

Abstract

This thesis explores women's interactions with non-human objects in the domestic interior in the work of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). By studying the historical, economic and personal contexts that influenced Woolf's work, it attempts to explore how domestic labour emerges as a conceptual lens to study power relations in Woolf's writing.

The thesis attempts to fill up lacunae in fields of Woolf studies, modernism studies, and object-oriented ontology by bringing into focus the women's roles as agents of reproductive labour, both in the body politic of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain, in the context of literary modernism, and in interactions that Woolf and other writers depict as occurring between women and non-human objects in 'private,' domestic spaces.

The thesis begins by exploring the socio-economic contexts that shaped the domestic interior in Woolf's Britain. It then closely studies how the gendered subject negotiates the assemblages of objects that constitute domestic spaces and consequently establishes that the quest for an autonomous domestic space lies at the heart of Woolf's feminist thinking. The subsequent chapters locate various domestic spaces and explore the specific dynamics between gendered subjects and non-human objects in varying settings.

The thesis attempts to contextualize Woolf in order to understand the way in which she critiques a society in which human beings relate to each other *through* commodities while positing the ways in which human and non-human objects co-exist *with* each other in creative ways. The thesis also acknowledges the blind-spots located along the lines of class and ethnicity that remain present in Woolf's explorations of the power dynamics of the domestic interior.