

# *Orlando*, posterity and textual survival beyond the book

Sophie Aymes

Université de Bourgogne (France)

ISIS 2022, Trinity College Dublin



# Wayne McGregor, *Woolf Works* (2015, Royal Opera House)

I Now, I Then (*Mrs Dalloway*, 1925)

Becomings (*Orlando*, 1928)

Tuesday (*The Waves*, 1931)



Dramaturg: Uzma Hameed

Composer: Mark Richter

architecture practices: Cigüe and We Not I

Costume designer: Moritz Junge

film maker: Ravi Deepres

light designer: Lucy Carter

*[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through from the reverse side are visible.]*

*[The page contains dense, handwritten cursive script throughout, which appears to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the document. The handwriting is highly stylized and difficult to decipher.]*

一、  
二、  
三、  
四、  
五、  
六、  
七、  
八、  
九、  
十、





‘Craftsmanship’ (BBC, 29 April 1937)

“Words, English words, are full of echoes, of memories, of associations [...].”

“How can we combine the old words in new orders so that they survive, so that they create beauty, so that they tell the truth?” (89)

“shuffle and change” (85)

Latham, Monica, Caroline Marie and Anne-Laure Rigeade (eds.).  
*Recycling Virginia Woolf in Contemporary Art and Literature*. Routledge, 2022.

Elisa Bolchi, “Dancing Woolf Back to Life: *Woolf Works* as Critical and Artistic Recycling”



Moving beyond the covers of the book

Sally Potter. *Orlando* (1992)  
<https://sallypotter.com/films>

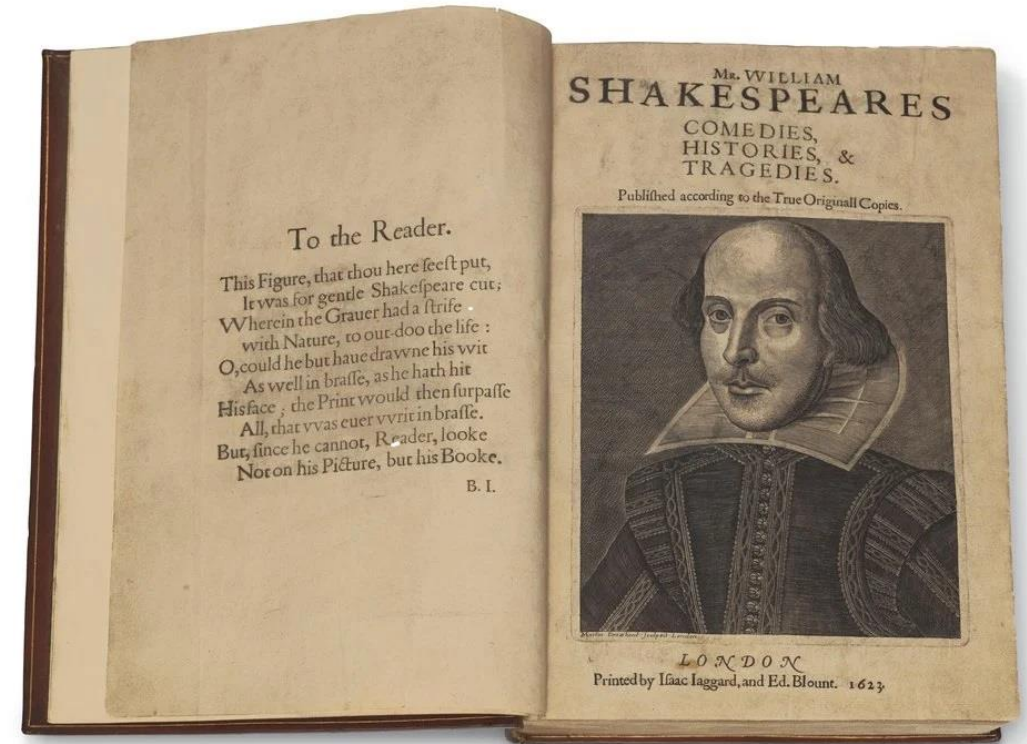


# 1. Instability and mutability of the text

‘The Oak Tree’

“a piece of darning”

(*Orlando: A Biography*, Penguin Classics, 2000, 163)



Nick Green: “[...] their poetry scribbled down on the backs of washing bills held to the heads of printer’s devils at the street door” (63)

“sav[ing] the book from extinction” (189)

“the green arras with the hunters on it moved perpetually” (11)

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*







“a grave among laurels” (71)

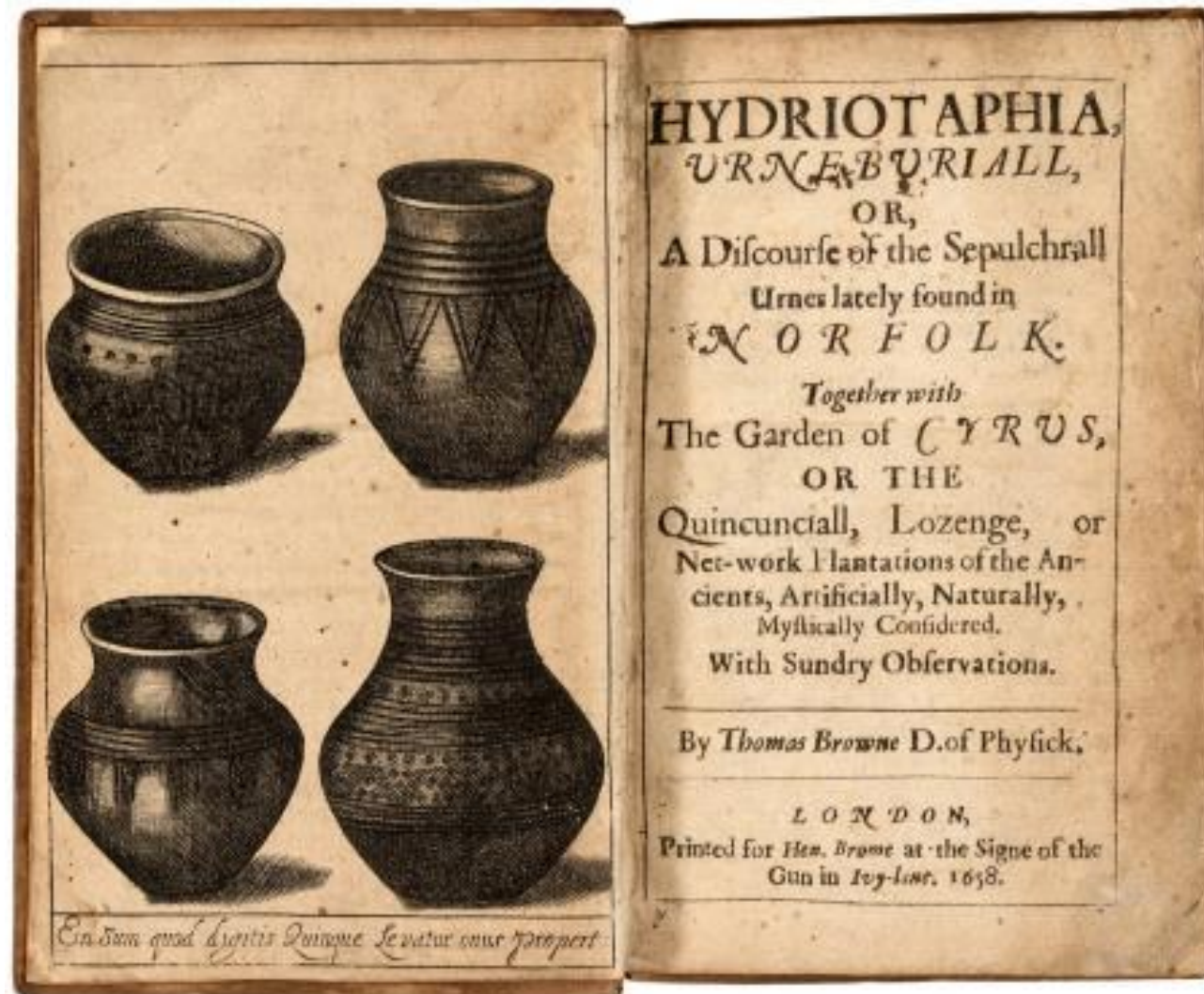
“where his ancestors lay, coffin piled upon coffin” (50)

---

[...] what remained? A skull; a finger. Whereas, he said, turning to **the page of Sir Thomas Browne**, which lay open upon the table – and again he paused. **Like an incantation rising** from all parts of the room, from the night wind and the moonlight, rolled the divine melody of those words which, lest they should outstare this page, we will leave where **they lie entombed, not dead, embalmed rather**, so fresh is their colour, so sound their breathing – and Orlando, comparing that achievement with those of his ancestors, cried out that they and their deeds were dust and ashes, **but this man and his words were immortal.** (57)



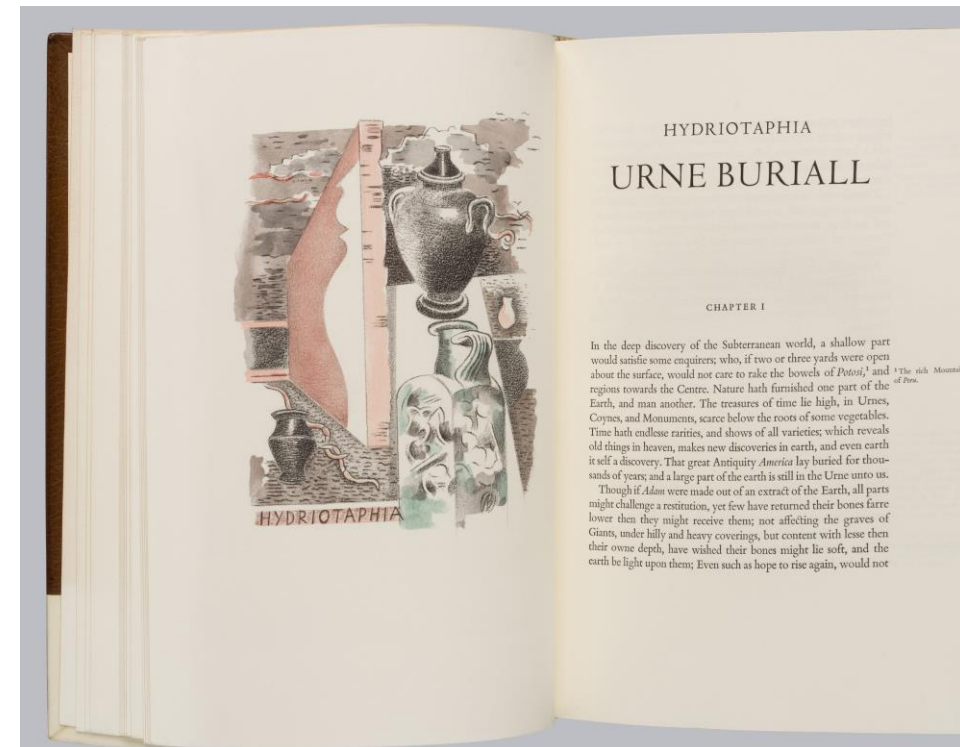
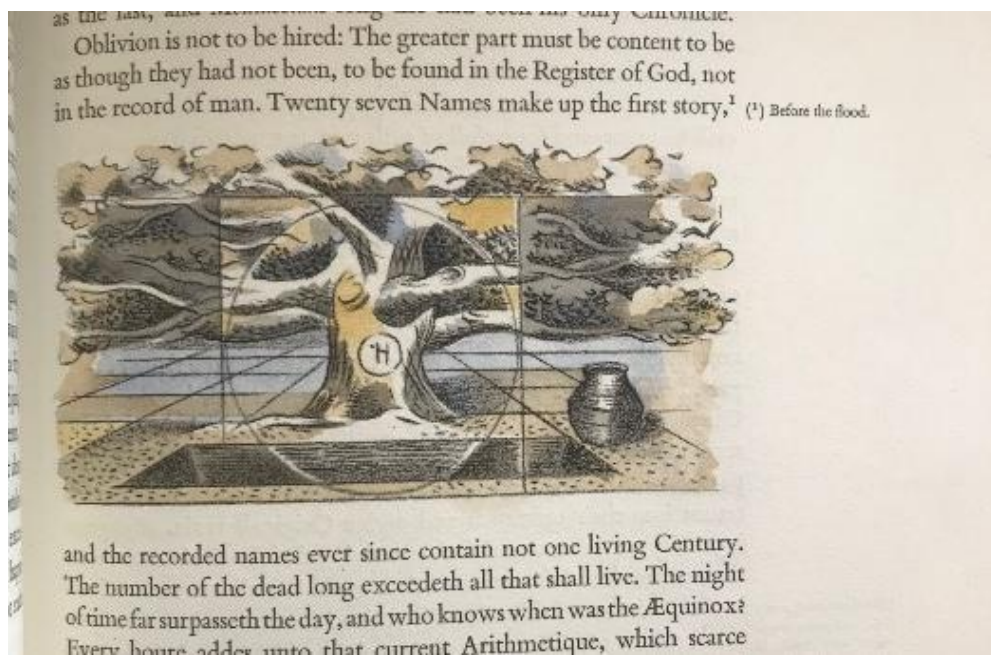
Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or, a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk* (1658)



“brevity and diuturnity” (*Orlando*, 69)

“Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks [...] diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.”

Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriall*, Cassell and the Curwen Press, 1932 (48, 49). Illustrated by Paul Nash.



## 2. Woolf's attitude to print

'aural sensitivity'  
(Melba Cuddy-Keane)

## The revival of printing and typography

“audibility of a human voice”

“thought transference”

Beatrice Warde (aka Paul Beaujon), *The Crystal Goblet*, 1955 (137, 12)



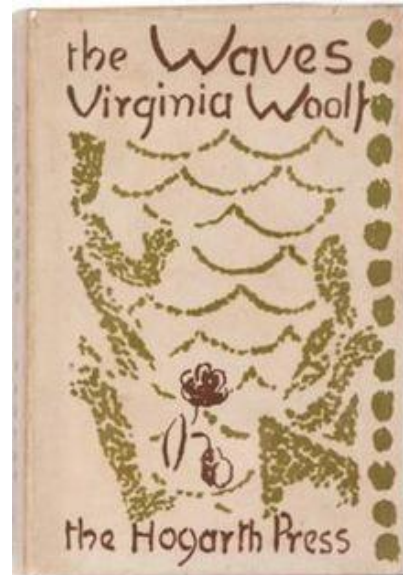
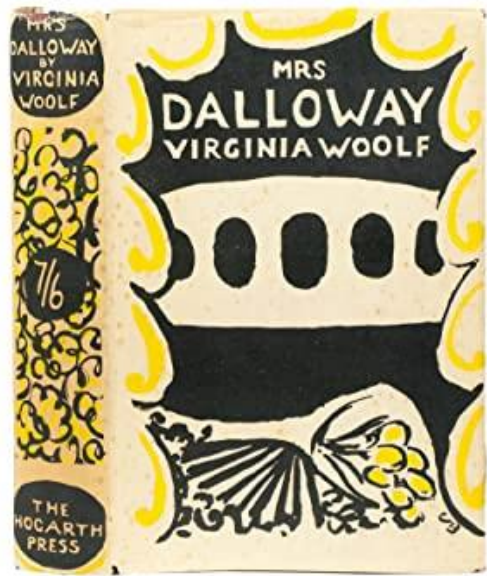
## ‘Sir Thomas Browne’ (TLS, 28 June 1923)

“The only exception which can be taken to the beautiful Golden Cockerel edition of the works of Sir Thomas Browne is a thick black leaf which spots the page too obtrusively for the comfort of the eye and too affectedly for the repose of the spirit. (*Essays* III, 368)

*Hydriotaphia, urn-burial, or, A discourse of the sepulchral urnes lately found in Norfolk.* Waltham Saint Lawrence, Berkshire: Golden Cockerel Press, 1923.

**I**N THE DEEP DISCOVERY OF THE SUBTERRANEAN world a shallow part would satisfy some enquirers who, if two or three yards were open about the surface, would not care to rake the bowels of Potosi and regions towards the centre. Nature hath furnished one part of the earth, and man another. The treasures of time lie high, in urns, coins, and monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endless rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth itself a discovery. That great antiquity America lay buried for thousands of years, and a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us. ¶ **THOUGH**, if Adam were made out of an extract of the earth, all parts might challenge a restitution, yet few have returned their bones far lower than they might receive them; not affecting the graves of giants, under hilly and heavy coverings, but content with less than their own depth have wished their bones might lie soft, and the earth be light upon them. Even such as hope to rise again would not be content with central interment, or so desperately to place their relics as to lie beyond discovery & in no way to be seen again, which happy contrivance hath made communication with our forefathers, & left unto our view some parts which they never beheld themselves. ¶ **THOUGH** earth hath engrossed the name, yet water hath proved the smartest grave; which in forty days swallowed almost mankind and the living creation; fishes not wholly escaping, except the salt ocean were handsomely contempered by a mixture of the fresh element. ¶ **MANY** have taken voluminous pains to determine the state of the soul upon disunion; but men have been most phantastical in the singular contrivances of their corporal dissolution; whilst the soberest nations have rested in two ways, of simple inhumation and burning. ¶ **THAT** carnal interment, or burying, was of the elder date the old examples of Abraham and the patriarchs are sufficient to illustrate, and were without competition, if it could be made out that Adam was buried near Damascus, or Mount Calvary according to some tradition. God Himself, that buried but one, was pleased to make choice of this way, collectable from Scripture expression and the hot contest between

# The Hogarth Press



## CASLON OLD FACE ROMAN & ITALIC

CAST ENTIRELY FROM MATRICES  
PRODUCED FROM  
THE ORIGINAL PUNCHES  
ENGRAVED IN THE EARLY PART OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
IN CHISWELL STREET, LONDON  
BY  
WILLIAM CASLON

<http://typefoundry.blogspot.com/>



“The whole works of Shakespeare cost half a crown and could be put in your pocket. One could hardly read them, indeed, the print was so small, but it was a marvel, none the less. ‘Works’ – the works of every writer she had known or heard of and many more stretched from end to end of the long shelves.” (*Orlando*, 197)

“repackaged as a mass-produced Penguin author”  
(Vike M. Plock in *Book History*, Spring 2022, 328)

<https://www.worthpoint.com/>



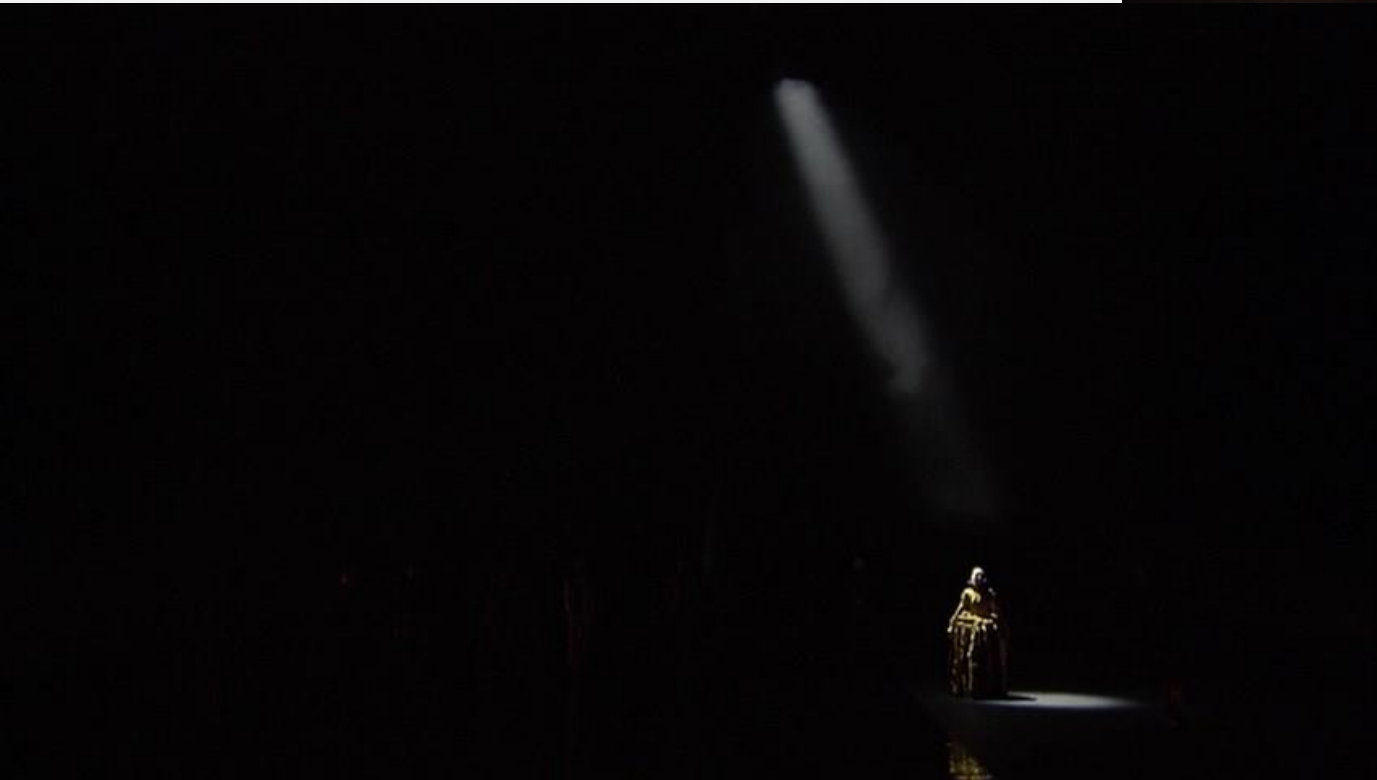
[...] what remained? A skull; a finger. Whereas, he said, turning to the page of Sir Thomas Browne, which lay open upon the table – and again he paused. **Like an incantation rising** from all parts of the room, from the night wind and the moonlight, rolled the divine melody of those words which, lest they should outstare this page, we will leave where **they lie entombed**, not dead, embalmed rather, so fresh is their colour, so sound their breathing – and Orlando, comparing that achievement with those of his ancestors, cried out that they and their deeds were dust and ashes, but this man and his words were immortal. (*Orlando*, 57)

“a voice answering a voice” (*Orlando*, 225)

### 3. Worlf's works / *Wolf Works*



*Woolf Works, 'Becomings'*





Sally Potter. *Orlando* (1992)

<https://sallypotter.com/films>



# The 'Woolf complex'

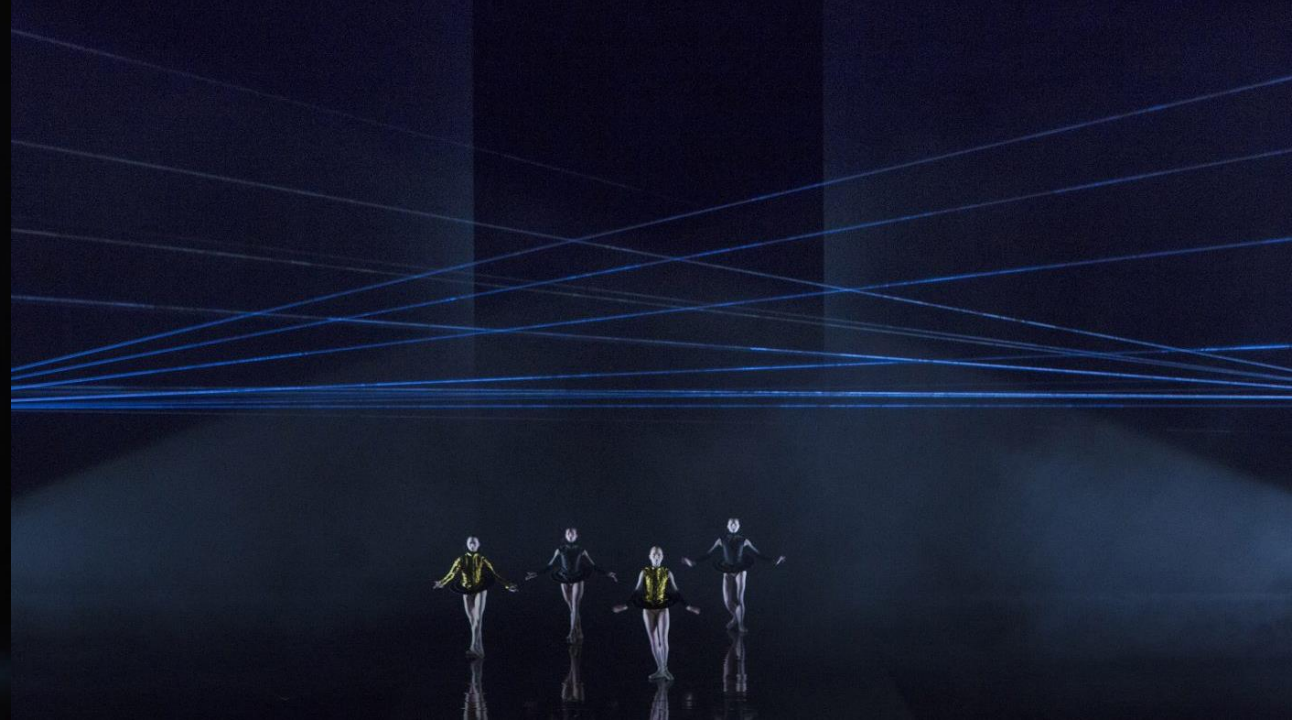
Cutchins, Dennis R. and Dennis R. Perry. "Introduction: The Frankenstein Complex". *Adapting Frankenstein: The Monster's Eternal Lives in Popular Culture*. Ed. Dennis R. Cutchins and Dennis R. Perry. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018. 1-19.

"intermedial interpretation" and reduction to significant patterns:

"Balletic versions often self-referentially allude to their own mediality and at the same time re-read the pre-texts in question, thus adapting readings to a wide web of existing interpretations across media"

Maria Marcsek-Fuchs, in Rippl, Gabriele (ed.). *A Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – image – Sound – Music*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015, 569.











Woolf on the air

‘Anon’

Woolf's works, *Wolf Works*, 'Woolf works'  
From intramedial remediation to the Wolf complex

“ transfer of cultural capital”

(V. M. Plock, 253)

Performance “releases the transformative potential based on a shared cultural understanding”

(Christina Ljungberg in Rippl, Gabriele (ed.). *A Handbook of Intermediality*, 552)

## Who does Wolf work for?

An “interpretative community” whose common set of references is also a “marker of class”

Maria Marcsek-Fuchs in Rippl, Gabriele (ed.). *A Handbook of Intermediality*, 564-65)

## Intermediality and the temporality of the medium

A text is “always embodied in temporal materiality”, disclosing the “mortal temporality by which the material world comes to life”

(John Lurz, *The Death of the Book: Modernist Novels and the Time of Reading*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2016, 20)

*Thank you!*