TO ALL VWM READERS, WRITERS, DONORS, & FRIENDS:

Well, have we succeeded? Our main goal in starting up the VWM back in 1973 was to help keep readers of Virginia Woolf talking with one another. Our ever expanding mailing list to individuals and libraries all over the world would seem to testify to the usefulness of our little publication.

So much has happened in Woolf Studies since that first tentative issue where Woolf’s name was misspelled at least once. (Is it now a collector’s item?) In the intervening years we have managed to spell Nigel Nicolson’s name several different ways and we have kept up with most of your name and address changes as well as with the many changes in Woolf Studies, from “scoops” on newly discovered letters to the fast-developing websites. (For more of the history of VWM, see Mark Hussey’s VIRGINIA WOOLF A TO Z, 1995.)

The now International Virginia Woolf Society has, of course, been a boost to our publication, giving generous help with the printing expenses as well as a core mailing list of people publishing in the field. The annual conferences have added so much to our sense of community for those of us fortunate to be able to attend, as does the publication of selected proceedings (see the Society Column on page 8 of VWM). The Pace University WOOLF STUDIES ANNUAL and the handsome CHARLESTON MAGAZINE now provide opportunities for publishing on Woolf and related areas. It is the VWM’s intention to stay small and within budget, though we regret that our space limitations make it impossible for Pat Laurence’s lively review section to cover all new books in a timely fashion.

To those interested, yes, we do have back issues of almost everything and upon request to VWM at the Sonoma State address, we make them available to you at a nominal fee. Laura Moss Gottlieb, our super indexer, suggested at the Plymouth Conference that the best way to celebrate this 50th issue milestone would be to publish a cumulative version of her excellent indexes which should be available to you by the first of the year. To receive a copy, write us at the SSU address and include a check made out to the Sonoma State Academic Foundation for $8.00 + any donation you wish to include toward your MISCELLANY “subscription.”

Thanks for your continued support and, of course, any comments and suggestions for the next decade or so! The Spring 1998 issue will be edited by J.J. Wilson, Dept. of English, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California 94928, no e-mail, but Voice Mail at 707 664-2882. There will be no set theme this time, though I am always interested to hear from readers in other countries. The deadline will be March 2, 1998.

For an up-coming edition of VWM focusing on Woolf and linguistics, Judith Allen and Pierre-Eric Villeneuve invite submissions of 600-800 words exploring theoretical issues that link Woolf’s texts to various linguistic schools or individuals (such as Prague, Russian Formalist, American Structuralist, etc. and/or Jakobson, Mukarovsky, Bakhtin, Shklovsky, Saussure, Barthes, Kristeva, Wittgenstein, Benveniste, and others). Please send two copies of your article, one to Pierre-Eric Villeneuve, 60 Gloucester, Suite 402, Toronto ON, Canada M4Y117 (villeneuf@chass.utoronto.ca) and one to Judith Allen, 646 Washington Lane, Jenkintown, PA 19046 (judithallen@p3.net).

J.J. Wilson • Editor in residence • Sonoma State University

TO THE READERS

An Editorial Comment on Woolf and Allusions1

Though the fiftieth issue of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany is devoted to a theme, in practice it does not differ significantly from the eclectic spirit of the regular issues. Because the submissions address the more general idea of references in Woolf’s work, the theme has been extended from “Woolf and Literary Allusions” to “Woolf and Allusions.” In tracing allusions, contributors are continuing in the notes and queries format of the Miscellany. And in doing so, they are participating in the delight we take in learning the uses Woolf made of her sources. In his essay John State distinguishes between inside and outside references. But once readers are able to identify these references they also become part of the in-group.

Five of the six contributors to this issue expand on a variety of references in Woolf’s fiction (Panthea Reid discusses Woolf herself as an allusion), and in doing so they reveal her familiarity with a wide array of subjects ranging from painting, politics, and history to literary figures, both famous and obscure. Arranged in the chronological order of Woolf’s own life and publications, these short articles show her lifelong, imaginative engagement with the worlds of the past and present. In the first article Reid examines the little-known references made to the adolescent Woolf in family correspondence that she uncovered since she completed her biography Art and Affection (reviewed and commented on in this issue). Sally Greene shows the way Woolf used the ideas of a Renaissance writer as she was developing her modernist aesthetics in her shorter fiction. Lisa Low, on the other hand, explores Woolf’s use of the writing of a more contemporary figure in her first novel. Always an avid fan of life-writing, Woolf included specific references to it in her own fiction, often to highlight her ontological beliefs, as Damion Searls explains in his piece on moments of being and non-being in Mrs. Dalloway. In her focus on the political importance of milk in To the Lighthouse Megumi Kato shows Woolf’s concern with the social context. And, finally, John Stape provides the results of his research into an in-joke between Woolf and Vita Sackville-West in Orlando, a novel packed with in-jokes. As all these contributors demonstrate, we take pleasure when we can see the ways Woolf incorporated the material of life and literature into the body of her work, and we can in the future more readily anticipate the richly allusive quality of her writing.

1 Special thanks to Plymouth State College and the Dean’s office for their generous financial contribution to this issue.

Joanna Dahlin • Guest Editor • Plymouth State University
TROUBLESOMENESS AND GUILT: NEW EVIDENCE FROM 1895

The 18 March 1895 issue of the Hyde Park Gate News wittily ridicules Mary Fisher for describing Charlotte Brontë as a “very clever woman,” who wrote novels and “two very pretty poems, the ‘Spanish Gypsy’ and ‘Aurora Leigh,’” poems actually written by George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. This satire, calculated to amuse Leslie Stephen’s literary sensibilities and to irritate Julia Stephen’s family loyalties, was one of several declarations of independence Virginia Stephen, by 1895 the Hyde Park Gate News’ exclusive author, made against her mother’s family and values.

In the 8 April issue, the final number of the Hyde Park Gate News, Virginia detailed spring travel plans: the Duckworth siblings were going abroad, the Stephens to “Great Tangley Manor and High Ashes.” Actually, Julia took the Stephen children to High Ashes for a week, and Leslie briefly visited at Great Tangley Manor, whence he walked to High Ashes. Afterwards, he was “still haunted by [Julia’s] looks.” He feared that she had been “shivering ever since” he had seen her at “that astonishing place.” He lamented, “my own, it is horrid to feel that you are ill away from me.” In a postscript, he associated Julia’s condition with Virginia’s illness or troublesomeness: “I am vexed with all the trouble you have had! Poor darling Gine; it is maddening!”

When Julia and the children returned to London, on Thursday (18 April), Mary Fisher declared herself “shocked to think of all you [her sister, Julia] have gone through.” As she hoped Julia would “sleep now & get yourself well,” Mary’s underlining implies that Julia had been caring for another, not herself. Like Leslie, Mary associated Julia’s health with Virginia’s and with a troublesome time at the sepsulchral High Ashes: “I so fear you have Gine ill... home must be heavenly after such an experience.”

Supposedly as a “favour” to the Fishers, on 22 April, Mary invited Virginia to visit in Brighton. The next day, she renewed her plea, concluding: “I hope [Dr.] Seton comes to look at you—only remember it would be the greatest pleasure to have Gine—I know you are not well eno' yet to move...” Virginia, however, seems to have refused to visit the conventional Fishers and the aunt who could not tell one woman writer from another.

On Friday (26 April) Mary worried: “I don’t like the acc’t of yourself at all—,” then she assured her sister, “I feel Gine will be all right & that Gerald will have yr call [a telegram summoning the Duckworths]... home must be a heaven indeed after H Ashes.”

Julia’s consolation, according to Mary on Sunday (28 April), was having “that dear little boy [Adrian] with you to coddle & to love up[.] How happy he must be—Gine will soon be back with him but she must have hated going—however it is not so far as this would have been for her.” Though Virginia had “hated going,” she must have been sent away for her mother’s sake.

The Duckworths returned about the end of April, as did Virginia, but even Julia’s dutiful daughter Stella Duckworth could not protect the weakened Julia against the “fiend” of rheumatic fever. Nor could Mary Fisher, who rushed up to London to nurse her sister. Too weakened to respond to the ministrations of family or the ineffectual Dr. Seton, Julia Stephen died in the early morning hours of 5 May 1895. In her initial numbness, Virginia was suppressing, I think, not only the horror of bereavement but also the unthinkable possibility that she was partly to blame for her mother’s decline. She had felt trapped by her mother’s conventional ambitions for her daughters, but now recollections of her various rebellions only heightened Virginia’s sense of guilt. She ceased writing for nearly two years, the only extended time in her literate life. Thereafter, the feelings of entrapment, guilt, and loss were the phenomena against which Virginia Stephen Woolf needed to guard her psychic health.

Before and after later losses, especially the deaths of Thoby Stephen, Katherine Mansfield, Jacques Raverat, Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, and Julian Bell, Virginia’s acts of kindness and self-abasement seem to have been insurance against a replication of the guilt and subsequent muteness she had experienced back in 1895 when, at the age of thirteen, she had not only experienced the death of her forty-nine-year-old mother but also had faced the unconscionable possibility that she was somehow implicated.

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1 See my Art and Affections: A Life of Virginia Woolf (New York: Oxford UP, 1996) for supporting evidence. For VWM, I have conceived but will supply full manuscript citations for interested VWM readers.
3 Virginia may have been sent to her Aunt Caroline Emma Stephen in Cambridge.
4 Dedicated by Quentin Bell, Mary Fisher’s letters are in the Cheltenham Papers, Additional Manuscripts, at the University of Sussex. My thanks to Elizabeth Engla, the staff at Sussex, and Sharon Welsman for their helpfinder. I also thank the Council on Research, LSU, for funds supporting this research, completed too late for inclusion in my biography.

BROWNEAN MOTION IN “SOLID OBJECTS”

As Woolf refashioned her early empirical realism into a modernist practice, her work began to reflect a deeper engagement with the Renaissance, including the works of an old friend, Sir Thomas Browne. While she was finishing Night and Day (1919), she was embarking on a new direction in short fiction. “The Mark on the Wall” and other stories collected in Monday or Tuesday (1921) reflect, in their impressionistic fragmentation, her new position that “inconclusive stories are legitimate.” Although that statement comes from a review of a collection by Chekhov, it is a conclusion she was also drawing from Browne.

In September 1919, she remarks that while “making way with my new experiment” in prose style—an experiment that culminated in Jacob’s Room (1922)—she “came up against Sir Thomas Browne, & found I hadn’t read him since I used to dip & duck & be bored & somehow enchanted hundreds of years ago.” She “had to break off, send for his books... & start little stories” (Diary 1: 297). “Solid Objects,” a story begun in 1918 (Letters 2: 299) but not published until 1920, recalls Ura Burial in its focus on the collection of treasures buried, broken, and rediscovered in a new context. More generally, it embraces Browne’s sense of wonder at the cryptic expanse of the world.

The story involves two men walking along a shore, one of whom, John, stumbles upon a piece of glass so worn it has become “almost a precious stone” (103). Inspired to look for other such treasures, he searches grass fields, railroad rights-of-way, abandoned houses, all in hopes of finding “[a]nything, so long as it was an object of some kind, more or less round, perhaps with a dying flame deep sunk in its mass, anything—china, glass, amber, rock, marble.” He is detained from a political meeting when he finds a shard of china “shaped, or broken accidentally, into five irregular but unmistakable points” (104)—like the five-pointed items catalogued in The Garden of Cyrus. Finally, he loses his bid for a seat in Parliament.

That the defeat is less important to John than the discovery of what might be a meteorite, still less important than the random mystery of the meteorite next to the round stone and the pointed piece of china, is something his politically ambitious friend cannot understand. He is baffled by the serene disengagement of this man who has ruined his career for the sake of a few solid objects. But the
narrative offers a correction: it is only his “political career” (106) that is jettisoned. The objects have worked on John, as the shreds of ancient burial urns did on Browne, to call into question customary measures of success. “Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor Monuments,” marvels Browne. “In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation, and obscurity their protection.”

Structurally, Browne’s influence extends to Jacob’s Room, where Woolf uses techniques of disjunction to keep Jacob just out of view—unknown and obscure—even through his death in the first world war. The story’s episodic unfolding is further complicated by the unstable narrative voice. Through seemingly arbitrary shifts from “I” to “we” to “you,” Woolf attempts, as Pamela Caughie claims, to “liberate” readers from the assumption that the novel should provide a naturalized depiction of the world, with its constraining social structures (71-72).

Employing a similarly destabilizing habit of interrupting the narrative with essayistic flights into abstractions that are in turn subverted or contradicted, Woolf recalls the spiraling rhetoric of the Religio Medici.

A reference to a London neighborhood, for example, provokes an imagined voyage to the New World: “‘Holborn straight ahead of you,’ says the policeman. Ah, but where are you going if instead of brushing past the old man with the white beard, the silver medal, and the cheap violin, you let him go on with his story. . . . [T]his (skipping the intermediate stages) brings you one winter’s day to the Essex coast, where the little boat makes off to the ship, and the ship sails and you behold on the skyline the Azores. . . . As frequent as street corners in Holborn are these chasms in the continuity of our ways,” the passage concludes. “Yet we keep straight on” (Jacob’s Room 94-95). Browne, whose Christianity moved him to emphasize continuities over chasms, nevertheless wrote, in Woolf’s words, “[w]ith such a conviction of the mystery and miracle of things, he is unable to reject, disposed to tolerate and contemplate without end” (Essays 3: 156).

But, as Woolf herself remarks of the experience of reading Browne (Essays 3: 370), isolated segments hardly convey the point. A sustained reading of “Solid Objects,” Jacob’s Room, and Browne’s meditations on his literal and figurative New Worlds more fully demonstrates the similarities of narrative voice. Through constant shifts of tone and attention, both writers compel a “sacrifice of independence” on the reader’s part—up in turn prompting a highly personal engagement and response.

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Woolf’s Allusions to Hedda Gabler in The Voyage Out

As chapter 10 of The Voyage Out opens, Rachel Vinrace sits reading—with an intensity unable to be summoned for the far more patriarchal Gibbon—an unnamed Ibsen play in the privacy of her room in Santa Marina. Louise DeSalvo assumes that Rachel is reading Ibsen’s most famous play, A Doll’s House, but it is just as likely that Rachel is reading—or, in any event, will have read by novel’s end—Ibsen’s more radical and violent, later play, Hedda Gabler.

There are a number of parallels between Hedda Gabler and The Voyage Out. Both Hedda Gabler and Rachel Vinrace are overly influenced by their fathers, authoritarians who, with disastrous results, dominate their powerful daughters. Both Hedda and Rachel have been either raised by or are surrounded by Victorian aunts. Rachel is an only child brought up by her father’s sisters in Richmond; Hedda Gabler is similarly circumscribed by maiden aunts from whom she is alienated and whose conventionality she defies. Woolf’s male protagonist, Terence Hewet, recalls Ellert Lovborg. Both are writers of some genius; both are, in many ways, the best of men; and both are forced to play second fiddle to the female protagonists with whom they are hopelessly in love. Most importantly, Hedda and Rachel are like one another. Neither Hedda nor Rachel fits into the sugarcoated world of suburban domestic propriety. Both do not want to marry, both are preoccupied with thoughts other than love, and both cannot bear the suitabilities of polite society. Both play the piano, expressing the impassioned self, prohibited, especially to women, by conventional mores. Both are artists, manqués, preferring independence to the company of men, and both aspire to something other than marriage. In the end, both commit suicide. Unable to find suitable alternatives to marriage, both exempt themselves by drastic means from the work these works portray as a conventional and woman-killing institution.

The most obvious connection between these two works is, in some ways, the corrupting influence of polite society. Among the many preoccupations of Ibsen’s plays is the conflict between philistinism and art. Commonly in Ibsen’s plays the artist/philosopher/social reformer finds himself or herself trapped in a bland world of conventional morality. In Hedda Gabler this theme finds its zenith. Against a soulless and philistine majority, Ellert Lovborg and Hedda Gabler stand blazingly apart like meteors. Initiated and soulful, they are a short-lived intellectual elite crushed beneath the grinding wheels of the convention-bound society into which they are born. Philistinism triumphs finally in Hedda Gabler when Hedda’s horrific suicide, accompanied by her husband’s alarmingly deflating “Shot herself. Shot herself in the temple! Fancy that!” (305), goes all but unremarked.

The Voyage Out is similarly driven by the indifference of polite society to the artist/philosopher/social reformer. For Rachel, as for Hedda, there is no place for a feminist heroine. Rachel’s death is apocalyptic for Woolf, but of little consequence to her peers. When Rachel dies, a flash of lightning illuminates the sky momentarily, and Terence, blind with


pain, cries out her name in the dark. But downstairs, after some officious remarks, the English settlers who inherit the world shuffle about in slippers, settling in for a night’s bland conversation and table games.1

If it is obvious that Rachel is reading one of Ibsen’s more feminist plays in chapter 10, it is unclear whether Rachel is reading A Doll’s House or Hedda Gabler. Woolf may have left the question deliberately open. Rachel Blau DuPlessis has argued convincingly that The Voyage Out blunders awkwardly because Woolf has not yet found a way out of the marriage plot.2 If Woolf’s first novel is, like Ibsen’s plays, prophetic in contravening a literal tradition in which the patriarchy has made “culture and history in [its] own image,”3 it cracks ultimately on the deadly rocks of that literal and literary history. At novel’s end, Woolf herself can only stare blindly into a hopefully feminist future. In the bildungsroman, the male protagonist typically achieves psychological maturity. But in her bildungsroman, Rachel stands uncertainly on a patriarchal precipice. A feminist only in embryo, Rachel remains crippled and incompetent, and ultimately lies dead on the threshold of feminism. In this The Voyage Out is more akin to Hedda Gabler than to A Doll’s House. Both Hedda Gabler and The Voyage Out settle on despair. Both convey the Old Testament message that women are better off dead since they will be killed, sooner or later, metaphorically or literally, by the patriarchy. Rachel may imagine herself in chapter 10 as Nora Helmer, leaving husband and children to find a brave new world of self, but she remains, at the end, Hedda Gabler: like Hedda, indeed like Woolf herself, Rachel is a defeated woman trapped, drowning, and finally drowned, in an amorphous sea of an all-presiding masculinity located somewhere on only the hypothetical threshold of a new, more feminist world.

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2Whether or not Rachel commits suicide is, of course, a much debated point, but her death seems at the very least psychological or self-induced.

3Quotations from Hedda Gabler, cited by page number within the text, are from The Plays of Henrik Ibsen, Authorized Translation [New York: T. Carter & Company, 1906].


“never been able to...convoy both” being and non-being in her novels. In stylistic terms, “being” is pattern, interconnection, meaning—it’s when different parts of the book “come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance,” to borrow a phrase—and thus Mrs. Dalloway is Woolf’s most being-heavy book (except perhaps The Waves); the tight interconnectedness of themes, motifs, and characters weave practically every word into patterns of repetition and association. Mrs. Dalloway is all inter-connectedness because Mrs. Dalloway is entirely interconnected—the “felt herself everywhere; not ‘here, here, here’; . . . but everywhere” (231); everything in the book is Clarissa, which is why it ends, “For there she was” (286). Mrs. Dalloway is one big moment, all Clarissa’s “being.” That makes Mrs. Dalloway an ideal object of formalist close-reading, because its theme—connections, hidden resonances, subtle patterning—is exactly what close reading uncovers. But even here, formal analysis of narrative structure has its limits. “Being” is always embedded in “non-being”; a novel is always not merely a formal structure, but a reading experience embedded in the life of its reader.

Woolf defines that experience against the experience of reading Marbot’s Memoirs. On the most macroscopic scale, Marbot represents the non-being which Mrs. Dalloway is “embedded” in and “contrasted” against: Clarissa was reading Marbot at 3 a.m. the night before her party (205), and when she goes upstairs for the scene I have been discussing it is “as if she had left a party” (45), which is one of the very few passages that foreshadow events after the end of the book. Hence reading Marbot frames the day of the party and thus, in a sense, the novel as a whole. But the contents of Marbot’s Memoirs, once transposed into Mrs. Dalloway, are no longer quite “non-being”; they are interconnected with other parts of the novel and thus reclaimed for the world of “being” (most obviously, the horrors of the retreat from Moscow parallel those Septimus Smith experienced in the trenches, but there are other connections, which I do not have the space to discuss here). The non-being, what is outside the novel, is not Marbot’s Memoirs as such, but more precisely Clarissa’s experience reading them. Finally, and most importantly, Mrs. Dalloway as entirely Clarissa Dalloway’s “being” makes it a kind of fictional life-writing. But if Mrs. Dalloway is biography under the sign of “being,” then it must be defined against biography as “non-being,” which for Woolf means defined against the Victorian and Edwardian life-writing which she so often criticizes.

Marbot is the perfect instance, for there are no themes in Marbot’s Memoirs, no artistic patterning, no “being” at all.2 It felt most appropriate to read his memoirs, if not exactly in a tight narrow bed or an attic room, then at least under a thick down comforter at home: they demand immersion, submission. Clarissa Dalloway also “read deep” in Baron Marbot’s Memoirs; read deep, submerged, like I was. Woolf rarely describes this experience, because as a writer she tended to see arid traditional biography, like life itself, as material for art. In other words, the point of “non-being” is always “being,” which is why she only wrote “being” in her novels, and why reading her novels is such a consuming, literally absorbing, experience. That in turn is why Clarissa Dalloway doesn’t read Virginia Woolf: Clarissa gets her moments of being from not art but “life; London; this moment of June” (5). But as a reader one needn’t, finally, choose: we can enjoy reading both kinds of book, as did Woolf herself.

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1Mrs. Dalloway (1925; New York: Harcourt, 1953) 45-47. Further references are to this edition.


THE MILK PROBLEM IN TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

At the Ramsay's dinner table, when Charles Tansley and William Bankes argued about politics, Mrs. Ramsay suddenly raised the question of milk and showed her enthusiasm for the matter: "Oh coffee!" said Mrs. Ramsay. But it was much rather a question (she was thoroughly roused, Lily could see, and talked very emphatically) of real butter and clean milk. Speaking with warmth and eloquence, she described the iniquity of the English dairy system, and in what state milk was delivered at the door..."

What was wrong with milk? What was Mrs. Ramsay talking about? A glance at the British Medical Journal at the beginning of this century will show how much milk was discussed in medical discourse in those days. In late Victorian Britain, the redistribution of the population to cities created a demand for milk far removed from its source. In the intervening period from farmers to consumers, milk was subjected to contamination and infection. Bacteriological findings in the 1890s that the milk supply was a source of infectious diseases gave an impetus to much discussion that measures for the prevention of milk-borne diseases were urgently needed. The milk problem took on a new importance in public discussion in Edwardian Britain. "The control of the milk supply is not only a concern of preventive medicine, but one of national importance," George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of Health to the Board of Education and a specialist in the public health and state medicine, wrote in 1904. The need for the legislation and control over milk was emphasized by Mrs. Ramsay, who was indignant because the "injilk delivered at your door in London [was] positively brown with dirt. It should be made illegal" (78).

The discourse on milk, however, circulated beyond the field of preventive medicine. The milk problem was deeply rooted in the "ideology of motherhood" in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. In this ideological climate the improvement of maternity, child-rearing and infant health was pursued as a national agenda mainly by male politicians of various stripes. This climate arose in part from anxieties about the falling birth rate, the high infant mortality rate, and the decline of the Empire brought on by the Boer War. These fears were further intensified by eugenicist ideas about the "degeneration" of the race. An article with the revealing title of "Milk and National Degeneration" illustrates how milk was related to an attempt to ward off national degeneration: "healthy babies are impossible without clean and wholesome cow's milk... It is here that the question of physical deterioration of the nation comes in, for a few generations of weakly babies necessarily spell a nation with an undue proportion of defective citizens." The lack of sufficient milk nourishment at an early age was considered to be "an essential and primary cause of degeneration." Solving the milk problem was crucial for the future of the race.

Whether or not she was aware of the political agenda of this discourse, Mrs. Ramsay, who hoped to be "an investigator, elucidating the social problem" (15), clearly, as other critics have noted, concerned herself with the milk problem. Investigating and observing the disastrous state of things "with her own eyes" (15), she speculated on a "model dairy and a hospital up here—those two things she would have liked to do, herself" (79). If we examine this attitude of Mrs. Ramsay in its context we can more readily see how politicized her character actually is. Moreover, contextualizing the milk problem reveals the racial character of this allusion.

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1 To the Lighthouse (1927; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) 136. Subsequent references are to this edition.
4 British Medical Journal 16 April 1904: 900-09.

"THE MAN AT WORTHING" AND THE AUTHOR OF "THE MOST INSIPID VERSE SHE HAD EVER READ": TWO ALLUSIONS IN ORLANDO

Orlando poses special problems for an annotator partly because the range of its allusions is so wide, embedding not only large swathes of English literature and history but minutiae about the life of Vita Sackville-West and her ancestors. The annotations to two recent reading editions of the novel have considerably eased the path of the neophyte or even the experienced reader. Research for my own forthcoming critical edition of the novel in the Shakespeare Head Press Edition, to be published by Blackwell's of Oxford, has led to the identification of additional references. Only the two most significant, which in different ways affect interpreting the novel and suggest how Woolf obtained and used her source materials, are commented on here.

The first may be called a "private" allusion or even an "in-joke" since Woolf could have expected only those in her or Vita Sackville-West's immediate circle to have recognized it. In the list of illustrations of the Hogarth Press edition the "kind permission of the Worthing Art Gallery" is acknowledged for permission to reproduce the illustration used on the dust jacket. My inquiry to the gallery, now the Worthing Museum & Art Gallery, led to a reply of considerable interest from its Principal Curator, Dr. Sally White: "you set me something of a puzzle which I am trying to unravel. The painting you mention was here in 1941, but I have not been able to trace its subsequent fate." While a temporary dead end had been reached as far as the painting itself was concerned, the reply generously enclosed a description of it published in 1941 by L. F. Salzman. This description has rescued for future readers of Orlando a gentleman, until now "unknown," from undeserved obscurity:

In the Worthing Museum is a remarkable late-sixteenth century portrait. It shows the three-quarter length figure of a Negro, or Moor—for his skin is dark brown and not black... The right arm... grasps the jewelled hilt of a sword, which passes behind the head of the figure. This head, almost full face, emerges from a ruff and is that of a northern European, a man of about 40 with dark hair and close-trimmed beard... On the frame is the inscription, added in the nineteenth-century:—"THOS. SACKVILLE Created Baron BUCKHURST 8th of June 1597. Afterwards Earl DORSET. Died 19th of April 1608" (205). In the meantime Dr. White had followed up on the picture's whereabouts and could report the following solution to "the puzzle": "I have finally discovered what happened to the portrait. It was blown up during the war! For some reason it was sent to conservators in London, called Messrs Down, in September 1943 'for repair'! It was destroyed in an air raid on February 23 1944 and the Council received 50 pounds from the War Department as compensation." While Salzman's article argues against the ascription of the nine-teenth-century frame, research in the Hogarth Press Archives establishes that, whoever may in fact have been the portrait's subject, Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West believed it to be of Thomas Sackville (1536-1608), the Elizabethan statesman and poet whose life
is a significant source for Orlando’s personality and activities in the novel’s first chapter. In June 1928, when preparations for publishing Orlando were underway, Leonard Woolf, writing on behalf of the Hogarth Press, requested and duly received permission from the then-named Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Worthing to reproduce on the novel’s dust jacket “the photograph of the panel of Thomas Sackville.” A bit of further evidence, not until now properly contextualized, seals the case: Vita Sackville-West herself supplied a photograph of the portrait to Virginia Woolf, having been asked by her in April 1928 to bring “the photograph of the man at Worthing.” With this information on hand, the novel’s dust jacket can be placed in context. Far from being merely decorative, it contributes to the novel-biography’s mixed generic identity and forms an integral part of its illustrations. It can also be recognized as yet another of the private allusions in the medley of those Woolf addressed to her inner circle.

The other hitherto-unrecognized “allusion”—again if the term is appropriate since Woolf would have expected few readers to recognize it—regards the identity of the actual author (in the novel the lines are Orlando’s) of “the most insipid verse she had ever read in her life” (215).9 The lines quoted are from two poems by “L. E. L.” (Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 1802-38), a popular Romantic poet who either committed suicide or was murdered while in the Gold Coast. The first quotation is from her “The Lines of Life” in The Venetian Bracelet and Other Poems (1829), the second from “Fragment. Is Not This Grove,” first published in 1818, and later collected in The Fate of Adelaide and Other Poems (1821). Both are quoted in D. E. Enfield’s L. E. L., A Mystery of the Thirties (57-58, 59-60), a book that Woolf wrote to Lytton Strachey about on 3 September 1927, 10 published by the Hogarth Press in March 1928.

Woolf’s use of these lines not only offers further evidence of her clear-sighted literary judgment, but is one of the most obvious instances of her life as a publisher directly cross-fertilizing her fiction.

There is, of course, more to be made of these allusions. A fully annotated edition of Orlando should stimulate a greater awareness of Woolf’s compositional methods as well as a more sophisticated appreciation of the novel’s complex allusiveness.

J. H. Stage • Kyota University

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Two new biographies of Woolf in the same year! As her title suggests, Reid focuses her interests more narrowly than Hermione Lee0 on questions surrounding the relationship between Virginia and Vanessa, and the aesthetic differences among the arts. Certainly, as a biography, Lee’s is the more comprehensive and definitive life study for this generation, but Reid’s smaller book has new insights based on an original reading of new caches of manuscripts. She focuses squarely upon the rivalry between Virginia and her sister Vanessa Bell offering examples of distancing and neglect on Vanessa’s part. Her book resembles somewhat Diane F. Gillespie’s The Sisters’ Arts, 2 but Gillespie covers her material in essays while Reid presents the lives of the sisters: their ups and downs, their competition over artistic production, and the relative success of each in her field.

We see that Vanessa was determined to lead her own life, sometimes putting her own needs before Virginia’s. In 1904, at the time of the move to Bloomsbury, Vanessa kept Virginia in the country for some months while the Gordon Square home was being redecorated—and again when Virginia’s mental illness prevented normal communication around the time of the suicide attempt of September 1913, and late 1915. Was Vanessa’s nearly total neglect of Virginia at this time—she failed to write and rarely visited—her way of making an independent life for herself? Had she nearly given up on Virginia whose flirtation with Clive Bell in the few years after the birth of her first child, Julian, gave her a permanent distrust of Virginia? Reid answers both questions “yes.” There were later reconciliations, of course, but never again the same intimacy which the sisters enjoyed before Vanessa’s marriage. Then, too, Clive and Vanessa did not at first take well to Leonard Woolf though Vanessa later learned to trust him implicitly.

The “new” or original sections of Reid’s book come from her patient research in reading collections of old letters such as those from Maria Jackson, Woolf’s grandmother (“appalling” letters in their stuffiness, their concern with illness and bowel movements, and middle-class values, says Reid). Julia Stephen kept hundreds of such letters from her mother, a woman who seemed unaware that the small children of Julia’s new family were being neglected while Julia spent weeks caring for her mother. Oddly, Julia seems not to have preserved any letters of Stella Duckworth. Her sons were the darlings upon whom she showered her indulgence. Reid also makes frequent, perceptive, and significant forays into the correspondence of Vanessa with Clive Bell and Roger Fry, and into Mary Hutchinson’s letters at Texas—some archives of letters now being opened to scholars.

Panthea Reid develops a theory of the paragone, the Italian term used for the rivalry between the arts of painting and literature. She traces the reputations of Virginia and Vanessa from childhood to maturity, and explores the public reception of the two sisters’ impor-
tant contributions to their respective arts, Reid shows that the competition between the sisters defined them in important ways. She demonstrates also how Roger Fry's letters and conversation encouraged Virginia Woolf to develop her early Post-impressionist style in such stories as "The Mark on the Wall," "Monday or Tuesday," "A Haunted House," and other stories written during 1917-21. Reid believes that the term Post-impressionist can also be applied to the novels, To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Dalloway, and even The Waves.

As a biography, Art and Affection treats a smaller circle of friends and writers than either Quentin Bell or Hermione Lee. Reid's interpretation of both Virginia and Vanessa's work is based on careful scholarship. Embracing Thomas Caramangio's meticulous investigation of Woolf's manic-depressive or bipolar illness, Reid also refutes the excesses of Louise de Salvo. The appendices are worth noticing too. In Appendix D (471-476), Reid offers a new analysis of the dating of Woolf's three suicide notes (Letters 6: 487). By studying with great care these three manuscript letters in the British Library, Reid has developed what seems, to her, a more satisfactory chronology for these last letters. Since she proposes a different scenario for the sequence of the letters than Joanne Trautmann Banks and Nigel Nicolson, editors of the Letters, it occurred to me to consult Joanne Trautmann Banks on the matter. Banks's comments after consulting with Nigel Nicolson appear in the column adjacent to this review.

This is not a mere scholarly quibble. If you accept Reid's version, Virginia Woolf's last instructions to Leonard would no longer say, "Will you destroy all my papers?" (VW Letters 6: 487). Which-\-ever version you now prefer, Reid's fresh approach to the letters gives us new eyes with which to perceive, or (re)imagine Woolf's last days.

Reid's sympathetic and intensive rereading of all the letters exchanged between Vanessa and Virginia over their lifetime forms the heart of her biography. Academic libraries, most public libraries, and many individuals should own Art and Affection. Reid's book is written for the common reader as well as the specialist in Woolf studies.

Edward A. Hungerford • Professor of English, Emeritus • Southern Oregon University

REID'S REDITING

I want to say at the outset that I admire Panthea Reid's extensive work with the three suicide notes, and that both Nigel Nicolson and I have given her arguments careful consideration. We all agree that no one can say with certainty how to date the notes. We all agree too that they were written on separate days—not, as both Leonard Woolf and Quentin Bell assumed, on one day, the last of her life.

Nevertheless, Mr. Nicolson and I stick by our dating. Readers who wish to follow our arguments will find them in Volume VI, Appendix A, of the complete Letters. In this space, I will briskly present our major challenges to Professor Reid's reasoning. We are, of course, speaking about three March 1941 letters which, for convenience, I'll label "a," "b," and "c," with "a" and "b" being letters to Leonard, the "a" dated by Woolf "Tuesday," and the "b" undated. Letter "c" is the note to Vanessa, dated "Sunday." As it happens, we and Reid agree that "c" was probably written on Sunday, 23 March, in response to the unintention-ally cruel letter written to her sister by Vanessa on 20 March.

But Reid believes that "b" was also written on 23 March, or shortly before. In support of her position, she says that the paper, margins, and salutations on "c" and "b" are the same, a very good point, I grant. She also says that the language is similar, but so is the language of any two of the letters. Professor Reid cedes to our scenario of the last days in Woolf's life that the pens, inks, and hands of "c" and "b" are entirely different. Consequently, Reid is forced to produce an elaborate plot to explain her dating. To me, her plot is far too contrived, and ours, closer to an Occam's razor explanation. In further examining "b" to Leonard, Reid calls it "a first, not a final version," mentioning its "brevity and haphazardness" (472). As evidence of the latter, she cites the verbal, marginal, "afterthought" about the Maunor/Fry letters, but not the more final-sounding "Will you destroy all my papers," which, for us, is only the beginning of our sense that "b" is the last letter, written on 28 March. Surely, writing in haste before her determined act, Woolf would have written briefly. Surely too, she would not have left for the river without writing something to Leonard on that very day, yet, in Reid's design, Woolf wrote nothing at all. More significantly, we cannot agree that this letter is haphazard. Throughout her writing life, Woolf frequently wrote postscripts in all manner of places on her stationery.

Next comes the most ingenious part of Reid's case, the folding together of letters "b" and "c." Her narrative builds on the creases of the stationery, the ripped and unripped envelopes, the levels of soiling, Vanessa's name on the "outside," and a dusty, dirty drawer. The account is accompanied by diagrams and correspondence with the British Library, which holds the letters in question. All very intriguing, except that Woolf wasn't in the habit of folding her letters into eights. It seems far more likely that Leonard folded the letters, as was his habit at this time. On the 28th of March, after he knew Virginia had drowned, he wrote himself a note that, "creased and worn, was found among his effects when he died" (George Spater and Ian Parsons, A Marriage of True Minds, 186). At a little more than half the size of the stationery used for "b" and "c," Leonard's sheet, now at the Sussex Library, is folded in quarters. Nor is it at all like Woolf to tuck a letter to Leonard inside one to Vanessa, with only the latter's name on the outside—assuming that Woolf wrote the name. I would need to check the "Vanessa" to see if it truly is in Woolf's handwriting, rather than having been placed there by someone else after her death. Beyond these details is the hard fact that the letters would have been required evidence at the coroner's inquest on 19 April, and were undoubtedly handled by several people after their discovery. Occam's razor again.

This leaves only letter "a," the "Tuesday letter, which should be moved from our 18 March to her 25 March, says Reid. As we do, she quotes Leonard's chapter on Virginia's death, in which he refers to "a note in my diary on 18 March that she was not well and in the next week I became more and more alarmed. I am not sure whether early in that week she did not unsuccessfully try to commit suicide" (The Journey Not the Arrival Matters 90). Leonard follows this statement with a description of Virginia's coming back from her walk, "ill and shaken," with a suspicious story about having fallen into a dyke. Reid's dating is based on a reading of "in the next week" as the week beginning on Monday, 24 March. Possibly, but here is another interpretation, based on Leonard's meticulous recording methods. In discussing the days leading to his wife's suicide, he moves through a strict chronology, checking his diary as he goes. Thus, he follows the reference to the 18th
with one to the 21st. If Reid were right about dating letter “a” on the 25th, she would be saying that Leonard’s order is the 18th, the 25th, and the 21st. That is not the Leonard Woolf we know. An even more important rebuttal to Reid’s dating is that, according to Leonard’s diary, Virginia is “slightly better” on the 24th, and it wasn’t until “two days later” (i.e., on the 26th) that Leonard “knew that the situation was very dangerous” (91). Apparently, nothing in his diary for the 25th, Reid’s proposed date for “a,” bears repeating in his autobiography. It’s worth adding that Hermione Lee follows Mr. Nicolson’s and my dating of all three suicide notes.

I’m certain that Panthea Reid would agree with us on one final matter: these disputes are important to an understanding of Virginia Woolf’s mind in her last days, but trivial compared to the terrible truth that her family and the world lost her much too soon.

Joanne Trautmann Banks • Co-editor of the Letters


Virginia Woolf and her biographers. It is a subject of research in itself. The latest biography written by Hermione Lee, published in England by Chatto and Windus at the end of 1996 largely corroborates this notion. Inevitably, it brings us to the fact that since Quentin Bell’s opus, many other biographers have tried the impossible, and many readers—lovers of Woolf—have experienced hours of pleasure and huge deceptions (James King’s attempt comes to mind here). The task is enormous; the challenge, serious; and, in the nineties, with Woolf’s scholarship at its peak, the pressure, unbearable for anyone who would seriously consider writing a biography (let alone pretend that he or she has something new to contribute). The reason is simple: Woolf has received the devoted attention of probably more biographers than any writer in this century. Each of them has offered to the world their “granite and rainbow,” according to their frame of interpretation, masks and tools. Each of them has tried to bring to us new visions of Woolf’s complex life either as told by others or as textually mediated by the enormous amount of bother her writing and the scholarship available. Woolf herself, constantly rewrites the stories of her life, changing the ways she looked at them. Certainly, my concerns are not about the biographer’s so-called facts and date—we all more or less know and relate to them in similar ways—rather I am concerned with how biographies are put together to give us a vivid and believable portrait of Woolf.

Hermione Lee’s massive work is carefully organized into four parts. These comprise forty-one chapters of 772 pages, delimited by the self-reflexive sections that hold her views together called “Biography” at the beginning and “Biographer” at the end. Included is a comprehensive section of notes and commentaries and a helpful index (together making up another 120 pages). The research is very impressive and well documented; never have Woolf’s texts been so abundantly used. Long before the book appeared readers were assured that it would offer new materials, new evidence and new ways of using Woolf’s fiction, diaries, letters and other texts. This is partly true, depending on who reads it and why.

For me, the problem lies elsewhere, as it does in other biographies, in interpretation, the connections she makes from her tactful use of the Hyde Park Gate news, to her more embarrassing treatment of Woolf’s fiction, largely used to give substance to the writer’s life—for instance by continuously linking Rachel Vinrace’s, Rhoda’s or Septimus’s experiences to support her understanding of Woolf’s psyche. However, Lee’s non chronological kaleidoscope arguably explores the multiple components of the taboos and stereotypes surrounding Woolf. The choices she made to recompose “a life” through what seems to her, and indeed many of us, the most important and never resolved matters, remain perplexing. I am referring to the more critical topics placed within the boundaries of what were once Woolf’s private realities. I would argue that at these polarized centres of Woolf’s life, Lee reaches for a deeper understanding: madness, abuse, suicide, marriage and the like are among the “issues” examined in her biography. All this is very predictable and familiar. It seems precisely like a collage of “issues”. One can look at her interpretation of the trauma of incest, for example, where her argument shifts from “it is impossible to think about this story innocently, without being aware of what has been made of it” (158) to a first degree judgmental reconstruction of Woolf, when Lee argues that “she used George as an explanation for her terrifyingly volatile and vulnerable mental states, for her inability to feel properly, for her sexual inhibition” (159). And she is just as affirmative and reductive when she looks at the so-called madness, when she reaffirms that “Woolf was a sane woman who had an illness” (175). Lee corroborates what seems to be now, very unfortunately, canonical and mainstream in studies of Woolf. Her use of Caramagno’s interpretations of Woolf’s as a manic-depressive is also persistent.

Of course, Lee’s assertive tone is meant to help the reader sort out the way various critics have viewed the issues before she came to give us the answers. Certainly, one can respect Lee’s need to elaborate a coherent and intersubjective portrait of Woolf, in several chapters focusing on a particular relationship, for better or worse. I am particularly thinking of the sections called “Paternal”, “Maternal”, “Thoby”, “Leonard”, “Katherine”, “Vita”, and “Evel” (why not “Violet” and “Vanessa”? why not “Lytton” or “Ottoline”?) even if they occupy a strong place in Lee’s reconstruction of Woolf’s sense of community. For better, in the figures of childhood of the first section (Laura Stephen’s story, for example); and for worse, in her reading of the thirties where she deals with Ethel Smyth and Woolf’s feminism. Here Lee neglects the real implications of Woolf’s materialist views and her militance because she reads Woolf’s feminist program as “above all a literary one” (13) insisting on Woolf’s “self-protectiveness” (17).

Indeed, the chapter titles necessarily predispose a way of looking at Woolf’s life, one direction at a time, often neglecting the subtle variations and changes of attitudes over the years towards each individual. In fact, Lee doesn’t have much choice. How can one offer a complete recreation of childhood, or put together the complex affections and love for Leonard, Vanessa, Vita or Ethel—all different in their drives as much as in the way they were written about and understood by Woolf herself—before any biographer came along? In spite of the fact that it is the most balanced of Woolf’s biographies in respect to the overlapping personas of Woolf as they evolve from the more obscure traumatic points of childhood to her ecstacies in friendships, her everyday life with money, fame, and her ultimate need of anonymity—Lee is at times too overconfident in her interpretations. Take for instance, these statements on Three Guineas: “The risks of her strategy were great, and Three Guineas did lay itself open to ‘sneers’ by the gaps and slippages within its arguments. It did not deal with women outside her own class, or with women’s capacity for martial belligerence, or with unlikely possibility of reeducating the next generation in the event of a German invasion. It offered a double approach to masculinity as both essentialist and constructed, which it did not try to reserve.” (681)

Although conscious of her different readers (probably as Woolf would expect her to be?), to which extent Lee’s tone—in ultimately exposing herself in continuity with her subject (the last chapter historicizes Lee that way) from the London streets to her trip to St. Ives, where “the view, in fact, seems to have been written by Virginia Woolf” (772)—implies a standpoint of authority? Is insisting
on her shared familiarity with Woolf’s London streets and surroundings, around which she subtly develops her biographical argument, a legitimation of a better understanding of Woolf’s life’s experience through her written word? Is that particular place of mediation between Lee and her “textual subject” enough to justify her collage of facts as they are recollected? We are relentlessly reminded that all her choices are the best since “biographers are supposed to know their subjects as well as or better than they knew themselves” (4).

In the midst of her fully exposed paradoxes of Woolf’s life and behavior where class, gender, lesbianism, homophobia and anti-semitism are brought up at various times in the biography, Lee finds herself trapped in the contradictions of a portrait that, in spite of its vigor in presenting a revolutionary writer, neutralize the radical and politically subversive elements of Woolf’s thinking — against all odds. She also insist too strongly on analyzing Woolf’s many realities according to today’s standard — using the term “queer” to speak of Duncan Grant and Lytton Strachey is one example (614), or linking Woolf’s homophobia to Simone de Beauvoir’s (614) is another. This explains why I feel annoyed at being reminded that Woolf was in many ways limited, a product of her time and society. Was she really then? Or isn’t Woolf more a fighter of the limitations imposed by social regulations, one of the first ethnographers of this century, anticipating constantly what her culture was up to in any case: war, psychiatry, sexuality or family values, racism — the list is endless?

It is also constructive to remember in this case that Woolf’s very careful writing of her private selves confronts the authoritarian mode in which the tradition of biography existed as a public medium (Lee is aware of this too). It doesn’t matter how carefully we actually read or examine Woolf’s autobiographical writings, from the diaries and letters to her fiction or “A Sketch of the Past,” we are all condemned to interpretations of her life or feelings that ultimately don’t belong to the texts themselves (expressions like “Woolf felt” are to us always debatable). Hermione Lee faces the same problem. How then can we legitimate the paratextual, what belongs to what we heard, or was told? This is an enormous paradox that any biographer must inevitably face and Lee is no exception. In his monumental rewriting of these technologies of the self in their relation to History, Foucault always asks a question that Virginia Woolf, before him, never stopped asking herself and the world: “Who is speaking?” Lee tried to remain aware of that in her questioning of Woolf’s understanding of her different and complex realities. Most certainly, one thing is sure: Hermione Lee’s interpretation will survive the millennium. We were overdue for a portrait of Woolf as a radical sceptic and more stoic intellectual.

Pierre-Eric Villeneuve • Université du Québec à Montréal

[As the Lee biography is so ambitious, VWM would be interested in printing brief reader responses to this.]

The Society’s Annual MLA party will be held Monday, December 29, 5-8pm, at E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University at the University of Toronto. Located at 71 Queen’s Park Crescent East, the Pratt Library is a short (3 stop) subway ride from the Convention Centre, and there will be a display of Bloomsbury art and artifacts.


Notice: The Eighth Annual Virginia Woolf Conference will be hosted by Saint Louis University, in St. Louis, Missouri, June 4-7, 1998. Professor Georgia Johnston of the English Department is coordinating. The theme of the conference is Virginia Woolf and Communities. As Georgia’s announcement says, the conference encourages presentations that examine Woolf’s work in terms of communities. Presentations that focus on any one or several of Woolf’s texts or on the cultural/textual contexts before, coterminal, or after Woolf’s writing are welcome. Community may be interpreted as national, geographical, pedagogical, sexual, lesbian, ideological, economic, racial, cultural, psychoanalytical, colonial, post-colonial, etc. Proposals for individual papers, performances, readings, and multimedia presentations are encouraged as well as three-four person panels, workshops and discussions.

Proposals must include fifteen copies of a 250 word abstract for each paper or presentation and a cover sheet that lists all names, addresses, institutional affiliations (if any), phone numbers, title of paper(s) or panel, and format. Abstracts should include paper/panel titles but not names. Send proposals by regular mail (not e-mail!) to: Professor Georgia Johnston, Women’s Studies Program, Saint Louis University, 221 North Grand Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103. Deadline: February 1, 1998, Postmark. To query, e-mail Georgia at johnstgk@slu.edu or call 314-977-3003. Selected conference proceedings will be published.
the International Virginia Woolf Society

The International Virginia Woolf Society Column

Congratulations to the Virginia Woolf Miscellany on its 50th issue anniversary! We are indebted to and grateful for the important role that the Miscellany plays in furthering our inquiry into and love for the writing of Virginia Woolf.

The 7th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference, held June 12-15, 1997, at Plymouth, New Hampshire with keynote speakers Maxine Kumin, Gillian Beer, Hermione Lee, Beth Rigel Daugherty, Joanne Trautmann Banks, and Brenda Silver was a huge success. Conference enjoyed the artwork of Suzanne Bellamy, the dance performance of Stephen Pelton, and the reception commemorating Quentin Bell. Mrs. Dalloway, the film, provided a unifying experience, and sessions such as "Directing Mrs. Dalloway(s)" and "Discussions of Mrs. Dalloway" continued the conversation. While full throttle motorcycles sounded in the background (courtesy of Plymouth's "Motorcycle Weekend") and dorm rooms reminded us of how our students live, our main problem was choosing from among a rich range of sessions and presentations. Jeanne Dubino did a fabulous job orchestrating this exchange of ideas. Her hard work was rewarded with four great days of intellectual, creative, and social exchange in the beautiful New Hampshire mountains. Commemorative mugs, t-shirts, and posters with Bill Megemhardt's design depicting Virginia Woolf astride a motorcycle are still available. Contact the Laura Clapper-Davis at the address below for an order form. As in previous years, Pace University Press will publish a volume of selected papers from the conference.

The next opportunities for Woolf scholars to meet will take place at the MLA Convention in Toronto and at the 1998 Woolf Conference in St. Louis. Information on MLA sessions as well as the Society's annual party can be found on page 9.

Christine reminds members to review the proposals for our Special Sessions at the 1998 MLA in San Francisco (which will be included in the Fall Newsletter) and to cast their votes by December 27. Members can hand their votes in either 1997 MLA sessions or at the 1997 Society party, or mail them to Christine Froula at 2801 Girard Avenue, Evanston IL, 60201, USA, to arrive by December 27. Send proposals for the 1998 sessions, consisting of a title and 25-35 word description to Christine until October 15.

Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal is planning a special issue to be called "Virginia Woolf in Performance." In addition to issues of textual performance (including negotiations of gender and sexuality), topics might include multimedia, film, or live performances of Woolf's work, photo-essays and other creative responses are welcome. Another possibility is the issue of Woolf's continued ability to perform: what will she sound like in a few years when she becomes a writer of the previous century? What are the difficulties and pleasures of keeping her voice alive? Essays should be 20-25 pages in length. Deadline for completed submissions is (postmarked) February 15, 1998. Send to guest editor Sally Greene, 406 Morgan Creek Rd., Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA 27514. Inquiries welcome at sally@sunsite.unc.edu.

If you would like to become a member of the IVWS, please send a check in US currency for $15 (or $7.50 for students, retired and part-time employees) Laura Davis-Clapper, Secretary/Treasurer, International Virginia Woolf Society, 5699 Powder Mill Road, Kent, OH 44240. For more information via e-mail, write to Laura at Ldavis@KentVM.Kent.edu. Current members please note that 1998 dues will be collected in January, 1998. You will receive a statement in your January Society mailing showing the date and amount of your most recent dues payment, and can send your dues at any time. Finally, welcome to new members of the Society, re-dedicated as the International Virginia Woolf Society in January 1997. Our new name gives true reflection of our growing global membership in twenty-three countries worldwide.

Laura Davis-Clapper • Secretary/Treasurer • Eileen Barrett • Co-Bibliographer/Historian

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