

Title	De-politicising the political : a reading of Virginia Woolf's populism/indigenism
Sub Title	
Author	遠藤, 不比人(Endo, Fuhito)
Publisher	慶應義塾大学藝文学会
Publication year	1997
Jtitle	藝文研究 (The geibun-kenkyu : journal of arts and letters). Vol.73, (1997. 12) ,p.333- 349
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	安藤伸介, 岩崎春雄両教授退任記念論文集
Genre	Journal Article
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00072643-00730001-0333

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De-politicising the Political : A Reading of Virginia Woolf's Populism/ Indigenism

Fuhito Endo

They do not grudge us . . . our prosperity. . . .

—“Street Haunting: A London Adventure”

. . . as if indeed there were a monster grubbing
at the roots, as if the whole panoply of content
were nothing but self love!

—*Mrs Dalloway*

I

Especially since the 1980s a considerable number of feminist critics in the United States—most notably Jane Marcus—have often described Virginia Woolf as a radical socialist-feminist ; their critical efforts have been focussed on reading Woolf's work as a severe and consistent accusation of the patriarchal social system of England which oppressed and exploited women and the proletariat.⁽¹⁾ Some critics, on the other hand, regard such a reading of Woolf's politics as a critical distortion, complaining that those feminist critics tend to simplify or rather ignore the complex ideological connotations of her writing. Among such critics is Mary M. Childers ; she argues that this kind of criticism suppresses “the political contradictions of [Woolf's] texts” by privileging “their reputedly coherent feminist theory.”⁽²⁾ Alex Zwerdling also maintains that “Woolf's complex feelings about her class identity”⁽³⁾—which have received little attention in this critical

trend—deserve particular consideration, remarking thus :

Two diametrically opposed middle-class responses can thus be seen in Woolf's milieu—a sense of guilt about their own privileges, and a determination to justify and defend them. That Woolf felt both emotions, and felt them strongly, helps to account for the complexities and contradictions of her own social attitudes.⁽⁴⁾

What matters in analysing the politics of Woolf's texts is, then, her deep-seated ambivalence towards the lower classes : “a volatile mixture of class feelings—impatience, sympathy, resentment, enthusiasm”.⁽⁵⁾ Underlying these mixed or mingled emotions is—as Raymond Williams points out in his political analysis of the Bloomsbury Group—an ideological conflict between Woolf's “social conscience” and her middle-class anxieties, both caused by the existence of the working classes just beneath.⁽⁶⁾

One of Woolf's attempted solutions to this ideological problem is, it has sometimes been suggested, “the tradition of Victorian philanthropy” ; its purpose is “to smooth out class antagonisms by ‘befriending’ the poor, visiting their homes regularly, offering advice, charity, help in crisis”.⁽⁷⁾ According to Fredric Jameson, “the ideological content of philanthropy” is “a nonpolitical and individualizing solution to the exploitation which is structurally inherent in the social system”.⁽⁸⁾ Quite obviously, the philanthropic motifs recurrent in Woolf's novels—despite the critical efforts of some feminists—cannot be interpreted as testimony of the author's radical socialism ; rather, we could say that such motifs serve as an ideological device to comfort or relieve Woolf's “social conscience”—or her “middle-class guilt”⁽⁹⁾—

while simultaneously alleviating her class fears or apprehensions.

In order to fully examine Woolf's conflicting feelings about the lower classes it is necessary to mention another ideological concept: populism. As Ernesto Laclau stresses, the term "populism" is notoriously ambiguous and "elusive"; indeed, "[f]ew terms have been so widely used in contemporary political analysis, although few have been defined with less precision".⁽¹⁰⁾ As far as our argument is concerned, however, Jameson's usage of this term in discussing George Gissing's notion of "the people" is useful enough :

[T]hat very . . . nineteenth-century ideological concept which is the notion of "the people," as a kind of general grouping of the poor and "underprivileged" of all kinds, from which one can recoil in revulsion, but to which one can also, as in some political populisms, nostalgically "return" as to *some telluric source of strength*.⁽¹¹⁾ (emphasis added)

Virginia Woolf's attitude towards "the poor" is, as in the case of Gissing, "a unique combination of revulsion and fascination".⁽¹²⁾ What needs to be emphasised here is, moreover, that Woolf's populism can also be considered to be a solution to her political dilemma—the conflict between "conscience"/"sympathy" and "fear"/"disgust" when faced with the lower classes ; as I shall discuss, her populism frequently functions as an ideological strategy to repress or manage her middle-class uneasiness or dread by exalting "the poor" as "the people" or "the folk", to whom she can "nostalgically return as to some telluric source of strength."

Of particular interest in this context is, therefore, the fact that

Woolf's populism very often takes the form of some kind of "indigenism"—the nostalgic or sometimes folkloristic glorification of the native peasant culture and tradition of England. Woolf's fervent enthusiasm for Thomas Hardy's peasants offers an example:

They drink by night and they plough the fields by day. They are eternal. We meet them over and over again in the novels, and they always have something typical about them, more of the character that marks a race than of the features which belong to an individual. The peasants are the great sanctuary of sanity, the country the last stronghold of happiness. When they disappear, there is no hope for the race.⁽¹³⁾

Woolf's indigenism—the nostalgic idealisation of the peasantry as the living embodiment of native English culture as well as the very essence of the English race—has often been interpreted by the feminist critics of Woolf (although they do not use such terms as "indigenism" and "populism" in their argument) as an accurate reflection of her feminist endeavour to denounce the male-dominated history of modern England. In brief, they assert that Woolf's nostalgic adoration for the peasants indicates her effort to explore the traces of more primitive phase of English culture before the firm establishment of patriarchy. Suggested by such nostalgia is, they therefore emphasise, her fascination with the "eternal" cultural line of the peasantry as the oppressed yet uninterrupted counter-history of England—a possible alternative to the modern patriarchal cultural and political system. I would argue, however, that another approach to the politics of Woolf's populism/indigenism is possible and necessary to a thorough understanding of the

ideological complexities and contradictions of her texts. Virginia Woolf's notion of "the people"/"the poor" should often be seen, I shall stress, as a manifestation of her characteristically middle-class ideologies, which have escaped the feminist readings of her politics.⁽¹⁴⁾

II

As mentioned earlier, Woolf's relationship to the lower classes is characterised by a mixture of fear and sympathy. Such mixed feelings about the poor are evident particularly in Woolf's essay "Memories of a Working Women's Guild" (1930), originally written as the introduction to *Life as We Have Known It* (1931), a collection of autobiographical writings by working-class members of the Women's Cooperative Guild. What has attracted critics' attention—in particular, that of those critics who disagree with the feminist simplification of Woolf's politics—is the author's candid confession of what she herself describes as: "contradictory and complex feelings which beset the middle-class visitor forced to sit out a congress of working women in silence".⁽¹⁵⁾ In this essay Woolf admits to her failure to feel genuine sympathy for the working-class women of the Guild, stressing that she is unable to overcome the limitation of her middle-class compassion for "the poor":

[H]owever much we sympathized, our sympathy was largely fictitious. It was aesthetic sympathy, the sympathy of the eye and of the imagination, not of the heart and of the nerves; and such sympathy is always physically uncomfortable. (140)

[W]e are condemned to remain forever shut up in the

confines of the middle classes. . . . (141)

Indeed, Virginia Woolf is amazingly honest enough to “write of the enormous gulf which she perceived between her comfortable capitalist self and the Guild members.” We could even discern between the lines Woolf’s repugnance, or “an uncontrollable physical repulsion which she could feel when confronted with the working classes *en masse* [sic]”.⁽¹⁶⁾

To be sure, Woolf’s honest confessions of her own middle-class prejudice or even disgust are surprising enough, yet what demands particular attention in our argument is the indigenism of this essay. Woolf associates the uncouth or unrefined appearances of the working-class women—“thickset muscular bodies” or “large hands” (138)—not only with their poverty or class but also with their indigeness: “They were indigenous and rooted to one spot. Their very names were like the stones of the fields, common, grey, obscure, docked of all splendours of association and romance” (138). What is more, it is the loutishness of the people—especially their “very fragmentary and ungrammatical” (142) dialect and slang—that brings Woolf to glorify “something of the force, of the obstinacy” or “the extraordinary vitality of the human spirit” (144) as characteristic of “the poor”:

How many words, for example, must lurk in those women’s vocabularies that have faded from ours! How many scenes must lie dormant in their eyes unseen by us! What images and saws and proverbial sayings must still be current with them that have never reached the surface of print; and very likely they still keep the power which we have lost of making new ones. (141)

This nativist, folkloristic and nostalgic homage to the provincial/indigenous elements of English culture is highly reminiscent of Woolf's exaltation of Thomas Hardy's peasants; both of which may be taken for an attempt to idealise the lower classes as a sort of reservoir of some "telluric" vitality which Woolf believes middle-class people lack, appealing to their nostalgia for the native cultural tradition of England, represented by "the peasants"/"the poor".

What is crucial here is, of course, not an effort to emphasise or rather exaggerate Woolf's sympathy with the lower classes—such critical distortions as have occasionally been made by some feminist critics in order to justify the reputation of Virginia Woolf as "a socialist-feminist"—but an attempt to analyse the complex ideological meanings of her indigenism. Latent in this nativist attitude towards "the poor" are, I would argue, Woolf's middle-class anxieties in the face of "the working classes *en masse*". In other words, one of the possible readings of Woolf's indigenism is to regard it as an ideological strategy to transform the potentially threatening existence of the working classes into the imaginary object of bourgeois nostalgia, thereby secretly depriving the proletariat of class connotation. In this regard, the following part of the essay is worth particular notice:

Indeed, we said, one of our most curious impressions at [the] Congress was that 'the poor', 'the working classes', or by whatever name you choose to call them are not downtrodden, envious, and exhausted; they are humorous and vigorous and thoroughly independent. Thus, if it were possible to meet them not as sympathizers, as masters or mistresses with counters between us or kitchen tables, but

casually and congenially as fellow beings with the same ends and wishes even if the dress and body are different, *a great liberation would follow*. (141) (emphasis added)

It is quite interesting to note here that, immediately after this statement, Woolf exalts “the poor” as the indigenous “people”, which we argued above. What Woolf means in this passage by “fellow beings with the same ends and wishes” is not so clear, yet much clearer is her effort or determination to see “the poor”/“the working classes” *not* from a political, class or materialistic point of view, but through the ideological lens of her indigenism. It is thus evident that Woolf’s concern here is to manage, treat or solve the political problem of exploitation in the context of her indigenist/populist enthusiasm for “the poor”/“the people”, thereby repressing the middle-class apprehensions of “her comfortable capitalist self” and successfully (or superficially) satisfying her “social conscience”. Indeed, Woolf’s populism in this essay would bring about “a great liberation” (or rather a repression of her class fear) but never a revolution against the class system of England. In this sense, such a nativist fascination with “the poor”/“the people” should be considered as a reversed or disguised manifestation of Woolf’s class anxieties aroused when “forced to sit out a congress of working women in silence”.

III

Woolf’s populism/indigenism thus read also reveals an ideological effort to de-politicise the political ; as we have just observed, she attempts to turn our attention from the crude realities of exploitation and the economic plight of the working-class people to “the extraordinary vitality” of their rustic and uncouth language—“a

quality that Shakespeare would have liked" (141). Quite evidently, Woolf forgets (or pretends to forget) the fact that such "vitality" is in fact a reflection of the eagerness or even the anger—represented as "smouldering heat" (141)—with which "the poor" try to describe their persistent poverty. Here we can detect a glaring example of "Woolf's habitual turning of political into aesthetic concerns"⁽¹⁷⁾; indeed, Woolf seeks to de-politicise or aestheticise the "heat" of the "smouldering" discontents of the labourers by transforming its energy into a source of literary inspiration, while at the same time robbing "the working women" of class implications. This aesthetic strategy—the appropriation of the "heat" of the lower-class resentment (or *ressentiment*) for a source of literary creation—inevitably leads us to reconsider the politics of Woolf's populism/indigenism of this sort. In this light, it is quite interesting to mention her extremely famous exaltation of "the people" as the fountain-head of "masterpieces" in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which is often cited as definite evidence of Woolf's feminist/socialist sympathy with "the poor"/"the obscure"/"the people": "[M]asterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice"⁽¹⁸⁾. Implied in this sentence is, once again, what may be labelled as Woolf's "aesthetic" populism/indigenism—her endeavour to turn the "telluric" energy or strength of "the people" into a vital source of literature; in this process of aestheticising, as we shall see, the political/ideological meanings of "the people"/"the poor" are often neutralised or nullified.

This kind of populism/indigenism forms a recurring motif of Virginia Woolf, developing into an intricate network of metaphors and symbolism especially in *Between the Acts* (1941). It is in an earlier

typescript of the novel that this motif finds its most typical and revealing expression: “Perhaps poetry grew from mud”.⁽¹⁹⁾ As suggested here, the symbolism of this work is repeatedly accompanied by a set of metaphors of strata, representing the depths of the earth—the “mud”—as the fertile matrix or origins of literature. Such geological metaphors are also employed to figure “the mud”/“the underground” as the cultural underlayer or substratum of England—the native Anglo-Saxon culture before (or beneath) the Norman Conquest. The indigenism of the text can thus be taken for an “archaeological” impulse to excavate and exalt the “buried” Anglo-Saxon origins of English literature as “some telluric source of strength”.⁽²⁰⁾

So far, the feminist critics of *Between the Acts* have attempted to read this symbolism as an obvious expression of the anti-patriarchal themes of the novel. Judith L. Johnston, for instance, stresses that Woolf’s characteristic attachment to such an ancient form of culture mirrors her feminist adoration or ardour for “the native Anglo-Saxon culture and the matriarchies of pre-Athenian Greece and Egypt” which were oppressed and replaced by “a continuous cultural lineage from Greek to Roman to Norman to British empires”. It follows, therefore, that the Norman Conquest is represented in this novel not just as an oppression and subjugation of “the rich native English cultural heritage” by “the ruling elite”, but also as the origin of the patriarchal history of “British empires”.⁽²¹⁾ In this way, the indigenism of the novel—its preoccupation with the oppressed Anglo-Saxon culture—provides the feminist critics with a viewpoint from which to highlight the anti-patriarchal desires of the author, while claiming the politics of the text to be potentially radical or subversive of the established dominance of the ruling classes. Certainly, Woolf’s representations of English history in *Between the Acts* can be thought of, in some respects,

as a feminist critique of British patriarchy and imperialism; as often noted, the pageant in this novel—while reproducing and following the historical stages of English literature—suggests and deplores the gradual repression of the Arcadian native culture of England by “the ruling elite” of “British empires”.

The politics of *Between the Acts* is, however, even more complex and complicated than those feminist critics believe, because such anti-patriarchal themes of the novel as they thus try to foreground are doubly de-politicised or aestheticised in such a way as makes it difficult to conclude the text’s ideology to be “radical” or “subversive”. The first thing to stress in this respect is the fact that Woolf’s chronological critique of “British empires” is hinted at mostly in the pageant—a representation or reproduction of the history of English literature from Chaucer, through Shakespeare, a Restoration comedy, and a Victorian burlesque vaguely suggestive of Jane Austen’s novels of manners, until “The present time, ourselves”.⁽²²⁾ Woolf’s historical survey of British patriarchy and imperialism is thus absorbed in her history of English literature—a series of “masterpieces”. It is clear, then, that the text’s political theme—the patriarchal “oppression” of “the natives”—is intermingled with Woolf’s aesthetic concept of “masterpieces”.

Here we are naturally reminded of Woolf’s nativist notion of “masterpieces” in *A Room of One’s Own*, which is worth quoting again in this context: “[Masterpieces] are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice”. What Woolf tries to emphasise in this passage is that the creation of “masterpieces”—the literary products of the politically and culturally privileged—greatly depends on “the fountain of creative energy”⁽²³⁾ to be found in “the accumulation of unrecorded life”⁽²⁴⁾ of the people/the obscure, which is,

as we have seen, often identified with the “telluric” vitality of the native peasantry. Quite significantly, we can see an explicit dramatisation of such populism/indigenism in the pageant; in which the chorus of peasants, reiterated as in Greek drama, successfully makes the audience feel that “behind” the history of “masterpieces” perpetually exists their “unrecorded life”: “*Digging and delving (they sang), hedging and ditching, we pass. . . Summer and winter, autumn and spring return. . . All passes but we, all changes . . . but we remain forever the same. . .*”⁽²⁵⁾ The native peasants’ song echoes throughout this historical play, thereby hinting that their life and culture form the “eternal” core or essence of English literature. Woolf’s populist/indigenist idea of literature is thus dramatised: the chorus of the indigenous peasants—embodying “the rich native English cultural heritage” and at the same time implying the generative force of the earth—strongly suggests that “masterpieces” are “the outcome” of the “telluric” vitality of the oppressed natives/the obscure. In this sense, Woolf’s use of their chorus obviously contributes to the text’s aesthetic indigenism: “Perhaps poetry grew from mud”.⁽²⁶⁾

What ought to be stressed from our standpoint is, then, that the chief concern of this pageant is not so much a political/anti-patriarchal one—the oppression of “the natives” by “British empires”—as the transformation of this political theme into an aesthetic one: the production of “masterpieces”. It is therefore possible to say that the pageant—while aestheticising the anti-patriarchal critique of “the ruling elite”—simultaneously reveals Woolf’s aesthetic/nativist desire to re-appropriate “the extraordinary vitality” of the oppressed natives/the obscure for “the fountain of creative energy” of the literary canons of England: the literature of the culturally privileged. Just as Woolf tries to turn “the extraordinary vitality” of the language of the poor/

the working women into a source of literary creation, so does this novel seek for the same kind of strategy to de-politicise or aestheticise the political problem of “oppression”/“exploitation”. Read in this manner, it is hardly possible to regard the politics of this novel as “radical” or “subversive”; on the contrary, we are led to suspect that the populism/indigenism of this text is an indication of Woolf’s substantially reactionary ideology—a political desire not to “radically” change but rather preserve or, to be exact, re-vitalise the *status quo*.

IV

Ernesto Laclau’s theoretical analysis of the ideological possibilities of populism/indigenism gives us an important clue as to the politics of Woolf’s “de-politicised” representations of “the poor”/“the natives”/“the people”. Laclau, in order to clarify his argument, supposes the following archetypal case: “a semi-colonial social formation in which a dominant fraction of landowners exploits indigenous peasant communities”. In this sort of society, he points out, those groups—both middle- and working-classes—which “challenge the hegemonic landowning fraction’s monopoly of power” unavoidably attempt to “appeal to the symbols and values of peasant groups” so as to “make their political opposition consistent and systematic”⁽²⁷⁾ as well as to “*express a radical confrontation with the power bloc [sic]*”.⁽²⁸⁾ Besides such a “radical” strategy, furthermore, there can be many other ways in which “the symbols and values of peasant groups” are ideologically exploited:

But in the urban reformulation of those symbols and values, they become transformed: they lose their reference to a concrete social base and are transformed

into the ideological expression of the ‘people’/power bloc confrontation. Henceforth they have lost all class reference and can, therefore, be articulated into the ideological discourses of the most divergent classes. What is more, no political discourse can do without them: dominant classes to neutralise them, dominated classes to develop their potential antagonism, their ideological elements are always present in the most varied articulations.⁽²⁹⁾

It is for this reason that indigenism “as an ideological symbol” can be appropriated by both “left and right fractions”⁽³⁰⁾ in a great variety of political situations.

Laclau’s analysis encourages us to see Virginia Woolf’s populism/indigenism as one of “the ideological discourses” of “dominant classes”. As we have already argued, the most striking and essential feature of Woolf’s representation of the exploited—“the poor”/“the natives”—is an effort *never* to “develop” but to “neutralise” or aestheticise the “potential antagonism” of “the symbols and values” of the oppressed, thereby simultaneously repressing her middle-class anxieties about their possible and “*radical confrontation with the power bloc*”. This aesthetic strategy is at work, for example, in Woolf’s turning of “smouldering heat”—a “symbol” of the working-class indignation—into a source of literary creation; further, this de-politicising process divests “the working women” of “all class reference”—their political connotations as “the proletariat”. In this sense, Woolf’s aestheticising transformation of “the oppressed natives” into a vital source of “masterpieces”—the pageant in *Between the Acts*, for instance—may be read as her endeavour to “neutralise” or de-

politicise “the revolutionary potential”⁽³¹⁾ of “the exploited”; indeed, “the symbols and values of peasant groups” are aesthetically re-appropriated for re-creative energies of a dominant cultural heritage—the literary canon. Evaluated in the light of populism/indigenism, therefore, the politics of Woolf’s texts—despite their frequent suggestions of anti-patriarchal themes—cannot be regarded as “radical” or “subversive”; without doubt, we should consider their ideology (as the author herself confesses) “condemned to remain forever shut up in the confines of the middle classes. . . .”⁽³²⁾

NOTES

- (1) For this kind of feminist discussion, see, for example, Jane Marcus, *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987); *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*, ed. Jane Marcus (London: Macmillan, 1981); *Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Slant*, ed. Jane Marcus (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1983); *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury*, ed. Jane Marcus (London: Macmillan, 1987); and Susan M. Squier, *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1985). In this context, further, Michael Tratner, analysing modernist writers’ representations of the working classes/the masses, regards Woolf as politically leftist, yet his argument is more balanced than that of the feminist readings. See his *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995), esp. 32.
- (2) Mary M. Childers, “Virginia Woolf on the Outside Looking Down: Reflections on the Class of Women,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 38. 1 (1992): 71.
- (3) Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986), 87.
- (4) Zwerdling, 103-4.
- (5) Zwerdling, 87.
- (6) Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 148-69.
- (7) Zwerdling, 99.

- (8) Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca : Cornell UP, 1981), 192.
- (9) Zwerdling, 98.
- (10) Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London : NLB, 1977), 143.
- (11) Jameson, 189.
- (12) Jameson, 189.
- (13) Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of Thomas Hardy," *Collected Essays* 1 (New York : Harcourt Brace, 1967), 259-60.
- (14) I attempted elsewhere a thematic interpretation of the symbolism of *Between the Acts* from this feminist point of view. The purpose of this essay is, therefore, to foreground the ideological complexities of Woolf's texts by trying to add another political reading to my former study. For my former argument, see "'Perhaps poetry grew from mud': A Reading of 'the hollow' in *Between the Acts*," *Studies in English Literature* 72. 2 (1996): 209-25.
- (15) Virginia Woolf, "Memories of a Working Women's Guild," *Collected Essays* 4, 142. Subsequent page references appear in the text in parentheses.
- (16) Kate Flint, "Virginia Woolf and the General Strike," *Essays in Criticism* 36. 4 (1986): 323.
- (17) Childers, 68.
- (18) Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London : Hogarth, 1959), 98.
- (19) Virginia Woolf, *Pointz Hall : The Earlier and Later Typescripts of Between the Acts*, ed. Mitchell A. Leaska (New York : University Publications, 1983), 67.
- (20) For a fuller discussion of this symbolism of the text, see my former paper.
- (21) Judith L. Johnston, "The Remediable Flaw : Revisioning Cultural History in *Between the Acts*," *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury*, 260. For a similar feminist argument of Woolf's attachment to these ancient forms of culture as a reflection of her disapproval of patriarchy, see, for instance, Evelyn Haller, "Isis Unveiled: Virginia Woolf's Use of Egyptian Myth," *Virginia Woolf : Feminist Slant*, 109-31 ; Patricia Maika, *Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts and Jane Harrison's Conspiracy* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987); and

Alison Booth, *Greatness Engendered : George Eliot and Virginia Woolf* (Ithaca : Cornell UP, 1992), esp. 236-84. Moreover, Makiko Minow-Pinkney, employing Kristevian theory, reads “the oppressed” or “the depths” in the text as the socially and linguistically repressed “feminine”—“the semiotic”—which is, by definition, potentially revolutionary and subversive of everything considered “phallic”, “symbolic” or “patriarchal”. See her *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* (New Brunswick, New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 1987). In addition, Marcus’s argument often heavily depends on this theory.

- (22) Virginia Woolf , *Between the Acts* (London : Hogarth, 1965), 208.
- (23) *A Room of One’s Own*, 151.
- (24) *A Room of One’s Own*, 135.
- (25) *Between the Acts*, 222.
- (26) For a detailed argument of the pageant as a dramatisation of this motif, see my former paper.
- (27) Laclau, 171.
- (28) Laclau, 172.
- (29) Laclau, 172.
- (30) Laclau, 172.
- (31) Laclau, 174.
- (32) Laclau’s following argument is highly suggestive when we consider the ideology of Woolf’s populism : “Classes only exist as hegemonic forces to the extent that they can articulate popular interpellations to their own discourse. For the dominant classes this articulation consists, as we have seen, in a neutralisation of ‘the people’. For the dominated classes to win hegemony, they must precipitate a crisis in the dominant ideological discourse and reduce its articulating principles to vacuous entelechies without any connotative power over popular interpellations. For this, they must develop the implicit antagonism of the latter to the point where ‘the people’ is completely unassimilable by any fraction of the power bloc.” See Laclau, 195.