Reading this passage, one has a sickening sense that gas masks have not gone out of fashion after all, that the strategy of shock and awe currently underway in Iraq is not just as bad if we do."

(Letter to Vanessa Bell, 1 October 1938)

Centuries ago, in December 2002, a world before the war, Melissa Silverstein of Paramount Studios contacted me and asked if members of the International Virginia Woolf Society might want to attend a private screening of The Hours during the MLA convention. Might want? Well, to say the least, we didn’t refuse the invitation. Should Woolfians have anticipated that the combination of a Pulitzer Prize winning book and an Oscar nominated film would suddenly catapult Virginia Woolf into a renewed blaze of fame? Over the months since the film was released and nominated for nine Academy Awards, the new future as a soon-to-be subscription periodical with a web presence. Members of the International Virginia Woolf Society will continue to receive the Miscellany as a benefit of their membership. A subscription to the Miscellany will be $10 a year for non-IVWS members (see insert for more information). The members of the Editorial Board introduce themselves on page six. This is the Editorial Board’s first adventure in assembling an issue of the Miscellany. If you have any suggestions regarding the publication, please contact me by mail or e-mail me at neverowl1@southernct.edu.

The editor of the Fall 2003 issue of the Miscellany will be Merry Pawlowski. Debra Sims will edit the Spring 2004 issue.

Vera Neverow
Southern Connecticut State University

VWM Fall 2003
Merry Pawlowski will be the editor for the Fall 2003 Miscellany. The theme will be Woolf and adaptation. Possible topics might include further commentary on The Hours; books such as Mr. Dalloway; film versions of Woolf’s novels; plays and performances relating to Woolf; and Woolf’s adaptations of works by others. Deadline for submissions: September 2. Electronic submissions as email attachments strongly preferred. Submissions should be sent to Merry.Pawlowski@firstclass1.csubak.edu or to Merry Pawlowski, English Department, California State University-Bakersfield, 9001 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield,CA 93311-1099

VWM Spring 2004
Debra Sims will edit the Spring 2004 Miscellany with the theme “Virginia Woolf: Drafting, Editing, Revising.” The due date is Monday, February 2, 2004, and electronic submissions are preferred. Please send questions and articles to simdebra@yahoo.com, or to Debra Sims, 33 R Water Street #18, Guilford, CT 06437.

BACK TO BLOOMSBURY
14th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
23-26 June 2004
Institution of English Studies
Senate House
Malet Street
Bloombury, London
WC1 E 7HU

In affiliation with the International Virginia Woolf Society & the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, this conference brings Virginia Woolf back to Bloomsbury in order to revisit Woolf’s links to the place and the group which helped to inspire her life of writing. Woolf’s life and work will be explored in relation to her Bloomsbury contemporaries and experiences of London.


The conference will include a range of keynote addresses, plenary panels and parallel sessions. In addition to the stimulus provided by speakers’ papers and panel discussions, there will be other fun events, including Woolf-inspired performances, tours to Bloomsbury Group residences and more. Between sessions delegates might also enjoy a nomadic wander through the squares in which the Bloomsberries lived, and loved. Keynote speakers will include Gillian Beer, David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus, Suzanne Raith, Morag Shiach and Brenda Silver. The call-for-papers with details of submission guidelines will be circulated on 1 October 2003. The deadline for submissions January 2004.
For more information contact:
Email: VWoolf2004@aol.com

WOOLF IN THE REAL WORLD:
The 13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
Smith College, Northampton, MA
June 5-8, 2003
The countdown to the 13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf continues, and the organizers at Smith College look forward to welcoming everyone in June. Please check the website at www.smith.edu/woolfconference for continuing updates and registration information. On-line registration is available.

Among the conference highlights will be several exhibitions showcasing Smith’s exceptional collections of Virginia Woolf/Bloomsbury materials including original Woolf manuscripts, letter and first editions, Leslie Stephen’s family photograph album, and artwork by Vanessa Bell and other Bloomsbury artists. A writing desk owned by Woolf will also be on display, as well as photos of gardens at Monks House, Charleston Farmhouse, Sissinghurst, and others. Down the street from Smith at a local gallery, Suzanne Bellamy will have a one-woman show of her own artwork inspired by Woolf.

Other highlights will include a nightly Woolf film festival, a book fair and demonstration by local women book artists and publishers, an auction courtesy of Krystyna Colburn, performances, sales of Woolfiana, and optional trips to the homes of Edith Wharton and Emily Dickinson—not to mention the keynote address by Hermione Lee, an interview with Carolyn Heilbrun, and several fabulous plenary speakers—and of course wonderful paper presentations by Woolf scholars and common readers.

For further information, please contact:
Marilyn Schwinn Smith at woolf@smith.edu, (413) 585-2154
Stephanie Cooper Schoen at sschoen@smith.edu, (413) 585-2680

THE SOCIETY PARTY AT MLA
New York City, December 2002
The "off-campus" Virginia Woolf Society Party at MLA was held at Jessica Berman’s parents’ elegant “four square” apartment on Riverside Drive, coming full circle from the very first such event which was also held on Riverside Drive in the hospitable digs of Sharon Olds. (Yes, it is fun getting older and seeing the patterns emerging...) The conversations were scattered (indeed!) between reminiscing about the pleasures of the Sonoma Conference and planning for the joys of the upcoming Smith Conference. And then there was animated discussion about The Hours which many had just seen in a special showing that afternoon. Reviews were mixed, but all agree that it will broaden if not deepen the attention to Woolf’s inimitable writings. Vara Neverow was quoted in an interview with Hillel Italie as saying that at least this film should help to sort out Woolf’s identity from Edward Albee’s play.... David Denby in the “New Yorker” and Stephen Holden in the New York Times both wrote admiring reviews of the film, but I look forward to reading a review or even perhaps a forum in the VWM of what Woolf scholars think of this adaptation of an adaptation on the so-dominant Big Screen.

To return to our own party, altogether more successful and less fraught than Clarissa’s in the books and the movie, let me follow in the tradition of the famous gossip columnists and give at least a partial list of who was there: Karen Levenback with her husband, Michael, Suzette Henke, Mark Hussey, Evelyn Haller, Jane Lilienfeld, Sally Jacobson, Lucio and Marcia Ruotolo, Elisabeth Heine, Beth Daugherty, Merry Pawlsowski, Leslie Hankins, Robin Hackett and her partner, Patty, Vara Neverow, Margaret Gorden, Eileen Barrett, Marilyn Schwinn, Marie, Flavia, someone who introduced herself as “a student of Alex Zwerdling’s” and other fascinating looking people whose names I did not get. Actually in that tasteful setting we all looked (but did not act) like movie stars and I regretted not bringing my camera, especially as Margaret Gorden and others mentioned how they relished the photographs of us in the Fall issue of the Miscellany.

Although trained by we know whom to participate fully in the present moment, I could not help missing those of you who were not able to come – and you missed much because of course the best bits were in the private gossips which will go unrecorded by your avid and yet discreet reporter, J.J. Wilson.

J.J. Wilson
Sonoma State University

ESSAYS

WHEN WOOLF GOES MISSING (FROM HERSELF): THE SURFET OF CONTEMPORARY SHORT ARTICLES ON VIRGINIA WOOLF’S LIFE AND WORK
Near the ending of David Hare’s film adaptation of Michael Cunningham’s The Hours, in a move which foreshadows her departure from life some 18 years later, Virginia Woolf goes missing. Resenting the nullifying effect of Richmond, where she and Leonard have moved for the betterment of her nerves, Woolf flees the desolation of their home and sits, brooding, on the platform of the train station. Although Hare has Woolf temporarily go missing from Hogarth House, it is the subtlety we associate with her life and work that is more genuinely effaced from the screenplay: a brief look at Woolf’s diary for 1923 reveals that she did not live in anything near the seclusion depicted in the film, but hosted family and friends, including the Eliots, Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, Maynard Keynes, E.M. Forster and Ottoline Morrell. As fellow Woolfie Gabrielle McIntire observed in her analysis of the film, “if Hare had read more carefully—or if Nicole Kidman had—they might have noticed an interesting comment Woolf makes on June 28, 1923, regarding her sociability: ‘This social side is very genuine in me. Nor do I think it prehensile. It is a piece of jewellery I inherit from my mother — a joy in laughter, something that is stimulated, not selfishly wholly or vainly, by contact with my friends. And then ideas leap in me’” (personal conversation with G. McIntire). Woolf’s ‘social side’ was emptied out of the film, her desire to return to London from the seclusion of Richmond “figured as a ‘mad’ impulse rather than a balanced desire for more human contact” (McIntire).

Hare’s disturbing alteration of Woolff’s life is most evident in the central encounter between husband and wife on the train platform. Kidman’s Woolf is in an agitated state, trying to flee the captivity of her husband and the suburbs, while Dillane’s Leonard berates her for going off alone. The event Woolf recorded in her diary on October 15, 1923 was sharply different: on a “wet and windy night” she went to meet Leonard on his return from London. When the train proved late, it was Virginia who began to worry about her husband, considering that he might have stayed overnight in London. When he suddenly arrived on the final train, he found his wife, relieved, for she had purchased a ticket to join him in London if he did not return (Diary 2: 270–271). “Rather than being her jailer, keeping a Rapunzel figure in her tower — Leonard was simply being met by his solicitous wife at the train station” (McIntire).
Hare’s stereotyping of Leonard as saintly caregiver and Virginia as angry madwoman flattens out the delicate intersubjectivity between husband and wife that Cunningham details in his version of the episode; for when Woolf visits the train station in the novel, she is not “escaping” Richmond, but merely giving way to a whim to see London. And Leonard comments, when he finds her, “I was so worried. . . . I don’t know why” (171). (The onus for neurotic worry is placed as much on his shoulders as on Virginia’s.) Hare’s rendering of the scene falls short of the novel; compare Virginia’s mute action of taking Leonard’s arm in the film with the thoughts Cunningham attributes to her in the original novel: Woolf thinks “[s]he will never mention to Leonard that she’d planned on fleeing, even for a few hours. As if he were the one in need of care and comfort—as if he were the one in danger—Virginia links her arm in his, and gives his elbow an affectionate squeeze” (Cunningham 172; my emphasis).

The anticipation and final release of the film of The Hours has occasioned a surfeit of popular articles on Woolf from both sides of the Atlantic, which demonstrate how far the public Woolf lags behind the academic Woolf. When Hare’s Woolf goes missing to brood on the railway platform, the polysemic versionings that Brenda Silver attributes to Woolf disappear with her.

For instance, in the home and fashion magazine, “Victoria: Romantic Living/Inpiring Women” (January 2003), Catherine Calvert evokes Woolf’s domestic life at Monks House with unpolemical passages from the diary (1919 and 1922), glossy photographs of the house and garden, and—more marginally—references to reading and writing. Politics are eschewed in this prettified Woolf: the suicide (barely comprehensible amid the cheerful environs of Monks House) is neatly dispatched, allowing Calvert to free associate that “[e]ven now . . . it’s possible to find a bench and recapture the feeling of the place and the golden hours lived here” (73).

At the same time, in a travesty of a left-leaning scholarly article in London’s Sunday Times (5 January 2003),4 Woolf again goes missing—here by Lucy Adams’ false reconstruction of her as a closeted lesbian, whose suppression of certain same-sex details from A Room of One’s Own is misrepresented as an entirely new revelation.4 Ostensibly reporting on the research of Jane Goldman and Susan Sellers for their forthcoming Cambridge edition, Adams ignored their insistence that the project is not primarily a lesbian study, but one that broadly aims to “enable insight into Woolf’s richly textured and erudite writing” (retraction 12 January 2003).

In each of these ways—“madwoman of Richmond,” “aesthetic woolf” and “anxious lesbian”—Woolf is being put to strange cultural work. But further right still on the swing of the pendulum, Woolf disappears altogether in the diatribes of Theodore Dalrymple and Philip Hensher.5

In last summer’s “The Rage of Virginia Woolf” (released in “City Journal”), ostensibly an assessment of Three Guineas, Dalrymple parrots the content and ideology of Queenie Leavis’ review (“Scrutiny,” September, 1938). Dalrymple (a pseudonym for Anthony Daniels) mocks Woolf’s connection between the oppression of women and war, attacking not merely her upper-middle-class privilege and snobbery, but, in one of many ad hominem moments, her sexual abuse, which he questions and subverts as a cause of her “desire . . . to destroy civilization in the name of preventing war” (3). He derides Woolf’s sensibly proposed reforms to education and her visionary concept of a university college that teaches “the arts that can be taught cheaply and practised by poor people” (2-3). Dalrymple obtusely and consistently misreads Woolf’s hyperbole, taking literally her suggestions to burn the patriarchal men’s college, and her likening of women’s sexual influence over men to prostitution in Piccadilly Circus (5). Dalrymple’s central difficulty with Woolf is his refusal to give credence to her politicization of the private lives of women, even if she favoured their middle class and upper-middle-class variety, so that he petulantly contends that his own working class mother “did more for civilization . . . than Mrs. Woolf” in her pacifism “had ever done” (8). And when Woolf’s vision for women includes pacifism, he erroneously labels it an indulgence of the educated.

A yet more inflammatory screed, penned since The Hours was released and in the same ideological vein as Dalrymple, is Philip Hensher’s recent article in the Independent, “Virginia Woolf Makes Me Want to Vomit.” Although not disputing Woolf’s status as a survivor of sexual abuse or as a pioneer in work for the education of women, Hensher positions himself (with the ludicrous plot summaries of a disaffected undergraduate) to discredit her “truly terrible novels: inext, ugly, fatuous, badly written and revoltingly self-indulgent” (1). Here again, the absurd literality of Hensher’s readings is symptomatic of narrow-mindedness. (Of To the Lighthouse, he says, “It is about an enormous house-party in the Hebrides, and crucially about the question of whether a trip will be undertaken to the lighthouse the next day. Halfway through, . . . Mrs. Ramsay is killed off in half a sentence . . . . The novel ends with one of the characters, Lily Briscoe, finishing a painting“ and saying “‘Yes . . . I have had my vision.’ Whatever” [2].) In lieu of appreciating Woolf’s subtext, Hensher dredges up Arnold Bennett’s charge that Woolf is “incapable of imbuing any of her characters with any kind of memorable life” (2). Yet his own plot summaries and later criticism of Woolf’s grammar point to an intolerance toward literary impressionism and stream-of-conscious narration that is confirmed by his preference for Ivy Compton Burnett (3). By reinventing the wheel of Q.D. Leavis and Arnold Bennett, Dalrymple and Hensher allow Woolf to disappear from the very criticism that ostensibly aims to engage her.

I borrow the concept of a writer “gone missing” from Woolf’s own insight that biographies fail when the subject “goes missing (lost under the welter of the life)” (Rose 7) and from Jacqueline Rose’s assertion that in the case of Hermione Lee’s biography “it is madness that goes missing because Woolf is never allowed to go missing from herself” (7).6 Rose observes that so strong is Lee’s motivation to champion Woolf as a hero against adversity—a “sane woman who had an illness” (175)—that we lose sight of the insight Woolf shared with Freud, that madness is “something to which we all have a relation” (Rose 7). In fact, to contemporary culture and academia alike, Woolf occupies the uncanny gap between sanity (Hermione Lee) and madness (David Hare), between having the phalus (Catherine Calvert) and lacking it (Theodore Dalrymple, Philip Hensher), between heterosexuality and homosexuality, and between life and death. We tend to fetishize Woolf as a creative or phallic mother whom we unconscious desire, since the illusion of plenitude she supports denies sexual difference, psychic lack or division and the ultimate “lack” of insanity and death.

Hare’s screenplay, with its angry “madwoman of Richmond” persona, largely inverts such a phallocentric construction (or Hermione Lee’s, of a courageous heroine) but does not step outside it, yielding instead a picture of an unstable and temperamental invalid that is vulnerable to Dalrymple and Hensher. And so the phallocentric pendulum continues to swing. Woolf “goes missing” from such popular representations before we can allow her—psychically—to “go missing” from herself. To those who suggest that Hare’s film is useful for returning students to Woolf’s texts, I ask what version of Woolf is being promulgated? Is it not urgent in light of the bellicose factions of contemporary politics that we interrogate these depoliticized representations of a writer known to us as a border crosser, a boundary breaker, and a pacifist? Difficult though it seems to imagine, Adam Phillips’ recent observation about Freud—that there will come a time when he will no longer be read—applies equally to Woolf.7 Then we will not, as we do now, strive to “relocate” a polysemic Woolf, whom, against our unconscious desire and fear, we first let disappear, paradoxically hoping to regain for a better view. We will instead lay her to rest, having exhausted the generative power of her uncanny pluralities. By the film The Hours, and the recent articles it has generated, we may seem to be moving away from rather than toward that moment. But through such (mis)representations, Woolf nonetheless beckons us to reach for a time when we will need her less than we do now.

1 I am grateful to Gabrielle McIntire (Queen’s University, Kingston) for sharing her reading with me.


3 Stuart Clarke observed over the Virginia Woolf Interverse that this article, “Virginia Woolf cut lesbian passages for fear of arrest,” had been syndicated to New Zealand and Canada, and possibly elsewhere (04 February 2003).

4 The ostensibly “new” manuscript, whose finding Adams attributes to Sellers’ and Goldman’s research, was in fact identified and recorded by S.P. Rosenbaum in Women and Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One’s Own (1992).


ON BEING A COMMON READER

The oddest thing has happened: my sister has asked to borrow my copy of Mrs. Dalloway. This is a book that I distinctly remember my pretty, high-spirited sister complaining about during high school. Now, many years later, she is a permanently exhausted mother of four exuberant, inventive children. She keeps a steady eye on a
household brimming over with projects and cats and uproar. In the warm months, her kitchen counters are littered with jars full of leaves and twigs, their unseen occupants patiently eating their way towards the day when they will emerge as moths and be coaxed, wet-winged and confused, onto the lid of the garbage can for their first flight. It is not for nothing that I have taken to calling her “Vanessa,” at which she alternately laughs and furrows her brows.

Recently she asked me about The Hours, which, along with what seemed like the entire Eastern Seaboard, she had been reading about in the newspaper. I lent her my copy, and held my breath. She gleefully handed it back to me within the week. I imagined her propping the book up against the vase of flowers at the center of her kitchen island, stealing a few pages during the making of yet another day’s peanut butter and jelly sandwichwiches, like Emily Bronté kneading bread alongside her German book in the parsonage kitchen. Upon hearing that, ironically enough, I do not possess a copy of Mrs. Dalloway, she began searching for her own copy. “I can see the cover clearly in my mind,” she said. And then, with a bemused smile that showed surprise at the thought: “But I remember not liking it at all.”

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Being a common reader of Virginia Woolf means that she comes to you in her own sweet time. As a history major at Villanova, reading novels was a luxury. During my junior year, a friend gave me A Room of One’s Own for a paper on hermeneutics. Enjoying the quiet determination of Woolf’s argument (especially when it was tempered by her quick wit), I mentioned it to my more radical friends in the women’s studies crowd. They laughed, muttered a curious phrase which I was to hear often during my time in academia—“complicit in her own oppression”—and, with the air of someone recommending an illicit pleasure, suggested Orlando instead. By now I was at graduate school, in Galway, and the Irish system provided me with more liberty for tangential reading. “The Eighteenth century was over; the Nineteenth century was begun.” I read passages aloud to JB in the evenings, sitting in the broken-down kitchen of the flat we shared with a never-ending cast of West of Ireland theatrical types. The standard detritus of the Galway vie bohème littered the table before us: cigarette papers, empty crisp packages, somebody’s copy of a Terry Pratchett novel, a salve made out of boiled peach pits that was supposedly curing a flatmate’s infected finger nail piercing. I sailed through the rest of Orlando, relishing the sweep and plunge of Woolf’s prose, her apparent effortlessness. I was working as an actor at the time; I found the hours involved in making even the simplest gesture flow easily. But my life just then was too chaotic for me to pay much attention to the resonance sounding faintly within me.

A year later, I was living in a quarter of a cottage in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. Our one room was heated by a gas cylinder, which also powered the primitive range consisting of two burners and a grill. The sink drained through the shower into an open channel out back. Twenty-five feet from the back door was the outhouse, which nourished a magnificent horse chestnut tree. It was not unusual when walking sleepily towards the toilet in the morning to find one of the village lunatics standing atop the outhouse, gazing into the neighboring field; when confronted, he would inevitably claim to be “checking the chimney.” This was no idyllic existence; we were broke, uncertain and afraid, having fled here after a series of disasters. Into this troubled environment I brought a copy of Woolf’s diary: Volume I, 1915-1919. Having somehow survived the upheaval of those years, it is sitting beside me as I write. On the inside of the front cover is penciled the phrase “BT/2.0,” which means I paid the exorbitant sum of 2 Irish pounds for it at a used book shop back in Galway. Two pounds: that equaled two, maybe three meals, a fourth of a cylinder of gas, a tenth of the rent, and so on. But the cover of the book had fascinated me, and we obviously went without something that week so I could purchase it.

This copy of the Diary is a UK Penguin 1981 paperback reprint, and spread across the front and back covers are the objects that make up a writer’s life. A volume of Keats. A mirror encrusted in shells. A photograph, a necklace, a story written by a beloved nephew. And circling around the spine, plain whitewashed walls leading to a brick staircase, a white wooden door held open by a bowl containing apples and figs and pears, the stairs leading up and out to dappled sunlight and hanging grasses. It looked uncannily like my own back steps right there in the middle of noplace Ireland: four or five narrow treads hidden under a broad lintel, pointing the way to a slate patio which promised to catch the rare sunshine when the days grew warmer. In late winter, feet propped up carefully on the grille of the gas heater, drinking endless cups of tea and rolling tinier and tinier cigarettes to make the packet last, I listened to BBC2 late into the night, and read Virginia Woolf. “Saturday 2 January. This is the kind of day which if it were possible to choose an altogether average sample of our life, I should select.” As the spring came on, I moved out to a broad rock by the herb garden, where savoury and nasturtiums struggled to grow, and where the sparrows grew so used to my presence that they ate the crumbs I saved for them right at my feet. Time and time again, Woolf went down into the twilight world I knew so well, that place Pascal calls the abyss, where doubt and despair and the whisperings of demons become the only reality. But always she emerged, this private friend, still defiant and full of love for her life. “This is the kind of day…” Something in my heart gratefully began to open.

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When my sister returned my copy of The Hours to me, she tucked a note inside the front cover: “We should go see this movie together.” Which is what we did, on the following Sunday. Children remained at home; cell phones were resolutely shut off. Afterwards, we went to a favorite restaurant in Georgetown, where I politely bullied the maître d’ into letting us have a table in the window. We talked for a long time, about screenwriting and adaptation; the pressures placed upon women who are not allowed to be depressed; the vagaries of one’s husband, loving or otherwise; the art of acting, and the courage an actor requires to disfigure her features, the best known part of herself, in the hope of being better able to channel emotions raw from the death of her marriage into the portrayal of a woman whose courage also seems boundless. But mostly my sister asked me about Woolf, about her life, her work, the lovingly accurate details in the film which she saw had pleased me: the curly-coated spaniel trotting happily alongside Leonard in Richmond; Angelica’s fairy wings; the color of the note paper upon which Woolf wrote her last letters. “It’s wonderful thing that you know all these things,” she said. “Sometimes,” I answered quietly, “I think I would rather have a child than know all these things.” An old argument between us. Our talk paused, and the world compacted itself into two glasses of wine, the quiet flow of the street outside, and the years falling from my sister’s face.

She still has not found her copy of Mrs. Dalloway. It is yellow with black lettering, and she insists it is somewhere, in a box packed away long ago and evading capture. With delight I say to her, “You’ll just have to buy another copy.” She, I hope, about to embark upon a friendship which will outlast the ephemera of suburbia and sustain her through her many cares. Even though I am thankful for her discovery, I welcome it with a twinge of envy, for I will not step in that river the same way again.

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It is a good time to be a common reader of Virginia Woolf, and an even better time to be one of IVWS first three “Members-at-Large,” with responsibilities to “publicize the Society, develop outreach programs and recruit membership in consultation with the officers of the Society.” In discharging these duties, the popularity of The Hours is only one of the current cultural zeitgeists available to tap into. In downtown DC, serious young “Boho Chic” women stride across the GW campus, wearing peasant blouses and flowing skirts, their long rich hair held back by bright bandannas. Despite their ubiquitous cell phones, they look for all the world like the Stephen sisters in their Gauguin-girl costumes, heading out to scandalize the Post-Impressionist Ball in 1910. As for The Hours itself, I would like to make the possibly heretical statement that, well, it seems as good a vehicle as any to introduce readers to Woolf, particularly those whom I sense most greatly need her: Colette’s “women of a certain age,” whose university education is drowning in the daily dull round of minivans and groceries and trips to the doctor, and who are gradually becoming aware of the fact that, despite their best intentions, they are living a life far more ordinary than they planned.

I welcome the input of my fellow members of IVWS, common readers or otherwise, on this piece, and any ideas they might have regarding the role of the Members-at-Large as it develops in the coming months.

Anne Ryan Barton
Common Reader
anne_ryanbarton@hotmail.com

MRS. DALLOWAY AND THE HOURS: TWO NARRATORS AND A FILM

Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway and Michael Cunningham’s The Hours provide a remarkable opportunity to compare the properties of the third-person narrator who speaks in past tense with one who speaks in present. In The Hours, the chapters develop detail, action, thought as they arrive, and so the voice of the novel is not so
much a person as it is an observance. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the narrator suggests he or she has had time to reflect on what is occurring or being seen; the gap of time has allowed the storyteller to draw conclusions, whether stated or unstated. These differences become central to the way Woolf and Cunningham approach the point of view of the crucial and linked characters, Septimus Warren Smith and Richard Brown.

The most striking moment where the two narrators part company comes at the center of *Mrs. Dalloway*, where the pathos of the Septimus tragedy leads to an editorial vision which governs the entire novel: “Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William’s goddess, was acquired by Sir William walking hospitals, catching salmon, begetting one son in Harley Street by Lady Bradshaw . . .” (99). While this prose could certainly be rendered in present tense, its reflective authority accentuates the distance between the past being narrated and whatever “present” the narrator is living in. In fact, this sentence and those that follow on the next two pages become a key to the plights of all the major characters, for in some way, each is tyrannized over by Proportion and will stand or fall by how the challenge is met.

Coordinately, the present tense of *The Hours* does not carry the abundance of disclosures which Virginia Woolf’s past tense does: “[But] when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him” (86). Some of what drives Septimus to his window ledge is suggested here, by a narrator who has had an opportunity to scan the consequences of World War I as well as the growing liabilities of “manliness” and suppressed grief. The re-experience of flashback, and the creation of cause and effect are central to the novel that is *Mrs. Dalloway*, and also serve to explain why the pathos is mitigated more here than in *The Hours*: meaning and explanation work to outweigh or at least balance catastrophe. Consistent with this moment, and forming the pinnacle of the story, is Clarissa Dalloway’s telepathic experience of Septimus’ death and plight, wherein she realizes, in supposition, “that he had had that passion, and had gone to Sir William Bradshaw, a great doctor and yet to her obscurely evil” (184).

In *The Hours*, the narrator does not have the opportunity to resurrect the characters by telling their stories in the rejuvenation of the past. In fact, ironically, although the novel is in present tense, the combined stories constitute a voyage to the Underworld, where Laura, Clarissa, and Virginia all keep company more closely with the dead than they do the living. In the moment where Clarissa Vaughan finds Richard on the ledge, the present tense gives death a much more severing force: “Something within her, something like a voice but not a voice, an inner knowledge all but indistinguishable from the pump of her heart, says, *Once I found Richard sitting on a window ledge five stories above the ground*” (194). Narrated in present tense, death is unmitigating. Consistent with this sentence and those that follow on the next two pages become a key to the plights of all the major characters, for in some way, each is tyrannized over by Proportion and will stand or fall by how the challenge is met.

Although historically Virginia Woolf was much more like Shakespeare than his wanly tragic Ophelia, the Prologue of *The Hours* not only presents Virginia drowning herself but also presents her authorial point of view when she passes, as a corpse without consciousness, down the Ouse. The writer of the more interior and yet occasionally editorializing *Mrs. Dalloway* is dead, and we witness her remains caught up in the present tense of the narrative. Also, symbolically, Richard Brown parallels her by becoming the extinguished creator of his own impossibly long novel of consciousness. Ironically, however, the even more current film brings us back to a perspective that is sometimes more coordinate with the greater compassion of past tense narration and thus with the original masterpiece itself.

**Henry Alley**

University of Oregon

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### Works Cited


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### More Like Woolf to Me...

Despite the raving reviews (or perhaps because of them) I went to see *The Hours* with a degree of skepticism. I could not imagine a movie capturing the fragility, creative genius, and beauty of the real Virginia Woolf, or for that matter, the depth and complexity of the feelings of her fictional characters. I was, however, in for a big surprise. Nicole Kidman’s portrayal of Woolf was, to borrow Virginia’s sister Vanessa Bell’s words, “more like [Woolf] to me than anything I could ever have conceived of as possible. It was almost painful to have her so raised from the dead.”

Sharing a simple ordinary day with the most extraordinary Woolf, to see her attend to daily life, servants, tea, and dinner was a joy so unique and a treat so unasked for it was almost unsettling. The visit with Vanessa and the kids was just marvelous.

In addition, the film does a superb job connecting the lives of the three women, so similar in their joys and pains. As one Woolf lover noted, it is a wonderful stream of womankind. In fact, the camera does a great job going from one woman to another, synchronizing their minds, yet revealing the depth and complexity of each of their
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Mark Hussey, who has served as an editor of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany and co-edited with Mark Hussey). She is currently History-Bibliographer of the International Virginia Woolf Society. She is currently chair of her department. Her publications include articles on Virginia Woolf, a web-published facsimile of the reading notebooks of Three Guineas (co-edited with Merry Pawlowski), and the first three volumes of the selected papers from the annual conference on Virginia Woolf (co-edited with Mark Hussey). She has also published articles on utopian studies and composition.

Editor

mhussey@pace.edu

Vara Neverow is President of the International Virginia Woolf Society and is a professor of English and feminist scholar. She is currently chair of her University. She is currently chair of her University. She is currently chair of her University. She is currently chair of her University.

Editor

varaneverow@sunrtheastern.edu

Merry Pawlowski is professor and chair of the Department of English at California State University, Bakersfield. She has recently published an edited collection entitled Virginia Woolf and Fascism. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001, and has authored numerous articles on Woolf and fascism, Woolf and male modernism, and Woolf and Conrad. She is currently editing, with Vara Neverow, the online Virginia Woolf’s Reading Notebooks for Three Guineas, and, with Eileen Barrett, Across the Generations: Selected Papers from the Twelfth Annual Virginia Woolf Conference.  

Editor

Merry Pawlowski@firstclass1.csubak.edu

Karen L. Levenback, who served as both president and secretary-treasurer of the Virginia Woolf Society, is the author of Virginia Woolf and the Great War and book-review editor of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany. She has published numerous reviews and articles, and after years on one side of the lectern, both here and abroad, she has moved to the other, in pursuit of the MLIS at Catholic University.

Book-Review Editor

kleenback@worldnet.att.net

Jennifer A. Hudson is Assistant Editor of Virginia Woolf Miscellany. She received her M.A. in English, along with her Advanced Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies, from Southern Connecticut State University. Ms. Hudson’s areas of scholarly interest include women writers, feminist theory, and the feminist utopias of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, one of Woolf’s American contemporaries. Ms. Hudson’s critical essays, articles, short fiction, and poetry have already appeared in such diverse publications as Sage Woman, Moondance, Horizons, Medieval Forum, and The Delta.

Epsilon Sigma Journal, and she has delivered several papers. Ms. Hudson is an active member of the Charlotte Perkins Gilman Society and the National Association of Women Writers. She is currently working on a critical analysis of David Lynch’s Mulholland Drive.

Assistant Editor

debra.sims22@hotmail.com

Debra Sims (née Schotten)

I "met" Virginia Woolf in 1996, during a four-week British Literature seminar at Southern Connecticut State University, where I was completing my undergraduate work. My first reading was Jacob’s Room, and I was immediately captivated. Three years later, I embarked on a Master’s degree program with Woolf in mind. It seemed only fitting that I should further explore Jacob’s Room, and thus, with Dr. Vara Neverow’s and Dr. Edward Bishop’s assistance, I began in 2000 to compose a Master’s thesis in which I explore “The Hero’s Evolution in Virginia Woolf’s Jacob’s Room: Tracing Jacob Flanders through the Holograph Draft and the Published Novel.” After a year of extensive research and writing, I submitted my thesis mere weeks before presenting a portion of it at the 2001 International Virginia Woolf Conference in Wales.

Production Editor

simsdebra@yahoo.com

Susan Wegenstein

As a student with a focus in Women’s Studies and a major British literature, I combined my interests in Virginia Woolf, and by the end of four years at Southern Connecticut State University I had grown to appreciate Woolf’s life and work enough to write my honors thesis on Orlando. Research introduced me to the International Virginia Woolf Society, and I submitted the proposal that brought me an enriching experience at the eleventh annual Virginia Woolf conference and an unbelievable trip to Wales. To meet the scholars whose books I had read and articles I had quoted was a part of my undergraduate’s thrill, and I knew then that I forever wanted to be part of this group who understands Woolf’s importance to me because she too means so much to them.

In February, with much excitement and a little trepidation, I took on the tasks and responsibilities of overseeing the physical publication of the newsletter and assist with copy-editing and design. I look forward to the experience, confident that under the new auspices of Southern Connecticut State University, the Virginia Woolf Miscellany will provide the same level of informative and entertaining articles that readers have come to expect.

Production Editor

sweg@earthlink.net

Arpi Sarafian

California State University, Los Angeles

MRS. DALLOWAY AS A GEOGRAPHIC NOVEL

Ever since the publication of Morris Beja’s map of Mrs. Dalloway’s London in the pages of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany in 1977, critics have continued to respond to the carefully planned structure of Woolf’s novel by drawing diagrams to illustrate relationships among characters (David Dachkes, Nancy Bazin, Wendy Williams), sketching maps and giving explicit directions to exact locations of particular scenes (Stuart Clarke, Richard Goldblatt, Jean Moorcraft Wilson, David Dowling), and linking Woolf’s topology of London to the characters’ identities (Susan Squier, Mirslav Beker, Catherine Lord). What has not been done is a visual juxtaposition of all the walks onto one simultaneous spatial form. When that pattern is traced, the graphic structure of the walks themselves reveals a new level of Woolf’s pictorial planning of the novel.

Charting the journeys taken by the characters in Mrs. Dalloway shows how the mapped image of the city itself plots the character’s relations to each other. For example, Clarissa Dalloway’s walk and Septimus’s are continuous — illustrating Woolf’s intention that Septimus be a complement or double to Clarissa. Together they form one almost straight, slightly diagonal line up the center of London’s canvas. Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway’s walks enclose Clarissa’s, suggesting that they represent two different attitudes towards protecting/controlling her. Peter’s walk is east of Clarissa’s and covers the most territory, as is appropriate for a colonial administrator. First paralleling Clarissa’s route, Peter’s stroll eventually merges with that of Septimus and Rezia, suggesting that he has some connection with the full range of Clarissa’s potential identity. On the other hand, Richard’s walk, which takes him on a slightly western loop by Buckingham Palace, is much shorter, but it crosses and retracts part of Clarissa’s earlier path, perhaps implying that although he relates to a smaller territory of his wife’s life, he does so with more sustained intimacy. Elizabeth Dalloway’s bus ride, the last journey through London explicitly mapped in the book, is a horizontal and technological counterpart to the vertical trajectories of her elders, striking off in the new direction of London’s commercial, as opposed to governmental or shopping, districts.

When all these various walks and rides are layered on top of each other, they suggest not only relationships between characters but also perhaps a shape for the whole novel. The resulting figure is ambiguous, open to speculation, but it is possible to see the total image composed by mapping all the walks as a still life of a flower in a vase: Clarissa and Septimus’s walks are the stem, leading into the oval bud of Regent’s Park; Richard and Peter’s walks are the concave sides of the vase enclosing the stem, and Elizabeth’s bus ride provides the horizontal baseline on which the vase sits, perched over the waters of the Thames. Is this design a visual pun on her sister’s art — the “quality of a sketch” that Woolf hoped to keep in her finished work (O2 312)? If it is, we have a new insight not only into the importance of flowers in the novel but also into the book’s structural relation to ideas of post-impressionist abstraction.

Elisa Kay Sparks

Clemson University

Legend for Map:

Clarissa is heavy flower dot; Septimus is a poppy or circle with dot in the middle; Richard is a diamond; Elizabeth is a snowflake; Peter is the knife.
GAPS AND ABSENCES IN THE HOURS

After seeing The Hours for the second time within the space of about three weeks (first at the MLA and then on the day it opened nationwide), I found myself in the rather strange position of defending both the film and the novel to a friend who insisted that each, but especially the film, reduced Woolf’s politics to the point of obscurity. Yes, I agreed, there was something profoundly lacking in both the film and the novel due to Michael Cunningham’s decision to transpose World War I into the AIDS epidemic; it was even more disturbing to find no reference to the violence perpetrated in the benign name of amelioration by the instrumentalist truth discourse and disciplinary practice of the medical establishment. And yes, there should have been some pointed reference to the politics of publishing; in neither text do we know what press Clarissa works for, but in the novel, at least, Sally is a “producer of public television” and Clarissa insists on publishing... good, flagrantly unprofitable books... alongside the pulplier items that pay her way. Never mind her politics, all her work with PWAs” (20-21).

And yes, Laura Brown comes very close to being a mere stereotype of the 1950s L.A. suburban housewife, a problem Cunningham discusses in his recent New York Times column upon the film’s release (NYT, 1.19.03, Arts and Leisure). I could agree that the film, especially, virtually erased the social and political implications of all these situations analogous to Mrs. Dalloway in a way Woolf emphatically does not. The most disturbing reduction for me comes in the film’s depiction of Woolf’s suicide as wholly due to her “madness,” a subjective madness with no clear relationship to the sociopolitical world; Cunningham’s novel at least tells us overtly that “It is 1941. Another war has begun” (3). The film makes no mention of this context at all, leaving the viewer only with a voiceover of Woolf (Nicole Kidman) reading the famous suicide note to Leonard as explanation for her act. With such serious textual issues at stake, why would I want to defend the book, let alone the film?

In her book review of The Hours, Karen L. Levenback suggests that Cunningham “ends The Hours with a number of fundamental conditions and strategies found in Mrs. Dalloway. Yet, the novel’s political effect is subtle; the only war veteran is Mrs. Brown’s husband—who has returned from fighting in World War II; and Septimus Smith is creatively recreeted as Richard, a gay poet afflicted with AIDS, for whom Clarissa, a gay woman, prepares a party” (Levenback 200). In an interview with Steven Drukman, Cunningham said, “I originally imagined I would simply rewrite Mrs. Dalloway set in contemporary New York, in Chelsea, with a 52-year-old gay man at the center of it, and try to use the AIDS epidemic very much the way Woolf used World War I—with this sense of a new culture rising up out of the ruins of the old. But I started writing about Woolf and what she meant to me and it gradually, over time, became this book and shed its original conceit” (Drukman 62). I’m not completely convinced that this transposition of a World War I veteran with an AIDS-stricken poet enables the shedding of that “original conceit” however.

Woolf’s brilliance in Mrs. Dalloway (if not in all her work) is revealed in her insistence that “life” exists along a continuum that fundamentally links the interior or subjective with the physical or material worlds; that the knot of social, economic, political and cultural discourses in which we each exist impinges upon and shapes the emotional and spiritual inner life in a complex, dynamic, fluid way that defies disciplinary compartmentalization. When Cunningham’s novel expresses this continuous tension between the interior and external worlds, he most closely achieves that decisively Woolfian effect. For example, Laura Brown imagines herself as “the brilliant spirit, the woman of sorrows, the woman of transcendent joys, who would rather be elsewhere, who has consented to perform simply and essentially foolish tasks, to examine tomatoes, to sit under a hair dryer because it is her art and her duty” (42). The reason she initially consents to live in the stultifying suburbs of postwar L.A. has to do with the political, economic and social imperatives established by the dominant culture in the aftermath of World War II: “Because the war is over, the world has survived, and we are here, all of us, making homes, having and raising children, creating not just books or paintings but a whole world—a world of order and harmony where children are safe (if not happy), where men who have seen horrors beyond imagining, who have acted bravely and well, come home to lighted windows, to perfume, to plates and napkins” (42). And yet, Laura Brown cannot finally consent to the materialist realities that this triumphalist and compliant middle class, capitalist world demands she internalize, and the cake for her husband’s birthday symbolizes this rending tension: “She wants (she admits to herself) a dream of a cake manifested as an actual cake; a cake invested with an undeniable and profound sense of comfort, of bounty. She wants to have baked a cake that banishes sorrow, even if only for a little while... She has failed. She wishes she didn’t mind. Something, she thinks, is wrong with her” (144). Though Cunningham never overtly invokes the politics of postwar white, middle class suburban America about (not incidentally) to enter the McCarthy era, the political pressures of ideological conformity, of gender and class conformity, of Cold War economics and politics, are present, if only implicitly (the most glaring absence is the racial divide, which doesn’t exist even implicitly). It is no small thing that Laura Brown, who chooses not to commit suicide on this particular day, makes a decision to leave her family—not just to go to another town or another state, but literally to another county (Canada). Are we meant to make the connection between her self-imposed exile to Canada and that of the conscientious objectors and others who would otherwise oppose America’s genocidal war in Vietnam in the following decade? If we are, then her decision to go specifically to Canada seems a veiled but important political statement.

Cunningham says in the Drukman interview that none of his novels would have been the same if it weren’t for the AIDS crisis raging around him. Yet for me, Richard is the most problematic figure in both the novel and the film, because he seems to exist only in the world of personal relationships. We know he’s been deeply wounded by his mother’s abandonment of the family when he was a child; we know he’s an important poet whose work might or might not enter the canon; we know he’s written a “bizarre novel in which he pays homage to his lifelong love for Clarissa Vaughan.” Yet, his disease seems almost irrelevant; he could have been dying of cancer instead of AIDS. In the character of Richard, Cunningham ironically fails to achieve that tension between the continuous interior and material worlds. When Drukman comments in the interview “interestingly, your writing is not polemical,” Cunningham replies that, “The novels I struggle to write have too much respect for human ambiguity...” (Drukman 62). And while one might hear echoes there of Woolf’s effort not to overwhelm “rainbow” with “granite,” her best work reflects the ineffable tension that exists between those two indissolubly related realms of being.

Most importantly, neither the book nor the film achieves through Richard Brown what Jamie Carr noted (in an essay discussing the film version of Mrs. Dalloway) of Septimus’s character in Woolf’s novel: “Just as the novel assembles a counter-discursive truth of sexuality for Clarissa, so too does it mobilize an ethical truth around the production of ‘madness’ through Septimus Warren Smith. Septimus inhabits in the novel the role of ‘truth-teller;’ he exposes and critiques the power of discourses to regulate the subjectivity, exposes and critiques, specifically, the medical adjudication of ‘madness’” (Carr 22). Richard’s character seems emptied out of the world, rather than providing us with a visionary expression of the truth of a world that is simultaneously oppressive and filled with moments of joy.

The film’s political high point, in my view, comes during the scene at the Richmond train station, where Woolf hopes to flee the enclosed and stultifying suburb of Richmond for the vibrant variety of life in London, with all its concomitant risks to her health (as Leonard and her doctors have determined, at least). When Leonard discovers her there and chastises her for such unhinging selfishness, she defiantly and almost heroically invokes her need to live in a London that teems with life in all its ambiguously various manifestations; it is the same polyvalent and far-reaching life that permeates the London of Mrs. Dalloway. The London of Woolf’s novel brilliantly contextualizes the relay and tension between the interior dimensions of its characters and the external, worldly realities of the economic, political and imperial center of the British Empire. It is the city—its roar and cry—that Woolf herself was irresistibly attracted to, with its gardens and parties and culture, as does Clarissa; yet it is also the site of Septimus Warren Smith’s plunge to his gruesome death to escape Sir William Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes’s relentlessly violent attempts to ‘cure’ him of the madness induced by a war that, in Three Guineas, Woolf attributed in a large part to an imperial form of democracy; it is the seat of Richard Dalloway’s seemingly benign government and of Peter Walsh’s imperial adventures. Woolf’s novel overtly invokes those political, material realities and relates them with care and skill with interior worlds of her characters’ loves, hates, joys, and agonies. Perhaps not ironically, it is the character of Virginia Woolf in The Hours who best manifests the tensions within the relay between the interior and the exterior worlds—the “continuum of being”—that, in opposition to a too disciplinary approach of Woolf’s novel, I’ve been attempting to explore here.

For all their gaps and absences, I have recommended both the novel and the films to friends and colleagues. Both provide moments, reminiscent of Woolf, of intensely lyrical reflection on the fragility of human existence—this is Cunningham’s strength as a novelist, and David Hare and Stephen Daldry give us a wonderfully resonant cinematic adaptation. Each text invokes, however unevenly, a fascinating dialogue with Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway, and each gave me yet another way of thinking about why Woolf continues to be relevant at the present, and quite different, historical conjuncture. But of course, my recommendation to read and see The Hours is always
followed by “and of course you should reread Mrs. Dalloway.”

Jeanette McVicker
SUNY Fredonia

Works Cited


A CINEMATIC SENSE OF THE MOMENT

How grateful I was to fate for having subjected me to the ordeal of learning an oriental language, opening before me that strange way of thinking and teaching me word pictography. It was precisely this ‘unusual’ way of thinking that later helped me to master the nature of montage, and still later, when I came to recognise this ‘unusual,’ ‘emotional’ way of thinking, different from our common ‘logical’ way, this helped me to comprehend the most recondite in the methods of art.

Sergei Eisenstein (1)

Michael Cunningham’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel, The Hours, inspired by Virginia Woolf’s novel, Mrs. Dalloway, did not evidence the art of Mrs. Dalloway, yet the film of The Hours did. Cunningham’s original theme owes a lot to its realization in film to an astonishing meeting of the minds of the writer Virginia Woolf, the English playwright/filmmaker, David Hare, and the actors. It is Woolf’s “art,” that which is recondite, that escapes many first time readers of Woolf, that has been comprehended and communicated here. By using the literary tools of symbolism and metaphor, David Hare manages to bring about, among other ideas, a sense of “the moment” as Woolf understood it.

To realize a narrative written by Woolf, cinematically, requires a creatively held camera eye, creative editing and a synthesis of all the methods of art available to recreate her belief that all lives are intertwined; a belief that, in part, led her to create non-linear novel structures. The novel, The Hours, is a sequentially written novel consisting of three parallel segments, each segment telling a part of the same ordinary daylong story. Although David Hare says he based his screenplay on the novel I believe the film resonates Woolf more than it resonates Cunningham. This is not surprising, since the original resource for all concerned is Virginia Woolf, her life and work, Leonard Woolf and “the Bloomsbury crowd.”

The Hours opens dramatically before establishing time, ambience, identities and mood. Cunningham’s Mrs. Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, and Mrs. Brown impress the audience with their vulnerabilities as their separate days unfold preparing for a party: their routines, their relationship ambivalences, their hopes and fears around the domestic decisions that have to be made; all of which are as important concerns in a woman’s world as is going to battle in a man’s world. The time is real time, set in June, in different stages of the twentieth century; the daylong rituals being those with which audiences will identify, be it in the suburb or city of an American environment or in a suburb in England. Parallels are drawn revealing the simultaneity of actions across different cultures in response to ordinary events, and a sense of the whole, as opposed to a linear format, begins to take shape.

Reading the prose of Virginia Woolf is, for some, like learning a different language. The film, by means of its pictography, in the Eisenstein sense, brings out an “emotional” way of thinking, making this film an “unusual” one by Hollywood standards. To first time viewers who may not have read the two novels, the adaptation and bias that I see toward the use of the language and ideas of Woolf is of interest here. There are times when the pace of the film moves so swiftly that it is difficult to keep up with, and note some of the literary allusions.

Cunningham’s Richard (Ed Harris) is a suicidal character, as is Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown. Septimus, the character in Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, is also suicidal.

Cunningham’s story employs the Woolfian technique used in the novel, Mrs. Dalloway, in the film—the contrasting of situations like the moldant theme of to die, or not to die, set against the upbeat theme of making a party. Also, although Clarissa Vaughn’s bond to Richard, being an ex-lover by her choice, is different from Clarissa Dalloway’s bond to Septimus, there is a sense that all are looking at life or death as rightful options to take, the latter option being as right as its alternative.

The suicide attempts are beautifully filmed, the successful ones shockingly realized. As Woolf steps into the water up to her neck, my mind literally switched to an image of Ophelia: perhaps because of the unexpectedly romantic quality of the shrubs and trees through which sunlight filters over the river Ouse. Of course, everyone’s response will be different according to their related experiences in life: the making of The Hours communicates that quality and power.

The scenes in Richmond with Virginia and Leonard (Stephen Dillane), center around Virginia writing Mrs. Dalloway, where the fate of Clarissa Dalloway is decided, and the fate of Virginia herself is also decided when, one day, she declares heatedly to Leonard at the station that she must return to London to live, or die in Richmond. Leonard’s control is seen to be reluctantly relenting as he ‘gets over it’ and they move on into the crowd, amiably enough. “Does someone have to die?” asks Leonard, plaintively one night as he looks up from her manuscript. The personal theme is expressed, is fictionalised and translated visually in the mind’s of others who are, in turn, affected by it.

Watch out for the rhythmic repetition of symbolic motifs, like the movement of vases of flowers, eggs, yellow roses, mirrors, from one segment to another, used metaphorically in varying degrees of gesture and emphasis, serving to link lives so far apart yet bound by their common every day usage. The egg theme is particularly intriguing as performed in Nelly’s kitchen (Virginia Woolf’s cook). Each story has its performance with eggs, a metaphor symbolizing fertility, the absence of fertility, whatever one wants to bring to it. Mrs. Dalloway in her Greenwich Village apartment appears to be massaging them in a bowl; Mrs. Brown’s handling of ingredients, including the eggs, shows us her insecurity as she demonstrates a careful procedure toward making a perfect cake.

When Mrs. Brown, in her eighties, turns up at the close of Clarissa Dalloway’s failed party for Richard, the audience is confronted with the answer to a lot of questions about the Los Angeles 1950s. Laura Brown is reading the novel, Mrs. Dalloway, and identifying with Clarissa’s strengths as she copes with her perceived failure in marriage and motherhood. Laura has an adoring young son, Richie (Jack Rovello) whose performance is worthy of an award. Mrs. Brown arrives as uneaten food is scraped into the garbage can. It is reminiscent of the moment when Laura once scraped her perceived horribly failed birthday cake into the garbage can.

In a shot of Virginia and Vanessa (Miranda Richardson) in Virginia’s garden, Vanessa’s three children (rambunctious Quentin and Julian, and a diminutive Angelica), find a dying bird. The scene is one of absolute reverence, with Angelica taking charge of its care and funeral, and Quentin its burial. Laura has an adoring young son, Richie (Jack Rovello) whose performance is worthy of an award. Mrs. Brown arrives as uneaten food is scraped into the garbage can. It is reminiscent of the moment when Laura once scraped her perceived horribly failed birthday cake into the garbage can.

In summary, the film is as interesting a synthesis of sound, color, imagery and dialogue that I have seen so far when it comes to making a film about Woolf - this is a step in a
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Editor, *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*
Department of English
Southern Connecticut State University
501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515

For information or questions about the *Miscellany*, please contact:
Vara Neverow
Phone: (203) 392-6717
Fax: (203) 392-6731
E-mail address: neverowv1@southernct.edu
Website: http://home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/
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Department of English
Southern Connecticut State University
501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515

For information or questions about the IVWS, please contact:
Vara Neverow
Phone: (203) 392-6717
Fax: (203) 392-6731
e-mail address: neverowv1@southernct.edu
website: http://home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/
I fairly expected not to like the film of the book when it first came out, but what a movie! A fit audience though few, this is one. This movie reflects convincingly a genius in the movie. I liked the way the movie portrayed her as Leonard’s “better,” his intellectual superior. I’m thinking of the way Leonard asked her in the evening if his was a stupid question when they were discussing her novel: why does Clarissa have to die? So Hare got that, good.

David Hare is a wonderful playwright and screenwriter. I admired the movie Wetherby, which he did years ago and which shares the theme of depression and suicide with the movie version of The Hours. So many things about The Hours were appealing. The sight of Woolf’s feet coursing down the Ouse; the rush of waters that flower out from under the hotel bed where Janianne Moore/Laura Brown lies; the method in general, so much more successful to me in the movie than in Cunningham’s book, of superimposing three ages, three women, three states of mental depression, all connected through the link of the novel Mrs. Dalloway (or the name Mrs. Dalloway). I liked the way the movie gave me the sense of Woolf speaking to us from the past. As if she were here, breathing beside us. I liked the way the movie showed her lying down (as she really did lie down) beside the dead bird, the better to imagine what death is. Death was something that she obviously had contemplated for some time. It was something about which she, like Shelley, was curious. It was something which she was obviously not entirely afraid of; something she ultimately preferred.

Why did Laura Brown not fit in? Was she lesbian or was she merely an intellectual woman; Shakespeare’s sister; lost and at a loss in a world that would prefer women to be the sole servers of potatoes and makers of birthday cakes, a role not all women can play happily because women are also dark; women also have knowledge of the dark? This movie showed depression and despair for what they are. How unspeakably lovely in a world where Hollywood offers us the equivalent of a “Have a Nice Day” smile in comedies and only murder and mayhem—car crashes—for tragedy. If ever there was a movie made for a fit audience though few, this is one. This movie reflects the higher states of human consciousness, the highest precincts of the human intellect, and that will likely appeal only to that small handful of people who populate those precincts; or am I wrong about that? Perhaps, as well, it will appeal to a much larger body of women, because I had a strange thought the other day—a thought prompted by the movie—and that was that women really are beings of a different kind, though rarely portrayed intelligence and this movie, like Robert Altman’s Three Women, gives us a hint of that difference; it taps into that idea that women are somehow strange, odd beings in a world dominated by brutes. Lonely creatures at sea in this world. At a loss.

Of the three actresses, my favorite was Julianne Moore, but I am grateful to all the people who made this movie. Watching it gave me the same exhilarating sense I get when I read Woolf. Total absorption; total giving up into another world. Watching it was like being drawn, head first, into the icy rush of the Ouse.

Lisa Low
Independent Scholar

MAKING IT HIS OWN: THE HOURS

Stephen Daldry’s The Hours (2002) is the much-celebrated and sometimes scorned adaptation of Michael Cunningham’s 1998 novel, which employed Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway as the catalyst for three disparate yet interconnected narratives. While most of the criticism centers on whether or not the film is “faithful” to two key things—Woolf’s life and her novel, it is important to step back and see the film as a separate piece of art that must stand or fail on its own. I say this recognizing that fidelity is of central concern to any adaptation; Daldry knows this as well. Early in The Hours, Clarissa Vaughan (Meryl Streep) finds herself explaining to her local florist how to read her friend Richard’s (Ed Harris) “difficult” novel, a work that seemingly borrows heavily from her own real life and personal history. Clarissa explains, “[Richard] changes things—not in a bad way—it’s more like he makes them his own.” The issue embedded in this apologia—ownership and fidelity, or the relationship that the simulated, fictional thing has to the “true” thing it represents or recreates—is the central tenet of The Hours, and is stated so forcefully within the film’s narrative structure that it is clear that Daldry seeks to question and perhaps reify the notion of “adaptation” in his arguably masculine re-imaging of Woolf’s work.

For here we have a film that is not only a straightforward adaptation of the novel The Hours, but also a truly interpretive adaptation of Mrs. Dalloway, as well as the portion...
of Woolf’s life that encompassed its creation. This is an ambitious, dynamic effort at best, one that circumvents the disrupted time and space between narratives by making the connections seem not only a logical but necessary outgrowth of Woolf’s work and its varied readership. At worst, it is a project that highlights how difficult it is to accurately portray a body of literary history and thus encourages continued scrutiny of Daldry’s efforts to be “true” to Woolf, assuming that was his main concern. This question of a film’s fidelity to a literary life reflects the chasm that scholars have debated for years regarding whether an adaptation can ever be “true” to its source, or whether any film version of a text (or stage version, or film version of a stage production) can be immediately dismissed as having no singular identity, domestic independence, and the way in which small things—or those that fail to register as “important” in one’s life—cause larger repercussions. From the moment Laura and Clarissa “translate” the first sentence (Laura reading it directly off the page; Clarissa asserting it into her life—“Sally, I think I’ll buy the flowers myself!”), we know that they will claim ownership of the novel in their lives, and that Woolf merely exists to create this possibility for them.

For some, this reflective and admittedly subjective narrative structure is a failed one. For this reviewer, it is a structure that privileges what succeeds in the film and relegates the rest to the fodder of disciplinary argument. Thus, just as Clarissa defends Richard’s right, as an author and additionally as a man, to appropriate and manipulate the details of Clarissa’s life as a woman for his fiction, so I as reviewer and reader find myself in the position of defending Daldry’s right to take similar liberties with Woolf and her narrative (both life and literary) for his film. The remaining question that falls from this is, is The Hours “his” story, then, with the man in question being Richard, Daldry, or some combination thereof? The answer to that question for me is ultimately “yes,” but therein lies in yet another qualitative statement about the film’s structure. Richard is arguably the center of The Hours, but he is also the emotional black hole into which the women’s life problems fall away once his presence is erased, much as Woolf herself falls away from the larger narrative once the other threads tying Laura, Richard, and Clarissa are exposed and made the central focus of the film. After all, Richard does not know Woolf; he only knows that her book was a catalyst for his mother’s sadness, and so he layers that sad identity on Clarissa later in life as an indirect payback. One could argue that if this is Richard’s film, and that he is the unseen narrative force that presents Woolf to us, then we cannot expect a “true” portrayal of Woolf from his point of view. Rather, we get a skewed one that emphasizes her illness and diminishes her personal worth, because that is the Woolf that Richard sees.

To make Laura and Clarissa the inheritors of Woolf’s identities, then, the film relies heavily on visual techniques of cross-over identification with Woolf herself, such as match-on-action in shots of the women sleeping, lying depressed in bed, coming through doorways and running away from their homes, in addition to sound bridges that allow one character to introduce another’s scene (for example, Clarissa’s question, “why is everything wrong?” that cuts to Laura displaying her fallen birthday cake). The film also employs bookend images of Woolf’s 1941 suicide, as if to imply that all that comes from Mrs. Dalloway may be linked to Laura’s depressed actions and Clarissa’s self-doubt; this trope keeps viewers from caring about Woolf (we watch knowing she is already and always dead; we stay focused for clues as to why, which we really do not receive). Thus, while all three actresses, including Kidman, give outstanding performances in their roles, only Moore and Streep are allowed to be a part of the film, and not historical prologue. The Hours is their story, misinterpreted and nearly destroyed by one man.

Laura and Clarissa’s narratives are essentially or literally controlled by Richard, but perhaps because she is his mother, Laura’s story is clearly the more heart-wrenching and more visually striking of the two. Her clean, 1950s world is divided into two parts: the home, where Laura and her son spend most of the day in their pajamas, making unsuccessful attempts at domesticity (e.g., cake-baking), and the public neighborhood, where the palm trees that elegantly line her street also loom over her limited suburban existence. Laura’s mise-en-scène is also significantly open in design (note the extra wide shots of interiors, including the kitchen), but obviously closed in true sexual and social opportunity. The most chilling scene in the film is when Laura’s husband Dan leaves for work, and she and her son are home alone. She turns to face her young son, who sits quietly on the floor. From his point of view we see Laura’s blank stare, which seems to last for an eternity, and then hear her finally ask him, accusingly, “what do you want?” Perhaps there has never been such an accurate portrayal on film of a mother’s depression—and a child’s fear of it—than in this scene. From then on, we know that this boy—this important, influential boy—knows his mother will leave him; the question is not if, but when, and, of course, how, and with what results for the future women in this boy’s life.

The film from there seems to argue that a neglectful mother can send a man’s world spinning out of control. This is an offensive assumption, but I believe it is made so as to show the very limitations of that world view. The film closes with Clarissa Vaughan finally at a kind of peace, having lived her adult life struggling with whether she has made the correct choices—specifically regarding her relationship with Richard. Now that he is dead, Laura has resurfaced to meet Clarissa, in another of the film’s brutally honest and ultimately “true” scenes; here we see that the true emotional core of the film is in the shared doubt these women have suffered in their lives. Within Clarissa and Laura’s stories are hints at more historical issues of importance to Woolf such as post-war identities (in Mrs. Dalloway World War I and Septimus; in The Hours, Laura’s segment, post-World War II) and the evolution of the city’s emotional landscape in modernity, (then London, here New York City.). But really, all these issues stem not from English social and political history, but from Laura’s abandonment of Richard, and the important role that betrayal plays in his own stream-of-consciousness living, and his repeated acceptance and rejection of Clarissa, right up until the end.

Richard’s character, part Peter, part Septimus, and part new creation, is ultimately weaker than either Clarissa or Laura, who herself rejects the death impulse and instead chooses “what (she) can bear” because she does not know “what it means to regret when you have no choice.” By comparison, Richard cannot bear “the hours after the party, and the hours after that,” and so he jumps from his window, like Septimus, overcome by his illness, but also by his own loneliness in what has become an all-female world. The problem is, the film is much better off without Richard. In Mrs. Dalloway we miss Septimus because we knew him, cared about him, and because Clarissa feels a connection to him that changes her life (and death); in The Hours, Richard dies so that we can get on with things—and so that Laura may meet Clarissa, and both women may be free of him. This allows the film to end on a positive note, showcasing the inner strength of these women in the face of lives interpreted and interpolated by others.

Ultimately, this is a man’s take on a woman’s story, but that should not tempt us to assume that such a take has no value; the masculine perspective is a controversial way to “read” Mrs. Dalloway that complicates but does not damage the goals of the original text. All viewers should at some level appreciate the chances that this film takes—by showing us unloving mothers, brutal end-stage illness, and petty, tragic
jealousies, and by forcing us to identify with the flawed characters who force these pains upon us as unavoidable facets of living, regardless of our gender or sexuality. The questions that linger for viewers are thus, Who am I? What am I? Why am I? We didn’t need a “new Mrs. Dalloway” to resurrect these questions, but we are also not harmed by the answers put forth by the haunting and complicated revision that is The Hours.

Kelly Ritter
Southern Connecticut State University

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DEATH THROUGH LAURA BROWN’S EYES
In an early scene of the 2002 Paramount Pictures film The Hours, the character of Virginia Woolf imagines her new novel as “a woman’s whole life in a single day—just one day—and in that day, her whole life.” Over the course of the movie and Michael Cunningham’s 1998 novel of the same title, we observe one solitary day in the lives of three very different women: Clarissa Vaughan, an editor living in New York City, Virginia Woolf, a writer beginning to compose her third novel Mrs. Dalloway, and Laura Brown, a reader whose life seems to utterly stifle her. The latter is portrayed by the author and the film’s director as a woman who wants to die, and when we look through Laura’s eyes, we view the death that has transcended her entire existence. She dies repeatedly during the course of that one day, and by combining both versions of The Hours, reader and viewer come to a fuller understanding how her despondency relates to the death that is her life.

When we first meet Laura Brown, she lingers in bed almost dreading the morning’s rituals and trying to lose herself in the first pages of Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway. Appearing terribly unhappy, Laura’s only chance at pleasure comes not from her family, but from drowning herself in the many novels she reads. Although she fulfills her expected destiny as a married housewife in 1949 (1951 in the film)—caring for her husband, her young son, and her unborn second child—she feels she is posing as a wife to Dan, whom she married out of a sense of guilt, a fear of being alone, and a feeling of patriotism. Dan, a local war hero, provides for his wife—he even takes on the role of flower purchaser on his birthday, removing that life-affirming freedom possessed by both Clarissa Dalloway and Clarissa Vaughan. Yet, as Cunningham writes, “his happiness depends only on the fact of her, here in the house, living her life, thinking of him” (100). But upon what does Laura’s happiness depend? She thinks of her husband and her need to please him as she struggles over her mediocre attempt at baking his birthday cake. She also struggles over the possibility of leaving, of being free from the monotony of her married life and free from the “simple and essentially foolish tasks” that are “her art and her duty” in 1949 (42).

In the midst of performing these tasks, Laura receives an unexpected visit from her neighbor. She initially appears diffident but she emerges from her protective shell when Kitty notices the book on the counter. This reference to Laura’s novel is exclusive of the film, but it is a telling depiction of Laura’s extreme anxiety. She explains to Kitty that Mrs. Dalloway is about a “woman who is going to give a party, [a woman who seems so] confident that everyone thinks she’s fine . . . but she isn’t.” Trepidation pervades her explanation, but Kitty glosses over the summary and explains why she has come to Laura’s house. In a frantic attempt to not only comfort Kitty but to breathe life into her own being, Laura leans down and kisses her friend. The two women awkwardly part and the scene comes to an anticlimactic end. Cunningham and the screen writer deny Laura an experience that could have transformed her day and possibly turned her life around.

After Kitty’s visit, Laura is again overcome by desperation, a feeling that fuels her to take a two-hour hiatus from life by retiring to the lavish privacy of a room at the Normandy hotel. In the novel, she packs only her copy of Mrs. Dalloway, intending to read in solitude for a few hours, free from life’s interruptions. Much like Clarissa Dalloway, Laura tentatively ponders suicide and thinks of how easy the task would be. She determines that it would be possible, it would be so simple, but then “says the words out loud in the clean, silent room: ‘I would never’” (152). In fact, Laura loves life, much like Clarissa Dalloway loved “life: London; this moment of June” (MD 4). Thus, the reader can infer from the novel that her life is more vital to Laura than the freedom from it inherent in death.

The film, on the other hand, sends her to the downtown Los Angeles hotel in order to commit suicide. In an overwhelming disparity from Cunningham’s book, Laura packs her bag full of sedatives as well as her copy of Woolf’s novel. We watch Laura as she anxiously clutches the pills and then we see her lying on the bed, apparently asleep. At the last minute, and in a very poignant scene, the character of Woolf determines not to kill her heroine, noting that she changed her mind but that she “may have to kill someone else instead.” The film pans back to the hotel room just as a rush of seawater to kill her heroine, noting that she changed her mind but that she “may have to kill someone else instead.” The film pans back to the hotel room just as a rush of seawater.

Laura journeys back to her suburban home, back to her husband and son, to give a party. While her family thinks she is “fine,” Laura, like Mrs. Dalloway, is not all right. She is, in fact, dying a very slow death, but the reader does not sense the true transience of Laura’s soul until the bedtime scene. To go to bed with Dan today, on his birthday, amounts to a further death for the forlorn Laura. She procrastinates as much as she can, but Dan keeps calling to her, keeps bringing her back to reality. Cunningham writes, “[s]he might, at this moment, be nothing but a floating intelligence; not even a brain inside a skull, just a presence that perceives, as a ghost might. Yes, she thinks, this is probably how it must feel to be a ghost” (215). Already, Laura seems to have died.

The events of this one day allow Laura, in both the novel and the film, to decide that the only way to escape “death” is by deserting her family. When she comes to Clarissa Vaughan’s apartment after Richard’s death, she appears as a woman in her eighties, aged by life and by the choices she has made. Cunningham calls her “the lost mother, the thwarted suicide; […] the woman who walked away” (221). Laura had done all she could for her family and it was simply time for her to leave, simply time to flee from the death that was encompassing her life. Nevertheless, we are left wondering if Laura discovered the life she thought she was missing, for in the film, when Clarissa Vaughan’s daughter leans in to give Laura a hug, a profound smile crosses the aged woman’s face. Much like the kiss with Kitty, this hug seems to breathe life into Laura’s spirit, but her smile seems filled with regret and the sense of death that plagued her in 1949. It is almost as though Laura had not had any physical contact in the fifty years since she left her family. So, did she have the opportunity to “live” during the past half-century? Or has death continued to pervade her existence?

Though one might argue that abandoning her children is the worst thing a mother can do, Laura honestly felt that she did not belong in that suburban life and finally had to escape. In both the novel and the film, we view her as still lacking the happiness for which she longed. She is the only person of her family who has endured, and she will forever remain “the woman of wrath and sorrow, of pathos, of dazzling charm; the woman in love with death; the victim and torturer who haunted Richard’s work” (226). In the film Laura is given voice to express her position. She appropriately explains to Clarissa Vaughan and to her audience that, while it “would be wonderful to say you regretted […] it would be easy. But what does it mean to regret when you have no choice […] It is what you can bear. […] It was death; I chose life.”

Debra Sims
Independent Scholar

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-12-
And there was something noble in feeling like this; tragic, not at all petty. Reality, so I thought, was unveiled. And such was the strength of my feeling that I became physically rigid.

(but I cannot re-capture really).

Now I am meeting it; as I walked back across the field I said

It was a wet windy night; &

What an intensity of feeling was pressed into those hours! that strange night when I went to meet Leonard & did not meet him.

"And I meant to record… humanity, humour, depth." August 30, 1923

And such was the strength of my feeling that I became physically rigid. Reality, so I thought, was unveiled. And there was something noble in feeling like this; tragic, not at all petty. ...
BLOOMSBURY IN SRI LANKA:
LEONARD WOOLF AND JULIA MARGARET CAMERON

For the last four Christmas vacations, my sister and I have taken trips to former parts of the British Empire: India, Malta, Burma, and just this past December, Sri Lanka. The trips have had literary interest as well: in the case of Burma, George Orwell’s *Burmese Days* is ubiquitously for sale. I acquired from that visit a far better sense of his experiences in that country. So, too, I learned more about Bloomsbury from my recent visit to Sri Lanka.

Leonard Woolf went to Ceylon in 1904, having become a member of the Ceylon Civil Service. He journeyed out with ninety volumes of Voltaire and Charles, a wire-haired fox-terrier. He was first posted to Jaffna; his presence there is attested to by a photograph of himself, the dog, and two other dogs of the generic sort to be still found throughout the country. Jaffna is off the ordinary tourist route at present not only for being in the north of the country but as a center for of the Tamil separatists. At the moment the “peace process” seems to be making at least this one country more peaceful. In 1907 Woolf moved to Kandy. That city was, with Jaffna and Columbo, one of the capitals of the country before it was consolidated by the British in the early nineteenth century. There is a local awareness of the Bloomsbury connection. As we arrived, we noticed a sign for a Bloomsbury nursery school in the center of town and right next to our hotel a Bloomsbury Computer Institute, apparently for children, was being established. The latter was in the process of construction and I was not able to locate anyone who could give an explanation of why the name was chosen.

While Leonard was in Kandy, his eldest sister Bella came to visit him. She remained, marrying an Englishman, in the classic way of visiting ladies to the Empire, as a member of the so-called “fishing fleet,” looking for husbands. She had already published some children’s books; she now produced several with a setting in Ceylon, *The Twins in Ceylon* in 1909 and a sequel two years later. She also wrote several general books about the country. Her first husband, who died in 1916 was R.H. Lock, a naturalist. In 1921 she married W.T. Southorn, later Sir Thomas, a civil servant, who had shared a bungalow with Woolf in Jaffna. He later became a prominent colonial official in Hong Kong. Bella wrote about that city in *Chips in China*, published in 1930.

While in Kandy, I had dinner, by chance, with Walter Perera, a professor of English at the leading university of the country. His great uncle, E.W. Perera, had come to the country more peacefully. In 1907 Woolf moved to Kandy. That city was, with Jaffna and Columbo, one of the capitals of the country before it was consolidated by the British in the early nineteenth century. There is a local awareness of the Bloomsbury connection. As we arrived, we noticed a sign for a Bloomsbury nursery school in the center of town and right next to our hotel a Bloomsbury Computer Institute, apparently for children, was being established. The latter was in the process of construction and I was not able to locate anyone who could give an explanation of why the name was chosen.

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The most important Woolffian site is undoubtedly Habanatota, the headquarters for the district in the south along the coast. There Leonard was Assistant Government Agent for three years, 1908-11: in effect the British ruler of the area. His official diaries were published in 1963 and provide a vivid sense of his activities. (I was kindly given by the archivist the published selection from the diaries in Sinhalese.) The buildings where Leonard worked and lived seem pretty much as they were and are still performing the same functions. We were cordially greeted by his Sinhalese successor, living in Woolf’s large bungalow, now expanded by the verandahs being enclosed. It is at a splendid location, quite close to a gallows overlooking the sea, presumably already out of use in Woolf’s time. But if one were going to be executed, there could hardly be a more beautiful place for the act.

The other fascinating connection with Bloomsbury in Sri Lanka is Julia Margaret Cameron. She and her husband went to Ceylon in 1875, taking their coffins with them, to be close to their coffee growing sons. The coffee plantations were destroyed by blight, but were replaced by tea, which the British had introduced and remains the major crop of the country. Her Isle of Wight house, Dimbola Lodge, is named after one of the great tea towns of the island. She continued to take photographs, using servants and plantation workers as her subjects. Until recently, these late images have tended to be comparatively ignored but our present concerns help make us more aware of their effectiveness. One suspects they will figure significantly in the major Cameron exhibition this Spring at the British National Portrait Gallery, coinciding with the appearance of a new biography by Colin Ford and the Getty’s publication of a catalogue raisonné.

We visited Nuwara Eliya, the famous hill resort, in the heart of the tea country. Three hotels remain from the British time, the Hill Club, St. Andrew’s, and the Grand, where we stayed, impressive in a rather dowdy way. And then one ravishing day we took an excursion through beautiful countryside full of tea plantations to the little English church of St. Mary’s in Boganwantalawa. There we found, side by side, her grave as well as that of her husband, Charles Hay Cameron. She died in 1879; he in 1880. One had a sense of both the domesticity and the grandeur of the “far flung” empire. Bloomsbury was fundamentally anti-imperial and yet, like so many of the British, it participated in its history. My visit to Sri Lanka made that abundantly evident.

Peter Stansky
Stanford University

REVIEW:
WHO WAS DR. JACKSON? TWO CALCUTTA FAMILIES: 1830-1855

Daughter of Virginia Woolf’s first cousin H.A.L. Fisher, historian in her own right of British-India affairs, erstwhile principal of St. Hilda’s College, Oxford, Mary Bennett has brought together material from diaries, memoirs, and letters that give us a lively picture of her great grandfather, that shadowy figure in the background of his wife Mia, whom Virginia’s mother, Julia, was forever nursing. In his *Mausoleum Book*, Leslie Stephen portrays him as a rather uninteresting figure much less important to the family than his mother-in-law, Mia Jackson. It is Bennett’s purpose, in part, to throw light on the shadow, and print the negative, as well as to display the life of civil servants in India in the years before what used to be called *The Mutiny* (1857).

Thus, besides the text, readers will find a gallery of illustrations depicting Patties, Jacksons, as well as notables of the Calcutta elite (Bishops, surgeons, and Governors General of the East India Co.), and reproductions of little line drawings of typical Indian scenes. All these give life, particularly to Part I: “Jacksons and Patties.” Part II focuses on Dr. Jackson, by presenting, in chronological order, selections from his letters to his eldest daughter Adeline, each period skillfully introduced. Dr. Jackson has been portrayed as a rationalist, somewhat alien from the atmosphere of Holland.
House, where his wife and daughters hobnobbed with painters like Watts and Val Prinsep and poets like Coventry Patmore, and indeed the contrast is there, but he was not an entirely “unaesthetic” man. He detected in Adeline a talent for drawing and urged her to study; he was passionately fond of music and urged her to become an accomplished pianist, insisting that she have a good instrument, and, of course, aware of the L’Etonne heritage, wanted her to perfect her French. Significantly, noting that young ladies too often know nothing about the subject, he strongly advised her to study arithmetic so she could keep his accounts when he came home to England. His program for Adeline was largely repeated for the other two daughters, for as we know, Julia was fluent in French, skilled in keeping the household accounts, and, like her father, devoted to music and musicians, hostess to musical soirees, attended no doubt by her daughter.

Bennett’s narrative ends in 1855 at the point where her sources for Dr. Jackson’s life dry up; she does sketch in what little is recorded—a trip to Russia for a conference of Orientalists, a trip to the United States, and little else. Contrary to Leslie Stephen’s account, Dr. Jackson did establish a practice in London and became a member of the Royal College of Physicians. He obviously took an interest in his daughters, their marriages, and children. He seems to have lived and died quietly.

When he died, Virginia Stephen was five years old. Which leads one to ask: what is here for Woolf scholars and critics? Not much for critics. There is nothing here to startle the devotees of literary theory. For scholars, particularly those whose wish to establish the ambience of Woolf’s family history and for those who are interested in pursuing some of the lines laid down by Sonya Rudikoff, there is here the texture of the British-Indian world under the East India Company, the actual daily life of Patties, Jacksons, Prinseps, Corries Champneys, Dalrymples, and Camerons: what it was like to take river boat from Calcutta to Benares, what the landscape looked like, the delight of opening mail and parcels from England that had come by sea to Cairo, overland to the Red Sea and thence by sea again to Calcutta; the first ride on a Indian railway; the parade of guests at a Governor’s ball. Texture—that is what we get from this graceful little book. As well, there are hints here for literary detective work. Bennett tells me that there is much to be learned about the Pattles and others in the letters from Virginia, Countess Somers to Sophie Dalrymple in India, as well as from other sources mentioned and used in her own text.

John W. Bicknell
Drew University Emeritus

REVIEW:
MODERNISM AND EUGENICS:
WOOLF, ELIOT, YEATS, AND THE CULTURE OF DEGENERATION

This well-written book is disappointing, finally. In spite of the author’s concession that eugenics is but one element of the discourse of modernity and allowing that there were modernist writers who opposed eugenics to affirm their aesthetics (as did Joyce), the book’s tendency to ignore other issues creates the impression of a reductive argument occasioned by moments of absurdity. Given Childs’s penchant for three, the title anticipates a triple trio of chapters (respectively, on Woolf, Eliot, and Yeats), which forms the architectural dome or arch of the book’s overall argument. “Culture of Degeneration” is supposed to sound like the declension of history that we associate with modern dissociated sensibilities and the pastoral tradition of the ancients without modern science. Only philosophy, religion, and magic find no place in this study—important as they were to the three lives and selected texts examined in these pages. Plato, Zeitgeist, and Anima Mundi will not be found in the index. The best single part of Modernism and Eugenics is the introduction, which is fascinating for the intricate way that it develops the intellectual history of eugenics from Francis Galton and, generally, late-nineteenth-century concern over hereditary decline in the upper-classes to espousals on both the left and right, in the 1930s, that the race of the nation wanted improving. That Shaw and the Webbs were eugenists seems patently counterintuitive because of their Fabian progressivism, but eugenics served various purposes, including Woolf’s feminism; and Childs avers that this reason for investigating individuals who subscribed to ideology that was once part of the milieu is the emancipation of the “literary critic” and (presumably) his audience “both in the realm of modern social policy and in the realm of the modern literary imagination” (20). Foucauldian “hegemonic discourse” analysis is the methodology. Woolf, Eliot, and Yeats have been chose to “restore a voice to [their] neglected eugenic selves” and “to tell a tale about their eugenic lives” (20). To tell a story? To make a confession? To tell the truth?

On the relation between Eliot’s conservatism and the eugenics literature that he read and sometime reviewed, the book is solid but sometime unnecessary (if the object of criticism is to illuminate art), just as the inevitable Yeats chapters seem largely unnecessary as the proverbial horse that has already gone around the track several times (for example, in books on fascism by Paul Scott Stanfield, Elizabeth Cullingford, and David Bradshaw). The chapter on Eliot had to precede the one on Yeats because Yeats’s eugenic self has no obvious voice before his On the Boiler tracts in the late 1930s, and the eugenical literature that Eliot read provides background for accounts of Allan Estlake’s The Oneida Community (1900), which Yeats probably did read, and of the 1908 English-language edition of Augustine Forel’s The Sexual Question, into which Yeats dipped but left many pages uncut. The latter makes a more interesting gloss than Childs knows on Yeats’s Playboy epigram (see yours truly on "eunuchs,” Arthur Griffith, and The Sicilian Players in Yeats Annual 6 [1988]: 112-15); but the former inspires an unusual interpretation of “Adam’s Curse,” if the Neoplatonic Book of the Courier is not to be taken into account. (Childs’s use of the term “sprezzatura” without Castiglione shows that he is aware of the usual gloss). So “[E]ugenic selves,” rather than creative literature, is what we should expect. Thus, for Yeats, it’s back to the Steinach operation, with almost nothing to say about the mysterious Mrs. Yeats. For Eliot, it’s poor “Tom and Viv” again, an invasion of privacy on “sexual misadventures,” menstrual phenomena, and Kotox.

To hear Virginia Woolf’s eugenic voice is unexpected and must be the only reason why she is given priority to the other two writers. The tale begins with a precaution that Childs might have taken care always to observe. “Virginia Woolf doesn’t have a life, she has lives,” Hermione Lee observes in her biography and Childs quotes, without allowing that his interpretation of Woolf’s life requires acknowledging those other selves occasionally. While the tale’s logic involves the embedded ifs of sometimes highly speculative circumstantial argument, it is probably that the views of Woolf’s doctors (Hyslop, Craig, and Savage), carried to her by her husband and by her reading, coalesced in the eugenical Dr. William Bradshaw in Mrs. Dalloway. Allowing that Woolf was not an admirer of the eugenist argument of Lady Bruton, chiefly a figure of “fun,” Childs still insists that “the object of Woolf’s disdain is not the eugenic project itself, but rather the ineffectualness of Lady Bruton’s enthusiasm” (41), having it all ways. One wonders why Childs avoids Between the Acts, a novel that deals unequivocally with evolution, heredity, and the threat of the barbarian unless the argument depends on the circumstance of a 1926 diary entry about her childlessness. With nearly two chapters on Mrs. Dalloway and, intermittently, To the Lighthouse, we find some fresh insight on the Manns cat as “dysgenic body” in A Room of One’s Own but also, finally, some perverse reading.

Darwinian and Lamarckian biology works awkwardly in interpreting Woolf’s account of Women and Fiction through the ages. Platonism has no place even when it is essential. Galton’s ideas on genius are credited though they do not work for Judith Shakespeare and require dismissing Coleridge, who suggested to Woolf “that a great mind is androgynous” (67). Mary Carmichael, Woolf’s fictitious novelist, must be Marie Stopes because of Stopes eugenist connections and the pen name she used in a novel. Although Woolf’s Carmichael is a new woman, probably a composite number of women who were novelists primarily (Sackville-West and Mansfield come to mind), Childs thinks otherwise, believing Woolf to seek a “superwoman” who emerges from “breed[ing] well” (73). Of course, A Room of One’s Own is not about breeding well but about writing well, unless I’m badly mistaken. Childs is an excellent practitioner of the sentence, but should rue the day he wrote that “Coleridge function[ed] [. . .] as a literary sperm bank [. . .],” for Woolf makes it clear that she chooses the past writer as father for her child only because the contemporary writers that she would prefer are impotent” (73).

Wayne K. Chapman
Clemson University
I began reading this book fearful that Dalsimer would treat Woolf as a patient. I recalled Elizabeth Abel’s *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* and her quotation from Woolf’s essay “Freudian Fiction” in which ‘Woolf insists that she disputes not psychoanalytic interpretations of infantile experience but a colonization of the literary field that transforms ‘characters’ into ‘cases’ through the application of a doctrinal ‘key’ that ‘simplifies rather than complicates’’ (17). Abel’s text complicates our understanding of Woolf’s engagement with psychoanalysis, provides an intertextual reading of Woolf, Sigmund Freud, and Melanie Klein, and notes that “Woolf’s relationship to Klein and Freud shifts dramatically in the course of the two decades that mark her career” (xvi). Abel also traces Woolf’s shift from a preoccupation with the maternal in *A Room of One’s Own* in which women writers think back through their mothers to *Three Guineas* in which she addresses the daughters of educated men. To my pleasant surprise, Dalsimer’s book proved to be accessible, free of psychobabble, and rather than turning Woolf into a case, reminds readers of her amazing vibrancy and the ways in which writing helped her to survive. It also made me rethink Woolf’s portrayals of mothers and fathers.

Dalsimer reminds us that the process of the clinical psychologist includes being “especially attentive: to the remembered scenes of a patient’s narrative, and that a ‘close reading of literary texts is excellent ‘ear training’ for the kind of listening that the clinical situation requires’” (xvi). She describes the rhythm of clinical work as a movement backward and forward in time in which “we examine the present in light of the remembered past, and that past in light of the present,” and then differentiates such practice from our reading of Woolf’s early writing because “we know not only her the remembered past, and that past in light of the present,” and then differentiates such movement backward and forward in time in which “we examine the present in light of the clinical situation requires” (xvi). Dalsimer explores “the ways that writing served Virginia Woolf in the period she was becoming a writer, the ways it served her in the face of the ‘sledge-hammer blows’ that life dealt.” Her thesis is that writing consoled and sustained Woolf “as much as it was possible for her to be consoled or sustained” (xvii).

In trying to evaluate my own responses to this beautifully written account of Dalsimer’s close attention to Woolf’s writings, filtered through her point of view as a sensitive psychotherapist, I kept remembering Abel’s remark about not turning characters into cases. I am reminded that Dalsimer’s interactions with Woolf’s writings are not a therapist/patient dialogue, and I am conscious of not wanting to turn Woolf into a patient by aligning my perceptions with those of even the most sensitive therapist. I credit Dalsimer for her enormous respect for Woolf’s writing, and I appreciate her emphasis on Woolf’s use of work/writing to survive. I appreciate her gentle reminder to pay attention to those writings about childhood written closest to the actual experience of childhood, to note the alterations to memory in the fictional accounts from one draft to another, and not to lend greater validity to one remembered scene than to another.

*Ruth O. Saxon*  
*Mills College*

**REVIEW:**  
**ETHICS AND AESTHETICS IN EUROPEAN MODERNIST LITERATURE: FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE UNCANNY**  

Ellison’s elegant and stimulating book is a useful reminder to monolingual modernists of how limited their understanding of this European movement can be. Beginning with Kant’s attempt to maintain a boundary between the ethical and the aesthetic, Ellison reads closely the texts of several French, German, and English writers to explore the way this boundary has been variously breached and negotiated. He argues that Kant is seduced in his “Analytic of Pure and Practical Reason” by the aesthetic harmony of a work he believes to be devoted to the moral. Kierkegaard also attempts to keep aesthetic and ethical apart, taking as a starting point Hegel’s critique of Fichte and Novalis, of Romanticism’s ironic mode of “living poetically,” but prefigures modernism in his recognition of the potential for the framing devices of narrative to be porous or even breached by the “unruly” aesthetic.

At the center of Ellison’s book is Freud’s essay “Das Unheimliche” in which the latter reads E. T. A. Hoffmann’s tale “Der Sandmann.” The uncanny, argues Ellison, is our sublime: “Just as Romanticism is impossible to understand without the sublime as one of its cardinal points, in the same way Modernism (and beyond?) cannot be studied independently of its figuration in the uncanny” (53). Ellison’s reading of Freud’s essay is typical not only of his subtle and close attention to details that open texts against themselves, but also of his easy familiarity with the significant commentary on the texts he discusses. In this instance he demonstrates how Hoffman’s tale posed a threat to Freud by anticipating “his every enveloping move,” speaking “psychoanalytically” a century before Freud himself.

Modern art’s focus on “the relation between the work of art as formal construction and the focus of that same work on moral or ethical matters” derives from an inherited tradition of seeing the aesthetic as a threat to the ethical, a pathway to that Romantic irony which later writers attempted to resist. After discussing Nietzsche and Baudelaire’s engagement with Wagner, Ellison chooses Alain-Fournier’s 1913 novel *Le Grand Meaulnes* as a hinge between declining Romanticism and the radical new forms which constituted European modernism. The novel represents the “beautiful soul” concept in a way that “remains firmly attached to a certain Romantic aesthetic-that of melancholy, of nostalgia for a beautiful and irrecoverable past” (131). The texts of Proust, Kafka, Conrad, Gide, and Woolf which form the objects of the second part of Ellison’s book all open themselves “to the radical otherness of the uncanny” (134), an uncanny which the modernists (including Freud) discover often leads back to an already familiar “home.” Thus, for Proust’s Marcel and for Kafka’s K, for example, the quest for a place of “secret truth” is destined always to be futile, circular.

In this rich context, Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* appears as a work that depicts Woolf’s home environment, but also is a raising of the dead. Death-in-life is the essence of *unheimlichkeit*, and uncanniness depends upon narrative framing that blurs the boundaries between inside and outside, “art” and “life.” Ellison’s reading of the novel, and specifically of the place in it of the Grimms’ tale “The Fisherman and His Wife,” is masterly and thought-provoking. Again thoroughly familiar with the relevant critical tradition, Ellison explores the way Woolf uses imagery of fish and fishing in *Lighthouse* and several other texts to articulate her own encounter with the vexed boundary issues confronting the artist concerned with ethics. Throughout Woolf’s novel, writes Ellison, “there is a complex vacillation between what one might call the irruption of the ethical into the aesthetic, on the one hand, and the aestheticization of the real, on the other” (198). Following the “fin” of the folktale through the “waste of waters” of the novel (201), Ellison reads the leitmotiv of fish and fishing through the
lens of Woolf’s own biography to demonstrate quite convincingly why she can be seen as the culmination of a particular chapter of European literary history. In asking whether it is not true that for any intellectually honest artist, “the flowers of rhetoric . . . are the false creations of artifice, and that the carefully constructed aesthetic structure is really a vain attempt to veil the reality itself” (205), Ellison places some of Woolf’s anguished diary entries about her own sense of failure as an artist into a broad philosophical context. This, of course, recalls Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason which argues that acting to one’s advantage is “to aestheticize life, to live it as if it were a work of art, which is to say, a fictional universe of symbols in which meaning itself is ‘veiled in impenetrable obscurity’” (Ellison’s emphasis, 18).

Art, then, transgresses morality—ethics—he uses the terms interchangeably by covering over with beautiful stories the truth of life itself. Woolf’s development of an “impersonal” art is a precursor to the neutrality of Maurice Blanchot, with a brief consideration of whom Ellison closes this absorbing and rewarding book.

Mark Hussey
Pace University

**REVIEW:**
**MODERNIST FICTION, COSMOPOLITANISM, AND THE POLITICS OF COMMUNITY**

Jessica Berman’s Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community is a slim but formidable work deeply grounded in contemporary critical theory. Berman herself describes the project as “an interdisciplinary effort that seeks to bring politics, history and geography to bear on the narrative construction of community” (5). Her sophisticated argument addresses the contested distinction between High Modernism and post-modernism. As she maintains, “[i]ncreasingly persuasive claims have been made about the many stylistic and thematic continuities between the modern and the post-modern, but it seems pointless to wedge all varieties of contemporary thought and experience into the category ‘modern’ just as it seems illogical to claim that writers who consciously called their work ‘modern’ . . . were really just post-modernists in disguise” (18).

Berman teases her own working definition of community out of a complex theoretical discursive web that includes Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Walter Benjamin, and Jurgen Habermas, as well as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Richard Rorty, Drucilla Cornell and Seyla Behabib. Negotiating effortlessly among these critical titans, Berman establishes that most definitions of a community are based on a presumed commonality shared by all members—an illusion that typically depends on the suppression of such differences as gender and race. As a radical alternative to this obliteration of difference, Berman posits the possibility of what she terms a cosmopolitan community, a community that acknowledges, accommodates, and indeed revels in disparity, fragmentation and instability, a definition of community that she contends is powerfully illustrated by modernist narrative technique. Referring to the work of Chantal Mouffe, Berman notes that consensus—the construction of a “we”—“always announces a ‘they,’ an enemy” (15) and warns us that “[h]armony and reconciliation is precisely that which is impossible and that which silences the very plural voices which it is supposed to protect. It is the version of community that leads toward uniformity and totalitarian nationalism” (15). As she reminds her readers, “realism’s construction of narrative consensus [i]s implicated in the imagining of the imperial nation-state” (21). Berman concurs with Jean-Luc Nancy’s idea that community extends “far beyond the consensual public sphere,” thereby opening “[p]olitical community . . . to the varieties of ‘being-in-common’ that are often relegated to the margins of the national discussion and to the kinds of voices, such as those often present in fictional narratives, that seem to speak outside of politics in general” (15).

Berman focuses on the works of Henry James, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein as representative instances of “a common impulse within modernist fiction to engage with the centralization of authority, whether domestic, social, cultural or political, that accompanies the crisis of community in Europe and the United States in the first half of the twentieth century” (200). As she points out, “while these writers were not all radical or even progressive, especially in their real-world politics, the[i]r writings not only inscribe early twentieth-century anxieties about race, ethnicity and gender, but confront them with demands for modern cosmopolitan versions of community” (3).

Berman affirms decades of feminist interpretation of Woolf’s work in her politically charged reading of Orlando as a community of selves and The Waves as a community of voices (117). Orlando’s layered selves “come to exist together, forming a community that is never singular and a character [. . .] that is defined by always being both multiple and resolutely contradictory” (134). The narrative voice in Orlando is inherently political in that it “act[s] to interrupt and rework [. . .] cultural discourses.” Thus, for instance, “the communal discourse surrounding motherhood is disrupted by the interjection of specific questions about identity and empire” (131). Berman relies on such texts as A Room of One’s Own, Three Guineas, “A Society” and the “Introduc
tory Letter” that prefaxes Life as We Have Known It to highlight Woolf’s engagement with specific social organizations, especially the Women’s Co-Operative Guild, which Woolf “found more palatable than the Fabians precisely because it rejected the nation as the primary locus of community affiliation” (127). While Orlando resists the construction of the unitary subject and functions as a kind of “community biography” (138), The Waves “resists fascism by enacting . . . a community that absolutely opposes most traditional models of family, proximity, and nation, as well as the fascist call for the corporate state [. . .] by rejecting the idea of the charismatic leader in the form of the character Percival[. . .] and by using gendered images of active natural power to contradict the ordered might of fascism” (141).

Berman frames her discussion historically: she intertwines Woolf’s vision of an inclusive, evolving, non-hierarchical community with an extended commentary on the Women’s Co-Operative Guild and juxtaposes Woolf’s political stance against that of her contemporary, Oswald Mosley who, with Harold Nicolson, started in October 1931 a journal entitled Action that was intended to agitate for immediate political change. As Berman documents, Action was a vehicle for Mosley’s political posturing. Deeply enamed of the “hyper-masculinity of the black shirts,” he declared in Action his openly misogynist view that the “’Liberty of life in this country is thwarted at every turn by . . . the nagging whining voice of the universal grandmother’” and advocated as an alternative to this purportedly emasculating influence “disciplined moderation or athleticism of life placed in service to the state” (154).

Ultimately, Berman argues that “Woolf’s work runs determinedly counter to the onward rush of fascism, presenting an oppositional cosmopolitan politics that resists the lure of the corporate state and that is prescient in its understanding of the danger of the fascist aesthetic” (156). Thus, Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community revisits arguments relating to Woolf’s political status advanced by scholars such as Jane Marcus and Berenice A. Carroll, Brenda Silver and Merry Pawlowski, offering a crucial reminder that Woolf’s feminism, socialism and pacifism are theoretically sound perspectives that are all too compellingly relevant at this particular political juncture. Thanks to Berman’s complex theoretical analysis, Woolf’s vision of community emerges as a powerful and defiant rejection of homogeneity.

Vara Neverow
Southern Connecticut State University
The IVWS panel at the 20th Century Literature Conference (U of Louisville) was a great success. Virginia Woolf Goes to Louisville Again: An Annual Event! including the topographies of Bloomsbury and the mappings of gender. Susan Stanford Friedman, Holly G. Henry, Sara B. Blair and Jane herself explored the complex Jane Garrity’s panel, “Virginia Woolf’s Geographical Imagination,” scintillated with brilliance as on the “Teaching Woolf’s MLA 2003 Membership & Dues for IVWS Thanks to all those who have paid dues in the last few months. If you are receiving the Miscellany but not the IVWS newsletters and other mailings, your membership has almost certainly lapsed. Keep up-to-date with your dues to ensure that you continue to receive the Virginia Woolf Miscellany subscription for free. If you are a member in good standing but haven’t provided the IVWS with your current e-mail address, you are missing out on early postings of IVWS news. To pay your membership dues or to join the IVWS, you may send a credit card payment, a check drawn on a US bank, or cash in US dollars to Vara Neverow, Pres. & Interim Sec./Treas., IVWS, TE-6, Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515 (phone: 203-392-6717/FAX 203-392-6731). Checks should be made payable to IVWS/SCSUF. To pay by credit card, just download and print out the membership form available online at http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/. Membership rates are $20 for full-time employed and $10 for those with limited income including students, the retired and those who are not full-time employed. MLA 2003 The Modern Language Association convention was held in NYC in 2002 where Woolfians were treated to a private screening of The Hours arranged by Melissa Silverstein of Paramount Studios. David Leon Higdon, Antonia J. Losano, Meg Albrinck, and Marcia Day Childress, the presenters on the “Teaching Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway” panel, organized by Eileen Barrett and Ruth Saxton offered fresh and innovative ways to make Mrs. Dalloway appeal to students across the disciplines. Jane Garrity’s panel, “Virginia Woolf’s Geographical Imagination,” scintillated with brilliance as Susan Stanford Friedman, Holly G. Henry, Sara B. Blair and Jane herself explored the complex geo-political implications of Woolf’s works and life in papers that addressed a variety of issues including the topographies of Bloomsbury and the mappings of gender. Virginia Woolf Goes to Louisville Again: An Annual Event! The IVWS panel at the 20th Century Literature Conference (U of Louisville) was a great success. Kristin Czarnecki, Mark Hussey and Jane Lilienfeld organized a fabulous panel on Virginia Woolf and War at the very last minute before the program went to press. The presenters were Merry Pawlowski, Patricia Moran and Freda Hauser. Kristin chaired the panel. As she reports, “the Woolf panel … was wonderful. The three presentations were lively, interesting, and provocative; … the presentations … linked Woolf’s writing, especially Three Guineas and Between the Acts, with what’s going on today.” Kristin, Mark and Jane have agreed to organize the 2004 panel as well. A call for papers is forthcoming. Anticipating the 2003 Conference on Virginia Woolf… “Woolf in the Real World: the 13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf” will be held June 5-8, 2003 at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. The event is sponsored by the Mortimer Rare Book Room at Smith College. For information, visit the Web site at http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/ or contact the organizers at woolf@smith.edu; Virginia Woolf Conference, Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063 USA; (413) 585-2154 (Marilyn Smith) or (413) 585-2860 (Stephanie Schoen); FAX (413) 585-4486. Plan to register early! The Very Important IVWS-Sponsored Party is described exquisitely by J.J. Wilson earlier in this issue of the Miscellany. MLA 2003 in San Diego: The IVWS Allied Organization Sessions The topics for the 2003 MLA conference will be “Virginia Woolf & Contemporary Magazines & Journals of the 1920s and 1930s,” organized by Leslie Kathleen Hankins, Cornell College and “Virginia Woolf in the Archives,” organized by Celia Marshuk, SUNY-Stony Brook. 2004 Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf Conference in London! “Back to Bloomsbury,” the 14th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf will be held at the University of London, Institute of English Studies. Gina Vitello will be responsible for organizing the event. She has sent out a lovely electronic flyer soliciting submissions. If you have any questions or are interested in helping organize this conference, contact: Gina M. Vitello, Birkbeck College, University of London, 30 Russell Square, London WC1E7HX, UK. Email: Vwoolf2004@aol.com, 2002 IVWS Elections Most of you already know the results of last June’s election, but, to recap, the current officers are Vara Neverow, President and Interim Secretary-Treasurer; Leslie Hankins, Vice-President; Jeanne Dubino, Secretary-Treasurer (on sabbatical leave); and Mark Hussey, Historian-Bibliographer (who has just completed the seven-year report that allied organizations are required to submit to the MLA to maintain their status). We miss Anne Fernald who stepped down as Historian-Bibliographer in December 2003 but are very glad that Mark has (re)joined us—this being something of a déjà-vu experience for him since he has previously served as Secretary-Treasurer and President of the IVWS. As you may have heard, we have also created three new positions for Members-at-Large. The M-a-Ls are Keri Barber, Anne Ryan Barton and June Dunn. Keri Barber Vara Neverow Member-at-Large President
Bloomsbury nursery school in Kandy

Bloomsbury Computer Institute

Leonard’s office

Leonard’s house

St. Mary’s Church

Assistant Government Agents

Headstones of Charles Hay and Julia Margaret Cameron

photos by Peter Stansky