion of some weaker articles, and perhaps despite the unavoidable overlapping of materials among different contributions, this book is an unquestionable achievement. It is a must for anyone interested in Woolf studies, for it contains a wealth of material and documentation that was impossible to find before and that would have required exhausting work for any scholar to bring together. The volume is crystal-clear proof that, as Virginia Woolf herself said, “Literature is no one’s private ground; literature is common ground. It is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our way for ourselves” (1947: 125).

Work Cited