

# 弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫的空间政治

*The Politics and Poetics of Space*

## 与空间诗学

*in Virginia Woolf's Novels*

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BOXUE WENKU

谷婷婷/著

本书从空间视角重新审视伍尔夫作品中的政治维度，意图恢复其文本原有的复杂性。作者提出，伍尔夫对小说这一文类所进行的实验和形式创新，常常同步于20世纪上半叶正在发生变化的英国社会现实，也表现了她在探索这种变化了的社会现实相对应的叙事方式而做出的不懈努力。



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谷婷婷 著

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## 序 言

2012年4月,谷婷婷进行了博士论文答辩,题目是《空间政治与空间诗学——弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫小说中聚会场景的空间研究》(This “Curious Silent Unrepresented Life”: The Politics and Poetics of Parties and Spaces in Virginia Woolf’s Novels),为她6年的博士生学习成功地划上了句号。论文在答辩时获得了答辩委员会的好评,被评为南京大学优秀博士论文。时隔近3年,谷婷婷告诉我,她的博士论文即将由安徽大学出版社出版,在此特表祝贺。

伍尔夫是20世纪英国著名的小说家。她在英国现代主义文学中占有极其重要的地位,她所身体力行的小说技法“意识流”是现代主义小说的一个显著标志,她提出并一再阐发的一些批评概念(如雌雄同体,女性书写)成为后来的女性主义文学批评的经典学说,她也因此被称为当代女性批评的“祖母”,尽管波伏娃这位女性批评的“母亲”和伍尔夫并不一定有多少显在的联系。因此,对伍尔夫的文学创作进行深入的分析,对她的批评思想作进一步的梳理,对我们理解英国小说的发展、欧美现代主义文学的内涵、乃至整个西方20世纪文学和批评理论,都有十分积极的理论价值和实际意义。

毕业后谷婷婷对博士论文进行了细致的再梳理,阅读了新的文献,增加了新的内容,对比原来的博士论文,新著无疑在深

度和广度上有了新的拓展。明显的变化就是博士论文标题中的“聚会场景的空间研究”在现在的书名《弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫的空间政治与空间诗学》(The Politics and Poetics of Space in Virginia Woolf's Novels)中消失了。作为博士论文,我们要求能够体现“论题小,论述大”,也就是“聚得拢,撒得开”,既能把论述的问题说深说透,又能在尽可能大的理论和文学背景之下,描述其复杂的各种关联,在尽可能广阔的视阈坐标中,给论述对象进行定位。

在这个意义上,“聚会场景的空间研究”是谷婷婷对伍尔夫进行文学透视的切入点,是她的博士论文的主要理论框架。她的研究聚焦在伍尔夫文学作品中涉及到的“空间”(客厅、厨房、英国式住宅庭院、街道等),分析这些构成维多利亚时代中产阶级私人生活的空间,把这个私密空间放到性别、阶级、种族等更大的社会秩序中,揭示其承载的意识形态、社会关系、文化意义。这种解读,是对文学和文化经典的一种重新阐释。它通过空间这个特殊的“视角”重新审视往往遭到忽略的部分,使伍尔夫作品中的政治维度得以彰显,是对此前将伍尔夫解读为关在象牙塔里、不关心现实世界、只专注现代主义文学技法实验的作家形象的一个重大拓展和补充,从而使我们对伍尔夫的研究提升到一个新的高度。

从“聚会场景”到“空间政治与空间诗学”,是谷婷婷对她的博士论文的进一步拓展和挖掘,凸显的是伍尔夫作品中的意识形态维度,以及这种维度与现代主义文学实验之间的关联。从“点”到“面”,由“表”及“里”,揭示的是伍尔夫对社会问题的探讨的一个特点:这种探讨往往是间接的、形式化的、隐蔽的;她的私密空间连接的是社会空间,而社会空间又被赋予意识形态意义,通过把主流意识形态投射在空间表征上,把叙事革新、表征空间与权力关系连接起来,使之带上自己的反思和批判。谷婷婷的新著告诉我们,伍尔夫对通常意义上先锋派文学所喜欢

“光顾”的空间(街道、咖啡馆等)进行了重新认识和重新审视,从一个独特的侧面反映出,在伍尔夫的时代,英国社会正经历着复杂、深刻的社会变革。这些变革不仅体现在与公共领域相关的社会体系(如宗教、政治、文化)范畴中,也反映在私人生活领域内,而对知识女性来说,后者才是更加真实地体验“现代性”的主要场所,也是对现代性的主要反映。伍尔夫所进行的文学实验也正是这种用新的文学形式和叙事表征来反映、容纳、重构变化了的社会现实。

这就是我理解的这部伍尔夫研究专著所具有的理论意义。  
是为序。

朱 刚

2015年春于南京北阴阳营

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>CDB</b>	<i>The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays</i>
<b>CH</b>	<i>A Cultural History</i>
<b>D</b>	<i>The Diary of Virginia Woolf</i>
<b>L</b>	<i>The Letters of Virginia Woolf</i>
<b>MD</b>	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
<b>MBMB</b>	<i>Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown</i>
<b>MOB</b>	<i>Moments of Being : An Autobiographical Writings</i>
<b>ND</b>	<i>Night and Day</i>
<b>SF</b>	<i>The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf</i>
<b>TG</b>	<i>Three Guineas</i>
<b>TL</b>	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>
<b>TY</b>	<i>The Years</i>
<b>VO</b>	<i>The Voyage Out</i>
<b>VW</b>	<i>Virginia Woolf</i>

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## Introduction

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is one of the highly-acclaimed and most prolific English writers in the first half of the twentieth century. In her short life that was frequently interrupted by bouts of mental instability, Woolf managed to leave a rich legacy of nine novels, an impressive number of essays, diaries and letters, and a biography of Roger Fry—one of her closest friends in the Bloomsbury Group. Writing in the transitional age from the Victorian society to the modern English society characterized by increasing secularization and urbanization, Woolf's sociopolitical and artistic vision was animated and shaped by the complexity and ambiguities of her time. There are places in her oeuvre where she casts nostalgic glances over the Victorian age, which are counterbalanced by her ruthless attacks on the realist tradition. At times, she ventures into the future with her advanced views on gender and politics and her audacious experiments with the novel-genre. As Mary C. Madden suggests, “with one foot in the cradle of the nineteenth century and one in the streets of twentieth-century London”, Woolf “represents an unresolved contradiction or unsynthesized dialectic” (pp. 1) that are shared by other prominent writers of

her time, such as T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster and James Joyce. For Woolf, this “contradiction” or “dialectic” has largely been demonstrated in her positionality in relation to the issues of class, gender and race, which in turn renders her writings a valuable source for the observation of the contemporary English society and at the same time subjects them to consistent critical attention.

The criticism of Virginia Woolf has undergone several significant phases, during which her reputation as a writer has experienced vicissitudes. After rather a bumpy reception in the first half of the twentieth century,<sup>1</sup> Woolf studies began to enjoy continuous development and prosperity since the latter half of the 1960s. Starting from the 1970s, Woolf scholarship has been remarkably nurtured, animated and expanded by a great variety of literary theories. Furthermore, Woolf's letters, diaries and memoirs published during this period not only proffer information about her private life that has been mystified before, but also unveil the processes of her writing. In this light, Woolf's work has been approached from the narratological, psychoanalytic, biographical, feminist, bibliographical, postmodernist, poststructuralist, postcolonial, historical and gender perspectives.<sup>2</sup> Each approach “has, in its own way, revolutionized the way one might read Woolf” (Snaith, *Palgrave Advances* 1).

In the 1970s and 1980s, Woolf became central to the theoretical framing of feminism, particularly in America. Feminist critics such as Jane Marcus, Makiko Minow—Pinkney and Rachel Bowlby invoke theories of French feminism and psychoanalysis to tackle with Woolf's oeuvre, attempting to

connect Woolf's feminist politics with her modernist practices. Meanwhile, critical interest in Woolf's modernist aesthetics and theories also developed and expanded. Her modernist manifestos "Modern Fiction" and "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" became major points of reference for modernist criticism, and her novels became the object of sustained scrutiny, especially in relation to the art theories proposed by Clive Bell and Roger Fry. During this period of time, "Woolf's writing became central to critical and theoretical formulations on modernism" (Goldman 130). Even nowadays, reevaluation of modernism involves to a large extent reassessments of Woolf.<sup>3</sup>

The 1990s and the new millennium bore witness to a golden age of development and diversification of Woolf studies. In this period, Woolf's modernist aesthetics, philosophy and feminism continue to engage critical attention; more importantly, new directions have been charted. It is safe to say that hardly a year passes without the publication of some significant books on Virginia Woolf. Inspired by postcolonial studies, gender studies, new historicism and cultural materialism, Woolf and her writing are increasingly examined in the context of imperialism, war and fascism. Her feminism, modernism, philosophy, and ethics have been reassessed from the perspectives of poststructuralism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup> Woolf in the contexts of modernity, science and technology continue to draw critical attention.<sup>5</sup> A number of books published during this period of time locate and examine Woolf in geographical context, ranging from landscape to London sites.<sup>6</sup> Jane de Gay investigates Woolf's relation to the

tradition of English literature in her book *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past*. Ann Banfield's erudite book, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (2000), offers a thorough examination of the philosophical influences on Woolf's modernism; Maggie Humm's *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell and Cinema* (2003) is an important reading of Woolf's visual modernism from the feminist perspective; and Naomi Black's *Virginia Woolf as Feminist* (2004) represents an evident return to Woolf's feminism. Woolf's centrality to modern thought, modern writing and modern politics is demonstrated by Christine Froula's important work *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization and Modernity* (2005).

Such vast number of monographs, biographies, essays, and editions in both America and Britain testifies to the significance of Woolf to the research of Modernism and Women's Studies in recent decades. It is also worth mentioning that Woolf studies has far exceeded the Anglo-American context. Interest in Woolf has become an international phenomenon. Apart from the Virginia Woolf Society in Britain and the International Virginia Woolf Society based in North America, Woolf societies have also been founded respectively in France, Japan and South Korea. *The Reception of Virginia Woolf* (2002), which contains a series of essays by various scholars and translators, sets out to address Woolf's reception in broader European context—Catalonia, Denmark, France, Galicia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden—from the 1920s to the present day.<sup>7</sup> Drawing on theories of reception

and systems, Els Andringa's essay "Penetrating the Dutch Polysystem: The Reception of Virginia Woolf, 1920-2000" traces the changes of Woolf's reception in Netherlands and offers an in-depth analysis of how such changes are interrelated to the shifts in social structure and conceptions of literary value.

By comparison, Woolf studies in China started rather late. Although she had come into the purview of Chinese critics and scholars as early as 1930s, it was not until the 1980s that the translation and researches of her work really started. In this early phase of criticism, critics tended to focus on Woolf's narrative technique, modernist aesthetics and novel-theory.<sup>8</sup> Since the 1990s, Woolf studies began to flourish in China. Between 2000 and 2003, there was a systematic translation and publication of Woolf's essays and novels. Papers and articles published in Chinese academic journals have doubled during this period. Generally speaking, critical emphases have been laid on Woolf's feminism, particularly her idea of androgyny, her theory of fiction and her modernist aesthetics in the past two decades.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, there have been new tendencies in recent years. Some critics began to notice the significance of empire in Woolf's writing,<sup>10</sup> and Woolf's reception in China has also been discussed. Yang Lixin, for example, excavates the correspondence established between Woolf and Ling Shuhua in the 1920s and 1930s and examines how she influenced Chinese poets and writers.<sup>11</sup> Jin Guanglan traces Woolf's critical reception in China from the 1930s to the present day in her dissertation. However, it has to be admitted that Woolf studies has been substantially influenced by Anglo-American studies and has serious limitations.



This study probes into the intersection of Virginia Woolf's concern with the external world or "reality" and her modernist experimentation through putting under scrutiny the party scenes that recur in her fiction. It joins the current critical efforts towards more nuanced inquiries into the social and political implications of Woolf's work and the restoration of the socio-historical contexts of her modernist texts that have been underplayed by the critical emphasis on the "inward" or psychological truth.<sup>12</sup>

At first sight, such juxtaposition of the sociopolitical vision of her fiction with her modernist agenda seems rather unusual. For one thing, like other Bloomsbury Group Members, Roger Fry and Leonard Woolf in particular, Virginia Woolf asserts that art and politics are incompatible.<sup>13</sup> Due to the experimental nature of her work and the critical emphasis on formal experiments, Woolf is widely known as a staunch proponent of modernist aesthetics "more concerned with artistic form than with political content" (Peach, VW 15). The British criticism particularly establishes her as "the legend of Invalid Lady of Bloomsbury" (Forster, VW 3) or "an eccentric, ladylike artist, out of touch with other writers and her own times, and too much influenced by her upper-middle-class origins" (Peach, VW 16). Such image of Woolf as an apolitical, asexual writer whose writings do not reflect her own time and the public world has ruled Woolf studies for a long time. Pamela Caughie observes that "[u]ntil the late 1970s, Woolf was typically considered an exemplar of a high modernist aesthetics" (Caughie, *VW and Postmodernism* 1).<sup>14</sup> In the 1990s, Anna Snaith still laments that the "idea persists that Woolf's