

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf
Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

In this book, Jane Goldman offers a revisionary, feminist reading of Woolf's literary Post-Impressionism. Focusing on Woolf's engagement with the artistic theories of her time, Goldman traces the feminist implication of her aesthetics by reclaiming for the everyday world of history and politics what seem to be private, mystical moments. Goldman analyses Woolf's fascination with the aesthetic possibilities of the Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910 and the solar eclipse of 1927, by linking her response to wider literary and cultural contexts. She argues that Woolf evolves a kind of 'feminist prismatic' through which she is able to express and develop both the challenge and pessimism of her feminist vision. Lavishly illustrated with colour pictures, this book will appeal not only to scholars working on Woolf, but also to students of Modernism, art history and women's studies.

Jane Goldman is Lecturer in English at the University of Dundee. She is co-editor of *Modernism: an Anthology of Sources and Documents*, and author of the forthcoming *Image to Apocalypse: 1910–1945*, and *The Icon Critical Guide to Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse' and 'The Waves.'*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf
Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the
Politics of the Visual

JANE GOLDMAN



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521794589

© Jane Goldman 1998

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1998

First paperback edition 2001

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-59096-9 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-79458-9 paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/9780521794589

Transferred to digital printing 2009

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel timetables and other factual information given in this work are correct at the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee the accuracy of such information thereafter.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For my mother
In memory of J.H.S.
All honour to my father and his art

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

	<i>List of illustrations</i>	page viii
	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
	<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
I	Introduction: interrupted moments	I
	PART ONE <i>Eclipse</i>	II
2	Virginia Woolf: heliotropics, subjectivity and feminism	13
3	The astonishing moment	25
4	The amusing game	39
5	The gathering crowd	49
6	The chasing of the sun and the victory of the colours	60
7	Elegiacs: capsizing light and returning colour	76
8	The death of the sun and the return of the fish	89
	PART TWO <i>Prismatics</i>	107
9	Post-Impressionism: the explosion of colour	109
10	Romantic to Classic: Post-Impressionist theories from 1910 to 1912	124
11	The new prismatics: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell and English Post-Impressionism	138
12	'Her pictures stand for something': Woolf's forewords to Bell's paintings	151
13	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> : purple triangle and green shawl	166
14	<i>The Waves</i> : purple buttons and white foam	186
15	Conclusion	207
	Notes	209
	Index	231

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

Between pp. 116 and 117

- 1 ‘Chelsea’ Banner, painted cotton banner of the Chelsea WSPU, designed by Herman Ross, 1908. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Museum of London.
- 2 ‘The Suffragette’ Poster, advertising *The Suffragette* newspaper, designed by Hilda Dallas in 1911. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Museum of London.
- 3 Anti-Suffrage Ostrich, Cartoon. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Museum of London.
- 4 ‘The New Mrs Partington’ Postcard, c. 1910. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the Museum of London.
- 5 ‘Handicapped!’ Poster: the joint winner of the Artists’ Suffrage League poster competition in 1909; designed by Duncan Grant. Reproduced by kind permission of the Library of Congress.
- 6 *The Suffragette*. 17 October 1913. Page 1. Reproduced by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.
- 7 Vanessa Bell, *Studland Beach*, 1912. Reproduced by kind permission of Angelica Garnett.
- 8 Vanessa Bell, *Abstract*, 1914. Reproduced by kind permission of Angelica Garnett.
- 9 Vanessa Bell, *The Tub*, 1917. Reproduced by kind permission of Angelica Garnett.
- 10 Vanessa Bell, *A Conversation*, 1913–1916. Reproduced by kind permission of the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London.

The author and publisher gratefully acknowledge the Carnegie Trust for assistance towards the cost of colour illustrations.

Thanks are also due to Geoff Ward, Head of English at the University of Dundee, for finding the funds to supplement this award.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

I am especially grateful to Suzanne Raitt and George Hyde for their very helpful and detailed reader's responses to the later drafts of this book. I would also like to thank for their comments those who, as part of their academic duties or out of sheer scholarly friendship (sometimes both), read (and sometimes re-read) its numerous earlier and less polished forms between thesis-proposal, thesis, and book: Leila Brosnan, Aidan Day, Kate Flint, Martin Hammer, Philip Hobsbaum, Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Pam Morris, Colin Nicholson, Faith Pullin, Randall Stevenson, Jim Stewart, Karina Williamson. Others have helped me enormously in a number of other ways from sound advice to practical assistance: Lesley Atkin, Kirstine Burnett, Ian Campbell, Ronnie Jack, Gail Low, Paddy Lyons, Geraldine Prince, Polly Rewt, Olga Taxidou, Geoff Ward, Marion Wynne-Davies, Julian Wolfreys. For his advice and patience I also thank my editor, Ray Ryan. I confess eternal gratitude for a truly generous and learned introduction to the pleasures of elegiacs (and much else) at the table of Paul Edwards. My 'without whom' (and whose books) is Gus McLean. I thank him for his love *and* his library.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

- AROO* *A Room of One's Own* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1929)
- BERG* [Microfilm] *The Virginia Woolf Manuscripts: from the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection at the New York Public Library* (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications International, 1993)
- CDB* *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950)
- CE* *Collected Essays*, 4 vols. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1967)
- CR* *The Common Reader* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925)
- CSF* *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, New Edition, ed. Susan Dick (London: The Hogarth Press, 1989)
- D I–V* *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols., ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977–84)
- DM* *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1942)
- E I–IV* *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vols. 1–4, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986–94)
- F* 'Foreword', *Recent Paintings by Vanessa Bell*, The London Artists' Association, Cooling Galleries (London, 1930); *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary and Criticism*, ed. S.P. Rosenbaum (London: Croom Helm, 1975), pp. 169–173
- F2* 'Foreword', *Catalogue of Recent Paintings by Vanessa Bell*, Lefevre Galleries (London, 1934)
- GR* *Granite and Rainbow* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958)
- JR* *Jacob's Room* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1922)
- L I–VI* *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975–80)
- LAW* *Life As We Have Known It*, by Co-Operative Working Women, ed. Margaret Llewelyn Davies (London: The Hogarth Press, 1931)
- M* *The Moment and Other Essays* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1947)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-79458-9 - The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual

Jane Goldman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

- MB* *Moments of Being*, Second Edition, ed. Jean Schulkind (London: The Hogarth Press, 1985)
- Mrs D* *Mrs Dalloway* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925)
- N&D* *Night and Day* (London: Duckworth, 1919)
- O* *Orlando* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928)
- PA* *A Passionate Apprentice. The Early Journals 1897–1909*, ed. Mitchell A. Leaska (London: The Hogarth Press, 1990)
- RF* *Roger Fry: A Biography* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1940)
- RN* *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks*, ed. Brenda Silver (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
- TL* *To the Lighthouse* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1927)
- VB* *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell*, ed. Regina Marler (London: Bloomsbury, 1993)
- VO* *The Voyage Out* (London: Duckworth, 1915)
- W* *The Waves* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1931)
- WS* *Walter Sickert. A Conversation* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1934)