TO THE READERS:

Lifting for a moment my editorial hat, I’d like to report that the Virginia Woolf Miscellany conference this past June in New York was a great success by all accounts. Plans for the Proceedings are underway and it is hoped this will be ready in time for the 2nd Annual conference, to be held at Southern Connecticut State University. (see call below).

With so much new material being published on Woolf, on her position in the modernist tradition, and on her relations with other writers and other arts, the VWM would welcome hearing from readers interested in reviewing (as well as suggestions for books that should be reviewed).

Speaking of “other arts,” perhaps readers saw recently Alive From Off Center’s “Loose the Thread,” the ODC/San Francisco’s dance choreographed by Brenda Way that “probes the relationships within the Bloomsbury Group intellectuals in 1920s and 30s London.”

Is there any interest in beginning some kind of journal devoted to scholarship on and around Woolf? Conversations at the June conference suggested this would be welcome. It has been noted, however, that in these times of fiscal constraint libraries might be more inclined to subscribe to a Woolf Studies Annual than to a bimonthly journal. Would interested readers contact me with ideas for such an undertaking’s scope and form, as well as nominations for an editorial board?

The next issue will be edited by Peter Stansky; submissions should be sent to him directly at Department of History, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-2024 by February 1.

Mark Hussey, Pace University

FROM THE READERS:

Eleanor McNees (University of Denver) is working on four volumes on Woolf for the Critical Assessments of Writers in English series due from Helm Information Ltd. in 1993. The first volume will include early responses, obituaries, chronologies of works, and bibliography of critical studies not included; the following three are to be organized chronologically. The goal of the project “is to present the research student with a comprehensive survey of Woolf criticism from the early reviews to the present.” Professor McNees would welcome suggestions for possible inclusions for her “daunting task.”


Brenda Lyon, one of the Woolf Society’s growing number of English members, sent an article on the “Virginia Woolf industry” by Victoria Glendinning that notes a new biography of Woolf has been commissioned from Hermione Lee by Chatto. The article was occasioned by the fact that Woolf comes out of copyright next year, “which is the signal for a flood of new publications.” Perhaps one day we will find time and space for a proper reckoning of the vast differences between “English” Woolf and “U.S.” Woolf!

Langdon Elsbree’s Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures (Peter Lang, 1991) “includes analyses of Virginia Woolf’s uses of liminality in A Room of One’s Own and To the Lighthouse in order to question certain male ritual patterns of narration.”

Karen Levenback’s A Chain in a Smooth Road: Virginia Woolf and the Great War will be published by Syracuse UP.

AND FROM THE READERS

ABOUT THE MISCELLANY ITSELF:

Mark Hussey kindly allowed me in his crowded conference schedule last June for a brainstorming session on the Miscellany itself, now over 15 years old. It was great to hear that people appreciated VWM, its brevity and wit, and great too hearing ideas for its improvement.

1) People are wishing for more reviews and from more different reviewers. May we reiterate what we said there: the door is wide open! Please propose yourself as a reviewer, or re-reviewer, or co-reviewer. Given our rotating editor policy, the “to whom?” is sometimes as puzzling as it is in The Waves. If in doubt, send it off to J.J. Wilson at the Sonoma State University address and she will forward your review requests to whichever batter is up...

2) J.J. would also like to “open the doors” for a theme issue for, say, Fall 1992 which would feature brief articles on Woolf’s influence on other authors, and on the other arts too. A fascinating topic, useful in teaching, and not enough considered. If you are interested in contributing to this issue, please send a query note to J.J.

3) Another suggestion: a regular Pedagogy Column? Teaching ideas are what we all need, they are condensable and thus appropriate for our format. Would someone volunteer to be editor of it for awhile

4) The VWM would like to publish an updated and annotated list of audio-visual aids for teaching and public lectures on VW & Bloomsbury, with sources and costs. Please forward all such information to the VWM editor by February 1, 1992.

5) Several people wanted a regular summary recap articles on criticism, like those in SIGN, for example, which sum up the ideas of, say, psycho-bio approaches to VW; Marxist approaches to VW; Myth approaches, etc. This is a huge project and might better be left for the Woolf Studies Annual idea, floated by Mark Hussey in his TO THE READER, but if anyone (or two, or three) feel the call to take up this challenge, please write VWM.
CALL FOR PANELS, PAPERS, AND WORKSHOPS:
2nd ANNUAL VIRGINIA WOOLF CONFERENCE
VIRGINIA WOOLF: THEMES AND VARIATIONS
Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT
June 11-14, 1992

Some Possible Topics:

Approaches to Teaching Virginia Woolf; Woolf and Her Circle; Woolf and Social Class; Woolf’s Short Stories and Non-Fiction; Woolf’s Diaries; Woolf and the Romantics; Woolf and Lesbian Literary Theories/Practices/Pedagogies; Woolf’s Other Novels (not To the Lighthouse or Mrs. Dalloway); Woolf and Her Male Contemporaries (Critics, Companions, Competitors); Woolf and Practical Politics; Woolf’s Editions and Manuscript; Woolf and the -isms (Post-Structuralism, Post-Feminism, French Feminism, Marxism); Woolf and Poo; Woolf and Nature; Woolf and Houses; Woolf and Cinema; Bloomsbury Revisited; The Omega Workshops; Woolf and the Performing Arts; Woolf and Music; Reading Woolf in an Era of Political Correctness

The conference organizers particularly encourage submission of panel proposals, but individual paper proposals will be considered. Non-traditional formats for conference sessions are invited (workshops, round-table discussions, videos, and performance pieces are possible approaches). Sessions will be 90 minutes long.

All proposals must include the following information: A 100-250 word abstract for each paper/presentation with a separate cover sheet listing:

Name, address, institutional affiliation (if any), and phone numbers (day and evening) of panel organizer and all panelists;
Session title (for panel proposals);
Title(s) of all papers/presentations;
Description of session format (e.g., workshop, performance piece, formal presentation of scholarly papers)
Request for type of audio-visual support (if any is needed)

Proposals should be sent to: Dr. Vara Neverow-Turk
Department of English
Southern Connecticut State University
New Haven, CT 06515
Deadline for submissions: postmarked by February 1, 1992.
Possibility of publication in a conference proceedings. Graduate and undergraduate credit available (3 credits).
Still, she felt the “Toms and Berties” (MD 135), i.e. Eliot and Russell, “oozing thick drops of vice,” everywhere ready to dip their meat in her blood through fiction and autobiography. The experience of Lawrence and Fluxey and others excited understandable anxiety. She had feared that Virginia Woolf, too, would write a Garsington novel. In 1917 Woolf had told her “that when she wrote her great Garsington novel there would be a streak of white lightning—and that would be Ottoline” (Ott 212). This expectation is fulfilled in Clarissa’s oracular vision, seeing Sally “as one sees a landscape in a flash of lightning... gallantly taking her way unvanquished” (MD 53).

The phantasmagoric entertainments at Garsington, reminiscent of the feast of Trimalchio, with acting and dressing up, “plays and tableaux vivants” in the red drawing room that Lawrence had helped to decorate “belonged very much to the spirit of the age” and attracted artistic radicals like Lytton Strachey in spite of Ott’s repugnant Pug dogs. Perhaps like Septimus Smith he could not suppress his natural feelings, “when a Skye terrier snuffed his trousers and he started in an agony of fear” (MD 102). Strachey, Ottoline’s major protégé and whose move to Ham Spray involved “much cutting down of trees” (Partridge #15), seemed drawn to Garsington, cynically disguising his entry. Alloment privately but declining to satirize publicly (Ott 185). In 1913, inspired by the beauty of Pompeii, the “walls of reds, yellows and blacks,” he had written to Ott of “the fountains dropping in the court, and all the exquisite reposé” he had found there (Holroyd 530-31). He was, in the main, loyal to the sexually mysterious presence seated at Garsington in her Pompeian red drawing room as Hera’s peacocks strolled about the lawns. In Virginia Woolf’s portrait there is the main, loyal to the sexually mysterious presence seated at Garsington in her Pompeian red drawing room as Hera’s peacocks strolled about the lawns. In Virginia Woolf’s portrait there is

The Diary Ed. Anne Olivier Bell (NY: Harcourt, 1977), p. 244. Hereafter shown as D1
3. There is something of Frieda Lawrence in Doris Kilman. Ottoline’s maids, Millie and Edith, are reminiscent of Millie Brush and Elise Henderson’s friend Edith (Ott 152).
6. Ott was descended from Bess of Hardwick and her son Charles, husband of “Mad Madge,” first duchess of Newcastle, limned in The Common Reader.

CLARISSA DALLOWAY, DORIS KILMAN AND THE GREAT WAR

Although the Great War and its effects are “something central that permeate” Mrs. Dalloway, they are unnoticed by Clarissa Dalloway. In this novel, set four years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 which officially ended the war, Woolf chose to provide Clarissa with a suggestion of war-consciousness (though not Great-War consciousness) in her selection of bedtime reading (the memoirs of Lord Marbot). That Clarissa overlooks Lady Asquith’s Memoirs in a bookshop window, implies her lack of interest in experiences of the Great War, even those of civilians who, like herself, were of a certain class in the British “social system,” the same social system which Woolf intended to explore in the novel.

By the time Woolf wrote the final typescript and corrected the final proofs of the novel, she had modified her earlier plans and decided that the characters could best be understood and could best inform her purpose in the novel in terms of their awareness of the war. That her earliest intentions changed in the course of writing the novel suggests that Woolf was taking to account the changes brought about in the wake of the war, and considering on whom the effect could be seen. Clarissa’s suicide, which Woolf acknowledged was part of her earliest plan, was abandoned, I suggest, as the central importance of the war and the postwar world became obvious to her. Josephine O’Brien Schaefer says, “without the presence of Septimus, Clarissa’s emotions might seem minor and trivial” [86]. But, it is the presence of Doris Kilman which suggests that Clarissa’s emotions may, in fact, have seemed minor and trivial to Woolf herself.

That Clarissa, who gives her party after hearing the shocking news of Septimus’ suicide, had no awareness of the war, is consistent with her myopic view of life itself; as John G. Hessler demonstrates in “Moral Accountability in Mrs. Dalloway,” “For Clarissa, the best life is the unexamined life” [131]. The only kind of warfare she knows is the metaphorical kind she has with the only obvious victim of the war on the homefront, Doris Kilman, the woman whom Clarissa admired less, the woman she sees as “some prehistoric monster armoured for primeval warfare” [190], as the “enemy” [265], using the war imagery that has been part of life itself since the Great War. In answer to Phyllis Rose’s question, “[W]hat is [Doris Kilman’s] particular function in this novel?” [147], we must look at her experience of the war, which was comparable to that experienced by D.H. Lawrence’s wife Frieda, and her experience of the postwar world, both of which are ignored by Clarissa Dalloway; it is here that we find not only Doris Kilman’s function, but Clarissa Dalloway’s.

Clarissa’s view of Miss Kilman points to her status as an outsider by birth and in fact, like Septimus, as a survivor. Mrs. Dalloway not only “lacks the generosity” of a Mrs Ramsay, as Suzette Henke notes [133], but, demonstrating a Kierkegaardian philistinism, Clarissa’s narrated monologues, like Browning’s dramatic monologues, point to the narrative distance from both Clarissa and the social system she represents through an irony that is widely regarded as social satire:

Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russians, starved herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she, dressed in a green mackintosh coat. Year in year out she wore that coat; she perspired; she was never in a room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were; how she lived in a slum without a cushion or a bed or a rug, or whatever it might be, all her soul rusted with that grievance sticking in it, her dismissal from school during the War—poor embittered unfortunate creature! [16]

Informing Clarissa’s patronizing attitude and making clear Clarissa’s disregard of both Kilman’s professional qualifications as tutor to Elizabeth (which Richard Dalloway sees) and her personal suffering (which he like Clarissa doesn’t countenance), Woolf suggests how far Mrs. Dalloway does, in fact, represent for her what has been called “the road not taken.” Mrs. Dalloway casts a cold eye at the economic suffering she faced the indigenous German population of England during the war and in its aftermath when the distrust that the Government and its propaganda organs had taken such pains to
instill was alive and well in postwar London: “For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night” [16].

Woolf’s own sensitivity to the emotional and economic cost exacted from civilians of German origin must have led her to use Louise Matthaei, who was dismissed “under a cloud” from Newnham College, Cambridge, because her father was German, as a model for Doris Kilman, something one can see in Woolf’s 1918 diary entry describing a visit by “Miss Matthaei”:

It is easy to see from her limp, apologetic attitude that the cloud has sapped her of her powers of resistance. We skirted round the war, but she edged away from it, & it seemed altogether odious that anyone should be afraid to declare her opinions—as if a dog used to excessive beating, dreaded even the raising of a hand. She said, I discussed their business, which has to do with War, & Peace, & may result in an offer to her of a place on the staff. She has to earn her living. ‘I must tell you one thing, she said, when the talk was over, my father was a German. I find it makes a good deal of difference—it is a distinct kindrance commercially.’ I agreed that it was. She’s a lanky gawky unattractive woman, about 36, with a complexion that blotches red & shiny suddenly; dressed in her best, which was inconceivably stiff & ugly. But she has a quick mind, & is an enthusiast; said she loved writing. [D] 135-36

Just as Woolf had given Mrs. Dalloway the eccentricities of Ottoline Morrell without her political commitment, she used as a model for Doris Kilman the situation and appearance of Louise Matthaei without endowing Miss Kilman with her passivity.

By juxtaposing Kilman’s need for relation, as manifest in her fanatical religious zeal (that began at about the same time as Septimus’ aberrational behavior became manifest) and her seemingly unhealthy attachment to Clarissa’s daughter Elizabeth, Woolf suggests that the war-blindness (which on the homefront was manifest through a propaganda campaign designed to isolate and demean those of German origin) was alive and well in postwar London. This might also suggest why, as Woolf was completing the final text, she changed the working title of “The Hours” to Mrs. Dalloway. Mrs. Dalloway is a survivor of the war, but unlike others of her class (Lady Bexborough, who had suffered from death during the war, and even Miss Parry who had a bomb dropped “at her very door” [271]), Mrs. Dalloway ends the day as she began it, believing the war is over. Henke is certainly right in seeing the title of the novel as ironic “since, in actuality, there is no Mrs. Dalloway” [136]. But, I would suggest, the irony is found in more than what Henke sees as Clarissa’s romantic vision of the war; it is found in her blindness to its effects, an isolation Woolf suggests graphically, at the end of the novel:

It is Clarissa, he said.

For there she was. [296]

The isolation of Clarissa Dalloway owes nothing to the war; that of Doris Kilman does. For Clarissa Dalloway the war did nothing to alter either the workings of the social system or life itself. Miss Kilman is not invited to the party which gathers the governing class around the Prime Minister, its “symbol,” and Septimus would not have been noticed (much less invited) even if Clarissa, like Peter Walsh, had seen him. If as Claire Tylee, among others, believes, Clarissa feels a spiritual bond with Septimus, it is because Woolf makes clear that it’s the only kind she’s capable of feeling. Clarissa didn’t only enjoy an illusion of immunity from the war, she, like the other civilians represented in the novel, believes herself immune from its effects and evidence of same in the postwar world.

Karen L. Levineback
George Washington University

1. Lady Asquith’s “memoirs” [Diaries 1915-1918] weren’t published until 1968 but, according to Beverly Schlack, members of Woolf’s circle of friends knew that Lady Asquith was keeping a war diary [144]. In addition to Siegfried Sassoon, T.S. Eliot, and Rupert Brooke, Lady Asquith was on friendly terms with Desmond MacCarthy and Vita Sackville-West.

2. See Diary II, 248.

3. In the Introduction to the first American printing of Mrs. Dalloway (Modern Library, 1928), Woolf said that in the first version Septimus did not exist and “that Mrs. Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party” [vi]. I agree with Daniel Ferrer who believes that the importance of this comment is not to be found in what it literally says (“There never was a first version as described in the preface” [9]), but rather in Woolf’s reasons for making it.

4. Compare Kenneth Moon’s “Where is Clarissa Dalloway? Doris Kilman in Mrs. Dalloway,” which sees Miss Kilman as informing the character of Mrs. Dalloway and the novel itself “as an exercise in characterization, as primarily a search for the whole Clarissa” [117].

Works Cited


— 4 —

PORTRAYING MRS. DALLOWAY

The following is a review of the South Bank Show entitled “The Modern World: Ten Great Writers.” The program includes a 70-minute segment on Virginia Woolf, focusing on Mrs. Dalloway. It was aired on cable television (BRAND) in northern California in 1990.

Cast: Eileen Atkins (Virginia Woolf), Susan Tracy (Mrs. Dalloway), John Castle (Peter Walsh), Robert Dawes (Septimus Smith), and Jennifer Landor (Lucrezia Smith). The show was written by Kim Evans and Gillian Greenwood, and produced and directed by Kim Evans.

The South Bank Show on Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway is an unusual dramatization of Woolf’s literary work. The segment moves in and out of three modes of presentation: English literary critic Hermione Lee discussing past and present critical assessments of Virginia Woolf’s life and work; Eileen Atkins portraying Virginia Woolf and rendering thoughts from her diary and other works; and actors presenting a dramatization of Mrs. Dalloway. Comments that Woolf was a committed experimentalist and that Mrs. Dalloway was Virginia Woolf’s first completely successful modernist novel frame the presentation and give rise to its three-part format. Just as Woolf tried in her fiction to “move in and out of speech and silence, and out of various characters’ minds, in and out of the past and the present,” the three-part format allows this presentation to do the same.
Lee’s comments focus on Virginia Woolf’s efforts to define a new form for the novel. Discussing *Mrs. Dalloway*, she points out that Woolf was attempting to “make fiction get at something abstract.” While the lyrical power of the novel is striking, equally compelling is Woolf’s effort to find the right shape, the right word, for embodying the complex reality that she wanted to represent. Woolf attempted to portray both social history and the “obscure secret parts of the personality.” She searched for a language to express the effects of war on a particular society, and individual emotional and physical reality.

Lee further argues that *Mrs. Dalloway* is a feminist novel, in that it portrays what the later feminist essays — *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* — were trying to say. Here Lee feels that the feminist vision of *Mrs. Dalloway* lies in both its anti-war themes — Septimus’s devastated life portraying “the appalling legacy of the war” — and its form — the structure of the novel working against rigid form and official time, just as Woolf argued against authoritarianism, coercion and tyranny of the social system and the destructiveness of war in the feminist essays.

Parallel to Lee’s critical commentary is Eileen Atkins’ portrayal of Virginia Woolf. Atkins is able to explore Woolf’s efforts to define a novel which embodies the representation of reality as she saw and felt it. Through Atkins, we hear Woolf asserting that “one must write from deep feeling, as Dostoyevsky said,” and her subsequent questioning “Do I or do I just fabricate words loving them as I do.” We also hear her agonizing over the challenge of creating characters who survive. Analyzing *Mrs. Dalloway*, she was very conscious of the difficulties of trying to portray two levels of reality — the feelings of a woman in a drawing room and the destructiveness of war, the world seen by the sane and the insane, “the surface and the spreading depths.” Woolf struggled to unite the different levels in a new form of expression which would capture “some real thing behind appearances which the writer makes real by putting into words.”

The dramatization of *Mrs. Dalloway*, like Woolf’s technique in the novel, attempts to find a form to express Woolf’s vision. Characters’ thoughts are expressed by a voice-over technique, and are juxtaposed with the dialogue of their interactions. The past and the present intertwine — Clarissa remembers key moments of her past — at the levels of both action and emotion — as she tries to evaluate the emotional and physical state of her life at age 52. This is very much a novel of mid-life reflection, as the key emotional events of the past are re-evaluated; the pressure of growing older makes that re-evaluation critical both to Clarissa, who asserts that she made the right choice, but wonders what it would be like if she could live her life over again, and to Peter Walsh, who feels with keen pain that his life would be seen as a failure. Both characters re-confront the grief and anguish of Clarissa’s decision not to marry Peter, and the meaning of their friendship that has lasted over 30 years.

Woolf struggled in the novel to parallel Clarissa’s evaluation of emotional and physical reality with Septimus’ struggle over the memories of the past and the emotional pain of the present. And just as she brought the two characters’ thoughts and lives together in her novel through similar imagery and states of sensibility, they are brought together in this dramatization through similar thoughts and through connections among the characters in order to give full expression to the vision of reality Woolf portrays.

As Hermione Lee comments, *Mrs. Dalloway* is remarkable for its form — its control of the movement between social and personal history, and between sanity and insanity. Yet it was also remarkable for its style — the use of a rhythmical, lyrical prose sentence, and its break with the type of narrative used by the realists. Just as Woolf went on to develop a new form in each of her later works, always attempting to “find something real behind appearances and to make it real by putting it into words,” the South Bank show survived on *Mrs. Dalloway*, in both its form and content, provides a unique but fitting portrayal of Woolf’s efforts as a novelist.

Selma Meyerowitz
Berkeley, CA

THE EGOTIST AND THE PEACOCK: VIRGINIA WOOLF AND DOROTHY RICHARDSON REVISITED

Neither Virginia Woolf nor Dorothy Richardson would have found it an honor to be compared to the other. In fact, each recorded a certain disdain for the other’s work. Commenting on the new form she was developing for *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf wrote, “I see immense possibilities in the form I hit upon more or less by chance two weeks ago. I suppose the danger is the damned egotistical self; which ruins Joyce and Richardson to my mind; is one plant and rich enough to provide a wall for the book from oneself without its becoming, as in Joyce and Richardson, narrowing and restricting? When reviewing some of Richardson’s novels, Woolf criticized her method as inadequate and failing to illuminate deeper regions of the human mind. She finds Richardson’s intentions unmet as well. Woolf says that although Richardson has invented, or least developed, the “psychological sentence of the feminine gender,” she is “neither proud nor afraid of anything that she may discover in the psychology of her sex.” Dorothy Richardson, on the other hand, disassociates herself from Woolf by resorting to name-calling. She refers to Woolf’s talents as a writer as “peacocks in prison” that “strut and strike attitudes. But always with drooping wings.” Richardson reduced the elegance of Woolf’s prose to stylistic show. When asked in 1937 to review Woolf’s *The Years*, she refused on the basis that none of Woolf’s preceding books had moved her deeply. (See Gloria Fromm’s *Dorothy Richardson*.)

How interesting, then, to uncover strikingly similar scenes and specific themes in the works of these two women. One example, a scene in Richardson’s *Interim* (1919), resembles the central conceit of Woolf’s “*An Unwritten Novel*” (1921). In *Interim* Miriam Henderson rides on a train alone, in her compartment. From her being alone, Miriam deduces she has no love in her nature. Having no one in her sight to love, she questions how she could love God whom she cannot see. Unable to pray, she conceives of herself as thoroughly evil. When other passengers do enter the compartment, they all appear bathed in the love she lacks. Miriam is first drawn to the face of a woman sitting opposite who has “a thin ravaged face strained and sheney with fatigue and wearing an expression of undaunted sweetness and patience” (II 356-7; all volume and page references are to the 1976 Popular Library Edition of *Pilgrimage*). While studying this woman’s face, Miriam imagines her circumstances: “Children and housework and a selfish husband and nothing in life of her own. She was at the disposal of everyone for her kind actions” (II 357).

Similarly, in Woolf’s short story “*An Unwritten Novel*” the narrator, riding on a train, becomes intrigued by a woman facing her. The narrator describes her as a “poor, unfortunate woman” who “looks at life.” Minutes later the narrator notices that this woman makes an “awkward angular movement . . . as if, after the spasm, some spot between the shoulders burnt or itched.” Like
Miriam in Interim, Woolf's narrator imagines the woman's circumstances, which causes her not only to reach spasmodically for a spot on her back, but also to rub assiduously at a spot on the window pane: "What she rubs on the window is the stain of sin. Oh, she committed some crime... They would say she kept her sorrow, suppressed her secret—her sex, they'd say—the scientific people."

In Richardson's novel the narrator feels she has an evil nature. Would that have influenced Woolf whose narrator sees the woman on the train trying to rub out a "stain of sin"? Woolf's story, published two years after uses the same venue as Interim, that of a train ride and a woman observed. Richardson's novel focuses on the experience of Miriam, the narrator, and her sense of her own evil. Woolf's story focuses on the woman opposite, perhaps a new rendering of Miriam, the narrator uses the woman as a screen on which she projects her perceptions—not of the unknown woman, but of herself.

Several other parallels exist between the works of Woolf and Richardson. For example, another passage from Interim (1919) resembles one in Woolf's The Voyage Out (1915). In Interim we read: At tea time in the den there was a darkening hush. It was like a guest, turning everyone's attention to itself, abolishing differences, setting free unexpected sympathies. Every one spoke of the coming storm and looked beautiful in speaking. The day's work was discussed as if in the presence of an unseen guest. (II 401-2)

The scene from Woolf's novel takes place during dinner time, soon after Rachel Vinrace dies. While in Interim a darkening hush fills the room, in The Voyage Out a "profound silence" (TVO 368) overtakes the diners. And as Richardson's darkening hush is "turning every one's attention to itself," in Woolf's we see "a crowd of people all standing... all looking with rather strained faces up at the skylight" (TVO 369). In Interim the darkening hush is described as an "unseen guest" that abolishes differences and liberates sympathies. Richardson's words strongly suggest those from Acts 5:8-9 where Luke explains that God gives the Holy Ghost to the gentiles as well as to the disciples so as to "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Woolf depicts the storm as "passing high over head with its clouds and its rods of fire" (TVO 369). This time the biblical allusion is from the Old Testament. In Exodus 12:21 Moses says that the Lord appeared before the Israelites "by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." Both scenes create a setting in which people have gathered socially, and in which a storm is imminent. In both a numinous silence occurs before the storm and the people are struck in anticipation of some magnificent event.

The remaining comparisons involve the authors' use of similar imagery. Miriam Henderson, in Revolting Lights (1923), passes an old woman on the street. As Miriam gazes at this woman she sees that underneath" the forward-falling crushed old bonnet shone the lower half of a bare scalp... reddish... studded with dull, wart-like knobs... Unimaginable horror quietly there" (Richardson's ellipses, III 268). A similar figure appears in The Years (1937): As Sara and Martin Pargiter walk through London, they pass a woman selling violets. Though she wears a hat over her face, Martin catches sight of her: "She had no nose, her face was seamed with white patches; there were red rims for nostrils. She had no nose—she had pulled her hat down to hide that fact" (TY 235). Both scenes employ the deformed figure to represent some hidden, perhaps unconscious, certainly grotesque, element in their characters. Martin cannot bear the sight of the woman, especially while in Sara's presence; Miriam recognizes in the woman "herself, set in her path and waiting through all the years. Her beloved hated secret self, known to this old woman" (III 289).

The last parallel to be pointed out here involves images of triangles. In Dawn's Left Hand (1931) Miriam wonders, "People can meet only in God?" Then she sees on "the tablecloth in front of her the shape—a triangle. Woman and man at either end of the base, the apex: God" (IV 224). Richardson's treatment of the triangle, recalling Woolf's use of it in To the Lighthouse (1927), surely asks for further analysis.
of transformation” (12). Rosenbaum, in “An Educated Man’s Daughter,” examines the relationships between Leslie Stephen’s work and the writings of his daughter and her circle, among them Strachey, Keynes, MacCarthy, Forster, Leonard Woolf. Choosing to look at Leslie Stephen as “the father of Bloomsbury,” to use Quentin Bell’s description, he examines Stephen not only as the “writer father,” the “sociable father,” and the “tyrant father” described by Woolf in the revised draft of “A Sketch of the Past,” but as a “Victorian philosopher and historian of ideas, as a literary historian and critic, and... as a biographer” (36).

The next three essays place Woolf within the context of her own time. In “Heart of Darkness,” Virginia Woolf and the Spectre of Domination,” Shirley Neuman discusses Woolf’s recurring allusions to the vision of horror underlying civilization, Conrad’s heart of darkness, as they appear in Mrs. Dalloway, The Voyage Out, and Between the Acts: “Like Conrad, Woolf invokes female values to save civilization. But where Marlowe bows before the coercion of women’s saving illusions, Woolf insists that no illusion can save, and demands female subversion, a conscious separateness from ‘unreal loyalties, and the tyrannical, darkness, of domination, in both private and public life” (74). In “Our Silent Life: Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot,” Lyndall Gordon looks at ways in which both writers used silence to examine experience for which words fail. In a search for a new kind of biographic study, she says, one “complementary to standard biography is that it would concentrate on the invisible moments of a writer’s life that terminate in the work” (78). Woolf especially wished to focus not upon factual detail but upon what she called the “essential hours of life” (Eliot’s “essential moments” [85-86]). In “Joyce, Woolf and the Modern Mind,” Maria DiBattista contrasts the “Wandering Rocks” sequence in Ulysses to its gently satiric transposition in the motorcade-aeroplane sequence in Mrs. Dalloway in order to determine “absolute” differences between the two writers: “her mind awed in the exercise of the power (novel-writing) which he confidently assumed, his recolling...from those unsayable and unfigurable realities (especially Death surprising in the midst of life) hers sought to embrace” (110).

In the second half of the collection, Virginia Blain in “Narrative Voice and the Female Perspective in Virginia Woolf’s Early Novels,” by examining Woolf’s first three novels, looks at Woolf’s development of a distinctively female voice. “An unspoken assumption among readers is that the Victorian omniscient narrator is a male persona,” she notes; “female omniscience, in a patriarchal society with an androcentric religion, is a contradiction in terms” (119). Blain suggests that Woolf develops away from “inherited voices of authoritative masculine omniscient narration, or even of ironic feminine knowing narration, towards a goal that was not so much the fusion of masculine and feminine perspectives, as the deconstruction of the opposition between them” (132). Next, in his “Mourning and Modernism,” John Mepham finds the “tyranny of plot” from which Woolf escaped to be akin to and a reflection of the false confidence of the tyranny of patriarchal authority. He discusses four of Woolf’s novels as modern rites for mourning and recovery, and he contrasts their uncertainties with the assurances of nineteenth century epistles and Greek poetry. Tony Davenport, in “The Life of Monday or Tuesday” offers a minute detailing of Woolf’s development between 1917 and 1925, pointing out the differences between “Modern Novels” (10 April 1919) and “Modern Fiction” (April 1922). Susan Dick, in “The Tunnelling Process: Some Aspects of Virginia Woolf’s Use of Memory and the Past,” traces through Woolf’s early novels and short stories the development of her technique of using memory to create character, dramatizing recollections of the past and allowing these to direct the movement of a character’s thought. Last, Isabel Grundy, in her painstakingly researched essay “Words Without Meaning—Wonderful Words,” offers a “general account” of Woolf’s “habits and procedures” in choosing names (200).

In the early eighties, Clements and Grundy brought together in Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays a collection that continues to be valuable in the early nineties.

Jean Tobin, Department of English University of Wisconsin—Sheboygan

MLA: WORK AND PLAY

And here is the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION convention line-up for the Society. There will, of course, be other papers treating Woolf in the larger Program, but we do not have that supplemental information here at press time for the VWM.

The Society business meeting will be slipped into the Friday panel, with more time to talk informally and make decisions in our own inimitable (fortunately) way at the Society Social immediately following that panel (see below).

Virginia Woolf’s Between the Acts: A Postmodern Text? Friday, December 27, 3:00 - 4:45 p.m. Franciscan Rooms A-D (Hilton)

Judith Allen, University of Delaware, Moderator

“Postmodernism and the Question of Authority in Between the Acts”

James F. English (University of Pennsylvania)

“Postmodern Strategies of Placement: Virginia Woolf’s Between the Acts”

Bonnie Kime Scott (University of Delaware)

“The Gramophone in Between the Acts”

Susan Bazargan, Eastern Illinois University

“Fascism, Feminism, and the Maternal: the Postmodern Condition in Between the Acts”

Robin Nilon, Temple University

Who is this Woman called Woolf? Critical and Biographical Constructions of Virginia Woolf Sunday, December 29, 10:15 - 11:30 a.m.

Teakwood A-B (Hilton)

Denise Marshall, SUNY Oswego and Jane Lilienthal, Lincoln University, Moderators

“The Politics of Constructing Woolf as an Incest Survivor”

Louise DeSalvo, Hunter College

“Writing the Feminine: Virginia Woolf and the Making of Feminist Historiography”

Sara Blair, University of Virginia

“Virginia Woolf as a Literary Critic and Her Relation to the Institution of Literary Critical History”

Jeanne Dubino, University of Massachusetts

“Imag(in)ing Woolf; or, the Perils of Popularity”

Brenda Silver, Dartmouth College

SOCIETY SOCIAL, from 5 to 8, Friday, Dec. 27 at Prentice and Paul Sack’s house, 3820 Washington Street, 387-8562. This by now ritual event will take place again off campus, in a fascinating Pacific Heights house. Michele Jordan will again honor us with her fancy and, by now, famous version of California cuisine. There will be ample samplings of our California wines and delicious waters and fruit juices. The conversation we leave up to you all; it too will be sparkling, therefore. You, your friends, family, students, etc. are most welcome. We will cab-pool from the Between the Acts panel, but for those of you coming later or whatever it is really not far from downtown, and worth the trip. You’ll see. If you would like to R.S.V.P., drop a card to J.J. Wilson, but so far it has always worked out, hasn’t it?
TO THE READERS:

Lifting for a moment my editorial hat, I'd like to report that the Virginia Woolf Miscellanies conference this past June in New York was a great success by all accounts. Plans for a Proceedings are underway and it is hoped this will be ready in time for the 2nd Annual conference, to be held at Southern Connecticut State University (see call below).

With so much new material being published on Woolf, on her position in the modernist tradition, and on her relations with other writers and other arts, the VWM would welcome hearing from readers interested in reviewing (as well as suggestions for books that should be reviewed).

Speaking of "other arts," perhaps readers saw recently Alive From Off Center's "Loose the Thread," the ODC/San Francisco's dance choreographed by Brenda Way that "probes relationships within the Bloomsbury Group intellectuals in 1920s and 30s London."

Is there any interest in beginning some kind of journal devoted to scholarship on and around Woolf? Conversations at the June conference suggested this would be welcome. It has been noted, however, that in these times of fiscal constraint libraries might be more inclined to subscribe to a Woolf Studies Annual than to a bimonthly journal. Would interested readers contact me with ideas for such an undertaking's scope and form, as well as nominations for an editorial board?

The next issue will be edited by Peter Stansky; submissions should be sent to him directly at Department of History, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-2024 by February 1.

Mark Hussey, Pace University

FROM THE READERS:

Eleanor McNees (University of Denver) is working on four volumes on Woolf for the Critical Assessments of Writers in English series due from Helm Information Ltd. in 1993. The first volume will include early responses, obituaries, chronologies of works, and bibliography of critical studies not included; the following three are to be organized chronologically. The goal of the project is "to present the research student with a comprehensive survey of Woolf criticism from the early reviews to the present." Professor McNees would welcome suggestions for possible inclusions for her "daunting task."


Brenda Lyon, one of the Woolf Society's growing number of English members, sent an article on the "Virginia Woolf industry" by Victoria Glendinning that notes a new biography of Woolf has been commissioned from Hermione Lee by Chatto. The article was occasioned by the fact that Woolf comes out of copyright next year, "which is the signal for a flood of new publications." Perhaps one day we will find time and space for a proper reckoning of the vast differences between "English" Woolf and "U.S." Woolf!

Langdon Elsbree's Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures (Peter Lang, 1991) "includes analyses of Virginia Woolf's uses of liminality in A Room of One's Own and To the Lighthouse in order to question certain male ritual patterns of narration."

Karen Levenback's A Chasm in a Smooth Road: Virginia Woolf and the Great War will be published by Syracuse UP.

AND FROM THE READERS

ABOUT THE MISCELLANY ITSELF:

Mark Hussey kindly allowed time in his crowded conference schedule last June for a brainstorming session on the Miscellany itself, now over 15 years old. It was great to hear that people appreciated VWM, its brevity and wit, and great too hearing ideas for its improvement.

1) People are wishing for more reviews and from more different reviewers. May we reiterate what we said there: the door is wide open! Please propose yourself as a reviewer, or re-reviewer, or coreviewer. Given our rotating editor policy, the "to whom?" is sometimes as puzzling as it is in The Waves. If in doubt, send it off to J.J. Wilson at the Sonoma State University address and she will forward your review requests to whichever batter is up...

2) J.J. would also like to "open the doors" for a theme issue for, say, Fall 1992 which would feature brief articles on Woolf's influence on other authors, and on the other arts too. A fascinating topic, useful in teaching, and not enough considered. If you are interested in contributing to this issue, please send a query note to J.J.

3) Another suggestion: a regular Pedagogy Column? Teaching ideas are what we all need, they are condensable and thus appropriate for our format. Would someone volunteer to be editor of it for awhile?

4) The VWM would like to publish at updated and annotated list of audio-visual aids for teaching and public lectures on VW & Bloomsbury, with sources and costs. Please forward all such information to Spring editor Peter Stansky by February 1, 1992.

5) Several people wanted summary recap articles on criticism, like those in SIGNS, for example, which sum up the ideas of, say, Psycho-bio approaches to VW; Marxist approaches to VW; Myth approaches, etc. This is a huge project and might better be left for the Woolf Studies Annual idea, floated by Mark Hussey in his TO THE READER, but if anyone (or two, or three) feel the call to take up this challenge, please write VWM.