TO THE READERS:
This is another truly miscellaneous Miscellany featuring several poems and images in addition to the usual articles and reviews. The backfile of the Miscellany is now available in a full-text digital format through two of EBSCOhost’s databases: Humanities International Complete and Literature Reference Center. Amusingly, Amazon.com is now offering subscriptions to the Miscellany (EBSCO handles the actual subscription process) so if you want to send someone in the U.S. a two-year subscription to the Miscellany as a gift, you can do so with a nifty little electronic gift card with an image of the Spring 2004 issue which featured the logo from the Back to Bloomsbury conference (there is a small surcharge of 65¢ for the online order).

Just for clarification, all members of the International Virginia Woolf Society receive the Miscellany as a membership benefit, but—like the annual Woolf conference—the Miscellany is an independent entity. In Spring 2003, the publication moved from Sonoma State University where J. J. Wilson had nurtured it from its inception in Fall 1973. Since then, the Miscellany has been housed at and is currently funded primarily by Southern Connecticut State University (the IVWS does contribute to the costs of printing and mailing the publication to its members).

Vara Neverow  
Southern Connecticut State University

Information about the 2006 IVWS Silent Book Auction on page 12

16TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIRGINIA WOOLF  
Woolfian Boundaries  
22 – 25 June 2006 hosted by the University of Birmingham at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Central Square, Holliday Street, Birmingham B1 1HH UK  
In affiliation with the International Virginia Woolf Society and the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain.

See page two for registration information.

Publishers, authors and scholars should direct inquiries regarding book reviews to Karen Levenback at kklevenback@worldnet.att.net.

CALL FOR PAPERS

17th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism  
The 17th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf will take place Thursday June 7 through Sunday June 10, 2007 at the Marcum Conference Center of Miami University of Ohio, in Oxford, Ohio, USA.

We welcome proposals for academic presentations, roundtable discussions, and creative performances on the conference topic of Art, Education, and Internationalism. Proposals presenting diverse perspectives on the following topics are especially encouraged:

- Peace, War, and Pedagogy: Public Discourse and the Artist; International Perspectives on Woolf Studies;
- Virginia and/or Leonard Woolf as Political Philosophers; Woolf and Postcolonial Studies; The Ethics of Art in Wartime; Woolf and the Translocal; Woolf in/and Translation; Heteronormativity and Institutional Politics;
- Woolf and Political Rhetoric; Art, Fascism, and Anti-Fascism; Woolf and Cultural Capital in Academe; Woolf, Cosmopolitism, and Education; Teaching Woolf and Feminist Rhetoric.

To propose an individual presentation, send a cover sheet with your name, title of your presentation, address, email address, and phone number. On a separate page, include the title of your presentation and a 250-word abstract of the presentation.

To propose a panel, send a cover sheet with the title of your presentation, presentation titles and contact information for each panelist, and a brief description of the panel topic. Include on separate pages titles and 250-word abstracts for each presentation. We welcome submissions by those affiliated with academic institutions and “common readers” alike.

Send proposals by January 8, 2007 via email to detloffm@muohio.edu or via mail to Woolf 2007 Conference, English Department, 356 Bachelor Hall, Oxford, OH 45056. Electronic submissions are preferred.

The conference will be connected to the Miami University English Department Graduate Summer Institute—a program offering graduate credit for students who attend a pre-conference summer session seminar taught by Diana Royer and Madelyn Detloff. Students who wish to receive more information about the Summer Institute should send their contact information to English@muohio.edu indicating that they wish to be placed on the Graduate Summer Institute Mailing List.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

To the Readers  
Vara Neverow  
1

16th Annual Conference Information  
1

17th Annual Conference CFP  
1

16th Annual Conference Registration Information  
2

VWM Subscription Guidelines  
2

MLA 2006 Panels & Party in Philadelphia  
3

IVWS/VWS Archive  
3

20th Century Literature Conference* CFP  
University of Louisville  
3

Remembering John Bicknell 1913-2006  
3

The Belle of Bloomsbury: Virginia Stephen Woolf  
Lenore A. Reiss  
4

An Author’s Endorsement by Jane Smiley  
Thomas Fagan  
4

In Parenthesis  
David Eberly  
4

Idyllic Summer at St. Ives (Cornwall)  
Lenore A. Reiss  
5

Corrections  
Leslie K. Hankins  
5

Confessions of an Archive Addict  
Donald Blume  
5

The Unbounded Whole: Harrisonian Ritual Structures in Virginia Woolf’s Night and Day  
Jean Mills  
6

Leaving Her Father’s House: Sackville-West’s St. Joan of Arc and Woolf’s Three Guineas  
Janine Utell  
6

“All Art, All Waifs & Strays,” and the English Great House in Between the Acts  
Melissa Sullivan  
8

VWM Subscription Form  
VWM  
9

IVWS Membership Form  
IVWS  
10

VWSGB Membership Form  
VWSGB  
11

2006 IVWS Silent Book Auction  
IVWS  
12

VWM Subscription Information  
VWM  
13

Editorial Staff  
14

Review: Virginia Woolf: The Will to Create As a Woman by Ruth Gruber  
Jean Mills  
14

Review: Women, Modernism and Performance by Penny Farfan  
Steven Putzel  
15

Review: Matricide in Language: Writing Theory in Kristeva and Woolf by Miglena Nikolchina  
Jeanette McVicker  
16

Review: Virginia Woolf’s Illnesses by Douglass W. Orr  
Vara Neverow  
17

Review: Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life by Victoria Rosner  
Sally Greene  
19

Society Column  
Bonnie Kime Scott  
20

-2-
The Panels:
Rereading Trauma in Woolf’s Fiction En(Corps)
Chair: David Eberly, Children’s Hospital Trust
Jane Lilienfeld, Department of Humanities, Fine Arts, and Journalism, Lincoln University, “‘There was an emptiness about the heart of life’: Traumatic Shock, World War I, and Mrs. Dalloway”
Andrea Yates, Department of English, University of Rhode Island, “The ‘To Come:’ Reading Trauma in To the Lighthouse”
Suzette Henke, Morton Professor of Literary Studies, English Department, University of Louisville, “The Waves As Ontological Trauma Narrative: The Anxiety of a Death (Un)Foreseen”
Kimberly Coates, Department of English, Bowling Green State University, “Woolf’s ‘Precarious Lives’: Trauma and Communal Survival in Jacob’s Room and Between the Acts”

Street Life: Woolf and Public Spaces
Chair: June Dunn, Southeastern Louisiana State University
Lisa Tyler, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH, “An ‘Elegy Played among the Traffic’: Motor-Cars in Mrs. Dalloway”
Adam Hammond, University of Toronto, “‘I Salute Thee; Passing’’: Generic Hybridity and Urban Space in Woolf’s ‘Ode Written Partly in Prose’”
Respondent: Vara Neverow, Southern Connecticut State University

This year’s MLA party, organized by Bonnie Kime Scott, will be at the home of Annette and Mort Levitt, 232 S. 21st St. starting at 6:30 on December 28.

2007 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
FORMERLY: 20th CENTURY LITERATURE CONFERENCE
NOW: CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND CULTURE SINCE 1900
Call for Papers

The International Virginia Woolf Society is pleased to host its sixth consecutive panel at the University of Louisville’s Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900 (formerly known as the Twentieth Century Literature Conference) in 2007. We invite proposals for critical papers on any topic concerning Woolf’s work. A particular theme may be chosen depending upon the proposals received.

Please submit by email a cover page with name, email address, mailing address, phone number, professional affiliation, and title of paper, and a second anonymous page containing a 250-word paper proposal to Kristin Czarnecki, czarnecki@fuse.net by Tuesday, August 1, 2006.

Panel Selection Committee
Mark Hussey\nJane Lilienfeld
Jeanne Dubino\nVara Neverow

The IVWS & VWS Archive
Thanks to the diligent efforts of Karen Levenback, Past President of the VWS, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Past President of the IVWS, and Carmen Köngsreuther Socknat, Head of Bibliographic Services at Victoria University E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, the archive of the VWS and the IVWS has at last found a secure and permanent home. The archive is now officially housed in the collection. All archival materials should be sent to the IVWS Historian-Bibliographer who will then arrange the transfer of materials into the collection.

REMEMBERING
JOHN WALTER BICKNELL
John Walter Bicknell, a noted scholar of Victorian Studies, died Jan. 14, 2006 of heart failure at his home on Little Deer Isle, Maine. He was 92.

A professor emeritus at Drew University in Madison, N.J., Dr. Bicknell devoted much of his long career to the study of Leslie Stephen, 19th century critic, biographer and editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, and father of novelist Virginia Woolf.


Dr. Bicknell was born on Jan. 22, 1913 in Mansfield, MA to John and Nellie Bicknell. He spent much of his early life in Sri Lanka, where his parents were Congregationalist educational missionaries and his father was principal of Jaffna College. In 1986 Dr. Bicknell became a trustee of the Jaffna College Funds. Prior to his death, Dr. Bicknell was writing a memoir about his years growing up in the island nation.

He was educated at Kodai School in Kodaikanal, India, and at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. He graduated from Hamilton College in 1935 and received a master’s degree there the following year. After his marriage to Evangeline N. Foster in 1936 and a year of doctoral studies at Columbia University, he became an English instructor at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y. He fondly remembered being mistaken for a freshman on his first registration day at St. Lawrence. During World War II, he served in the Navy as a meteorology instructor. He earned his doctorate at Cornell University in 1950 and taught there until his move to Drew University in 1954.

At Drew University he served as chairman of the English department for 14 years and was instrumental in the founding of the graduate program. In 1957, he coached the university’s baseball team. His coaching, while short on specifics, was long on practicality. During one tense bases-loaded, no-outs situation, he visited the mound. “The pitcher asked me what I thought he should do,” Dr. Bicknell recalled years later. “I told him, ‘throw something that will get us a triple play.’ And by golly, he did!” He also served as faculty advisor for the school’s soccer team.

After he retired in 1979, Dr. Bicknell wrote, traveled to Europe and lectured. He returned to Jaffna College for three months in 1983 where he gave several lectures. At home in Maine he sang in two church choirs and the Bagaduce Chorale, and performed in community plays and variety shows. He volunteered weekly at the Bagaduce Music Lending Library in Blue Hill, Maine. He was an avid Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots fan and a political activist known for his devotion to peace and improving conditions in the developing world.

Sometimes called “The Last Victorian” by family and friends, he frequently quoted 19th century literature. But in the end, he turned to Shakespeare. Among his last words were, “And now to sleep, perchance to dream. Good night, good night.”


A memorial service was conducted on Jan. 21 at the First Congregational Church of Deer Isle, Maine. A memorial took place at Drew University in Madison, N.J. on April 23rd, 2006. Donations in Dr. Bicknell’s memory can be made to Amnesty International or Doctors Without Borders.
THE BELLE OF BLOOMSBURY: VIRGINIA STEPHEN WOOLF

“Virginia Woolf was the centre not merely of an esoteric group, but of the literary life of London.”
—T. S. Eliot

“Where they seemed to me to triumph is in having worked out a view of life which was not by any means corrupt or sinister or merely intellectual; rather ascetic and austere indeed; which still holds, and keeps them dining together, and staying together, after twenty years; and no amount of quarreling or success, or failure has altered this.”
—Virginia Woolf

O What Joy to flee the Victorian Gloom of 22 Hyde Park Gate Kensington with its Heavy Furnishings & Draperies Cupids Hearts Crimson Velvet Black Gold abounding the oval table with pink china where I had “My Tea-Table Training” Vanessa & I Perfect Virgins in white lace & seed pearls in a constant undertow of Death George Duckworth’s Erotic Presence to Fresh Air & Light at 46 Gordon Square Bloomsbury White Walls Large Windows White & Green Chintzes Rooms of our own Owners of our Time After-Dinner Coffee replacing Afternoon Tea Fledglings liberated from the nest FREE FREE to follow Artistic Dreams Then the Miracle of “Thursday Evenings” at Bloomsbury with Thoby’s Cambridge Friends Lytton Strachey Clive Bell E. M. Forster Leonard Woolf & Company sitting on sofas silent as snow when a Concept “Beauty” “Reality” surfaced from polite talk into an Active Volcano spewing WORDS IDEAS my Thoughts & Feelings Appreciated Lauded & the welcomed birth of “My Conversational Self” “My Literary Self” while Bloomsbury Homosexuals tickled our imaginations Sex discussed with the same Fervour as “What is Art?” “What is Truth?” Parties Masquerades Plays written & dramatized as We were Captives in the Storm’s Eye of Modernism Psychoanalysis dispelling clouds of Realism Freud Jung Cezanne Picasso New Terms Cubism Abstract Art Surrealism poured from our Lips & Souls like vintage wine What a Time to be Alive! Part of a Chosen Family bonded with the same Flesh & Blood belonging to each other believing in each other idolizing each other’s talents ignoring the Mores of Conventional Society Virginia Stephen Woolf “An Outsider” no longer but a Modern Woman encased in a satin cocoon metamorphosing until able to Soar to Unimagined Horizons A Ripening Sun with Planets drawn to my Rays A Yellow Rose blossoming in the Garden of Bloomsbury my Vigilant Loving Caretakers at my side without whom I would never have plunged into Deep Waters of Creativity Daring All with My Poetic Vision in the Novels I so desperately desired to Write...

Lenore A. Reiss

AN AUTHOR’S ENDORSEMENT

All women writers after Woolf owe her an unprecedented debt. I think it is safe to say that women writers of my generation could not have conceived of themselves as they did—conceived of themselves as writers with a right to compose their works—without two things that Woolf offered: in her fiction, a serious depiction of female and male consciousnesses as they exist in themselves and interact with one another, equal and equally detailed, and, in her criticism, a consideration of literature (in the Common Readers and A Room of One’s Own) in which Woolf’s rights as a critic and reader are quietly and authoritatively asserted.

—Jane Smiley
13 Ways of Looking at the Novel

Thomas Fagan
Independent Scholar

IN PARENTHESES

Now this is very profound, what rhythm is and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in mind, this distracted gap, so much longer than breath, within which is held— what? how to capture, to show this fissure, this break, this insistent gasp inserted between one word— space false, notation irrelevant—and the next, arbitrary halt to the self’s incessant attempt to reattach itself to something else (intimate) long before it makes the words to fit.

Virginia Woolf to Vita Sackville-West
March 16, 1926

David Eberly
Children’s Hospital Trust

IDYLLIC SUMMER AT ST. IVES (CORNWALL)

“They were happier now than they would ever be again”

—Mrs. Ramsay
To the Lighthouse

Summers at Talland House St. Ives regaled the Stephen Family with a Splendid View of the Sea Rhythmic Waves stroking the Shore Day & Night like a Heartbeat pumping blood into our Innocent Veins Were We really there in those Carefree Months splashing in the Bay smelling of salt & seaweed our towels bathing suits & toes filled with sand chasing butterflies by day moths by night when the Godrevy Lighthouse glowed in all its Brilliance a Monument of Security in our minute world our Beacon of Golden Light as We played games of cricket climbed rocks & trees Four Stephens the Duckworth children Father & Mother MOTHER Always THERE weaving a Tapestry of Endless Love Giving Giving to her Tyrannical Husband Demanding Home Needy Children pleasing them preparing Feasts presiding at her Large Kitchen Table Beautiful Optimistic though often strangely Aloof Remote Silent as if having an Inner Dialogue which didn’t include Us appearing Older & more Worn yet calming Us solving our dilemmas seldom tending to her own emotions & We were so absorbed in Blissful Childhood until one day the Angel of Darkness descended & Mother flew away Willingly on her Soft Wings into the Night & the Waves kept pounding the Shore & the Sands kept coming to her Door but Mother wasn’t There to Sweep them away...

Lenore A. Reiss

CORRECTIONS
In VWM #67, the Spring/Summer 2005 issue, the notes were omitted from Leslie K. Hankins’ article, “Switching Sex and Redirecting Desire: the Surrealist Film, Entr’acte, and Woolf’s Orlando.” The notes are printed below and correspond with the article, which appeared on pp 25-26 of VWM #67.


2 The British censors were irritated by the Surrealists; the British Board of Film Censors vented that incoherent irritation at the Surrealist film by Germaine Dulac, The Sea Shell and the Clergyman. The London Film Society quoted the censors on their programme for the 1930 showing as a way of endorsing the film: “This is the film rejected by the British Board of Film Censors on the grounds that it is so cryptic as to be almost meaningless. If there is a meaning, it is doubtless objectionable.” (Amberg 150)


4 Certainly, the sex change in Entr’acte confuses or challenges any identity based on sexual preference. What are a few of the myriad possibilities? Viewing this segment of Entr’acte with a lesbian gaze, delighting in the erotic spectacle of the female ballet dancer, one might find it a rude awakening when the figure changes into a male in drag. Such a lesbian spectator may be wrenched into compulsory heterosexuality, a discomforting option. If one takes on the gaze of a straight male spectator-reader, constituting desire according to compulsory heterosexuality, that socially acceptable heterosexual desire would be wrenched into something taboo, the gay’s gaze, as the object of his gaze shifts from female ballerina to a bearded man in tutu and tights. In Entr’acte, viewing from a gay male position may be rewarded as the female turns into the male in drag. And other options are possible.

5 Or, she might enjoy the joke on heterosexist assumptions. Chris Straaeyer complicates Laura Mulvey’s pioneering forays into the study of the gaze.

Regarding her contribution to Virginia Woolf in the Real World (the selected papers of the 2003 Virginia Woolf Conference at Smith College), Elizabeth Shih wishes to clarify that in the contributors’ notes that she has published only on Alice Munro and Virginia Woolf. The writer of the biographical note was unintentionally mistaken.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ARCHIVE ADDICT
The archives I have spent time in—including those at the British Library, the Royal Geographical Society, the Alpine Club, the University of Sussex, and Kings College—are delightful places to wile away a few hours or a week of days at. Indeed, of these, the Alpine Club of London is the only one that can claim any share in the musty, dusty category of the stereotypical archive, and its mustiness is merely a reflection of its character—visiting it is like stepping back in time to the Victorian Age. The other archives are light and airy places all.

But let me begin anew with a question: Why does one go to the archives? To revise a somewhat famous reply from George Mallory, the ill-fated Everest pioneer, the short answer is “Because they are there.” “They” in this instance being the personal letters, literary manuscripts, photographs and other items of interest that can shed light on the public lives and published writings of people like Virginia Woolf and the other members of Bloomsbury. Of course, archives often yield interesting background information that can shed light on otherwise obscure episodes or events. For example, the Alpine Club archives contain a range of material about Woolf’s father, Leslie Stephen, a long-time member of the club, who served terms as both the club’s president and the editor of its official journal. And occasionally archives contain information that is impossible to find elsewhere. Thus the Alpine Club is probably the only location that contains gallery guides, including artist and lay member lists, from a number of Vanessa Bell’s Friday Club shows: it turns out that early in the twentieth century the Alpine Club had a gallery space that hosted several exhibitions of works by Bloomsbury artists.

For me, the Alpine Club’s archives have also yielded up a treasure trove of material bearing on the social milieu of the mountaineers and their families who gathered each Christmas and Easter for many years in Snowdonia, Wales, to climb and socialize with their host, Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Among the found treasures are original photographs, diaries, and drafts of songs and a published song book containing lyrics about particular guests at these gatherings. For example, “A Masque of (G.W.Y.) and P.Y.P.” by Hilton Young commemorates a climbing party held at the Pen-y-Pass Hotel (now a YHA hostel, which incidentally still holds the official hotel guest-book from these days) over the Easter holiday in 1912, and includes verses about George Mallory, Hilton Young, his brother Geoffrey, and other notable figures, including prominent academics, politicians, and a member or two of the Apostles, the secret and highly selective Cambridge University-based society.
which Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, and Maynard Keynes belonged to. You never really know what you are going to find in an archive until you actually go there and look.

Thus, it has come about that for the past five years I have been making regular pilgrimages to these archives, feeling at times a bit like Mr. Casaubon in my effort to not merely gather material for my study about George Mallory, Virginia Woolf, and To the Lighthouse, but to assemble a comprehensive collection of letters written between four key and fascinating men prior to and during the early largely Cambridge-centered days of “Bloomsbury”: Lytton Strachey and his younger brother James, Maynard Keynes, and Duncan Grant (a cousin of the Strachey brothers). While my study is still in the computer-based drafting stage, I now have five closely-packed pages of letters, mainly covering the 1905-1910 period, as which I see as the formative years of Bloomsbury. Together, I think the letters, which constitute a kind of epistolary non-fiction novel, give an excellent sense of how “modernism” developed within Bloomsbury. Most obviously, the story they tell is one of rather byzantine love affairs, both real and imaginary. But it is also a story of how a close group of men with extraordinarily high aspirations for personal greatness went about making their way in a world that was often indifferent or hostile to them. And always, too, in devious ways it is a story of the Apostles, for both Lytton Strachey and Maynard Keynes were obsessed with this secret society to a degree that only their personal letters on the subject can fully reveal.

Ultimately, because these men and their struggles became an increasingly important part of the life of the twenty-something and similarly ambitious Virginia Stephen, particularly following the death of her brother Thoby in November of 1906, their experiences and struggles are a key part of the intellectual and creative coming of age of Virginia Woolf. This is in part to say that the letters I have gathered, if not actually read by Virginia Stephen (though some surely were), often address episodes or ideas that she was privy to as a member of this group of friends. My working title for this contemplated book of letters, which Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, and Maynard Keynes belonged to. You never really know what you are going to find in an archive until you actually go there and look. Scholars writing in the 1980’s, in particular by the critic, Jane Marcus, that Woolf looked to Harrison as a feminist role model and intellectual mentor. With the exception of analyses exploring mythic patterns in the more obvious examples like To the Lighthouse, The Years, and Between the Acts (Blotner 547; Marcus 19; and Cuddy-Keane 105; among others), there have been no full-scale studies restoring the connections between Harrison and Woolf as two major feminist intellectuals.

In my current project, I chart the markers of Harrison’s mythography throughout Virginia Woolf’s writing life, as I argue that the questions preoccupying Harrison resonated with Woolf as she adapted these ideas to her own intellectual pursuits. What is the relationship of the family and women to the state? What are the sources of violence and war? What role can gender play in effecting social change? What are the roots of patriarchy and the possibilities of alternative social systems? How do universal structures, like language and time, function and govern culture? And what role can art play in changing our lives? In other words, the “great J—H—herself,” who haunts the grounds of the women’s college, Fernham, in A Room of One’s Own (1929), is the same intellectual and political presence haunting each one of Woolf’s novels and major essays.

While Night and Day, Woolf’s second novel written for the most part during respite from a difficult convalescence between 1913 – 1915 (Briggs 34), is frequently dismissed as “minor” by critics, a “disappointment” and “a lie” by her contemporaries, and as a necessary exercise by a literary apprentice by the author, herself (Letters, Vol. 4, to Ethel Smythe 16 October 1930, 231), the novel, when it is read on its own merits, has been usefully characterized both structurally and thematically in terms of Mozart, Ibsen, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Meredith, and Samuel Butler. In my view, however, Night and Day, gestures towards Jane Harrison more than any of the above, as the novel is particularly rich in a mythos and politics prescribed by Harrison’s discussion of Greek rites in two of her major texts Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (1903) and Themis (1912), and in the feminism and pacifism of her essays Alpha and Omega. Although Night and Day, a book newly published on the boot heels of the first great catastrophe of the 20th century, has been gauged as “not antiraw enough” or not “modern,” it takes on new meaning and stylistic, structural, and thematic dimension when it is read through a Harrisonian lens.

In her work, Jane Harrison uncovered archaeological evidence (pathbreaking, at the time) that pointed to the predominance of the collective, the “Unbounded Whole,” and the female archetype not only representative of disaster and destruction, but also of renewal, rebirth, and what she called “the Tragic Rhythm” of regeneration (Themis 93). According to Harrison, the great challenge of “the herd instinct” of patriarchy and the promise of the “Unbounded Whole,” were to ensure that personal freedom was enhanced and not diminished by connectivity. In Night and Day, for example, as Denham curses himself “for having exchanged the freedom of the street for this sophisticated drawing-room,” Katherine Hilbery, watches him compress his teacup to such an extent that “there was danger lest the thin china might cave inwards.” She stirs her tea, but what she is really thinking about is how she is going “to keep this strange young man in harmony with the rest” (11). The topic of conversation in the early pages of the novel is the recent marriage and subsequent re-location of a family relation to the hinterlands of industrial Manchester. In the same moment, Katherine takes note of the novelistic and temporarily famous, Mr. Fortescue, (a cameo parody of Henry James) who depicts “first the horrors of the streets of Manchester, and then the bare immense moors on the outskirts of the town, and then the scrubby little house” in which their cousin will have to live before returning to London for a visit where Katherine will have to lead her “like an eager dog on a chain, past rows of clamorous butchers’ shops” on a tour of the more fashionable streets of London. Katherine’s challenge both within and between each of these scenarios is to integrate the young Denham, the dying God, into the circle at hand, to create out of the public and private spheres yet a third intellectual and ideological space encompassing “the Unbounded Whole.” Night and Day is filled with the subversive use of domestic space, libation scenes, initiation rituals, and parallels to Harrison’s “Year-Spirit” and rituals of aversion (or “the gloomy rites of ‘riddance,’” and tendance, the more hopeful, cheerful ceremonials of do ut des (I give that you may give)) (Prolegomena 3-11).
Many modernist authors borrowed from Jane Harrison, but in contrast to Woolf, did so from a masculinist perspective. Joyce’s Ulysses, for example, chose a locus classicus that centered not on the archetypal Mother as she relates to the archetypal Son, but on the male god, or “the dying god” as he transitions and separates from the Mother into the “deathless, heroic [or anti-heroic] deeds” of the Olympian gods. While the male god is essential to Harrison’s ritual drōmenon (or, the thing done), and her influence on Joyce, Lawrence, and others is an area of study worth renewing, the notion of valorizing or romanticizing “the dying god” as disconnected from Themis, the Mother, is not part of Virginia Woolf’s thinking in any of her novels and becomes an idea that in later works fills her with rage and frustration. In The Pargeters, for example, within a patriarchal ritual structure, she finds it “extremely difficult to say what you think,” especially regarding the possibility of another war, which she characterizes as “a stupid and violent and hateful and idiotic and trifling and ignoble and mean display.” She writes that she is “bored to death by war books,” “detests[s] the masculinist point of view,” is “bored by heroism, virtue, and honour,” and wishes they would “not talk about themselves any more” (The Pargeters 164). The Pargeters, of course, comes much later in her career and becomes attached to The Years and Three Guineas as Woolf’s writing actively takes part in a complete re-visualization of society. Night and Day is one of Woolf’s early examples of a quintessential feminist ritual structure in service to that end and owes an intellectual debt to Jane Harrison’s views as expressed in her own eminently readable texts on families, women, peace, and living a moral life without God. Indeed, it is my hope that, upon completing this project, Harrison will be required reading alongside Woolf texts in the curriculum, for to do otherwise is a disservice to Woolf’s literary achievements.

Jean Mills  
The Graduate Center and Hunter College

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LEAVING HER FATHER’S HOUSE: SACKVILLE-WEST’S SAINT JOAN OF ARC AND WOOLF’S THREE GUINEAS

On the eve of the Second World War, through differing processes of writing women’s lives, Vita Sackville-West in Saint Joan of Arc and Virginia Woolf in Three Guineas show how women might reject patriarchal codes of power and gender in order to make a claim for a new form of national identity, predicated on a feminist revisioning of historical agency and action. These interventions call for a refashioning of women’s roles in the public sphere and a reconsideration of the relationship between gender and national identity at a time when the British state, and the very concept of “Britishness,” were under threat from outside forces.

Hélène Cixous claims that the female struggle for sexual and national identity which takes place within the patriarchy cannot succeed: “Within his economy, she is the strangeness he likes to appropriate. […] She has not been able to live in her ‘own’ house, her very body” (68). The female body is denied of subjedehood as it is made subject to the male body politic. Joan of Arc must leave her father’s house and the roles and codes imposed upon her in order to claim her place in her nation. Likewise, the “daughters of educated men,” as Woolf argues in Three Guineas, must leave the their fathers’ houses, the site of domestic—and thus political—tyranny. What we are supposed to do once we pass through the gates of that house, however, is where Sackville-West and Woolf differ.

I read Saint Joan of Arc and Three Guineas in the context of Sackville-West’s and Woolf’s personal relationship—their engagement with the question of feminine/feminist identity—as well as in the context of the political and historical moment. Vita Sackville-West published her biography of Joan of Arc in 1936, as the rumblings of war began to be heard across Europe. With her portrayal of Joan, Sackville-West proposes a feminist model of militarism, revising history for her own purposes. Saint Joan of Arc is a response to patriarchy and impending war; this response shows a woman appropriating military action within the masculine realm in order to reaffirm patriotism and national identity. Jane Marcus has pointed out that Virginia Woolf sought to bring Sackville-West to feminist consciousness over the course of their relationship (107-109). This relationship saw its height in the years 1923 to 1934; in the years after this period, the same time that saw the publication of the two works under examination, the relationship between the two women cooled. One of the reasons, as suggested by Louise DeSalvo, was their differing opinions on pacifism. Sackville-West rejected Woolf’s form of pacifism, and in fact was quite unsympathetic to Three Guineas (DeSalvo 214). In that text, published two years after Saint Joan of Arc, Woolf argues that it is in fact patriarchy and masculine power that lead to war. She claims that it is only through feminist change and a radical revisioning of female citizenship and national identity that war can be averted.

Contending that there is a connection between public and private dictatorship, Woolf writes that “the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other. […] Both houses will be ruined, the public and private, the material and the spiritual, for they are inseparably connected” (217-218). Patriarchal tyranny implicitly is connected, for Woolf, to war, and must be resisted. She rejects national identity, famously stating, “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world” (166). Yet at the same time, she calls for a new civilization founded on an explicitly feminist definition of national identity purged of militarism. A woman looking at “her” country will find “how much of ‘England’ in fact belongs to her” (164). “England” is a construct, but one women should have the right to claim—provided it is revisioned within the context of a new civilization. Woolf writes of the giver of the guineas to the writer of the letter, “The giver has no wish to be ‘English’ on the same terms that you yourself are ‘English’” (154). As Naomi Black writes, “It [Three Guineas] is about war because it is about the better, nonsexy, and therefore peaceful world that feminism envisages” (1). Yet Black also points out that the argument of Three Guineas is broader than simply a polemic against war; it is a critique of men’s civilization: “For her, the evils of the modern day were direct results of the prevalent structures of power, with patriarchy central in both private and public life” (98). Woolf rejects both the violence of these existing structures and the violence that would come from waging a new “woman’s war,” as Cixous exhorts. Patriotism is jettisoned in favor of a cosmopolitan, feminist citizenship, and with that comes a pacifist responsibility. “The ‘daughters of educated men’ must leave the father’s house. The house as domestic sphere, and the house as nation, is founded on tyranny; women must seek out a new space for peace and freedom, where they might construct their own vision of identity. Woolf calls for the daughters to “dance round the new house, the poor house […] and let them sing, ‘We have done with war! We have done with tyranny!'” (127). Doing away with domestic tyranny—the oppression of the home—is necessarily of a part with resisting (peacefully) the tyranny of fascism and militarism.

In her own engagement with the relationship between women and war on the eve of another global conflict, Sackville-West constructs a specifically feminist model of militarism and national identity: “She made war, but not love” (6). In this model, Joan of Arc rejects the categories of gender and sexuality imposed upon her by the patriarchal authority of her father: “From being a little girl, ordered
and thither by her parents, she had bloomed suddenly into the envoy of God, browbeating a king into doing the bidding of the King of Kings” (10). Joan formulates a wholly new self rooted in a definition of national identity and a destiny of military engagement. Woolf saw the intersections between violence and oppression in private and public life; Sackville-West advocates leaving private life to struggle for and against public, political concerns. She argues that women do not have to reject national identity, and that it is in fact vital to protect such an identity, while appropriating it in a specifically feminist intervention—even if it means waging a “woman’s war.” As in Woolf’s vision, for Sackville-West women must leave the house of their fathers to forge a new identity both sexual and national; yet in the work of the latter we see a resistance to an identity that does not allow for women’s might—even military might—in wartime.

Critics considering both Saint Joan of Arc and Three Guineas have claimed Sackville-West’s and Woolf’s texts as writing against history—and specifically fascism—through the body; the two books serve as interventions against a mode of inquiry and an ideology that strips the female body of signifying power. In analyzing Sackville-West’s life writing, Karyn Sproles criticizes her for refusing to acknowledge Joan’s femininity, the feminine body: “Femininity is certainly what Sackville-West both points out and wishes to repress in Joan. This conflict in representation is itself a crisis. […] Repressing her sexual identity is the active, albeit unconscious, task of her representatives, and Sackville-West does this not by forcing her to be either masculine or feminine, but by seeing her as neither” (162). Yet one might read Sackville-West as seeking not to remove the feminine from Joan’s conception of self but to negotiate both the gendered self and the “nationed” self.

Joan cultivated a “military persona”—this was a process of self-fashioning, of situating herself in her political and national context, and of constructing her own national identity at a time when such a construct was highly unstable. In telling Joan’s story, Sackville-West goes through much the same process, creating what she calls an “unconsciously complete” picture (85). She pieces together a narrative from Joan’s own testimony—telling much of the story in Joan’s own words—in order to reveal not only the saint but the citizen. As Joan says, “There is no one in the world, neither king, nor duke, not daughter of the King of Scotland [Margaret of Scotland], nor any other, who can regain the kingdom of France; there is no help for the kingdom but in me. I should prefer to be spinning beside my poor mother, for these things do not belong to my station; yet it is necessary that I should go” (84). Here Joan speaks of leaving the private sphere, the domestic world, her father’s house; at the same time, she acknowledges that another father, the King—any king—himself would have no power to save the nation. Even the daughter of a king, beholden as she is still to the power and authority represented by both his kingship and his patriarchal authority over her, cannot be a model for feminine power. Only Joan, the Maid of Orleans, through her own body, a body freed from the body politic while still devoted to her nation, will be that nation’s salvation. Sackville-West is responding to the anxiety over what so many believed to be impending war in the 1930s, the questioning of the stability of national identity under threat from outside hostile forces. Cixous writes: “I don’t give up on war. That would be suicide: struggle is more necessary than ever. […] I, revolt, rage, where am I to stand? What is my place if I am a woman? […] Where to stand? Who to be?” (74-75). Joan finds a place to stand in the struggle with—but without—masculine power.

Similarly, Woolf rejects the strict and stable categories required to define identity; citizenship should not be founded upon a gendered binary because then the woman can never be a true citizen. The appropriation of the feminine body, the reproductive body, by the state—the patriarchal state and its complement, the fascist state—is in both texts denied. However, where Woolf calls for a destabilization of woman’s place in the nation, a peaceful revolution of the word “citizenship,” Sackville-West offers a violent reimagining of female national identity, one that seeks to simultaneously preserve civilization and forge a place for woman within it. Thus in her biography of Joan of Arc, she re-envisioned the feminine/feminist body and the nature of the body politic.

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Notes
1Christine Froula situates Woolf’s envisioning of a new civilization within the modernism of Bloomsbury, “a different legacy for a new century still struggling toward global economic equity, human rights, community, and peace” (4). In her compelling study, Froula considers not just the feminist implications for Woolf’s vision, but the implications for the wider context of modernism and modernity.

2See, for example, the work of Merry Pawlowski, Judy Suh, and Erin Carlston.

Works Cited

“ALL ART, ALL WAIFS & STRAYS,” AND THE ENGLISH GREAT HOUSE IN BETWEEN THE ACTS

On 26 April 1938, Virginia Woolf sketched an outline for Between the Acts (1941), then titled Poyntzet Hall. Of this new novel, which she hoped would “amuse” her, Woolf writes: “Why not Poyntzet Hall: a center . . . but ‘I’ rejected: ‘We’ substituted . . . we all life, all art, all waifs & strays—rambling capricious but somehow unified whole . . . And English country; & a scenic old house” (Diary V 135). Significantly, the site of this great social and artistic assortment center which Woolf envisions is “a scenic old house,” rather than a diverse and modern metropolis. As Marina MacKay notes, Woolf’s decision to position Pointz Hall as a central focus in this novel reflects a growing tendency to focus on domestic imagery and places in the English press and in late modernist writing during the late 1930s and early 1940s (228). This is further complicated, however, when we consider that while “homely,” Pointz Hall is not a modest house, like Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s own Monk’s House—it is instead effectively an English Great House! (Woolf RTA 6). Woolf’s interest in casting the Hall as a location for communal artistic production shows that she envisages uses for the Great House that extend beyond its traditional role as a home for an upper class family and symbol of British social power. In Between the Acts, Pointz Hall is positioned as a counterpublic sphere that provides space for a temporary community center and an “outsider’s” artistic production; its transformation explores new roles for the English Great House, but without severing class or national hierarchies.

(continued on page 13)
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The **Virginia Woolf Bulletin** is the Society’s forum for discussion and research, and is issued free to Members. Published three times each year, the *Bulletin* contains articles, book reviews and information invaluable to those interested in Woolf and Bloomsbury. The *Bulletin* usually includes previously unpublished material by Virginia Woolf herself.

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By depicting Pointz Hall as a counterpublic sphere, Woolf suggests new possibilities for the English Great House during a time where her own thoughts often fixed upon her country’s historical and literary heritage. Nancy Fraser argues that “counterpublic spaces” are places where marginalized groups with limited power in the mainstream public sphere can gather and devise strategies for participating within wider arenas of discourse (Fraser 8). Yet, significantly, the Great House is a place that the average person is traditionally denied access to—and while the patriarchal controls are loosened when the Olivers become audience members, by the end of the day, it will again be the family’s private home. Woolf’s revisioning of the English Great House in *Between the Acts* echoes her friend Elizabeth Bowen’s call for a modern, social function for Anglo-Irish homes in “The Big House” (1940). Attempting to reinvent the symbols of a colonial regime, Bowen writes that “the idea from which these houses sprang was, before everything, a social one. That idea, although lofty, was at first rigid and narrow—but it could extend itself, and it must if the Big House is to play an alive part in the alive Ireland of today” (Bowen 29). Although the circumstances are different, Woolf too tries to temper the cultural significance of the Great House in *Between the Acts* by offering it as a social and artistic space that blurs, but does not destroy, class boundaries.

In Pointz Hall the intersections of the public and the private are emphasized, as well as those of class, art, nationalism, time, and gender. Christopher Reed argues that for members of the Bloomsbury group, reconfigurations of domestic spaces were directly linked to identity, artistry, and modernity, but I would add that the Great House is intriguing for Woolf because the blending of the public and the private is so pronounced in such a place (Reed 5). In *Orlando* (1928), the Great House “looked a town rather than a house” and is a place for both public industry and private artistry (64). After declaring that “the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected” in *Three Guineas*, Woolf brings her reevaluation of the domestic sphere even further in *Between the Acts* by positioning the Great House in a liminal, yet privileged, position between the two (Woolf TG 142).

As a counterpublic sphere, Pointz Hall provides an alternative space for Miss La Trobe’s artistic vision; here her art is released from the pressures of the literary marketplace and her voice is guaranteed to be heard. “The emergence of a counterpublic sphere,” Rita Felski maintains, “allows women's increased (if unequally distributed) access to networks of communication and interpretation” (201). Miss La Trobe’s pageant is performed in this counterpublic sphere, but her work is still mitigated by social pressures. She does not have full control of the power structures within this space and so “[w]riting this skimble-skamble stuff in her cottage, she had agreed to cut the play here; a slave to her audience . . . Just as she had brewed emotion, she spilt it” (Woolf *BT A* 91). Yet as an “outsider” through gender, class, and probably sexuality and nationality, Miss La Trobe can use her detached position to change the Great House by giving all members of the audience their own space within the pageant and the Hall. As Michelle N. Milmitsch claims, the pageant “attempts to create community out of fragments” (40). Within Miss La Trobe’s production, the community is part of the tale (the full pageant experience) and helps to define the space and the medium in which she works (150). Thus, the pageant itself is a communal production that is dependent upon each individual’s contribution and changes the power dynamics of Pointz Hall.

Despite the audience’s role in the pageant performed at Pointz Hall, class structures do ultimately remain intact: Mrs. Mannress and Mrs. Parker lead the villagers into tea and Miss La Trobe begins her next play at a local “public house” (103, 211-212). By challenging the traditional role of the Great House, Woolf grants the community a temporary center, but Isa Oliver, in many ways, benefits most from Woolf’s revisioning of Pointz Hall. During the pageant Isa does not have to be “Mrs. Giles Oliver,” the hostess pouring tea, or “Sir Richard’s daughter,” but instead becomes a part of the audience, eating store-bought cakes and watching the pageant (107, 16). With this freedom, Isa’s production of art increases and becomes more frequent. The short bursts of poetry she whispers at the start of the novel between brushing her hair and ordering filleted soles are replaced by longer solitary musings and public poetic statements (15, 155-6). Isa’s home becomes a site of her own artistic production, rather than only the symbol of her “hair thin ties to domesticity” (19).

Pointz Hall does not remain a counterpublic sphere once the players and audience members disperse at the end of the afternoon and return, presumably, to their own homes (or the local public house); the Great House does not ultimately serve as a permanent center for the wide range of audience members and Miss La Trobe remains an “outsider” (although this is not necessarily a negative conclusion for Woolf). Yet the lingering traces of Miss La Trobe’s pageant, which “hung in the sky of the mind—moving, diminishing, but still there” long after its conclusion, suggests that the evolving public role of Pointz Hall will also affect its private realm. For Woolf there is space for the English Great House in the modern world, but not all people are always granted access to it (212).

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**Note**

While tourists to East Sussex are told that the Hall was modeled upon the stately Glynde Place and Firle Place, it does hover between its status as an English Great House and as an average family’s home supported by Giles Oliver’s necessary work as a stock broker (“Virginia Woolf” par. 8). For the community, however, Pointz Hall fulfills the role of a Great House.

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I’ve become a bargain hunter of late. As an academic, I’ve discovered, one has to be. Thus the reason my eyes grew big with excitement as well as satisfaction as I turned each page of Ruth Gruber’s Virginia Woolf: The Will to Create as a Woman. In under 200 pages, and under $20, the reader is treated to a literary gem of a book. An articulate, time-tested, first-feminist dissertation on Virginia Woolf by the youngest person ever to receive a doctorate is bookended by the author’s candid, new introduction recounting her meeting with Leonard and Virginia Woolf on October 15, 1935 and an equally intriguing “About the Author” page. While it’s unusual for a reviewer to privilege an assessment of an “About the Author” page, Ruth Gruber is, in her own right, like Virginia Woolf, herself, a force to be reckoned with.

Gruber’s gifts as an author and a scholar, her experiences as a journalist and a member of FDR’s administration, who, at the request of Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes in 1944, led one thousand Holocaust refugees out of Italy to America, breathe life into her subject—Virginia Woolf. The author’s passion and compassion, her own enthusiasm and determination to retaliate against injustice using as “weapons” her typewriter and her camera recall Woolf’s own declarations during the writing of her pacifist manifesto Three Guineas to fight back against fascism and wrongdoing “with her mind.” Indeed, it would be a worthwhile project, I think, to look at Gruber’s series of essays for the New York Herald Tribune on women under fascism, democracy, and communism in the 1930s, in relation to the complex tapestry of Woolf’s own treatment of these issues in what ultimately becomes Three Guineas (1938).

Gruber’s dissertation entitled “Virginia Woolf: A Study,” written in 1931-32 and published here in the United States for the first time in a facsimile reproduction of the original 1935 Tauchnitz of Leipzig edition, is at the center of Virginia Woolf: The Will to Create as a Woman flanked by two new pieces by the ninety-one-year-old journalist. Here, the young Ruth Gruber writes with the perception and rhetorical confidence of a mature scholar capable of sustaining an effective and extended argument as she charts the evolution of Virginia Woolf’s literary style. Her findings reveal Woolf’s deliberate and remarkable determination to embrace her own voice, to write “through the eyes of her sex […] to penetrate life and describe it” as she is “bitterly opposed by the critics, who guard the traditions of men, who dictate to her or denounce her feminine reactions to art and life” (61).

In her first chapter, “Poet versus Critic,” relying predominantly on A Room of One’s Own for support, Gruber positions Woolf in relation to and against a largely hostile literary and critical environment. She sees Woolf navigating a course between the need for literary role models and a struggle for independence. Gruber writes refreshingly, especially to contemporary readers, of Woolf’s desire for “that integrity which I take to be the backbone of a writer” (AROO 110), as she characterizes Woolf as “a feminine Stephen Dedalus [who] seeks a spiritual mother from whom she can learn and, if possible, in herself surpass” (63). This is the Woolf, resurrected in the 1970’s and 80’s by leading feminist scholars like Jane Marcus and others, recognizing the importance of women writers to “think back through our mothers” (AROO 114).

In Woolf’s struggle for a style, Gruber notes the shift from the romantic, musical, dreamer heroine, Rachel Vinrace to the scientific, precise, mathematical heroine in Katherine Hilbery as a change from youthful rebelliousness in The Voyage Out to self-conscious reaction to “the lash of masculine criticism” in Night and Day. She sees Woolf’s early writing as vulnerable to self-confidence, of doubt, of attempted change, and grim resolution. (69)
The corrective comes in the female leads of Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, in the innovations of *Orlando*, and in “the rhythm of conflicts” (124) in *The Waves* as Woolf finds her literary stride, writing deliberately and energetically as a woman. Gruber writes eloquently of Woolf’s stylistic achievement, which, although it goes unmentioned, owes a great deal to Woolf’s intellectual mentor, Cambridge classicist, Jane Ellen Harrison, as:

That completion which Virginia Woolf had sought in her spiritual mothers, is in her women, fulfilled. A Greek perfection marks them; they are at once intellectual and sensual, balancing androgynously, as in “Orlando,” the creativeness of men and of maternal women. Physically submitting to the laws of life, of reproduction, they stand also beyond these laws, mentally productive. (156)

These recovered insights are framed by fresh new material in Gruber’s introduction, “My Hours with Virginia Woolf,” facsimile reproductions of their previously unpublished correspondence, and an epilogue, “A Mystery Solved.” This last carries the subtitle: “How 28 Volumes of Virginia Woolf’s Diaries and More than 100 of Her Letters Left London and Landed in the Berg Collection of the 5th Avenue New York City Public Library.” (Only a woman of Gruber’s stature and accomplishments could get away with a subtitle like that, and I like to imagine the young[er?] editor respectfully keeping mum about its length in the presence of the nongenominator, who happens also to be a master of piquing reader interest). In each of these sections, Gruber writes with such honesty and intimacy that the reader feels included in the “mystery” at the Berg and like another guest in the Woolf’s living room in the Introduction, as we gaze down upon a relaxed Virginia Woolf stretched out on the floor in front of the fire. We are present too for the discovery of the letters exchanged between them and for Gruber’s realization later on that Woolf was less than charitable to her when she met her in person, complaining about not being able to write and having to meet a Miss Grueber [sic] whom she refers to as “a pure have yer,” a derogatory Cockney expression, meaning a kind of fake. In a letter to her nephew Julian on 14th October 1935, she refers to her as “an importunate and unfortunate Gerwoman” (30). Gruber expresses her own hurt feelings upon reading these entries, but here uses them as an opportunity to openly discuss Woolf’s anti-Semitism and her struggle with illness. This new introduction forces us to confront head on the question of how Virginia Woolf’s personal anti-Semitism affected her public anti-fascism and how one’s private life can sometimes contain blindspots or utter disconnects from one’s public politics.

Gruber also comes to terms with her own “chutzpah” when she asks “How could I have dared to tell her that her reasons for waiting to read my book while she finished hers were splendid? I was surprised that she even answered such a letter. But she did answer it swiftly” (33). Gruber, a woman who worked tirelessly on behalf of Jewish refugees during World War II, ultimately forgives Woolf her remarks, pointing to the dailiness of Woolf’s struggle as a woman and a writer and to her relationship with her Jewish husband, Leonard Woolf. Two love letters to Leonard in the final days of her life, Gruber writes, “helped me work through my own anger and disillusionment, which now seem trifling in comparison to the agony she endured. They helped restore the admiration I had for her when I was nineteen and just discovering her genius. I realized that she had lived her entire life with a will to create as a woman. That was the most important lesson she taught me” (36).

It is fitting too, I think, that a woman like Ruth Gruber, who would go on to achieve so many “firsts,” would also be the critic to so clearly and early on identify the significance of Woolf’s David and Goliath achievement in breaking away from literary traditions dominated by men. As Jane Marcus notes in her assessment of Gruber on the inside flap, Virginia Woolf finally “found the critic she deserved in a 19-year-old Brooklyn Jewish girl’s Ph.D. at Cologne University in 1931.” The recovery of Gruber’s thesis in this new edition, then, reflects a need, in my view, to re-examine early feminist criticism of Woolf. Gruber’s analysis also emphasizes the importance of recent work done by Anna Snaith, Merry Pawlowski, and others on Virginia Woolf’s readership, seeking to place Woolf not in an elitist circle, but in a larger circle of ordinary anti-fascist men and women. For Virginia Woolf, writing was fighting, and lucky for us, lucky for the world, there were other activists, extraordinary anti-fascists, like Ruth Gruber.

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**REVIEW:**

**WOMEN, MODERNISM, & PERFORMANCE**


In her introduction to the special issue of *Women’s Studies* focusing on “Virginia Woolf in Performance” (1999), Sally Greene announces that “performance studies . . . has arrived in Woolf criticism” (354). Two years earlier, Penny Farfan, a specialist in dramatic literature and theatre history, theory and criticism, won the Association for Theatre in Higher Education’s Research Award for Outstanding Journal Article for “Writing/Performing: Virginia Woolf Between the Acts.” Not long after that, her essay “Freshwater Revisited: Virginia Woolf on Ellen Terry and the Art of Acting,” appeared in the *Wool Studies Annual* 4 (1998: 3-17). Now these two essays have been reworked to form the “anchor” in what Farfan calls “a kind of relay structure” (6), linking the six diverse essays in *Women, Modernism, and Performance*.

Farfan’s stated purpose is to examine the “performative strategies” and texts of selected late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century feminist artists “in order to clarify the position of women within—and in relation to—modern theatre history” by combining biography, performance theory, criticism, textual analysis, and feminist theory (6). In addition to the two Woolf essays, chapters focusing on Elizabeth Robins’ critique of Ibsen, Ellen Terry’s feminist rendering of Shakespeare’s women, Djuna Barnes’ inversion of male-defined “obscenity,” and Isadora Duncan as “icon of the tragic female artist” begin to paint a picture of what Farfan calls “the feminist-modernist counter-public sphere” (4). The first three chapters trace the role that drama, theatre, and performance theory played in the attempts of Robins, Terry, and Woolf to realize “liberating notions of self,” with Woolf achieving an “anonymous self-expression,” not dramaturgically in *Freshwater*, but in the dialogue and choral narration of *Orlando* and *The Waves*.

Woolf, then, provides much of the theoretical framework supporting and informing these studies in feminist performance. For example, the third chapter, “Unimagined Parts, Unlived Selves: Virginia Woolf on Ellen Terry and the Art of Acting,” not only examines Woolf’s depiction of Terry in *Freshwater* and in her 1941 essay, “Ellen Terry,” but also links Woolf’s own “feminist-modernist literary project” to the dramaturgical experiments of Terry, Robins, Barnes, the French actress Rachel, and others. Farfan defines the first wave of this feminist project as the “recognition and transcendence.
of subordination” and the discovery of artistic modes through which to convey this recognition. Terry steps toward a modernist-feminist perspective in her transformation of Lady Macbeth from sexless monster to a powerfully sexual woman, her brilliant depictions of Shakespeare’s strong comical women, and her comment that “Shakespeare was one of the pioneers of women’s emancipation” and that Portia, Beatrice, and Rosalind “were prototypes of modern suffragists” (46).

The connections between Terry and Woolf serve so well to create continuity that readers may wonder why Farfan did not also note the connections between Robins and Woolf. For example, Robins knew Julia Stephen and visited Hyde Park Gate; members of the Stephen family saw Robins act in Mariana (Passionate Apprentice 40); one of Woolf’s earliest reviews (1905) criticized Robins’ novel A Dark Lantern for its “morbidly” but concluded that Robins was one of the most “genuinely gifted” novelists alive (Essays 1: 42–43); Woolf met Robins in 1928; Woolf read two of Robins’ manuscripts in 1940; and the two women corresponded until a few days before Woolf’s death. Also, although Farfan draws heavily on Robins’ Ibsen and the Actress, she fails to remind readers that the work was published by Hogarth Press in 1928. Nevertheless, the description of Robins’ decade-long dedication to producing Ibsen and playing Hedda Gabler, Nora Helmer, Rebecca West, and his other heroines, the discussion of the critical stir these performances created, and the excerpts from period reviews and an unpublished lecture, provide valuable theater history. Farfan does more than previous critics to explain how Robins moves from Ibsen acolyte toward a feminist-modernist stance, though she sees Robins’ feminist credentials as somewhat limited by the melodramatic staging techniques of Votes for Women and her use of the heroine’s conventional good looks to reel in the audience.

The final three chapters of Women, Modernism & Performance are not as tightly interconnected as the first three, remaining closer to their earlier iterations as stand-alone articles. But her fourth chapter, “Staging the Ob/scene,” connects Ibsen, Terry, Edith Craig, and Woolf with references to Cicely Hamilton’s 1909 A Pageant of Great Women, in which a resurrected and politicized Hedda Gabler leads an impressive group that includes Edith Craig and Woolf. By her citations from that work (which are not many) rather than the full, published set; there are limitations in some choices for Kristeva criticism as she is in psychoanalytic theory and Kristevan criticism.

Nikolchina arrived at her fascinating conclusion. Readers already familiar with Kristeva will be treated to a subtly argued hermeneutic engagement with these two women’s lifelong fascinations with such concepts as exile, the maternal, the abject, the body, and the relation of language to silence, particularly in the “reclamation” of women’s contributions to culture.

Nikolchina’s voice is lucid, crisp, and refreshing in its willingness to dispense at times with academic protocol. She is as well read in Woolf and Woolf criticism as she is in psychoanalytic theory and Kristevan criticism and her understanding of Kristeva comes, in fact, through reading Woolf. In other words, this is not a book that mechanically “applies” Kristevan theory to Woolf’s texts; rather, her understanding of the concepts that inform Kristeva’s theoretical project are indebted to the example of Woolf’s writing practice. At the same time, her reading of Woolf’s writing—its gaps and silences as well as its overt articulations—unfolds concepts utilized by Kristeva in brilliant ways. My only complaint is that Nikolchina relied on A Writer’s Diary for her citations from that work (which are not many) rather than the full, published set; there are limitations in some choices for quotation that would not have been necessary otherwise.

Nikolchina, who teaches at Sofia University in Hungary, has clearly been a long-time, careful reader of Woolf. In the 15 years between publication of this book and the 1991 Diacritics essay that served as her primary introduction to Woolf scholars (“Born from the Head: Reading Woolf viaKristeva,” which became the basis for her dissertation, “Meaning and Matricide: Reading Woolf via Kristeva”) at University of Western Ontario in 1994), Nikolchina has become an important feminist theorist herself in addition to being a recognized Kristeva scholar. Part of her insight into Kristeva’s work derives from a level of shared kinship—both are Bulgarian and are informed by its literature, language and culture; both are “exiles” even as they have found new “homes” in other parts of Europe. Nikolchina writes extensively about Western philosophy, feminine subjectivity and language; her work on Plato’s Symposium (specifically how to account for the figure of Diotima) is

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In spite of the rather foreboding title, this book offers a rich, intertextual reading of Julia Kristeva with Virginia Woolf “to address the enigma of the persistent depletion of women’s contributions to culture” (1). If you are a reader who feels a bit intimidated by psychoanalytic theory, allow yourself to delve into the final chapter first to find as compelling a reading about Woolf’s late work (Between the Acts, “Anon” and “The Reader”) as any—and one that is genuinely accessible to non-specialist readers. I guarantee it will make you start leafing through the earlier chapters to see how Nikolchina arrived at her fascinating conclusion. Readers already familiar with Kristeva will be treated to a subtly argued hermeneutic engagement with these two women’s lifelong fascinations with such concepts as exile, the maternal, the abject, the body, and the relation of language to silence, particularly in the “reclamation” of women’s contributions to culture.

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deeply entwined in what has clearly been a sustained engagement with thinking Woolf and Kristeva’s work and ideas together and it provides one of the fundamental bridges for the intertextual reading developed in this book.

The organization of the book itself is very interesting: as she puts it, “My theoretical narrative moves from the discussion of Kristeva in the first part ... to a blend between Kristeva and Woolf, in which there is more and more Woolf and less and less Kristeva, until finally it is Woolf who provides the answer to her own excruciating questions—the questions that made me turn to Kristeva in the first place” (11). This is what makes it possible to “skip” to the final chapter, entirely on Woolf, if one must—yet Kristeva is there, hovering, through the careful conceptual threading that’s already taken place in previous chapters. The richness of Nikolchina’s discussion of Woolf’s final texts invokes a Kristevaian vocabulary and sensibility that moves easily alongside passages by notable Woolf critics (Ferrer, Graham, Ruotolo, Wyatt, Laurence, Harper, Bowby... just to name a few). The effect is kaleidoscopic: from the Symposium to a discussion of the “angel in the house” to a critique of Showalter’s dismissal of Woolf... through a brilliant correspondence between “A Room of One’s Own,” “A Sketch of the Past” and “An Unwritten Novel”... the reader gains a significant understanding of how Woolf’s use of interrupted speech and silence in Between the Acts potentially signals the “unend of narrating” and thus never comes to its “end” as a book (133).

Part of what I enjoyed while reading this book was hearing more vintage critical voices that have made important contributions to Woolf studies recast in a new conceptual framework; the sensation was something like “yes, this idea is familiar yet somehow new” and it made me want to reread Woolf as well as much of critical material with this altered perspective. In her analysis, for example, Patricia Laurence’s The Reading of Silence (1991) resonates alongside Joan Scott’s work on history and identity (2001-02) (the book is, incidentally, dedicated to Scott) and they are mutually drawn through the Kristevaian articulation of matricide and female libido, yielding fresh insights into Woolf’s texts. Tracing the critical responses to both Kristeva and Woolf, to take a more specific example, Nikolchina discusses how they have both been perceived as “strangers to language”—yet this is precisely what allows them to effect a “revolution in poetic language” (the title of Kristeva’s first acclaimed book, also her dissertation thesis), i.e., the making and unmaking of signs (26)—and what allows the hermeneutic reading to unfold:

This strangeness to language does entail the forlornness of the melancholic who is fused with the maternal Thing because of an unaccomplished separation from the mother. Asymptopia is the insufficiently lost maternal continent, the invisible center of gravity, the hidden image of Narcissus, whose silent call threatens with dissolution. But, on the other hand, without an ear for that silence and without the estrangement from language that prods the melancholic on a quest for the totally new word, there can be no psychic life or imagination. As Kristeva argues in Strangers to Ourselves (1991), there can be no basis for understanding and cooperation, no hope for the paradoxical universality demanded by a world without boundaries. Woman’s asymptopia, the feminist, Woolf’s speaking with the difficulty of a visionary and a dancer [Kristeva’s comment about Woolf], with the painful force of a spastic body, offers the horizon for a new universality that respects the unique and the singular (26).

During the course of the book, Nikolchina comments on nearly all of Woolf’s novels, with special focus on To the Lighthouse and Between the Acts; a striking reading of “Shakespeare’s sister” in A Room of One’s Own provides a major bridge to her discussion of how philosophy has contributed to “matricide” (via Diotima’s erasure in Plato’s Symposium); Kristeva’s understanding and use of important terms such as “abjection” are clarified through a vivid discussion of “A Sketch of the Past.” And that sets up her discussion of the use of fracture and interruption in Between the Acts. For example:

Against the background of linguistic theory and language learning, Kristeva places emptiness at the root of the human psyche and at the beginnings of the symbolic function. As the first and most fragile screen of the primeval separation of an ego that is not yet an ego from an object that is not yet an object, emptiness is the treacherous surface of Narcissus’s pool, a quivering shield against a hidden presence that has better remain hidden. Woolf’s “A Sketch of the Past” offers a late rationalization of the boon of the “sudden shocks,” the deadly reminders of the thing behind appearances, that demand to be put into words. . . . For what might break the surface of the mirror—rise up and make the pool of Narcissus turgid—is the abject and, with it, chaos, the destruction of the possibility of any distinction or trace. But also ... the demand for a new word, a new rhythm, and a new language, which arises with the triggering of an archaic, maternal tongue, and through which art “challenges the universe of established values, pokes fun at them” (Kristeva 1987). (126)

Nikolchina’s own contribution to halting the “depletion of women’s contribution to culture” thus comes in helping readers understand the work of two exemplary women who, in their own ways, open up new paths for understanding what such contributions can look like.

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Work Cited

REVIEW:
VIRGINIA WOOLF’S ILLNESSES

The title of this work—focusing so explicitly on illness—might be initially off-putting to those Woolfians who find pathographies of Virginia Woolf problematic or downright irritating. However, to overlook the study based on these factors would be a classic case of wrongly judging the book by its cover. Douglass W. Orr, who identifies himself as “a physician and psychiatrist, as well as a psychoanalyst,” initially became interested in Bloomsbury in 1969 specifically because of its affiliations with psychoanalysis, and it was perhaps inevitable that—he would be “caught up in the problem of Virginia Woolf’s ‘madness’” (ix). But, as the quotation marks around the word “madness” suggest, Orr does not endorse the view that Woolf suffered from a lifelong recurrent mental disorder, and the work, as Orr points out, “is not a psychobiography” (ix). Orr’s thoughtful, compassionate and rational discussion of Woolf’s health and illnesses—both mental and physical—is well-researched, using primary source materials such as diary entries and letters, and is well worth reading.

-17-
The book can be viewed online electronically (http://www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp/orr/main.htm) and is available in a print-on-demand format. While the online version can be searched chapter by chapter, the hardcopy volume lacks an index. The website also includes Orr’s 1978 article on Bloomsbury and psychoanalysis in a PDF format at http://www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp/Virginia%20Woolf%20PDFs/Orr_Bloomsbury.pdf.

Orr’s research began in 1983 with a “Bloomsbury Quest” (ix) and he must have completed the manuscript by 1986 when Quentin Bell, wrote an endorsement of the work for “bringer[ing] new knowledge and new material to light” (xiv). Despite the gap of more than twenty years from inception to publication, Virginia Woolf’s Illnesses remains relevant and suggestive for Woolfians. Reading Virginia Woolf’s Illnesses gives one the eerie shiver that accompanies a valuable discovery. Wayne Chapman, who edited this volume, must have had such a frisson of excitement when he heard a paper presented at the 12th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference by Nancy Orr Adams, Dr. Orr’s daughter, documenting her father’s research. Orr’s study is clearly in the tradition of Roger Poole’s The Unknown Virginia Woolf (1978) and Stephen Trombley’s “All that Summer She Was Mad: Virginia Woolf and Her Doctors” (1981), works which—perhaps still controversially—vigorously resist the lay diagnosis that Virginia Woolf was a madwoman. As he acknowledges, Orr’s work also resonates with other contemporary publications such as Jean O. Love’s Virginia Woolf: Sources of Madness and Art (1977) and Shirley Panken’s Virginia Woolf and the “Last of Creation” (1987). Virginia Woolf’s Illnesses predates and predicts subsequent scholarship as well, anticipating some of Louise DeSalvo’s claims in Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work (1989) regarding Virginia’s experiences with familial trauma and problematic relations with her half-brothers Gerald and George Duckworth. Orr’s study also foretells Hermione Lee’s biographical line of reasoning in her chapter “Madness” (1997).

In the first chapter of Virginia Woolf’s Illnesses, Orr firmly and succinctly rejects the claim that Woolf had any inherent tendency toward madness; in the last chapter, he dismisses manic-depression as the cause of her breakdowns—a retroactive antidote to Thomas Carmagno’s claims in The Flight of the Mind (1992). Orr sees Woolf’s episodes of mental distress as “reactive psychoses”—a series of occurrences in which specific triggers cause uncontrollable outbursts of rage and frustration similar to Woolf’s early childhood “purple rages” (15). With regard to Woolf’s life history, Orr observes in the concluding chapter: “Virginia had many episodes of illness; and six of these were mental illnesses,” arguing that “these were separate and discrete occurrences . . . best understood as psychotic reactions to severe blows to [Virginia’s] self-esteem” (168). Orr classifies Woolf’s personality as narcissistic—and specifically points out that “‘narcissistic’ is not a dirty word”; as he explains, “Far from implying an excessive love of self, the term refers rather to the consequences of deficits in being loved and made to feel emotionally secure during the crucial years of personality development” (163). Orr speculates that Leslie and Julia Stephen were the type of parents so pre-occupied with other responsibilities that they could not offer adequate love to their young children (14-15). As a consequence, Virginia developed separation anxiety that affected her emotional stability in later life (163-66). Orr’s discussion of these early years is particularly interesting because he recognizes (in the tradition established by Freud) that the nurses, nannies and other servants at 22 Hyde Park Gate would have contributed to shaping Virginia’s consciousness (e.g., 3, 12).

Orr’s core argument is that Woolf’s earliest breakdowns could readily be attributed to organic factors such as recurrent episodes of rheumatic fever and a bout of scarlet fever, both of which, he argues, present such symptoms as hallucinations and could be misinterpreted as mental illness. He notes that Woolf throughout her life had frequent incidents of influenza, heart problems including an erratic rapid heartbeat eventually treated effectively with digitals, fainting spells that could have been caused by these heart irregularities, and serious dental problems resulting in abscesses and extractions. In all instances, Orr closely studies the experiential contexts of Woolf’s six major emotional collapses documented in diaries and letters and links them to the painful emotional triggers that might have provoked her breakdowns. For example, like Poole and Panken, Orr sees a relationship between one of Woolf’s serious breakdowns and the publication of Leonard’s The Wise Virgins. Orr notes that Leonard’s characterization of Camilla in the novel is an obvious surrogate for Virginia—sexually frigid with men with incestuous lesbian desires for her sister Katharine, a character Leonard depicts as sensual and womanly, thus replicating all-too-familiar contrasts between Virginia and her sister Vanessa. Orr speculates that Leonard—by publishing a fictional version of Virginia heterosexual failure—wounded her deeply. Orr, who died in 1990, would have agreed wholeheartedly with Mark Hussey’s 1992 article “Refractions of Desire: Virginia and Leonard Woolf’s Early Fiction.” Orr also argues—as does Poole—that Leonard’s unilateral decision that Virginia should not have children could have sent her into a psychological tailspin and initiated a prolonged period of depression. Orr, like Panken, notes that Virginia seemed jealous of Leonard’s relationship with Margaret Llewelyn Davies, a factor that could easily have stirred Virginia’s sense of abandonment and awakened her deep yearning for constant love and affirmation.

Provocatively, Orr argues that Virginia may have been striking out in resentment against Leonard and Vanessa when she chose to take her own life—but he also sees her suicide as the culmination of a terrible period of loneliness which she documented powerfully in her diary entries. As she began to sense the onset of another breakdown, the humiliating boredom of a rest cure might not have been Woolf’s only worry (Orr illustrates the experience with a three page archival prescription for administering the treatment [47-49]). Orr notes that Woolf’s diary entries and letters from the period reveal strong anxiety about finances. Since she and Leonard were daily confronting shortages of petrol and the rationing of food during a period of dwindling income from their work, she might also have dreaded dipping into capital to cover the expenses of nursing.

Throughout the work, Orr’s readings emphasize and indeed celebrate Woolf’s extraordinary resilience in the face of sexual and emotional damage; he refuses to position her as a fragile invalid always teetering on the brink of insanity. Orr depicts Virginia Woolf as a survivor, not a victim.

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-18-
The architecture of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus “was never popular in Britain,” observed J.G. Ballard recently in The Guardian; it was “a little too frank for its repressed nativists, except at the lidos and the seaside, where people take their clothes off.” In Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life, Victoria Rosner similarly notes that Great Britain witnessed no “total restatement of the problem of the house” (7) of the kind attempted by Le Corbusier in Europe and Frank Lloyd Wright in the United States. Rather, the modernist revolution in design was more subtle. It involved the restatement of problems that had arisen among fully clothed members of the post-Victorian household. Building upon William Morris’s engagement of design principles to bring about social reform, British design embraced “a crafts-based aesthetic with a simplified use of line, stress on individuality, and maverick experimentalism,” writes Rosner. “It was interior design—and not architecture—that articulated a visual and spatial vocabulary for describing the changing nature of private life” (9). Beginning with an intriguing discussion of Oscar Wilde, Dorian Gray, and the changing nature of the picture frame, Rosner limns the mutually constitutive relationship between the literary modernism and modernist interior design—the multiple ways in which a “discourse of space” (2) worked to tear down physical and psychic barriers. For this project that focuses so centrally on redefinitions of domestic life, Virginia Woolf “is the guiding spirit” (15).

The rooms of a Victorian house were clearly demarcated along lines of class and gender. The notion of the “threshold” thus captures, for Rosner, the site where the “pressure of convention” (72) threatens to bring the very walls down, exposing the fragility of carefully structured personal relationships. Considering the memoir-writing of both Woolf and Lytton Strachey, she explores the way both writers “claim to redefine the genre of life-writing to accommodate the kinds of stories they want to tell.” Both “formally repudiate the lives chronicled by Victorian life-writers to tell a more private, fractious, and sometimes anguished story” (84). An “exemplary threshold moment” (89) takes place in the drawing room at Gordon Square. “Suddenly the door opened,” Woolf writes in “Old Bloomsbury,” and the long and sinister figure of Mr. Lytton Strachey stood on the threshold. He pointed a finger at a stain on Vanessa’s dress. “Semen?” he said. “Can one really say it?” I thought and we burst out laughing. With one word all barriers of reticence and reserve went down. A flood of the sacred fluid seemed to overwhelm us.

It’s not that “the sacred fluid” was actually there, of course: it’s that such a thing could be said out loud. “[T]he stain of the past on the present,” Rosner concludes, represents “the question Woolf continues to ask of the older generation even when they are no longer there to answer” (90).

Some structural changes did occur in the organization of the British home as the old century gave way to the new. Women’s appropriation of male spaces traditionally reserved for reading, in fact, had begun by the late eighteenth century. Quoting Peter Thornton, Rosner tells us that “increasingly, . . . the library was invaded by the women of the family who gradually turned it into a family drawing-room” (96). A modernist critique of the household “argued for a more egalitarian division of household space”—but with limits. It “apparently grinds to a halt at the study door” (93). Here begins perhaps the most interesting of Rosner’s critical observations. Calling A Room of One’s Own “the most famous articulation of the study’s power” (93), she asks a simple question: why would Woolf, with such an obvious awareness of the problems of patriarchy associated with that power, have set out merely to claim the man’s study for the woman writer? Why does she find the study so necessary when her two best examples of “androgynous” writers, Jane Austen and Shakespeare, managed without its benefit?

To those of us who have thought long and hard about A Room of One’s Own, the fact that it is “riven with contradiction and paradox” (123) is neither newsworthy nor particularly troubling. The way the writer’s “nuptials” are to be “celebrate[d] . . . in darkness” (Room 104), the way the woman writer is supposed to approach her task both as woman and as woman-man, is a shape-shifting intellectual problem, the practical details of which are best left to play against the mind. And yet Rosner’s insistence on the connection with the historical study is worth some attention. The first studies, she points out, were closets: where secrets were kept. Even into the late nineteenth century “studies had not ceased to be closets. They retained the closet’s elaborate cabinetry, private nature, and use for storage of personal effects.” Colette’s father, Rosner tells us, removed himself to his study to write his memoirs. On his death, the secret he kept there was revealed: the volumes were empty. For Woolf, in contrast, the study becomes “not a place to keep secrets but a place to strip away pretense and disguise, a place where reality is laid open” (125-26). Perhaps the woman writer’s study is a different place after all.

In her final chapter, on “interiors,” Rosner turns to novels in which the home serves as “the testing grounds for a way of living that valued spontaneity, creative work, self-expression, free love, and the affection of friends” (128), giving attention to the Omega Workshop’s experiments in these directions as well. Her choice of novels—Howard’s End, Night and Day, and To the Lighthouse—seems a little arbitrary. Perhaps we can most productively understand the chapter to suggest new ways of reading any number of modern domestic novels. Seeing Mary Datchet’s flat as a lively extension of the political and cultural activity found in the streets, echoing the dynamism of Bloomsbury art, enriches our understanding of Mary’s story as an utopian alternative to the marriage plot. With To the Lighthouse, Rosner focuses on the dilemma Lily faces in completing her painting. Only by abstracting Mrs. Ramsay out of the picture, Rosner argues, can Lily break free of her constricting power. But about this interpretation Rosner herself appears less than certain. What she is struggling with is the formalist solution that Lily’s painting achieves to a problem that is social and political, the problem of Mrs. Ramsay’s injunction: “people must marry, people must have children” (161). To get beyond this “two dimensionality and reliance on abstract forms,” Rosner emphasizes the narrative interiority that Lily experiences, “tunneling her way into her picture, into the past” (171). Returning to the roots of the Bloomsbury aesthetic in the socially grounded principles of Ruskin and Morris, she concludes that “[f]or Bloomsbury, formalism is not a retreat from the social world but an attempt to use the artist’s vision to organize and redefine that world” (172).

Through such observations and careful connections Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life contributes to our deepening understanding of British modernism as a thoroughgoing revolution in what could be thought and said—at the kitchen table and the tea table no less than at the painter’s easel or in the cloistered artist’s study.

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Works Cited
MLA 2005 and The IVWS Leadership Transition
In the midst of MLA in Washington D.C. last December, it was my pleasure to sit down to a quiet lunch with outgoing Society President, Vara Neverow, who has been the consummate leader of this group. Juggling the personal with the professional (in the finest Woolfian usage of Professions for Women), Vara has kept both the spirit and the letter (in the form of MLA panels, MLA parties, newsletters, elections, by-laws and such) of this organization humming. And of course she doesn’t stop there. Acquainting me with my new responsibilities, many of the other ways she has contributed to organizing around Woolf naturally arose, as I was concerned about them as well. No it wasn’t the job of the officers to take a major role in running the June conferences or to edit the Miscellany. She just did (and does) these as well, and so well. Networking is one of Vara greatest talents. She knows what everyone else knows and can send you to just the right person for a British book bag, a silent auction, or a quote. Indeed, she is never to be seen at MLA without a carefully balanced heap of Woolf flyers and paraphernalia. Vara cares about those permeable boundaries between what we do for a living and how we live life, sensing the value of both, and helping preserve that “razor edge of balance.” We lifted our glasses of fine white wine to the continuing spirit and scholarship of the Woolf Society.

By the way, anyone considering hosting the annual Woolf conference should please get in touch with Mark Hussey husseym@pace.edu. I can say from the experience of 1999 that there is lots of great guidance for the asking, and that planning several years ahead is helpful on all sides.

As new officers of the society, Madelyn Detloff (Vice President, detlofmm@muohio.edu), Thaine Stearns (Secretary-Treasurer, thaine.stearns@sonoma.edu), Celia Marshik (Historian-Biographer, Celia.Marshik@stonybrook.edu) and I (Bonnie Kime Scott, President, bkscott@mail.sdsu.edu), welcome your news and your ideas for the Society. We are also fortunate to have an engaged group of Members-At-Large: Keri Barber anoddwoman@earthlink.net, Anne Ryan Hanafin arhanafin@myrealbox.com and Susan Wegener s.wegener@sbcglobal.net. Madelyn has her first Newsletter off, Thaine has moved the account books to Sonoma, and we have filed our panels for the 2006 MLA in Philadelphia successfully, online. The two selected are “Rereading Trauma in Woolf’s Fiction En(Corps),” offered by Suzette Henke and David Eberly and “Street-Life: Woolf and Public Spaces” by Vara Neverow and June Dunn. Details of those, and the party to be held in the home of Annette and Mort Levitt are on page three.

Our thanks to Karen Levenback, former Woolf Society President, and her husband, Michael Neufeld, who held the 2005 MLA party in their lovely home in Tacoma Park, MD. By all accounts, a terrific time was had by all, and some even improved their mass-transportation skills. How fortunate we are to have such hospitality set the tone for our interactions!

I have Patricia Laurence’s report of her MLA panel:

There was lively interest in the session on “Beyond the Borders of Nation: Virginia Woolf and International Women Writers.” About 40 people attended the session in which thought-provoking papers were delivered by Emily Dalgarno on Assia Djebar, Andrea Reyes on Rosario Castellanos, Pia Mukherj on Anglo-Indian writers, and Brenda Watts on Gloria Anzaldua. The women authors discussed—from Algeria, Mexico and India—found inspiration in Woolf’s writing to create narratives of subjectivity in the midst of imperial or patriarchal oppression in their countries. Some were inspired by Three Guineas and came into “voice” through mourning the dead after political or cultural conflict. A discussion of when Woolf was translated and the quality of translation in these various countries led to a realization that more work was needed in this area.

The IVWS sponsored panel that I chaired, “Intersections and Identities in Woolf Studies” had a nice morning time slot on the 28th and drew an audience of 60 or more. The topic invited very different papers from Pamela L. Caughie, Kevin M. Lamb and Keri Walsh. Woolf provides abundant evidence in her work of how we go about constructing our identities. Pamela encouraged us to think about what constitutes a group or a class, and how much identity has moved around since the early 20th century. Kevin encouraged us to think how we go about constructing previously unidentified identities, and the value of being “no-one.” Focusing on Antigone, Keri explored ways that we identify with a literary character who demonstrates all sorts of intersections of identity, particularly as historical contexts change. As the subsequent discussion demonstrated, intersectionality is very much a discussion for our own time.

In the second IVWS panel, a session appropriately rich in visual material, Karen V. Kukil, Elizabeth Hirsh, Frances Spalding and Ben Harvey discussed “Virginia Woolf and Portraiture,” Karen taking up Leslie Stephen’s photo album, Elizabeth considering Orlando, Knole and the National Portrait Gallery, and Frances addressing Vanessa Bell’s portraits of Virginia. Ben Harvey, co-organizer of the panel with Elizabeth Hirsh, was the respondent, offering an illuminating commentary on the previous presentations and providing integration and closure.

Passages
David Daiches 1912-2005
We note with regret the passing of David Daiches, whose Virginia Woolf, published in 1942 in the New Directions “Makers of Modern Literature” series, was in the vanguard of Woolf studies. He also opened the University of Sussex, where Woolf has long had an archival presence. I learned of another area of expertise when Daiches was a visiting scholar at the University of Delaware while I was a young faculty member there. My husband Tom and I offered him a drink and he chose Scotch. We proudly tendered him a quaff of the finest house blend from “State Line Liquors,” an establishment just over the border in Maryland, where liquor taxes are lighter. He scanned the label and said that he was not familiar with this one, and added (with uncharacteristic immodesty), “I am a world expert in single malt Scotches.” He was.

John Bicknell, editor of the two volume Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen, passed away in January 2006 at the age of 92. A remembrance of his work and life appears on page 3.

Coming Events
We look forward to a return to England for this year’s 16th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf: Woolfian Boundaries. See you in Birmingham, June 22-25!

Bonnie Kime Scott
President, International Virginia Woolf Society