



Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life

Derek Ryan

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Explores Woolf's writing alongside Deleuzian philosophy and new materialist theories of 'sex', 'animal', and 'life'

How does Virginia Woolf conceptualise the material world? In what ways has Woolf's modernism affected understandings of materiality, and what new perspectives does she offer contemporary theoretical debates? Derek Ryan demonstrates how materiality is theorised in Woolf's writings by focusing on the connections she makes between culture and nature, embodiment and environment, human and nonhuman, life and matter. Through close readings of texts including *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, *A Room of One's Own*, *The Waves*, *Flush*, he details the insights Woolf provides into issues concerning the natural world, sexual difference, sexuality, animality, and life itself.

Ryan opens up Woolf studies to new theoretical paradigms by placing Woolf in dialogue with Gilles Deleuze - who cites her modernist aesthetics as exemplary of some of his most important philosophical concepts - as well as eminent contemporary theorists including Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, and Jane Bennett, all of whom have influenced the recent critical turn towards new materialisms. Locating theory within Woolf's writing as well as locating Woolf within theory, *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life* brings her modernism firmly into to the foreground of current debates in literary studies, feminist philosophy, queer theory, animal studies and posthumanities.

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