Dear 20th-21st Centuries Cultures Workshop,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my work in progress. “A Queer Ecology of the Sea: Reading Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*” is part of my third book, still at an early stage. I also have an article-length piece on Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* and Erna Brodber’s *Louisiana.* “A Queer Ecology,” once revised, will go to *Feminist Modernist Studies*, so that should help with understanding who my audience is. The audience knows their Woolf archive (mostly what I’m drawing from) and are committed to feminist scholarship. What I would especially appreciate getting feedback on is the shaping of the argument. As I discuss dissolving form and turbulent materiality, I feel my argument is also slipping away from me. The three parts need to be better coordinated in argumentative scope. I’m also not entirely sure I’m demonstrating a queer ecology throughout. (I think I am, but do my readers?) Though I definitely know that the turn to political discourse in part 1 is jarring. I probably also need to explain the linkages between race/coloniality and sexuality. Alas, it’s been a very busy semester and I’ve gotten as far as I could in the time I had. I look forward to meeting you all and hearing your thoughts.

Since Woolf’s archive is well published, I’m simply attaching Figure 1 which is a women’s suffrage poster from 1910. (A precis of the overall book is below.)

Laura

*Salvage Aesthetics: Precarious Lives and the Grounds of the Human*

*Salvage Aesthetics* examine collective modes of sensing beauty that is materially grounded in gendered, sexualized, and racialized bodies and imagines their potential to produce meaningful and often unpredictable attachments across lines of difference and also to reinvent the grounds of the human. This embodied aesthetic remains firmly rooted in the politics, social interactions, identity categories, and literal bodies, or, more generally put, in the materialities of everyday life. It is this way of thinking aesthetics that enables, as Ewa Ziarek recently put it, “the resignification of damaged bodies and objects previously expelled from the realm of meaning” (*Feminist Aesthetics* 6). In so doing, salvage aesthetics reinvents the relations between humans and their surrounds, between loss and the recovered debris of the past. It examines novels and essays by Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Zadie Smith, Sylvia Wynter, Nella Larsen, Claude McKay, and Erna Brodber to demand a rethinking of the aesthetic as a transitive process, one that can transform abjection—of nonlegal persons and their traces –into new forms of collectivity and reconceptions of the human that reinvent the future. How can the debris of the past be transformed through an embodied aesthetic, and particularly, an aesthetic that never removes those losses from view? Moreover, I develop the notion of a pedagogy of sensibility, as articulated by queer of color theorists (Munoz, Chuh) and also practiced by the literary writers I explore, to advocate for a way to transform the teaching of these and other texts.