

Virginia Woolf Miscellany

NUMBER 86

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To the Readers:

Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield

In July 1916, still several months before their first meeting, Virginia Woolf wrote to Lytton Strachey in mocking complaint that “Katherine Mansfield has dogged my steps for three years” (*The Letters of Virginia Woolf* [L] 2 107). It was a feeling engendered, no doubt, by what Kathleen Jones describes as “[a] period of courtship” whereby “[m]utual friends” conveyed “encouraging messages” of one to the other (Jones 288). Looking ahead to her holiday in Cornwall, Woolf jokes about a chance meeting with Mansfield there: “We go to Cornwall in September, and if I see anyone answering to your account [of Mansfield] on a rock or in the sea I shall accost her” (L2 107). Perhaps inspired by the Cornish folk tale of the “Mermaid of Zennor” and the knowledge that Mansfield and John Middleton Murry were living largely in Mylor, not far from Zennor, the image conjures the siren-like allure of Mansfield herself. Indeed, although Woolf describes their first meeting as a “slight rapprochement” (L2 144), their early relationship soon developed a significant intensity, shaped as it was by mutual fascination and admiration, as well as by wariness, a sense of danger and jealousy. Theirs was a fluctuating and volatile relationship, complex and shifting, which Woolf described as “almost entirely founded on quicksands” (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 1 243).

At first glance, the two writers seem to occupy very different positions socially and culturally: Mansfield was from a middle-class New Zealand settler family headed by her businessman and banker father; Woolf was from the heart of the British intelligentsia with familial connections to key literary, artistic and political figures. Woolf was a central figure in Bloomsbury and Mansfield, by her own account of it, was the “little colonial walking in the London garden patch—allowed to look, perhaps, but not to linger [...] a stranger—an alien” (*The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* 106). Their life experiences were also radically at odds: Mansfield was nomadic, driven by her ambitions, desires and finally by her illness to seek new horizons; Woolf largely moved between London and Sussex, relocations that were also dictated at times by her illness. This shared personal experience of chronic illness and their awareness of the emotional burden this placed on others was just one of the unlikely points of similarity between them, as were the long-lasting effects of the death of a much-loved brother and the sense of loss resulting from childlessness. However, it is that they shared a great “affinity” in their creative lives, as Angela Smith has so persuasively

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Editorial note:

While previously published work may be submitted for consideration, both the original publication and any other versions of it must be acknowledged and cited in the text at the time of submission.

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Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Issue #87—Spring 2015

“1930s Woolf”

Guest Editor: Erica Gene Delsandro

<ericadelsandro@gmail.com>

Issue #88—Fall 2015:

Virginia Woolf in the Modern Machine Age

Guest Editor: Ann Martin

What is the role of everyday machines in the life and/or works of Virginia Woolf? How do the commonplace technologies of the modern machine age leave their trace on Bloomsbury?

Please submit papers of no more than 2500 words to Ann Martin <ann.martin@usask.ca>

by 31 March 2015.

Issue #89—Spring 2016:

A Truly Miscellaneous Issue

Editor: Diana Swanson

<dswanson@niu.edu>

Deadline: 1 September 2015.

Issue #90—Fall 2016:

Woolf and Illness

Guest Editor: Cheryl Hindrichs

<cherylhindrichs@boisestate.edu>

Deadline: 31 March 2016.

Issue #91—Spring 2017:

Virginia Woolf, Bloomsbury, and the

War to End War

Guest Editor: Karen Levenback

<klevenback@att.net>

Deadline: 1 August 2016.

Any queries regarding the Virginia Woolf

Miscellany should be addressed to

Vara Neverow

<neverow1@southernct.edu>

argued, which provides the most startling sense of connection between them: the two writers “mirror each other constantly, in spite of their evident differences” (Smith 1).

Both women understood fairly quickly that they shared the same literary intent—that, in Mansfield’s words, they took “the writing business seriously” and were “honest about it and thrilled by it” (*The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* [CLKM] 2 169). But this shared intent went further as they strove to revitalize the literary conventions they had inherited and to develop new techniques and forms of fiction. These goals seem to have been catalyzed into effect by their meeting at such a pivotal time in their careers. By the time they met, Mansfield had already published her fiction in *The Blue Review*, *Rhythm*, and *Signature* and brought out her first collection, *In a German Pension*, in 1911; Woolf had published *The Voyage Out*, had a substantial draft of *Night and Day* and published her first experimental story, “The Mark on the Wall” in 1917 with her own Hogarth Press. But critics agree that it was the two publications that they produced during this early part of their friendship—Mansfield’s *Prelude* and Woolf’s “Kew Gardens”—that marked a significant turning point in accelerating their innovative methods and experimental approaches. Mansfield’s description of the effect created by Woolf’s “Kew Gardens” captures this sense of suspense and expectation: “Anything may happen; her world is on tiptoe” (“A Short Story” 53). For Mansfield, this story evokes a sense of anticipation of something new, of life, rich and expansive—“filling a whole world” (54)—a description equally applicable to her own literary experiments.

Throughout 1917 Woolf’s letters and diaries attest to a growing sense of admiration for Mansfield, as well as a sense of shock and curiosity at their differences in experience. As Woolf wrote to Vanessa Bell, she had had “an odd talk” with Mansfield in which Mansfield revealed the vast extent of her sexual experience in “hav[ing] gone every sort of hog since she was 17” which Woolf found “interesting” (L2 159). Woolf may at times have vented her sense of difference from Mansfield in derogatory terms which deliberately put Mansfield at a distance—acerbically she notes in her diary that Mansfield “stinks like a [...] civet cat that had taken to street walking” and disparaged what she saw as Mansfield’s self-advertisement (D1 58; D2 78)—yet Woolf recognized that Mansfield had “a much better idea of writing than most” (L2 159). The sense of their shared passion for literary innovation and their mutual support and admiration was at times

intoxicating, leading Woolf consider their “queer fate,” which set them apart from others and sealed their bond as “a public of two” (D1 222), a phrase which encapsulates the powerfully felt sense of connection which lasted long after Mansfield’s death in 1923. As Smith and others have noted, the “affinity” between them continued to influence Woolf, and there are many Mansfieldian echoes (and indeed echoes of Mansfield herself) detectable throughout Woolf’s writing.

For Mansfield’s part, she also recognized the similarities between them, writing to Woolf that they had “the same job” and goals so similar that she found it “really very curious & thrilling” (CLKM1 327). Her praise for Woolf’s essay, “Modern Novels” (TLS 10 April 1919), in which Woolf condemns contemporary realist fiction, notably that of Arnold Bennett, for its materialist approach to literary production, marks a significant moment for Mansfield and she writes effusively to Woolf, “To tell the truth—I am *proud* of your writing. I read it & think ‘How she beats them’” (CLKM2 311). On other occasions she writes to Ottoline Morrell about her perception of Woolf as a “beautiful brilliant creature” and about her “strange, trembling, glinting quality of [...] mind” and unique artistic perspective (CLKM2 333, CLKM1 315). Yet Mansfield also found herself resenting her friend for her certain advantages; Mansfield, herself, felt “handicap[ped]” by illness, itinerancy and the long estrangements from Murry and was envious of the various material and emotional conditions she felt that Woolf enjoyed that made good writing possible: “There is always in her writing a calm freedom of expression as though she were at peace—her roof over her, her possessions round her, and her man somewhere within call,” she confided to Murry (CLKM2 226). Even in her most effusive letters of praise and affection, Mansfield recognizes irrevocable differences between them: Woolf has the power to “dispatch [her] to cruel callous Coventry, without a wave of her [Woolf’s] lily white hand” (CLKM1 324). Given the Bloomsbury proclivity for gossip and sharing of letters, Mansfield was always aware that any “private” correspondence would be for more public consumption and here exaggerates her vulnerability and dependence, performing for her audience (see Macnamara), but still the cultural distance between them is clear.

Although Woolf’s immediate response to the news of Mansfield’s death was one of bitter regret and a sense of finality—“there was no point in writing. Katherine won’t read it. Katherine my rival no longer” (D2 226)—critics have continued to explore the many and various points of connection between them. In this issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, scholars from the UK, US, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Australia offer rich comparisons of the two writers, focusing on their literary experiments, intellectual engagements and class and gender politics. The contributors advance lines of inquiry opened up by Smith and Sydney Janet Kaplan by exploring these themes and concerns through Woolf and Mansfield’s fiction. But many of these same contributors are especially keen to trace further affinities in their essays, poems, criticism, letters and diaries. The resurgence of interest in Mansfield’s writing and, indeed, in the many and various (and sometimes unexpected) connections between Woolf, Mansfield and their contemporaries makes this a timely moment to explore the connections between these two central women modernists.

While many critical assessments of Woolf and Mansfield focus on their fiction, Hilary Newman’s “Taking the Measure of New Books: Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield as Reviewers of Fiction,” which kicks off the issue, notices that the literary conversations between the two writers continue in the book review pages of the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Athenaeum* between April 1919 and December 1920—that is, the period in which Mansfield was chief fiction critic for Murry’s *Athenaeum*. At this time Woolf and Mansfield read and reviewed a large number of the same novels. Newman pays close

attention to the consonances between their critical adjudications, finding evidence in these writings for a common literary aesthetic and, indeed, a common critical language but also perceiving more fault-finding and stridency in Mansfield’s reviews than Woolf’s.

Patricia Moran’s “‘the sudden ‘mushroom growth’ of *cheap* psychoanalysis’: Mansfield and Woolf Respond to Psychoanalysis” is also interested in gauging these two writers’ responses to their contemporary cultural milieu, tracing their respective familiarity with and application of psychoanalytical ideas. Moran considers the extent of their knowledge of psychoanalysis through, among other things, their professional associations, personal encounters and use of Freudian jargon in their writings. She goes on to show that, despite Woolf and Mansfield’s ambivalence towards the “case study” tendency in contemporary fiction, their conceptualizations of the workings of consciousness, ascertained through both their fiction and nonfiction, were honed in relation—and sometimes in opposition—to psychoanalytic theories of the mind.

Sue Reid’s “On Form/s: Woolf, Mansfield and Plato,” like the Newman and Moran essays, is concerned with the reading matter the two writers had in common, though of a more historical kind: Plato. Reid contends that their mutual obsession with the idea of form can be traced back to this Ancient Greek philosopher. Reid uncovers allusions to the Platonic cave in Woolf’s *Night and Day* and looks also to Mansfield’s response to the novel to prove that Plato was “their philosophical ‘father’” and that these women were, as she puts it (quoting the contemporary New Zealand fiction writer, Eleanor Catton), “serious thinkers.”

The fathers and daughters theme is taken up in a different way in Emily M. Hinnov’s “The Daughters of the ‘Tyrant Father’ in Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield.” This essay examines the “private battle” in which middle-class daughters engage with the “tyrant father” in order to win greater freedom in the public world. Hinnov frames her analysis of Mansfield’s story, “Daughters of the Late Colonel,” with reference to some of Woolf’s more autobiographical writing (“A Sketch of the Past” and *To the Lighthouse*) and also to a photographic record of Virginia Stephen’s position in the hierarchy of the patriarchal family. Exploring the tentative claims to freedom that Constantia and Josephine make following the death of the Colonel, the powerful legacy of his overbearing and domineering hold over them remains alive and well, and they remain haunted by his habitual power over them. In contrast, Lily Briscoe (the non-familial “daughter” in *To the Lighthouse*) is able to draw on a more positive maternal power and is finally able to achieve the freedom with which to complete her painting. As Hinnov points out, however, both narratives remain open to interpretation—spaces in which the sympathetic reader might imagine the characters’ freedom.

María J. López and Gerardo Rodríguez Salas’s “‘a queer sense of being “like”: Female Friendship in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf” is also interested in the sometimes disruptive presence of the male figure in the context of women’s lives. For López and Salas, stories such as “Bliss,” “A Cup of Tea,” “Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding,” and “The Daughters of the Late Colonel” demonstrate Mansfield’s pessimism regarding the possibilities for women to escape hetero-reality and enter into wholly positive communion with other women. But the authors find in Woolf a striking contrast: homosocial, but also heterosocial friendships, are, despite their “frailty,” pleasurable and enabling in, for example, *To the Lighthouse*.

Rose Onans’s “Seeking the Self in the Garden: Class, Femininity and Nature in ‘Bliss,’ ‘The Garden Party’ and *To the Lighthouse*” also investigates how women achieve self-actualization and development, reading the recurring space of the garden in Mansfield and Woolf’s fiction as a key site for scenes of attempted transcendence of class and gender roles. According to Onans, the garden is a problematic site for such attempts because it is compromised by gender- and class-inflected commodification. As such, the garden is an interstitial space where

¹ This essay was slightly revised and reprinted in *The Common Reader* (1925).

characters often strike out on their own personally and artistically, as Lily Briscoe does successfully in *To the Lighthouse*, but in Mansfield's stories the breaking away from and breaking down of class and gender distinctions tend to remain incomplete.

Alda Correia's "The Shape of the 'Moment' in Virginia Woolf's and Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories" turns to the key concept of the "moment of revelation" to examine the affinities between the two writers. Correia argues the concept not only encapsulates their senses of what consciousness is like but also drives their experiments in form. She turns to Woolf's and Mansfield's essays, private writings and short fiction to detail their sense of what constitutes "the moment," which for both writers is intense, "involuntary and powerful." But Correia observes that Woolf's "moments" tend towards the philosophical whereas in Mansfield they are centered on the everyday and feeling.

This special issue is fittingly completed with Sandra Inskip-Fox's poignant poem, 'Fringe of Intuition: Virginia Sees Through Everything' which beautifully contemplates Woolf's thoughts on life and death (triggered by Mansfield's death), circling round Bergsonian ideas and entwined with emotional intensities.

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&

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

For information about the history of the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf go to:
<http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neveroww1/annual_conference_on_virginia_woolf.html>

MLA 2015—Vancouver, BC, Canada—8–11 January 2015

Panels Featuring Papers on Virginia Woolf

236. Bloomsbury, Politics, and the Essay

Friday, 9 January, 10:15–11:30 a.m., 115, VCC West

Program arranged by the International Virginia Woolf Society and the Division on Language and Society

Presiding: Andrea Adolph, Penn State Univ., New Kensington

Andrea Adolph's Annotation:

Urvashi Vashist is unable to attend the convention.

1. "'Some Rickety and Ramshackle Fabric': Political Spectacles and Performative Essays in the Work of Virginia Woolf and Leonard Woolf," Jeffrey Brown, Ursinus Coll.
2. "Critically Modern: Dialectics of Dissent in the Essays of Virginia Woolf and Arundhati Roy," Urvashi Vashist, University Coll. London
3. "The Face on the Other Side of the Page: Imagining Justice with Woolf, Césaire, and Ngũgĩ," Mara de Gennaro, New York, NY

286. Disability Epistemology

Friday, 9 January, 12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., 117, VCC West

Program arranged by the MLA Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession

Presiding: Rebecca Sanchez, Fordham Univ.

1. "Cripistemology of the Crisis: Desiring Disability in an Age of Austerity," Robert McRuer, George Washington Univ.
2. "Communicating Failure: Disability and Epistemology in Woolf's *Jacob's Room*," Courtney Andree, Washington Univ. in St. Louis
3. "Enlightenment without Light: Disability, Diversity, and Epistemological Difference in Denis Diderot's 'Letter on the Blind,'" Melanie Holm, Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania

361. Sound

Friday, 9 January, 3:30–4:45 p.m., 224, VCC West

Program arranged by the Division on Late-Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century English Literature

Presiding: Cassandra Laity, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville

1. "'London Street Cries': Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years* as Sound Archives," Laurel Harris, Rider Univ.
2. "The *Salome* Chord," Ellis Hanson, Cornell Univ.
3. "'Shouts, Shrieks, and Yells': The Modernist Noise of Modern Suffrage Propaganda," Mary A. M. Chapman, Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver

482. Negotiating Memory

Saturday, 10 January, 10:15–11:30 a.m., 118, VCC West

Program arranged by the International Virginia Woolf Society

Presiding: Leslie Kathleen Hankins, Cornell Coll.

1. "(Re)Locating Laura: Disability and Retrospection in Memoirs from Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen," Courtney Andree, Washington Univ. in St. Louis
2. "Fragments of Ritual and Memory: The Constructs of Woolf's *Between the Acts*," Joel Hawkes, Univ. of Victoria
3. "Woolf and Memory," Mary Ann Caws, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York
4. "Organic Memory and Biographical Form in Woolf's *Flush*," Alexander N. Moffett, Providence Coll.

658. Things in Woolf

Sunday, 11 January, 8:30–9:45 a.m., 121, VCC West

Program arranged by the International Virginia Woolf Society

Presiding: Jane M. Garrity, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder

1. "Writing in Absentia: Woolf and the Language of Things," Michelle Ty, Univ. of California, Berkeley
2. "The Thing in the Mirror: Woolf on the Self as Object," Celia Marshik, Stony Brook Univ., State Univ. of New York
3. "Imperial Objects in *The Waves*," Jane M. Garrity

770. Twentieth-Century World Wars Memorialized as Past and Future

Sunday, 11 January, 1:45–3:00 p.m., 208, VCC West

A special session

Presiding: Richard Allen Kaye, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York

1. "Modernist Death: Rewriting the Form," Alice Kelly, Yale Univ.
2. "Wyndham Lewis and the Temporal Shapes of World War I," Stephen Sturgeon, Univ. of Iowa
3. "Plural Pasts and a Future beyond One's Grasp in Virginia Woolf's *The Years*," Richard J. Dellamora, Univ. of California, Los Angeles

379. Late Barthes as New Barthes?

Friday, 9 January, 5:15–6:30 p.m., 217, VCC West

A special session

Presiding: Yue Zhuo, Yale Univ.

1. "Late Barthes: The Intimacy Effect," Youna Kwak, New York Univ.
2. "'My Not Especially Heroic Hero': M. Barthes and Mrs. Brown," Elizabeth F. Abel, Univ. of California, Berkeley
3. "Walking from the 'Dark Cube' to the 'Second Room': Barthes's 'Resistance to Cinema,'" Yue Zhuo

Call for Papers <http://woolf.bloomu.edu/> **2015 Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf** **Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries**

The 25th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, sponsored by Bloomsburg University, will take place in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, June 4-7, 2015. The topic, **Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries**, seeks to contextualize Virginia Woolf's writing alongside the work of her contemporaries. This unprecedented number of women writers — experimentalists, middlebrow authors, journalists, poets, and editors — was simultaneously contributing to, as well as complicating, modernist literature. In what ways did these burgeoning communities and enclaves of women writers intersect with (or coexist alongside) Virginia Woolf?

We welcome proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, and workshops from literary and interdisciplinary scholars, creative and performing artists, common readers, undergraduates, students, and teachers at all levels. Submissions should relate to **Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries** and may emphasize either the development of enclaves or specific female subcultures or individual writers who were contemporaneous with Virginia Woolf.

Possible themes include:

- ◆ The role of sexuality in the formation of communities of women writers
- ◆ Publication and women writers
- ◆ The Little Magazines and women writers
- ◆ Fashion and women writers
- ◆ The role of the new electronic mediums in the promotion of women writers
- ◆ The rise of women writers and the anti-war movement
- ◆ Suffragism and emerging women writers
- ◆ Psychoanalysis and the advent of women writers
- ◆ War and women writers

In addition to papers clearly focused on Virginia Woolf, we also welcome themes that involve any of the many women writers of the early twentieth-century including (but not limited to) Gertrude Stein, H. D., Dorothy Richardson, Mina Loy, Vera Brittain, Marianne Moore, Jean Rhys, Djuna Barnes, Una Marson, Colette, Mary Butts, Amy Lowell, Rebecca West, Kay Boyle, Bryher, Elizabeth Bowen, and Enid Bagnold.

For individual papers, send a 250-word proposal. For panels of three or four people, please send a proposal title and a 250-word proposal for each paper. For roundtables and workshops, send a 250 to 500-word proposal and biographical description of each participant. Also, if you would like to chair a panel, please let us know.

Conference Organizer: Julie Vandivere

Email proposal by attachment in Word to
 Woolf2015@bloomu.edu

Deadline extended to midnight January 31, 2015.

International Virginia Woolf Society Panel at the University of Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture, 2015

Panel Title:

International Virginia Woolf Society Panel

Panel Chair:

Joanna Englert, a grad student in English at Louisville,

Presenters:

Jung Ja Choi, Dartmouth College, "Toward Global Networking of Women: The Hours, Virginia Woolf, and Princess Tökhye"

Nan Zhang, Fudan University, Shanghai, "Woolf, Burke, and the Negotiation of Virtue in Mrs. Dalloway"

Charles Harding, University of Colorado at Boulder, "Empire in the 'Misty Spaces of the Intervening World': European Integration, British Protectionism, and The Waves"

Boosung Kim, Texas A&M University, "Art, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde": Aesthetics of Distraction in Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts"

LOUISVILLE CONFERENCE 2016—CALL FOR PAPERS

The International Virginia Woolf Society is pleased to host its sixteenth consecutive panel at the University of Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900. We invite proposals for critical papers on any topic concerning Woolf studies. A particular panel theme may be chosen depending on the proposals received. The conference dates are currently TBA.

Please submit by email a cover page with your name, email address, mailing address, phone number, professional affiliation (if any), and the title of your paper, and a second anonymous page containing a 250-word paper proposal to

Kristin Czarnecki.

<kristin_czarnecki@georgetowncollege.edu>

by

Monday, September 14, 2015

Panel Selection Committee Members:

Beth Rigel Daugherty

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Mark Hussey

Jane Lilienfeld

Vara Neverow

Issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* dating from Spring 2003 (issue 62) to the present are currently available online in full text PDF format at:

<http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/VWM_Online.html>
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A project to scan and post all earlier issues of the *Miscellany* is underway. The site (still in progress) is:

<http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverowv1/VWM_Online_Fall1973-Fall2002.html>
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All issues to the present as well as those from Fall 1973-Fall 2002 are available in digital format through EBSCOhost's Humanities International Complete and EBSCOhost's Literary Reference Center.

More recent issues are also available through through ProQuest Literature Online (LION) and Gale Group/Cengage.

An Index of the *VWM* from Fall 1973-Fall 2011 is now available from Susan Devoe at <susan.devoe@gmail.com>

VIRGINIA WOOLF MISCELLANY

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including information about upcoming Woolf conferences and
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Below is the finding aid for the IVWS archival materials:

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With regard to such items as correspondence, memorabilia and photographs,
contact the current Archival Liaison,

Karen Levenback,

either at <ivwsarchive@att.net>

or by surface mail:

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304 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

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<http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_membership.htm>

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Reading Group meetings

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

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Virginia Woolf Miscellany
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Woolfian Resources Online

Virginia Woolf Miscellany:

Issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* from Spring 2003 (issue 63) to the present are available in a PDF format at: <http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverow1/VWM_Online.html>.

A project to scan and post all earlier issues of the *Miscellany* is underway. The site (still in progress) is at:

<http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverow1/VWM_Online_Fall1973-Fall2002.html> (These issues are available to view through EBSCOhost as well.)

The Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Information about the history of the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf is available at: <http://www.home.southernct.edu/~neverow1/annual_conference_on_virginia_woolf.html>

The Three Guineas Reading Notebooks Online:

<<http://woolf-center.southernct.edu>>

Contact Vara Neverow <neverow1@southernct.edu> for more information about the site.

Facebook:

The International Virginia Woolf Society is on Facebook! You can become a fan—and you can friend other Woolfians. The Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain also now has a Facebook page.

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/> 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 <fernham.blogspot.com/>.

Scholarly Resources

Woolf Online: An Electronic Edition and Commentary of Virginia Woolf's "Time Passes" at <<http://www.woolfonline.com/>> is a beautifully crafted website dedicated entirely to the middle chapter 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 be the future of Woolfian texts online. 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."

E-books

The majority of Virginia Woolf's novels as well as many of her short stories and the complete texts of *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* can be read online at <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/>>.

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 keystrokes? Check it out! It's simple, fast and very rewarding.

VWListserv

To join the VWListserv, please go to the IVWS home page a <<http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS>> and click on the VWListserv link in the left column. Then, follow the instructions.



A Brief Overview of Resources for Woolfians

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

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

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

The V Woolf Listserv is hosted by the University of Ohio. The current list administrator is Elisa Kay Sparks. Anne Fernald oversaw the list for many years. The founder of the list is Morris Beja. To join the list, you need to send a message to the following address: <listsproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu>. In the body of the email, you must write: subscribe VWOOLF Your first name Your last name. 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: <listsproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu>. In the body of the email, write: unsubscribe VWOOLF.

Materials from most of the sources mentioned above are included in **the IVWS/VWS archive** at the E. J. Pratt Library, 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 <ivwsarchive@att.net>.

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

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

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



The Leonard Woolf Society will be holding its next meetings as follows:

May 23, 2015 in London, UK
& March 2016 in Sri Lanka
(Details to be decided.)

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The May 2014 Leonard Woolf Society Symposium Report

The Leonard Woolf Society based in Great Britain held its 2nd Annual Symposium on May 24, 2014, in the recently opened 'The Keep' (www.thekeep.info), part of the Sussex University, Brighton. The newly erected building houses the Special Collection, which includes the Monk House Papers and the Leonard Woolf Papers.

A small party of about 25 people gathered on this very rainy day and began by admiring the display of some books and pictures that Nathan Sivasambu, the coordinator of the LWS, put together. Dr. Surendra Paul, chairman of the LWS, opened the meeting and introduced the first speaker, Dr. Shihand de Silva from the institute of Commonwealth Studies, who spoke on the topic *The Village in the Jungle*, Cultural Confluence and Conflict. Her goal was to show us through examples in the text how much Woolf understood Sinhalese cultural practices and folk beliefs and was able to put that across in the story. She argued that the Sinhalese translation had a more authentic rhythm and that Sinhalese words in the English text, being transcribed in western letters, were difficult for Sinhalese speakers to recognize. The theme of rhythm reappeared at the end of the day with a performance on the cello by Rohan de Saram, who also took us on a journey of rhythm. He showed us, among other things, the difference in rhythm between the Eastern and Western musical traditions, which made his improvisation based on the *Village in the Jungle* even more valuable.

Dr. Peter Wilson had an hour to explain Leonard Woolf's role in shaping the League of Nations, the positives and the negatives of the League of Nations in general and specifically. He made us aware, as he has done in his publication *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf*, that the founding of this institution wasn't as straightforward as we like to think. The different countries involved had their own agendas, which complicated and hindered its progress. His talk and, especially, questions from the audience ate into our lunchtime, which nobody seemed to mind.

After a short lunch break William Clarence wove his own experiences as a UN field worker in Africa, "a worm eyed view" he called it, with Woolf's experiences as a civil servant in Ceylon.

Ruth Alloun & Dr. Jane Russell, in their 30 minutes dual talk, presented us with a clear and sometimes hilarious performance showing another side of Woolf. Quoting from different sources, they showed us that not all of Woolf's actions were so admirable.

A different and very personal side to Leonard Woolf became clear in the wonderful talk by Dr. Anne Byrne from a time in Woolf's life after Virginia had died. Byrne had made a study of the correspondence between Leonard and an Irish housewife stretching over a period of 25 years. Over 600 letters can be found in the Keep, and she shared with us some golden nuggets from that correspondence, showing e.g. how generous Leonard was to her with advice, books and suggestions. In the future we hope to hear more about this "Writing to Nancy, writing to Leonard Woolf 1943-1968" (see Dr. Byrne's article based on this talk on page 32 in this issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*).

Fiona Courage, curator at the Keep, gave us an idea of the wealth of material relating to Woolf in her talk "A Life in Boxes." Seventy boxes are still to be investigated. She had divided them into 4 subjects and gave a few examples of the contents of each.

The Leonard Woolf Society's coordinator, Nathan Sivasambu, briefly explained the idea behind the Society, which is still in its infancy but is likely to grow as interest in Leonard Woolf increases. The by-laws are still in the making, and one can become a member by contacting Dr. Surendra Paul ([surenpaul@hotmail.com](mailto:surenspaul@hotmail.com)).

Next Annual Meetings will be May 24, 2015, in Cambridge, and March 2016, in Sri Lanka. Details of these meetings will be decided upon in the near future.

AnneMarie Bantzinger

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

VIRGINIA WOOLF AND KATHERINE MANSFIELD

EDITED BY
KATHRYN SIMPSON AND
MELINDA HARVEY



Taking the Measure of New Books: Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield as Reviewers of Fiction

Virginia Woolf's career as a reviewer began in 1904 and ended shortly before her death in 1941. Her reviews appeared in a number of different journals, most notably the *Times Literary Supplement*, established in 1902 and still appearing today. Katherine Mansfield initially reviewed fiction in the *Blue Review* and the *TLS*, but from April 1919 to December 1920 her reviews were published in the short-lived revamped *Athenaeum*. This magazine was edited by Mansfield's husband, John Middleton Murry, from February 1919 until February 1921. It is interesting to contrast Woolf and Mansfield's reviews of contemporary novelists as their comments reflect both reviewers' desire to be innovative in their fiction and also to persuade other writers to explore more experimental literary forms. For the purpose of comparison, this article will limit consideration of Woolf's reviews to the same period as Mansfield's reviews for the *Athenaeum*. It will concentrate on comparing and contrasting their reviews of the same novels, which amounts to eleven titles. Unless otherwise stated Woolf's reviews appeared in the *TLS*.

Both writers reviewed *The Tunnel* by Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957). Woolf's review was published in February 1919 and Mansfield's in April 1919. Between these two dates, Woolf described a meeting with Mansfield during which they "plunged" "into the question of Dorothy Richardson" (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 1 257). It is thus possible that Woolf influenced Mansfield's review, especially in stressing that Richardson was attempting something new. Woolf wrote that *The Tunnel* "represents a genuine conviction of the discrepancy between what [Richardson] has to say and the form provided by tradition for her to say it in" (*The Essays of Virginia Woolf* [E] 3 10-12). As Woolf herself was beginning to do in her shorter fiction, Richardson had discarded "the old deliberate business," including the treatment of plot and "characteristic characters" (E3 10). In her review of *The Tunnel*, Mansfield took most seriously Richardson's novel as an attempt at something new, "composed of bits, fragments, flashing glimpses, half scenes and whole scenes, all of them quite distinct and separate, and all of them of equal importance" (*Novels and Novelists* [Novels] 4). The new novel form would discard a traditional story and plot.

For Woolf and Mansfield, the important element of *The Tunnel* is not the outwardly developing story but the representation of Miriam's

consciousness. Nevertheless, both reviewers express doubts about Richardson's techniques. Woolf believes that "we should perceive [...] some unity, significance, or design" (E3 11). Further, Woolf argues that though this novel creates a far greater sense of reality than the ordinary methods, she is unsure whether this sense of reality is profound or superficial (E3 11). Both reviewers refer to the impression of "fragments" (E3 11; *Novels* 4). Woolf and Mansfield feel that while Richardson has discovered something important, her techniques require further development.

Woolf and Mansfield also reviewed *An Honest Thief and Other Stories* by Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1880), which had been recently translated by Constance Garnett. Woolf's review appeared on 23 October 1919 (E3 113-15) and Mansfield's on 28 November 1919 (*Novels* 111-14). They both pick up on three similar aspects of the stories. First both reviewers try to imagine the characters in a provincial English town—hence Woolf's title, "Dostoevsky in Cranford." Both comment on Dostoevsky's sense of comedy (E3 114; *Novels* 112). Finally, both reviewers draw Jane Austen into the discussion. Woolf suggests that Dostoevsky's comedy resembles the work of the satirical Restoration playwright Wycherley rather than Jane Austen's novels. Woolf concludes by observing that though both Dostoevsky and Austen are great writers, they are also opposites. Woolf asserts that the Austen-Dostoevsky dichotomy is "the old, unnecessary quarrel between the inch of smooth ivory and the six feet of canvas with its strong coarse grain" (E3 115). Mansfield also raises the question of which of these two authors is the greater, but she does not answer her own enquiry.

A third contemporary whose reputation has survived is Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). Woolf's review of *The Rescue* appeared on 1 July 1920 (E3 229-32) and Mansfield's on 2 July 1920 (*Novels* 213-17). Woolf and Mansfield once more both use the same word to describe the author. Woolf describes Conrad as a "romantic" writer twice (E3 229, 232). Mansfield also refers to Conrad's "romantic vision" (*Novels* 214). However, although basing their judgments on the same concept, the reviewers reach very different conclusions. Woolf was disappointed with *The Rescue* because Conrad "has attempted a romantic theme and in the middle his belief in romance has failed him" (E3 232). By contrast, Mansfield writes that "we are more than satisfied" by *The Rescue* (*Novels* 214). The hero and heroine's sense of romance is different and this leads to "disaster" (*Novels* 217). Why this should have occurred, Mansfield observes, is "to put the seal of greatness on *The Rescue* that the author gives us no answer" (*Novels* 217).

The other contemporary novelists reviewed by Woolf and Mansfield have largely sunk into obscurity now. They reviewed *The Mills of the Gods* by Elizabeth Robins (1862-1952), the actress who first brought Ibsen to the English stage in the 1890s. Woolf's review appeared on 17 June 1920 (E3 228-29) and Mansfield's on 25 June 1920 under the title "Wanted, A New World" (*Novels* 211-13). Woolf finds Robins's ideas "commonplace" and her knowledge "superficial," though her "masculine" style has an admirable "bare brevity" (E3 228). Mansfield notices her "workmanlike style" and likewise finds "hollowness beneath the surface" (*Novels* 211). Woolf's main criticism is that Robins's stories are "pre-war" but she ends with the tolerant claim that "although the story may be of no great concern, the mind behind it is exceptionally robust" (E3 228). Mansfield is more condemnatory: "How is it that the author can bear to waste her time over these false situations which are not even novel?" (*Novels* 211). She ends her review of these stories with a disgusted exclamation: "Oh, Miss Robins! We are very, very weary of this kind of tale" (*Novels* 212). Their responses to Robins's stories reverse their approval and disapproval of Conrad's *The Rescue*. For Mansfield, Robins' novel represents all she detested in the traditional novel; Woolf's judgment was possibly affected by the fact that she had a personal relationship with Robins that went back to her childhood.

Woolf reviewed *The Imperfect Mother* by J. D. Beresford (1873-1949) on 25 March 1920 under the revealing title "Freudian Fiction" (E3

195-97) and Mansfield reviewed it on 9 April 1920 under the title “Two Modern Novels” (*Novels* 171-73). Both reviewers recognized that the novel was written according to the new psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, showing they were abreast with current intellectual ideas. However, neither Woolf nor Mansfield thought the novel was successful. Both use an architectural metaphor to describe how it fails. Woolf writes how “The door swings open briskly enough, but the apartment to which we are admitted is a bare little room with no outlook whatever” (E3 197). Similarly Mansfield uses the same metaphor: “The house is not furnished at all; nobody lives there. We should not be surprised if Mr Beresford had written ‘To Let’ on the last page” (*Novels* 172). Both reviewers use an image of domestic space, partially because Freudian theory often deals with family dynamics and also because this was the interior place Woolf and Mansfield were often interested in when they explored consciousness. The idea of an interior space gave the titles to Woolf’s novel *Jacob’s Room* and her polemic *A Room of One’s Own*.

Woolf and Mansfield reviewed *A Lost Love* by Ashford Owen (pseudonym of Charlotte Ogle, 1832-1918), which was reprinted in 1920, over sixty years after its original appearance. Woolf reviewed it on 25 March in “An Old Novel” (E3 215-17) and Mansfield on 9 April 1920 (*Novels* 183-85). Though both writers quote several scenes from the novel, neither feel that it has any chance of survival. In *A Lost Love*, Woolf sees “the skeleton of the traditional form” (E3 217). For Mansfield, too, Owen’s novel has had its day, an observation which she expresses in a natural metaphor: “They are pressed flowers: the fashion for them is no more” (*Novels* 185). Both reviewers use images of death (“skeleton”; “pressed flowers”) to reinforce the idea that the traditional Victorian novel is now defunct, which they aspire to replace with innovative fiction.

Woolf and Mansfield both reviewed the same three novels by the American author Joseph Hergesheimer (1880-1954). Woolf’s review of *Java Head* appeared on 29 May 1919 (E3 47-49) and Mansfield’s on 13 June 1919 titled “Glancing Light” (*Novels* 38-40). Hergesheimer’s popularity was reaching its peak at the time of these reviews and Woolf had already reviewed one of his earlier novels. Although she begins and ends by claiming that *Java Head* is “a good novel,” she is actually rather critical of it (E3 47, 49). Both Woolf and Mansfield devote considerable space to a recapitulation of this historical novel’s plot. They each recognise that Hergesheimer devotes much time to describing outward things such as clothes and scenery, but neither reviewer finds that this is sufficient. It was certainly Woolf’s objection to the Edwardian novelists in “Modern Fiction” that they relied too much on externals to create their fictional worlds (E4 157-65). The reviewers agree that the author is not at ease with penetrating other aspects of the world of his novel. Nevertheless, this is another occasion where they diverge in their conclusions. Woolf claims to be finding fault because she has hopes that Hergesheimer will improve as a novelist and is mature enough to benefit from criticism. Mansfield is less optimistic and more critical. While *Java Head*’s readers are “excited” by the novel and curious as “to what lies beneath these strange surfaces,” Mansfield concludes that, “Mr Hergesheimer leaves us wondering and unsatisfied” (*Novels* 40).

Woolf and Mansfield return to Hergesheimer in reviews of *Gold and Iron* on 25 December 1919 (E3 139-40) and 6 February 1920 (*Novels* 151-52) respectively. Both reviewers felt that Hergesheimer had not quite brought off the three stories that comprise *Gold and Iron*. Woolf and Mansfield implement different metaphors to discuss these short stories: Woolf uses the modern image of developing a photograph, while Mansfield uses a traditional image of the growth of a fruit. Despite the contrasting images, one mechanistic and one natural, the point both reviewers are making is that, in Woolf’s words, “Mr Hergesheimer is still in the process of development” (E3 140). Mansfield writes of “this quality of ‘promise’ which we venture to think he possesses” (*Novels* 151). Significantly, Mansfield’s title for this review was “Promise.”

The third Hergesheimer novel reviewed by both of them was *Linda Condon*. Woolf’s review appeared on 8 July 1920 titled “The Pursuit of Beauty” (E3 233-34) and Mansfield’s on 23 July 1920 as “The Luxurious Style” (*Novels* 227-29). Again Mansfield is more disparaging than Woolf, who feels that “because Mr Hergesheimer is a sophisticated writer [...] he is an interesting writer” (E3 233). Woolf also approves of Hergesheimer’s exploration of “strange elements in composition of modern life” (E3 233). Woolf goes on to state that Hergesheimer “keeps to the solid and the actual,” but this leads her to conclude that “[t]he difficult experiment is hardly successful” (E3 234). Mansfield again uses a natural image to describe how a book should develop as naturally as fruit and buds. Like Woolf, Mansfield believes that Hergesheimer deals only with the outward circumstances and the physical facts of existence. She returns to her opening metaphor to criticize *Linda Condon*: “It is a great pity that Mr Hergesheimer has not faced the difficulties of a more reluctant and more precious harvest” (*Novels* 229). Unlike Woolf, Mansfield does not enjoy “picking to pieces” a novel that runs like an artificial watch mechanism (E3 234). Again, a natural and a mechanistic image are used.

September by Frank Swinnerton (1884-1982) was reviewed by Woolf on 25 September 1919 (E3 103-4) and Mansfield’s on 10 October 1919 (*Novels* 84-88). Once more, Woolf finds something to be enthusiastic about in *September*, which she describes as “a very able book. With candour and sincerity Mr Swinnerton has applied his brain to a very difficult task” (E3 103). She sees the “relationship between the two women” as the main theme of the novel (E3 103). Woolf believes that Swinnerton approaches this theme with insight and that the result is that “the development is original enough to have an unusual air of truth” (E3 103). Mansfield comments negatively on the “composure and deliberation” of Swinnerton’s style, which Woolf had praised (*Novels* 84). Mansfield also, though less clearly than Woolf, suggests that the two women’s relationship is at the heart of the novel. This is significant because both reviewers wrote about obscure women and the relationships between women in their own fiction.

Although Woolf feels that “it is easy to mark out the boundaries” of Swinnerton’s talent, notably that his mind is more lucid than beautiful and that his scope is intellectual rather than imaginative, she nevertheless concludes that “praise ought to have the last word and the weightiest” (E3 104). He is more successful than most modern novelists and makes the reader feel the problems presented in *September* are “worth solving,” (E3 104). Thus it is “a novel of exceptional merit” (E3 104). Mansfield’s view of the characters and their problems is the opposite of Woolf’s, “They are most carefully, most conscientiously painted, but we are not held” (*Novels* 87).

Finally, Woolf and Mansfield both reviewed a reprint of *Esther Waters* (1894) by George Moore (1852-1933). Woolf’s review was published on 29 July 1920 (E3 250-52) and Mansfield’s on 10 October 1919 (*Novels* 233-37). Both writers want to establish how and why the novel has survived and whether it will continue to do so. Woolf describes *Esther Waters* as “old-fashioned” (E3 250) but refers to its “obvious merits,” as a story that is “varied and interesting,” with a style that is “invariably lucid and effortless.” She concludes the book’s value “lay in a shapeliness which is at once admirable and disconcerting” (E3 250). Mansfield agrees that “*Esther Waters* is, on the face of it, a model novel” (*Novels* 234).

Then comes the criticism. Mansfield sums up one fault with which Woolf agrees, “Fact succeeds fact,” (*Novels* 237) and this alone will not make a great novel. Both reviewers find that *Esther Waters* fails to rouse any emotion “What it comes to,” Mansfield explains, “is that we believe that emotion is essential to a work of art; it is that which makes a work of art a unity. Without emotion writing is dead” (*Novels* 236). Nevertheless, Woolf is again more tolerant, insisting that Moore is “a born writer” (E3 251). By contrast, Mansfield condemns Moore’s claim that *Esther*

Waters is his best novel as an “insult to his reader’s intelligence” (*Novels* 237) and thinks Moore has been deservedly forgotten.

In conclusion, Mansfield and Woolf both welcome the experimental writing of Dorothy Richardson and hope to see it developed further. Both are dismissive of the realistic or naturalistic novels produced by Robins, Beresford, Owen, Hergesheimer, Swinnerton and Moore, though on the whole Woolf found more positive aspects than Mansfield to comment upon. However, both Mansfield and Woolf felt that all these novelists overused facts or photographic realism, something that Woolf had condemned in her April 1919 essay “Modern Novels” (E4 157-65). As far as Woolf and Mansfield were concerned, such novels were throwbacks to the nineteenth century. Given both of them were aiming to break with the traditional and developing what would come to be known as modernist texts, they tended to be critical of the conventional elements in the fiction they reviewed. Angela Smith notes in her book on Woolf and Mansfield that “[b]oth writers constantly repeat in different ways in their journals, letters, essays, and reviews, the theme that art is not about solving problems but of finding an equivalent for life” (155). In order to achieve this both reviewers would experiment with the structure, plotting and narrative techniques of prose fiction in their own work. In terms of their subject matter, Woolf and Mansfield would put women’s minds at the center of much of their prose fiction, discarding the idea that it is the male world of action and external objects, which is paramount. Thus, their work as reviewers of their contemporaries between April 1919 and December 1920 provide insights into their aims and practices as writers of modernist fiction.

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“the sudden ‘mushroom growth’ of cheap psychoanalysis”: Mansfield and Woolf Respond to Psychoanalysis¹

This account examines Mansfield’s and Woolf’s response to psychoanalysis during the crucial years of 1918-1919, years when discussions of Freud became inescapable in London’s literary circles, years that coincided with Mansfield’s and Woolf’s period of greatest intimacy.² Their discussions about literature and writing were among the most productive Woolf would ever enjoy with another woman writer; it was this time spent with Mansfield that would lead Woolf to comment after Mansfield’s death that “probably we had something in common which I shall never find in anyone else” (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 2 227). I touch on three topics: first, Mansfield’s and Woolf’s exposure to and knowledge of psychoanalysis; second, what their personal writing during this time period reveals about their exchanges concerning the uses of psychoanalysis for literary purposes; and finally, how their fiction engages with psychoanalysis, in particular, how their ideas of memory and the unconscious both resemble and differ from then-popular psychoanalytic models of the mind.

Woolf scholars and biographers have thoroughly documented Woolf’s exposure to and knowledge of psychoanalysis. Her involvement with the dissemination of Freud in particular was central: not only did the Hogarth Press publish works of Freud in English translation, but Leonard Woolf wrote the first general introduction to Freud in a review published in *The New Weekly* in 1914 (reprinted in Rosenbaum 189-91). Woolf’s brother, Adrian, became one of England’s first psychoanalysts, and with his wife Karin, also an early English psychoanalyst, played a crucial role in bringing Melanie Klein to England. Woolf met both Freud and Klein, and she recorded her impressions of both in her diary (D5 202, 209). The Bloomsbury Group debated Freudian theories of the mind, with Leonard and Lytton Strachey advocating Freud’s theories, and Clive Bell and Roger Fry challenging them (see, for example, the entry on psychoanalysis in *The Cambridge Companion to the Bloomsbury Group*).³

Our information about Mansfield’s exposure to and knowledge of psychoanalysis is much sketchier. Certainly she was present at numerous gatherings hosted by Ottoline Morrell at Garsington Manor where discussions of Freud were rife. Her intimacy with Frieda and D. H. Lawrence perhaps provided her most crucial source, since the Lawrences were familiar with popular Freudian concepts, Frieda through her

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the MLA convention in 2013.

² In *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, Elizabeth Abel provides a comprehensive account of English literary circles’ exposure to Freudian psychoanalysis.

³ See Brenda Silver’s chapter in particular.



early affair with the Freudian analyst Otto Gross, Lawrence through his and Frieda's friendship with the analyst Barbara Low. Living with the Lawrences in Cornwall in 1916, Mansfield wrote numerous letters in which she excoriated the Lawrences for their adoption of Freudian phallicism. Writing that Frieda's mind was "simply riddled with what she calls 'sexual symbols,'" Mansfield complained,

I shall never see sex in trees, sex in the running brooks, sex in stones and sex in everything. The number of things that are really phallic from fountain pen fillers onwards! But I shall have my revenge—I suggested to Lawrence that he should call his cottage The Phallus & Frieda thought it was a very good idea. (*The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* [CLKM] 1 264, 261-62).

Mansfield deplored Lawrence's inability to tolerate dissension: "whatever your disagreement is about he says it is because you have gone wrong in your sex and belong to an obscene spirit" (CLKM1 263). Lawrence's later efforts to represent female psychology in *The Lost Girl* affected Mansfield with nothing but dismay:

Oh, don't forget where Alvina feels 'a trill in her bowels' and discovers herself with child. A TRILL—what does that mean? And why is it so peculiarly offensive from a man? Because it is *not on this plane* that the emotions of others are conveyed to our imagination. It's a kind of sinning against art (CLKM4 138).

Mansfield and Lawrence did, however, share an interest in the figure of the devouring or engulfing mother, a figure Lawrence explored explicitly in his fictions and Mansfield explored via her relationship with her companion and caretaker, Ida Baker. In this time period Lawrence sent Mansfield a copy of what was probably Carl Jung's *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, warning her in the letter accompanying the volume against "this mother-incest idea":

Beware of it—this mother-incest idea can become an obsession. But it seems to me that there is much truth in it—that at certain periods the man has a desire and tendency to return into the woman, make her his goal and end, find his justification in her. In this way he casts himself as it were into her womb, and she, the Magna Mater, receives him with gratification. This is a kind of incest [...] it is awfully hard, once the sex relation has gone this way, to recover. If we don't recover, we die. (Lawrence qtd. in Ruderman 11).⁴

Mansfield's letters also reveal some knowledge of then-popular Freudian concepts. Letters to Morrell, for example, frequently find Mansfield jokingly referring to various "complexes": "I seem to have a 'hands complex,'" she writes after several disparaging remarks about women picking up food with their hands (CLKM2 336); another letter remarks, "In addition to my money complex I have a food complex" (CLKM2 339). Similarly, a letter to S. S. Koteliensky takes Joyce, Eliot, and other "ultra modern young men" to task for appreciating Chekhov as "almost as good as the 'specimen cases' in Freud" (CLKM2 345); the term "specimen cases" was used by A. A. Brill in the first English translations of Freud in 1913 and 1914.

Discussions of psychoanalysis also permeated literary circles in London at this time and, given Mansfield's immersion in the London literary world, it is hard to believe she did not grasp some of its import. Bronislaw Malinowski observed that "psychoanalysis has had within the last ten years [1917-1927] a truly meteoric rise in popular favour. It has exercised a growing influence over contemporary literature, science, and art. It has in fact been for some time the popular craze of the day" (qtd. in Abel 16). Another observer remarked that "Freud's theories infiltrated in an expurgated form from the gardens of Hampstead to the squares of Bloomsbury and salons of Kensington. In the bus, the newspapers, and underground a new vocabulary appeared" (qtd. in Abel 16). The poet

Bryher attests in particular to the influence of psychoanalysis in literary circles:

You could not have escaped Freud in the literary world of the early twenties. Freud! All literary London discovered Freud about 1920 [...] the theories were the great subject of conversation wherever one went at that date. To me Freud is literary London [...] after the first war. People did not always agree but he was always taken with the utmost seriousness. (Bryher qtd. in Friedman 18; ellipsis in Friedman).

The infiltration of psychoanalysis into London literary circles coincided with the greatest period of intimacy between Woolf and Mansfield. Both were involved in work for John Middleton Murry's *Athenaeum*, Mansfield as a regular reviewer of books and Woolf as a sometime contributor. As Sydney Janet Kaplan remarks,

the period of Murry's editorship culminated for both Woolf and Mansfield in a higher level of awareness of the possibilities and complexities of the prose medium. Woolf's centrally important essay, 'Modern Novels,' and Mansfield's *Athenaeum* reviews of current fiction resonate with an implicit critical dialogue between the two women. (109)

That dialogue has been the subject of a number of studies, including, in addition to Kaplan, important work by Angela Smith and Jenny McDonnell.⁵ Mansfield and Woolf were in agreement about the deleterious influence psychoanalysis had on fiction writing, and both complained—in published reviews as well as private observations—that writers influenced by psychoanalysis turned life into a case. In a review of J. D. Beresford's *An Imperfect Mother* titled "Freudian Fiction," Woolf deplored the masquerading of science as art: "The triumphs of science are beautifully positive. But for novelists the matter is much more complex. [...] Yes, says the scientific side of the brain, that is interesting; that explains a good deal. No, says the artistic side, that is dull" (*The Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf* 3 197). In a similar vein Mansfield railed against the "sudden 'mushroom growth' of cheap psycho analysis" in fiction: "these people who are nuts on analysis seem to me to have no subconscious at all. They write to *prove*—not to tell the truth" (CLKM4 69). Here Mansfield's championing of Chekhov is relevant: whereas Mansfield believes that Chekhov "has given us a sign of the way we should go," the ultra modern men—Joyce, Eliot, Pound—equate his fiction with Freud's psychoanalytic case studies. For both Mansfield and Woolf, the problem with this kind of fiction writing is that psychoanalytic models take precedence over insights arrived at through the imagination, emotion, and language of the writer.

That said, it is also indisputable that both Mansfield and Woolf brought to fiction writing an enhanced sense of emotional life and the self that speaks to their engagement with the psychological revolution of their time. Hence, while Woolf objected to a reductive application of psychoanalysis to fictional plots, her own writing engages with a number of the same issues that preoccupied psychoanalysis in this early stage of its dissemination and development. Many of her novels, in particular *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *To the Lighthouse*, are structured as developmental narratives that trace, for example, oedipal and preoedipal concerns and that depict infantile and childhood crises of separation and individuation as persisting in adult life. Woolf uses dreams in *The Voyage Out* to represent Rachel's wordless, deeply repressed conflicts, for example, while in *To the Lighthouse* she alludes explicitly to oedipal models of development in her characterization of James Ramsay. Woolf's fractured narratives, moreover, reflect the sort of emotional fractures that Freud and other psychoanalysts theorized as characteristic of development. More crucially, Woolf's own models of memory and the

⁴ See also my *Word of Mouth: Body/Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* (87-116).

⁵ See Angela Smith, *A Public of Two* and Jenny McDonnell, *Katherine Mansfield and the Literary Marketplace*.

mind are congruent with those developed by Freud. In “A Sketch of the Past,” for example, Woolf describes how

The past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past; but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present. For the present when backed by the past is a thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close that you can feel nothing else, when the film on the camera reaches only the eye. But to feel the present sliding over the depths of the past, peace is necessary. The present must be smooth, habitual. (98)

This layered conception of the mind and personal history recalls the archaeological tropes for the mind deployed by Freud, who similarly images the mind in terms of surface and depth, past and present, adult and child. In an early letter to Wilhelm Fliess, for example, Freud describes the mind as coming into being through “a process of stratification”: “the material present in the shape of memory traces [...] is, as it were, transcribed [...] memory is present not once but several times over. [...] the successive transcripts represent [...] successive epochs of life[.] [...] Relics of the past still survive” (Freud 173, 175).

Mansfield’s writing is in some ways a far more radical departure than Woolf’s. Kaplan and McDonnell have both argued that the years in which Mansfield and Woolf engaged most closely with each other and with writing reviews and essays coalesced for both with a sharpening and defining of their narrative aesthetic. McDonnell in particular has described these years as crucial for Mansfield in developing her sense that the short story form offered greater potential for experimentation than the novel, and further, that such an exploration was ethically required of the writer following the Great War. To Middleton Murry, for example, Mansfield decried one such traditional novel thus:

It is an awful temptation, in face of all these novels to cry “Woe—woe!” I cannot conceive how writers who have lived through our times can *drop* these last ten years and revert to why Edward didn’t understand Vi’s reluctance to be seduced or (see Bennett) why a dinner of twelve covers needs remodelling. If I didn’t review novels I’d never read them. (CLKM4 50-51)

It is this thinking that, McDonnell argues, resulted in Mansfield’s notoriously underwhelmed review of Woolf’s *Night and Day*. In a letter written to Murry before writing the review, Mansfield described Woolf’s novel as a “lie in the soul” because it did not acknowledge, either thematically or stylistically, the impact of the First World War: “the novel can’t just leave the war out,” Mansfield complained: “There *must* have been a change of heart[.] [...] I feel in the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same—that as artists we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our thoughts and feelings” (CLKM3 82). McDonnell has persuasively argued that Mansfield’s search for such new expressions and moulds translated into the kinds of plotless stories that are characteristic of her late and most accomplished work. Hence, in contrast to Woolf, Mansfield does not privilege developmental models as a plot structure. But Mansfield’s concept of human personality also differs radically from that of Woolf and from that of the psychoanalytic theory of her time. Mansfield’s sense of the self as multiple and performative, deeply contingent upon context and interaction with others, also impacts her rejection of plot and narrative development. The characteristics typically ascribed to Mansfield’s work after the breakthrough she accomplished with “The Aloe”/“Prelude” in 1915 are antithetical to the extended character development and interaction Mansfield associated with the novel. The stories after 1915 are impressionistic and dependent upon the epiphanic moment; they typically stress the isolation of people from one another, and they often turn on the exposure of social indifference to human suffering and misery. Personality is a fleeting and ephemeral

construction in these stories, and there is no unifying thread—no narrative arc—to hold human character together. In writing “At the Bay” in 1921, for example, Mansfield wrote that she “tried to go deep—to speak to that secret self we all have—to acknowledge that” (CLKM4 231). Significantly, that “secret self” remains a secret even to the person concerned, and one of the most radical aspects of Mansfield’s work is her uncompromising insistence that we remain unknowable, even to ourselves. The social “mask” (her term) is a temporary measure, adopted to protect and conceal the seething chaos that reigns beneath.⁶ In a late notebook entry, Mansfield describes the suspension of a wave before it breaks as containing “the whole life of the soul”:

One is flung up—out of life, one is “held,” and then—down, bright, broken, glittering on to the rocks, tossed back, part of the ebb and flow [...] while one hangs, suspended in the air, held [...] I was conscious [...] of the white sky with a web of torn grey over it, of the slipping, sliding, slithering sea; of the dark woods blotted against the cape [...] and more—of a huge cavern where my selves [...] like ancient sea-weed gatherers) mumbled, indifferent and intimate [...] and this other self apart in the carriage, grasping the cold knob of her umbrella [...] Shall one ever be at peace with oneself? Ever quiet and uninterrupted—without pain—with the one whom one loves under the same roof? (*Letters and Journals* 70).

Mansfield’s best work captures both this desire for unity and an uncompromising belief in the profound self-division that perpetually undercuts that desire. It is here that Mansfield differs most radically from Woolf and from Freud and early psychoanalysis. Whereas Woolf, too, compares the mind and memory to moving water, for Woolf the present is the surface gliding over the past: if the present is smooth and untroubled, the past and its depths are visible. For Mansfield, by contrast, there is no peaceful perspective, no possibility of accessing the depths, only the lived experience of momentary suspension before the inevitable breaking of personality upon the rocks.

Mansfield and Woolf enjoyed only a brief time of real intimacy, the extended conversations they held in that time period of 1918-1919. Both stressed how unusual their conversations were, and how important. Woolf writes of how they “talked as easily as though 8 months were minutes [...] I feel a common certain understanding between us—a queer sense of being ‘like’” (D2 45); when Mansfield leaves for Europe Woolf notes “of a sudden comes the blankness of not having her to talk to. [...] A woman caring as I care for writing is rare enough I suppose to give the queerest sense of echo coming back to me from her mind the second after I’ve spoken” (D2 61). Mansfield similarly singles Woolf out: “I long to talk to you. [...] I wonder if you knew what your visits were to me—or how much I miss them. You are the only woman with whom I long to talk *work*. There will never be another” (CLKM4 154). It is tempting to imagine that those intense discussions touched on the psychoanalytic revolution of their time, and that they shared their differing ideas of how psychology might best translate into fiction.

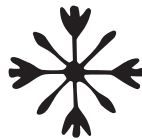
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⁶ Mansfield’s sense of the necessity of concealing identity with a social mask permeates her writing and indeed is a characteristic much noted of her by her contemporaries. As she famously wrote to John Middleton Murry in July 1917, “Don’t lower your mask until you have another mask prepared beneath—As terrible as you like—but a *mask*” (CLKM1 318).

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On Form/s: Woolf, Mansfield and Plato

Ninety years after the death of Katherine Mansfield in 1923, her fellow New Zealander Eleanor Catton "observed that male writers tend to get asked what they think and women what they feel. [...] The interviews much more seldom engage with the woman as a serious thinker, a philosopher, as a person with preoccupations that are going to sustain them for their lifetime" (qtd. in Higgins). Mansfield's literary critics show a similar bias, with a majority focusing on psychological "glimpses," characterized by Sylvia Berkman as "sharp intuitive flashes" that were "never the result of long, contemplative thought" (150), or Mansfield's choice of a form which, according to Julia van Gunsteren, inhibited the development of "detailed intellectual discussions into lengthy conjectures," as compared with the Woolfian novel (152). And yet van Gunsteren's study, grounded in the notion that "the impression of the perceiving mind is quite distinct from the phenomenon stimulating the impression" (15), returns us (albeit unwittingly) to Plato's cave, a site that preoccupied both Mansfield and Woolf, I will argue, in their engagement with foundational theories of reality.

Woolf's writing was rarely considered in metaphysical terms during her lifetime and it is only relatively recently that critics have approached

it from this perspective. This is due in part to Woolf's complaints that philosophy was the preserve of Oxbridge-educated males, but also because such men were apt to conclude, like E. M. Forster, that her writing "has no moral, no philosophy, nor has it what is usually understood by Form" (qtd. in Mao and Walkowitz 124). While the extent of Woolf's reading of Plato is now acknowledged (for example by Dalgarno, 17–18), Plato is also the philosopher Mansfield mentions in her "Notebooks," mediated through her reading of Walter Pater and Hans Vaihinger and encountered through her Oxford-educated partner John Middleton Murry, who in comparing Picasso to Plato conceded "it is but my weakness that prevents my following them to the heights they reach" ("The Art of Pablo Picasso" 115). Woolf also reflected on the heights of philosophical thought in her essay "On Not Knowing Greek," which describes how Socrates' "argument mounts from step to step" as he draws us in "his wake to the summit" (*The Essays of Virginia Woolf* [E] 4 42). Heights, as C. Fred Alford explains, are particularly appropriate to understanding the trajectory of Platonic thought since, "For Plato, humanity is drawn upward, and the self-moving energy of the psyche resides in the highest, not the lowest, part" (50). Indeed, we can impute to Plato the fracturing of mind from body in Western thought and the resulting separation of thinking from feeling and their mapping onto dualistic conceptions of gender that Catton observes in our own time and that Woolf and Mansfield contested in theirs. This essay, then, sets out to explore their dialogue with Plato, their philosophical "father," and with each other about matters of narrative form that related closely to understandings of metaphysical forms.

In January 1916—when writing "The Aloe," subsequently revised for the Hogarth Press as *Prelude* (1917)—Mansfield noted that "the form I would choose has changed utterly. I feel no longer concerned with the same appearance of things" (*The Katherine Mansfield Notebooks* [KMN] 2 32). As "The Aloe" transforms into *Prelude*, her story bears out her intention to liberate narrative form from plot as it unfolds like the aloe flower at its center, and deals not with events but impressions as the narrative flits (and digresses) among consciousnesses. But a further implication is Mansfield's rejection of any absolute truth about reality, as represented by Plato's theory of forms, and a re-assertion of the material world of sensations. Her early writing establishes this agenda; for instance, her poem "The Opal Sea Cave" (1912) can be read as a feminist inversion of Platonic myth. The poet, like Plato's philosopher, releases a "prisoner" from the cave into the sunlight, where true forms are manifest, but instead of returning to the darkness to lead others to enlightenment, Mansfield's female protagonist changes form: "First she became thistledown, / Then a mote in a sunbeam, / Then—nothing at all" (*Poems of Katherine Mansfield* 33: ll.10-12). Mansfield's cave thus remains "empty" at the end of a poem that empties Plato's allegorical cave of its meaning; but her poem also suggests that the only alternative space for women is a fatal unboundedness, a problem shared by the heroine of Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out* ([VO] 1915).

The question of form preoccupied Woolf, too, as she wrote her second novel during 1916-1919. Mansfield must have been much on her mind, as the subject of Bloomsbury gossip as well as the source of "priceless" "extra-Bloomsbury talk," productively analyzed by Kathryn Simpson as contributing to "a collaborative or co-operative creativity" between women (177). But while typesetting *Prelude* Woolf would have noticed a sharp contrast between the economy of Mansfield's prose and the expansiveness of *Night and Day* (1919), which David Bradshaw describes as a "juggernaut" of such length and bulk that it seems "designedly tedious" (xii). Woolf's concurrent experiments with the short story form have led critics to evaluate Mansfield's role in the conception of "Kew Gardens" (for example Simpson 177), but Mansfield may also have influenced the characterization of her namesake Katharine in Woolf's *Night and Day*. Bradshaw notes, for example, how Katharine Hilbery's preference for "the exactitude, the star-like impersonality, of [mathematical] figures to the confusion, agitation, and vagueness of the finest prose" evidences Woolf's "burgeoning interest in the

symbolic economy of the short story” (Bradshaw xii) and, I would add, in Mansfield herself. Woolf would also have noticed how, as Sydney Janet Kaplan points out, “everything [...] Mansfield wrote seems crisp, pointed, bold in outline” (*Katherine Mansfield* 151), a characteristic Woolf attributed to Mansfield personally—she “liked to have a line round her” (E 3 482)—and to the Katharine of *Night and Day*, on occasions when “the outline of the young woman’s form” emerges from the shadows (ND 141).

Mansfield’s review in the *Athenaeum* (“A Ship Comes into Harbour,” 21 November 1919) compares Woolf’s *Night and Day* to a “ship,” condemning it as a relic of the past: “We had thought that this world was vanished for ever, that it was impossible to find on the great ocean of literature a ship that was unaware of what has been happening” (*The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* [CWKM] 59). Mansfield’s imagery thus harks back to the oceanic voyage depicted in Woolf’s first novel (though, reportedly, she had admired it, see Lee *Virginia Woolf* 388), while also censuring Woolf in terms similar to her own dismissal in “Modern Fiction” of “shipshape and substantial” novels (E 4 158). But Mansfield’s nautical imagery also recalls her own story *Prelude*, in which the aloe at its center seems “to ride upon [a wave] like a ship with the oars lifted” (*The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* [CSKM] 53). Though Mansfield’s “ship” is lighter and more prone to the buffeting of events than Woolf’s, the aloe itself seems other-worldly in its centennial flowering and as the focus of one of the key characters Linda Burnell’s dream of escaping from the demands of her husband and children, “far away over the top of the garden trees, the paddocks and the dark bush beyond” (53). Indeed, *Prelude* is at least as dream-laden as *Night and Day*, a novel that Woolf provisionally titled “Dreams and Realities” (Whitworth 151). While Katharine Hilbery’s dreams of “heroes riding through the leaf-hung forests” (ND 237) chime with those of Linda’s unmarried sister, Beryl Fairfax, who dreams of a lover emerging from the shrubbery, another of Linda’s dreams, in which she “did not feel her bed, she floated, held up in the air” (CSKM 28), resembles Rachel Vinrace’s experience of “floating on the top of her bed” (VO 404) in Woolf’s first novel.

Mansfield’s review of *Night and Day* criticizes Woolf for keeping the “dream world” of her protagonists “a deep secret from her readers” (CWKM 58). Curiously, then, Mansfield focuses on Woolf’s novel’s perceived debt to Jane Austen rather than Tennyson, poet *par excellence* of dream worlds, since not only is he mentioned in the novel, but its title may refer to his iconic poem “The Lady of Shalott”: “There she weaves by night and day / A magic web with colours gay” (ll. 37-38). Though critics have labored “to dissociate Virginia Woolf from Tennyson’s portrait of the artist isolated from her kind” (Zwerdling 9) and reposition her in the “real world” that Mansfield urged her to portray, we should remember first that Tennyson had been a member of the Cambridge Apostles, a society steeped in the writings of Plato, and that Leonard Woolf, together with other of the Woolfs’ Bloomsbury friends, belonged to the same Apostolic tradition. Though not specifically referenced in *Night and Day*, Tennyson is yet invoked in a variety of ways, including a shared dialogue with Plato.

Even the title of *Night and Day*, like the shadows and sun of Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott,” signals the binary of light and dark allegorized in Plato’s “Simile of the Cave.” In summary, the prisoners in Plato’s cave are chained in position so that they can only see the fire-lit shadows of objects behind them, which they mistake for realities, since to them “the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images” (*The Republic*, Part VII). Imagery redolent of Plato’s cave recurs throughout Woolf’s novel; for example, “The dream nature of our life had never been more apparent to [Katharine], never had life been more certainly an affair of four walls, whose objects existed only within the range of lights and fires” (ND 262). In Plato’s parable, only the philosopher can leave the cave to behold a sunlit reality of true forms, but then he must return to enlighten others. We might interpret Katharine’s story as a parody

of Platonic ideals since the novel centers on her fear of marriage as a confinement that will prevent her pursuit of (mathematical) knowledge. By agreeing, finally, to marry Ralph Denham, Katharine submits to the confinement of the interior—in short, like Plato’s philosopher, she will return to the cave—but the novel questions the enlightenment of her decision. In particular, Mrs Hilbery’s description of marriage—“The great sea was round us. It was the voyage for ever and ever” (ND 364)—ominously recalls Woolf’s previous novel, *The Voyage Out*, in which Rachel’s engagement is rapidly followed by a fatal illness and hallucinations of “the sea rolling over her head” (VO 397).

As an “adaptation of the genre of courtship novel,” or even as the anti-romance that Michael H. Whitworth ultimately perceives it to be (151-57), *Night and Day* is in dialogue with another Platonic myth that underpins the romantic conception of lovers as soul-mates, the divided halves of a single being, a conception also treated ironically in Mansfield’s tales of romantic failures. In the *Symposium*, Plato characterizes androgyny as a “double nature” preceding the separation whereby “Each of us [...], having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half.” In *Night and Day*, when Katharine appears “outlined against the deep green waters, in which squadrons of silvery fish wheeled incessantly” (ND 274), the proximity to fish evokes the “androgynous qualities” that critics have identified (separately) in Woolf’s character, Katharine (Lee, *Novels* 62), and in Woolf’s contemporary, Katherine Mansfield (Kaplan, *Circulating Genius* 29). Woolf’s assertion that Katharine “represented very well the manly and the womanly sides of the feminine nature” (ND 254), like other passages that foreshadow the dual sexualities of the main character in *Orlando* (1928), owes more to Mansfield than to Vanessa Bell, Woolf’s sister, the ostensible model for Woolf’s heroine in *Night and Day* (*The Letters of Virginia Woolf* 1, 109, 232). The love triangle involving Katharine, Ralph and Mary Datchet may also reflect the strange relationship between Mansfield, Murry and Ida Baker, the faithful companion who lived with Mansfield at various times, including the spring of 1917 when Woolf was writing *Night and Day*. Indeed, Katharine Hilbery is initially more interested in Mary, whose independence and usefulness she covets and, on hearing that Ralph loves her, not Mary, Katharine feels “horribly uncomfortable, dismayed, indeed, disillusioned” (ND 203). In a highly erotically charged moment, Mary’s “hand went down to the hem of Katharine’s skirt, and, fingering a line of fur, she bent her head as if to examine it. ‘I like this fur,’ she said, ‘I like your clothes’” (ND 203), suggesting Mary’s unspoken desires for Katharine.

As an acute reader of Woolf’s work, Mansfield is unlikely to have overlooked the Platonic allusions in *Night and Day*, particularly as her earlier review of Dorothy Richardson’s *The Tunnel* is couched in Platonic terms. Here Mansfield regrets Miss Richardson’s “passion for registering every single thing that happens in the clear, shadowless country of her mind” and concludes with a call to “creep away into our caves of contemplation,” where we can judge what “to shine in the light” and what to throw “into the darkness” (CWKM 49, 50). Thus Mansfield criticizes Woolf for leaving her characters in shadow and Richardson for shining too much light, a paradox she pondered in her “Notebook” in April 1919. An unfinished piece, “It was neither dark nor light in the cabin” (KMN 2 177-78), rejects a binary choice between darkness or light by asserting the absence of both; rather than multiplying possibilities, Mansfield chooses a negation similar to the emptying out of her early poem “The Opal Sea Cave.” She also introduces an “odious little creature,” a monkey, who claims to be “a philosopher” (KMN 2 178), while in “See-Saw,” written around the same time, “two little people” set up house in a cave then argue about the names of creatures until the boy “made water” on the fire and put it out (CSKM 656-60). In these sketches, Mansfield is iconoclastic about Platonic ideals but does not posit alternatives; in “See-Saw” the “little people” simply move to another cave, rather as the house-move in *Prelude* retains Linda within the patriarchal structures the story exposes.

Thus while Mansfield's writing throughout her life was often framed in Platonic terms—from an early letter in which she wrote that, “the sun filled world seemed a revelation. [...] I feel the veil between me and the heart of things has been swept away” (*The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* 1 72-73), to her later desire to replicate this state, as she approached death, by becoming “a child of the sun” (KMN 2 287)—her work made no attempt at a feminist revision of Plato. Woolf, on the other hand, set out deliberately to explore “differences from masculine modes as a component of feminist desires for change” (Kaplan *Katherine Mansfield*, 159; see also Goldman). As Woolf's first published story implies, the narrator (presumably female) does not need to be told by “someone” (presumably a man, per Bradshaw xxv) the nature of “The Mark on the Wall”—nor a philosopher to reveal the true forms of shadows on a cave wall—since the thoughts provoked and the associated uncertainties about knowledge seem more engaging and important than the final anti-climactic revelation: “Ah, the mark on the wall! It was a snail” (10). And yet, though Woolf and Mansfield differed, finally, in their reflections on Plato, in their dialogue on form and forms, both invite reassessment, in Eleanor Catton's terms, as “serious thinkers.”

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The Daughters of the “Tyrant Father” in Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield

In *Three Guineas* (1938), primarily written for her own class and sex—the “daughters of educated men” (6)—Virginia Woolf suggests the category of the “Outsiders Society” (*Three Guineas* [TG] 126) whose membership necessitates a refusal to participate in the public sphere of male-dominated institutions that perpetuate war and fascism. According to Woolf, fascism is analogous with patriarchal oppression; the fascist, dictator, and father are one in the same: “Dictator as we call him [...] who believes that he has the right [...] to dictate to other human beings how they shall live” (TG 65). Woolf thereby links the power this dictator has in the home with the control he holds over the state: “Nature has done well to entrust the man with the care of his family and the nation.” Oppression, then, originates within the private family structure, a construct that results from supposedly natural hierarchal structures based on gender. Members of the Outsider's Society believe in “the dream of freedom” (TG 169) beyond the “force of the fathers” (163)—despite the fact “that the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other” (168). The central focus of this essay will be the depiction of overbearing father figures in the earlier work of Woolf and Mansfield. Considering Woolf's autobiographically-influenced writing as a lens through which to view Mansfield's “The Daughters of the Late Colonel,” I will show that both writers portray the private battle with

the tyrant father in order to envision freedom in the public world for the daughters of the patriarchy.

As Woolf demonstrates throughout her fiction and essays, tyranny begins at home. Woolf's relationship with her own domineering father left her feeling trapped and chided within the domestic space. As she recalls in "A Sketch of the Past" ["Sketch"]:

it was the tyrant father—the exacting, the violent, the histrionic, the demonstrative, the self-centered, the self pitying, the deaf, the appealing, the alternately loved and hated father—that dominated me then. It was like being shut up in the same cage with a wild beast. [...] I [...] was a nervous, gibbering, little monkey, [...] he was the pacing, dangerous, morose lion [...] who was sulky and angry and injured; and suddenly ferocious, and then very humble, and then majestic. (116).

Woolf's "obess[ion]" with her father, and the fact that she "still feel[s] come over [her] that old frustrated fury" ("Sketch" 108), even as a middle-aged woman, suggests the prevalence of the patriarchy in the lives of most late Victorian daughters. A glorified paternal presence was "the convention, supported by the great men of the time [...] Those who had genius in the Victorian sense were like the prophets; [...] another breed" ("Sketch" 109). What Woolf calls the image of the "father's steel engraving" ("Sketch" 109) in life goes beyond the realm of death and transforms into a monstrous omnipresence. As I will discuss, this despotic figure resonates palpably in Mansfield's story.



Reproduction of plate 38h from Leslie Stephen's Photograph Album
Julia and Leslie Stephen reading at Talland House, watched by their daughter, Virginia

Photographed by Vanessa Stephen, 1893

Courtesy of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, Neilson Library,
Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

Whether an intellectual or a colonel, the father "had a godlike [...] standing in the family. He had an extraordinarily privileged position" ("Sketch" 111) at the center of late Victorian family life. In the image of Leslie Stephen reading in the Talland House family parlor, his paternal

presence evokes an expression of stunned reverence from his daughter Virginia; immersed in his concentrated reverie, he does not seem to notice her. Julia, Virginia's mother, is pictured alongside her husband, but the placement of the father in the middle (in majestic profile) surely connotes his prominence. Virginia's inscrutable look back at her father is what Roland Barthes would call the photograph's "punctum"—the "accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" (27). The daughter is engulfed by the intellectual work of the father—almost to the point of insignificance. Taken by Vanessa, this photograph presents her sister in the everydayness of a domestic moment with their parents so that this stratified family dynamic is normalized.

Woolf's most directly autobiographical representation of the father in her fiction appears in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), where the mother-child bond between Mrs. Ramsay and her son James establishes a counterpoint to the father's harmful dominance. Mr. Ramsay blusters about reciting Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," contemplating the progress of human thought: "For if thought is like [...] the alphabet [...] ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q" (*To the Lighthouse* [TTL] 37). Here Mr. Ramsay reveals his rigidly pompous, utterly linear, militaristic mindset. Early on in the novel, we witness James's thoughts when his father tells him they will not be able to go to the lighthouse the next day: "Had there been [...] any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts" (8). Conversely, and to actively counter the father's effect, Mrs. Ramsay simultaneously creates a balm-like, supportive, life-sustaining vitality for their son. As she senses that her husband is "demanding sympathy," she shores up her motherly and wifely verve for the task at hand:

Mrs. Ramsay [...] folding her son in her arm, braced herself, and [...] seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect into the air a rain of energy, a column of spray, looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating (quietly though she sat [...]) [creating] this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life. (40)

This extraordinary amniotic force is "her capacity to surround and protect" (41), her ability to create a sense of protective permanence for her children. She later worries that James "was thinking, we are not going to the Lighthouse tomorrow; and she thought, he will remember that all his life" (65). Here Woolf reveals her concern for the profound effect that early experiences of struggle against patriarchal power can have on a child's psyche. The Ramsay children's relationship with their father diminishes them and instigates a lifelong battle to for each of them to regain a strong sense of self.

Woolf's personal and fictional representations of the father reverberate compellingly with Katherine Mansfield's tragicomic short story "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." In Mansfield's story we see the longer-term consequences of militaristic patriarchal power on older children. The aptly named Colonel Pinner's two spinster daughters are rendered invisible and silenced during his lifetime, yet the narrative suggests the development of a potential voice of protest. Constantia and Josephine are immobilized by the phallic presence of "father's head!" (*Katherine Mansfield: Selected Stories* [KMSS] 230) even after his death. As they confer about what to do with his "top-hat," Josephine feels the absurd urge to laugh but stifles herself: "The giggle mounted, mounted; she clenched her hands; she fought it down." Confirming their status as isolated outsiders—"But nobody sees us" (230)—they are still convinced that the panoptic paternal eye ("one eye only. It glared at them a moment and then ... went out" [234]) will haunt them for having buried him: "'father will never forgive us for this—never!'" (236). The sisters must

then violate the inner sanctum of their father's bedroom, and they are terrified: "Constantia's eyes were enormous at the idea; Josephine felt weak in the knees" (236-37). The narrator describes the room as if this were a ghost story and their father the boogeyman. The entrance way is "like the doors in dreams" and the room is chill, as in a nightmare: "It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness—which?" (237). Their father, they fear, "was watching there, hidden away—just behind the door handle—ready to spring" (237-8). Even after deciding that "It's much better not to [risk anything]" and choosing to "be weak for once" (238), Constantia "deliberately" risks finding "her father [...]" there among his overcoats when she opens the wardrobe. "But nothing happened." In one of Mansfield's tragicomic and ironic moments, there is no cataclysmic result that comes when the daughter breaks out of her inertia.

Throughout the story, Constantia and Josephine remember the colonel thumping his walking stick, which becomes another metaphor for his imperious phallic power. When their nephew Cyril visits him, the colonel is "sitting in front of a roaring fire, clapping his stick"; he "pointed with his stick to Cyril" demanding that he speak up (KMSS 242). The image of the stick reappears later when Josephine and Constantia, out of instinctual, ingrained servitude to their father's tyranny, are about to run outside to stop the sound of the "barrel-organ" (246), but they suddenly realize that "[i]t's a week today, a whole week" since he has died. Initially caught up in their oppressive routine, they share a moment of giddy jubilation:

They would never have to stop the organ-grinder again. [...] Never would sound that loud, strange bellow when father thought they were not hurrying enough. The organ-grinder might play there all day and the stick would not thump.

It never will thump again,

It never will thump again,

played the barrel-organ. (246)

In this instance, although they continue to struggle against their father's controlling presence, it seems possible that they might be able to escape the colonel's phallic and oppressive influence as manifested in his habitual stick "thump"ing. Not only do the sisters no longer have to stop the music at their father's command but the newly invented song's very rhythm provides them with a space to engender a voice that speaks back to their father's prohibitive power.

In *To the Lighthouse*, the outsider spinster artist Lily Briscoe finds her artistic voice by cultivating Mrs. Ramsay's influence rather than the domineering presence of Mr. Ramsay. She views him as some kind of colonel "advancing towards them" as she observes that "he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust" (TTL 50). Lily instead exalts in the knowledge that "[i]n the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing [...] was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said" (165). As Lily struggles to create her masterpiece in the early part of the novel, the dispiriting pronouncement of another advancing male, Charles Tansley, echoes in her head in a repetitive rhythm: "Women can't paint, women can't write" (51). At novel's end, Mr. Ramsay may not be dead like Colonel Pinner, but his "thumping power" is at the very least diminished, and Lily can therefore complete her artwork. Her painted line represents not a division of sides but instead a way to bring together disparate things into harmony: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the center. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought[...]" I have had my vision" (211). Her final assertion of artistic independence insists on harmony and balance rather than one individual's dominant point of view. For Woolf, art should result from communal collaboration with artists who came before and will come after oneself: "[T]he voices of poets, answer[...] each other, assuring us of a unity that rubs out divisions as if they were chalk marks only" (TG 169). Art, then, resounds

with "the capacity of the human spirit to overflow boundaries and make unity out of multiplicity" (TG 169). Lily's personal manifesto of art thus takes on a wider vision and becomes communal—with the potential to realize "the dream of freedom" for artist and spinster daughter alike.

In contrast to Lily, Mansfield's story suggests that societal forces exerted upon women of a certain class in late Victorian culture often kept them trapped and silenced within the domestic sphere. These middle-aged women, represented in Mansfield's story by Josephine and Constantia, exhibit a kind of arrested sexual development—presumably as a result of stifling patriarchal custom which was then internalized—as evinced by Josephine's fetal position at the opening of the narrative: "[She] arched her spine, pulled up her knees, folded her arms so that her fists came under her ears, and pressed her cheek hard against her pillow" (KMSS 232). Now asexual spinsters, their lives have been wholly devoted to their father: "The rest [of daily life] had been looking after father and at the same time keeping out of father's way" (248). Constantia and Josephine lacked social opportunities as young women, further solidifying their outsider status. The sisters' only interface with men other than their father is symbolized by an illegible note left on a jug of hot water by a "mysterious man" once when they were on their yearly holiday: "by the time Connie had found it the steam had made the writing too faint to read; [...] [a]nd that was all." Even so, and somewhat pitifully, Josephine's nickname "Jug" is associated with this one great romantic moment of their life.

The true Woolfian "moment of being" in Mansfield's story occurs in the final episode. The sisters' connection with Eastern elements seems to offer them brief yet positive instances of release and transformation. Shortly after the epiphany that is has been "*A week since father died*" (KMSS 247), the sisters share strange, faint smiles. In a moment of possible yet fleeting clarity, Josephine notices how, "On the Indian carpet there fell a square of sunlight, pale red; it came and went and went and came—and stayed, deepened—until it shone almost golden." For Constantia, "her favourite Buddha [...] seemed today to be more than smiling. He knew something[.] [...] Oh, what was it, what could it be? And yet she had always felt there was...something" (247). However inarticulate their desires, the sisters seem to be searching for a deeper spiritual or perhaps truer sense of self brought on by their connection with these Eastern objects.

Constantia in particular seems to be awakening out of her somnambulism, "wondering, but not as usual, not vaguely. This time her wonder was like longing" (KMSS 248). With this newfound insight, she remembers a mystical moment of freedom that serves as a counterpoint to the first scene where we find her "lay[ing] like a statue" (230) in her bed. She envisions herself "lain on the floor with her arms outstretched" and concludes that "[t]he big, pale moon made her do it" (248). She realizes that she similarly felt this whole, authentic identity in the presence of the sea where "she really felt herself" and, moreover, that the "kind of tunnel" that was her subordination to her father "wasn't real" by contrast. Constantia is left with a yearning to know what will happen next; there is a sense of futurity in her illuminated present moment: "What did it all lead to? Now? Now?" (248).

As with the conclusion of *To the Lighthouse*, readers of "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" are left with an arresting yet open-ended interpretive moment. What, then, are we to make of the Mansfield's ambiguous and perhaps existential ending? Constantia once again becomes "vague" as she turns away from the Buddha and is unable to communicate with Josephine, who "stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then Constantia replied shortly, 'I've forgotten too'" (KMSS 249). By definition, my account of modernism takes its cue from Woolf's communitarian sentiments. Considering how modernist aesthetic productions present an alternative to official versions of history lends a voice to those once left out. It is possible, then, that the daughters of the late colonel are not capable of breaking free from the

internalized structures of patriarchy after all; they do not experience the clarity of vision that Lily Briscoe enjoys. Yet perhaps we, as readers sympathetic to these outsider women, could fill in the gap and consider how they might become emancipated—or at least imagine that, given their Woolfian “moment of being,” they could experience the sense of freedom they seek.

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“a queer sense of being ‘like’”: Female Friendship in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf¹

An important critical current that emerged largely in the 1980s focuses on female friendship as depicted in literary works by women: Nina Auerbach discusses “communities of women” as “emblems of female self-sufficiency which create their own corporate reality” (5); Elizabeth Abel argues that “identification replaces complementarity as the psychological mechanism that draws women together” (415); and Janice Raymond opposes *hetero-reality*—“the world view that woman exists always in relation to man” (3)—to *gyn/affection*—“a woman-to-woman attraction, influence, and movement” (7). In our focus on

female friendship in Katherine Mansfield’s and Virginia Woolf’s work, we would like to contend that bonds between female friends are never depicted as independent of, or impervious to, male presence.² In the case of Mansfield, the male figure works as a disruptive and destructive intrusion that prevents women from inventing alternative relations to prevailing hetero-reality. In the case of Woolf, male figures may be a disruptive presence, but may also be friends, recipients or agents of the creative effects that tend to be associated with friendship in Woolf’s fiction.

In both writers, the inadequacies and shortcomings of a specifically feminine mode of identification are symptomatic of the uncertainty, otherness and fragility that accompany every human relationship. This conception of friendship resonates with the relationship between Woolf and Mansfield, marked as it was by rivalry and ambivalence, but also by moments of intense communion. Such a moment is registered in Woolf’s diary: “once more as keenly as ever I feel a common certain understanding between us—a queer sense of being ‘like’” (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 2 45). Similarly, Mansfield confessed to Virginia: “You are the only woman with whom I long to talk *work*. There will never be another” (*The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* [CLKM] 4 154). However, on another occasion, Mansfield asserts, “I don’t like [Virginia’s] work at all at all at all” (CLKM 4 125), just as Woolf continually wonders about whether she really knows Mansfield. As expressed by Woolf and as both writers’ literary works show, “Strange how little we know of our friends” (D 2 62).

“You, too?”: Questioning Female Friendship in Katherine Mansfield

In spite of Mansfield’s ardent desire to find spiritual and intellectual shelter in other women, in her fiction the journey invariably ends in failure and the disruptive presence of a man breaks the female dyad, preventing women from inventing alternative relations and leading to female competition. Derrida’s theorization of *hospitality* offers an apt explanation to understand Mansfield’s exploration of female bonding. He poses a question, “How can we distinguish between a guest and a parasite[?],” describing the parasite as “a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest” (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 99, 100). The Derridean guest points to Abel’s perception that women’s desire is “to merge with” other women (Abel 415), but in Mansfield this desire ultimately confronts the parasite dimension. Not only are her female characters unable to envision an alternative connection but they ultimately succumb to one of the obstacles that Raymond theorizes as “the fiction that women never have been and never can be friends” (6).

Two of Mansfield’s stories epitomize Derrida’s notion of hospitality. In “Bliss,” Bertha Young feels a version of Abel’s “identification” drive in her interactions with Pearl when she assumes that they both share the same condition as women, thinking that “‘I believe this does happen very, very rarely between women. Never between men’” (*The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* [CSKM] 101). During the pivotal scene of contemplation of the pear tree, the two women seem to have found an alternative space for gyn/affection: “Both, as it were, caught in that circle of unearthly light, understanding each other perfectly, creatures of another world” (CSKM 102). Bertha is looking for a gynocentric encounter with Pearl—“as if they had said to each other: ‘You, too?’” (CSKM 100). However, the hypothetical tone of this statement betrays its materialization. This is especially so because Bertha describes their “merging” from a heteronormative angle marked by the symbolic presence of the phallus, of which they are passive viewers: “And the two women stood side by side looking at the slender, flowering tree [...] it seemed, like the flame of a candle, to stretch up, to point, to quiver in the

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² We follow critics such as Janet Todd and Tess Cosslett, who focus on female friendship in relation to the traditional romantic marriage-plot. On the other hand, in her analysis of female friendship in Victorian England, Jane Marcus argues that it proves that “women were not defined only in relation to men, and that they formed legible and legitimate bonds with one another” (26).

bright air, to grow taller and taller as they gazed" (CSKM 102). The male presence (Bertha's husband) works as a disruptive intrusion that prevents the women from inventing alternative relations to prevailing hetero-reality. Pearl emerges as the parasite that, assuming the appearance of a guest-friend, steals Bertha's husband and destroys the community of female friendship.

"A Cup of Tea" follows a similar pattern. Rosemary's intention to explore female friendship with a poor woman proves to be an ill-fated experiment of generosity that hides her selfish need to satisfy her ego. She feels attracted to the idea not out of genuine feeling for female camaraderie, but out of curiosity to replicate fictional patterns, as in "a novel by Dostoevsky" (CSKM 401). Derrida's concept of the guest-parasite is highlighted in Rosemary's animalization of Miss Smith as a "creature": Rosemary is the hunter and the poor girl her bird-prey: "She had a feeling of triumph[...] She could have said, 'Now I've got you,' as she gazed at the little captive she had netted" (CSKM 401). Rosemary seems to convince herself that her motivation for friendship is the similarity and identification between them: "'We're both women'" (CSKM 402). Once Miss Smith's basic needs are satiated, however, she becomes perceived as the parasite-rival rather than friend and Rosemary's hypocrisy is laid bare. Hetero-reality breaks in and the fake female friendship evolves towards enmity in competition for Philip, Rosemary's husband. As in "Bliss," the "foreign" woman proves to be a threat to the married couple when sexual competition enters the game. In confessing that "she's so astonishingly pretty" (CSKM 405, 400), Philip deliberately arouses Rosemary's sense of rivalry. When Rosemary is aware that the apparently innocuous game has now turned into a silent confrontation, she ends the experiment by asserting her economic superiority, gives the girl three five pound notes and sends her away.

Female friendship is explored from similar perspectives in other Mansfield's fictions. In "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding," there is the suggestion of a communal sisterhood of three generations and, beyond them, of all women, although they are unable to share their silent gender burden. "Carnation" suggests the union of women through the empowerment of their bodies, but the predominant note is the symbolic annihilation of all the girls at school by their male teacher, M. Hugo. The girls mockingly refer to him as "Hugo Wugo," but nonetheless he is a figure of hetero-patriarchal authority and enforcer of the male-dominated literary canon. In "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please" and "The Lady's Maid," Mansfield introduces a dialogue between women that is ultimately monologic. In the first story, the conversation of two women suggests the triviality of their feminine role and their lack of communication; in the second story, the conversation of a maid about her lady suggests a class differentiation that prevents female intimacy between lady and maid. Finally, in "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," Mansfield focuses on sibling intimacy and, although the suggestion is that Constantia and Josephine develop a real "sisterhood," it is once again dictated by their subjugation to their dead father.

"This is not one life": Female and Male Friends in Virginia Woolf

In Woolf's fiction, friendship is presented as an intense feeling of mutual recognition or communion to be found in momentary encounters between two characters, but also as an expansive and creative network somehow presided over by certain individuals, endowed with a special ability to create bonds with and between people around them. As friendship makes the person go beyond ego boundaries, connecting the individual to the existential "pattern" to which "all human beings [...] are connected" ("A Sketch of the Past" 84), it necessarily overcomes any identity boundaries, including those of gender.

Woolf's novels are pervaded by moments of friendship between men and women, such as those between Mrs. Manresa and Giles Oliver, or between Isa Oliver and William Dodge, in *Between the Acts* (51, 102-03). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, however, it is suggested that women may be liable to share a feeling from which men are excluded: as Clarissa

remembers "the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally," she reflects that "it was not like one's feeling for a man[...]; [...] it had a quality which could only exist between women" (*Mrs. Dalloway* [MD] 37). Thus, "the most exquisite moment of [Clarissa's] whole life," when Sally kissed her on her lips, is brought to an end by Peter Walsh's "shocking" and "horrible" interruption (MD 38, 39). But what Peter's interruption actually signals is the impossibility of setting him apart from Clarissa's and Sally's bond, the three of them constituting a kind of triad: "With the two of them [...] she shared her past[...] [...] A part of this Sally must always be; Peter must always be" (MD 199-200).

In relation to *To the Lighthouse*, Abel points to "Lily Briscoe's (unfulfilled) desire [...] to merge with, not know about, Mrs. Ramsay" as an illustration of the "identification" that drives women together (Abel 415). Certainly, Lily reflects that "it was not knowledge but unity that she desired[...] [...] nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge" (*To the Lighthouse* [TTL] 60). Lily yearns for a different kind of knowledge: a non-rational, intimate understanding dependent on emotional and erotic bonds. However, this intimacy does not only take place between women. In fact, whereas "[n]othing happen[s]" (TTL 60) as she leans her head against Mrs. Ramsay's knee, in the next scene, we find a moment of true communion between Lily and William Bankes, when the latter examines her painting: "This man had shared with her something profoundly intimate." It is friendship with a man that provokes in Lily "the strangest feeling in the world, and the most exhilarating": "that one could walk away down that long gallery not alone any more but arm-in-arm with somebody" (TTL 63).

In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, Clarissa and Mrs. Ramsay respectively stand at the center of a collectivity, with "the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rest[ing]" on them (TTL 96). Clarissa's parties are the result of her special capacity to feel what others feel, bringing them together: "Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; some one up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence[...] [...] and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it" (MD 133-34). In a more symbolic way, Mrs. Ramsay remains the "permanent" lighthouse "presiding" over the chaos and flux of the existence of those around her (even after her death), as Lily sees it: "This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together" (TTL 183, 59, 183).

In Woolf's *The Waves*, her novel in which the existential and all-embracing nature of friendship is most strongly accentuated, it is two male figures that create the community of friendship. As we encounter the inseparable lives of six friends—three male and three female—it is Bernard, the storyteller, who most strongly feels his identity as dependent on that of his friends: "I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs" (*The Waves* [W] 156). It is Percival that creates in them "communion by some deep, common emotion" (W 70), which is precisely the love that all of them feel toward him. This novel epitomises the lesson that Woolf learnt from G. E. Moore about "the pleasures of human intercourse" and "personal affection" (*Principia Ethica* 234) and that Bernard beautifully summarizes: "Some people go to priests; others to poetry; I to my friends" (W 150).

"Uneasy Sisterhood": A Conclusion

In Mansfield's fiction female friendship is virtually unattainable. The key to understanding the "uneasy sisterhood" of her protagonists—similar to the one detected by Ann L. McLaughlin between Mansfield and Woolf—might reside outside the boundaries of her fiction. Mansfield's inability to feel mystical sisterhood with other contemporary female writers belies the notions of "gyn/affection" and "identification" critics posit as key to literary female friendship. Mansfield compared women writers to hens

“laying eggs all day long” and “sound[ing] as like one another” (*The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* 153). Patricia L. Moran clarifies the danger of identification in Mansfield, particularly as regards the creation of a literary sisterhood: for Mansfield the mere fact of being female seems to cause this lack of differentiation (99), a biologicistic stance that might explain her ultimate neglect of gyn/affection. Mansfield’s fiction is permeated by her autobiographical experience with close female friends who turned into parasites, such as her epistolary confidant, Dorothy Brett. Indeed, Mansfield felt it necessary to warn her husband, Murry: “dout [sic] let her touch you” (CLKM 4, 64).

In Woolf’s writing, on the other hand, the “flexible ego boundaries and relational self-definition” that Abel detects in women’s literary relationships (433) characterize most friendships, male and female, that we find in her novels. Although friendship in Woolf is always haunted by the shadow of frailty (TTL 103), the impossibility of knowing others (TTL 60) and “insincerity” (TTL 104), it is never as utter a failure as in Mansfield. For Woolf, true to the Bloomsbury spirit, friendship was indeed one of the most valuable pleasures in life, together with one of the most powerful manifestations of “the common life which is the real life and not [...] the little separate lives which we live as individuals” (*A Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas* 148-49).

Regardless of Mansfield’s ultimate pessimism about sisterhood, she recognized her need for constant self-reassurance *within* a group of intellectuals (“‘my’ kind of people” [CLKM5 80]), an intellectual union that she had, at least temporarily, with Woolf. Both writers shared the need to explore alternative female realms, which, in different ways, they could never see as free from male presence.

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Seeking the Self in the Garden: Class, Femininity and Nature in *To the Lighthouse*, “Bliss” and “The Garden Party”

In Katherine Mansfield’s short stories “Bliss” and “The Garden Party” and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* the garden is a space of attempted self-transformation through which the female protagonists seek to grow beyond the confines of their upper-middle class feminine roles. The garden is one of Western literature’s most enduring and potent symbols, contextualizing cultural and literary discourse on knowledge, sexuality and nature (Morris and Sawyer 21). In Mansfield’s and Woolf’s work, however, as Shelley Saguro argues, “the gardens themselves are imbued with contingency and transition, rather than represented as simple paradigms of paradise or retreat” (59). Mansfield and Woolf problematize the idea that the garden, as a natural space, offers a means to transcend the barriers of class and gender by highlighting the commodification of this space and the restrictive effects of the traditional equation of femininity with nature. Each of the three texts offers its own perspective on the connection between the garden and female subjugation and emancipation. When read together, therefore, they offer a more complete understanding of this relationship, complicating and expanding on the ideas in the individual texts.

The relationship between women and nature is immediately problematized in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* through the character of Mrs Ramsay. Mrs Ramsay, as an “archetypal mother” figure (Transue 68) and wife who “did not like to be finer than her husband” (*To the Lighthouse* [TTL] 45) has been rightly understood as Woolf’s fictional image of the “Angel in the House” that she describes in “Professions for Women”; “Sympathetic,” “charming,” “unselfish,” excelling in “the arts of family life” and entirely self-sacrificing, the qualities of the Angel in the House ensure that she “never had a mind or a wish of her own” (“Professions”). These traits, although not quite so one-dimensionally presented in Mrs Ramsay, coalesce with the powerful natural imagery that Woolf utilizes to describe her. Mrs Ramsay “pour[ing] erect into the air a rain of energy [...] looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies

were being fused into force, burning and illuminating [...] this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life" (TTL 42-43) draws upon the legacy of Western thought in which the feminine is equated with the natural (Kaplan 55). Yet "boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent"—fertile femininity is thus explicitly tied to the Angel in the House, who spends all her personal resources caring for her family (TTL 44). Maria DiBattista's analysis of Mrs Ramsay as being "in the novel's symbolic topography [...] at the center of a circle of life that encloses a green world of gardens and marriage" sums up what I argue is Woolf's problematization of the equation of women with nature by linking Woolf's view to the Angel in the House through the character of Mrs Ramsay (175).

This problem becomes particularly important when considering Mansfield's story "Bliss." Bertha Young, as a young upper-middle class housewife, rails against "idiotic civilisation," which means one has to keep one's body "shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle" (*Katherine Mansfield. Selected Stories* [KMSS] 111). Specifically uttered in response to Bertha's feeling of "bliss" and desire to "run instead of walk," this image of restriction by "civilisation" speaks of enclosure, objectification and commodification of the body and the subjugation of the desire to express natural emotion. This restriction becomes evident in Bertha's inability to express her thoughts and feelings to herself, her child and her husband, Harry, and most importantly can be seen as borne out in her sexual "coldness" with Harry and ambiguous feelings for her friend, Pearl Fulton (KMSS 122). Chantal Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy's reading of the "rare fiddle" as symbolic of the "political and sexual alienation of women" (244) highlights the artificially restrictive force of society, which is countered by the central symbol of the blooming pear tree in Bertha's garden. Bertha's initial feeling of being "shut up in a case" is at odds with her later interpretation of "the lovely pear tree with its wide open blossoms as a symbol for her own life" (KMSS 115). While the specific implications of this identification with the pear tree remain extensively debated, I see it as symbolic of Bertha's desire to "grow" herself out from the restrictions of society. The garden thus becomes the site of Bertha's attempted personal growth. What this growth entails specifically for Bertha remains a matter for debate, but it places her subconscious desire for freedom to grow and express herself squarely within the natural realm through identification with her garden.

As Saguaro highlights, despite "Bliss" being imbued with Biblical imagery and symbology, the garden's meaning is transitory rather than static; it is neither a space of redemption nor fall. The women-nature problem discussed in *To the Lighthouse* becomes extremely pertinent in relation to Bertha's self-identification with nature through the pear tree, and complicates the possibility of nature as an escape in opposition to artificial social and class constructs. The relevance of this issue to Bertha is important, as she is characterized as a more "modern" woman than Mrs Ramsay. While she is not a Victorian "Angel" per se, Bertha's predicament highlights Woolf's point as to the pervasive and subtle power of this idea of womanhood. The connection between the Angel in the House and the feminine natural ideal elucidated through Mrs Ramsay highlights the subtle inference in "Bliss" that Bertha's desire to be like the pear tree cannot offer a meaningful way out, laden as it is with problematic cultural significance. Even Bertha's implied dichotomy between nature and civilization is troubled in "Bliss." Mansfield exposes the commodified status of the garden, listing it among commodities Bertha and Harry are blessed with: they "don't have to worry about money" so they have "this absolutely satisfactory house and garden" (KMSS 115). Bertha's use of grapes to complement the purple carpet and even her amusement at envisaging one of her dinner guests, Mrs Norman Knight, as a monkey suggests that rather than nature acting as an interruption on the artificial, it serves merely to complement it (112, 116). Her desire to identify with nature as a way out of the "case" of civilization's expectations is thus undercut by this reminder that the garden, and therefore Bertha, is not separate from cultural scripts but is,

in fact, integral to them. Bertha too is not so far from being of the status of the "rare fiddle" after all.

The commodification of the natural, exposing the garden as an upper-class space, is extended in Mansfield's "The Garden Party." As Angela Smith argues, the second line, "they could not have had a more perfect day for a garden-party if they had ordered it," reveals that the family is "in the habit of ordering what it wants," (KMSS 237; Smith 141), and from the opening line on, the commodification of the natural is heavily emphasized. Even the description of the roses simply highlights that they exist to serve the family's needs (Smith 141): "you could not help feeling they understand that roses are the only flowers to impress people at garden parties" (KMSS 237). Mansfield thus complicates the possibility of Laura achieving any kind of authentic break from her class in the garden. Less than half Bertha's age, Laura Sheridan is arguably not old enough to feel the full extent of the class constriction with which Bertha struggles. Laura, however, perceives the garden as a space to break from the affectations of her upbringing in order to have a genuine interaction with members of the working class, causing her to abandon her attempt to "copy her mother's voice" and look "severe" and instead feel "just like a work girl" (KMSS 239). Her keen awareness of "these absurd class distinctions," despite her desire to believe that "she didn't feel them. Not a bit," precipitates her reaction to the death of the carter, and her eye-opening experience visiting his family (239).

Despite Laura's budding awareness of class sensitivity, Mansfield further erodes the idea that the garden offers a natural space, apart from the decadence of the house, in which to break down class distinctions. This is evident through the contrast between Laura's own garden and the "garden patches" of the "little mean dwellings" of the working class in which "there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans" (KMSS 245). This emphasis on the disparity between the gardens, and Mansfield's use of a polyphonic narrative voice throughout the story (Smith 140), means that the Sheridans' judgmental upper-class mentality informs Laura's belief that she can escape. The pervasiveness of this view that perceives poverty as "disgusting and sordid" continually interrupts Laura's experience, and ultimately highlights that Laura is nothing like a "work girl" (245). Yet Laura's reading of the dead man's face as "content"—"what did garden parties and baskets and lace frocks mean to him? He was far from all those things"—suggests that Laura still seeks to get away from "all those things" of her frivolous life (251). Her previous alignment of the means of this escape with the workmen and the garden, however, is sharply critiqued, not only by the emphasis on the garden as a wealthy space, but also by the reality of the dismal poverty that Laura witnesses when she enters a real working class space. As Smith argues, Mansfield's use of polyphony ensures that the effect of Laura's epiphany remains ambiguous, such as when she struggles to articulate to her brother her new sense of life the narrative voice takes over: "but what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood. 'Isn't it, darling?' said Laurie" (251). Laura is "poised on the edge of a greater revelation" that remains inconclusive as "we are taken back to the tone of the opening, with the perception that rites of passage are not easily achieved" (Smith 144). In situating Laura's initial personal conflict with class in the garden Mansfield creates a spatial metaphor for the need for distance from class paradigms to allow for Laura's natural process of self-discovery. Yet the continued insertion of the upper-class voice into the narrative speaks to the fact that even the garden is a commodified and class-designated space, offering an explanation for why this rite of passage remains thwarted.

To an extent, Bertha and Laura can be seen as intermediary characters between Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*. Unlike Mrs Ramsay, who exemplifies the traditional role of women, Bertha and Laura are aware of their class and gender roles and push these boundaries. Yet for both characters the ultimate effect remains ambiguous and under-realized. Lily and Mrs Ramsay, however, emblemize a diverging trajectory for women; while Mrs Ramsay

remains static, Lily forges a new path for herself through the strength she gains from her painting, thus achieving the personal independence that evades Mrs Ramsay and Bertha. Her vision at the end of the novel, seen as an instance of a woman “freely choosing to engage in conscious, self defining activity” that is “rare in modernism” (Pease 21) is the culmination of the self-confidence that she develops as a result of her painting. Charles Tansley’s criticism “‘Women can’t paint, women can’t write’” characterizes the view of women’s endeavours that fall outside of their traditional circle (TTL 54). In the crucial dinner scene at the end of the first chapter, “The Window,” Lily initially conceives of herself in natural terms as bending “like corn under a wind” from Tansley’s ridicule, conforming in the moment to the passive feminine role of appeasement embodied by Mrs Ramsay (94). Lily only recovers “with a great and rather painful effort” by remembering “there’s my painting; I must move the tree to the middle; that matters—nothing else” (94). Her remembrance that “she too had her work” gives her a foundation from which to define herself, to move beyond her feminine role in conversation with Tansley and deny Mrs Ramsay’s wish that she marry (92).

In the context of our discussion, situating Lily’s act of painting in the garden, which has as its subject Mrs Ramsay reading to her son, James, is highly significant. Painting both the garden and the garden-like Mrs Ramsay, Lily is able to assert control over the image, and thus is able to reduce the Madonna-esque image of Mrs Ramsay and James into “a purple shadow without irreverence” (59). Just as her investment in her “work” allows Lily to remove herself from the feminine destiny of marriage and sexual politics, her act of painting in the garden externalizes her from it. Rather than being identified personally with the natural world like Mrs Ramsay (via reference to her fecundity) or seeking growth and escape through access to it like Laura and Bertha, Lily imposes her vision upon the scene, thus in a parallel act removing herself from what DiBattista pertinently calls the “circle of life that encloses [...] gardens and marriage” (175). While the influence of Mrs Sheridan, Laura’s mother, is felt right to the end of “The Garden Party,” preventing Laura from fulfilling her journey toward self-definition, the artistic act of reducing the mother and child to a shadow in the final version of the painting parallels Lily’s realization that because Mrs Ramsay has died the metaphorical Angel in the House has died with her, so that “we can override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas” (TTL 190). This process is not as simple as superseding the older generation; Lily must complete a highly complex process of taking control over both the garden and the Angel in the House ideal of womanhood so that it does not take control of her. By externalizing herself from both, she does not entangle herself in the problems associated with identification with the garden. She simultaneously breaks down the class expectations upon herself, not by seeking out the garden as a neutral space to avoid class restrictions, but rather by engaging with and defeating them by finding in the garden the subject and space for meaningful work.

For both Mansfield and Woolf, thus, the garden becomes a highly contested space imbued with the effects of the class system. To differing degrees, the texts explore this idea in terms of the problems of the commodification of nature paralleling the commodification of women and the pervasive equation of femininity with nature as a means of restricting women within a “generative cycle” (Kaplan 65). Written at a time when Woolf noted the necessity for women to “kill the Angel in the House” in order to “have a mind of their own,” the texts speak to the period of transition in the understanding of the role of women. While I have not suggested that the works discussed here have any relationship with one another beyond that of their subject matter, I have argued that the idea of the garden becoming a space of attempted self-transformation functions at a deep level within the concerns of all three narratives. In advancing Lily as the example of a successful attempt to define the female self through a relationship with the garden I do not promote her as a *solution* to the problems encountered in Mansfield’s

stories but suggest that her character highlights the difficulties faced by women turning to nature to try and escape the confines of human class constructs. The garden, thus, provides Mansfield and Woolf with a spatial metaphor for the need to achieve both distance from and engagement with class influence, and by functioning as such in their work provides the means for them to achieve this themselves.

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The Shape of the “Moment” in Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield’s Short Stories

The moment of revelation was used as a structuring technique by many modernist short story writers. The moment allowed these writers to, among other things, explore the evolution of subjectivity over short periods of time. For Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, the use of the moment provided an answer for their personal, poetic and literary concerns. Both explore the moment of revelation, Woolf to try new narrative techniques based in imprecise states of consciousness and daydream, Mansfield to reveal the focus of conflict, crisis and irony.

Woolf's most explicit references to the moment can be found in her memoir "A Sketch of the Past" (1939)¹ and in her essay, "The Moment: Summer's Night" (1947). The first more autobiographical text explains very clearly the interior dynamics and the effect of such moments in the writer's art and life. They start with a "sudden and violent shock, so violent they will be remembered all her life" ("A Sketch of the Past" ["Sketch"] 82). Woolf presents two examples initially, and then a third some pages later. All are followed by reflections:

The first: I was fighting with Thoby on the lawn. We were pommeling each other with our fists. Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person? I dropped my hand instantly, and stood there, and let him beat me. I remember the feeling. It was a feeling of hopeless sadness. It was as if I became aware of something terrible; and of my own powerlessness. I slunk off alone, feeling horribly depressed. The second instance was also in the garden at St. Ives. I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; "That is the whole," I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower.

[...]

And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer. [...] [A] blow [...] is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole ("Sketch" 82-84).

We find in this text some fundamental elements of Woolf's poetics of the moment: the importance of the capacity to feel shocked; the notion of the existence of a reality behind appearances; the search for wholeness through writing; the unifying vision of the artist who is the only one able to transmit an immediate image of the work of art hidden behind the chaos of daily facts; and the notion of the symbol. But, above all, we have in this text a detailed description of the casual, involuntary and powerful character of these moments.

"The Moment: Summer's Night" ("Moment") does not present the moment as vehicle of revelation but it tries to explain its meaning and composition in a detailed way. The moment is described as a sequence of multiple sensory impressions and emotions that dissolve (or is included in time flow) when they become integrated with the darkness or a random wind:

To begin with: it is largely composed of visual and of sense impressions. The day was very hot. After heat, the surface of the body is opened, as if all the pores were open and every thing lay exposed [...]. Then the sense of light sinking back into darkness seems to be gently putting out [...]. Then the leaves shiver now and again [...].

But this moment is also composed of a sense that the legs of the chair are sinking through the centre of the earth [...]. But that is the wider circumference of the moment. Here in the centre is a knot of consciousness [...] ("Moment" 9-10)

In the essay "To Spain" (1923), Woolf emphasizes some other aspects of the moment, which are its intensity and the notion of stasis in the flow of time, taking as an example the early recollection of the look of London streets from a cab window on a journey to Victoria Station: "Everywhere there is the same intensity, as if the moment, instead of moving, lay suddenly still, became suddenly solemn, fixed the passers-by in their most transient aspects eternally" (*The Essays of Virginia Woolf* [E] 3

¹ Woolf claims that she wrote her memoir "A Sketch of the Past" as a break from "writing Roger's life" (meaning *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940)). The essay was not intended for publication by the author, but this was later carefully reconsidered, due to its undeniable value. It was first published, together with other autobiographical memoirs, in *Moments of Being*, edited by Jeanne Schulkind, in 1976.

361). In "Moments of Vision" (1918), Woolf's review of Logan Pearsall Smith's collection of sketches (called *Trivia*), she says:

It is his purpose to catch and enclose certain moments which break off from the mass, in which without bidding things come together in a combination of inexplicable significance, to arrest those thoughts which suddenly, to the thinker at least, are almost menacing with meaning. Such moments of vision are of an unaccountable nature; leave them alone and they persist for years; try to explain them and they disappear; write them down and they die beneath the pen. (E 2 250-51)

The elusiveness and persistence of these moments were a focus of Woolf's writing. Recent studies have shown that her narrative style can be seen to relate to her manic depressive illness in which separate states of awareness bring constantly new sets of perceptions. In *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic Depressive Illness* (1992), for example, Thomas C. Caramagno contends that Woolf's work is not a neurotic evasion or a loss of control, but an intelligent and sensitive exploration of certain components of her mood swings. Neuroscience and the discovery of a biological basis for manic depressive illness have helped to make clear that her novels were produced by a sane, responsive and insightful woman, who was able to study and take advantage of the bipolarity of her own mind.

There is also, of course, the oft-quoted diary excerpt about *The Waves*, in which Woolf speaks about the "saturat[ion] [of] every atom" of the moment, of "giv[ing] the moment whole" (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* [D] 3 209). For her, this saturation may be composed of thought, sensation and symbolic facts like the voice of the sea. It is central in what she considered would be the novel of the future—the "playpoem" she envisaged "The Moths" (later *The Waves*) to be (D 3 203)—and to the structure of *The Waves* itself, in which we find six speakers engaged in soliloquies that interrogate the moment and the development of their lives.

New conceptions of time and space in narrative drove an interest in the moment in modernist literary practice. Some of the authors who were engaged with these new theoretical and philosophical ideas had a specific and sometimes personal influence on Woolf. They include Joyce, Keynes, Proust and Mansfield herself. The moment of perception is one of the most important and frequently occurring concepts in Woolf's work and is associated with the relationship between the solid and the intangible, time, transitoriness, flow and stasis. Along with its central employment in novels like *To the Lighthouse* (1927), some of Woolf's more experimental short stories apply her concepts of "vision" and "moments of being" implicitly or explicitly. The moment of being is not quite an epiphanic revelation altering the course of events but a clarifying and integrative experience of intensity, the place where the opposites may come together and the artist is able to have access to a vision of wholeness.

What is less often remarked upon is the way in which Mansfield explored similar conceptualizations of the moment in her writing. Mansfield uses words like "blazing moment" and "central point of significance" (*The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* [CWKM] 89), and "glimpse" (*The Journal of Katherine Mansfield* [JKM] 202-3) to describe the epiphanic moment in her stories. In "A Novel without a Crisis"—her review of *Heritage* by Vita Sackville West (1919)—she writes:

If we are not to look for facts and events in a novel [...] and why should we?—we must be very sure of finding those central points of significance transferred to the endeavours and emotions of the human beings portrayed [...]

What is to prevent each being unrelated—complete in itself—if the gradual unfolding in growing, gaining light is not to be followed by one blazing moment? (CWKM 89)

Later, she wrote in her diary:

And yet one has these “glimpses,” before which all that one ever has written [...] all [...] that one ever has read, pales[...] [...]The waves, as I drove home this afternoon, and the high foam, how it was suspended in the air before it fell. [...] What is it that happens in that moment of suspension? It is timeless. In that moment (what do I mean?) the whole life of the soul is contained. One is flung up—out of life—one is ‘held’, and then,—down, bright, broken, glittering on to the rocks, tossed back, part of the ebb and flow (JKM 202-03).

Many of Mansfield’s ideas have a consonance with Woolf’s: we might compare Mansfield’s “points of significance” with Woolf’s “blow” or “token [...] behind appearances” (as above, “Sketch” 84) or Mansfield’s idea of “unfolding in growing” with Woolf’s “knot of consciousness” (as above, “Moment” 10) The interest in the structure of the moment, the sense of its stasis, movement and pause, permeates the reflections of both writers when they consider their respective writing processes.

Like Woolf, Mansfield was influenced by Chekhov (her great literary passion), the *Yellow Book* writers and also by Wordsworth, Keats, Whitman, Pater, Conrad and Joyce, as revealed in her letters and literary criticism. In Keats, the chameleon poet, she admired the ability to become a person or object in a given moment, to integrate and identify into the soul of a situation or character (*The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 107-8). This capacity they shared confirmed her sense of the importance of impersonation and role-playing, of trying to become the things before recreating them. In these moments we have again movement and pause, fragmentation and a desire to find unity. From the Symbolists, to whom she was introduced through Arthur Symons’s *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, Mansfield retains the transmission of the abstract through the objective, applying this to the moment of epiphanic revelation. As she says in “Esther Waters Revisited” (1920):

What it comes to is that we believe that emotion is essential to a work of art; it is that which makes a work of art a unity. Without emotion writing is dead; it becomes a record instead of a revelation, for the sense of revelation comes from that emotional reaction which the artist felt and was impelled to communicate. To contemplate the object, to let it make its own impression [...] is not enough. There must be an initial emotion felt by the writer, and all that he sees is saturated in that emotional quality. It alone can give incidence and sequence, character and background, a close and intimate unity. (CWKM 68)

Both Mansfield and Woolf explore the moment of revelation, Woolf trying new narrative techniques based in imprecise states of consciousness and daydream and Mansfield pinpointing the significance of experience.

Woolf and Mansfield’s short stories also repeatedly return to the idea of the moment: in Woolf’s “Lappin and Lapinova” (1938) and Mansfield’s “The Escape” (1920) characters who experience an epiphany are those who feel imprisoned in lives and relationships they find boring and meaningless. The result of the revelatory moment shows the characters’ meanings and ambiguities presented in the texts: the evolution of the self towards daydream/reality brings death. In Woolf’s “An Unwritten Novel” (1920) and Mansfield’s “The Little Governess” (1915), which explore the interior world of the feminine mind, the moment of revelation questions the narrative consistency of Minnie’s story and the incompatibility between the ideal imaginary world of the governess and crude reality. In Woolf’s “The Lady in the Looking-Glass: a Reflection” (1929) and Mansfield’s “Taking the Veil” (1922) the narratives are centred on the daydreams of characters whose perceptions are explored in different ways: in Woolf, the perception of space, its objects and the person that inhabits or is reflected in that space is probed; in Mansfield, the perception of feelings is investigated. In both stories the character

makes a mistaken assessment that in Woolf questions the meaning of the very story and in Mansfield changes deeply the direction of the narrative. In both stories, epiphany is a way to establishing a clearer truth than the one presented previously.

The moment, which in Woolf’s writing often has a mystic, meditative or philosophic tone, is in Mansfield more associated with daily situations and action and shows in an ironic, heartbroken and intense way the clash of the character’s consciousness with the exterior world. Woolf emphasizes the past and memory’s centrality to identity, whereas Mansfield puts the emphasis more on chronological time associated with the individual consciousness of the characters. Both use lyricism and symbolism in narrative, and a multiplicity of points of view, to render moments of evanescence and intensity. The moment of revelation, used as a technique in these modernist short stories, makes possible a fecund exploration of subjectivity and is therefore a very effective strategy in attempting to analyze and scrutinize the human soul in detail, bringing together the exterior and the interior as both authors were keen to do. The consequence of the use of this technique is the perception of dissonance, contradiction and psychological disruption, which marks their epiphanic short stories.

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Fringe of Intuition: Virginia Sees Through It All

(time) "[...] gnaws on things, and leaves on them the mark of its tooth."
Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*

"We were a nothingness shot with gleams of what might be."
(Katherine Mansfield, letter to John Middleton Murry, 11 October 1922)

Three evenings I have walked the Downs
Trying to separate self from the
Incorrigible twisted threads,
Katherine gone somewhere into the gleaming mists;
Audience of awe, her great energy for living
Extinguished.

East toward the River Ouse
With the wet, cool grass brushing my ankles
And Leonard talking, talking

Calling to Pinka. There is a white kernel
Of reality which is me, though Lord knows
Of what substance

And also a thick fringe of intuition
Which halos both what's behind
And what's up ahead? Life,
Life in snapshots: Death a fading photo
Of what?

Life circling itself ready to devour
Or itself be eaten. The fault is Bergson's.
He goes on and on trying to disprove
What he already knows

100 pages in
And nothing has evolved. Time
Sweeps ever arrogantly through this fringe

Her hooded cape and crooked cane
And satchelful of memories, Time
With her brilliant torch

Cutting through the night
the sparks, the shards
And atoms likely to set fire

As they fall. Time
With sweet breath
And bloody teeth,

Gnawing.

Sandra Inskeep-Fox
Independent Scholar

TRULY MISCELLANEOUS



A Portrait of Virginia Woolf (Woodcut)
by Loren Kantor

Loren Kantor is a Los Angeles-based Woodcut Artist and writer. He worked in the film industry for 20 years as a screenwriter and assistant director. He is a huge fan of Classic Literature and Cinema. You can see his Woodcut Prints on his blog: <http://woodcuttingfool.blogspot.com>

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: **Here Ends the Special Issue on** :
: **Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield** :
.....





Chinese cup stand, Yuan dynasty, 14th century, porcelain with celadon glaze,
Honolulu Academy of Arts

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_cup_stand,_Yuan_dynasty,_14th_century,_porcelain_with_celadon_glaze,_Honolulu_Academy_of_Arts.JPG

“Behind that plain china off which we dined”: China/Chinese in Virginia Woolf’s Writings

“What force is behind that plain china off which we dined” (AROO 20). In *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf invites the readers to consider the ideology, especially female marginality lying beneath a commonplace object that we easily ignore. While Woolf sees the patriarchal force behind the plain china, I want to move on to explore the cultural complexity behind the same object, with an examination of Woolf’s own writings on China/Chinese.

Scholarship on Woolf and China dates back to Melba Cuddy-Keane, who, with Kay Li, provided ground-breaking research on Woolf studies in China (1996), and Patricia Laurence, whose seminal work *Lily Briscoe’s Chinese Eyes* (2003) cogently argued for a link between the Bloomsbury Group in Britain and the Crescent Moon Group in China. Since then, critics have further explored the above two fields in various ways. The research on Woolf’s own writings on China/Chinese, however, is quite scanty. While Cuddy-Keane and Li’s and Laurence’s works touched on the issue, Urmila Seshagiri devoted a full chapter titled “Orienting Virginia Woolf” in her volume *Race and the Modernist Imagination* (2010) to the subject, addressing the significance of racial discourse in Woolf’s works. All these studies provided a great starting point for my research. To uncover Woolf’s concern with China/Chinese in both her life and writings, I examined her diary, letters, biography, her novels and essays, resulting in my discovery that Woolf engaged with China/Chinese in many different levels, ranging from personal to national and cultural concerns. Starting with Woolf’s writings on China, the country, in terms of British imperialism, I move on to elucidate her frequent mention of Chinese artifacts as linked to the Chinese vogue in Britain. I then further explore the myriad presence of Chinese metaphor in Woolf’s writings.

In 1905, while revisiting her childhood resort St. Ives with her siblings, the 23 year old Virginia Stephen mentioned in her diary Mr. Pascoe, one

of the “old St Ives people,” saying that, “China, I remember, was one of the places which Mr. Pascoe had seen himself, when he was in the Navy” (PA 288). This early mention of China in Woolf’s diary interestingly posits a connection between Britain and China through colonialism. Though Woolf’s diary entry does not explicate Mr. Pascoe’s detailed engagement in China, his being in the Navy suggests the British colonial advancement in China in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. This early note of China shows Virginia Stephen’s vague idea of China as a remote country connected with British imperialism. In a 1915 diary entry, Woolf again referred to China when mentioning her childhood friend Sylvia Milman, one of the granddaughters of the Dean of St Paul’s, Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868): “Sylvia Milman came to dinner—After a good deal of bowing & scraping about China (which she has dutifully seen, in her endeavour to be advanced) we got on to memories of childhood which amused me, but bored L. I’m afraid” (D1 25). Here Sylvia Milman’s interest in China was defined as “her endeavour to be advanced.” This note reflects the general tendency of the Westerners of that time to learn about China and Chinese culture. The many books on China/Chinese in Woolf’s own personal library are also evidence of such tendency. With her friends’ (Margery Fry, G. L. Dickinson etc.) visits to China in the 1930s, and especially with her nephew Julian Bell’s two years of teaching (1935-37) in China, and Woolf’s correspondence with the Chinese writer, Ling Shuhua (Julian’s woman friend in China), Woolf was increasingly involved with this old and remote country in personal ways. It is thus no accident that the mention of China/Chinese dotted her diary, letters, and her essays and novels.

China, the country, in Woolf’s writings is constantly associated with remoteness and distance. At the early part of *Mrs. Dalloway*, when the mysterious car is gone, all the strangers in the shops feel emotional about the Empire: “Something so trifling in single instances that no mathematical instrument, though capable of transmitting shocks in China, could register the vibration; yet in its fullness rather formidable and in its common appeal emotional” (MD 138). China here is introduced to describe the enormous capability of the mathematical instrument as compared to the subtle patriotic emotion felt by the people. In *Flush: A Biography*, when Flush is taken to shop in Oxford Street, “[a] million airs from China, from Arabia, wafted their frail incense into the remotest fibres of his senses” (F 6). Commodities from these remote countries like “gleaming silk” (6) and “ponderous bombazine” (6) are displayed over the counters to show the cosmopolitan side of the imperial London. But more importantly China is often related to British colonial history in Woolf’s writings. In “Three Pictures,” the first picture discussed is about a sailor “back from China” (*The Death of the Moth* 12) who expresses his fondness of the cozy and leisured English life after the China seas. In “Street Haunting: A London Adventure,” China is mentioned to illustrate the restless colonial spirit of English imperialism (31). In *The Waves*, China appears several times in the colonial discourse of the major figures. Susan “listen[s] to the missionaries from China” (27); Louis has “commitments to China” (113), and his saying “I roll the dark before me, spreading commerce where there was chaos in the far parts of the world” (113) significantly reveals his Eurocentric thinking. He refers to the British colony as “the dark” and “chaos,” making himself a Savior-like figure delivered by his efforts to “spread[s] commerce.” Just as Alexander Kwonji Rosenberg has noticed, “though some critics have pointed to instances of ambivalence in Woolf’s position toward imperialism, Virginia Woolf, in her essay writing, remained an opponent to British expansion and subject domination” (Rosenberg), Woolf’s mention of China as illustrated in the above examples all give a sense of irony on British imperialism.

Apart from those references to China, Chinese people are also mentioned in passing in Woolf’s writings, pointing to the issue of Orientalism. For instance, “The Mark on the Wall” curiously references “the foot of a Chinese murderess” displayed in the local museum (*A Haunted House* [AHH] 49); in *Flush*, an Englishman who “had a son by a Chinese

washerwoman" is introduced briefly (33). In both cases, the Chinese persons mentioned are characterized by Oriental primitiveness and degeneration.

Paradoxically, however, the Chinese goods produced by these "primitive" people had won favor of the "civilized" Englishman a long time ago. Qi Chen remarks that "[i]n Britain in the mid-eighteenth century, the vogue for Chinese goods spread widely among the aristocracy, and a taste for objects in Chinese style became almost synonymous with nobility" (40), but, during the Victorian age, thanks to the development of navigational technology and the decrease of the cost of transportation, the Chinese goods became cheap enough that the new middle class consumers could also afford to buy them. Virginia Woolf's own diary and letters vividly reflect such historical reality. Both her diary and letters reveal that Woolf was a lover of chinaware (*Letters* [L] 1 157, L3 376, L3 34). It is also for this reason that many Chinese commodities appear in Woolf's novels. In *Night and Day*, Mrs. Hilbery tries to show Ralph Denham "[b]ooks, pictures, china, manuscripts and the very chair that Mary Queen of Scots sat in when she heard of Darnley's murder" (ND 13; my italics). Among Mrs. Hilbery's manuscripts on her father, there is "an essay upon contemporary china" (35). In her room, there are "the china dogs on the mantelpiece" (103). A Chinese teapot and China teacups are prevalent in this story about an English middle class courtship. Even when Mrs. Hilbery imagines finding a house, she visualizes "a pond with a Chinese duck" (203) in the garden. Apart from Chinese porcelain and ceramics, other Chinese handicrafts also appear in Woolf's writings. For example, Chinese lanterns lighten up the narrative background in "A Summing Up" (AHH 150); Chinese boxes are owned by Mrs. Clandon in "The Legacy" (AHH 132). All these minute mentions of Chinese handicrafts significantly show the daily consumption of Chinese commodities in British society. As Qi Chen has pointed out, "the consumption of 'China' was part of the practice of nineteenth century imperialism, in which the products of 'past' or 'primitive' cultures were fetishistically consumed" (48).

Woolf's mention of China/Chinese is not limited to household chinaware and realistic description of Chinese handicrafts as ornamental parts of her stories. In many of her writings, Woolf frequently employs Chinese imageries as metaphors. In "The Man Who Loved His Kind," between the conversation of Miss O'Keefe and Prickett Ellis, there is "the wavering of leaves, and the yellow and red fruit like Chinese lanterns wobbling this way and that" (AHH 123); at the end of "Kew Gardens," the city murmurs "like a vast nest of Chinese boxes all of wrought steel turning ceaselessly one within another" (AHH 42); in *Night and Day*, while in momentary desperation of his love for Katharine Hilbery and before his spontaneous proposal to Mary Datchet, Ralph Denham "had been building one of those piles of thought, as ramshackle and fantastic as a Chinese pagoda" (ND 216). It is interesting to note that the words "wobbling," "turning ceaselessly," "ramshackle," and "fantastic" attributed to the Chinese objects all produce a sense of dreaminess, magic and unreality in the above cases. It seems that Woolf likes to employ the Chinese metaphors to create some unreal atmosphere or to show the unstable flow of the characters' consciousnesses.

The most notable Chinese metaphor is perhaps Chinese eyes, a concept which characterizes both the female artist Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* and the independent daughter, Elizabeth Dalloway, in *Mrs. Dalloway*. This racial trope has been studied by scholars from a variety of perspectives (see Patricia Laurence; Urmila Seshagiri). I want to stress its function in arguing for a new femininity since both Lily Briscoe and Elizabeth Dalloway rebel against the conventional gender roles expected in the Victorian age. Woolf's resort to Chinese imageries to argue for the feminist ideology can also be found in her 1923 essay "The Chinese Shoe." While reviewing *Lady Henry Somerset*, Woolf remarks that, "the old Chinese custom of fitting the foot to the shoe was charitable compared with the mid-Victorian practice of fitting the woman to the system" (E3 390). Here Woolf is obviously referring to the footbinding tradition of women in feudal China. A high fashion among women and

one of the important standards of women's beauty, the footbinding was only condemned relatively recently as "the symbol of feudal oppression of women" (Wang x) and eliminated in Modern China. Woolf rightly relates the Chinese shoe to women's issues despite of its cultural ambiguity. In *Orlando*, when Orlando is back in England as a woman, she is sketched "spending her morning in a China robe of ambiguous gender among her books; then receiving a client or two (for she had many scores of suppliants) in the same garment" (O 138). The China robe is used here to symbolize Orlando's androgynous vision. Woolf's use of Chinese imageries to talk about women's issues was perhaps not incidental. In 1918 and 1919, Woolf twice referred to Lytton Strachey's Chinese play *A Son of Heaven* in her diary (D1 176; 273). This play was performed to the London and National Society for Women's Service in 1925. In the play, Strachey "created [a] woman who defied all traditional ideals of motherhood and femininity. [...] [His] picture of the Chinese imperial court at the time of the Boxer Rebellion centers on the Empress Dowager who had usurped power from her son" (Taddeo 80). It is said that Strachey wrote this Oriental-themed play "for a woman's suffrage benefit sponsored by the Strachey sisters" (63). Thus, what seems to be a Chinese historical drama was in fact appropriated for the struggle of sexual equality in Britain. It is also intriguing to note that the Empress Dowager, a notorious figure in Chinese history (unlike the other Chinese Empress Wu Zetian [624 -705 AD] of the Tang Dynasty, who holds a more positive reputation in Chinese imagination), is depicted in Strachey's play in a more sympathetic way for its relevance to women's suffrage movement.

By using Chinese metaphors, Woolf was able on one hand to express her modernist nonlinear thought pattern and on the other hand to argue for her feminist vision. One may wonder why she chooses Chinese imageries in doing so. Perhaps it is worthwhile to have a look at her view on Chinese art and literature for an answer. In a 1913 essay entitled "Chinese Stories," Woolf remarks that "to give any idea of the slowness and queeriness of these stories one must compare them to dreams, or the airy, fantastic, and inconsequent flight of a butterfly" (E2 7). This comment is coincidentally reminiscent of her metaphors on Chinese lanterns and Chinese pagodas as ramshackle and fantastic. In *Between the Acts*, Mrs. Swithin complains that, "Actors show us too much. The Chinese, you know, put a dagger on the table and that's a battle" (987). The suggestiveness of Chinese drama dimly reminds us of Woolf's frequent choice of a single day or a few episodes of one's life in her novel writing.

Woolf's sporadic reference to China/Chinese in her works significantly forms part of her discussion of imperialism and colonialism but at the same time speaks to the issue of orientalism. On the other hand, the Chinese metaphors in her works serve as her modernist device to move away from the Victorian convention either thematically or aesthetically. What I want to highlight by such an analysis most, however, is how the cultural interaction between East and West influence ordinary people's ways of thinking.

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Table 1 in: Peder Ascanius: *Icones rerum naturalium*. Part V (København, 1806):

Motiv: Berggylte

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Chinese Lantern at Yuyuan Gardens

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Fish-Cat Metaphor in *A Room of One's Own*

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf refuses to respond directly to the question of “women and fiction.” It would have been easier to “speak about” her great predecessors: “a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs. Gaskell and one would have done” (AROO 3). Yet, in order to show that “a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction” (AROO 4), Woolf takes a long detour through invented stories in which the thought processes that lead to her conviction are expressed. What might have been a simple, forthright discourse takes a circuitous path and turns into a series of metaphors that merely “defer” and “differ.”¹

Mary Beton, the narrator of *A Room*, begins the detour with a reference

¹ It is the concept of *différance* outlined in Jacques Derrida's *Margins of Philosophy* that denotes the force of “defer” and “differ”: “*Différer* in this sense is to temporize, to take recourse, consciously or unconsciously, in the temporal and temporizing meditation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of “desire” or “will,” and equally effects this suspension in a mode that annuls or tempers its own effect”; “the other sense of *différer* is the more common and identifiable one: to be not identical, to be other, discernible, etc. When dealing with *differen(ts)(ds)*, a word that can be written with a final *ts* or a final *ds*, as you will, whether it is a question of dissimilar otherness or of allergic and polemical otherness, an interval, a distance, *spacing*, must be produced between the elements other, and be produced with a certain perseverance in repetition” (8).

to a fish being lost. "Sitting on the banks of a river" the narrator is lost in thought, imagining a fish that is loosed upon the water. Not knowing where to turn, the fish struggles its way, moving "hither and thither among the reflections and the weeds" (AROO 5). The fish is an invented figure that seems to grow into signification: "it darted and sank, and flashed hither and thither, set up such a wash and tumult of ideas that it was impossible to sit still" (AROO 5). But, just as the fish matures into signification, the Oxbridge Beadle interrupts and stops the narrator who, having been impassioned by the fish, walks hastily "across a grass plot" (AROO 6). For it is the rule of Oxbridge that no layperson, especially a woman, is allowed on the "turf."² The Beadle disrupts the narrator in such a way that the "fish" is suddenly obscured and set adrift, unanchored from the stream of thought. The narrator comments: "What idea it had been that had sent me so audaciously trespassing I could not now remember" (AROO 6). The "fish" seems to have been lost irrecoverably.

But the fish only goes "into hiding" (AROO 6), latent but always capable of returning to haunt the meaning of "women and fiction." For the fish becomes in *A Room* what one might call a "movement of signification," which, since it moves through water as thoughts resonate through the mind of narrator, partakes in suggesting a meaning of "women and fiction." It is a metaphoric configuration that develops into signification that never *actually* becomes a complete thought. It is essentially a metaphor of a thought process that gets disrupted, indicating how the woman's endeavor to think—to come to a meaning about herself—has been consistently interrupted by men.³ The fish is therefore not only suggestive of a woman being halted at Oxbridge, but indicative of a larger socio-political repression of women.

The detour, then, which takes the form of a fish, demonstrates a movement of signification in which a meaning of "women and fiction" is disrupted and suggested at the same time. The detour of a fish is an interrupted moment⁴ during which a meaning of "women and fiction" is indicated. What must be recognized immediately is that the fish, while being a metaphor of an interrupted thought, has in itself disrupted the meaning of "women and fiction." The fish is a metaphor and a disruption at the same time and suddenly becomes Woolf's most extensive "metaphor of interruption" that undergirds the subtext of *A Room*, exposing new windows through which it becomes what Anne Fernald in "*A Room of One's Own*, Personal Criticism, and the Essay," calls "a method and a theme" (178). The Beadle's interruption that victimizes the narrator is reflective of Woolf's own "frustration of being interrupted" (Fernald 179). The use of Mary Beton for expressing Woolf's personal side has the effect of creating distance between the speaking voice and the author herself. Fernald argues that Woolf uses the narrator of *A Room* to "cover" her own anxiety about interruptions, while, at the same time, implanting that anxiety "in a narrative about interruptions" (179).

² "His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me" (AROO 6).

³ It is in fact difficult to make the case that all women, particularly Virginia Woolf, have experienced "interruptions" analogous to the scene at Oxbridge in *A Room of One's Own*; nor are these interruptions to which Anne Fernald alludes necessarily feminist criticism in nature. But, as Fernald argues, they do at least represent Woolf's intention "to articulate the connection between patriarchal oppression and the loss of a thought" (179).

⁴ Ruotolo contends that Woolfian interruptions often reveal a new awareness and perception that become "most real." Citing a passage from *A Room of One's Own* he observes that, "There as here a sense of what is most real grows mysteriously out of its antithesis: 'Nothing came down the street; nobody passed. A single leaf detached itself from the plane tree at the end of the street, and in that pause and suspension fell. Somehow it was like a signal falling, a signal pointing to a force in things which one had overlooked'" (64).

Having been interrupted by the Beadle, Mary Beton⁵ retires from the turf and observes the monumental buildings of Oxbridge where the "stream of gold and silver" (AROO 9) has accumulated for centuries. The narrator attempts to trace the footsteps of Charles Lamb to the "famous library" (AROO 8) in which Milton's *Lycidas* and Thackeray's *Esmond* are "kept" and "preserved" (AROO 7). But, once again, a "kindly gentleman" deters her from entering the library saying, "ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction" (AROO 7-8). Disturbed and mortified, Mary Beton contemplates on the exuberances of Oxbridge, describing a lavish site of luncheon, before seeing a "tailless cat" "in the middle of the lawn as if it too questioned the universe" (AROO 11).

The Manx cat, who did look a little absurd, poor beast, without a tail, in the middle of the lawn. Was he really born so, or had he lost his tail in an accident? The tailless cat, though some are said to exist in the Isle of Man, is rarer than one thinks. It is a queer animal, quaint rather than beautiful. It is strange what a difference a tail makes. (AROO 13)

Unlike the fish that merely disrupts the stream of thought, the Manx cat not only interrupts, but also, through that interruption, signifies difference. The tailless cat signifies something missing and different and its seeming deficiency disrupts the narrator to question whether the condition of lacking has been unjustifiably identified as a gender difference. "The sight of that abrupt and truncated animal" transfixes narrator's sense of reality, rousing her "subconscious intelligence" that releases an "emotional light" (AROO 11). And, in that sense, the Manx cat becomes "a cover" for Woolf's own "embarrassment at noticing difference, at being a woman, at laughing aloud" (Fernald 182).⁶ The tailless cat is a reflection of Woolf's own state of the unconscious as much as it is about her subversive writing, revealing, through the narrator, the author's deepest anxieties about interruption.

The anxiety must have amassed within the unconscious of the narrator caused by a series of interruptions at Oxbridge. The Manx cat is a reflection of that unconscious state of repression created by the unpleasant disruptions of the mind. The narrator's anxiety of interruptions is represented through the figure of "the cat without a tail" (AROO 11). The Manx cat is therefore an expression of a sublimated anger: a question of gender difference. But the narrator's anger also comes from isolation and exclusion derived from interruptions. Inhospitability by the Beadle and "gentleman" leaves the narrator in a state of aloneness, which the Manx cat seems to mimic by lingering "in the middle of the lawn" (AROO 13). On the other hand, the anger from isolation and exclusion is also, paradoxically, expressive of narrator's desire to be connected. The anxiety of aloneness expressed through the

⁵ In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak explicates how the narrator ends up being affiliated with the name Mary Beton—the narrator's aunt, Mary Beton, left her an inheritance and she shares her aunt's name. "Chapter 2 starts with the nameless 'I,' but in a few pages she is indirectly given the name Mary Beton. 'Five hundred pounds a year for ever were left me by an aunt, Mary Beton, for no other reason than that I share her name.' 'I share her name.' One is two-d; standing in for the indefinite? Remember, every use of the major shifter 'I' in this text is marked. At any rate, Mary Beton now acknowledges the compromised foundations of her liberation" (40). However, since the narrator also says "call me [...] Mary Seton, etc." her "real" name is ambiguous.

⁶ Fernald observes that, "What interests me here is the way in which Woolf's offhand manner covers her anxiety. While Mary Beton's reading of *Jane Eyre* demonstrates what it is to be a Woolfian reader, the Manx cat asks us to perform the reading ourselves. Her narrator has been laughing not at the Manx cat but at her own nostalgia for luncheon parties before the war, where, she imagines, the sexes mixed as harmoniously as the poems of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti that she quotes. The Manx cat is thus a cover for her embarrassment at noticing difference, at being a woman, at laughing aloud. Woolf leaves the interpretation of the Manx cat to us. Her swift change of subject may be partly a gesture of self-protection, a sigh of her anxieties about sounding 'shrill'" (182).

Manx cat exposes the “signal”⁷ and the need to reestablish what Wendy Faris terms “communal feelings.”⁸

But what does the “taillessness” of the cat precisely signify? What are the ways in which the Manx cat signifies difference? In *Modernism and Eugenics*, Donald Childs contends that the “tail” symbolizes a “writing tradition” of which women writers have been deprived and dispossessed in the culture of phallocentrism. He asserts therefore that, “Insofar as the tail represents the writing tradition, and insofar as the writing tradition is man-centered, the woman writer is born tailless—born without the phallus that constitutes the tradition” (61). Women have been lacking their own *écriture féminine*, which has been suppressed by the culture of phallocentrism. Childs observes that Woolf delineates in *A Room* the ways in which women writers have forsaken their tails or writing tradition “in an accident—the accident that is a patriarchal culture in which a woman’s writing tradition has not been preserved” (61)—and the possibility of repossession through “eugenical development of the body” (64).⁹

From the perspective of psychoanalysis, the “tailless cat” also appears to represent male anxiety of castration. In “Freudian Seduction and the Fallacies of Dictatorship,” Vara Neverow suggests that the Manx cat is invariably connected to Woolf’s criticism of Freudian theory of penis envy. She articulates that Freud and the fascists have used the “anatomical differences” (56) between the sexes to legitimate subjugation and inferiority of women. But such “privileging of the phallus” is a “patriarchal pathology” (57) traceable to “deep seated male sexual anxiety” (56). The theory of penis envy is only a fiction which Freud utilizes to legitimate phallocentrism: “[Woolf] suggests that penis envy is a convenient fiction intended to justify an excessive male investment in the penis which can only be validated by enforced female inferiority” (Neverow 56-57). The Professor’s “anger” in *A Room* is therefore simultaneously a testament to and revelation of male anxiety of “protecting” (AROO 35) the phallus that constitutes his superiority over women: “[Superiority] was what he was protecting rather hot-headedly and with too much emphasis, because it was a jewel to him of the rarest price” (AROO 35). In the midst of this make-believe, the “tailless cat” lurks at the heart of Oxbridge, “in the middle of the lawn,” “padding softly across the quadrangle” (AROO 11) to expose the subconscious anxiety of castration.

Within the discourse of “lacking,” however, the Manx cat that appears between the juxtapositions of Oxbridge and Fernham comes to signify not just a biological difference but an economic inequality that underlies a woman’s loss of a “tail.” In *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, Elizabeth Abel highlights the transition of the cat’s symbolism from one of sexual or biological to economic: “The two pictures translate sexual difference into an economic frame by pairing images of founders instead of lovers, shifting the frame of reference from the phallus, cat’s missing tail, to the ‘chest’ in which food passes through the circuit of money” (98). The lack of a woman’s “tail” or “writing tradition” is tied to economic difference, which is contrasted and highlighted through the tales of Oxbridge and Fernham. The former

is endowed with “treasure in huge sacks” while the economy of the latter is associated with “a muddy market.”

Kings and nobles brought treasure in huge sacks and poured it under the earth. This scene was for ever coming alive in my mind and placing itself by another of lean cows and a muddy market and withered greens and the stringy hearts of old men—these two pictures, disjointed and disconnected and nonsensical as they were, were for ever coming together and combating each other and had me entirely at their mercy. (AROO 19)

Woolf uses words like “succulent,” “brilliance,” and “glow” to describe the dining experience at Oxbridge, where “money was poured liberally to set these stones on a deep foundation” (AROO 9). It is “the university where [the pedagogues] had learnt their craft” (AROO 10), that is, where the writing tradition for men has developed and cultivated. Dining at Fernham, on the other hand, was utterly about “bargaining and cheapening.” It is the college where women have been subjected to meager conditions of living, which made them less able to “think well, love well, sleep well” (AROO 17-18) and turned their attention away from writing to anger and “scorn at the reprehensible poverty of our sex” (AROO 21).

If Mary Seton’s mother

had left two or three hundred thousand pounds to Fernham, we could have been sitting at our ease tonight and the subject of our talk might have been archaeology, botany, anthropology, physics, the nature of the atom, mathematics, astronomy, relativity, geography. [...] We might have been exploring or writing[.] (AROO 21-22)

If the “Oxbridge/Fernham” binary exemplifies economic inequality between the sexes that reveals the effect of poverty on women’s writing, Shakespeare’s sister, an imaginary figure named Judith, shows the singular effect that phallocentrism has on a woman of genius. The tale of Judith becomes indispensable for showing the causality since the history of Elizabethan women has either been forgotten or unwritten. As Woolf intimates, the “facts” on women from that period “are [...] hard to come by” (AROO 48). It is the unavailability of facts on Elizabethan women that prompts Woolf to begin a tale of Judith Shakespeare. With lament, the author of *A Room* speculates about “what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith” (AROO 48) and recounts how Judith’s parents would have deprived her of education, obligated her to fulfill domestic duties, and arranged the early marriage for her that drove her to leave home, a decision that later caused her to succumb to Nick Greene, the “actor-manager” who impregnated her and thereby led her to suicidal death and feticide (AROO 50).

This may be true or it may be false—who can say?—but what is true in it, so it seemed to me, reviewing the story of Shakespeare’s sister as I had made it, is that any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty. (AROO 51)

Judith is then also a detour and a metaphor, analogous to the fish and the cat, and seems to deviate from a direct and forthright discourse on “women and fiction.” But if the fish and the cat are limited to explaining a certain generalities of repression, Judith, on the other hand, indicates explicitly the extent to which a “gifted” woman is affected by phallocentrism. And, in the most novel way, Woolf affixes and situates the fictional Judith into a specific time and space in an Elizabethan home, the Shakespeares, where family is organized around “a patriarchal

⁷ John Cacioppo et al. argue that, “in the case of isolation, the signal is a prompt to be alert to social threats (predator evasion) and to renew the connections we need to survive and prosper” (21).

⁸ Wendy Faris describes Bloomsbury’s animals as “often seen alone,” and such aloneness not only express “outlets for repressed emotions and vehicles to express cosmic relatedness” but also “construct the delicate web of communal feelings and mysterious connections that comprises Virginia Woolf’s ‘luminous envelope’ of life itself” (107-08).

⁹ Childs explains that Woolf depicts in *A Room* the ways in which the lost “tail” can be recovered and put back into women’s body through eugenics: “Woolf’s implicit hope concerning the cat’s tail becomes her explicit hope concerning a woman’s writing tradition: it might be reacquired. Woolf’s hopes for the bodies of cats and women are the hopes of eugenicists for the bodies of the British people: over time, the body might be remade and redeemed” (64).

system,”¹⁰ substituting fiction for the missing facts on women from that historical period and cultural specificity. In “Shakespeare’s *Other Sister*” Louise DeSalvo points out that,

In *A Room*, Shakespeare’s sister, who kills herself both because she has not been allowed to develop those powers that lie within her as surely as they lie within her brother, and because she was forced to flee a household where her marriage had been arranged for her, while becoming embroiled in a relationship with Nick Greene, becomes the emblem of *all* women who have been denied the circumstances in which to cultivate their gift for pen and ink and have become, instead, commodities in the market-place of marriage. (62)

As DeSalvo suggests, however, there may have been “Shakespeare’s *other sister*” (79) who, unlike Judith, wrote a journal about “the historical and societal causes of the tension between the sexes” (71) and became a “historian of her own times” (79). “Born with a great gift, [Joan] did not hide her work or set fire to it, she did not become crazed, she did not shoot herself, nor end her days in a lonely cottage outside the village” (79). Unlike Judith Shakespeare who falls a victim to phallogentrism in *A Room*, Joan Martyn is a heroine in Woolf’s “Untitled Story” who “keeps her diary” and becomes “a mythic mother” (79) for women’s writing tradition. Shakespeare’s *other sisters* may also include Emily Brontë who, as Heather Bean states, “becomes a prophet and martyr of women’s literature” (118), Jane Austen (the only woman mentioned in *A Room* who wrote “impersonal literature” [116]); and Virginia Woolf herself who shed light on the “literary value” of Emily Brontë¹¹ (118), not to mention all those great woman writers from the past who may still remain anonymous and unrecognized.

The historicity of Judith is therefore questionable, which is to say that Judith may not be exemplary of Elizabethan women, let alone *of all women*, and therefore such fictional substitution can be considered absurd and meaningless. And, after all, it is the deprivation of facts on Elizabethan women that sparks Woolf to imagine Judith in the first place. One may inquire, for instance, “How can fiction re-present reality, metaphorically or otherwise, if facts of reality are either unknown or concealed?” It is akin to metaphorizing something that does not exist. It is as if metaphor’s referential functions come to a dead end, the point beyond which its signification would no longer progress. Judith would be deprived of its very object of metaphorization.

But it is here “the cat without a tail” comes to rescue. The Manx cat surfaces as if it had been anxiously waiting all along. The tailless cat must have questioned the “women and fiction,” for it has already signified “difference” by lacking its tail, symbolizing some deficiency

¹⁰ Shedding light on the connection between the familial abuse in *To the Lighthouse* and Woolf’s own “possible” incestuous relationship with her brothers, Jane Lilienfeld, in “‘Could They Tell One What They Knew?’: Modes of Discourse in *To the Lighthouse*,” articulates that the author of *A Room* endeavored to “depict the [Ramsay] family as a patriarchal system” (100) in which the denial of abuse becomes “visual” so that “the reader, in viewing the characters’ denial, comes to understand what the characters cannot fully comprehend at the time of their experience” (118). Therefore, “Woolf may have prepared the ground work for her recovered memory of childhood sexual abuse by first writing from the perspective of a little six-year-old boy, observing and sustaining what he experienced as a brutal attack on himself and his mother, negate the truth-claim of the author’s memory of early sexual abuse? Far more likely is the fact that Virginia Woolf’s continued exploration of painful materials through writing might demonstrate her courageous determination to seek that which she could know in the way she could most comfortably know it, through language” (117).

¹¹ In “Something of a Firebrand: Virginia Woolf and the Literary Reputation of Emily Brontë,” Heather Bean asserts that in *A Room* Virginia Woolf depicts Jane Austen as “the female writer whose gift was most perfectly realized” and Emily Brontë as “the greatest unfulfilled promise” that “anticipates and helps to shape a public prepared to read whatever a woman would write” (118). Unlike Austen’s impersonal fiction that completely immerse the reader into the “writer’s perspective,” Emily Brontë utilizes “her own emotions” (117) to create a world of personal fiction.

at least in its physicality. But it is the very physical difference or the lack-there-of that determines the whole condition of its existence: “The tailless cat, though some are said to exist in the Isle of Man, is rarer than one thinks. It is a queer animal, quaint rather than beautiful. It is strange what a difference a tail makes” (AROO 13). The Manx cat represents a condition of deficiency, a superficial quality which, in reality, nonetheless gives a definitive gender identity in women, including that of anxiety “at being a woman” (Fernald 182) and “anger” toward men (Marcus 73).¹² And such anxiety and anger, combined with “fear” and “rancor” (AROO 76), interfere with consciousness of woman writers in ways that disrupt the narrative flow of their work and prevent them from writing their own *écriture féminine*. Woolf asks regarding Charlotte Brontë, “Would the fact of her sex in any way interfere with the integrity of a woman novelist—that integrity which I take to be the backbone of the writer?”

Now, in the passages I have quoted from *Jane Eyre*, it is clear that anger was tampering with the integrity of Charlotte Brontë the novelist. She left her story, to which her entire devotion was due, to attend to some personal grievance. She remembered that she had made to stagnate in a parsonage mending stockings when she wanted to wander free over the world. Her imagination swerved from indignation and we feel it swerve. (AROO 76)

It is the condition of lacking—the lack of phallus—that perpetuates superiority of men and becomes the basis on which the male “self-confidence” and “self-assurance” (AROO 37) are constructed, which is to say that the “inferiority of women” (AROO 37) has been falsely attributed to the lack of phallus. Superiority of the male sex is only an “illusion” (AROO 36) founded on the belief that possessing a phallus in and of itself can justify subjugation of women.

They start the day confident, braced, believing themselves desired at Miss Smith’s tea party; they say to themselves as they go into the room, I am the superior of half the people here, and it is thus that they speak with that self-confidence, that self-assurance, which have had such profound consequences in public life and lead to such curious notes in the margin of the private mind. (AROO 36-37)

And such belief is “one of the chief sources of [men’s] power,” which has been sustained by women who mirrored “the figure of man at twice its natural size” (35). Neverow explains how the lack of phallus conditions women to acknowledge her inferiority and submit to male supremacy: “Thus, culturally, the male organ is fetishized and transformed from a biological appendage into what Jacques Lacan would later term the transcendental signifier, the phallus, endowed with the patriarchal authority of the Law of the Father” (57).

If the lack of phallus is a biological fact for women and if *that* difference has determined the condition of women throughout the history, Judith Shakespeare becomes exemplary of Elizabethan women. Deprived of facts on women from that era, Woolf situates Judith in such a way that a fictional character can re-present the reality of gifted women. The coercion of domestic obligations, deprivation of education, and early arranged marriage, all the oppressions that contributed to Judith’s tragic, unfulfilled death, are no longer merely fictional since they reflect the very condition of women as determined by the lack of phallus. The tailless cat in *A Room* is therefore not only a metaphor that signifies lacking and difference but an analogical participant that serves as a

¹² Marcus also contends that, “While Woolf felt that one must be a pork-butcher’s daughter’s and have inherited a share in a pig factory to have access to the vulgar power of language, she often felt it was necessary to carry the weight of her own rage. She habitually recorded that rage in her diary, to use its energy in the melting-down-of-the-mind process she called ‘incandescence’ so that the anger, when expressed, would have more fire than smoke” (76-77).

biological fact which “legitimate[s] male dominance” (Neverow 60) that determines the condition of women, including that of Judith.

The Manx cat, *as metaphor*, is turned into an object of metaphorization for Judith, and such is the movement of metaphors in *A Room of One's Own*. Fiction becomes more truthful than fact only when its metaphoric signification is not only indicative of the object, but also transgresses itself and turns into an object of metaphorization. What makes fiction truer than facticity is invariably dependent on the heterogeneous movements of metaphor. By not only re-presenting its object of metaphorization, but also signifying other metaphors in the text, and, finally, becoming an object of metaphorization itself, metaphor such as the Manx cat, in the words of Jacques Derrida, not only “add[s]” to but also “take[s] place of” (*Of Grammatology* 145) the meaning of “women and fiction.” The ‘tailless cat’ runs deep into each and every subtext of *A Room*, making it a “meta-metaphor” that becomes the fact and reality of women on which Shakespeare’s sister depends to metaphorize.

The fish is also at the foundation of narrativity in *A Room*, exhaustively signifying all those interrupted moments that become part of the meaning of “women and fiction.” In fact the Manx cat is vulnerably dependent on the signification of the fish, since at the root of each and every condition of difference—of writing tradition, genius, economic—there is always an interruption, according to Peggy Kamuf, “which forces narration to deviate in some fashion, that intrudes with an effective, forceful objection to the momentary forgetting of a woman’s identity” (Kamuf 10). Each interruption prevents woman from knowing her true self, an enlightened self who, like “incandescent” Shakespeare, has freed herself from any obstructions of the mind. Interruptions reinforce and put a woman back into a phallogocentric society, constantly reminding her of a “proper” place in the world where the condition of lacking and difference becomes the grounds for sexism. And, regressively, the fish relies on the cat to signify lacking and difference generated by the interruptions. In the absence of the cat, the fish, as metaphor, would be dwarfed into signifying all those interruptions that fail to re-present, for instance, the loss of genius and writing tradition in women. In *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf utilizes the two divergent metaphors, the fish and the cat, in such a way that one is inherently depended on the other. The “fish-cat,” each on its own and by the conjunction with each other, becomes the dominant metaphor without which *A Room* cannot signify “women and fiction.”

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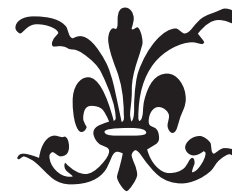
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Heavily stylized depiction of a Manx cat; detail from a hand-colored antique engraving. 1885 (reprint, from 1853 original)
From *Our Living World: An Artistic Edition of the Rev. J.G. Wood's Natural History of Animate Creation – Mammalia Vol. 1*, John George Wood, p. 163, Original art by unknown illustrator (engraving credits were given as “by Wolf, Zwecker, Weir, Coleman, etc. etc., engraving by the Brothers Dalziel”); scan uploaded by SMCandlish (talk · contribs) published 1885, in this hand-colored version, by Selmer Hess. Originally published in black-and-white in Wood's *Illustrated Natural History*, Volume I: Mammalia, p. 203, by Routledge, Warne & Routledge, London, 1853.
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manx_cat_%28stylized%29_1885.jpg





A Passion for Books: The Early Letters of Nancy Nolan to Leonard Woolf (1943-1944).

I have long been interested in socio-biographical writing and the opportunity it presents for tracing signs of personal or social transformation in women's lives. Aware of my interest in and search for letters and diaries as material sources for women's biographical writings, a colleague directed me to Victoria Glendinning's (2006) magisterial biography, *Leonard Woolf*, and her reference to an Irish woman who wrote to Leonard from 1943 to 1969.

Nancy Nolan was a Dublin housewife. Leonard replied to her fan letter about Virginia's books briefly and kindly. It was his brevity as much as his kindness which made possible the transference. Mrs Nolan used her long letters to him as a journal or meditation, musing on the page about her family's ups and downs, consistently for a quarter of a century[...]. They remained "Mrs Nolan" and "Mr Woolf," and his most personal note Leonard ever struck was in signing off "Yours affectionately" in a condolence letter on the death of her husband. They never met. (Glendinning 397)

I was immediately intrigued and sensed that Mrs Nolan's letters to Mr Woolf might contain more than musings and were a possible source for biographical reflection on women's lives in twentieth-century Ireland. I was interested in what Nancy wrote about to Leonard and what circumstances prevailed so that she took up her pen and wrote that first letter, Irish woman to English man, in the middle of World War II (1939-1945). As soon as the opportunity presented itself, I removed myself to the Woolf archive at the University of Sussex and became immersed in reading Nancy's accounts of her life as a 'housewife,' her reflections on motherhood and family, and her passion for books.¹ My focus here is on that passion as expressed in the first year of their correspondence, in which Nancy writes 17 letters to Leonard, sometimes twice a month. Filed as 'miscellaneous,' amid the 'fan-mail' correspondances to Leonard, copies of Nancy's 150 letters, of considerable length (10 pages and more), are carefully tied with pink ribbon or stretched rubber bands. These are the letters of an 'ordinary' woman, reflecting on her life to a man she does not know, but with whom she develops an epistolary friendship. His initial replies to her may have been out of courtesy to a fan, but soon a dynamic is created so that the correspondence continues until his death in 1969.

What initiated Nancy's correspondence with Leonard Woolf author, publisher, political activist, member of the Bloomsbury group and husband to Virginia Woolf? The question can partly be answered from the letters themselves and from what is generally known about fan-mail to authors, political and spiritual leaders and regents in this period. Glendinning writes that authors such as G. K. Chesterson, for example, received such fan mail as did Woolf. Women expressed their identification with Virginia Woolf and then transferred their affection to Leonard, "and there were other women who became equally fixated, and wrote to him in a similar way, over the years" (Glendinning 434). Nancy Nolan then was not exceptional in this. Nancy's admiration for the life and literature of Virginia Woolf first prompted her unsolicited four-page letter to Leonard on the 9th of February 1943, two years after

¹Thank you to Dr. Eilis Ward (NUI Galway), Dr Margaretta Jolly (University of Sussex), Fiona Courage and Rose Lock, (Special Collections Unit, University of Sussex) for assistance with this work.

the death of Virginia. Nolan writes that she is housebound, "always alone among books" with "only my own instinct to guide me, and this is why I have only within the last year discovered the finest writer and the most rare spirit of our times." Nolan is sustained by her "love" of books. Their authors, such as the Brontë sisters, Dorothy Wordsworth and Charles Lamb, are her "companions," but Virginia Woolf is more than these as "in her work I find everything; my mind responds to hers with such instant comprehension and such perfect sympathy as I have never before experienced." She is familiar with Woolf's writing, quoting from an essay written in 1929 concerning second-hand books but placing Virginia Woolf as the subject of the quotation: "...with the first words of Virginia Woolf I found that here was 'a complete stranger who will, with luck, turn into the best friend' I have in the world."² She describes herself as "one of an amorphous crowd of colourless, ordinary inarticulate people" whom Virginia would not have noticed, and "still I claim her boldly as my friend, and feel that she has written for me." She writes "What is the power that words possess, which makes each reader seem the special one to whom the writer reveals herself?" Nolan inquires whether there is a biography available of Virginia's life, wishing to know more about her. The stated purpose of the letter is to request a copy of *Mrs Dalloway*, not being able to procure the book in Ireland and "hoping it is not banned; one never knows on which author the interdict may next descend." Irish censorship regulations in 1943 were rigorous, and books were either banned or physically marked to remove any references that might compromise Irish neutrality or be deemed offensive to the moral sensibilities of church and state. Nolan's desire is to talk and write about books that she has read or might read. She claims that she is "ignorant" and lives apart from the outside world and wonders if it is possible to form an "epistolary friendship with someone who loves to talk about books? Is there not some way of getting in touch with such people?" She refrains from further imposition, as she assumes that Leonard may never see this fan-mail letter she has written, much less read it and respond to her himself. She concludes her first letter with the thought that "it has been a pleasure to imagine myself in touch with a real bookman and one who lives in that world which of all others I would have wished to inhabit."

From the first letter we know that Nolan is a reader of eighteenth and nineteenth century American and English poets, essayists and novelists, but with a special interest in Virginia Woolf. She comments on the structure and characters of the books that she has read, regarding *The Years* as "disappointing" and not "distinctively" the work of Virginia Woolf. Nolan wonders why "did she hide herself so completely in *Roger Fry*?" She writes that she has not yet read *Flush*. Her second letter (2 March 1943), acknowledging the gift of *Mrs Dalloway* from Leonard, which she read at once, is also prompted by her reading of the *The Waves* and her strong desire to communicate her critical response to the book, knowing that Leonard "must have heard the opinions of practically every important author or reader of the last few years. But I don't care." She needed to let an informed other know of its effects on her; "The sunlight glancing through crystal streams, the rise and fall of the sap in the leaves; it is perfection. It is the nearest thing to a Bach fugue I have found and when I do finish it (I'm trying to read it slowly) it will leave the same sense of satisfaction and mathematical perfection that the fugue gives us—at least I am sure it will. Apart from the book itself, how exquisitely the words are woven! She must have loved the writing of it, though that does not express my meaning at all." Nancy Nolan's reflections on Virginia's writing style, her responses to Virginia's books and essays (as well as those of other authors) drive the correspondence and provide her with a reason for writing to Leonard. Few people of her acquaintance are familiar with Virginia Woolf's books. Writing to Woolf

² The full quotation is "Books are everywhere; and always the same sense of adventure fills us. Second-hand books are wild books, homeless books; they have come together in vast flocks of variegated feather, and have a charm which the domesticated volumes of the library lack. Besides, in this random, miscellaneous company we may rub against some complete stranger who will, with luck, turn into the best friend we have in the world" (Woolf 25).

about the books she is reading brings her closer to her desired world and motivates her to continue writing. A sense of urgency to communicate her ideas and criticisms permeates her writing as well as an awareness that she does not want to overwhelm this addressee with her correspondences. She holds back from writing about *A Room of One's Own*: "...it's a delight to read and very stimulating. I love the quick, flashing turns from one point to another, and her way of being puckish when she is being most sedate. [...] I wanted to say more about 'A Room of One's Own'—but I'll keep it for the next time." Nancy apologizes to Leonard for the number and length of her letters to him. Nonetheless, in a postscript she reveals the resolve required to overcome any hesitancy or doubt she might feel about the force of her determination to write and post her letters to him. "P.S. I'm sorry for writing again so soon, but if I delay I would lose courage to send it. I tried to make it shorter, but couldn't." (undated, 1943). Every so often her epistolary connection with Leonard Woolf appears to startle her, as if she cannot quite believe she is writing to him and he is writing to her.

The early correspondence takes place in the years following Irish independence from Britain, after the formation of the Irish Free State (1922-1937) and the establishment of 'Ireland' as an independent democratic state as constituted by the 1937 Constitution of Ireland. Much has been written about these foundational events including the significance of the limiting effects of article 41 for Irish women, positioning married women primarily in the private sphere of the home. While there is debate about the long term discriminatory effects of constitutional constraints such as this, at the time only 5.6% of married women worked outside the home. By working full-time in the home, Nancy Nolan was fulfilling an economic, cultural and state designated role for women. We get some sense of how she felt about this from her letters, but particularly in her letter from 1944. Writing about how the role of housewife is perceived by her mother and husband she confides that they "think I have a very easy, leisurely life, because I don't have to go out and work in the morning; I think they both believe me a lazy, idle creature—but the dishes, and cooking, and washing, and ironing take up so much time that I usually can only give the rooms a quick sweep and dust, and the windows are always getting ahead of me [...] they have no conception at all of my real work, which, as I see it, is to help the children in as many ways as possible to develop on their individual lines and at the same time live peacefully and happily together" (11 January 1944). She offers a counter-point to this perception of her to Leonard, comparing care of children as similar to the creative force required for writing or musical composition. "I used to regret that I hadn't the ability to create books or music, but I think now that it is just as much creative work to bring up a family, even a small one, and see them safely started on their own roads; it requires a virtuoso's touch and a knowledge of the art of living." The separation of domestic labor from love labor speaks of a woman whose ideas may not have chimed with the expectations of how middleclass married womanhood might be performed or understood in Ireland at the time.

Finding the time to read and write letters while managing home and family is a source of some anxiety for Nancy. Hers is the problem of the lack of solitude. She writes that illness allows a total immersion in the world of books bestowing "a great opportunity for reading with a clear conscience" (27 May 1943). Reading is a time for entering particular storyworlds, engaging with characters, reflecting and commenting on their behavior and values. But the anxiety leaks through as she confides to Leonard that "It's very inconvenient my being sick, although the children are very good; but no none but myself knows when everyone wants their dinner or tea, to suit their various activities, and it interferes with their school work and music" (27 May 1943). But it is clear that reading time is also recovery time; she writes that reading *Flush* "has restored me to a much more cheerful self" (20 April 1943). It is very difficult to gauge how exceptional a reader Nolan was in her choice of literature without a thorough knowledge of the availability of books in circulation through lending libraries, specialist booksellers and local

bookshops in Ireland during the 1940s. By all accounts, access to books was not only mediated by church-influenced state censorship laws and the availability of personal money to buy books but was also an era in which the public library system was only beginning to expand. Nolan writes to British booksellers in her search for specific texts and was a regular visitor to second-hand bookshops in Dublin. By 1943 most of Virginia Woolf's publications, novels, short stories, essays and non-fiction would have been available, and there is no indication that Woolf's work was subject to Irish censorship laws. Nolan writes of the difficulty in procuring books for her daughter to read. "Unfortunately a good many of the books I want her to read are frowned on by the church; if not banned altogether" (third letter in series, undated, 1943). Nolan writes that she hides her books from her family, and we learn how others respond to her reading choices, such as *To the Lighthouse*. "My friend Pearl, also read it, when I had been careless enough to leave it in the sitting room (I have to hide them you know) and she could find no sense in it all—it was crazy she said" (29 June 1943). Nolan reacts with some amusement on learning that her daughter ordered *To the Lighthouse* for her friend's birthday. "I'm envious to know how her family will react...they don't approve of any books but Irish and Catholic one's [...] hearing so much about Virginia Woolf, she's determined to get them. She got *Mrs Dalloway* from the library and her family were horrified."

Nancy Nolan identifies with the values and ideas grounded in Woolf's writings and for her Virginia Woolf is a writer of personal significance. "I've never known any writer who so charmed and invigorated me; every sentence of hers delights me, and with all her ideas I find myself in complete harmony. The world must be more beautiful because she lived" (20 April 1943). From her letters it is clear that Leonard did respond, though not at length. The archive contains only a few samples of his replies; the whereabouts of the bulk of his correspondences to her at this point is unknown. At the outset, his replies are short, responding to her immediate queries while encouraging her to continue to write to him. Later on in their correspondences, and gleaned from Nancy's replies, he reveals a little more about himself, with descriptions of where he lives, room furnishings, his music preferences and comments on travel abroad, holidays and the state of his health. He also writes to her about American academic visitors who have come to Monk's House to talk with him about Virginia's work and life; he tells her of a film that is being made about his life and from the mid 1960s onward, letters are more frequently signed off by both of them, with "yours affectionately." One of the ways of reading the meaningfulness of the correspondence for Leonard is considered by Glendinning. Woolf shared Mrs Nolan's letters with Trekkie Parsons, his companion and partner from the 1940s onwards, referring to one of her very long letters as "terrifying." Glendinning observes that:

When his own letters to Trekkie were over-long, he said he was as bad as Mrs Nolan. But the correspondence touched a nerve: his intrigued fondness for women who were not geniuses, and who admitted him into their confidence and into a way of thinking which he believed peculiar to the "feminine mind." (Glendinning 397)

There is no doubt that Nancy Nolan admitted Leonard Woolf into her thoughts about her familial, domestic and personal life, inviting him in as an act of epistolary friendship. Corresponding with somebody "who lived among and loved books," affirmed the time she spent reading books and writing letters, time otherwise occupied by the needs of family and the demands of domestic work. From these extracts from the first year of the correspondence, it is clear that the act of writing, the letters sent and received, and the connection with Woolf are deeply significant for Nancy Nolan at this point in her life story. She conveys her appreciation to Leonard to whom she is indebted for his responsiveness to her. "Once more, thank you for being so kind; it was a great pleasure to me, and I shall always enjoy the thought of it. It was like a window opening on a blank wall" (16 May 43). The correspondence is not only a conduit for her literary expression but provides her with affirmation

and recognition from an informed addressee confirming the aesthetic value of intellectual inquiry, the pleasure to be gained from it, and the opportunity to forge another vision for herself and her family. For this 'Dublin housewife,' her search for an alternative self and a context in which her creativity could be expanded is expressed in the epistolary space of the letter and composed in the epistolary friendship with Leonard Woolf.

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"the drop fell"—Time-space Compression in *The Waves*

Technological innovation in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries transformed popular conceptions of space and time. Radio technology allowed information to be propagated instantaneously. Trains, planes, and personal motor-cars made it possible to traverse great distances many times more quickly than in the past. According to Leena Kore Schröder, Virginia and Leonard Woolf were quick to embrace the technologies that became available during their lifetimes, buying three cars between 1927 and 1933 (133), and taking "an annual motoring holiday, roughly alternating between Britain and the Continent" (137). They were also aware of the cultural significance of the technological revolution the West was experiencing. Indeed, Virginia writes in her diary, "we opened one little window when we bought the gramophone... now another opens with the motor" (qtd. in Schröder 132). Leonard is more dramatic, declaring in his autobiography, *Downhill All the Way*, "nothing ever changed so profoundly my material existence, the mechanism and range of my every-day life, as the possession of a motor-car" (qtd. in Schröder 133).

In *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey argues that these new modes of travel and communication, made marketable in the early twentieth century, produced an era of "time-space compression." Technology permitting high-speed travel had the effect of "annihilat[ing] space through time" (Harvey 205), whence the practice of measuring distance in temporal rather than spatial units (e.g., "Vancouver is five hours distant by plane"). The ability to communicate instantaneously caused time-horizons for decision-making to shrink drastically. Distant spaces became effectively adjacent, intervals between cause and effect

contracted; more could be accomplished, for better or for worse, in an hour or in a day, than ever before. The result was a highly accelerated pace of life that, according to Harvey, inspired and informed the work of contemporary artists, whose task it was to represent the high-tech, high-speed environment in which they found themselves. Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) is no exception. In *The Waves*, the mainly continuous literary time-spaces characteristic of more conventional novels are dissolved into atoms. The new time-space that emerges does not form a continuum, but rather a myriad of discrete microstates—disconnected moments in disconnected spaces. Its atoms, however, contain condensed within them large expanses of space and time. This article will show that *The Waves* can therefore be read as a representation of time-space compression.

Let us begin by introducing a certain conceptual tool for analyzing depictions of space and time in literature, which will help elucidate the above claims: Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "chronotope." Thus far, I have tacitly assumed the interconnectedness of novelistic space and time—that neither can be properly characterized without recourse to the other. It was Bakhtin, however, who, in "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," first expressed this view:

We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.[...] In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.¹ (84, emphasis in original.)

Characterizing the chronotope(s) of a work, then, means outlining the way(s) in which space and time function within it, considered both separately and together. Bakhtin insists that this is the best way to trace the generic evolution of the novel, because every genre exercises its own distinctive spatiotemporal logic. His most famous chronotopic analysis, for instance, is of the Greek romance "novel," whose chronotope he dubs "an alien world in adventure-time."² Though Bakhtin's interests lie in the study of genres, the chronotope concept can be applied across a wide range of literary scales, from individual works, to individual passages, and, still smaller, even to the spatial and temporal relations between individual words and phrases (Ladin, 215). Here, however, we will avoid the extremes of generic and micro-linguistic analysis, restricting our attention instead to the "local chronotopes" (216) of certain passages, and the way they come together to form the larger, let us say "primary," chronotope of *The Waves*.

I have claimed that this primary chronotope is atomized. What I want to suggest by this is not merely that it is composed of many nested local chronotopes (which, arguably, is true of every novel), or that each of its fragments occupies a small textual space. Indeed, there is another concept I wish to capture with the image of atoms, one which distinguishes the chronotope of *The Waves* from others, and which Woolf herself uses in "Modern Fiction" when she compares impressions upon

¹ Though Bakhtin was a contemporary of Woolf, writing this passage sometime in the years 1937-38, it is important to note that because his work was only translated into English in the 1970s, Woolf is unlikely to have read it. This does not, of course, detract from the value of the chronotope concept in criticism of Woolf's work.

² Bakhtin describes adventure-time as an extra-temporal "hiatus" (89) between two directly adjacent moments in regular (biographical) time (e.g., the meeting of the lovers, and their consequent marriage), during which characters and their relationships remain absolutely unchanged. Once the adventure ends, everything goes back to normal; it is as if nothing had happened. The spatial component of this chronotope is abstract, related to the temporal only mechanically: it must be large and alien; there must be obstacles; distance and proximity must govern events; etc.

the mind to “an incessant shower of innumerable atoms”: that is, that atoms form a “disconnected and incoherent” pattern (*Common Reader*, 85). The myriad time-spaces of *The Waves* are not, as in more traditional novels, connected continuously; rather, they form a *discontinuous* whole of (often wildly) disjointed chronotopic fragments.

To make this distinction clear, let us consider the following passage from the opening of *The Voyage Out* (1915), which exemplifies the spatiotemporal continuity characteristic of what I am calling the “conventional”³ novel:

One afternoon in the beginning of October when the traffic was becoming brisk a tall man strode along the edge of the pavement with a lady on his arm. [...] After watching the traffic on the embankment for a minute or two with a stoical gaze she twitched her husband's sleeve, and they crossed between the swift discharge of motor cars. When they were safe on the further side, she gently withdrew her arm from his[.] (3)

The abundance of concrete spatiotemporal indicators in this passage creates a smooth narrative flow from event to event: it was *one afternoon in the beginning of October* that there was a man and a lady walking *along the edge of the pavement*; it was *after* watching traffic *for a minute or two* that they *crossed* the street; and it was *when* they reached *the further side* that they separated. Walking along and crossing the street over the course of a few minutes is depicted here as a continuous process in a continuous space. Zooming out to the novel's larger plot scales, we can identify three chronotopic categories, which are also connected continuously: London, before the departure; the steamer, during the trip; and the South American vacation destination. The chronotope of the boat joins the launching and landing points of the voyage smoothly, in space and in time, again by means of concrete spatial and temporal markers. The sudden trembling of the dinner table, followed by Ridley's remark, “We're off” (11), signals the boat's departure. Then, “uncomfortable as the night [...] may have been,” we are told that by morning, “the voyage had begun” (20). Finally, the narrator marks the end of the journey with the words “on and on [the boat] went, by day and by night, following her path, until one morning broke and showed the land” (94). The time-spaces of this narrative thus form an absolute, stable, continuous whole. This is an example of a chronotope that is structurally coherent and therefore *not* atomized; it has many pieces, but they are smoothly connected.

This cannot be said of time and space in *The Waves*, however. Consider, for instance, the following passage from the novel's first paragraph-length soliloquy:

“Now they have all gone,” said Louis. “I am alone. They have gone into the house for breakfast, and I am left standing by the wall among the flowers. It is very early, before lessons. Flower after flower is specked on the depths of green. The petals are harlequins. Stalks rise from the black hollows beneath. The flowers swim like fish made of light upon the dark, green waters. I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre. All tremors shake me, and the weight of the earth is pressed to my ribs. Up here my eyes are green leaves, unseeing. I am a boy in grey flannels with a belt fastened by a brass snake up here. Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans. I hear tramplings, tremblings, stirrings round me.” (6)

I want to suggest that the chronotope of this extract is disjointed. To see how this is true, let us begin by tracing its spatial progression. We begin

³ To be clear, I am referring to that class of novels one might describe as normative. The normative novel, naturally, does not seriously engage in formal experimentation.

with Louis standing alone *by the wall among the flowers*, observing their petals and stalks. Suddenly we receive an image of fish “upon the dark, green waters,” without any specification as to which waters these are. Of course, they are figurative waters, standing in for those “depths of green” Louis is studying—but by eschewing the syntax of a direct comparison between greenery and waters, Woolf has skipped a key step in composing this metaphor. The result is that a new space is flashed over the initial scene for an instant; the verdure beneath the flowers is referred to implicitly as “*the* dark, green waters,” as though they are waters we have seen before. The initial space is then restored, with the addition that Louis is now holding a stalk. Straightaway, however, space is ruptured again, though more drastically this time, and in a different way: “I am the stalk,” Louis declares, and we are dragged without warning *down* from the earth's green surface, *through* soils dry and damp, to the depths of the world, where tremors shake and veins of precious minerals stretch threadlike through solid rock. Now we are torn from the center of the earth back to its surface—*up here*—where Louis seems to live simultaneously in plant- and boy-form. Finally, in what constitutes this passage's most jarring spatial disjunction, we are returned to the depths—*down there*—where the dense rocky world Louis probed with his roots just three sentences prior has been erased, replaced with a strange desert scene of women carrying red pitchers to the Nile. The spatial markers “up here” and “down there” are not like the concrete markers we saw in *The Voyage Out*, because the spatial relations they indicate do not coherently connect their associated spaces. Thus, despite the presence of these markers, the spaces in this passage do not form a continuous whole, but rather a sort of disjointed phantasmagoria.⁴

Time here is also discontinuous, but in a different way than space is. The very first word of the excerpt indicates that whatever is to follow occurs *now*, in some present moment; and *now*, we soon discover, is *very early*, during *breakfast* and *before* class. But for the remainder of the passage, time appears to stop; there are no further temporal markers, despite the mutating spatial setting. Yet, a glance down the page to the first line of the soliloquy's next paragraph tells us that something has changed since the initial *now*: “Bernard, Neville, Jinny and Susan (but not Rhoda) skim the flower-beds with their nets” (6). They were inside a moment ago; suddenly, though, “they brush the surface of the world” (6). Furthermore, Louis is no longer “standing by the wall among the flowers;” he has spontaneously appeared “on the other side of the hedge,” where he peeks through the leaves. We must wonder, then, where in the text, if at all, time is passing.

I would suggest, in agreement with Ann Banfield's reading of Woolf's philosophy of time, *The Phantom Table*, that time is in fact not passing at all here, in the continuous sense, but rather jumping discontinuously in discrete steps, along a sequence of moments—from *now* to *now*, so to speak. Indeed, consider the next temporal indicators in Louis's soliloquy, which appear later in its second paragraph: “*Now* something pink passes the eyehole. *Now* an eyebeam is slid through the chink” (7; my emphasis). A separate moment is indicated for each of these events. Hence, Woolf represents the passage of time as a series of discontinuities by suppressing temporal indicators alien to the progressive present tense. To be sure, there are many less time markers in *The Waves* than in *The Voyage Out*. A simple word-search reveals that the words “minute” (in its temporal sense) and “hour,” for example, appear six times and twice as often, respectively, in the latter novel than in the former.⁵ Furthermore, of the temporal markers that do appear in *The Waves*, the most frequent

⁴ “Phantasmagoria” is in fact just the right word to use here, because it refers to images both real and imaginary. Similarly, the spaces explored in this passage are not all “made of the same stuff,” so to speak, since some are literal, while others are figurative. This contributes to the difficulty of linking diverse spaces continuously, and therefore to the atomization of the chronotope in *The Waves*.

⁵ *The Waves*: ~77,500 words; seven occurrences of “minute”; twenty-nine occurrences of “hour.”

The Voyage Out: ~136,800 words; seventy occurrences of “minute”; ninety-seven occurrences of “hour.”

is “now.” Soliloquy after soliloquy begins with that word: in fact, there are twenty-two such examples in the first thirty pages of the novel.⁶ Finally, the discontinuous jumps in time precipitated by each such indicator often result in discontinuous jumps through space as well. This may be because we have entered the mind of a new character occupying a new space, or simply, as the above example of Louis standing in the flowerbed one moment, behind the hedge the next, illustrates, because some motion has occurred invisibly.

All this lends credence to Banfield’s central argument, which is that “contrary to a popular assumption” (“Time Passes” 471), Woolf’s novelistic time is not Bergsonian time, experienced as *duration*, but rather “Cambridge time,” which is composed of discrete units. The bulk of Banfield’s analysis is devoted to *To the Lighthouse*, the structure of which—“two blocks joined by a corridor” (*Holograph*, qtd. in “Time Passes” 500)—she argues, reveals that for Woolf, “within the moment, all is still, suspended. Change and motion lie between the unchanging moments, invisible, imperceptible; between them, time passes” (496-7). This conception of time is even more evident in *The Waves*, however, not only because of the recurring *now* indicator, but also, on the scale of whole sections of the novel, because the “corridors” between units of text have disappeared all together. Indeed, from the end of one set of soliloquies to the beginning of another, we do not see the characters age, or their worlds evolve; we see, in an interlude, the sun at some position on the sky, telling us roughly how old the characters will be in the next block of soliloquies. Similarly, during the interludes, we do not see the sun trace out a continuous path across the sky; we see it at discrete steps along that path. Though there is motion and change in the interludes—waves crashing on the shore, birds flying about, shadows moving around a room, etc.⁷—and though events, like dinners, dances, and adventures to Elvedon, occur in the soliloquies, we experience these dynamic happenings only for very short times—a few minutes, or hours, say—separated by the vast gulfs of time that stretch the novel’s “timeline”⁸ to the length of a lifetime. Reading *The Waves*, one therefore has the impression that time does not pass within the text, but rather invisibly, between its units.

Now, to close this demonstration of how the chronotope of *The Waves* is atomized, let us consider the specific spatial and metaphorical form given to time in the novel; namely, that of drops falling:

“And time,” said Bernard, “lets fall its drop. The drop that has formed on the roof of the soul falls. On the roof of my mind time, forming, lets fall its drop. Last week, as I stood shaving, the drop fell. I, standing with my razor in my hand, became suddenly aware of the merely habitual nature of my action (this is the drop forming) and congratulated my hands, ironically, for keeping at it. Shave, shave, shave, I said. Go on shaving. The drop fell.” (W 134)

Spatialized in the closed geometry of a sphere, time is quantized, atomized, fractured irreparably into discrete units. We can therefore characterize the chronotope of *The Waves*, with its disjointed spaces in discontinuous time, metaphorically, as a string of beads—a series of discrete temporal states, spread erratically along a line—and within each bead, diverse spaces, pieced together like the many scales of a varicolored mosaic.

We are now in a position to explore the ways in which time and space are compressed within the disconnected units of the chronotope of *The Waves*. Having established the existence of these chronotopic atoms, let us consider some (of many) examples that illustrate time-space

compression.⁹ Most obviously, by simply mapping birth onto the sunrise and death onto the sunset, we can read the interludes as compressing a lifetime into a day. A smaller-scale example, though, which illustrates both the non-passing of time as well as its compression by fast-paced living, is the soliloquy, given by Louis, that opens with “I have signed my name” (121). Here, Louis sits at his desk at noon, when “Miss Johnson brings [him his] letters in a wire tray” (121); these he must sign. We follow him, it seems, to certain times throughout his day: “Mr. Prentice at four; Mr. Eyres at four-thirty” (122); and “when six o’clock comes and [he touches his] hat to the commissioner” (123), he goes out to eat. Yet, as we discover moments later, nothing narrated has actually occurred; Louis remains seated at his desk, at noon, signing letters: “Here is the pen and the paper; on the letters in the wire basket I sign my name, I, I, and again I” (124). He therefore seems to experience six hours time in the space of a moment. This is not only suggestive of a daily schedule so replete there is “not a moment to spare” (122), but also provides an explanation for his musing, “a vast inheritance of experience is packed in me. I have lived thousands of years” (121).

The metaphor of the drops too is suggestive of time-space compression. Indeed, drops of time seem to come in different “sizes,” so to speak. The drop that Bernard notices forming while he shaves, for instance, seems to him to contain within it his whole youth, which he feels is lost as the drop falls (134). Later, he associates the falling of this same drop with his passage into a new stage of life (“stage upon stage” [136]). Furthermore, droplets of time, we are told, are not only formed on the small and large time-scales of habit and whole life-stages, but also in the evenings of every day: “The drop that forms on the roof of the soul in the evening is round, many-coloured” (57). Periods of varying duration—a moment, while shaving; a stage in one’s life; a single day—and not just fleeting moments are therefore condensed into beads of time-water. In addition, as a spatialization of time, the metaphor of the drops suggests also some compression of space. This is evident when Bernard reflects, “This drop falling is time tapering to a point. Time, which is a sunny pasture covered with a dancing light, time, which is widespread as a field at midday, becomes pendant. Time tapers to a point” (134). There are two images of compression present in this passage: an expanse of time shrinking to a point, and an expanse of space shrinking to a point.

We can also identify numerous chronotopic atoms in which space is compressed independently of time. Returning, for instance, to Louis’s first paragraph-length soliloquy, quoted at length above, we see that geographically distant locations—the English schoolhouse and the desert by the Nile—have been brought into such close cognitive proximity that Louis can observe them both, even occupy them both, simultaneously. Rhoda’s ability to see “marble columns and pools on the other side of the world where the swallow dips her wings” (76) constitutes another example of distant spaces being made effectively adjacent in the smallest chronotopic units of *The Waves*. Finally, Bernard collapses large geographical expanses down to the human scale when he compares London to a “ponderous, maternal, majestic animal,” the train he rides toward it to a shell “about to explode in [its] flanks” (80).

The discontinuous fragments of the chronotope of *The Waves* can therefore be said to carry out time-space compression. These fragments can be described as atoms because of their numbers, textual sizes, and incoherency. What remains to be determined, however, is how chronotopic atomization figures in other modernist novels—whether it occurs frequently or infrequently, or in other shapes and permutations, in works from the same period. Atomization of time and space, and the images of time-space compression produced by it, may in fact proceed naturally from the “stream of consciousness” narrative mode, especially

⁶ See pp. 5*, 6, 8, 9, 10*, 11, 13, 16, 20, 23, 24, 25*, 26, 27, 29* (*multiple occurrences on same page).

⁷ This dynamism is possible thanks to the past tense and verbs describing complex motion in the interludes.

⁸ The term “timeline” assumes a continuous flow of time. What we have here, though, are select points, or at least very small intervals, along the line.

⁹ Of course, given their number, neither can we consider all the morsels of time-space in *The Waves*, nor should we imagine that every single one demonstrates time-space compression. Indeed, the novel is so “saturated” (*Diary* 139) with images, times, and spaces, it is impossible for everything in it to reflect a single theme.

in texts with multiple characters occupying different spaces at discrete times. These concepts may also be present in impressionist visual art from the modernist period; atomization, at least, is characteristic of impressionist spatial form. Indeed, if Banfield is right in declaring that in Woolf's oeuvre, "the present moment is conceived as an Impressionist canvas which close inspection reveals as atomized" ("Time Passes" 486), then we must ask whether time-space compression is discernible, in some form or another, in impressionist artworks as well.

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Bloodless Birth: Reproduction and the Masculine Mind in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*

The early twentieth century witnessed an overt cultural shift linked to the control of the reproductive body. The pregnant form, a site already laden with disparate cultural and socio-economic narratives, began to carry with it the hopes of an entire nation as Britain urged its women to birth more babies for the bolstering of the empire. Reproduction and the spectre of the gestating female consequently became charged with increased meaning for many modernist writers. Virginia Woolf penned her classic *A Room of One's Own* during this auspicious time period when the battle over the woman's body—its freedoms, control, and definitions—was at its peak. As Susan Squier relates, the 1920s was an era "obsessed with reproductive control and power" (92). One avenue of control was through birth control which, after the 1920s, Britain finally possessed the proper technology to introduce on a large scale (92), increasing the eugenic furor over who was breeding, and whether proper or improper bodies were being produced.

Room is many things, but it is also Woolf's way of interrogating the uncontrollable reproductive female condition. This article explores how Woolf, in an effort to distance herself from the threat of reproduction symbolized by the female corporeal, turned to masculine rhetoric at crucial moments when considering the female body—for as Rita Felski points out, many women "could enter modernity only by taking on the attributes traditionally classified as masculine" (18-19). And, because a female body in patriarchal culture signifies nothing so much as the potential for reproduction, Woolf employed masculine rhetoric never so much as when contemplating instances of reproduction.

Many critics have detailed how Woolf critiques contemporary rhetoric limiting the woman to her body and to her reproductive capacity. Renée Dickinson argues that Woolf's characters try to show themselves as "more than body" as they struggle with representing "the corporeal manifestation of patriarchal ideas of femininity, specifically those of marriage and maternity" (18, 27). Shirley Panken claims Woolf's "indeterminacy regarding her self-concept and her vacillation concerning sexual and personal identification" stems from "her sense of inadequacy and deviance concerning body-image and sexual identity" (15). While such bodily ambivalence is often included in Woolf scholarship, what is consistently overlooked is how this ambivalence coupled with her use of masculine (disembodied) births in her texts combines to create a birth paradigm founded on the masculine and the mind, eschewing the bodily feminine and thereby removing critical avenues of power from the woman.

I argue that Woolf's texts, especially *A Room of One's Own* (1929), correspond to the "birth from above" model—birth that is figurative, controlled, and clean, not literal, bodily, or messy.¹ Rather than illustrate the myriad biological processes of a female reproductive life—menstruation, childbirth, breastfeeding—Woolf injects the feminine body



¹Throughout, I am indebted to Robbie Pfeuffer Kahn for elucidating the difference between "birth from above" versus "birth from below" (a biological rendering of female birthing) in theoretical and literary texts (147). The first instance of the notion of "birth from above" in writing comes from Charles Lee Follen's theological text *The Birth From Above* (1889), in which he argues "a man must be 'born from above,' if he would 'see,' or 'enter into,' the Kingdom of God" (6). For more on bloodless birthing metaphors, see Susan Stanford Friedman.

with a healthy dose of masculinity, often wresting these processes out of the grasp of the physical altogether and relocating them in the realm of the mental, of the bloodless. It is significant that Woolf chiefly employs bloodless models of birth from above, for in her aim to achieve a clean reproduction of the mind, she inevitably aligns herself with the sphere of masculinity and of empire—a sphere which she is blatantly critical of, to be sure, but a sphere which her bloodless texts, doing their own work, nevertheless bolster. Birth in Woolf is patriarchal and disembodied, often has masculine connotations, and seeks to bolster the empire and Englishness (by supplying proper British citizens), to map the mind of the writer, or to explore psychological, ideological, and political systems. Physical birth, when it happens, appears in the margins (literally between the acts) or is artificially truncated (as in *Orlando*) in a rhetorical technique Rebecca Walkowitz terms Woolf's "evasion."

I maintain that the reader should approach Woolf's deployment of "birth from above" with caution, understanding that to remove birth from the female realm, to disembody it and "masculinize" it as a birth of the mind, is to remove an inherent source of power and purpose from her female characters. In other words, if one employs the traditional Western philosophical gendered binary divisions of masculinity versus femininity, rhetorical and "masculine" births in Woolf (bloodless births of roads, births of empires, births of ideas) means that such birth is fundamentally a marker of masculine power, a tool of his state, a project of his empire. Further, the truncated or absent births in Woolf's texts shift the emphasis and importance from *women's* work to *men's* work. Woolf was aware who held the power in her patriarchal world, and while her texts appear to push back against this status quo, in the end they merely bolster it. While Woolf is highly critical of empire in all its manifestations, she nevertheless (and perhaps unknowingly) supports it with her use of reproductive metaphors. The horror of the reproducing female body in Woolf's oeuvre leads Woolf to a disembodied model of reproduction—masculine minds over female bodies—that ultimately falls within the patriarchal service of empire.

Woolf's use of the birthing trope is notable for the way it marries a (female) body process with a (masculine) mental one. Perhaps the most famous and critiqued instance of this birthing trope occurring in Woolf's oeuvre appears in *Room*, in which Woolf famously describes the writer's ideal mind as having both male and female parts, existing in pure androgyny. This mind begets a novel as it "celebrate[s] its nuptials in darkness" (104); "[p]oetry ought to have a mother as well as a father," the narrator argues, as if the poem itself is offspring of a mental union (103). Further, while Woolf claims "[t]he book has somehow to be adapted to the body" (78), she also argues it is "fatal" to write as either a man or a woman, but instead, to write in the "perfect fullness" of the consummation of this "marriage of opposites" (104).²

Such rhetorical births in *Room* subscribe to ancient masculine rhetoric which transmutes them into mental acts men can perform as well—indeed, men often perform better than women, beating them at their own game. There is tremendous anxiety over female birth and female authorship in *Room* and a fundamental belief one cannot be fully woman and fully author.³ As Elizabeth Abel states, "Biological motherhood in

Room disqualifies literary maternity" (88).⁴ To birth a text in Woolf's model is to need *both* biological systems, the enfolding womb *and* the impregnating phallus, and the parts the writer lacks, he or she is supposed to conjure irregardless of physical bodily status. Masculinity and femininity may be equal, then (as both are needed to reproduce), but throughout *Room*, it is masculinity shown to be the controlling, powerful side. This control is laughed at—Woolf's wondering if Sir Archibald Bodkin is lurking in the linen cupboard is one example—but it exists nonetheless. Woolf is very much aware of who holds the reins of society (there's that Beadle chasing her narrator off the grass again). Women, she argues, instead of holding their own with the womanly sentence, need to meet men in the middle and write a little more like them to be successful.

Woolf shrewdly surmises and advises her readers in *Room* that to be more effective in an institutionalized, patriarchal world, women need to turn from the slavery of bodily births to the birth of the mind. Putting aside the female body and focusing on the mind in a time when woman was solely relegated to the realm of the body is certainly an admirable and worthy goal, it is true. Christine Froula claims that Woolf's technique of writing beyond sex, as neither a male nor a female body, is Woolf's way of claiming "freedom of mind on her own behalf no less than her audience's" and is therefore a crucial step towards achieving the freedom of the writer apart from the body that Woolf produces in *The Waves* (197). It is also crucial to recall that Woolf was importantly distancing herself from the body when ruling systems such as fascism sought to confine women to their physical bodies, especially where birth was concerned. In this light, Woolf's revision of a "bloodless" birth can be read as an attempt to free women from the prison of being cast as only "walking wombs" (Bland 91). Yet I am also interested in how, throughout Woolf's writing, she turns away from specifically female embodiment and thus a celebration of power through femininity. Consistently downplaying the physical in light of the mental results in a problematic and recurrent theme of female disembodiment. Her continual use of birth as a metaphor or purely rhetorical conceit similarly rips birth from its embodied, feminine form and places it in the masculine realm once again. This action is partly empowering: because women were often culturally aligned with their reproductive, empire-making, kinship-producing abilities, Woolf was reminding her reader of alternate roles for women. Because Woolf was skeptical of the role of childbirth in dominant ideologies, then, she necessarily criticized its cultural construction in her rhetorical exercises. But to consign birth to the mental realm only, as I argue Woolf does, removes power from the specifically female body and paradoxically places it back in the realm of the masculine and of the empire. It is as if the move that Woolf tries to take (freeing the woman from the physical confines of her traditional reproductive role) backfires.

Modernist women writers, in tandem with the Women's Movement, were struggling to re-write birth-giving as not only the birth of another human being, but a powerful and transformative moment in a woman's life, a choice that she was making now that she had the power to choose when and if to give birth due to birth control. Births in Woolf never reach this transcendent, powerful plane; indeed, most women in Woolf's texts are denied birth-giving altogether—either they don't reproduce or the birth happens behind the scenes, an unimportant aspect of a larger story. Throughout her oeuvre, women remain rooted either in the domestic, featuring mindless body work, or in the space of ideas—similarly founded upon a rift between mind and body. Ripped from their embodied lives, speaking only "silence about physical experience" (Moran 67), they lack the power of redefinition, the control over their corporeal condition. As female thinkers, they do not effect change, and

² See also Woolf's claim occurring immediately before this quoted passage that without a mother and a father, a text will end up just a "horrid little abortion," like "the Fascist poem" (103). Woolf's use of the concept of abortion is intimately linked to her use of birth control. For more on these two concepts, see Christina Hauck.

³ The clear example of this concept in *Room* appears in Shakespeare's sister, Judith, who is unable to achieve the artistic brilliance of her brother simply due to the baggage of her female body and its penchant for reproduction. As Elizabeth Abel claims, Judith's weakness specifically lies in her body (101). For more on Judith Shakespeare, see Christine Froula who argues, in part, that the society in *Room* "makes children the price of genius in a woman's body" (193).

⁴ This reading of maternity and creativity existing at odds in Woolf is quite common, reoccurring in critiques by Ellen Rosenman, Suzanne Raitt, Christine Froula, and Patricia Waugh. Jane Maree Maher reverses this common reading in her article on the book and movie versions of *Orlando*, stating the novel offers space, rooted in pregnancy, for "new forms of material productivity and engagement" (21).

the physical births they perform are clearly at the service of the empire. The empire in Woolf is comprised of words, thoughts, and ideas; each individual takes part, and pregnant female embodiment is the casualty. The best birth, indeed, was a bloodless birth.

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REVIEW:

ON BEING ILL:

WITH NOTES FROM SICK ROOMS BY JULIA STEPHEN

by Virginia Woolf. Introductions by Hermione Lee and Mark Hussey. Afterword by Rita Charon. Rpt. Ashfield, Massachusetts: Paris Press, 2012. 160 pages. \$16 paper.

Why a new edition of Woolf's essay "On Being Ill," one might reasonably ask? "On Being Ill" (OBI), written in 1926 for T. S. Eliot's *The New Criterion* magazine and edited before publication in 1930 as a Hogarth Press Pamphlet, developed out of Woolf's lifelong and varied experiences of disability. The comprehensive volume under review here unites Woolf's essay with *Notes from Sick Room* (NFSR), with the lesser-known book of her mother, Julia Stephen. (Please note, however, as you begin reading, the pagination is continuous for both Woolf's essay and Stephen's work, which may seem confusing when composing parenthetical citations, but which does lend a sense of continuity to the volume as a whole.)

The volume includes Introductions by respected critics Hermione Lee and Mark Hussey and an Afterword by Rita Charon, Director of the Narrative Medicine Program at Columbia University, the latter in particular underscoring how these works anticipate and parallel the contemporary field of medical humanities in foundational ways. According to Charon, from a doctor's perspective, the mother-daughter collaboration has a unique value: "[T]ogether, these Stephen women wrote me into a shocking recognition of *exactly* what it feels like to be in the presence of a sick person in my care" (NFSR 109), this fifty years before Susan Sontag's extended essay *Illness as Metaphor* (1978). In fact, Sontag's linkage between illness and metaphor has been critically superseded by the many merits of narratives in representing illness. Narrating illness can have especially strong therapeutic value as Arthur

Frank, Rita Charon, and Ann Jurecic (among others) persuasively argue. In “On Being Ill,” Woolf not only anticipates contemporary use of the essay form as an appropriate genre in which to write about illness, she also anticipates using narrative as both a therapeutic and philosophic medium for exploring the potential value of illness to human beings.

While doctors as protagonists are commonplace, before Woolf’s essay few writers had chosen to focus on implications of the unpleasant and dehumanizing activity of illness itself. As Hermione Lee observes in her admirable Introduction, it is truly one of Woolf’s “most daring, strange, and original essays,” its style inspired by the Romantic essayists Thomas De Quincey and Charles Lamb but still modern in its impersonal tone and viewpoint (OBI xiii, xxvii). Its organization seems impressionistic and its allusions are far ranging—Milton’s *Comus*, *Hamlet*, *Prometheus Unbound*, Rimbaud—ending with a jumbled biography of “two unknown aristocratic ladies” (OBI xxxiii). Yet its final image of the mid-Victorian curtains crushed from Lady Waterford’s “agony” as she watched her husband’s coffin loaded into the hearse brings the essay back to its essential subject of unspoken pain. How to objectively and creatively experience and represent pain is truly a modernist topic. The insight inherent in the essay’s last lines reminds us that “On Being Ill” is also an important intertext for Woolf’s writing of *Mrs. Dalloway* and her complex friendship with T. S. Eliot.

“On Being Ill” takes the reader to a sick room where the patient is often curiously empowered and uninhibited, becoming sometimes an explorer, a soldier, an outlaw, a lover, and even an artist endowed with liberating powers of perception: “We [the ill] float with the sticks on the stream...irresponsible and disinterested and able...to look round, to look up—to look, for example, at the sky” where shifting clouds form complex patterns (OBI 12-13). The patient finds even stubborn language malleable, “taking his pain in one hand, and a lump of pure sound in the other” (OBI 7), producing a brand new word that may adequately describe his suffering. Woolf echoes this positive framing of illness as aesthetically-productive in her diaries and letters, and an increasing number of contemporary writers have also gravitated to this counter-intuitive position, most prominent among them Anatole Broyard in “Intoxicated by My Illness” (1-9).¹ Still, dark hints of illness’s destructive powers inevitably creep into Woolf’s essay, particularly in reference to the afterlife and *Hamlet*.

Woolf alludes to the “daily drama of the body” (OBI 7) in “On Being Ill” but largely directs her focus on the ways patients escape from or endeavor to tolerate these dramas: “[T]here is always some little distraction” (OBI 9). Julia Stephen, conversely, marks the impact of every bath, drop of vinegar, annoying crumb, and crease in the sheets in *Notes from Sick Rooms*. In his carefully contextual Introduction to her work, Mark Hussey argues how Julia Stephen’s ethos of care was especially valuable to her as a Victorian woman because it supplied her with a secular substitute for religion and gave her a sense of power outside the domestic sphere (NFSR 41, 46). From the brittle bones of cancer patients to how to prepare a body *post mortem*, Julia Stephen’s attention to detail and range of knowledge is impressive, the section entitled “Nerves,” for example, seeming to be particularly applicable to the often irritable Stephen clan itself, especially the thin-skinned Leslie and the restless young Virginia. When Stephen speaks of the necessity of fresh milk (NFSR 91), it is impossible not to hear Mrs. Ramsay’s voice from *To the Lighthouse*.

While Rita Charon emphasizes the differences between Woolf and Stephen’s writing on illness (NFSR 113), Hussey quotes Woolf’s first biographer, Winifred Holtby, who noted “clear proof that Virginia inherited the instinct to write from her mother as well as from her father” (NFSR 44). In Julia Stephen’s witty extended diatribe on crumbs in

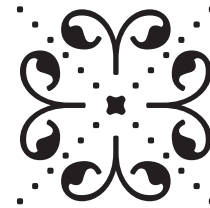
sick beds, whose origin “has never excited sufficient attention among the scientific world, though it is a problem which has tormented many a weary sufferer” (NFSR 57), the reader may hear the makings of Woolf’s later feminist comedy: “Mrs. Stephen,” like her daughter, “must have had ample opportunity of listening to philosophers determining the origin of most things, yet ignoring completely the possible explanation of crumbs,” Holtby observes. (qtd. in NFSR 44)

While they approached illness in different time periods and from opposing epistemological positions, both Virginia Woolf and Julia Stephen found the experience of illness transformative and shared the courage necessary to face it, even if “[t]o look these things squarely in the face would need the courage of a lion tamer” (OBI 5). Having “On Being Ill” and *Notes from Sick Rooms* together in one volume allows readers to easily compare, contrast, or (as Charon suggests) combine their two complementary voices. I would recommend this thoughtfully-edited volume for all college- and university-level collections as well as all medical school libraries, anywhere, in fact, readers have the fearlessness necessary to confront illness and see what it could mean.

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¹ See also Coates’s reading of Woolf and illness (249-52) and Cavel’s work on illness and happiness.



REVIEW:

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP MEMOIR CLUB

by S. P. Rosenbaum. Edited with an Introduction and Afterword by James M. Haule. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. ix, 203 pages. \$32 cloth.

I do not think this unfinished work is intended to be read as if it were the “Kubla Khan” of Bloomsbury’s great literary historian, S. P. “Pat” Rosenbaum, as if it were an inestimably valuable relic that, “surviving recollections,” as Coleridge said, “the author...frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him,” to sing a sweeter song at a later time (Coleridge 248). Certainly, Pat Rosenbaum gave the critical equivalent of *honeydew* in three magnificent volumes of history: *Victorian Bloomsbury* (1987), *Edwardian Bloomsbury* (1994), and *Georgian Bloomsbury* (2003), as well as that esteemed work of documentary editing, *Virginia Woolf’s Women & Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One’s Own* (1992). His last published monograph before now, *Virginia Woolf, The Platform of Time: Memoirs of Family and Friends* (2008), makes literary capital from the most famous member of the clandestine, largely secret Memoir Club founded by Molly MacCarthy in 1920. *The Bloomsbury Group Memoir Club* might have, in a sense, completed work begun in two important anthologies—*The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary and Criticism* (1975) and *A Bloomsbury Group Reader* (1993), with various essays in *Aspects of Bloomsbury* (1998) added for good measure—if Rosenbaum, who said he “had a book to finish” (10), had left the hospital alive in May 2012. As editor James Haule suggests, the “task now falls to us” to “complete the story” (11), Coleridge’s “tomorrow...yet to come” (Coleridge 248). By analogy, this book breaks off in 1928, barely two pages into chapter 6, “Old Bloomsbury,” with so much of the original design unwritten.

From death to publication in less than two years, an uncharacteristically swift pace for Palgrave Macmillan, the book shows signs of haste unfortunate for a tribute, including an irritating number of typographical flubs and mechanical errors left to stand in Rosenbaum’s work in progress and in the appended paper, “Virginia Woolf among the Apostles,” delivered in Paris weeks before he died. Besides proofreading, the rushed editor may be faulted for quoting too generously in his Introduction much that Rosenbaum says better in his own space, as if paraphrasing were impossible and echoing preferable under the circumstances. I believe there must be some reason for these lapses although it is hard to guess what they might have been.

Choosing not to dwell on defects, nevertheless, the reviewer also declines an implicit invitation to write elegiacally, acknowledging at once

the challenge and difficulty any fragment poses to one who reviews, writes, and publishes books (see Amber K. Regis, “Life-writing”). Because much of *The Bloomsbury Group Memoir Club* is anticipated by Rosenbaum’s anthologies and histories of earlier date, among the most valuable contributions this book makes is its census of papers presented to the club by original members (Clive Bell, Vanessa Bell, E. M. Forster, Roger Fry, David Garnett, Duncan Grant, J. M. Keynes, Desmond MacCarthy, Molly MacCarthy, Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, and Virginia Woolf) and then by later members (Olivier Bell, Quentin Bell, Jane Bussy, Angelica Garnett, Dermot MacCarthy, Frances Partridge, Dennis Proctor, W. J. H. Sprott, Julia Strachey, Oliver Strachey, and Sydney Waterlow). When not lost, these papers are traced to collections (177-82) or, in many cases, to publications (175-77) that incorporated them in some way—the extreme example being Leonard Woolf, who embedded many of his into the several volumes of his autobiography (180). For some 60 meetings over a period of 45 years, club members read approximately 125 papers, from which only 80 memoirs have survived (8). Considering the confidential nature of the club and the fact that it kept no record of its meetings, it is a marvel that roughly 64% has been reconstructed. Much of that reconstruction is of course the product of years of prowling in archives and tracing references in the extant letters and diaries of the principals, not least of which were those of Virginia Woolf.

The five largely complete chapters are 1) “Outlines”; 2) “Ancestral Voices, Cambridge Conversations”; 3) “Beginnings”; 4) “Private and Public Affairs: 1921-1922”; and, 5) “Hiatus: 1922-1928.” The first of these serves as an overview on memoir-writing, Bloomsbury, and World War I. The second makes the most of origins, particularly for members of the Memoir Club who were also Cambridge Apostles. Those who were not Apostles, notably the Stephen sisters, owed much of their interest to memoirists such as Leslie Stephen and Anne Thackeray Ritchie. While attention is unsurprisingly given to Sir Leslie’s *Sketches from Cambridge by a Don* and *The Mausoleum Book*, excellent connections are also made with less well-known, mainly Victorian “voices” such as Mary MacCarthy’s “eccentric” mother, Blanche Ritchie Warre-Cornish, E. M. Forster’s great-aunt Marianne Thornton, various Quaker relatives of Roger Fry, Maynard Keynes’s mother and younger brother Geoffrey, the Strachey matriarch Lady Jane Maria Strachey, and later editions of Elizabeth Grant’s *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*. Summed-up nicely by Rosenbaum, these antecedents were tonally “[p]ious, agnostic, mournful, irreverent, reticent, uninhibited,” rendering “for the domestic family circle ...an autobiographical heritage, in which the voices of women are at least as memorable as those of men” (44).

Following the third chapter, on the difficulties of Molly MacCarthy’s starting and sustaining the Club “to get her wonderfully conversational, endlessly procrastinating husband to write his memoirs” (58) (the effort failed), highlights of the book’s longest chapter memorably reconstruct from manuscripts and letters the reception of Clive Bell’s tour de force on his affair with Mrs. Raven Hill and Keynes’s serious treatment of the Paris Treaty fiasco among members of the Club. Though tactless to some in the first instance, it was sexuality and political life that arrested Forster, seemed to have prevented him from resigning as he was on the verge of doing so periodically, and encouraged him to return to the Near East, where he completed his greatest work, *A Passage to India*, in 1923.

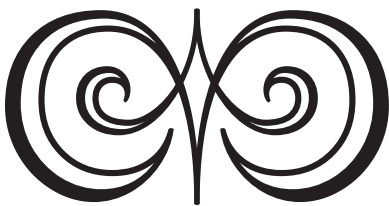
Oddly, Forster returned to England to find that, after at least a dozen meetings in three years to 1922, during which time perhaps “thirty to forty memoirs” were read, “of which some fifteen still exist in various published and unpublished forms,” the Memoir Club suddenly “stopped” (120). Then a hiatus of six years ensued, a period of important developments by Virginia Woolf in the art of the novel and a time in which her sister’s children edited *The Charleston*, a family newspaper later called the *New Bulletin*. Young Quentin Bell solicited humorous biographies and “legends” from Woolf, Fry, and other adults so that, in a sense, the Memoir Club was alive although dormant. In what

Molly MacCarthy supposed to be her last meeting because of incipient deafness, a meeting occurred on July 4, 1928, featuring Virginia Woolf's paper on "Old Bloomsbury." As a consequence, the Club became active again. But Rosenbaum's narrative breaks off there, leaving four chapters unwritten: "Beyond Bloomsbury," "The War," "Later Bloomsbury," and "Posthumous Bloomsbury." As outlined in James Haule's Afterword, the first and last of these would seem to be more than mere chapters for anyone but Rosenbaum himself. His publisher may plan to fill the void with someone else's *Bloomsbury Group Memoir Club, Part II (1928-1965)*. But who's to write it?

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REVIEW:

'T'D MAKE IT PENAL', THE RURAL PRESERVATION MOVEMENT IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S BETWEEN THE ACTS
by Mark Hussey. The Bloomsbury Heritage Series, Vol. 62. London: Cecil Woolf, 2011. 15 pages.

VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: TEXTS, CONTEXTS & WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

by Lolly Ockerstrom. The Bloomsbury Heritage Series, Vol. 66. London: Cecil Woolf, 2012. 35 pages.

These two relatively slim volumes showcase the diversity of titles in the Bloomsbury Heritage Series, which continues to provide a distinctive venue for Woolf-related scholarship. In *'T'd Make It Penal'*, the *Rural Preservation Movement in Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts*, Mark Hussey deftly links representations of local community and historical pageantry in *Between the Acts* to discussions of village life that were featured prominently in the English press during the novel's composition. By drawing our attention to some of the people, institutions, and publications that drove the rural preservation movement in England, Hussey is able to treat seriously, with moments of quiet humor, the investment of Woolf's final novel in seemingly parochial concerns such as whether the cinema should be open for business on Sundays. In contrast, Lolly Ockerstrom in *Virginia Woolf and the Spanish Civil War: Texts, Contexts & Women's Narratives* provides a wide-ranging survey of the lives, texts, and political fault lines that intersected during the Spanish Civil War. Her account of the territorial boundaries and gender restrictions that were crossed makes clear the extent to which "professions for women" (one of Woolf's working titles for *Three Guineas*) was one of the international causes being worked out on the front lines of this conflict. While the monographs move in opposite directions in terms of scale, they both contribute to our sense of the interlocking nationalism and cosmopolitanism in late modernism.

As opposed to commentators who see rural preservation as a largely reactionary agenda, nostalgically out of touch with urban life, Hussey focuses on aspects of the movement that were "forward-looking and modern, aiming at integration of the new, rather than preservation of a museum-like rural environment" (10). On one hand, the concern for preserving buildings, natural areas, and traditional ways of life did stem from a sense of the "continuity of national character embodied in rural landscape," a perception that Woolf sometimes shared with "man of the land" Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (8). This sense of continuity was essential to the movement's evocation of a fragile harmony threatened by litter, noise pollution, and encroaching suburbs. On the other hand, preservationists emphasized the constructed character of England's natural environments and proposed rural planning as a mechanism for tempering modernization at the national level. Thus, Patrick Abercrombie of The Council for the Rural Preservation of England consistently noted the link between town and country, rural planning and national development, and even recommended the Chinese philosophy of *feng shui* as a potential guide for harmonizing the two. In the 1920s, Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford used aerial archaeology to present a

defamiliarizing perspective on the English landscape's record of ancient civilizations and European wars, including the Napoleonic Wars' effects on domestic agriculture. Readers interested in how Miss La Trobe's play represents rural life and English history will find several points to consider in Hussey's study. But those who can't help but see the shadow of world war in *Between the Acts* will not be disappointed either, for by rereading rural preservation Hussey also highlights the wider significance of debates about town halls and community theater.

Because of its range, Ockerstrom's volume would make a compelling addition to any syllabus that includes *Three Guineas* or covers the Spanish Civil War. Notwithstanding recent developments such as the publication of Muriel Rukeyser's autobiographical novel, *Savage Coast* (written soon after her return from Spain in 1936), attention to English-language writers in this context has focused largely on prominent male writers such as George Orwell or Ernest Hemingway. Ockerstrom widens that perspective significantly by providing a panoramic view of women's participation in the conflict. Women from abroad volunteered to serve on both sides of the war effort and explored new professional roles as nurses or journalists. And while many Spanish women ended up as refugees, others in fact served as combatants, or *milicianas*—a notable situation considering Woolf's analysis of patriarchal militarism.

Ockerstrom's main focus is the English-language writing that emerged from these unprecedented events. In a variety of forms and venues, women documented and responded to the war. In some cases, they worked out of the same hotels as Orwell and Hemingway and took shelter from bombardment alongside them. They wrote headlines, provided eyewitness reportage, and encouraged international dialogue (Josephine Herbst, Nancy Cunard, Martha Gellhorn, Muriel Rukeyser); they published fiction and poetry (Sylvia Townsend Warner, Muriel Rukeyser, Genevieve Taggard); and they reflected on their role in history through memoir (Gamel Woolsey, Kate O'Brien). Each of these figures receives concise but rich attention in Ockerstrom's overview, which also frequently makes suggestive connections between them. Woolf's discussion of gender, labor, religion, and the culture of war in *Three Guineas* looks fresh against this backdrop, but different, too. Scholars, students, and common readers might consult this study to get a new perspective on the photographs and letters in Woolf's own wartime narrative. Combining local and international perspectives, Ockerstrom's and Hussey's contributions to the Bloomsbury Heritage Series provide detailed introductions to two well-known but often partially understood contexts for the books Woolf was completing during the second half of the 1930s.

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REVIEW:

VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE MATERIALITY OF THEORY: SEX, ANIMAL, LIFE

by Derek Ryan. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
221 pages. £70, \$120 cloth.

This well-articulated study extends the recent turn toward the natural world in Woolf Studies into the wider-ranging theoretical area of the new materiality. It also bears some relation to recent interest in the category of “everyday” experience as represented by Woolf. Ryan’s astute analysis can be considered post-postmodern: he argues that, though language was undeniably important to Woolf, her rendering of the material world was an early and enduring concern that still has much to teach us today. Ryan’s rejection of binary thinking and androcentrism unites his work with aspects of deconstruction, feminist studies, and eco-literary studies. The work manages to engage both theory and close textual reading, which is appropriate to its boundary-dissolving philosophy. The approach has the added advantage of moving between the mere opposition of theory and materiality (or culture and nature) that has persisted in critical inquiry.

In his first chapter Ryan reveals what he means by “The Materials for Theory” (the chapter title) by examining a favorite figuration of Woolf’s, “granite and rainbow,” which he culls mainly from her essays and memoirs, but also from less-studied novels. Ryan’s own play with these materials includes scientific understandings of their composition, as well as evocations by other artists and writers. It is a list that surely might be joined by Joyce’s playful evocation of the rainbow girls in *Finnegans Wake*. Ryan’s point is to demonstrate ways that Woolf fulfilled her own observation in *Orlando* of “Nature, who has played so many queer tricks upon us” (30), including a refusal of granite and rainbow to remain static or in opposition.

The remaining four chapters each takes on a material focus, investigating what Woolf has to offer in that area through close readings of different novels. His readings are informed theoretically mainly by the work of Giles Deleuze and those who have shared and refined his thinking, most notably including Rosi Braidotti. Other important players are materialist theorists Elizabeth Grosz, and Jane Bennett. The importance of the director in his similarly-titled Ph.D. dissertation, Jane Goldman, is also evident. There are two chapters concerned with “sex”: “Sexual Difference in Becoming: *A Room of One’s Own* and *To the Lighthouse*” and “Queering *Orlando* and non/Human Desire.” The remaining chapters focus upon “animals”: “The Question of the Animal in *Flush*,” and the much broader category of “life”: “Quantum Reality and Posthuman Life: *The Waves*.”

Ryan looks afresh at the enduring debate over Woolf’s uses of “androgyny,” and his discussion will be of interest to anyone who has followed this controversy. Demonstrating his thorough familiarity with existing criticism, Ryan takes us through two stages of the debate, their positions and counter-positions. First came the 1970s celebration of the concept by Nancy Topping Bazin and Carolyn Heilbrun, which was met by Elaine Showalter’s attack, not just of the androgyny, but of Woolf for repressing anger and compromising her feminism, moves

that amounted to escapism. Poststructuralist readings that flourished in the 1980s once again found something to celebrate in a different form of escape—the rejection of binary thinking that androgyny afforded. Then, after acknowledging arguments that Woolf encouraged women to write from the perspective of their own experience, Ryan re-enlists with poststructuralist theory in an effort to extend it. Working with Braidotti's concept of “nomadism” and Deleuze and Guattari's “becoming woman,” he makes his own use of androgyny as a “theoretically agile term which still has something to add to feminist considerations of sexual difference” (61). His basic take on the subject is that Woolf is keenly aware of multiple differences, including differences among men and differences among women, that make simple oppositions and classic gender oppression impossible. Ryan offers his own geometry of sexual relations, escaping the classical Oedipal triangle that has been used to define the familial relations of *To the Lighthouse* to locate multiple trios in the text. The reading allows for a dynamic relation among human and other than human entities, including the landscape, though the connection back to concepts of androgyny grows tenuous as the chapter concludes.

The sort of multiplicity found in Chapter 2 is multiplied and seen to differ qualitatively as well as quantitatively, and is even more diversely directed in the process of becoming queer explored by Ryan in *Orlando* in Chapter 3. Not only is the human self multiple and fluid, but so is history itself, and non-human relations include even objects, rings and bedrooms and motor-cars. As in the discussion of androgyny, Ryan works closely with previous Woolf criticism.

Ryan succeeds beautifully, then, with the first of the three focuses identified in his subtitle: Sex, Animal, Life. Perhaps because so much has recently appeared on *Flush* and on Woolf's relations to animals, I found less to remark upon in Chapter 4, though it certainly belongs in the book's general flow toward posthumanism. Posthumanism is ably defined, relying on the work of Jane Bennett and Karen Barad, while sustaining its interest in Deleuze and Guattari, in the final chapter. This again engages scientific understandings of matter, in this case, theories of quantum physics. As Ryan acknowledges, Woolf takes on the subject of life in various, often inconsistent ways. This is true of the characters in *The Waves* as well. Still, he argues that she experiments with a concept of life that both escapes the anthropocentrism characteristic of most approaches to representing life, but also investigates life as “immanent assemblages” (181), what Deleuze terms “haecceity” (192). Interestingly, Jinny emerges as the character most able to relate to “a life” (not necessarily her life) and to find in it “rapture” (195). Ryan himself has assembled an admirable study that integrates new materialist theory and, through it, credits Woolf with representing life in moments of rapturous non-being.

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REVIEW:

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S ETHICS OF THE SHORT STORY

by Christine Reynier. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 179 pages. \$110 cloth.

Perhaps because Virginia Woolf called her short stories “treats I allowed myself” (Woolf 231), many critics have treated the stories as little more than experiments for the novels. So Christine Reynier's book is only one of five about Woolf's short stories.¹ But, according to Reynier, Woolf wrote a body of work without “any hierarchy between her novels, her biographies, her essays, her letters, her diaries, or her short stories” (147). Reynier stresses a “generic hybridity” that helps make the short stories “a deeply committed form where the aesthetic, the ethical, and the political are brought together” (17).

Reynier begins by drawing from three of Woolf's essays about Hemingway, Chekhov, and Flaubert some “broad flexible guidelines” (20) for approaching the stories. Successful stories are anonymous, universal, emotional, inconclusive, and ethical. By “ethical” Reynier refers to Derek Attridge's definition as a democratic openness not only to other people but also to other genres, topics, writing methods, and reading habits.

In “Woolf's Short Stories as a Paradoxical and Dynamic Space,” Reynier analyzes proportion, emotion, impersonality, and the combining of opposites. Woolf often chooses an intense moment in her characters' lives and organizes a story around it. Some stories have frames (the heron in “Monday or Tuesday”) and some do not, endlessly deferring conclusion. The “pull and counter-pull between continuity and discontinuity” (Reynier 57) create a dynamic space in which Woolf's stories become a conversation, what Reynier calls, again drawing on Attridge, an “encounter” (61).

The first encounter is between people—“alternately between the self and the other as characters or narrative entities” (61). In her chapter “Conversation, Emotion, and Ethics or the Short Story as Conversation,” Reynier shows that the stories are often dual conversations—the words people say to one another and a silent one, conveyed through metaphor, between the self and the other. Social encounters where characters retain their own “individuality while belonging to the group” (“A Summing Up”) “expose, through conversation, through the spoken and silent words they exchange, their various emotions, what Woolf defines as ‘second selves’” in her diary (77). In her longest discussion of a single story, “A Dialogue upon Mount Pentelicus,” Reynier shows that Woolf uses “conversation as a democratic form, a political as well as an ethical and aesthetic space” (89).

In her fourth chapter, “Woolf's Ethics of Reading and Writing,” Reynier considers the stories as metafictional narratives which “focus on the process of writing the text one is reading” (91). The reader becomes part of that process—with techniques such as the absence of closure,

¹ The others prefer the word “fiction” to “story”: Dean R. Baldwin (1989); Kathryn N. Benzel and Ruth Hoberman, eds. (2004); Heather Levy (2010); Nena Skrbic (2004). Levy's book was not published until after Reynier's.

the connotative rather than denotative meaning of words, and the denial of a “straightforward meaning, as in ‘Monday or Tuesday’, which is an invitation to re-reading” (100). In “The Legacy” Gilbert becomes a detective; he learns to read signs, paralleling “the hermeneutic activity of the reader who has to read in-between lines, thus sharing in the process of writing” (101). This encounter between story-teller and reader creates a “questioning [of] the traditional boundaries between author and reader” and establishes “a silent dialogue between them” (105).

In her final chapter, “Woolf’s Short Story as a Site of Resistance,” Reynier explores the “long-standing apparent contradiction in Woolf between her feminist and political and aesthetic commitments” (111). Woolf develops a polyphonic narrator so that the reader hears not an omniscient voice but “many different voices... a whole sample of voices in which the personal collapses into the collective and even the universal” (128-29).² This democratic impulse, as Reynier points out, is one that “Melba Cuddy-Keane also traces in [Woolf’s] essays” (130). Woolf combines fiction, essay, poetry, diary, and letter in her stories. Finally, Reynier considers claims of anti-Semitism in “The Duchess and the Jeweller.” She thinks Woolf uses stereotypes to make her reader question them. “Woolf’s commitment is neither action nor direct protest but connection” (147).

Instead of separating the stories from Woolf’s *oeuvre*, Christine Reynier approaches them as one part of the whole. She does not offer many close readings of specific stories but writes paragraphs packed with examples from the stories. When she does read closely, as she does with “A Woman’s College from Outside” or “A Dialogue upon Mount Pentelicus,” she is rewarding. Reynier considers complex ideas but does so in a straightforward style; nevertheless, this intriguing book is dense and benefits from re-reading. Adding to a growing interest in the short stories, Reynier contributes to an appreciation of Woolf’s “inexhaustible gift to the reader” (148).

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² Dominic Head refers to the “juxtaposition, even the fusion, of disparate voices” (95). Nena Skrbic refers to “multi-layered structure of voices” (127).



REVIEW:

THE POSTFEMINIST BIOPIC: NARRATING THE LIVES OF PLATH, KAHLO, WOOLF AND AUSTEN

by Bronwyn Polaschek. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013. 191 pages. £50, \$85 cloth.

No one likes writing a negative review. We all remember every word of any negative review of our work, even if the negativity is often imagined. So this is a review I hated writing. But *The Postfeminist Biopic* is not a good book.

Polaschek takes her definition of postfeminist biopic from other critics (as she takes all of her concepts). “Contemporary postfeminist biopics” are those which “represent a challenge to traditional patriarchal constructions... but also to second-wave feminist narratives” (3). Since we are now at the juncture of fourth/fifth-wave feminisms, Hollywood (or “Conglomerate Hollywood” [1]) is more backward-looking than I thought.

Polaschek then develops four case-study chapters examining the films *Sylvia*, *Frida*, *The Hours*, and *Becoming Jane*. She promises how “a close reading of each film in its cultural context reveals how each can be most comprehensively interpreted as the product of feminism’s encounter with theories of postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism” (4). Somehow I don’t see Gwyneth Paltrow’s slim, vulnerable Sylvia emerging through this dense woody jargon. But who is Sylvia? Polaschek cites the Plath biographies by Edward Butscher and Jacqueline Rose without mentioning that Butscher’s biography was banned from the UK, and Rose received horrific legal challenges from Ted Hughes before publication. (Hughes’s rigid restraints on Plath’s representations might just have something to do with any biopic about Sylvia.) Nor does Polaschek, as promised, situate the four films in their cultural contexts.

Instead, each case study adopts a similar approach: Polaschek describes the plot and characterization in each film, after paraphrasing the comments of a few film critics and quoting some filmmakers. Polaschek prefaces these case-study chapters with a chapter on “feminist film theory and postfeminist culture” and a second chapter “the biopic genre.” The summary of feminist film criticism begins (yet again) with Marjorie Rosen’s *Popcorn Venus* (1973), and Molly Haskell’s *From Reverence to Rape* (1974). When discussing Laura Mulvey’s theory of the gaze, Polaschek seems not to know that Mulvey revisited her theory in the later *Visual and Other Pleasures* of 2009 (not cited) and subsequently, not only in her “Afterthoughts” (reprinted in Mulvey 2009). But then Polaschek often cites a book as “a more recent analysis” although a book is dated 1994 (Basinger 1994). Why does Polaschek not mention key networks such as the *Women’s Film and Television Network* or *Women Make Movies* or indeed much of the last decade’s feminist film research, for example, Jane Sloan’s exhaustive 433-page filmography *Reel Women: An Interdisciplinary Directory of Contemporary Feature Films About Women* (Scarecrow Press, 2007)?

Academia is in crisis. A neoliberal employment structure now relies on part-time, short-fixed and zero-hours contracts in which women predominate. Feminists also understand how the crisis is supported by an academic presumption of the sexless neuter as a sign of cultural competence. New inequalities simply lay over old ones, let alone the



fact that, in 2014 over 85,000 women were raped in the UK. A book calling itself postfeminist needs to justify that title with less solipsism. More positively, any book on postfeminism should address the fact that in recent years female writers, producers and directors have emerged as more central players in the media. In the UK new production houses such as Red Productions are women-led, and women creatives have moved into new media territories, for example the regional film with Amber Films. Polaschek's frozen time-warp would be endearing in an essay by a first-year undergraduate excitedly discovering feminist media work (don't you love those essays!), but less so in a critical volume dated 2013. The chapter on genre starts with Aristotle (well, yes).

In addition, Polaschek makes little or no mention of filmic codes and techniques, either as a function of the cinematic apparatus or arising from production. The fact that *Frida* has women as director, screenwriters, producers, editor and star would make the film differ from Stephen Daldry's masculinist *The Hours*. But not to Polaschek, because in *The Hours* apparently "the feminist ideas informing the film, including those derived from the revisionist work of feminist art and literary scholars, represent different feminist strategies" (126). Did we see the same film? Obviously not, because Polaschek finds *The Hours* to be "this postmodern, polysemous and postfeminist text [which] suggests that no single life, or individual feminist theory, can adequately represent the historical woman's experience" (126). This generalized academic writing is endemic in *The Postfeminist Biopic*.

Sadly Polaschek pays no attention to the work of queer and Woolf scholars of film in her chapter on *The Hours*, except for a sentence mentioning a Brenda Silver quote in a *New York Times* article, a surprising omission given the exemplary and extensive film scholarship of Leslie Hankins to name just one Woolf scholar. But then Polaschek overlooks Madelyn Detloff's *The Persistence of Modernism*, Justyna Kostkowska's "Cinematic Editing of Virginia Woolf" and many more.

The Postfeminist Biopic, with its plot and character summaries, could be a useful primer for first-year undergraduates in film, but not for Woolf studies.

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REVIEW:

VIRGINIA WOOLF: ART, LIFE AND VISION

London: National Portrait Gallery. 10 July-26 October 2014.

VIRGINIA WOOLF: ART, LIFE AND VISION

by Frances Spalding. London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014. 191 pages. \$25.75, £15.30 paper.

Those who were fortunate enough to be in London between July 10 and October 26 this past year could view *Virginia Woolf: Art, Life and Vision* at the National Portrait Gallery. It was curated by that preeminent Bloomsbury scholar, Frances Spalding, the biographer of Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant as well as of Gwen Raverat and John Piper. She has also written the book of the exhibition, which is one of the best introductions I know to Virginia Woolf and which includes illustrations of most of the material in the exhibition itself. What is particularly striking about this "take" on Woolf, deeply appropriate for its being at the National Portrait Gallery, is not only its emphasis on images of her but also the relationship between her as a writer and the art that she saw about her, most particularly in the work of her sister Vanessa. She could tease the painters, Vanessa, Duncan Grant and Roger Fry, for taking their art too seriously, but she recognized its importance and artistic conceptions indeed infused her own work. Bloomsbury's heart, I believe, was the two Stephen sisters, Virginia and Vanessa. In their early years they decided between themselves that Virginia would pursue writing and Vanessa would pursue painting. Not surprisingly the elder Vanessa came to some prominence earlier than her sister and over the years established herself as a moderately well-known artist. Her supporters do not make extravagant claims for her but her detractors act as if they do so, as evidenced by the attacks upon the Bloomsbury art exhibition of some years ago. (Although the members of Bloomsbury were politically left of center, it is hard not to conclude that in England but not in the United States issues of class play a role in Bloomsbury bashing.) But undoubtedly, Virginia Woolf is a much greater artist than her sister.

Art played an important role in the life of Virginia Woolf, and it is striking that this splendid exhibition has at its beginning its destruction, a photograph of the Woolfs' bombed London house, exposing for all to see the fireplace decorated by Vanessa and Duncan Grant. The war was probably not a major cause for Virginia's belief that she was going mad again and her decision to kill herself. But the war does frame the exhibition: with the Nazi Black Book at its end listing the 2,280 British, including Leonard and Virginia, who were to be taken into "protective custody" when the Germans invaded Britain, a real possibility in the Fall of 1940. (Those who wish to examine the "Black Book" in the United States can consult the copy in the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.) Between these two representations Virginia's life is beautifully presented through images, documents, and objects, including the walking stick she took with her, leaving it on the bank, before drowning herself in the river Ouse that flowed past Monk's House.

The exhibition tells us the story of her life. It begins with the great Victorian intellectuals depicted through the magnificent photographs by her great-aunt, Julia Margaret Cameron. It then turns to her growing up in London and holidays in Talland House in St. Ives. It is wonderful to have numerous photographs of her, even though she disliked having her picture taken: the classic one of 1902 by G. C. Beresford; casual ones of her at Garsington, stylishly dressed, taken by Lady Ottoline Morrell; one by Man Ray in 1934; and the great ones by Gisèle Freund in 1939. The exhibition also reminds us how stylish Virginia was,



how conscious of dress, and how receptive she was to the advice of Madge Garland, the fashion editor of *Vogue*, as regarded photographs of her appearing in its pages. Here we also have representations of her family circle, her parents, her brothers Thoby and Adrian, and, more troubling, her half-brothers, George and Gerald Duckworth and their sister Stella. Then the Group itself: John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Duncan Grant, Clive Bell, Desmond MacCarthy, ultimately Roger Fry, and E. M. Forster, only represented as a slouching figure in Vanessa Bell's group portrait of the Memoir Club of 1943. We go through her life: the one-day engagement to Lytton Strachey; the marriage to Leonard; the founding of the Hogarth Press (and the publishing of T. S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield, and others); the connection with Vita Sackville-West. The posthumous life is here as well as in the multi-volume collected letters and diaries.

Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant were the first of the Group to be modernists. There are three 1912 Vanessa Bell paintings in the exhibition, two portraits of Virginia and one of a conversation taking place at Asheham House in Sussex. In them the figures' features are virtually non-existent. Yet the reality of the person is more there than if they were presented more conventionally. The greater reality was below the surface. But unlike Virginia the artists did not continue on that path but returned to more traditional styles. The presence of these paintings in the exhibition is one way in which it enriches our understanding of how new conceptions of art may have influenced Virginia. Virginia recognized the new approach in her somewhat tongue-in-cheek famous remark "On or about December 1910 human character changed," emphasizing the importance of Roger Fry's great exhibition "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" of that year, and in effect the pioneering role of French art. The remark was made in the 1920s, the years of her great novels *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. The same decade she wrote *Orlando* as well as *A Room of One's Own*, and a page from its manuscript is on display. After all, *To the Lighthouse* ends with Lily Briscoe finishing her Cézanne-like painting.

This effective and powerful exhibition includes the brief and very moving suicide notes she left for Vanessa and Leonard. Her life closed yet the intense continuing activity around it and more important her achievements seems to be ever-growing. Through these images, manuscripts, photographs and portraits, Virginia Woolf's life and accomplishments were evoked in London in a few rooms where multiple material was effectively displayed. To see the actual exhibition was a great joy, and fortunately much of it is preserved in Frances Spalding's fine book.

Peter Stansky
Stanford University



Recent Woolf-Related Publications, Scholarly and Otherwise

- Chan, Evelyn. *Virginia Woolf and the Professions*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2014.
- Dubino, Jeanne, Gill Lowe, Vara Neverow and Kathryn Simpson, eds. *Virginia Woolf: Twenty-First-Century Approaches*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014.
- Davison, Claire. *Translation as Collaboration: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and S.S. Koteliansky*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014.
- Fernald, Anne, ed. *Mrs. Dalloway*. By Virginia Woolf. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014.
- Gee, Maggie. *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan*. London: Telegram, 2014.
- Lazenby, Donna J. *A Mystical Philosophy: Transcendence and Immanence in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Olk, Claudia. *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*. Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014.
- Parmar, Priya. *Vanessa and Her Sister*. New York: Random House, 2014.
- Sandberg, Eric. *Virginia Woolf: Experiments in Character*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014.
- Van der Wiel, Reina. *Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.



Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Special Topics and Calls for Papers

CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Issue #88, Fall 2015

SPECIAL TOPIC: Virginia Woolf in the Modern Machine Age

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 31 March 2015

GUEST EDITOR: Ann Martin

The *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* invites submissions of papers that address the role of everyday machines in the life and/or works of Virginia Woolf. From typewriters and telephones to gramophones and the wireless; from motor-cars and combat aeroplanes to trains and department store elevators; from cameras and film projectors to ranges and hot water tanks, the commonplace technologies of the modern machine age leave their trace on Bloomsbury. To what extent are these and other machines represented, hidden, implied, avoided, embraced, or questioned by Woolf and her circle and characters? What is the place of labour and mass production, or the role of the handmade or bespoke object, in the context of such technologies and the desires with which they are implicated? What are the ramifications for the individual's everyday navigation of modernity, domesticity, and/or community? Alternatively, what is the influence of everyday technologies in our own interactions with Woolf and her writings? Please submit papers of no more than 2500 words to Ann Martin <ann.martin@usask.ca> by 31 March 2015.

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CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Issue #89, Spring 2016

SPECIAL TOPIC: A Truly Miscellaneous Woolf Miscellany

GUEST EDITOR: DIANA SWANSON

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 15 September 2015

Please Note: This CFP replaces the prior CFP "The Woolfs and Africa."

Essays on any topic related to Virginia Woolf are welcome; however, we do have particular interest in essays on post-colonial, eco-critical, LGBT, and historical topics.

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

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

CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Issue #90, Fall 2016

SPECIAL TOPIC: Woolf and Illness

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 31 March 2016

GUEST EDITOR: Cheryl Hindrichs

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

Send submissions of no more than 2500 words by 31 March 2016 to: Cheryl Hindrichs at <cherylhindrichs@boisestate.edu>

CFP: Virginia Woolf Miscellany

Issue #91, Spring 2017

SPECIAL TOPIC: Virginia Woolf, Bloomsbury, and the War to End War

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 1 August 2016

GUEST EDITOR: Karen Levenback

This issue commemorates the advent of the Great War and its representation by Virginia Woolf and her friends and colleagues in Bloomsbury and beyond (even H.G. Wells, who wrote a 1914 pamphlet called *The War that Will End War*)—noncombatants, combatants, and conscientious objectors; writers of prose, poetry, and drama; fiction and memoirs; criticism, reviews, and social commentary; journalists, historians, philosophers, and humanists. Contributions need not necessarily involve work done during the war, but gauge the war's ongoing effect on a wide range of topics and perspectives: cultural, socio-economic, modernist, feminist, to name the most obvious. How did war-consciousness, for example, affect views of mass culture and consumerism? Articles on other topics (e.g., constructions of self and identity in wartime, and post-war aesthetics) are also welcome.

Send enquiries and submissions of not more than 2500 words by 1 August 2016 to:

Karen Levenback at <kllevenback@att.net>

*Virginia Woolf:
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*Edited by Pamela Caughie
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Contents include familiar voices from past conferences as well as new voices of younger scholars, students, and independent scholars. Highlights include keynote addresses by Mark Hussey's roundtable on war and violence, Maud Ellmann on Woolf and Warner, and Tuzyline Allan on Woolf after post-colonialism. Thematic divisions include "War and Peace," "World Writer(s)," "Animal and Natural Worlds," and "Writing and Worldmaking."

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the Virginia Woolf Society



*“—how could she express it?
—that after the dark churning of myriad ages here was light at the end of
the tunnel; life, the world. Beneath her it lay—all good; all lovable. Such
was her discovery.”*

VW, “A Women’s College from Outside”

Winter looms with all its epic challenges—relieved by a festive Modern Language Association Convention in sparkling Vancouver, that temperate gem by the Pacific—and by Virginia Woolf’s birthday ahead on January 25th which I trust we will all celebrate in some appropriate way—perhaps with wineglasses that flush yellow and then crimson—or by immersing ourselves in Woolf’s writing—or penning some new findings in Woolf studies. As the outgoing President of the International Virginia Woolf Society, I bid you hail and farewell! Though I certainly hope to see many of you at the MLA in Vancouver, and of course, at the annual Virginia Woolf conference in June! I welcome our new slate of officers with anticipation; let’s all support them in the years ahead. I hope you will be attending the MLA IVWS dinner in Vancouver! And, I hope you encourage your students to enter the first annual Virginia Woolf Essay contest for undergraduates which we hope to inaugurate shortly.

Happy New Year!
Leslie Kathleen Hankins
Outgoing President
International Virginia Woolf Society

Remembering the 2014 Woolf Conference

Many thanks from the IVWS to Diana Swanson of Northern Illinois University (on the left below) and Pamela Caughie of Loyola University (on the right), the organizers of the totally fabulous Woolf Writing the World, the 24th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, held the 5th to the 8th of June 5-8 in 2014 at the Loyola University Chicago Lake Shore Campus (see <<http://www.niu.edu/woolfwritingtheworld/home/>> for an archival version of the conference). The Selected Papers from the conference, edited by Diana and Pamela, will be published by Clemson University Press—formerly Clemson Digital University Press—in June 2015 (see also the pre-order discount form from CUP on page 51).



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