TO THE READERS:

In a recent issue of the VWM, we asked for news of Virginia Woolf studies abroad that is, not in Britain, the United States and Canada. The protest and most unpromising came from Father Patrick Richards in Gin-Gin, Australia:

Thank you for your letter asking for some contribution for the Miscellany from our perspective here. But Gin-Gin is slap-bang in the middle of cane/cattle country. If V.W. couldn't cook a meal, ride a horse or drive a tractor, they wouldn't be interested in her... but thanks for asking anyway.

I suspect that wherever Father Richards lives, Virginia Woolf does also.

From L. L. Lee at Western Washington University, we heard of a novel entitled El Mundo Atunciante, by a Cuban writer named Reinaldo Arenas, which "demonstrates the living effect of Virginia Woolf—and that writers other than English and North American ones are aware not only of her techniques, stories, and characters, but also of her humor."

The novel is a mixture of fiction and history, and the hero, Friar Servando Teresa de Mier, arriving in an England with a fog as pervasive as Woolf's "Great Frost," meets "Orlando, rara mujer, or as the English translator has it an odd woman." "I was born about three hundred years ago," she explains. (He responds, gallantly, "you are very well preserved." She goes on to say that she was born a man, but became a woman just before she turned twenty (this time he responds, politely, "that happens often in English high society").

Prof. Lee goes on to recount the apocalyptic ending, where, in the midst of a naval attack, the "unfortunate friar dives into the sea to escape. Orlando dives after him—and here in the water the friar sees that although Orlando has a woman’s figure, her sexual organ was not like a woman’s at all: The poor friar swims off through the sea in mad fright, pursued by Orlando and her ‘Huge, Definitely Classified Organ,’ an organ that grows and grows—and keeps thrusting at Frey Servando. Indeed, he swims undersea all the way to America. It is only thus that he (and the reader) escapes Orlando, truly rara (rare as well as odd) mujer. In brief, a marvellous lobo-toma, not a lobotomy," concludes Prof. Lee.

Somewhat tamer, but also good news, is Luxmi Parasuram’s comprehensive letter about responses in India to Virginia Woolf. Although, as she reminds us, Virginia Woolf did not visualise India as part of the real world, and she quotes from The Waves and from Mrs. Dalloway to support her view, Woolf "spoke in a language that could fascinate an Indian mind."

"But for most of these scholars who inhabit the unreal dominion of Virginia Woolf, easy access to her manuscript collection and the vast array of Woolf scholarship remains well nigh impossible. Therefore, they make the best of whatever they can lay hands on and often delve deep into the sea of her primary texts to fetch their trophies of universal truths." So much the better, many would say, and indeed, the studies Prof. Parasuram (at the Dept. of English, Burdwan, Burdwan, W. Bengal) lists sound wonderful.

"Prof. Rajkumar in his Technique of Modern Psychological Novelists emphasizes her stream of consciousness theme and technique. But he is not sure how her novels relate to the business of the novelist to alter social conditions. Another enthusiast of her technique, Prof. Sisir Chatterjee, in his Virginia Woolf and the Capture of the Moment (1939) emphasizes her vision and its unlimited capacity for capturing intense moments of human experience. Another critic, Prof. Thakur, in his Symbolism in Virginia Woolf (1965), makes Virginia Woolf a seer and a symbolist who sees something stable and everlasting behind the Heraclitan fluidity and Bergsonian flux. For Thakur, Woolf’s vision is similar to those of Greek philosophers and Indian Yogis. Prof. Shiv K. Kumar stresses the influence of Bergson in her use of the stream of consciousness technique. Prof. N. S. Subramanian in his study treats her work as basically androgynous and feminine and notes the presence of suffering and experience in her work. For him, she was a realist with no political ideology. For Shaheen Wari, in his The Mind and Art of Virginia Woolf (1976) the dual nature of her vision, an inheritance from many schools of thought without a systematic study, becomes the main focus. He also notes that the women in her novels play contradictory roles—relationship with men and society go against their need to develop as individuals and artists. Prof. Luxmi Parasuram in her Virginia Woolf: the Emerging Reality (1978) dwells on her creative imagination which, by means of a reversion to the order of direct relationship between primordial consciousness and natural phenomena is able to establish an emerging pattern of meaning in support of a humanistic order. Prof. Vijay Kapur in her search for significant form and shaping vision in Virginia Woolf finds her meaning not in her existential contradictions, but in her sense of continuity of man’s creative will exemplified through emotional rhythms and cosmic cycles."

So Woolf scholarship is hot in India.

And lastly, we are pleased to hear from Suguru Fukasawa, Chair of the Virginia Woolf Society of Japan. It was founded in 1979 ("after my chat with Dr. Ruotolo in Rodmell.") and has now 120 members. Its address: President: Dr. Ineko Kondo, Dept. of English, Japan Women’s University, 2-8-1, Meijiroda, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112, Japan. They hold an annual congress and several meetings every year. Each congress includes a symposium and a special lecture as well as several papers, focusing each time on one work. They also publish (in Japanese) a Virginia Woolf Review.

Thanks to all who responded and we hope to hear further from our friends from far away. It is clear from even these few responses that Virginia Woolf is indeed a writer with universal appeal.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (see Anthony Netboy’s article in the VWM) has brought out a charming Harvest paperback edition of "Freshwater," as edited and prefaced by Prof. Lucio Ruotolo, this time with accompanying drawings by Edward Gorey.

The next issue of VWM will be edited by Prof. Lucio Ruotolo, Dept. of English, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305. The deadline will be March 1, 1986, and remember that items must be as condensed as possible, as our space is so limited. 800 words or so.

Remember too that we depend upon donations from individuals to print the Miscellany. We have only the most minuscule subsidies from our various universities, and the costs are ever rising. Just now, we have a rather worrying deficit. Contributions should be in checks for American dollars made out to SSU Academic Foundation, with a sub-designation to the Virginia Woolf Miscellany, and sent directly to our address: President: Dr. Ineko Kondo.

Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California 94928. We’d hate to have to stop publishing now that we are at our 25 issue! Thank you.
Interview: COMING THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE
Angelica Garnett interviewed by Virgil Bissett
(transcribed by Millie Olson of MPBN)

Excerpts reprinted, with permission, from The Puckerbrush Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1985

BISSET: Angelica, your recently published book, Deceived With Kindness: A Bloomsbury Childhood . . . This autobiographical memoir has been termed by Caroline Moorhead of the New York Times as a touching, prickly portrait of the Stephen sisters, Virginia Woolf and your mother, Vanessa Bell, and their troubled relationship, and as a first gesture on your part of exorcism.

GARNETT: I suppose that's just about the right word. Yes, yes.

BISSET: Is this exorcism from your Bloomsbury past?

GARNETT: Well, yes, of course, because Bloomsbury was what was the trouble with me, really. I grew up in the middle of a very very magic circle and I didn't know, I knew nothing but Bloomsbury until I was about 20 or more. And even when I did know that something else existed and even when I wanted to escape, it was a very hard thing to do because in fact one was made to feel that there wasn't anything to escape from. I mean, there was no friction. There was nothing you could fight against, because everybody always said you could do exactly what you liked. And I personally found it extremely hard to escape. I didn't manage to do it until I wrote my book. [ . . . ]

BISSET: You felt this psychological exercise was necessary for you, but when you began, did you think of publishing it?

GARNETT: I always thought of publishing it, I'm afraid, because I had been brought up to think that one should, one almost ought to create a work of art, and to write something which would be a means of communication with the public from the word 'go,' I thought of it like that far too early on. Now I think I should have thought of it to start with like a private diary, and I would have got there quicker.

BISSET: Was it hard, the initial starting?

GARNETT: Well, it was hard as soon as I realized that my real problem was to come to terms with my mother. And she was no longer there. I couldn't have done it while she was still alive. I didn't think. So it was a question of reliving my whole relationship with her, and that was very, very hard.

BISSET: Many feel, Angelica, that the whole Bloomsbury scene has been exhausting overworked, and yet I'm aware that many of my friends persist in keeping it alive.

GARNETT: I'm very glad to hear that because I think it's worth keeping alive. I'm critical now of my parents' sort of lack of morality, I think, but I'm extremely, I'm as much, as you might say, in love with their work as I ever was. I think it's wonderful.

BISSET: I've been told that this fierce interest in Bloomsbury is stronger in America than it is in Britain.

GARNETT: Well, yes, it is, because in Britain they know it by heart, they really do and they don't want much more of it. But over here you see Bloomsbury is identified more with my Aunt Virginia than with my mother and father. Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant are virtually unknown. Their art work hasn't been shown here very much. There was one beautiful, first-rate exhibition of my mother's work in New York at Davis Long Gallery about four years ago, and that was the first one. There was one at Vassar, recently, and also in Dallas. And that's about all, apart from a few pictures in private collections. And of course the States is so huge that you know it's just in certain centers that they're likely to be talked of and known about. But really the person who became, who is so well known in the States and is more enthusiastically regarded, as a great writer is my aunt, Virginia Woolf. And she is a great writer, I think. But it's partly because she was a woman, so, you know, for you she does represent some aspects of the feminist movement. And so she's become rather a cult figure. And she is in university programs, or whatever you call them, young people read her in a way that naturally will never happen to painters, you know, to my mother for instance. [ . . . ]

BISSET: A few years ago, I went to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, to an all-day symposium largely on the restoration of Charleston. Are you interested in this restoration project?

GARNETT: Yes, very much so. Until this year I lived in England, very close to Charleston, only about four miles away. And in fact, when my father, Duncan, died I was living there. And I'm a close friend of Deborah Gage whose uncle or cousin actually owned the house, from whom we bought it. I'm a member of the committee of the Charleston Trust and I've given it all the furniture which belonged to me, everything that belonged to the house I've given to the Trust, and quite a number of pictures. As far as the structural repairs to the house are concerned, it's pretty well finished, but we still have to wait for some of the art, the objects, I mean; the furniture, the wallpapers, and some of the things painted on the walls have to be restored. Because, I'm sorry to say, my parents were very careless about the sort of mediums they used. A lot of the things have got flaked off or destroyed and so they've got to be restored. And this work is being done by very, very good people, one of them actually a great friend of Duncan's, and so she knows very well what he liked and is able to do it very well. But all that's a bit slower. That'll be done in about 18 months I should think.

BISSET: So it is coming on.

GARNETT: It's coming on very well and we've raised a great deal of money but we still need more for the enforcement because one has to keep it going after it's been done. You can't rely on what comes in from the public, because the house is too fragile to have much public. We will have it open, but we will have to limit the number of people. [ . . . ]

BISSET: Well, Angelica, although you've been tormented by the Bloomsbury and family relationships in many ways, it seems you've surfaced a very healthy person. Has the book helped you in doing this?

GARNETT: Yes, I think the book has helped me enormously. More than I can say. I mean, having to, thinking that I had to, write the book. But once I started I had the feeling, you know, that I simply had to finish it, that I had to go on. And then I think I've been helped, also, since I wrote the book, by various criticisms of it which have made me see myself with still more perspective. Because I'm afraid I think the book is written with still a little particle of resentment in it. But now I feel, no, don't feel any resentment. I feel far more that if I had to write the book again, I would do it differently.

BISSET: How differently?

GARNETT: Well, I think I might be, on the one hand, I think I'd be, perhaps, even more severe, more in transition morally speaking. I used to be afraid to talk of morals, because we were brought up to think that morals were common and vulgar. And that one had to be amoral. I didn't really know what it meant. Now I see that that's quite impossible. You can't live like that. You've got to be moral in a perfect, straightforward, old-fashioned way. Even if you know all about Freud and all the rest of it, morality still counts. And so now I feel that they were very irresponsible; my parents, and this hurt me very deeply. But now I begin to understand why it was they behaved like that and how it was that they really didn't take those things very seriously and I have a great deal of sympathy for them. I'm quite sure that if my mother was alive today I would be able to talk to her freely about it all, you know, and then it would be all right.

BISSET: You seem to be doing your own psychoanalysis, which is always supposed to be good, if you do it correctly.

GARNETT: I think it's a very slow way, you know. I haven't ever been psychoanalyzed, but I've talked to a psychologist, which helped me a great deal, towards the end of the book. I don't think I could have finished if I hadn't somebody to talk to.

An annotated bibliography of 34 books integrated into a discussion of the 26 authors and works handprinted by the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press between 1917 and 1932 has been published by UMI Research Press, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. The ISBN is 8357-1694-6 and it is part of a series entitled Studies in Modern Literature: Virginia Woolf, No. 52. The 182 page book contains 86 facsimiles is available for $39.95; there are a limited number of review copies available.
Review: VIRGINIA WOOLF: A WRITER'S LIFE
by Lyndall Gordon

In an essay recently published in The Craft of Literary Biography, Lyndall Gordon describes the "detective excitement ... the irresistible momentum and direction" of her pursuit of "the elusive Eliot," a search leading to the publication of her much-praised biographical study, Eliot's Early Years. Reading this self-analysis of theory and method, we understand the pleasures of discovery and critical resistances aroused by Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life, another result of her confident detection.

In the essay Gordon retraces the road to what she calls "inevitable conclusions." Defying Eliot's warning against linking poet and poem, undaunted by bans on quotations, she sought out Eliot's scattered unpublished manuscripts, convinced that she would find a pattern in that "single-minded, almost obsessed career" by asking two central related questions: What does the work tell of life? What was his native (inherited) tradition? (TSE, pp. 178, 176, 177).

What she called her "hunch" was not a new idea. In 1916 Ottoline Morrell wrote in her journal, "Where does his queer neurosis come from, I wonder. From his New England Puritan inheritance and upbringing?" But if others had put the query, it was Lyndall Gordon who answered "yes" to it, backing her opinion with telling proofs from her adventurous research. She concluded that Eliot, another Arthur Dimmesdale straining for spiritual perfection, "was only superficially a man of his time" (TSE, p. 180). The one hundred and forty page monograph, sharply focused on the formative years of a pilgrim mind, is powerfully persuasive.

But when Gordon asks the same questions about Virginia Woolf's entire creative experience and once more discovers anachronism as the chief characteristic, she is less convincing. She tells us that Eliot's life was a constant withdrawal and paring down; we know that Woolf's creative life, although rhythmic, was constant exploration and expansion. Yet Gordon believes that the essence of Woolf's restless search can be explained by her inherited tradition—her attachment to the nineteenth century—personal, cultural, historical memories. Gordon concludes that "Woolf's celebrated modernity is, in a sense, spurious" (p. 12). She asks us to regard Woolf's commitment to the art of a new novel, to the fate of women's lives and to relationships apart from her Bloomsbury marriage as minor phases of a life and work essentially backward-looking.

We have had years of rich scholarship and criticism acknowledging Woolf's continuity with the past yet interweaving all these less nostalgic thoughts and feelings throughout her career. With James Ramsay I look at the lighthouse and mutter, "Nothing was only one thing." Believing in the power of Woolf's ghosts and her strong historical sense, grateful for the insights of a fine book which uses the unpublished material with imaginative skill, is lucid, sensitive, and intelligent, I am yet unwilling to accept as the dominating vision a Virginia Woolf whose imagination is forever caught in a Late, Late Victorian world, seeking always to "reconstruct and preserve" it (p. 4). The great action in Woolf's fiction is the constant questioning interplay between the past, present and future; she sought to understand and pass beyond her mother's experience as well as to recreate it.

But some parallel techniques in the Eliot and Woolf works are equally appropriate and successful. The structure of both is a gift by the subjects to the author; Gordon sets out to map "the dark side" of each artist, building the writer's story on the silent turning points of inner experience. This is the form of an Eliot poem, the plot of a Woolf novel. The biographer's difficulty is the location of the landmarks of a hidden landscape. Eliot barricaded himself behind his breastworks, wore a mask, cultivated unapproachability, abandoned intimates; Woolf left us almost 4000 letters, a spate of autobiography, testimony from many friends, yet the puzzle of many roles. Gordon is right in saying that the secret of writing self in both is elusive.

Where incontrovertible evidence is lacking the biographer needs intellectual tact. Sometimes Gordon delights us with a fresh discovery. She offers a stunning metaphor for Woolf's method in the image of the young Virginia following obscure, twisted footpaths to her destination rather than tramping the Cornwall high road. Yet we are jarred by her unsupported assertion that "this was the strange origin of her most experimental work" (italics mine, p. 78). Is this Woolf's insight or Gordon's? The accompanying quotations from the 1905 Cornwall diary do not include the "theorizing" Gordon mentions thirty-three pages later. In the same brisk, arbitrary way, she judges Woolf's behavior toward Vita Sackville-West as "insincere." (pp. 188, 255).

She shows modesty and perceptiveness in her accounts of the mental sufferings of Vivien Eliot and Virginia Woolf and in her deductions about their marriages. She is admirably content to declare Woolf's illness "a mystery," concluding "... there are aspects of her illness that are open to explanation and, even in madness, here remained a particular, rare mind" (pp. 57, 61). We are fascinated by her revelations of the Woolf's fantasy world, but not convinced that the marriage blotted out all other loves.

Gordon's style and critical methods work best in the chapters on 7. Woolf; here she uses life, art and the imaginative power of the past. Yet the originality of that novel's form raises the question: How can Gordon call Woolf's formal innovations "a jilted overlay" on the Romantic reverence? (p. 166). These are fuzzy terms, ignoring the achieved organic unity. Gordon argues that we cannot place Woolf among the moderns because her ambitions were "solitary" (p. 97). Is this not the hallmark of the pioneer? Gordon says Woolf was only briefly "the high priestess of the modern novel," a journalistic tag she would have abhorred (p. 167). Yet Woolf's goal of transforming the novel is in her first book review and is implicit in Between the Acts.

In this mood of mingled admiration and dissatisfaction we express astonishment that Gordon's scholarship and editing fall below the standard of Eliot's Early Years. Her inexact, incomplete notes do not lead us unerringly to her sources; To the Lighthouse is misquoted (p. 38); Woolf's diary phrases appear without quotation marks or footnotes; a witty description of Leonard from Richard Kennedy's A Boy at the Hogarth Press appears verbatim as Gordon's own observation (p. 138, 11. 1–2).

I draw back; space is limited. I am grateful, yet eager to argue. Lyndall Gordon's Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life offers, not brilliant revisionism, but a rich exploration of a narrowed point of view. She sees it as a complement to Quentin Bell's story of "the outer life" and dismisses "the feminist bias" of Phyllis Rose's A Woman of Letters (pp. 329). Surely we need all three biographies. I listen most happily to Lyndall Gordon when she acknowledges that "there is no end to understanding a life," and when, fortunately and frequently, fascinating details burst the bounds of her confining generalization and give us the credible contradictions of "life itself."

Jane Novak
Stanford University

NOTES


2. References to the Gordon biography will appear in the text by page numbers only.


Barney Bailey's (VWM, Spring 1985) teenage grandson, Brendan Murphy has been reading A Room of One's Own and sent VWM a thoughtful piece on his reaction to it, ending with the stirring peroration:

For a man to begin to understand a woman truly, he must read a woman's written work. Virginia Woolf is ideal for a man's introduction to women. Women do not need to know much more about men. The male-dominated societies of the past and present already show women how men think. Just look at the status women have had for years. Until this century they had almost no rights. Women have probably had enough of us men. They know where we are at. Now we need to see where women are at.

When Virginia Woolf died in 1941, she left a permanent mark on writing. Both women and men are forever affected by her. She encouraged women to write which has improved literature over the years. Thank you, Virginia Woolf.

Thank you, Brendan Murphy!
SIR THOMAS BROWNE AND ORLANDO

Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not a History, but a piece of Poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable. . . . (Religio Medici, II, 11)\(^1\)

These words from near the end of Sir Thomas Browne's greatest personal work could well serve as an epigraph to Orlando. For Orlando is in her thirties at the end of this work, which is less a history or biography than a fable of Orlando's life that spans more than three centuries, "a miracle of thirty years" indeed. And her life is a piece of poetry, that palimpsest "The Oak Tree" written over centuries.

While many readers have commented in general on the evocation of Browne in Orlando, no one has pointed out specific borrowings from Browne's subjects and themes or has commented on Woolf's and Browne's shared sensibility concerning the relation of the writer to his times. My purpose is not just to flush out the references to Browne's works in this novel, but to suggest the implication an understanding of Browne as a personality and as a writer can have for a reading of Orlando.

Perhaps the most apparent evocation of Browne in Orlando is Woolf's use of the word diuturnity, which recurs in Urn-Burial (O, 99-100). Not only is that word Browne's, but these reflections on the difficulty of measuring a life span are his as well:

> How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah, was work for Archimedes: common counters sum up the life of Moses his man. Our days become considerable, like petty sums, by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our days of a span long make not one little finger. (UB, V)

Such thoughts on the different times, as well as selves, in one person recur in Orlando (305-308) as they do in Browne's writings (RM).

Of course, Urn-Burial is the work Woolf most obviously had in mind in Chapter Two of Orlando. Like Browne musing on those ancient urns, Orlando "took a strange delight in thoughts of death and decay" and often visited the crypt of his ancestors (70-71). As he wonders just whose bones these are, as Browne wonders about the remains in the urns (UB, III), Orlando contemplates the theme of Browne's famous conclusion—the futility of earthly monuments and the insubstantiality of one's physical existence:

> Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuance... (UB, V)

"Nothing remains of all these Princes," Orlando would say, indulging in some pardonable exaggeration of their rank, "except one digit." (O, 71)

Here Woolf brings up the name of Sir Thomas Browne for the first time, though his writings have been suggested in earlier passages. For example, early in Chapter Two when Orlando's biographer reflects on the nature of Orlando's mysterious seven-day sleep, she touches on many of Browne's speculations on sleep and death (UB, V; RM, II, 11-12). Later when Orlando, pacing her gallery, forgets "the bones of his ancestors and how life is founded on a grave" (O, 72), his thoughts recall Browne's metaphor of the urn as womb (UB, III) and his observation that "death must be the Lucina of life" (UB, V), that is, the birth or deliverance.

After his unfortunate relationship with Nick Greene, Orlando reconsiders her status as a writer and rejects the superfluity of fame for the "value of obscurity" (O, 104). This is the theme of Browne's conclusion to Urn-Burial—"diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation"—as well as one motif in Religio Medici—"And therefore at my death I mean to take a total adieu of the world, not caring for a monument, history, or epitaph" (RM, I, 41). Orlando comes to admire not just the anonymous writers who have built the house of literature, but those who wrote with no purpose in mind, only for the writer to his times. My purpose is not just to flush out the references to Browne's works in this novel, but to suggest the implication an understanding of Browne as a personality and as a writer can have for a reading of Orlando.

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> . . . thinking how obscurity rids the mind of the irk of envy and spite; how it sets running in the vein the free waters of generosity and magnanimity; and allows giving and taking without thanks offered or praise given; . . . . (O, 105)

The issues of anonymity and androgyny in Orlando link Woolf's two main concerns in this novel, history and identity. History and identity, like Orlando's poem, are palimpsests. They are plural and open, not dialectical and closed. Woolf shares Browne's view that standard histories, like standard biographies, are "an Authentic kind of falsehood" (RM, II, 3) because the individual, like the world, is made up of "contrarieties":

> I find there are many pieces in this one fabric of man; [and that] this frame is raised upon a mass of Antipathies: I am one, methinks, but as the world; wherein notwithstanding there are a swarm of distinct essences, and in them another world of contrarieties; . . . (RM, II, 7)

Admitting that history, identity, life itself are constructions or fictions, "an Authentic kind of falsehood"; Woolf in Orlando offers support for different interpretations of life without arguing for any one. "Society is the most powerful concoction in the world and society has no existence whatsoever" (O, 194). "Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath"; and "clothes wear us"; changing "our view of the world and the world's view of us" (O, 187-8). There is no difference between the sexes, for Orlando remains "fundamentally the same" thoroughly, and the difference is "one of great profundity". In the midst of all these "contrarieties", Woolf offers her androgynous view not so much as a metaphysical theory as a way to remain suspended between opposing beliefs:

> Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male and female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above. (O, 189)

Like Browne, the narrator of Orlando often omits or downplays conclusions (O, 271, 291). The ironic, slightly mocking tone and the vacillating narrator of Woolf's novel check our efforts to read for a personal argument, just as Browne's humor and detachment keep us from taking him too seriously. The very first words of Woolf's novel shake our certainty about anything in this text: "He—for there could be no doubt of his sex." Similarly, the opening words of Religio Medici raise doubts and set the tone: "For my Religion, though there be several circumstances that might persuade the world I have none at all, . . . . " A reading of Browne induces us to approach a novel which recaptures Browne's attitude, themes, and style in so many ways with a willingness to remain suspended between beliefs. Orlando, to the extent that it resembles Browne's writings, combats a literal-minded, end-seeking, purposeful reading.

Pamela L. Caughie
University of Virginia

By way of information for Roger Fry fans, Panthea Reid Broughton sent VWM her lively unpublished article on Fry's connection with a Cambridge literary magazine, Granta. She has rediscovered an essay he wrote in 1889 on the subject of becoming an artist in "today's world." He ends by describing (tongue-in-cheek) the ideal art school which he plans to start, to be called on the principle of Hegelian dialectic, the "Impressionist-Pre-Raphaelite School," and assures his readers breezily that though it had not done much yet, "time will show." Panthea kindly says that she could send a photocast of this early essay to any interested readers. Her address: Dept. of English, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S AMERICAN PUBLISHER

Nearly all the works of Virginia Woolf were originally published in the United States by Harcourt, Brace, New York, and they still retain the rights for those of both Leonard and Virginia that are under copyright in this country.

Harcourt, Brace was a small publisher founded by Alfred Harcourt and Donald Brace, salesmen for Holt & Co., a well-known trade and textbook publisher. Like many book salesmen, they dreamed of one day owning their own company and in 1920 succeeded in finding the capital to do so. The original name was Harcourt, Brace and Howe, but Howe soon dropped out. They were very lucky be-
cause in 1920 they published Main Street by an obscure writer, Sinclair Lewis, which became a runaway best-seller. They also published several of his succeeding novels which put Lewis in the forefront of American novelists. He turned down a Pulitzer Prize in 1927 but in 1930 was awarded the Nobel Prize, the first American so honored. Harcourt, Brace never again had a Nobel Prize winner on its list. It was really not a literary publisher.

Through their London agent Frank Morley, brother of the novelist Christopher Morley, they signed up not only Virginia and Leonard Woolf but also Maynard Keynes whose Economic Consequences of the Peace they published in 1920 and Lytton Strachey, whose Queen Victoria, like Keynes' book, were best sellers. Morley was an editor with Faber & Faber in London as well as a scout for Harcourt, Brace. The Virginia Woolf books published by H.B. in the 1920s were Monday or Tuesday (1921), Jacob's Room (1922), The Common Reader (1925), Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To the Lighthouse (1927). An agreement between the Woolfs and H.B. was signed on January 9, 1927, as she was about to publish To the Lighthouse. Thereafter all her books until she died were issued by H.B. except Letter To A Young Poet, and Walter Sickert, a Conversation.

None of Virginia's novels were best sellers until The Years appeared in 1937. She had published articles in various American magazines and reviews but her name meant little to book buyers. Indeed, she was so obscure that when The Years appeared on the best seller list the New York Times sent a reporter to interview her in Rodmell. When he arrived at Monks House uninvited she refused to be interviewed and fled to her studio. On January 5, 1938, Virginia sent a brief note acknowledging receipt of a check for royalties on The Years amounting to $5,160.44, worth about £1,050, a substantial sum at that time.

Relationships with her American publishers were extremely cordial. I doubt they extended themselves, however, in promoting her books until one appeared on the best seller lists. In a letter of August 30, 1938, she thanked Brace for sending the author three copies of Three Guineas and commented, "It is very encouraging to write for so appreciative a publisher!" Whether the Woolfs ever met Brace I don't know, but there is a sardonic portrait of him in a letter by Lytton Strachey to his brother James of November 21, 1921:

I don't think you heard the end of my negotiations with Mr. Brace—they were perfectly hectic, and I spent days in which I alternated between the vast halls of the Hotel Cecil and the office of the Authors' Society, where poor Mr. Thing assisted me with his advice and ejaculations. Mr. Brace was a very pale, worn-out American, with the inevitable tortoises, and we had a high old time, struggling and bargaining in the strangest style. I made a gallant effort to recapture the copyright of Victoria, but I found that he wanted more for it than I was willing to give, and it ended with my agreeing to let him have my next book (on very good terms) and the offer of two others, in exchange for £1500 down. It was an offer which would nearly dropped dead, as with shaking hand and ashy face he drew out his cheque-book. He had begun by offering £1000; but at the last moment I was able suddenly to raise my terms, and in a jiffy I had made £300. I can only hope that in some mysterious way I haven't been let in—but Mr. Thing supported my every movement.

It was strange that Virginia Woolf should be published by a firm not known for its fiction, nor for cultivating fictional talent as Harper's cultivated Thomas Wolfe and Scribner's Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Harcourt and Brace were hard-headed business men and their editors were not literati like Eugene Sexton of Harper's or Blanche Knopf and Harold Strauss of Knopf.

In 1940 H.B. was busy promoting the six volume Life of Abraham Lincoln which made both the publisher and author rich—Sandburg was a struggling lean-and-hungry-looking reporter on the Chicago Daily News when I lived there in the early 1920s; when I saw him in the H.B. office in 1940 he was a filled-out, properous looking bourgeois.

Neither Harcourt nor Brace could have imagined in the 1920s and 1930s that Virginia Woolf's books would in the long run make more money than Sandburg's and, with the ancillary books of the Virginia Woolf Industry such as Quentin Bell's Life, that mushroomed in the 1960s and 1970s, become very important properties. By then the firm had gone public, both of the original partners were dead, and one of their textbook salesmen, Jovanovich, had gained control and put his name on the letterhead alongside theirs. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, with offices in New York and San Diego, is now a giant in the publishing industry, making advances of several hundred thousand dollars to writers of potential blockbusters. The Woolfs and their friends whose works the two hard-working partners had published surely provided a substantial portion of its success.

Anthony Netboy
Box 1249
Ganges, B.C. VOS 1E0

FROM THE READERS:
Dear VWM:
A recent concert at Skidmore College featured a premiere performance of a song by Wallace Berry set to lines distilled from Virginia Woolf's essay "The Moment: Summer's Night." I thought this information might be of interest for your Newsletter.

Isabelle Williams
Chair, Department of Music
Skidmore College

Dear VWM:
This is, I suspect, old news, but I promised the owners of Talland House, St. Ives, that I would send on their brochure. The current owners, Glyn and Cathy Roberts, have had the house a little over a year, maybe a bit more. They are friendly, hospitable and proud of their association with the Woolfs. They would like Americans to know that flats can be rented in Talland House. St. Ives is, of course, still very beautiful and it would be lovely to be there off season.

In another vein, much thanks for the utterly delightful and always fascinating VWM:

With good wishes,
Carole Locke

[While VWM cannot reproduce the entire brochure, we can indicate that most flats sleep 4, with extra beds brought in for kids, are self-catering, offer free parking (rare in St. Ives), and during the most expensive summer season, cost between 200 and 260 pounds. For more information, write or call the owners, Talland House, St. Ives, Cornwall TR26 2 EH, tel # (0736) 796368.]

Dear VWM:
I thought the enclosed note might be of interest to Woolf readers, many of whom may also be interested in the the fiction that Virago is republishing (Elizabeth Taylor is one of the novelists included).

"In Elizabeth Taylor's 1947 novel A View of the Harbour which contains a painter who attempts a view of the harbor and its light house and a woman who finishes her novel just as the novel itself concludes, and which has characters named Lily and Prudence— as in To the Lighthouse—there is the following quotation from a scene where the novelist, Beth, is reading to her child Stevie:

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
The night shall have but three;
There was Marie Seaton and Marie Beaton,
And Marie Carmichael and me.

These ballad heroines are of course named in A Room of One's Own. Elizabeth Taylor's debt to Woolf's clear in her late fiction as well as this early novel. It is interesting, I think, that she calls her 'indebtedness' to our attention with such an allusion, given Woolf's theme of thinking back through our literary mothers in 'In anatomy' concludes, and which has characters named Lily and Prudence— as in To the Lighthouse—there is the following quotation from a scene where the novelist, Beth, is reading to her child Stevie:

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The quote from Taylor is on page 227 of the Knopf edition.)

Dr. Victoria Middleton
c/o Dean of Studies
East China Petroleum Institute
Dongying, Shandong
People's Republic of China
Here is some information, the best we have at press time, on Woolf activities at the Chicago MLA:

I. Saturday, December 28 (3:30-4:45, Hyatt Regency, Belmont)
Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Criticism: Presiding: Prof. Murray Beja, Ohio State University
Papers to be presented by Mary Ann Caws, Grad. Center CUNY; Christine Froula, Yale; Thomas Matro, Rutgers; J. Hillis Miller, Yale.

II. Saturday, December 28 (5:15-6:45, Hyatt Regency, Belmont)
Virginia Woolf Society Reception: Cash bar

III. Sunday, December 29 (12-1:15, Hyatt Regency, Columbus 1, I.)
Virginia Woolf and James Joyce: Presiding: Prof. Christine Froula, Yale Univ.
1. "Subverting the Patriarchal Signature: Woolf and Joyce" by Prof. Karen Lawrence, University of Utah

2. "The Word Split its Husk: Modernist Encounters with Language" by Prof. Bonnie Kime Scott, Univ. of Delaware
3. "Radical Comedy: Woolf and Joyce" by Prof. Judy Little, Southern Illinois Univ.

Prof. Ruotolo would also like to ask VWM readers to consider appropriate subjects for next year's MLA program on Woolf. Please send suggestions by mail to Prof. Ruotolo (Dept. of English at Stanford University) or give them to him in person at Chicago.

Laura Gottlieb, secretary-treasurer of the VW Society, would like to thank all of us for such a good response to her request for payment of membership dues. The Membership directory should be in your hands by the time you receive the VWM. For those who would like to be members, send $10 (for employed persons) or $5 (for unemployed or retired persons) directly to Laura Moss Gottlieb, 118 Grand View Rd., State College, PA 16801. Thank you.

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