This is not to say that particular scholars have not attempted to reorient discussions of the 1930s and its literature. Most notably, Jed Esty, in his 2004 A Shrinking Island, examines the 1930s literary production of modernist writers, specifically T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, and Virginia Woolf. However, instead of integrating these canonical modernist writers into a broader examination of the 1930s literary scene in order to investigate the reciprocal relationships between 1930s literary trends and modernism, Esty focuses on the development and role of modernism through the 1930s. Esty argues that rather than relinquishing its position as the dominant cultural force in the decade—as many narratives of 1930s literature seem to imply—modernism reorients itself. According to Esty, modernism takes an “anthropological turn” in which modernist aesthetics are redirected towards a pastoral, English nativism. In other words, rather than examining what sympathizes Woolf, Eliot, and Forster might share with their younger generation literary counterparts during the decade, Esty focuses on how Victorian-born modernists adapt to political and cultural currents that dominate the decade, thus reinforcing the distinction between writers of the 1930s and modernists writing in the 1930s.

As the title of this issue of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany, “1930s Woolf,” suggests, the contributing scholars look closely at Woolf’s writing and literary politics of the decade, constellating her with canonical 1930s writers (such as Isherwood and Upward) and other women writers publishing in the decade (Dorothy Sayers and Victoria Ocampo) as well as attending to Woolf’s responses to her earlier writing and emerging cultural trends of the decade. In this manner, I hope that “1930s Woolf” offers to readers of Woolf and readers of the decade a way to move beyond scholarly categorizations that distinguish between Woolf and her canonical 1930s counterparts by highlighting the way Woolf’s work in the decade took seriously her literary, historical, and cultural moment, her own continued evolution, and the appearance of new literary and cultural discourses. The goal is not to claim Woolf as a 1930s writer. Rather, my aim is to open up the decade designation in such a way as to encourage common readers and scholars of Woolf to “trespass freely and fearlessly” over and through literary territories—historical as well as aesthetic and political—because, as she reminds us in “The Leaning Tower” (1940), “literature is common ground” (154).

For Woolf, the end of the decade brought into relief the dangers of exclusivity and boundary-drawing, not just in literature as “The Leaning
under pressure in the latter half of the 1930s."

claims that "in terms of our understanding of the period, they are our
and its gender politics. Rather, Johnsen convincingly and engagingly
Sayers "do not need documentary or formal political allegiances" to
politics—literary and otherwise—Johnsen argues that Woolf and
relationship to another female writer of the decade, Dorothy L. Sayers,
the British colonies. Rosemary Johnsen, like Beeber, considers Woolf's
constellations, scholars Matthew Beeber and Rosemary Johnsen each
Continuing the exploration of often overlooked or undervalued
writers by examining connections cultivated through Woolf’s role in
the Hogarth Press and the rise of fascism at home and abroad. Stansky
leads the issue with his investigation into the relationship between Woolf
and Edward Upward, arguably the most committed Communist of the
politically outspoken Auden Generation. Through the Hogarth Press,
Woolf is introduced to Upward by Isherwood and Lehmann, and, despite
Woolf’s skepticism concerning the younger generation of emerging
writers, the Hogarth Press published Upward’s Journey to the Border
in 1938. A similar publishing affiliation underlies Alice Keane’s essay,
“Miserably Devalued Currency: Language, Economy, and Fascism
in Christopher Isherwood’s The Berlin Stories and Virginia Woolf’s The
Years.” Although initially their relationship is solely professional with
the Hogarth Press publishing Isherwood’s first novel, The Memorial,
in 1932, by the end of the decade, Keane argues, Woolf and Isherwood
“both experiment with narrative realism, repetition, and variation around
questions of modern economies as they struggle to locate possibilities
of resistance to the commercially and politically driven ‘devaluation’ of
language.” Together, both Stansky’s and Keane’s essays offer productive
ways of thinking across the divide traditionally separating modernism
and 1930s writing, encouraging readers to place modernists like Woolf
alongside canonical 1930s writers like Upward and Isherwood in service
of complicating the commonplace narratives that dominate the scholarly
construction of the decade and its literature.

Many scholars have joined me in this effort and I am proud to showcase
them in this issue. Peter Stansky and Alice Keane both directly address
the scholarly divide between canonical modernists and canonical 1930s
writers by examining connections cultivated through Woolf’s role in
this issue. Peter Stansky and Alice Keane both directly address
their work.” In so doing, Beeber’s essay both highlights a connection
between Woolf and Ocampo that is under-examined outside the annual
Woolf conferences and expands our understanding of the decade
designation to include writers beyond the boundaries of England and
the British colonies. Rosemary Johnsen, like Beeber, considers Woolf’s
relationship to another female writer of the decade, Dorothy L. Sayers,
methodology that is unassociated with modernism because of her commitment
to detective fiction. Despite the obvious differences in aesthetics and
politics—literary and otherwise—Johnsen argues that Woolf and
Sayers “do not need documentary or formal political allegiances” to
offer a fresh and productive perspective on the decade, its literature,
and its gender politics. Rather, Johnsen convincingly and engagingly
claims that “in terms of our understanding of the period, they are our
correspondents, reporting on the situation of the woman intellectual
under pressure in the latter half of the 1930s.”

Both Sarah Cornish and Jennifer Mitchell, like Johnsen, employ
the decade as the frame for their readings of Woolf’s 1930s writing.
Cornish, through her attention to Le Corbusier’s architectural concept
of ineffable space, suggests the influence of architectural discourse
on Woolf’s thinking and writing during the 1930s. Reading Woolf
in conjunction with Le Corbusier, Cornish argues that “Woolf challenges
meanings, dominant narratives, and patriarchal ideologies found in
the built environment, contributing to her well-documented interest
in the relationship between a gendered body and the city.” Her close
reading of Woolf’s 1938 essay, “America, Which I Have Never
Seen,” by way of the concept of ineffable space illustrates how Woolf
reconceives of the male dominated discourse of architecture in service
of creating a “liberated, feminist space.” Similarly, Mitchell draws
upon the increased circulation and familiarity of sexological works by
Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis during the decade, citing
critics’ acknowledgement of Ellis’s direct influence on Woolf and her
conception of androgyny. It is Woolf’s 1933 mock-biography, Flush,
#f
that, for Mitchell, stands as an “experiment in masochistic subjectivity.”

“The emotional capacity ascribed to Flush, and its ensuing struggles,”
Mitchell claims, “echo contemporaneous sexological tracts that uncover
and explore the direct relationship between love and suffering.” When
read together, both Cornish and Mitchell draw our attention to the
manner in which Woolf was an attentive cultural consumer and critic
during the 1930s, absorbing the cultural discourses that were circulating
during the interwar generally and the 1930s specifically.

Leslie Kathleen Hankins and Annette Oxindine each look closely
at Woolf’s writing in the decade, focusing on her essays for British
Good Housekeeping (Hankins) and her novel The Years (Oxindine).
Hankins takes readers on a lively journey through her research process:
examining Woolf’s The London Scene essays in their original Good
Housekeeping context. Culminating in a close reading of the image
accompanying Woolf’s essay “This is the House of Commons”—“an
exterior view of the Houses of Parliament, with the little people below
rather like ants, and atop the building, a series of huge, looming statues
of statesmen somehow superimposed or cut and pasted in”—Hankins
raises questions about the relationship between text and image, the
relationship between Woolf’s essay and her other writings of the
period, and the aesthetic and political role of statues in Woolf work.
If Hankins immerses herself and her readers in a deep appreciation
of the visual complement to Woolf’s Good Housekeeping essay,
then Oxindine takes a broader view. Fully considering Hermione
Lee’s “tantalizing claim that ‘in a way The Years rewrites [Woolf’s]
earlier books.’” Oxindine addresses Woolf’s increasing resistance to
didacticism by analyzing “Woolf’s intratextual strategies for resisting
or undermining the creation of a unified vision in The Years” in service
of interrogating evocations of visionary wholeness present in Woolf’s
earlier works and [considering] the ways in which Woolf in the 1930s
might be ‘rewriting’ some part of her 1920’s oeuvre.”

As I hope this brief introduction suggests, “1930s Woolf” encompasses
productive interpretations of her work from the decade, new perspectives
on the way the literary, cultural, and political trends of the decade are
integrated into her work, and fresh connections between Woolf’s writing
and that of her female contemporaries. Moreover, I hope this special
issue of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany is the first step in our collective
repossession of Woolf’s writing in the 1930s. Not only will Woolf studies
benefit from this decade-specific approach, but also, modernist studies
and studies of 1930s literature will benefit as more complex conceptions
of the decade’s literature enrich our understanding of—and the
affiliations among—aging modernists, Auden Generation writers, and
those unrecognized by either dominant category.

And what would this edition be without a poem from Sandra Inskeep-
Fox, the poet laureate of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany? Here, Inskeep-
Fox frames her verse with epigraphs from Ernest Hemingway and Woolf,
suggesting, like others in this issue, that throughout the decade Woolf’s
work was in conversation with many, crossing divisions scholarly, gendered, political, and continental!

_Erica Delsandro_
_Bucknell University_

Works Cited
Leeds Trinity University is honoured to be hosting the 26th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf: Virginia Woolf and Heritage.

This international conference will investigate how Virginia Woolf engaged with heritage, and how she understood and represented it. One strand will look at her experience of the heritage industry, for example: libraries, museums, art galleries, authors’ houses, artists’ houses, stately homes, London’s heritage sites, and tourist sites in Britain and abroad.

Alternatively, the topic encompasses Woolf’s constructions of heritage, including literary heritage, intellectual heritage, family histories, the history of women and the history of lesbians. The conference will also consider ways in which Woolf has been represented and even appropriated by the heritage industry, for example in virtual and physical exhibitions; libraries, archives and collections; plaques, memorials, and statues; and at National Trust or other properties such as Monk’s House and Knole.

When and where?
16-19 June 2016, Leeds Trinity University

Who should attend?
An international audience of academics, postgraduates, students, and general readers.

How to book:
We will be setting up an online booking portal, but in the meantime please email woolf2016@leedstrinity.ac.uk or join the Facebook group https://www.facebook.com/virginiawoolf2016.
Conference theme: We envisage a conference premised around the broad idea of Woolf and ‘the world of books’, incorporating readings of the past, present and future of Virginia Woolf’s works. The Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf at the University of Reading in 2017 will also coincide with the centenary of the Hogarth Press. During the conference, we will share some of the materials from the Hogarth Press in our Special Collections.

Attendees are invited to submit papers related to all aspects of the Woolfs and print culture, including topics exploring Leonard and Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press; the production, reception and distribution of Woolf’s books; new media studies of Woolf and her circle; Woolf and Digital Humanities; materiality and textuality; Woolf and objects; the global literary marketplace; collecting, bookselling, advertising and reviewing; writing practices; editing and revision; translation; Woolf and her readers; Hogarth press authors; modernist publishing and publishers; Bloomsbury writers and connections.

We will also include special sessions/workshops on the Hogarth Press; modernist publishers and publishing; global modernisms; Woolf and the Digital Humanities.

Conference Location: The University of Reading is half an hour away from London Paddington by train and those on international flights can get the Heathrow Express direct from London Heathrow to Paddington station with an easy connection from there to Reading. There are also direct trains between Reading and Gatwick airport.

Organizers: Dr Nicola Wilson (Reading), Dr Claire Battershill (Reading)

Program Committee: Dr Maddi Davies (Reading), Dr Alice Staveley (Stanford), Dr Helen Southworth (Oregon), Dr Elizabeth Willson Gordon (King’s, Canada).

Please contact Dr Nicola Wilson n.l.wilson@reading.ac.uk if you have questions about the conference.

The 3rd Korea-Japan Virginia Woolf Conference 2016
Virginia Woolf and Her Legacy in the Age of Globalization
August 25th-26th, 2016
Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea

Call for Papers
Since 2010 scholars of Virginia Woolf from Japan and Korea have held joint conferences on Woolf, exchanging thoughts and sharing friendship. Seeking to enlarge participation, the upcoming 3rd Korea-Japan Virginia Woolf Conference, which will take place in Seoul, Korea on August 25-26, 2016, will be held as an international conference and invites papers from not only the two countries but also other countries. The two-day conference will focus on critical issues related to Woolf’s legacy in the age of globalization. Possible topics might include: Virginia Woolf studies in Asia; Woolf and Victorianism; Woolf and modernism; Woolf and life-writing; Woolf and posthumanism; and Woolf in the age of postfeminism. We also welcome papers on any other topics that will refresh our perspectives on Woolf’s works and widen the horizon of Woolf studies.

Please send 250-word abstracts in English and a one-page CV to the office of the Virginia Woolf Society of Korea at woolfkorea@gmail.com by January 15, 2016. You will receive the official notification of acceptance by March 15, 2016.

Registration:
Regular Fee: 50 USD
Fee for Graduate students: 25 USD

Conference Important Dates:
Abstracts/Papers Submission Date: January 15, 2016
Notification of Acceptance (by Email): March 15, 2016
Final Papers for Conference Proceedings: July 15, 2016
How to Join

The International Virginia Woolf Society

To join, update membership or donate to the International Virginia Woolf Society, please either:
download the membership form from the IVWS website and mail to the surface address provided or use the PayPal feature available online at the IVWS website.

Regular membership:
a 12-month membership ($20)
a 5-year membership ($95)

Student or not full-time employed membership:
12-month membership ($10)

Members of the Society receive a free subscription to the Virginia Woolf Miscellany, updates from the IVWS Newsletter and have access online to an annual Bibliography of Woolf Scholarship and an updated list of members in a password-protected PDF format—the password is provided in the IVWS newsletter. The electronic IVWS distribution list provides early notification of special events, including information about the Annual Conferences on Woolf and MLA calls for papers as well as access to electronic balloting, and electronic versions of newsletters.

Subscriptions for the year ending 31 December 2014 are £18 UK, £23 Europe

Société d’Études Woolfiennes

The Société d’Études Woolfiennes (SEW) is a French society which promotes the study of Virginia Woolf, the Bloomsbury Group and Modernism. It was founded in 1996 to develop Woolf studies in France and to create further links between French specialists and their counterparts abroad. It welcomes academics and students in the field of English and Comparative Literature who share a strong interest in the different aspects of Virginia Woolf’s work (the canonical as well as the lesser known works).

Over the years, the SEW has aimed to create a rich working atmosphere that is both warm and generous to all involved, intellectually vibrant and challenging. We are keen to maintain this complementary association of academic poise and spontaneous enthusiasm, so that members, potential members and passing guests all feel welcome and valued.

The dedication of its founding members and more recent participants has enabled the SEW to make its mark in French academic circles, convening high quality international conferences every two years and publishing a selection of the proceedings in peer-reviewed journals, as well as organising more informal annual gatherings and workshops.

Since the foundation of the SEW in 1996, international conferences have focused on:

• “Métamorphose et récit dans l’œuvre de Woolf” (1997)
• “Metamorphosis and narrative in Woolf’s works”
• “Things in Woolf’s works” (1999)
• “Le pur et l’impur” (2001)
• “The pure and the impure”
• “Conversation in Woolf’s works” (2003)
• “Woolf lectrice / Woolf critique” (2006 / 2008)
• “Woolf as a reader / Woolf as a critic”
• “Contemporary Woolf” (2010)
• “Woolf among the Philosophers” (2012)
• “Outlanding Woolf” (2013)
• “Translating Woolf” (2015)

Information concerning past and forthcoming conferences and publications is available on our website: http://etudes-woolfiennes.org

We would be very pleased to welcome new members. If you wish to join the SEW, please fill in the membership form available on our website (“adhérer”) or send an email to claire.davison@univ-paris3.fr and marie.laniel@gmail.com, indicating your profession, address and research interests.

The annual subscription is 25€ (15€ for students).

Cheques made out to SEW should be sent to:
Nicolas Boileau, 12 Traverse du Riaz, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, FRANCE

If you wish to join the SEW’s mailing list, please send an email to marie.laniel@gmail.com.

Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain Membership

Membership of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain entitles you to three free issues annually of the Virginia Woolf Bulletin, and the opportunity to attend member-only events such as:

Birthday Lecture*—AGM with guest speaker—Summer Study Day*

Reading Group meetings

(*There is a charge for events marked with an asterisk.)

Subscriptions for the year ending 31 December 2014 are £18 UK, £23 Europe and £26 outside of Europe;

Five-year memberships (five years for the price of four) beginning in 2013 are £72 UK, £92 Europe and £104 outside Europe.

We are always delighted to welcome new members. If you wish to join the VWSGB and pay in pounds sterling (whether by cheque or via PayPal), please write to or email Stuart N. Clarke <Stuart.N.Clarke@btinternet.com> for a membership form:

Membership Secretary
Fairhaven,
Charneys Lane, Banks,
SOUTHPORT PR9 8HJ,
UK

For members paying in US dollars, please request a membership form by writing to or emailing Professor Lolly Ockerstrom <ljsearose@gmail.com>

Park University,
8700 NW River Park Drive,
English Department, Box 39
Parkville, MO 64152,
USA

If you are interested in details of student, five-year or life membership, please write (as above) or email the Membership Secretary, Stuart N. Clarke <Stuart.N.Clarke@btinternet.com>

THE IVWS & VWS ARCHIVE INFORMATION

http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/special/FS1ivwoolfosocietyfonds.htm

http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/fs1_intvwoolf_society/>

The archive of the VWS and the IVWS has a secure and permanent home at E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto.

Below is the finding aid for the IVWS archival materials:

http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/special/FS1ivwoolfosocietyfilelist.htm

[As a lexical point of interest, professional archivists use the term “archival” to describe records that have been appraised as having enduring value or the storage facility where they are preserved. For example, when we call a record “archival,” we generally refer to where it is housed; depending on context, the term may be used to refer to the valuation (“enduring value”) of such a record.]

With regard to such items as correspondence, memorabilia and photographs, contact the current Archival Liaison, Karen Levenback, either at iwvsarchive@att.net or by surface mail:
Karen Levenback, Archival Liaison/IVWS Archive, 304 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.
The Miscellany gladly considers very short contributions including scholarly articles, essays, poems, fiction, notes and queries as well as line drawings and photographs.

The Miscellany considers work that has been previously published elsewhere; however, the editor(s) and guest editor(s) must be notified at the time of submission that a similar or closely related work was published originally elsewhere. The prior publication must also be explicitly cited in the newly published submission. Any permissions to republish must be provided by the author.

CFPs
If you are responding to a call for papers for a themed issue, the submission should be sent directly to the Guest Editor.

Miscellaneous Submissions
Even when individual issues are themed, the Miscellany accepts submissions unrelated to the theme. Such submissions should be sent to the Managing Editor, Vara Neverow (rather than to the Guest Editor) at: <neverovv1@southernct.edu>

Guidelines for Submissions
Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words at maximum and shorter articles are strongly preferred. Articles should be submitted electronically, in .doc or .docx MS Word format and in compliance with the style of the 6th edition of the MLA Handbook (not the 7th edition published in 2009). For a copy of the current Miscellany style guide, please contact Vara Neverow at <neverovv1@southernct.edu>. Editorial note: While previously published work may be submitted for consideration, the original publication must be acknowledged at the time of submission (see above).

Editing Policies
The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and to correct errors. If time permits, contributors will be consulted about changes.

Permissions
Contributors are responsible for obtaining permissions related to copyrights and reproductions of materials. Contributors must provide the Editorial Board with original written documentation authorizing the publication of the materials.

Reimbursement for Permissions
The Editorial Board will assist contributors to the best of its ability with regard to permissions for publication, including costs of up to $50 per item. However, the Editorial Board has the option to decline to publish items or to pay for items. The Editorial Board will consider requests to publish more than one item per article or more than five items per issue but will be responsible for funding items only at its own discretion.

Publication Policies
Submissions accepted for publication may be published in both print format and electronic format.

NOTE: The Editorial Board takes no responsibility for the views expressed in the contributions selected for publication.

Rights of Publication
The Miscellany retains all rights for future uses of work published herein. The contributor may, with the express permission of the Miscellany, use the work in other contexts. The contributor may not, however, sell the subsidiary rights of any work she or he has published in the Miscellany. If the contributor is granted permission and does use the material elsewhere, the contributor must acknowledge prior publication in the Miscellany.
A Brief Overview of Resources for Woolfians

The Virginia Woolf Miscellany is an independent publication, which has been sponsored by Southern Connecticut State University since 2003. Founded in 1973 by J. J. Wilson, the publication was hosted by Sonoma State University for 30 years. The publication has always received financial support from the International Virginia Woolf Society. Issues from Spring 2003 (issue 63) to the present are available in a PDF format at <http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/VWM_Online.html> (see also <http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/VWM_Online_Fall1973-Fall2002.html>.

The IVWS was founded in 1973 as the Virginia Woolf Society. The society has a direct relationship with the Modern Language Association and has for many years had the privilege of organizing two sessions at the annual MLA Convention. As of 2010, MLA has transitioned to a new format in which the IVWS will continue to have one guaranteed session.

The IVWS website <http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/> is hosted by the University of Toronto. The website was founded by Melba Cuddy-Keane, Past President of the International Virginia Woolf Society, who continues to oversee the site.

The VWoolf Listserv is hosted by the University of Ohio. The current list administrator is Elisa Kay Sparks. Anne Fernald oversaw the list for many years. The founder of the list is Morris Beja. To join the list, you need to send a message to the following address: <listproc@lists.ohio-state.edu>. In the body of the email, you must write: subscribe VWOOLF Your firstname Your last name. You will receive a welcome message with further information about the list. To unsubscribe, please send a message *to the exact account that you originally subscribed with *to the same address: <listproc@lists.ohio-state.edu>. In the body of the email, write: unsubscribe VWOOLF.

Materials from most of the sources mentioned above are included in the IVWS/VWS archive at the E. J. Pratt Library, Virginia University, University of Toronto even though they are entities separate from the Society itself. Individuals who have materials that may be of archival significance should consult Karen Levenback at <ivwsarchive@att.net>.

The Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf is an independent entity. It was envisioned by Mark Hussey and launched in 1991 at Pace University. The conference is overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of all previous conference organizers. Permission to host a Woolf conference is authorized by Mark Hussey, who chairs the Steering Committee. Those interested in hosting the conference should contact Mark Hussey at <mhussey@pace.edu>. Each annual conference is organized by one or more individuals associated with the host institution. The host institution finances the event and uses the registration fees of attendees to offset the costs of the event. The Annual Conference has no formal association with the International Virginia Woolf Society or the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain or any other Woolf society. For information about the history of the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, go to <http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/annual_conference_on_virginia_woolf.html>.

The Selected Papers from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf 2001-present (excluding 2004) are published by Clemson University Press (formerly Clemson University Digital Press) under the auspices of Wayne Chapman. The editors of the publication vary from year to year. The electronic version of the Selected Works from the 2002 and 2004 Woolf conferences are available to view at the Woolf Center at Southern Connecticut State University: <http://woolf-center.southernct.edu>.

The Selected Papers from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf 1991-2000, launched by Mark Hussey in conjunction with the conference, were published by Pace University Press under his auspices. While early volumes of the papers are out of print, a number of the more recent ones are still available from the press (see <http://www.pace.edu/press>.

CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

ISSUE #89, SPRING 2016 A TRULY MISCELLANEOUS ISSUE OF THE Virginia Woolf Miscellany

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 15 OCTOBER 2015

EDITOR: DIANA SWANSON

Essays requested on any topic related to Virginia Woolf. All topics and approaches are welcome; however, we have particular interest in essays on post-colonial, eco-critical, LGBT, and historical topics. PLEASE NOTE that this CFP replaces the CFP for “The Woolfs and Africa;” however, papers on Africa are most welcome, including but not limited to the following topics: Virginia Woolf and African writers; representations of Africa in Virginia’s fiction and/or essays; Leonard’s international politics/writing and Africa; imperialism, race, and Africa in the Woolfs’ lives and work; teaching Virginia and/or Leonard Woolf in Africa; African perspectives on Virginia’s feminism; African modernisms and Virginia Woolf; post-colonial African literature and Virginia Woolf.

Please send queries and submissions to Diana L. Swanson <dswanson@niu.edu>.

Essays should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words and use MLA citation style. Submit files in Word or RTF format.

CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

ISSUE #90, FALL 2016

SPECIAL TOPIC: WOOLF AND ILLNESS

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 31 MARCH 2016

GUEST EDITOR: CHERYL HINDRICH

Virginia Woolf’s 1926 essay “On Being Ill” questions why illness has failed to feature as a prime theme of literature, alongside love, battle, and jealousy. This issue of VWM seeks contributions on Woolf’s exploration of illness in her life and work, as a paradigm for reexamining modernist literature and art, and its influence on subsequent writers. Topics might include questions such as: How does the literature of illness challenge or enhance theories of trauma, narrative ethics, and disability studies? How does Woolf’s focus on the politics and aesthetics of the ill body inform our understanding of the period, including in relation to Victorian values, in relation to the 1918-19 flu pandemic, and in relation to mechanized modernity’s drive toward professionalization and specialization? How has the contemporary literary landscape changed to contribute to the popularity of Woolf’s focus—from the success of the medical humanities to the proliferation of autopathographies? What might be inspiring or potentially problematic in Woolf’s theory of illness as a site for creative rebellion?

Send submissions of no more than 2500 words by 31 March 2016 to: Cheryl Hindrichs <cherylhinch@boisestate.edu>
Recent Woolf-Related Publications, Scholarly and Otherwise


Bradshaw, David and Stuart N. Clark, eds. *A Room of One’s Own*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015.


Audibooks


A Tribute to Shari Benstock

Shari Benstock (Shari Gabrielson Goodman) (1944-2015)

We regret to report the passing of Shari Benstock, after a long illness.

Shari was an important and innovative scholar of feminism, Woolf, and Joyce.


Shari was also very active in Joyce studies. With her husband Bernard Benstock, she published *Who’s He When He’s at Home: A James Joyce Directory* (1980). She also co-edited *Coping with Joyce* (1988).

Her various essays on the narrative bases of, especially, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* attracted a great deal of admiring attention—and, sometimes, controversy.

Shari was a memorable presence at a number of Virginia Woolf conferences as well as International James Joyce Symposia (co-directing the academic program for the Symposium in Copenhagen, in 1986), and was a long-time member of the Board of Trustees of the International James Joyce Foundation. She also served on the editorial boards of the *James Joyce Quarterly*, the *James Joyce Literary Supplement*, and the *Joyce Studies Annual*, as well as *Modern Fiction Studies* and the *Journal of Modern Literature*, and as editor of *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*.

After her graduate work at Kent State U. (she was named a Distinguished Alumna in 2001), she served on the staff of the U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and as a faculty member at the U. of Tulsa and then the U. of Miami. She served as Chair of the Department from 1996 to 2000 and as Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs from 2000 to 2003.

After Berni’s death, those who knew Shari were extraordinarily happy for her when she subsequently married Thomas A. Goodman, also a member of the faculty at Miami. Tom and she were a wonderful couple. In her difficult last years, no one could have been a more loving and caring companion than Tom has been.

*Morris Beja*

*The Ohio State University*
Remembering
Jane Marcus
1938-2015

Tributes to Jane Marcus

Jane was there from the beginning, encouraging us all. We are all indebted to her in ways that are too numerous to count. A very sad day.

Brenda Silver
Dartmouth College

My interaction with Jane was extremely brief, but meaningful and generous to someone who was still finding her professional footing in the mid-late 90s, just as I was earning tenure. She had called (I believe it was at a Woolf conference in 1996 or ’97) Woolf a ‘public intellectual’ at a moment in the academy when that concept had gained currency but was almost entirely limited to male thinkers. Taking her lead, I asked if she would participate in an MLA session if I proposed and organized it, to which she generously agreed. Happily, the session was accepted by the IVWS for 1997. Unfortunately, Jane became ill and could not attend the Toronto MLA, yet she still sent me her paper to be read by a friend at the convention session. I was thrilled to have that brief connection to someone who had, however contentiously, shaped my own reading of Woolf, and ideas about feminist literary scholarship, in graduate school. Even when I disagreed with her, I appreciated her willingness to engage in critical dialogic sparring and willingness to disturb the ground of modernist scholarship. When Anna Snaith invited me to write the “postcolonial approaches” chapter of Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies, Jane Marcus’s work (particularly on The Waves) loomed large as a turning point. Her courage in publicly re-examining her own work, health, and life in general. She never pitied me. Her faith that I would find a way to carry a heavy burden gave me strength, and I expect Jane would most certainly have hated an implied insult, wrapped in a euphemism. She always insisted on direct, straightforward speech and a glimpse into their public disagreement was rather perfect, I thought. ‘Jane Marcus objects to my having called her a “personage”.’ That first two names, the first line of text I saw was actually from Bell, and it read, “The English don’t like me, but you’ll get along much better, I’m sure.” She seemed proud of the idea that an entire nation might Page 2 of 4 disapprove of her, so we asked her to tell us how this could possibly be true. She answered with a breezy comment along the lines of, “Oh, I made Quentin Bell angry.” When I did a quick Internet search for the two names, the first line of text I saw was actually from Bell, and it read, “Jane Marcus objects to my having called her a ‘personage’.” That first glimpse into their public disagreement was rather perfect, I thought. Jane would most certainly have hated an implied insult, wrapped in a euphemism. She always insisted on direct, straightforward speech and writing from us, especially when she disagreed with our conclusions.

Jeanette E. McVicker
SUNY—Fredonia

I have been trying to find a way to say good-bye to Jane Marcus for five years, ever since I abandoned graduate school. She was away that semester, and we did not connect again, despite close contact during my studies. I never earned a Ph.D. and still believe that I am better suited to life outside the academy, but even when my student loan bill arrives, I feel grateful that my early connection with Jane helped form my character. I carry more passion, more integrity, more tenacity, and more faith in myself, because she showed me these things. Jane Marcus insisted that these were traits I had or needed, and she certainly was persuasive. She never let me off the hook for anything, so I will try to complete this farewell as best I can.

Relating the personal stories that Jane told seems to be the best way I’ve found to share what it was like to be her student. On my first day of graduate school, she told the students in her Spanish Civil War seminar about her recent trip to Europe, in order to show us who had fought in the War, and what they had lost. Several of us had signed up for the course knowing nothing about the Spanish Civil War, perhaps without any real interest in the topic, but we were there because she was teaching. Her story of her trip that summer was such a perfect way to draw us all in. She had gone to find evidence of barbed wire, poking out from a sandy beach—she had heard that Spanish refugees had been treated horrifically by the French. She wanted proof that the experience had been closer to a concentration camp than a refugee camp, and her trek through the countryside implied that she would simply have to see it for herself. The refugees had lost their homes and crossed over mountains, on foot, making shoes out of woven straw as they went. Why should bad knees and advancing age keep her from visiting the place where they arrived, to honor their memories and see the truth for herself? We were all emotionally involved with the Spanish Civil War by the end of that story.

Most of the stories Jane shared with us have almost no context in my memory. I can’t place the time or even which classroom we were in, but I can clearly hear her explain that, a very long time ago, she had stopped supporting the local chapter of the Black Panthers because “someone pulled out a gun. I was far too pregnant for that, so I just walked out.” On another occasion, she gave a group of female students advice on childbearing in a short elevator trip to the Grad Center lobby. “Have your babies in grad school! You can write around their schedule, and they’ll be in school by the time you need to get tenure.” With that, Jane bid us good-night. (Now that I have a baby of my own, I am a bit skeptical about the wisdom of this plan, but she seemed to remember those early days of scholarship and babies so fondly!)

Jane was reluctant to tell us about a controversy at City College, but we did draw the story out of her, bit by bit. She had clashed with someone who held an important position over the appropriate attire for a young female professor. One of my favorite memories is the glee that sparkled in her eyes when she told us, “He thought that because I’m as old as he is, I would be on his side! He called me in to back him up!” I do wonder how it was possible that anyone who had had a conversation with Jane would assume that she would object to the length of a colleague’s skirt. I saw that defiant spark again when she informed students who were daydreaming of overseas conferences and Bloomsbury haunts that “The English don’t like me, but you’ll get along much better, I’m sure.” She seemed proud of the idea that an entire nation might Page 2 of 4 disapprove of her, so we asked her to tell us how this could possibly be true. She answered with a breezy comment along the lines of, “Oh, I made Quentin Bell angry.” When I did a quick Internet search for the two names, the first line of text I saw was actually from Bell, and it read, “Jane Marcus objects to my having called her a ‘personage’.” That first glimpse into their public disagreement was rather perfect, I thought. Jane would most certainly have hated an implied insult, wrapped in a euphemism. She always insisted on direct, straightforward speech and writing from us, especially when she disagreed with our conclusions.

Patience is not the first quality that comes to mind, when I think about Jane Marcus, but she was patient with me, when she saw me falter in work, health, and life in general. She never pitied me. Her faith that I would find a way to carry a heavy burden gave me strength, and I expect that I am one of many students who found strength in Jane’s support. I chuckle every time I remember her reply to an email about my wedding registry, after I accidentally sent it to everyone in my contacts list (I remain mortified over that error). “I wish only for the paper that you promised me.”

Jane, I am sorry that I never wrote that paper for you, and I deeply regret that I never found a way to say good-bye in person. Perhaps I simply wanted us to remember each other flipping through pages, quoting passages from Mrs. Dalloway at each other, in our ongoing argument about whether there was any hope to read in its ending.

Anne-Marie [Tonyan] Lindsey
A Tribute to Jane Marcus

Most of my personal memories of Jane Marcus revolve around food. A year ago, during Spring semester, while I was teaching four classes in a row at John Jay College-CUNY, the last two in a building which can only be described as decrepit — windowless, airless, no faculty lounge, furniture nailed to the floor — Jane and her beloved husband Michael, Mike, Big Mike, insisted I come up to their apartment each Tuesday and Thursday evening in between class 3 and 4, for dinner. I had a 50-minute break in between. I’m like, ohhhh, mannnn, I don’t know if I have enough time. But Jane insisted. She said, “you need SUSTENANCE!”

So every Tuesday and Thursday night, I’d jump on the bus or hop in a cab at 59th and 10th and ride up to their apartment on 73rd Street for dinner.

Well, it wasn’t just a quick bite. It was grilled salmon and asparagus one night; brisket another; salad greens and vegetables from their garden; duck confit (I didn’t even know what duck confit was… it turns out it’s delicious); followed by dessert, usually ice cream drizzled with preserves she had canned over the summer; and, yes, a glass (or two) of wine. I’d walk back in to class with 30 seconds to spare, fed and renewed by our conversation, and teach with an energy I had found lacking in Class number 3.

Because Jane was right. I needed sustenance. For, “one cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well!” (AROO 18). We need sustenance “so that,” as Virginia Woolf writes in A Room of One’s Own, we are “able to draw up to the fire and repair some of the damages of the day’s living” (AROO 19).

Jane Marcus gave me, and so many of the scholars in this room, personal, intellectual, and professional sustenance. As one of her students, Rowena Kennedy Epstein, posted on social media, “It is such a unique relationship to mourn — through it one becomes part of a community, is someone else’s legacy, gets a job, is given permission, makes another network of legacies, moves somewhere, publishes, thinks, writes, gains authority. It’s profound when it is nurturing,” and she nurtured all of us in this way. She created a space for feminist scholarship, gave us the confidence of our own voices and interpretations of the work, insisted we do the work, follow through and check the archive against the public record. She taught us how to read, and as another of her students, Lauren Elkin, wrote “how to be fierce.”

Her scholarship was pioneering, foundational. Intellectually, she was a firebrand, provocative, passionate, audacious. In her work, Art and Anger: Reading Like a Woman, Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy, New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf, Hearts of Darkness: White Women Write Race, and in countless other essays on Woolf and other more obscure writers she introduced us to, she asked the important questions. She refused to keep silent about Woolf’s feminism and lesbian identity, about her socialism and pacifism. Elisa Kay Sparks is correct to point out, citing Jane’s groundbreaking essay, “Storming the Toolshed,” that “the degree to which those two subjects [her feminism and socialism] now provide the cornerstones of international Virginia Woolf Studies is largely due to Jane Marcus’s long, hard years of struggle to document the full political and social context of Woolf’s writing.”

For me, she is indeed a giant upon whose shoulders we all stand, a dedication attributed long ago to another great woman professional scholar, whom she adored, Jane Ellen Harrison, the Great J— H— of A Room of One’s Own. She introduced me to Jane Harrison, my research subject and encouraged me to follow the trajectory of Harrison’s own research, which took me to archives and ancient Greek vase collections in Athens, Berlin, London, and Sicily. As we all know, research and writing can often be lonely work. It’s solitary, and one must navigate the eternal conflict between not wanting to be interrupted, and desperately wanting someone to walk through that door. A reality, which leads me to another personal memory about Jane involving food. On my way back from Athens via Palermo, Jane and Michael, Mike, Big Mike, insisted I meet them for dinner. “Oh my goodness, we’re going to be in Sicily the same time you are. Let’s meet for dinner!” I had had a bit of a rough time in Athens, a woman, traveling alone… many of those challenges are alive and well in that city, and I suppose alas in cities throughout the world. And believe it or not, smoking a pipe on the steps of the Parthenon is still frowned upon! (that’s a little shout out to Jane Harrison). In any case, I was thrilled at the prospect of being interrupted. It turned out we were staying at the same hotel, which I vaguely remember as being right next door to an Opera House, which is pretty much how Jane and Michael rolled, (they loved the opera), and we met and had the most delicious dinner which lasted, as dinners do in Sicily, long into the night. And there was Jane, providing me again with SUSTENANCE.

Whether we knew her personally, or, as Carolyn Heilbrun once wrote, as an “unmet friend” across the landscape of her body of work, Jane’s devotion and generosity to her students will inspire and encourage countless new ideas and ways of thinking about Virginia Woolf, about feminism, and all of the inter-disciplinary fields with which we engage, and her work, her rich, thought-provoking body of work, will endure as generative, meaningful and bold. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to honor her in this way.

Jean Mills
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Knowing Jane Marcus

I think it must have been through Louise DeSalvo that I first met Jane Marcus. Once, in the early 1980s I participated as an adjunct in a faculty development seminar at Pace University on “class in literature.” Jane was the invited speaker, and at one point during the discussion, she leaned across and quietly enlightened me that I was being sized up for a full-time position. At that time I was one of “you people” in the department — you people with your political readings, etc. I felt Jane’s support, a kind of unspoken “I’ve got your back.”

The last time I saw Jane was at the 2013 meeting of the Rebecca West Society in New York, where she was a warm and witty presence throughout the weekend. At one point, with all of us sitting around a square of tables having lunch, Jane pulled out several manuscripts and said she would like to auction them for the benefit of the Society. They were typescripts of West’s essays and stories that Dame Rebecca had given to Jane when she interviewed her in London in the early 1980s, inviting Jane to look through boxes and take what she wanted! The auction happened right there and then as, one by one, avid West scholars bid on and won these amazing artifacts. It was a moment that crystallized Jane Marcus: generous, surprising, and with a voluminous knowledge of twentieth-century modernist and feminist culture that she was herself so deeply a part of. Even a short conversation with Jane could suggest all kinds of unexplored territories, give leads for research to be followed up, enrich one’s understanding of what had seemed minutes before already to be quite well-known. She was, indeed, a force of nature.

Mark Hussey
Pace University
Memorial Tribute for Jane Marcus

I’d first like to express my appreciation to Julie Vandivere, Kristin Czarnecki, Erica Delsandro and Vara Neverow for making the space for this tribute. Jane Marcus died just one week ago, on May 28, while vacationing with her husband in the South Pacific. I was asked to speak about what Jane Marcus meant to Woolf scholarship. I am going to be a bit disobedient, but I think Jane would approve. What Jane Marcus meant to Woolf scholarship is abundantly evident in this room. Here we are, continuing scholarship on Virginia Woolf, and at this year’s conference, the study of women writers. Jane Marcus made our work possible; she was doing feminist scholarship before it was acceptable to do so; she laid the groundwork for Woolf studies.

Jane broke ground not just in Woolf scholarship but in so many areas. My work on Jean Rhys, Claude McKay, Djuna Barnes, have all been enabled by Jane. “Laughing at Leviticus” changed the way many of us read Nightwood. Her work on the suffragists, Elizabeth Robins, the Spanish Civil War, the Negro Anthology, and of course Rebecca West and Nancy Cunard—all vital, all cutting edge.

The legacy of Jane’s scholarship will live on. Her books are (mostly) in print and much of her work is easily accessed. Even those Woolf scholars who never met her, or even read her (god forbid!), walk through the doors Jane Marcus opened—or more appropriately, crashed through—in areas of scholarship previously undiscovered, unchartered, silenced.

However, besides acknowledging Jane’s foundational role at this 25th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, I want to say a few words about my personal experience as a student of Jane.

I have known Jane Marcus since 1995. She was my academic mentor, my dissertation director, and a dear friend. She was one of the most important people in my life.

As someone who was her student and knew her fairly well, there are two key things I would like to contribute to the comments here today, for those of you who did not have the privilege of knowing her or being her student. But first I should perhaps offer my condolences to you—you don’t know what you missed.

Jane Marcus was fierce and frightening, difficult and demanding, but she had the warmest embrace and the most extraordinary generosity. After spending time with Jane you’d come away with a list of must reads, dozens of ideas, books she pulled off her shelves, archival papers she gathered but decided you could make use of, and probably a jar of pickles from her garden cucumbers and a homemade peach tart. She was an amazing cook. To be her student meant that you might get short quirky emails with messages such as, “You should think about the toilets in Good Morning, Midnight,” or a comment about the Pope’s footwear, or a photo of Emma Goldman in Spain. I don’t work on Goldman or the Spanish Civil War, but it was always good to hear from Jane.

To be Jane’s student meant that you probably also got to know other of her students, many of whom would become lifelong friends due to similar commitments to scholarship and politics. I know Jean and Ashley would agree that Jane’s students share a bond; we share a love of Jane and an awareness about what a treasure we had. Jane encouraged our community; treasured meetings with Jane always included news about what her other students, present or former, were up to—publications, awards, yes, but also news of travel, marriages, and babies. We know are in a special group. Jane attracted the feminists, the queers, the leftist activists, the working class, and some (present company excluded) with the most amazing fashion sense.

I first heard Jane Marcus give a public lecture at the CUNY Graduate Center in 1995. She was to give a talk that would become “The Proper Upkeep of Names: Virginia Woolf and Cambridge.” But it began with a very Woolgian scene. There was an audience; there was a podium;

I witnessed Jane do battle on behalf of others. She fought for a graduate student who was told she could not do a Toni Morrison dissertation because Morrison was not a major author (the following year Morrison won the Nobel Prize). Jane almost lost her Distinguished Professorship when she came to the defense of a female colleague who was being denied promotion.

Especially in recent years her presentations were major productions. She never seemed to have the right glasses, but then declared it didn’t matter since she hadn’t finished her paper. And it didn’t matter if she hadn’t finished her paper, because invariably she would mostly set her papers aside and talk. And how Jane could talk. She had so much to say. It was that way, too, when she read drafts of student work – she’d read a sentence or two and then would be flooded with suggestions and ideas to share and then half an hour would pass and she’d return to the paper and ask, “Where are we?”—um, second paragraph. She always had so much to say, so much to offer.

The most recent conference I was at with Jane was Louisville in 2013, where two panels on Adrienne Rich, who had died the year before, were organized and presented in honor of Jane. And this conference gels for me the two points I want to make. It was wonderful being her student because she so valued her students. She spoke to me that weekend about how conflicted she was about her pending retirement. She needed to retire because she was simply exhausted; she was juggling many health issues, tired of battling the university bureaucracy, and she needed to get more of her own writing done. But she kept saying how she would miss her students.

In her Louisville keynote Jane spoke about Adrienne Rich. I hadn’t realized that Jane corresponded with Rich in the 1970s, but of course it all makes sense. In the decade that witnessed the birth of women’s studies, this major lesbian essayist-poet and Jane Marcus corresponded about, among other things, Virginia Woolf. Pages of correspondence were projected on screens and Jane had so much to say, filled as she was with reminiscences, documents, analysis, and insight into this key moment in the history of feminist scholarship. In one letter Rich wrote, “I draw on Woolf constantly, but I can’t write on her.” They discussed Woolf’s stifled feminism, her conflicts with the men of Bloomsbury. These letters (and so much more) are, as far as I know, still in Jane’s files, as is so much else.

Besides the very personal, selfish loss I feel (and sorrow for her husband, Michael, her children Lisa, Ben, and Jason, and her grandchildren), there is also the loss of her voice, her beautiful, bold, husky voice, and all that is still unsaid, unwritten.

During her life she had so much to say, and she said it, unafraid and unabashed.

She had so much still to say, and so much more to write.

She had so much and she gave so much.

I will be forever grateful.

Linda Camarasana
SUNY College at Westbury

To Jane, Thank you. With Love, From Ashley

How does one speak about a great mentor, to whom you owe an entire career of intellectual, emotional, and energetic debts? How does one begin to write about a deep and intensely personal relationship, to share the numbing throb of grief, in un clichéd terms, and leave oneself open and vulnerable to the pain of memory? Since becoming Distinguished Professor Jane Marcus’s graduate student in 2007, I would note things to myself to share with Jane later, to process and discuss. In London, my emails to Jane from the archives were like my travel logs. This
The world has suffered a great loss with the passing of Jane Marcus. It is in recognition of her singularity of existence, the substantial way in which she contributed to so many discourses, communities, and students, the expansive and inspiring way that she transformed my own life, that I feel a deep sadness, a gaping abyss of loneliness, but I also feel profound gratitude. I feel incredible gratitude for having been her student, for having known her, and for having had the opportunity to love her. I feel grateful to both Jane and her husband Michael Marcus for adopting me as a stray graduate student, hosting me in their warm and lovely home (Jane said to me once, “I have the best apartment in New York” – and she does. It is a converted Masonic Lodge), and for giving me an image of a united, influential, mutually supportive academic couple who both pursued ambitious and successful careers. I thank them for including me vicariously in their family, for sharing stories and pictures of their children and grandchildren. I feel very privileged to have had these experiences with both of them, and it is a great honor to be asked to speak and write on her behalf.

I wish I could capture Jane’s energy for you today, to paint a picture of her sheer, impressive command as an individual. At my dissertation defense, almost exactly a year before her death, and directly following major heart surgery, Jane held court. She spoke so inspiringly and passionately, even my other committee members, established professors in their own right, started taking notes off of what she was saying. Dressed in steel grey, with cropped, short white hair, it was a sight to behold. This power and piercing brilliance was wrapped up in an enthusiasm for life and beautiful things—Jane loved her garden in the Hamptons, fussing over all the little plants, sported big 1930’s inspired jewelry, enjoyed a nice table setting, and with Michael, generously constructed the most beautiful meals.

Those of us who knew and loved Jane Marcus are now charged with the task of holding the space that she created in this world, this incredible space of ethics, creativity, of dynamic, electric, intellectual labor, of community cohesion and absolute, acute brilliance. Jane was a powerful individual. Her power was of the best kind, for it empowered others and infected those around her. Her magnetic presence filled a room and made her one of the most exceptional, inspiring teachers of our age. Jane inspired love—love for her, love for the subject, love for the work yet to be done. Her classes operated like a frenzied storm building to a finely controlled chaos, where every student arrived ready to present every meeting, clamored to share books, art, articles, ideas, clamored to share what they had put together in honor of her. And she conducted this energy of a humming orchestra magnificently, at times letting us strike modernist dissonant cords, then pulling us into harmony, and then deciding when to perform the most articulate, stunningly beautiful solos. Jane created a community for her students, passing on her socialist, feminist ethos to all of us. In a collaborative spirit, she taught us to share with our work and ideas with each other, forging an ongoing and powerful scholarly conversation amongst her students. Jean Mills has called Jane our intellectual mother, which makes us all inspired by her work intellectual siblings.

From Jane, I learned that Virginia Woolf’s pacifism was not passive—that Woolf was an engaged, active, public intellectual who shouldered the great responsibility of writing in an attempt to change the consciousness of an age bent on war. I learned the scholarly obligation to recuperate underrepresented and repressed histories—feminist histories, pacifist histories, the histories of those who are relegated to any “outsider” status, those histories overwritten by the metanarratives of our fields, those histories lost and buried in the archives, waiting to be resuscitated and brought life. In changing our stores of the past and the present, Jane taught, we change the world.

Jane’s words were one of the places where her great personal power manifested most acutely. I sit and read Jane’s work half in awe, half ready to jump up and cheer at any moment. Her ability to construct a sentence, to turn a phrase that hits one with full impact, defines her scholarship. (Also, more impressive, she spoke the way she wrote.) “Britannia Rules The Waves,” an essay that reads The Waves as a trenchant critique of imperialism, is full of these elegant sentences that are simultaneously poetic and a forceful attack on oppressive cultural cycles. This is one of my favorite examples, where Jane writes: “The origin of the ‘story’ for which Bernard [the “white Western male author”], “Byronic man, the romantic artist-hero,” as Jane calls him and his friends search is in the burbling of blood from a cut throat, the wars and imperialist adventures on which their power was built.” I love this sentence because it exhibits not only her mastery, but also how Jane’s criticism unveils the ways in which Virginia Woolf struggled to work through the reciprocal relationship between writing, culture, and war throughout her career, a struggle that now falls to us to continue.

Il faut—the must, the necessity of writing. Jane’s passing is cosmically charged with the privilege, obligation, and responsibility to keep Jane’s writings and teachings alive and present, to allow her to continue to communicate with us, and our students, through her words. Jane has given us her assignments. She writes, upon the turning of the millennium, “In a new century the questions still before me concern the responsibility for writing those once vilified texts into classic status in a new social imaginary. If it was once the critic’s role to argue the case for canonizing such works, perhaps it is now her role to question their status and explore their limits.” At the end of her Coda to Hearts of Darkness: White Women Write Race, Jane maintains the need to continue to diversity and more fully expand “modernism,” to include a comparative reading of “its margins” (which is also the name of a class she taught). She argues that, “in about April 1934, human character changed,” which was “the moment when Bloomsbury met the young radicals of the colonies, when some white hearts struggled out of darkness, when women and people of color became public intellectuals without the anxiety that hounds the self-appointed guru Bernard, of The Waves. The listener, collared by Bernard on a ship out to Africa, has returned to England. He speaks. Then she speaks.” Jane Marcus has spoken. Now it is up to us to listen, and to write back through our mothers’ in response to her call.

Jane, I am holding you now, as forever, in the light.

Ashley Foster
Haverford College


6 This is a paraphrase of Virginia Woolf’s famous observation, “For we think back through our mother’s if we are women” (75). See A Room of One’s Own. Annotated with an Introduction by Susan Gubar. Gen.ed. Mark Hussey. Orlando: Harcourt, 2005.
Remembering Jane Marcus and Shari Benstock

I cannot remember when I first met Jane Marcus, though I surely encountered her at Woolf conferences and MLA conventions from the very beginning of my own career in academia. Jane always served as an abiding tutelary spirit of the Woolf community, infusing it with a unique sense of passionate commitment, social activism, brilliant analysis, and generous scholarly camaraderie. In my early days at SUNY-Binghamton, Jane phoned to ask if I could possibly provide an article on Mrs. Dalloway for a feminist collection due at the publishers in a month’s time. I took on the precipitous project following Jane’s cryptic instructions to visit the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library and find Woolf’s “little black book.” To my amazement and relief, the mysterious notebook rose to the surface of the Berg’s extensive holdings, replete with Woolf’s holograph notes for The Hours. Prior to Helen Wussow’s transcription, these notes proved an invaluable treasure for the early archival scholarship that informed Jane’s groundbreaking collection, New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf.

When I organized a small modernist studies colloquium at Binghamton, Jane generously agreed to take the Greyhound Bus from New York City and cheerfully camped out on my fold-out couch in an attic bedroom of the tiny bungalow I inhabited. Years later, she enjoyed more salubrious accommodations at the Seelbach Hotel when she came to Louisville to deliver a keynote address on Woolf and Bloomsbury at the University of Louisville Twentieth-Century Literature Conference. The name of this event had morphed into the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900 by the time Jane joined us in February 2013 to serve on a special panel offering a poignant tribute to Adrienne Rich. Characteristic of Jane’s enthusiasm and good will, she accepted a dinner invitation to address my Bloomsbury seminar on Woolf, Three Guineas, and the Spanish Civil War. Needless to say, she held the graduate students enthralled with political interpretations of patriarchy, poverty, and bellicosity in the historical milieu that shaped Woolf’s radical politics. Jane always maintained that Woolf cherished a radical, socialist perspective that grew stronger and was less heavily censored as she aged into the development of more chutzpah, despite a technical disclaimer in Three Guineas of the traditional “feminist” label.

Jane and I discussed the possibility of our mutual retirements with a sense of wanhope. She talked about future plans for a cruise circumnavigating the globe in celebration of a long and productive career in the academy. In March 2015, she kindly sent her condolences after learning of my husband, James Francis Rooney’s, recent death. From our communal dinner in Louisville, she remembered that “he was charming and intelligent and I am sure you’re going to miss him very much.” As we will miss you, Jane, the “mother of us all,” to echo Laura Hinton.

Our beloved Shari Benstock held similar prominence in the world of James Joyce scholarship, and I can only begin to express my gratitude and admiration for this exceptional feminist scholar, biographer, and incredibly gifted writer. In what Joyce would call the “dawn of protohistory,” when we were “jung and easily Freudened,” it felt thoroughly intimidating to enter a seemingly male-dominated world of Joyce studies. In the 1980s, Bonnie Scott and I got together to inaugurate a Joyce Foundation women’s caucus, in a gesture of political activism that would not have been possible without the ongoing support of people like Shari and many others, both male and female. Shari was already prominent in the Joyce establishment and exceptional insofar as she deftly incorporated contemporary feminist, narrative, and post-structuralist theory into a dazzling series of literary analyses. When I invited Shari to contribute to Women in Joyce, the first collection of feminist essays on his canon, she agreed to write on the “Psychodynamics of Issy” in Finnegans Wake in a provocative and scintillating piece that has since become a classic. Shari went on to publish a truly impressive range of feminist texts, including Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940; Textualizing the Feminine: On the Limits of Genre; and No Gifts from Chance: A Biography of Edith Wharton. Her edited work The Private Self was a pivotal collection in feminist autobiographical studies that strongly influenced many of us engaged in the criticism of women’s life-writing. Our careers crossed and intersected over the years, but what remains foremost in my memory of Shari are her wit, astonishing energy, dazzling intellectual verve, and sheer kindness and sisterly support. She, too, will be sorely missed by all those in Joyce studies and women’s studies who sincerely mourn her passing.

Suzette Henke
University of Louisville
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Edward Upward (1903–2009) recorded in his notebook on September 6th 1937: “Twenty minutes to twelve. Have finished The Border-Line” (British Library Add MS 89002). He had been working on this first novel for some years. Now the problem was to have it published. (It would be published the next year, 1938, with the title Journey to the Border.) For this Leonard and Virginia Woolf became crucial figures. Emily Kopley, in her splendid publication, Virginia Woolf and the Thirties Poets (2011), has written about how Virginia Woolf came to know and publish the canonical 1930s writers: W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, John Lehmann, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and Christopher Isherwood and her both supportive and competitive relationship with them. She may well have heard of Upward as Isherwood’s great friend and influence upon him, his contemporary both at Repton, their public school, and then at Cambridge. She also might have known that he saw a lot of Auden in the first half of the decade. Upward was the most politically committed of the group, becoming a devoted member of the Communist Party in 1934. He had published two stories in New Country, issued by the Hogarth Press in 1933. Now he had completed his first novel, which turned on the question of the future of its central character, an unnamed tutor. Would he go mad or would he come up to the border and join the workers’ cause? By publishing the book, the Hogarth Press made a significant contribution to the shaping of the literary 1930s. That and the debate over her 1940 essay, “The Leaning Tower,” were the two significant connections between Edward Upward and Virginia Woolf.

Another crucial figure in the story was John Lehmann. At Cambridge, Lehmann was a very close friend of Julian Bell and, through Bell, met his aunt Virginia; this connection led to his working for the Hogarth Press. He also published with the Press, not only in New Signatures and New Country but two books of his own poetry, their titles suggesting the transition to left-wing politics that was taking place in the 1930s: The Garden Revisited in 1931 and The Noise of History in 1934. Lehmann was central to Woolf’s simultaneously confrontational and co-operative relationship with the young writers of the 1930s. Lehmann introduced many of the canonical 1930s writers to the Woolfs who were happy to publish them despite their aesthetic differences. In 1936 Lehmann launched the first issue of the semi-annual, New Writing, in effect a continuation of New Country. “New” was such a characteristic term of the time, yet it also hearkened back to Ezra Pound’s modernist cry, “Make It New.” The first volume was not published by the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press but rather by John Lane at the Bodley Head as Lehmann had at that time left the Hogarth Press (although he would return) in part, he explained, because working for Leonard Woolf was so difficult. The Manifesto for New Writing announced that “NEW WRITING is first and foremost interested in literature, and though it does not intend to open its pages to writers of reactionary or Fascist sentiments, it is independent of any political party” (Lehmann, New Writing n. p.). The volume contained among its contents the first of Isherwood’s Berlin stories, “The Nowaks,” poetry by Stephen Spender and Boris Pasternak, and the first chapter of Upward’s novel, still known as The Border-Line. A second excerpt from Upward’s novel appeared in the third New Writing. In this manner, Lehmann was a bridge linking Upward and the Woolfs.

But it was actually Isherwood who persuaded the Woolfs to publish Upward. In November 1938, Upward signed a contract with the Hogarth Press for his novel with an advance of £20. It was then that the title was changed as it was discovered that there was another Border-Line that had been published by Heinemann. Journey to the Border appeared on March 10, 1938 with a jacket by Vanessa Bell for which she was paid £3. The Press also tried, without success, to find an American publisher, being in touch with Knopf and W. W. Norton among others. (Donald Brace of Harcourt Brace liked it but felt it wouldn’t have enough of an audience in the United States.) By the standards of the time, the publication was a limited success. It was recommended by the Book Society. The very well-known photographer Howard Coster did a portrait of Upward for publicity purposes. The novel received, on the whole, good reviews.

1,400 copies were printed at the price of 7/6 and 438 copies were sold in the first year.1 Isherwood had written to John Lehmann:

Edward’s book is being published by the Hogarth in early spring. This after a terrific putsch on my part. There was a wonderful dinner party given by the Woolfs to the Upwards, a great success. Virginia is really the nicest woman I know: she was so nice to Mrs U. Elizabeth Bowen came in afterwards, so Edward got a real glimpse of Bloomsbury, and quite enjoyed it in his chilly way. (Lehmann, Christopher Isherwood 39)

Edward did enjoy himself, remembering vividly that Virginia smoked a cheroot. Isherwood’s characterization of his old friend as “chilly” seems a little harsh as others depicted him as more genial and friendly—but of course Isherwood knew him extremely well.

The other connection between Upward and Woolf is her well-known essay, “The Leaning Tower,” a talk that she gave to the Workers’ Educational Association in Brighton in April 1940. Along with her “Letter to a Young Poet” of 1932 addressed to John Lehmann, it was part of her debate with the writers of Upward’s generation. In her essay she argues that peace and prosperity shaped the British writers of the nineteenth century, that they looked at a world from secure towers built upon class, educational, and gender privilege: “They had leisure, they had security” (264). Except for Dickens and Lawrence, they were, she argued, on towers of stucco—their middle-class birth—and of gold—their education. This lasted until 1914. Then, after the war, the situation changed. She identifies the writers that she has in mind as the new generation—Upward’s circle—although she does not mention him; rather, she mentions Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice, Isherwood, and Spender. They came from the middle class and had the same private education: “They are tower dwellers like their predecessors, the sons of well-to-do parents, who could afford to send them to public schools and universities” (267). Yet the view from the tower was so different as the towers themselves were now leaning. They were no longer anchored in the securities of the nineteenth century. She argues that being on a tower leaning to the left makes these writers much more self-conscious of their class and hence it is harder for them to create characters. Also, she suggests that the angle of vision made them angry at their society. Much as they might wish to, they cannot divest themselves of their class formation: “And thus, trapped by their education, pinned down by their capital, they remained on top of their leaning tower, and their state of mind as we see it reflected in their poems and plays and novels is full of discord and bitterness, full of confusion and of compromise” (Woolf 269). They would like to come off their tower and join the mass of

1 Details about publication from the Hogarth Press file 507 Special Collections, University of Reading
humankind. She feels that these writers lack the creative power to write about others but they could, in her view, write creatively and truthfully about themselves. She is hopeful about the literature that might exist in the world without towers, without class, but that world did not yet exist. The essay ends with a suggestion to her readers and her listeners to read freely from books taken from the library, which she seems to imagine will help to eliminate the world of class. She published her essay in the Folios of New Writing in the Autumn 1940 issue.

Then, in the Spring 1941 issue of Folios of New Writing, there were four brief replies to her essay, three by whom she had criticized with the addition of B. L. Coombes, who was in fact a working-class writer. There were pieces by Louis MacNeice, who was in her sights particularly, as well as John Lehmann, the recipient of her “Letter to a Young Poet” of 1932, and Upward. The replies, of course, were rather overshadowed by her suicide in March of 1941. “The Leaning Tower” was almost the last piece she wrote, being followed in publication before her death by one short essay on Ellen Terry, the actress, and a review of a book on Mrs. Thrale, the friend of Dr. Johnson.

Coombes, in “Below the Tower,” makes the case for the capabilities of the working-class writer and urges the middle-class, “leaning tower” writers to climb down to the working-class writer’s level before the tower collapses and gives them no choice. Moreover, Coombes suggests that the “leaning tower” writers teach the working class writers what they need to know. Louis MacNeice wrote the next response. He was the writer most specifically attacked in her essay with quite a few quotations from his Autumn Journal—“feeble as poetry, but interesting as autobiography”—included in Woolf’s critique (269). He is on the leaning tower and can’t get off, which explains, she asserts, the destructiveness and emptiness of his writings. MacNeice disputes her conception that the writers of the nineteenth century accepted the status quo and also her claim that the discontent with the status quo among members of MacNeice’s generation restricts their ability to be successful writers. He does see flaws in the writings of those in his circle, disagreeing the polemical poetry of Rex Warner, the social satires of Day Lewis, and Auden and Isherwood’s On the Frontier. He remarks that Edward Upward “ruined his novel, Journey to the Border, with his use of the Deus ex Machina—i.e. ‘the Workers’—at the end” (40). But whatever their faults, MacNeice perceives these writers, particularly Auden and Spender, as bringing new hope and new spirit to English writing. He doesn’t respond to Woolf’s particular criticisms of his poetry but he concludes his essay with the assertion that “we were right to advocate social reconstruction and we were even right—in our more lyrical work—to give personal expression to our feelings of anxiety, horror and despair” (41). John Lehmann writes as the editor who published the original essay but also the person who knew Woolf best. He argues that she was more sympathetic to the writings of these young writers of the 1930s than might appear. As he points out, she was a socialist but was also intensely self-conscious about not belonging to the working class. He ends his very brief “A Postscript” stating how interested and anxious she was to publish new young authors and to encourage their work.

Upward’s reply, “The Falling Tower,” was the first of the group and he argued strongly on the necessity to be a Marxist as he had pointed out in his essay, “A Marxist Interpretation of Literature,” published in The Mind in Chains in 1937. He states that the writers of his group are right to attack the bourgeois world, even though that world has given them some economic security. Indeed, he sees such a point of view as a necessity in order to be a significant writer. But he does accept that the “leaning tower” writers are not great and that their work “was filled with confusion and compromise” (26). He does not feel that the writer needs to throw away bourgeois advantages in order to be a proper socialist, as he thinks Woolf is arguing. As he points out, Marx, Engels, nor Lenin did not do so. Upward explains:

It is true that in order to write like socialists they would have had to be socialists and to work with other socialists, but this does not mean that they would have had to spend all their time in committee meetings or door-to-door canvassing or in composing propaganda leaflets. They could have taken part in ordinary political work and they could have written poems and novels as well. Their inherited money gave them—or those of them who possessed inherited money—the time and the freedom for political work and for imaginative writing. (28)

Upward’s explanation reminds one of the “golden islands” of E. M. Forster’s Howards End. In fact, although very solidly from the middle class, the Auden group on the whole did not actually have private incomes. Upward ends his brief essay by stating that indeed the tower will fall and that those who are socialists and writers will be even better writers after the tower, the capitalist economic system, has been destroyed. In his concluding lines he defends the writers of the Auden circle: “There is much in the poetry of Auden and of Spender which is fit to stand beside the great poetry of the past. The ‘leaning tower’ writers are able and more serious than most of their detractors. No better work than theirs appeared in England in the ‘thirties. They may produce their best work in the ‘forties” (29).

The relationship between Virginia Woolf and Edward Upward reveals her as both skeptical and encouraging of these young writers of the 1930s.

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“miserably devalued currency”: Language, Economy, and Fascism in Christopher Isherwood’s The Berlin Stories and Virginia Woolf’s The Years

Introducing the anti-hero of The Last of Mr. Norris, narrator William Bradshaw describes the con artist’s gestures: “For all they conveyed, he might equally have been going to undress, to draw a revolver, or

1 Mr Norris Changes Trains (1935), published by the Woolfs’ Hogarth Press, is the earliest of The Berlin Stories. It was published in the United States as The Last of Mr. Norris (1935). The Hogarth Press subsequently published Sally Bowles (1937) and Goodbye to Berlin (1939).
merely to make sure that I hadn’t stolen his money” (Berlin Stories 4). In Weimar Berlin, with Arthur Norris’s metonymic gestures writ large, the scarcity of money is a powerful motivating force for two other possibilities—commodified sex and political violence. Isherwood’s narrator makes this linkage among economy, language, and the bankruptcy of the “private escape” explicit:

The murder reporters and the jazz-writers had inflated the German language beyond recall. […] The word Liebe, soaring from the Goethe standard, was no longer worth a whore’s kiss. Spring, moonlight, youth, roses, girl, darlings, heart, May: such was the miserably devalued currency dealt in by the authors of all those tangos, Waltzes, and fox-trots which advocated the private escape. Find a dear little sweetheart, they advised, and forget the slump, ignore the unemployed. (93)

The consequences are devastating. As the Reichstag burns (191), café crowds in Berlin, their newspapers close at hand, “smiled approvingly at these youngsters in their big, swaggering boots who were going to upset the Treaty of Versailles” (192).

Economic motifs are also pervasive in Virginia Woolf’s 1930s “novel of fact,” The Years, and Three Guineas, its sister progeny from the “one book” that was, in draft, The Pargiters. In The Years, the violence of war and the violence of economic crisis are linked. Woolf’s treatment of these harsh realities does not suggest conclusive or unduly optimistic answers. Critics have often emphasized differences between Bloomsbury and the “Auden Generation,” but this viewpoint has not been universal. I would argue that, in their prose of the late 1930s, despite diverging sympathies concerning liberalism, feminism, and Communism, Isherwood and Woolf both experiment with narrative realism, repetition, and variation around questions of modern economies as they struggle to locate possibilities of resistance to the commercially and politically driven “devaluation” of language.²

Arthur Norris spins fictitious scenarios for a living, while none-too-successfully proffering them as truth. We might draw parallels between the cons that are inherent in Norris’s storytelling and the con of unreliable narration itself in The Berlin Stories. Diarist Isherwood morphs his observations into fiction that is narrated by British expatriates “William Bradshaw” (Isherwood’s middle names) and “Christopher Isherwood” (sometimes “Chris” or “Christoph”), both characters who are non-identical variations upon Isherwood himself. But there is an important distinction between Norris and the Isherwood personae. To obtain money, Norris will do anything with words, regardless of the personal or political cost to others. Bradshaw, who participates in Norris’s intrigue not for his own economic gain but to save his friend, shocks Norris, who is afraid that Bradshaw will turn him in to the German police: “‘My God, Arthur! I literally gasped. ‘What exactly, do you take me for?’” (173). Norris, baffled, replies: “There might be quite a large reward, you see…” (173).

Even as Bradshaw refuses to betray Norris for money, “Chris” in Goodbye to Berlin resists his theatrical friend Sally Bowles’s pressures to rewrite a ghostwritten article in order to improve its marketability. Both Sally and Chris fantasize about financial success: “We talked

² For example, reading Isherwood’s 1932 novel, The Memorial, in the context of Woolf’s To the Lighthouse and Jacob’s Room, Erica Gene Delsandro has argued recently for “lines of affiliation” between the two writers’ representations of World War I and its consequences, consistent with Woolf’s call for “common ground” in “The Leaning Tower.”

³ Woolf’s Diaries often record a difficult and sacrificial aspect attendant upon her late 1930s change in style. Moreover, in his July 1954 Preface for the New Directions combined edition of The Berlin Stories, Isherwood acknowledges, in retrospect, that the cost of his narratives was often borne by others: “Hadn’t there been something Youthfully heartless in my enjoyment of the spectacle of Berlin in the early thirties, with its poverty, its political hatred and its despair?” (xviii).

continually about wealth, fame, huge contracts for Sally, record-breaking sales for the novels I should one day write” (Berlin Stories 249). When Sally obtains an offer to contribute an article on “the English Girl” (266) for a modernist magazine—“most terribly highbrow and artistic, with lots of marvelous modern photographs, ink-pots and girls’ heads upside down” (265)—Chris agrees to draft a piece to run under her byline. But after Sally insists on something more “snappy… the kind of thing this man wants” (266), he balks, which marks the decline of their friendship. She turns to a new friend, the market-savvy Kurt Rosenthal, who is “terribly ambitious and […] works the whole time; and […] can write anything—anything you like: scenarios, novels, plays, poetry, advertisements…” (267).

When Isherwood’s narrators draw these lines of resistance, they—like Isherwood himself—inherit a “place” in Weimar that is geographically identical to, but economically distinct from, the locus of Berlin’s demimonde.⁴ The Isherwood personae’s limited but insistent refusals to yield to commodification unfold against an economic and sociocultural backdrop in Weimar where, as historian Detlev Peukert observes, “over and beyond their immediate material plight, intellectuals were in a fundamentally new situation now that they were having to work within a market society and a mass culture” (167). The pre-Weimar equivalent of Woolf’s prescribed five hundred pounds a year in A Room of One’s Own had vanished for many writers and artists in the German hyperinflation, and The Berlin Stories register the impact of economic change and precarity in Weimar as a pervasive theme.

Woolf, too, portrays unsettling economic circumstances and the related prospect of sociocultural and political change in her oeuvre of the late 1930s. For example, in The Years, Sara Pargiter elects to live in a squalid boardinghouse room on considerably less than £500 a year. Woolf depicts Sara and her friend Nicholas as generating a private “outsider’s society” à deux in The Years, using language in a way that both reinforces the partners’ connection and discomfits their fellow participants in mainstream social discourse. Sara is a saboteur, as it were, who blurs out unexpected information but who is also capable of cutting off information flows if and when it suits her. Despite having only a small private income, she lives in marginal circumstances rather than accept a job in a newspaper office.⁵ Sara’s artistic and economic model in The Years, resembling the Outsiders’ extreme iteration in Three Guineas—one that Woolf herself approached at times in the last decade of her life but never quite wholly followed—opens up possibility and risk, recognizing that literary labor might have to be done without less of a material basis than Room had urged and in an atmosphere of even more radical experimentation. Sara’s poverty embodies resistance, as she disrupts the usual, compromised flows of economic and linguistic exchange.⁶ But it also bespeaks desperation: Sara, like Isherwood’s Sally Bowles, as they respectively resist and embrace commodification, ultimately fails to win a comprehending public audience.

Isherwood’s narrators rent lodgings among “houses like shabby monumental safes crammed with the tarnished valuables and secondhand furniture of a bankrupt middle class” (Berlin Stories 207). A place even worse than these rooms, the Nowaks’ drafty, overcrowded flat in Hallesches Tor, seems to prove Woolf’s assertion in Room that “[i]ntellectual freedom depends upon material things” (100). Isherwood

⁴ Isherwood’s biographer Peter Parker notes: “Some people felt that during the 1930s Isherwood liked to give the impression that he was constantly short of money when in fact there was always a readily available source back in England if things got really difficult” (252).

⁵ Evelyn T. Chan analyzes Sara’s refusal to “prostitute” her literary talent by working professionally as a journalist; both The Years and Three Guineas, Chan finds, foreground Woolf’s “conflicting feelings” about women vis à vis the professions (593).

⁶ John Whittier-Ferguson, who argues for a connection between Woolf’s late style and the imminent repetition of world war, characterizes Sara as “the spirit of repetition incarnate” (235).
tells Frau Nowak that his move to her flat is motivated in part because of the decline of the British pound (Berlin Stories 307). Still, when it proves impossible for him to write his novel “about a family who lived in a large country house on unearned incomes and were very unhappy” (326)—that is, the Vernons of The Memorial—in the miserable conditions that surround him (326), Isherwood has no difficulty in moving on from the Nowaks’ to a “comfortable bed-sitting-room in the West End” (333).  

Alison Light has posited that Woolf’s insight into the injustices of class remains flawed and so “the figure of the servant and of the working woman haunts Woolf’s experiments in literary modernism” (xviii). We might argue the same about Isherwood’s depictions of his Berlin landladies and their economically desperate sons. But both Woolf and Isherwood sometimes partially recognize, and represent in their fiction, their own limitations in this regard. Visiting the Communist leader Ludwig Bayer, Isherwood’s alter ego Bradshaw admits his own ineffectuality in helping the cause: “He asked about the living conditions in the East End of London and I tried to eke out the little knowledge I had collected in the course of a few days’ slumming, three years before” (71).

Impressed by Norris’s charismatic speech to a working class gathering, Bradshaw also realizes: “They were listening to their own collective voice. At intervals they applauded it, with sudden, spontaneous violence” (53). Bradshaw recognizes that some kind of change is imminent; what kind of change it will be is not yet certain. Similarly, in the final reunion scene of The Years, Eleanor Pargiter, if only for a moment, grasps a vague but genuine insight as she “shut[s] her hands on the coins she was holding” (426). But she cannot communicate it to others as she touches these ostensibly “solid objects,” commonplace representations of value that now might conceivably melt into air. Her sister Delia tries to be welcoming to the caretaker’s children as they make a sudden appearance, but she is as ineffectually generous with her cake as Eleanor had been with her quasi-charitable cottage visits to London’s poor. Commanded by Martin Pargiter to “sing a song for sixpence” (429), the children twist their compliance into nonsensical syllables that are compelling and ominous, but also perhaps strangely “Beautiful!” (431). Woolf catalogues the impact of their song for Martin: it is “distorted” (429); “with one impulse they attacked the next verse” (429), and the second “more fiercely than the first” (430), so that “the unintelligible words ran themselves together almost into a shriek” (430). The caretaker’s children sing and move in concert, always as a collective “they,” promising themselves together almost into a shriek” (430). The caretaker’s children sing and move in concert, always as a collective “they,” promising something new and perhaps generative. But, marshaling emotion without rational language, they also strike a note of warning: a generation who might in a decade or two become soldiers or rioters themselves, caught up in the collective emotions of Fascist or revolutionary violence.

Modris Eksteins has explored a pre-World War One “fascination with primitivism” (84) in Germany; after the war, he finds that language “was gradually robbed of its social meaning and became a highly personal and poetic instrument” (219). Although the continental linkage of artistic primitivism and mass political violence that Eksteins establishes was not replicated in Britain, in this scene, Woolf seems to cast it as a possibility. The children’s response, fracturing assumptions too long held within the walls of an abruptly defamiliarized room, imprecisely yet meaningfully communicates that perhaps the Pargiters will be made to “pay” more in the future than cake and sixpence to those whom their class has exploited.

Eleanor’s succession of insights at the close of The Years are a far cry from the hopeful and momentarily confident narrator of A Room of One’s Own, reflecting on her aunt’s legacy: “No force in the world can take from me my five hundred pounds. Food, house and clothing are mine for ever. Therefore not merely do effort and labour cease, but also hatred and bitterness” (38). Rather, some of Colonel Pargiter’s children are perhaps beginning to learn from direct experience, including their observation of these less privileged children, that macroeconomic forces—and their potential political consequences—do not necessarily work this way. As The Years concludes, the Pargiters cannot hold onto the present, and what will happen next is uncertain. The “rules,” both political and linguistic, are shifting. But recognition of that fact—for Eleanor as listener, and for Woolf’s readers—becomes not only essential but potentially transformational.

“I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking,” claims Isherwood’s narrator in “A Berlin Diary, Autumn 1930,” the first story in Goodbye to Berlin 207). “Thinking is my fighting,” states Woolf in her 1940 essay, “Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid.” But Isherwood the fiction writer, if not always his eponymous narrators, “thinks,” too, about the power of language as a political instrument. “That the artist is interested in politics needs no saying,” Woolf acknowledges, in 1936, in “The Artist and Politics” (230). Under conditions of imminent peril, that interest must extend to overt involvement; the artist “is forced to take part in politics” (232). Seen from this viewpoint, both Woolf’s and Isherwood’s late 1930s texts embody an innovative, politically responsive aesthetic. Adopting a comparatively understated style, in contrast to the “hyperinflated” prose of Weimar journalism and political speeches, and employing a kind of iterative, cross-generic repetition that implicitly acknowledges uncertainty, both writers respond presciently and courageously to appalling historical circumstance.

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7 Parker notes that the devaluation of the pound in 1931 led Isherwood toward some journalistic compromises: “[A]lthough he described the contents of the first issue of Action, the New Party’s magazine, as ‘the rankest John Bull stuff,’ he wrote to its editor, Harold Nicolson, offering him the occasional ‘Berlin Letter’ and asking whether he might review books. The New Party had been founded earlier in the year by Oswald Mosley, and was swiftly (and presciently) anathematized by the communist Daily Worker as ‘fascist’” (201).
Bloomsbury circle were invested. Rebecca Walkowitz argues that cosmopolitanism in which, as Christine Froula has shown, many of the groups, aligns roughly with the Kantian enlightenment project of (97). This critical refusal of the nation (along with other exclusionary loyalties is meant that you must rid yourself of pride of nationality and cast off such loyalties, writing that “by freedom from unreal no country. As woman my country is the whole world” (129). Woolf’s feminism, one has to go no further than her oft-quoted declaration in her work, most notably her public “Letter to Virginia Woolf,” has been likened to Three Guineas in both its form and content (Rogers 127). What has received less attention are the key cultural incommensurabilities between Woolf, working from the metropolitan center, and Ocampo, writing from the formerly colonized (semi) periphery. In this paper I trace the effects of this disconnect through an interrogation into their often uneven personal and professional relationship as well as through a comparison of their differing forms of cosmopolitanism as seen in Ocampo’s “Letter to Virginia Woolf” (1935) and Woolf’s Three Guineas (1939). Three Guineas, I argue, is a text in which nationalist and cosmopolitan forces exist dialectically and in which we can trace what Jed Esty calls the “anthropological turn,” wherein Anglo modernists in the twenties “translated the end of empire into a resurgent concept of national culture” (2). Ocampo’s work, on the other hand, though similarly working towards a cosmopolitan feminism, is informed by an almost inverse project. Influenced by her mentor, the Spanish intellectual Jose Ortega y Gasset, her career is defined (often by her more nationalistic detractors) by her attempts to (re)connect to world cultural centers—to Europeanize Latin American and Hispanic culture. In an argument informed by Pascale Casanova’s influential study of the often uneven distribution of cultural capital in The World Republic of Letters, I suggest a comparison of Woolf and Ocampo’s work which acknowledges and critically addresses the gap between center and periphery which divides their work, and, in doing so, highlights the particularly “rooted” cosmopolitanism of Woolf’s Three Guineas.

In search of a concise summation of Woolf’s controversial cosmopolitan feminism, one has to go no further than her oft-quoted declaration in Three Guineas that “as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As woman my country is the whole world” (129). Woolf considers a woman’s national identity an “unreal loyalty,” and calls for women to cast off such loyalties, writing that “by freedom from unreal loyalties is meant that you must rid yourself of pride of nationality in the first place; also of religious pride, college pride, school pride, family pride, sex pride and those unreal loyalties that spring from them” (97). This critical refusal of the nation (along with other exclusionary groups), aligns roughly with the Kantian enlightenment project of cosmopolitanism in which, as Christine Froula has shown, many of the Bloomsbury circle were invested. Rebecca Walkowitz argues that Three Guineas is cosmopolitan in that it engages in transnational comparison; and, formally, it is distinct from earlier works of “high” modernism, written in a straightforward, almost journalistic style that allows for it to be easily translated.

However, Three Guineas’s cosmopolitanism is complicated by a tendency towards the very kind of national identification that the text warns against. In a rhetorical turn that has received much scholarly debate, Woolf does not attack Fascism in Spain directly, instead focusing on the tyranny of the patriarchy in England. The substitution is executed deftly, in mid-paragraph, when Woolf finds in three variously misogynist quotations by Englishmen “something which, if it spreads, may poison both sexes equally. There, in those quotations, is the egg of the very same worm that we know under other names in other countries” (65). It is the egg of Fascism in England, not in Spain or in Germany, which Three Guineas directly critiques. Woolf addresses this rationale in a passage from her “Reminiscences of Julian,” claiming that were she to join the international “cause” against Fascism in Spain she “should evolve some plan for fighting English tyranny” (258-59). The substitution of the international by the national is evident also in the absence of the photographs of “dead bodies” and “ruined houses” which are sent to her “with patient pertinacity about twice a week” by the Republican Spanish government and the inclusion instead of photos of the British patriarchy (Three Guineas 14).1 Walkowitz adds to her argument that Three Guineas “promotes a transnational appreciation of culture” yet simultaneously “affirms the boundaries of country and metonymies of the nation” (40), and, as Susan Stanford Friedman notes, “Three Guineas also contains an emotional attachment to England, even as it attacks nationalist patriotism, a combination that anticipates [Kwame Anthony] Appiah’s notion of the cosmopolitan patriot” (30).2

I agree with these critics and others that Woolf’s Three Guineas can be seen as “rooted” in its Englishness and suggest that this element of the text exists in dialectical tension with its cosmopolitanism. In contrast to Ocampo’s work, as I will show, Three Guineas displays the tendency of British modernists in the thirties to shift their focus inward to the reification of national boundaries. This transition in focus during the thirties is addressed directly by Esty, who claims that “the attempt on the part of English writers to reinscribe universal status into the particularist language of home anthropology defines the transition from imperial to postimperial Englishness” (15). Thus the “anthropological turn” by modernist writers during the thirties is seen as concomitant with the sputtering and imminent decline of Britain’s empire. In reference to postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha, Esty writes that “in Bhabha’s model, the nation, when it is no longer defined against its ‘Other or Outside,’ finds itself foundering on its own internal contradictions, since there can be no effective, positive, or final signification of the people” (15). Without the colonies against which to define themselves, Anglo-modernists took to writing themselves. This shift is evident in Three Guineas, a work which espouses cosmopolitan values both in form and content and yet does so in a “language of home anthropology” (Esty 15). The photos of the English patriarchy, the facts and figures all regarding the state of affairs in England, of English educational institutions and of women’s employment—all of these elements do work to “affirm the boundaries of country” (Walkowitz 40), an affirmation which exists dialectically with the work’s cosmopolitanism in constant, at times uncomfortable, tension.

This tension between the national and the transnational in Three Guineas is mirrored by tensions in Woolf’s relationship with Ocampo. On one

1 The discussion of the inclusion of photographs of British patriarchal subjects in place of the war photography mentioned in the text of Three Guineas has been well developed. Jane Marcus writes that “[t]he subversive role played by the photographs cannot be exaggerated” (lxiii). See also Maggie Humm, Jessica Berman, Brandon Truett, and Alice Staveley.

2 Appiah, as Friedman suggests, advocates a “rooted cosmopolitanism,” which he likens to the philosophy of Gertrude Stein, who claimed, “America is my country and Paris is my hometown.”
hand, their collaboration truly does embody the cosmopolitan feminism of *Three Guineas*’ proposed Society of Outsiders. On the other hand, their relationship displayed unevenness indicative of their differing positions in relation to the metropolitan center. Meeting for the first time in late 1934 at an exhibit of Man Ray’s photography, their friendship developed quickly. Woolf wrote twelve letters to Ocampo within the first years of their meeting, much of which correspondence regards the Spanish editions of Woolf’s work, which Ocampo was translating and publishing through *Sur*. On 19 December 1934 Woolf writes to Vita Sackville-West, “I am in love with Victoria Okampo [sic]” (*Letters* 5 355). Ocampo goes on to write several pieces on Virginia Woolf, starting with the open letter “*Carta a Virginia Woolf*” (“Letter to Virginia Woolf”), written in Madrid in the months following their first meeting and published as the opening essay in Ocampo’s book, *Testimonios*. The essay at times seems to presage *Three Guineas* and puts Ocampo firmly in Woolf’s camp of outsiders: Ocampo writes that “by defending your causes...Virginia...I defend my own too” (qtd. in Rogers 8). In September 1946 *Vogue* (US) published “Memories of Virginia Woolf,” in which Ocampo writes of Woolf’s fiction, political activism, and also of her physical beauty.

Ocampo’s essay does converge, as Gayle Rogers suggests, with *Three Guineas*, both formally and topically (Rogers 127). As a public epistle (and as a political piece), it is an intrusion into the male-dominated public sphere, a lifting of the metaphorical “veil of St. Paul” which divides the public and private spheres. The letter calls for a specific mode of female expression, a kind of expression which “today has not found an atmosphere conducive to its flourishing” (*Testimonios* 14). Ocampo’s use of the concept of atmosphere (*temperatura*, alternately translated as “climate”) is comparable to Woolf’s use of that term in *Three Guineas* in which Woolf ironically attributes women’s abject position in the professions to the “atmosphere” of the times (64). Ocampo’s letter is a pledge of solidarity to Woolf’s feminist vision, with much of it focused on Woolf’s argument in *A Room of One’s Own*. It is most forthright in its cosmopolitanism in the final line, in which Ocampo offers, “may my efforts join with others by all women, unknown or famous, working throughout the world” (14).

Yet we must situate Ocampo’s work with an understanding of her larger project of Europeanization and with an acknowledgement of her position as a citizen of the colonial periphery. In taking this into account it becomes clear that her “Letter to Virginia Woolf” and Woolf’s *Three Guineas* are in fact advancing different cosmopolitanisms, each informed by their respective points of origin along the center/periphery divide and in what Casanova has coined the “world republic of letters.” Where Woolf employs “the language of home anthropology,” attacking Fascism abroad by critiquing the patriarchy at home, Ocampo is reaching outwards to the metropolitan center. When reading Ocampo’s “Letter to Virginia Woolf” alongside *Three Guineas*, one profound difference appears at first to be a similarity; both focus almost entirely on Englishness. Ocampo writes of Woolf and of *A Room of One’s Own*, of Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte. She references Shakespeare, and, more importantly, Shakespeare’s sister. But, whereas Woolf’s Anglo-centrism (although in the service of a transnational critique of Fascism) is for her a contraction, a reinscribing of Englishness or national reintrenchment, for Ocampo it is an adoption of the language of the cultural center. The circumstances of the center/peripheral divide between Woolf and Ocampo cannot help but give shape to the relationship between their works. Although Woolf may “have no country,” and Ocampo may join the efforts of women “throughout the world,” their positions towards cosmopolitanism itself are shaped by the socio-historical implications of their respective national identities.

A disparity between the two women can be seen, too, in their personal relationship, which was in many ways uneven. This is in part due to Woolf’s international fame in the 1930s. Ocampo’s attitude towards Woolf was often one of idolization, and Doris Meyer writes that “it seemed to Victoria [Ocampo] that her tendency toward hero-worship had even marred their last meeting in 1939” (128). More important, as Meyer and Elizabeth Horan write, is Woolf’s seeming inability to “get past her own invention of Ocampo as a creature from the ‘land of great butterflies’” (13), an allusion to Woolf’s often exoticized imaginings of Ocampo’s home country. As Rogers points out, Woolf’s descriptions of both Spain and Latin America are problematic, and “as Ocampo herself noted, Woolf’s ideals of South America, which were derived from her notions of Spain and Hispanicity, did not change much between *The Voyage Out* (1915) and her meeting Ocampo in 1934*” (128). Many of Woolf’s letters to Ocampo reference a disparity in their correspondence itself, it is implied that Ocampo’s letters were routinely longer and sent with greater frequency than Woolf’s. We can trace this unevenness too in the unidirectional movements of cultural material. Ocampo was an avid reader of Woolf’s works in English and, in addition, imported, translated, and published many of Woolf’s novels and essays in Spanish. Woolf read only one short piece of Ocampo’s writing that Ocampo had sent her in English.

The differing socio-historical points of origin of *Three Guineas* and “Letter to Virginia Woolf” inform their different versions of cosmopolitanism. Both use transnational comparison as a way of defining national identity, yet Woolf is attempting to define Englishness in the face of a contracting empire, whereas Ocampo, writing from a post-colonial periphery, is working to forge a Latin American identity through a connection with the culture of the metropolitan center. Woolf’s work in particular displays a dialectical tension between the national and the transnational, and this tension is mirrored in her relationship with Ocampo. Their relationship was a productive meeting of the minds between two of the twentieth century’s most prominent women intellectuals, an instance of transnational modernist networking, an embodiment of the society of outsiders that Woolf envisions, but it also displays incommensurability between the metropolitan center and the (formerly) colonized periphery, an unevenness in those very cosmopolitan networks. It is of course productive to interrogate the networks “that tie modernist texts to one another, linking Joyce or Proust to Woolf and (more recently) Ocampo, much as the gossamer webs link characters across London in Mrs. Dalloway” (Berman 9), but we must too acknowledge the three-dimensional quality of these ties, their tensions and inequalities, in order that we may better understand the manifestation of these tensions as they appear in Woolf’s works of the thirties.

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**Works Cited**


3 Woolf indicates in her letters that Ocampo sent her at least a few pages in English (“I mean the pages you sent to me. I don’t usually like appearing as a private person in print, but on this occasion I can find no fault”), but when Ocampo sends her the finished book Woolf is unable to read it (“How tempting it is—I can’t [sic] read a word of it, and yet every other word is almost one I know”) (*Letters* V 365, 372).

4 Much of this article is a translation of an earlier, longer piece of criticism, *Virginia Woolf. Orlando y Cía.*, which itself is an adaptation of a lecture given by Ocampo to the “*Amigos del Arte*” del Buenos Aires on 7 July 1937.

5 Woolf writes that St. Paul “lays it down that women, when praying in public, should be veiled” (145). The veil of St. Paul is mentioned throughout *Three Guineas* (22, 76, 142, 145, 153).

6 It was at this meeting when Ocampo “all but forced herself into the writer’s house, accompanied by the photographer Gisele Freund, and coaxed an angry Woolf to sit for some portraits” (Rogers 161). Meyer also mentions this meeting, but notes that Woolf’s annoyance notwithstanding, the next day she “permitted Freund to come for a two-hour session of photographs, and according to Freund, she appeared to enjoy it” (Meyer 12).
of the period, they are our correspondents, reporting on the situation of those engaged by Virginia Woolf’s three Guineas. As we have seen, Woolf’s representation of telephony in The Years as a way “to tie its interest in the clan of outsiders back into the erotics of connection imagined by Hamilton, Isherwood, Lehmann, and others” (82). Of interest to Woolf scholars and other scholars of the 1930s is the way Trotter’s response to the most recent generation of work on the inter-war period—such as books by Jed Esty and Rebecca L. Wallkowitz—uses his communication lens to re-materialize feminism. He argues, for example, that the telephone “did provide, especially where young independent women were concerned, the basis for a viable and appealing existence. By 1930, Britain was no mere shrinking island. The interest Bowen, Woolf, and others took in such developments amounted to a good deal more than the adoption of a ‘cosmopolitan style’” (27). Woolf’s and Sayers’s 1930s fiction makes appearances in Trotter’s study (although not together), and one direction of his analysis, as I have tried to illustrate briefly, is sympathetic to my proposed means of bringing them together through the focal point of the role of the woman intellectual under the pressure of the late 1930s. This was a time when Woolf’s argument in Three Guineas about the centrality of women’s rights to any discussion of supposedly larger political or economic issues could be met by embarrassment, resistance, or silence. Uncomprehending responses are well-documented into the following generation: Quentin Bell was not alone in finding Fascism a “far more agonizing and immediate question” than women’s rights (Lee 680), and Julia Briggs traces its reception similarly, from the silence of Woolf’s friends and the Queenie Leavis attacks to “second generation” hostility (332-37). If women’s rights in general seemed less valid as a subject of concern in the latter half of the 1930s, even more invalid would be specific questions concerning the woman scholar, the woman’s colleges, and the role of women intellectuals. And yet both Sayers and Woolf held their course in the middle of the 1930s.

How might we proceed to bring Woolf and Sayers together in this particular context? Following Woolf’s own practice, we turn first to biography. While the different life patterns of the two writers are evident, Woolf scholars are well aware of the overlapping social and intellectual circles of the period in which nearly everyone turns out to be connected to everyone else, and Woolf and Sayers are both educated men’s daughters of a similar generation (born in 1882 and 1893, respectively). Given the voluminous documentation provided by Woolf’s published diaries, letters, and subsequent biographies, it seems not unreasonable to turn confidently to the indices of those volumes. Finding them surprisingly silent, lacking any reference to Sayers, we turn then to the multiple biographies of Sayers, calculating that perhaps the popular writer noticed her more literary sister even if the reverse did not happen. Again, nothing. A passing trace is found in Carolyn Heilbrun’s biographical essay on Sayers: “While Woolf and Sayers had little enough in common, they shared the dubious honor of being chosen by Q. D. and F. R. Leavis for passionate attack” (10). Even this glancing Leavis connection peters out, as they attack Woolf and Sayers as embodiments of quite different types of affronts to Leavisite values, and Heilbrun’s essay is apparently alone in drawing any kind of parallels between the two writers. 1 Indicative of the ships passing in the night quality of their biographies is the curious fact that both lived in Mecklenburgh Square at different times. Sayers had a flat at 44 Mecklenburgh Square in 1921, and it is here that she came up with the concept for the Wimsey detective novels; she gives this address to Harriet Vane in Gaudy Night in 1935, and it is from this flat that Vane launches her expedition to Oxford in Gaudy Night. Woolf moved into

Dorothy L. Sayers and Virginia Woolf: Perspectives on the Woman Intellectual in the late 1930s

Widely-accepted versions of 1930s literary history that emphasize documentary and leftist politics make outliers of both Virginia Woolf and Dorothy L. Sayers, and they do so in ways that keep them far apart. Woolf’s acknowledged position in Modernism and Sayers’ “golden age” fictional fiction would seem to offer little opportunity for placing them in dialogue. And yet I would like to suggest a focus that brings them closer together and contributes to a more accurate picture of the 1930s literature and culture: I propose that Dorothy L. Sayers’ tenth Peter Wimsey detective novel, Gaudy Night (1935) might be read as a sustained examination of questions pertinent to those engaged by Virginia Woolf in Three Guineas (1938). Sayers and Woolf do not need documentary or formal political allegiances; rather, in terms of our understanding of the period, they are our correspondents, reporting on the situation of the woman intellectual under pressure in the latter half of the 1930s.

1 Sean Latham’s “Am I a Snoo?” Modernism and the Novel, which takes its title from Woolf and includes chapters on both Woolf and Sayers, also suggests parallels rather than connections. Where the strands are brought together in the conclusion, he tends to preface Sayers’s name by the word “even,” marking her out as different from Joyce and Woolf: “for writers such as Woolf, Joyce, and even Sayers” (215); “even Dorothy Sayers” (216; 219).
37 Mecklenburgh Square in a period of late-career reflection during
the somber summer of 1939, with the unappreciative response to *Three
Guineas* relatively fresh and a world war imminent (and the bombs
would fall on Mecklenburgh Square soon enough). These trajectories are
evocative, perhaps, of the continuities and discontinuities between the
two writers and their careers.

What kind of biographical cross-pollination can we create ourselves out
of their separate biographical records? The Oxford-educated Sayers was
the only child of a Church of England vicar; after achieving a First in
French at Somerville, she found work in advertising, joy in motorcycles
and fast cars, and sexual adventures that led to a child out of wedlock.
In contrast, Woolf’s lack of an Oxbridge education is a well-known part
of her engagement with women’s intellectual life, and her family experienc-
es could hardly be more different. And yet both women were determined
that they would do their own work, valuing it highly, and both were in
long-standing marriages with partners who acknowledged its importance
and provided support for their wives’ intellectual endeavors.\(^2\) Their
engagement with official recognition and honors is pertinent here. What
claims should women make to education, degrees, and honors? Woolf’s
exploration of these questions in *Three Guineas* leads to the austere posi-
tion that women should take no part, should offer only their refusal and
form instead a Society of Outsiders. Such a position is not sour grapes
but one that Woolf adhered to for herself, turning down prestigious
invitations such as the Clark lectures at Cambridge in 1932, an honor-
ary Doctor of Letters from Manchester in 1933, and the Companion of
Honor in 1935 (Lee 613, 633, 653). Sayers’s relation to such recognition
is complex. The recent US reissues of the Wimsey series promote Sayers
as “one of the first women to be awarded a degree by Oxford University”
which is true, but perhaps slightly misleading. Sayers went up to Oxford
in the autumn of 1912, taking her exams in the spring of 1915. Her third
year was much different than the first two, with Somerville College com-
mandeered by the War Office and Oxford filled with Belgian refugees.
When Oxford began granting women the degrees they earned, Sayers
decided to attend the first ceremony on October 14, 1920, because she
thought the first “‘will be so much more amusing’” (qtd. in Reynolds
98). In 1943, the Archbishop of Canterbury wanted to honor her with
a Doctor of Divinity, but she turned him down; seven years later, she
accepted an honorary Doctor of Letters from Durham University and
enjoyed using the D.Litt designation (Reynolds 328-29; 359-61).

Turning to the published work and public appearances, again we find
no direct connections, but parallels in Woolf’s and Sayers’s ideas about
women and terms of engagement suggest a similar interrogation of
1930s culture. In 1938, for example, Sayers gave a talk to a woman’s
society entitled “Are Women Human?” in which she begins with an ex-
tended discussion of how feminism is past its usefulness and we should,
instead, talk about “sex-equality” (21).\(^3\) In “Are Women Human?” and
“The Human-Not-Quite-Human,” Sayers’s chosen examples include several
that are intriguingly close to Woolf’s in *Three Guineas*. Sayers speaks in
a very different voice, striking her own notes, and, however close she comes to Woolf’s arguments, Woolf is never mentioned among
the many, varied references. Woolf’s voluminous citations in *Three
Guineas* are similarly devoid of reference to Sayers.

So we must pick up the clues provided by the work itself. Woolf’s ongo-
ing interest in the agency of educated men’s daughters took many forms;
\(^2\) Unlike Woolf, who took Leonard’s surname, Sayers continued to use her own
name professionally, even as her son was formally adopted by his stepfather, the
Scots journalist Oswold “Mac” Fleming, and began to use his surname. Sayers
was never married to the biological father of her son, John Anthony, who was
born in 1924, two years before her marriage to Fleming. Although legally John
Anthony Sayers, the child was called by the last name of his biological father
(White), and raised by Sayers’s cousin Ivy Shrimpton. The adoption was arranged
in 1934, and in September of 1935 John Anthony was told of the adoption as
prelude to beginning his school life as John Anthony Fleming.

\(^3\) This talk, along with another essay and an introduction by Mary McDermott
Shideler, was later published by Eerdmans Publishing.

she explored roles both actual and potential, those realizable and those
prohibited, and she did so in essays, reviews, and fiction. In the later
1920s, she had called upon the young university women addressed in
*A Room of One’s Own* to work diligently, to “write books of travel and
adventure, and research and scholarship, and history and biography, and
criticism and philosophy and science. By so doing you will certainly
profit the art of fiction” (142). By the time of *Three Guineas*, the picture
is darker. As Woolf notes sardonically, educated, voting women had
not transformed the politics of Great Britain, and the Spanish Civil War
pregsed a larger European conflict. And yet among the many things
she asks women not to do in that polemic, she does not ask them to stop
writing. Her list of the types of research and writing women should do,
and the claim that it will benefit fiction, stands. Woolf projects a portrait
of contemporary women’s fiction, however incomplete its achievement
may be, when she concocts Life’s Adventure for A Room of One’s Own.
Woolf seems to say this is not the kind of novel she herself will write,
but it invites us to probe Gaudy Night, published in the decade after
*A Room of One’s Own*, for signs of progress. Two features that Woolf
highlights in her representational novel are that Chloe likes Olivia, and
that they share a laboratory. Gaudy Night’s cast of women academics
offers a valuable counterpart to Chloe’s and Olivia’s shared intellectual
enterprise and friendship. Over the course of the novel, readers are given
information about the research of the dons, whose specializations range
across humanities, social science, and science fields. Their female com-
munity, functioning through respect and loyalty, is emphasized by Peter
Wimsey:

The one thing which frustrated the whole attack from first to last
was the remarkable solidarity and public spirit displayed by your
college as a body. I think that was the last obstacle that X expected
to encounter in a community of women. Nothing but the very great
loyalty of the Senior Common Room to the College and the respect
of the students for the Senior Common Room stood between you and
a most unpleasant publicity. (495-96)

Such solidarity among women scholars is something we can still learn
from. *Gaudy Night* is a novel that is at once popular genre fiction and
a serious literary exploration of women as intellectuals and scholars. It
is also a hands-on approach to questions of “how?” and “at what cost?”
women scholars should function rather than the principled refusal Woolf
would advocate a few years later in *Three Guineas*.

If crime fiction often begins with the main fact accomplished—the
murder—and proceeds with a retrospective bent, this is not the case in
*Gaudy Night*.\(^4\) Although the initial occasion is a reunion, its focus is in
the present, and it is a detective novel without a murder. The novel, the
ten of eleven Wimsey novels, is also a high water mark in the series,
a view corroborated by Heilbrun’s observation that “In writing Gaudy
Night, the novel she had prepared herself all her life to write, Sayers
had completed her task of transforming the detective story and embody-
ing her vision of intellectual integrity” (10). Sayers would publish only
one more Wimsey novel, *Busman’s Honeymoon* (1937), and it reads
as something of an epilogue to the series; after that, Sayer’s primary

\(^4\) The novel takes its title from the traditional “gaudy” of the Oxbridge colleges;
these events are alumni reunions. At the beginning of the novel, crime writer
Harriet Vane is returning to her alma mater for the first time since she had “broken
all her old ties and half the commandments” (3-4) after being tried for the murder
of her live-in lover. Shrewsbury College has been experiencing pranks and
vandalism; Harriet is asked to stay on after the gaudy to investigate these. As she
investigates the increasingly serious attacks, Harriet becomes part of the life of
the college, pursues her own writing and research, and negotiates her personal
relationship with the famous detective Peter Wimsey whom she met when he
found the evidence for her acquittal. At the novel’s end, the perpetrator is exposed
and rather than an arrest, “the problem is being medically dealt with” (520). The
motive for the crime is hatred of women academics, centering on one woman who
had completed her task of transforming the detective story and embodying her
vision of intellectual integrity” (10). Sayers would publish only
one more Wimsey novel, *Busman’s Honeymoon* (1937), and it reads
as something of an epilogue to the series; after that, Sayer’s primary

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focus became her Christian humanism and her translation of Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, which was published in Penguin Classics in the post-war period and is still in print. Sayers herself was well aware of *Gaudy Night’s* significance, as revealed in her letter to Victor Gollancz upon its completion:

> It is the only book I’ve written embodying any kind of a “moral” and I do feel rather passionately about this business of the integrity of the mind—but I realise that to make a “detective story” the vehicle for that kind of thing is (as Miss de Vine says of the Peter-Harriet marriage) “reckless to the point of insanity.” But there it is—it’s the book I wanted to write and I’ve written it—and it is now my privilege to leave you with the baby! Whether you advertise it as a love-story or as educational propaganda, or as a lunatic freak, I leave to you. (qtd. in Reynolds 261)

Sayers’ comments here show the consciousness of the genre blending that her commitment to her “moral” about intellectual integrity produced. It is not unlike Woolf’s original concept for the Pargiters that she later split into *The Years* and *Three Guineas*, work which taxed her energy and consumed a great deal of time. Sayers, like Woolf, knew that she risked incomprehension or worse from readers who had definite generic expectations for her work. While *The Years* was highly successful, the planned factual “interchapters” that Woolf spun off to become the foundation of *Three Guineas* were read less receptively, partly because of readers’ expectations of Woolf. What Woolf separated, Sayers kept together; both strategies have value, and both carry risks, as Woolf and Sayers were well aware.⁶

Crime fiction scholar Heta Pyrhönen notes that “Sayers’ *Gaudy Night* (1935) is frequently cited as the first overtly feminist detective novel in its concern for female character and female development in a male dominated world” (108-09). Thinking of the novel alongside *Three Guineas*, with its sustained emphasis on women’s social, professional, and financial independence, adds 1930s resonance to that status; it is a novel specifically about women’s intellectual labor and its costs. The novel enacts its own themes: the plot brings to life the social and institutional contexts of women’s intellectual activity, and its events demonstrate the personal costs paid by women intellectuals. Contextualizing Harriet Vane and Peter Wimsey’s search for an intimate relationship that enables truly equal partnership within an examination of the intellectual life in an Oxford women’s college creates a blended form that incorporates themes and strategies often associated with Woolf.

My exploration of common elements in Woolf’s and Sayers’ work life, public integrity, and perdurability, however lacking in direct connection these two important figures were in their own time, claims Woolf and Sayers as sister intellectuals in the late 1930s. Why bother? Because we must locate and record these connections ourselves when, for example, Stefan Collini’s 500+ page study of intellectuals in twentieth-century Britain creates a strong impression that there were no women intellectuals at all.⁷ When Sayers turned down the Doctor of Divinity offered her by the Archbishop of Canterbury, her main reason for doing so was an *intellectual* one: acknowledging the great honor he offers, she tells him that “I should feel better about it if I were a more convincing kind of Christian. I am never quite sure whether I really am one, or whether I have only fallen in love with an intellectual pattern” (qtd. in Reynolds 329; my emphasis). In the second half of the 1930s, both Sayers and Woolf wrote the books they wanted to write, although they knew those works might be met by incomprehension and disdain, because of their belief that women must find the work they are meant to do and do it. Sayers’s Harriet Vane has made herself an outsider through her scandalous post-Oxford life, but she still has the membership card: “They can’t take this away, at any rate. Whatever I may have done since, this remains. Scholar; Master of Arts; Domina; Senior Member of this University” (9). From this insider/outside vantage point, Sayers can use Harriet to examine the education of women and the role of women intellectuals. The criminal activity of the novel, driven by hatred of female scholars, allows Sayers to show the high costs paid by intellectual women; it also allows her to argue that women are entitled to pursue intellectual work about which they are passionate. While Woolf was a visitor to Oxford and Cambridge, always conscious of how her brothers had received the education she was denied, Sayers was a participant and graduate. Perhaps Woolf would have deprecated Sayers’ participation in these dramas of certification, given what Hermione Lee calls her “settled dislike . . . of universities” (635), but I like to think she would have enjoyed Sayers’ “monstrous impertinence” in locating her fictional Shrewsbury College in the exact location of the real-world emblem of male privilege, Balliol College’s “spacious and sacred cricket-ground” (Author’s Note to *Gaudy Night* xii).

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**Works Cited**


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⁵ Although he is best known to scholars of the 1930s for his role in founding the Left Book Club, Victor Gollancz also published important contemporary fiction throughout the inter-war period.

⁶ With *Gaudy Night*, “her most literary novel” (173), Sean Latham situates Sayers “at the perilous intersection of two increasingly divergent literary cultures...the highbrow critics and creators of modernism [and] Sayers’ own dedicated readership” (198).

⁷ Of the mere handful of women cited in Collini’s book, only Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch receive more than two references in the index and, although he has a chapter entitled “Outsider Studies,” *Three Guineas* is not mentioned.
Imagined “Ineffable Space”: Woolf’s Architectural Release in “America, Which I Have Never Seen”

In the 1914 section of _The Years_ (1937), we come upon Martin having a somatic moment as he approaches St. Paul’s Cathedral before an impromptu lunch with Sara Pargiter. As the sounds of the clock fade into the air, a peculiar sensation affects him:

> He crossed over and stood with his back against a shop window looking up at the great dome. All the weights in his body seemed to shift. He had a curious sense of something moving in his body in harmony with the building; it righted itself: it came to a full stop. It was exciting—this change of proportion. He wished he had been an architect. (TY 215)

Martin’s harmonious moment with St. Paul’s resonates with what the Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier terms _l’espace indicible_, or “ineffable space,” an architectural principle he developed after reflecting on the bodily sensations he experienced while standing at the edge of a cliff overlooking the Acropolis in 1933 (Vidler 38). Le Corbusier’s life’s work on architectural proportion and bodily sensation began with his early focus on the Golden Ratio, which yielded influential challenge to and transformation of building practices initiated during the 1930s that emphasized architecture’s potential to be harmonious with the body; ineffable space is produced when proportions are harmonious. With scenes like the one above featuring Martin in harmony with the cathedral, Woolf also challenges meanings, dominant narratives, and patriarchal ideologies found in the built environment, contributing to her well-documented interest in the relationship between a gendered body and the city. Here, I explore how a reading of that relationship shifts by putting Woolf’s spatial constructions into conversation with architectural language of the time, specifically with Le Corbusier’s emerging theories. I suggest that Woolf engages ineffable space, in Martin’s moment with the cathedral, and in her short essay “America, Which I Have Never Seen” (1938) in which she creates a liberated, feminist space that is wiped clean of history and attachments. Like Le Corbusier’s sensational moment on the edge of a cliff, Woolf’s narrator too, is unbound and disengaged from the confines of the body.

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris was a Swiss-French architect, urban planner, and writer who is credited for much of modern architecture’s design aesthetic. In 1920, Jeanneret-Gris unveiled his pseudonym, Le Corbusier, in a journal he founded called _L’Esprit nouveau_. A great proponent of using reinforced concrete, steel, and plate glass, Le Corbusier’s urban planning of the 1930s emphasized abandoning the class-based stratification that appeared in his earlier work _Towards a New Architecture_ (1923) and _The City of To-Morrow and its Planning_ (1925) and focusing entirely on creating buildings that suited families regardless of economic status. He published his designs and philosophy for his classless architectural vision in _La Ville Radieuse_ (The Radiant City) in 1935. For a definitive biography, see Weber.

The Golden Ratio is a Euclidean mathematics principle in which two quantities are “golden” if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger quantity with a numerical value of $1.618033\ldots$. Le Corbusier began using the golden ratio in practice in 1927 beginning with the Villa Stein in Garches (Le Modulor). In _Le Modulor_ (1948) and _Modulor 2_ (1955) Le Corbusier published analysis and sketches of the way in which the Golden Ratio informs his use of bodily proportions to achieve harmony in architectural design. Based on the height of a man with his arm raised (6 ft/1.83 m), Le Corbusier’s modular system served as a bridge between to incompatible systems of measurement: the “foot-and-inch system of the Anglo-Saxon world, and the metric system on the other side” (Le Modulor 17). Pertinent to this feminist reading of ineffable space in Woolf’s essay, it should be noted that the system has been sharply criticized for not considering the female body, typically shorter in stature, as proportional and harmonious.

While, to my knowledge, there isn’t direct evidence that Woolf read Le Corbusier’s architectural writings, they both contributed to British _Vogue_ during the mid-1920s, a publication aimed at giving new intellectuals, artists, and culture makers initial exposure while conferring “taste” onto its readers. In fact, _Vogue_ was the first publication in England to publish photographs of Le Corbusier’s buildings (Cohen 249). Woolf would likely have seen these photographs, and her essay, “America, Which I Have Never Seen,” embraces the architectural zeitgeist of which Le Corbusier is representative. Writing about Le Corbusier’s vision as it developed through the interwar years, Anthony Vidler notes that the architect’s goal was to take a natural setting and rework it, rendering a perfect balance between buildings and space—nothing too closed, nothing too open. To achieve such was to create ineffable space, which Le Corbusier described as transcendent space “as high as the sky, as deep as the clearest lake, and stretched on all sides to the horizon” (Vidler 38). Ineffable space was to be a corrective to what the modern architects saw as confined, tight, claustrophobic, dark canyons or trenches of the nineteenth century metropolises—closures which promoted vice and mental disturbance. To heal anxieties about the uncontrolled and un-policed, modern spaces would allow therapeutic light and air necessary for healthy bodies and minds into urban centers. It might even bring the natural world back into a symbiotic relationship with the city. The feeling of being in ineffable space is described by Le Corbusier as an experience in which one’s perspective encompasses all, but is also encompassed by the space; therefore, one is simultaneously within the body and outside the body. Time becomes irrelevant, highlighting a troublesome goal of early twentieth century architecture—to erase history and destroy the past. By the 1930s, Le Corbusier’s ideology celebrated the erasure of class stratifications within urban planning, and in his book _La Ville Radieuse_ (The Radiant City, 1935), he offers his solution to what he saw as the clutter and mess of class by “cleaning and purging” the city to create a “calm and powerful architecture” (qtd. in Dalrymple). In modernist designs of the 1930s, buildings are often transparent and crystalline, clean and without ornamentation, a gesture toward using materials of the future, but also reflective of an ideological shift toward and desire for a transparent and classless society. In the above passage from _The Years_, Woolf describes Martin as intrinsically understanding that the only way to express the sensation he is feeling is through the language of architecture—a language that depends on futuristic vision and the multiple narratives of the cathedral’s past. Yet, not being an architect, he lacks that language. Despite this, his body is in perfect harmony with the space. Past, present, and future merge within his flesh in this singular moment to make meaning for him that runs deep beyond the language at his disposal. Woolf plays with that same architectural sense in “America, Which I Have Never Seen”; in this essay, the built environment and surrounding landscapes are unfamiliar, thus she can conveniently ignore their pasts while escaping the very real violence brewing in Europe. The piece imaginatively paints a picture of a wild, primeval, and yet futuristic America where everything moves extraordinarily quickly, there is no class distinction, and history has yet to be written.

Ostensibly a slapdash response to a question Hearst’s International/Cosmopolitan Magazine put to a series of writers, “What interests you most in this cosmopolitan world of today?” (“America” 56), the essay reads like a playful writing exercise. It was housed in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library as part of Woolf’s papers until reprinted in the _Dublin Review_ in 2001. There is no trace of an invitation from Hearst’s International/Cosmopolitan to write it, no mention of it in Woolf’s diaries, notebooks, or letters, nor any

1 Le Corbusier writes, “Proportion is an ineffable thing. I am the inventor of the expression: ‘ineffable space,’ which is a reality I have discovered in the course of my work. When a building achieves its maximum of intensity, of proportion, of quality of execution, of perfection, there occurs a phenomenon of ineffable space […] which does not depend on dimensions but on the quality of perfection. That is the domain of the ineffable” (qtd. in Weber 733).

2 The Golden Ratio is a Euclidean mathematics principle in which two quantities are “golden” if their ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger quantity with a numerical value of $1.618033\ldots$. Le Corbusier began using the golden ratio in practice in 1927 beginning with the Villa Stein in Garches (Le Modulor). In _Le Modulor_ (1948) and _Modulor 2_ (1955) Le Corbusier published analysis and sketches of the way in which the Golden Ratio informs his use of bodily proportions to achieve harmony in architectural design. Based on the height of a man with his arm raised (6 ft/1.83 m), Le Corbusier’s modular system served as a bridge between to incompatible systems of measurement: the “foot-and-inch system of the Anglo-Saxon world, and the metric system on the other side” (Le Modulor 17). Pertinent to this feminist reading of ineffable space in Woolf’s essay, it should be noted that the system has been sharply criticized for not considering the female body, typically shorter in stature, as proportional and harmonious.
evidence of her developing the idea beyond this short text (56). Andrew McNeillie’s introductory headnote describes the magazine version of the piece illustrated with “a graphic montage-style view of Manhattan: its cocktail bars, its skyscrapers, its traffic, the Statue of Liberty” (56). The magazine article, thus, used graphics to visually capitalize on the myth that America is New York City and that the city’s atmosphere serves up the elixir that makes it possible to ignore what is going on in the rest of the world. But Woolf’s essay is far more complex than the graphics surrounding it would suggest.

Woolf’s feeling of being suspended between a British literary legacy and her own marginality as a woman writer has been the focus of the critical approaches to “America, Which I have Never Seen,” but I want to distance the piece from her political project about America, its literature, and its relationship to British nationalism and writing. Rather, by contextualizing it with Le Corbusier’s principle of ineffable space, I suggest that she invents a space that liberates her body, frees her from gender, and suspends her nationality. She creates a particularly feminist sort of ineffable space. America provides the only landscape upon which she can impose this creation because, of course, she has never seen it, and it offers limitless possibilities for myth-making. Through her narrator, the birdlike “Imagination,” Woolf escapes a restrictive, classed, and imperialist British and Fascist Europe. While the narrator sits on the rocky shores of Cornwall looking west, her back turned away from the continent and its unrest, Imagination flies across the Atlantic to America and reports back. In this way, Woolf inhabits two perspectives: that of her narrator’s own still, seated body on the shore looking out across the sea, and that of her in-flight Imagination whose perspective is vast and uninhibited; Woolf inhabits both inner and outer bodies in relation to space. Thus, through her composition of the essay, Woolf becomes an agent of ineffable space and, through her embrace of the imagined America from New York City to the West Coast, has control over it. Through her description, Woolf symbolically throws a rope around the entire imagined space marking her own boundaries and positioning objects within them to achieve balance. (Architectural renderings exhibit a similar practice.) While Martin in The Years is on the verge of understanding this same sensation, he is also aware of the historically saturated significance of the buildings and environment surrounding him. Martin’s awareness reminds us of Walter Benjamin, who throughout The Arcades Project, floats the term “new barbarism” to describe architecture that releases us from the storms of modernity’s past and returns us to our primeval roots. New barbarism dissolves the historical continuum and revolutionizes the present moment. It appeals to the person driving quickly by in his or her car, or the bird flying high over top, not the historian or archivist who would contemplate it in stillness (Heynan 107). To truly inhabit ineffable space, in her essay, Woolf rearranges historical saturation, rewrites it, and embraces a “new barbarism.”

New York City appears to Imagination “scraped and scrubbed only the night before” (“America” 57), a gleaming glass city that recalls 1930s architectural models and drawings of fantastical crystalline cities made of materials easy to keep clean and bright and that both reflected and occasionally displayed the bodies within urban space. Imagination reports of the houses in which people live, “‘There is no privacy’ […] [.] ‘The houses stand open to the road. No walls divide them; […] There are no curtains on the windows. You can see right in. The rooms are large and airy’” (57). Woolf’s vision of America imagines ineffable space in its sweeping, clean, modern aspects and her voice expresses a celebratory release from the claustrophobia of being, as she puts it, “marooned on [her] island” (56). A guiding principle in Le Corbusier’s Radiant City is that the removal of barriers from the plane of vision, walls for example, will result in the dissolution of political upheaval; the urban plan itself governs individuals, not politicians or regulations. Imagination’s reportage suggests Americans have found something similar by living in glass houses that offer transcendence from modernist anxieties about urban and natural space.

Imagination flies over the vast landscape to effectively position Woolf’s voice as the creator of a utopian America riven and liberated from the heavy violence of the Spanish Civil War and growing Fascism. Through constant movement of people and objects, America resists the destructive violence developing across the Atlantic and embraces, rather, a violence of creation. Imagination reports, “‘Look how they battle and punch, hack and hew; tunnel through mountains; erect skyscrapers; are ruined one moment, millionaires the next’” (60). The Americans have their own power to self-annihilate, to return to primeval roots, and don’t need the rest of the world to help. Americans have achieved a state of new barbarism. Imagination tells us:

[Whether] it is that the mountains are so high and may at any moment belch out fire and decimate a town, or that the rivers are so huge and may at any moment roll out their long liquid tongues and swallow up a city, or that the air is decidedly alcoholic so that everyone is always a little tipsy, the Americans are much freer, wilder, more generous, more adventurous, more spontaneous than we are. (60)

The spatial qualities of this passage indicate a playful attitude toward a landscape that contains more topographies than Woolf has ever seen. Enormous mountains and wide rivers that have the capacity to eradicate human existence also have the power to remind those living in such landscapes that they are simply not essential to the movement and continuation of the world. Here, Woolf gestures ironically that the wars that erupt from human beings’ violent conquest of each other are unnecessary to a definition of the self or one’s place within a national context. The open spaces of America are unlike those of Europe; she calls them “primeval” (58) because they do not allow human history to be permanently stamped upon them. Even though Imagination notices traces of human activity left in the woods—a “heap of rusty tins; that deserted shed of corrugated iron; that skeleton of an old motorcar” (58)—none of these things tell a singular, homogeneous narrative. They are not tied to any particular individual or group. They have no historical context. As Imagination observes, “They [the Americans] never settled down and lived and died and were buried in the same spot” (58). It is this “primeval” essence that serves as the key to a sense of release in the piece; time is manipulated, disordered, and compressed. At one point, a “giant man, standing as if he were carved in stone” who “makes one nervous […] about one’s scalp” takes aim at a “prehistoric extinct monster” (58). Within one image we are in a speeding car, see a Native American wielding a tomahawk, and spot a woolly mammoth. Some critics have noted that the anachronisms suggest Woolf’s scathing and stereotyping attitude about Americans, but I am inclined, rather, to see her putting into practice the dissolution of a chronological continuum. Woolf’s use of anachronism works towards forging the new barbarism that would allow for a fresh start from the traumas of modernity.

Briefly, a return to Le Corbusier’s principle to deepen this connection. As Vidler explains, Le Corbusier believed that “Objects, if possible free-standing, generated force-fields, took possession of space, orchestrated it and made it sing or cry out with harmony or pain” (Vidler 38). Le Corbusier stated that it was the discovery of the “fourth dimension,” which was a “moment of limitless escape” (qtd. in Vidler 39), but, in true Le Corbusian fashion, ineffable space would reveal itself only to those worthy of deserving it. For Le Corbusier, this would have meant powerful men. In Le Corbusier’s estimation, ineffable space is naturally
a masculine concept, and the ability to feel it is a distinctly masculine one. Like an intensified imperial map-making, wherein conquering space becomes even more dangerous than lines drawn on paper to assign borders, it’s an aerial attack that subsumes all four dimensions gathering them up for the beholder to manipulate and control. (The language of architecture often hedges on egotistical madness.) But just like the literature and arts that came before it, modernist architecture fought to “make it new” and work against prevailing ideologies. Le Corbusier had a deep distrust of and anxiety about everything that came before —history, stories, clutter, messiness—in other words, the layers of human experience and the things that charge the places we live with meaning that resonates generation after generation. Woolf’s Imagination is gathering up the terrain in much the same way, but with a celebratory encompassing of all its details, at once container and contained.

Near the end of the piece, Imagination finds herself in a car speeding through a valley where “time has dropped and stands clear and still” (59). Past, present, and future converge. Imagination spots villagers dancing around a Maypole, “the England of Charles the First,” and the “red man” with his tomahawk aimed at a bison (59). Imagination observes that, “in her broad plains and deep valleys America has room for all ages, for all civilizations” (59). The inclusivity of the space lends to its ineffable quality where light and air contribute to healthy bodies and minds. The car crests a hill and emerges into a city of the future, built of concrete, heavily populated, noisy, stylish, and efficient (59). The essay’s focus shifts at this moment to describe not the environment, but the people within it. Americans, it seems, are “the most interesting people in the world” because “they face the future, not the past” (60).

Martin’s transcendent moment with St. Paul’s is firmly of the present, and, over the span of a lunch, is lost to the past. Reminded that he is saddled with duty and nation and went into the army rather than becoming an architect, Martin loses contact with the transcendent feeling of looking at St. Paul’s. This small moment in The Years about the immensely gratifying, yet utterly fleeting, feeling of harmony a man experiences when looking at St. Paul’s is firmly of the present, and, over the span of a lunch, is lost to the past. Reminded that he is saddled with duty and nation and went into the army rather than becoming an architect, Martin loses contact with the transcendent feeling of looking at St. Paul’s. This small moment in The Years about the immensely gratifying, yet utterly fleeting, feeling of harmony a building can give a person, coupled with the sweeping, inventive, ineffable spirituality in “America, Which I Have Never Seen,” suggests resonance between the architectural ideologies of the 1930s and Woolf’s own commitment to the liberating possibilities of making a new kind of space.

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Flush, Courtship, and Suffering

Virginia Woolf’s 1933 biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s cocker spaniel, Flush, occupies a peculiar place in the Woolf canon. As Pamela L. Caughie points out, “if few critics took Flush seriously at the time of its publication, still fewer consider it worth their time today” (47). Regularly overlooked as a serious text, Flush is notably absent from much scholarship about Virginia Woolf, modernism, women writers, and British literary history. Still, there has been a recent reclamation of Flush within animal studies as a means for Woolf to “challenge empiricist epistemology and revitalize literary aesthetics” (Hovanec 246). This vantage point has allowed critics to address issues of social propriety, gender identity, class distinctions, and, perhaps most obviously, animal subjectivity. While critics admit that “to some degree, Flush must be anthropomorphized” (Johnson 35), those same critics are often unwilling to entertain the depth of human experience, with its explicit roots in animal behaviors, ascribed to the titular dog. Given the surge in theories of courtship, sexuality, and identity during the previous decades, I read Flush as an experiment in masochistic subjectivity. Indeed, the emotional capacity ascribed to Flush, and its ensuing struggles, echo contemporaneous sexological tracts such as those by Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis that uncover and explore the direct relationship between love and suffering.1

A product of the early 1930s, Flush is, in many ways, much more than what Woolf initially conceived as “a joke” (Briggs 300) or what critics read as “light-hearted” (Whitworth 26). The novel can be understood as an acknowledgement of the necessarily masochistic elements within the rituals of courtship. Unlike the “masochistic aesthetic that depends on a dynamics of suffering and compensation […] in which creativity and self-destruction are linked in inextricable and productive ways” (Sorum 25-26), Flush experiments more with the ways in which masochism becomes a means of expression for those in love. Because Woolf presents such masochistic tendencies through Flush’s experience of them, she locates them in all types of affectionate relationships. In particular, Woolf uses Flush to reveal the porous borders between human society and the animal kingdom. Writing in a post-Darwinian period in which nature is seen as the analog of human behavior, Woolf applies the same emotional experiences to dog and human alike, encouraging readers to consider them in tandem.

With the circulation of sexological works by Krafft-Ebing and Ellis, discussions of sex and deviance became a regular feature of public discourse in the early twentieth-century. Indeed, critics have acknowledged Ellis’s direct influence on Woolf and her approach to

1 As Carol Siegel points out, “The modernist normalization of sadistic and masochistic desires also implicitly supports as natural the sexually charged social hierarchies” (30). The relationship between a dog and his mistress is, of course, a type of social hierarchy.
androgyny. His particular contributions to the understanding of gender roles and courtship, though, invite a reading of Flush himself as a traditional, heteronormative suitor courting his mistress. Revealing the latent masochistic tendencies engendered by desire, Ellis asks, “Why is it that love inflicts, and even seeks to inflict, pain? Why is it that love suffers pain, and even seeks to suffer pain?” (87). Ellis’s understanding of love as intimately tied to suffering explains how Flush is “ravaged by the alternate rages of lust and greed” (Woolf 36) in his desire to “win the female” (Ellis 88). The narrator makes clear that it is for Elizabeth Barrett Browning—and for her alone—that Flush’s existence is measured: “it was for her that he had sacrificed his courage, as it was for her that he had sacrificed the sun and the air” (Woolf 48). Flush chooses a life with Miss Barrett, “a life of complete seclusion in her bedroom” at the expense of his “natural instincts” (33); as such, his love for Miss Barrett is consistently measured in terms of the pain of sacrifice.

Throughout the novel, Flush’s most intense experiences of love are framed in terms of his own suffering. His pain is intimately tied to his feelings of duty and questions of his own worth. The “bond, an uncomfortable yet thrilling tightness” (35) that unites Flush with Miss Barrett is based upon Flush’s realization that “if his pleasure was her pain, then his pleasure was […] three parts pain” (35). Like a good suitor, Flush’s satisfaction is dependent entirely on that of his beloved. The juxtaposition of “uncomfortable” and “thrilling” iterates Ellis’s suggestion that even the most playful courtship rituals “are verging on pain” (88). For Flush, a single suitor within what Ellis conceives of as a broader spectrum of courtship rituals, pleasure is pain and pain is pleasure.

In this sense, pain is more multidimensional than simply the negation of pleasure. Ellis explains, “the emotional value of pain is equally great whether the pain is inflicted, suffered, witnessed, or merely exists as a mental imagination, and there is no reason why it should not coexist in all these forms in the same person” (215). Even Flush’s mistress measures his worth in terms of his sacrifice and suffering. When he boasts because he cannot sleep on her bed, or when he refuses to eat if she does not feed him, Miss Barrett “took the blame and bore the inconvenience because, after all, Flush loved her. He had refused the air and the sun for her sake. ‘He is worth loving, is he not?’” (48-9). Flush sacrifices greatly, often counter to his own desires and desires. Because he is willing to submit himself wholly to the whims and wishes of his mistress and because he celebrates the primacy of her desires over his, he proves worthy of her affection.

Clearly, the “game” of courtship—a mock-combat between males for the possession of the female which may at any time become a real combat” (Ellis 88)—is afoot for Flush. Such play evolves into real combat for Flush when Mr. Browning enters the narrative and directs Miss Barrett’s attentions elsewhere. The novel ascribes a canine quality to his feelings of duty and questions of his own worth. The “bond, an uncomfortable yet thrilling tightness” (35) that unites Flush with Miss Barrett is based upon Flush’s realization that “if his pleasure was her pain, then his pleasure was […] three parts pain” (35). Like a good suitor, Flush’s satisfaction is dependent entirely on that of his beloved. The juxtaposition of “uncomfortable” and “thrilling” iterates Ellis’s suggestion that even the most playful courtship rituals “are verging on pain” (88). For Flush, a single suitor within what Ellis conceives of as a broader spectrum of courtship rituals, pleasure is pain and pain is pleasure.

When Mr. Browning enters Miss Barrett’s life, he violently disrupts Flush’s routine, and, as such, Flush internalizes the pain of his exclusion from the life of his mistress: “Once he had felt that he and Miss Barrett were together, in a firelit cave. Now the cave was no longer firelit; it was dark and damp; […] e[verything] had changed” (56). Flush blames the newfound darkness of his life entirely upon Mr. Browning, though it is contingent upon an explicit change in Miss Barrett’s displays of affection. Prior to the entrance of his rival, Flush’s affection and loyalty are validated by Miss Barrett’s attentions. As she develops feelings for Mr. Browning, however, she recasts her love for Flush into her love for this new suitor, leaving Flush “ignored” (56) and relegated to the background. Perhaps more tragic, Miss Barrett’s indifference—“She no longer remembered his existence” (56)—turns to cruelty, undercutting all that Flush has previously cultivated to endear himself to her: “She treated his advances more brusquely; she cut short his endeavours laughingly; she made him feel that there was something petty, silly, affected, in his old affectionate ways” (62). All of Flush’s quirky characteristics, which once endeared him to his mistress, have become disdainful and worthy of mockery; accordingly, Flush, now secondary to Mr. Browning, is miserable.

The degradation that Flush feels chronicles the process by which romantic rivals are necessarily pitted against one another: “there is always a possibility of actual combat […] of real violence, of undisguised cruelty, which the male inflicts on his rival” (Ellis 90). Flush, to assert his claim on Miss Barrett and, by proxy, to prove his dominance, imagines himself “sharply” (61) biting Mr. Browning. In order to be the triumphant male, Flush has to prove that he is “the bravest and strongest” (Ellis 89). As a result, his fantasy of physical assault intensifies with real violence becoming inevitable: Flush “savagely” (63) bites Mr. Browning. Yet, contrary to Ellis’s belief that the female in question would “delight in the prowess of the successful claimant” (90), Flush, the more aggressive of the rival suitors, is harshly ignored: “Neither he nor Miss Barrett seemed to think the attack worthy of attention. Completely foiled, worsted, without a shaft left in his sheath, Flush sank back on his cushions panting with rage and disappointment” (63). By ignoring Flush, his most treasured beloved and most despised rival validates his deepest fears that they are in cahoots against him. Miss Barrett, like Ellis’s notion of the female who discovers “on her part also the enjoyment of power in cruelty” (88), asserts her own power by denying Flush any attention whatsoever.

Flush, the wounded suitor, is desperate for acknowledgement of any kind when the cruelty of being ignored becomes too much to bear. When Miss Barrett, though, “inflicted upon him the worst punishment he had ever known” (63), it is notably not the ensuing physical punishment of which he speaks: “First she slapped his ears—that was nothing; oddly enough the slap was rather to his liking; he would have welcomed another” (63). The physical manifestation of Miss Barrett’s disappointment in Flush is welcome precisely because it acknowledges his value—he is, even at this moment, worthy of attention, however damning. Flush is the quintessential masochist, whose selfishness is avowed precisely when it is abused. “The worst punishment,” then, is the declaration that follows: “she said in her sober, certain tones that she would never love him again. That shaft went to his heart” (63). Previously, Miss Barrett’s rejection of Flush is momentary and fleeting—a standard part of the “game” of courtship. Yet, this declaration leaves Flush completely heartbroken, as with “a detached, a mocking, a critical expression […] Miss Barrett, absorbed in her own emotions, misjudged him completely” (65). Once part of the rituals that Flush envisions, Miss Barrett suddenly steps outside of them and the “uncomfortable yet thrilling tightness,” mentioned above, that once was a testament to the intensity of their love, is severed. Even though Flush feels that in this instant “the chain of love was broken” (66), he just cannot give up his beloved or his persistent persecution of his rival.

It is through the rhetoric of the inevitable and interminable suffering
that accompanies love that Flush’s multiple failed attempts to eliminate Mr. Browning are explained. Trying twice to destroy his foe, Flush is unsuccessful because “he loved Miss Barrett” and “must love her for ever” (69). Defeated, he realizes that, “If he bit Mr. Browning, he bit her too” (69). Doomed to follow his beloved practically to the ends of the earth, Flush becomes a philosopher, drawing apt conclusions about the relationship between affection and disdain: “Hatred is not hatred; hatred is also love” (69). Indicative of the simultaneity with which love and pain are experienced according to Ellis, Flush’s declaration is wholly masochistic. More so, these philosophical musings are indicative of the more primordial essence within human romantic relationships.

Initially representative of the conventional courtship trajectory—with Flush’s gestures of aggression and virility, his symbols of sacrifice and devotion, and his beloved’s encompassing power—Flush and Miss Barrett ultimately evolve into the inverse. When Flush is stolen by a gang of petty criminals, his strength and agency is wholly undercut. His only hope for rescue is at the hands, and purse, of Miss Barrett. With Flush “helpless” and Miss Barrett with a “duty” (93) to rescue him, the traditional roles within courtship have been inverted. Unable to “fight,” a suitor can no longer hope to “win” against his rival (Ellis 89); as such, Flush no longer considers himself a threat to Mr. Browning. Precisely as Miss Barrett rescues Flush from the depravity of “horrible monsters” (84), so too Mr. Browning rescues Miss Barrett from a life “chained to the sofa” (35). Formerly the aggressive suitor, Flush is relegated to a status akin to damsel in distress. The “mock-combat” of courtship, of which Flush was once an active part, ends with Mr. Browning finally possessing Miss Barrett in marriage. After the two elope, they relocate to Florence, “escaping” (109). Freed from the “jealousy, anger and despair” (133) that stems from unrequited passions, Flush finally runs “free” in Italy, more canine-like, developing less permanent affections for female dogs. Once he is replaced as suitor, Flush transcends the suffering that was once proof of his devotion to his mistress.5

In her diary entry from 16 August 1931, Woolf explains her interest in writing biographies “simply to express the general, the poetic” (40). The masochistic subjectivity that surfaces in Flush is the bridge between the general and the poetic. By experimenting with the rituals of courtship through the lens of an animal, Woolf locates the dynamic between pleasure and pain in the most ordinary of relationships. Indeed, while Eve Sorum explains that “modernist aesthetics depends on a dynamics of suffering and compensation that can be described as masochism” (25), the type of masochism at play in Flush is more subtle and nuanced than the traditional images of humiliation and debasement. Further, whereas “female masochism [is] deemed a ‘natural’ condition” (Schaffner 17), Woolf disavows that connection by ascribing a perfectly “natural” masochism to a canine subject. In the early 1930s, by presenting readers with a progressive examination of masochism through the struggles of a loving, loyal, and complex dog, Woolf sets the stage for the type of radical activism she becomes known for throughout the remainder of the decade. Indeed, Woolf’s reconfiguration of biography in Flush anticipates her incorporation of various forms of lifewriting, including her own notebooks and diaries, into much of her writing during the 1930s.

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4 Here, Woolf predates D. H. Lawrence’s posthumously published essay “Love” (1936), wherein he poses a question that applies to Flush: “What worse bondage can we conceive than the bond of love?” (34).

5 The possibility of “outgrowing” masochism, so to speak, surfaces in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s foundational novel, Venus in Furs, and is tied to the ways in which masochism is often critically connected to sadism. For alternative ways of reading this trajectory, see Gilles Deleuze’s Coldness and Cruelty.

Illustrating the Uncanny: Picturing Virginia Woolf’s “This is the House of Commons” in the 1930s British Good Housekeeping

From being the natural inheritor of civilisation, its statues, its government buildings, its triumphal arches, I had suddenly become an alien, a critic: & <as if I had thought back through a different universe to

Virginia Woolf, Women & Fiction 143

Looks down, in company with the shades of bygone statesman, upon the Westminster scene

Editor, Good Housekeeping, 18

Beckoning on the horizon, those peripheral visions of research projects that one never quite gets to—how tantalizing they are, playing hide and seek with our agendas. For me, such a mirage has been Virginia Woolf’s series of six essays in the British edition of Good Housekeeping in the early 1930s and later published together as The London Scene; certainly I read with delight the brilliant essays in various incarnations, but I always wondered what they were like in their original context, embedded within the pages of that journal. After working with the posh British Vouges—
so high fashion and highbrow—in which Woolf published in the 1920s, I was very curious to see what it would be like to read her early 1930s London Scene essays in the original context of the British issues of Good Housekeeping. Would her essays fit in or stand out? What would the illustrations be like? What would the Good Housekeeping advertisements be like? The fiction? What would the Table of Contents hold? Would her essays and their context belong quintessentially to the 1930s? Such questions crossed my mind every decade or so, but that research project stayed on the back burner—until recently.

Reading inspiring scholarly and theoretical studies of Woolf’s Good Housekeeping essays by Jeanette McVicker, with in-depth analyses of the political work the essays do, I was reminded of my desire to experience the Good Housekeeping issues myself. Visuals were what I coveted the most. Alas, the British version of Good Housekeeping proved very elusive for me; a librarian’s quick search suggested only a few British archives had the originals, and, somehow, the texts were never central enough to my research to justify a trip. So, imagine my delight, when on one late night cruising on AbeBooks I found one of those tantalizing journals (or a significant chunk of one) for sale! I purchased it in a happy click, eager to see whether it would be akin to the American homemaker journal, and to see the illustrations. The edition I found was the December 1932 issue containing “Portrait of a Londoner” with illustrations Stuart N. Clarke describe as “tomato and grey” (Essays 5 597). I won’t tell you now my initial impressions of the journal; that will all come in a later article, for here I wish to concentrate on the serpentine process of my research, and on one small detail that finally emerged. Sidetracked again for more than a decade by other projects, years passed, until I came across Alice Wood’s groundbreaking study of Woolf’s writings within the historical and cultural context of Good Housekeeping. I was inspired: once again AbeBooks beckoned and I found, lo! and behold!, four more of the coveted journals: December 1931 with “The Docks of London,” January 1932 with “Oxford Street Tide,” March 1932 with “Great Men’s Houses,” and May 1932 with “Abbeys & Cathedrals.” Gleefully, I pounced. Alas, you must await my findings about these tomes, though hopefully not as long as I awaited the originals.

Of course, what followed was that I began to obsess on the one issue I could not find for sale: the ultra-elusive October 1932 issue containing “This is the House of Commons.” Inter-Library Loan was not forthcoming. Once I learned that the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library held Virginia Woolf’s drafts and proofs for the essay, along with the illustrations for the articles pasted into the proofs, a visit was required. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but who can resist the Berg? I was last there a few years back when Issac Gewirtz showed a few treasures to a select audience of attendees of the 2009 Woolf and the City conference (hosted by Anne Fernald at Fordham University); he regaled us with Dickens’ cat paw candle snuffer, Charlotte Bronte’s writing desk, and, yes, the walking stick Virginia Woolf left by the river in March 1941. And manuscripts! Of course. So here I was at the Berg Collection again, filling out call slips with anticipation.

What did I expect to see? Judging by the other illustrations, which ranged from tasteful engravings for “The Docks of London” to somewhat banal photographs for “Abbeys and Cathedrals” to the rather conventional tomato and grey illustrations that were omnipresent in Good Housekeeping, to a smart modern set of drawings for “Oxford Street Tide,” I was not sure what to expect, though I assumed it likely that I would find a typical photographic illustration of the House of Commons. Would it be a photograph of outside? Or inside? That was the only real question I could muster, and that was hardly a compelling one. The photographs of the abbeys and cathedrals for the article by that name are inside shots, rather than the conventional outside views, so I was not going to bet on one perspective or the other.

Imagine my surprise! I made a startled exclamation (in the rather sedate setting of the Berg reading room, no less). Why? You may well ask. The spread for the essay has the title and below that, VIRGINIA WOOLF in capital letters, under which, in italics, is the editorial phrase “Looks down, in company with the shades of bygone statesman, upon the Westminster scene” (18).

The illustration, which takes up the entire right hand page, was pasted into Woolf’s proofs, proving she must have seen it before it was published as she had made some minor edits in the text (19). But, the image was what caught my eye: uncanny (in the Freudian sense) it struck me as both familiar and alien; it was an external view of the Houses of Parliament, with the little people below rather like ants, and atop the building, a series of huge, looming statues of statesman somehow superimposed or cut and pasted in. There was no artist’s signature, but it left me feeling remarkably strange and discomforted—part hilarity, part befuddlement, that sense you have when an image reminds you of something you can’t quite recall, which is disturbing. It took me quite a while to sort out these tangled perceptions. The dizzying height of the statues, so oddly poised on the brink of the parapets of the Palace of Westminster, gave an odd sense of vertigo; Humpty Dumpty came to mind, of all incongruities, as the statues seemed precariously perched. Just slightly more transparent than the building, the statues gave the aura of ghostly presences. Yet, there was nothing weird about these very solid statesmen. They were familiar (historical figures, well known statues from the guidebooks in familiar poses) yet their inflated stature triggered the unheimlich—I could not help being reminded of Woolf’s scathing discussion of men

1I wish to express my gratitude to the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library for their courtesy, support and encouragement as the librarians gave me access to the original materials for this study.
relying women to reflect them back at twice their natural size, yet multiplied here to an absurd cartoon:

Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle. The glories of all our wars would be unknown. We should still be scratching the outlines of deer on the remains of mutton bones and bartering flints for sheepskins or whatever simple ornament took our unsophisticated taste. Supermen and Fingers of Destiny would never have existed. The Czar and the Kaiser would never have worn crowns or lost them (A Room of One’s Own [AROO] 35).

These vast statues dwarfing the buildings made me laugh—but also made me uneasy. I wondered if part of my amusement and sense of disorientation came from my gender—or theirs? A telling phrase from A Room of One’s Own leapt to my lips: “Again if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilisation, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical” (AROO 96). I reached for the holograph draft, wondering what lay behind that marvelous phrase, and found this intriguing one:

But what do I mean by the unity of the mind, I thought, remembering my own statement that a woman thinks back as a writer through her mothers; remembering too, how, when I walked down Whitehall, <there had been> a distinct break in my consciousness; had From being the natural inheritor of civilisation, its statues, its government buildings, its triumphal arches, I had suddenly become an alien, a critic: & <as if I had thought back through a different universe to a woman in a tree; who had denied that this civilisation was any of her doing> (Women & Fiction 143).

Woolf’s sense of alienation not only from this particular civilization, but from civilization per se intrigued me. It occurred to me that “the woman in the tree,” outsider original, truly is “looking down.” That triggered a series of reflections. I have argued elsewhere that Woolf embodies the “striding feminist,” a Benjaminian flaneur with a gender change to a flaneuse, and, even more, a political change to feminist, in her critique and reclaiming of the bourgeois exteriors of the London Squares, and through the tresspassageways her striding feminist treks through the London streets (“Virginia Woolf and Walter Benjamin Selling Out(Siders)” 15-22). Here I would like to expand that analysis to witness Woolf’s demolition of monumental spaces and politicians on pedestals and, yet, her mixed feelings about that demolition work. In “This is the House of Commons,” with its evocative illustration, the narrator arises as a woman in a tree; who had denied that this civilisation was any of her doing:

Statues matter in this essay—and in Woolf’s aesthetics of this period. The opening line, “Outside of the House of Commons stand the statues of great statesmen,” (18) draws our attention to the focus on statues and their roles past and future, yet the line adds, with a somewhat mocking tone, “black and sleek and shiny as sea lions that have just risen from the water” (18). And inside the House of Commons, Woolf continues, “—here, too, are statues—Gladstone, Granville, Lord John Russell—white statues, gazing from white eyes at the old scenes of stir and bustle in which, not so very long ago, they played their part” (18). Such statues, she argues, are obsolete in a democratic age: “the days of the small separate statue are over” (18). The undercutting of the statues, bringing them down to size, continues throughout the essay and the illustration amplifies the mockery:

But how, one asks, remembering Parliament Square, are any of these competent, well-groomed gentlemen going to turn into statues?

For Gladstone, for Pitt, or for Palmerston even, the transition was perfectly easy.

Thus if statues are to be raised, they will become more and more monolithic, plain and featureless. They will be like granite plinths set on the moors to mark battles. The days of single men and personal power are over.

Let us rebuild the world then as a splendid hall; let us give up making statues and inscribing them with impossible virtues. (“This is the House of Commons” 110-12)

But, just as we amble along agreeably in sync with her argument, Woolf trips us up by reversing: “The mind, it seems, likes to perch, in its flight through empty space, upon some remarkable nose, some trembling hand; it loves the flashing eye, the arched brow, the abnormal, the particular, the splendid human being” (112). The only hope she articulates for the future (and she hopes it does not come until she is gone) is “that by some stupendous stroke of genius both will be combined, the vast hall and the small, the particular, the individual human being” (Woolf, “This is the House of Commons” 112). Woolf thus choreographs her familiar counterpoint step in this essay, signaling the death of the individual statue and yet also marking her nostalgic attachment to the individuality it embodies.

The aesthetic and political role of the statue was clearly on her mind during this creative phase; one might argue that this “stupendous stroke of genius” was in fact embodied in Woolf’s monumental work, The Waves, in which she claimed to have at last put her statues against the sky. One might also reflect on ways the illustration anticipates Three Guineas; in this montage we might recognize the forerunners of the photographs of the generals and bishops in that essay. Perhaps this photomontage triggered an uncanny response in Woolf, and inspired her endeavor to startle the reader of Three Guineas with photographs of patriarcs on paradise. It is noteworthy that the Good Housekeeping illustration does not picture the narrator, though it does imply her point of view. Both the illustration and the editor’s introductory blurb to the essay situates Woolf as a ‘high-up-sider’—a rather aerial outsider—on a level with the quirky shades of past statesmen hovering above Westminster, up with Big Ben, if not quite in the clouds, certainly far from the antlike humans in the square far below. This placement somewhat anticipates her inauguration of the Outsiders’ Society, for the narrator in this piece (despite the editor’s blurb that she is “in company with the shades of bygone statesmen”) definitely is outside and “looking down.” Yet, the narrator, dancing “its flight through empty space, has no intention of becoming a statue, reminding us of Woolf’s words in a diary entry of March 24, 1932, “I must not settle into a figure” (Diary 4 85).

What an adventure this long-deferred research foray took me on! And, finally, I could not have imagined an illustration better suited to Woolf’s mixed tones in this essay: mocking, nostalgic, monumentally-challenged, and provocatively uneasy.

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2 Melba Cuddy-Keane offers a thought-provoking reading of this essay and Virginia Woolf’s rhetorical turns and shifts. See 50-52.

3 See Erica Delsandro’s article “Flights of Imagination: Aerial Views, Narrative Perspectives, and Global Perceptions,” particularly the section IV. Feminist Flights of Fancy.


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Un-visioning the Visionary in Woolf’s The Years

While many early critics who focused on the textual evolution of The Years concluded that Woolf “failed to harness [her] ‘vision’ to unify the [novel]” (Snaith 94), The Years’ failure to present a unified vision is increasingly regarded as Woolf’s radical and formidable aesthetic resistance to homogeneity and didacticism—a resistance Woolf thought to be ethically necessary as a response to the proliferation of 1930s Fascist rhetoric. Some recent critics, Judy Suh among them, “take seriously” Woolf’s own assertion that The Years was “a deliberate failure” (100). Reading The Years as “a failure that embraces itself as such” (205), Stephen Barber contends that the novel “aspires both to diagnose fascism and to fight against a totalizing or unifying political, aesthetic, and moral system” (204); that is, any totalizing or unifying system, not just one associated with Fascism. Woolf’s “refusal to offer models of heroic political virtue” in The Years allows her to expose “the failure of British liberalism,” argues Suh, who links Woolf and Stephen Spender in their distrust of phrases such as “justice and liberty,” abundantly used in liberal anti-Fascist rhetoric (100-01). Although Woolf was famously distrustful of the political self-consciousness of Auden’s generation, she found in Spender a careful reader of The Years. In an April 1937 letter to Spender, Woolf expresses her pleasure at his “lik[ing] the Years better than the other books”; and she is “very glad [he] saw that the tend of the book, its slope to one quarter of the compass and not another, was different from the tend in [her] other books” (122-23). It is this relation of Woolf’s other books to The Years that is of particular interest, as we have yet to fully consider the implications of Hermione Lee’s tantalizing claim that “In a way The Years rewrote [Woolf’s] earlier books” (637). To that end, I suggest that an analysis of Woolf’s intratextual strategies for resisting or undermining the creation of a unified vision in The Years might help us to interrogate evocations of visionary wholeness present in Woolf’s earlier works and to consider the ways in which Woolf in the 1930s might be “rewriting” some part of her 1920’s oeuvre.

An early analysis of The Years by Victoria Middleton illustrates how Woolf’s various methods of repetition “undercut” the novel’s own “visionary experience” (167). I propose that The Years’ echoing of visionary moments in Woolf’s previous works often unsettles those earlier moments—opening up new strategies for reading Woolf’s ongoing aesthetic and ethical negotiations with the epiphanic. In The Years, replete with epiphanic- and ethical-sounding pronouncements that are often exposed, by repetition and communal absorption, to be both profound and platitudinous—such as “If we do not know ourselves, how can we know other people?” (293)—Woolf engages in what Melba Cuddy-Keane identifies as the “ethics of interpolation”: a process in which The Years “is constructed as both provisional and contingent by being inserted into a larger communal flow of thought” (“Inside and Outside” 178). Part of that “communal flow,” I contend, also occurs within the larger body of Woolf’s work, which, as a result, also becomes retrospectively provisional. In The Years, it is “The Present” section—with its unrealized epiphanies and rejected perorations, its unfinished thoughts, conversations, and speeches—that most markedly recalls, interrogates, and unsettles many of the visionary moments in Woolf’s previous works written in the 1920s and early 30s. While this essay is part of a larger project, I limit my focus here primarily to Mrs. Dalloway, a novel also significantly informed by intersections of public and private history and one that also culminates in a party. Reading Woolf’s depictions of several visionary moments in Mrs. Dalloway alongside

1 Anna Snaithe’s scholarship on The Years’ engagement with “intertextual layering of sources and influences, private and public fictions and narratives, rather than with categorization and separation” (111) has helped to reverse the trend of reading The Years as a text that cannot resolve tensions between fact and fiction—a dichotomy, Snaithe contends, that Woolf’s experimental feminist text rejects (110). Alice Wood, in her recent book of feminist-historicist genetic readings of Woolf’s late work, concludes that Woolf’s “fusion of fact and fiction” in The Years “distin-

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those that occur during the final party in *The Years* will illustrate, on a
small scale, what such intertextual engagement might yield.

One of *The Years*’ most enigmatic scenes, the singing of the caretaker’s
children, seems to impersonate a visionary moment as much represent
one. Reading their song—which begins with the sounds “Etho passo
tanno hai” (*The Years* [Y] 407)—alongside its echoic counterpart
in *Mrs. Dalloway*—the Tube station singer’s “ee um fah um so”
(79, 80)—prompts a reevaluation of the visionary force of the old
woman’s song. The children’s song, Rishona Zimring emphasizes, is a
commodity the party guests pay for, and she praises Woolf for “in one
ingenious move […] remind[ing] us that worlds continuously interact
in economic transactions as well as […] economic disparities” (152). I
suggest the text makes another ingenious move: by foregrounding the
children’s inscrutable song with the promise of sixpence, it encourages
a backward glance, one that sets its sight on the coin that rests in the
Tube station singer’s hand in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Whatever visionary aura
attaches to the old woman’s cryptic signing in a seeming Ur-language,
we must also consider its value as a commodity. Her hand, as she sings,
is “exposed for coppers”; when Peter Walsh gives her a coin, “she
smile[s], pocketing her shilling” (80). Considering her smile alongside
the grins of the caretaker’s children makes it seem more sardonic than
it might otherwise. Perhaps the old woman knows full well the allure
of an ancient-sounding song in the modern urban market place, much
as the “grinning” caretaker’s children, who “nudge” one other to sing
their last verse, are aware of their performative value at a party whose
hostess insists she wants to “mix people” and disregard “conventions”
and who gives the children extra-large slices of cake to prove it (378).
A more materialist reading of the Tube station singer necessarily shifts
focus away from well-established readings of her song as visionary
resistance to the patriarchal symbolic order. However, it is not my
intention to negate the powerful pull of such readings, for it is the power
to be seduced by the visionary that *The Years* so expertly exposes and
compels us to examine. The ancient woman’s song, as several critics
have convincingly argued, represents feminist resistance to patriarchal
culture by harnessing the power of the semiotic (Minow-Pinkney
73; Matson 177). A simultaneous consideration of the old woman’s
song as both commodified and visionary makes it possible to read her
as a “commodified authentic,” a term recently coined by Elizabeth
Outka in her book *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism and
The Commodified Authentic*. Although Outka does not address Mrs.
Dalloway or *The Years*, her brilliant reading of Lily Briscoe’s attempt to
paint Mrs. Ramsay as an authentic subject concludes with an interpretive
strategy that is useful for addressing the seeming contradictions
contained in readings of the cryptic songs and their singers: “To
understand the commodified authentic,” Outka asserts, “we must
understand […] the powerful appeal of the authentic vision at the same
time that we resist it, at the same time we acknowledge its construction”
(171).

In *The Years*, Eleanor’s musings about the possibility of a grand design
offer a resistance to visionary moments while simultaneously evoking
their appeal. She wonders, “Does everything then come over again a
little differently? […] If so, is there a pattern? a theme, recurring, like
music […] a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible?” (Y 350-51).
Cuddy-Keane contends that while Woolf implies a “pattern,” the text
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Cuddy-Keane contends that while Woolf implies a “pattern,” the text
does not “offer a spiritual entry into transcendent reality” (“Modernist
393-94). I agree with her reading of this passage but also want to call
attention to a significant line she does not address: “The thought gave
Eleanor extreme pleasure: that there was a pattern” (Y 315). Eleanor’s
pleasure is crucial to my reading of how Woolf’s rejection of a pattern
and “a transcendent reality” in *The Years* can work against our readings
of earlier texts, where such transcendence is often more seductive.
The Tube Station singer again provides a case in point. After Peter gives
the battered woman a coin, Rezia pities the “poor old wretch,” “standing
there in the gutter” with presumably no place to sleep at night (*Mrs.
Dalloway* [MD] 81). The paragraph that follows, to borrow from Oscar
Wilde, leaves the gutter and heads straight for the stars, as the singer’s
voice transcends her material conditions: “Cheerfully, almost gaily, the
invincible thread of sound wound up into the air like the smoke from a
cottage chimney, winding up clean beech trees and issuing a tuft of blue
smoke among the topmost leaves” (81). The visionary tropes associated
with this old homeless woman place her outside the historical conditions
of post-war London; her song’s origin as an “ancient spring” deep in the
earth (79) evokes Ur-history, while its skyrocket “invincible[ity]” suggests
a transcendence of history. In addition, the simile comparing her song
to “smoke from a cottage chimney” calls up a pastoral nostalgia, signaling
that all is well in the woods of Arcadia. It is no wonder, then, that
directly after this passage, homesick Rezia’s own unhappiness seems
to have to her been just a “silly, silly dream” (81); she even thinks Sir
William Bradshaw’s “name sounded nice” (81; my emphasis). In short,
Peter pays for the song, but Rezia gets his money’s worth. In this scene,
as in other parts of *Mrs. Dalloway*, disruptive and discordant sounds are
mitigated by soothing tropes, “invincible threads,” if you will; tracing
those threads can help us to interrogate how our own desires to locate
textual harmony might render us too complacent, like Rezia, to resist
what “sound[s] nice.” Woolf makes that complacency alarmingly less
available to us in *The Years*.

Prior to the tropic transformation discussed above, Woolf describes the
ancient woman’s voice as “running […] [s]hrillly and with an absence all
human meaning” (MD 79). In *The Years*, Woolf uses similar language
to characterize the children’s song after its abrupt end in seeming mid-
verse: “so shrill, so discordant, and so meaningless” (408). The addition
of the adjective “discordant” is telling, given that their song, unlike
the old woman’s, remains so. Eleanor’s response to the children’s voices,
unlike Rezia’s response to the old woman’s, maintains the singers’
alterity, their insistent otherness. Eleanor thinks, “it was impossible to
find one word for the whole” (408). Her attempt to do so—the word
“Beautiful?”—is offered as a question; and although it seemingly is
affirmed by Maggie’s reply—“Extraordinarily”—Eleanor resists the
coopulative assumption that her thoughts and Maggie’s are identical—
she “was not sure they were thinking the same thing”—even though
doing so would replace possible disharmony with certain accord (409).
This scene, read alongside Clarissa’s uncanny and, as many have
noted, co-operative connection with Septimus—a connection central to
the novel’s thematic vision—further suggests how *The Years* might
intertextually disrupt other novels’ aesthetically unifying moments.
Clarissa, confronted with death at her party, reads Septimus’s suicide as
“an attempt to communicate”; finally she, too, reads his message as one of
beauty: “He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun” (182).
Despite the critical consensus that both Mrs. Dalloway, the character
and *Mrs. Dalloway*, the novel, create wholeness from fragmentation,
Clarissa’s pronouncement causes many readers discomfort, lacking as
it does, among other things, Eleanor’s interrogative note. An ethical
reading, Molly Hite rightly insists, requires that we attend to Woolf’s
“conflicting tonal cues” and “return again and again to the complicated
scene of pleasure at another’s despair and death—for its empathy,
callousness, identification, and inequality” (253, 269). I would add
that we should repeatedly return to the complicated scene of our own
pleasure when we read a text. To read ethically, then, is to examine the
esthetic and ethical negotiations that Woolf, her characters, and we as
readers make when we “feel the beauty” of it, “feel the fun” of it, when
the desire to find a pattern eclipses the awareness that no pattern exists
outside a system of other patterns, all of which mutually constitute and
interrogate each other. Conversely, lest we become complacent about
our own engagement with disunity and undecidability, we need to explore
their seductive pleasures as well. Pamela L. Caughie, whose work
richly demonstrates the pleasures of reading Woolf from a postmodern
perspective, regards *The Years* as a “spectacle, play, [and a] ruse” (105).
This assessment is substantiated by the novel’s copious word play, which
I explore in my conclusion to illustrate yet another means by which *The
Years* resists didacticism.
“Djidax,” the last word the caretaker’s children sing before they start grinning, not only recalls the commercial-sounding, sky-written “Glaxo” in Mrs. Dalloway, but evokes a commodified version of the didactic. I suggest that Woolf’s own well-documented efforts to avoid didacticism in The Years are whimsically reflected by her choice of the word “didax,” in the children’s song, as well as her placement of the Latin word for “year” (“anno”) within the nonsense-sounding words “tanno” and “Fanno” (407). The novel prepares us for such word play when the elderly Patrick hears the proper noun “Hacket” when Peggy says, “hatchet,” and the noun “body” when she speaks the name “Biddy” (334, 336). The nouns, when paired—hatchet and body—suggest a playful dismembering of the corpus of the text: an image later reinforced by an allusion to the picture-drawing version of the surrealist word game, the ex-quisite corpse. All this is not to suggest that Woolf gives us a code to crack in the children’s song or elsewhere; rather, affirming other readings of the significance of sound in The Years, I contend that a primary function of the novel’s word play is aural—attuning our ears, if you will, so that when we reach its end we are well rehearsed to hear the words, especially when we encounter a familiar sight: a man and a woman and a taxi.

Woolf herself concedes, in A Room of One’s Own, that it is amateurish to “sketch a plan of the soul” upon the image of a man and a woman getting into a taxi (97), so perhaps we should be suspicious of the trope of a man and a woman getting out of a taxi at the end of The Years. As Eleanor watches the couple from a window, she repeats the word “There” (412); the word “there,” contends Merry Pawlowski, creates a “space” that “sums [up] a new vision” of “equality” for men and women (89). But is it really that new or visionary? The woman, after all, follows the man, who puts his key in the door, which he then shuts behind them with an insular “thud” (412). Given that The Years arguably most intriguing “couple” is made up of unmarried Sara and gay Nicholas—who, Woolf reminds us, could be imprisoned for loving men—are we really afforded sufficient pretext to read the heteronormative couple who emerge from a taxi as a promising vision? And given that the novel has primed us to listen very carefully, might we not hear, faintly beneath Eleanor’s “there,” its homonym, the plural possessive “their” as a reminder of the couple’s safe hegemonic status? Finally, turning her back to the window, Eleanor asks, “And now?” The novel’s last sentence does not offer an answer, but it does continue the aural unsettling of the visionary moment: “The sky above the houses wore an air of extraordinary beauty, simplicity, and peace” (412). This final image is qualified by the verb “wore,” as if the sky, too, were wearing its party best, evoking not a vision but its postmodern counterpart: a spectacle. Even the verb “wore” is disturbed by its homonym, the noun “war”—the novel’s constant specter, which further qualifies the tranquil noun “peace”—the novel’s constant, disturbed by its homonym, the noun “war”—the novel’s constant.

In her compelling essay on The Years’ engagement with kitsch, Ruth Hoberman reads “the sunrise [as] an obvious cliché” and contends that “the novel’s closing lines express a utopian desire all the more poignant for the inadequacy of its vehicle” (94-95). Our awareness of the brutality that followed Auden’s aptly named “low dishonest decade” (5) does make it tempting to want to linger on the poigniant note Hoberman locates at the novel’s end; but reading The Years as a text that resists its own visionary seductions as well as those that occur in Woolf’s earlier works can help us to better hear the ways in which utopian desires can be tone deaf to voices of otherness.

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5 Woolf’s choice of the term “didax” turns out to have been quite prescient, as a Google search reveals that Didax, Inc. is an educational resource company in Massachusetts, its name copyrighted in 1996.

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Did Virginia Woolf Attempt Suicide in 1904?

Quentin Bell’s biography of Virginia Woolf refers to a suicide attempt that she made in 1904, during the breakdown following the death of her father, Leslie Stephen, earlier that year. A friend of the younger Stephens’, Violet Dickinson, assisted the family by taking Virginia Woolf to the Dickinson home, Burnham Wood at Welwyn, where she could be cared for. Here Bell describes a suicide attempt in which Virginia “threw herself from a window, which, however, was not high enough from the ground to cause her serious harm” (Bell 89-90). A posthumously published work by psychoanalyst, Douglas W. Orr, who had consulted Quentin Bell, parenthetically states that the window Woolf jumped out of was “just a few feet off the ground” (45).

It is possible to cast doubt on the idea that Woolf attempted suicide in 1904. There appears to be no reliable source, and it seems to be contradicted by a letter from Virginia Woolf to Beatrice Webb of 8 April 1931 (The Letters of Virginia Woolf 4:305, letter no. 2344). Woolf wrote to her correspondent that she was much ‘pleased by your views upon the possible justification of suicide. Having made the attempt [in 1913], from the highest motives as I thought—not to be a burden on my husband—the conventional accusation of cowardice and sin has always rankled.’ The same motive was given for her successful suicide in 1941. Woolf refers to no other suicide attempt, and the editors’ parenthetical note indicates that she was referring to the well-documented 1913 suicide attempt.

It is indeed possible to suggest that through a misunderstanding of the psychotic experience, this putative suicide attempt was actually no such thing. As one with some personal experience in this area, I would like to offer a few insights into what may have occurred. Quentin Bell states that Woolf “heard voices urging her to acts of folly” (89). Woolf may have been anxious to escape from the (unknown) voices as she did not wish to succumb to performing such acts. It is even likely that, if this was her first experience of the psychotic experience known as “hearing voices,” she did not recognise it as such, instead assuming that these voices were embodied in real people. In this case they may also have represented a physical threat. Woolf would probably have felt unable to appeal to the medical staff in attendance for help against these voices or people, since, as Bell tells us, she regarded her three nurses as “fiends” (89). In her psychotic state she may well have regarded these nurses as being involved in the “plot” against her. In this situation the best remedy probably appeared to be flight. The window would have offered the best opportunity of escape and thus she may have exited from it.

The lowness of the window would not have offered her the possibility of a successful suicide attempt. We know that her suicide attempts of 1913 and 1941 were serious attempts. She took a lethal dose of Veronal in 1913 which nearly resulted in her death. In 1941, the fact that she loaded her pockets with stones emphasises her determination to succeed. Both these attempts were made during illness and her judgment of the effects of jumping from a low window would have assured her that it could not possibly kill her. So, it is possible that it was not suicide but escape she aimed at in jumping or throwing herself out of the window at Welwyn.
A Woolf Abroad:
The Novels of Virginia Woolf and Their Sales Overseas

The order books of the Hogarth Press held within the University of Reading’s Special Collections Archive may appear, on first glance, to be nothing more than simple sales figures. To a lover of literature or history, sales figures, while no doubt useful, might not be the most attractive prospect for study. They are, however, vital to our understanding of publishing both for individual authors and publishing houses, and, on a wider scale, for publishing on national and even global levels. Hidden within and often behind long lists of figures and abbreviations, scrawled fleetingly or lovingly organized in several remarkably different and often difficult examples of handwriting, are nuggets of information which, bound together in large collections between heavy leather covers, form a cornucopia—a gold mine of unexpected proportions which might overwhelmingly prove or disprove theories and warrants a great deal of further study.

I first came across these ledgers during a placement with the University of Reading’s undergraduate research opportunities programme (UROP) concerned with those who bought the books of Virginia Woolf. The placement, as part of a wider research project, formed an early step towards the Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP); an international academic collaboration aiming to bring together information from archives across the world into one easily navigable database. Since the project’s inaugural case study deals with the Hogarth Press, the publications of Woolf herself seemed to be the most appropriate initial foray into research for the fledgling project, and my contribution was the digitization of a number of entries from the MS2750/A/27 Order Book entitled “Novels Sackville-West & Woolf, 1927-1944.”

Leaving through the ledgers, one comes across multiple abbreviations, often more than one for the same end as dictated by the individual taste of the scribe—in this case Leonard Woolf or one of the Press’s secretaries. Some of these abbreviations are common practice among contemporary publishers, some are less familiar, and some written in a less legible hand could be either; for example those from within the entry for Virginia Woolf’s Orlando, which is written almost entirely in a singularly stylized hand which denies comprehension. One such abbreviation that is readily understood, however, is ‘C.C.’, which is given its own column within the records beside a column which denotes the number of books ordered by a particular customer. ‘C.C.’ refers to books bound in colonial cloth, a less substantial cloth binding than the standard used for British publications resulting in a cheaper production cost, presumably cheaper transportation costs and a lower purchase price for colonial customers, all of which indicates quite clearly the intention to distribute and sell these so called ‘colonial editions’ upon the colonial market. ‘Colonial’ in the context of an increasingly post-colonial world refers in this instance to colonies, dominions or former colonies of the British Empire, used intermittently alongside “imperial,” “dominions,” “Commonwealth” and “overseas” among other blanket terms during the period in which Virginia Woolf’s works were published. Often, this abbreviation is replaced with other similar abbreviations, such as “Col. Cloth” in the entry for To the Lighthouse, or with some alternative marking such as a specific price at which the books are to be sold if different from other colonial cloth editions. Nevertheless it is safe to assume that any purposeful marking in this column denotes the sale of colonial editions for a global marketplace. So the assumptions upon which this study is built are firstly that any purposeful marking in the “Colonial Cloth Column” denotes editions intended for the colonial marketplace, and secondly that this might provide a relatively accurate impression of the proportion of a book’s sales which were given over to colonial distribution, the series of data being so large that anomalies and mistakes should not have too great an effect upon the results.

And so it falls upon the fabled figures to speak up for themselves. The first publication to be examined is Woolf’s technical masterpiece, To the Lighthouse (1927). Compared with other more popular novels by Woolf, To the Lighthouse had a small print run, being both a relatively early novel in the writer’s career and a famously difficult literary piece to read, although still outselling her previous novels. The total number of copies dispatched by the Hogarth Press during the period of the 5th May 1927 to the 17th March 1943—the extent of the To the Lighthouse order book entry—was 4,655. Of this number, 1,035 copies were sold on the colonial market—meaning here that 1,035 copies are indicated as colonial editions in the order book. For the sake of clarity, these figures are represented as percentages in figure 1.

It must be noted that while the Hogarth Press dealt in Britain and overseas, it did not do business in the United States. Stanley Unwin writes, “When American publishers acquired books of British origin it was normal for them to have the exclusive rights of sale in the U S A, the British publisher to retain the rest of the world,” and this is certainly true of Woolf’s novels, being published in the US by Harcourt, Brace (after the publication of Night and Day in 1920 by George H. Doran Co. of New York). This policy goes some way to explaining the somewhat

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1 Author’s note: with thanks to the University of Sussex and the Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf and The Random House Group Ltd. for permission to access material held in the Archives of the Hogarth Press, University of Reading Special Collections. I would also like to acknowledge the University of Reading’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme for funding the early stages of this research.

2 For more information on MAPP, see Nicola Wilson, Elizabeth Willson Gordon, Alice Staveley, Helen Southworth, and Claire Battershill.


4 MS2750/A/27 Order Book: Novels Sackville-West & Woolf, 1927-1944. All further use of statistics pertaining to the sales figures of the novels of Virginia Woolf are from this ledger.
low percentage of overseas sales compared with what may have been expected from the inclusion of the rich American home market.

Published a full ten years later, *The Years* (1937) proved far more popular than *To the Lighthouse*, outselling the latter nine days before the official date of publication, 15 March 1937. Within just shy of seven years, the Hogarth Press sold 14,482 copies of the novel, of which 3,100 copies were colonial editions. The figures for *The Years* go some way to explaining the American dilemma, as Leonard Woolf claims that in the first six months after its publication, *The Years* sold 13,005 copies through the Hogarth Press, but in the US, Harcourt, Brace sold 30,904.

The chart in figure 2 appears remarkably similar to its counterpart in figure 1, the percentage of colonial editions remaining almost constant, despite the large disparity in the number of books sold.

The constant fails to persist, however, within the figures for Woolf’s posthumous, foreboding publication *Between the Acts*. The total number of books sold remains closer to that of *The Years*, at 12,697, whereas the proportion of those which were intended for overseas markets drops far nearer to the figures given in the *To the Lighthouse* entry, at 1,458, shown below in figure 3.

The percentage of overseas editions has all but halved in the space of four years, whereas the number of home editions sold is almost the same as the home edition consumption of *The Years*, despite the almost 2,000 strong difference in the total number of books sold. Figure 4 below illustrates quite how dramatic this upheaval was on a comparative line graph.

It is obvious from these figures that *Between the Acts* sold almost as well in Britain as *The Years* did, and that the only reason for the drop in sales is the reduction in colonial orders.

The most obvious explanation for this occurrence is the most significant event to happen between the publication of *The Years* and *Between the Acts*—i.e., between

1937 and 1941—the outbreak of the Second World War. With war came rationing of resources which were in high demand in the United Kingdom, like paper. In an article for the *Tribune* from 1944 entitled “As I Please,” George Orwell writes with considerable anger about the situation concerning paper rationing, citing figures from a pamphlet written by Stanley Unwin called *Publishing in Peace and War*:

However, the consistent demand for paper paired with a decreasing supply did nothing to satiate demand for books; in fact Ian Norrie suggests that demand rose due to a newfound nationwide appreciation for the arts brought about by the prospect of total war. He writes: “New books were printed under wartime economy regulations; page margins were meagre, the paper quality usually poor and the use of small typefaces essential” (88). The quality of British-produced books fell dramatically, and while it was obviously still more convenient for British residents and companies to purchase their books from their home country, this was not the case overseas. Quality was not the only contributor to the reduction in colonial sales, however; with rationing also came a reduction in the number of books published by British firms. In an appendix to *Mumby's Publishing and Bookselling in the Twentieth Century*, there exists a table of figures referring to the number of new books published in Britain at intervals between 1900 to 1981. For 1937, the date of publication for *The Years*, the number of new publications is 11,327. For 1940 and 1943 the figures are 7,523 and 5,504 respectively (Norrie 220). In addition to this, Johanson cites “a sudden decrease in all British exports, [and] enemy menaces to shipping” (Johanson 260), all of which led, according to Johanson’s study which focuses specifically upon Australia, to a dramatic increase in the cost per centum weight of imported British books in Australia in pounds sterling from 7.5 in 1932 to 16 in 1946 (Johanson 265). Australia is one example of a portion of the overseas market for whom imported British books were no longer the most financially viable option, particularly considering the decrease in their overall quality.

Fewer British books were bought by customers overseas during the war, that much is clear; but it would be naive to assume that the same customers simply did not buy the books at all. Where, then, are the missing 2,000 odd colonial editions of *Between the Acts*? Norrie suggests an answer in passing: “In Canada, however, the public tended to buy the more attractive-looking American editions of books of British origin” (Norrie 88). As previously noted, Virginia Woolf’s novels were published in the US by Harcourt, Brace separately from any British Hogarth operations. The established problems facing the British publishing export trade were not so present for American exports. Although dangerous, exports from America were less affected by the war than those from Britain, with the war on its doorstep. Furthermore, for timber-rich North America, paper rationing was never the issue it was in Britain, and the quality of American-published books saw little or no reduction in quality, hence Norrie’s description of them as “more attractive-looking.” Presumably the lack of problems such as those faced by Britain led to a lesser increase in the cost per weight of American book exports, making them far more financially viable for customers on the overseas markets. Johanson explains, however, that in 1943, American and British publishers reached a profit-sharing agreement closer to earlier colonial edition contracts. Put simply, the war began in 1939, and by 1943 British and American publishers had a profit-sharing agreement; but *Between the Acts* was published in 1941, at quite possibly the lowest point in the twentieth century for overseas sales of books from British publishers.

Therefore, using figures from the Hogarth Press archives at the University of Reading, the suggestion stands that the decrease in overseas sales of colonial editions of *Between the Acts* compared with those of *The Years* and *To the Lighthouse* might correlate to an increase in overseas sales of the same book from its

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<th>Newspapers</th>
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<td>Nearly 50,000 tons</td>
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<td>Books</td>
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Figure 5: Allocation of paper by the British Government, 1944
American publishers as a direct result of the Second World War. The next piece of this emerging puzzle could be found in the archives of Harcourt, Brace; provided they have details pertaining to the sale of these books on the American and overseas markets similar to those housed within the Hogarth Press archives.5

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5 For more information on the publication of Woolf’s novels in the US, see the forthcoming work by Claire Battershill and Helen Southworth.

An Echo from Hamlet in To the Lighthouse?

In “The Mousetrap,” the play-within-the-play in Hamlet, the title character contrives so that the visiting players act out how he thinks his father was murdered by his uncle Claudius. King Claudius’s conscience is touched to the quick and he disrupts the performance. Amidst the confusion, Polonius calls out, “Lights, lights, lights!” (III.ii.264).

In To The Lighthouse, Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle return from a walk with Nancy and Andrew Ramsay on the beach as an engaged couple. Seeing the well-lit house differentiated from the surrounding darkness, Paul Rayley says to himself “childishly, as he walked up the drive, Lights, lights, lights!” and repeated in a dazed way, Lights, lights, lights...” (Woolf 107).

Susan Dick’s introduction to her edition of the original holograph of To The Lighthouse points out that Virginia Woolf included light imagery in this earlier version but that it was greatly expanded in the final novel. Dick comments, “We cannot isolate any single emblematic meaning for light since it is a word used or suggested so frequently and in such varied contexts” (Holograph 18). It may suggest that Paul Rayley is to be considered a major character in the novel, as light is particularly associated with other major characters, such as the Ramsay parents and Lily Briscoe. Equally it may simply be another contribution to the prevailing imagery of light and dark in the novel.

It is of great significance, however, that in the original holograph neither of the ‘lights, lights, lights’ phrases appeared. The earlier version reads:

It was awfully late probably. One could tell that by the lights in the bedroom windows. & it must be late, with the lights in the windows. Burn, he said; blaze; make a whole in the the night, brave lights; & they were her eyes, only & her children’s own burning in all their chambers & which seemed to him to burning there, blazing there. (Holograph 128)

The alterations and crossings out show that the composition of this passage gave Woolf some difficulty. Much of the original was deleted and Polonius’s cry of “Lights, lights, lights!” substituted, revealing that this was a deliberate and considered change. This section in the holograph draft is not dated, but it was very probably before March 5, 1926, when the following section numbered XIV begins.

Intriguingly, during the early composition of To The Lighthouse, Woolf wrote in a letter to Vita Sackville-West (no.1588, 25 September 1925; Letters of Virginia Woolf [L] 3 214): “But I was going to write about Hamlet, which I read last night, but have no time.” As a general point, Woolf’s thoughts never strayed far from the admired Shakespeare. During the composition of To The Lighthouse there are five references in her letters and one in her diary to Shakespeare. They vary from reporting to Desmond MacCarthy about Shakespeare on two occasions to a partly teasing letter to Lytton Strachey, in which she described herself as a “venerable lady” who “finds her chief consolation in the works of Shakespeare and Lytton Strachey” (no.1615, 26 July 1926; L3 234).

My conclusion is that, while it is not possible to prove that this phrase was a conscious borrowing from Hamlet, the fact that the three reiterated words were decided on at a later date in the novel’s composition suggest that at least it was an unconscious echo.

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Practeria and Mrs. Dalloway: A Hypothetical Note

“The Victorians are…in Virginia Woolf,” Gillian Beer observes; they are “internalized, inseparable, as well as held at arm’s length” (139). Of Ruskin, in particular, Beer states that he attracted Woolf “because of his antagonistic relationship to the powers of his society” and “his capacity for self-contradiction” (146). Beer goes on to say:

But another reason for her responsiveness to Ruskin [in spite of his teachery tone] is his countervailing immersion in the specific: his joyous zeal in particularizing gives life to his writing in the modernist era, particularly to Virginia Woolf in her search for the “moment,” both evanescent and fully known. (146)

1 A slightly different, Japanese version of this article appeared in Eigo Seinen [The Rising Generation] in 2012.
Beer’s discussion of the two writers centers round *Orlando* and *Modern Painters*. This is very natural, for there is a fairly explicit reference to Ruskin in *Orlando*, and it has been a standard practice to study that novel when the association of Woolf and Ruskin is brought up.² The present article, however, seeks to explore the relationship between these two writers through Ruskin’s unfinished autobiography, *Praeterita*, and *Mrs. Dalloway.*³

Woolf speaks, in an essay titled “Ruskin,” of the Victorian writer’s “force which is not to be suppressed by a whole pyramid of faults.” Although “so much of his force” has gone into “satire and attempts at reformation,” she suggests that, “if we want to get unalloyed good from Ruskin, we take down not *Modern Painters*, or the *Stones of Venice*, or *Sesame and Lilies*, but *Praeterita.*” Here Ruskin has ceased to preach, she says, and he is “unfailingly benignant”:

Compared with much of his writing, it is extremely simple in style; but the simplicity is the flower of perfect skill. The words lie like a transparent veil upon his meaning. And the passage with which the book ends, though it was written when he could hardly write, is surely more beautiful than those more elaborate and gilded ones which we are apt to cut out and admire. (462)

She then quotes a passage from the autobiography that we shall examine later.

Woolf also wrote a review of *Praeterita*, “Ruskin Looks Back on Life,” subtitled “Serene Thoughts with the Echoes of Thunder” (Kirkpatrick and Clarke 284). Again she commends the book’s plain, unadorned style: if one wishes to feel for oneself “the true temper of his genius, these pages, though much less eloquent and elaborate than many others, preserves it with exquisite simplicity and spirit” (503). She then talks about the ending of the book, but this time with a subtly different accent:

Before the book is finished the beautiful stream wanders out of his control and loses itself in the sands. Limpid as it looks, that pure water was distilled from turmoil; and serenely as the pages run, they resound with the echoes of thunder and are lit with the reflections of lightning. For the old man who sits now babbling of his past, was a prophet once and had suffered greatly. (505)

Woolf seems to emphasize what lies behind the serenity of the prose. Of course she knew about Ruskin’s madness and suggested it by mentioning the disruptive “thunder” and “lightning.” I suspect that one of the things that aroused Woolf’s interest in Ruskin was his madness, and I wish to advance a hypothesis that Ruskin’s autobiography served as a possible inspiration for Woolf’s elaboration, if not creation, of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway.*⁴ I must emphasize the word “hypothesis,” for what I am going to offer cannot go beyond that. Of the two essays I have quoted, the date of the first is unknown. Stuart N. Clarke says that “the subject of the second essay of the two was mentioned by Woolf in a letter to Vanessa Bell (5 April 1916; Letters 2 88) Woolf spoke of a review assignment on Ruskin,⁵ and another letter (to George Rylands, 30 September 1923; Letters 3 71)—‘I see Desmond [MacCarthy] has returned to his vomit this week, without bringing up anything that convinces me about Ruskin’—shows some familiarity with Ruskin. It is not altogether surprising that by the period of the composition of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1922-24), the familiarity should have included *Praeterita*, given her voracious reading habit.

My hypothesis is built upon verbal echoes between the two texts. Consider the final paragraph of Ruskin’s autobiography (Woolf quotes from “Fonte Branda” to “the stars” in her essay, “Ruskin”):

How things bind and blend themselves together! The last time I saw the Fountain of Trevi, it was from Arthur’s father’s room—Joseph Severn’s, where we both took Joanie to see him in 1872, and the old man made a sweet drawing of his pretty daughter-in-law, now in her schoolroom; he himself then eager in finishing his last picture of the Marriage in Cana, which he had caused to take place under a vine trellis, and delighted himself by painting the crystal and ruby glittering of the changing rivulet of water out of the Greek vase, glowing into wine. Fonte Branda I last saw with Charles Norton, under the same arches where Dante saw it. We drank of it together, and walked together that evening on the hills above, where the fireflies among the scented thickets shone fitfully in the still undarkened air. How they shone! moving like fine-broken starlight through the purple leaves. How they shone! through the sunset that faded into thunderous night as I entered Siena three days before, the white edges of the mountainous clouds still lighted from the west, and the openly golden sky calm behind the Gate of Siena’s heart, with its still golden words, “Cor magis tibi Sena pandit,” and the fireflies everywhere in sky and cloud *rising and falling*, mixed with the lightning, and more intense than the stars. (526-27; emphasis added)

William Arrowsmith, one of the most astute commentators on *Praeterita*, makes a suggestive remark that here Ruskin must have been remembering Dante’s “great metaphor…of the peasant and the fireflies, who stand for the fire-enveloped sinners” in the *Inferno* (219-20).⁶ Significantly, Septimus is reading this very book—“‘Septimus, do put down your book,’ said Rezia, gently shutting the *Inferno*” (79)—while thinking about “the sin for which human nature had condemned him to death” (81). The allusions to Dante in this novel have been examined, most notably, by Beverly Ann Schlack. She argues that the name “Septimus” can be understood fully only in this connection. In Dante’s world, “the seventh sin in the seventh terrace is sexual (lust) and it is punished in flames” (70). Septimus’s chief sin is his homosexual love for Evans, and as we shall shortly see, he is in fear of being burnt. Schlack also notes: “Because Septimus is mad, he is quite literally one of Dante’s ‘fallen people, / souls who have lost the good of intellect’” (69).⁷ Of course Woolf could have conjured up these associations directly from her own reading, but her use of the Italian poet in this novel, I submit, may have had Ruskinian inflections.

Bearing in mind the ending of Ruskin’s autobiography, let us examine the following passage, describing Septimus’s agitated mind:

A marvellous discovery indeed—that the human voice in certain atmospheric conditions (for one must be scientific, above all scientific) can quicken trees into life! Happily Rezia put her hand with a tremendous weight on his knee so that he was weighted down, transfixed, or the excitement of the elm trees *rising and falling*, *rising and falling* with all their leaves alight and the colour thinning and thickening from blue to the green of a hollow wave, like plumes on horses’ heads, feathers on ladies’, so proudly they rose and fell, so

² See studies by Jane de Gay, Steve Ellis, and Caroline Webb.
³ George Landow, pointing out the diffuse, unconventional narrative mode of *Praeterita*, has speculated about its influence on modernist writers such as “Conrad, Faulkner, and Woolf” (84).
⁴ For the connection between this character and Woolf’s own “madness,” see Roger Poole.
⁵ I have consulted Brenda Silver’s study of Woolf’s reading.
⁶ B. J. Kirkpatrick and Stuart N. Clarke note that this review, possibly of *A Sketch of John Ruskin* by Peggy Webling, has not been traced (302).
⁷ Arrowsmith, it must be noted, is not arguing that Ruskin sees himself as a sinner here; he is quick to add that “not all Ruskin’s fireflies are infernal or funereal” (221). The fireflies in question recall Canto XXVI, depicting the eighth circle. The fireflies in question recall Canto XXVI, depicting the eighth circle. For the old man who sits now babbling of his past, was a prophet once and had suffered greatly. (505)
⁸ Anne Fernald, in the note to her edition of the novel, states that Woolf “read Dante throughout her life, including during the composition of Mrs Dalloway although her most intense study of his poetry was in the 1930s” (p. 266).
superbly, would have sent him mad. But he would not go mad. He would shut his eyes; he would see no more.

But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern; the white and blue, barred with black branches. (20; emphasis added)

Here the trees and sparrows are “rising and falling,” and they almost drive Septimus to madness. He imagines that the leaves of the “rising and falling” elm trees are “alight” and they are “connected by millions of fibres with his own body.” The identification with a tree and the sense of being alight also appear in an earlier passage:

Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. (13-14; emphasis added)

Here I cannot help feeling the relevance of Arrowsmith’s perceptive comment—though he is talking about the workings of memory—on Ruskin’s “things bind and blend themselves together,” which triggers the final paragraph of Praeterita (quoted above):

The intricacy of binding here, whether these concinnities are deliberate or the work of “dream-gifted” association in a mind nearing madness, is close to miraculous. Ruskin’s things (“How things bind and blend…”) suggests that here things—active memories—are in control; that the narrator’s mind is merely a chain on which these memories thread themselves and collect, imposing their own apparently adventitious unity on the musing mind whose past they casually glean. (208)

Similarly, things get hold of Septimus’s mind, and in another passage where Woolf depicts it, she again seems to recollect Ruskin:

Up in the sky swallows swooping, swerving, flinging themselves in and out, round and round, yet always with perfect control as if elastics held them; and the flies rising and falling; and the sun spotting now this leaf, now that, in mockery, dazzling it with soft gold in pure good temper; and now and again some chime (it might be a motor horn) tinkling divinely on the grass stalks—all of this, calm and reasonable as it was, made out of ordinary things as it was, the truth now; beauty, that was the truth now. Beauty was everywhere. (62-63; emphasis added)

When she had Septimus think of “beauty” and the “truth,” it is likely that Woolf had Keats in mind, as Anne E. Fernald suggests. But, since these matters can be overdetermined, it is tempting to imagine that Woolf was also thinking about Ruskin as a theorist of beauty, seeing that her phrase, the “flies rising and falling,” resonates with Ruskin’s “fireflies rising and falling.” Behind this, perhaps we hear an echo of Dante, where the fly and fireflies are placed in close proximity; in the translation of Charles Eliot Norton (a friend of Ruskin’s, mentioned in the Praeterita quotation above): “As the rustic who rests him on the bill in the season when he

that brightens the world keepeth his face least hidden from us, what time the fly yieldeth to the gnat, sees many fireflies down in the valley…. (Canto XXVI).

I have premised the foregoing speculation on the possibility that Woolf read Praeterita before she wrote Mrs. Dalloway. If she did not, the above findings will lead us, somewhat less excitingly, to imagine that when she turned the final page of Ruskin’s autobiography she must have discovered a remarkable literary affinity with its author.

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Works Cited

Making Woolf Work: Woolf Works at the Royal Ballet

I greeted the news of the Royal Ballet’s newest production, Woolf Works, with delight. As both a lover of Woolf and an ardent ballet enthusiast, I find the idea of an immersive Woolf experience—one that takes you by the ears and eyes, as well as by the mind—to be thrilling. The ballet premiered on 11 May 2015 at the Royal Opera House in London. With an original score by Max Richter and choreography by Wayne McGregor, who hail from a contemporary dance background and is well known for his cutting-edge choreography, Woolf Works is certainly a high profile production and the first treatment of Woolf and her work by a major company on the scale of a full length ballet.


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After marking my calendar and assuring myself that the world did indeed hold such wonders in store, I settled down to speculate on how Woolf’s work might appear. In this ballet, Woolf’s novels, I reasoned, could not appear on stage exactly as they do in the text. The ballet explores three of the novels, Mrs. Dalloway, Orlando, and The Waves—ample material for any production. It would be impossible to cover roughly 700 years worth of combined plot in a two hour time-slot—the number of set changes, costumes and characters alone would be staggering. Aside from these practical matters, there was the more pressing difficulty of Woolf’s narratives themselves. Narrative ballets, such as Swan Lake or Sleeping Beauty, tend to have simple, linear plot structures, relying heavily on mime and symbolism to convey the story. Woolf’s plots are neither simple, nor linear, but rather a constant stream of flashbacks, digressions, dialogues, monologues and memories. Furthermore, Woolf’s characters often live much more in their minds than in the plot-proper; these minds bleed into each other within the narrative, shifting between past and present. Such shifts are possible for Woolf, who can slip details of plot and setting into the characters’ thoughts as relevant, but are more difficult to represent in a medium like ballet, which is entirely non-verbal.

Given the nature of Woolf’s actual work, and ballet’s own methods of communication, Woolf Works as a project seemed to demand a reinterpretation of narrative ballet as a genre in order to support Woolf’s fiction. Intrigued by the prospect of the new kind of story ballet necessitated by Woolf’s novels, I contacted the dramaturge of the production, Uzma Hameed, early in May 2014 to discuss Woolf Works. The ballet had only just been announced, and was still in the early stages of conceptual development. I began by asking Hameed about the methods of adapting Woolf that the creative team had been discussing as the ballet came together. She confirmed my analysis of the potential challenges, remarking that theater artists tend to shy away from adapting Woolf’s work, both because of her complexity and because of the practical difficulties in representing her stream of consciousness narratives on stage. “Why Woolf, then?” I asked, “being so difficult to work with, why was she chosen for this large scale production?” Hameed laughed, but her answer was quite serious: “I believe that, in choosing Woolf for his subject, Wayne McGregor is doing for story-ballet what Woolf was doing for literature, finding ways to extend its range, both in terms of the forms it employs and the subject matter it traditionally encompasses.” Not only was Woolf attractive to McGregor for the beauty of her prose—a topic which Hameed and I could not help discussing at length—but as a tool. The necessary reinterpretation of the story ballet that I had anticipated prior to our conversation seems, for McGregor and Hameed, not merely a side-effect of the choice to represent Woolf, but also a conscious decision to use her work to expand story ballet as a genre.

This was not the answer I had expected, but one whose implications both pleased and intrigued: If Woolf is being used as a tool to achieve a change in the genre of narrative ballet, why is such an expansion of narrative ballet’s possibilities attractive? When asked, Hameed went on to explain that, dance, even in the story ballets we know and love, is not always well suited to conveying the stories it traditionally employs and the subject matter it traditionally encompasses. The “stories” of traditional story ballets rarely contain much dancing in and of themselves; the dance is added in and around the plot. Indeed, Choreographers and composers often need to make space within the plots of their own ballets for the dancing, hence the profusion of weddings, birthday parties, and balls. These scenes tend to take up full acts, and have little to do with the stories themselves.

When plot information does need to be conveyed, it is done through mime, a code of hand and arm gestures which loosely correspond to key words and phrases, like “marriage” or “death” or “I have been turned into a swan.” Mimed hand gestures are beautiful and evocative, if a bit mystifying, and one of the story ballet’s hallmarks of which I am deeply fond. The use of mimed gestures to convey plot means that the dancer’s body must work in two ways: the body not only conveys the literal plot of the piece, but also the conscious or unconscious emotional life of the character. When the dancer must move quickly from a sublime, heart-wrenching pas de deux (the Giselle Act II pas de deux comes to mind), to a necessary sequence of mimed plot information, the shift sometimes feels strange. Indeed Hameed noted that “the gestural language of mime can seem an uncomfortable compromise within an essentially abstract medium, like dance”, and that attempts to convey plot through mime “often make ballet less accessible, detracting from the immediate, intrinsic power of the movements.” In other words, the dance and the story often seem to be at odds.

On the other hand, Hameed was aware that these gestures are necessary to the plot, and the plot is, of course, somewhat necessary; get rid of plot entirely and the audience becomes disoriented. Hameed acknowledged this point, saying “We do want to detach people from any familiar sense of dramatic realism, but we don’t want them to be completely lost or to become disengaged. Dance is good at the big sublime states, and the heightened emotional subtext; more difficult is identifying the narrative anchors which allow the audience to grasp the intention of the work, especially if the ‘story’ we are telling is not plot-driven.” The task for Woolf Works becomes, as Hameed put it, “similar to Woolf’s when she was writing The Waves—finding the ‘tables’ to put our ‘interesting things’ on.” The project has to strike a balance between including enough narrative cues to make the work intelligible, but at the same time keep the narrative open enough to be hospitable to the dance. The structures of Woolf’s narratives, then, hold incredible potential for story ballet. Woolf often uses plot points as touchstones from which her character’s reflections spring. Her novels contain enough plot to be intelligible while leaving plenty of space for the thoughts and emotions of her characters. Woolf’s narratives—driven by emotional development, rather than plot action—would make more space to display dance’s strong suit, its ability to convey what Hameed called the “larger emotional subtext.”

At the same time, Hameed said that McGregor “[did] not wish to transpose Woolf’s novels into dance”—i.e., literally realize all of Woolf’s plots and characters in exact detail—but to find their equivalents.” Hameed and McGregor want to see if the same sense which the novels convey can also be conveyed in dance through a different theatrical language. “There are opportunities here that [Woolf] would have loved,” Hameed said, “and, of course, Woolf herself adapted formal techniques from other art forms in her own work.” Woolf’s work with Roger Fry’s biography sprang to mind. While writing the biography, Woolf looked to the sonata form of the Classical composers, like Mozart and Haydn, to organize her material: “there was such a mass of detail that the only way I could hold it together was by abstracting it into themes. I did try to state them in the first chapter, and then bring in developments and variations, and then to make them all heard together and end by bringing back the first theme in the last chapter” (The Letters of Virginia Woolf 6 426). Or again in The Waves, when Woolf, inspired by a string quartet, finds a way to unify the disparate impressions of a single character at the end of the novel: “It occurred to me last night while listening to a Beethoven quartet that I would merge all the interjected passages into Bernard’s speech & end with the words O solitude: thus making him absorb all those scenes, & having no further break” (The Diary of Virginia Woolf 3 339). Clearly Woolf herself certainly was not opposed to importing techniques from one art form to another and did so to great effect. McGregor and Hameed seem to be taking a Woolfian approach to their own adaptation of Woolf’s material.

During our discussion, Hameed mentioned a few different staging paradigms which had been mentioned as possible options for adapting Woolf’s psychologial realism for dance. For example, Hameed pointed out that Woolf’s stream-of-consciousness structure, the rhapsodies of thought that spring from a single incident, often feel “very complete, like a movement in a piece of music” already—ready made for a pas de deux.
deux or a solo variation. Hameed noted Clarissa Dalloway’s refections at the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway*, both in Regent’s Park and in her bedroom, as particularly good examples of this structure. Throughout these sections, Clarissa spends much of her time remembering the past and reflecting on her past selves. In dance, that act of remembering could be expressed as a *pas de deux* between Clarissa and her younger self. While the theatrical language Hameed and McGregor use to express Woolf may not be exact—Clarissa would not be alone on stage, as she is in the novel—they seek to be true to the work in a different way: remembering a past self is an interaction with another person, as is a *pas de deux*. A staging like this would allow McGregor and Hameed to capture an essential aspect of Woolf’s characterization of Clarissa, without reproducing the literal details of the novel.

I emerged from our conversation thinking very much of Woolf herself on the topic of genre innovation and the development of new artistic techniques. Particularly of her essay “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown,” where she speaks to the difficulty of establishing new conventions with which to convey character in fiction. As Woolf notes, in order to be true to the new “human character” post “December 1910” (“Mrs. Brown” 320), modern writers can no longer use the conventions of their Edwardian predecessors: “they [the Edwardians] have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death” (330). As the essay progresses, however, Woolf articulates the same problem that Hameed noted surrounding the balance of narrative in the story ballet: one cannot do away with convention entirely. To communicate effectively, Woolf knows she must find “a common ground” between herself and her audience, “a convention which would not seem...too odd, unreal, and far fetched to believe in” (332). For Hameed and McGregor, Woolf seems to be that “common ground”; a “tool” which is “not too far fetched,” and will still allow them to take story ballet in a new direction, while maintaining the narrative balance which makes the abstract intelligible.

Towards the end of our interview, Hameed brought up one of Woolf’s famous quotations: “the ‘book itself’ is not a form which you see, but emotion which you feel” (“Re-reading” 340). This seems a good phrase to sum up the process of Hameed and McGregor’s adaptation. From my conversation with Hameed, I gathered that, in *Woolf Works*, Hameed and McGregor are dealing with essentials, with emotions. The adaptation is not about matching the details of Woolf’s novels one to one on the stage, but about finding “the emotion which you feel” in dance, as conveyed by the “‘the book itself.’” The best question, then, is what the essential emotion is that McGregor and Hameed perceive in Woolf’s work, and seek to express.

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**Works Cited**


**A Bloomsbury Miscellany from the Charleston Attic**

Opening up an unexplored archive of original Bloomsbury materials and shedding new lights on the relationships between Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant with Virginia Woolf. In April 2014 work on the Centenary Project at Charleston, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant’s Sussex home, officially began.

The site of the museum is undergoing a period of intense transformation, one hundred years after Bell and her family moved to Charleston on Woolf’s recommendation: “I wish you’d leave Wissett and take Charleston[…]It has a charming garden, with a pond, and fruit trees, and vegetables, all now rather run wild, but you could make it lovely” (14 May 1916, Letter 575; *Letters of Virginia Woolf* 1:95). The project will provide additional facilities such as a new road leading to the property, specialized archival storage space, educational facilities and a gallery that will take pressure off the delicate fabric of the house, safeguarding Charleston’s future accessibility.

Fresh from completing my PhD thesis, “Vanessa Bell and the Significance of Form”—I was lucky enough to be hired to spend six months working in Bell’s former attic studio to begin the work of cataloging, conserving and researching a largely unseen archive of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant’s material. This bequest, known as the Angelica Garnett Gift (henceforth AGG), was left to the Trust by Angelica Garnett, Bell’s daughter by Grant. It arrived at Charleston in November 2008 after hitherto being stored by Anthony D’Offay, whose gallery handled the sale of much Bell and Grant’s work. The remainder, now constituting the AGG, comprises of over 8,000 works in a wide range of media, including several hundred of the artists’ sketchbooks.

Not only did the spectacular spring and summer of 2014 show the Sussex Downs and beautiful Charleston gardens in their best light, but investigating the archive opened up Bell and Grant’s worlds in tremendously enlightening and exciting directions (as well as providing many happy hours poring over new works with my colleague, Polly Mills). Artist’s sketchbooks have long fascinated art lovers and scholars alike, the methodological evidence contained within them appealing to professional and connoisseurial interest, and the window they provide into artists’ private worlds fascinating even the most casual observers. When the archive first arrived in boxes at Charleston the original item count considered each sketchbook as one unit, but in actual fact, some contain over one hundred pages, multiplying this initial census significantly.

This amounts to a substantial body of small scale, intimate works by both artists, encompassing not only sketches, studies and designs—objects that art historians might expect to find; but also items deeply imbued with personal, and historical and sociological interest. These treasures include lists, games, addresses, correspondence, newspaper

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1. This phrasing is an accurate indication of the relationship dynamic between the three – Garnett only became aware that Grant, not Clive Bell, was her biological father aged 18. In her autobiography she described their relationship as ‘gentle, equable and superficial’ (135).
Bell's outlook, her constant honing of her skills, as well as her relationship to the places and culturally noteworthy people surrounding her, including Woolf. One discovery of major significance has been her designs for the dustjacket for Woolf’s collection of essays *The Death of the Moth*, published posthumously in 1942. Bell designed dustjackets for all of Woolf’s publications with the Hogarth Press, from *Jacob’s Room* (1922) onwards. Her wolf head colophon design became the press’ emblem. Woolf’s use of her sister’s designs to introduce her books shows her faith in the value of Bell’s work and a desire for her own work to be associated with it. Some attempts have been made to consider the imagery of the dustjackets, but so far, there has been no consideration their materiality as three-dimensional objects which enclose Woolf’s words. When also viewed as objects, rather than simply as images, it becomes apparent the jackets bind Woolf’s texts offering, in both literal and metaphorical fashions, support and protection to the material within. Woolf’s name and titles are not printed in a standard font, but personalised, approved, and caressed by Bell’s own hand, so that not only Bell’s imagery, but her unique handwriting preface Woolf’s often experimental and politically daring writings. Bell’s covers were not always well received, but the sisters’ continuing publishing collaborations indicate a shared perception of the jackets as having “inextricably linked meanings as images and meanings as objects” (Edwards and Hart 2).

Much has been made of the spontaneity of Bell’s approach to designing Woolf’s dustjackets and her apparent lack of interest in reading the work first. Bell’s biographer Frances Spalding records that Bell based her design for *Three Guineas* “entirely on the title” (287), and a footnote from John Lehmann’s *Thrown to the Wolf*s quotes Bell as having informed Lehmann that she not read this, or any other of Woolf’s manuscripts:

> Thank you so much for the dummy. I will do my best to have the design soon. Until it is done I don’t think I can decide about a coloured top but I will let you know then. I’ve not read a word of the book – I only have had the vaguest description of it and what she want me to do from Virginia—but that has always been the case with the jackets I have done for her. (27)

While on the one hand this fortifies theories about the sisters’ complicity and instinctive understanding of one another’s aims (to the extent that Woolf asked Bell: “Do you think we have the same pair of eyes, only different spectacles?”), it downplays Bell’s pride and pleasure in her sister’s achievements, and, to an extent, the value of her analogous designs (17 August 1937, Letter 3294; L 6 158). Bell did read and respond to Woolf’s works, as this painfully intense reaction to Woolf’s depictions of their parents in *To the Lighthouse* shows:

> as far as portrait painting goes, you seem to me to be a supreme artist and it is so shattering to find oneself face to face with those two again that I can hardly consider anything else. In fact for the last two days I have hardly been able to attend to daily life[…]. I am excited and thrilled and taken into another world as one only is by a great work of art, only now also it has this curious other interest, which I can’t help feeling too. (11 May 1927, Bell, *Selected Letters* 314-15)

She also professed on several occasions that she often found Woolf’s writing profoundly visually inspiring. After reading “The Searchlight” (later published in *A Haunted House*) she told Woolf:

> It seems to me lovely—only too full of suggestions for pictures almost. They leap into my mind at every turn. Your writing always does that for me to some extent, but I think this one more than usual. (31 May 1939, Berg Collection Bell; qtd. by Spalding 291).

Just as Bell’s relationship with Leonard Woolf regarding her designs for the Hogarth Press changed considerably between 1917, when she refused to let Leonard have control over her designs, to their close working relationship evidenced in letters of the 1930s and 40s, it is possible her approach to designing Woolf’s dustjackets may evolved into a more engaged process over the years. It is also probable that due to her many commitments there may have been occasions when there was

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2 Although Edwards and Hart are discussing photography, their argument for the cultural importance of the materiality of the photographs is also applicable in this case to Bell’s dustjackets.
little time before creating a design, forcing her to work intuitively from Woolf’s explanations of her vision.

Bell’s multiple designs for *The Death of the Moth* cover together with her careful incorporation of symbolic imagery indicates that we must reassess long held beliefs that reduce Bell’s role in the dustjacket designs, and indeed her wider creative relationship with Woolf, to acts of telepathy. This AGG sketchbook shows that Bell’s agency in the sisters’ relationship, as well as her independent stature as an important British artist, must be further recognized.

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**Works Cited**


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**THEATER REVIEW:**  
*Septimus and Clarissa*  
Alvina Krause Theatre, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania  
5 June 2015: 7:30 PM

**Starring Ellen McLaughlin and Eric Wunsch, Directed by Rinde Eckert**

Adapting modern prose to the stage or screen is notoriously difficult, and Virginia Woolf’s works present a particular challenge. The majority of the action in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway* occurs through characters’ variously intentional and incidental introspection. The adapter thus faces the challenge of externalizing action that is, in the novels, largely internal. Robert Browning, a master of psychological complexity and a modernist forebear, famously turned away from writing drama precisely because, as he put it, he was better at representing “action in character” than “character in action.” Similarly, *Mrs. Dalloway* is a *tour de force* of action in character, as the central figures reflect on the ongoing internal changes they have experienced and that have shaped who they have become by June 1923.

Ellen McLaughlin’s *Septimus and Clarissa* successfully overcomes the challenge of adapting *Mrs. Dalloway* by externalizing thought on stage in a streamlined version of the text that refines the action through a dual focus on Septimus’s breakdown and Clarissa’s wavering regrets about her past. While all characters speak aloud their thoughts, their mental action is occasionally represented by another actor who gives voice to “aspects” of their minds, thus externalizing their interior conflicts, and even allowing characters to have internal dialogues, as when an aspect of Septimus (James Miller) compares his prewar aspirations to his postwar paralysis.

In focusing the drama around Septimus and Clarissa’s trauma, McLaughlin stays true to Woolf’s intent of presenting sanity and insanity side by side and demonstrating the tenuousness of this categorical binary. As the title indicates, the production foregrounds Septimus, clarifying that he is as important to the story as Clarissa: as Woolf’s working notes on the novel imply, they are two sides of the same coin. The first act presents much of the 1890s action at Burton, the past over which 1923 Clarissa broods. In the second act, the drama of Septimus’s final days is imbued with extreme tension. The poignant compassion of Lucrezia (Christine Doidge) opposes Dr. Holmes’s (Daniel Roth) unfailing devotion to sneering patriarchy, but the staging underscores that they are equally unaware of Septimus’s internal torment. In an early moment of mental isolation, for example, Septimus’s trauma is externalized by the ensemble players advancing from the back of the stage and giving whispered voices to the birds that call to him, urging him to kill himself. The effect of these stage-whispered injunctions was perhaps the most powerful and certainly the most chilling element of the production.

While some of the nuance of Woolf’s comparison of the sane and the insane is inevitably lost, it is remarkable how successful this interpretation of her novel is at questioning and undermining assumptions about what characterizes mental health and mental breakdown. McLaughlin portrayed the later Clarissa elegantly and commandingly (Renee Fawess played the younger Clarissa), her performance always suggesting, as the character demands, that Clarissa’s control over her life and obligations is a reaction against the recurring and semi-conscious wish that her life had followed her more impulsive and heartfelt attractions to Sally Seton (Cassandra Pisieczko) and Peter Walsh (Daniel Roth). McLaughlin’s Clarissa vacillates between her usual mask of authority and gentility and the vulnerability of her secret desire to have lived for herself rather than for Richard (Andrew Hubatsek) and to have devoted more time to her personal rather than her social identity.

Both complementing and complicating McLaughlin’s Clarissa, Eric Wunsch’s Septimus Smith fluctuates between moments of clarity, in which he can recapture his external identity as masculine soldier-poet, and moments of terrifying despair. These lead performances were strongly supported by the actors of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, each of whom played a variety of roles. Elizabeth Dowd’s rendition of Miss Kilman, Elizabeth’s tutor and religious guide and Clarissa’s nemesis and rival, was particularly illuminating. Dowd played the role with humor and pathos, bringing out Miss Kilman’s churning resentment in a hilariously passive aggressive near shouting match with Clarissa.

The production was directed by Rinde Eckert, whose inventive staging, sound effects, and unconstrained sense of movement created strong visual and aural analogues to Woolf’s fluid prose. The freedom and mobility of Elizabeth Dalloway’s escape from Miss Kilman onto a city bus, for example, is effectively captured by two other ensemble players acting as swaying passengers. Similarly, through motion alone, the seven actors bring the lively party scene to life through constant movement within the confined space of a raised central platform on the stage, their close proximity and constant motion creating the illusion of a much larger gathering. This movement was occasionally and suddenly halted for a brief soliloquy from Clarissa or Peter.

This staging also found a physical expression for the work’s theme of mental duality in the contrast between the central raised platform, which became the site of conscious thought and action, and the semi-darkness of the stage’s periphery, which became the space of unconscious cognition and mystery. To bring out not only the social aspect of Clarissa’s party, but Woolf’s overarching concern with social interaction even among strangers, and how the subject internalizes the public gaze, audience members were invited onto the stage to occupy tables in the...
periphery. The costumes, like the staging, were understated, elegant, and appropriate for the period.

Gina Leishman provided music, which was supplemented by imaginative sound effects provided by the ensemble players when they faded into the background as characters conversed. Miss Kilman’s roaring anxiety at the tea-shop with Elizabeth, for example, was rendered aural by players crinkling plastic bottles and blowing across their tops to create an undertone of menace. To build tension and unease during Septimus’s breakdown, several ensemble members ran their fingertips around the rims of wineglasses, creating an eerie and suspenseful high-pitched humming.

Septimus’s suicide and the reflections on the value of life that it inspires in Clarissa were handled gracefully and subtly. The performance closes as Clarissa realizes that she is indeed united in mortality with not only this strange young man, whose death has interrupted her party, but also with Peter, whom she had loved, but whose proposal of marriage she had rejected, and Sally, who had been more than a best friend, the object of her deepest desire. Though they have grown apart, the intrusion of shared mortality seems to cast a new intimacy with not only Peter and Sally, but with the rest of her guests, and, indeed, the rest of humanity.

The moving performance was a highlight of the 25th Annual International Virginia Woolf Conference. Fittingly, McLaughlin and Eckert’s production was as much analysis of the novel as adaptation, and succeeded at showing new dimensions of the constant action in these well-known characters.

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FROM THE BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
All publishers, authors and scholars should direct inquiries regarding books to Karen Levenback, the Book Review Editor, as should anyone interested in reviewing books for the Miscellany. Please direct any queries to Karen Levenback at <kileenback@att.net>

REVIEW
BECOMING VIRGINIA WOOLF: HER EARLY DIARIES & THE DIARIES SHE READ

Works about Woolf’s life and fiction are numerous but few academics have focused on the 770,000 words that constitute her longest work so that a book-length study of Woolf’s diaries is welcome. Significant contributions to this area of Woolf studies include a section in Daily Modernism by Elizabeth Podnieks which considers Woolf’s diaries as modernist literary works; Susan Sellers’ essay sees them through the lens of French feminist theory as expressions of selfhood; Joanne Campbell Tidwell’s monograph focuses on the aesthetic and political aspects of Woolf’s diaries; Anna Jackson considers the style and form of six early-twentieth-century diarists, including Woolf. Barbara Lounsberry has taken a different approach. She has undertaken meticulous research into the 66 diaries she knows that Woolf read and traces how these diaries might be seen as sources for her later work. She claims that Woolf’s “diaries disclose (when carefully studied) a clear path of development no biographer yet has shown” (225). She divides Woolf’s own diaries into three stages: the early diaries from 1897 to mid-1918; her “spare modernist” diaries from 1919 to 1929; and a final “flowering from 1930 to her death” (2). Lounsberry’s book is a detailed exploration of the first twelve “experimental” diaries over the first two decades of Woolf’s writing life. It makes some intriguing connections with other diarists and considers how they might have influenced Woolf’s own work.

Distinguished theorist of autobiography, Philippe Lejeune writes in On Diary about Woolf as diarist. He writes that we know very little about the private practices of journal writers because the form is still under-researched. He employs the term terra incognita, and Lounsberry begins the Introduction to Becoming Virginia Woolf by using this expression. As this title promises, the book sets out to explore the process of its subject, Virginia Stephen, “becoming” Virginia Woolf. “Becoming” implies a teleological methodology, suggesting that the book will map the development of the writer and account for the construction of the writer as a subject. The sub-title, Her Early Diaries and the Diaries She Read, makes a direct correlation between the young writer’s reading material and selfhood. The book finishes in 1918, so, by the end of that diary, its writer had “become” the subject as we would recognize her: “Virginia Woolf leaves a trail in her first dozen diaries that shows how she comes to be the writer we know” (225).

The project is conceived concurrently in terms of a “treasure hunt” (4) and a detective work; Lounsberry is pursuing “leads” and so, predictably, she finds them. In tracing Woolf’s literary foremothers and fathers she employs words associated with narrative such as “foreshadows” (151).
and “anticipates” (161). The reader is encouraged to see many details as indicators of Woolf’s almost inevitable success. The objective is to explain “how [Woolf] becomes the writer so widely revered today” (2). Arguably through, the diaries do not allow a neat and clear movement forwards towards what Lounsberry terms a “mature, spare modernist diary style” (226). The provisional diary form was so attractive for Woolf because of the satisfaction of continually making and re-making versions of a life. Lounsberry’s hypothetical approach suggests some interesting ideas but, in places, her suppositions seem fanciful and occasionally awkward. She wonders if Sir Walter Scott’s image of his work as composed of odds and ends like an olla podrida [stew pot] might have led to Woolf’s metaphors for her diary of the compost heap or a great desk into which anything could be thrown (16). A great deal is inferred in this book: “Scott often uses initials in place of names and he regularly employs ampersands—traits Virginia’s diary also apes” (15). Several rather general and inconsequential similarities are discerned, for instance between the literary curate Stopford Brooke and Woolf. Both writers liked Scott’s work; both suffered illness as children; both were speed-readers; both wrote periodic diaries; both composed as they walked; both shared a “passion for self-expression” (212) and had a “love-hate affair with London” (207). “[Brooke’s] quicksilver, perhaps even bi-polar, mind also resembles hers” (206). Lounsberry wonders: “Did Woolf see that Brooke anticipated her intellectual as well as geographical moves?” (207). She makes a conjectural textual link between the two writers when she points to Brooke’s phrase “There’s never anything lost by hanging out our colours and letting them blow in the wind” (written in 1876). These words remind Lounsberry of the March 1941 Woolf diary entry: “I will go down with my colours flying” (D5 358). The unbearable poignancy of the last entry does not seem to me to echo Brooke’s words. Such comments are made rather nonchalantly, as if in passing, or as if the writer is thinking aloud. Observations such as these, though speculative, do, however, serve as testimony to the very close textual work Lounsberry has done on Woolf’s work and the diaries that she read as she seeks to find and plot a trail through “unknown territory” (page needed). But, as is often the case when plotting is involved, suppositions have to be made about things that one could never know for sure.

The book aims to trace a discernable path but the trail through the diaries is neither straight nor steady, rather it is crooked and discontinuous. The text will not obediently allow neat mapping. In tension with her wish to control her route, Lounsberry acknowledges at several points that the diaries are heterogeneous; she writes that, “the first seven diaries are extraordinarily varied” (2). She recognises the chaos of the diary form and uses Woolf’s own expression for her diary: it was a “compost heap” (10). The delightful rich fertility of the diaries is diminished somewhat by the way Lounsberry tries to sort them stylistically or thematically. She states her objective along with the problem of gloss over contradictory qualities in the attempt to find an “evolving aesthetic” (10). She argues that Woolf sees herself as an “outsider” in the 1903 diary (54); that the 1904 diary is about the development of the “professional” writer (75). She notes the gap between 1909 and 1915 and proposes that in 1918 Woolf is writing herself back from illness. 1897, 1909 and 1915 are “life” diaries (12, 40, 135, 163); 1899, and 1906-1909 are “travel” diaries (87, 114); though Lounsberry indicates that a new interest in portraits rather than places is a significant development in the 1909 pieces. 1917-19 are categorized as “natural history” diaries (183); 1917 is “collaborative” (188). Her final section is headed “The Diary Coalesces” and here she suggests that, between 1915 and 1918, these various styles “begin finally to fuse” (226). She seems almost relieved that contradictory styles and forms may be able to be more tidily resolved.

Certain diaries are seen as key to Woolf’s development as a writer and this symptomatic approach recalls clinical psychologist Katherine Dalsimer’s book *Virginia Woolf: Becoming a Writer*. Lounsberry frequently returns in her book to the problem of sub-text, what may be done consciously and what may be the result of an “unconscious need” (137). The 1909 life diary strikes her, for example, “as an act of self-assertion and self-definition. A complex rather than simple regression occurs” (136). She identifies the country as a feminine space in apposition to the masculine locus of London. Woolf’s literal travelling is read as metaphorical. Lounsberry assesses the 1903 diary as “pivotal” and in it “[the whole diary elides London—surely a step required]” (120). Her analysis of the 1906 New Forest diary is set against Woolf’s ambivalent relationship with her sister’s fiancé, Clive Bell. Lounsberry says that a “psychological reading...seems inescapable” (96). She goes on to argue that Woolf seeks the “country-in-London” in her diaries.

In 1907, rejecting traditional routes through London, on an expedition through Golders Green and Hampstead, Woolf “defies hedge and fences...” (98) preferring to be a bold, free traveller. Solitary Sussex walks by night, in 1907, “show Woolf’s further embrace of the unconscious begun in Cornwall in 1905” (120).

Although admitting that “[o]ne can never gauge a book’s precise impact on its readers” (15), hypothetical expressions are numerous here: “might explain”’; “might have recalled”; “could”; “perhaps”; “likely”; “One cannot say for certain” (32); “[he] may have planted in her mind” (39); “may have caught Woolf’s fancy and lodged in her mind” (150); “they might have refreshed and fortified her” (152). Very often rhetorical questions are use to introduce a tentative interpretation: “One wonders...” (passim); “[c]ould this be the genesis of Mistress Joan Martyn?” (91); Rosamond Merriew “might be read as Virginia’s projection of herself in 1906 of herself in middle age” (92); “surely it is noteworthy that...” (124). Lounsberry uses the distancing device of the first person plural: “we note too” (44); “we see” (67); “we should not be surprised” (126). There is occasional intervention through use of the first person; this tends to be when observations are less contentious, for instance: “I find her consciously seeking in her diary her own view, voice, and form” (127). Sometimes Lounsberry’s interrogative style appears to be genuine rather than rhetorical. There is a sense of unease and frustration when she is trying to interpret certain knotty clues: “We wish she would say more” (170) or “[s]everal scenarios seem possible” (164). Lounsberry is clearly engrossed by Woolf’s creative process and, occasionally, even takes an editorial role such when she writes, with reference to the 1905 Cornwall diary, that “The Ghost Diary should be the title of Virginia Stephen’s fifth journal” (82). Lounsberry’s imaginative style contributes to the elucidation of the text so a “row of sea gulls” might be the Stephen children sitting on the skirts of the wave. Birds will symbolize the young writer as the Cornwall diary unfolds” (83). Lounsberry uses the trope of unknown territory again when she writes, lyrically, of “the young writer’s intent to chart unmarked waters and find richness in her misty dappled terrain” (85).

Setting out her aims for the book Lounsberry uses Hermione Lee’s phrase that Woolf’s mind was “full of echoes” (5). This densely referenced study seeks to recall the many voices resonating in Woolf’s writing. The most illuminating aspect of this book is the sensitive comparative work undertaken on the eclectic selection of diarists Woolf read: “Emerson, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Stendhal, the Goncourt brothers, de Maupassant, Jules Renard, André Gide, Jonathan Swift, Boswell, Burney, Scott, William Allingham, Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Berry, George Eliot, Mary Coleridge, Katharine Bradley, and Edith Cooper (‘Michael Field’), Beatrice Webb, and Katherine Mansfield” (3) among others. The analysis of Burney and Scott as models and “diaristic father and mother” (3; my emphasis) for the very young writer is especially absorbing and Lounsberry interpolates helpful mini-essays on more obscure diarists such as Lady Dorothy Nevill, Lady Charlotte Bury and Mary (Seton) Berry. Although, in places, the connections made between writers and Woolf seem tenuous or serendipitous, Lounsberry’s scholarship is to be commended. There is excellent work on the materiality of the diaries; she clearly distinguishes between them
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*Works Cited*


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**REVIEW**  

**VIRGINIA WOOLF’S LATE CULTURAL CRITICISM: THE GENESIS OF THE YEARS, THREE GUINEAS, AND BETWEEN THE ACTS**


Expanding upon a conversation enriched and framed by late Virginia Woolf scholar, Julia Briggs, Alice Wood delivers an innovative and incisive examination of Woolf’s processes of writing and thinking. Focusing on Woolf’s later work, especially the novels *The Years* (1937), *Between the Acts* (1941), and her major pacifist polemic, *Three Guineas* (1938), originally attached as a novel-essay to *The Years*, Wood approaches her analysis deploying the practices and principles of genetic criticism, a French school of textual studies, *avant-textes* or (‘pre-texts’), a branch of manuscript studies reliant upon historical context. This is a welcome addition to “Historicizing Modernism,” Bloomsbury Publishing’s book series dedicated to interdisciplinary, source-based readings providing historical context of late nineteenth and twentieth century literary Modernism. Placed within a feminist-historicist critical frame, the significance of Wood’s volume rests on her recognition of Woolf as a social and cultural critic, and her study “crucially reads Woolf’s late cultural criticism as an extension of, rather than a departure from, the innovative feminist politics and aesthetic experimentation of her earlier writing” (4). This is a candid, refreshing examination of Virginia Woolf’s political theories, processes, and ideas, in conversation with and in revolt against the dominant male narratives responding to the political, economic, and social crises between 1931 and 1941.

Aligning her work with scholars of late Modernism, particularly Tyrus Miller (1999), Jed Esty (2004) and Marina Mackay (2007), Wood points out the hazards of periodization and places Woolf’s development as a cultural critic as part of “a bridge between two decades and two generations often artificially divided in scholarly discussions of the interwar period” (9). The first chapter, “Introducing Late Woolf,” provides the parameters and trajectory of the debate. In stylistically accessible prose, Wood provides an overview of the reception history of Woolf’s work from the interwar period and during the final decades of her life, outlining the misogyny and anxieties of many of her contemporary male critics and placing her within the context of other contemporaneous women writers, such as Storm Jameson, Jean Rhys, Dorothy Richardson, Stevie Smith and others producing work during the 1930’s. Here we encounter many of the “usual suspects” emphasized in critical heritage studies: early critics, both women and men, who often missed Woolf’s social and political critiques, (see, for example, Arnold Bennett’s “Queen of the High-Brows” 28 November 1929; Wyndham Lewis’s misogynistic skewering of Woolf in *Men Without Art* (1934); and Winifred Holtby’s prediction in an early critical study of Woolf that her “range will remain limited, her contact with life delicate and profound rather than comprehensive” (Holtby 201 qtd. in Wood 10) and literary histories of the 1930s, which stress the importance of the so-called “Auden Generation.” These trends were of course challenged by subsequent scholarship and research in the fields of feminist criticism, new historicism and textual studies, each of which Wood credits and acknowledges, pointing to the work of Jane Marcus, Julia Kristeva, Alex Zwerdling, and, more recently, Julia Briggs, Anna Snait, Melba Cuddy-Keane, and Anne E. Fernald, among many other feminist scholars who have helped draw attention to Woolf as a social commentator and public intellectual.

Wood’s study relies upon a bedrock of archival research which deploys a meticulous textual investigation of published and unpublished materials, many of which are presented in the three Appendices of extracts from the holograph drafts of *The Years* and *Three Guineas* and which Wood uses to discuss the ways in which Woolf’s process informs her “late analyses of the historical and contemporary oppression of women in patriarchal Britain, the links between patriarchy, imperialism and war, and the relationship between literature and politics” (17). What one realizes in reading such a study is how, as Wood points out, “voluminous and still largely unexplored” these archival materials truly are, and the nature and scope of the possibilities they present for Woolf studies in general. Wood’s Chapters 2 and 3 on the publication and pre-publication processes of *Three Guineas* and *The Years* are to be read in relation to one another, as they, to an extent, mirror the “shared textual histories of the works themselves” (21). Woolf’s additions, deletions and revisions can be daunting at times, but Wood’s well-organized and efficient handling of “the six years of socio-political research, writing, and thinking that preceded the publication” (27) of the two texts brings a fresh perspective and a way to a portrait of Woolf as a social and political critic, a moniker, which the author admits, has become familiar and “something of a cliché” (27) in academic circles.

Part of Chapter 4 addressing Woolf’s contributions to the *Daily Worker* first appeared in these pages (see Wood’s “‘Chaos. Slaughter. War Surrounding Our Island’”). In addition to a textual analysis of *Between the Acts*, the chapter covers commentary on Woolf’s essays “A Letter to a Young Poet” (1932), “Why Art To-day Follows Politics,” (a piece in the *Daily Worker*, published in 1936, which Woolf basically did as a favor to a friend of her nephew, Quentin Bell) and “The Leaning Tower” (1940), each of which Wood persuasively argues are “pre-texts” to Woolf’s last novel. At issue here are Woolf’s own pacifism and political positions held up against criticism of her as an isolated, out-of-touch, Bloomsbury aesthete, accusations mainly lobbed at her by 1930s male poets, such as Stephen Spender, and taken up by John Lehmann, Peter Quennell, and later by critics of the 1940s and 50s, such as David Daiches. Wood does well to outline the sources and counter arguments of Woolf’s controversial remarks in these essays, noting, along with others, that Woolf’s political engagement had been evident throughout her entire body of work.

The author does sometimes seem to contradict herself, however, for example, identifying a shift “reflected by Woolf’s altered perspective in her final novel on the relationship between art and society” (123)
but then contending that “[t]his late novel follows the trend of Woolf’s earlier fiction in camouflaging her cultural criticism within the narrative, revealing her politics through the course of the novel’s action and dialogue rather than in authorial comment” (124). I would suggest that there is more evidence of Wood’s latter contention, and much of it is provided in the Wood’s own critique and archival work presented here.

Woolf was not arguing in these three “pre-texts” what the snarky disclaimer, published above her Daily Worker piece, stated—that artists “have been so peacefully immune from the conditions and issues of the society in which they live” (Daily Worker qtd. in Wood 119), nor what Lehmann, Quennell, and others read as a reductive contention that politics has no place in art. Woolf was pointing out the importance of resisting heavy-handed, soap-boxerism in art and arguing for freedom of expression, a condition of society which is undermined and challenged during times of war. Wood, citing Woolf, writes that, “in peacetime, the artist is granted detachment from society in order to write and paint ‘without regard for the political agitations of the moment’” but then adds, “because otherwise [the artist’s] productions would not provide the humanizing escape from current affairs that we expect from art” (Woolf qtd. in Wood 118). This is not what Woolf says we should “expect” from art, and, Wood’s approach constitutes, in my view, a common misreading of the complexities of Woolf’s pacifism, politics, and ideas about art in relation to society, theories which Woolf mines early, as early as 1904, from the works of her public intellectual role model, Jane Harrison. In the essays cited by Wood, Woolf never mentions what kinds of art might be produced. This is impossible to know. Woolf is outlining the conditions necessary for art, for freedom of expression to take place, conditions now commonly referred to as “positive peace” (a term coined by Johan Galtung in the 1990s), arguing against using art to grind an axe while contending that the more effective way of achieving one’s artistic aims is to avoid hitting the reader over the head with one’s agenda. Woolf is not suggesting artists ignore politics during wartime but instead to resist fascist ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’ in all of their guises. It is one of the reasons we continue to find Three Guineas on our syllabi today, but not so much Quack! Quack! by Leonard Woolf. Wood, in her assessment of Woolf as an “internationalist,” also suggests that Woolf exhibits “a tempering of her pacifist argument in her last novel,” Between the Acts (106), a position, which Wood increasingly qualifies as we move through her argument and which might benefit from revision, again based on much of the first-rate evidence Wood has produced here herself.

Nevertheless, Virginia Woolf’s Late Cultural Criticism ultimately locates Woolf’s political and cultural critique within the context of her entire body of work. The author reveals the traps and limitations of categorizing Woolf as a “New” or “Late” modernist as such labels “lead us to overlook the feminist politics that directed her creative and critical outputs from the outset of her career” (139). This is a thread Wood successfully follows in her concluding remarks, which counter the three critics of late modernism mentioned above, especially Miller and Esty, “on the basis that their reading of late modernism as a reaction against apolitical high modernism relies on the illusion of modernist marginality” (143). Wood, citing Bonnie Kime Scott among others, points to gender and Woolf’s feminism as factors informing her outsidership from the mostly male modernist literary canon. Ultimately, this work cautions against reaching for such easy and artificial assessments of Woolf as a late modernist and is valuable to succeeding generations of Woolf critics and common readers for using a textual methodology which offers a host of possibilities for emerging perspectives in the field.

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REVIEW:
CONTEMPORARY WOOLF. WOOLF CONTEMPORAINE
edited by Claire Davison-Pegon & Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biaso.

This handsome volume bears witness to the impressive vitality of Woolf studies in France and more specifically of the 15-year old Société d’Études Woolfiennes, currently chaired by Claire Davison, a society whose many activities regularly culminate in the annual conference it organizes (http://etudes-woolfiennes.org/). The book here reviewed results from the conference held in September 2010 at the University of Aix-en-Provence, which brought together nine French Woolfians and a number of internationally known scholars, including three from the U.S., three from the U.K., and one from Japan, Italy and Greece respectively. The book is bilingual but only four articles are in French. In their introduction, the two editors very usefully refer us to Woolf’s own reflections in “How it Strikes a Contemporary,” an essay first published in 1923, in which she shows how difficult it is for the reader “to take his bearings in the chaos of contemporary literature” (353). Woolf herself finds that she lives in an “age of fragments” (355). Of “The Waste Land” she says that “Mr Eliot makes phrases” and of Ulysses that it is “a memorable catastrophe—immense in daring, terrific in disaster” (356). In 1923, the difficulty there was in being a perceptive contemporary critic, spotting masterpieces and major authors-to-be, is unforgettably exemplified by Arnold Bennett himself who, also in 1923, wrote in “Is the Novel Decaying?” that the characters in Jacob’s Room “do not vitality survive in the mind” and that he could not “despy any coming big novelists”—which sparked off a well-known polemic and led to the writing by Woolf of “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown” (384). Woolf, however, is by now undisputedly acknowledged the world over as a major author or “big novelist,” and Contemporary Woolf is also about “the immense relevance” and contemporaneity of her works for us living in the twenty-first century. To the question of Woolf’s contemporaneity there are thus clearly two lines of approach to be envisaged, one dealing with Woolf in her own lifetime, the other with Woolf in our own time. The question involves and articulates past, present and future. Georgio Agamben, whose essay “What Is the Contemporary?” is referred to by several contributors, insists upon the concept of “noncoincidence,” or “dys-chrony”: “Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one’s own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism” (Agamben 41).

The first series of articles begins with “Virginia Woolf and the Art of the Novel,” in which Laura Marcus focuses on essays of The Common Reader, the act and art of reading and the writing of literary history.
Woof is very much aware that she lives in an age of transition. She feels cut off from the age of great authors and great critics, which is now past, and disappointed by the work of her contemporaries. And yet, in spite of it all, the present time and modern literature have “the same enduring quality of being that which we are, that which we have made, that in which we live” (20). Noriko Kubota shows that the Japan-English Exhibition which took place in London in 1910 contributed to the sense that in that pivotal year “human nature changed” (33). Kathryn Simpson contributes a well-documented ethnographic study of early twentieth-century commodity culture and the experience of shopping as reflected in Woolf’s œuvre. Claire Rosé deals with the process of reading poetry as “what is timeless and contemporary” (53) and what she calls the interdependence of historically-bound meaning and the historicity of the signifying process; also with the process of writing, Woolf’s poetics of “life itself,” and the intimacy made possible between reader and author.

Nathalie Pavec, who writes in French, interestingly brings together Three Guineas, The Years and Woolf’s “Memoir of Julian Bell” in order to concentrate upon the present reality of the years 1936-1938 and analyze Woolf’s position as an author writing from “the platform of time” (73). Naomi Toth gives a close reading of Orlando’s arrival in “the present moment” (“It was the eleventh of October. It was 1928. It was the present moment.”) and shows that Orlando’s experience of the present is then marked by discrepancy, by a tension between the present visible and the invisible past that endures within it.

The second series of essays engages with the aesthetics of Woolf’s art. In “Dating Mrs. Dalloway: The Use and Abuse of History,” Michael Davis examines the tension there is between the formalist tradition which proclaims the autonomy of the novel as regards linear time and the historicist tradition which maintains that it takes place on 13 June 1923. Adriana Varga explores the connections between music and language in Woolf’s modernist novels, notably The Waves and Between the Acts, and suggests that her ultimate desire was to break the boundaries between the arts, between poetry, music and the novel. Derek Ryan’s exciting reading of To the Lighthouse is based upon Deleuze’s rhizome concept, and the opposition he makes between the arborescent rigidity of trees and the rhizomatic, multiple, horizontal growth of grass. Like grass and its “line of flight” (129), the characters are viewed in what Ryan calls their “journey of becoming” (129). In “Un regard posé sur le monde,” Adèle Cassaigneul adopts what she terms in her article for the issue an “intermedial approach” (139) and analyses the text of Three Guineas together with the photos and newspaper clippings Woolf collected at the time of writing it. She then draws a parallel between Woolf’s visions and those of James Whistler, whose works reflect an endlessly changing world.

The next sequence of essays is more precisely related to Agamben’s concept of “non-coincidence or dys-chrony” inherent in the contemporary. In “The Fissured Contemporaneity of Virginia Woolf,” Angeliki Spiropoulou reads in Woolf’s disjunctive narratives her response to modernity and her attempt at retrieving from the past what has been repressed by official history. Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biaso, one of the two editors of the book, ventures into what Woolf called “the pale borderland of no man’s language” (Woolf qtd. in Smith-Di Biaso 167) and traces a link between hallucinatory images and remnants of dream whose haunting presences obscurely refer to Woolf’s terrors of sterility and pregnancy, to the “most archeaic layer of female sexuality,” and concludes with an interpretation of Mrs. McNab as “an archetypal figure of maternal remembrance” (167) Teresa Prudente’s contribution is centered upon The Waves. It takes up the issue of permanence and of the transience of time, impersonality and individuality, and shows how Woolf tries to adhere to her own time while conveying the timeless nature of the human soul. In “We are...marking time: the Impossible Contemporary as a Poïe/Litical Threshold in Virginia Woolf’s Diary, Volume 5,” Chantal Delourme rejects the view that the diary merely chronicles contemporary time. In the light of the theories of Jean-François Lyotard and Agamben, she introduces the concepts of differend and contretemps, analyses the regimes of enunciation grappling with the forces of history (in the somber years 1936-1941), and detects the writing of desire subtending the ethical dimension of the diary.

The last three essays stand apart from the rest. They deal with various aspects of Virginia Woolf’s presence in the contemporary literary scene. Monica Latham examines four postmodernist or neo-modernist Woolfian palimpsests that bear witness to the lasting influence of Mrs. Dalloway: Robin Lippincott’s Mr. Dalloway, Michael Cunningham’s The Hours, Ian McEwan’s Saturday and Rachel Cusk’s Arlington Park. Anne-Laure Rigade, in the third essay in French, argues that Nathalie Sarratue’s response to Woolf’s work, together with the specific writer-to-reader relation between the two women, marks them as contemporary. For Christine Froula, in the concluding essay, “Orlando Lives,” Orlando is alive and embodies the essence of contemporaneity. Orlando’s continuing life is attested by the many editions and translations of the book and by all the theater, film, music and dance adaptations, a considerable number of which are methodically reviewed and superbly illustrated with color photographs.

This book offers a distinct and welcome contribution to Woolf scholarship. It reflects on a variety of critical and theoretical approaches to the problematics of Woolf contemporaneity. The editors must be thanked for their excellent work, and for allowing one more volume to be added to the considerable amount of studies on Virginia Woolf already produced in France over the past decades.

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REVIEW:
TRANSLATION AS COLLABORATION: VIRGINIA WOOLF, KATHERINE MANSFIELD, AND S. S. KOTELIANSKY

It is nearly a century since the works of the classic nineteenth-century Russian writers burst into Western awareness through translation. Even though isolated Russian works appeared in French and English in the late nineteenth-century, it was only during the early twentieth century that the “Russian point of view” achieved critical momentum in Britain. More recently, Woolf scholars have explored Virginia Woolf’s significant engagement with Russian literature. Scholarly analyses by Natalya Reinhold, Laura Marcus, Christine Froula, Emily Dalgarno, myself, and others have focused, for the most part, on Woolf’s imaginative debt to
the Russian writers, whom she read and reviewed during her formative years as a writer and whose substantive and stylistic divergences from traditional British fiction inspired her earliest and most enduring experiments with literary form and style. Claire Davison turns her focus to a less noticed aspect of Woolf’s—and Katherine Mansfield’s—engagement with the Russian writers: their co-translations, with the Russian émigré S. S. Koteliansky, of belles lettres by Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gorky, most of which were published by Virginia and Leonard Woolf’s Hogarth Press during the early 1920s.

Davison’s rich study builds on two widely separated cultural moments: first, the fertile period of the early twentieth century, during which “cultural, intellectual, political and linguistic factors all fed into a huge interest in literatures seen through the prism of translation” (5); and, beginning in the 1990s, the “translation turn” (5) prompted by critical attention to the complex linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural assumptions embedded in the process of translation. Drawing on both contexts, Davison challenges the “long-standing tendency to write off Mansfield and Woolf’s work with Koteliansky as essentially that of editor wielding the red pen to correct uncouth language” (115). Brilliantly plumbing her subject to offer multiple new angles for understanding both the practice and outcomes of co-translation, she illuminates Woolf’s and Mansfield’s unacknowledged substantive contributions to the endeavor. Interestingly, she downplays the essay that has for decades provided the essential starting point for scholarly examination of Woolf’s view of the Russians: her close reading of “The Russian Point of View” leads her to conclude that much of the essay is “a masquerade of refined table talk”—less a decisive position on the subject than “recycled cliché or conventionalism” (25).

Davison’s project might be described in terms of a triangle, with Woolf, Mansfield, and Koteliansky occupying the cardinal points while the aesthetics, politics, and other aspects of translation, co-translation, and collaboration fill in the figure. Through this structure, she examines the ways in which co-translation and collaboration not only influenced both writers at the early stage of their respective literary careers but also the reverse: Woolf’s and Mansfield’s linguistic, aesthetic, and editorial choices distinctively shaped their respective co-translations. Although Virginia and Leonard, stimulated by their association with Koteliansky, took Russian language lessons for a time and Mansfield knew some Russian, their knowledge of the language was rudimentary; their contributions depended on their association with the native Russian speaker—who also acquired the Russian texts for these collaborative translations.

In five sharply focused chapters, Davison examines different facets of her subject, including “thinking through translation,” voice, “imprudent moveables” (“translation as a form of speculative mutability,” 84), craftsmanship and marketplace, and biographical writing in translation. Herself conversant in Russian, French, and German, Davison is particularly good at providing telling examples of the ways in which small differences in word choice, syntax, “orality,” and “musicality”—the last understood as attending to “the original patterns in the making of meaning” (73)—result in outcomes that, in her judgment, preserve more faithfully the essence of the original Russian. For example, focusing on Stavrogin’s Confessions—Dostoevsky’s suppressed chapters from The Possessed, which Woolf and Koteliansky co-translated for the Hogarth Press—she compares the same passages in several English and French translations to highlight the ways in which the Koteliansky/Woolf version captures the “dialogic tensions” (73) in the character of Stavrogin that are absent from other translations.

Davison establishes each writer’s implicit theory of translation, emphasizing that both Woolf and Mansfield—the latter more obviously an “outsider” from New Zealand—relished the sense of “intermediate foreignness” (33) that they experienced through the process of co-translating. Affirming their own aesthetic preferences, each strove, with Koteliansky’s collaboration, to maintain rather than minimize irregularities, repetitions, shifting voices, and even rough syntax in the Russian original rather than attempting—as had traditional translators—to domesticate the language into a “a smooth, coherent textual surface” (84) in English.

Moreover, given Woolf and Mansfield’s literary interests, their parallel involvement in the co-translation process opened up for each of them “a creative space between fiction writing and classic translation” (48) as each writer put her own individual stamp on her collaborative endeavor. Their active engagement in the rendering of words and ideas from Russian into English influenced their “aesthetic intuitions” and prompted them to “hone their own convictions about life-writing and fiction” (150). As Davison observes,

What may have started as an interesting means to gain more specialised, reliable knowledge of Russian literature and to help an endearing friend get published soon evolved into a subtly disguised mode of experimentation in writing styles, which formed a very practical bridge between personal emotion and an escape from personality into the lives of other speaking, living selves, saying ‘I’ without wholly being the ‘I’ that speaks. (47–48)

Woolf and Mansfield contributed not only aesthetically but also editorially to the translation process. Through her attentive examination of such works as A. B. Goldenveizer’s Talks with Tolstoi (co-translated by Koteliansky and Woolf) and Chekhov’s diary and letters (co-translated by Koteliansky and Mansfield)—biographical works whose contents were rendered into English not in their entirety but selectively—Davison uncovers biases, including gender bias, that result from the selection process itself. Comparing the Koteliansky–Mansfield collection of Chekhov’s letters with the same letters in the volume translated by Koteliansky and Philip Tomlinson, she observes that “more than half the female characters—dinner guests, addresssees, visitors, artists—are written out [of the latter volume]. Their entire narrative is male focused. . . .” (126). Thus, the process of selection and omission was not neutral but one that shaped the Russian writers for their English readers according to the translator’s own conscious and unconscious values.

Admittedly, Woolf and Mansfield had their own biases. As Davison posits, “Woolf and Koteliansky’s editorial choices suggest a decided modern take on how to use certain materials to fashion the reception of the author. Mansfield and Koteliansky’s translations of Chekhov’s letters . . . show a comparable, editorially motivated translation strategy shaping and promoting a precise, very timely image of Chekhov” (123). Thus, while the Russians indeed contributed to Woolf’s and Mansfield’s development as modernists, the writers in turn helped to “modernize” the Russians, “literally lifting [them] from their late nineteenth-century mindset and setting, and electing them as honorary Georgians, speaking in and speaking to the present . . .” (168).

Davison’s compelling, impressively researched, and lucidly articulated book enables readers to appreciate both the significance of Woolf’s and Mansfield’s collaborative co-translations from the Russian and the poetics and politics of translation itself.

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Virginia Woolf once told her friend Janet Case about a delicious mishap. In a cooking class, Woolf had “distinguished [her]self by cooking my wedding ring into a suet pudding” (97). Jans Ondaatje Rolls recounts this anecdote in The Bloomsbury Cookbook: Recipes for Life, Love, and Art, and includes a recipe for Plain Suet Pudding with the wary note of caution: “if possible, remove all rings beforehand” (97). This book is check-full of such moments, showing the interconnectedness of food, story, and affection in the daily lives of the Bloomsburies (or Bloomsberries), their friends, and descendants. Bloomsbury inspires perennial interest among scholars, casual readers, and, in recent years, social-media lifestyle mavens. Today, “Bloomsbury” signifies not only a collection of artists and intellectuals who helped to shape British life in the twentieth century, but also a lifestyle. Charleston Farmhouse and Monk’s House have long been sites of domestic pilgrimage. The Bloomsbury Cookbook, written for scholar and common reader alike, functions as a field guide to one of the most nourishing spaces in Bloomsbury homes—the kitchen.

At Charleston in 2009, Rolls pitched to Virginia Nicholson an “idea for a book about Bloomsbury food and cookery.” Nicholson recalls, “No stone seemed to have been left unturned where Bloomsbury was concerned—and yet here, in the kitchen, was an aspect of my ancestry that I had long felt to be underexplored” (9). After five years of thorough archival research, Rolls has turned over a new stone: she has gathered together an impressive collection of period recipes, stories, and images, and invites her readers as fully as has ever been done into the everyday life of Bloomsbury.

The Bloomsbury Cookbook is not organized like traditional cookbooks, by type of food or meal, but by story. Anecdotes are interspersed with recipes by Bloomsbury’s members, cooks, and friends, as well as recipes from period cookbooks. The book begins with Nicholson’s note on the Charleston Trust, to which Rolls is generously donating all profits. Anne Chisholm’s Foreword indicates two of the book’s greatest strengths. Bloomsbury aficionados “will be richly entertained”; newcomers “could not receive a better introduction…to Bloomsbury’s cuisine [and] to its curiously enduring fascination” (11). Rolls’s Introduction affirms the importance of “lingering breakfasts” and “painting lunches” to Bloomsbury, from its emergence in turn-of-the-century Cambridge and London to the 1940s and after (12). Biographical notes cover 29 dramatis personae from Helen Anrep and the Bells to the Stracheys and Woolfs. Entries include the longtime Charleston housekeeper and cook Grace Higgens, whose recipes feature prominently in the collection, and who, together with Sophia Farrell and Nellie Boxall, receives deserving praise. Seven chronological chapters compose the Cookbook proper. Each chapter begins with a menu of recipes surrounded by a colorful Grant-and-Bell-style frame. Appendices and other back matter include additional recipes, a Bloomsbury chronology, notes on imperial and metric measures, an extensive Bloomsbury bibliography, an index of recipes, and a list of their sources.

The chronological structure of the Cookbook, with each chapter featuring a hodgepodge of recipes and anecdotes (many sans recipes), makes for an entertaining read while limiting its practical value. The book is not organized according to types of food or meal, and it has no clear rubrics, so it is difficult to find a particular type of recipe. But, then, is The Bloomsbury Cookbook, strictly speaking, a cookbook? Does it belong beside Mrs. Beeton, Delia Smith, or Nigella? Its subtitle, Recipes for Life, Love and Art, speaks to the fact that it is at once something less and something more than a cookbook. As a work of archival recuperation, it might sit proudly beside the Duncan-Grant-illustrated In an Eighteenth Century Kitchen: A Receipt Book of Cookery, 1698 (Rhodes, 1968).

Alongside Quentin Bell and Virginia Nicholson’s Charleston: A Bloomsbury House and Garden (1997) or Virginia Woolf’s Garden (2014) by Caroline Zoob. And as a work of culinary anthropology, it reveals myriad facets of the fact that, whatever else they did, the Bloomsburies also ate. Bloomsbury was a circle composed of triangles who lived in squares—and it was a group of friends who enjoyed Bell Family Christmas Cake baked in an eight-inch round pan (315-16); took their tea with Ham Sprays Triangles—fish roe, ham, and bechamel sandwiches from Frances Partridge’s recipe book (160-61); snacked on pureed sardines spread over fried toast squares (41); and—beyond such strict geometrical limits—devoured Bunny’s Honey from the hexagonal combs of the bee-hives kept by David Garnett during the Great War (126-27).

The book is especially intriguing when Rolls uses recipes to flavor iconic moments. Woolf fans can try their hand at Mildred’s Masterpiece, Rolls’s own recipe for the legendary Boeuf en Daube from To the Lighthouse. They can also test the eleven recipes spread over the Cookbook’s longest entry. Seven pages detail contrasting menus from the impoverished Fernham dinner and the luxurious Oxbridge lunch in A Room of One’s Own, providing a culinary confirmation of Woolf’s insights into the reciprocal connection between economic advantage and literary excellence, eating well and thinking well. Open to the menu for “Dinner at a Women’s College” and discover homely recipes for Consommé, Beef Loaf, Sprouts, Prunes, Custard, and Savoury Biscuits and Sour Milk Cheese (209-12), Turn to “Lunch at a Men’s College” and find such delicacies as Fillets de Sole à la Crème, Perdrix en Cocotte, Salade de Haricots Verts, Pommes Sauittes, and Gateau de Riz en Moule (212-14).

This is a great book to get lost in, and not only for the recipes. Just as the culinary arts rely on presentation to announce the quality of food, so too the Cookbook, beginning with Cressida Bell’s vibrant dust jacket, serves up a visual feast. Scores of images give an intimate, kaleidoscopic, and luscious portrait of Bloomsbury’s world. There are reproductions of paintings, book covers, and sketches—Carrington’s caricature of Lytton Strachey reading while lounging in a soup bowl and her sketch of hens eating a spoiled steak and kidney pie are as sweet as the “sugar” that she and Mark Gertler used as a euphemism for sex (107-108). There are reproductions of handwritten letters, menus, and recipes, including one, for “Meat Bobbity, in Tamil” (87). A facsimile vote tally from an Apostles meeting on the question, “Eggs or Omelettes?” notes that Lytton Strachey “is really eggy” (42). And there is a generous helping of photographs. Octogenarian Leonard tends plants in his greenhouse. Clive hoes a field at Garsington. Frances Partridge lunches under a weeping willow. And Virginia Woolf sits at table, at home, ring on finger, gazing at the camera over a loaf of bread and a cup of tea.

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REVIEW
THE HOUSE OF FICTION AS THE HOUSE OF LIFE:
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOUSE FROM RICHARDSON TO WOOLF

As the editors acknowledge, this volume of “expanded” conference proceedings, originating in a 2008 Seminar held in Aarhus, Denmark and sponsored by the European Society for the Study of English, joins what is already a “vast literature” on the representation of houses in literature and the problematic of “inhabited space” more generally (1). Inspired by such seminal works as Martin Heidegger’s “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Gaston Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space, and Henri Lefebvre’s The Production of Space, scholarship on space and place has proliferated vigorously since at least the 1980s, as the Works Cited to this volume amply attests. Woolf scholars have of course participated in these developments in studies such as Susan Squier’s Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City (1985), Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth’s Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place (2007) and several contributions to Maggie Humm’s The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts (2010), among many others.

Most distinctive about The House of Fiction’s contribution to the still-burgeoning field of place/space studies is the chronological ordering and conceptual framing of its twenty-one essays, a presentation intended to draw out connections between the evolution of the novel as a genre and changing constructions of domestic space. The essays focus on British novels by canonical writers from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Six of them address eighteenth century figures, including Samuel Richardson and Frances Burney; twelve address nineteenth century figures including Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, Wilkie Collins, and George Meredith; the twentieth century is represented by just three essays, two on Woolf and one on crime fiction that treats both nineteenth and twentieth century writers. The editors’ brief introduction distills from the essays a panoptic account of the shifting cultural and social meanings of house and home in England and other “northern countries” (3) from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, identifying three major themes: the house’s role in articulating binary categories such as public/private, male/female, adult/child; the house as a locus of sometimes “strident contradiction” (7), particularly for Victorian women; and the rise and decline of the myth of the country house and its attendant fantasy of national identity. The editors emphasize too that the essays reconcile the broadly interdisciplinary approach required by space studies with discipline-specific “textual and narratological analysis” (4), treating novelistic representations of the house as “dynamic narrative studies with discipline-specific ‘textual and narratological analysis’ (4), treating novelistic representations of the house as “dynamic narrative studies with discipline-specific ‘textual and narratological analysis’ (4), treating novelistic representations of the house as “dynamic narrative studies with discipline-specific” (5) that actively shape plot and sites of encounter between text and world. “The main aim of the project,” Saggini and Soccio write, “is to investigate and reconsider the forms and modes through which the figure of the house was represented in English literature” during the period of the novel’s emergence and development (5, my emphasis). At once the singularly dominant form in English literature and the genre par excellence identified with private consumption, the novel provides a privileged vantage on the house, and vice-versa, because the two have been mutually constructing.

The first of the essays on Woolf is not concerned with the novel, however. Francesca Pieri’s “Closed Spaces, Women’s Rooms, Symbolic Objects: The House in Virginia Woolf’s Short Stories” surveys thirteen stories in just five pages, noting the various meanings and functions of the house in each—for example, the negative valorization of domestic space in “Phyllis and Rosamond” versus its positive valence in “The Diary of Mistress Joan Martyn],” or the use of domestic space as a signifier of characters’ interior lives in “Moments of Being: Slater’s Pins Have No Points” and other stories. Most suggestive, and most in keeping with the volume’s stated approach, is Pieri’s brief discussion of the metafictional implications of common household objects such as a curtain or picture. Pieri’s observations are sound and her piece might serve as an entrée to Woolf’s short stories for a newcomer, but seasoned Woolfians may find the essay’s usefulness limited by its brevity.

Janet L. Larsen’s longer contribution, “The Personal is National: Houses of Memory and Postwar Culture in Mrs. Dalloway” more fully realizes the volume’s objectives. Larsen draws on Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope in order to demonstrate how Woolf destabilizes the national myth of historical “continuity” embodied in the image of the English country house by “levitating” that image “into time’s flow in the mind” (194). Making the personal national in this sense, the novel’s experimentalism breaks up the imaginary continuity of what Woolf called “historian’s histories” (193) in a process congruent with post-war transformations of the English “manor-house system” and its ordering of consciousness (196). Larsen illuminates submerged connections between Clarissa’s and Peter’s memories of Bourton, Lady Brutton’s evocation of her family’s rural seat at Aldmixon, and an unnamed “old Manor House” whose loss is mourned by a certain Mrs. Foxcroft more sincerely than the human casualties of the War (196). Incidentally, since no one was more invested in the myth of the country house and national “continuity” than Vita Sackville-West, Orlando’s dismantling of that myth, linked as it is to Woolf’s deliberate outing of Sackville-West, in a different sense also makes the national very personal (as discussed in my contribution to Humm’s Edinburgh Companion). But we do not usually connect Woolf’s critique of the country house with Mrs. Dalloway. Larsen’s essay shows that we should, and effectively demystifies romanticizing interpretations of Bourton’s significance.

As a genre, conference proceedings are generally most valuable when they offer a snapshot of emerging trends and new perspectives, since the brevity of the papers typically precludes depth. The House of Fiction as the House of Life does not escape this limitation but, while no connections are drawn between papers within the papers themselves (as is sometimes done in revising for publication), Saggini and Soccio frame their collection thoughtfully, in a way that will be of interest to students of the novel and of place/space studies. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to sample work by an international array of English scholars not only from England and the U.S., but also Italy (primarily), Germany, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Costa Rica.

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David Rando’s first monograph undertakes, with innovation, a kind of media studies of literary modernism, understanding modernist novels as contending with what Mark Wollaeger has called the media ecology of popular news. Rando joins recent scholarship that has explored the embeddedness of modernism in forms of mass culture such as journalism (Patrick Collier) and radio (Jussi Parikka’s the edited collection Broadcasting Modernism). Even though not explicitly stated by its author, Modernist Fiction and News also relates to the burgeoning field of media archaeology, which, as Jussi Parrikka delineates, “sees media cultures as sedimented and layered, a fold of time and materiality where the past might be suddenly discovered anew” (3). Rando embarks on such an archaeological project on the early twentieth century, which, he claims, “was the first period to face the impossibility of adequately storing, remembering, and prioritizing the avalanche of information that new recording technologies and mass communication networks pressed upon consciousness, thereby altering not only human experience but also reality itself” (1). Modernist novels perceive news as an inauthentic way to represent communicable experience; however, amid the flow of the dialectical tension that Rando identifies, modernist novels and news lose their mediatic territorial boundaries. Through eclectic readings of Woolf, James Joyce, John Dos Passos, and Gertrude Stein, Rando’s methodology queries the expansionist mode of historicism that has characterized the “new modernist studies,” as dubbed by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz; instead of a project oriented toward a revision of modernist literary history (Gayle Rogers) or an explicit account of the sociology of modernism (Jeremy Braddock), Rando “explores modernism’s implicit challenge and response to contemporary ideologies and practices of technology” (16). Modernist Fiction and News reads canonical modernists alongside Walter Benjamin’s model of materialist historiography and Jacques Derrida’s theory of the archive, endeavoring to show how “we must arrest modernism in a relationship with our moment and read the resultant image not as a continuum of history, but as a form of potential awakening” (25). Thus Rando situates modernist novels within the dialectical conflict of Benjamin’s two concepts of experience, Erfahrung and Erlebnis, which one might translate as accumulated, lived experience and immediate, living experience, respectively. Channeling Benjamin from cover to cover, Rando’s chapters pursue the shock of experience in which the past and present flash together and dialectics comes to a standstill, revealing historicism as homogenous, empty time. The six thematic chapters of nearness, scandal, character, identity, and war constellate and modify each other as Modernist Fiction and News progresses, tracking the form of the anecdote as an antidote to the impoverished experience that one receives in the news.

United in their focus on newspaper reading, Virginia Woolf’s two short stories “Sympathy” and “The Mark on the Wall” appear in the first chapter, which analyzes the category of nearness through affective identification. Rando interrogates the difference between empathy and what Benjamin lauds as the “paths of nearness”; the former affects the reader out into the space of the object whereas the latter invites the object into her own intimate space. For Rando, empathy “is this disconnection from and mediation of history, this movement outward from oneself toward some abstracted object, that Benjamin equates with newspaper reading” (33). Indeed, Woolf’s “Sympathy” charts this empathetic movement in the form of the narrator’s imaginative traversal of space to the location of the supposed widow, Celia. The narrator believes she has read the death of Celia’s husband, Humphry Hammond in the newspaper, and is subsequently troubled by “the blind moment” or incommunicable experience that impoverishes her experience of Celia’s conversion to the subject position of widow. The narrator receives an invitation to dine with the Hammonds, which reveals that he did not die, that the name in the newspaper merely bore a resemblance to Humphry. Rando compares Woolf’s representation of the impoverished experience of newspaper reading to René Magritte’s 1938 painting Man with a Newspaper (L’Homme au journal), which “represents newspaper reading as time spent outside of oneself, and perhaps as absent to oneself, as well as to one’s immediate environment” (35). Rando then proposes Benjamin’s form of the anecdote as that which remedies the problem of representing experience in the media ecology of news. Benjamin criticizes “the empathetic distance of historicism and contrasts it with the anecdotal nearness of materialist historiography” (37). With Woolf’s well-known short story “The Mark on the Wall,” Rando demonstrates “the narrator’s experiment in archiving experience and anarchiving facts and objective reportage” (41). The narrator seeks unmediated, intimate experience that taps into the paths of nearness, which unfolds in the private and gendered spaces of domesticity.

Moving to the tabloid condition of news in contrast with the difficult reading experience of modernist fiction, the second chapter examines Joyce’s Finnegans Wake in the context of scandal. Rando foregrounds one of the Wake’s auto-descriptive moments: when it labels itself “This noonday diary, this allnights newseryreel” (489.35). Rando continues with the analytic of anecdotal form, and he illustrates how “the Wake springs scandal upon its readers anecdotally, in such a way that facts and actors remain primarily elusive but something of the experience of scandal is allowed to emerge with nearness” (53). He is also interested in the dialectical oscillation between public and private that occurs in one’s reading experience of the Wake. The “plebiscite section”—Joyce’s creative revision of the Bywaters-Thompson adultery scandal and murder trial—functions as the central source of textual evidence in the chapter. He compares Joyce’s archiving practices of journalism with the contemporary scandalous article from the Daily Sketch on December 14, 1922.

In the third chapter, Rando interrogates the modernist construction of character as represented in Dos Passos’s U.S.A. trilogy which he views “as engaged in a complex and continuous negotiation and power struggle with news discourse over the language of character in the media ecology, one that finally opens out into a class struggle over the language of America itself” (74). Responding to what criticism has lamented as the flatness and transparency of the characters in U.S.A., Rando eruditely explains these formalistic features in terms of Dos Passos’s aesthetic response to the “homogenous, empty time of the newspaper’s columns” (76). The characters are thus cut out of history and pasted into clinical narrative description that is analogous to journalistic style; however, Rando withholds the hope that there are remainders in the free indirect discourse that indicate how Dos Passos’s style negotiates reportage and intimate experience. Dos Passos shows the imbricated relationship of news and novels—that the two media are coeval and indistinguishable. Rando supports these claims with an extended reading of Dick’s unmediated experience of President Wilson and the impoverished, “reptilian” representation of Dick having sex with Daughter.

The fourth and fifth chapters of Modernist Fiction and News probe the categories of identity and war as represented in Gertrude Stein’s autobiographical practices of the thirties and forties. In Rando’s view, Stein rejects identity for the way in which it emulates the structure of a news story that depicts the continuous development of the past into the present; therefore, he reads Everybody’s Autobiography as “a narrative of process, discovery, particularity, and nonidentity,” whereas The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas might be seen as newspaper, description, and historicist historiography (98). Rando upholds
Rando concludes with a coda that cogently meditates on the critical relevance of the study of modernism in our twenty-first century media ecology of vacuous tweets, ubiquitous likes, and sensational Gawker headlines. Returning to the introduction’s modification of historicist modernist studies, Rando proposes a presentist approach to modernism, “less a new modernist studies so much as a ‘now’ modernist studies […] [which] presumes that modernism matters most right now, and always has” (143). He echoes Wollaeger’s sense that the difficulty of modernism produces within its readers a necessary critical consciousness or what Rando terms “a habit of mindfulness”; he goes further to suggest that the study of inscrutable modernist texts constructs a dam in the incessant stream of digital information (145). Even though Rando does not completely flesh out this presentist modernism, one is left intrigued and sanguine about further critical inquiry into the interrelationship of contemporary mass culture and the legacies of modernism. Indeed, Modernist Fiction and News insists that the study of modernism in its contemporary media ecology is now most crucial because “[t]he problems that the modernists first faced have thus become our own urgent problems” (144).

Brandon Truett
The University of Chicago

Works Cited

Society Column continued:
Please also welcome our new officers listed and remember that, as of this fall, the membership dues for the IVWS have increased.

1-year student, retired, or not full-time employed membership ($15 US)

1-year regular membership ($35 US, with optional $5 or $10 donation to the society)

5-year regular membership ($130 US, with optional $25 or $50 donation to the society)

5-year retiree membership ($60 US)

To join, update your membership or donate, you can go to http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/how-to-joindonate.html.

Until next time,

Kristin Czarnecki
President, International Virginia Woolf Society

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serving from January 2015 through December 2017

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Society Column

What a lark it’s been so far this year for the International Virginia Woolf Society!

The Annual Conference

The Twenty-Fifth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries, organized by the incomparable Julie Vandivere and hosted by Bloomsburg University. The conference, which was from June 4-7, was a smashing success, with a cornucopia of stimulating panels and special events. Among the many highlights were three plenary dialogues—by Linda Leavell and Susan McCabe on patronage, friendship, and money in the creation of creative spaces; by Helen Southworth and Jane Garrity on “obscurity” and its relation to women; and by Melissa Bradshaw and Madelyn Detlof on the role of “big personality” modernist women writers on making and breaking the literary reputations of their female contemporaries.

Anne E. Fernald and Cassandra MacIntyre held a roundtable to announce their launching of a new journal, Feminist Modernist Studies, while a theory roundtable with Celia Marshik, Judith Brown, Emily Ridge, and Allison Pease considered theoretical issues that level the playing field between so-called major and minor figures.

Attendees also enjoyed a poetry reading by Cynthia Hogue, a fiction reading by Maggie Gee, “The Mark on the Wall” art exhibition in a beautiful gallery nearby, and a theatrical reading by award-winning playwright and actress Ellen McLaughlin, performed by Ms. McLaughlin and the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, called Septimus and Clarissa, followed by Mrs. Dalloway’s Party, where the audience had the chance to don fabulous 1920s-era hats and mingle with the cast.

Saturday’s banquet, always a festive occasion, was particularly special due to honored guests Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson. After the wonderful meal, Jean interviewed Cecil, asking him questions about Aunt Virginia, Uncle Leonard, and the ongoing allure of the Bloomsbury Group.

The conference was also notable for its impressive undergraduate presence. Dozens of students from Bloomsburg University and colleges across the country presented fantastic papers on the conference theme. Thank you, students! You are the future of the IVWS! The entire conference program may be viewed online at woolf.bloomu.edu.

Next up is MLA in Austin, Texas, January 7-10, 2016, and the IVWS has two scheduled panels, exact locations TBA:

Friday, 8 January 3:30-4:45 p.m.
363. Textual Woolf

Program arranged by the International Virginia Woolf Society

Presiding: Mark F. Hussey, Pace University, New York

1. “How Should One Read a Draft? Virginia Woolf and Moments of Publication,” John Young, Marshall University

2. “Kindling Taste; or, How I Tried Going Paperless and (Finally) Became a Common Reader,” Benjamin Hagen, University of South Dakota

3. “Macroanalyzing Woolf,” Jana Millar Usiskin, University of Victoria

For abstracts, contact mhussey@pace.edu

Saturday, 9 January 8:30-9:45 a.m.
451. Woolf and Disability

Program arranged by the International Virginia Woolf Society and the MLA Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession

Presiding: Maren T. Linett, Purdue University, West Lafayette


2. “Woolf, Wheelchairs, Feminism,” Lisa Griffin, University of Saint Andrews


For abstracts, contact mlinett@purdue.edu

Please join us at the MLA Woolf Society dinner on Saturday, January 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the highly recommended and festive-looking Fonda San Miguel (http://www.fondasanmiguel.com/). The reservation is for 30 people, so if you’d like a spot, please email me at kristin_czarnecki@georgetowncollege.edu.

“Virginia Woolf Fans Save the View…For Now”…read one recent headline as social media lit up in July about proposed construction in St. Ives, Cornwall that would obstruct the view of the Godrevy Lighthouse from Talland House, the Stephen family’s summer home from the time of Woolf’s birth in 1882 to the year of her mother’s death, 1895. Paula Maggio, Social Media Coordinator for the IVWS, immediately leapt into action, posting up-to-the-minute news about the plans on Facebook, Twitter, the VWoolf listserv, and other on-line spaces and encouraging Woolfians around the world to send letters of protest to the Cornwall Council about the ill-advised plan to build a block of flats and a parking garage that would forever mar a literary treasure.

Dozens of news outlets, including BBC News, The Guardian, and Telegraph, picked up the story, contacting Woolf scholars, common readers, and literary tourists, all of whom decried the proposed construction, and their voices were heard: After five days of frequent posts, tweets, and retweets, along with a letter-writing campaign to Cornwall Council, the Council put the plan on hold—for now. Council will take up the matter again at a later date. Consider following us on Twitter @IntVWoolfSoc to keep up with this issue and other IVWS news. If you would like to express your views on the issue, you can email the Cornwall Council Planning Committee at planning@cornwall.gov.uk. Please join us at the MLA Woolf Society dinner on Saturday, January 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the highly recommended and festive-looking Fonda San Miguel (http://www.fondasanmiguel.com/). The reservation is for 30 people, so if you’d like a spot, please email me at kristin_czarnecki@georgetowncollege.edu.

New Web Site Design and Membership/Fee Structure

Be sure to take a look at the fresh new design of the International Virginia Woolf Society website at http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/, which includes a wealth of information on the Society’s activities along with links to invaluable archived material. Many thanks to Melba Cuddy-Keane and Alex Nica for their stellar work on this! The site also includes a revised membership form reflecting a new fee structure intended to ensure the long-term viability of the IVWS. Our officers and especially our Membership Coordinators, Marilyn Schwinn Smith and Lois Gilmore, worked tirelessly over several months to streamline membership practices and bring files up to date.

(The Society Column continues on page 55)