TO THE READERS:

Regarding this issue, a few recollections on miscellaneous. What inspired the title of VWM, some time before the Fall Issue of 1973, was a wideness of spirit Peggy Comstock, Ellen Hawkes, Rosalind Rogat, J. Wilson and I associated with Virginia Woolf. Seeking to be inclusive rather than exclusive, we sent out a questionnaire and the first TO THE READERS invited all to participate in future "editorial" decisions. Agreeing that "nothing was simply one thing," from the outset we encouraged the miscellaneous. So back for one issue at least, to our origins.

Lucio Ruotolo
Stanford University

Indeed, the Fall '99 issue of VWM is devoted to a theme, translation, and Pat Laurence has heard from a number of different countries and languages already, but has extended her deadline to June 15. If interested in contributing you must reach her right away by e-mail: plaureno@univ.campuscw.net or by fax: 212 666-6250.

Please order your VWM Index to issue 1-50 now from Pam at the SSU English Department as she is going off to library school at the University of Wisconsin—Congratulations, Pam and thanks for all your help to VWM readers! $10, very useful, indeed essential to all good work on Woolf. Our fax: 707 664-4400.

FROM THE READERS: Dear VWM:

As early as 1973, scholars have been considering how much Wittgenstein influenced Woolf. Lucio Ruotolo, for instance, initiated the discussion in Six Existential Heroes (1973) when he noted that Wittgenstein, in his 1929 or 1930 lecture to the "Heretics," endorses a philosophy of "seeing the world as a miracle," a view similar to Clarissa Dalloway's experience of the world as "mystery" or "miracle" (28). Most recently, Pamela L. Caughie, who focuses on the two's similarities with regard to language philosophy, wonders whether "Wittgenstein had influenced Woolf" through a host of mutual "personal and intellectual connections" (VWM, 52). Though Caughie admits, we "have no evidence that Woolf read Wittgenstein or even knew his philosophy," she nonetheless claims that Woolf "certainly knew of him" (2). Ruotolo's letter from Leonard Woolf, confirms that Woolf did indeed meet "the philosopher a number of times" (28), but Leonard's letter adds: "My wife did not go to his lectures .... His philosophy is so difficult that it would not influence any but the professional philosopher" (Letters, 539).

What strikes me about these discussions of influence is the question of who influenced whom. We have, to be sure, Caughie to thank for one of the most compelling readings of A Room of One's Own and Orlando, precisely because in using the writings of Wittgenstein, she shows how Woolf tests "out the consequences of different concepts of language and identity," an insight which leads Caughie to claim: "To speak of rhetoric as either revealing or concealing, to speak of appearance as either natural or contrived, is to set up a false opposition; it is to assume that we can get beyond or beneath the linguistic paradigm, in which rhetorical and sexual differences function, to some natural state, some natural discourse" (Virginia Woolf & Postmodernism, 80-1). In other words, Woolf had just as little time for the traditional correspondence theory of truth as did the later Wittgenstein. But this is precisely where I get confused when I consider Caughie's recent essay "Woolf and Wittgenstein." Caughie speculates whether "Wittgenstein had influenced Woolf," but if Woolf had developed her most intelligent and decisive statements on language from 1927 through 1929, then it would seem that our speculations about influence should cut the other way. As Caughie points out, early Wittgenstein remained faithful to the traditional correspondance theory of truth, "seeking a correspondence between word and world" (2), but if we accept Caughie's reading of Woolf's late twenties writings, then it would seem that Wittgenstein had a lot to learn from Woolf about language games, and not vice versa. And even if we acknowledge that Wittgenstein reconsiders his early philosophy, it appears that his rejection comes after Woolf's central works on language had already been written—Caughie dates his rethinking in the 1930's. Questioning the directionality of influence is also an issue when considering Ruotolo's 1973 discussion of Mrs. Dalloway. Woolf seems to have had firmly in place by the time she wrote her 1925 novel a philosophy which focuses on "the experience of seeing the world as a miracle," an insight which Wittgenstein makes public in 1929 or 1930.

I would suggest that Woolf directly influenced Wittgenstein, were it possible that any woman could have influenced the Austrian philosopher, but as one of Wittgenstein's biographers makes clear, "Wittgenstein seemed unable or unwilling to discuss serious matters with members of the opposite sex" (Ray Monk is paraphrasing Frances Partridge in this instance, Ludwig Wittgenstein, 256). Yet there were male members of Bloomsbury, who did respect Woolf, and who may have been able to communicate Woolf's philosophy of language to the Cambridge luminary. For this reason, I agree with Caughie, that to establish a line of influence between the two, we must look at "personal and intellectual connections," but as I have been arguing, the task will be to understand how Woolf influenced Wittgenstein, and not how Wittgenstein influenced Woolf.

Michael Lackey
University of St. Thomas

1. My thanks to Pamela Caughie and Lucio Ruotolo for helping me to clarify my response to their works.
A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE

A student of mine once commented on the resemblance between Poe's description of Ligeia and that of Orlando at the beginning of Woolf's novel. The coincidence would have little significance were it not for the thematic relationship between the two tales. Orlando studies the maturation of the creative imagination. Poe's short story, "Ligeia" deals with the power of that imagination. In Orlando, the main character produces a mate out of the depths of her mind and desire. In Poe's story, the narrator contrives to bring back to life the long-dead Ligeia.

Before we look into the sleight-of-hand (or mind) by which these feats of the imagination are accomplished, a number of resemblances between characters and situations should be noted. Two key words highlight the descriptions of Orlando and Ligeia: marble and medallions. Orlando has a "brow like the swelling of a marble dome pressed between the two blank medallions which were his temples." Ligeia has a "marble hand," "a gentle prominence of the region above the temples" and a nose compared with those in the "graceful medallions of the Hebrews." Each has a short upper lip and enormous eyes.

Likewise, both Ligeia and Orlando possess immense stores of knowledge. The name Ligeia appears to be a cognate of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet. In Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, Orlando's lost wits are recovered from the moon via Elijah's chariot, a seemingly irrelevant coincidence until its counterpart appears in the closing scene of Woolf's novel.

Both Orlando and the narrator of "Ligeia" (the parallels touch now Ligeia, now the story's narrator) are descendants of ancient families. Both have great wealth. And both are distraught after the loss of their beloved, retreating to enormous houses in the country. The loss of Sasha, the Muscovite princess, sends Orlando into the solitude, both characters briefly lose contact with the normal world.

Two related symbols appear in both Orlando and "Ligeia": the vulture, representing passion, and the puppet show. During the Great Frost, Orlando watches a puppet show staging Othello. Ligeia's poem, "The Conqueror Worm," depicts a tragic drama with man as a mere puppet of fate/passion. Orlando's final thoughts after the puppet show are "Worms devour us," echoing the poem's central image. These surface resemblances cease after the first seventy or so pages of Orlando. All that remains is a theme which forms the plot-line of the two stories: the search for the beloved. Orlando searches for Sasha over several centuries; Poe's narrator looks for another Ligeia in the body of his second wife, Lady Rowena. When Orlando changes sex, the search continues, the climax embodied in the appearance of Shelmerdine on the moon. Orlando has broken her ankle and awaits death as "nature's bride." Out of the "yellow-sashed sky of dawn" rides Shelmerdine, her shadow-self or double, and her poetic muse. He has been born from the very depths of her being.

With great subtlety Woolf establishes the fact that Shelmerdine is not an actual human being but a product of Orlando's imagination. The synchronous sounds of heart and hoofbeat (first heard "deep within" herself) announce his presence. Secondly, the highly symbolic finale of the wedding echoes Whitman's poem "The Dalliance of Eagles." Whitman's eagles mate in the air in the same soaring rhythms as Orlando's wild hawks circle among the beffries. The eagle is a traditional symbol of the creative imagination, a raptor as is the hawk.

The third clarification of Shelmerdine as non-earthly lies in Orlando's ability to summon Shelmerdine mentally when she desires him; and finally, in his supernatural appearance "in moments of dead calm ... when ... the moon was on the waters."

The act of summoning her husband through her imagination is dramatized in his final appearance in a plane that "hovered above her" in bright moonlight. The moon is closely allied with the creative process. The plane "hovered above" Orlando as does a thought above the head. "Baring her breast to the moon, so that her pebbled-veined cheek and the eggs of some vast moon-spider becomes an elaborate metaphysical conceit joining the moon (imagination) with a feminine generative symbol."

Added to this final scene is a veiled reference to the legendary Flying Dutchman, a "spectral" or ghost ship. Shelmerdine is "always sailing, so uselessly, round Cape Horn in the teeth of a gale," just as the Flying Dutchman is forever caught in storms by the Cape of Good Hope.

A question remains: that of the child born to Orlando and Shelmerdine and mid-wived by Mrs. Banting. A similar word, "bantling," means a young child not begotten in a marriage bed and suggests a changeling or spirit-child. Certainly the birth is shrouded in images of dreams, sleep, mirrors, the moth (Woolf's symbol for the imagination), and the kingfisher, which makes its nest in hidden places and flashes now here, now there, as does the creative mind.

The birth of the son appears to be an allegory for Orlando's completion of her life-work, The Oak Tree. Neither the child nor Orlando's role as a mother are mentioned in the remainder of the book.

The finale of the search for the beloved in Poe's "Ligeia" occurs in a more melodramatic manner. The morning after his second wife's death, through the aid of opium the narrator literally dreams Ligeia back into existence. From the dead body of Lady Rowena emerges the living Ligeia with the "full, the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love."

Whether or not these resemblances were actuated by Woolf's reading of Poe's story is not important. From To the Lighthouse through The Waves Woolf was concerned with the creative imagination and its role in the mental life. Part of this concern might have stemmed from a fear of approaching middle age and losing her ability to write. Quentin Bell's biography notes Woolf's feeling "as she approached her forty-first birthday, that life was slipping away and that it could in some manner be arrested, or more effectively detained in its flight" (II, 89). . . . As the diaries make clear, Woolf was possessed of a "ravaging sense of the shortness and feverishness of life" (III, 20 Dec. 1927). Her imagination was her anchor, her refuge from mortality. It is little wonder that the theme of the power of the imagination, transcending death and time, would have a strong attraction for her.

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DEFOE THE TOUCHSTONE

A reading of Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf on Defoe yields an interesting glimpse into that vexed love/hate relationship. Stephen's essay came out in 1868 and Woolf's two essays in 1919 and 1925 When Woolf tells us that in 1900 "two different ages" confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate, she is referring, of course, not just to interfacing cultural milieus, but to a very personal, and often deadly, divide between the Victorian father and his Edwardian daughters—a divide that caused the daughter Vanessa, at least, to dream of murdering the old man. When Woolf's essays appeared, twenty years after Stephen's death in 1904, those tensions were still alive.
Robinson Crusoe offers no problem. "We have all had Robinson Crusoe read aloud to us as children," writes Woolf (from her high nursery tower) and Stephen proclaims it "the most fascinating boy's book ever written"—though he qualifies it as "a book for boys rather than men" and charming only to those grown-ups "who are not too proud to take a low order of amusement." If it was Stephen who did the reading aloud in the scenario above (as is likely), it would appear that he had blessed his daughter with the status "boy"—an honor quite in keeping with his allowing her, at age 13, the run of his precious library.

Stephen's charges against Defoe—which he usually makes and then modifies—are basically two: (1) Defoe is a liar, and (2) he is a mere fact-gathering journalist lacking imagination. When Stephen momentarily rises above his moralism to glimpse Defoe as an artist, he rises only to fall again. Defoe, he writes, had the "most marvellous power . . . of giving verisimilitude to his fictions," but this ability is nothing more than "the most amazing talent on record for telling lies." Stephen acutely analyzes the devices Defoe employs to this end—the legend of a clever con artist—but he sees very little art beyond that Defoe is simply a reporter "aiming at true stories which happened not to be true," and Stephen regrets that "the story-teller cannot be cross-examined." When Stephen compares Defoe with Richardson, he concludes that "the division between the art of lying and the art of fiction was not distinctly visible to either . . ." It does not occur to Stephen to see such a fusion as an artistic asset, or to consider that finding "truth" may be more than simply tearing the mask from "falsehood."

Woolf, on the contrary, admires Defoe for his truthfulness and commends him for achieving in Moll Flanders (the novel she most values) a "truth of insight far rarer and more enduring than the truth of fact." Defoe does, of course, "lie"—she quotes his own admission—but it is in the service of nothing base. His characters exhibit a "natural veracity," and this is the quality, she asserts, that excited Defoe's interest far more than their picturesqueness or their service as examples of cautionary "evil." "We admire Moll Flanders for more than we blame her," Woolf writes; and she loves Moll for her "home-made" morality and her "openness," especially her openness, for "there is a dignity in everything that is looked at openly—even money. Moll Flanders stood, in Woolf's opinion, along with Roxana, as one of the "few English novels which we can call indisputably great." Stephen would strongly demur. He allows that Roxana is an "impressive mystery," but he regrets that the plot does not let us witness the heroine's "well-deserved" downfall, and that we are only told about it. Woolf, on the contrary, is explicitly glad that Roxana is not a moral example: "she is blessedly unconscious that she is in any good sense an example to her sex" and that is the reason she comes across as "fresh and human."

As for Defoe's being merely an unimaginative journalist, Woolf rebuts her father in almost his own words. Stephen had asserted that Defoe—except in Crusoe where he is artistic "in spite of himself"—cannot claim "any higher interest than that which belongs to the ordinary police report." It follows that "passion or sentiment" is absent from his work and that "all which goes by the name of psychological analysis in modern fiction is totally alien to his art." Woolf's position is pointedly opposite. After extolling Moll's virtues—her tolerance, good nature, generosity—Woolf writes: "But we dwell upon such signs of character only by way of proof that the creator of Moll Flanders was not, as he has been accused of being [my emphasis], a mere journalist and literal recorder of facts with no conception of the nature of psychology."

They both recognize Defoe's "vigor," but they value it very differently. Stephen sees it as expended in a "good steady jog-trot of narrative" in pursuit of money. Woolf sees that same energy brought to bear against "that worst of devils, poverty," by people made admirable in the struggle—for survival and the very "right to exist."

They both agree as well that Defoe is often "dull." Stephen sees this as a grave fault, infecting "two-thirds of each of these novels"; Woolf sees this dullness in a positive light: Defoe's "trouble of fact" is the solid earth from which he rises to a "truth of insight."

In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf connects dullness with a state she calls "non-being," the freight of everyday details and duties that fill most of our lives. There is a lot of non-being in Defoe, but Woolf, unlike her father, saw flashes of "being" as well. As Woolf once said of Stephen: "Give him a thought to analyse" and he is "acute, clear, concise... But give him life, a character, and he is so crude, so elementary, so conventional, that a child with a box of coloured chalks is as subtle a portrait painter as he is." Stephen saw only himself in Defoe; Woolf saw much more.

Woolf and the Necessity of Atheism

Given the number of atheists in Woolf's novels, and given her relentless critique of belief in God, it is surprising how little critical attention Woolf's atheism has received. George Carslake, the protagonist of the posthumously published short story "A Simple Melody" perhaps articulates Woolf's attitude best when he says: "To believe in God! Indeed! When every rational power protested against the crazy and craven idiocy of such a saying!" Only three years after writing this story, Woolf echoes Carslake's sentiments when she tells her sister about T.S. Eliot's conversion, claiming "there's something obscene in a living person sitting by the fire and believing in God" (III 1: 457-58). Even in the last months of her life, Woolf confirmed herself an atheist by saying that "certainly and emphatically there is no God" (MOB 72).

Such a committed atheism would surely make its way into one's fiction, and for Woolf, this is most certainly the case. Though Rachel Vinrace is a believer early in The Voyage Out, she eventually says, "I don't believe in God" (250), a declaration which leads her to claim just a few pages later that she will never attend church again (261). In like manner, on the shelf which held "the last relics of religious belief" (ND 343), Katharine Hilbery keeps only school books, and to punctuate her atheism, she refuses to be married in a church (489). As for Clarissa Dalloway, "not for a moment did she believe in God" (MD 28), which is why "she evolved this atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness" (78), while Mrs. Ramsay could not imagine "any Lord [would] have made this world" (TI 64).

Critics have yet to consider the significance of atheism for the deconstruction of what Woolf calls "the Captain self, the Key self" (O 310). In their excellent studies of Orlando, Pamela Caughie and Makiko Minow-Pinkney persuasively argue that Woolf dismisses the notion of "a fixed essence" (Minow Pinkney 130), but for 'humans' to be liberated from the tyranny of essentialist discourses, Woolf makes it clear that 'God' and the church must first be eliminated, a position which Nietzsche, Sartre, and Foucault also support. Richard Schacht shows how Nietzsche's subject-hypothesis leans on the God hypothesis "for its philosophical and theological intelligibility" (131), and so Nietzsche, like Woolf, considers "[u]nconditional honest atheism" (Genealogy 160) necessary in order to understand that the subject is just "a fable, a fiction, a play on words" (Twilight 59).

To understand Woolf's critique of 'God' and the church, it is important to note that two sets of binary oppositions are established in the opening pages of Orlando: Christian / Pagan, male / female. The novel begins with the young Christian—for there could be no doubt about his religion—"in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor" (13).
Contra the standard readings of this passage, I want to suggest that the narrator literally means, "there could be no doubt of his sex" or religion. With God in his heaven, all is right with essentialized subjects, so Orlando could playact the male, Christian role expected of a boy "whose father, or perhaps his grandfather, had struck it [the Moor's head] from the shoulders of a vast Pagan" (13).

Before a radical questioning of binary oppositions could occur, the God-hypothesis would first have to be refuted, or at least challenged, and such a questioning did occur during the reign of King James (1603-25), the age in which Galileo's discovery of the telescope (1610) confirmed that the earth is not the center of the universe. The new world view forced God out of the Ptolemaic heavens and undermined the church's traditional belief in the hierarchical chain of being, leaving the Renaissance human with no justifiable ground for his/her established standing in the cosmos. So the church, which relinquished neither its power nor its teaching, had to assert itself more forcefully, lest humans fall prey to the "madness" (46) of an undifferentiated universe.

Not coincidentally, Orlando meets Sasha when King James is in power (31), and during a conversation with the young Russian, Orlando notes that only "a knife’s blade separates" seeming contrary (49). Because there is no legitimate ground for making clear categorical distinctions, the passage continues, the philosopher "bids us take refuge in the true Church, which is the only harbour, port, anchorage, etc., he said, for those tossed on this sea" of a non-differentiatable world (46). As the novel progresses, and the clouds "dark[en] and spread with extraordinary speed" "behind the dome of St. Paul’s" (225), and the age of doubt replaced the age of belief (226), the core self disappears, and is replaced by many selves (308-09) which are ultimately thrown "into a metonymic confusion of genders" (Minow-Pinkney 122). I propose that to understand Woolf's efforts to undo the bounded unity of an essentialized subject and the strict divisions of binary oppositions, we must take her atheism more seriously. So while I agree with Caughie and Minow-Pinkney that Orlando "challenges the reference theory of meaning" (Caughie 79), I would suggest reading the novel as a gradual progression towards a world in which the reference theory of meaning is no longer tenable. At the beginning of the novel, when the sea of faith is at the full, the bounded unity of a stable subject is firmly fixed, but as 'God' and the church become less credible, "the reference theory of meaning" is undone, and subjectivity is liberated from the tyranny of essentialist discourses.

With such a model in mind, we are in an excellent position to understand the painfully precarious predicament of Mrs. Jarvis from Jacob's Room. Unhappily married to a derygman, "Mrs. Jarvis was just the sort of woman to lose her faith upon the moors," but because such an act would ruin her husband, "she did not lose her faith" and "did not leave her husband" (27). Not surprisingly, we find Mrs. Jarvis near the end of the novel not thinking of God, and yet, during her retreat to the moors, the church clock divides "time into quarters" (133), for "here was a church . . . , of course" (132). Escaping 'God' and the church, just as Mrs. Ramsay (TL 63) and George Carslake (CSF 203) would escape the traps of believing in God, is almost impossible, but the consequence of being trapped is deadly, especially for women, because the "measured voice" of those who "believed in God" continues to "impose itself upon time and the open air" (JR 133). In Woolf's corpus, believers—necessarily—impose a reality structure on humans (Kilmann coerces souls, while Lucy Swinton imposes harmony), and it is church and religion that legitimates this structure (MD 14 and 0 46). Until Mrs. Jarvis can shuffle off the mortal coils of church and 'God' there will be no freedom from the binary oppositions which the church establishes and 'God' sanctions.

A cautious interpretation of the foregoing suggests Woolf criticizes religious institutions, but a close reading of the novels indicates that her claim is much stronger. For Woolf, like Nietzsche and Freud, believing in 'God' (the epistemology of belief) is necessarily destructive, and if we expect to create conditions for healthy human interaction, atheism is a psychological and emotional must. This explains why Woolf calls belief in 'God' an obscene gesture and it helps explain the consistent anti-God rhetoric in her fiction.

Michael Lackey
University of St. Thomas


I happened to arrive in Cambridge, King's College, on the day of Dadie Ryland's funeral, January 25th, 1999. Throwing research to the rafters, I paid my respects to the teacher who had welcomed so many of the Chinese students and writers I had been tracing over the past few years, and who, for so long, was a living memorial to the best of King's of the '20-'30's. King's was the spiritual and educational home of many identified with Bloomsbury (Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Julian Bell), as well as the Chinese writers, Xu Zhimo and Xiao Qian who died this past week at the age of eighty-nine. Though a web of gossip spread across King's of the day, Dadie Rylands represented its kindly, less scandalous part. Although a Fellow of King's from 1927, Dadie was not a university lecturer until 1935. He retired from this post in 1962. Shakespearean expert, teacher, actor, Dadie left a legacy of good memories.

A few weeks earlier, I had read of his gift to Girton College in memory of his friend, Joan Bennett, fellow at Girton: the Second Folio Edition of Shakespeare, 1632. He was often to be found in the theater and became the head of the Cambridge Arts Theater after Maynard Keynes' death. Many remembered his productions, and Lehmann recorded his impressions of the King Lear which produced for the Marlowe Society in the early spring of 1929. It was, he said, "one of the most moving and beautiful [productions] of our time and without much doubt the one truest to the spirit of poetry" (152), noting the remarkable acting of Lear by Peter Hanman. During his days as a lecturer, Dadie's name and Shakespeare's were linked as they were at his funeral in the wondrous King's College Chapel. Here Noel Annan somewhat read "Fear no more the heat of the sun . . ." during the service. I thought of that refrain, a favorite of Virginia Woolf's also, running through the mind of Mrs. Dalloway as she reflects upon death. But during his active teaching career and as a player, Dadie made those words live in the minds of his students and audiences. Just that week, I had been reading John Lehmann's Whispering Gallery in which he praises Dadie (George) Rylands who was then one of the youngest dons at King's. He took, Lehmann said, "an incredible amount of trouble" to direct him and other students such as the visiting Chinese student Xiao Qian in 1939. Lehmann wrote of him: "I owe more than I can say to his coaxing, teasing sympathy; when he praised I knew it was because he sincerely admired, when he found fault he did it so gently but with so sure a precision of analysis that it was impossible for me not to be convinced" (140). Lehmann also writes of Dadie's early days working with Leonard Woolf on the Hogarth Press, in 1924, and his interest in poetry and printing, speculating that one day he and Lehmann might run a press. But the time came when Leonard was looking for a new manager of the Hogarth and Dadie who had also worked at the Press recommended Lehmann.

Sixty black-robed fellows rimmed the choir stalls of King's Chapel along with about two hundred friends, family and colleagues to pay their respects to Dadie, described as "much-loved" by the Provost of King's. A subdued occasion with no grand speeches, rather song, prayer, Shakespeare and Ecclesiastes. The experience of space and light in the chapel—no other word but "glorious" will do—sent the eye upward to the lacy vaults past the hundreds of candles illuminating the stalls to the light filtering through the stained glass north windows. The coffin accompanied by the Dean and small choir of choral scholars moved slowly under the dark Tudor organ-screen toward the people . . . The knells sounding,
the subdued procession proceeded out of the chapel around the court to where the hearse was waiting. The words of Ecclesiastes 12

infamous lawn) to the Modern

and to become one of the most respected journalists and lit­

Dadie’s generous supervision, Xiao read four English authors:

Hieruo, and to become one of the most respected journalists and lit­

12:12, "and to become the most despised of the dead..."

But mostly he was impressed by his tutor, Dadie, both a good

By "rolling his blue eyes," he remembered him listening "vigorously." He wrote essays under his tutelage and noted Dadie’s expanded

"It was precisely when I expressed possibly irreverent ideas rooted in my Oriental background that he
grew especially interested." Xiao described one tutoring session where Dadie presented James Joyce as the height of fiction in the

West. Xiao Qian disagreed and felt that Joyce could only be "a literary dead end" in Europe and China. He wrote an essay describing his views: "I began with the social function of literature and proceeded to the exchange of feelings between author and reader—without which literature became no more than a word game or a masquerade... even as my interest in Joyce was limited by this peculiarly Oriental viewpoint" (Traveller, 101). From Dadie, however, Xiao learned to listen to people with viewpoints that differed from his own.

Little did they both know at the time, that Dadie’s enthusiast

A MODEST BIBLIOGRAPHY—4TH EDITION
A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf, 4th edition,
by B.J. Kirkpatrick and Stuart N. Clarke, Oxford UP,

It is a melancholy object for those who walk through large uni­

versity libraries or small independent bookstores to see shelves

once devoted to Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury now filled with cd’s, CD-ROMS, and videos. In such places, where a "little lan­
guage" is lost in what seems like a conspiracy of sound and visuals, we shudder to see bibliographies, like almanacs and dictionaries, regarded cavalierly and discarded willy-nilly as their usefulness becomes limited by a popular culture increasingly computer­dependent, even as the legacy of Virginia Woolf keeps pace.

Bookish tools, like those treated unceremoniously above, con­
tinue to be consulted and passed on, their usefulness overshadowed by nothing so much as the interest they hold for bibliophiles and common readers alike. No one knows this—or should know this—better than students of Virginia Woolf. For those of us who have used and consulted and applied each successive, modestly entitled, A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf, will always welcome another edition, in part because there is untold value and interest in Virginia Woolf and, in part, because we, like the young readers in her "Hours in the Library," have a perpetual "passion for begin­ning"—no matter how many times we have begun before.

Xiao Qian had connections with Virginia Woolf also. He vis­

ited Leonard Woolf at Monk’s House after Virginia’s death in

October, 1943. Leonard brought out Woolf's diaries and let Xiao

copy from them.

Early the next morning, we went together with heavy

a friend in London, Ying Chinnery, informing me of the
death of Xiao Qian (Hsiao Ch’ien), journalist and trans­
lator, on February 11th. Xiao was in Cambridge before the second world

and he eventually became a student, writing his name in the regis­
ter at the Senate House, along with Milton, Byron, Darwin. Under Dadie’s generous supervision, Xiao read four English authors:

D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and E.M. Forster.

Xiao Qian remembered King’s of the day, for example, the niceties

of class—"Firecrackers and chorus girls shall not be permitted within the college."

But mostly he was impressed by his tutor, Dadie, both a good

and good actor. "Putting on his pipe and continually

rolling his blue eyes," he remembered him listening "vigorously." He wrote essays under his tutelage and noted Dadie’s expanded

notions of Englishness. "It was precisely when I expressed possibly irreverent ideas rooted in my Oriental background that he
grew especially interested." Xiao described one tutoring session where Dadie presented James Joyce as the height of fiction in the

West. Xiao Qian disagreed and felt that Joyce could only be "a literary dead end" in Europe and China. He wrote an essay describing his views: "I began with the social function of literature and proceeded to the exchange of feelings between author and reader—without which literature became no more than a word game or a masquerade... even as my interest in Joyce was limited by this peculiarly Oriental viewpoint" (Traveller, 101). From Dadie, however, Xiao learned to listen to people with viewpoints that differed from his own.

Little did they both know at the time, that Dadie’s enthusiast

for Joyce would one day lead Xiao Qian to translate Joyce’s

Ulysses into a best-selling Chinese edition with his wife, Wen

Jieruo, and to become one of the most respected journalists and literary

critics in China.

Xiao Qian was also given an introduction to Forster at

Cambridge, and given their mutual love of cats, and Xiao’s inter­
est in Forster’s novels and transnational themes, they became

good friends (a relationship to be described in my forthcoming


In one of the many literary losses of China’s Civil War, Qian lost

Forster’s letters to him. In England, his letters to Forster dis­
appeared. In 1994, Xiao wrote that this happened because he did not
dare to meet W.J. Sprott when he visited China in 1954 as a member

of the British cultural delegation.

All my letters (I mean the originals) [to Forster] dis­
appeared and my own guess has been that the old man
simply tore them to pieces when he learnt in the early

50’s that I failed to have a separate session with his

friend, Professor Sprott (from Nottingham University),

and so failed to receive his letter and the book which was
to be delivered to me in person. I have often pondered,

“suppose I were to be in the 50’s again with the same

Stalinist atmosphere, would I dare to have a separate

session?” I am afraid the answer would still be NO, for
during these forty years I have seen too many people

who were made counter-revolutionaries just by such a

chance meeting. (Xiao/Laurence 6.2.94)
Review: BLOOMSBURY HERITAGE SERIES


There is a pleasant air about these diverse Bloomsbury Heritage booklets. Created under the editorship of Jean Moorcroft Wilson and unified by Robert Campbell's cover design they suggest being in a transitional space—between engaging in serious endeavors and having fun. Conveniently sized to tuck into a large pocket, to read on the subway or at the beach, they give the reader the freedom to go down a variety of byways, peer into corners, discover unexpected treasures.

Rachel Tranter's "Vanessa Bell—A Life in Painting" is a brief narration of the artist's life and work, and includes an eye-pleasing selection of illustrations in color and black and white. It introduces Vanessa Bell, and therefore is not for the expert but for someone who wants to learn about her. Reading Tranter's account, one is reminded of the astonishing variety of forms Bell experimented with: oil painting, woodcuts, gouache and collage, mural painting, pottery/fabric painting, costume and set design, book jackets, lacquer boxes, paper flowers—even the design of a mosaic pavement. This lively experimentation, Tranter points out, was encouraged by Bell's participation in the "innovative and flexible" atmosphere surrounding the Omega Workshops early in her career.

The booklets on lesser-known members of Bloomsbury circles are like expanded footnotes in a useful, enjoyable form: a name, a hint; in 1926 Woolf chose this more provocative version to send to the Edinburgh University Women's Union publication. Luckhurst discusses in some detail different aspects of the ethical dilemmas Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, and others faced in writing for Vogue, and the anxiety that the blurring of boundaries between the artistic and the commercial can create. "And what's the objection to whoring after Todd?" Woolf writes, rather defensively, to Vita Sackville-West, 1 September 1925: "Better where, I think than honestly and timidly and coolly and respectively culpate with the Times Lit. Sup." Woolf experienced opposing inclinations as well; Lisa Cohen in another article on the subject, "Virginia Woolf, Fashion and British Vogue" (in the Summer/Winter '98 issue of the Charleston Magazine), quotes from her diary: "I want as usual to dig deep down into my new stories, without having a looking glass flashed in my eyes—Todd, to wit" (19 April 1925). Did Vogue exercise more or less censorship than other publications? Opinions differed, but Roger Fry once gave up on an article that struck a nerve: it was returned heavily marked up. Deciding to send it off to the Nation instead, he told Helen Anrep, "with their advertising clientele it is perhaps impossible to say openly some of the things I've said."

When Vogue's circulation and ad revenue fell, Conde Nast was not pleased and Todd was sacked, thus ending an intriguing and aberrant era in fashion magazine publication. Todd went on to co-author The New Interior Decoration, a Bloomsbury project, with Raymond Mortimer—for both of them, a rare excursion into book writing. Eventually she moved to Cambridge "where she lived in relative poverty," Luckhurst tells us, and became a Christian Scientist, "writing haphazard notes and fragments on scraps of paper."

"Charleston, A Voice in the House," by Kathryn N. Benzel, is an evocative essay-meditation, containing anecdote and romantic description as well as factual information about this home of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the rural heart of Bloomsbury. Benzel says her purpose is to proceed through the house and grounds and "reveal, I hope, the emotion of its extraordinary artistry, the ingenuity of its experiments with domestic art, the delight and playfulness of its eclecticism, the lingering voices of its artists and its potential still to inspire and encourage artists."

A transitional space, to use British psychologist D.W. Winnicott's term, is a zone of particular magic and energy, conducive to creativity (for children, an opportunity to play "alone" and freely within the orbit of a parent who is not scrutinizing too closely). Part of the charm of the Charleston museum is its existence in such a zone, and Benzel evokes well the sense of "a flurry of creative activity there," the fluidity and spontaneity where the usual boundaries have blurred: between work and play, past and present, inside and outside, public and private, art and decoration, picture and frame. Charleston is like no other museum, Benzel concludes, because it "invites and engages the visitor to ponder, to question, to reciprocate, to realize the combined power of art and living; it is a living art gallery."

A number of booklets about Charleston exist—in addition to the gorgeously illustrated book Charleston: a Bloomsbury House and Garden by Quentin Bell and Virginia Nicholson—but perhaps no essay on the museum conveys so well in words its continuing magic as this one does.

Kathy Chamberlain
New York, New York
THE INTERNATIONAL VIRGINIA WOOLF SOCIETY COLUMN

The Society membership voted in December to choose topics for the 1999 Modern Language Association Convention, to be held in Chicago, December 27-30. The Society's first session will be "Virginia Woolf and the Everyday," organized by Lisa Ruddick (Univ. of Chicago). It will feature "Everyday Any Day: Monday or Tuesday," by Marianne DeKoven (Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick); "Woolf and the Discipline of Everyday Life," by Mark Wollaeger (Vanderbilt University); "Eternally Seeing and Being Seen: Death, the Ridiculous, and the Sublime in Some Letters by Virginia Woolf," by Pierre-Eric Villeneuve (Brock Univ.); and "Anon, as Peacher: Virginia Woolf and the Practice of Everyday Life," by Molly ElitE (Cornell Univ.). Our second session will be "Virginia Woolf and Englishness," organized by Melba Cuddy-Keane (Univ. of Toronto). It will feature "Woolf's Ethnographic Fiction: Othertising Englishness in The Voyage Out" by Carey Snyder (SUNY, Stony Brook); "Redefining Englishness: Between the Acts and the History of the Modern English Pageant," by Ayako Yoshino-Miyaura (Waseda Univ. and Univ. of Sussex); and "Sitting Englishness in Virginia Woolf's The London Scene," by Sonia Sarker (Macalester College). Thanks to all who contributed ideas, ballots, and proposals toward the making of this program.


The Society has moved its Web Site to: http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS (remember to change your bookmark) Founded and maintained by Past President Melba Cuddy-Keane assisted by Alan Chong, the site has improved links and new materials, including: the annual bibliography; calls for papers and proposals (soon to include session proposals for MLA 2000, by Oct. 15); a log of the Society's MLA sessions since 1988; information on and links to Virginia Woolf Societies in Japan, France, and Great Britain as well as other Woolf resources; and instructions for joining the Virginia Woolf listserv. Thanks to Melba Cuddy-Keane for contributing this invaluable service to the Society and the larger world of Woolf readers.

The Society's membership currently stands at about 600. Thanks to all who sent in dues and ballots in December. Outstanding dues may be sent to Laura Davis, IVWS Secretary-Treasurer, 5699 Powder Mill Road, Kent OH 44240 USA.

Christine Frau/a, President
International Virginia Woolf Society

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