

# Virginia Woolf Miscellany

NUMBER 100

Spring/Summer 2023

**To the Readers:**

**The Evolution of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*  
Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Issue!**

***The Beginning...Who Woulda Thunk?!*  
What J. J. Wilson Says:**

Certainly not that ragtag group—Peggy Comstock, Rebecca Davison, Ellen Hawkes Rogat, Lucio Ruotolo, and I—who in the Fall of 1973 kind of cooked the idea up as a modest end run around the well-funded and ambitious (but short-lived) publication called, misleadingly, the *Virginia Woolf Quarterly*.

The journal we launched was named the “Miscellany” because of the serendipitous contributions that such a publication could cluster. The term itself has many fascinating synonyms, among them amphigory, commonplace, medley, potpourri, gallimaufry, salmagundi, lexicon, omnium gather, and vade mecum....

As I note, the founders were reaching out for a community they were not even sure was there: Virginia Woolf’s common readers, academics, and also “our people,” the rare ones who had already embraced Woolf. Remember, this was in the “Lost (before Found)” era when all of Woolf’s books, except *Orlando*, were out of print, much less in the canon. Amazingly, people did respond to the first tentative three-and-a-half-page issue (now a collector’s item because of a misspelling of Virginia Woolf’s name). Even the *TLS* deigned to recognize us by April 21, 1978, in a rather vapid article with the trivializing headline “Woolf Whistles.” Their lede:

What on earth would she have thought of it? As someone who could never get enough praise and reassurance, Virginia Woolf’s first reaction to the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*—a sturdy pamphlet which has reached nine issues already—would have been simple bliss [...] grateful (one hopes) she would have learnt of the existence of Woolfians.

In the same file of early responders is the more telling request from the McCain Library of Agnes Scott College in Georgia asking to be added to our mailing list; mind you, it was addressed to “Dear Sir,” which was a bit tone-deaf, but that is perhaps the price one pays for being nicknamed J. J.

Carolyn Abst (who was then working in Sonoma State’s Reprographics Department) moonlighted in the basement of Darwin Hall after working hours for no money with me hanging over her shoulder. She determined the design, the font, the *everything* of the first *VWMs*. The paper choice was Carolyn’s, the dark beige, though one issue was printed on



You can access all issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* online in PDF format on WordPress at <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/>

*Virginia Woolf Miscellany*  
**Editorial Board and the Editors**  
page 4

**VWM Guidelines for Submissions**  
page 7  
**Editorial Policies**  
page 9

INTERNATIONAL VIRGINIA WOOLF  
SOCIETY COLUMN  
page 40 (continues on page 39)

IVWS OFFICERS AND  
MEMBERS-AT-LARGE  
2021-2023  
page 39

**In Memoriam:**  
**Suzanne Bellamy**  
22 September 1948–20 June 2022  
page 9



**33rd Annual Conference on  
Virginia Woolf  
Woolf, Modernity, Technology**  
California State University, Fresno  
Organizer: J. Ashley Foster  
6-9 June 2024  
page 6



CFPs for the *VWM*:  
**Issue 102**  
**21<sup>st</sup>-Century Perspectives on  
Virginia Woolf: Feminisms, Genders,  
Politics, and Patriarchy**  
Spring 2024  
Editors:

Kimberly Coates and Vara Neverow

**Issue 103**  
**Virginia Woolf and George Eliot**  
Fall 2024  
Guest Editor:  
Charlotte Fiehn

**Issue 104**  
**Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence**  
Spring 2025  
Guest Editor:  
Benjamin Hagen

**Issue 105**  
**Virginia Woolf and Failure**  
Fall 2025  
Guest Editor:  
Mary Wilson

pages 21 and 22

To propose a special topic, please contact  
Vara Neverow at  
[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)

blue paper because it was a special SUMMER issue that featured correspondence that had just been discovered — very exciting!

The mail-outs were organized by Karen Petersen, with her usual clarity and celerity (she had once worked for the U.S. Post Office and so...); and yes, the teams collated, folded, stapled, labeled, and mutilated the *VWMs*—but the stamping and sending out was funded and done by SSU, bless ’em!

The twice-yearly task of editing the *VWM* was mainly allotted to people who could persuade their schools to underwrite some of the very mild expenses of printing at Reprographics at Sonoma State University. Of course, the editors also had to have something to say.

The *Miscellany* eventually got more funding both from SSU’s School of Humanities and from the newly established Virginia Woolf Society. Its printing became a proud product of the Reprographics Department which had moved out of the basement into its own building at the other end of the SSU’s growing campus. Reprographics typeset those first issues since that era was before computers, and yes, we typed the copy.

And when Sonoma State hosted the 2002 Annual Virginia Woolf Conference, all the participants marched over to Reprographics and were shown the whole process by the quite honored and pleased workers—it was a darling moment.



Teams at Sonoma having fun folding an issue for mailing

As was mentioned before, the very first issue was sent out with Woolf’s name misspelled<sup>1</sup>—I had made some editing corrections for the copy but did not ask to see the results because time and duties

<sup>1</sup>See page 41 for a photograph of the error.

were looming. Well, it was a learning experience—I never skipped that last check up again, but there were some other changes that had to be made by hand.<sup>2</sup>

The mailing list started small, but as the Virginia Woolf Society formed in 1976 with a guaranteed slot at the annual MLA Convention, and as the word spread, the readership expanded.



J. J. Wilson hovers over a mailing team member....



J. J. Wilson puts copies of the *Miscellany* into the back of a car to deliver to the Sonoma State University mail room

Some of the early days and ways of the *VWM* are still stashed in a folder of miscellaneous correspondence in the archives at the Sitting Room Library<sup>3</sup> in Sonoma County.<sup>4</sup> There, I recently located some information on the financing of the *Miscellany*, some letters about the transfer of “power” from Sonoma State University to Southern Connecticut State University,<sup>5</sup> when Vara Neverow inherited the perfectly imperfect gem. Among these papers are some charming photos of the “send-out-teams” that show the hive of busy bees humming and buzzing as they prepare the copies for mailing.

And, if I had known we would be history, I’d have taken notes...



<sup>2</sup> For example, Issue 13 had to be manually corrected because of the typo in the issue number; also, one issue was actually never printed due to another typo: Issue 59 does not exist. The numerical sequence shifted to Issue 60. Thus, Issue 100, dedicated to the history of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, is really Issue 99. These are just a few of the very minor quirks in the history of the journal.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://sittingroomlibrary.org/>. Of interest is Catherine Hollis’s article, “A Library One Can Eat In” (see page 31 in Issue 95 of the *Miscellany*). Catherine Hollis was the guest editor of that issue with the topic “The Common Book Collector”: [https://viriniawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/vwm95springsummer2019\\_final.pdf](https://viriniawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/vwm95springsummer2019_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> When documents of the history of the Virginia Woolf Society were acquired by the University of Toronto, several troves of the *Miscellany* were also added to the collection. The information about the documents related to the *Miscellany* can be viewed here: [https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special\\_collections/f51\\_international\\_virginia\\_woolf\\_society/series\\_31](https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/f51_international_virginia_woolf_society/series_31). The list of items can be accessed here: [https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special\\_collections/f51\\_international\\_virginia\\_woolf\\_society/boxfile\\_list](https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/f51_international_virginia_woolf_society/boxfile_list)

<sup>5</sup> Both Sonoma and Southern had previously been state colleges—SSU transitioned in 1978 but SCSU did not until 1983.



### “What a lark! What a plunge!”: Inheriting the *Miscellany* What Vara Neverow Says:

On 29 December 2002, during the MLA Convention in New York City, the Woolves were gathering at the party hosted by Jessica Berman at her parents’ beautiful apartment on Riverside Park. J. J. Wilson approached me while everyone was noshing and clinking and chattering and invited me to become the editor of her beloved scrappy journal, the *Miscellany*.

I was astounded, thrilled, and, yes, terrified to be offered such an extraordinary role. Susan Wegener and Debra Schotten (both of whom were graduate English students at Southern) were standing there with me when J. J. made the offer, and they agreed eagerly to assist in the transition from Sonoma State U to Southern.

One of the first ideas Susan and Debra proposed was for the *Miscellany* to go digital, and it was eventually fully available online from Issue 1 to the most recent iteration of the journal. It is free, accessible, searchable, and downloadable in PDF format.<sup>6</sup> However, the *Miscellany* also continues today to be produced in print primarily for members of the International Virginia Woolf Society and for libraries (including the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, the Sorbonne, and the British Library). The digital versions are also accessible through databases including EBSCO and Gale.

One critical factor for us was to find the right place to have the printing done since we didn’t have a Reprographics Department at Southern. Susan reached out Peter Sheldon, a delightful young man who managed the then-Kinko’s office in downtown New Haven. Later, when Kinko’s transitioned in the takeover by FedEx, Peter moved from New Haven to the FedEx office in Branford, CT. He was the invaluable person who oversaw the printing of the *Miscellany* for 15 years until he returned to Michigan, his home state, in June 2018, where he planned to continue to work for FedEx. The new Branford FedEx Office’s current manager and staff have continued to support the *Miscellany* in invaluable ways.

In Spring 2003, the *Miscellany* transitioned smoothly from one coast to the other, traveling from Sonoma State University in California to Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven and journeying from one “red-brick style” campus to another.<sup>7</sup> Once it relocated, the *Miscellany* began to evolve from a very short format (the first issues started with just four pages using a single folded 17.5” x 22.5” “parent” sheet) to increasingly longer issues. The first issue published at Southern

<sup>6</sup> The website also includes the two online-only collections of selected papers from the 2002 and 2004 Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf. The 2002 conference, *Across the Generations*, was hosted by J. J. Wilson at Sonoma State University, and the 2004 conference, *Back to Bloomsbury*, was hosted by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari. Both volumes were published by Merry Pawlowski through California State University—Bakersfield.

<sup>7</sup> J. J. points out that her campus features the Brutalist “prison concrete” style of design rather than “friendly bricks.” SCSU is the “other” university in New Haven, Yale being *the* university. Southern was originally founded for young women seeking to teach children and adolescents.



was more than 20 pages long, and subsequent issues became even more robust. The *Miscellany* now averages around 60 pages.

J. J. had already invited me to craft the special topic for Issue 62 of the *Miscellany* before the transfer. It was the very first issue hosted at Southern Connecticut State and was published in Spring 2003. The theme focused on Woolf and the film *The Hours*, which had been released in December 2002, and the Woolfians who attended the New York MLA Convention were invited to watch the film gratis.<sup>8</sup>

Sadly, the next issue of the *Miscellany*, # 63 (Summer 2003), was special in a heartbreaking way. It was dedicated solely to remembrances of Lucio Ruotolo, one of the founding editors, who had passed away suddenly in June 2003. This was Lucio, who described (on pages 1 and 2 of Issue 4, Fall 1975 of the four-page *Miscellany*) his amazing experience of living at Monks House for a year; Lucio, who edited and published Virginia Woolf's one and only play, *Freshwater*, while he stayed at Monks House; Lucio, who spoke brilliantly at the second Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf held in 1992 in New Haven; Lucio, whom we should never have lost so suddenly or so soon. Lucio's special issue is the only one that was printed on green paper.

Issue 72 is a stunning 75 pages long that features the special topic on Leonard Woolf. The special topic was conceived and edited by AnneMarie Bantzinger. It required 18 parent sheets, which made that unique brochure too thick to be stapled. The spine had to be bound and trimmed. It is the only issue that is smaller than its peers at 8 x 10 ½ inches in measurement, and it stands out in multiple ways including, as noted, its unique size and shape.

Over the years, new features were added, including the middle column on the first page of every issue that lists upcoming events among other things and a Table of Contents (which was urgently needed once the *Miscellany* had expanded in size). The amount of information provided in each issue expanded to several pages devoted to providing information about Woolf studies and Woolf organizations that are included in every issue. The Society Column, which offers a report from the International Virginia Woolf Society in each issue was introduced during the "Sonoma Era" when Issue 20 offered, on the last page, a short statement about the Society from Brenda Silver. In Issue 21, Susan Squier, the President of the Society, detailed the Woolf events in the 1983 MLA Convention program and mentioned five major books on Woolf that had just been published or were forthcoming. The Society Column continues today to contribute a range of news items and events for Woolfians who peruse the *Miscellany*.

In Issue 53 of the *Miscellany*, a drawing of a butterfly appeared beneath the Society Column. In the next issue, it was above the column. Then there were two of them, bracketing the title, which also had transitioned from the bold feature in the standard font used in the issue to a stylish cursive font. Later, the butterflies were replaced with various stylistic flowers. In 2000, the Society held a competition for a logo. Melba Cuddy-Keane's design won the contest. The logo appeared for the first time in Issue 75, placed on either side of the title (the images of the butterflies and the logo can be viewed above the title for this section). This sustained association between the *VWM* and the Society is a great benefit to Woolfians. There are many other details of the evolving publication, but this introduction is already too long!



<sup>8</sup> Issue 61 was eight pages while Issue 62 was 21 pages long, with a sheet of paper as an insert. It was also the first issue of the *Miscellany* to be stapled and, unlike the prior issues, it was not folded and taped with the address on the lower part of the last page but was mailed in an envelope. (The insert in Issue 61 offered an opportunity to renew or initiate one's membership in the Virginia Woolf Society, now the International Virginia Woolf Society; the *VWM* and the IVWS continue to be affiliated today. The IVWS funds the *VWM* so that members have free copies of the publication, and the editor of the *Miscellany* holds an ex officio position in the IVWS..

### ***On Taking Woolf for Granted*** **What Alec Pollak Says:**

Among the things that contemporary readers of Virginia Woolf often take for granted is that Woolf counts as a "major" writer for the purposes of academic scholarship, that Woolf is both a feminist and a "great" author (viewing the two categories as compatible rather than diametrically opposed), and that others have read Woolf's work at the same rates they have read the work of James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, or any other Modernist touchstone. Long-time readers of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* know that this hasn't always been the case—that Woolf hasn't always been the "worldwide phenomenon" she is today—but it can be a surprise to newer readers to learn that Woolf's journey to the pedestal of the twentieth-century canon was hotly contested, and that those who championed her long faced "hostility, rudeness, and obstruction" for their efforts as noted by Regina Marler (138). It was certainly a surprise to me when, in a college seminar, I encountered Jane Marcus and Quentin Bell at loggerheads in *Critical Inquiry* where, in the mid-1980s, Marcus and Bell had quarreled in print not only over Woolf's politics but also her very worthiness. But by 2014, even the stodgiest practitioners of literary studies exalted Woolf and recognized her feminism as part of her writing and her legacy. I was astounded to learn that it had ever been possible, let alone desirable or necessary, to regard Woolf as an innovative stylist rather than a political thinker, and to interpret her works accordingly.

I soon learned that the Virginia Woolf I inherited when I was pursuing my degree, and that most readers take for granted today, was an almost completely unique American invention, a once-controversial figure enabled by American feminist scholars of the 1970s who fought to debunk the prevailing myth of Woolf as the "Invalid Lady of Bloomsbury," beset as she was by the "stigma of second-rateness," whose legacy had been, according to Nigel Nicolson, "virtually obliterated" (7) in Great Britain by 1982. This isn't to say that only American or only feminist readers appreciated Woolf throughout the 1970s—the varied contents of *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* attests to that. But it was American feminists, largely, who recognized Woolf's value and the absurdity of her neglect; it was they who established a communications network devoted to the study of Woolf, the condition of possibility for widespread engagement that ultimately rewrote Woolf's reputation and installed her as one of the twentieth century's literary greats.

This communications network began, in part, with the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*; indeed, the *VWM* was the communications network in its entirety, for a time. The *VWM*'s inaugural goals were archival and bibliographical; the editors stated that their goal was to "note the location and availability of Woolf manuscripts and papers; to inform readers of publication dates for forthcoming work; to summarize and in some cases review the latest books and articles on her work and life; to inform our readers about various conferences, exhibitions, and other public events of interest; to air the controversies that are the healthy consequence of the new directions in Woolf criticism" (Peggy Comstock et al. 1). Scholars mailed in to announce the contents of Woolf's American and British archives, and so the *VWM*, in addition to its other functions, became a de facto finding aid; its bibliographies and book reviews revised the parameters of Woolf's corpus and fortified Woolf studies as a field with a core (albeit quickly growing) corpus. The relationships it enabled begat conferences, seminars, and edited editions; the first MLA seminar to take Woolf as its primary subject arose in the pages of the *VWM*. Readers of all stripes and scholars from all fields began to think about Woolf differently than they had before—or began to think about Woolf at all. This uptake, widespread and diverse as it was, was a specifically feminist accomplishment, because it was the founders of the *VWM* (and later the Virginia Woolf Society, now the International Virginia Woolf Society) who recognized the misogyny of Woolf's so-called second-rateness, strove to correct it, and, in so doing, contributed to the renaissance that followed.

At the beginning, though, the *VWM* faced backlash. Ellen Hawkes in the "To the Readers" section of Issue 19 (Fall 1982) countered those who

derided the *Miscellany* for its short-form articles and claimed that some of the contributions were just “so much ‘fan’ mail” or the “uncensored outpouring[s]” of hobbyists. The *VWM* produced the same primary-source reference material and communication channels for Woolf studies that *James Joyce Quarterly* did for Joyce scholarship, but the *Miscellany* was subordinated to journals like the *James Joyce Quarterly* much as Woolf herself was subordinated, in the modernist imaginary, to Joyce. It was, Carolyn Heilbrun reminded readers, a matter of sexism, plain and simple: “If you admire Auden, that’s good taste,” she explained, but “if you admire Sylvia Plath, it’s a cult” (Heilbrun qtd. in Wilson, Issue 19: 1). The same could be said for Woolf. “Either a woman author isn’t studied,” Heilbrun elaborates, “or studying her is reduced to an art of misplaced religious fanaticism” (37).

Backlash against the *VWM* ranged from the outright disdain of arrogant Modernists to the benign skepticism of Woolf’s executor, her nephew Quentin Bell, who was “baffled by the way [Woolf] has been raised to the status of Joan of Arc by American feminists” (see Stead 10), and who long resisted the notion that Woolf was a subject worthy of extensive political and critical inquiry in her own right. Although Nicolson appreciated American feminists’ interest in Woolf, he nevertheless cautioned that “[Woolf] should not be allowed to eclipse others who were equally important in the history of ideas” (9).

But feminist scholars stayed the course, with the *VWM* their primary mouthpiece. Starting in the early 1970s and continuing into the 1980s, the *VWM* documented the discovery and publication of Woolf’s previously unpublished writings; enabled an outpouring of edited collections, reissues, and scholarly research; and served as an up-to-date guide of primary and secondary Woolf sources. Its open-source practice was especially important in Woolf’s case because, although Bell had authorized publication of six volumes of Woolf’s letters (published between 1974 and 1980) and five volumes of diaries (published between 1977 and 1984), he wasn’t interested in making the rest of Woolf’s archive accessible in published form (see Stead 10). In 1978, Bell informed American feminist scholars that they had reached “the bottom of the barrel” (Bell qtd. in Marcus, “Review” 4)—and yet, as Jane Marcus continues, this “bottom” would yield to manuscript editions of *Virginia Woolf’s “The Years”: Evolution of a Novel*, edited by Grace Radin, and *Melymbrosia*, the early version of *The Voyage Out*, edited by Louise DeSalvo, as well Woolf’s prolific reading notebooks, edited by Brenda Silver, all in 1981. Again, in 1982, Bell reiterated that, after the release of the final volumes of Woolf’s letters and diaries, “there [would be] nothing left but a bit of PhD fodder” (Bell qtd. in Stead 10); again, this “PhD fodder” gave rise to Woolf’s correspondence with Vita-Sackville West (1985), edited by DeSalvo and Mitchell Leaska; her diaries from 1897-1909 (1990), edited by Leaska; and even the manuscript edition of *A Room of One’s Own* (1992), edited by S. P. Rosenbaum. Via the *VWM*, Woolf enthusiasts and scholars took matters into their own hands, inaugurating a collective bibliographic effort that made up for the estate’s reticence.

This surge in interest and outpouring of material thoroughly “changed the subject” in Woolf studies and literary studies more broadly; Woolf began to flourish (see Marcus, Introduction xx). Bryony Randall quotes Jane Goldman’s observation that Woolf began as “the handmaiden to the literary men of modernism” (35) and points out that Woolf now consistently ranks among the “top three or four” most-cited authors in texts that “aim either to provide an introduction to [modernism] or to offer a wide, if not comprehensive, survey of perspectives on modernism” (29). We might disidentify, today, from the polemical mode of select early critics—Marcus once described Woolf as “a guerrilla fighter in a Victorian skirt” (1)—but these polemics served the crucial purpose of refuting the sexism of the 1970s Bloomsbury revival and inviting curious readers to interpret and relate to Woolf in a manner far more akin to the manner we’ve grown accustomed to today. What was once controversial—that Woolf is both meritorious and a feminist—is now commonplace, and we can trace ascent of these notions across the

pages of the *VWM*, which remind us that there were, once, arguments to the contrary. Woolf’s revival and transformation began with a feminist readership and the intellectual infrastructure of the *VWM*, which have been inspiring and welcoming Woolf aficionados ever since.



### A Few Concluding Thoughts about the *Miscellany*

Over the years, the *Miscellany* has expanded and shifted in various ways but has always continued to embrace the same inclusive values as those of the founders. The contributors range from young scholars and independent scholars to academics, artists, and poets. In addition to the “special topics” such as this one on the evolution of the journal, there are also always book reviews and “Truly Miscellaneous” essays that are not related to any particular theme. The contributions tend to be longer now than they were originally—typically essays are in the range of 2,500 words rather than 800 words, but very short work is also acceptable. And there are numerous illustrations in each issue, many of which are drawn from free online websites now.

Since its founding, the *Miscellany* has published numerous types of information. Below is a list of contributions that have been included.

Articles (whether for special topics or for “truly miscellaneous” submissions)	Letters to the editor	Membership information and news from the International Virginia Woolf Society
Selected essays from conferences and from competitions	Unpublished letters and other documents	Notifications of events and programs
Poems, artworks, drawings, photographs, and illustrations	Reports from events including various conferences	Calls for papers and submissions for the <i>Miscellany</i> and other publishing entities
Book reviews	Remembrances and tributes	Woolf-related MLA Convention program listings and other Woolf-related conferences including the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
Reviews of films, TV series, performances, and exhibits	Occasional advertisements	Membership information about Woolf-related organizations

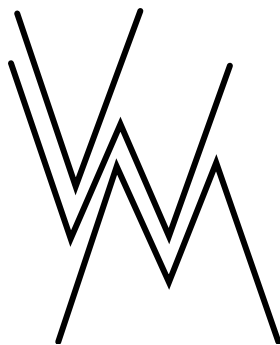
What is the purpose of the *Miscellany*? It is an accessible resource for all those who wish to engage with Virginia Woolf studies and Woolf culture. The *Miscellany* offers a range of differing perspectives and engages with Woolf in multiple ways. The *Miscellany* accepts work relating to the Bloomsbury Group and to Woolf’s contemporaries as well as her cultural era and her influences today. The *VWM* accepts submissions from academics, graduate and undergraduate students, independent scholars, and common readers and also provides news and updates while connecting Woolfians to one another. The *Miscellany* is and always has been a community and offers both a print version and free online access to all previous issues.

We welcome all readers and contributors to join us in celebrating the fiftieth year (!) of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

*J. J. Wilson and Vara Neverow,*  
**Former and Current Editors of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany**  
 with  
*Alec Pollak,*  
**Guest Co-Editor**

## Works Cited

- Goldman, Jane. "Modernist Studies." *Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies*. Ed. Anna Snaith. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 35-59.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. "The Politics of Mind: Women, Tradition, and the University." *Gender in the Classroom: Power and Pedagogy*. Ed. Susan Laine Gabriel. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1990. 28-40.
- Marcus, Jane. Introduction. *Art and Anger: Reading Like a Woman*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1988. xiii-xxi.
- . "Review of Grace Radin's: *Virginia Woolf: The Years* (University of Tennessee Press, 1982)." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 20 (Spring 1983): 4-5.
- . "Thinking Back Through Our Mothers." *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Jane Marcus. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1981. 1-30.
- Nicolson, Nigel. "Bloomsbury: The Myth and the Reality." *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration*. Ed. Jane Marcus. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987. 7-22.
- Randall, Bryony. "Woolf and Modernist Studies." *Virginia Woolf in Context*. Ed. Jane Goldman and Bryony Randall. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012. 28-39.
- Rosenbaum, S. P. "The Manuscript Version of A Room of One's Own." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 38 (Spring 1992): 4.
- Stead, Jean. "The Fading of Bloomsbury." *The Guardian* 6 March 1982: 10.
- Sackville-West, Vita and Virginia Woolf. *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Louise A. DeSalvo and Mitchell A. Leaska. Introduction by Mitchell A. Leaska. New York: Morrow, 1985.
- Wilson, J. J. "To the Readers." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 18 (Spring 1982): 1.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals, 1897-1909*. Ed. Mitchell A. Leaska. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.
- . *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks*. Ed. Brenda R. Silver. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981.



Many thanks to the International Virginia Woolf Society for its generous and continuing support of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.



Be sure to check Paula Maggio's *Blogging Woolf* for the history of many things Woolfian and for much up-to-date information.  
[bloggingwoolf.wordpress.com](http://bloggingwoolf.wordpress.com)

## The Virginia Woolf Miscellany Online

All issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* are available at:  
[virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com](http://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com)

All issues are fully searchable in PDF format.

The current editorial guide to formatting for the *Miscellany* as well as the most recent issue are available directly on the website. All previous issues can be accessed through the links to the archives.

Two indexes of the *Miscellany* can be accessed at:  
<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/indexes-of-the-virginia-woolf-miscellany/>

If you have questions, see an error, or wish to acquire a print version of an issue, please contact Vara Neverow at  
[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)

All issues to the present as well as those from Fall 1973 to Fall 2002 should be available in digital format through  
EBSCOhost's

Humanities International Complete and Literary Reference Center.  
More recent issues are also available through

*ProQuest Literature Online (LION)* and Gale Group/Cengage.

**Please do not republish, replicate, copy, or post any of the essays, poems, illustrations or images from the *Miscellany* without explicit permission from the Editors and the author.**

**If you are the author, then you are free to post and share your work (but you should not republish it elsewhere without notifying the Editors).**



## VIRGINIA WOOLF MISCELLANY

### EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

**Kristin Czarnecki**

[keczarnecki@gmail.com](mailto:keczarnecki@gmail.com)

**Jeanne Dubino, Appalachian State University**

[dubinoja@appstate.edu](mailto:dubinoja@appstate.edu)

**Mark Hussey, Pace University (Emeritus)**

[mhussey.emeritus@pace.edu](mailto:mhussey.emeritus@pace.edu) or

[markh102@gmail.com](mailto:markh102@gmail.com)

**Vara Neverow, Southern Connecticut State University**

[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)

**Merry Pawlowski, California State University-Bakersfield**

[mpawlowski@csub.edu](mailto:mpawlowski@csub.edu)

**Diana L. Swanson, Northern Illinois University**

[dswanson@niu.edu](mailto:dswanson@niu.edu)

### EDITORS

**Vara Neverow, Managing Editor**

[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)

**Martin Brick**

[brickm@ohiodominican.edu](mailto:brickm@ohiodominican.edu)

**Charlotte Fiehn**

[cfiehn@utexas.edu](mailto:cfiehn@utexas.edu)

**Lesley Higgins**

[l9higgins55@gmail.com](mailto:l9higgins55@gmail.com)

**Celiese Lypka**

[celiese.lypka@umanitoba.ca](mailto:celiese.lypka@umanitoba.ca)

**Patrizia Muscogiuri**

[p.muscogiuri@gmail.com](mailto:p.muscogiuri@gmail.com)

**Cecilia Servatius**

[cecilia.servatius@edu.uni-graz.at](mailto:cecilia.servatius@edu.uni-graz.at)

### BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

**Karen Levenback**

[klevenback@att.net](mailto:klevenback@att.net)



## Woolf, Modernity, Technology

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf

Organized by J. Ashley Foster

woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu

California State University, Fresno

June 6-9, 2024

Pre- and Post-conference activities June 5 and 9, 2024 to  
Yosemite National Park and Sequoia/Kings Canyon

Submission Deadline: January 15, 2024

"On or about December 1910 human character changed."

– Virginia Woolf, *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*

----- Redux:-----

"On or about December 2022 human character was called into question."

– Informed by the emergence of ChaptGPT and evolving AI

The organizers of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf invite paper, panel, workshop, and exhibition proposals that engage with our 2024 theme, "Woolf, Modernity, Technology."

Technological innovation regularly inspires a social, cultural, artistic, and political revolution. Though evolving artificial intelligence programs are the most recent iteration of this, epistemological and ontological crises underwritten by technics reverberate through modernity. This conference embraces the expansive, cosmopolitan, and transnational turn in modernist studies to trace the interaction of networks with the aesthetics, techniques, and vocabulary of modernisms and the way in which these modernisms are indebted to modernity's technological ruptures and innovations.

Accelerating technological climates force us to ask, what does it mean to be human? If a machine can make and replicate art and literature, and possibly even innovate in the arts, where does that leave space for us as creators and contributors? Do human-agent interactions redefine relations again, redoubling what Woolf said in 1924, that "All human relations have shifted," which leads to "a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature"? Where do we locate the nexus of the "little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark" that Woolf wrote about in *To The Lighthouse*? Is it (can it be?) contained in the output of an algorithm?

"Woolf, Modernity, Technology" brings into relief relations and tensions between literature, art, technology, modernity, and humanity that modernism broadly, and Woolf specifically, has long negotiated. Here, we define both modernity and technology in their most expansive and loosest expressions: modernity invites historical, political, economic, cultural, and theoretical approaches – among many others – and technology invites thinking on techné and technics, technology, technicity, technique, tool, on art, writing, and praxis as technologies.

Possible topics might include:

- gender, race, sexualities, and relationships in the rise of modernity and an age of innovation
- modernity and/or technology and ontology, metaphysics, ethics, epistemology
- techné, tech, technics
- technology's and modernity's relation to nature or the natural
- digital humanities, critical digital pedagogy, or pedagogical experiments with technology
- writing, communication, or travel technologies
- extended, augmented, and virtual realities
- aesthetic innovation, poesis, art and artistic production, art and AI
- technologies of peace
- technologies of war, imperialist expansion, or capitalism
- explorations of what it means to be human, animal, or machine
- medical humanities and scientific approaches
- technologies of printing and publishing
- neural networks, network theory, collaboration, loops, and circuits
- human-agent interaction
- technology, modernity, temporality

While this list offers suggestions or possible entrances into a conversation, we welcome all ideas and approaches and seek to traverse disciplines and time periods. Anyone interested in presenting is invited to submit a proposal for a paper, panel, roundtable, workshop, or exhibition on Woolfian or Bloomsbury topics. Exhibitions could be digital (as in digital humanities projects) or could include exhibits of crafts or material objects related to the conference theme. Interactive workshops of 90 minutes will also be offered throughout the conference and we welcome submissions for non-traditional formats. Please specify in your proposal if you are submitting:

-An interactive workshop (Abstract of 500 words)

-Panel or Roundtable (abstract of 500 words for the entire panel or roundtable)

-A paper (abstract of 250 words)

-A digital/material object exhibition (abstract of 250 words)

-A non-traditional form of presenting (abstract of 250-500 words)

Abstracts and questions should be sent to:  
[woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:woolf2024@mail.fresnostate.edu) by January 15, 2024.



### Call for Proposals: Annotated Woolf Clemson University Press

Molly Hoff's annotated guide to *Mrs. Dalloway* (Clemson, 2009) offers multiple entry points for students first approaching Woolf's celebrated and often misunderstood novel. Hoff's masterful annotations provide a guide for in-class student readings as well as points of departure for new scholarship.

Clemson University Press seeks proposals for complementary annotated guides to *Jacob's Room*, *The Waves*, and *A Room of One's Own*, works that are commonly taught at the undergraduate level.

For additional details or to propose an annotated guide, please contact Alison Mero ([amero@clemson.edu](mailto:amero@clemson.edu)), director of Clemson University Press.



### Call for Submissions for the International Virginia Woolf Society Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize

The International Virginia Woolf Society is pleased to host the Annual Undergraduate Essay Competition in honor of Virginia Woolf and in memory of Angelica Garnett, writer, artist, and daughter of Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell.

For this competition, undergraduate essays can be on any topic pertaining to the writings of Virginia Woolf. Essays should be between 2000 and 2500 words in length, including notes and works cited, with an original title of the entrant's choosing. Essays will be judged by the officers of the International Virginia Woolf Society: Benjamin D. Hagen, President; Amanda Golden, Vice-President; Susan Wegener, Secretary-Treasurer; and Catherine Hollis, Historian-Bibliographer. The winner will receive \$200 and have the essay published in a subsequent issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

Please send essays in the latest version of Word.

All entries must be received by 1 July 2023.

To receive an entry form, please contact Benjamin D. Hagen at [Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu](mailto:Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu)



**Virginia Woolf Miscellany  
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS  
AND EDITORIAL POLICIES**

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 for the section titled "Truly Miscellaneous." Such submissions should be sent to the Managing Editor, Vara Neverow (rather than to the Guest Editor) at [neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@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 in the style of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the MLA Handbook published in 2009 (and not subsequent iterations). For a copy of the current *Miscellany* style guide, go to the Virginia Woolf Miscellany. Note that, 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 Editors reserve 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 Editors with original written documentation authorizing the publication of the materials.

**Reimbursement for Permissions**

The Editors will assist contributors to the best of their ability with regard to permissions for publication, including costs of up to \$50 per item. However, the Editors have the option to decline to publish items or to pay for items. The Editors 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 their own discretion.

**Publication Policies**

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

Note: The Editors and the Editorial Board take 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 Editorial Board of the *Miscellany*, use the work in other contexts. The contributor may not, however, sell the subsidiary rights of any work the contributor 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*.



**THE IVWS & VWS ARCHIVE INFORMATION**

<http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/special/F51ivwoolfsocietyfonds.htm>  
[http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special\\_collections/f51\\_intl\\_v\\_woolf\\_society/](http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/f51_intl_v_woolf_society/)

The archive of the IVWS and the VWS 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/F51ivwoolfsocietyfilelist.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 Archival Liaison,

Karen Levenback,  
either at [klevenback@att.net](mailto:klevenback@att.net)  
or by surface mail:

Karen Levenback, Archival Liaison/IVWS Archive,  
304 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.



**51<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisville Conference  
on Literature and Culture Since 1900**

**February 20-21, 2024 (virtual) and February 23-25, 2024 (in person)**  
<https://www.thelouisvilleconference.com/home>

The International Virginia Woolf Society is pleased to host its annual panel at the University of Louisville's 2024 Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900

We invite proposals for critical papers on any topic concerning Woolf's work. Please note that this panel may be virtual. A specific panel theme may be decided upon depending on the proposals received.

Previous IVWS panels have met with great enthusiasm at Louisville, and we look forward to another successful session.

Please submit by email a cover page with name, email address, mailing address, phone number, professional affiliation, and title of paper, and a second anonymous page containing a 250-word paper proposal, with title, to Emily M. Hinnov, [ehinnov@ccsnh.edu](mailto:ehinnov@ccsnh.edu), by Monday, August 28, 2023.



**The Woolf Salon Project**

<https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/home>

Founded in 2020 and hosted by Benjamin Hagen, Shilo McGiff, Drew Shannon, and Amy Smith, the Salon features discussions about Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury and other related matters.

Proposals for future Woolf Salons can be posted using the following webpage:

<https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/call-for-hosts>

The email address for the Salon is:  
[woolfsalonproject@gmail.com](mailto:woolfsalonproject@gmail.com)

You can follow the Salon on Instagram: [@woolfsalonproject](https://www.instagram.com/woolfsalonproject)



JON S. RICHARDSON  
RARE BOOKS  
[yorkharborbooks@aol.com](mailto:yorkharborbooks@aol.com)



**How to Join**  
**The International Virginia Woolf Society**  
<http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/>  
or  
<https://v-woolf-society.com/>

To join, update membership, or donate to the International Virginia Woolf Society, you can use the PayPal feature available online at the IVWS website at

<http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/how-to-joindonate.html>

or  
<https://v-woolf-society.com/membership/>

(you can also download the membership form from the IVWS website and mail to the surface address provided).

**Regular 12-month membership:**

\$35

**Student or part-time employed 12-month membership:**

\$15

**Regular five year membership:**

\$130

**Retiree five year membership:**

\$60

Members of the Society receive a free subscription to the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and updates from the IVWS Newsletter. Members also have access online to an annual Bibliography of Woolf Scholarship. The electronic IVWS distribution list provides early notification of special events, including information about the Annual (International) Conferences on Woolf and MLA calls for papers, as well as access to electronic balloting and electronic versions of newsletters.

*The IVWS is now registered as a U.S. non-profit organization.  
U.S. members' dues and donations are tax-deductible.*



**VIRGINIA WOOLF SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**  
**Membership Information:**  
[virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk/membership/](http://virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk/membership/)

Membership of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain entitles you to three free issues annually of the *Virginia Woolf Bulletin*, free regular email updates with news and information, and priority registration and discounts on events such as:

Birthday Lecture—AGM (free to members only) with Conference—Study Days and Weekends—Online Talks (free to members only)

Subscriptions for the year ending 31 December 2024 are:

£10 for UK-based students

£15 outside Europe

£25 UK, £30 Europe and £35 outside Europe

Five-year memberships £100 UK, £130 Europe and £150 outside Europe

Lifetime membership (beginning 2024)

£350 UK

£450 Rest of World

Memberships starting part-way through the year and continuing until December of the following year are also available

The Society is always delighted to welcome new members.

If you wish to join, please email Lindsay Martin at [membershipvws.gb@gmail.com](mailto:membershipvws.gb@gmail.com) for a membership form and information about how to pay, or write to:

Membership Secretary

Lindsay Martin

[membershipvws.gb@gmail.com](mailto:membershipvws.gb@gmail.com)

or post it to him at:

12 Elm Park Road, London N21 2HN.

(PLEASE WAIT FOR A REPLY BEFORE PAYING.)

**Web:** [virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk](http://virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk)

**Facebook:** @VWSGB

**Twitter:** @VirginiaWoolfGB

**Instagram:** @virginiawoolfsociety



*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 organizing 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)
- “Outlandish Woolf” (2013)
- “Translating Woolf” (2015)
- “Quel roman! Photography and Modernism's Novel Genealogies, Virginia Woolf to Roland Barthes” (2016)
- Virginia Woolf, Still Life and Transformation (2018)
- Virginia Woolf and the Writing of History (2018)
- “Recycling Woolf” (2019)
- “Virginia Woolf, Lectures Françaises” (2022)
- “Virginia Woolf: For a Poetics and Politics of Intimacy” (2023)

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](mailto:claire.davison@univ-paris3.fr) and [marie.laniel@gmail.com](mailto: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 Ricm, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, FRANCE

If you wish to join the SEW's mailing list, please send an email to

[marie.laniel@gmail.com](mailto:marie.laniel@gmail.com)



honey & wax

BOOKSELLERS

USE BOOKS AS BEES USE FLOWERS

[WWW.HONEYANDWAXBOOKS.COM](http://WWW.HONEYANDWAXBOOKS.COM)





### Woolfian Resources Online

#### Virginia Woolf Miscellany:

Issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* are available in PDF format at <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/>. The editorial guide to formatting and the current issue are listed separately, while archived issues are listed in separate sections. Please contact Vara Neverow at [neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu) if you want to acquire a print copy of an issue.

#### Facebook:

The International Virginia Woolf Society is on Facebook! You can become a fan and friend other Woolfians at <https://www.facebook.com/International-Virginia-Woolf-Society-224151705144/>.

The Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain has a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VWSGB/> and is on Twitter: @VirginiaWoolfGB and on Instagram: @virginiawoolfsociety.

And Virginia Woolf has other multiple Facebook pages that are not related to specific societies.

#### Blogs:

Visit Paula Maggio's "Blogging Woolf" at [bloggingwoolf.wordpress.com/](http://bloggingwoolf.wordpress.com/) for a broad range of valuable information such as key Woolfian resources, current and upcoming events, and an archive of Woolfian doings now past.

Anne Fernald says she is "writing from a kitchen table of my own on the Jersey side of the Hudson." Contact information: fernham [at] gmail [dot] com. The blog is located at <https://anne-fernalid.squarespace.com/home/>.

#### Scholarly Resources:

##### Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP)

(<https://www.modernistarchives.com/>)

The website is a critical digital archive of early twentieth-century publishing history. The goal of this site is to display, curate, and describe the documents that go into the making of a book. As of fall 2021, the site will include the digitalized version of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* reading notebooks held at the Keep at the University of Sussex. (The digitalized reading notebooks were previously available via a website at Southern Connecticut State University but now have been relocated to MAPP).

##### Woolf Online

(<http://www.woolfonline.com/>)

This beautifully crafted website offers a digital archive of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. Access to the site is free. The material is excellent for scholars but is also highly teachable. One hopes this type of website will inspire other digital Woolfian texts online. The project began with the digital archive of "Time Passes." As the website notes, "The initial idea and overall organization of this project was the work of Julia Briggs (1943-2007), in whose memory the project has been completed" (<http://www.woolfonline.com/timepasses/?q=about>).

#### E-books:

Many of Woolf's works have now come out of copyright in various countries and can be accessed online, and some current publications are also available.

##### *A Vision of Beauty: A Biography of Julia Duckworth Stephen:*

Marion Dell's biography of Virginia Woolf's mother is now available online in PDF format at: <https://theelusivejuliastephen.com/>

Also, the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>) is a particularly useful resource for online materials. Creating a free account provides access to many works.

#### Woolfian Google Alerts:

Have you signed up for Google Alerts? Did you know you could be totally up-to-date on the latest developments in the Woolfian and Bloomsburian world with just a few keys? Check it out! It's simple, fast and very rewarding.

#### VWoolf Listserv:

The VWoolf Listserv is open to one and all. To join the VWoolf Listserv, please go to <https://lists.osu.edu/mailman/listinfo/vwoolf/> and click on it. Then, follow the instructions.



### THE MODERNIST ARCHIVES PUBLISHING PROJECT

[HTTPS://MODERNISTARCHIVES.COM/](https://modernistarchives.com/)

#### Co-Directors:

Claire Battershill, Matt Hannah, Helen Southworth, Alice Staveley, Elizabeth Willson Gordon and Nicola Wilson.

Do you want to know more about the Woolfs and the hundreds of works published by the Hogarth Press?

#### Welcome | Modernist Archives Publishing Project

Welcome to The Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP), a critical digital archive of early twentieth-century publishers, beginning with Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press (est. 1917).

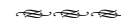
Search for Hogarth Press authors, illustrators, editors, book jackets and archival objects—including correspondence, publishing notes, production schedules, advertisements and ephemera.

MAPP brings together materials relating to the Woolfs and the Hogarth Press from University of Reading Special Collections, Smith College Special Collections, Harry Ransom Center, the E. J. Pratt Library (University of Toronto), Bruce Peel Special Collections (Alberta), and in the future will also contain material from the University of Sussex Special Collections and the Berg at NYPL.

We are working with our cultural heritage partners to include material relating to other presses, including the Knopfs, Harcourt Brace, Nancy Cunard's The Hours Press, and Allen & Unwin.

We are always looking for collaborators! For more about MAPP, to contribute a biography, and/or to get in touch, contact us at <https://www.modernistarchives.com/contact> if you are interested.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Ane Thon Knutsen is a Graphic Designer & Artist  
living and working in Oslo, Norway.

She works from her private letterpress studio and as Associate Professor at Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

She does freelance lecturing, workshops, and exhibits work internationally. In June 2019 she defended her PhD:  
A Printing Press of One's Own.

Her expertise spans the wonderful possibilities of experimental printing, moveable type, artistic research, literature, book making, tools, rooms, feminism & Virginia Woolf.

For any requests, please get in touch!

[anethonknutsen@gmail.com](mailto:anethonknutsen@gmail.com)

+47 98 89 42 39

<https://cargocollective.com/anethonknutsen>

<https://www.instagram.com/anethonknutsen/>



## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF INDEPENDENT BUT AFFILIATED ENTITIES RELATED TO WOOLF STUDIES

The *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* is an independent publication that has been housed at Southern Connecticut State University since 2003. Founded in 1973 by J. J. Wilson, Lucio Ruotolo, Peggy Comstock, Rebecca Davison, and Ellen Hawkes Rogat, the publication was hosted by Sonoma State University for 30 years under J. J. Wilson's auspices. The publication has always received financial support from the International Virginia Woolf Society. Issues are available online in PDF format at <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com>. If you have questions or need a print copy of an issue, please contact Vara Neverow at [neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu).

The **International Virginia Woolf Society** was founded in 1976 as the Virginia Woolf Society. The society has a direct affiliation with the Modern Language Association and had for many years the privilege of organizing two sessions at the annual MLA Convention held between Christmas and New Year's Eve. In 2010, MLA transitioned to a new format, with the Convention being held in early January, and the affiliated organizations having just one guaranteed panel but being able to co-host one or more additional panels.

The **original IVWS website** (<http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/>) was launched by Melba Cuddy-Keane, a Past President of the International Virginia Woolf Society, and she continues to oversee that site. It is hosted by the University of Toronto. The new International Virginia Woolf site can be accessed at: <https://v-woolf-society.com/>.

The **VWoolf Listserv**, was founded by Morris Beja in 1996 and is hosted by the English Department at Ohio State University. The current list administrator is Elisa Kay Sparks. Anne Fernald oversaw the list for many years. To join the list, you must send a message to the following address: [listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu). In the body of the email, you must write: "subscribe VWOOLF Your first name Your last name" (but with no quotation marks). You will receive a welcome message with further information about the list. To unsubscribe, please send a message \*from the exact account that you originally subscribed with\* to the same address: [listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu). In the body of the email, write: unsubscribe VWOOLF.

Materials from most sources that are mentioned above are included in the **IVWS/VWS archive** at the E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria 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 [klevenback@att.net](mailto:klevenback@att.net).

The **Blogging Woolf** site was founded by Paula Maggio in 2007. The site provides news, alerts about upcoming events, and book listings as well as "Woolf Sightings" and offers many other informative and engaging features.

The **Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf** (also sometimes titled the International Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf) is an independent entity. Envisioned by Mark Hussey, the first conference was held in 1991 at Pace University. The conference is overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of the 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 [markh102@gmail.com](mailto:markh102@gmail.com). Each annual conference is organized by one or more individuals associated with one or more host institutions. 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 a history and documentation of the ACVW, please see Issue 98 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

**SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON VIRGINIA WOOLF**  
**Pace University Press**

**Selected Papers from Conferences 1-10 (1991-2000)**

Launched by Mark Hussey, the first volume featured all the papers from the 1991 conference and was published in 1992. The subsequent

volumes were compilations of selected papers. Nine additional volumes were published by Pace University Press under Mark Hussey's auspices. The last volume, published in 2001, was from the conference held in 2000. A variety of editors have overseen the collections during publishing process. While early volumes of the *Selected Papers* are out of print, a number of the more recent ones are still available from the press at <http://www.pace.edu/press> and in PDF format on JSTOR (but access depends on the institutional subscriptions).

**Clemson University Digital Press (now Clemson University Press)**  
**Selected Papers from Conferences 11-18, excluding 12 and 14 (2001, 2003, 2005-2017)**

These volumes—initially starting with the papers from the 2003 conference—were published by Clemson University Digital Press under the auspices of Wayne Chapman. The papers from the 2001 conference were not published until 2011. The Clemson University Press altered its structure and now is affiliated with Liverpool University Press. John Morgenstern took over Wayne Chapman's position after Wayne Chapman retired. John Morgenstern stepped down in 2022, and Alison Mero is now the director. Up until the publication of *Virginia Woolf, Europe, Peace* from the Kent, UK, conference in 2018, all volumes consisted of the short selected papers from the conference. These chapters were longer and were published in two volumes. The papers from the 2019 conference on Virginia Woolf and Social Justice have not yet been published, and the plan is to transition from print versions to digital-only volumes that will be published in a collaboration between Clemson University Press and the International Virginia Woolf Society and accessed through the IVWS website.

The electronic versions of the Selected Works from the 13th Annual International Conference (*Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration*) and the 15th International Annual Conference (*Woolf in the Real World*), are available in downloadable PDF format online at [http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cudp\\_woolf/](http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cudp_woolf/)

**California State University—Bakersfield**

**The Selected Papers from Conferences 12 and 14 (2002, 2004)**

The *Selected Papers* from the **12th conference**, *Across the Generations* (organized by J. J. Wilson and held at Sonoma State University in 2002) and the **14th conference**, *Back to Bloomsbury* (organized by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari and hosted by the University of London in 2004) were both published by Merry Pawlowski through her own university. These volumes are available exclusively as PDF versions and can be viewed, searched, and downloaded on the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* website. (Note: the Palgrave editions *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury*, Volumes 1 and 2, edited by the conference organizers Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari, also drew on the conference presentations.)

The most recent developments in Woolf organizations and entities emerged from the pandemic. In June 2020, the first online "**Woolf drop-in**" event was held on the day that the 30th Annual Conference, *Virginia Woolf: Performance and Professions*, planned by Benjamin Hagen, would have begun. (The conference had to be postponed to the 2021 and was held virtually, as was the 31st conference in 2022.) The Woolf drop-in continues at intervals, as does the **Woolf Salon Project**, also launched in 2020.

Unlike other the growing number of Woolf societies globally that offer a range of activities all clustered within the same organization, these entities are independent. These other societies include: the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, Société d' Etudes Woolfiennes, Italian Virginia Woolf Society, the Virginia Woolf Society of Japan, the Virginia Woolf Society of Korea, and the Virginia Woolf Society of Türkiye.



# In Memory of Suzanne Bellamy

## 22 September 1948–20 June 2022

### Suzanne's Red Shoes

When Vara and I sent out the call for memories of Suzanne, some asked “Why Suzanne?” There are so many of us: each beloved, creative, influential, individual. And there will be so many more Percivals—so many centers of circles hollowed out. All I can say is, for me at least, Suzanne represents the utopian possibility of the entire Woolf community: her humor, her wisdom, her disciplined scholarship, her visual artistry, her practicality, her adventurousness, her wide global embrace represent the qualities that draw me not only to Virginia Woolf but also to those who make a life's work of thinking through her.

I met Suzanne Bellamy at her first Woolf conference, in New Hampshire in 1997. Wandering over to her table full of bright images, I stopped to talk and asked the fateful question “Are you a printmaker too?” which launched us into twenty-plus years of vivid conversations. At the time I was writing on Woolf and Georgia O'Keeffe, and almost immediately our shared interests in art and feminism dovetailed with the work of Diane Gillespie and Leslie Hankins to produce what we sometimes, partially in jest, called “the visual mafia” as we all continued to develop interests in how Woolf's words could be read through images, her own and those of art and cinema. This concern only intensified as Suzanne reached out and collaborated with the artist Isota Tucker-Epps, continuing to inspire some of us to create our own artistic reactions to Woolf's works.

Whenever I picture Suzanne, I see her wearing her inevitable red lace-up boots. I'm fascinated by shoes. They are what connect us to the ground, our means of travel and our link to reality. Suzanne's boots seem to sum up much about her: practical, comfortable, yet purposefully eccentric, dramatic, not just a little rebellious, good for every situation. There is a picture of her defiantly trespassing on the green of Trinity Great Court, her red boot planted insouciantly next to the “Keep off the Grass” sign, that epitomizes Suzanne for me, the bright twinkle in her eye that signaled, “Let's get into some trouble.” Her trouble was always good trouble, a willingness to jump in and only connect that often challenged my boundaries and linked me to people I would never have dared to accost on my own.

There was the trip to Cambridge where that picture was taken. When we got off the train, we ran into the entire South Korean Woolf contingent, also bound on a pilgrimage of Woolf sites. Of course, Suzanne took them under her wing like some bold mother hen, and we were off like a covey of giggling girls from the Mikado. Oh how we laughed! And of course, by the time we settled down for a late lunch, Suzanne was deep into plans for some kind of South Asian Woolf group. And then there was the night before the Annual Woolf conference at Birmingham, UK, when a small group of us who had arrived early were shaking off jet lag over dinner at the hotel. A tiny, bright-eyed older woman with a walker was escorted in, and Suzanne whispered, “I bet that is Ruth Gruber,” and promptly got up, introduced herself, and invited Ruth to dine with us, thus inaugurating a friendship that lasted for years. And, in another trip to Cambridge, there was a lovely, sweet white-haired gentleman who showed us all around King's College, and, being himself a fellow, kindly escorted us out onto the grass. Only much later did we discover who Peter Stansky was.

Over the years as we attended conference after conference, our circles continued to broaden, and, aided by advances in technology which made it easier to connect to Australia, the friendships deepened.

Those red shoes showed up at so many celebrations: lunches, dinners, parties, and performances. I've made a blog to memorialize these with several hundred photographs at <https://woolfparties.blogspot.com/>. In the words of a friend, Suzanne was a veritable hurricane of fun. But she was a good deal more than fun. As eager to meet new ideas as she was to make new friends, Suzanne was not only an inventive and constantly evolving artist, but also a careful and meticulous thinker with an instinct for foundational thinking. Her scholarship, like her bright images, was a constellation of unexpected references and influences. She was always going deeper, pondering the origins of ideas, and connecting them at their roots.

It was this quality of groundedness, literal as well as figurative, that drew so many of us to Suzanne. For Suzanne lived with the land, her land in Mongarlowe; she knew the wombats; she worked with local environmentalists to grow sustainable grasses. Once when I got a new version of Photoshop and offered to give her my old one, her reply completely re-oriented my perspective on her life: “I live in the bush; my laptop runs on solar power. I am not sure I could run Photoshop.” And yet the creativity exploded out of such a basic matrix.

Another core matrix was Suzanne's historic commitment to Australian feminism. Although she remained relentlessly optimistic, she had a sardonic and at times hilarious cynicism about politics, a wisdom that enlivened many long and otherwise bitter conversations about the current American shenanigans. Her dissertation on years of political activism were an apprenticeship in the politics of being human, of making a place for outsiders that makes the world a bigger place for all of us.

And so now I see Suzanne, marching cheerfully in her red boots, among the procession of Shakespeare's siblings, along with Julia Briggs, and David Bradshaw, and Sally Jacobsen, and Georgie Johnston, and Jane Marcus, and Susan Stanford Friedman—one of those continuing presences who “lives in you and me” and helps us to see human beings not only “in their relation to each other but in relation to reality, and the sky too.”

*Elisa Kay Sparks*

*Clemson University, Emerita*

*(see <https://woolfparties.blogspot.com/> for more photos of Suzanne)*



Suzanne in her red shoes stepping on the grass at Cambridge, evoking the passage in Virginia Woolf's description of the narrator in *A Room of One's Own* being shooed off the grass  
*Note: The fonts in these various remembrances are intentionally different.*



## Brief Encounters

I can still see the long table set out with dashes of exuberant and vivid colors in the foyer of the Virginia Woolf conference hall. The figure of a woman walked slowly from one end to the other, tending to the artwork on display with a particular kind of careful attention, looking first at one, straightening another, moving images around until she was satisfied with the display. Or so it seemed. I had never seen artwork like this and not as part of an academic conference. At the breaks between papers, people swarmed round the table, smiling, hugging and eager to talk with the artist, look at the prints for sale, drawn to the images inspired by Virginia Woolf's writings. I learned that the artist was Suzanne Bellamy from Australia, and her Woolf series would grace numerous Woolf Conferences as prints, posters, t-shirts, and other merchandise.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, in place of Suzanne's absence, I bought a hat. It is more properly described as a 'baseball cap' from a design gifted by Suzanne to the Ohio conference. At that evening gathering we said a virtual hello to Suzanne who delivered her paper on-line. I wrote to her afterwards. 'We were as you know in the middle of a noisy banquet with readings from the Woolf Players, the silent auction (your artwork missed!) and post a stunning mini opera from Virginia Woolf's *Diary* so please excuse what may have appeared like mayhem!' I think that the energy of that mayhem would have made her laugh, long and loud.

Each time I attended a Woolf conference, I looked out for Suzanne and her mysterious, dreamlike, otherworldly art work in which the same photograph of Virginia Woolf is featured over and over. Accompanied by lines from the diaries, Woolf's face is illuminated by light and shade, colours of gold, blue, green sparkle and stand in contrast to white and black spaces in these images. What emerges onto Bellamy's page is an arresting visual essay.<sup>2</sup> These images, enduring collaborations of artist and writer, require constant, patient study as the mysterious process of creative production opens up to the viewer. Her creative process combines a form of meditation and visualisation, 'a dynamic studio tool for accessing work images, stories, and solutions to problems... the workshop developed over time to encompass an expansive world of women, a great city, studios, teachers, complex art practices, journeys, a forum for ideas.'<sup>3</sup> Here she encounters Virginia Woolf. 'We went through a maze-like garden of exuberant color to a beautifully light-flooded room where a woman was working. It was Virginia Woolf... she stood absorbed at a huge easel-like circuit board, tipped at an angle like an architect's bench. On both sides of her were hundreds of tiny objects in containers and trays, exotic materials unknown to me, like jewels and unknown metals, tiny shapes. She had an array of tweezers and tools that she used to pick up these objects, and obviously amazing eyesight, I thought, helped by the abundant prismatic light in her studio.' Like Woolf writing at her desk searching for words or working at her printing press picking up type, I imagine Suzanne standing in her studio working with the form of the photograph, adding layers of colours and shapes, engaged with Woolf's mind, words and ideas, drawing closer to her beloved. Bellamy writes that the photograph taken by Leonard Woolf in 1932 at Monk's House of Virginia in her 30s has 'lived in my changing work spaces, among books, clay, etching inks and tools for twenty years and holds the place of honour and the muse. Along with this photo are a number of large, hand-printed quotations from Woolf about her

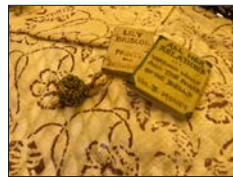
work, the brain, shapes and the creative process. As they yellow, tear, stain and deteriorate, I make them again, and again, and again'.<sup>4</sup>

We meet at Canterbury and chat, together looking at her work and talking about life, health and art. I stood at her display table while she went for a walk. Later she asked me to choose a print as a gift. There is Virginia, framed and bathed in gold, looking away to the left towards a vase of flowers on top of three tall shelves of books standing over a drawer painted with omega type designs. From her mind, magenta and gold thoughts, large and small, bubble and flow around two black filled circles. Woolf writes, 'I think I am about to embody at last the exact shapes my brain holds' (*Diary* IV, 1931). Exposed to damp air, my print has bled a little into the edges, blue ink overlapping with brown. I treasure it and recall Suzanne saying 'that's a good one', when I picked it up. Our later correspondence focussed on the Irish art collector Gladys MacDermott. Suzanne was writing about the reception of Woolf's writing, Bloomsbury connections and the histories of women advancing modernist ideas in Australia. MacDermott collected the paintings of Roger Fry, exhibiting them in her home in Australia. When she returned to Ireland she brought with her never seen works by modernist Australian artists such as Grace Cossington Smith. Suzanne was generous, encouraging and offered to help with further research on MacDermott from her end. But this was not to be. I met this warm, compassionate and engaging woman at the end of a long, productive and radical life, a lesbian activist, a renowned multidisciplinary independent artist, a passionate women's liberation leader, an erudite scholarly writer who sought ways to build powerful communities of women artists and writers to escape, decentre and discount patriarchy with creative courage, using every cell of her being to do so.<sup>5</sup> I know now how very fortunate I am to have met Suzanne Bellamy, even if ever so briefly.

Anne Byrne  
Galway, Ireland

<sup>4</sup> See Suzanne Bellamy, *The Pattern Behind the Words* (1997). Downloaded 21 February 2023 from <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Archive.html>

<sup>5</sup> See the launch of Suzanne's exhibition 'Time and Place' October 2019 at <https://youtu.be/KJizSPiuOmY>.



Small ceramic books crafted by Suzanne Bellamy

## Memories of Suzanne

I met Suzanne for the first time at the "Back to Bloomsbury" Woolf Conference in 2004. I remember her and Elisa sitting on the floor in one of the sessions because the room was so crowded, and I liked their cheerful disregard for academic proprieties in a setting that still made me feel quite nervous. I crossed paths with Suzanne at Woolf conferences for several years after that, but it was when I moved to Sydney for a postdoc while Suzanne was completing her PhD there that I got to know her better. When she came up to Sydney, we would go for coffee or to an exhibition.

She was the best exhibition company: effortlessly knowledgeable and somehow both genuinely appreciative of art and deeply irreverent about it. Going to exhibits with her was also different because she insisted that everyone should do art, something with their hands and materials, especially if they worked with words all day. She would scout around an exhibit for things that you could try yourself and then announce that maybe wire sculpture, for example, was what you should be doing.

<sup>1</sup> *Virginia Woolf, a Visual Essay* by Suzanne Bellamy is available at the time of writing at <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/gallery8.html>. Downloaded 21 February 2023.

<sup>2</sup> See Diane Gillespie, *Suzanne Bellamy's Visual Essays*. Downloaded 21 February 2023 from <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Archive.html>

<sup>3</sup> See Suzanne Bellamy, *The Pattern Behind the Words* (1997). Downloaded 21 February 2023 from <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Archive.html>

There's a whole facet of my life that wouldn't be there if it weren't for Suzanne's insistence that art is just a good and human thing to do.

Everything was potential material for art in her eyes, too. During the time that I was in Sydney, she was always on the look-out for springs and cogs and little mechanisms that could be incorporated into one of her boxes or assemblages, and the discovery of an old typewriter, with all its type elements and mechanisms, was an instigation to new experiments. Going to one of her open studio days offered another window into her life. There was a pottery kiln and the burial mound of a ceramic goddess in the backyard, a bottomless teapot in the kitchen, people chatting, and all around the house Suzanne's paintings and prints and pottery and boxes of miniature scenes and assemblages of mechanisms.

It's easy to make her life in Mongarlowe sound idyllic, but it involved a lot of work, whether that was loading and unloading the kiln and accepting the fact that sometimes a whole firing would go wrong and a whole kiln's worth of work would be ruined.

A lot of our conversations when I was in Sydney and afterwards centred around our academic work at the time and involved quite a lot of venting of frustrations at the constraints of academic writing and the intractability of words in general. Suzanne was then working on her doctoral dissertation on Nuri Mass, and she was balancing her research and writing with medical treatments, but she was always clear in her determination to bring Nuri's work to view and give this early response to Woolf's writing a place in the history of Woolf scholarship and in the history of modernism as a transnational literary movement.

Suzanne's doctoral project reflected her fundamental commitment to the recovery of women's lives and works. However, it is in the projects that engaged with but did not conform to academic convention that Suzanne seems to me most present and her voice most audible. These include her La Trobean staging of pageants performed by friends and neighbours in Mongarlowe and by the Woolf Players at the Glasgow Woolf conference and her account of an imagined archaeological excavation of the rooms of a Women's Liberation group in Glebe, NSW, from the late 1960s and 1970s. The archaeological dig project came complete with material artefacts, model reconstructions, maps, graphs, the analysis of coprolites, and the speculative interpretation of mundane objects as articles of ritual significance. In her introduction to the archaeological dig project, Suzanne wrote, "It always seemed funny to me, I laughed my way to all the ideas, the site gags, the mocking of disciplines, the Museum format" (Bellamy). Even though I know the seriousness of her commitments and the labour that went into her work, this image of Suzanne laughing her way to all the ideas seems to me to call up the truest picture of Suzanne and her manner of living and working.

Christina Alt

#### Works Cited

Bellamy, Suzanne. "The Lost Culture of Women's Liberation": Project Thoughts on an Evolving Method." Suzanne Bellamy. n.p., 2015. Web. 6 March 2023. <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/LostCulture.html>.



A print of Virginia Woolf with a bookshelf by Suzanne Bellamy



An artwork by Suzanne Bellamy

#### Suzanne Bellamy's Visual Essays

What I remember most about the late artist-scholar Suzanne Bellamy is her creative versatility, her ability to leap enthusiastically between visual and verbal genres as she united them in innovative ways. Suzanne's "visual essays" contain candid reflections about her "rooms within," her creative inspirations and processes, relating them to women's political and artistic movements. She created her own Women's World wherever she went, and once, for us, she created "Woolf World—A Room of One's Own," a striking multi-media, floor construction exhibited both at the Sonoma State (2002) and Smith College (2003) Woolf Conferences.

I first met Suzanne Bellamy at the Seventh Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, held at Plymouth State College in Plymouth, NH, June 12-15, 1997. It was the first of many Woolf conferences to which Suzanne traveled with her art work from Australia. I was told immediately upon my arrival in Plymouth that someone who had read my book, *The Sisters' Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (1988), was anxious to meet me. Thus began over two decades of stimulating encounters at Woolf conferences with a few emails in between. What Suzanne called her "visual essays" have included print series and paintings based on Woolf novels, large installations, and miniature clay sculptures, as well as painted backdrops for multimedia performances. Also gracing programs, posters, T-shirts, tote bags, and once even a cake, Suzanne's Woolf-related designs have provided several successive conferences with visual energy and definition. I have often introduced her presentations and exhibitions. I was honored when she asked me to write an introduction for a book of her Woolf series prints. A potential publisher balked at all the color printing, and by 2016 Suzanne decided not to pursue publication. This remembrance is a version of what I wrote.

Although the Plymouth conference helped to expand Suzanne Bellamy's knowledgeable and appreciative audience, her intimate responses to Virginia Woolf's writings began much earlier. They are worth a look since Suzanne was a gifted writer and, as Virginia Woolf said of her biography of Roger Fry, it was "a gamble in R's power to transmit himself," and to "shine by his



own light better than through any painted shade of mine" (*Letters* 6 417). "I have written a series of partly autobiographical essays over a number of years," Bellamy recalled in "The Pattern Behind Words" (1997), "each of which has a Woolf title and philosophical underpinning" (22). In her partly retrospective essay, Bellamy summarizes, in a more detailed Woolfian context and from a lesbian perspective, the evolution she described piecemeal in four previous essays. Woolf's ability to seduce women readers, noted by Jane Marcus and affirmed by Bellamy, impacts all kinds of women ("Pattern" 24). "She was not my only inspiration" for choosing independence from patriarchal institutions—urban life, the academy, the gallery system," Bellamy notes, "but she was the one who has lasted the distance" ("Pattern" 24).

While each early essay has an immediacy, reflecting as it does a stage in Suzanne Bellamy's personal and artistic development (one and the same), the summary essay elaborates on each stage in a context more exclusively focused on Woolf. It also indicates shifts in her readings that are the result of greater maturity and contemporary applications ("Pattern" 26). As adept with words as with visual images, Bellamy describes how, to varying degrees, Woolf has provided insight into "the dilemmas of dual creativity, sister love and envy, child abuse memories, madness, sibling suicide, the failings of love and lust and loyalty, the drive and passion of work" ("Pattern" 22). Having "imagined and explored those shapes" in Virginia Woolf's brain for two decades, Bellamy notes, she has evolved a life story of her own with Woolf acting as "teacher, muse, companion, beloved" ("Pattern" 22).

Although Suzanne Bellamy's path away from academe has diverged from my own career in the academy, as feminists we have both found inspiration in Virginia Woolf's work, hers for "visual essays," mine for often illustrated scholarly ones. In recent years, confident now of her intellectual and artistic independence, Suzanne has taken her historical, archaeological, and feminist emphases back into the academy while I have retired early to continue the research and writing part of my career. Suzanne wrote a doctoral study of Nuri Maas, writer in 1942 of a forgotten MA thesis on Virginia Woolf, and of other women who in the 1930s and 40s pioneered women's readings of a writer too often ignored in her own country, Suzanne joined all of us who have tried, and are trying to have a leavening influence on institutions of higher learning.

Initially a sculptor, Bellamy identified with Woolf's shaping creative process, with her complex overlapping of verbal and visual, with the struggle to verbalize the visual and visualize the verbal. For Bellamy it is "a kind of sex in the mind, a complex experience of words and shapes and potencies that can be shared, but not essentially—that can be physical but will not stay there" ("Pattern" 30). For her it was a study in dual creativity, in Woolf's ability to get "past the limitations of painting as a way ahead, drawing from another, more robust form of construction, literary but breaking into the same new territory as a maker of physical shapes that free themselves from direct representation but take on independent form" ("Pattern" 33). Through all Bellamy's ponderings of the creative process runs a sense of humor, a willingness to play, as she puts it, "the Fool," confident enough in her "imaginary culture" of women to experiment and take risks ("Narrow" 132), as Miss LaTrobe does in her village play in *Between the Acts* [BTA] ("Pattern" 35).

"Only a few women artists have written about their work processes," Bellamy wrote already in 1984 in an article with a title from Woolf ("Form—'we are the thing itself'"), and included Virginia Woolf—along with Tillie Olsen, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Judy Chicago—among her examples ("Form" 69). This lack of women's words about "non-verbal exploration" has led to the neglect of the visual arts by the radical feminist movements

with which she identifies ("Form" 72). Indeed, visual and verbal creative processes are similar, and again she includes "the sculptured words of Virginia Woolf" as an illustration ("Form" 72). Bellamy, like Woolf, kept journals from which she quotes to illustrate her attempts "to find words to express what [...] was happening" in her creative evolution, her attempts to find women's forms of expression ("Form" 75). She quotes parallel passages where Woolf describes the way form "flows from her own life and work" and becomes inseparable from her own "real presence and power" ("Form" 83). Bellamy recognizes the inseparability of life and art in her own, and Woolf's creative process, something too often denied by formalist theorists among Woolf's Bloomsbury friends and even by artists like Vanessa Bell whose paintings sometimes benefit from psychological and narrative readings she would not have approved.

A later autobiographical essay, "Freedom from Unreal Loyalties," again takes its title from Woolf as Bellamy describes her attempts to balance academic historical studies, involvement in women's liberation political activity, and artistic work. She describes how Bessie Guthrie introduced her to Virginia Woolf's writing; how she wrote radio scripts on Woolf's feminism as expressed in *Three Guineas*; and how, inspired in part by Woolf's admonitions, she left the patriarchal academic world. A "pilgrimage" to sites important to women included the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library where the manuscript of *Three Guineas* had unfortunately been "captured." Nevertheless, with "Freedom from unreal loyalties" echoing in her head, she sees a future for herself and other women ("Freedom" 196-97).

In another autobiographical essay, "The Creative Landscape" (1994), Suzanne Bellamy describes her movement from "radical feminism and the city" to "words and clay free from ideologies" (373). "Like Virginia Woolf's Miss LaTrobe," Bellamy observes "with disbelief" as plans for a sculptural "Earthworks project" designed to "integrate at a ritual level the overlaying cultures, the archaeological realities" of her rural place took its bureaucratic route from a supportive community to the regional Council which rejected it ("Creative" 376).

"The Narrow Bridge of Art and Politics" (1996) again takes the first five words of its title from a Virginia Woolf essay by that name. Once again Bellamy invokes Woolf's phrase "freedom from unreal loyalties" to describe her attempt to detach herself "from excessive devotion to the work and ideas of others" ("Narrow" 128). She continues her investigation of "a women's culture as an imaginative construct" in which there is an imaginary "artist/scholar who could be witness, commentator, creator of dynamic artifacts and stories, and most importantly traveler on the trade routes which crisscrossed the geography of this rich hypothetical Reality" ("Narrow" 129). Evoking simultaneously in clay sculptures, like "Boat," both companies of women and their individualities, Bellamy defines her work in part as an attempt "to fuse art and politics, thought and feeling" ("Narrow" 132).

Employing etching and screen-printing techniques, Bellamy chose several "visual essays" for her book. Because we cannot reproduce her choices here,<sup>1</sup> I will describe one in detail and, for the others, indicate mainly the words written below each painting and digitally enhanced print, words by Woolf that inspired Bellamy's work. One of my favorites is from her "Love and Politics...the room within. A Virginia Woolf Print series" (1997). It embodies the dual creativity Bellamy attributes to Woolf and identifies with herself. The words inspiring it are "Only when we put two and two together—two pencil strokes, two written words...—do we set up some stake against oblivion" from "Anon" (403). Here Bellamy uses screen print adaptations

<sup>1</sup> To access a number of Suzanne Bellamy's essays, go to <http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Archive.html>



of parts of two photo portraits of the mature sisters,<sup>2</sup> overlaying Vanessa's image with a shape that suggests her sister's verbal art, a book, and Virginia's image with a shape suggesting an easel. Hands folded alongside her chin, Vanessa becomes part of a dust jacket with a decorative row of circles at its bottom. Just as a portion of Vanessa's shoulder, spotted with white unlike the rest of her dark dress, is outside the dust jacket, so the hand and wrist at the side of Virginia's face nudges out a little bulge at the edge of the canvas. A vertical pattern along the left side of Bellamy's print echoes this half-circle, just as the circles on the dust jacket reappear between book and easel and on the easel's legs. Bellamy's print suggests that each sister could achieve to some degree the other's artistic perspective and that, although the sisters used each other as the basis for characters or painted portraits, neither could quite contain, nor did she seek to contain, the other within the framework of her art. Bellamy positions the two faces, each in three-quarter profile, so that they look towards each other. One of the difficulties of using existing photographs, however, is that she cannot get their eyes to meet, but that helps to declare their artistic independence. Bright yellows and red and orange accents on Vanessa's side and cooler burgundies, pinks, and purples accented with yellow on Virginia's side compensate for the lack of color in the photographs. Woolf's words, handwritten by Bellamy at the bottom of the print, bring into focus the most important link between the sisters, their creativity. The full quotation is from Woolf's "Anon":

Only when we put two and two together—two pencil strokes, two written words, two bricks (notes) do we overcome dissolution and set up some stake against oblivion. The passion with which we seek out these creations and attempt endlessly, perpetually, to make them is of a piece with the instinct that sets us preserving our bodies, with clothes, food, roofs, from destruction. ("Anon" 403).

Artistic creation, for both sisters, is essential to life itself.

Two of the images chosen for this book give prominence to the same photo of the mature Virginia Woolf with the book-lined shelves that were intrinsic to her reading and writing. Woolf's words, the inspiration for a print with a bookshelf on each side, are "We think back through our mothers if we are women" from *A Room of One's Own* (1929) (101). The book titles visible on both sides of her are her own, and written on the lower part of her photograph is "a room of one's own," the prerequisite for those publications. The titles are not visible on the other print, or they are replaced with Bloomsbury/Omega designs (cross-hatchings and geometric shapes) on the books to the right of the photograph. Woolf's words inspiring Bellamy's "visual essay" are, "I think I am about to embody, at last, the exact shapes my brain holds (Diary IV 1931)." In the diary, Woolf continues. "What a long toil to reach this beginning—if *The Waves* is my first work in my own style!" (D 4 53).

Another print shows the well-known three-quarter profile of the young Virginia Stephen, the lower part of her covered by what seems to be the shadow of a mantelpiece. Is she being threatened with the sacred hearth of the Victorian "Angel in the House" whom she has to kill in in her essay "Professions for Women"? Do the cross-hatched circles and rectangles, along with a vase of flowers decorated in Omega fashion suggest the Bloomsbury art revolution that helped to liberate her? Woolf's inspiring words

<sup>2</sup> Bellamy has adapted a 1932 photograph of Vanessa likely by Lettice Ramsey and a snapshot of Virginia used by Quentin Bell as a frontispiece to volume two of *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. For one Bellamy print and her Chaucer mural, see [bloggingwoolf.org](http://bloggingwoolf.org). "In Memorium to Suzanne Bellamy: artist, writer, scholar," June 28, 2022. At [SuzanneBellamy.com](http://SuzanneBellamy.com), the "Gallery" section no longer contains her Virginia Woolf Series.

offered by Bellamy here are "If I could catch the feeling I would: the feeling of the singing of the real world [V.W. *Diary*, 1929]."

Two other prints use the wave motif, the first combining waves with moths, an allusion to the story told to Woolf by Vanessa Bell that was the genesis of *The Waves*. Bellamy's choice of the words inspiring this visual essay are "I felt all the doors opening...and the moth shaking its wings in me...Everything is vivified when I think of the Moths. [1930]" (D 3 236). Virginia's mature photo appears in a shaded blue rectangle. Two dark blue lines of deep, pointed, scalloped waves cross the bottom and orange and red moths fly upwards.

The other print has calmer, more rounded, white wavy lines angling across the blue lower portion of the picture. Superimposed on them, facing center, are both Woolf's mature image, in a red rectangle and that of the younger Virginia Stephen, orange in a blue circular form. Surrounding them are what appear to be bubble shapes inspired perhaps by Woolf's description of Miss LaTrobe's consciousness: "The mud became fertile. Words rose. Words without meaning. Wonderful words" (BTA 212).

The next print also has two photos, this time of the mature Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. Both looking towards the center, they exist in overlapping squared shapes. Against a background washed with variegated colors, curved and spiral lines and circles surround the figures. Between and above them is a red, amorphous, but vaguely heart-shaped form. The inspirational words are from Vita's letter to Virginia (3 April 1928; 266): "Your adoring and perfectly solid Orlando"

The final print again pairs the mature and young Virginias, in dark frames above the vivid oranges and reds of a stylized beach scene with two mounds whose banded wide-brimmed hats suggest figures seated on the sand. Below, Bellamy has written "AFTER STUDLAND BEACH: 'Hearing this splash, seeing this light..., feeling the purest ecstasy,'" a quotation from Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past" (64-65). Bellamy combines Woolf's memories of her childhood experiences at St. Ives, reflected also in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), with the radically simplified forms of Vanessa Bell's painting called *Studland Beach* (c. 1911) where the sisters stayed once in 1910. Photos of the mature and young Virginia help to suggest the presence of the past in the present; the overlapping of the sisters' art forms; and, in spite of the "significant form" that is supposed to have erased narrative elements from Bell's painting, the inevitable "impress" of the "'emotions' of life" upon art (Tickner 80).

In addition to the Woolf prints chosen for her proposed book, Suzanne Bellamy's creativity took many forms. These included "a multimedia installation called *The Lost Culture of Women's Liberation, 1969-1974, The Pre-Dynastic Phase*," and a "New Hogarth Little Lesbian Book Series" of "high-fired porcelain books with individual once-only titles" ("Imagining" 196-97). In 1999, she and the late Isota Tucker Epes (1918-2009) each painted a response to the Lily Briscoe paintings in *To the Lighthouse* ("Painting"), and in 2000, they responded visually to *The Waves*. Bellamy also produced and described another print series called *Conversations with Woolf and Stein* ("Experiments"). Taking her historical and archaeological interests in unearthing women's history back into academe, she wrote about early Woolf criticism written by women outside the UK ("Textual Archaeology" and "Textual Archaeology and the Death of the Writer"). I in turn have published a chapter on modernist women painters, including Vanessa Bell, and another on the sister artists, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, including scholarly treatments before and since my publication of *The Sisters' Arts*. The latter chapter includes plates and discussions, in relation to Woolf's work, several more recently discovered paintings by Bell.

Suzanne Bellamy's productivity and generosity over the years resulted in my personal collection of her art work, photos of it, and comments about it. I, only one of her many friends, remember Suzanne fondly. Several of her Woolf-inspired small prints and large monographs, plus a "Woolf in the Reel World" conference poster (June 2003) are framed on my study walls. I still have examples of her Woolf-inspired art that graced programs, T-shirts, and tote bags. The screen saver on my PC is part of the large Chaucer pilgrimage mural that she managed to get from Australia to the Glasgow Conference (June 2011) where she recruited several of us to be the on-stage "audience" to her thoughtful and amusing rendition of Miss LaTrobe's pageant. I have already given some of Suzanne's art, and plan to give more, to Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections at Washington State University, where the Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury Collection are housed.

**Diane F. Gillespie**  
**Professor Emerita, Washington State University**

#### Works Cited

- Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. Vol. 2. *Mrs Woolf 1912-1941*. London: Hogarth Press, 1973.
- Bellamy, Sue. "Form—we are the thing itself." *All Her Labours: Embroidering the Framework*. Sydney, Australia: Hale & Iremonger, 1984. 69-84.
- . "Freedom from Unreal Loyalties." *Different Lives*. Ed. Jocelyne Scott. Sydney, Australia: Penguin, 1987. 189-99.
- Bellamy, Suzanne. "Experiments in Constructing the Visual Field: *Conversations with Woolf and Stein* and *Painting The Waves*." *Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds: Selected Papers from the Tenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Jessica Berman and Jane Goldman. New York: Pace University Press, 2001. 186-92.
- . "Imagining the Muse." *Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis. New York: Pace University Press, 1999. 194-200.
- . "The Narrow Bridge of Art and Politics." *Morally Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*. Ed. Diane Bell and Renate Klein. North Melbourne, Victoria: Spinifex, 1996. 126-234.
- . "'Painting the Words': A Version of Lily Briscoe's Paintings from *To the Lighthouse*." *Virginia Woolf: Turning the Centuries: Selected Papers from the Ninth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Ann Ardis and Bonnie Kime Scott. New York: Pacc, 2000. 244-51.
- . "The Pattern Behind the Words." *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*. Ed. Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer. New York: New York University Press, 1997. 21-36.
- . "Textual Archaeology: An Australian Study of Virginia Woolf in 1942." *Woolfian Boundaries: Selected Papers from the Sixteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Anna Burrells, Steve Ellis, Deborah Parsons, and Kathryn Simpson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press, 2007. 1-7.
- . "Textual Archaeology and the Death of the Writer." *Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism: Selected Papers from the Seventeenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Diana Royer and Madelyn Detloff. Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press, 2008. 131-38.
- Gillespie, Diane. "The Gender of Modern/ist Painting." *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections*. Ed. Bonnie Kime Scott. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. 765-808.
- . *The Sisters' Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell*. 1988. Syracuse, NY: University of Syracuse Press, 1991.
- . "Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell and Painting." *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*. Ed. Maggie Humm.

- Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. 121-39.
- Sackville-West, Vita. *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell A. Leaska. New York: William Morrow, 1985.
- Ticknor, Lisa. "Vanessa Bell: *Studland Beach*, Domesticity, and 'Significant Form.'" *Representations* 65 (Winter 1999): 63-92.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Anon." Ed. Brenda Silver. *Twentieth Century Literature* 25:3/4 (Fall/Winter 1979): 380-44.
- . *Between the Acts* (1941). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969.
- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. Vols. 3 and 4. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, 1982.
- . *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. Vol 6. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.
- . *A Room of One's Own*. 1929. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1957.
- . "A Sketch of the Past." *Moments of Being*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985. 61-159.



A print of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell by Suzanne Bellamy

#### For Suzanne Bellamy

I first met Suzanne Bellamy in 1997, when she came to the Woolf conference I organized that year in Plymouth, New Hampshire. Krystyna Colburn, who was on the program committee, told me about an Australian artist who would be happy to display her work. And display she did! Suzanne entered the Woolf scene with her usual flourish, joy, and aplomb and was a major part of it for the rest of her life. I looked forward every year after that to seeing her in future conferences—in Bangor, Wales (and laughing for an entire train ride as we sat next to each other after the conference was over); Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia, among many others. I recall, in Vancouver, Suzanne savoring the scene and saying how much she enjoyed a city with a real, live working port. Later I met a friend of Suzanne's, the poet Robyn Roland, who said the same thing while we were in Canakkale, Turkey. I noted that a fellow citizen of hers made the same comment several years earlier—and it was then that I learned that the two were friends. What a small world! Suzanne seemed to know everyone. And she was the kind of person everyone wanted to know. I had the great fortune of working with her on one of her last projects. She was writing it under great duress; she was not only ill but was living among the raging fires burning at that time in Australia. And yet—she was as cheerful, loving, and funny as she always was. I will miss her with all my heart; the world will never be the same without her.

**Jeanne Dubino**





A canvas work by Suzanne Bellamy titled *Woolf and the Chaucer Horse* from the performance at the 2011 Contradictory Woolf conference

### An Adventure with Suzanne

Suzanne and I travelled to many Woolf conferences together—with many fantastic trips in the US, the UK, Paris, and Canada. One of our most memorable trips was Jane Goldman’s “Contradictory Woolf” meeting at the University of Glasgow. I felt very honored that Jane had chosen my paper on *A Room of One’s Own*—focused on “But”—to be the theme, and Suzanne’s amazing painting—“The Chaucer Horse”—to be the centerpiece in “Bute Hall,” the huge room where all of the presentations, including Suzanne’s performance piece, were to take place. That we were both going to be keynotes was very exciting for both of us.

Our hotel in Glasgow was fine, but the room was tiny and did not have the floor space for Suzanne to build a frame for the huge painting she had folded into a suitcase in Australia for display in Glasgow. We requested and were changed to a large room with enough floor space to build the frame. We were then off to the lumber yard to buy the wood, and realized as our taxi arrived, that the wood would be hanging out of the window of the taxi, and the ride back to the hotel was slightly dangerous! Our next challenge was to get the lumber to our room on the 4th floor, since it was never going to fit into the elevator. Suzanne and I carried it up a spiral staircase—laughing all the way. We managed to get it into the room which had more than adequate floor space, and within a few hours Suzanne had built it. The painting was to be attached when we reached Bute Hall, so all seemed to be going well until we realized that it would never go through the door of our room, and never fit the elevator.

Looking at the glass doors that took up one full wall of our room, opening on to a shallow balcony, we had our answer—and our only option: we would lower this huge frame down to the street. Now we needed help, and asked the hotel to find us some rope to tie it up so it could be lowered slowly four floors down. We knew that no taxi would work, so we informed Jane of our predicament, and with everything else that Jane had to take care of in chairing the conference, she immediately hired a van and drove over to pick up the frame. Finding that the wood Suzanne purchased would not secure Suzanne’s extremely large painting, Jane borrowed scaffolding from the Tramway Theatre and that worked perfectly. The “Chaucer Horse” painting then took its central place in this magnificent hall. It was there for the entire conference, viewed by all, and in the end was purchased by Jane, who currently uses it in her MLitt class on Virginia Woolf. There was great relief for Suzanne that she would not be putting it back in the very large suitcase she lugged from Australia, and to Suzanne’s delight, it is now used in teaching while giving great pleasure to all.

Judith Allen

### Suzanne...

I am going to tell a story that has never been shared before and that many of you rationalists are not going to believe, but if telling it brings Suzanne back to haunt me, I would be dee-lighted to see her, dead or alive. Weren’t we lucky at the Woolf Conferences that she came all the way from Australia, with her suitcases full of tiny art trophies. In Australia she was known for building BIG ART PIECES, but her creativity was such that it could crawl into a suitcase and emerge as if out of a jack in the box, surprising and captivating.

But to my story which dates back to 2002 when the Woolf Conference was at my school, Sonoma State University. As all of you who have put on one of these extravaganzas know, the whole is full of moving parts and one has to be at one’s best to keep juggling—I wasn’t. My beloved Siamese cat of many years had picked this tumultuous moment to get sick unto death and I was undone.

Fortunately, miraculously, Suzanne, the Indigenous woman from Australia was on hand and with her Marylou Awiakta, a Cherokee woman from Memphis (who was one of our featured speakers). Those two women took hold of my beloved cat and rubbed her strongly and then, yes, you were expecting this, I suppose, but I was not—they chanted for a very long time after which I felt better myself, and my cat was I would not say cured but “on hold”—she did not die until a month later, at a time when I could pay attention to her. Whew! A Virginia Woolf Conference saved and my sense of wonder increased. It was wonderful what those two people did and I still can hardly believe it.

### JJ Wilson



Tiny sculptures crafted by Suzanne Bellamy



## Suzanne Bellamy and Her Contribution to the International Community

It is so important to emphasize Suzanne's work in promoting and stimulating the international community at the Woolf Conference, since she was so concerned in helping international students and in widening the scope of the conference. It was also her dream to witness a Woolf Conference held in South America, in Asia, and in other places than Europe or North America.

I met Suzanne Bellamy in Glasgow in 2011 during the presentation of her rehearsal play, which was transformed into an essay, "The Play's The Thing BUT We Are the Thing Itself.' Prologue, Performance and Painting. A Multimedia Exploration of Woolf's Work in the Late 1930's and Her Vision of Pre-History," published in *Contradictory Woolf: The Selected Papers of the Twenty-first Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson UP, 2012). The Play was a huge success with the participation of the main Woolfian scholars and special participation of Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson as the "audience" and the unforgettable "I am William" performed by Derek Ryan. That was a special moment at the history of Virginia Woolf Conferences. Besides the play, Suzanne displayed her magnificent and inspiring painting "Woolf and the Chaucer Horse."<sup>1</sup> I also remember that Suzanne was in a panel with a presenter from Chile, and that was Suzanne in her best, inspiring the international community to join the conference.

Then I met Suzanne again in Vancouver in 2013; we spent most of the time together, talking and laughing, such was her immense sense of humour. She was genuinely interested in my work, and I was fascinated with her painting and her ideas. After that, we started collaborating and she was always motivating and stimulating my work. In 2015 in Pennsylvania at the Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries conference, Suzanne pushed me to write about Woolf and Victoria Ocampo; the next year, she inspired me to write about Woolf, Frida Kahlo, and Vanessa Bell. She had many ideas: she wanted me to write more about South America and about bringing my identity and the Brazilian women writers in dialogue with Woolf, which I did for the 2022 *Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature*, the cover of which features one of Suzanne's works.

Being in a panel with Suzanne was always a party! It was fun; it was thought-provoking; it was always a success. In 2016, we met Davi Pinho in Leeds at the 26<sup>th</sup> Woolf conference, and since then he was part of the crew. Suzanne was also fascinated by Davi's brilliance, and we would share so many panels together and the same way Suzanne welcomed me into the Conference, I also embraced Davi and since then we have been working together. In 2016 in Leeds, Suzanne and I shared the panel "Rose, Wattle, Bird of Paradise: The Heritage Rose and The New World of Difference" with Elisa Kay Sparks. In 2017, at the conference in Reading, UK, Suzanne Bellamy, Davi Pinho, and I shared the panel "Transcultural, Transnational and Transatlantic Conversations: Receptions of Virginia Woolf." And in 2018, the Canterbury, UK, Woolf conference, Davi Pinho, Elisa Kay Sparks, Suzanne Bellamy, and I organized the panel "Peace Consciousness and Word/World Transformed: Identity, Art, Flowers and Translations." The last time we met in person was in 2019, the year before COVID, where we shared a panel in Cincinnati, Ohio, entitled "Shades of Violence: Pre-War, Post-War, Present Day: Transcultural Approaches to Three Guineas."

At that time, we could not imagine what was going to happen to the world in 2020 with COVID and all the losses we had in our own lives. In 2022, ten days before her death, Suzanne joined us by zoom presenting her art experiment for our panel "Who's Afraid of William Shakespeare: Virginia Woolf Reading the Bard" held online by Amy Smith at Lamar University. When looking back to all those years of collaboration, we can understand how generous Suzanne was and how

interested in promoting diversity and the outsiders of the community. If it was not for Suzanne, our work would not have had such visibility, and the way she promoted us was extremely generous.

Besides that, it is also important to mention that Suzanne wrote a preface for my book on Woolf, and she also contributed with her chapter "Woolf and the Post-War Left: Simone de Beauvoir, Hanna Arendt, Legacies and Resonances of *Three Guineas*" for the book *Conversas com Virginia Woolf*, organized by Davi Pinho, Nicea Nogueira, and me. Finally, Suzanne contributed for our cover for the book *A Prosa Poética de Virginia Woolf*. Losing Suzanne was so sad, and not to have the conversations we had is immensely unhappy, but her legacy will keep alive for many years and we will always remember her with a smile in our faces.

I would like to finish this text with Suzanne's words from her obituary written by Julia Ryan in 2022: "I have no regrets except I wasn't very good at relationships but I found that the Art of Friendship is infinitely more important. This last phase of my life feels so rich in connections with now and memory, an experience that no one prepared you for, fascinating and not at all sad." Suzanne Bellamy was a great artist, an intellectual, an activist and a radical feminist, but above all, she was a huge friend and good friends will always find a way to meet again.

### Maria Aparecida de Oliveira



Davi Pinho, Elisa Kay Sparks, Suzanne Bellamy, and Maria Aparecida de Oliveira at Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace, the 2018 Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, at the University of Kent, Canterbury, hosted by Derek Ryan

### Fleeting and Lasting Impressions

A halo of curly hair. A joyous and quick laugh. Bright, intense eyes. Colorful clothes punctuated with great, flowing scarves. Comfortable. In herself. With others.

A sense of adventure. Traipsing halfway across the world. Relying on the kindness of strangers (and friends). Returning such kindness tenfold. A blithe spirit with a spine of steel. A rapier wit used with humor and for truth, not for harm or one-upmanship.

Generosity and trust. Signs on a conference table, loaded with her art and artifacts, informing browsers: £5 (or so), take what you want, leave your money here.

Deeply creative, curious, experimental. Open to new visions, approaches, questions. Amazing talks and presentations—mental synapses fire while listening. Taking us into her creative process, inviting us to delve into our own. Helping us play, have fun with Woolf, use hats and minimal props to create characters, read parts, and laugh—oh, my goodness, how we laughed.

<sup>1</sup> Now on display at University of Glasgow.

Putting Woolf and Stein into conversation with each other. Bringing verbal and visual worlds together. Flexible, inventive, playful. Yet dead serious. Seeing art everywhere. Putting art anywhere.

Going back to school, writing a dissertation, tracing impact of F. R. Leavis, discovering hidden teachers and scholars, making the academic world hers, too. Insightful learning, sharing.

Hard work, dedication, discipline. How, in face of so many obstacles: gender restrictions, cultural and political barriers, blind and ignorant forces, cancer diagnosis and struggle? How?

A deep, deep well of love. For art, for Virginia Woolf, for all of us, for the earth. A belief in human creativity, including hers, a belief in what art can achieve, a belief in connection, a belief in healing. Knowledge of what's important. But a sense of humor about it all. About life, love, passion, ongoing struggles and causes and projects. Not irony, not cynicism. But wry laughter at human foibles, inflated selves, unthinking certainty. Both/and. Devoted commitment within awareness of long, long human procession.

A kaleidoscope. Ever colorful, changing, patterned, free, wheeling. Suzanne. And memories.

*Beth Rigel Daugherty*



Suzanne exploring Cambridge

### Oh, Suzanne...

What comes to mind in the swirl of thoughts is the discovery that Suzanne was born in Australia the day just before Equinox on 22 September 1948 (the Spring Equinox of the Global South...) and departed on the day just before the Solstice on 20 June 2022 (winter in Australia).

Suzanne's presence is vivid and unforgettable. She is with me now, in intense memories and in her artwork that is on display in my study—a print depicting a photo of Woolf pondering aligned with a crowded bookshelf on the wall and multiple small sculptures—as well as in her writings.

Like many other Woolfians, the first time I met Suzanne was in June 1997. I actually first encountered her at the pre-conference event in Boston that focused on Woolf and lesbianism. At the Woolf conference, Suzanne, Krystyna Colburn, and Morgne (Patricia) Cramer and I shared a room in the residence hall. It was the most fun imaginable. I do not

think we slept. Suzanne almost glowed in the dark with her intense energy and brilliance, and her humor was so fierce that it left one gasping and in spasms of laughter. Her charisma was magnetic. Her gifts in art, in words, in her physical presence, all were extraordinary.

In 2021, Suzanne even agreed to have her work on the front cover the *Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature*, which I co-edited with Jeanne Dubino, Paulina Pająk, Catherine Hollis, and Celiese Lypka. She sent us a cluster of works to choose from and was generous and supportive in the process. She also contributed her own chapter to that collection.

Over the years, I would meet Suzanne at the conferences, and it was always fascinating to see what she had created, whether the work was on display on a table, or in her panel presentation, or, once, in an uproarious performance on the stage at the University of Glasgow during Jane Goldman's Contradictory Woolf conference.

Just days before she left her body, Suzanne was able to present in a panel at Amy Smith's online Woolf and Ethics conference. Suzanne also chose to spend more than 10 hours with Woolves on the screen during that time, talking with us, amusing us, being luminously present in the innumerable, unforgettably distinctive ways she possessed. She said farewell by being there. It was pure joy. Suzanne still is truly present for me as a friend and a source of infinite inspiration. She is unforgettable.

It has been an honor to work with Elisa Kay Sparks to compile these memories of Suzanne.

We miss you, Suzanne.

### *Vara Neverow*



A figurine of a reader (or writer), a few of Suzanne Bellamy's tiny ceramic books, including a wearable one that has a tiny pin on the back, and two adult kangaroos with joeys





Suzanne Bellamy with Gus McLean and Jane Goldman

**“AM I BLUE?”**

without you suzanne yes i-i'm blue  
i-i'm blue with rapture and immersion

so many little moments of improvisation  
and error for you and yes i-i'm so blue

how i-i miss you but always feel we are  
in conversation always already working

with your metallica your found objects  
blue junk all these your recycled materials

deconstructed machines like typewriters  
sound players slide projectors cameras

composition as explanation is composition  
as recombination we're working with

the archaeology of things you love  
everyday objects with deep inner

complexities that remain hidden blue  
whose only function is in combination

with other things your idea of a machine  
transformation of energy and meaning

unstable form now moving on past  
an industrial base to new materials

yes i-i'm blue like metal itself carrying  
memories of a passing age not nostalgia

but a kind of archaeology of shifted  
contexts patterns in the brain create

new orders out of the chaos  
indecipherable texts and languages

an abstraction of things flows on  
from your canvases you are moving

heaven and earth so many journeys  
inside the retina and through the brain

into the voids we carry in memory  
and vision you say plenty of material

in all this in times blue for transformation  
not to be ghoulish BUT.... life serves it

up to us you find that yourself nothing  
like being inside the real at the sharp

end your challenge has also been to  
embrace the experiences survive and use

them use everything said stein then you  
making me feel loved and treasured

in this wild turbulence swirling all around  
saying you will not drown saying you

you are a swimmer in wild seas you  
see clearly and find the way i-i am

holding this image of you Suzanne  
in my heart your strength your clarity

i-i am holding you in my heart fiercely  
beyond the words all the love suzanne

i-i am blue beyond the creeping appeasers  
you say these are early days in a new struggle

you say spirits continue to be solid and real  
and expansive it's all ok you and i-i

are a mimetic pod a written canvas  
or painterly novel allows free space

to open the mosaic of colour and sound  
this is your named journey into the aura

of the other the play of creation  
in the borderlands of new language

before things become really visible you  
see the images suzanne always there

embedded blue in woolf's language  
and in her process blue you have always

wanted to let them out blue let them  
become visible again so you let them

be blue your thoughts are just stirring

**Jane Goldman**  
**University of Glasgow**



An artwork made from found items by Suzanne Bellamy



## RESOURCES RELATED TO SUZANNE BELLAMY

### OBITUARIES, TRIBUTES, AND REMEMBRANCES OF SUZANNE BELLAMY

#### OBITUARIES AUSTRALIA

Ben Hagen, President of the International Virginia Woolf Society, offers an heartfelt remembrance

<https://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/bellamy-suzanne-margaret-sue-32637>

Note: The IVWS has created the Suzanne Bellamy Travel Fund to honor Suzanne. The funding is for travel to the Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf and is intended for those who are not financially supported (<https://v-woolf-society.com/suzanne-bellamy-travel-fund/>)

THE *SIDNEY MORNING HERALD* published an obituary of Suzanne Bellamy; it includes several remembrances:

<https://tributes.smh.com.au/obituaries/448597/suzanne-bellamy/>

PAULA MAGGIO'S *BLOGGING WOOLF* devotes a webpage to the memoriam for Suzanne Bellamy and features some of Suzanne's artworks:

<https://bloggingwoolf.org/2022/06/23/in-memoriam-to-suzanne-bellamy-artist-writer-scholar-feminist-pioneer/>

SPINFEX PRESS has offered remembrances Suzanne Bellamy and features a number of her artworks:

<https://www.spinifexpress.com.au/blog/vale-suzanne-bellamy>

THE *ROCHFORD STREET REVIEW*, which describes its website as "an on-line journal highlighting Australian and International Literature, Art and Culture – with an emphasis on small press and grassroots cultural activities," has posted a very detailed tribute to Suzanne Bellamy:

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2022/06/25/vale-suzanne-bellamy-feminist-artist-writer-scholar-activist/>

(the webpage includes a number of Suzanne Bellamy's works)

#### ROCHFORD STREET REVIEW'S WEBPAGES DEVOTED TO SUZANNE BELLAMY

Suzanne Bellamy's 'Abstract Machines' Artist Statement:

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2019/09/23/suzanne-bellamy-abstract-machines-artist-statement/>

Suzanne Bellamy's speech about Susan Hawthorne, "writer and publisher at Spinifex Press," and her book *Dark Matter*:

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2017/11/13/a-world-of-inner-and-outer-captivity-suzanne-bellamy-launches-dark-matters-by-susan-hawthorne/>

Suzanne Bellamy's 2019 exhibit at the Altenburg Gallery Braidwood NSW  
A YouTube video featuring Suzanne Bellamy at the opening event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJizSPiuOmY&t=1s>

Suzanne Bellamy's 2019 exhibit:

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2019/10/17/identity-and-habitat-biff-ward-launches-time-and-place-an-exhibition-by-suzanne-bellamy/>

Suzanne Bellamy's remembrances of Kate Jennings:

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2021/06/29/the-time-of-white-heat-that-fueled-an-era-suzanne-bellamy-remembers-kate-jennings/>

#### A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SUZANNE BELLAMY:

<https://www.daa.org.au/bio/suzanne-bellamy/biography/>

#### A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SUZANNE BELLAMY'S WORK

##### SUZANNE BELLAMY'S OWN WEBSITE

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/BioMAINpage.html>

*Suzanne Bellamy's artist statement in print version:*

<http://www.suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/ArtistStatement.html>

[http://www.suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/ArtistStatement\\_print.html](http://www.suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/ArtistStatement_print.html)

*Diane Gillespie's article:*

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Gillespie.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Gillespie\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Gillespie_print.html)

*Suzanne Bellamy's Gallery (alas, her actual artworks are no longer posted here)*

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/GalleryMAinPage.html>

*Eight of Suzanne's many articles (see links to PDF versions below)*

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Bio.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay1\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay1_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay2.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay2\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay2_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay3.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay3\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay3_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay4.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay4\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay4_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay5.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay5\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay5_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay6.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay6\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay6_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay7.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay7\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay7_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay8.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay8\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/Essay8_print.html)

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/LostCulture.html>

[http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/LostCulture\\_print.html](http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/LostCulture_print.html)

*A list of Suzanne Bellamy's publications, including some of the articles that are not listed above*

<http://suzannebellamy.com/pages/Archive/SelectedPublications.html>

#### LINKS SUZANNE BELLAMY INCLUDED ON HER OWN WEBSITE

##### WOOLF BLOG

<http://bloggingwoolf.wordpress.com>

##### ELISA KAY SPARKS

<http://people.clemson.edu/~sparks/>

##### BESSIE JEAN THOMPSON GUTHRIE BIOGRAPHY

<http://adonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140394b.htm>

##### HINDSIGHT

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/hindsight/>

##### FYRE GALLERY

<http://fyregallery.com.au/>

##### INTERVIEW WITH SUZANNE BELLAMY

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn282592>

##### SPINFEX PRESS

<http://www.spinifexpress.com.au/>

##### ONLINE ACCESS TO A FEW OF SUZANNE BELLAMY'S EXHIBITS

<https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2013.11/suzanne-bellamy>

<https://keithlyons.me/2010/11/28/suzanne-bellamys-sixteenth-annual-open-studio/>

<http://suzannebellamy.com/> (a few of Suzanne Bellamy's works are displayed on her website)

<https://rochfordstreetreview.com/2019/09/23/suzanne-bellamy-biographical-note/>

##### SUZANNE BELLAMY'S 2018 DOCTORAL THESIS

Suzanne Bellamy's thesis, "Textual Archaeology. A Contextual Reading of the 1942 Nuri Mass thesis on Virginia Woolf," is described in her abstract: My thesis recovers, reads and contextualises a long-lost early Australian thesis on Virginia Woolf submitted by University of Sydney MA student Nuri Mass in 1942. Through its careful reading and contextualisation, my thesis aims to reveal the significance of the Mass thesis for both contemporary Woolf studies (early textual readings) and consequently for transnational modernist studies at large, also producing new, fine-grained insights into the 1930s Australian context for Woolf's reception and Australian engagement with literary modernism. I will contend that the Nuri Mass thesis was written at, and fundamentally shaped by, a pivotal transition in the reception of Woolf's writing, marking a shift in Woolf's place in the literary modernist canon following her death, the rupture presented by world war, and the rise of Leavisite canon formation. Likewise my analysis of the Mass thesis sheds new light on academic, institutional and cultural contexts of 1930s Australian modernism. In addition to the Mass thesis itself, previously unexplored contextual manuscript and documentary materials are introduced, opening new lines of enquiry in the field of transnational/ Australian modernism.

<https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/18612>

2018 Suzanne Bellamy thesis Redacted.pdf

##### SUZANNE BELLAMY'S ARTWORKS DISPLAYED ON FLICKR

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/feraldata/23802194511/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/17247559@N04/7546557072/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/17247559@N04/7546562636/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8632034111/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8633140526/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8633140260/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8632034051/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8633140068/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8632034179/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/clemsonuniversity/8632034389/>

##### SUZANNE BELLAMY'S 2014 EXHIBIT AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

<https://blogs.clemson.edu/visualart/2013/04/04/international-visiting-artist-suzanne-bellamy-48-412/>



Suzanne Bellamy with Davi Pinho, Judith Allen, Jean Moorcroft Wilson, Cecil Woolf, and Elisa Kay Sparks in London



Suzanne Bellamy at Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson's home in London

**Issue 102 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***  
**Special Topic: Twenty-First-Century Perspectives on Virginia Woolf:**  
**Feminisms, Gender, Politics, and Patriarchy**  
**Spring 2024**

**Guest Editor: Kimberly Coates**  
**Editor: Vara Neverow**

Submissions should be no longer than 2,500 words.

Submissions are due by August 31, 2023

Please send submissions to:

[kimbec@bgsu.edu](mailto:kimbec@bgsu.edu) and [neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)

Activists in the twentieth-century Second-Wave feminist movement coined the phrase “the personal is political” to confront the patriarchy. Today, at least half a century later, the concept still applies, and one must still hold the patriarchy accountable for the marginalization and exploitation of cis-women and transwomen alike.

In this Call for Papers, we invite a variety of contributions that explore, define, and document a range of topics that cluster around Virginia Woolf’s own viewpoints and texts regarding patriarchy and its impact on girls and women (whether cis-born or trans). These approaches can align or clash with differing contemporary sexual and gender-based politics. Contributions can be in the form of essays, poetry, and artwork (note: the electronic edition of the issue will include color, but the print version will be in black-and-white format). We hope to examine the evolution of this complex historical moment from multiple perspectives. While we offer a range of rhetorical questions below, we also encourage contributors to feel free to craft their own approaches.

- How do Woolf’s works intersect with reproductive rights; reproductive justice; girls, women’s and trans healthcare; and the representation, construction, and control of “female” bodies whether cis-born or other?
- How do Woolf’s political insights play into the current opportunities and constraints of women’s rights in the workplace, in professions, and in labor?
- How does Woolf’s advocacy for women’s financial stability and independence intersect with twenty-first variants of exclusion and inclusion of feminisms and womanism?
- How can Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw’s diagramming of intersectionality, discrimination, privilege, and marginalization—for example, ableism, ageism, class, gender and sex, race/ethnicity/nationality, religion, physical appearance including skin-tone—be applied to Woolf’s own advocacy?

We envision articles that might place Woolf in the context of creative twenty-first-century conversations with feminist writers and advocates from Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Americas. So too are feminist perspectives from the late-nineteenth through to the mid-twentieth century. For example, such British and Western European activists as Josephine Butler, Annie Besant, Sylvia Pankhurst, Millicent Fawcett, Margaret Llewelyn Davies, Ray Strachey, and Simone de Beauvoir might provide relevant perspectives.

Woolf’s own critical reception as feminist and activist evolved at the same time that Second-Wave Anglo-American advocates, scholars, and novelists were expressing their views and offering their insights to a feminist readership. These works include Valerie Solanas’s *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), Andrea Dworkin’s *Woman-Hating: A Radical Look at Sexuality* (1974); Audre Lorde’s *Sister Outsider* (1984); Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985); Marilyn French’s *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals* (1986); Patricia Hill Collins’ *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (1990); Catherine MacKinnon’s *Women’s Lives, Men’s Laws* (2005); and bell hooks’ *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000).

Over the decades, Third-, Fourth-, and Fifth-Wave generations of feminists have addressed the increasingly complex perceptions associated with the evolving intersections of sexuality and gender while also tackling the politics of patriarchy. Similarly, Woolf’s reception has become ever more intricate and more global as patriarchy has continued to encroach on the lives of women and girls, whether cis-born or trans. We welcome multiple approaches. Contributions can be confrontational and passionate but must also speak to collaborative inclusive efforts. We hope that submissions will

feature methods, solutions, and possibilities that foster hope as we rely on Woolf as an inspiration to confront and counter the rising patriarchal backlash of the twenty-first century.

**Issue 103 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***  
**Special Topic: Virginia Woolf and George Eliot**  
**Fall 2024**

**Guest Editor: Charlotte Fiehn**

Submissions should be no longer than 2,500 words

Please send submissions to: [caf9414@nyu.edu](mailto:caf9414@nyu.edu)

Deadline: 15 June 2024

The special topic for Issue 103 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* will focus on the literary, biographical, and critical intersections of Virginia Woolf and George Eliot. Woolf, in preparation for her article on the centenary of Eliot’s birth in November 1919, claims to have read all of Eliot’s works, and numerous critics noted Eliot’s influence on Woolf’s fiction. Although Woolf’s centenary article was largely scathing, suggesting that Eliot was old-fashioned and even somewhat ridiculous, Woolf insisted that she greatly admired Eliot. Her comment about *Middlemarch* as “one of the few novels written for grown-up people” remains a definitive assessment. Woolf receives credit for reviving Eliot’s reputation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Suggested topics include (but are by no means limited to) the influence of Eliot on Woolf’s work and Woolf’s role in shaping Eliot’s reputation in the early twentieth century; comparisons of Eliot and Woolf’s works (e.g., *Middlemarch* and *Night and Day*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *To the Lighthouse*, or “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists” and *A Room of One’s Own*); biographical connections (e.g., familial relationships, experiences of education, and the respective roles of George Henry Lewes and Leonard Woolf); and Woolf’s and Eliot’s critical reception.

**Issue 104**

**Spring 2025**

**Special Topic: Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence**

**Please submit article proposals of approximately 300 words by 15 January 2024**

Article drafts (no more than 2,500 words including Works Cited) are due by 15 October 2024

Guest Editor: Benjamin D. Hagen

Please send your submissions to: [Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu](mailto:Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu)

In October 1932, over two years after D.H. Lawrence’s death, Virginia Woolf reads, “with the usual sense of frustration,” an edition of Lawrence’s letters published the previous month, an edition edited and introduced by Aldous Huxley (D 2 126). We could take her critical inventory here as a summation of her assessment of Lawrence’s writing: his “repetition of one idea”; his poor “explanations for what he sees”; the “panting,” “gasping,” and “preaching” tone of his sentences; and his diction (“English has one million words: why confine yourself to 6? & praise yourself for so doing” (126). She ends her diary entry wondering, “Why all this criticism of other people [in the letters]? Why not some system that includes the good? What a discovery that would be—a system that did not shut out” (127).

Though several scholars have written on both Woolf and Lawrence—too many to list here—the pairing of these two writers nonetheless continues to surprise literary scholars, especially those working in modernist studies. In my book, *The Sensuous Pedagogies of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*, I explore how *pedagogy* and *feeling* preoccupied both writers across their lifespans. In this special issue, I invite proposals for articles that expand our critical knowledge of the concepts and contexts in which we might reconsider the relation—and persistent non-relation—between these modernist writers. Both Woolf and Lawrence are famous for their letters, their essays, and their fiction, but their legacies and receptions are far from equitable: Woolf has become an icon whose work is reissued again and again and adapted repeatedly into other media while much of Lawrence’s writing remains out of print and unrecognized by the very field that might benefit from his wide travels, his interest in Indigenous people, and much more. Where might we locate resonances between these important early twentieth-century figures? How might Lawrence help us see or see anew aspects of Woolf’s thought? How might Woolf—despite her own judgments of his writing—aid us in better assessing and understanding those very features of his work that frustrated her. And why might it be important to locate such resonances here and now?



**Issue 105 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***

**Special Topic: Woolf and Failure**

**Fall 2025**

**Guest Editor: Mary Wilson**

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**

Submissions should be no longer than 2,500 words.

Submissions are due by August 31, 2023

Please send submissions to:

***mwilson4@umassd.edu***

For this special topic of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, you are invited to think about, analyze, expose, and otherwise wallow in failure. While we can readily credit our later successes to lessons learned from earlier failures, we often experience failure in less linear and more cyclical ways. Failure surfaces at different points in our lives and work, and fears of failing and the risks involved in achieving anything other than success recur in sometimes unexpected situations. Failure is ordinary, not extraordinary—and when we recognize failure’s ordinariness, its significance in Woolf’s work may take on new meaning.

Failure circulates throughout Woolf’s work, and carries with it many meanings. Fears of failing or of being a failure characterize many key characters’ psyches; narratives are built on incomplete, unrealized, or failed artistic projects. Failure is also central presence in many of Woolf’s essays; it has a particular role in her review work, but also forms the foundation of “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.” That generation-defining essay is founded on Arnold Bennett’s assessment that Woolf failed to create real characters in *Jacob’s Room*, and contains within it Woolf’s assertion of her own failure to capture “Mrs. Brown” in telling her story. That sanguine expression of failure in the essay jars against the fears of failing to achieve her artistic vision that Woolf records in her personal writings. Even as Woolf explores her own worries and points out the failures of others—such as Charlotte Brontë’s anger marring *Jane Eyre*—she also exposes and questions the structures of expectation and the norms (both social and fictional) that determine failure and success.

And yet failure need not be a bummer—nor need this special issue. As Jack Halberstam argues in *The Queer Art of Failure*, “under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world” (2-3). In what ways might Woolf’s work offer examples of this mode of failing or this way of understanding what failure offers?

Lastly, since each of us contends with failure in our own lives in and out of the classroom, this special issue also welcomes personal reflections on the experience of failure. Where do our understandings of failure intersect with our work with Woolf? How have our failures shaped us, and continue to shape our scholarship and teaching?

Possible approaches might include:

- \* Defining failure in or through Woolf
- \* Representations of failure in Woolf’s novels, short stories, and essays
- \* Failure in Woolf’s personal writings
- \* Failure as action (failing) or identity (being a failure)
- \* Reading Woolf’s work through theories of failure, such as Jack Halberstam’s *The Queer Art of Failure*
- \* Woolfian aesthetics of failure
- \* Failures of imagination and/or execution
- \* Political, social, and ethical failures
- \* Failed identities
- \* Examinations of Woolf’s failed projects
- \* Woolf’s assessments of her own failures and those of others
- \* Woolf and other women writers: does Woolf’s success at infiltrating the canon mean others’ failure? Our own experiences of failure as students, scholars, and teachers of/with Woolf



**A Quick Overview of Guest Editing, Publishing, Teaching, Reviewing, and Advertising with the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***

You can peruse previous issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* at: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/>. The website provides access to all previous issues of the *Miscellany* in PDF format. All issues are searchable and can be downloaded.

**Call for Special Topics**

You can propose a special topic for a future issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

**Call for Submissions**

You can submit a “Truly Miscellaneous” essay, poem, or drawing.

**Writing a Book Review for the *Miscellany***

If you are interesting in writing a book review or recommending a book to review, you can contact Karen Levenback, the Book Review Editor, at [klevenback@att.net](mailto:klevenback@att.net).

**Teaching Woolf with the *Miscellany***

If you are interested in teaching using copies of the *Miscellany*, a number of issues are available in print format and can be mailed to you for free.

**Sharing Notifications about Upcoming Events and Publications**

If you want to alert Woolfians of events or share CFPs for conferences and the like, provide the information at least three months in advance if possible.

**Advertising in the *Miscellany***

If you are interested in promoting something (a book or a business, for example), you can advertise in the *Miscellany* for free if you donate to the International Virginia Woolf Society at <https://v-woolf-society.com/membership/> and provide documentation for the donation.

For further information or if you have questions about these options, please contact Vara Neverow at [neverow1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverow1@southernct.edu)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<p><b>EDITORS' INTRODUCTION</b>  <b>Special Topic:</b>  <b>The Evolution of the Miscellany</b>  <b>J. J. Wilson, Vara Neverow, and Alec Pollak</b></p> <p><b>EVENTS, CFPS AND INFORMATION</b>            Thanking the IVWS for continuing support            Paula Maggio's "Blogging Woolf"            The 33rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf            The <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i> Online            Call for Proposals, Clemson UP: Annotated Woolf            The <i>VWM</i> Editorial Board            CFP from the IVWS            Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize  <i>VWM</i> Guidelines for Submissions and Editorial Policies            Jon S. Richardson Rare Books (advertisement)            How to Join the International Virginia Woolf Society            How to Join the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain  <i>Société d'Études Woolfiennes</i>            The Woolf Salon Project            The IVWS and VWS Archive Information            Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture            Ane Thon Knutsen, Graphic Designer (advertisement)            Woolfian Resources Online            The Modernist Archives Publishing Project            A Brief Overview of Affiliated Woolf-Related Entities</p> <p><b>In Memoriam</b>  <b>Suzanne Bellamy</b></p> <p><b>Calls for Papers for the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i></b>            Issue 102: Twenty-First-Century Perspectives on Virginia Woolf: Feminisms, Genders, Politics, and Patriarchy            Issue 103: Virginia Woolf and George Eliot            Issue 104: Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence            Issue 105: Virginia Woolf and Failure            A Quick Guide to Guest Editing, Publishing, Reviewing, Teaching, and Advertising with the <i>Miscellany</i></p> <p><b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>  <b>Special Topic:</b>  <b>The Evolution of the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i></b>            "The International Virginia Woolf Society: The Origin Story"            "Memories of the <i>Miscellany</i>"            "Being an Editor of the <i>Miscellany</i>: 1983-2000"            "From the Viewpoint of a Common Reader"            "On Editing an Early Issue: of the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>"            "Number 20, Spring 1983: "A Personal Reflection"            "Community Building at the <i>VWM</i>"            A Personal Reflection            "Becoming Book-Review Editor of the <i>Miscellany</i>: Zazz, Minutiae, and All"            "'A Fantasy' Redux"            "Society Columns: On the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>"            "How to 'write small': Truly Miscellaneous Encounters"            "Woolf-Spotting"            "The <i>Miscellany</i>: A Research Harbour for a PhD Student Sitting in a Lockdown Storm"            The <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>: A "capacious hold-all"            "The Spirit of the <i>Miscellany</i>"</p>	<p>1 5 5 5 5 5 5 6 6 6 7 7 7 8 8 9 9 10 11 23 23 23 24 24 17 18 26 28 28 29 30 32 32 33 35 36 37 37 37 38 38 39</p>	<p>"A Conversation about the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>"            "Getting to Know (and Correctly Pronounce) the <i>Miscellany</i>"            "Miscellaneous Benefits of the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>"            Evolution of the <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i>: An Appreciation  <b>The 2022 Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Prize Essays</b>            "'Breaking the Silence?': Talking, Speaking, and the Dissipation of Meaning in Virginia Woolf's Novels"            "Abandoned, Domestic Objects 'continuing without us' in Ecological Landscapes in Virginia Woolf's 'Solid Objects'"            "Predicting the Present: Orlando Is Trans*"  <b>TRULY MISCELLANEOUS</b>            "Outside"            "Mrs. Papworth: The Working-Class Woman in Virginia Woolf's Novel <i>Jacob's Room</i>"            "Virginia Woolf and the Letterpress"            "The Power of Silence: Understanding Women's Resistance in Woolf's <i>To The Lighthouse</i>"            "A Deliberate Failure: Politics, Form, and Woolf Between the Wars"  <b>BOOK REVIEWS</b>            How to Contact the Book Review Editor            Call for Reviewers            REVIEW  <i>Virginia Woolf: Critical and Primary Sources, 1975-2014</i>            Edited by Vara S. Neverow, Jeanne Dubino, Kathryn Simpson, and Gill Lowe            REVIEW  <i>Virginia Woolf's Mythic Method</i>            by Amy C. Smith            REVIEW  <i>The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature</i>            Edited by Jeanne Dubino, Paulina Pająk, Catherine W. Hollis, Celiese Lypka, and Vara Neverow            REVIEW  <i>The Sensuous Pedagogies of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence</i>            by Benjamin D. Hagen            REVIEW  <i>Feminism from Literary Modernism to the Multimedia Present</i>            by Amy Elkins            REVIEW  <i>England's Lane</i>            by Emma Woolf  <b>List of the IVWS Officers and Members-at-Large</b>  <b>The Society Column</b>  <i>(continues on page 71)</i></p>	<p>40 41 43 44 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 59 63 63 63 65 66 68 69 70 71 72</p>
--	---	--	--



# The Evolution of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*



Edited by  
J. J. Wilson, Vara Neverow, and Alec Pollak

## The International Virginia Woolf Society: The Origin Story<sup>1</sup>

Time passes.

It was June 1975, and James Naremore and I were sitting at a Paris bistro. We were attending an International James Joyce Symposium, sponsored by the James Joyce Foundation. As we chatted, it occurred to us—correctly of course—that it would be a great idea to start a similar organization devoted to Virginia Woolf. Just a thought. But when we returned to the States, Jimmy to Indiana University and me to Ohio State, we actually followed through. We decided to write to a few people to see if others agreed with us. It should be understood that in the early and mid 1970s it was not universally agreed that Woolf was a great novelist or a fully major figure in the Modernist canon. She wasn't taught in the academy nearly as much as, say, Joyce or D. H. Lawrence; nor was as much published about her work. But we knew that all that was changing, and that the time was ripe for the formation of a society devoted to Woolf and her work.

To fortify ourselves and make us look and feel legitimate, at the end of August we wrote to Madeline Hummel (later Madeline Hummel Moore), at the University of California at Santa Cruz, whom neither of us had ever met but whose work we liked, and who we knew had had experience setting up a conference for people interested in Woolf; we asked if she would agree to sign such a query with us. She agreed, and on October 10, 1975, we wrote to maybe a dozen or so people—most of whom none of us knew at all. I don't have a list of all the recipients in my records, but I recall that they included such people as Carolyn Heilbrun, Suzanne Henig, Mitchell Leaska, Jane Marcus, Tillie Olsen, Lucio Ruotolo, Joanne Trautman, and J. J. Wilson:

We are writing to you and several other people in order to ask your opinions about the possibility and desirability of forming a scholarly "foundation" devoted to Virginia Woolf, or perhaps to the Bloomsbury Group in general.

During the past several years the research on Woolf and the figures around her has proliferated enormously, to the point where there might be interest in forming an international organization similar to the one the Joyceans now have. The purpose of this organization would be to enable scholars, critics, teachers, students, and general readers to meet together and contact one another more easily. Eventually, it would sponsor conferences or symposia, once again on the model of the successful Joyce group. It would *not* presume to "take over" the Woolf industry, or to usurp the functions of the existing journals and meetings....

... We want to emphasize that we have no ambitions to be the "leaders" of such a group, nor do we want to work at the idea unless there is significant reinforcement from other scholars. Could you give us your frank opinions? Is the idea too ambitious, too

unrealistic, too time-consuming? Is there even a need for such a group? ....

The responses were sufficiently enthusiastic (although, as you'll see, not universally so) for us to call a meeting at the MLA conference, at the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco, for the evening of December 27. That meeting was packed and entirely supportive. Obviously, it was unrepresentative insofar as it could consist solely of those who were able to attend the convention (and not all of them, since there are always inevitable time conflicts at MLA). As I wrote in a report about the meeting I sent out on January 13, 1976, "Several people expressed a preference for a society that would encompass the entire Bloomsbury Group, but the consensus of most people in the room was that while all of Bloomsbury would inevitably figure in the interests and activities of such a society, Virginia Woolf has too long been connected to a single coterie in a particular time and place, rather than to the widest of literary worlds where she belongs. Moreover, it was felt that if men like Joyce, Joseph Conrad, and Lawrence 'deserve' their own societies, a woman of Woolf's stature need not be considered part of a wider group in order to rate such attention."

We came up with a "Steering Committee" consisting, with a couple of exceptions, of people who were at the MLA meeting: Margaret Comstock, Alice Goode, John F. Hulcoop, Madeline Hummel, Edward Hungerford, Jane Marcus, Grace Radin, Sally Ruddick, Lucio P. Ruotolo, Beverly Schlack, Grace Studley, J. J. Wilson, and me. (Soon Ellen Hawkes and Elaine Unkeless were added.) I was tasked with coordinating our activities, which involved looking into such questions as incorporation, funding, cooperating with existing entities such as the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and *Virginia Woolf Quarterly*, coming up with a more or less permanent sort of structure, and sending out a wider invitation for memberships. One task I had was to send out the January report I've mentioned, which ended by saying that "at the December meeting, a number of us wondered aloud at how Virginia Woolf would have reacted to all this. Perhaps that's irrelevant (or perhaps it doesn't bear thinking), but then again she understood and did not entirely disapprove, surely, of Clarissa Dalloway's desire to have people *gather*. That's what we do it for."

By April we *legally* existed, incorporated in Franklin County in the state of Ohio, of all places. (As if I needed concrete evidence of that fact, the society began to receive junk mail.) The Articles of Incorporation for the sovereign state of Ohio demanded a statement of "the purpose or purposes for which said corporation is formed." After consulting with the Steering Committee, we came up with the following:

To foster and encourage the scholarly study of, critical attention to, and general interest in, the work and career of Virginia Woolf, and to facilitate ways in which all people interested in her writings—scholars, critics, teachers, students, and common readers—may learn from one another, meet together, contact each other, and help one another.

I also started the more formidable job of obtaining tax exemption from the Internal Revenue Service. We sent out a mailing inviting people to be founding members (dues were \$5.00 annually, \$2.00 for students). The *Miscellany* helped us with its mailing list, and we put notices in the *TLS*, *PMLA*, the *Journal of Modern Literature*, and such single-author journals as those on Joyce, Lawrence, Conrad, and Anaïs Nin.

Very tentatively we called ourselves the International Virginia Woolf Society, but we soon dropped the word "International" simply because, at the time, we weren't achieving a status deserving that title. But I did send letters to Quentin Bell, David Garnett, John Lehman, and Nigel Nicolson requesting that they agree to be Honorary Trustees; Bell, Lehman, and Nicolson said yes, but Garnett very politely declined, citing difficult experiences he'd had with the *Virginia Woolf Quarterly*. Incidentally, I had come up with a letterhead for the society, including in it a sketch of Woolf that I had drawn; Bell asserted that it didn't look anything like his aunt, and suggested that instead we use an image of

<sup>1</sup> This essay is about the creation of the Society, not that of the *Miscellany*, but the two are so closely connected that the story of the beginnings of the Society is also of great importance here.



a moth by Vanessa Bell, which he very kindly supplied, along with permission for it.

When it came to coming up with possibilities for officers in the Society, we took into consideration the simple fact that at that time, the mid-1970s, a good many of those who felt most strongly about Woolf's stature in modern literature were relatively early in their academic careers and had publishing and tenure to worry about. Not all of them could devote the energy and time necessary to making sure that the Society developed and grew into more than just a group of folks who arranged an occasional informal get-together. Meanwhile, as I mentioned, the responses to the original letter that Madeline, Jimmy, and I sent out were not invariably positive: the notable exception was from Caroline Heilbrun. She had written:

My first response is that I really could not bear another scholarly group. Is it a sign of age, or the particular point we have reached in the semester, that I feel as the scholarship industry increases, the life of literature somehow fails? Probably this is just a bad month. All of which amounts to this: if I can help, I shall, but the thought of such enterprise does not fill me with enthusiasm. Why does there seem to me something especially ironic about an institution devoted to Bloomsbury, a group of individuals outstanding above all for their intolerance of institutions? Should I, like Virginia Woolf at another occasion, simply say I have nothing to wear? Joyce, on the other hand, obviously dreamed of this sort of attention.

It took me a full year to write a full response to that letter, a response that carried with it a not so ulterior motive: following up on J. J. Wilson's suggestion, on September 13, 1976, I wrote to Heilbrun requesting that she agree to serve as the first President of the society she wasn't sure should exist. I responded to her point about how differently Woolf and Joyce would have reacted to "this sort of attention" by saying that "I've come to feel that invitations by a writer (explicit or implicit) are less compelling than the felt needs of readers. I honestly feel that readers and students of Woolf have such needs, and that they're legitimate ones." I went on to recognize that:

Naturally, you're wondering why we're asking you to be the President. Personally, I'm willing to continue to do the business aspects of what I've been doing.... But I should not be President. I fully agree with all of those who believe that for various reasons the first President of the Virginia Woolf Society should not be a man. Moreover, someone as widely respected as you (forgive this if it sounds cloying, but I am trying to be both realistic and frank) would set a tone—and provide an image if you will—for the Society that would be immensely valuable in its first stages....

...And I don't think I'm betraying a confidence when I say that J. J.—who of course knows you as I don't—feels especially that you'd be one of the few people who would be both well-known in the profession and yet also one who would be regarded by the upcoming generation in Woolf studies as in a sense one of them.

I discussed in some detail the activities of the Society in its first year, and our ambitions, and I mentioned that we had been encouraged by Bell, Lehmann, and Nicolson; with impressive honesty, I also enclosed the negative response from Garnett. That turned out to be a good ploy, since she was amused and in her reply pointed out that "I wrote a book, long ago, about the Garnett family, which appealed to me precisely because they never had anything to do with societies." More importantly, she shared Garnett's reservations about the *Virginia Woolf Quarterly*. But overall she was receptive, and she even suggested a name for the first person to be Vice President: Elaine Unkeless.

In subsequent correspondence and phone calls, Carolyn expressed most concern about the procedures by which she might be elected; those matters were resolved, and by MLA of that year—1976—she could be called the new President (with Elaine Unkeless as the Vice-President and me as Executive Secretary). We also had a Board of Trustees: Margaret

Comstock, Ellen Hawkes, Madeline Hummel, Jane Marcus, Grace Radin, Lucio Ruotolo, Sallie Sears, Elaine Unkeless, J. J. Wilson, and Carolyn and me. In her marvelous—elegant and eloquent—inaugural speech at our meeting at the MLA (attended by about a hundred people, with a cash bar hosted by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), Carolyn, stretching things just a bit, opened by saying that:

The Founders of the Society determined that its first President should have three qualifications: She should be female; she should have been a full Professor teaching Woolf at a prestigious university; she should be aging. A moment's thought will indicate to you the scarcity of such creatures. One must recognize one's destiny. If I appear to have been selected because I lack both youth and manhood, I prefer to consider that middle-age and femaleness have, for once, united into desirability. But I ask you to recognize that in a profound sense, I am a fraud. I am not feminine, but androgynous.

She concluded with the hope that "the society will remember that for Woolf, criticism was ideally offered late at night, over glasses of wine, in sentences which were not finished.... Let's remember, if not the unfinished sentences (for we are, after all, a society of scholars), the wine, and the friendship late at night."

After that Carolyn and I both kept our promises, and she went beyond hers, turning out to be an active if not quite activist President. She wasn't above discussing, say, how much we might want to charge for drinks at the annual MLA party, or what might be the best venue. Carolyn was especially concerned about getting younger Woolf scholars into official roles within the Society. But she could also be frank about her negative feelings. In retrospect it's intriguing—given that she was ultimately to take her own life—that she objected to the possibility that one scholar might be nominated for office because "she speaks of suicide as a Bloomsbury art form." I remember, too, a conversation we had at one of the Woolf parties at an MLA in New York, when I asked about some of the people at Columbia University, where I had received my M.A. She told me with a pained expression about one elderly and very well-known and respected emeritus scholar, by then inflicted with dementia: "She spends all day with crayons, Murray, keeping the colors inside the lines."

In March 1977 I sent "A Report to the Membership" that included an address list of all the "Founding Members"—175 of them. In October I sent out "A Checklist of Work in Progress on Virginia Woolf." At the MLA in Chicago that year, our party was hosted by the Newberry Library. By then we were sponsoring sessions on Woolf at each MLA, although we were still unsuccessful in our hopes that someone at some institution would be able to sponsor a full-length conference devoted to her. At the next year's MLA in New York, we reserved our own hotel suite, at which Carolyn picked up the tab for the wine and refreshments, her gesture as she retired from her post as President. There were over two hundred people at the party, including Virginia Wo[o]lf herself. It turned out that Ms. Wolf, a member of the faculty at the University of Wisconsin at Menomonie attending the MLA, had a room at the Hilton, where the Society also had its suite. Naturally, if annoyingly, many or most inquiries about the party resulted—in the prelapsarian days when hotels allowed this—with people being given her room number. We pleaded with the Hilton to shape up, but also asked Virginia Wolf for permission to put a note on her door—and of course invited her to be our honored guest.

In 1979 we had new officers (no longer including a Vice-President): President, Mitchell A. Leaska; Secretary, Grace Radin, and Treasurer, Louise DeSalvo.

Carolyn, Elaine, and I had all determined that it was time for new leaders.

Yes, we thought, in a bit of fatigue, we have had our vision.

*Morris Beja*  
*The Ohio State University*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Memories of the *Miscellany*

Issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* in my file drawer go back to the first (Fall 1973). It is one large, folded sheet of paper with reviews of books, exhibitions, and archival collections. I also have a useful “Index to the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*: The First Twenty Issues 1973-1983.” Check marks indicate what I went back to read while working on *The Sisters’ Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (1988) and other research projects.

Until I saw it in the “Index,” I had forgotten my short piece on “The Leonard and Virginia Woolf Library and the Washington State University Woolf Collection” 9 (Winter 1977): 4. It summarizes what happened to the Woolfs’ books after Leonard Woolf’s death in 1969. It covers how Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC) at the WSU Libraries acquired such a significant majority of the books, provides an overview of categories of the collection, and outlines plans for cataloguing. In fact, the WSU English Department hired me in 1975 in part because of the Woolfs’ Library purchase and because of my dissertation, “Women Artists as Characters and Creators... in the Work of May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf.”

Later I guest edited an issue, number 22 (Spring 1984), devoted to the Woolf Library collection at WSU. The *VWM* called it “a bonanza” issue in part because it included a number of visual images from the Woolfs’ books, among them cover designs by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant; drawings that Leslie Stephen, Thoby Stephen, and William Makepeace Thackeray had done in books Virginia Woolf inherited; a Leonard Woolf book plate; a Carrington illustration; and playbook notes by Elizabeth Robins. The issue was an exciting, collaborative project, one that involved people who offered financial support as well as early visitors, many of whom are no longer with us, who shared their first experiences of the collection. John Elwood, then chair of the English Department, writes how Lewes book shop owner Fred Lucas introduced him to Leonard Woolf. Lucas became the contact for the sale of two lots of the books to the WSU Libraries. When boxes began to arrive early in the 1970s, librarian Leila Luedeking helped to unpack and begin to catalogue the contents. She shares her appreciation and impressive early knowledge of the collection. Accounts by visitors are by Virginia R. Hyman (Rutgers University), Alex Zwerdling (University of California, Berkeley), Elizabeth Steele (University of Toledo), L. L. Lee (Western Washington University), Ed Hungerford (Southern Oregon State University), Linde M. Brocato (Emory University graduate student), and Mildred Bissinger (small press printer from Kentfield, California). In addition to the guest-edited part of the issue are several important reviews of seminal books, Brenda Silver on Woolf’s reading notebooks (reviewed by Alice Fox), Frances Spalding’s biography of Vanessa Bell (reviewed by Noel Annan), and Madeline Moore’s book *The Short Season Between Two Silences: The Mystical and the Political in the Novels of Virginia Woolf* (reviewed by Harvena Richter). There are also comments on productions of *Freshwater* by Ruth Z. Temple, Marilyn Zucker, and Nigel Nicolson, who later visited the collection and reverently held one of Virginia Woolf’s Greek play copies with her penciled translations.

Over the years, I published a few book reviews for the *Miscellany* (1985, 1986, 2004, and 2012). In 2010, Maggie Humm guest edited a useful special issue on Woolf and Intellectual Property/Copyright Issues. Having had to get permissions to include many images in publications over the years, I happily contributed “Publishing Visual Images: A Few Nuts and Bolts” (Issue 77 [Spring 2010]: 9-10). Rereading the account of all I went through to locate images and to acquire necessary permissions reminds me of how onerous the process sometimes was and how varied were published results, images often limited in number and most often published in black and white, not in color. Then there were fees for permissions and for quality reproductions. These were not always recouped by rare help from publishers, available university funds, miniscule royalties, or vague promises of future salary increases.

In the same issue, Dannel Jones covers the legalities of quoting Woolf’s words and Karen Kukil takes us into copyright issues in the digital world of online exhibitions. It is a guest-edited issue rich with other useful essays, exchanges, and reviews. Truly, the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* has been, and continues to be a valuable part of my scholarly life as reader, researcher, and contributor.

*Diane F. Gillespie*  
*Washington State University--Pullman*



## Being an Editor of the *Miscellany*: 1983-2000

I’m delighted to make a small contribution to the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* reminiscing about my own involvement in it as one of its editors so many years ago, based on a faulty memory and the issues themselves. Of one thing there is no doubt. The single most important figure in its history is the superb J. J. Wilson.

I had arrived at Stanford in the Fall of 1968 as its modern British historian. I had published two quite different books, my revised dissertation on high British Liberal politics at the end of the nineteenth century and, with my co-author, William Abrahams, *Journey to the Frontier*, a study of two young men killed in the Spanish Civil War, John Cornford and Julian Bell, Virginia Woolf’s nephew. So I was certainly interested in Bloomsbury. And I already knew Ellen Hawkes as I believe she had done a directed reading with me on Bloomsbury when she was a Radcliffe undergraduate. She was now a PhD student at Stanford in Modern Thought and Literature. I rapidly became aware in the Stanford English Department of Wilfrid Stone, who had recently published a well-received book on E. M. Forster, and Lucio Ruotolo, the quite splendid scholar of Bloomsbury.

In Fall 1973 when the *Miscellany* began, I knew about it and subscribed, if that is the accurate word, as there was generously no charge for receiving it. Nine years later I was asked to join its editorial board. At this point the publication I believe was run in an unusual and imaginative way that one would be the sole editor of an issue every other year although this was not a firm pattern as there were also issues edited by guest editors, such as Mark Hussey and Jane Marcus. J. J. was the crucial and essential figure as she brought the publication into existence and arranged for its distribution. If I remember correctly—which I don’t vouch for—at the time I joined there was an editorial board of four, including myself—with the others being Lucio, Ellen, and J.J. I presume Lucio and Ellen had brought my name to J. J.’s attention as a possible member of the editorial board, and she announced that I had done so in issue No. 18. Ellen shortly after dropped out as an editor. J. J., Lucio and myself would appear to be the “regular” editors, joined by Mark Hussey in 1991. I was honored and pleased to be asked to join the board and I remember understanding that each editor would probably be responsible for one issue every other year. As there were two issues a year it meant that one’s commitment was time limited but total—no editorial meetings. Contributors were instructed in the previous issue to send possible submissions to whomever the editor of the next issue might be. It was an efficient way of operating.

The first issue I edited was No. 20, Spring 1983. My introductory remarks were largely devoted to the dispute that was then going on in Woolf studies about how political she was. Interestingly those who tended to depict Woolf as less political tended to be British and male while those who thought otherwise tended to be American and female. In my introduction to the issue, I took perhaps a weak middle position which I still believe to be accurate that *Three Guineas* was a far stronger text than Quentin Bell seemed to think but that Woolf was not quite the Marxist socialist that Jane Marcus depicted. I mention that Jane Marcus

had accused me at a Woolf meeting at Brown University of being hopelessly “English” in my take on Woolf’s politics. Quentin Bell wrote the first piece in the issue taking strong issue with Jane Marcus while at the same time recognizing that Woolf was a socialist and politically active. The issue contained two pieces by Susan Groag Bell and Selma Meyerowitz dealing positively with Woolf’s political commitment. There was also a book review by Jane Marcus which had no political content. A similar division of opinion about the significance of Woolf’s sexual abuse by her Duckworth half-brothers, George and Gerald, would not emerge until some years later with the publication in 1989 of Louise DeSalvo’s *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on her Life and Work*. In the very next issue of the *Miscellany* there was a rather testy exchange between Jane Marcus, myself, and Quentin Bell. Marcus said that what I had publicly stated at Brown was that Woolf was not a socialist and wasn’t interested in politics. As I didn’t believe either claim, I wrote that I couldn’t have made such a statement. Quentin Bell wrote a letter published in the issue to refute her charge in *Signs* that in order not to jeopardize one’s career in terms of securing publication permission one had to agree with his interpretation of Woolf’s politics.

The next issue of the *Miscellany* I edited, No. 24, Spring 1985, had a few short pieces and some book reviews, notably of the fifth and concluding volume of the *Diaries* and Angelica Garnett’s memoir, *Deceived with Kindness*. The next issue I edited was No. 28, Spring 1987, a true miscellany with an emphasis on the Bloomsbury-derived designs from Laura Ashley. I acknowledged the help of Ellen Hawkes and Victor Luftig as Assistant Editor. I did a review of a book about Charleston in No. 30, Spring 1988. The next issue I edited was No. 34, Spring 1990. In my introduction I took note of Louise DeSalvo’s book and Quentin Bell’s unfavorable review of it in the *New York Review of Books*. The issue contains a general piece on the sexual abuse of children by two medical writers with no particular reference to Woolf and Vara Neverow writing her second piece for the *Miscellany*, on Woolf’s essay on Sara Coleridge, in the light of the DeSalvo book on incest. And as usual there was the quite amazing group of reviews of recent Woolf related books. I edited No. 38, Spring 1992, also a true miscellany but it did also include a spirited exchange between Anne Olivier Bell and Louise DeSalvo over the *Impact* book. They were in pretty much total disagreement. Bell agreed that sexual abuse but not incest had taken place and not on the scale including other members of the family as depicted by DeSalvo. DeSalvo in her contribution assumed that there had been widespread incest and that Bell was unwilling to recognize its consequences. The rest of the issue was a rich collection of varied pieces about Virginia.

I next edited No. 42, Spring 1994, largely devoted to Virginia Woolf’s connections with performance and the arts. Then No. 49, Spring 1997. Sadly, the issue was dominated by pieces in memory of Quentin Bell who had died the previous December, two specially written by Lucio and myself and two others by Frances Partridge and Frances Spalding from the British press. The last issue I edited was No. 56, Fall 2000. It was an appropriate miscellany, but it paid special attention to the large exhibition of Bloomsbury art that had been at the Tate and subsequently at the Huntington and the Yale Center for British Art. In a way it was an appropriate final appearance as the theme of contrasting British and American approaches to Bloomsbury had in retrospect been a major concern of my editorial involvement: Quentin Bell/Jane Marcus; Anne Olivier Bell/Louise DeSalvo. In the case of Bloomsbury art, the British critical reaction was very negative as most of the reviews were quite dismissive of its quality. One reason for this, I felt, was class antagonism which was not present in the American reactions to Bloomsbury. As an historian of Britain, I’ve always been interested and intrigued about what such reactions can tell one about British society.

Then in Spring 2003 the *Miscellany* moved from the West to the East Coast. J. J. Wilson was retiring in 2004, having been at Sonoma State since 1968. Very sadly, Lucio Ruotolo had died in July 2003. The one East Coast editor in place was Mark Hussey and he remained on

the Board. On the new Board, Merry Pawlowski of California State University, Bakersfield, would be the one West Coast figure. The crucial successor to J. J. then as now was Vara Neverow of Southern Connecticut State University. She splendidly replaced J. J. as managing editor. Long may she continue to do so. Appropriately my own position on the Editorial Board ended at the same time. Over subsequent years I have been a happy contributor to the *Miscellany* as well as remaining a member of the vibrant Virginia Woolf community. It is hard to believe that there have now been 100 issues. Long may the *Miscellany* continue to flourish.

Peter Stansky  
Stanford University



## From the Viewpoint of a Common Reader

### Foreword

I am the commonest of readers. At least I am when I read outside the set of should and musts of what every day is required of me. A common reader, I think, reads not for amusement or knowledge alone though that may be what draws her to open a book, to leaf through a periodical, to scroll a page. She is, after all a common reader, given to a bit of wandering in her leisure hours. But the wandering has a purpose. She reads for appreciation as much as for content; she reads for the striking eureka moment that takes her somewhere else. She reads for that touch that Clive Bell could never quite reach in describing “significant form.” but everyone who reads a writer’s style and substance knows it for what it is. She wants the content to (forgive me, Clive) ring a bell. It needs to move her.

In Woolf’s *The Waves*, Bernard is the storyteller who bumbles on, telling stories that allow the others to lie in the grass and dream and think and feel the importance of the moment, to wish the blue of the sky could stay forever. Bernard is a seducer who pulls his audience to another level, to freedom and lightness. While he talks and tells his stories they are only vaguely aware of Percival, the Weight of the World. True, they are pulled back to the world, but the moment stays and changes them so that being deprived of the stories remains forever a loss. Now *the world* would hear this and laugh, brutal in the extreme, but I have been reading Woolf and the Bloomsburys and the scholars that challenge my understandings for over 25 years now, setting aside time from all the concerns Percival would charge into and die from; and the moment, the freedom and lightness has been both respite and guidance in my life. In *The Waves*, Neville says, “Among the tortures and devastations of life is this—that our friends are not able to finish their stories.” Woolf was the story, retold in books, periodicals, opera, films, even dance, and I have been lying in the grasses listening. I am not yet bored. The blue remains.

### Reflections on the Miscellany

I would not speak for all common readers, but for me, without Woolf and her band of scholars these last years of seemingly unending chaos would have taken an even greater toll. Of America, I am often ashamed, but reading the work of the Woolf and her Bloomsbury circle, visualizing their world, and living along through their wars, depressions, pandemics, and certainly social and cultural disruption, I draw a form of hope from them and from other Woolf readers, “outsiders” all. I feel that it is possible to see the wrong turns and misdirections and still hold close vestiges of pride in what rings for me a bell of uprightness and even virtue somewhere in the past and possibility for the future. Below are some of my notes about the *Miscellany*.

...I recently received a gift of the first 63 issues of the *Miscellany*. (You may all drool now if you wish...).

...There are things I missed that I now feel I was fully present for: the why and when of the books I have been reading; Monk’s House



dampness and camp-ness; Charleston's hearty eccentricism; the excitement of new, unpublished letters.

...As I read, I grow fond of the scholars whose names appear and reappear, feel sadness at obituaries for people I have never met.

...In Issue #18: J. J. Wilson mentions an article, "Are We a Cult?," by Helen Dudar, who views the *Miscellany* as a "fanzine"; William Gekle worries about being in a cult, but I don't. Or maybe I would enjoy joining a cult? (Note to self: need to look up the *Saturday Review* article by Helen Dudar.)

...I was writing a poem about Duncan Grant and his "campishness" in 2011 when I read the obituary (Spring-Summer 1978)—surely the sudden grief I felt was "camp" itself; he had then been dead at least 33 years....

...Then I noticed "a certain Theory of Domesticity" (Jane Lilienfield's article "The Sunlight on The Garden: Vanessa Bell at One Hundred" in Volume #15). (This is the title of a one-act play I have other notes on. Never written, but....)

...Ah, Issue #20. Good point from Caroline Heilbrun on context, nuance, class, and culture and their influence on our perceptions of, our guesses about, Woolf. For me, reading the text of a book by Woolf is a very vague picture and takes on a greater depth when one pictures the writer sitting over a typewriter putting a sentence together, scratching it out, rewriting.

...Issue #25: it's a prickly resistance to a Angelica Garnet's victimhood in her memoir, *Deceived by Kindness*, wanting to chant at her "Get over it," like I might to a client.

...As is evident, the *Miscellany* is sort of like visiting my Granny's attic and finding old love letters written by my Granddad—to become obsessed with what it all means and how it all turned out, and just continuing to turn pages to find out the truth.

To sum up, nothing is ever what it seems; nothing matters, and yes, everything matters at least on a fine day in June.

I was fortunate in the past months to have obtained a cache of 700 "vintage" *New Yorker* magazines from the 40s to the 70s. As I shuffled through them, I found the original Clifton Fadiman review of Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (4 October 1941). The review was short but beautifully written, obviously more a memorial to her as a writer than an actual review as he makes clear in the writing that this, even more than her other works, is puzzling and leaves him guessing at her intentions and meanings. What struck me, as a common reader of Woolf, but a longtime member of the IVWS, is what the *Miscellany* and the abundance of publications of the many scholars through the past years have added to my own enjoyment and understanding of her works. The current issue's theme seems the most auspicious time to write this note of appreciation for all of you.

I skipped through Woolf in the 70's and 80's but primarily reading Quentin Bell's biography and Woolf's letters and diaries as they were published. I did, in fact, read every word of every volume. Still, I was certain that I could never understand the complexity of her fiction. My field was economics and political science. Keynes' General Theory I could read and understand, but *Jacob 's Room* was a mystery. I met and married a man whose ability to completely focus on one thing at a time also factored in. It was a trait that I admired even as it irritated me, and I decided to choose a subject that could be an obsessive focus of my own. Virginia Woolf seemed a natural target. Some people would say a hobby, but Woolf was more like taking on a life partner. I did become obsessed. I am even today. What allowed, encouraged, even goaded my interest was my first annual subscription to the *Miscellany* and my new membership in the Woolf Society. It was as much an admiration for the scholarship and the scholars as it was for the writings of Woolf that I found on the pages. It led me to reading and collecting not only Woolf

but all that I could find of criticism. I sheepishly admit that I have written fan mail to a few of my favorite scholars. And, what you all gave me set me on a course of deeper reading and understanding. You provided the atmosphere of acceptance so that I even began to find my own muse in Woolf and her Bloomsbury crew. You published my many poems, and I even got a few fan emails of my own to treasure. I am currently writing a bibliomemoir (working title: "Rooming with Virginia"—why not?) that explores my life and my relationship with Virginia and her writings over the years. At 80 I may never finish it, but if and when, it will be a tribute to the *Miscellany*, the Society, and the many Woolf scholars who have added just everything to the process.

I hope the idea of an appreciative, unknown reader comes across. Issue after issue the *Miscellany* really did (and does) offer more than just a collection of brilliant essays to The Woolf canon. It is a real community of scholars, readers, fans, and even the occasional groupee.

**Sandra Inskip-Fox**  
**Independent Writer**



### On Editing an Early Issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*

It seems so long ago!

I edited Issue 17 (Fall 1981) of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* more than forty years ago. I had just completed my dissertation and was in the third year of my first job at the College of William and Mary; shortly after, I would "come north" to teach in the English Department on the C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University, where I still teach. As I look at that very (very) old issue of the *VWM*, I am struck by two things: the way the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* has, over the years, forecast developments to come, and the way the *Miscellany* has created a sense of intimacy and wonder that has provided a space for the Woolf community to grow.

The issue contains three pieces that stand out particularly. The first is an account of an event at the Metropolitan Museum of Art sponsored by the Royal Oak Foundation, the American "arm" of the National Trust in the UK. On October 17, 1981, Royal Oak sponsored a day long program that included Nigel Nicolson, Leon Edel, Michael Holroyd, Joanne Trautmann, and Quentin Bell. The purpose was to begin to raise money for the restoration and preservation of Charleston Farmhouse. The highlight of the event was Quentin Bell's "Reflections on Charleston," in which he remembered staging his play, "Charleston Revisited," after a Bloomsbury dinner in 1938 or 1939. His play was set in the future, in the year 2000; in the play, Charleston had become a National Trust property. Bell was short of props, so he insisted his audience participate. Virginia and Leonard Woolf posed as bookcases stuffed with their own first editions; Clive Bell became an elegant eighteenth-century writing desk; John Maynard Keynes played the role of a safe. Of course, it seems odd to us these days to think that Charleston should ever have been a neglected spot, threatened with ruin. Charleston never became a National Trust house, but it was restored by the Charleston Trust, and now (having recovered after Covid), again hosts tours, exhibitions, festivals, and workshops, drawing people from around the world. How far we have come in recognizing the importance of the Bloomsbury Group!

The other two pieces are articles by people who were, at the time, relatively unknown scholars: Jack Willis and Jane Marcus. Jack was one of my colleagues at William and Mary and was at that time researching the archives of Chatto & Windus publishers for a book about the Hogarth Press. He wrote a wonderful piece for the *VWM* called "Kot, Lawrence, and Bunin's Dog." Of course, this research eventually became *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press from 1917 to*

1941 (1992), a work we all rely upon now to answer questions about the Hogarth Press's publishing practices. This issue of the *VWM* also included a probing piece by Jane Marcus—who later became one of the most influential feminist Woolf scholars—titled “On Dr. George Savage.” In this piece, Marcus brings her keen intellect to bear on the writings of one of Virginia Woolf's doctors. The article is written in Jane's inimitable style. It takes what was then entirely unused material (in this case, Dr. Savage's textbooks and lectures), and draws on it to illustrate the impact of Savage's treatments on Woolf. Jane's insights have since become a cornerstone in our understanding of Woolf's mental condition. Jane even makes that point that Dr. George Savage, in one of his lectures, discusses a patient, a soldier returned from the trenches of World War I, who, after imagining people are coming after him, jumps out a window and kills himself.

But editing that long ago issue of the *VWM* was also one of my first introductions to the friendliness and support that always characterized the Virginia Woolf community. J. J. Wilson was my contact for all matters editorial. Of course, she was already an established scholar at Sonoma State University; I was so grateful for her kindness and her willingness to help a beginner like me. J. J. effectively initiated me into the Woolf community. And in those days, admiration for Virginia Woolf was not yet a worldwide phenomenon. In fact, many British readers wondered why the “crazy Americans” were so devoted to Woolf. So it is wondrous to see where the Woolf community stands now, with Woolf Societies all over the world, and with inviting venues that welcome all readers, whether they are common readers, academics, or students.

The day after I wrote the paragraphs above, I decided to take a sentimental journey by skimming over all ninety-nine issues of the *VWM* that came before this issue—a luxury only possible during the summer months, when student papers in need of grading don't loom. Of course, the first issue of the *VWM* appeared in Fall 1973; three years later, the first incarnation of any Virginia Woolf Society anywhere in the world appeared at the December 1976 meeting of the Modern Language Association. Carolyn Heilbrun was elected President because, as she put it in a charming acceptance speech reprinted in the *VWM*:

The Founders of the Society determined that its first President should have three qualifications: She should be female; she should have been a full Professor teaching at a prestigious university; she should be aging. A moment's thought will indicate to you the scarcity of such creatures.

At that time, Heilbrun was the first woman to be tenured in Columbia's very large Department of English and Comparative Literature, and still one of only two female full professors. The new Virginia Woolf Society had 175 members from three continents, but those numbers grew quickly.

I'm sure we all “use” the *VWM* in very different ways. Whenever I receive my copy (yes, I still receive a hard copy), I scan first for the book reviews to see what I've missed—and it's usually a lot. I'm always delighted to see the wide range of announcements, CFP's, reminders, and just plain useful information: the *VWM* is surely the only spot where any Virginia Woolf reader can find a full list of Virginia Woolf online resources next to an invitation to participate in the Modernist Archive Publishing Project. I have savored all the “special topics” issues published over the years, from Vara Neverow's issue on “war, pacifism and resistance” to Mark Hussey's issue on critical “amnesia” to name just a few favorites. (Stuart N. Clarke also writes on critical “amnesia” in this same issue, although it is hardly his first appearance in the *VWM*.) Surprising authors pop up in the world of the *VWM*: David Lodge has a piece about Charles Tansley in *VWM* Issue 10. (Yes, that David Lodge, who later left academia to write hilarious novels about hilarious academics.) But I delight most of all in the truly “miscellaneous” approach to the whole project, the willingness to publish poetry, drawings, and many other quirky things that come in over the transom.

I'm also always grateful to the *VWM* for the homage it pays to members of the Woolf community when they pass away. Deaths of Woolfian friends are noted—because they really have become friends—and the *VWM* prints tributes from close colleagues. One of the most poignant of these memorials appeared in Issue 93 (Spring/Summer 2018), three years after Jane Marcus died. Marcus was such an important Woolf scholar and beloved figure that her students and friends gathered on September 9, 2016, to present the “Jane Marcus Feminist University,” a daylong program of papers, remembrances, and performances. The *VWM* published the proceedings of the conference in its entirety.

As I thumbed through the early issues of the *VWM*, I was also reminded of the important role the *VWM* played in the discourse between editors and readers of many of Woolf's autobiographical documents just beginning to be published in the 1970's. Volumes I and II of Woolf's *Letters* were published in 1975 and 1976 respectively. When S. P. Rosenbaum protested that some names had been omitted from the *Letters*, Nigel Nicolson wrote back to the *VWM* to explain the omissions. He said that, when the *Letters* first appeared in print, Mary Hutchinson (Clive Bell's lover for many years) was still alive, so he and Joanne Trautmann decided not to name her. But Hutchinson had since died, so Nicolson restored the material cut from Woolf's *Letters*, and printed it in the *VWM*. In similar fashion, Anne Olivier Bell received many comments and corrections from readers of the *VWM* to her edition of the first volume of *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Since she wasn't sure when she would have the opportunity to correct errors in the book itself, she asked the *VWM* to print her list of corrections, “many of which are due to the vigilance and erudition of correspondents.” And, of course, the *VWM* did.

I was also reminded that the *VWM* was one of the first staging grounds for some of the largest debates about Woolf, many of which are still in dispute today. In the Spring of 1992, there was a tense exchange between Anne Olivier Bell and Louis DeSalvo about DeSalvo's book *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work*, which came out in 1989. Bell objected to the book's premise, saying it was about time to put a brake on the “rolling bandwagon carrying the burdens of the Stephen family” and that DeSalvo's book moved away from “responsible scholarship and deeper and deeper into the realm of erotic fantasy.” DeSalvo's reply pointedly acknowledged the immense debt all Woolf scholars owe to Bell for her work on the *Diaries*, but chided Bell for not having read any of the recent work by feminist scholars on the psychology and impact of childhood sexual trauma. It was a disagreement that continued to play out over many years in both the popular press and scholarly venues.

In a similar way—but with much less heat—the *VWM* printed an exchange between Isota Tucker Epes and Nigel Nicolson. In 1994, Epes had written in the *VWM* about her experience reading Woolf as a young woman in the 1930's, an experience that taught her that Virginia Woolf, along with Eleanor Roosevelt, was one of the “few rational minds in evidence” when it came to politics and war. Nigel Nicolson replied to Epes privately, arguing that Woolf had no understanding (or interest in) politics at all, and that the arguments she made about pacifism in *Three Guineas* were entirely unrealistic. The whole correspondence was published in the *VWM* by Suzanne Bellamy in Spring 2011, after Epes died and Nicolson's letter was found. It pretty much summed up the two poles of thinking about Woolf and politics that persist today.

As I look back over the last forty years and all that has happened in the world of Virginia Woolf studies, I can't help but recall a conversation I had with my dissertation advisor, Carolyn Heilbrun. It was 1974 or so, and I was casting around for a dissertation topic. She was supportive, as always. She kept suggesting James Joyce (because I was Catholic and had grown up with the Latin mass, which I knew by heart); I really wanted to write about Virginia Woolf. Heilbrun finally said: “I just don't think you should devote an entire dissertation to Virginia Woolf. There's just not that much left to say.”

When it came to literature, Carolyn was usually right about things. Not that time.

**Katherine C. Hill-Müller**  
**Long Island U—C. W. Post**

#### Works Cited

- Bell, Anne Olivier. "Corrections and Additions to Volume 1 of *The Diary*." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 10 (Spring/Summer 1978): 7.
- Bell, Anne Olivier and Louise DeSalvo. Letter and reply. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 38 (Spring 1992): 2-3.
- Bellamy, Suzanne. "An Archival Discovery." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 79 (Spring 2011): 25.
- Epes, Isota Tucker. "How It Struck a Common Reader of the 1930's." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 44 (Fall 1994): 2.
- Gabbard, Corey and J. Ashley Foster. "Jane Marcus Feminist University: The Documentary Record." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 93(Spring/Summer 2018): 29-53.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 7 (Spring 1977): 1.
- Hill-Miller, Katherine C., ed. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 17 (Fall 1981).
- Hussey, Mark, ed. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 68 (Fall 2005/Winter 2006).
- Lodge, David. "Where Was Charles Tansley When They Were Talking About Him?" *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 10 (Spring and Summer 1978): 4.
- Marcus, Jane. "On Dr. George Savage." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 17 (Fall 1981): 3-4.
- Neverow, Vara, ed. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 60 (Spring 2002).
- Nicolson, Nigel. "Passages Excluded from Volume II of *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*." *The Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 8 (Special Summer Issue 1977): 1-2.
- Nicolson, Nigel. "Letter to Isota Epes." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 79 (Spring 2011): 27.
- Willis, Jack. "Kot, Lawrence, and Bunin's Dog." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 17 (Fall 1981): 3.



#### Number 20, Spring 1983: A Personal Reflection

In several file boxes in my attic, cluster many copies of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, dating from issue 20, Spring 1983. Why keep printed copies in a digital age when individual articles are retrievable via Google? Why even keep hard copies of those *Miscellanys* to which I contributed? Especially when, recently, I clicked on-line onto a *Miscellany* focusing on autobiography, thinking it would be relevant for my current Biofiction research, only to discover that the issue contained a piece from me – now completely forgotten.

Number 20 Spring 1983 was a mere five and a half pages in length but with contributions from major Woolf scholars and figures: Peter Stansky on Woolfians and Lupines, Quentin Bell on Virginia Woolf and Politics, S. P. Rosenbaum on Bloomsbury studies, a book review by Jane Marcus, and Brenda Silver's Society Report, among others. Sadly, three of these contributors are dead, but the others' scholarship has grown in stature as has the *Miscellany* itself.

In 1983 I had only published a chapter and an article about gender and education (I was beginning to call my courses Women's Studies); an article about Paul Goodman the polymath US writer and activist and subject of my recent PhD; and a short article about Thomas Hardy. I had no book, given no international papers and only one national paper about gender in Higher Education, had no PhD students or external examining experience. My research, such as it was, solipsistically contextualised my own teaching. I lacked an intellectual focus, and quite simply, a literary enthusiasm. Critiquing the breadth and variety of Goodman's work had exhausted me.

That Number 20 *Miscellany* rescued me from floundering, and I fell in love again with Virginia Woolf. By 1986 Virginia Woolf had a whole chapter in my first book *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics*. *Miscellany's* non-peer review policy and sometimes informal, anecdotal style kept me reading and researching, and finally feeling brave enough to submit work, then guided by the expert and sympathetic editor Vara Neverow.

But to return to the question: why keep *Miscellanys*? It is because they are a kind of external hard-drive, or more accurately, an archive of my Woolf memories, like a collection of fading flaxen school memo pads. The early functional graphic design became cluttered with a wild range of differing dingbats, and pieces were separated into boldly outlined boxes resembling Woolf's scrapbooks. The antithesis of an academic journal. No academic volume would, irritatingly, bury its contents list several pages into the publication.

The endearing, unrelated visual juxtapositions match the *raison d'être* of the *Miscellany* – to welcome a wide range of Woolf admirers into its pages, including independent and common readers. The old *Miscellanys* will always be safe in my attic.

**Maggie Humm**  
**Emeritus Professor, University of East London, UK**



#### Community Building at the VWM

Before there were Virginia Woolf Societies, before the annual Woolf conferences with their inspiring, supportive teaching and research conversations and selected papers, before the Woolf Studies Annual with its holdings and contact-laden "Guide to Library Special Collections," there was the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, where Woolf scholars, common readers, teachers, and students asked questions ("Why *does* Sara Pargiter wear those mismatched stockings?" wrote James Hafley),<sup>1</sup> talked about what they were reading and thinking, and shared information and tips about what they were finding where. I know I did not read the earliest issues as they appeared—I was teaching English at Union Local High School prior to graduate school and my discovery of Virginia Woolf!—but by the time I was at Otterbein College (as it was then) and planning my first sabbatical and trip to the New York Public Library Berg Collection in 1988, I know I looked up Ellen Hawkes Rogat's "Visiting the Berg Collection" in the very first issue (Fall 1973), which led me to Ed Hungerford's "Visiting the Monk's House Papers at the University of Sussex" and Phyllis Rose's "Virginia Woolf and the *Yale Review*: Material in the Beinecke Library" in the second issue (Fall 1974). Such pieces communicated much more than information about what the collections contained; they conveyed what it felt like to work with Woolf's papers, to be among the first visitors to see a set of papers, to be at the very beginning of a journey. Rereading these pieces reminded me what maintaining an archive is like, how directors shape one's experiences, how rooms and spaces contribute to the spell of archival research. We forget, for example, that in 1973, Dr. Lola Szladits was still cataloguing some of the Woolf materials in the Berg and visitors to the Monks House Papers were relying on a handlist compiled by Olivier Bell! In publishing such pieces, still useful today, the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* created a community and preserved our history; such articles bring names read in a bibliography to life and reveal the human side of knowledge seeking.

<sup>1</sup> See page 3 of Issue 2 of the *Miscellany*: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/vwm2spring1974-new.pdf>.



But the *VWM* issue that probably did more to infect me with archival fever than any other was #22 (Spring 1984), guest-edited by Diane Gillespie. Perhaps it was the wonderful tale of how the Woolf library ended up in Pullman, WA (Washington State University). Perhaps it was the Leslie Stephen sketches or the various illustrations of woodcuts, designs, and drawings. Perhaps it was Diane's statement that very few people knew about the collection or had visited it. Most likely, though, it was the eight visitors who wrote about their varied experiences and their lovely sense of being in the midst of an ongoing creation. All I knew was, once I had read it (again, probably not when it was published), I knew I had to visit. Some day. Somehow.

I visited Pullman twice and happily worked away at a table in the Manuscripts Archives and Special Collections (MASC) with the goal of identifying which Stephen books were whose in the Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf—which books belonged to Leslie, Julia, Thoby, Virginia? Poring over cards in a card catalog (remember those?!), working before the publication of the collection's *Short-Title Catalog*,<sup>2</sup> asking Julie King to bring out book after book after book so I could hold, look, and take/type notes, I slowly compiled libraries within the Library lists, lists that ultimately supported discussions and an appendix in *Virginia Woolf's Apprenticeship: Becoming an Essayist*.<sup>3</sup>

All because of *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Its spirit of sharing, its ability to instigate and nurture searching. Thank you, J. J. Wilson, for envisioning and building such a remarkable community, Vara Neverow, for providing the publication with a new home and expanding its scope, and everyone else—guest editors, writers, assistants, correspondents—for doing so much to sustain it over these many years. May you prosper for many more!

**Beth Rigel Daugherty**  
**Professor Emerita, Otterbein University**

<sup>2</sup> King, Julia and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, comp. and ed. *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalog*. Intro. by Diane F. Gillespie; Foreword by Laila Miletic-Vejzovic. Pullman, WA: Washington State UP, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Edinburgh University Press, 2022; <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-virginia-woolf-s-apprenticeship.html>.



### **Becoming Book-Review Editor of the *Miscellany*: Zazz, Minutiae, and All**

Once upon a time, in 1999... and a relatively good time it was (pre-9/11 and way before Trump, COVID, Ukraine, and the decision to declare Roe v. Wade null and void)... it came upon me to assume the book-review editorship of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Pat Laurence, the first named book-review editor, had to take a break from the *Miscellany*, and I assumed the mantle (temporarily, we thought). Reviews had been a regular feature of the *Miscellany* since its inception in 1973, when books on, about or involving Virginia Woolf were rarely published, as J. J. Wilson observed in the “oral history” of the Virginia Woolf Society,<sup>1</sup> but it took twenty years for there to be an official call for reviewers by Lucio Ruotolo (a founding member of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and of the Virginia Woolf Society), by then published by Sonoma State, J. J.,

<sup>1</sup> See my “Preserving Our History of Reading Woolf” and the three CDs in the “Oral History” and/or transcriptions. In the very first issue of the *Miscellany* (Fall 1973), there were two reviews: Lucio Ruotolo reviewed Allen McLaurin’s *The Echoes Enslaved* (2-3) and J. J. Wilson reviewed *Portrait of a Marriage* (4). See also “Are Too Many Books Written and Published?” by Leonard Woolf, Virginia Woolf with an introduction by Melba Cuddy-Keane.

the de facto [managing ] editor):<sup>2</sup> “Pat Laurence is seeking persons to review for her column, and book suggestions as well” (Issue 41, Fall 1993: 1). In the Spring 1996 issue, below a paragraph by Lucio “TO THE READERS,” was a lengthy, black-boxed announcement about the Fall 1996 issue of *VWM* which included: “Book reviews are usually handled by Patricia Laurence” (Issue 47, Spring 1996: 1).

In Spring 1999, it was announced that the “Fall ’99 issue of *VWM* is devoted to a theme, translation, and Pat Laurence has heard from a number of different countries and languages already, but extended her deadline to June 15” (Issue 53, Spring 1999: 1). By then, Pat had asked me to take over “handling” the reviews while she was working on the special issue though in Issue 54, Fall 1999, Pat’s special issue, there are no reviews but a notice to send book review materials directly to “Prof. Karen Levenback” at her home address... (Pat Laurence is taking some time off from this task to do some other projects.),” and I was identified as Review Editor in the same issue (Issue 54, Fall 1999: 9); my first issue as “Review Editor” was Issue 55, Spring 2000.<sup>3</sup>

In keeping with the protocols set forth by Pat, reviews of 500-750 words were requested—though once Vara Neverow took over the management of the *Miscellany* from J. J. Wilson in Spring 2003, the word-limit “rule” became looser in fact if not by design as the word-limit became more flexible. I generally ask for 1000-1500 words for Woolf-related or particularly important books and 750 words or fewer for most others—always with the “more or fewer” based what the reviewer deems necessary regarding the word count. If a reviewer is doing a portmanteau review, sometimes featuring related publications, the word limit is 1500 rather than 750 or 1000.<sup>4</sup> Unless the review is way longer, I usually assume that the extra words were needed.

Since I assumed the mantle, there have been at least four or five book reviews an issue, a total of more than 240 reviews in my twenty-three years. In keeping with the process of book-review editorship, there are four main functions: choosing and acquiring books/monographs for review; soliciting reviewers; processing/editing reviews; and communicating with reviewers:

Of late, I have found a willing reviewer first and thus saved on postage costs by requesting that books be sent directly to the reviewer. In all events, I promise and send copies (lately, electronic copies—analogue if requested) of the published review to publishers. When an author requests that the *Miscellany* publish a review, I try to request a copy via email or telephone. Either a reviewer or an author can request that we review a book. Assuming it fits within the implicit parameters of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, we usually accept the review. Sometimes the

<sup>2</sup> Because the *Miscellany* was originally conceived and has continued as a non-hierarchical way for readers of Woolf to stay in touch, titles were generally eschewed by originators Peggy Comstock, Rebecca Davison, Ellen Rogat, Lucio Ruotolo, and J. J. Wilson, whose “hope [was] to involve readers in what are usually termed ‘editorial’ decisions” (“To the Reader,” *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, Issue 1, Fall 1973: 1). The editorship moved around after the first issue, first to Lucio Ruotolo at Stanford, then to John Hulcoop and so forth. And the contributions to each issue were mailed to each editor for review, just as nowadays but using email rather than snail mail. In the Spring 1975 issue, readers were asked to send “business correspondence” to J. J.’s institution, Sonoma State College (see Issue 3, Spring 1975: 10) and then to “Prof. J. J. Wilson” at the college starting in Fall 1975 (Issue 4, Fall 1975: 4).

<sup>3</sup> However, drama reviews, art reviews, music reviews, etc., are not edited by me unless they include a book review. I wrote two such reviews of *Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press: From the Collection of William Beekman Exhibited at the Grolier Club and The Perpetual Fight: Love and Loss in Virginia Woolf’s Intimate Circle* by Sarah Funke and William Beekman (Issue 74, Fall/Winter 2008: 31-34) and *World War I and American Art* by Robert Cuzzolino et al. and *All Together: A Family Guide for World War I and American Art* (Issue 91, Spring 2017: 24-27).

<sup>4</sup> For example, Mary Wilson wrote a portmanteau review of Bonnie Kime Scott’s *Natural Connections: Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield* (published in 2015) and Todd Martin’s *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group* (published in 2017) (see Issue 94 [Fall 2018]: 37-38).

reviewer already has the book, but more often the reviewer wants me to request it.

When it is an author who contacts me, generally, I will ask for the publisher's review copy contact information and then ask for a review copy to be sent directly to a reviewer once one is located. This is done to save on postage and mailing costs, and another benefit is that I also avoid having to make a trip to the post office, which I did for many years. The books that are selected for review include those focusing on Virginia Woolf and/or Bloomsbury (including individual Bloomsburys) in their title; books involving modernism or genre; and books written by or about women and/or topics of interest to our readers, but the criteria are fluid. In any given issue we might see a review of a newly published edition of a work by Virginia Woolf. In the past, an issue might include a review of the essays from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, a tome on women writers, and a Bloomsbury Heritage monograph published by Cecil Woolf Publishing. Books reviewed in the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* are not necessarily dedicated to the study of Woolf and, not unlike the original Hogarth Press, the *Miscellany* is open to reviewing a wide range of books. Most explicitly relate to Virginia Woolf, her writing, and her circle, but in other books, the relation is not stated in the title, even though it is inevitably found in the reviews.<sup>5</sup>

Most publishers are obliging, but starting during the pandemic and continuing to this day, some publishers do not want to send hard copies and prefer eBooks. Though I do my best to persuade on occasion, and do so particularly if the requested book is more than a year old, the publisher may not be willing to send a review copy out or may insist on a digital version (though this was more often the case during the pandemic). In that event, and/or if a reviewer cannot be found, the book is not reviewed in the *Miscellany*.<sup>6</sup>

Nowadays, when I write to a publisher, I also "cc" the reviewer in the email. When the reviewer receives the book, I ask to be notified. Sometimes reviewers remember to do so. Sometimes I follow up. Sometimes the promised book reviews are not submitted on time—or ever. Life itself intervenes, I assume, sometimes without warning. Sometimes there are gaps between when a review is assigned, when it is submitted, and when it is published—sometimes to the frustration of authors of books (who are keen to see their books reviewed expeditiously) and the writers of reviews (who, of course, want to see their reviews published expeditiously).

Because the *Miscellany* has many moving parts and not everything works at the same rate, neither due dates nor submission dates nor dates of publication are predictable. The most critical phase is assigning the reviews.

First there is the process of **soliciting reviewers** (which has been termed "proactive commissioning";<sup>7</sup> see Brienza 1). Members of the International Virginia Woolf Society and readers of the *Virginia Woolf*

<sup>5</sup> In the early days of the *Miscellany*, publications on and by Woolf and involving the origins of the Woolf Society were few and far between ("Preserving Our History of Reading Woolf" 200). This gap explains why there were only two or three book reviews in each issue of the first twenty years—and not all of them involved Virginia Woolf directly. To choose a year at random, by the time Issue 57 (Spring 2001) was published, we see *Virginia Woolf* by Nigel Nicolson and Angelica Garnett's *The Eternal Moment: Essays and a Short Story*, reviewed by Beth Daugherty (5-6); Pamela Caughie's *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* reviewed by Richard Pearce (6-7); Herbert Marder's *The Measure of Life: Virginia Woolf's Last Years*, reviewed by Karen Levenback (7-8); Sue Roe and Susan Seller's *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, reviewed by Anne Fernald (8); and *No Room of their Own: Israeli Women's Fiction* by Yael S. Feldman, reviewed by Linda Raphael (8-9).

<sup>6</sup> This situation has happened only a handful of times.

<sup>7</sup> Both "proactive commissioning" and "reactive commissioning" are quoted from the first page of Casey Brienza's article "The Review Editor's Function."

*Miscellany*, as mentioned above, sometimes approach me when they have a book in mind that they want to review. Often, I will rely on MLA bibliographic listings;<sup>8</sup> sometimes I ask authors for suggested reviewers or refer to my own list of potential reviewers culled from "calls for reviewers" published in the *Miscellany* or solicited at conferences ("reactive commissioning"; see Brienza 1).

My wont is to isolate reviewers who have published on similar topics or share an interest with the author's work and who are nonetheless, disinterested arbiters of the subject matter and approach under review. In other words, a reviewer who, as W.W. Bostock observes "is capable of giving a review which will be accepted as informative and fair by not only the readers of the [*Miscellany*], but also by the *writer* of the book under review" (298).<sup>9</sup> And, if I may apply a comment by Thomas Keymer, general editor of *The Review of English Studies*, "The generosity of peer reviewers with their time and expertise is one of the most gratifying things about [book review] editorship."<sup>10</sup>

That said, reviewers invariably ask when the review is due and how long it should be. Some reviewers do take this to heart and count words and get reviews in on time. Some do not. If reviewers have not reviewed for the *Miscellany* before, I send links to issues with reviews to use as models: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/the-virginia-woolf-miscellany-from-spring-1973-to-fall-2002/> (*The Virginia Woolf Miscellany Editorial Guide* (<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/virginia-woolf-miscellany-editorial-guide-to-style-spring-and-fall-2019.pdf> can also help, though there are some minor differences in the formatting of reviews.)

Then comes **processing/editing reviews**. This is a most interesting and rewarding part of the job, notwithstanding the tongue-in-cheek comment that "[i]f we're using book reviews as evaluation tools, we're employing a Lake Wobegon scale in which every scholar is brilliant and every book is above average" (Musgrave 3).<sup>11</sup>

Editing reviews is a process that begins with me, and, in addition to copy editing and assuring the headings and affiliation are in keeping with the *Miscellany* style,<sup>12</sup> I return submissions with comments, queries, and suggestions, sometimes rudimentary and slight, sometimes more substantive. After these are done, I forward the review to Vara: step two in the editing process and then to the reviewers for their input. The final stage takes place when the issue of the *Miscellany* is readied for publication and last-minute alterations and/or corrections are solicited. Finally, after any number of iterations and back and forth, when the ready-for-publication version is ready, I send electronic copies to reviews and to publishers, who may (and occasionally do) request paper versions of the *Miscellany*; in olden days, before such and like options were available or even possible, I would mail hard copies to publishers and reviewers.

<sup>8</sup> The last print volume of a *Selected Papers* was published in 2018. A new online format will be implemented by Clemson University Press in the near future.

<sup>9</sup> W. W. Bostock is the Review Editor for *The Australian Library Journal*.

<sup>10</sup> Professor Keymer's remarks are part of his contribution "The Generosity of Peer Reviewers with Their Time and Expertise Is One of the Most Gratifying Things About Journal Editorship" in *Times Higher Education's* "How to Be a Great Journal Editor: Advice from Eight Top Academic Editors."

<sup>11</sup> Paul Musgrave, assistant professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, criticizes in his article "Against Academic Book Reviews" "the standalone, capsule review of a scholarly volume published in an academic journal running about 500 to 1000 words" (2). These reviews, he takes pains to point out, are "plain old academic book reviews," typically "ferociously dull" with a lack of "zazz [...] as evidence of its seriousness" (2-3). (Our reviews/reviewers in the *Miscellany* are full of **zazz**, if I may be so bold.)

<sup>12</sup> As Brienza points out in her how-to-write an academic book review, "academic book reviews tend to have a standard even formulaic structure" (2); this is certainly the case when it comes to the heading if not the content of reviews. (Nothing is simply one thing in the *Miscellany*...or in *To the Lighthouse*.)

Finally, there is **communicating with reviewers**: Through it all, communication has been the best part of anything I've done for the *Miscellany* as well as the International Virginia Woolf Society, from my first years when I was teaching in Greece (when we still relied on snail mail and J. J. Wilson and I first began a correspondence); to my years teaching in Washington, DC (during which time I served as secretary-treasurer and then as president of the Virginia Woolf Society, as the organization was then called); through my years as book review editor and my role as the archival liaison of the Society and of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Communication includes the time I spent in contact with the IVWS membership when I was an officer and, for the last couple of decades as book-review editor. In that role, I have been constantly involved in communication whether in contacting and selecting reviewers or seeing the reviews through the process starting with the acquisition of copies from publishers through to the final stages.

The first hundred issues of the *Miscellany* have yielded much that is timeless.<sup>13</sup> For me, the last 24 years in particular have been full of zazz here at the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Leonard Woolf lamented that “where there are so many books on every subject, busy people haven't the time to find out which is best” (141) but, at least when it comes to books on or about Virginia Woolf and those in her circle or peripheral to it, we are lucky that the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* publishes reviews.

**Karen Levenback**  
**Book Review Editor, Virginia Woolf Miscellany**

#### Works Cited

- Bostock, W. W. “The Review Editor’s Function; A Significant Role in the Dissemination of Information.” *The Australian Library Journal* 38.4 (1989): 296-302. Web. Published online 28 October 2013. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00049670.1989.10755554>
- Brienza, Casey. “Writing Academic Book Reviews: A Guide from Casey Brienza.” *Inside Higher Education* 27 March 2015: 1-4. Web. 6 July 2022. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/03/27/essay-writing-academic-book-reviews>.
- Comstock, Peggy, et al. “To the Reader.” *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 1 (Fall 1973): 1.
- Daugherty, Beth Rigel. Rev. of *Virginia Woolf*. By Nigel Nicolson and *The Eternal Moment: Essays and a Short Story*, by Angelica Garnett. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 57 (Spring 2001): 5-6.
- Fernald, Anne E. Rev. of *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, by Sue Roe and Susan Seller. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 57 (Spring 2001): 8.
- Keymer, Thomas. “The Generosity of Peer Reviewers with Their Time and Expertise Is One of the Most Gratifying Things About Journal Editorship” in “How to Be a Great Journal Editor: Advice from Eight Top Academic Editors.” *Times Higher Education* 14 December 2017: 1-3. Web. 16 July 2022. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/how-be-great-journal-editor-advice-eight-top-academic-editors>
- Levenback, Karen. “Preserving Our History of Reading Woolf: The Common Wealth of Our Past and Future.” *Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader: Selected Papers of the Twenty-Third Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Helen Wussow and Mary Ann Gillies. Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2014: 198-204.
- . Rev. of *The Measure of Life: Virginia Woolf’s Last Years*, by Herbert Marder. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 57 (Spring 2001): 7-8.
- . Rev. of *Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press: From the Collection of William Beekman Exhibited at the Grolier Club* (2008) and Sarah Funke and William Beekman’s *The Perpetual Fight: Love and Loss in Virginia Woolf’s Intimate Circle* (2004). *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 74 (Fall/Winter 2008): 31-34.

- . Rev. of *World War I and American Art* by Robert Cozzolino et al. and *All Together: A Family Guide for World War I and American Art*. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 91 (Spring 2017): 24-27.
- Musgrave, Paul. “Against Academic Book Reviews.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 8 January 2021: 1-8. Web. 16 July 2022. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/against-academic-book-reviews>.
- “Oral History.” 1993. 3 CDs. International Virginia Woolf Society Collection, Fonds 51, Box 2, series 2, file 22. Victoria University Library Special Collections. University of Toronto. Toronto, Canada. CD.
- “Oral History.” 1993. Transcription. Karen Levenback. International Virginia Woolf Society Collection, Fonds 51, Box 2, series 2, file 22. Victoria University Library Special Collections. University of Toronto. Toronto, Canada.
- Pearce, Richard. Rev. of *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, by Pamela Caughie. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 57 (Spring 2001): 6-7.
- Raphael, Linda. Rev. *No Room of Their Own: Israeli Women’s Fiction*, by Yael S. Feldman. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 57 (Spring 2001): 8-9.
- Ruotolo, Lucio. Rev. of *Virginia Woolf: The Echoes Enslaved*, by Allen McLaurin. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 1 (Fall 1973): 2-3.
- Wilson, J. J. Rev. of *Portrait of a Marriage*. By Nigel Nicolson. New York: Atheneum, 1973. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 1 (Fall 1973): 4
- Wilson, Mary. Rev. of *Natural Connections: Virginia Woolf & Katherine Mansfield* by Bonnie Kime Scott and *Katherine Mansfield and the Bloomsbury Group*, by Todd Martin. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 94 (Fall 2018): 37-38.
- Woolf, Leonard and Virginia Woolf. “Are Too Many Books Written and Published?” Introduction by Melba Cuddy-Keane. *PMLA*. Special Topic: The History of the Book and the Idea of Literature 121.1 (January 2006): 235-44. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1632/003081206X129846>



#### “A Fantasy” Redux

The phrase that greets successful candidates after an oral exam—“Welcome to the Community of Scholars”—has always seemed to apply to the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. There the editors, contributors, and dedicated keepers of the flame constitute a welcoming community where comments, observations, scholarship, and bone-deep interest in Virginia Woolf reside, in an intellectual, inquiring home.

In the past, various editors of the *Miscellany* chose to print pieces of mine: “Pointing the Way to *Orlando*: Literary Signposts” (2005), “The Uses of History: *Orlando* and the Countess of Desmond” (2004), and “A Fantasy” (2003). The publication of these kindly received articles seemed to offer membership in that hallowed community of Virginia Woolf scholars, whether independent, university affiliated, or retired. Seeing these pieces in the august *Miscellany* offered a vindication of a lone scholar’s tentatively offered ideas. Of the three pieces, my favorite remains the short, front-page, boxed “A Fantasy.”

The stellar, heady atmosphere of the Annual Virginia Woolf Conference held at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, in June of 2003 buzzed and rippled with discussions of Michael Cunningham’s novel *The Hours*. One couldn’t help feeling the undercurrent of strong and divided opinions about the novel’s portrayal and, as some felt, the usurpation and commercialization of Virginia Woolf herself. The film based on Cunningham’s novel continued to be the subject of discussions in various media reports long after the conference ended.

Remaining neutral became impossible for me when Nicole Kidman was quoted in an interview saying that she had read all of Virginia Woolf’s

<sup>13</sup> If you do not have access to the analog copies, you might want to access them online: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com>



works in preparation for her role as Virginia Woolf in “The Hours.” All? “All?” I groused—the novels, the letters, the diaries, the biographical sketches, the criticism? Outrage at the casual remark that, perhaps unintentionally, defamed the serious readers and scholars who *had* spent years trying to read all of Woolf, lead to my reaction in “A Fantasy,” an imagined letter of Virginia Woolf to her sister, Vanessa on the eve of the Golden Globe awards where both the film *The Hours* and Nicole Kidman were nominated. In the half-hour drive I made to my campus the next morning, the entire short piece came to mind. It was, I must confess, set down in writing during the subsequent faculty meeting.

What I still love about that fantasy of a letter and its having been printed in the *Miscellany* is the inside nature of the joke. Only those erudite readers steeped in the real, not Hollywood, knowledge of Virginia Woolf would be able to see the humor of the piece in the things that Virginia Woolf, had she somehow still been alive in 2003, would *never* have done: shopping with Sibyl Colefax for a glittering low-backed sheath to wear to the awards, having her hair done for the awards, borrowing diamond jewelry from a Rodeo Drive jeweler, social climbing with J Lo and Ben (even then), participating in an autograph and photo session with Nicole Kidman, seeing a plastic surgeon about her nose (self-consciously after the prosthesis Kidman sported), and contacting John Grisham about publishing for the Hogarth Press.

The crux of these jokes would be immediately understood by *Miscellany* readers. No explanation would be necessary for them because those enlightened, perennially interested and curious readers of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, united in their abiding interest in all things Virginia Woolf, could be trusted to recognize and enjoy the absurdities. Writing for the community of scholars who read the *Miscellany* and reading the work of those similarly inclined has been pure pleasure. As Woolf herself wrote in the acknowledgments of *Orlando*, “it rouses in me memories of the pleasantest kind...” (6).

**Rebecca McNeer**  
**Ohio University Southern**

#### Work Cited

Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando: A Biography*. 1928. Ed. Suzanne Raitt and Ian Blyth. Cambridge UP, 2018.



#### Society Columns: On the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*

All of the columns are society columns. This is true literally: the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, supported in part by the dues of the International Virginia Woolf Society (IVWS), has been typeset in double columns since its first issue. It is also true metaphorically: the *Miscellany* proves the hospitality and intellectual richness of IVWS-affiliated gatherings, such as the MLA panels on Woolf, the annual Woolf conferences, and the online Woolf Salon gatherings. It is the permanent record of IVWS activities as well as one product of the talks and conversations that help refine a literary argument. It is a paper (or pdf) assembly. For me, as, I’d guess, for other readers, the *Miscellany* is about people.

The 2006 Woolf conference, in Birmingham, England, introduced me to the Woolfian world. During a coffee break, amidst platters of pastries and tropical fruit, Steve Putzel remarked that the annual conference was “interested in the *person* of Woolf,” and that this made for a welcoming crowd that included many non-academics. Not yet an academic myself—I had just received my BA—I found this to be true. The shared concentration on Woolf’s life facilitated a sharing of our own lives. Vara Neverow, who became *Miscellany* editor in 2003, particularly made me feel at ease. After the conference, over email and in person, Vara encouraged and critiqued my ideas. In June 2008, at New Haven’s Istanbul Café (alas, long defunct), Vara and I talked about Woolf and American poets—a conversation that was helpful a few years later when

I wrote an essay for the *Miscellany* on Rachel Wetzsteon. As we sat sated with cinnamon-laced dolmas, Vara handed me my first *Miscellany*, #72 (Fall/Winter 2007), AnneMarie Bantzing’s special issue on Leonard Woolf. This issue also contained remembrances of Julia Briggs. I had been absorbed in *Reading Virginia Woolf*, with its insights into Woolf’s revisions, interest in typography and blank space, and use of numbers to structure her novels. Now I was brought closer to the generous heart, electric wit, and admired face behind the book. Among the many roles of the *Miscellany*, this role—elegizing members of the community—I think among its most important and representative.

When I moved to the Bay Area for grad school, I met other editors of the *Miscellany*. Thaine Stearns showed me around the Sitting Room, the community library created by J. J. Wilson, which was then still in its original home in Cotati. Eileen Barrett introduced me to J. J. herself, bringing her to a talk I gave at the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco on the poetry that Woolf had handset at the Hogarth Press. J. J.’s face was a magic mirror, reflecting to me the clarity of my arguments and (varying) success of my jokes.

My *Miscellany* debut was a short report, invited by Vara, about the 2008 MLA in San Francisco. “The IVWS dinner at the MLA” lingers perhaps a little too long over the buffet at Eileen Barrett’s house: “The tables were decked with grilled vegetables, olives, hummus and Baba Ghanoush, fruit and cheese, pita wraps, brownies, baklava, and local wine.” I add that Madelyn Detloff and Thaine Stearns honored IVWS president Bonnie Kime-Scott with a “coconut-lemon cake.” One might suspect journalistic filler, but I wanted to convey the sense of spiritual fullness fostered by good company and good food—as with the pineapples and cream puffs in Birmingham, and the dolmas in New Haven. Vandyck was certainly of the company.

Subsequent work for the *Miscellany*—reviewing, contributing to special issues, editing an issue on Woolf and literary genre with Sara Sullam—brought me in touch with more scholars and common readers. And I was delighted when the *Miscellany* published the work of two of my McGill students, Katherine Horgan and Dan Varon. Katherine is now a PhD student in English at Harvard. Dan has received his PhD from Harvard in atmospheric chemistry and is now a postdoc at Princeton.

The *Miscellany* essay for which I have been most grateful has no personal association for me at all. As I was revising my dissertation into *Virginia Woolf and Poetry*, I found that in 1998 John Parras had set up a short but solid platform on which I could stand. Parras points out that Woolf’s “poetic prose . . . was less straightforward and more enigmatic than has been previously acknowledged” and that “her aggressive critique of poetry . . . has been too often underrated or altogether disregarded” (5). He goes on to say that Woolf’s poetic prose is partly a response to what she perceives as the inability of lyric poetry to tell the whole truth. In *To the Lighthouse*, Parras argues, poetry “allur[es] characters into a smug, nostalgic and illusory sense of rapture, complacency, or detachment” (6). Parras prompted the thought that a scholar often hopes for: *someone has said this thing before, which makes me seem not eccentric, and this person has not said everything, which means there is room for me*. My book quotes Parras on page 4. Like the annual conferences, *Virginia Woolf and Poetry* is “interested in the *person* of Woolf”: I use a biographical structure to show how Woolf’s reading and relationships and life experiences informed her writing. Similar contingencies shape *Miscellany* contributions—and these essays persuade and inspire even when the reader has no knowledge of the author.

At the end of every *Miscellany*, I smile at the visual pun: the “Society Column” is in a society column. If someday the layout should change, and a full-page design replace the columns, we will lose only a pun. The *Miscellany*, like the *IVWS*, will still be about people.

**Emily Kopley**  
**McGill University**

## Bibliography

- Horgan, Katherine. "Making Woolf Work: *Woolf Works* at the Royal Ballet." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 87 (Spring/Summer 2015): 41-43.
- Kopley, Emily. "The IVWS dinner at the MLA in San Francisco, 2009." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 74 (Fall/Winter 2008): 35. [Note: The date in the title should be 2008; the MLA was in late December. The date of the *VWM* is correct even though it came out in 2009.]
- . "Rachel Wetzsteon, Poet and Woolfian." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 79 (Spring 2011): 29-31.
- . *Virginia Woolf and Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Parras, John. "The Dangerous Gift of Poetry: Woolf's Critique of the Lyric." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 51 (Spring 1998): 5-6.
- Varon, Daniel Jordan. "'the drop fell': Time-space Compression in *The Waves*." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 86 (Fall 2014/Winter 2015): 36-39.



## How to "write small"

*Virginia Woolf Miscellany* has reminded me how to write—every time I pick up the new issue. Though it's also done more than that: it's also shaped how I teach writing. It's taught me to "write small" and taught me to teach students to "write small." Broadly, this means focus on the detail, and above all be clear and concise. Okay, good so far—perhaps this is no great revelation.

But it's not easy to fit an idea, an argument, or/and a discussion into about a thousand words. Even if it is a smaller idea. You can't spare words. You have to choose your examples and evidence carefully. You can't get carried away with theory. And you have to be very willing to kill your darlings. The *VWM* has been a showcase of many authors achieving all of this, and with style.

So, this is what I've been reminded of, or taught, and now go on to teach to my students:

- Longer arguments might be better off as shorter ones—and usually are.
- Simpler, "smaller" sentences are nothing to be afraid of.
- A sentence is a work of art, and thus must be produced very carefully (But it can still be simple). Woolf would agree.
- Examples and quotations are necessary but should not just be essential; they must be the very best you can find.
- Making your writing accessible to as many people as possible (and I emphasise this is not a "dumbing down") is actually not just a good but a great thing.
- A carefully crafted, clear, concise thesis makes everything work.
- And to extend this further: write the perfect abstract before you begin on the essay. And spend a lot of time on this—this is your paper in "small." In fact, with just a small amount of development, it might be your paper.

Enough said.

Joel Hawkes  
University of Victoria



## Truly Miscellaneous Encounters

I first read Virginia Woolf in 1977. I know because I was flipping through an old journal and there it was, Dec. 2, 1977, "I'm into Virginia Woolf a truly fascinating writer." I wonder what I made of *Mrs. Dalloway*. I was 23 years old, reading Virginia Woolf all by myself, and living a mere 40-minute drive from Sonoma State University where twice a year the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* was being written, edited, printed, stamped, and mailed to scholars and common readers near and far. And yet, it would be over 40 years before my introduction to the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. When I finally learned about the *Miscellany*—I went 'all in.' I became a proud member of the International Virginia Woolf Society and began reading the *VWM* issues from Issue 1, Fall 1973, to Issue 99 Spring/Fall 2022 that arrived in my mail box just a few days ago. (I must confess that there are still several issues waiting to be read.)

I made my way to the *Miscellany* via the Sitting Room, a community library founded by a 'group of like-minded feminists,' one of whom is J. J. Wilson (<https://bloggingwoolf.org/2018/06/06/a-library-one-can-eat-in-a-visit-with-j-j-wilson-of-the-sitting-room-and-a-call-for-papers/>). I began attending poetry readings, writing workshops, and eventually was 'hired' for the best job I have ever had—supporting J.J. in maintaining the extensive and ever-expanding Virginia Woolf library and archives at the Sitting Room, which of course includes an archive of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and correspondence with the *VWM* community going back to 1973.

I have been reading and re-reading Virginia Woolf for over 45 years, but now I do not read Virginia Woolf alone, with Mark Hussey's *Virginia Woolf A-Z* always at my side, I read in community with and am inspired by the essays, articles, and reviews in the *Miscellany*.

JoAnn Borri  
Common Reader



## Woolf-Spotting

Unlike most readers of the *Miscellany*, I came to Woolfian studies late, very late, in fact at the age of seventy-five. Prior to that, I had as a teenager given up on *To the Lighthouse* after about twenty pages and, later on, as a Greek scholar, read Virginia Woolf's "On Not Knowing Greek." I found the idiosyncratic ramblings of that essay so unappealing that I transferred my reaction to the whole Woolfian corpus until, at a loose end in retirement, I caught sight of *Mrs. Dalloway* on our shelves, left by a house-sitter. This time I did not stop before the end and, being more familiar, as a former University College London undergraduate, with geographical than with literary Bloomsbury, spotted an incoherence. The British *Virginia Woolf Bulletin* kindly took my analysis,<sup>1</sup> and I was off and writing. I next spotted an issue involving Greek accents in *The Waves*, and the *Miscellany* kindly took my 'essay,'<sup>2</sup> as the editor called it. So as an amateur, I pick on bits and pieces that strike a chord, and in turn find in the *Miscellany* that others also focus on appealing details, whether it be items on Virginia's dentists or her Hopkins-like prose rhythms. Recently I offered my thoughts on geraniums in Muswell Hill in *Mrs. Dalloway*,<sup>3</sup> probably because I lived in that neighbourhood sixty years ago. No scholar would approach Woolf in this way, but I am not, and cannot hope to be, a Woolfian scholar, but I can feel at home with the *Miscellany*.

Robert B. Todd  
Emeritus, University of British Columbia

<sup>1</sup> "Bloomsbury Residences."

<sup>2</sup> "Virginia Woolf, Greek Accents, and *The Waves*."

<sup>3</sup> "Geraniums."

## Works Cited

- Todd, Robert B. "Bloomsbury Residences in *Mrs. Dalloway*: Peter Walsh and the Warren Smiths." *Virginia Woolf Bulletin of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain*, 63 (January 2020): 22-30.
- . "Geraniums and 'the Long Fingers of the European War' in *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 99 (Spring/Fall 2022): 54-56.
- . "Virginia Woolf, Greek Accents, and *The Waves*." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 95 (Spring/Summer 2019): 47-49.



### The *Miscellany*: A Research Harbour for a PhD Student Sitting in a Lockdown Storm

The *Miscellany*; as a rich, diverse, and exciting Woolfian resource, was a revelation during the second year of my thesis towards the end of 2020 and throughout 2021. I discovered the *Miscellany* when I began to attend the Literature Cambridge season on Virginia Woolf. This occurred at possibly the most challenging point of any thesis and during the intense periods of the COVID lockdown isolation. It was these lectures that provided an escapist portal into ongoing Woolfian research. In recent years, the virtuality of the *Miscellany* and its collaborators has become important for securing outposts for higher education studies. They link scholars and students to a sense of community. These resources formed a space where I felt free, once more, to experiment with ideas surrounding interwar emotions and the natural world in relation to Woolf and her contemporaries. I was supported by these unique resources, whilst many universities remained in a COVID-caused hesitancy.

This Woolfian world created an onwards path. I became aware of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, The International Virginia Woolf Society, MLA conferences and BAMS lectures. I had found the thriving research network that I required, by listening to an instinctive curiosity. I could also hold firm in my approaches with renewed determination. Here there was Elisa Kay Sparks —champion of flora in Woolf's fictions. Here there was Christina Alt and Bonnie Kime Scott, both fiercely engaging with the natural world of Woolf's writing processes. Here, too, was Karina Jakubowicz with her fervour for the gardens and pasturelands that surrounded the Bloomsbury Group, altering their experiences of art, politics, and activism.

As I looked into the archives of the *Miscellany*, a whole range of issues appealed to my current research, including 79, "Woolf and Auto/biography" with guest editor Gill Lowe and 81, "Eco-Woolf" edited by Diana L. Swanson. However, the issue that excited me the most was 78, "Woolf and Nature" edited by Kristin Czarnecki, due to its deep analysis of how Woolf treated nature as a primary conceptual force for her own creative process and energy for life. Through these gradual appreciations of the breadth of research available for reading I was then able to search more forensically for the ecocritical readings of Woolf's works that could help me delve further into my own thesis.

The *Miscellany* reassured that, through the socio-cultural challenges of our time, there remained a constant stream of artistic enthusiasm surrounding Woolf's life and works. My research student experience at this level only became more rounded when I made the decision to seek out this community. It has given me an insight into academic life at its best and afforded me with the knowledge I required to become a mentor and a tutor myself. I have gained confidence through the passionate contributions made by members of the *Miscellany* itself and I have learnt how to write more in keeping with the specific subject field. Gradually, I understood who to ask for advice and where to search for source materials in more depth and with more bravery. All the skills that I have learnt I am now able to pass on to fellow students, students who are at different stages of their educational process.

Much like Woolf's own ability to hold the line, to not be entirely swayed by the doctrinal rigors of any movement or school of thought, the *Miscellany* provides a space where Woolfian ideas can continue to grow. Though I found this platform at a much later stage than most, I am incredibly impressed by the respect that this community have managed to carve out within the literary realm. Amongst the context of a questioning, decolonizing, academic stratosphere, the complexity of Woolf's conceptual awareness still enables focused research into ever-changing and greatly-diverse investigations.

From an ecocritical perspective, Woolf's ability to manoeuvre herself in and out of the natural world—in both her life and her writings—is as exciting as it ever was. The environmental qualities that Woolf and her close circle honed in on during the interwar years, leaves us with a trail of culturally significant nature writing transformations. I realised that whilst studying these revolutionary forms of the genre in Woolf's works, as evidenced in several issues of the *Miscellany* mentioned earlier, that the forms have an impact on how we see the green movement. They have the ability to combine past understandings with the ongoing evocations and actions of the future, both in relation to the cycles of the natural world and in relation to the more human meanderings that occur on this planet.

Alex Clarke  
English Literature, Brunel University London



### The *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*: A "capacious hold-all"

I write in celebration of the fiftieth birthday of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, a wonderful repository of knowledge, criticism and interpretation for scholars, initiated in the autumn of 1973. In March 1920 Virginia Woolf wonders whether or not she should continue with her journal and decides "[i]n spite of some tremors" to "go on" with it (*Diary* [D] 2 24). She greets herself a "my dear ghost" and fancies a future "old Virginia", aged 50, "putting on her spectacles" to re-read her current diary (D 2 24). I hope that, in a similar manner, some of those who began the *Miscellany* fifty years ago Sonoma State College are recognising, in their later years, that they laid the "bricks" (D 2 24) for a fine storehouse of fascinating work relating to Woolf. Kudos too is due to those who have since assumed the task of guiding writers and of compiling the *Miscellany*.

Like all journals, the *Miscellany* provides a record, bringing to mind another much-quoted 1919 analysis of the diary-writing process. Woolf muses at Easter, in April 1919: "What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something loose-knit, & yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace any thing, solemn, slight or beautiful, that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings a mass of odds & ends" (D 1 266). She imagines returning, as an older self, to re-read this "haphazard", "loose" writing and of finding "the significance to lie where I never saw it at the time" (D I: 266). A reader may look back across the five decades of the organic "elastic" *Miscellany* to see the ways in which Woolf studies have developed and broadened. Woolf stresses the "rough & random style", the "slapdash" (D 1 266) nature of her journal and this is where her process departs from the scrupulously tended, meticulously edited publication of each *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. As Woolf says, one cannot "let the pen write without guidance; for fear of becoming slack & untidy" (D 1 266). Nothing is "slovenly" about the *Miscellany*. But it is a "capacious hold-all" (D 1 266).

The project aspired to be welcoming, generous and inclusive from the start. The first address "TO THE READER," signed by editors Peggy Comstock, Rebecca Davison, Ellen Rogat, Lucio Ruotolo, and



J. J. Wilson, stated its aim to inform and to air controversies in Woolf studies; to be “a forum for all varieties of Woolf readers, many of whom may lack the opportunity to be heard.”<sup>1</sup>

Recently all the extant editions of the Stephen children’s journal, the *Hyde Park Gate News*, were digitised and can be studied on the British Library web site.<sup>2</sup> I have wondered—not for the first time—whether the format of the *Miscellany* was consciously modelled on the *Hyde Park Gate News*. The volume numbers are set to the left and date to the right; lines or symbols are drawn to indicate the separation of items; there is a header across both columns. Many of the existing volumes are on thick cream paper, like the printed version of the *Miscellany*.<sup>3</sup> A variety of material is included in both publications: essays, articles, announcements, poems, artwork, information about events and reports of activities.

The synonyms for “miscellany” are themselves various: accumulation, assortment, collection, combination, compilation, gallimaufry, medley, mélange, melée, smorgasbord, stew. Many of these alternative terms suggest foodstuffs. Here, indeed, is a bountiful buffet—to taste, share, savour, digest, and nourish.

**Gill Lowe**

*Visiting Fellow at the University of Suffolk, UK*

#### **Works Cited**

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume I: 1915-1919*. [The Hogarth Press, 1977] Edited by Anne Olivier Bell. London: Penguin: 1979.

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume II: 1920-1924*. [The Hogarth Press, 1978]. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell, assisted by Andrew McNeillie. London: Penguin: 1981.

<sup>1</sup> See page 1 of Issue 1, the Fall 1973 edition of the *Miscellany*; this issue can be read online at: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/vwm1fall1973.pdf>. The link to the website is: <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/hyde-park-gate-news-a-magazine-by-virginia-woolf-and-vanessa-bell>

<sup>3</sup> The digitized page of Hyde Park Gate News Vol. II, no. 6 (#48 in the pages displayed in the British Library collection) shows these similarities (<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/hyde-park-gate-news-a-magazine-by-virginia-woolf-and-vanessa-bell>).



#### **The Spirit of The *Miscellany***

The *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* embodies for me the spirit of inclusiveness. I make no claims to the same expertise as that of the widely published academics and independent scholars who contribute regularly to the journal, yet I do not feel in the least excluded. Having my reflections on two Annual International Conferences on Virginia Woolf—the only two I have been able to attend—published in the journal gave me a wonderful feeling of belonging to a community of beautiful men and women interconnected by their devotion to Woolf.

I find the absolute absence of any hierarchies in the journal especially appealing. The generosity of those at the top—meaning the editors and regular contributors—is incredible. Mark Hussey has taken the time to carefully read and comment on my writing. Vara Neverow’s support is unmatched. By publishing my essay on Virginia Woolf and the Armenian Woman in the Fall 2019-Fall 2020 issue of the *Miscellany*, Vara welcomed me into the circle of scholars who fascinate and inspire me with the breadth of their learning.

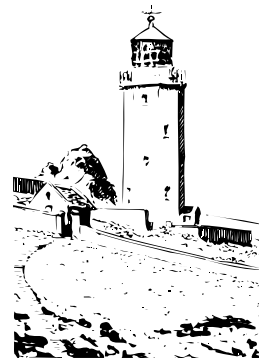
The (mostly) biannual issues of the *Miscellany* keep me updated and connected to the Woolfian realm. As I read the detailed accounts of the Virginia Woolf Conferences and the comments by the attendees as they reflect on the various events and venues, always inspired by the fact of their being together and of sharing, I have to confess that I feel a trifle envious but happy too that such genuine camaraderie is possible.

With the *Miscellany*, I am in my own habitat. The copies of the journal I have on the nightstand by my bed connect me to my inner world and give me the courage I need to access my own truth. I can truthfully say that Woolf is part of everything I do. Whether it is about Installation Art and the “permanence” of “the ever-changing moment,” or about William Saroyan and the Common Reader, almost every article I publish in the Armenian press invokes Woolf. Woolf has sustained me through many moments of joy, and through moments of pain. More often than I would like to admit, I have found myself exclaiming with Mrs. Ramsay who says in *To the Lighthouse*, “How could any Lord have made this world?” Yet, I know that “Life is to be dealt with.” Woolf makes the dealing possible.

To keep the Woolf community connected during the recent pandemic, Benjamin Hagen and co-conspirators Shilo McGiff, Amy Smith, and Drew Shannon launched the Woolf Salon in 2020, a Woolf Salon Project which further affirms the spirit of interconnectedness of the *Miscellany*. It is in fact a great joy to watch them lead the Salon sessions with such grace, always ready to accommodate everyone’s needs. “Communication is health; communication is truth; communication is happiness. To share is our duty,” thinks Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Woolf never ceases to remind us.

The *Miscellany* is celebrating its 100th issue. I would like to thank co-founder J. J. Wilson who created and launched the newsletter at Sonoma State University in 1973, and who is just one of the countless creatures who give so generously of their time and their effort to the publication—simply because they adore Woolf.

**Arpi Sarafian**  
*Independent Scholar*





A Display of AnneMarie Bantzinger's *Miscellanies*  
Photograph by AnneMarie Bantzinger

**AnneMarie Bantzinger and Anne Byrne:  
A Conversation about the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***

Anne Byrne (AB): So, you began to read Woolf fifty or so years ago?

AnneMarie Bantzinger (AMB): Yes, Virginia Woolf, her novels and other works were bought, read, and have taken pride of place on my bookshelf. Slowly her *Letters* and *Diaries* were added, a world to submerge oneself in. A world of one's own, but nobody to share it with. That world expanded beyond anything one can imagine when the first issue of the *Miscellany* entered the house in 1973. No more borders or feelings of isolation—this was truly a window into the Virginia Woolf world of readers, writers, and scholars, whose names became very familiar to me as I read each issue, cover to cover. Yes, I dropped everything when the *Miscellany* arrived—it was like a gem arriving in the post. Those early issues were free of charge, though donations were welcome of course. Even now, when the latest issue arrives in the mailbox, I read every word.

AB: Your bookshelf holds every issue of the *Miscellany*—that must mean a lot to you. I also prefer the print issues, a throwback to a generational desire to read on paper perhaps. I look forward to the familiar yellow pages, thickly packed with essays, reviews and poetry in small black print with an assortment of embellishments and photographs that always delight. The testimonies to Woolf scholars who have died are especially insightful into the early work that creates scholarly communities. I scan the table of contents, at times overwhelmed by the profound scholarship, insights, and tumult of ideas that spill across the pages. With so much rich, diverse, and interesting content in my hands, often I don't know where to start. I lay my copy aside, breathe a little, and then I am ready to be fully absorbed into and transported away to the Woolf world.

AMB: Yes. My Woolf world—and my bookshelves expanded even further in 1991 when the Virginia Woolf Conference Proceedings were published along with the *Woolf Studies Annual* in 1995. I read the book reviews in the *Miscellany* with special interest; this was bad for my pocket as I ordered these new publications too! I noticed from the

beginning that there was an international dimension to these publications and that interested me very much.

AB: So, you are living in the Netherlands, in splendid solitude but surrounded by books on and by Woolf. Twice a year the *Miscellany* arrives with news of conferences, calls for papers, reports on Virginia Woolf societies, lists of resources, and invitations to contribute. Were you curious about the editors, writers, designers, printers, and community of people who brought the *Miscellany* to life, year after year? When did you first meet those whose work you were reading in the *Miscellany*?

AMB: In 2003 I was asked by Prof. Natalya Reinhold to talk about “The Reception of Woolf’s Translated Works in the Netherlands.” She organized a symposium, Woolf Across Cultures, at the Russian State University for Humanities in Moscow. There I met attendees and speakers from Korea, Japan, France, the UK, Portugal, Canada, and the USA. Finally, I could put faces to the (to me) well-known names, some of whom became and still are friends. That gave me the confidence to attend my first Virginia Woolf Conference in London in 2004, where I was made very welcome. Then and there, Vara Neverow asked me to guest edit a special issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* on Leonard Woolf which was published as Issue 72 in Fall/Winter 2007. I wrote the introduction “Is Holland an Island?” and an article on Leonard Woolf’s Dutch ancestors.

AB: You traced the trials and accomplishments of Leonard’s Jewish forbears for several generations as they overcame the restrictions against religious minorities working and living in Dutch towns. That special issue of essays and book reviews on Leonard Woolf is highly valued by those writing about and interested in Leonard’s life and legacy. I recently reread Cecil Woolf’s memories of Leonard and Virginia in that issue; his recall of and forthright views on the personalities and proclivities of his uncle and aunt were remarkable as was his clear admiration and devotion to both.

Can you remember when *we* first met?

AMB: You contacted me about the special issue on Leonard and we first met in 2014 at the Annual Leonard Woolf Society in Sussex. I wrote a short report of that meeting, published in Issue 86 of the *Miscellany* (Fall/Winter 2015).

AB: Yes, that was one of my first experiences of a Woolfian gathering with scholarly papers, a display of books and images from Ceylon and we were treated to a cello improvisation based on *The Village in the Jungle*. The reports on meetings attended or missed, never lose their value, do they? This is the gift of the *Miscellany*; the combination of its different elements produces a work of art of enduring value and richness. It is an invitation to connect with a formidable reading and writing community. I love how many issues begin with the words “To the Readers,” everybody is welcomed and included. That is my experience of writing for the *Miscellany* too. It is where I have had the very best, wisest, and attentive editorial guidance, full of care for both reader and writer. I was encouraged to explore broader topics on Bloomsbury, stimulating an interest in the creative arts, for example.<sup>1</sup> Encouraging another person to write comes from a spirited, generous mind and a fertile belief in what might unfold.

You said that you began as a solitary ‘common reader,’ but it seems you were precipitated into writing, editing, and contributing to the international community of Woolf through the *Miscellany*?

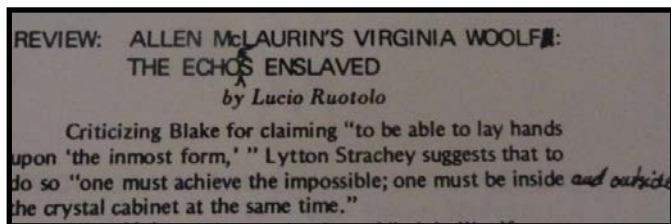
AMB: Yes, I also edited a history of the Virginia Woolf conferences recently for the *Miscellany*, a special issue on 30 years of Virginia Woolf Conferences. This was made possible by many, many organizers and attendees who dug deep into their memories and put them on paper. I owe them my deepest gratitude. You get to know people through their writing and interests in Woolf. My personal reflections on editing that issue and memories of the conferences are in the Introduction.

Each issue of the *Miscellany* brings with it a continuing sense of connection, of shared learning, and great enjoyment. It has been a

Photograph by AnneMarie Bantzinger

constant factor in my life over many years.

AB: In the history, you highlight the significance of everybody being equal at the conferences. The ethos of welcome and openness permeates the pages for the curious reader and writer. The *Miscellany* is an invitation to dive deep into Woolf’s writings, connecting the past and present, the outer world with the inner, linking readers and writers in creative and multiple relationships. It seems to me that the urge to read, converse and write critically about Woolf with Woolfian comrades is part of the magic of the *Miscellany*, a treasured vein of community and friendship that is inspired by those that dreamed the very first issue into being.



Virginia Woolf Miscellany Volume 1 No. 1 Fall 1973,  
with handwritten correction and addition

AMB: Yes, and deep bonds of friendship have developed for me through the *Miscellany*, that hopefully will continue for ever and ever.

**AnneMarie Bantzinger, Independent Scholar  
and Anne Byrne, Emerita Professor, University of Galway**

<sup>1</sup> See Byrne.

## Works Cited

- Bantzinger, AnneMarie. “Holland and Virginia Woolf: Reception of Woolf’s Translated Work in the Netherlands.” *Woolf Across Cultures*. Ed. Natalya Reinhold. New York: Pace University Press, 2004. 121-31.
- Bantzinger, AnneMarie, ed. Special Topic: Leonard Woolf. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 72 (Fall/Winter 2007): 1; 9-66.
- Bantzinger, AnneMarie, ed. Special Topic: Remembering the First Thirty Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf. *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021) : 1-2, 10-47.
- Byrne, Anne. “Roger Fry and the Art of the Book.” *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 92 (Winter/Spring 2018): 25-29.



## Getting to Know (and Correctly Pronounce) the *Miscellany*

I remember the first time that I encountered the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. It was in Cincinnati, during the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, which was also the first one that I had ever attended. I was chairing a panel, and while reading the speakers’ bios, I stumbled while pronouncing the title of the journal.

Every non-native speaker has a couple of English words which, for some reason, he or she struggles to pronounce. ‘Miscellany’ was mine: despite re-reading the panelists’ bios the night before to ensure a successful performance, when I was in front of the audience, anxiety got the better of me and I got stuck halfway through the articulation of the word: “Misc-... Misc-...”. Very kindly, everyone in the room smiled and helped me get out of that embarrassing situation by verbalizing in unison ‘Miscellany!’<sup>1</sup> In that moment, I promised myself that I would make up for the incident by familiarizing myself with the journal as soon as I could. This chance was offered to me a few weeks later when I received the first printed copy of the *Miscellany* at my place in Treviglio, Italy. It was Issue 95: a parcel wrapped in yellow paper with a stamp from the U.S., which also represented the first, physical sign of my belonging to the IVWS.<sup>2</sup>

As someone passionate about bookbinding and graphic design, I was amazed to discover that the journal displayed an old-fashioned layout, with its signature slim columns, framed announcements, and thick, quality, and yellowish paper. Especially in a time when journals in digital-only format are thriving, the *Miscellany* appeared almost to be an original craft product—an *outsider* in the context of today’s editorial market, and in perfect alignment with the critical perspective offered by Woolf studies. The style of the contributions it contained also caught my attention due to their concise yet effective arguments, and for the variety of input that they provided: a journal that makes you want to read it during your non-work hours remains a special one, particularly if, beyond that, it ensures valuable insights for one’s professional life.

There is another reason why Issue 95 is so special to me: one section of it is dedicated to the memory of Cecil Woolf. I cannot forget what

<sup>1</sup> Editorial note: The American and British pronunciations of the *Miscellany* differ based on the stressing the first syllable (American): **mis**-cel-lany or the second one (British): mis-cel-lany (for a sample pronunciation, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxzeqsiuiCY>).

<sup>2</sup> Editorial note: The *Miscellany* is affiliated with the International Virginia Woolf Society but is independent as are such entities as the Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf and the Woolf Salons.



I felt when at the conference in Cincinnati a general concern rose among the participants due to the health conditions of Cecil Woolf, who unexpectedly could not make it to the event that year. “It is a real pity you will not be able to meet him on this occasion!” and “He really is a special person!” represent the kinds of sentences that many Woolfians repeated to me during the conference, which made me realize how admired and respected Cecil Woolf was. It became clear at that moment that, beyond being a renowned academic and a man carrying the aura of having known Virginia Woolf,<sup>3</sup> he was a wonderful human being as well. I unfortunately did not have the chance to meet him in person since he passed away the day after the conference ended, on June 10, 2019. However, as it is common among great people, his memory endures through the stories that people tell one another, especially passing them on to younger generations, through a collective storytelling ritual. In this sense, Issue 95 can be seen as a valuable work for ensuring this ‘passing of the baton’ among present and future generations of Woolfians regarding him and his legacy.

The issue contains an array of personal and professional accounts concerning Cecil Woolf, thus creating a diversified mosaic of testimonies which, nonetheless, agree on depicting him as an extremely generous and supportive scholar, especially towards early career researchers. The fact that this spirit also represents one of the most striking features of the International Virginia Woolf Society says a lot about the influence that Cecil Woolf has apparently exercised upon the community.

Among the many engaging contributions contained in the issue, I enjoyed reading the correspondence between Cecil Woolf and Vara Neverow, in which the former underlines the peculiarity of his editorial guidance to young scholars and colleagues, especially when compared to mainstream editorial customs: in fact, “unlike many publishers I [Cecil Woolf] make it a practice not to breathe down our authors’ necks” (Woolf qtd. in Neverow, “Cecil Woolf Publishers” 18).<sup>4</sup> Or, it was fascinating to discover how enthusiastic and supportive he was even in regard to work-in-progress projects, for he was always ready to encourage one to complete them, over time—a striking feature considering how busy and committed a scholar of his caliber must have been. This aspect, for instance, emerges from Paula Maggio’s accounts dedicated to her involvement in Mr. Woolf’s Bloomsbury Heritage Series, which, in spite of the fact that the completion of her project extended over a period of eleven years, “Cecil’s ongoing patience, perseverance, and support indicat[ed] how important the topic was to him” (Neverow, “Cecil Woolf Publishers” 18).

Similarly, it was interesting to discover how a high-profile scholar such as Cecil Woolf maintained a decent, candid, and informal behavior toward other people. One can easily understand it when reading, for instance, Drew Shannon’s memory of his first meeting with Mr. Woolf where he said that: “He immediately grasped my hand, and, visibly upset that someone had made a rather nasty remark about Leonard as a husband, he peered at me through his glasses with those big, clear eyes [...], and said, ‘Can you tell me WHY some people hate Leonard?’” (Shannon).<sup>5</sup> As one can easily comprehend, such an intimate, physical, and spiritual proximity cannot be taken for granted between acquaintances, let alone among strangers in an academic context.

Those mentioned before are just some of the many stories through which the *Miscellany*—allowed me to get to know Cecil Woolf, not just the scholar, but also the man—and reminded me that being a Woolfian is much more than being an expert of Bloomsbury and literature: it

<sup>3</sup> Editorial note: Cecil Woolf was Leonard Woolf’s nephew.

<sup>4</sup> Editorial note: This discussion of Cecil Woolf is from the conference panel that had been organized by Karen Levenback and focused on his work as a publisher and a friend. The panel had been proposed before Woolf became ill, and the papers were published in Issue 95.

<sup>5</sup> Editorial note: Drew Shannon’s reflections are drawn from the remembrances of Cecil Woolf, edited by Paula Maggio.

also regards embodying the spirit of inclusivity, the pedagogy, and the awareness one can breathe from Woolf’s texts. In this sense, I am grateful to Vara Neverow and to Paula Maggio, who oversaw the section dedicated to remembrances of Cecil Woolf, for having developed the idea that a collection of reflections on Cecil Woolf “should be made available to current and future scholars who want to explore, recognize, and document the legacy of Cecil Woolf and Cecil Woolf Publishers” (Maggio 9). For this reason, I believe that the issue is particularly suitable for young people at their prime in Woolf studies.

Many other issues of the *Miscellany* represent useful tools for neophytes in the field for *sensing* the spirit of the international Woolf community. Among these is number 98, which is edited by AnneMarie Bantzing and dedicated to the memories of organizers and attendees of all the Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf through 2022. While flipping through the pages of Issue 98, it is curious, for instance, to discover that “the conference was structurally stable from the start” (Bantzing 2), and that, therefore, in spite of the different topics proposed throughout the years, the vibes one could experience during the earliest editions must have been somehow the same as those during later events. Or, reading the accounts where at-the-time young researchers describe their first time at the Woolf conference, it is easy to recognize yourself in the feelings and emotions of other people: for instance, I felt connected with Maria Aparecida de Oliveira when reading that, for her, the “Woolf Conference has not only been an inspiration; it has also been a transformative experience in my life as an educator” (de Oliveira 32). Or I find myself in the words of Susan Wegener, who, when sharing the memory of her first encounter with Hermione Lee, describes herself as “waiting in line for her autograph, shaking her hand, and flaunting my newly signed copy of her book” (Wegener 23). Moreover, one cannot feel distant from Anne Byrne’s comment that underlines how “Looking back, I understand that the conference is also a space to play, to experiment, to take a risk now and then” (Byrne 37). There is something reassuring in discovering that, despite different lifepaths, as Woolfians our personal stories have a lot in common.

When reading Issue 98, one can also detect several commonalities among the accounts of the people who handled the organizations of the several conferences throughout the years. Seeing how the process is not always simple makes one attendee appreciate these events even more: it was curious to discover how, again, Vara Neverow, who organized the second conference in 1992, had “just one phone number allocated to four faculty members” and “didn’t have an answering machine” (“Themes” 10) to deal with the many calls from those who wanted information. Or one can easily sympathize with Beth Rigel Daugherty when she reports that “Louise DeSalvo’s last-minute stress fracture meant she could not come to discuss and read from *Vertigo*” (15), which led her to rely on the generosity of friends and colleagues to come up with a solution for the keynote lecture of the 5th conference. Eventually, discovering that the idea of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, in 1991, came about as the result of a chit-chat in J. J. Wilson’s hotel room at an MLA event in New Orleans, as Mark Hussey reminds readers (10), invites one to acknowledge even more relevance to these kinds of informal exchanges during events as special moments that could become the foundation of life changing projects.

And if these stories were not enough to illustrate how special Issue 98 is to me, let me finally add that it also represents the first one to which I have ever contributed (the present article is my second) by sharing my personal experiences attending the 28<sup>th</sup> conference in Cincinnati... which leads me back to the context in which I mispronounced the word ‘Miscellany’ in front of a panel of A-list Woolfians, as reported at the beginning of this article.

If there is one way to praise and acknowledge the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, perhaps, it is just that: its capacity to crystallize and constantly offer to its readers the experiences of the many people composing the Woolfian community worldwide, and to exchange good

scholarly practices and creative ideas which, all in all, represents those valuable and even essential life lessons for which one should be grateful.

**Stefano Rozzoni**  
**University of Bergamo**

### Works Cited

- Bantzinger, AnneMarie. "What We Remember." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021): 1-2.
- Byrne, Anne. "'...my mind was sated, not the treasure exhausted'" (Virginia Woolf, "Reading" 151): Recollections of Virginia Woolf and Heritage, the 26th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, Leeds Trinity University, 16-19 June 2016." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021) 36-38.
- Daugherty, Beth Rigel. "5th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, 1995." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021): 15.
- de Oliveira, Maria Aparecida. "Remembering Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021): 32.
- Hussey, Mark. "1st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, 1991." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021):10.
- Maggio, Paula. "Remembering Cecil Woolf." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 95 (Spring/Summer 2019):8- 9.
- Neverow, Vara. "Cecil Woolf Publishers: Using the Power of the Press to Advocate for Peace." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 95 (Spring/Summer 2019): 18.
- . "The Themes and Variations of the Second Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021): 10-11.
- Shannon, Drew. "Recalling "Moments of Being" With Cecil Woolf." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 95 (Spring/Summer 2019): 11.
- Wegener, Susan. "Woolf in the Real World: The Thirteen Annual Conference." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 98 (Fall/Winter 2021): 23



### Miscellaneous Benefits of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*

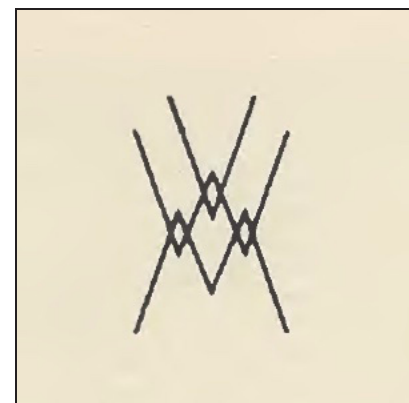
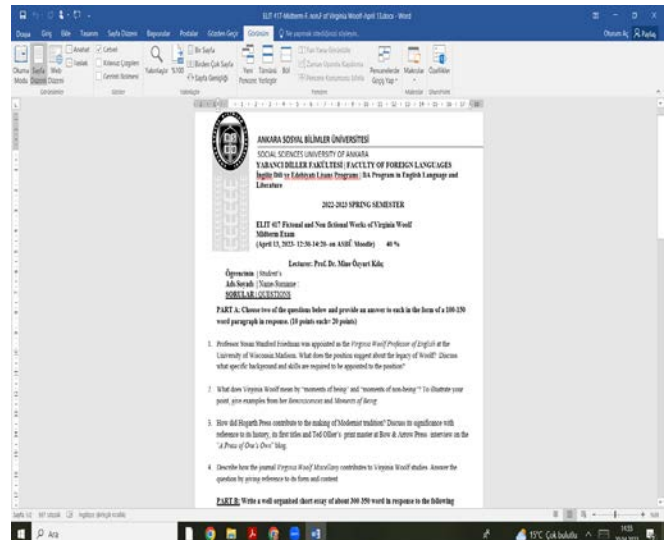
Deadline is fast approaching! I am slowly cherishing the student answers, reading their papers again, feeling lucky—and leisurely forgetting about the deadline—rereading them, happily, proudly, confidently. Two weeks ago, students were assigned to question what it means to be a "Virginia Woolf Professor," put simply, to think why Susan Stanford Friedman could become one. With young men and women in Turkey studying English literature, I asked how a BA student could pay homage to a professor whose career in women and writing is named after a woman and a writer who established the field, woman and writing! We devised a way to pay homage to a Virginia Woolf professor who passed very recently; we did it in our own way, in our own tune, with heavy hearts but open minds. Now, this is the week after the Midterm Week; papers are to be graded, and grades to be uploaded soon! In my departmental elective course "ELIT 437 Fictional and Non-fictional Writings of Virginia Woolf," deadline is fast approaching! But I will still reread the beautiful answers, this time, on the "miscellaneous benefits of *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*"! Within the context of "Virginia Woolf and Her Legacy," students carefully studied the last issue of the journal to understand how the journal contributes to the making of a legacy while presenting the established legacy. As the short reviews uploaded on the online learning platform show, even by studying a single issue student readers could see that the journal has miscellaneous functions. They are in an agreement that the journal does more than just circulating scholarly analysis of Woolf's works. As a source of Woolf-related information and knowledge piled up before us in 100 issues, the

*Miscellany* is the very legacy Woolf made possible. It shares and makes the Woolf-related news, records the memories of past conferences, presents Woolf's works from an ever fresh perspective, enables one to keep up with the Woolf scholarship, keeps alive those Woolfians who are not here anymore, pays tribute not just to Woolf but all those creating her legacy in *miscellaneous* ways.

Above all of these valuable functions is the *Miscellany's* formative influence on the budding Woolfians to ask: How—else—should one read Woolf's work? Student answers show that we can do it through the call for papers and news, through understanding the scholarship behind each special issue, through realising the ever-growing transnational and transdisciplinary nature of Woolf scholarship and seeing that this is the engine behind the rich network of scholars and readers leading to a strong camaraderie. I read their answers leisurely, and reread happily, proudly, confidently, not with a red pen in my hand to make corrections but with a great sigh of relief: "*Virginia Woolf Miscellany* is an academic journal that publishes articles, essays about Virginia Woolf's work, her influences, articles, essays and reviews from scholars all around the world who are willing to contribute to Virginia Woolf scholarship!" Yes, it is! Yes, we are! And, after another cup of tea, I read the concluding part of another answer "Lastly, it is an active journal which produces work related to Woolf studies. So, with this journal, we understand that Woolf studies is never ending," and I say, "Yes!" and add again, "Yes!"

**Mine Özyurt Kılıç**  
**Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey**

### Appendix: A View from the Exam



## Evolution of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*: An Appreciation

Living west of the Alleghanies  
I eagle-eye for *Miscellanies*  
That fill life's many gaps  
With unexpected Apps  
& other news is absentia  
Of my darling dear Ginia

I bless the editors  
Accomplished predators  
Of Virginia Woolf deniers  
I myself subdue with pliers  
& other nifty farm devices  
That cure most scholarly crises

Yet thank you J. J. Wilson for  
Opening a welcome door  
& thanks to 'Aloe' Vara Neverow  
The *Miscellany* garden grows  
*Medicinal* I might have said  
Though V returning might strike me dead

Breathe deep I'm back on track  
With love for A Pollak  
Intrepid PhD  
The scholar we'd like to be  
Thanks *Miscellany* for your light  
That penetrates my lonely night

Robert McDowell

<https://robertmcdowell.net/category/virginia-woolf/>



Here Ends the Special Topic  
The Evolution of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*



The Essays from the 2022  
Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Prize

<https://v-woolf-society.com/2022/12/12/2022-angelica-garnett-undergraduate-essay-prize-results/>

Winner of the 2022 Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate  
Essay Prize  
Eleanor Clark

Merton College, University of Oxford

The essay was written in preparation for first-year undergraduate exams  
in modern English literature.

Eleanor Clark was tutored on this paper by Dr Laura Ludtke and  
advised on this essay by Professor Michael Whitworth.

The author is now entering her third and final year of her BA in English  
Language and Literature at Merton College, Oxford.

### “Breaking the silence?": Talking, Speaking, and the Dissipation of Meaning in Virginia Woolf's Novels

In the first chapter of Virginia Woolf's first novel, Helen Ambrose  
“shut her face away from [her husband] as much as to say, ‘You can't

possibly understand'” (*The Voyage Out* [VO] 9). From this initial voyage  
outwards, Woolf is deeply concerned with the fear that, even between  
intimates, communication may be impossible. And yet, in Woolf's  
second novel, two lovers can say “Yes, the world looks something  
like that to me too” (Woolf 525). Harvena Richter, an early critic, was  
insistent that “the voice-tone of Virginia Woolf's different characters of  
necessity remains the same” (144) but that “from novel to novel [...] the  
voice becomes more complex” (131). Between *The Voyage Out* and  
*Night and Day*, however, communication is solved in only four years.  
Woolf breaks this silence through a precise distinction between talk and  
speech. The former imparts language and is heard; the latter imparts  
meaning and is listened to. This distinction survives Woolf's increasing  
interiority: in both dialogue and monologue, talk is derided and speech  
desired. So then, as Neville begs in *The Waves* [TW], let us cease talking  
and instead “let us say, brutally and directly, what is in our minds” (TW  
98).

Feminist criticism notices Woolf's distinction only implicitly, finding  
that “talk is frequently associated with men in Woolf's novels” which  
form “a critique of talkers” (Laurence 11). Yet the extrapolation that  
this means “silence is persistently associated with women's experience”  
(Sutton 41) fails to listen to the alternative codes with which Woolf's  
women speak. For Bernard in *The Waves*, “to speak [...] is to bring about  
an explosion. Up goes the rocket. The golden grain falls, fertilizing [...] that  
is the joy of intercourse” (TW 93). Sexual euphemism and imagery  
epitomize the male freedom to talk. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf  
found “a sense of physical well-being in the presence” of the male “mind  
which had never been thwarted or opposed and had had full liberty from  
birth to stretch itself” (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* [AROO] 133).  
Bernard's linguistic freedom similarly suggests “such freedom of mind,  
such liberty of person, such confidence in himself” which makes male  
communication “so direct, so straightforward” (AROO 133). Woolf's  
conflation of physical and mental freedoms argues that in the life of the  
free body, the mind too is free – and thus is the mouth free to speak.

Not so for women: Julia Briggs argues that “sexuality is [...] the point  
of silence” for women in Woolf's novels (Briggs 58). Yet while women  
may be *verbally* silent on the subject, they speak, nonetheless. The mind  
thwarted and opposed cannot speak with such minimal coding as can  
Bernard, but it finds new codes. Rachel Vinrace tells Terence Hewet  
that she prefers music to words because “music goes straight for things”  
whereas “with writing it seems to me there's so much [...] scratching on  
the match box” (VO 248). Anticipating Clarissa Dalloway's later image of  
“a match burning in a crocus, an inner meaning almost expressed”  
(Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* [MD] 27), usually read as a coded admission of  
sexual pleasure with Sally Seton, Rachel's words are decoded. Rachel  
hides her answer in a language unintelligible to Hewet because male  
language—words—does not fire her up as music does. This view is not  
solely a twentieth century phenomenon: Thomas Hardy's Bathsheba  
Everdene in *Far From the Madding Crowd* announces that “it is difficult  
for a woman to define her feelings in a language which is chiefly made  
by men to express theirs” (390). Woolf, however, asks *why*, pushing  
towards languages made for and by women.

Briggs argues that women speak freely in non-verbal languages  
because these are “pure signs [...] free of gender distinctions” (51).  
Rachel's music and Katharine Hilbery's mathematics are conveniently  
consecutive examples. But neither notational nor numerical systems  
were—or are—any freer from male cultural domination than  
words. Rather, the affordance of concertos and calculations is to be  
uninterruptible. For Bernard, “soliloquies in backstreets soon pall [...] I  
need an audience” – and he gets one: the other five “retrieve me from  
darkness” (TW 92). In *The Voyage Out*, Hirst says, “there will never  
be more than five people in the world worth talking to” and yet “in five  
minutes he was telling [Helen Ambrose] the history of his life” (VO  
191). Men have ample opportunity to impart their language, and they  
are almost always heard. Woolf is clear, however, that communicative  
speech is collaborative, and its audience is receptive. Sharing meaning



requires each interlocutor to take their turn unbroken, and then listen fully to the answer. Bernard “burb[ing] on, telling us stories, while we lie recumbent” (TW 30) does not suffice. *Night and Day* [ND] satirizes the male failure to distinguish between the ease of talking and the important effort of speaking in William Rodney, whose play prioritizes the surface affectation of clever talk: “if the beauty of a drama depended on the variety of measures in which the personages speak, Rodney’s plays must have challenged the works of Shakespeare” (ND 149). His reading “nails each voice firmly onto the same spot in the hearer’s brain” (149), and is thus unavoidably heard, but allows no collaborative meaning. It is unsurprising, therefore, that while “his mastery of meters was very great,” Rodney admits to Katharine “I really don’t know what we’re talking about” (309). Men’s uninterrupted freedom to talk does not necessarily make them better understood than women. Perhaps, then, we must move beyond gender with regard to language and understanding.

Indeed, Woolf’s dialogues between lovers demonstrate that no one can speak and impart meaning in isolation; no human voice survives alone. Suzanne Raitt writes of *The Voyage Out* that “selves built on sound cannot last” (35) and that Rachel’s inability to speak her mind reveals the fragility of her autonomous self. But it is Terence who goes unanswered, calling out “Rachel! Rachel!” into the empty space between Chapters 25 and 26 (VO 424). As Rachel prefigured Clarissa, so Terence anticipates Peter Walsh’s meditative question “To whom does the solitary traveler make reply?” after failing to get through to Clarissa (MD 50). Both members of both couples are solitary travelers, voyaging independently. Their sonic selves are fragile because they fail to resonate off each other. Modern physics made available to Woolf the analogy of sound waves and their dissipation: the loss of energy into the environment is a pattern repeated by the loss of meaning into textual gaps seen in the speeches of her solitary characters. As Louis says, “children, our lives have been like gongs striking” (TW 32): to live is to sound, but to live is not necessarily to be answered.

Woolf signals the mismatching of individuals in their inability to prevent the dissipation of meaning. Richard Dalloway resolves thrice to “say to Clarissa in so many words that he loved her” (MD 98), and never does, deciding “she understood without his speaking” (MD 100). But the narration provides no confirmatory window into Clarissa’s mind: the communication is lost to the gap between narrator and character, proving their differentiability. Similarly, Ralph Denham “told [Mary Datchet] unhesitatingly that he planned to write a history of the English village” (ND 240), yet another of the unfinished writings which populate *Night and Day*. Mary loves Ralph, and might be prepared to listen, but he cannot love her, and will only talk about words he will never write. These voices cannot then escape the ephemerality of the waves.

Yet “selves built on sound” invariably do last when communicants are balanced and mutually comprehending and when two selves are answering echoic surfaces. In fact, for Sally Seton, the voice is the *only* stable self: Clarissa recognizes her by “That voice!” for “she had never looked like *that*” in the past (MD 145). In further resistance to developmental readings, Ralph finds the same of Katharine. Realizing that “he had never seen her in the daylight” (ND 250), he confirms his love not in the romantic convention of regarding her in the cold light of day, but by listening to her voice in the cold *sound* of day, realizing “the pause between the voice of one’s dreams and the voice that comes from the object of one’s dreams” (ND 323). Indeed, the novel denies to the end the need for anything to come visually into the light of day. It is promenading at night, under streetlamps, that the couple learn to speak instead of talk: “From the heart of his darkness he spoke his thanksgiving; from a region as far, as hidden, she answered him” (ND 540). The phrase alludes overtly to Conrad, whose idea in *Heart of Darkness* that “it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one’s existence” (Conrad 130), Ralph earlier accorded to in saying “I doubt that one human being ever understands another” (ND 270). Such doubt belongs indisputably to a modernity which destabilized

individual subjectivity, and in which Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic analysis of the arbitrary sign had unveiled the gap between signified and signifier into which all meaning could collapse. T. S. Eliot’s speakers repeatedly fall into this gap, from Prufrock lamenting “it is impossible to say just what I mean” in 1917 (Eliot 6) to the Hollow Men chanting that “Between the conception / And the creation [...] / Falls the Shadow” in 1925 (Eliot 82), to the poet’s prevaricating persona in “East Coker” (1940) punctuating abstract meditations with “That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory” (Eliot 186). Woolf, however, is more optimistic than Eliot and Conrad, because she valorizes speech as well as talk.

Easy as it would be to read the resolution of *Night and Day* as a younger, naiver Woolf, she, like Eliot, has a life’s work in dialogue with itself. *Between the Acts* [BTA], published posthumously, has a chiastic structure. Opening with a married couple, “It was a summer’s night and they were talking” (BTA 7) Woolf has these voices lost to an animal cacophony in which “a cow coughed” and “a bird chuckled” in imitation of a theatre audience (BTA 7). The novel closes with the couple’s true voices rising from the sounds of their arguing, metaphorized as how “the dog fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night” to end “The curtain rose. They spoke” (BTA 152). Chillingly, and tellingly, this last page of Woolf’s last novel, which she did not finish to her satisfaction, is still fighting Conradian pessimism, and, in doing so, is in dialogue with the second novel she was never satisfied with. In the gap between 1919 and 1941, Woolf’s narrative form and the techniques with which she rendered voices had altered hugely, creating the unvoiced speech of *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*. Yet no meaning is lost to this gap between dialogue and internal monologue. Rather, Woolf’s conviction that mutual comprehension is possible calls loud and clear from all these pages.

“There’s only one place to discuss things satisfactorily that I know of,” says Ralph Denham to Katharine Hilbery, and “that’s Kew” (ND 323). In the 1919 short story “Kew Gardens” [KW], Woolf seems to find the very same. The protagonists struggle to communicate, asking inwardly “breaking the silence? But there was no silence” (KW 39). Woolf herself uses the story as a sounding board for narrative techniques she developed in *Jacob’s Room* and later novels. In “Kew Gardens,” we begin to see ambiguity over the distinction between thought and speech, and between the subjectivities of characters walking through the same space; here Woolf discusses with herself the possibility of “wordless voices” (KW 39). Such techniques lead criticism to position Woolf’s style as “an oeuvre which does not much insist on the spoken voice” (Beer 58), but this could not in fact be further from the truth. The later novels valorize the unspoken voice in internal monologue and synesthetic representation, but the earlier novels crucially establish the importance of that inner voice, and the difficulty of expressing it which requires such alternative renderings. If “man or woman is not defined by having to speak to reveal his or her humanity” (Laurence 41), then why should Woolf’s characters be so very desperate to do just that? And why should the final words of Woolf’s final novel be “They spoke” (BTA 152)? It is time to break the silence on Woolf and speech. It is time for criticism to improve its acoustic from which Woolf’s words can resonate. Let it be us to whom the solitary traveler makes reply.

#### Works Cited

- Beer, Gillian. *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1996.
- Briggs, Julia. *Reading Virginia Woolf*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2008.
- Eliot, T. S. *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*. London: Macmillan, 1971.
- Laurence, Patricia. *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

- Raitt, Suzanne. "Virginia Woolf's Early Novels: Finding a Voice." *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Susan Sellers. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. 29-49
- Richter, Harvena. *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970.
- Sutton, Emma. "Silence and Cries: The Exotic Soundscape of the Voyage Out." *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Jessica Berman. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. 41-54.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Haunted House*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1962.
- . *A Room of One's Own*. London: Macmillan, 2017.
- . *Between the Acts*. London: Penguin, 1953.
- . *Jacob's Room*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1992.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2009.
- . *Night and Day*. London: Grafton, 1979.
- . *The Voyage Out*. London: Grafton, 1978.
- . *The Waves*. London: Grafton, 1977.



**The 2022 Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize  
(Runner Up)  
Saskia May**

**University College London**

The essay is the author's adaptation of her 2022 Virginia Woolf Module Essay, completed during her undergraduate studies at the University of Sussex

Saskia May was advised by Dr Helen Tyson, University of Sussex, UK

The author is now pursuing a master's degree at University College London, UK, studying "Issues in Modern Culture"—English Literature

**Abandoned, Domestic Objects "continuing without us" in Ecological Landscapes in Virginia Woolf's "Solid Objects"**

"Objects often occurred there—thrown away, of no use to anybody, shapeless, discarded," Virginia Woolf writes in her 1920-short story "Solid Objects" (SO 64). The protagonist of the story, John, once had dreams of becoming a successful politician, but burrowing into the sand one day and unearthing a lump of "worm" glass which leaves him with a sense of "nothing but wonder," he begins to obsessively collect abandoned, domestic objects (SO 62). Before John discovers and claims his objects, Woolf depicts their endurance in landscapes unattended to by humans. Turning away from the lens of the Anthropocene, Woolf's focus is on objects which are not situated in populated and maintained human settings, but in ecological landscapes uninhabited by civilization—overlooked and forgotten. While "Solid Objects" is a short story consisting of a few pages, Woolf's concentration on the longevity of human objects aside from and beyond their anthropocentric value and utility, and their durability within natural sites, makes for arresting and vital reading. In light of the current climate crisis, objects will not only, as Woolf writes in *To The Lighthouse* outlast their human owners, but the production of such objects pollute and defile the wildernesses they endure in (TTL 26).

**Objects Which Remain**

In search of his objects, John "haunts [...] pieces of waste land between railway lines, sites of demolished houses" (SO 65). The objects are located in landscapes of decay—"spaces and alleyways"—liminal locations marked by an absence of humanity as opposed to a presence (66). In these sites, "objects often occurred there—thrown away, of no use to anybody, shapeless, discarded" (64). Woolf's use of language depicts the life span of these objects, for once their utility has been spent,

"no use to anybody," they become "shapeless" and are subsequently "discarded." "Thrown" and "discarded" encode a sequence, for the physical action of "thrown" interpolates some degree of passionate feeling, whereas "discarded" is indifferent, careless. Extricating objects from human attention and **practicality**, Woolf depicts their owners "reckless impulse," as they relinquish their possessions without any thought or "purpose" (65). Objects then, may not always be considered in light of their anthropocentric context, for they do not perish once discarded but endure in disregarded landscapes.

While John haunts the once populated waste lands in his search for new objects, Woolf's predominant focus is on the three striking objects which he finds in natural environments. John's first discovery is a lump of glass which he unearths by "burrowing his fingers down, down into the sand" (62). He later finds a "piece of china [...] half-hidden in one of those little borders of grass which edge the bases of vast legal buildings" (64). Finally, a "remarkable piece of iron" is uncovered "under a furse bush" (64). Objects are submerged in landscapes not marked by human interference, "down" into the sand, "half hidden" in the grass, and "under" the bright yellow furse flowers. Woolf challenges the perception of the objects value as determined by its utility in maintained, human environments, for had John have not unearthed the objects, they would still endure in ecological sites (57). Objects may be considered then, in a new context, for they are no longer neatly displayed in and admired within the domestic site of the home but are now embedded amidst the wilderness.

Before John discovers the objects, Before John discovers the articles, Woolf depicts the agent which shapes the objects to be not a human actor, but the powerful forces of the natural world, which alter their physical form so that their previous anthropocentric history, use, and economic value is obscured. The lump of glass that John unearths has been crafted by humans for consumption and profit, and may have once been a "bottle, tumbler or window-pane" (62). Now "shapeless" (64) and weather worn due to the "smoothing of the sea," which has "completely worn off any edge or shape," it is "impossible to say," what the previous use of the object was (62). Attempting to uncover the purpose of the glass, John is left "puzzled" (62), his efforts marked as a futile endeavor for he cannot find a human meaning lingering beneath the surface of the glass, it is simply "nothing but glass" (62). The tide has transmuted the material appearance of the object, invoking its transition as a repository of economic and domestic value as a commodity, to one devoid of human significance. Eroded by the elements, the object is further isolated from its anthropocentric past, for while humans may craft the object with sentiment, the forces of the natural world have what Woolf calls an "insensibility" (TTL 104). As Woolf notes in her essay "Being Ill," nature is "divinely beautiful [and] also divinely heartless" (104).

Woolf's notion of 'shape' in both "Solid Objects" (62) and to *The Lighthouse* [TTL] (95), points to an anthropocentric conception of the object, for once marred by the natural world, with its "life of service [...] done" (TTL 20), it becomes "shapeless" (SO 56). As Gillian Beer notes, the notion of "objects, made to serve" and "constructed for human use" means that in its desertion, the object is "without function" (43). Woolf displaces the human subject through the erosion of the object, for while its "shape" (TTL 95) signifying its domestic utility is disfigured, the object does not "perish" nor "fade." The object "remains" (TTL 96), for it may be "shapeless" (SO 56), but it is still substantial. The anthropocentric context of the object is displaced from the lofty position it occupies in our hierarchy of value, for once abandoned by humans, the object can no longer be identified wholly in terms of their human use. The marks made on the object by humanity are shown not to be indelible, but fleeting, for the elements introduce a continual flux beyond our control, proving to be far more powerful and corrosive. Objects are shaped by the waves, eroded by the rain, and obscured by mold, regardless of human presence. The discarded object transfigured

by the elements of the natural world and inimical maritime wind and turbulent tides that challenge the authority of the human subject for the efforts of strenuous labour and craftsmanship are eroded, and the traces of human presence weakened. Woolf invites us to consider, in the words of Graham Fraser, how the “the world goes on making and unmaking itself in its own terms” (127), regardless of our presence. As Woolf notes in her short story “The Mark on The Wall,” ecological landscapes “for years and years [...] grow, without paying any attention to us” (TMW 9).

By removing a human witness in her presentation of the ‘waste land’ in “Solid Objects” (63), Woolf offers us a distinctly “eyeless” site (TTL 100). As Woolf writes in her diary, in spite of human absence, objects are still “the thing in itself enough: satisfactory; achieved” (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* 3 62). Woolf invites us to consider the endurance of an object which lacks human ownership, as Beer notes, “the survival of the object without a perceiver” (32). Objects are not props for a narrative that concerns itself primarily with human subjects, but the objects themselves and the ecological landscapes in which they are located in are the focal point. By describing the world as it is in our absence, Woolf leaves readers without a clear narrator. We are not aware from whose perspective we are offered the haunting description in “Solid Objects” of the “pieces of wasteland between railway lines, sites of demolished houses” (SO 62). Devoid of a human presence, the deserted terrains that Woolf depicts can be read in line with Sigmund Freud’s 1919 essay “The Uncanny.” The landscapes where John finds his objects might be considered as uncanny because they are, as Freud notes, “an area in which a person was unsure of his way around” (125). In depicting environments without a human presence, Woolf destabilizes anthropocentric narratives. In the wilderness of the beach, the desolate scrubland, ruined dwellings, and the overgrown grass where John discovers his objects, we cannot locate distinct human characters—we do not know where we are.

There are difficulties in presenting landscapes devoid of humanity, as Woolf depicts in *The Waves*, Bernard is mystified as to how he should use language to “describe the world seen without a self” (206). Bernard finds that “there are no words” (206) to portray a reality devoid of a human consciousness and encounters a distinct challenge. He must utilize language in order to comprehend and represent his absence, and yet, the lack of humanity would render the system of language as a form of productive communication, meaningless. John similarly finds it “impossible” to discern the object cast aside from human use (62). Where the human centric category of language is a tool utilized by human communities, linguistic articulation fails as a mode by which to depict an experience devoid of humanity. When there are no humans to bear witness to, or observe the world, it can no longer be identified through human knowledge practices.

Woolf faces the problem in “Solid Objects,” of how we might describe abandoned objects when they exist independently of human perception. Christa Grewe-Volpp’s argument is useful here, as she writes about the difficulties of presenting what Woolf calls an “eyeless” landscape, arguing that as “humans we cannot give up a sense of self and write and reflect about our perceptions” (129). Woolf does not eliminate or relinquish the human subject altogether in “Solid Objects” to create what Grewe-Volpp calls a “nonanthropocentric self” (129). Woolf cannot eliminate the perceptual subject, for some form of consciousness describes the liminal waste land where John uncovers his treasures. In presenting the decay of the abandoned object in sites inhabited by flora and fauna, Woolf is searching for, according to Derek Ryan, “something outside the human but to which she knows she can never truly have access” (295).

### **Death and Future**

That Woolf is concerned with imagining landscapes before human life and civilization, is evident, for she returns to the prehistoric in both her first and last novels. In *The Voyage Out*, Rachel Vinrace imagines “mammoth who pastured in the fields of Richmond High Street” (VO

206). Twenty-six years later, in Woolf’s *Between The Acts*, published posthumously, the elderly Lucy Swithin thinks back to landscapes before humanity: “There were mammoths in Piccadilly” (BTA 20). Through the motif of mammoths in both her novels, Woolf sheds light on the loss of a former species, inviting her readers to consider the uncertain and dubious future of humanity, when viewed in terms of a vast stretch of time. In the closing of *Between the Acts*, Lucy, sitting down to admire the scenery, remarks, “That’s what makes a view so sad [...] and so beautiful. It’ll be there,” she nodded at the strip of gauze laid upon the distant fields, “when we’re not” (34). This is not only a moment of beautiful poeticism, but it is here that Woolf is most concentrated in depicting the endurance of the natural world in spite of and because of, human absence. Human existence, which could be considered as “gauze” like (BTA 34), delicate, and fragile, is not positioned by Woolf at the center of her narrative or thinking.

The durability of the robust object in comparison to the transient nature of human existence means that Woolf registers the uncertain future of humanity during the historical conditions in which she was writing. *To the Lighthouse* was published during the interwar years, when, as Louise Westling notes, “the carnage of World War I [had] torn away the illusions of [human] control” (863) while *Between the Acts* was written when “the Battle of Britain was raging over [Woolf’s] head” (871). In the wake of the First World War and its immense bloodshed, writers in the early twentieth century began to consider a planet devoid of human presence. “Solid Objects,” written in 1918, evokes a world without humans, and elsewhere Woolf focuses on objects outlasting their human owner’s lives, inviting us to consider “a kitchen table [...] when you’re not there” (TTL 17). It is then, through the consideration of our absence at the table, of imagining our objects that remain despite our dearth, that we acknowledge our death. The peculiar feeling evoked from the image of the kitchen table devoid of ownership and use derives from our certain knowledge that the world surely *will* continue without us, our existence not a central nor fundamental part of the universe. For Freud, “the proposition ‘All men are mortal’ is paraded in text-books of logic as an example of a generalization, but no human being really grasps it” (148). Nicholas Royle’s observation is particularly pertinent here, that “Death” is an example of the uncanny, “something at once familiar [...] and absolutely unfamiliar, unthinkable, unimaginable” (35). We are haunted by our future absence then, for death, while recognized as an inevitable, is still uncanny to comprehend, despite, as Freud notes, it having “long been familiar” (124).

Considering the endurance of objects long after the death of their human possessors, Woolf engages with the “sense of the world continuing without us” (*The Waves* 86). Woolf’s fascination with human absence and the survival of the object within ecological landscapes is pertinent to the current climate crisis. As Westling notes, Woolf could not “have known how apt [her] consideration” of the world continuing without us, “would be, for the threat of ecological collapse [...] now faces not only humans but all the rest of life on earth” (872). “Solid Objects” functions as an encouragement towards an environmental ethics where we might mediate on our values and practices. Even if humans face challenges in imagining the world continuing without us, our activity still greatly impacts ecosystems. Many of the material objects of the contemporary moment “outlast” (TTL 26) production and ownership for they are formed of plastic, which does not decompose. While our human-made objects will outlast us, the prospect of objects decaying amidst, as Woolf depicts, the sprawling growth of the natural world, is an unlikely possibility if ecosystems continue to be damaged by the human production of objects and subsequent pollution. Jane Bennett notes that, “humans are always in composition with nonhumanity, never outside of a sticky we connections or an ecology” (365). At the time of Woolf’s writing and publication of “Solid Objects,” plastic was not yet produced, but if “Solid Objects” were to be modernized to reflect a twenty-first century context, John would surely be collecting abandoned, plastic



possessions, for plastic is now one of the most commonly produced and used materials.

While the human history and use of objects may be altered by natural forces, the deleterious production of plastic objects harms and destroys the inhabitants of complex ecosystems, for they cannot break down the inorganic material. The materiality of John's finds in "Solid Objects" are composed of glass and china, which will shatter and decay over time, but full degradation of plastic is impossible. As Tallash Kantai notes, plastic "lasts for hundreds of years, slowly disintegrating into smaller and smaller pieces, but never fully degrading" (2). In "Solid Objects," the lump of glass and fragments of china are not depicted as causing harm to natural landscapes, whereas today discarded plastic wreaks havoc on eco systems, with "sea turtles [...] tangled in fishing nets or trapped in plastic pack rings" and "terrestrial creatures [...] getting trapped in discarded plastic bags and suffocating to death" (3).

Woolf's depiction of abandoned objects decaying in natural landscapes which flourish despite human absence, draws our attention to life forms which are dynamic and vital. In Woolf's description of the thriving communities of plant and insect life, we are made aware of what Bennett calls, "the agential powers of natural things" (349). When we examine Woolf's concern with objects and within the natural world in a contemporary context, we come to realize how ecosystems may be greatly affected and damaged, not only by our presence, but our absence, too. Many of our modern objects are made of plastic, which will "remain" (TTL 96) and "outlast" (TTL 26) us, threatening the continuation of different species: While the objects of Woolf's waste lands are not filled with plastic cartons and excess packaging, our modern "waste land where the household refuse is thrown away" (SO 63) can be read as Kantai observes, as a forewarning of "plastic pollution overflowing our landfills" (2). It is productive then, more so than ever, to consider Woolf's depiction of human absence in light of the endurance of both objects and ecological landscapes, for they will be here "when we're not" (BTA 34). Objects must be conceived of from a biocentric as opposed to an anthropocentric perspective, for their permanence affects all life on earth.

**Saskia May**  
**University College London**

#### **Works Cited**

- Beer, Gillian. *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*. Edinburgh UP, 1996.
- Bennett, Jane. "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter." *Political Theory* 32.3 (2004): 347-72.
- Fraser, Graham. "The Fall of the House of Ramsay: Virginia Woolf's Ahuman Aesthetics of Ruin." *Criticism* 62.1 (2020): 117-42.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. Trans. David McLintock. London: Penguin, 2003.
- Grewe-Volpp, Christa. "How to Speak the Unspeakable: The Aesthetics of the Voice of Nature." *Anglia* 124.1 (2006): 122-43.
- Kantai, Tallash. "Confronting the Plastic Pollution Pandemic." *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. 2020. Web. 8 Dec 2022. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep29273>.
- Royle, Nicholas, "The Uncanny." *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. Ed. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016. 35-43.
- Ryan, Derek. "Following Snakes and Moths: Modernist Ethics and Posthumanism." *Twentieth Century Literature* 61.3 (2015): 287-304.
- Westling, Louise. "Virginia Woolf and the Flesh of the World." *New Literary History* 30.4 (1999): 855-75.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Being III." *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.
- . *Between The Acts*. 1941. London: Penguin Books, 1992.

- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 3: 1925-1930*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell, assisted by Andrew McNeillie. London: The Hogarth Press, 1980.
- . "Solid Objects." *Selected Short Stories*. Ed. Sandra Kemp. London: Penguin, 1993.
- . *To The Lighthouse*. 1927. Wordsworth Classics, 1994.
- . *The Voyage Out*. 1915. The Floating Press, 2000. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/UCL/detail.action?docID=583213>. Web.
- . *The Waves*. 1931. Basingstoke: Alpha Books, 2015.



#### **The 2022 Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize (Runner Up)**

**Jasmine Woodcock**

**University of Huddersfield**

The essay is the author's adaptation of her 2021 English Literature Bachelor's dissertation, supervised by Dr David Rudrum.

The author is now studying for a Master's in English Literature at the University of Huddersfield.

#### **Predicting the Present: Orlando Is Trans\***

Just as Terence Hawkes argues that Shakespeare's "texts can never be read after 1999 in quite the same way that they could be read before that date, that their 'meaning,' now thoroughly suffused with different levels and intensities of irony, seems to change before our eyes, offers a fine example of how the present helps to mould the past" (Hawkes 4), Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* [O] is now "thoroughly suffused" with our modern understandings of gender. Halberstam offers a marked date in terms of general understandings of gender: "In 2015, after functioning for at least half a century as the name for bodily disgrace and gender absurdity, "transgender" (used as an umbrella term for gender-variant bodies) became a household word" (Halberstam 46).

Thus, *Orlando* can never be read after 2015 in quite the same way as it could be read before that date. The wider general knowledge of trans experiences is subsequently "suffused with" our understanding of Orlando's experience, resulting in a new era of appreciation for the novel. The popular culture magazine *Vulture* released "Why Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* Feels Essential Right Now" in 2018 (Scutts) and, in 2021, the high-fashion brand Fendi "[drew] gender fluid cues from *Orlando*" (Silbert) both highlighting the range of audiences who are now coming to appreciate *Orlando* due to its depiction of gender.

Presentist theory, a concept that focuses on how the specific moment and superimposes contemporary perceptions onto the past, has been critiqued for "blandly imposing a tritely modern perspective on whatever texts confront it" (Hawkes 3); however, *Orlando* naturally resonates with our modern ideas. If "One of the more interesting aspects of presentism is that it seems to suggest that, when reading about a past era, readers must forget the research about that past era" (Power 456), then we may see that without knowledge of the context of production, *Orlando* could be understood to be a modern text, reaching across time and around contexts to engage with contemporary ideas.

In fact, literary criticism consistently finds insight in *Orlando*, recording the way the text engages with ever-changing ideas. Over the decades, the text has been the subject of studies on feminism, gender performativity, and sexuality, to name a few. Woolf herself acknowledges that "Change was incessant, and change perhaps would never cease" (O 104); criticism has changed, but, of late, it rarely ceases to find *Orlando*. Just as Ellen Gajowski argues that "A variety of nuanced meanings in Shakespeare's

texts is constructed at different moments in the four centuries that separate Shakespeare and us” (675), so too these various meanings in *Orlando* acknowledge the various ‘presents’ in which those concepts are read into the novel. The reading of *Orlando*’s relation to gender performativity has no less value than the reading of Orlando as trans. “It is, rather, a matter of ethical responsibility, of owning up to the meanings that we construct” (Gajowski 686) into any text, documenting these “readings and re-readings” (Saxey xxiv), with the critical history of the novel acting as a kind of time-capsule for our evolving perceptions of gender.

In the novel, Orlando’s Biographer wonders “What the future might bring,” and then reflects that, “Heaven only knew” (O 104.) If the intrigue that it has presented thus far is precedent, *Orlando* will likely continue to resonate with our changing present. The experience of non-binary or fluid gender identity has only recently made its way into the mainstream consciousness, as evidenced by Jack Halberstam’s observation that “the increasingly common use of the term ‘they’ for individuals who refuse to place themselves within a gender boundary” (2). This recent use of pronouns applies particularly well to Orlando, who shifts from one sex to another. It is standard to refer to the character as ‘he/him’ pre-“trance” (O 80)—or, *transition*—and ‘she/her’ for the second half of the novel (“we must, for convenience’s sake, say ‘her’ for ‘his,’ and ‘she’ for ‘he’” [O 83]), yet we now have the language to fulfill Woolf’s wish to “neither to transcend nor neutralise gender but to enable additional gender categories along with unimpeded, lifelong manoeuvrability among them” (Czarnecki 220) through the use of the ‘they’ pronoun. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Emma Corrin, the actor chosen to play Orlando in the 2022 stage adaptation in London identifies as non-binary and uses ‘they/them’ pronouns—and, as Claire Allfree asks, “Who [would be] better to play the gender-bending Orlando on stage?”

Woolf’s aims in creating the character of Orlando can be summarized much in the way Jack Halberstam does in writing *Trans\** (2017): “Let’s look at forms of gender, idioms of gender, gender practices and ask all the while how gender shifts and changes through all bodies and how it might be imagined in the future” (xiii.). Through the gender change in *Orlando*, Woolf “unharnesses theories of gender identity from any specific feminist agenda” (Watkins 42) to advocate for that “additional gender categories along with unimpeded, lifelong manoeuvrability among them” (Czarnecki 220) and describes Orlando as a “mixture [...] of man and woman, one being upper-most and then the other” (O 111).

Certainly, the trans\* label aligns with Czarnecki’s claim of the “unimpeded, lifelong manoeuvrability” for which Woolf advocates in *Orlando*; Orlando’s Biographer states, “Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place” (O 139), a statement that highlights Woolf’s advocacy for gender fluidity. Similarly, Halberstam states that,

trans\* can be a name for expansive forms of difference, haptic relations to knowing, uncertain modes of being, and the disaggregation of identity politics predicated upon the separating out of many kinds of experience that actually blend together, intersect, and mix. (5)

Halberstam adds that the trans\* label “holds open the meaning of the term ‘trans’ and refuses to deliver certainty through the act of naming” (3). The nonchalant, rather vague, presentation of Orlando’s gender-change—“It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age of thirty” (O 84)—echoes the refusal “to deliver.” Halberstam advocates “not to impose ever more precise calibrations of bodily identity but rather to think in new and different ways about what it means to claim a body” (50), a perspective that Woolf establishes by writing Orlando’s experience of embracing their gender fluidity thus validating Halberstam’s trans\* label.

The fantasy of the novel “obliterates the significance of ordinary time and actual events, where the boundaries of sexual identities are blurred beyond conventional sorting out” (Knopp 33), allowing Woolf to create a trans\* character. Halberstam explains that: “For [‘gender-bending’] performers like Prince and Bowie, the opposing tendencies that our culture has placed in separate boxes were easily conjoined on behalf of, often, otherworldly productions of identity” (xii). Woolf, too, conjoins “the opposing tendencies that our culture has placed in separate boxes,” the concept of binary gender, into one “otherworldly” character, who, like these performers, “exceeds simple divisions between gay and straight or trans and cis” (Halberstam xii). Indeed, *Orlando* fulfils Halberstam’s concept of “a ‘transgender gaze’ within which time, space, desire, and embodied identification all splinter, *representing a collapse of the matrices of gender and sexuality*” (94; emphasis mine).

Pamela Caughie argues that “transnarratives cross genres—for example, medical, psychological, judicial, journalistic, anthropological, philosophical, autobiographical, fictional—as in the case of *Orlando* with its generic mix of biography and fantasy, philosophy and literary history, poetry and prose” (503). The modernist “new narratives of embodiment that enable new configurations of gender and sexual identity” (Caughie 520) used in *Orlando* reflect that “when narratives of sex, gender, and embodiment loosen up and become less fixed in relation to truth, authenticity, originality, and identity, then we have the space and the time to image bodies otherwise” (Halberstam xii).

Woolf’s “formalist project” (Cohler 193) in fact *enables* her exploration of and advocacy for gender fluidity, as well as “representing a collapse” (Halberstam 94) of the gender binary as Woolf abolishes Orlando’s binary gender. The case to embrace gender fluidity is repeatedly enforced in *Orlando*:

[Orlando] found it convenient at this time to change frequently from one set of clothes to another. [...] her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive; nor can there be any doubt that she reaped a twofold harvest by this device; the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied. From the probity of breeches she turned to the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both equally. (O 128)

Upon their gender change, Orlando “move[s] seamlessly from ‘he’ to ‘their’ to ‘she’, wholly at ease with gender variance” (Czarnecki 210), fluidly embracing the spectrum of gender through the use of these various pronouns. Halberstam highlights that “one of the biggest innovations of the past two decades in relation to gendered expression indeed has been the production, circulation, and usage of just such a vernacular language for non-normative gender and sexual expression” (10). Esther Sánchez-Pardo González examines “the use of plurals” (78) and suggests that Woolf seemed to anticipate the use of ‘they’ as a pronoun, providing the language for this non-binary gender identification to Orlando in 1928.

We may see that Orlando’s fluid display of gender is an active choice made by the character, a kind of ‘coming out.’ Upon their gender change, “[Orlando herself showed no surprise at it [with][...] no [...] signs of perturbation. All her actions were deliberate in the extreme, and *might indeed have been thought to show tokens of premeditation*” (O 84; emphasis mine). Additionally, when Orlando returns to Knole, her home, as a woman, one of the servants, “Mrs Grimsditch,” is not surprised by the sex change. “[B]ecoming confidential, [she indicated that she] had always had her suspicions (here she nodded her head very mysteriously), which it was no surprise to her (here she nodded her head very knowingly)” (O 101); Orlando’s trans\* gender expression seems to come as no surprise to those who knew her ‘pre-trance.’ Sánchez-Pardo González agrees that, “with the use of plurals [‘they’], the Biographer is indeed pointing to an androgynous being who is now revealing the feminine side that Orlando the man had been concealing in his

behaviour” (78) and that the male Orlando had perhaps been waiting to express their trans\* identity.

Czarnecki argues that by recognizing Orlando’s “gender-variant inclinations [...] [we] shift our consideration of this character from one upon whom biological and social forces act to an agent of his and her own performance of gender” (206). Woolf shows the reader how “the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied” (O 128) when Orlando embraces the fluidity of their trans\* identity and provides a model to show that gender fluid identities should be embraced, thereby encouraging one to be “an agent of his and her own performance of gender” (Czarnecki 206). When, as Czarnecki observes, “Orlando herself refuses to choose between the two [binary genders]” (214), “they” “reaped a twofold harvest by this device” (O 128). Perhaps Woolf applied Vita Sackville-West’s assertion that “cases of dual personality do exist, in which the feminine and the masculine elements alternately preponderate” (Nicolson 102) when she crafted a model of fluid sexuality and fluid gender identity. Indeed, “[Orlando] belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman” (O 95), a more fluid presentation of gender than a binary transsexual change.

Orlando presents a conceptualization of gender which we can only recently fully appreciate. Quoting Woolf, Knopp points out—from a late 1980s perspective—that “the future really does ‘somehow blossom out of the past’” (33) through Woolf’s presentation of gender fluidity. The aforementioned “future” has seen labels such as trans\* brought to the forefront of our conceptions of gender identity.

In the novel itself, Woolf is concerned with the future, but also with the present; the novel ends on its date of publication; “it was ten o’clock in the morning. It was the eleventh of October. It was 1928. It was the present moment” (O 173). *Orlando* ends with and resonates with the present, whenever that present might be.

The majority of presentist criticism thus far has had its focus on Shakespearean and Victorian texts, yet *Orlando* serves as the epitome of a presentist text in terms of its (and our) conception of gender. *Orlando* consistently engages with evolving criticism—currently, with our understandings of gender fluidity.

But perhaps we have been consistently chasing *Orlando*, only catching up with Woolf’s philosophies almost a century later. Woolf’s trans\* tale was published in 1928, yet, as noted earlier, our perception of gender was not to meet her conception on a mainstream Western societal scale until around 2015. We failed to recognize Woolf’s revolutionary, time-defying imagining of gender, with Orlando’s trans\* experience, as Caughie points out, “already there in the past, but not yet there in language. Woolf foresaw this experience of ours when she wrote in the final pages of the manuscript, ‘words have yet to be coined for the selves have never been numbered’ (Woolf, 2015; p. 180)” (520). From such a perspective, it seems that Woolf remains perpetually ahead of present ideas.

*Jasmine Woodcock*  
*University of Huddersfield*

#### Works Cited

- Allfree, Claire. “Emma Corrin: ‘I don’t mind if you get my pronouns wrong. Just try.’” *The Telegraph* 26 November 2022. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/crown-star-emma-corrin-dont-mind-get-pronouns-wrong-just-try/>.
- Caughie, Pamela. “The Temporality of Modernist Life Writing in the Era of Transsexualism: Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Einar Wegener’s *Man Into Woman*.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 59.3 (2013): 501-25.
- Cohler, Deborah. *Citizen, Invert, Queer: Lesbianism and War in Early Twentieth-Century Britain*. U of Minnesota P, 2010.
- Czarnecki, Kristin. “Two-Spirits and Gender Variance in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Louise Erdrich’s *The Last Report on the*

*Miracles at Little No Horse*.” Ed. Jeanne Dubino, Gill Lowe, Vara Neverow, Kathryn Simpson. *Virginia Woolf: Twenty-First-Century Approaches*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014. 205-22.

- Gajowski, Evelyn. “Beyond Historicism: Presentism, Subjectivity, Politics.” *Literature Compass* 7.8 (2010): 674-91.
- Sánchez-Pardo González, Esther. “‘What Phantasmagoria the Mind Is’: Reading Virginia Woolf’s Parody of Gender.” *Atlantis* 26.2 (2004): 75-86.
- Halberstam, Jack. *Trans\*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2017.
- Hawkes, Terence. Introduction. *Shakespeare in the Present*. London: Routledge, 2002. 1-5.
- Knopp, Sherron E. “‘If I Saw You Would You Kiss Me?’: Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*.” *PMLA* 103.1 (1988): 24-34.
- Nicolson, Nigel. *Portrait of a Marriage*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992.
- Power, Chandra L. “Challenging the Pluralism of Our Past: Presentism and the Selective Tradition in Historical Fiction Written for Young People.” *Research in the Teaching of English* 37.4 (2003): 425-66.
- Saxe, Esther. Introduction. *The Well of Loneliness*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2014. v-xxv.
- Scutts, Joanne. “Orlando Is the Virginia Woolf Novel We Need Right Now.” *Vulture* 12 October 2018. Web. 20 October 2020. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/why-virginia-woolfs-orlando-feels-essential-right-now.html>.
- Silbert, Jake. “Kim Jones’ Debut Fendi Couture Collection Draws Genderfluid Cues from Virginia Woolf’s ‘Orlando.’” *HypeBeast* 27 January 2021. Web. 1 June 2022. <https://hypebeast.com/2021/1/fendi-couture-spring-summer-2021-runway-collection-kim-jones>.
- Watkins, Susan. “Sex Change and Media Change: From Woolf’s to Potter’s *Orlando*.” *Mosaic* 31.3 (1998): 41-59.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando: A Biography*, Ed. Michael Whitworth. Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2015.
- . *Selected Diaries*. Abridged and edited by Anne Olivier Bell. London: Vintage, 2008.



Truly Miscellaneous

#### OUTSIDE

##### 1

*Three Guineas* [TG] is all about war and differences of attitudes between women and men. Three guineas for three letters. One from a man asking, “how in your opinion are we to prevent war?” (TG 117), the second one from a woman asking for help to rebuild a college for women, and the third one from a woman asking to help women to get into professions. In the end, each of them will receive one guinea but no subscription to any society will be made as the Society of Outsiders imagined by Virginia Woolf—the Outsiders being exclusively women—would be the only one to which women could ever belong. “The world of public life” as evoked at the beginning of the book is certainly seducing:

Within quite a small space are crowded together St Paul’s, the Bank of England, the Mansion House, the massive if funeral battlements of the Law Courts; and on the other side, Westminster Abbey and



the Houses of Parliament. There, we say to ourselves, pausing, in this moment of transition on the bridge, our fathers and brothers have spent their lives. (TG 133).

Pausing on the bridge, in this moment of transition.... At the very beginning of *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf had also imagined a setting, a fictive narrative frame for her essay. "When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the bank of a river and began to wonder what the words meant" (AROO 3.) The river happens to be in the famous fictive university of Oxbridge. The narrator who may be Virginia Woolf is so excited about her thoughts—helped by the flowing water (an image of the flow of consciousness?)—that she walks "across a grass plot" (AROO 5). A "man's figure" appears and gesticulates. "His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman" (AROO 5). The path is regained; no harm is done. But a connection is suggested between getting off the path and being a woman. The Beadle is not a man but a "man's figure," underlining thus his sudden and symbolic apparition. A man standing before a woman and forbidding her to go on her own way. A woman walking on the grass, off the path. Instinctively outside. Just as the woman in *Three Guineas*, pausing on the bridge to look at the procession made of institutional professional men—perhaps first longing to be part of it but then, as an afterthought, "would prefer not to" (as Herman Melville's *Bartleby* would say) knowing for sure where she belongs—the Society of Outsiders.

2

Why did I decide to translate Virginia Woolf into French again? I had indeed already translated *The Waves*, had even given three different versions of it over the years, and my latest novel, *Nevermore*, is about translating the central chapter in *To the Lighthouse*, "Time Passes." A few years ago, I had been asked to give a lecture about *Three Guineas* (which, by the way, partly relies on some of Virginia Woolf's preceding lectures, including "Memories of a Working Women's Guild" and "Professions for Women") in a kind of writer's symposium about Virginia Woolf. I had both vague and vivid memories of it, I remembered—from my first reading in the beginning of the eighties—the fictive setting—three letters, three guineas—the strong irony, the radicalism. Rereading it about forty years later, I found much more of course. I knew that in the first French edition (in the seventies) no photographs were included. A more recent translation—published about three years ago—didn't include the photos either. And yet Virginia Woolf had put five photographs in her book. Five photographs carefully chosen of institutional men in uniforms all looking ridiculous. Why were those photographs left aside as they are part of the argumentation? Why not a new publication with the photos? So I would say it was an almost outside reason—or an Outsider's reason—which spurred me to embark once more into the adventure of translating Virginia Woolf.

3

"It is impossible to judge any book from a translation" writes Woolf in the 39<sup>th</sup> note of the second chapter of *Three Guineas*. A little further on, she observes that the translator's name—quoting translated passages from the Sophocles "Antigone"—is of no importance. And the way she ironically relates how bored she was during Marguerite Yourcenar's visit to her, as the young author came with a few questions about translating her *The Waves* into French, is another proof of how little she thought about translation and translators. In *Three Guineas* translation is of course not the main point—it is not a point at all. But learning foreign languages is an important matter and being forbidden or hindered to get access to an extensive and full education also means being only able to be "reading and writing their own tongue" (see TG 214). This issue being several times mentioned and seen as an impoverishment—it is no coincidence that in Nazi Germany the teaching of languages was denied to girls and progressively restricted to boys. Yet Virginia Woolf did translate Chekhov; yet she did have a friendly correspondence with Charles Mauron, one of her French translators. And translating

offers—as regarding literature, as regarding *Three Guineas*—an interesting viewpoint. As a translator I am in fact pausing on the bridge, looking at the long procession of words. Words...the only remaining broadcast of Virginia Woolf's voice is a text she wrote about words, "On Craftmanship", recorded on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1937, at a time when she was right in the middle of the writing process of *Three Guineas*. As translators, we are staying on the bridge, we have both a "bird's eye view of the outside of things," that is to say of the book as a whole that the writer, while writing, cannot get, and an inside view that no other reader could ever have because translating is a kind of X-ray reading, where every word is scanned and weighed on the uncertain scale of transition—transition between one language and another language.

4

*Three Guineas* could be said to rely upon the contrast between an inside world and an outside world, between the private sphere and the public sphere. Women were locked up in their private houses and could hardly go out on their own before the year 1919, when they got access to the professions—that is a mere twenty years before the time when Woolf is writing *Three Guineas*. Men on the contrary could circulate between the private and the public sphere but their main concern was about public affairs. So men were living mainly outside and women mainly inside. But as *Three Guineas* has to do with war, professions, and politics—with the outside world—situations are reversed. Accustomed to professions, having the power and having the uniforms, men are insiders, they are the standards to which everything can be measured and considered while women are the outsiders, the new ones who should, Woolf says, neither hope nor wish to integrate the procession on the bridge.

With her Society of Outsiders, Virginia Woolf opens up an utopian space which would allow women to stay in the marginal position they were always holding but which would also allow their original point of view to have some influence on the public sphere in its insiders dimension, that is to say speaking in different words, expressing different thoughts, helping thus the present society to get off the path leading straight to war. Something similar to what she says about language in the only recording of her voice....

In order to use new words properly you would have to invent a whole new language; and that, though no doubt we shall come to it, is not at the moment our business. Our business is to see what we can do with the old English language as it is. How can we combine the old words in new orders so that they survive, so that they create beauty, so that they tell the truth? ("Virginia Woolf")

It is striking that this text "On Craftmanship" goes on with an allusion to a possible "Society for Pure English" which would immediately call for a "Society for Impure English" because words are vagabonds and words are highly democratic and words are free. Difficult not to notice that what Woolf says about words is also what she writes about women, fighting for democracy—the Franchise—being Outsiders—that is to say vagabond and free.

5

Outsiders—the French word would be *marginales*, on the margins, as it had been translated in the first French edition. But then the echoes and paradoxes between outsiders/outside, insiders/inside get lost. So why not keep "Outsiders" in French? The word has been acclimated for quite a long time into the French language. The problem is that when Woolf speaks of the "outside" world, it can only be translated with "*dehors*" or "*extérieur*" so that the inner echo, the inner rhyme is also lost. The only possibility is to keep to "Outsiders" and to rely on the fluidity of language, to consider words as real vagabonds travelling not only between an old and a new English language, between all kind of emotions, between literature and the real world, but also between languages, crossing borders without having to show any travel pass. So that while reading "*dehors*" or "*extérieur*," you would keep in mind the word "outside."

No competition, not earning more money than necessary, no abuse, remaining “outside any profession hostile to freedom, such as the making or the improvement of the weapons of war” (TG 138) refusing “to take office or honour from any society” (TG 238). The duties of the Outsiders are numerous and often rather difficult to achieve. But even before Virginia Woolf created the Society of Outsiders by writing *Three Guineas*, she behaved as a member of this Society would, refusing in May 1935 a prestigious decoration, having refused, two years earlier, to be made Doctor of Letters at the University of Manchester. “As I have always been opposed to the acceptance of honours, whether civic or academic, by writers,” she explains, “I feel that I should be acting with great inconsistency if I accepted any such honour myself” (*Letters* [L] 5 171). Refusing as well to be made Doctor of Letters at the University of Liverpool in March 1939....

Answering a letter from Ben Nicolson about her biography of Roger Fry who had written, “My quarrel is not with art but with Bloomsbury” (L 6 419), by the question “What do you mean by Bloomsbury” (419) she observes on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1940 that Bloomsbury doesn’t mean anything, that she is not responsible for everything Roger Fry “did or said” (419), that her education and point of view are “entirely different” (419). “I never went to school or college,” she writes. “My father spent perhaps £100 on my education. When I was a young woman, I tried to share the fruits of that very imperfect education with the working classes by teaching literature at Morley College; by holding a Women’s Cooperative Guild meeting weekly; and, politically, by working for the vote” (419). Stressing here the adequacy, the coherence between what she wrote and what she did, between the literary and the political sphere, between inside thoughts and outside acts. *Three Guineas* is not only but is also a very personal and intimate testimony about what it is to be an outsider.

7

The only profession opened to women before 1919 had been the profession of literature (and marriage, Woolf ironically says). The point occurs several times in *Three Guineas*.

We cannot forbid [women] to buy ink or paper; or rule that metaphors shall only be used by one sex, as the male only in art schools was allowed to study from the nude; or rule that rhyme shall be used by one sex only as the male only in Academies of music was allowed to play in orchestras. (TG 215)

Speaking about metaphors, the “different point of view” claimed by Virginia Woolf in her letter to Ben Nicolson is not only hers for being a woman—among so many men in the Bloomsbury group—it is also hers inside of the literary world—which is also mainly a masculine world.

In several essays, Woolf explains how much she wishes to distance herself from the Victorian or Edwardian novel, how she tries to create another kind of literature. There again trying to find new words in the old language, calling *To the Lighthouse* an elegy, wishing to write a novel-essay which will be divided in the end into a novel called *The Years*, and an essay called *Three Guineas*, seeing the figures in *The Waves* as “dramatis personae.” If “the rhythm is the main thing in writing,” as Bernard puts it in *The Waves*, the point of view is also an essential thing. That she develops in “The Leaning Tower,” an essay she wrote in May 1940—which could be called visionary and one of her last texts—an essay wrote as war had already been declared, insisting upon the importance of education, the influence it has upon a writer’s point of view, and how uncomfortable this point of view and viewpoint is, when standing on a “leaning tower.” In the essay, the leaning tower has to do with social origins. But this metaphor—since women are allowed to use metaphors—could apply to Virginia Woolf’s literary work, not because she didn’t have a clear view of what she wanted to do, of what she did, but because of the reception of her books which, although becoming

more and more positive, had been yet difficult at times, critics not always understanding what it was all about. Her position was not as secured as it seemed to be, and, in her diary, in her letters, she regularly comes back to her fear of being mocked, despised—one of the titles she thought of, while reflecting on a possible feminist essay following *A Room of One’s Own* was “On Being Despised”—to her fear of being attacked. All the more while writing *Three Guineas*. Writing at several places in her diary that her friends will not like it. And noting, once the book had been published, that none of them did tell her anything about it. Of course did she perfectly know—while comparing dictators as Hitler and Mussolini to English men willing to confine women in the private house, pretexting that unemployment could be resolved if women (less than twenty years after professions were opened to them) did return home—certainly did she know, while writing things like “as a woman, I have no country” (TG 234), certainly did she know how much of an outsider she was. The conclusion in *Three Guineas* about a Society of Outsiders is very similar to the last lines of “The Leaning Tower” where, citing her own father, Leslie Stephen, about walking, she writes: “Whenever you see a board up with ‘trespassers will be prosecuted’, trespass at once” (178), she adds: “Let us trespass at once. Literature is no one’s private ground; literature is common ground” (178). This time, no man’s figure will be gesticulating and forbid the way. Both women and writers, all the more women writers, on the grass they must go, off the path...

**Cécile Wajsbrot**  
**Writer and Translator**

**Works Cited**

- Woolf, Virginia. “The Leaning Tower.” *A Woman’s Essays*. London: Penguin Books, London, 1992.
- . *Leave the Letters till We’re Dead, The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1936-1941*, Vol. 6. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: The Hogarth Press, 1980.
- . *A Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Michèle Barrett. London: Penguin Books, 2019.
- . *The Sickly Side of the Moon, The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1932-1935*. Vol. 5. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: The Hogarth Press, 1979.
- . “Virginia Woolf ~ Craftsmanship ‘On Craftsmanship.’” Audio. *Art & Crap*. Web. <http://artandcrap.com/ensayos/virginia-woolf-craftsmanship>.



**Mrs. Papworth: The Working-Class Woman in Virginia Woolf’s Novel *Jacob’s Room***

Regarded as Virginia Woolf’s first truly experimental novel, *Jacob’s Room* (JR] 1922) sketches the life of Jacob Flanders as he moves from childhood to manhood to dies early on during the First World War (1914-1918). While many of the figures moving through the novel have been critically investigated, working-class character Mrs. Papworth has received less attention, despite Woolf devoting an entire scene to the charwoman’s life. Janet Wolff’s point that “the literature of modernity” has been “impoverished by ignoring the lives of women” (9) makes the close reading of Mrs. Papworth offered here doubly imperative. In this paper, I argue that the figure of the charwoman, described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a “working-class woman who carries out household tasks,”<sup>1</sup> offers insight into how Woolf understood the pressures shaping the lives of laboring women whom she describes in her essay “Lives of the Obscure” (1925) as “stranded ghost[s] [...] waiting, appealing, forgotten, in the growing gloom” (106-07).

In the time period covered by *Jacob’s Room*, domestic workers like Mrs. Papworth were overworked and underpaid (JR 138-39). Numerous

<sup>1</sup> See “charwoman, n.” in the *OED*.

working women, many without a surname, appear elsewhere in Woolf's fiction, for instance, Maria in *The Voyage Out* ([VO] 1915; 100), Dorothy in *Night and Day* ([ND] 1919; 393), and Agnes in *Mrs. Dalloway* ([MD] 1925; 102). Alison Light in *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants* (2008), has documented the lives of the real women, including Sophie Farrell, Nellie Boxall, and Lottie Hope, who cooked, cleaned, and cared for Virginia Woolf during her lifetime. Woolf's depictions of laboring women in her writing are, argues Light, "tinged with [a] revulsion" rooted in "social differences" and "class feelings" (xiv, 203). Here, I would like to propose an alternative point of view by suggesting that, rather than repelled by working women, Woolf was aware of the challenges they faced.<sup>2</sup> First of all, however, it is important to consider Mrs. Papworth's background.

Mirroring the toil of Mrs. Bast, who contends with the dirt of the higher classes in the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse* (111-17), Mrs. Papworth is charwoman to Jacob Flanders's friend Richard Bonamy (JR 138-39). Woolf maps London in many of her works, and she situates Mrs. Papworth in a specific location. She hails from "Endel Street, Covent Garden" (JR 138). As a Londoner, Woolf was no doubt well aware that a maternity, or 'lying-in' hospital, existed in Endel Street between 1849 and 1913 (International Congress 31-32). This allusion to childbearing becomes even more significant when we read that Mrs. Papworth is mother to nine children (138). Woolf's reference to multiple pregnancies is more than a simple gesture to Mrs. Papworth's fecundity. Rather, the further mention of three miscarriages and one disabled child illustrates Woolf's awareness of the considerable amount of loss and suffering often involved in the lives of childbearing working women. Indeed, the fact that the father<sup>3</sup> of her children goes unmentioned implies that Mrs. Papworth carries the sole responsibility for her children, a formidable task for a poorly paid cleaner. In recounting the intense economic and emotional loads bearing down on working women, the belief that Woolf was repulsed by working women starts to crumble.

Mrs. Papworth's surname is worth noting. The cognomen 'Papworth' is composed of two syllables: 'pap' and 'worth,' which, when examined individually, work to critique the social delegitimization of Mrs. Papworth. According to the *OED*, the word 'pap' refers to 'breast,' 'nipple,'<sup>4</sup> or a 'small round tumor or swelling; a pimple.'<sup>5</sup> Here, on one hand, is Mrs. Papworth's significance as a vital source of new civilians and, on the other, an objectionable tumor on the social body requiring removal. In addition, the second syllable, 'worth,' acknowledges the considerable economic value of her physical labor. One could argue that here Woolf anticipates the well-known phrase of 'double burden' of work, that is, lower-class women's work inside the home caring for the emotional wellbeing of their family and work outside the home to supply their physical needs. Uniting 'pap' and 'worth,' Woolf exposes troubling configurations of laboring women as: 1) problematic social pustules requiring amputation; 2) child-bearers, and 3) cheap forms of labor within the national workforce. However, Woolf does not stop at simply underscoring disturbing societal views of the working woman.

Mrs. Papworth is initially situated in the domestic kitchen. Her hands, as they clear away the food scraps "swirling round the sink," are pictured as "purple, almost nailless" (JR 138). Mrs. Papworth's chapped hands illustrate the damage her body endures. But when we look at the image more closely, an additional point is revealed that returns us to the idea of maternal labor. The cleaner's purple skin brings to mind the poorly oxygenated skin of a newly born baby. The swirling, whirling water in the kitchen sink mirrors the breaking of the amniotic sac. The circular 'O' of the plughole recalls the passage of the infant through the vaginal opening. The reader metaphorically revisits the maternity hospital on Endel Street with a panoply of sights, smells, and sounds related to the

labor ward: the sound of "hissing gas" (138) fills the room; the clatter of pans conjures up an image of surgical instruments; the sound of hot running water hint at hospital levels of hygiene.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that when Mrs. Papworth leaves the domestic kitchen and moves toward the drawing room, she threatens to invade the privileged masculine domain. As she opens the door, she encounters an unexpected scene. Mrs. Papworth finds that the drawing room resembles more a boxing ring than a domain devoted to high culture. Bonamy and Flanders, unable to bring their debate to an amicable end, have resorted to a violent *pas de deux*. The broken table and shattered "coffee pot" point to the fruitlessness of their violence. At this point, they become subject to the gaze of the laboring woman. Their futile altercation exposes the sterility of the male stewardship of the cultural domain at the start of the twentieth, debunking any suggestion of intellectual superiority.

When we consider the tussle more closely, we recall a very similar confrontation in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1921). For Susan C. Harris and Vara Neverow, the scuffle is a codified expression of illicit sexual desire and a satire on the policing of sexuality in Edwardian England (Harris 420; Neverow 157). It also evokes the vaudevillian schtick, pratfalls and play-acting of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, somewhat embarrassingly suggesting the men's underdevelopment. This infantilism reveals the towering aura of these two would-be patricians as little more than a superficial patina that places Mrs. Papworth in the figurative position of a parent tasked with interrupting the fracas of two troublesome children.

Despite her presence, Flanders and Bonamy are indifferent to Mrs. Papworth. They "never noticed" (JR 139) the woman.<sup>7</sup> Unwilling to acknowledge her existence, Mrs. Papworth returns to domestic matters by making a brief inquiry about Bonamy's breakfast (139). But it is her self-interested expedition from kitchen to drawing room, which is of chief importance to Woolf.

It has not been my task here to recount the moments when Virginia Woolf wrote disparagingly about working-class women. Rather, I have taken the portrayal of charwoman Mrs. Papworth and considered it from the point of what Hermione Lee calls Woolf's "feeling for women's lives and characters [that] frees her into fantasy and indirection" (166). What we see in the depiction of Mrs. Papworth is a perceptively written study of working-class women that is composed with recognition and respect. Woolf drew attention to the challenges faced by laboring women without naively sidelining the real economic difficulties they faced. While I do not consider this paper the final word on the working-class women residing in Woolf's texts, it is my hope that it will encourage others to examine their lives ever more closely.

**Rhonda Mayne**  
**Queen's University, Belfast**

#### **Works Cited**

- "charwoman, n." *OED Online*, Oxford UP. March 2023. Web. 8 February 2023. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30845>.
- Harris, Sarah. C. "The Ethics of Indecency: Censorship, Sexuality and the Voice of the Academy in the Narration of *Jacob's Room*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 43.4 (Winter 1997): 420-38.
- International Congress of Medicine. *London's Hospitals: Brief Histories of the Chief Hospitals of the Metropolis*. London: The Hospital, 1913.
- Lee, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf*. London: Vintage, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the part played by social class in perinatal and maternal mortality rates and the importance of midwives during this period, see Philip Rhodes.

<sup>7</sup> Attentive Woolfian readers will recall in *The Years* (1937) Martin Pargiter's similar acts of indifference in his treatment of the family servant "old Crosby" (142; 210-12).

<sup>2</sup> See Virginia Woolf's "Introductory Letter" (xvii-xxxxi).

<sup>3</sup> Or fathers?

<sup>4</sup> Now rarely used according to the *OED*.

<sup>5</sup> See "pap, n." in the *OED*.



- Light, Alison. *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants*. New York: Bloomsbury P, 2008.
- Neverow, Vara. "Contrasting Urban and Rural Transgressive Sexualities in *Jacob's Room*." *Woolf and the City: Selected Papers from the Nineteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Elizabeth F. Evans and Sarah E. Cornish. New York: Pace UP, 2010. 154-160.
- . "Virginia Woolf and City Aesthetics." *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and The Arts*. Ed. Maggie Humm. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010. 88-103.
- "pap, n.1." OED Online. Oxford UP, March 2023. Web. 8 February 2023. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/137076>.
- Rhodes, Philip. *A Short History of Clinical Midwifery: The Development of Ideas in the Professional Management of Childbirth*. Hale, Cheshire: Books for Midwives P, 1995.
- Wolff, Janet. "The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity." *Theory, Culture and Society*. Special Issue: "The Fate of Modernity." 2:3 (1985): 37-46. *Centre for the Study of Culture and Society* (1985). Web. 9 February 2023. <http://cscs.res.in/irps/interasia-cultural-studies-summer-school-2018/all-readings/wolff-janet-the-invisible-flaneuse-women-and-the-literature-of-modernity/view>
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1929. London: Hogarth, 1935.
- . *Jacob's Room*. 1922. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- . "Introductory Letter." *Life as We Have Known It, by Co-Operative Working Women*. Ed. Margaret Llewelyn Davies. Virago: London, 1977. xvii-xxxix.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. 1925. London: Penguin, 1992.
- . *Night and Day*. 1919. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- . "The Lives of the Obscure." *Common Reader: First Series*. London: Vintage, 2003.
- . *To the Lighthouse*. 1927. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- . *The Years*. 1937. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- . *The Voyage Out*. 1915. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.



## Virginia Woolf and the Letterpress<sup>1</sup>

**But, you may say, we asked you to write about your art on Woolf...**<sup>2</sup>

During the 2023 Woolf Conference at The Florida Gulf Coast University, Vara Neverow urged me to submit work to the *Miscellany*. But about which of my art works should I write? Coming home from the conference, thinking of the conversations I had with people about art, gender, the regression of women's rights, the dark developments in Florida, and the absurdity of how frightened some people are of social democracy, feminism, and equal rights, as if it is something made to steal rights and money away from you (that's fascism and capitalism, folks). On this backdrop I started thinking I should write about a point

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ane Thon Knutsen (born in 1984) is a Norwegian artist and designer working as a letterpress printer in the expanded field. Knutsen works in multidisciplinary form at the intersections between graphic design, art, research, and dissemination. She exhibits, presents, and teaches internationally, and her works often take form as installations and artist books. Knutsen has a special interest in self-taught women on the distaff side of print history. In 2019, Knutsen defended her PhD on Virginia Woolf's work as a typesetter and self-publisher and how this skill had an underestimated impact on Woolf's practice as a writer. Knutsen has won several awards for this work. She owns and works from her private letterpress studio in Oslo and is currently Associate Professor in graphic design at the Oslo Academy of the Arts. Ane's work can be seen here: <https://cargocollective.com/anethonknutsen> or on <https://www.instagram.com/anethonknutsen/reels/>.

<sup>2</sup> A riff on Woolf's first sentence in *A Room of One's Own*.

in my presentation that people came and talked to me about: The Scandinavian social democratic model. What it is and does, by using my own experiences as example. To write about what makes me able to make art at all.

Social democracy and feminism have everything to do with the work I do. Before motherhood, I had considered gender irrelevant, and thought little of all my privileges as a woman living in Norway. But pregnancy and having a baby made it clear how important gender and societal circumstances is. My first ever encounter with Virginia Woolf's writings was after my son was born. Back to work as a PhD student in 2016: raw and shaken, like someone had peeled off all my skin. Seeing my frustration, my supervisor advised me to read *A Room of One's Own*. Books are marvelous things! I saw the cogs aligning and I started seeing the bigger picture. That book became the most transformative reading experience of my life. I understood why women are so absent in the world history in general. This one book changed my view of the world, and my entire PhD project. Virginia Woolf was soon to become a big part of my career.

You see, I am a self-taught letterpress printer, like I learned that Woolf was too, typesetting, printing and publishing her own work on The Hogarth Press. I'd been researching letterpress against better judgment and discouragement by several professors and peers since 2008. They did not see that to me, as a digital native, it was something new, and I became determined to prove them all wrong. Letterpress dominated the mass production of printed matter in the western world between the 1450s and 1970s but has lost its original position and become something else. In 2014 I started a practice-based PhD asking what letterpress might be, and how I could use it as a research method. At this point I thought my project was about Norwegian Crafts traditions, until I discovered Virginia Woolf.

## *A Press in the Basement*

My research slowly turned from being about the technology itself to looking at how Virginia Woolf's practice as a printer became crucial for developing her style and publish on her own terms, how the form influenced the content, becoming in her own words: *The only woman in England free to write what I like*.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by The Hogarth Press, I knew what I had to do: with a respectable collection of printing equipment rescued from junkyards, I set up a press of my own in my basement, with a door I could lock from the inside in 2017. I still thought Woolf was a sidetrack, a detour, but after going to the Woolf conference titled Woolf and the World of Books in Reading, UK, in 2017, I found there was little research on the actual making of books by people with skills in typesetting and printing. I thought I would get my questions answered and could leave Woolf, but most of my print-related questions were returned to me with masses of encouragement, and I realized this had to be my project; a practice-based work on Woolf as a typesetter, bookbinder, and graphic designer.

## *What Happens When the Author Designs?*

The body text content is the author's work, the designer then designs the body text and the book object—this technique emphasizes the content. How can I communicate the special relationship you get to the words when you stand in front of the typeset building your thoughts while designing, which puts the words like a wedge between form and content and content as form? The more industrial and professional a print is produced, the more the trace of man disappears. In good typography, it's the intention is to get the best reading possible. But reading from a craft practice can in some cases create a bridge to the person behind, like we form a sense of the painter's mood by studying brushstrokes. This was what I wanted to communicate, but it's easier said than done....

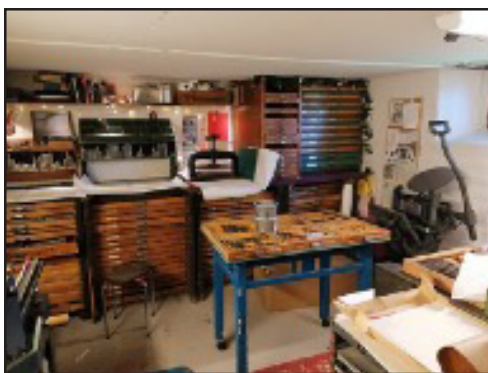
In February 2018, I received an invitation to exhibit my PhD result in an enormous room—and I was terrified! But to me feminism is also about not wasting a chance, and I decided that this room is now a room of

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from page 35 of *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 3.

my own! Clearing away the fears (or killing the Angel in the House<sup>4</sup>), I saw it all clear in my mind and wrote down this idea: *Imagine flipping the whole relationship between typesetting and reading in relation to the body. From something intimate and tangible to something big and fragmented. Imagine the whole room covered with prints. The format/limitations are the printing press, the type, the words, the sheet, and the room. The room is the format, the room is the text, and the text is the room, which The Mark on The Wall reflects on.*

I embarked on a time consuming and labor-intensive project, typesetting and printing first *The Mark on the Wall* (2019), then *Blue and Green* (2020), *On Being Ill* (2020) and *Kew Gardens* (2021). Counting about 30.000 single prints on my press, I spent between 9 months to a year in total in my printshop producing these works (not counting planning, installing, binding, disseminating, and all the other work around the productions).

The point I want to make is that this project could've never been done if I did not have a printing press of my own, time to think, and money to buy the time to produce a work which would not provide for any financial benefits on my behalf. Through Woolf's utopian ideas in *A Room of One's Own*, being able to go through with this work, I saw how utterly privileged I am.



The Letterpress



Exhibit of The Mark on the Wall



The Installation

### ***The Gift of the Freedom to Create***

A wise woman<sup>5</sup> once told me that, when talking about social democracy, feminism, and privilege, numbers are important, and below are the numbers behind my creative freedom.

I live in Norway, a small country of only 5 million inhabitants, who hit oil in the 1960s. With the Scandinavian social democratic model, our government decided this wealth should belong to the people. Norway has one of the world's highest levels of trust towards our government and is only surpassed by Denmark as the best country for being a parent.

I don't have health insurance. Health care is provided during pregnancy and giving birth and health monitoring for me and the baby the first year is paid through my tax bill. I had 42 weeks of 100% fully paid maternity leave; my husband had 10 weeks of fully paid paternity leave. Day care is subsidized; we paid about \$310<sup>6</sup> a month. I get \$110 a month in welfare per child until the child's age of 18. My son's 13 years of schooling is free of charge. The children learn about LGBTQ+ in school, which is determined by law. Dental care is free until age 18 and studying at the university costs \$40 per semester. (Just now students are enraged as it just got raised to \$60 per semester.) Students can get student loans to provide for living expenses of a maximum \$13,780 annually. If you pass your exam, \$5500 will be erased from the debt annually. If you struggle with disabilities, like dyslexia, you can get an extra \$4700 annually in scholarship. Doing a PhD at my institution is a paid position with an average of \$45,000 annually, though the position is extremely hard to get. (I'm the first and still only graphic designer in history to be accepted and graduated with a PhD from The Oslo National Academy of The Arts.)

If we get sick, we will be taken care of free of charge. Contraceptives like the pill, condoms, and implants are free until age 20. Abortions are free and granted without question until week 12 of pregnancy. Abortions between week 12 and week 18 can be performed after consultation of two doctors with special attention towards the health of the woman, like sexual abuse or mental illness, or if there is something wrong with the fetus. If the fetus is not able to live, an abortion can be performed at any time. All women are invited to be screened for cervix cancer from age 25 and breast cancer from age 50, which probably saved both me and my mom from severe illness or death, free of charge. To never have to worry about how we will manage if my family gets sick is but one reason why I happily pay 34% in income tax.<sup>7</sup>

### ***The Courage of Choosing a Career***

A career in the arts is not what most families would advise you to choose, or even support, not even in Norway. I've been very lucky to have been supported by my family, which is partly due to previous family members experiences with the damages of having ambitions, but not opportunities. My paternal grandfather was known for his sharp mind but withered away in a factory his whole life. My maternal grandmother dreamt of becoming a nurse, but instead suffered from mental illness, trapped in the home in a small town she never liked. She never got to develop a purpose in life; thus, she was determined to give my mom the education of her choosing. My mom fought for and started the first kindergarten in our municipality in the 70s, enabling women to be financially independent even with kids. Seeing how their parents

<sup>5</sup> Lotte Konow Lund, a Norwegian artist. (Go to <http://www.lottekonowlund.com/> to view her work.)

<sup>6</sup> The currency is converted to USD from the Norwegian Krone.

<sup>7</sup> These are but a few examples, and it can sound like a utopian fairytale, yet Norway is not without faults. There are many problematic issues like the treatment of the Sami-people, how we profit greatly from exporting oil and weapons, narrowing the rights for people seeking refuge, terminating free education for students outside EU and Schengen, the rise of nationalism producing the worst alt-right terrorist in modern times, and the gaps between the richest and the poorest in our country is growing. Social democracy is under siege and in decline.

<sup>4</sup> See "Professions for Women" online at: <https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/Woolf.pdf>.

suffered, my parents have always supported my unconventional career path and urged me to make choices based on my desires and abilities.

So, if I found it hard to get back to work as a mother with this golden ticket, I don't know how the rest of the women in this world can uphold both a family and a career. Social democracy is not perfect, but I think it is the best solution we've come across so far. I like to think it as a bouquet of tulips. If some flowers are hanging over the edge unable to stand up straight on their own, you place them in the center where they're held up by the others. Social democracy enables everyone a little more dignity, a little more room of their own. With freedom from worrying about basic needs like food, health care, and education for our children, we're more likely to get the best out of our capacities to the benefit of all, making us able to *think calmly, spaciouly, without any sense of hostility or obstacle.*<sup>8</sup>)

**Ane Thon Knutsen**  
**Oslo Academy of the Arts**

#### **Works Cited**

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume Three 1925-1930*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell, assisted by Andrew McNeillie. Orlando, FL: Mariner Books, 1981.

—. "The Mark on The Wall." *Two Stories*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1917. 19-31. British Library Collection Items. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/two-stories-written-and-printed-by-virginia-and-leonard-woolf>.

<sup>8</sup> See "The Mark on The Wall." (The story can be accessed online at this webpage: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/woolf/monday/monday-08.html>.)



#### **The Power of Silence: Understanding Women's Resistance in Woolf's *To The Lighthouse***

Silence in power paradigms has been viewed as a sign of oppression and subjugation; specifically, as Patricia Lawrence argues, women's silence has been perceived prior to the twentieth century as "a place of oppression, the mark of women's exclusion from the public spheres of life, and from representation as speakers in a text" (156). Silence is also typically associated with powerlessness since it reflects weakness and lack of ability to articulate one's needs and wishes. In *Silence, Feminism, Power*, Sheena Malhotra and Aimee Carillo Rowe state that the "articulation between silence and powerlessness is almost a common sense within Western culture, an assumption that is reified across literary, progressive academic, and activist contexts" (1). Elaine Showalter has also discussed the relationship between silence and powerlessness in women's discourse. Showalter asserts that silence paradigms in women's narratives reflect nothing but powerlessness. She argues that "The holes in discourse, the blanks and gaps and silences, are not the spaces where female consciousness reveals itself but the blinds of a "prison-house of language" (193). Accordingly, breaking the silence of women becomes a substantial strategy to give them a voice in patriarchal paradigms. In this context, reading silence in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) suggests that silence is depicted as a refuge for the female characters to avoid confrontations with the patriarchal force. This avoidance of confrontation is nothing but a sign of powerlessness. However, an examination of silence in *To the Lighthouse* reveals an alternative approach toward analyzing the power dynamics of patriarchy wielding silence.

These readings of silence in *To the Lighthouse* have mostly overlooked the tension in power relationships in the patriarchal community presented in the novel. In discussing their perception of silence in *To the Lighthouse*, scholars have followed mainly a linguistic approach. Cheng-Chen Chein analyzes silence in *To the Lighthouse* as a semantic construct that represents gaps in meaning that the reader must "concretize" to fill the gaps in the message. Chein writes that "the blanks in this novel challenge the reader's insights to unravel the mystery of language and expand the referentiality of signs" (67). Similarly, scholar Caragana Ellis in her study on Woolf's work including *To the Lighthouse* claims that silence is represented in the use of "white spaces in the form of blocks of blank space between blocks of text as well as ellipses and em dashes" (1). Ellis suggests that these 'negative spaces' represent a conspicuous absence which shows the intersection between the form and the content that allows the silence of women to be treated as content (1). Meanwhile, Elizabeth Hirt investigates the use of language in *To the Lighthouse* and argues that words are inadequate to create real connections among characters and that their silence establishes a bond of intimacy and connection, particularly between men and women. She writes, "Though an intimate connection is established by Mr. Ramsay's words, Mrs. Ramsay's silence also serves to communicate" (62). Hirt explains that narrating the interiority of the characters rather than their speech has two functions: First, "words do not do their thoughts justice. And, second, the characters' "thoughts and desires are so vague or contradictory that [the characters] often do not even know what they are trying to put into words" (66). In the same vein, Gönül Bakay studies how Woolf employs silence as an alternative to verbal communication in *To The Lighthouse*. Bakay suggests that Mrs. Ramsay expresses her feelings in silence, which reflects Woolf's exploration of the theme of human nature of loneliness and isolation where the lack of communication is mirrored in silence. Bakay interestingly argues that silence and repetition make "a gendered language that is more appropriate for the expression of women's emotions but that also widens the scope of communicative exchanges between both genders" (146).

This paper identifies silence beyond the reference to the word's occurrences in *To the Lighthouse* and explores the moments the novel narrates the characters' inwardness. Woolf depicts silence in *To the Lighthouse* using the stream-of-consciousness narrative technique. Woolf and other modernist writers who adopt this technique use it as "a way of challenging the traditional structural pattern associated with the novel" (Sim 141). Woolf's compelling use of this technique skillfully creates a space for her women characters to be. Much of the interaction between the characters in *To the Lighthouse* is a result of their inner reflection that is attained during moments of silence, and these moments articulate the tension between the inner and outer forces among the characters and their surroundings. Woolf conveys the characters' feelings and innermost thoughts in narrating silence. The dynamics of conversation among the characters relies on sharing the characters' thoughts, opinions, feelings, and perceptions of each other. The reader learns about the characters from their thoughts rather than their spoken words. Dialogue in the novel is minimal, and it is used to anchor the transitions in the perspective in the narrative. This paradigm of silence significantly reveals ambivalence between what flows on the surface and what is hidden beneath the relationships among the characters, particularly for women, highlighting the existing tension in power relations in the novel.

I perceive that silence has more to it than just being a visually 'marked' construct that indicates gaps in the meaning or space for communicating and connecting among characters. I read silence as a spatial construct presented in moments of stream-of-consciousness that represent the female characters in the novel, particularly I focus my analysis on Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe and argue that silence in *To the Lighthouse* is a space for resistance that transforms complicity, subordinating the paradigm of patriarchal power and giving women agency. In *To the Lighthouse*, silence is prominent. The word "silence" appears twenty-three times. Its repetition implies a disconnection in the interaction among characters in the novel. Yet, at the same time, it creates



existentially significant moments for the characters to find a space of being. In one of its occurrences, the novel narrates,

Mrs. Ramsay sat silent, she was glad, Lily thought, to rest in silence, uncommunicative: to rest in the extreme obscurity of human relationship [...] Who knows even at the moment of intimacy, This is knowledge? Aren't things spoilt then, Mrs. Ramsay may have asked (it seemed to have happened so often, this silence by her side) by saying them? (TTL 171-72)

In this passage, silence is intertwined with its transcendent meaning; it becomes the medium for Mrs. Ramsay to be herself.

When Woolf identifies power relations early in *To the Lighthouse*, she mainly stresses gender as the main variable of the novel's paradigm of power. While women are typically represented as silent, men are entitled to speak most of the time. Mr. Ramsay as a figure of power is not represented in silence. As a man and a husband, Mr. Ramsay speaks aloud, and he exercises his authoritative power over his wife and his family. Early on in the narrative, Mr. Ramsay explicitly demonstrates his power by defying his wife's assertion to her son of their visit to the lighthouse the next day if the weather permits simply by stating that "it won't be fine" (TTL 4). Mr. Ramsay challenges Mrs. Ramsay's promise and asserts his control over the situation and his role as the decision-maker in the family.

Although Mrs. Ramsay's character is presented as an archetypal wife and mother in the novel, it is her moments of silence that expose her resistance to that role. To everyone in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay appears genuinely committed to her duties as a wife, mother, and host. She also acknowledges that she "would never for a single second regret her decision, evade difficulties, or slur over duties" (6). She insists on sharing her views on marriage with all women around her, encouraging them to get married and build families. However, at the same time, she is aware that she has consumed her life and beauty in taking responsibility for her husband, his finances, and his books. Narrating Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts in her moment of silence reveals a different aspect of her character:

The real differences, she thought, standing by the drawing-room window, are enough, quite enough [...]; but more profoundly, she ruminated the other problem, of rich and poor, and the things she saw with her own eyes, weekly, daily, here or in London, when she visited this widow, or that struggling wife in person with a bag on her arm, and a note-book and pencil with which she wrote down in columns carefully ruled for the purpose wages and spendings, employment and unemployment, in the hope that thus she would cease to be a private woman whose charity was half a sop to her own indignation, half a relief to her own curiosity, and become what with her untrained mind she greatly admired, an investigator, elucidating the social problem. (TTL 9)

Standing in silence in this scene, Mrs. Ramsay ponders upon her society's problems: such as the living conditions of the poor compared to the rich, the high rate of unemployment among people of her country, and the low wages that workers had to endure (TTL 9). It is only in those silent moments away from her distracting social duties that Mrs. Ramsay attains her privacy and gets the chance to reflect on her life. Even though Mrs. Ramsay communicates her advice for women to get married, she silently admires their independence. She describes Lily Briscoe as she paints on her canvas as an "independent little creature" and she "liked her for it" (17). Silence also gives her a chance to think outside her role as a wife, and it allows her to become "an investigator, elucidating the social problem" (9). The narrator also describes how Mrs. Ramsay longs for solitude, for moments that are replete with silence when she can be herself: "For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of—to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone" (62). It is at those moments that Mrs. Ramsay escapes her social roles and yearns for the

"strangest adventures" while "her horizon seem[s] limitless" (62) for a few minutes.

Lily Briscoe senses this aspect of Mrs. Ramsay. Though Lily resents Mrs. Ramsay's insistence on her marriage, she recognizes that Mrs. Ramsay genuinely values knowledge and education:

Sitting on the floor with her arms around Mrs. Ramsay's knees, close as she could get, smiling to think that Mrs. Ramsay would never know the reason of that pressure, she imagined how in the chambers of the mind and heart of the woman who was, physically touching her were stood, like the treasures in the tombs of kings, tablets bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out, would teach one everything, but they would be offered openly, never made public. (51)

Lily simply smiles when she remembers the pressure Mrs. Ramsay put on other women concerning marriage which underscores her understanding of the discrepancy between Mrs. Ramsay's declared and hidden viewpoints. She realizes that Mrs. Ramsay articulates what she does not truly believe in, and that what Mr. Ramsay says does not reflect her true thoughts. Woolf uses silence here to expose women's resistance to the subjugation and the social pressure put on them. The above scene illustrates what Lawrence describes as the "unsayable," alluding to the social restriction on women public speaking. Lawrence interestingly suggests that Woolf turns to the techniques of silence to reveal in her novel the "cultural silences or repression of her life" (TTL 2). She considers three types of silence in *To the Lighthouse*: "what is unsaid, something one might have felt but does not say; the "unspoken," something not yet formulated or expressed in voiced words; and the "unsayable," something not sayable based on the social taboos of Victorian propriety or something about life that is ineffable" (1). Intertwining silence and cultural and social aspects in Lawrence's reading suggest further that power is ascribed to silence in the novel through which women characters reject and resist the patriarchal structures in the society.

The discrepancies between Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts in her silent moments and her actions when socially involved reveals her social intelligence, not her subjugation. The scope of social intelligence includes the ability to enrich personal relationships through empathy and concern (Goleman 12). Mrs. Ramsay demonstrates her ability to understand men's minds and to respond adequately to their needs, giving them sympathy and reassurance. This trait endows Mrs. Ramsay with the ability to manage her relationship with men around intelligently—particularly her husband, even though, she consciously understands his imposed power on her.

Silence in Mrs. Ramsay's relationship with her husband is a demonstration of resisting oppression. When Mr. Ramsay verbally abuses Mrs. Ramsay, she reflects in silence on his "brutality" and his "lack of consideration to other people's feelings" (TTL 32). In silence that she "without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water bespatter her unrebuked" (32). Mrs. Ramsay gives up replying to him, thinking that "there was nothing to be said" (32). She finds in silence a shelter from confrontation with him. Her silent response does not mean accepting the humiliation though; in fact, her silence is intentional, and it underscores challenging her husband's behavior, considering it an "outrage of human decency" (32).

After the dinner scene in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay gets a chance to be alone in silence; this silence ignites her craving for creativity. She enters a state of solitude where she recites what they read at the dinner table since it "began to washing from side to side of her mind rhythmically, and as they washed [...] lit up in the dark of her mind" (TTL 119). The beauty of what she recollects captures her feeling and gets her to grab a book and read. A shift in the type of her thought happens again in this solitude, and she recognizes the value of intellectual work. Mrs. Ramsay

perceives these moments as a sublime space in which she dreams and discovers new thoughts and ideas: “She read, and so reading she was ascending, she felt, on the top, on the summit. How satisfying! How restful!” (121). She finds in silence an opportunity to resist any outer influence that would have deprived her of appreciating poetry: “And then there it was, suddenly entire; she held it in her hands, beautiful and reasonable, clear and complete, the essence sucked out of life and held around here—the sonnet” (121). Silence takes a spatial dimension that creates a boundary between her and her husband that he himself recognizes. While she is reading, he tries to distract her with slapping his thighs. She resists his influence by looking at him silently with no response. This moment represents a genuine conflict between her inner self and the patriarchal force of her husband. Though she thinks that she would give up her solitude if he seems to need her, this goes against her real wish to continue reading in silence.

Breaking her silence and responding to Mr. Ramsay’s needs does not negate the power attributed to Mrs. Ramsay in her silence. In seeking sympathy and reassurance, Woolf presents a reversed picture of relationships among partners in typical patriarchal societies. In Mr. Ramsay’s case, it is obvious that he constantly requires Mrs. Ramsay’s sympathy. This aspect of their relationship suggests a reversed power paradigm in the novel. Mrs. Ramsay understands her husband’s psychological need for sympathy all the time, and she is willing to reassure him of his genius when he doubts it. As Mrs. Ramsay succeeds in giving her husband the assurance he needs, she gains power in most situations, being in control of when to give up her silence and when to preserve it, subverting the power paradigm.

Furthermore, through moments of silence, Woolf creates a metaphorical private space for women in *To the Lighthouse*. Women’s understanding of this aspect of silence empowers them. This space becomes a structure of power for women that negates their complicity to men’s dominance in the novel. Woolf gives the floor for Lily to take note of Mr. Tansley’s struggle during the dinner scene, as she observes his neediness. In this scene, Lily perceives silence as a spatial construct that challenges Mr. Tansley, defying any complicity to his needs. Mr. Tansley feels detached from the company because of his inferior class status. Annoyed by the situation, he feels “extremely, even physically, uncomfortable” and, to offset his discomfort, he views the hosts and the other guests’ speech to be “nonsense” and “fragments” (TTL 90). Like other men in the novel, he starts to seek reassurance from people around him. In this scene, Lily’s power is presented in a woman’s ability to read men’s inner social conflict. At first, Lily challenges him since he condemns women earlier in the novel for their supposed inability to be creative and to make art when he states that “women can’t paint, women can’t write” (48). In this situation, Lily opts to stay silent as she thinks, “Why should I help him to relieve himself?” (91). Lily resists comforting him and stays silent to defy Mr. Tansley’s masculine force that has tried to subdue and humiliate women. Silence becomes the means to subvert patriarchal authority in this context. Lily understands the power of her silence since Mr. Tansley stays uncomfortable and intense until Mrs. Ramsay breaks this silence. She asks Lily about her plans to visit the Lighthouse and asks Mr. Tansley, “Are you a good sailor, Mr. Tansley?” (91). These spoken words break the authority and power Lily attained in silence in this scene. Though this question gives Mr. Tansley the assertion he needs, it happens under the control of Mrs. Ramsay who has the power to decide when to offer her help and when to decline it. Understanding Mrs. Ramsay’s intention which Lily describes as “the usual trick—been nice,” Lily relents, saying “Will you take me, Mr. Tansley?” (92).

Likewise, as Lily observes Mrs. Ramsay and Paul Rayley alluding to marriage, she feels the conflict between her inner self and the outer social force. She departs from their conversation and starts to think about her art. Silence allows her to ponder on things and discover what she truly wants. She resists the acclaimed temptations of finding love and getting married: “What happened to her, especially staying with the

Ramsays, was to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time; that’s what you feel, was one; that’s what I feel was the other, and then they fought together in her mind” (TTL 102). The conflict and tension over her choices in life exemplify the challenges that women endure living within a patriarchy that oppresses women and limits their creativity. In such silent moments, she dives deeper into herself and gets to understand who she really is and what she aspires to be. She (for the most part) resists the pressure of the people around her including Mr. Ramsay; consequently, she acknowledges that she does not want to get married, as she “need[s] not undergo that degradation” (102).

As an act of resistance, Lily tries to preserve her silence and ensure her freedom from social pressure. She constantly attempts to avoid conversing about topics that increase pressure on her. Silence is her preferable condition in which she finds a space to be creative, working on her art. Her silence invokes her creativity. Lily’s silence aligns with Susan Sontag’s exploration of the aesthetics of silence that benefit serious artists. She describes the silence as “a zone of meditation, preparation for spiritual ripening, an ordeal that ends in gaining the right to speak” (6). In the narrative, Lily’s silent moments end with her figuring out a new insight into her painting. The novel narrates: “For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle,” (TTL 102). Even after ten years, she feels the need “to escape somewhere, be alone somewhere” (147) in silence to work on her painting: “There was the wall; the hedge; the tree. The question was of some relation between these masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed as if a solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do” (147-48).

Lily’s figured solution for her painting transcends making an artistic choice for it. It involves her decision to make art, subverting the norms of the society that perceives women as incapable to make art. Lily decides to prioritize working on her painting and not surrender to society’s patriarchal pressure presented in Mr. Ramsay’s presence. When Mr. Ramsay approaches her while she paints, he interrupts her working in silence and breaks into her privacy: “[e]very time he approached—he was walking up and down the terrace—ruin approached, chaos approached. She could not paint” (TTL 148). His presence impedes her creativity, “She could not see the colour; she could not see the lines” (148). Lily strives to keep her space, trying to avoid submitting to his tyranny. Like Mrs. Ramsay, Lily possesses the ability to read men’s minds. In this scene, she is aware of Mr. Ramsay’s demands. She is scared to be forced to submit, as it had happened to Mrs. Ramsay though. Lily considers it Mrs. Ramsay’s fault that she used to surrender to him all the time.

Hence, Lily tries to resist and does not respond, staying silent, and that makes Mr. Ramsay sighs “to the full. He waited. Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her?” (TTL 151). She resists him and refuses to submit: “In complete silence she stood there, grasping her paint brush” (153). Undoubtedly, the solution for Lily is art. Her art is a means of resistance in this situation, and silence is the medium. Lily’s momentary triumph over Mr. Ramsay appears in this scene in her determinate unresponsiveness to his needs. Even later when she breaks her silence and compliments his shoes, it comes after Mr. Ramsay has to think of Lily’s deliberate ignoring of his needs, and he reaches the level that he exposes his “concentrated woe; his age; his frailty; his desolation” (153). Lily herself realizes that this cheerful praise of his shoes is not what Mr. Ramsay longs to receive to “solace his soul” (153).

To intensify his complete helplessness and Lily’s success in resisting his authority, Mr. Ramsay appears to accept and cheer up on the compliment—when all Lily would expect is his “roars of ill-temper” that would result in her “complete annihilation” (TTL 153). Lily appears to master Mrs. Ramsay’s ways of handling men’s pressures, as she

comes to appreciate the power of silence in resisting their influence. She understands when to preserve it and when to break it. In addition to Lily's triumph over Mr. Ramsay, with Mrs. Ramsay's death, the novel announces Lily's triumph over Mrs. Ramsay as well. Lily also thinks she has "triumphed over Mrs. Ramsay," since "it has all gone against [Mrs. Ramsay's] wishes" (175). Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley's marriage fails—a marriage Mrs. Ramsay had planned—and Lily herself did not marry and continues to paint even if her work will never be recognized.

Woolf's narrative use of silence in *To the Lighthouse* marked a significant step in resisting patriarchy and shaping feminist discourse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Woolf evokes the relationship between silence and women's agency in this novel. Her distinct use of silence anchors a discourse of defying patriarchal dynamics, allowing women to 'be' and find meaning in themselves. Woolf has killed "the angel in the house,"<sup>1</sup> represented in Mrs. Ramsay and cherished the life of the woman artist, Lily Briscoe. To capture women's subverting complicity to patriarchy, Woolf weaves silence as a creative space where Lily contemplates on her work and finds out an idea with which she finishes her painting, and, in parallel, she finds out the aspired ways for her life

**Rasha Aljararwa**  
The University of Texas at Dallas

#### Works Cited

- Chien, Cheng-Chen. "Silence as Language in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*." *Journal of the College of Liberal Arts* 15 (1985): 67-74.
- Harper, Howard H. *Between Language and Silence: the Novels of Virginia Woolf*. Louisiana State UP, 1982.
- Ellis, Caragana. "the eternal conspiracy of hush": Physical and Conceptual Negative Space as a Representation of Resistance through Female Silence in Virginia Woolf's Novels and Essays." *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 96 (Fall 2019-Fall 2020): 34-37.
- Gönül Bakay. "Virginia Woolf's Gendered Language". *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics* 1.2 (June 2015): 142-47.
- Hirt, Elizabeth. "Language in the Silent Space: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*." *The Oswald Review* 7 (2005). <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/tor/vol7/iss1/5>.
- Laurence, Patricia Ondek. *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*. Stanford UP, 1991.
- . "Women's Silence as a Ritual of Truth." *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*. Ed. Elaine Hedge and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. 156-66.
- Malhotra, Sheena and Aimee Carrillo Rowe. *Silence, Feminism, Power: Reflections at the Edges of Sound*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Sim, Stuart. *Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." *Critical Inquiry* 8.2 (1981): 179-205. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448150>.
- Sontag, Susan. "The Aesthetics of Silence." *Styles of Radical Will*. London: Penguin Classics, 2009. 3-34.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927.

<sup>1</sup> See "Professions for Women," at: <https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/Woolf.pdf>.

## A Deliberate Failure: Politics, Form, and Woolf Between the Wars

### Introduction

In her introduction to *Virginia Woolf's Late Cultural Criticism* (2013), Alice Wood succinctly contextualizes the interwar mood in Great Britain: "Confidence in the League of Nations, the international governmental organization set up after World War I to prevent further conflict, was gradually eroded through this period as its attempts to secure worldwide disarmament proved futile" (5). For Woolf, as well as other Bloomsbury intellectuals and Modernist writers, the threat of recurring violence and political upheaval during the interwar years called for moments of reflection and modification regarding their political allegiances and artistic practices. Woolf's husband, Leonard, wrote a letter published in the *Left Review* in June 1937 wherein, referring to the Spanish Civil War, he states that "[i]t is impossible any longer to take no side [...] the equivocal attitude, the Ivory Tower, the paradoxical, the ironic detachment, will no longer do" (Leonard Woolf qtd. in Lee 687). For many of Woolf's male contemporaries, including Leonard, the tragedy of World War I and the Spanish Civil War inspired disillusionment with their long-standing pacifism and, in turn, turned their attention towards action.<sup>1</sup>

As the voices of Hitler and Mussolini rose across Europe in the 1930s, pacifism no longer seemed morally permissible to most. Woolf was intensely aware of the changes in political stance occurring around her. As well as this, a new generation of radical and politically engaged writers was gaining momentum across Britain; W. H. Auden and George Orwell, among others, were looking to the realist tradition to inspire their writing.<sup>2</sup> Woolf, reflecting on the work she had published over the last two decades, felt "shame at [her] own verbosity" (15 January 1941; *Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 5 352.). The 1930s were the decade where Woolf's fear of being rendered outdated and politically aloof reached their peak; rather than allow herself to fade into the background of the contemporary literary scene, she revised and sought new ways of writing which, rather than combine realist and modernist elements, challenged the necessity of this division entirely. Writing in her diary during her first plans for *The Pargiters*, she describes her intention to "give the whole of the present society—nothing less: facts, as well as the vision. And to combine them both [...] There are to be millions of ideas but no preaching" (31 May 1933; D 4 161). Although her initial plan to write an 'essay-novel' was neglected during her revision of *The Years* (1937), Woolf's urgent desire to experiment with its form is emblematic of her late writing and thinking more broadly (see D 4 129).<sup>3</sup> For Woolf, responding to her contemporary political climate meant taking bold and unexpected choices in the direction her art would take.

In the study which follows, I argue that the most bold and unexpected formal decision Woolf makes in her late writing is her decision to make *The Years* a deliberate failure. In her diary she writes: "I myself know why its a failure, & that its failure is deliberate" (D 5 65). While Woolf might understandably have viewed *The Years* as a failure because the published version differed so extensively from her initial plans, the political implications of writing a deliberate failure were still vast. During a period in which cohesion and ontological stability were needed to counter the fractured socio-political landscape of interwar Britain, Woolf's decision to write a deliberate failure is radical, if sometimes puzzling. Although this idea emerged during the drafting of *The*

<sup>1</sup> As Sarah Cole comments, "Above all, what has changed, I think, is that by the 1930s Woolf had been betrayed by her male modernist peers, many of whom had come to embrace fascism and other authoritarian ideals" (263), including Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, and Yeats.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed survey of literature and politics in the 1930s see Samuel Lynn Hynes's *The Auden Generation*.

<sup>3</sup> "And I have entirely remodelled my 'Essay'. Its to be an Essay-Novel, called the Pargiters—& its to take in everything, sex, education, life &c; & come, with the most powerful & agile leaps, like a chamois across precipices from 1880 to here & now" (D 4 129).





*Pargiters*, later renamed *The Years*, the concept of the deliberate failure can be extended to Woolf's final, posthumously published novel *Between the Acts* (1941) and the ideas and theories she was nuancing in her late diaries and letters. Extensive work has been carried out to place Woolf and the Bloomsbury intelligentsia in a socio-political and historical context; however, my essay turns specifically to the unexplored idea of the deliberate failure in relation to the interwar years and Woolf's experiments with art and politics at this time.<sup>4</sup>

Woolf's growing interest in the relationship between art and politics in the interwar years prompted her to write her two most politically and formally experimental novels. The deliberate failures I trace in *The Years* and *Between the Acts* include the failure to provide a central authorial voice, the failure to maintain rhythm in the way she so masterfully achieved in *The Waves* (1931), and the failure to create a comprehensive sense of community. I argue that, collectively, each of these examples of failure ultimately shows Woolf resisting the sway and lure of fascism in the wake of the Second World War. I end by considering to what extent Woolf's late work can truly be considered a deliberate failure; whilst the formal arrangement of her work, especially when coupled with her disdain for the 'loud speaker strain' of propaganda, certainly shows deliberate gaps and fissures in syntax, and repetitive and clichéd language, this surely amounts to Woolf's most radical and comprehensive critique of fascism, didacticism and totalizing language (*Essays of Virginia Woolf* [E] 6 272). The result is a thorough meditation on the relationship between European fascism and art.

#### ***Textual Repetition and the Repetition of Global War***

In a diary entry from 1938, Woolf describes the contemporary moment of disenchantment as "1914 but without even the illusion of 1914" (D 5 170). This oft-quoted diary entry is emblematic of the mood of late modernism; it captures the overwhelming sense of history as consisting of cyclical acts of violence and aggression. It also seems to suggest that the quasi-religious faith in pacifism which Woolf and her Bloomsbury contemporaries shared during World War I had, by the 1930s and the onset of the Spanish Civil War, become obsolete. While Woolf maintained her pacifist stance, despite the attitudes of those around her changing drastically in the interwar years, her diaries show a growing wariness towards all forms of political rhetoric and organizations. As John Whittier-Ferguson notes, "[w]ith the slow, excruciatingly evident return of war over the course of the 1930s, repetition rather than surprise becomes newly significant in the aesthetic landscape" (9). Repetition, as well as clichés, banality, and discordant rhythms, become quintessential features of Woolf's late work. Characters in *The Years* and *Between the Acts* use trite and repetitive language where they are unable to communicate the levity of their historical moment; the tragedy is that repetition, though it tries to fill the gaps and silences in conversations, fails to alleviate the strain of impending violence which undercuts both novels.

Whittier-Ferguson also postulates that, in Woolf's late fiction, "she forces us to consider the ordinary and the unredeemed, the repetitive, the banal, the common bits and pieces of the languaged world" (26). Where Woolf's earlier work traces character development and personal and communal transformation, *The Years* and *Between the Acts* leave their readers with "scraps, orts and fragments" (*Between the Acts* [BTA] 169) of characters and conversations. In both novels, Woolf links the socio-political failures of government policy to prevent war with the failure of conversation and language to convey the magnitude of personal and communal suffering. Language and violence become inseparable in both of Woolf's late novels. Woolf's deliberate inclusion of scraps, orts and fragments, and her refusal to offer an alternative to repetition and clichéd language, shows her thorough engagement with the relationship between

politics and art throughout the 1930s. In *Between the Acts*, Woolf writes that,

Giles nicked his chair into position with a jerk. Thus only could he show his irritation, his rage with old fogies who sat and looked at views over coffee and cream when the whole of Europe—over there—was bristling like.... He had no command of metaphor. (BTA 49).

This scene illuminates the impossibility of making language communicate one's innermost thoughts and feelings. Giles resorts to jerky and strained movements to convey his irritation at the older generation who remain immune from, and disinterested in, current global affairs. Moreover, Giles embodies the attitude of a new generation of militant young men across Europe. Woolf watched these attitudes gain momentum around her and, eventually, lead to her nephew's death in the Spanish Civil War on 18 July 1937. This personal loss had a profound impact on her writing thereon after. In a letter from her nephew, Julian Bell, to his brother, Quentin, in 1936, Julian writes that "[i]t's too late for democracy and reason and persuasion and writing to the New Statesman, and Virginia signing letters saying its all a pity. The only real choices now are to submit or fight" (Julian Bell qtd. in Lee 667). The scene in *Between the Acts* depicting the old fogies drinking coffee and cream only days before the outbreak of the Second World War shows Woolf's engagement with questions concerning action and inaction, and politics and art, during this period. She experienced immense artistic and political conflict during the interwar years; she was acutely aware of the criticisms herself and the Bloomsbury intelligentsia were facing in the British press, yet she was "more and more convinced that it [was the writer's] duty to catch Hitler in his home haunts and prod him if even with only the end of an old inky pen" (*Selected Letters* [SE] 425). Giles' concern that he has no command of metaphor is equaled by Woolf who, though convinced it was her duty as an artist to interrogate fascist ideologies if even with only the end of an old inky pen, was also experiencing doubts about her ability to merge politics with fiction.<sup>5</sup> For Woolf, perhaps there was no longer any *use* for metaphor. By failing to give Giles a command of metaphor, Woolf exposes a new and urgent problem arising for Giles' generation. Language, in fraught global and political moments, becomes either strained and clichéd or absent altogether.

Critics have highlighted the 1930s as the decade which saw a revival in the pageant across British literature. Modernist writers such as T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, and Woolf were experimenting with the pageant form to analyze and undo the versions of history and nationalism they promoted. Jed Esty notes that, "Like Eliot and Forster, Woolf experiments with pageantry in an effort to reestablish the nationalism of shared experiences (pastoral memory) as against the nationalism of shared goals (imperial mission)" (90). The broken rhythm of the music in Miss La Trobe's pageant undermines the traditionally stable and linear structure of English pageants and their triumphalist retelling of historical narratives. During the pageant "[t]he tune changed; snapped; broke; jagged. Foxtrot was it? Jazz? Anyhow the rhythm kicked, reared, snapped short" (BTA 164). Rather than provide a harmonious accompaniment for the pageant, the music carries with it implications of violence. Words like "jagged," "kicked" and "reared" show the failure of music to smooth over and distract from history's violence. Moreover, the actors in Miss La Trobe's pageant are liable to forget their lines and miss their cues. These failures add to the pageant's amateurish, staccato, and often uncomfortable atmosphere. More often than not the audience is left staring at an empty stage or gazing out into the fields beyond; the actors and actresses lack synchronicity, and the pageant becomes a tedious event to endure. Jessica Berman notes a similar narrative of discordance

<sup>4</sup> I am thinking specifically here of Alex Zwerdling's seminal work, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (1986). See also: Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (2003).

<sup>5</sup> She expresses these doubts in a letter to her nephew Julian Bell on 28 June 1936: "Unfortunately, politics gets between me and fiction. I feel I must write something when this book is over - something vaguely political; doubtless worthless, certainly useless" (SE 376).

at work in Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938) writing that, "*Three Guineas* broaches the political by way of, rather than in spite of, its incoherence" (41). Here, Berman responds to criticisms of *Three Guineas* at the time as being politically ineffectual and formally confused by suggesting that 'incoherence' is a deliberate formal measure in Woolf's writing. In *Between the Acts*, the incoherence of Miss La Trobe's pageant is part of Woolf's broader aim to dismantle the historical processes and political ideologies which have created impending war for Britain. By failing to answer questions in the novel, such as whether the music in the pageant is foxtrot or jazz, Woolf illuminates the impossibility, and perhaps the undesirability, of meaning-making in the present day.

Both *The Years* and *Between the Acts* reveal moments of strain, miscommunication and repetition as deliberate political decisions; since language and rhythm *must* fail, readers are able to glimpse the lengths Woolf travels in order to show even a fleeting moment of shared affinity. In *The Years*, Woolf is concerned with how war and violence impinge on civilian life and civilian's use of language. Thomas Davis writes that "*The Years* trains its eye on the traces such events leave on the everyday and, indeed, detects the ways these past histories give form and shape to daily life in the present" (8). Woolf wrote about the incoming Second World War as unique in its proximity to civilian life. In "The Leaning Tower" she observes that "[Walter] Scott never saw the sailors drowning at Trafalgar; Jane Austen never heard the cannon roar at Waterloo. Neither of them heard Napoleon's voice as we hear Hitler's voice as we sit at home of an evening" (E 6 261). With the invention of the radio and loudspeaker, war was closer to the home front than ever before. Woolf wondered, and feared, what affects the constant stream of news and violence would have on society and relationships.

In the present day chapter of *The Years*, Peggy speculates on the conversations about to unfold at a family gathering. Peggy predicts that,

Now they'll talk about being children; climbing trees in the back garden [...] and how they shot somebody's cats. Each person had a certain line laid down in their minds, she thought, and along it came the same old sayings. One's mind must be criss-crossed like the palm of one's hand. (TY 340)

Peggy's expectations for the gathering show that language, as it stands, is automatic, world-weary and bordering on subconscious. The nuances and idiosyncrasies of character have been dampened by repeated violence and political tension; clichés and repetitive phrases have been woven into the fabric of human existence by centuries of global conflict. By describing the mind as "criss-crossed like the palm of one's hand," Peggy illustrates the back-and-forth nature of conversation and, as an extension, national thought during the interwar period. Sarah Cole writes that, "in *Between the Acts*, the essence of the novel's (or play's) humanity is drained, so that characters become stock characters, relationships fall into clichéd categories, people act out their roles with a wearisome predictability" (279).

This is also true of *The Years*, where relationships (barely) survive on the exchange of repetitive phrases and clichés. North, musing on his time at war, concludes that "war's poppycock, poppycock. Sara's word 'poppycock' returned" (TY 356-57). Patrick's "stock phrase" is "'And you all talk [...] about money and politics.' [...] He had said it twenty times already" (380). Each character in *The Years* is built upon stock phrases which, through repetition, have lost their charm and instead become predictable and wearisome. North also notes how, in marriage, individuals communicate with worn-out phrases and repeated words. Observing Milly and her husband at the dinner table, North concludes "[t]hat was what it came to—thirty years of being husband and wife—tut tut tut—and chew-chew-chew" (TY 356). The sounds, like those in *Between the Acts*, are described as "half-inarticulate" (TY 356). In *The Years*, even the most intimate relationships have been reduced to garbled, animalistic sounds like "chew-chew-chew."

### *Patriotism from the Outside*

*Between the Acts* presents a creative and critical collaboration between the pageant's orchestrator, Miss La Trobe, and Woolf. Both Miss La Trobe and Woolf are branded as outsiders of their respective societies; Woolf, a self-educated woman and artist, and an advocate for her figurative "Society of Outsiders,"<sup>6</sup> and Miss La Trobe, a woman described as being from foreign ancestry. As Woolf asserted in *Three Guineas*, the outsiders find themselves in a unique position to analyze and critique the representations of history, patriarchy and patriotism from which they have been excluded.<sup>7</sup> In *Between the Acts*, Miss La Trobe and Woolf use their 'outsiderdom' to expand the reader's understanding of history and belonging. However, it is important for Woolf that these notions of history and belonging resist essentialism. The versions of history offered in both *The Years* and *Between the Acts* are full of gaps, confusion and violence, and Woolf deliberately fails to provide a unifying rhythm to conduct her retelling of English history. Miss La Trobe's pageant, with its chaotic and discordant rhythm, shows Woolf experimenting with community dynamics and the community's capacity for self-reflexivity. Alice Yaeger Kaplan, drawing from Walter Benjamin, claims that "Symbiosis and oceanic feeling are produced in fascism's 'gathering' stages—produced in its rhythms, the intonations.... What was liberating in aesthetic terms can look dangerous as soon as it is socially conceived" (13). With the imminence of the Second World War, questions about fascist rhythms and symbiosis felt newly important to Woolf and the political Left, and Woolf became deeply suspicious of rhythms which subsumed individuals into a unanimous whole.

From *The Waves* (1931) onward, Woolf had struggled to "keep the individual & the sense of things coming over & over again & yet changing" (Woolf qtd. in Marder 219). Woolf knew that political stasis was inconceivable, and yet she wanted to maintain a sense of individual autonomy and freedom from political organizations. Jean Radford notes that, in Miss La Trobe's historical pageant, "triumphalist history is staged [...] as a construction, a story line whose authority is subverted as characters forget their lines, the audience interpolates their comments, and the natural world disrupts the human" (37). The rhythm of the pageant is undermined by missed lines and cues and by the sounds of the natural world drowning out the oppressive noise of the gramophone. After the failure of Miss La Trobe's pageant, Woolf writes: "[t]hen suddenly, as the illusion petered out, the cows took up the burden.... The cows annihilated the gap; bridged the distance; filled the emptiness and continued the emotion" (BTA 126).

Woolf and other liberal thinkers in the 1930s came to associate the gramophone with politicians and the loudspeaker, making it significant that the gramophone in Miss La Trobe's pageant is so clunky and unpredictable.<sup>8</sup> Rather than unite the audience, the voice issuing from the gramophone leaves the audience more confused and dispersed than before the play began. The cows, representing the natural world, offer a different kind of historical continuum. Beyond the loudspeakers and the militaristic constructions of history the cows remain as they always have been; outside of the oppressive linearity of present time, they speak to more personal and idiosyncratic notions of Englishness. In a letter to Ethel Smyth, Woolf writes, "Of course I'm 'patriotic': that is English, the language, farms, dogs, people: only we must enlarge the imagination, and take stock of the emotion" (7 June 1938, letter from Virginia Woolf to Ethel Smyth, SE 403). While Woolf's relationship with patriotism and national identity were far from straightforward, she took pleasure and pride in some small corners of English heritage. The failure of

<sup>6</sup> See *Three Guineas*.

<sup>7</sup> In *Three Guineas* Woolf writes: "When he says, as history proves that he has said, and may say again, 'I am fighting to protect our country' and thus seeks to rouse [a woman's] patriotic emotion, [the woman] will ask herself, 'What does "our country" mean to me an outsider?' To decide this she will analyse the meaning of patriotism in her own case" (123).

<sup>8</sup> Woolf explores these ideas in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" (216-19). *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. 2008. 216-19.

Miss La Trobe's play does not wholly condemn patriotism but asks the reader, as Woolf also does in *Three Guineas*, to think critically about the construction of history and find out what patriotism means for the individual, and particularly the outsider.

### **“O that our human pain could here have ending!”<sup>9</sup>**

The endings of both *The Years* and *Between the Acts* are more deliberately ambivalent than any of Woolf's previous novels; they make the reader work hard, often with no immediate or obvious reward, to glimpse even a fleeting moment of optimism or hope for the future. Berman rightly notes that “*The Waves* is [the] direct antecedent” of *Between the Acts* (147). Berman identifies “the kind of reconstruction of intertwined notions of self and society, community and nation that goes on in *Between the Acts*” as a “constant preoccupation from the twenties on” (120-21). The endings of both novels deliberately fail to present an overtly celebratory portrait of communality and society; by the 1930s, Woolf still believed in the transformative politics of multiplicity, but more than ever she realized that these moments would be, and perhaps *should* be, impermanent.

For Woolf, the idea that unity should be impermanent is interlinked with her anti-fascist politics. Much of what Woolf wrote in the 1930s referenced the imminence of war and the fear of living under a dictatorship. In a letter to her friend Ethel Smyth, Woolf writes: “what I can't abide is the man who wishes to convert other men's minds; that tampering with beliefs seems to me impertinent, insolent, corrupt beyond measure” (18 May 1931; SE 285). The man which Woolf is likely referring to here is Aldous Huxley. In her diary she describes the dilemma of the artist as “[a] very difficult problem; this transition business. And the burden of something that I won't call propaganda. I have a horror of the Aldous novel: that must be avoided” (D 4 281; Woolf also qtd. in Andrews 64). Woolf was firm in her belief that art, though it needed to follow politics, should avoid the didacticism and propaganda that was contaminating political discourses and literature in the 1930s. Charles Andrews writes that Woolf's “desire for politically engaged literature that would sacrifice neither politics nor artistry appears to be [her] biggest intellectual challenge during the 1930s” (64). This challenge is something which, rather than ignore or try to overcome, Woolf weaves into the form of her novels. By doing so, Woolf shows that the relationship between art and politics, though complex and challenging, is necessary during times of political conflict.

The extensive revisions which *The Years* underwent is testament to the difficulty Woolf found in combining both granite and rainbow, fact and vision, without slipping into a polemical style of writing.<sup>10</sup> In the final present-day chapter, North grapples with the division between the individual and the community, a division which Woolf deliberately fails to resolve by the end of the novel. North wonders what it would be like to “keep the emblems and tokens of North Pargiter—the man Maggie laughs at; the Frenchman holding his hat; but at the same time spread out, make a new ripple in human consciousness, be the bubble and the stream” (TY 389-90). In the 1930s, Woolf was often preoccupied with the kinds of questions North is asking here; how does one experience a sense of affinity and community without being carried along a stream of totalizing and fascist narratives? In *Three Guineas*, Woolf thought it her mission to “[f]ind out new ways of approaching ‘the public’; single it into separate people instead of massing it into one monster, gross in body, feeble in mind” (113). The ‘monster’ Woolf describes could represent a host of authoritarian figures; in one of the only emotional outbursts in the novel, Eleanor describes Hitler as a ‘damned bully’ (TY, 313). North's desire to ‘be the bubble and the stream’, to retain a distinct sense of self whilst being part of the wider world, is a desire which

<sup>9</sup> See BTA 162.

<sup>10</sup> In her essay “The New Biography,” Woolf writes: “Nor can we name the biographer whose art is subtle and bold enough to present that queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow” (SE 100).

Woolf deliberately leaves unfulfilled. Thus, Woolf seems to suggest that the best we can do is to hold onto rare moments of solidity and purposefulness.

The ending of *Between the Acts* centers on Isa's belief that “it was time someone invented a new plot” (BTA 194). Woolf asks to what extent Miss La Trobe's pageant succeeds in making her audience think about their place in history and their potential to steer society in a more democratic direction. Woolf was also interested in new plots during the writing of *Between the Acts*, she wanted to find “a new critical method—something swifter & lighter & more colloquial & yet intense” (D 5 298). Woolf achieves this “new critical method” by exposing the myths of history and linearity upon which the traditional pageant is based. She stages the novel as a traditional pageant and uses its supposedly light and colloquial tone to critique the patriotic and celebratory rhetoric of Englishness which reproduces war and violence. Questions about the hidden meaning of Miss La Trobe's pageant reverberate up to the end of the novel. Mrs Swithin asks, “‘What did it mean?’ and added ‘The peasants; the kings; the fool and’ (she swallowed) ourselves?’” (BTA 191-92). The fact that Mrs Swithin has to swallow before she asks how “ourselves,” the audience, have been positioned in the pageant's slippery retelling of English history, shows that the question of individuality and community is still a difficult one to answer. Similarly, when the Reverend G. W. Streatfield is called upon to close the pageant, he is reluctant to offer a precise reading of Miss La Trobe's intentions. The breeze outside rises and Streatfield “was heard saying: ‘What.’ To that word he added another ‘Message’; and at last a whole sentence emerged; not comprehensible; say rather audible. ‘What message,’ it seemed he was asking, ‘was our pageant meant to convey?’” (171-72). Then “the words were repeated—‘what meaning, or message, this pageant was meant to convey?’” (172). The closing speech is laden with apology and uncertainty: “‘unless I mistake,’” “‘am I too presumptuous?,’” “‘I am not a critic’” (BTA 172). The rare moments where it seems Streatfield might be on the cusp of revelation or profundity are undercut by stammerings and self-doubt. Standing in front of Miss La Trobe's audience, he cannot fulfill his role as “their representative spokesman” (BTA 171). When Mrs. Swithin asks Isa whether she believes that “‘we act different parts but are the same?’,” Isa responds by saying “‘Yes[.][...] ‘No,’ she added. It was Yes, No. Yes, yes, yes, the tide rushed out embracing. No, no, no, it contracted’” (BTA 193). The ending of *Between the Acts* resists totalizing narratives. Questioning and uncertainty show movement of thought and opportunities for moments of connection; movement, for Woolf, was more desirable than the cyclical patterns of political speech she heard both on the wireless and in her own Liberal circle. Importantly, the ending of the novel fails to present an authoritative, collective voice to bring the audience together.

### **Conclusion**

Woolf's experiments with art and politics in the 1930s show her actively challenging the attacks on the Bloomsbury as a “cult of individuality,” which appeared regularly in newspapers and reviews. In *Men Without Art* (1934), Wyndham Lewis was typically scornful of Woolf's style of writing. He attacks “Mrs Woolf” for writing from “the security of the private mind” amid nationwide social and political upheaval (Lewis qtd. in Lee 658). Similarly, in a 1932 review of *The Waves* (1931), contemporary critic Winifred Holtby prophesied that Woolf's “range will remain limited, her contact with life delicate and profound rather than comprehensive” and “she is unlikely ever to command the allegiance of a wide contemporary public” (Holtby qtd. in Wood 10). In contrast, *The Years*, along with *Between the Acts*, sees Woolf bridging the gap between art and politics. Both novels demonstrate how the effects of global conflict become most clear at the level of everyday language and speech. Woolf in her late writing is able to make politics speak not through a loudspeaker but through form. She takes every opportunity to present her characters questioning their contemporary moment and failing to master language. These deliberate failures are necessary for Woolf's political project: resisting fascism, political organization, and damaging rhetoric meant showing the dispersal and multiplicity of individuals in both



novels. Their deeply ambivalent endings show a deliberate refusal to coalesce into fascistic and authoritarian narratives of history and national identity. Woolf challenges the very necessity and desirability of these narratives. Freeing herself from them through the novels' failures, she better illuminates the rare yet valuable moments of hope during periods of political uncertainty.

**Megan Pollard**  
Independent Scholar

#### Works Cited

- Andrew, Charles. "'beauty, simplicity and peace': Faithful Pacifism, Activist Writing, and *The Years*." *Virginia Woolf Writing the World: Selected Papers from the Twenty-fourth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Pamela L. Caughie and Diana L. Swanson. Clemson: Clemson UP, 2015. 63-68.
- Berman, Jessica. "Virginia Woolf." *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- . "Intimate and Global: Ethical Domains from Woolf to Rhys." *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.
- Cole, Sarah. "Patterns of Violence: Virginia Woolf in the 1930s." *At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence in England and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012. 197-286.
- Cuddy-Keane, Melba. *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Davis, Thomas. "The Historical Novel at History's End: Virginia Woolf's *The Years*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 60.1 (Spring 2014): 1-26.
- Esty, Jed. "Insular Rites: Virginia Woolf and The Late Modernist Pageant-Play." *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004. 54-107.
- Hynes, Samuel. *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s*. London: The Bodley Head, 1976.
- Kaplan, Alice Yaeger. *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature and French Intellectual Life*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.
- Lee, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1996.
- Marder, Herbert. *The Measure of Life: Virginia Woolf's Last Years*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000.
- Radford, Jean. "Late Modernism and the Politics of History." *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics, and History*. Ed. Maroula Joannou. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999. 33-45.
- Whittier-Ferguson, John. "Introduction: Virginia Woolf's Late Style." *Mortality and Form in Late Modernist Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014. 1-30.
- Wood, Alice. "Introducing Late Woolf." *Virginia Woolf's Late Cultural Criticism: The Genesis of 'The Years,' 'Three Guineas' and 'Between the Acts.'* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 1-26.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Between the Acts*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998.
- . *The Years*. Ed. Hermione Lee. 1999.
- . *Three Guineas*. 1977.
- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Vol IV: 1931-1935*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell assisted by Andrew McNeillie. London: The Hogarth Press, 1982.
- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume V: 1936-1941*. Edited by Anne Olivier Bell assisted by Andrew McNeillie. London: The Hogarth Press, 1984.
- . *The Essays of Virginia Woolf Volume VI: 1933-1941*. Ed. Stuart N. Clarke. London: The Hogarth Press, 2011.
- . *Selected Essays*. Ed. David Bradshaw. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008.
- . *Selected Letters*. Ed. Joanne Trautmann Banks. London: Random House 2008.
- Zwerdling, Alex. *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986.

## Book Reviews

### 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

kllevenback@att.net



#### REVIEW

##### VIRGINIA WOOLF:

##### CRITICAL AND PRIMARY SOURCES, 1975-2014

Edited by Vara S. Neverow, Jeanne Dubino, Kathryn Simpson, and Gill Lowe. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 4 Vols. 1,372 pages. \$815 cloth.

The four-volume set *Virginia Woolf: Critical and Primary Sources* is a monumental work of scholarship. It collects representative essays from 1975 to 2014 across a wide range of methodologies and interests. The collected essays are not presented as an authoritative canon but rather as signposts for various avenues through Woolf scholarship, highlights of the major trends and suggestions for further research. As such, it is a crucial record of the state of the field for the past four decades and a guide for future research opportunities. Some questions linger regarding the usability and accessibility of this collection, but it holds unquestionable value as a documentary history of Woolf studies since the mid-1970s and of changing fashions in literary scholarship more broadly.

Volume One, edited by Vara S. Neverow, covers the years 1975 to 1984, a period when Woolf's status as a quintessential modernist writer and luminary of world literature was far less secure than today. Neverow notes the vital roles played by Jane Marcus and other feminist critics in fighting for Woolf's recognition in the canon. This period witnessed an explosion of interest in Bloomsbury and Woolf's vitality within the Bloomsbury Group, and access to Woolf's personal life was expanded greatly through the publication of her diaries and letters beginning in 1975. Key themes that marked scholarship from the period include attention to her mental health, feminism, and lesbianism, as well as the fraught and contentious debates about her political engagement. Berenice A. Carroll's essay, "'To crush him in our own country': The Political Thought of Virginia Woolf," originally published in *Feminist Studies* in 1978, begins with the now cliché (and quaint-sounding) quotations by Leonard Woolf and Quentin Bell dismissing Woolf's political seriousness, and Carroll offers many rejoinders to this dismissal from a wealth of Woolf's writing that show how she "was unusually well informed in matters of history and politics" (35). Returning to an essay such as Carroll's is a helpful reminder about how far we have come in understanding the range of Woolf's thought. Along with other classic essays by James Naremore on historical fiction and *The Years* and Alex Zwerdling on *Between the Acts* and war, Volume One registers the important efforts to establish Woolf as a materially grounded artist who explicitly dealt with political realities and her historical context—work that forms the basic assumptions for many Woolf scholars today.



The overlooked dimensions of Woolf's work during the period from 1975-1984 are also intriguing, and Volume One supplies glimpses of elements that will burgeon in later scholarship. Neverow points out several areas of neglect, including the minimal engagement with Woolf's essays and nonfiction as well as her first two novels. By way of response, Neverow includes some of the few exceptions to these gaps: Beth Rigel Daughterty on the spat between Woolf and Arnold Bennett, Thomas S. W. Lewis on Woolf's biographical writing, Marcia McClintock Folsom on teaching *A Room of One's Own*, and, for the neglected novels, Avrom Fleishman on *The Voyage Out* and Susan Merrill Squier on *Night and Day*. These essays function as early forays into aspects of Woolf's writing that would recur as scholars investigated works beyond the most heavily studied such as *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Most intriguing, perhaps, is the relative dearth of scholarly attention to *Orlando*, which Neverow describes as a book "strangely neglected in scholarship of the period despite the rise of feminist and lesbian literary approaches" (12). Discussions of *Orlando* from the time tended to focus on its playfulness with the genre of biography rather than its queer and feminist politics, and Louise DeSalvo's essay on the relationship between Woolf and Vita Sackville-West included in the collection is typical in its mentioning of *Orlando* only in passing rather than as an artful response to that relationship. The story that emerges from these selected essays is one of scholarship striving to establish Woolf as a major writer whose personal life, political thought, and creative expression are all worthy of serious attention.

In Volume Two, edited by Jeanne Dubino and covering the years 1985 to 1994, we see the exponential growth of Woolf's academic popularity. She becomes, as Dubino puts it, "Virginia Woolf Superstar"—at least in the United States (1). If the previous decade involved a struggle for recognition, the early 1990s showed a convergence of academic fashion with the interests of Woolf studies. The year 1991 was pivotal for Woolf studies in the US as Mark Hussey organized the inaugural Virginia Woolf conference and planted seeds for the *Woolf Studies Annual* that would be first published in 1995. With regard to the UK, Dubino records a different story marked by "typical British resentment toward the author who was regarded as Shakespeare's sister in the United States" (1). That persistent attitude notwithstanding, the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s were essential for establishing the academic structures that have enabled Woolf studies to flourish in its current form, and Dubino perceptively identifies five key categories of interest that were hallmarks of the field in this period: "biography and Bloomsbury; feminism and sexuality; genre and form; theory and literary periodic action, namely modernism and postmodernism; and culture and politics" (3). The selected essays illustrate these areas, and it is worth noting that variations on these five areas remain the core concerns of the field to this day, despite many new theoretical and conceptual approaches and significant findings within Woolf's archival resources.

Attention to Woolf's life and Bloomsbury context was enabled by scholarly work in important Woolf archives such as the University of Sussex Library, the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, and the Woolfs' personal library at Washington State University. Essays by Mark Hussey on the Woolfs' early fiction, David Eberley on *The Years* and incest trauma, Emily Dalgarno on "A Sketch of the Past," and Elizabeth Abel on father-daughter relationships in *To the Lighthouse* are among the selected works that read Woolf's writings for biographical insights, demonstrating the ways she harvested her own personal experiences to fuel her art. Dubino counts nine articles and essays in this period focused on *Moments of Being*, and this body of work along with the essays included in Volume Two demonstrate more than just data-gathering of facts about Woolf's life; they show academic interest in the ways Woolf blurred the lines between fiction and non-fiction, creating "a new kind of aesthetics" and approach to life-writing (4).

This recognition of Woolf's formal experimentation and blending of genres is crucial to several of the other essays in the volume, including

Anne Fernald's discussion of "personal criticism," Melba Cuddy-Keane's examination of political comedy in *Between the Acts*, and Christopher Reed's analysis of formalism and Bloomsbury aesthetics. Particularly emblematic of this decade and its debates about high theory and the tensions between modernism and postmodernism is Pamela L. Caughie's chapter on Flush excerpted from *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism* (1991), where interpreting Woolf's relationship to the highbrow/popular cultural divide through postmodernist aesthetic theories leverages a fresh response to her supposed elitism. These theoretical interests are matched by approaches that consider the politics of Woolf's fiction through nationalist, imperialist, and postcolonial theories. Well-known essays such as Jane Marcus's "Britannia Rules *The Waves*" and Gillian Beer's "The Island and the Aeroplane: The Case of Virginia Woolf" are included, and both contribute in their unique ways to investigating the textures and meanings of Woolf's politics, rather than arguing, as work from the previous decade had done, that Woolf ought to be taken as political at all.

By the timeframe of Volume Three, 1995-2004, Woolf's critical reputation is fully established and coincides with the broader institutionalization of modernist studies in which Woolf cuts a significant figure. This third phase begins with the initial publication of *Woolf Studies Annual* and concludes with a special issue on Woolf in *Modern Fiction Studies*. It is also the period of several landmark works in Woolf studies, including Hermoine Lee's indispensable biography of Woolf (1996), Mark Hussey's *Virginia Woolf: A to Z* (1995), and Brenda R. Silver's *Virginia Woolf Icon* (1999). Kathryn Simpson's introduction to the volume also situates the interests of Woolf studies within the growth of modernist studies. The creation of the Modernist Studies Association and the Space Between Society with their respective journals made this era especially exciting for modernism, and Woolf bulked large in those academic ventures. The five areas of interest identified by Dubino in Volume Two remain crucial to Woolf Studies during the decade covered by Volume Three, but rather than fighting for recognition or relevance, Woolf is now regarded, in Simpson's description, "as a writer very much aware of and involved with the social, political, economic and cultural shifts taking place in the first decades of the twentieth century, not only in Britain but on the global stage" (2).

Woolf's politics are a dominant theme of Volume Three, for the ways she gives "representation of and response to war, elegy, mourning, trauma and loss" as a "feminist, pacifist and critic of empire and imperialism" but also for her less salutary positions that make "her engagements with these issues," as Simpson notes, "often complex, contradictory and sometimes perplexing" (2). The selected essays demonstrate this complexity well. Mark A. Wollaeger, for instance, gives a thick cultural history of race and globalization in *The Voyage Out* through the ways Woolf describes Rachel Vinrace's interactions with postcards of colonized women. And, Maren Linett supplies a "nuanced inquiry into Woolf's often conflicting and sometimes troubling political positions"—particularly with regard to competing strains of antifascism and antisemitism (183). The neglect of *Orlando* in previous eras is corrected not only by attending to the biographical and personal dimensions of Woolf's gender and sexuality but by assessing the rich politics of the novel, as in Karen Kaivola's historicization of androgyny as a site where Woolf examines racial and national identity. Such depictions, Kaivola argues, are not without problematic elements of racialist othering and acceptance of patriarchal gender categories. A hallmark of the essays in Volume Three, then, is the willingness to parse Woolf's viewpoints and expressions without needing to defend her status. Her work has proven itself worthy of our attention, and scholarship showed a readiness to combine both affirmation and critique.

In the final volume of the set, encompassing 2005 to 2014, Gill Lowe describes the proliferation of Woolf studies and the "richly diverse theories, perspectives and approaches" that characterize this time—a lengthy list that includes fresh takes on familiar areas such as gender

and sexuality alongside newly emergent interests in digital humanities, ecological criticism, transnationalism, genetic criticism, innovative pedagogies, ableism and disability studies, and multimedia, among many others. The selected essays capture the diversity of these interests, but perhaps even more than the previous volumes gives a sense of scratching the surface rather than comprehensively covering the field. So many new methodologies and topics of interest have emerged in this decade, and the volume gestures toward this wealth without foreclosing its boundaries.

Interesting guideposts for the breadth of the field are plentiful in Volume Four, and especially engaging are the many essays that exhibit a fusion of methodologies to explore less well-illuminated corners of Woolf's oeuvre. David Bradshaw, for instance, fuses animal studies with suffragette and Irish revolutionary history to consider how Woolf's multifaceted references to birds give insight into her political expression. Evelyn T. Chan uses philosophical ethics and medical humanities to historicize Woolf's grappling with medicine in *Mrs. Dalloway* and ultimately to theorize her sophisticated response to problems with professional healthcare that continue to plague us today. J. Ashley Foster draws on the interdisciplinary field of peace studies to argue that Woolf's multi-layered response to the Spanish Civil War in *Three Guineas* supplies resources for current peace activism. And, Laura Marcus contextualizes Woolf's use of telescopes and other optical technologies to show how visual apparatuses were crucial to her experimental prose. The final chapter in Volume Four is a multi-authored introduction to the Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP) which launched in 2014 and remains an ongoing work in progress. Its goal of becoming "a 'super collection' of books and publishing histories" remains active (321). Concluding with a look toward the expansive possibilities of digital scholarship is a worthwhile gesture, especially since the decade after 2014 has continued to flourish in that direction. These are just a few of the many interdisciplinary approaches represented in Volume Four, and together the essays in this volume suggest the extraordinary range of critical approaches enabled by Woolf's work as well as the many ways her thought can enliven our own contending with contemporary issues.

Pointing toward the digital at the end of the collection does, however, raise a spectre that haunts the entirety of *Virginia Woolf: Critical and Primary Sources*. That is, in an age where many researchers at all levels will rely most heavily on digital search tools and online databases, what is the ultimate usefulness of this massive four-volume set? The likelihood of undergraduates, the "common reader" frequently invoked in this collection, or even professional scholars turning to the essays in these bound volumes rather than their more readily available electronic versions seems slim. These are elegantly designed and sturdy books with a price tag that presumably destines them for library collections rather than personal shelves, and in areas where library resources are scarce, even this possibility might be forsaken in favor of electronic subscriptions for acquiring selections of the collected essays. This is a monumental publication, but its scale threatens its usability and accessibility.

And yet, I do hope that this collection can find a sizable readership and belonging in as many places as possible. Its most significant value is as an introduction to Woolf Studies, meaningful for experienced scholars but essential for new voices in the field. In reading through these volumes, I found myself wishing that I would have had a set with this scope when I was a graduate student becoming initiated in Woolf studies, writing a dissertation and attending my first Woolf conference. Having field experts—each of whom were vital to Woolf scholarship in these decades—curate a representative reading list of the major trends supplies an invaluable resource for entering the field. Besides the selected essays, Volume One includes a "chronology of the Woolf community" that describes the origins of every Woolf studies periodical as well as brief histories of the conferences on Woolf in the US, UK, and Canada from 1974 to the present. *Virginia Woolf: Critical and Primary Sources* is a

monumental record of this diverse and vibrant field, and at its best it will supply generative resources for comprehending the past, present and future of Woolf studies.

Charles Andrews  
Whitworth University



## REVIEW

### *VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MYTHIC METHOD*

by Amy C. Smith. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2022. 160 pages.  
\$99.95 cloth; \$49.95, e-book.

In twenty-first-century America, the cluster of extremist right-wing political entities familiarly known as the "alt-right" routinely appropriates the classical texts and artwork of Greco-Roman antiquity to legitimize the work of hate groups promulgating white supremacy, misogyny, patriarchal values, and colonialist imperialism (McCoskey). Such a development would no doubt have seemed unsurprising and perhaps even predictable and all too familiar to Virginia Woolf, who herself drew on myth to oppose similarly reactionary and dangerous views during the years generally associated with literary modernism (Smith 16). In *Virginia Woolf's Mythic Method*, a slim volume published as part of Ohio State University Press's "Classical Memories/Modern Identities" series, Amy C. Smith examines Virginia Woolf's use of myth to critique her society in three of her most widely taught novels. Smith, an associate professor at Lamar University, is perhaps best known to Woolf scholars as the organizer of the entirely virtual Virginia Woolf Conference hosted by Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, in 2022. In this book, she contends that Woolf's knowledge of preclassical oral literature inspired her to deploy in her fiction a paratactic method that affords the reader (like the audience of an epic poem) plenty of space to co-create meaning:

In contrast to the syntactic storytelling common in written literature, which tells the reader a story by providing the logical connections between events and ideas, indicating the sequence and cause of events through subordination and coordination, paratactic storytelling presents the ideas and events of a story one after another without providing the logical connections that order these items [...] Parataxis thus engages the reader in more active reading, or listening, practices and counteracts the numbing effects of hegemonic discourse. (4-5)

Smith notes that Susan Stanford Friedman has identified parataxis as a distinguishing characteristic of modernist literature.

But not all modernists are alike, as readers see when Smith pointedly contrasts Woolf's "mythic method" with T. S. Eliot's. In contrast to Eliot's reliance on J. G. Frazer's discussion in his book *The Golden Bough* of patriarchal myths of the killing of the king, Woolf prefers the work of Jane Ellen Harrison, which celebrates community rather than a powerful male authority (Smith 9). Whereas Eliot used myth to order and control the apparent chaos of the present and both mourn and reaffirm the patriarchal hierarchies of the past, Woolf instead deploys myth to counter what Smith terms "rational materialism," defined as "the metaphysical claim that everything, including the mysteries of human consciousness and life, has a material cause, and the epistemological claim that everything can be explained rationally and that anything that falls outside this sphere is mere superstition" (12). Smith argues



that Woolf sees a necessarily unresolvable tension between rational materialism on the one hand and the mythic and irrational on the other.

Smith notes briefly that Woolf first developed her paratactic method in her short fiction (specifically “Kew Gardens” and “A Mark on the Wall”), and Woolf’s first *sustained* use of the method occurred in her 1922 novel *Jacob’s Room* (6). But Smith moves on quickly to discuss Woolf’s later and more highly regarded novels. Not surprisingly, *Mrs. Dalloway*, the subject of three of the book’s five chapters, receives the most assiduous attention in Smith’s book.

In the first chapter, Smith examines Clarissa Dalloway in the light of the Elueusinian Mysteries, Thesmophoria, and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Smith argues that Woolf revises the myth’s vision of female community organized around the mother-daughter bond and in its place offers a vision of female community rooted in the bond between lesbian women. According to Smith, Woolf also revises the myth in her novel to critique those women who are complicit in the patriarchal systems that celebrate nationalism and promote warfare—including the mature Clarissa Dalloway and Lady Rosseter (née Sally Seton).

Smith takes up Septimus Smith in the book’s second chapter, arguably the most original aspect of her argument. Septimus embodies Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of the Dionysian and demonstrates the dangers of modernity’s attempted eradication of the irrational. Smith argues that what traumatizes Septimus is World War I, “the epitome of excessive and instrumental rationality” (52). According to Smith, Septimus has so thoroughly subscribed to scientifically objective cognition that he can no longer feel and succumbs to madness. As (like Dionysus) a proponent of nonrational and mythic thinking, in his madness he resists the rationality that led to World War I and is therefore ruthlessly marginalized by modernity because of the threat he poses to the social order.

Smith catalogs the allusions to *The Odyssey* in Woolf’s portrayal of Peter Walsh and proposes that he reproduces British imperialism while ostensibly critiquing it. Peter indulges in colonial fantasies about the women he observes during his passage through the city, affording Woolf the opportunity to critique the false nostalgia of modernist primitivism: “Peter co-opts the mythic vision that could destabilize his ideological imperialist and patriarchal worldview and instead uses it to support imperialist modernity” (90).

Shifting her focus to the iconic character of Mrs. Ramsay in the book’s fourth chapter, “The Goddess in the Lighthouse,” Smith persuasively argues that the emphasis on fertility expressed by a range of goddesses—among them Demeter, Hera, and Aphrodite—inspires Mrs. Ramsay’s insistence on marriage and traditional gender roles. As is true for many mythic goddesses, for Mrs. Ramsay the good of the tribe outweighs the good of the individual. Smith rejects the scholarly debate about whether Lily absorbs or rejects Mrs. Ramsay’s essentialism and compulsory heterosexuality, endorsing instead Beth Rigel Daugherty’s view that Lily must stand outside the debate to critique her society. Lily must ultimately resist the temptation to resolve the tension between the two irreconcilable positions.

Finally, Smith contends that Woolf in her last, posthumously published novel achieves the fullest expression of her paratactic method that owes so much to classical myth. In *Between the Acts*, Woolf draws on not just Greek deities but also figures from Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Roman mythologies. Using a multiplicity of mythic allusions for individual characters, Woolf deliberately presents a vision of the world that is fragmented and ever-shifting so that she can resist the phallogocentrism and falsely totalizing “order” of fascism.

Smith’s book is unusually well researched, although her work owes perhaps more to predecessors like Madeline Moore, Evelyn Haller, and Molly Hoff than she explicitly acknowledges. What is perhaps most valuable about *Virginia Woolf’s Mythic Method* is that Smith

reinvigorates what has been falsely perceived as a tired school of criticism and renders fresh understandings of Woolf’s most commonly taught novels.

**Lisa Tyler**  
**Sinclair Community College**

#### **Work Cited**

McCoskey, Denise Eileen. “Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts: How Neo-Nazis and Ancient Greeks Met in Charlottesville.” *Origins: Historical Events in Current Perspective*. Columbus: Ohio State University, 2019. Web. 2 Jan. 2023. [origins.osu.edu/article/beware-of-greeks-bearing-gifts-how-neo-nazis-and-ancient-greeks-met-charlottesville](https://origins.osu.edu/article/beware-of-greeks-bearing-gifts-how-neo-nazis-and-ancient-greeks-met-charlottesville).



#### **REVIEW**

##### ***THE EDINBURGH COMPANION TO VIRGINIA WOOLF AND CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL LITERATURE***

Edited by Jeanne Dubino, Paulina Pająk, Catherine W. Hollis, Celiese Lypka, and Vara Neverow. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2021. 445 pages. \$230 cloth.

*The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Global Literature* takes a unique approach to exploring Woolf’s global reception and impact on human culture. What distinguishes this particular attempt from any of its predecessors in the 2000s<sup>1</sup> is its attention to relatively small countries yet to be discussed, such as Estonia, as indicated by one of its contributors, Raili Marling. The collection of essays consists of two parts: Part I deals with the reception history of Woolf—how her work has been received, albeit chiefly through translations of her work in each country or region, while Part II addresses Woolf’s long-lasting legacies handed down to contemporary global writers—how much, and what kind of influence Woolf has exercised on them, or what sort of affiliations they have formed with this literary foremother. Although there is some overlap in terms of detail—the first part is sometimes found more detailed and the second involved in an overview of reception history—this might be reasonable enough, for how things are generally received is hardly separable from how they are responded to by individuals.

Perhaps one of the ticklish problems with editing such a book with contributions by authors of diverse nationalities is how to arrange the chapters. In the case of this volume, the editors seem to have given considerable attention to fairness. Part I has its chapters organized in a roughly chronological manner, while Part II we see critiques organized in a geographically clockwise fashion—as explained in the introduction. In fact, the arrangement of chapters turns out to appear effective in terms of readability, as well as fairness. The chronological ordering enables readers to grasp an overall picture of Woolf’s reception history across nations, from her time to the present, while the geographical arrangement draws attention to the minutest differences as well as similarities between adjacent regions in terms of socio-political or cultural climate.

The combination of fairness and readability is evident in the introductory part of the book. This part provides a brief outline of each chapter, devoting proportionate space to each of the 23 chapters. In so doing, it also interrelates the chapters, knitting them into an organic whole. This

<sup>1</sup> See Caws and Luckhurst; Reinhold.

sensitive description might look quite sensible to the reader like me, those who are first daunted by the bulkiness of this volume, feeling at a Dante-esque loss as to how to cope with it—as if in deep woods—but the editors' efficient summary of the book functions as a sketch map therewith helping readers find out exact spots they hope to explore.

The title of Part I—"Planetary and Global Receptions of Woolf," indicating a worldwide reception history of Woolf—may evoke plain (and in many cases also dull) descriptions of historical facts and events in the manner of textbooks. On the contrary, the chapters in Part I are far from monotonous: they are textured and nuanced, varied and informed, in-depth and thought-provoking. Davi Pinho holds imaginary conversations with the three writers—Woolf, Kristeva, and the Brazilian writer Paulo Mendes Campos—across time and space to explore their respective socio-cultural stances as writers, especially focusing on how the latter two responded to Woolf. An intriguing kind of conversation is also found in Chapter 4, where Christina Carluccio points to long-standing dialogues between the Argentine writer Victoria Ocampo and Woolf (even after the latter's death!) as a gesture of cooperative resistance to transnational patriarchy embodied in "the monological virility of an egotistical man" (83). Also, Suzanne Bellamy reports on the possible influences of Modernism and Woolf on Australian writers and visual artists in a distinctive collage style.<sup>2</sup> Elisa Bolchi combines a historical description of how today's "Italian Woolf Renaissance" (183) has risen with a lively social network-based survey of Italian general readers' responses to Woolf. Hala Kamal insists that highly creative roles should be played by Arabian translators of Woolf, so that Woolf's feminism can be conveyed both faithfully and effectively in their androcentric culture. An ingenious operation on the side of a translator is also noted by Adriana Varga when she ascribes the successful conveyance of the subversive nature of Woolf's *Orlando* in communist Romania in 1968 to its first translator's surreptitious reference in the back cover of the book to the novel's possible allusions to the historical and political emancipation of the heroine.

Since the reception history in a particular region is inseparable from its socio-political, cultural situations, some chapters in Part I will open the reader's eyes to some unfamiliar internal conditions. Daniel Göske and Christian Weiß reveal scandalous alterations in pre-war Germany of Woolf's texts in style and even in theme according to the convenience of the publishers and their hired translators. Henrike Krause, Maria Bent, and Raili Marling disclose that great hardship "bourgeois" literary discourses, including Woolf's, had to endure under the communist regime in East Germany, Russia, and Estonia, respectively. Jeanne Dubino, in her informative study of one of the most unexplored parts of the world, sub-Saharan Africa—in terms of literary reception in its entirety—provides an illuminating reason for the high popularity of Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in the region. Its traditional "oral storytelling practices" (212) embrace a book scattered with aphoristic passages.

Part II is characterised by a presentation of roughly two ways to investigate Woolf's legacies in one specific country or two. The first group of essays gives an overview of Woolf's reception history in a country, mapping each individual writer's attempt at it. The other group focusses on one or more authors' works in the wake of Woolf, followed, in many cases, by investigations into their socio-political,

cultural backgrounds. The most typical examples for the first group can be found in Chapters 12, 13, and 18 where Lindsey Cordery explains Woolf's favorable reception in Uruguay at the foundation of "the Anglo-Uruguayan Cultural Institute" (227) in 1934, giving ample references to Woolfian Uruguayan writers. In a similar vein, Maria A. de Oliveira delineates the Brazilian discovery of Woolf along with the country's awakening to feminist movements, giving 10 Brazilian female writers' personal attempts to adopt and adapt their forerunner Woolf. Paulina Pająk prefaces the first exploration of contemporary "Polish textual dialogues with [Woolf]" (334) with a brief outline of her reception in Poland from the 1920s onward. Chapters 17 and 20 provide parallel historical explanations of Woolf's reception with an analysis of individual literary attempts. Justyna Jaguścik contextualises Chinese writers' century long struggle for female empowerment, drawing for its backdrop sketches of women's social situations as they shifted from Maoist to post-Maoist China. Also, Anne-Laure Rigeade attributes three critical attitudes—"contemporaneity, idolisation and iconisation" (371)—in France to Woolf's work and life from the 1960s onwards to the country's socio-cultural climate in each era, giving a typical example of each.

The second group of essays—beginning with the specific, to get a picture of the whole—is exemplified in Chapters 16, 19, 21, and 22. Zhongfeng Huang focusses on the contemporary Chinese writer Chen Ran's Woolfian feminist attempts to portray female experiences, as opposed to the androcentric Chinese literary circle. Monica Latham takes up three contemporary novels (two set in France, one in Australia), exploring how they employ several features of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and reorient these borrowings to depict the cultural, socio-political complexities of our post-9/11 contemporary world. Patricia Laurence draws attention to the emphases put on personal affairs in the works by two post-Woolf Irish female writers—Elizabeth Bowen and Mary Lavin—regarding them as symbolically conforming to Woolf's advice for women writers to bring to light, through delineating the private, "the problems and fissures" (397) in the public world. Bethany Layne's close look at the "Woolf-inspired biofiction" (400) by the contemporary American writer Maggie Gee highlights dangers of biofiction, as well as its possibilities in forming the popular image of Woolf's life. Hogara Matsumoto regards the Japanese female writer Yuriko Miyamoto's *Dōhyō* as an attempt to expand Woolf's literary vocation to "create a new transgressive space" (288), as is embodied by her fictional counterpart Mary Carmichael while situating the attempt in the historical context of post-WWII Japan. A unique critical perspective is introduced by Lourdes Parra-Lazcano when she draws attention to the canine protagonists of Woolf's *Flush* and Mexican writer María Luisa Puga's *Las razones del lago* as "subjects of trauma" (268), attributing their traumas to their respective socio-cultural circumstances. Catherine W. Hillis's final discussion on the quasi mother-daughter relationship (a firm literary bond) between Woolf and the contemporary North American writer Lidia Yuknavitch offers a fitting conclusion to all the preceding chapters of Part II, which equally explore cotemporary global endeavours to write in the wake of literary mother, Virginia Woolf.

As is often the case with a collection of essays by different authors, this collection comprises multiple tones of voices—from the sheer academic, to the deliberately colloquial, to the highly poetical. This element seems to correspond well with Woolf's call for speaking in one's own voice to convey what has yet to be revealed. And with this richness of the volume in various levels—in tone, approach, style—several other books with similar approaches are keenly awaited. I believe this sort of transnational collaboration, the book itself, stands as an irreplaceable literary prayer

<sup>2</sup> Editorial note: The front cover of the volume features an artwork by Suzanne Bellamy: "The Door to the Past" (2007), an embossed and etched monoprint on Fabriano Cotton Paper. The back cover is a portrait bust of Virginia Woolf by Valentina Mazzei photographed by Deborah Swain.

for world peace, especially important in such politically complex, difficult times in our contemporary world.

*Sayaka Okumura*  
*Kobe University*

#### Works Cited

- Caws, Mary Ann and Nicola Luckhurst, ed. *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- Reinhold, Natalya, ed. *Woolf Across Cultures*. New York: Pace University Press, 2004.



#### REVIEW

##### **THE SENSUOUS PEDAGOGIES OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND D. H. LAWRENCE**

by Benjamin D. Hagen. Clemson University Press, 2020.  
xii + 262 pages. \$124.87 cloth.

Benjamin Hagen's *Sensuous Pedagogies* contains many insights about Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, but at its heart it is a book by a pedagogue about pedagogy. Reading between the lines of Hagen's sensitive examinations of studentship and teaching methodologies in works by two authors who are not often read in tandem, we find a keen interest in the acts of teaching and learning and a principled set of best practices that motivate Hagen's critical attention. For instance, drawing on Lawrence's *The White Peacock*, Hagen declares that "human beings require pedagogical interference," meaning that we all need guidance in how to be the best versions of our own humanity; reflecting on Woolf's pedagogic method, he writes that her work gives us "a cue to trust others as well, including our students" (71, 96). Hagen's literary criticism arises from turning these fundamental teaching insights into a critical frame through which to revisit familiar modernist texts, finding that both authors were involved with teaching and learning, broadly speaking, throughout their literary careers.

I begin with this point partly because the book directs me to do so through its title, opening pages, structure, and arguments. This is also a good place from where to understand Hagen's critical project because it contextualizes a recent shift in the interests of the discipline at large. Hagen's book is one of a growing number of critical studies that centralize pedagogy as a literary frame beyond the purview of what is known as Critical University Studies.<sup>1</sup> This indexes a change in our professional approach to literary study, showing that we are not only interested in teaching (arguably we always were), but that insights arising from pedagogic principles are being applied in fresh ways to understand primarily literary questions. Hagen insists upon the variety of human encounters at which we learn from one another, showing how

<sup>1</sup> Critical University Studies (CUS) is concerned with the history and future development of the university system, in the US and elsewhere. Broadly speaking, there has been a strong interest in understanding pedagogic methods as part of larger systems of higher education in this subfield, and Duke UP goes so far as to define and generate a syllabus of readings on topics including "structural racism, gender, the uneven distribution of resources, coloniality, academic labor, and the effects of university financialization." For more please see: <https://dukeupress.edu/Explore-Subjects/Syllabi/Critical-University-Studies-Syllabus>. My point here is that Hagen seems to have learnt much from conversations in CUS but remains firmly grounded within literary studies. His interdisciplinary perspective is very useful for broadening ongoing conversations within modernism about Woolf, Lawrence, and pedagogy.

Woolf and Lawrence situate pedagogic interactions in classrooms, but also within friendships and love relationships. The increasing porosity between our classroom interests and our critical ones is an excellent development for literary studies in the twenty-first century. Popular culture seems to still hold on to an outdated stereotype of an Ivy League professor wearing elbow patches and working in a grand library; in contrast, Hagen's book is part of the vanguard of literary criticism that inherently acknowledges, and is informed by, the realities of our profession—more dry-erase markers and reading alongside students, if you will. *Sensuous Pedagogies* thus implicitly offers an updated view of the figure of the instructor as a teacher-researcher in conversation with their (our) students and books.

This broadening of the critical purview also draws us as readers and learners closer to two authors who were professional teachers, if only for initial phases of their careers. As Hagen notes about Lawrence, criticism has tended to downplay the impact and importance of the author's teaching role or simply ignored it as a desperate first job he took on en route to establishing himself as a writer, in part because of statements made by Lawrence and his cycle of ambivalent "Schoolmaster" poems (1912). Instead of trying to valorize Lawrence's time as a teacher, Hagen acknowledges the tedium of working in secondary education, but points to the poem "The Best of School" to register Lawrence's pleasure in open-ended, creative classroom interactions alongside his frustration with draconian rules and rote instructional practices. Hagen also notes the ubiquity of teaching (wanting to—, failures of—) in Lawrentian relationships in *The White Peacock*, *Women in Love*, *Apocalypse*, and elsewhere. It is a critical commonplace to understand Lawrence as reductively sexist and hostile to homosexuality. At the same time, Lawrence was never satisfied with a heteronormative status quo, and Hagen urges us to resist biographical intent when approaching scenes of homosociality and queer love in the fiction. In three chapters dedicated to Lawrentian pedagogy (instead of sexology), Hagen's readings deconstruct some of the most familiar ways that we are accustomed to view the author. Choosing for critical companions Eve Sedgwick, Gilles Deleuze, occasionally Sara Ahmed and Michel Foucault, Hagen convincingly shows the uses of biographical readings as well as its limits, and renews the strange and oblique prose of this iconoclastic author. Our twenty-first century concerns were not Lawrence's, and Hagen notes that readers looking for comments about gender equality or social justice will continue to be disappointed in this body of work. However, Hagen writes that Lawrence's enduring concern with how individuals might best live alongside each other, and how we might love, think, and pray honestly while alive, is worth renewed critical attention.

Hagen's view of Lawrence as a writer striving to find and share sensually apprehended inner truths draws the latter closer to Woolf than seems obvious at first. Indeed, Hagen's comparison is unique in that while there are many critical studies of Woolf and Lawrence in the modernist milieu among other writers, there are relatively few studies centered on just these two. Rachel Crossland's *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence* (OUP 2018), Youngjoo Son's *Here and Now: The Politics of Social Space in D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf* (Routledge, 2006), and Helen Wussow's *The Nightmare of History: The Fictions of Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence* (Lehigh UP, 1998) are among the other book-length studies considering them together. Readers of the *Miscellany* may be most interested in Hagen's three chapters on Woolf, wherein he approaches lesser read texts such as both *Common Readers*, *Roger Fry: A Biography*, "Slater's Pins Have No Points," "A Sketch of the Past," and *The Voyage Out*, alongside better known passages from *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Years*. He challenges our understanding of Woolf as a conversational author, showing instead that in fiction and nonfiction she contrasts between time spent in company of people and hours spent more fruitfully with books. Her pedagogy is "most interested [...] in modeling independent study as the bulk of literary taste-training" (89). In sections that draw on the depth and



breadth of his familiarity with Woolf, Hagen shows that she has a long-standing interest in teaching readers how to read, configuring these as conversations between the individual and their chosen literary texts. This depends upon pursuing solitude at the expense of company and conversations that distract—note Katharine Hilbery from *Night and Day* who studies mathematics in her room alone, away from her parents. For Hagen, essays like “How Should One Read a Book?” are crucial for the encouragement they offer an untutored reader to, in effect, teach themselves their own preferences. Hagen uses as exemplar Woolf’s admiration for Margaret Cavendish (and other figures like her) whom Woolf values primarily for their method of solitary reading, thinking, and writing. Hagen thus emphasizes the centrality of the lesson from the two *Common Readers* to Woolf’s work overall, to trust in one’s own taste, to curb its worse tendencies through reading widely and to deepen one’s thinking through nonsynchronous textual encounters.

A very contemporary sense of good pedagogy lurks behind Hagen’s analysis, as he locates in Woolf a guiding voice that explains her own process as a way to encourage readers—students—to nurture their own. Woolf’s essays do not explain their subjects in the usual way; rather, they register her responses to them to teach her readers to value idiosyncratic reactions to ideas. This is also a skill needing patient practice. Hagen notes that Woolf’s essays foreground attentiveness, seeing that as the first step in consolidating a personal taste that counters the regimented, schematic world of soldiers and Oxbridge dons whom Woolf rails against in *Three Guineas* and elsewhere. Finally, Hagen points to ways that Woolf’s novels repeatedly rehearse how their protagonists covertly, without fully discarding convention, eke out a space for private thought and reflection that she sees as both luxury (because most women do not have it) and necessity (because everyone should). Hagen thus uncovers the pedagogic instinct embedded throughout Woolf’s oeuvre, in the passages where she explicitly shows readers how to read, and also where she shows women readers how to be. Hagen locates Woolf’s feminist pacifist politics motivating what is, broadly speaking, a pedagogic intervention that decenters authority and remains firmly interested in rhizomatic, multifaceted responses to written works instead of any singular textual explication.

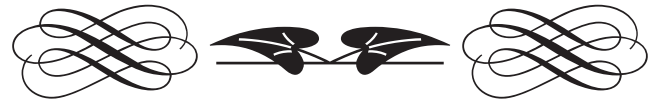
*Sensuous Pedagogies* positions itself as a reparative study, in that Woolf and Lawrence are seldom read together and usually not for their pedagogic approaches to questions of modern living. Through comparisons between their methods, styles, and affect, Hagen convincingly shows that the task of a pedagogue is very broad. Learning is not confined to the classroom but is, instead, taking place everywhere. Learning is not always or solely confined to human interactions, either; through Woolf, Hagen makes a strong case for what we intuitively know – that our relationships with literary texts are intimate pedagogic encounters in their own right that develop in unique ways over time. Indeed, while Hagen’s analyses of Lawrence are refreshing and revivify Lawrence studies, his chapters on Woolf read like the heart of the book. Particularly touching are his speculative passages about *The Common Reader*’s “odd preoccupation with disappearance and death” and Woolf’s way of apprehending a book “not only as the work of another human being but as traces or remains of an absent person” (105). Instead of a “morbid preoccupation,” Hagen argues that this way of conducting literary study bears within it an element of pathos—so much writing, and Hagen dares to say, beauty, is “in perpetual danger of passing away,” forgotten by posterity (105). Reading in the mode that Woolf teaches is, then, also a solitary act of remembrance, an individualistic excavation of historical traces, an asymmetric communing with past lives.

**Ria Banerjee**  
CUNY Guttman Community College

#### Works Cited

Critical University Studies. <https://dukeupress.edu/Explore-Subjects/Syllabi/Critical-University-Studies-Syllabus>.

- Crossland, Rachel. *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Son, Youngjoo. *Here and Now: The Politics of Social Space in D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Wussow, Helen. *The Nightmare of History: The Fictions of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1998.



#### REVIEW

#### **FEMINISM FROM LITERARY MODERNISM TO THE MULTIMEDIA PRESENT**

by Amy Elkins. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2022. 288 pp. \$85

In “Anon,” a chapter of the “Common History Book” upon which Woolf was at work at the end of her life, she wrote: “Only when we put two and two together—two pencil strokes, two written words, two bricks <notes> do we overcome dissolution and set up some stake against oblivion. The passion with which we seek out those creations and attempt endlessly, perpetually, to make them is of a piece with the instinct that sets us preserving our bodies, with clothes, food, roofs, from destruction” (Silver 403n4). This passage recurred to me often as I read Amy Elkins’s brilliantly original exploration of craftwork and archives. Woolf was a maker throughout her life, from the manipulated books in which she penned her early diaries, through her making of books for the Hogarth Press, to her knitting and scrapbooking. Elkins points out the low esteem in which craft has been held by traditional aesthetic hierarchies, and today two seconds on google will cough up myriad examples of how “basket weaving” is perennially used to mock the supposed uselessness of the humanities. But Elkins herself, who is both a “scholar and a basket weaver” (11n12) demolishes such patriarchal taunts in a “woven, crafted work of scholarship” (25) in which she reads lines of stitching as carefully and imaginatively as she reads lines of text.

The book is constructed of traditional chapters and “Techne” interchapters where Elkins brings to bear the personal experience of doing research that is typically hidden in scholarly work. These interchapters expose the “seams” between the chapters, telling stories and exemplifying the work (process) that goes into making a work (product). Elkins begins and ends with Woolf, and in between explores the art of H. D., Lorna Goodison, Mina Loy, Zadie Smith, Ali Smith, and Kabe Wilson with a close attention informed by wide and deep reading in critical discourses across a great range of topics and fields.

Woolf’s great-aunt, the pioneering photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, sent a number of experimental works to her friend the painter G. F. Watts that found their way to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1941, but then languished there uncatalogued for decades. The images in this archive enhance Elkins’s argument for Cameron’s manipulations of her glass-plate negatives as a precursor of how Woolf uses metaphors of glass in her writing. “Like Cameron,” Elkins writes, “Woolf calls attention to glass as a visual medium with the capacity to both disrupt and preserve” (66). Glass reflects and is also transparent, can shatter or crack. Elkins theorizes that the way Woolf’s great-aunt drew attention to glass as her medium through the production of photographs that showed the cracks in the (glass) negatives resonates as a “visual prototype for Woolf’s photographic perspective in her own writing” (49). Glass is “a key visual pattern” in *The Years*, for example (58), and in *Between the Acts*, Miss La Trobe’s mirrors reflect the audience members back to themselves in a way that is at once familiar and estranging (67).

In the “Techne” section following this opening chapter on Woolf, Elkins discusses one of her own family’s photographs, as well as a tintype made of herself. For all us, of course, the material conditions of our work are populated by personal object archives which hold and summon memories, affecting our emotions (as Woolf well knew), yet rarely, if ever, do we integrate the resonances of such significant objects into our scholarship, as Elkins successfully does throughout her book. The book itself is a remarkable object by the standards of academic publishing. Anyone who has struggled with obtaining permissions and negotiating fees for images will not fail to be impressed by the striking archival finds reproduced here, and also by the presence of color photographs, which are allied to Elkins’s careful analysis.

Elkins explains how she tracked down H. D.’s needlework—now in the Beinecke, thanks to Elkins’s relationship with H. D.’s grandson, who donated it—following an instinct that it would enhance her understanding of the poet’s writing. And indeed, she found that the tactile craft of H. D.’s needlework often provided “materially specific resources for her poetry” (9): “Like the abstraction of her poems, her needlework technique frequently disrupts conventional uniformity, alternately showing off her technical skill and her willingness to loosen and lengthen her stitches to great effect” (91).

There are other examples of Elkins’s persistence in finding what she needed for her research, outstanding among which is the tale of her pursuit of the “assemblages” created by Mina Loy (159). Elkins demonstrates not only persistence but also imagination in coming up with ways to circumvent the obstacles sometimes put in the way of researchers by archives (the majority of which, to be fair, tend to be welcoming and eager to assist).

In a necessarily Woolf-centric and brief review such as this, it is not possible adequately to convey the richness of this wide-ranging work. Nevertheless, even when not writing specifically about Woolf, Elkins affords new contexts for approaching her art. In her chapter on the poet and painter Lorna Goodison, for example, I found myself again thinking back to Woolf. In Goodison’s memoir of her mother, for example, “women’s history in Jamaica, tradition and custom, and issues of progress” are brought “into focus with the strokes of Goodison’s watercolor brush” (142-43), reminding me of those passages in *To the Lighthouse* where Lily Briscoe uses color to create memory, to give material form to her emotions about Mrs. Ramsay. But Elkins’s analysis of pigment as aesthetic tool and racial category in histories of colonialism and art takes us well beyond Woolf, demonstrating, as Elkins tells her students, that “a book by Woolf does not exist as an isolated text. Each of her works is a node in the expanding network of adaptations and remixes that follow it” (203).

I again heard echoes of Woolf’s “Anon” in what the writer Ali Smith told Elkins in an interview: “I think what I like best is how objects and images resonate on their own. Then when you put them beside other objects or images, they do what narrative does when two things come together in it, they make a third, they cocktail together to produce their own new thing or narrative” (184-85). Coming full circle to Woolf in her discussion of Zadie Smith’s “craftiness” (in her novel *NW*) and Kabe Wilson’s recent ‘remixing’ of *A Room of One’s Own*, Elkins leaves us with an exciting updating of Woolf’s early manifestos for modernism in her comments on the artists Sarah Sze’s multimedia work *Centrifuge*. “Linear reading, like linear time, will not suffice in capturing the multimedia world of modern experience,” she writes (221). *Centrifuge*, in yet another echo of “Anon,” “speaks to one our oldest technological instincts: to record what we have seen. In rock, in pencil, in print, in paint, in film—and now in pixels” (227).

**Mark Hussey**  
Pace University (Emeritus)

#### Work Cited

Silver, Brenda, ed. “‘Anon’ and ‘The Reader’: Virginia Woolf’s Last Essays.” *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. 25, Nos. 3/4, 1979: 356-441.



#### REVIEW

##### ENGLAND’S LANE

by Emma Woolf. London: Three Hares Publishing, 2018. 274 pages. \$11.60 paper.

The novel *England’s Lane*, by Emma Woolf, grand-niece of Virginia and Leonard Woolf, explores the fallout from an extramarital affair. Woolf’s previous books covered her struggles with anorexia; this is her first novel, inspired in part by her own affair with a married man.

Published in London in 2018 by Three Hares Publishing and in the US in 2019 under the title *The Years After You* by Amberjack Publishing, Woolf’s novel is about a love triangle involving a tragic, guilt-ridden husband, Harry; his wife, Pippa, who comes to learn of his affair; and Lily, the woman who is the object of Harry’s obsessive and increasingly desperate affection.

The story is mostly Lily’s. Harry’s point of view is revealed in part via his visits with his strikingly unhelpful therapist and the increasingly alarming narration of his thoughts. Pippa’s growing understanding of and emotional reactions to her husband’s affair is conveyed in an anonymous blog, told in first person. Though the least developed of the three principal characters, Pippa’s blog is an unusual but important part of the story as it reminds the reader of the implications of Harry’s deception and Lily’s complicity in the breakdown of a family.

The novel is about deceiving others, but ultimately it is the characters’ self-deception that proves the most devastating for all three principal characters. The cluelessness of all three main characters almost stretches credulity until one realizes that self-deception is not just a defense mechanism and but also a desperate indication of hope.

The second part of the novel deals with the lingering fallout of the affair. It also introduces new characters from an earlier part of Lily’s life; not merely an addendum, the second part further explore the themes of family ties, loyalty, betrayal, and forgiveness.

The novel affirms the value of forgiveness, and Lily and her siblings ultimately forgive the man who abandoned them and their mother. It sympathetically portrays men in crises, whether midlife, as in the case of Harry, or youthful insecurity and immaturity, as in the case of Lily’s father. Readers may be less forgiving of these characters and how their weaknesses and self-indulgence harms the innocent.

Those hoping to find traces of Virginia Woolf’s brilliance in Emma Woolf’s writing may be disappointed. Nonetheless, Emma Woolf reveals her talent as she expertly weaves together three very different points of view, and her powers of observation and non-judgmental depiction of the intricacies of human feeling are compatible with her more famous ancestor.

While the reader may be frustrated by the main characters’ actions and stupefying blindness, it is hard to judge them too harshly due to the author’s skill at making their dilemmas feel real and fully human, understandable, if not admirable.

**Linda Camarasana**  
SUNY College at Old Westbury

**Officers of the IVWS**

**Serving from**

**January 2021 through December 2023**

**PRESIDENT: Benjamin Hagen**  
*Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu*

**VICE-PRESIDENT: Amanda Golden**  
*agolde01@nyit.edu*

**TREASURER/SECRETARY: Susan Wegener**  
*suswegener@gmail.com*

**HISTORIAN/BIBLIOGRAPHER: Catherine Hollis**  
*hollisc@berkeley.edu*

**ARCHIVAL LIAISON:**  
**Karen Levenback**  
*kllevenback@att.net*

**MEMBERSHIP COORDINATORS**

**Serving from**

**June 2022 through December 2024**

**Annaliese Hoehling**  
*annalieseh@gmail.com*

**Leanna Lostoski-Ho**  
*Leanna.Lostoski-Ho@unh.edu*

**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

**Serving from**

**January 2021 through December 2023**

**AnneMarie Bantzinger: *ambantzinger@hotmail.com***

**Erica Delsandro: *ericadelsandro@gmail.com***

**Elizabeth Evans: *evansef@gmail.com***

**Emily Hinnov: *emhinnov@yahoo.com***

**Patricia Laurence: *pat.laurence@gmail.com***

**Marcia James: *marciahalstead@aol.com***

**Alex Nica: *internationalvirginiawoolfsoci@gmail.com***

**EX OFFICIO**

**Vara Neverow, Managing Editor of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany***  
*neverowv1@southernct.edu*

(The *Society Column* continues here from page 72.)

artist's residency at the Centre for Modernist Studies in Sussex last term, and it's just gone live on our website. I kept mentioning it to people at the Woolf conference and am sure many of the Woolf community will be interested. The link is here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/centres/centre-for-modernist-studies/artist-in-residence>."

**Online Society Events and the Woolf Salon Project**

On October 10th, 2022, the Society hosted over Zoom the 2022 IVWS Fall Lecture, featuring Beth Rigel Daugherty, who delivered the lecture "Learning and Essaying: From Adeline Virginia Stephen to Virginia Woolf." Beth began her lecture by recalling for attendees where her scholarly journey through Woolf's essays began before sketching out the overall approach, organization, and argument of her recently published *Virginia Woolf's Apprenticeship: Becoming an Essayist* (Edinburgh UP, 2022). After reading brief passages from this work—about the King's College Ladies' Department; Morley College; her editors; and more—Beth closed the lecture with a glance at her follow-up volume, *Virginia Woolf's Essays: Being a Teacher*. This mention included a snippet on teaching English literature in the first part of the twentieth century.

On March 24th, 2023, the Society also hosted a spring event that featured researchers who were recognized in 2021 and 2022 for their award-winning submissions to the annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize. I served as moderator, and Pamela Caughie generously served as respondent, summarizing but also entering into generous and critical dialogue with all three presenters. The featured presentations were: Eleanor Clark's "'Breaking the silence?': Talking, Speaking and the Dissipation of Meaning in Virginia Woolf's Novels"; Jasmine Woodcock's "Predicting the Present: Orlando Is Trans\*"; and

Gabriela Zetehaku's "'In this book I practice writing': Virginia Woolf's Diary-keeping Practice and the Creative Process of *Mrs. Dalloway*" (Gabriela's paper is from 2021 and was published in Issue 99 of the *Miscellany*; Saskia May was not able to participate in the event; her paper title is "Abandoned, Domestic Objects 'continuing without us' in Ecological Landscapes in Virginia Woolf's 'Solid Objects'").

The winter and fall of 2022 and winter and spring of 2023 saw three Woolf Salon events as well, including:

Woolf Salon No. 22: Unnatural Daughters (the third of three salons dedicated to *Three Guineas*)

Woolf Salon No. 23: Lives of the Obscure

Woolf Salon No. 24: On Wonder

The Woolf Salon No. 25: Party Time took place on Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. The discussion focused on the short stories collected in *Mrs. Dalloway's Party* (as well as two others that were brought to our attention!).

A fall and end-of-year salon are tentatively scheduled. If you have interest in attending any Woolf Salon virtual discussion, write to [woolfsalonproject@gmail.com](mailto:woolfsalonproject@gmail.com) to get added to the Salon Contact List.

If you were unable to make it to one (or all) of the Salon events listed above, note that IVWS members have access to all IVWS and IVWS-affiliated event recordings. Please contact me ([vwoolfsociety@gmail.com](mailto:vwoolfsociety@gmail.com)) if you are an IVWS member and need help accessing them.

**The 32nd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf**

Hosted by Laci Mattison at Florida Gulf Coast University, the 32nd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, the first face-to-face ACVW since Drew Shannon's conference in Cincinnati in 2019, was held from the 8th to the 11th of June 2023. The theme was "Virginia Woolf and Ecologies." As Laci stated the conference:

foster[ed] conversations about a wide range of ecologically relevant topics [...] that address[ed] ecological concerns in or illuminated by Woolf's work [or] [...] alternately explore[d] artistic, social, political, economic, racial, decolonial, anti-ableist, and/or queer ecologies, among others, in or alongside Woolf's novels, essays, letters, or diaries.

**The Fall Symposium—Woolf & Ecologies II**

**An Online Continuation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference**

As many of you may already know, the International Virginia Woolf Society will be hosting a virtual symposium later this year in conjunction with its annual Fall Lecture and in collaboration with the organizers of the 2023 Woolf Conference that took place in Fort Myers, Florida, in early June. The Fall Symposium (October 20-22, 2023) will extend the 32nd Annual Conference theme, Woolf & Ecologies. We are pleased to announce that Derek Ryan will deliver the 2023 IVWS Fall Lecture, which will double as the symposium's plenary address. You can find more information here: Woolf & Ecologies II. Please share with anyone you think may be interested. We look forward to seeing many of you who were not able to travel to Fort Myers this year, continuing many of the conversations already in progress, and starting new ones! More specific information about Symposium registration and participation will be available closer to the event.

Please send inquiries to Laci Mattison, Ben Hagen, and Shilo McGiff at [woolfecologies@gmail.com](mailto:woolfecologies@gmail.com).

**The 33rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf**

J. Ashley Foster will host the 2024 conference on "Woolf, Modernity, Technology" (July 6-9) at California State University, Fresno. For further information, please see page 6 of this issue.

**The 34th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf**

This conference will be organized by Helen Tyson, University of Sussex, and Clare Jones, King's College London and held in Sussex (July 3-6).

If you have anything you would like me to pass along to the IVWS membership, please let me know!

**Benjamin Hagen**  
**President, IVWS**





# the Virginia Woolf Society



## The Society Column

The past several months were busy for the International Virginia Woolf Society! In this issue's Society Column in the *Miscellany*, I will cover a few events that took place in 2022 and 2023 as well as a few other items.

### Update on Initiatives and Elections

Last year, IVWS officers and members-at-large asked members to vote on two initiatives, which passed unanimously. The first initiative concerned the future of the Selected Papers of the Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf series. Starting with the most recent Woolf Conference (organized by Amy Smith), the Society will fund a move of the annual series to an open-access digital format.

The second initiative was the establishment of the Suzanne Bellamy Travel Fund. In honor of Suzanne, who passed away in June 2022, the fund supports the travel of students, international travelers, folks in contingent and/or precarious positions, and others in need of financial support to attend Annual Conferences on Virginia Woolf. This issue of the *Miscellany* includes remembrances honoring Suzanne Bellamy (see pages 11-22). In Spring 2023, the IVWS raised nearly \$3000 in donations, which supported fifteen conference presenters. (Note: The Society is always open to donations; visit <https://www.v-woolf-society.com/membership> for instructions on how to donate; visit <https://www.v-woolf-society.com/suzanne-bellamy-travel-fund/> for more info, specifically, on this initiative.)

In addition to holding elections for a new President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer in 2023, the IVWS membership voted this past spring to alter the by-laws to allow for the election of *two* Co-Historian-Bibliographers. The membership also voted to expand the advisory board of members-at-large to up to ten people. Later this year, the membership will also vote to elect three new officers: a Web Manager, a Social Media Coordinator, and a Marketplace Manager. More information about the officer elections is forthcoming.

I'm happy to announce that in the Advisory Board election results, IVWS members have overwhelmingly supported the election of Catherine Hollis, Danell Jones, Kika Kyriakakou, and Mine Özyurt Kılıç. Their terms as members-at-large will begin January 1st, 2024, and will run until the end of 2026. I have confirmations from each of them of their willingness to serve. My thanks to each of them!

### MLA 2023 and 2024

The 2023 MLA Annual Convention this past January featured *three* IVWS sessions, two of which were in-person in San Francisco, CA, and one of which was virtual. The virtual session, "Virginia Woolf, Hope, and Wonder," originally scheduled for the 2022 convention, was a rousing success. With nearly thirty conferees attending the panel via Zoom, Erin Penner and Marlene Dirschauer presided, introducing and facilitating conversations about three presentations: Amy Smith's "A Precarious Re-Enchantment in Virginia Woolf's Post-World War I Fiction," Siân White's "Terror and Ecstasy: Paradox in Virginia Woolf's Fiction," and Angela Harris's "Woolfian Moments of Being: *To the Lighthouse* and the Ethics of Epiphany." The presentations were well worth the wait!

The guaranteed IVWS-MLA 2023 session, "Woolf and Illness: Pandemic Then and Now," was organized and presided over by Maren T. Linett. The session was scheduled in the earliest Sunday morning slot, though the hour did not deter conferees from packing the room. The excellent featured presentations, which led to a lively Q&A, were Caylee Weintraub's "'Her Poor Dog Was Howling': Zoonotic Illness and Cross-Species Suffering in *Mrs. Dalloway*," Serena Wong's "Fleshing Out the Chinese: Virginia Woolf and Her Opium-Eaters," Megan Quigley's "'What Kind of Wuss Was Woolf?': Woolf and Abstract

Illness," and Amanda Caleb's "'An Indescribable Pause': *Mrs. Dalloway* and the Disruption of Pandemic Time and Space." The IVWS's third session, organized and presided over by Alice Staveley, was "Teaching Virginia Woolf in the Age of #MeToo." The Thursday afternoon session was very well attended and inspired excellent conversations about Woolf, Woolf's affordances and limitations, and pedagogies attentive to racial and gender inequities. The presentations were V. Lauryl Tucker's "'Equally, If You Stop to Laugh': Teaching the Humor of *A Room of One's Own*," Aili Pettersson Peeker's "Critical Fabulation as Pedagogical Strategy," and Alice Staveley and Anna Mukamal's co-presentation, "Intergenerational Feminist Pedagogy: Course Design for Virginia Woolf in the Age of #MeToo."

Members of the IVWS attending the MLA convention in San Francisco also enjoyed each other's company at a Society dinner and a late-night sojourn to City Light Books. Follow the IVWS on Instagram and scroll back to January to see some photos of this adventure. My thanks to Catherine Hollis co-organizing the dinner and excursion.

The upcoming MLA Convention in 2024 will feature two IVWS sessions: our guaranteed session, "Rethinking Woolf and Race," organized by Erica Delsandro (Bucknell University) and "100 Years of Mrs. Brown" proposed by Mary Wilson (UMass Dartmouth). I will update the membership about these sessions when I learn more.

### Louisville Conference CFP

The International Virginia Woolf Society is pleased to host its annual panel at the University of Louisville's 2024 Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900, scheduled for **February 20-21, 2024** (virtual) and **February 23-25, 2024** (in person).

We invite proposals for critical papers on any topic concerning Woolf's work. **Please note that this panel may be virtual.** A specific panel theme may be decided upon depending on the proposals received. Previous IVWS panels have met with great enthusiasm at Louisville, and we look forward to another successful session. Please submit by email a cover page with name, email address, mailing address, phone number, professional affiliation, and title of paper, and a second anonymous page containing a 250-word paper proposal, with title, to Emily M. Hinnov, [ehinnov@ccsnh.edu](mailto:ehinnov@ccsnh.edu), by **Monday, August 28, 2023**. The members of the Panel Selection Committee are Beth Rigel Daugherty, Jeanne Dubino, and Vara Neverow.

### Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize

The deadline for the Essay Prize has passed. I received eight submissions this year, which have been anonymized and sent to officers/judges. I should be able to announce results by early fall.

### Woolf Studies Annual 29 (2023)

To order online the most recent volume of *Woolf Studies Annual*, follow [this link](#) and click "Add to Cart." At checkout, enter the discount code WSA2023 for 20% off through August. **You do not have to create a PACE UP account to make a purchase.** WSA 29 features the research of Celia R. Caputi, Danielle N. Gilman, Lingxiang Ke, John Pedro Schwartz, and Kathryn Van Wert. In addition to several new book reviews, Part 2 of the WSA Index, and an updated guide to scholarly collections, the volume also includes a forum on Mark Hussey's 2021 biography of Clive Bell. Contributors to the forum include Elizabeth Berkowitz, Claire Davison, Diane Gillespie, Maggie Humm, and Christopher Reed, with Mark Hussey (in response).

### Looking for Virginia

Many thanks to Helen Tyson for sharing the link to Kabe Wilson's latest Woolf-related project: "Looking for Virginia: An Artist's Journey Through 100 Archives." Helen writes, "Kabe made the film as part of his

(The Society Column continues on page 71.)