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Alice Wood

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## REFERENCES

Virginia Woolf. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Ed. Anne E. Fernald. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 482 pp. ISBN-13 978-1107028784.

- 1 “So, how should we edit the writings of Virginia Woolf?” ask Jane Goldman and Susan Sellers in their General Editors’ Preface to the new Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf (xii). Woolf’s oeuvre certainly poses plenty of challenges to her editors. Her major works appear in variant first British and first American editions — in several cases, including *Mrs. Dalloway*, published simultaneously on either side of the Atlantic — while her surviving letters, diaries, reading notebooks, manuscript and typescript drafts and proofs offer an abundant and exhilarating resource. Woolf was a compulsive writer and reviser and left a substantial corpus interwoven with genetic links and oblique textual resonances. She was also a voracious reader and prolific reviewer and literary journalist whose fiction is littered with allusions to canonical, contemporary and sometimes downright obscure literary and historical works. Any editor of a Woolf novel must decide, firstly, which text we should read, and, secondly, where the boundaries of that work — and the scope of the diligent collator and annotator — might be deemed to end. In addition, any scholar familiar with Woolf’s distaste for institutional authorities and delight in the freedom and flexibility of an independent reader or an incomplete text has cause to pause at the prospect of developing a methodology for imposing stability on and establishing authoritative texts of her works.
- 2 The eagerly-awaited Cambridge edition tackles these challenges by adopting transparency as its editorial ideal. It is the first edition of Woolf’s works to supply a coherent and explicit general editorial policy and, importantly, to do away with silent emendation. Though marketed as the definitive edition of Woolf, its general editors acknowledge that “no edition can ever give all” and fittingly conceive of this series as

“continuing, and not capping, the ongoing processes of reading and rereading her work” (xvi-xvii). Its volumes normally take as copy text the first British edition with a notable exception; Mark Hussey’s 2011 Cambridge edition of *Between the Acts* returns to Woolf’s typescript as the final authorial text of this posthumously published novel with insightful results. Variants are supplied in a separate Textual Apparatus and debated in Textual Notes to produce a clean, reading text. Annotations in the Cambridge edition aim “to be more thorough than in any previous edition, with regard to historical, factual, cultural and literary allusions, in long overdue homage to the remarkable density and breath of reference in Woolf’s work” (xiv).

- 3 Anne E. Fernald’s edition of *Mrs. Dalloway* is the fourth work to be published in this series. Following its general editorial policy, she adopts the first British edition as copy text and maps against it variants from extant proofs and all editions published in Woolf’s lifetime. The most striking result of this editorial process is her restoration of the novel’s original section breaks. The Cambridge edition of *Mrs. Dalloway* presents the text once again in twelve sections, which, as Fernald notes, must be deemed “a neglected and deeply significant aspect of this modernist novel’s form”, especially when we recall that it was in draft titled *The Hours* (lxxxvi). Fernald charts Woolf’s addition of six section breaks at proof stage to produce twelve sections in the first British edition, the omission of two section breaks in the first American edition and the history of the loss of the original section breaks in most subsequent editions. As well as opening up this important aspect of the novel’s form to critical enquiry, Fernald’s 51-page introduction carefully details the broader composition and publication history of *Mrs. Dalloway* and her editorial strategies. The Textual Apparatus records over 300 differences between the first British and first American editions (around half are changes in punctuation) and variants from three further published texts and the two surviving sets of page proofs. These variants are discussed in the Textual Notes, which also explore significant changes and allusions recorded in the manuscript of *The Hours* and other draft documents. The volume benefits, too, from chronologies of Woolf’s life and the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway* and a list of archival sources for the manuscript, typescript and proof materials that evidence the novel’s production.
- 4 One of the great strengths of the Cambridge edition of *Mrs. Dalloway* is its copious Explanatory Notes. These mine Woolf’s letters, diaries, reading notebooks, essays and reviews for biographical and cultural references and for clues about her reading. Fernald is an expert in Woolf as reader and has meticulously traced allusions in the novel to works that Woolf was reading or writing about alongside producing *Mrs. Dalloway*. Guided by the general editors’ policy, her notes also address the novel’s many references to “a historical period and cultural context now becoming distant enough from many of today’s readers to require elucidation” (xvii). This drive for comprehensiveness does result in voluminous annotations and the occasional inclusion of seemingly extraneous information. One wonders, for example, how useful it is to document that the name Elizabeth, given to Clarissa Dalloway’s daughter, “has been recorded in England since medieval times” (188). On the other hand, a lengthy note exploring the etymology of and potential literary sources for Septimus Warren Smith as well as soldiers of Woolf’s acquaintance who may have served as a model for this character is exceedingly pertinent for both student and scholarly readers (205-206). Locating the annotations after rather than alongside the text ensures they are unobtrusive and gives the reader autonomy to choose when and how to consult this material. Fernald’s notes seek to “present information, suggesting, but not developing,

avenues for interpretation” (xc). The Cambridge edition does not attempt to have the last word on Woolf’s writings, but instead offers a commentary “in dialogue with the work of past and present readers and scholars of Woolf, with the hope of enabling and continuing the dialogues of the future” (xvi). It is an approach which Woolf would surely have approved.

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## AUTHORS

### ALICE WOOD

Alice Wood is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at De Montfort University, Leicester (UK). She is the author of *Virginia Woolf’s Late Cultural Criticism: The Genesis of The Years, Three Guineas and Between the Acts* (Bloomsbury, 2013).