

# 'This moment of June': *Mrs Dalloway*, Women's Magazines and Virginia Woolf

Women in Literature / and Society - Edexcel and OCR AS/A Level

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<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/mrs-dalloway-woolf-and-women-s-magazines-12404701>

Historicist and feminist approaches are introduced through placing *Mrs Dalloway* in the context of women's magazines to show how context can assist in determining the meaning in the book and expand on the theme of women in literature and society.

This resource assists students to:

- show knowledge and understanding of the ways that texts can be grouped and compared to inform interpretation
- show knowledge and understanding of the contexts in which texts have been produced and received, and understanding of how these contexts influence meaning
- understand the ways in which texts relate to one another and to literary traditions, movements and genres
- understand the significance of cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers

This resource has been developed in association with the AHRC-funded project '*Time and Tide: Connections and Legacies*' directed by Catherine Clay, Associate Professor in Feminist and Literary Studies at Nottingham Trent University, UK. For more information about the project, visit the project website [here](#).

This project aims to introduce the history of *Time and Tide* and related interwar women's periodicals to a wider public through a host of centenary celebrations including: a Souvenir Edition of *Time and Tide*, a Festival of Women Writers and Journalists, and an Exhibition of Interwar Women's Magazines at the Women's Library, LSE.

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## Overview

The first section of this resource looks at the main stories in women's magazines to draw out the context of the day on which *Mrs Dalloway* is set in June 1923. (Dalloway Day is usually marked between 17 to 20 June - [hear the podcast](#)). This

draws on the female owned and edited periodical *Time and Tide* as well as other magazines to give a sense of the world that Clarissa Dalloway inhabits and the socio-political context of the book.

A middle section focuses on a review of *Mrs Dalloway* in *Time and Tide* to help position the novel as a modernist text within literature of the period. A short story by E. M. Delafield - available in the *Time and Tide* centenary issue published on the *Time and Tide* project website - is offered for comparative reading for themes and methods of writing. The last section is on Woolf's position within the literary scene and the articles Woolf herself wrote for periodicals, such as *Vogue* in 1924. It stresses that women produced the content and decided on the content for these magazines as well as read them. It looks at how she became a literary celebrity and recognised leading figure in the modernist world in the 1920s and 30s.

It can be split up into the three lessons (or just pick and choose from the sections) alongside readings of Woolf's work to give *Mrs Dalloway* further context and students' greater familiarity of Woolf's work. Reference is made to the centenary issue of *Time and Tide*, which is available here:

<https://www.timeandtidemagazine.org/read-souvenir-edition>

## [Slide 1] Introduction: Reading Interwar Women's Magazines and *Mrs Dalloway*

Feminist and historicist ideas can be used for different readings of *Mrs Dalloway* and to draw out the book's social and literary context. We are looking at two forms of literary theory to offer interpretations of the text (OCR AS English Literature, 2008, 123). By giving more context about the magazines aimed principally at women in the time that *Mrs Dalloway* was written and published, many of which Virginia Woolf herself wrote for, we can have greater understanding about the concerns of women at the time. This assists an interpretation of the novel within the context of women and society. This is a feminist approach within literary theory.

This reading also places the novel within its historical context. It is an extrinsic approach that pulls out some of the social and political considerations within the novel (OCR AS English Literature, 2008, 133-136). Understanding the publishing world within which Woolf herself worked and critiqued assists an understanding of literary modernism and the wider cultural dialogue that *Mrs Dalloway* belonged to. It is reading 'outside the text' to understand the text in a new way.

## [Slide 2] Interwar Women's Magazines

There was an increasing number of magazines aimed at women published in the UK between 1919 to 1939 as well as pages in newspapers aimed at women. The increase was part of one in media publication generally - in 1922 there were more than 50,000 periodicals published in the UK and ten daily newspapers (Ardis & Collier, 2008: 1). This reflected the changing role of women in British society at the time with the introduction of a limited franchise for women in 1918 and full franchise in 1928. An enabling act in 1919 allowed women to enter some professions, such as the law, that they had been barred from. In addition, changes to divorce,

guardianship of children etc, reflected women's changing domestic role as well as recognition of their political citizenship.

The magazines varied from story weeklies aimed at mill and factory workers (e.g. *Peg's Paper*) to high society fashion glossies such as *Vogue* as well as the domestic focus of *Good Housekeeping* and career focus of professional magazines like *The Woman Engineer*. Many of these were edited by women with a mixture of male and female writers and journalists. The weekly review *Time and Tide* was the only female-controlled magazine of its kind and had both male and female writers. For further information about *Time and Tide's* interwar history and contributors, see the [timeline](#) and [biographies](#) on the website.

## 1. The Chimes of Big Ben

### [Slide 3] Big Ben

#### *Time and Tide* Mast Head

The mast head - the main title - of the *Time and Tide* magazine features the clocktower of the Palace of Westminster from which the bell Big Ben chimes. This marked it out as a political journal founded in 1920, after parliament opened up to women. It was also a literary and arts review and published short stories and satirical pieces. It was founded in 1920 by Lady Rhondda, Margaret Thomas (née Haig) and had a board of female directors and editors. Rhondda had been in the Women's Social and Political Union - the suffragettes - headed up by Emmeline Pankhurst and the magazine was closely allied to The Six Point Group, which was founded the following year. The Six Point Group focused on six aspects of women's equality: political, occupational, moral, social, economic and legal. (See piece on The Six Point Group in the centenary issue of *Time and Tide* on page 3). Further information about *Time and Tide's* links to the Six Point Group is available on the [timeline](#) (which also features a photograph of Rhondda with Pankhurst.)

Control of publishing was crucial for the development of modernist texts. Leonard and Virginia Woolf founded the Hogarth Press in 1917, which published Woolf's books and work by T. S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield (among others) as well as radical social criticism, often on the British Empire. There are parallels with the founding of *Time and Tide*, as it was produced (and in part funded) by a group of women who had political objectives. It was a magazine that had a definitive purpose - the promotion of political feminism - but also aimed to attract a wider audience. (In 1929, *Time and Tide* moved its offices from Fleet Street to Bloomsbury, the district of London where Virginia and Leonard Woolf lived – see [timeline](#).)

The chimes of Big Ben punctuate the text of *Mrs Dalloway*, marking the location of the novel as central London and its backdrop as political society. Clarissa Dalloway has lived in Westminster for over twenty years when she walks out to buy flowers for a party:

'There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hours, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air.' (p.2)

Virginia Woolf's first name for the novel was *The Hours*, making the chimes of Big Ben even more central to her criticism of 'the social system, and show it at work, at its most intense' (Woolf, 1978, 63). Big Ben and its chimes can be read, for example, as marking the passing of time in the novel, a reference to death - the tolling of a bell to mark the passing of the dead - as well as the political system of Westminster (Outka, 2020, 116).

#### [Slide 4] *The Tatler* as image

June 1923 *The Tatler* Cover and County Show.

If Big Ben signified a political background, the monthly magazine *The Tatler* referenced high society, aristocracy and royalty. Although not seen as a women's magazine, its content was principally the social scene of the establishment. As Clarissa Dalloway walks down St James' Street, she passes the club Whites (the oldest gentlemen's club in London) where:

The white busts and the little tables in the background covered with copies of *The Tatler* and syphons of soda water seemed to approve; seemed to indicate the flowing corn and the manor houses of England; and to return the frail hum of the motor wheels as the walls of a whispering gallery return a single voice expanded and made sonorous by the might of a whole cathedral. (p. 20)

The car ('the motor wheels') may have contained the Prime Minister or the Prince of Wales, who is on the cover of *The Tatler* for June 1923 (published 13 June). The issue covers the society events for the summer - the county shows, the Fourth of June at Eton, the Epsom races - as well as photographs of society women. Women who may be in the circle of Clarissa Dalloway.

**Activity** around imagery: Discussion - how is *The Tatler* used as an emblem for a section of society? Think about the imagery and how it applies to who may be in the 'motor wheels'.

#### [Slide 5] Masculine Politics?

Cover of *The Vote*, 8 June 1923

The newspaper of the Women's Freedom League, *The Vote*, led with a photograph of the actress, political wife and new Member of Parliament (M.P.), Mrs Mabel Phillipson. Yet *Mrs Dalloway* seems to show politics as a masculine world, one in which Richard Dalloway is a Conservative Party M.P. with committee meetings and involvement in the issues of the day. Clarissa plays the part of the society hostess. Even the formidable Lady Bruton needs the assistance of two men - Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread, who works at Buckingham Palace - to write a letter to *The Times*:

Lady Bruton often suspended judgement upon men in deference to the mysterious accord in which they, but no woman, stood to the laws of the universe; knew how to put things; knew what was said; so that if Richard

advised her; and Hugh wrote for her, she was sure of being somehow right.  
(p. 120)

It is then interesting that at the time that *Mrs Dalloway* was set, a third female M.P. was elected in a by-election at Berwick.<sup>1</sup> Mabel Phillipson had been an actress, specialising in musical comedy, and stood in her husband's former parliamentary seat after he was forced to step down due to irregularities in election spending. She, however, stood for the Conservative Party rather than the National Liberals, which had been the party of her husband. (She remained an M.P. until 1929 when she stood down and resumed her acting career). All three female M.P.s sitting in parliament had stood in the seats previously represented by their husbands.

## [Slide 6] Women and Politics

After the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 women over 30 who occupied land or premises of yearly value not less than £5 (or women whose husbands held this property qualification), or women who were university-educated were able to vote. It was essentially middle and upper-class women who had the vote from 1918 until the Equal Franchise Act in 1928.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of June 1923, the women's political papers led with the news of a third female M.P. Most of these papers were magazines that had been founded in the pre-World War One suffrage movement. For example, *The Vote* was the paper of the Women's Freedom League and their front page for 8 June 1923 led with the title 'Our Third Woman M.P., Mrs Phillipson Conservative'. *The Vote*, like the League, had a broad political and social reform agenda with a strong emphasis on internationalism.

*Time and Tide* reported on Westminster in much the same way as the other political weeklies. In the issue of the magazine dated 8 June 1923, an editorial commented that the election of all three M.P.s was influenced by 'personal factors', but that Phillipson was also 'elected in her own right'.

By the time *Mrs Dalloway* was published there had been another two general elections, including one in 1924 which saw eight women elected as M.P.s.

[Image] 'The eight women Members of Parliament': Dorothea Jewson; Susan Lawrence; Nancy Witcher Astor, Viscountess Astor; Margaret Wintringham; Katharine Marjory Stewart-Murray, Duchess of Atholl, Margaret Bondfield, Mabel Phillipson, Vera Woodhouse, Lady Terrington.  
Unknown photographer, 1924, NPG x196075 © National Portrait Gallery, London.

N.B. The Prime Minister in *Mrs Dalloway* would be the Conservative Party Leader Stanley Baldwin, who had only just taken office in May 1923 after the resignation of Bonar Law.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, she was the fourth female M.P. elected as Constance Markievicz was the first female M.P. elected in 1918. Markievicz did not take her seat as she represented Sinn Fein, which did not recognise the authority of the British Parliament over Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> All men over the age of 21 received the vote in 1918 - it took another 10 years of campaigning for women over 21 to get the vote on the same terms as men.

**Activity:** Discussion about the nature of politics in *Mrs Dalloway* - is it reflecting an unchanging way of doing things or an order that is being challenged? Is power depicted in the hands of male politicians?

## [Slide 7] Matrimonial Causes Act

Article, *Time and Tide*, 15 June 1923.

Marriage and relationships are strong themes in *Mrs Dalloway*. The other story from Westminster that was extensively covered by the women's political press in June 1923 was on the proposed changes to divorce law. This bill gave women equity with men in seeking divorce, as now both husband and wife could sue for divorce on the grounds of adultery. Before this, wives had to prove additional faults as well as adultery, but men could sue for adultery alone.

The bill passed its reading in the House Commons and so would go for debate in the House of Lords, despite the efforts of some M.P.s to talk it out. *Time and Tide* commented that some of the culprits attempting to filibuster (i.e. talk out) the bill took any opportunity to 'oppose any Bill that was an attempt to enforce equal moral standard between the sexes' (*Time and Tide*, 15 June 1923: 606).

In the novel, Peter Walsh, Clarissa Dalloway's friend and the man she would not marry, is in London to see about a divorce for Daisy, the married woman he wants to marry (*Mrs Dalloway* p.49-50). In that instance, Daisy's husband may be able to divorce her on the grounds of adultery alone so the Act may not make much difference with regards to Walsh and Daisy.

**Activity:** Draw out a spider diagram showing which characters are married in Mrs Dalloway, who is not, who wanted to be (and to whom) and whether their relationships have been successful. (Student can debate what successful means!). For example, Woolf tells us (or implies) that Walsh gets engaged to a woman on the ship to India and it does not work out (p.118 & p.208).

## 2. Method and Modernism

### [Slide 8] *Mrs Dalloway*: Method and Modernism

Page of *Time and Tide* review and quote from it.

Sylvia Lynd reviewed Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* in *Time and Tide* after its publication in 1925. Lynd was a poet who had published two novels, and from 1929 promoted women's writing in the Book Society. She reviewed literary books for *Time and Tide* in the 1920s (Clay, 2019: 113). Generally, Lynd preferred traditional styles of writing fiction rather than experimental ones.

In her review Lynd admired Woolf's 'beautiful' prose and the character of *Mrs Dalloway*, but disliked the character and presence of Septimus Smith and criticised

the constant coincidences, such as Peter Walsh seeing Septimus in the park and then again in an ambulance on the way to the mortuary.

In contrast, Winifred Holtby, a director of and a writer for *Time and Tide* as well as an accomplished novelist of novels with a traditional narrative, such as *South Riding* (published posthumously in 1936), admired Virginia Woolf's development of 'experimental methods'. She described Woolf's novels as cinematic, which in *Mrs Dalloway* has a 'more subtle complexity of orchestration' (Holtby, 1932: 89 & 91).

For further information about Sylvia Lynd and Winifred Holtby, see their biographies on the [website](#).

**Activity:** What do you think Sylvia Lynd means by this sentence?

For by this method of writing, this snatching at life in handfuls and heaping it chaotically together, by rejecting a central presence and personality to give it order and coherence and inevitably selection and limitation, Mrs Woolf compels us to make impossible demands on her and cry for every life in London in a single book.

Sylvia Lynd, 'Book Reviews. Town and Country', *Time and Tide*, 15 May 1925, 472.

Why might Lynd say this? How does it position Woolf as a writer? (modernist, difficult, experimental etc).

[Slide 9] Woolf on Fiction

Woolf herself reviewed literature and wrote prolifically about writing and the methods she used and admired. This is a quote from her essay 'Modern Fiction', which she wrote for the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1919 and re-published in *The Common Reader* (1925):

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday [...]. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from beginning of consciousness to the end.

Virginia Woolf ([1921] 1986), 'Modern Fiction', *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. London: Hogarth Press, p. 160.

In this passage, Woolf illustrates how impressionism or an appeal to the senses can be crafted in prose. According to Woolf, we experience the world through "myriad impressions" that strike us randomly as we go about our lives. Woolf applied this way of writing in *Mrs Dalloway*.

[Slide 10] 'Retrospect' by E. M. Delafield

*Time and Tide* promoted women writers, of both modernist and more traditionally mainstream work (Clay, 2019: 212). E. M. Delafield wrote *A Diary of a Provincial Lady*, which can be seen as a precursor for *Bridget Jones' Diary* by Helen Fielding, in instalments for *Time and Tide* from 6 December 1929. Delafield also wrote parodies and short stories for various publications in the 1920s and 30s.

**Activity:** Get the students to read and compare the short story 'Retrospect' by E. M. Delafield in the *Time and Tide* Centenary Issue p. 13 with the Sally Seaton section in *Mrs Dalloway* pp. 35-38. They can use the grid [Slide 10 or word doc] to note down similar themes, e.g. sapphic subtext, reflection on past. How are they told differently? What is the prose like? Etc.

For a home reading exercise or another class lesson around modernist writing you could set a comparison between the themes of Katherine Mansfield's short stories 'Bliss' or 'The Garden Party' and sections of *Mrs Dalloway*. (Mansfield was also published by Hogarth Press - her methods influenced Virginia Woolf and vice versa). More information about Delafield's life and work (including *Diary of a Provincial Lady*, which was originally published as a serial in *Time and Tide*) is available in her biography on the [website](#).

### 3. Woolf's writing for magazines

#### [Slide 12] 'Grub Work'

Virginia Woolf, 'A Letter to a Lady in Paraguay', *The Woman's Leader* 1922.

Virginia Woolf began her writing career by reviewing books for the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) in 1904. She continued to write for literary reviews throughout her career. It was paid work and enabled her to have financial independence. She also wrote both essays and short stories for women's magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. She called this 'Grub Work' as a reference to popular journalism, but considered it important for promoting her writing and ideas.

*The Woman's Leader* was previously known as *The Common Cause* and changed its name in 1920 after the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) became the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC). This was the group known as the suffragists, formerly led by Millicent Fawcett and then by Eleanor Rathbone from 1919. The paper took a broad interest in women's achievements in the professions, and in related legislation going through parliament.

Woolf didn't write for many of the women's political magazines, so 'A Letter to a Lady in Paraguay' in *The Woman's Leader* in 1922 is unusual. It is part obituary, part parody of the style of the best-selling romance writer Mrs Barclay, who wrote *The Rosary* (1909), which has been turned into various films. Woolf references her own frequent bouts of influenza and appears to be writing from her sick bed in this article, though that is probably a play on the story that Mrs Barclay started writing when she was bed ridden.



Woolf defended her decision to write for the style magazine *Vogue* in 1925 to a friend by telling them that 'Ladies' clothes and aristocrats won't affect my style' and she enjoyed having the money. In fact, Woolf took advantage of the expanded magazine market to both earn more and reach new readers (Wood, 2020: 148). For example, she wrote six articles for *Good Housekeeping* on London in 1931, and an experimental short story was included in the first British edition of *Harper's Bazaar* in 1930.

These new (to Britain) magazines - *Vogue*, *Britannia and Eve*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar* - were 'shaped by the new rights and opportunities opening up for women in interwar Britain' (Wood, 2020: 24). Many of the magazines not only employed women journalists and writers but also had female editors - women were producers of this new content, not just consumers.

### [Slide 13] Woolf in *Vogue*

Article by Woolf 'Indiscretions in Literature', (US) *Vogue*, 1 June 1925 and extract.

The critic and literary editor Raymond Mortimer reviewed *Mrs Dalloway* for the British edition of *Vogue* in June 1925. Mortimer found Woolf's writing in *Mrs Dalloway* 'ethereal' and full of imagination. Mortimer compares her work to a modern painter 'like Matisse' in its 'capricious arabesques, its omissions and the demands her imagination makes on yours'. Mortimer celebrates the demanding nature of Woolf's writing. In the same issue Woolf herself writes an essay, on the realist novelist George Moore.

Her first article for *Vogue*, 'Indiscretions in Literature', was published in the British *Vogue* in late November 1924 and republished in the American edition in June 1925, which also reviewed *Mrs Dalloway*. 'Indiscretions' considers personal feelings for certain authors and writing, particularly those driven by gender. She asks:

Now, perhaps, it may be pertinent, since women not only read, but sometimes scribble a note of their opinions, to inquire into their preferences, their equally suppressed, but equally instinctive response to the lure of personal liking in the printed page.

Virginia Woolf, 'Indiscretions in Literature', *Vogue* (1924)

Woolf wrote five essays for British *Vogue* between 1924-1926 and sat for *Vogue's* photographers Maurice Beck and Helen Macgregor in 1925 and 1926. She actively took part in '*Vogue's* commercialisation of Bloomsbury in the 1920s'.

Under the editorship of Dorothy Todd from 1922-26, the magazine championed modernism and the work of members of the Bloomsbury Group, such as Woolf her sister Vanessa Bell and their friend Roger Fry. Todd used the 'high cultural value' of modernism and the 'open secret' of the Group's sexual subcultures for a radical new style (Jana, 2020). Although Todd was sacked in 1926, due in part to her literary and radical direction for the magazine, her successor Alison Settle, editor 1926-35, was also inclined towards modernism.

**Activity:** Look at the quote from Woolf in her first article for *Vogue*. What is the tone of it? Is it humorous? Is she 'daring' to suggest that women have opinions? Why do you think she is writing like this for *Vogue*?

### [Slide 14] Woolf in Fashion

Woolf was fascinated by fashion and took style tips from Todd's then girlfriend and fashion editor of *Vogue*, Madge Garland. Both Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell were known for being untidy in dress, yet Woolf admired Garland's taste.

Garland commissioned a two-piece dress and long coat that Woolf had admired, from Nicole Groult for Woolf herself. She is seen wearing it in this photograph by Ottoline Morrell in June 1926 (Spalding, 2014).

[Virginia Woolf](#) by Lady Ottoline Morrell, June 1926, NPG Ax142591 © National Portrait Gallery, London

### [Slide 15] Woolf in *Time and Tide*

Excerpt from the review of *A Room of One's Own*.

In 1927 Virginia Woolf appeared in *Time and Tide* as the subject of a 'Lampoon of Literary Celebrities'. Sylvia Townsend Warner, a novelist and reviewer, wrote a parody of Woolf's densely impressionistic prose, while Woolf was pictured by artist Paul Bloomfield standing in an awkward manner. This illustrates both the perception of the inaccessibility of Woolf's prose and that she was a well-known writer (Clay, 2019, 149).

Woolf wrote 'The Sun and The Fish', which captured her trip to see the eclipse of the sun at dawn in the north, for *Time and Tide* in 1928. In the same year the Hogarth Press, which Woolf and her husband Leonard owned, published a book of articles by the magazine's proprietor Lady Rhondda.

Theodora Bosanquet reviewed *A Room of One's Own* on 15 November 1929 - a copy of which is reprinted in the Centenary issue (p.22). Extracts from Woolf's essay were then published in *Time and Tide* over the next two weeks. In her review, Bosanquet draws attention to the political arguments about women in society current a year after equal franchise:

The verities Mrs. Woolf wanted to domesticate in the minds of her readers were so well-known and, alas, so controversial. They had served so many times as slogans and rallying points— "economic independence, equal opportunities, equal moral standards, limitation of families." How were these topics to be disguised as kittens when they were so easy to spot at a glance as man-eating tigers bristling with the weapons of attack and defence?

Very few writers could have brought off the trick, and none other with the consummate skill exhibited by Mrs. Woolf. She does it by her own sparkling method, enriched and perfected by experiment and practice to be an exquisitely responsive instrument for registering the flickering lights and

shadows of the subtle, elusive but so unerringly directed mind that guides and controls it.

Bosanquet [1929], Reprinted in *Time and Tide* Centenary Edition (2020), 21.

For further information about Theodora Bosanquet, see her biography on the [website](#).

**Activity: Class discussion** - What topics does the reviewer mention as relevant to women in society in *A Room of One's Own*? How does Woolf's method 'soften' these topics - tigers to kittens?

Given that *Time and Tide* is a political and cultural review with reference to Westminster, why might *A Room of One's Own* have extracts serialised in it?

### [Slide 16] Woolf as Literary Celebrity

In the early 1930s, Woolf wrote for magazines with a greater readership than either *Vogue* or *Time and Tide*. She published six articles on London for *Good Housekeeping* in 1931, which was aimed at a middle-class readership and had a circulation of up to 150,000. Alice Maud Head, the editor 1924-39, commissioned leading women fiction and non-fiction writers, such as Rebecca West and Winifred Holtby, to entertain readers and address great social questions (Wood, 2020: 42-43).

Woolf used 'short stories as a testing ground for ideas in novels' (Wood, 2020: 129). A few of these were published in *Harper's Bazaar*, which combined fashion with a wide-ranging range of fiction by writers such as Nancy Mitford, Dorothy L. Sayers and E. M. Delafield. Woolf's 'The Lady in the Looking Glass' was published in *Harpers* in 1930 with an accompanying image by artist and photographer Cecil Beaton.

In 1937 the magazine *Britannia and Eve* - a 'Lady's Pictorial' - ran a feature 'Europe's "Number One" Women' in which Virginia Woolf was listed as 'if intellect alone were in question, Virginia Woolf would win the day.' The article is not particularly serious but it does illustrate the profile of Woolf as an intellectual, a writer and a significant woman for an audience that may not read her work. (Although, the magazine did also review Woolf's novels *Orlando* in 1928 and *The Waves* in 1931).

**Activity: Research / Discussion** - Ask your students to research women writers who are also public figures or well-known e.g. Margaret Atwood, Hilary Mantel, Bernadine Evaristo or Candice Carty-Williams. Get them to think about what they have said in interviews, on social media and whether their gender makes a difference to how they are received / their audience. Do they talk about contemporary concerns?

### [Slide 17] Chimes: Female Icons?

The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room. (p. 204)

In 2019 Virginia Woolf was the only woman to feature amongst the writers and artists section of the BBC series *Icons*. This series purported to cover a series of icons from

the twentieth century that the public then voted for. No women were voted as icons and Woolf was the only female contender in the 'artists and writers' section. Woolf was an innovative writer and the series recognised her work for and support of other writers. However, the lack of female icons does raise questions about the continuing status of women as writers and public intellectuals in the twenty-first century.

Woolf is the most famous female writer of the first half of the twentieth century, but she was one of many - others included Rebecca West, Winifred Holtby, Katherine Mansfield. Women's magazines did important work in promoting and publishing work by women. This cartoon (on the slide) published in *Time and Tide* in December 1928 showed Winifred Holtby, Hilda Reid, Margaret Kennedy, Naomi Mitchison, Vera Brittain and Sylvia Thompson around a statue of Venus (specifically the Venus de Milo). The cartoonist Paul Bloomfield was making a wry comment on how women were producing culture rather than being the subject of it, signified by the Venus sculpture.

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Women's Rights Collection, various magazines connected to Suffrage and Equal Citizenship digitised by LSE Library:

<https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/collections/suffrage>