

Remembering the First Thirty Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf

In loving memory of those who have departed¹

Jane Lilienfeld, conference organizer
Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives
The Third Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
Lincoln University
Jefferson City, Missouri, 1993

Paul Connolly, conference organizer
Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching
Virginia Woolf
The Fourth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,
Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, NY, 1994

Georgia Johnston, conference organizer
Virginia Woolf and Community
The Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
St. Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri, 1998



Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after. Thus, the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling an inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting, like the underlinen of a family of fourteen on a line in a gale of wind.

Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*

In certain favourable moods, memories—what one has forgotten—come to the top. Now if this is so, is it not possible—I often wonder—that things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds; are in fact still in existence? And if so, will it not be possible, in time, that some device will be invented by which we can tap them?

Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*

Words, English words, are full of echoes, of memories, of associations. They have been out and about, on people's lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields, for so many centuries. And that is one of the chief difficulties in writing them today—that they are stored with other meanings, with other memories....

Virginia Woolf, "Craftsmanship,"
BBC Radio Broadcast, April 29, 1937

¹ Please see pages 42 and 43 for a list of those mentioned in this special issue who have passed away over the last 31 years.



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

Virginia Woolf Miscellany
Editorial Board and the Editors
page 3

VWM Guidelines for Submissions
page 7

Editorial Policies
page 7

– TABLE OF CONTENTS –
page 9

**INTERNATIONAL VIRGINIA WOOLF
SOCIETY COLUMN**
page 60 (continues on page 59)

**IVWS OFFICERS AND
MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
2021-2023**
page 59

EVENTS, CFPs AND INFORMATION:

2022 MLA Convention
IVWS Panels and Papers
page 3

Louisville Conference
IVWS Panel
page 3

CFP for the IVWS Annual
Angelica Garnett
Undergraduate Essay Prize
page 3

Call for Proposals:
Annotated Woolf
Clemson University Press
page 5

**CFP for the
31st Annual Conference on
Virginia Woolf:
Virginia Woolf and Ethics**
page 4

**Call for Special Topics for the
Virginia Woolf Miscellany**

To propose a topic, please contact
Vara Neverow at
neverowv1@southernct.edu



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

What We Remember

Bilthoven, February 2021

Staring out of my window into the empty streets of Bilthoven, I see beyond the emptiness, I see fragments of moments, I see faraway places where a warm welcome awaits. I feel the hardships of travel, the crowded airports, the tiresome, long flights to the USA, Canada, or the short ones to the UK.

I see myself stepping into unknown territories, taxi rides, bus rides, carpool rides,² and then there all you are, my dear and wonderful Woolf friends.

While collecting a bag full of info, a key to the dormitory to find a bed, I hear laughter, someone cries out 'come and join'.

I feel dizzy and elated, I feel so very, very tired. No matter, 'come and join, here is glass of wine, come and sit, we want to hear your adventures, we have some good ones of our own'.

And so it goes, from day to day, from hour to hour, minute to minute. We race around, we absorb like sponges, we share, learn, we eat, drink, and have lots of fun. It is intense too, conversations—often very personal. It's catching up with old friends, making new ones sometimes while checking in at the registration desk, that quickly.

I remember always being short of time in between breaks, talking, laughing, connecting, everybody being equal. Yes, equal, not only during breaks and meals but also when lining up for toilets, showers in the communal facilities, in the—to me—famous words of Bonnie Kime Scott, those are the great equalizers. So true.

Canterbury, 2018, 28th International Annual Virginia Woolf Conference

Almost thirty years of Annual (International) Virginia Woolf Conferences were in the offing. After just having finished writing *The History of 90 Years of Two Montessori Schools in Hilversum, 1927-2017*, where I experienced that so much of that history was lost, I figured it was a good idea to look into the history of the Woolf conferences while so many of the organizers and attendees are still around to write down their memories of this important (almost)³ yearly event.

Launching this idea at a conference meeting about the next annual event, it was met by applause, and Vara Neverow stepped up and offered to publish the collection of stories in a special edition of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Once home, I started this project with a theory in mind; convinced that my theory was correct, I was ready to prove it.

² Thank you Gaile and Mad you saved me!

³ Due to the pandemic in 2020, the scheduled thirtieth conference, Virginia Woolf: Profession and Performance was cancelled; it was hosted virtually in 2021.

My theory was that the first conference started simply and humbly with a few people gathered, talking about Woolf for a day or two. True, the first one—bless you, Mark Hussey—was only three days and relatively small in comparison to some of the later events; as the conference evolved, it also expanded into four days and attracted larger groups, especially if the event was held in a major city. My own first conference experience was the Back to Bloomsbury gathering, organized by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari, at the University of London in 2004.

How wrong I was about the evolution of the conference, though. The veterans of the conferences⁴ could have told me my theory could go straight into the bin. Their stories are proof. Another proof that my hypothesis was wrong came into focus as I researched the frameworks of the conferences over the years and studied the number of panels and their length, plenaries, outings, clocking break times, and dinner times as I was making graphs and checking statistics to show the growth and changes over the years. The results revealed that the conference was structurally stable from the start.

‘How boring’, someone wrote me after I told her my idea. She was right, nothing spectacular came up. I gave up.

Bilthoven, February 2021

Sitting here, looking at the empty streets into the dark night, I’m thinking of those days and smile. I long for the hard, uncomfortable seat in some classroom somewhere in this wide world, listening to talks people worked so hard on. Crowded classrooms, or empty rooms with just a few in the audience. Cold rooms, swelteringly hot rooms, and everything in between. The warm plush theater seats, listening, absorbing, learning, enjoying plenaries, performances. The many breaks with their treats, eating snacks, sandwiches, drinking our coffee while attending panels or plenaries, always short of time, catching up on sleep after the conference.

The spectacular banquets are a highlight on Saturday evenings. All dressed up in our own ways, bringing on the food and wine, the speeches of Cecil Woolf—very funny and informative, and yes, one can do both in the same speech—and the Woolf Society Players.⁵ It doesn’t matter which academic venue is used, or whether the events will be held in the big city, the small town, a library, a church, or a fancy restaurant; whether it is fine dining or a buffet dinner, it doesn’t matter. We are all together having a good time.

How wonderful are the pre- and post-conference outings going to places we would might otherwise never have seen—Georgia O’Keeffe’s home in New Mexico, Sissinghurst, Haworth, the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati. Lunch boxes under our arms, even more time for personal conversations.

I have met up with a friend at the airport in Leeds, in a botanical garden in Glasgow, at a coffee shop in Canterbury, shared taxis with people I didn’t know in Saskatoon, in Chicago, have gotten lost—with friends—on university grounds at Reading—remember the ducks? We laughed, we joked, and came home from our destination with another story to tell. I found a warm welcome at houses of Woolfian friends in Chicago, and on my way to Cincinnati. We wandered around in Glasgow trying to buy warm panty hose, for Scotland in June can be very cold indeed if you don’t dress for the occasion.

Come to think of it, we wandered around in many different places, big or small—London; New York; Georgetown, KY; Oxford, OH; Saskatoon; Vancouver; Chicago; Leeds; Bloomsburg, PA; Kent; Cincinnati, OH; and everything in between.

Canterbury, June 2018

Curiosity was the start of this project. I was curious how these Virginia Woolf conferences came into being, how they grew and grew, evolved, developed, and how they came to mean so much to so many.

⁴ I am very happy that so many of them are still with us.

⁵ Editorial note: The Woolf Society Players perform by reading passages from Woolf’s work, typically at the banquets.

I thought about how these conferences were nurtured and inspired by the professors, the students, the common readers alike; how Woolf’s words inspired us and how we inspired each other; how new paths were carved out, different angles found; how Woolf’s work remains relevant, words written by Woolf, some more than 100 years ago.

A call for stories, memories, anecdotes for the issue saw a flying start. One call for a story to 30 organizers or assistant organizers, one call to 30 people who attended a conference, and I could sit back and let the stories flood in. Responses were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. Although at times I felt like a high school teacher, supporting students, giving them encouragement and advice, and dealing with excuses like ‘my computer/boiler/central heating’ broke down, I had to see ‘a doctor/dentist/neighbor’, in spite of all that, we got there in the end with this issue.

Bilthoven, February 2021

I’m no longer staring out of my darkened window but instead I am watching a lively screen. With the Woolf drop-in and the Woolf Salons, I see my fellow Woolfian friends much more often than just the four conference days in the time before COVID. Let’s call the Zoom gatherings ‘armchair conferences’. These events are not the conference, but they were inspired by the conference that did not happen in 2020.

It took us all a while to come to the realization that the 30th conference scheduled for June 2020 in beautiful Vermillion, SD, was not to be. For Benjamin Hagen and his staff who had everything in place to welcome us, it was the hardest decision they had to make. Ben knew we had booked flights, transportation, lodgings. The papers were written, schedules in place.

To keep us all together, to keep us learning, connecting, and enjoying the papers and the company, Elisa K. Sparks started the first Zoom drop-in for Woolves to gather on June 11th, the day when Ben Hagen’s 2020 conference would have begun. These online meetings continued and became a virtual place where we socialize and chat just as we would have done in the ‘old’ days at the conferences. Ben, Shilo McGiff, Drew Shannon, and Amy Smith also launched the Woolf Salon, with themed online meetings that focus on different aspects of Woolf and Bloomsbury (see <https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/home>). Also, Ben and his team at the University of South Dakota were able to rebuild the conference in conjunction with the IT staff so that the conference, rescheduled for June 2021, could be entirely virtual—and as fabulous as any on-the-ground conference.

Bilthoven, July 2021

Before you, you will see a history of Annual (International) Virginia Woolf conferences written by the organizers and attendees, reflecting on their memories and experiences, on how a conference influenced their work, their personal lives.

Thirty years of conferences are gathered in this issue of the *Miscellany*, with facts, stories, and impressions—moments of being which would otherwise disappear in the mist of time.

With such a history behind us there is no doubt in our minds that the future looks bright and will continue to light our lives. It might be in a completely different shape or form, but we’ll continue to hold hands (virtually or in person), and be there for one another.

Thank you, contributors; thank you, Vara Neverow.

Until we meet again,

AnneMarie Bantzinger

Bilthoven, December 2021

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

MLA 2022
#MLA22
January 6-9, 2022
Washington, DC

466. Virginia Woolf, Hope, and Wonder
ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR
SATURDAY, 8 JANUARY 12:00 PM-1:15 PM,
UNIVERSITY OF D.C. (MARRIOTT MARQUIS)—DELAYED TO 2023

Keywords: Ethics, Epistemology, Ecstasy, Modern re-enchantment

Sponsoring Entity: International Virginia Woolf Society

For related material, write to angela.cat.harris@gmail.com
after 1 Nov 2021.

Presentations

1. "A Precarious Re-enchantment in Virginia Woolf's Post-World War I Fiction," Amy C. Smith (Lamar U) [#17529]
2. "Terror and Ecstasy: Paradox in Virginia Woolf's Fiction," Siân White (James Madison U) [#17530]
3. "Woolfian Moments of Being: *To the Lighthouse* and the Ethics of Epiphany," Angela Harris (Durham U) [#17531]

Presiding

Erin Kay Penner (Asbury U) and
Marlene Dirschauer (Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich)

547. Woolf's Twenty-First-Century Academia
SATURDAY, 8 JANUARY 3:30 PM-4:45 PM,
HOWARD UNIVERSITY (MARRIOTT MARQUIS)
Keywords: Woolf, teaching, academia, collaboration, education

Sponsoring Entity: International Virginia Woolf Society

For related material, write to emhinnov@yahoo.com
after 31 Dec. 2021

Presentations

1. "Taking Virginia Woolf Seriously: What Do We Do or Should We Do?," Beth Rigel Daugherty (Otterbein U) [#16886]
2. "Poor Queer Studies for a Society of Outsiders," Matthew Cheney (Plymouth State U) [#16887]
3. "What Is a Woolfian? Teaching Woolf to STEM Students at a Regional University," Tonya Krouse (Northern Kentucky U) [#16888]
4. "Outsider Pedagogy and Its Paradoxes," Erin Greer (U of Texas, Dallas) [#16889]

Presiding

Emily M. Hinnov (Great Bay Community C, NH)



LOUISVILLE CONFERENCE ON
LITERATURE AND CULTURE SINCE 1900
23-26 FEBRUARY 2022

I-5 International Virginia Woolf Society
Saturday 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Room: Humanities 117

Chair: Ben Wilson, University of Louisville

Jamie Millen, University of Massachusetts

"A 'Risk that Must Be Run': On Substantive Modes of Emptiness
and the Creative Process in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*"

Patrick Eichholz, Virginia Military Institute
"Jacob's Room at 100"

Kika Kyriakakou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
"Rooms, She Sheds, Gardens and Feminism in Light of a Global
Pandemic"

Rupeng Chen, University of Edinburgh

"What you see beside you, this man, this Louis, is only the cinders":
The Waves as an Allegory of Coal and Capitalism"

Responder: Suzette Henke, University of Louisville, Emeritus

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

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

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

Please send essays in the latest version of Word.

All entries must be received by 1 July 2022.

To receive an entry form, please contact Benjamin D. Hagen at Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu



Virginia Woolf and Ethics
31st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 9-12, 2022
A Virtual Online Conference Hosted by
Lamar University
Beaumont, TX, USA
Organized by Amy Smith
Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu

The 31st annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf takes as its theme “Virginia Woolf and Ethics,” and aims to promote conversation about the topic across disciplinary boundaries. We hope to explore Woolf’s engagement with specific ethical issues in her writing. These may include, but are not limited to, war and pacifism, human rights, human-animal relations, environmental ethics, bioethics, fascism, empire, patriarchy, racism, and bigotry.

The theme also suggests a reconsideration of Woolf in relation to various ethical approaches. For instance, participants may wish to read Woolf’s thought in conversation with care ethics, narrative ethics, moral psychology, moral imagination, moral luck, virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, communitarianism, liberalism, religious ethics (for instance, Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, Jewish, Buddhist, etc.) as well as spiritual practices of Indigenous peoples, and other moral theories or concepts. Papers might address the moral philosophy of Woolf’s milieu, including the thought of Russell, Moore, or Leslie Stephen. Participants may wish to consider Woolf’s thought with continental theorists such as Levinas, Derrida, Foucault, Irigaray, Kristeva, Badiou, and others who address ethical concerns.

We invite participants to consider Woolf in relation to broader ethical considerations, such as the relation of ethics to reading practices (or to literature); ethics of teaching, scholarly community, and academic life; secularism, religion, and/or mysticism in Woolf’s thinking; and reading Woolf as an ethical (or social or political) theorist.

What might a Woolfian ethic look like? How might we read Woolf’s aesthetic practices in ethical terms (e. g., narrative indeterminacy and the cultivation of certain forms of attention, moral imagination, or empathy)? How does Woolf navigate competing demands of justice, individual liberty and rights, and collectivity and social responsibility in her fiction and non-fiction?

Papers on members of the Bloomsbury Group and other associates of Virginia Woolf in relation to the conference theme are also appropriate. We welcome proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, and workshops from scholars, students, artists, and common readers from all backgrounds and fields.

Abstracts of maximum 250 words for single papers and 500 words for panels, as well as any questions, should be sent to: Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu by **February 15, 2022**.

The conference welcomes proposals for presentations in languages other than English to foster a more open exchange at this international conference. A few caveats: the organizers ask that all abstracts and proposals be submitted in English. Also, to ensure a more effective exchange among all participants, we ask that non-English presentations be accompanied by a handout of main points in English as well as (if possible) a PowerPoint presentation in English or (again, if possible) a version of the essay in English. Note that Q&A sessions will be conducted in English as well.

Possible topics and approaches include:

- Ethics and reading, ethics of reading
- Ethical scholarly community and academic life
- Woolf as ethical/social/political theorist
- Human-animal relations, the natural world
- Racism, patriarchy, and bigotry
- The ethics of biography and life writing
- Woolfian teaching, ethics in teaching
- War, pacifism, fascism, empire, human rights
- Narrative practices, reading experiences
- Empathy, regard, attention
- Individuality and collectivity
- Knowledge, reason, objectivity, and certainty
- Secularism, religion, and spirituality
- A range of moral philosophies and concepts (listed above and extending further)

If you have questions, please contact Amy Smith at Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu

The Woolf Salon Project

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

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

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

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

The email address for the Salon is:
woolfsalonproject@gmail.com

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

Call for Proposals: Annotated Woolf Clemson University Press

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

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

For additional details or to propose an annotated guide, please contact John Morgenstern (jmorgen@clemsun.edu), director of Clemson University Press.



OUTSIDE/RS 2022



**Making Space at the Queer Intersections of Sex and Gender
Friday 1 and Saturday 2 April 2022, University of Brighton, UK
(hybrid delivery)**

Outside/rs 2022 is a conference that platforms those researching and working with themes of sex, gender, queerness, community and exclusions. If you are a postgraduate researcher, early career researcher, or live, work or create in a marginalised community, then please join us in April, either online or in person at the University of Brighton.

For those who exist in queer, marginal, or dissident relations to normativity in its various guises, the 'outside' is a familiar place. As Virginia Woolf famously noted, to be locked out of or barred from spaces of privilege was, and still is, a common experience for women. This is also a common experience for queer, trans or LGBTQIA+ people, as well as BIPOC communities, disabled and neurodiverse people, working class and colonised populations, and many others.

We would like to draw your attention to the panel on Queer Bloomsbury. This will be an online panel on Friday, 1 April. The panel will include Madelyn Detloff (Miami University), Jane Goldman (University of Glasgow) and Samson Dittrich (University of Sussex), chaired by Marielle O'Neill (Leeds Trinity University).

Website: <https://outsiders2022.wordpress.com/>



The Virginia Woolf Miscellany Online

All issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* are available at:
virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com

All issues are fully searchable in PDF format.

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

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

If you have questions, see an error, or wish to acquire a print version of an issue, please contact Vara Neverow at
neverow1@southernct.edu

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

Humanities International Complete and Literary Reference Center.

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

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



THE IVWS & VWS ARCHIVE INFORMATION

<http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/special/F51ivwoolfsocietyfonds.htm>
http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/collections/special_collections/f51_intl_v_woolf_society/

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

Below is the finding aid for the IVWS archival materials:

<http://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/special/F51ivwoolfsocietyfilelist.htm>

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

With regard to such items as correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs, contact the Archival Liaison,
Karen Levenback,
either at klevenback@att.net
or by surface mail:
Karen Levenback, Archival Liaison/IVWS Archive,
304 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.



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

JON S. RICHARDSON RARE BOOKS
yorkharborbooks@aol.com

How to Join
The International Virginia Woolf Society

<http://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/>

or

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

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

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

or

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

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

Regular 12-month membership:

\$35

Student or part-time employed 12-month membership:

\$15

Regular five year membership:

\$130

Retiree five year membership:

\$60

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

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



VIRGINIA WOOLF SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Membership Information:

virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk/membership/

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

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

Subscriptions for the year ending 31 December 2022 are:

£10 for UK-based students

£15 for overseas students

£20 UK, £26 Europe and £30 outside Europe

Five-year memberships £80 UK, £104 Europe and £120 outside Europe

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

The Society is always delighted to welcome new members.

If you wish to join, please email Stuart N. Clarke at stuart.n.clarke@btinternet.com for a membership form and information

about how to pay,

or write to:

Stuart N. Clarke

Membership Secretary

Fairhaven, Charnleys Lane

Banks

SOUTHPORT PR9 8HJ

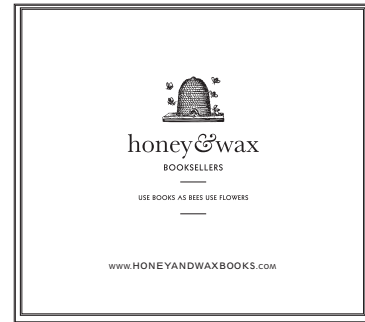
UK

Web: virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk

Facebook: @VWSGB

Twitter: @VirginiaWoolfGB

Instagram: @virginiawoolfsociety



Société d'Études Woolfiennes

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

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

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

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

- "Métamorphose et récit dans l'œuvre de Woolf" (1997)
"Metamorphosis and narrative in Woolf's works"
- "Things in Woolf's works" (1999)
- "Le pur et l'impur" (2001)
"The pure and the impure"
- "Conversation in Woolf's works" (2003)
- "Woolf lectrice / Woolf critique" (2006 / 2008)
"Woolf as a reader / Woolf as a critic"
- "Contemporary Woolf" (2010)
- "Woolf among the Philosophers" (2012)
- "Outlanding Woolf" (2013)
- "Translating Woolf" (2015)
- "Quel roman! Photography and Modernism's Novel Genealogies, Virginia Woolf to Roland Barthes" (2016)
- Virginia Woolf, Still Life and Transformation (2018)
- Virginia Woolf and the Writing of History (2018)

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

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

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Virginia Woolf Miscellany
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS
AND EDITORIAL POLICIES

The *Miscellany* gladly considers very short contributions including scholarly articles, essays, poems, fiction, notes and queries as well as line drawings and photographs.

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

CFPs

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

Miscellaneous Submissions

Even when individual issues are themed, the *Miscellany* accepts submissions unrelated to the theme for the section titled "Truly Miscellaneous." Such submissions should be sent to the Managing Editor, Vara Neverow (rather than to the Guest Editor) at neverow1@southernct.edu.

Guidelines for Submissions

Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words at maximum and shorter articles are strongly preferred. Articles should be submitted electronically, in .doc or .docx MS Word format in the style of the 7th edition of the MLA Handbook published in 2009 (not the 8th edition published in 2016). For a copy of the current *Miscellany* style guide, go to the Virginia Woolf Miscellany. Note that, while previously published work may be submitted for consideration, the original publication must be acknowledged at the time of submission (see above).

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Woolfian Resources Online

Virginia Woolf Miscellany:

Issues of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* are available in PDF format at <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/>. The editorial guide to formatting and the current issue are listed separately, while archived issues are listed in separate sections. Please contact Vara Neverow at neverow1@southernct.edu if you want to acquire a print copy of an issue.

Facebook:

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

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

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

Blogs:

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

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

Scholarly Resources:

Modernist Archives Publishing Project (MAPP)
(<https://www.modernistarchives.com/>)

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

Woolf Online

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

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

E-books:

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

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

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

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

Woolfian Google Alerts:

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

VWoolf Listserv:

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



◀ A Brief Overview of Publications and Archives for Woolfians ▶

The *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* is an independent publication 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 are available online in PDF format at <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com>. If you have questions or need a print copy of an issue, please contact Vara Neverow at neverowv1@southernct.edu.

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://sites.utoronto.ca/IVWS/> was first 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 site is now transitioning to <https://v-woolf-society.com/>.

The VWoolf Listserv is hosted by the English Department at Ohio State University. The current list administrator is Elisa Kay Sparks. Anne Fernald oversaw the list for many years. The founder of the list is Morris Beja. To join the list, you need to send a message to the following address: listproc@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: listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu. In the body of the email, write: unsubscribe VWOOLF.

Materials from most 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 klevenback@att.net.

The Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf (sometimes titled the Annual International 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.emeritus@pace.edu or 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.

The Selected Papers from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf 2001-2013 (excluding 2002 and 2004)

These volumes were published by Clemson University Press (formerly Clemson University Digital Press) under the auspices of Wayne Chapman. Clemson University Press, now overseen by John Morgenstern (jmorgen@clemson.edu), is affiliated with Liverpool University Press. The editors of the volumes that are drawn from the conferences vary from year to year. The electronic version of the Selected Works from the 13th Annual International Conference (*Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration*) and the 15th International Annual Conference (*Woolf in the Real World*), published by Clemson, are available in downloadable PDF format online at http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cudp_woolf/.

The Selected Papers from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf 2002 and 2004

The PDF versions of the *Selected Works* from the 12th conference (held in 2002) and 14th conference (held in 2004) are available to view or download at the Woolf Center at Southern Connecticut State University on the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* website. (Note: the Palgrave editions *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury*, volumes 1 and 2, were edited by the conference organizers Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari and also drew on the conference presentations.)

The Selected Papers from the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf 1991-1999

1991-1999 were launched by Mark Hussey in conjunction with the annual conference and 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 at <http://www.pace.edu/press> and in PDF format on JSTOR (access depends on the the institutional subscriptions).

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

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

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

We look forward to hearing from you.

XX



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION	<i>AnneMarie Bantzinger</i>	1	Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader (2013)	33
Special Topic:			Virginia Woolf: Writing the World (2014)	34
Remembering the First Thirty Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf			Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries (2015)	34
EVENTS, CFPS AND INFORMATION		1	Virginia Woolf and Heritage (2016)	35
Thanking the IVWS for continuing support		2	Virginia Woolf and the World of Books (2017)	38
IVWS MLA 2022 Panels (Washington, D.C., January 6-9)		3	Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace (2018)	39
The 2022 Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture IVWS panel		3	Virginia Woolf and Social Justice (2019)	40
<i>VWM</i> Editorial Board		3	Virginia Woolf: Profession and Performance (2021)	41
CFP from the IVWS for the Annual Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize		3	Virginia Woolf and Ethics (CFP for 2022)	42
CFP for the 31st Annual International Conference on Woolf (2022)		4	Remembering Those Whom We Have Lost	42
The Woolf Salon Project		5	A History of Thirty-One Years of the Annual (International) Conference on Virginia Woolf and the <i>Selected Papers</i> from the Conferences	44
Call for Proposals, Clemson UP: Annotated Woolf		5	TRULY MISCELLANEOUS	
CFP for Outside/rs 2022		5	REVIEW	
Making Space at the Queer Intersections of Sex and Gender		5	" <i>The Waves</i> in Quarantine"	<i>Christine Froula</i> 48
The <i>Virginia Woolf Miscellany</i> Online		5	Berkeley Repertory Theatre's video-theatre experiment	
The IVWS and VWS Archive Information		5	Two Poems	<i>Kristin Czarnecki</i> 50
Paula Maggio's "Blogging Woolf"		5	"cullenders, frying-pans, chicken in aspic, ice-cream freezers, pared crusts of bread, lemons, soup"	
Jon S. Richardson Rare Books (advertisement)		5	"Pantoum for Septimus"	
How to Join the International Virginia Woolf Society		6	BOOK REVIEWS	
How to Join the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain		6	How to Contact the Book Review Editor	50
Honey & Wax Booksellers (advertisement)		6	Call for Reviewers	50
<i>Société d'Études Woolfiennes</i>		6	REVIEW	
<i>VWM</i> Guidelines for Submissions and Editorial Policies		7	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>Mark Hussey</i> 51
Woolfian Resources Online		7	by Virginia Woolf (Dover Publications)	
A Brief Overview of Publications and Archives for Woolfians		7	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	
The Modernist Archives Publishing Project		7	by Virginia Woolf (Vintage Classics)	
TABLE OF CONTENTS		7	Introduction by Michael Cunningham	
Special Topic:		8	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	
Remembering the First Thirty Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf		8	by Virginia Woolf (Broadview Editions)	
Virginia Woolf Miscellanies (1991)		8	Edited by Jo-Ann Wallace	
Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations (1992)		9	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	
Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives (1993)		10	by Virginia Woolf (Norton Critical Edition)	
Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf (1994)		10	Edited by Anne Fernald	
Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts (1995)		10	<i>The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway</i>	
Virginia Woolf and the Arts (1996)		10	by Virginia Woolf (Liveright)	
Virginia Woolf and Her Influences (1997)		10	Edited with an Introduction by Merve Emre	
Virginia Woolf and Communities (1998)		12	REVIEW	
Virginia Woolf: Turning the Centuries (1999)		12	<i>A Moment in the Life of Virginia Woolf</i>	<i>Benjamin D. Hagen</i> 53
Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds (2000)		14	by Louisa Amelia Albani	
Voyages Out, Voyages Home (2001)		15	<i>VOS</i>	
Across the Generations (2002)		16	by Erik Fuhrer	
Woolf in the Real World (2003)		17	REVIEW	
Back to Bloomsbury (2004)		17	<i>Behind the Times:</i>	<i>Eleanor McNeese</i> 55
Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration (2005)		18	<i>Virginia Woolf in Late-Victorian Contexts</i>	
Woolfian Boundaries (2006)		18	by Mary Jean Corbett	
Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism (2007)		19	REVIEW	
Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf (2008)		19	<i>Virginia Woolf and Christian Culture</i>	<i>Karen Levenback</i> 56
Woolf and the City (2009)		21	by Jane de Gay	
Virginia Woolf and the Natural World (2010)		21	<i>Religion Around Virginia Woolf</i>	
Contradictory Woolf (2011)		22	by Stephanie Paulsell	
Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf (2012)		23	REVIEW	
		23	<i>Leonard Woolf:</i>	<i>Janet M. Manson</i> 58
		24	<i>Bloomsbury Socialist</i>	
		24	by Fred Leventhal and Peter Stansky	
		26	The Woolf Salon Project Overview and Events	59
		26	List of the IVWS Officers and Members-at-Large	59
		28	The Society Column	
		29	(continues on page 59)	<i>Benjamin Hagen</i> 60
		30		
		32		

The First Thirty Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf

Edited by AnneMarie Bantzinger

The remembrances included in this issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* start with the first Woolf conference, held in 1991, and continue to the thirtieth conference, held in 2021. The organizers' recollections are followed by the observations of the conference attendees. The upcoming 31st conference, *Virginia Woolf and Ethics*, is the final entry and serves as a call for papers. (Due to the pandemic, the conferences no longer match the year of event numerically because the thirtieth one, scheduled for 2020, was delayed to 2021.)

The two final segments in this special topic follow the conference reminiscences. The first section identifies the people who are mentioned in the remembrances but have died over the years. The second section offers a detailed chronological list of the conferences and the publishing information about the volumes from the conferences.

Note: the individual contributors' spellings and formatting (including US, Canadian, Australian, and British usage) have been retained in the essays.

**Virginia Woolf Miscellanies
1st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 7-9, 1991
Organizer: Mark Hussey
Pace University
New York, New York, USA**

Organizer

1st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, 1991

**Mark Hussey
Pace University, emeritus**

It's a long time ago, so what I remember is quite patchy. Sitting on the bed (or perhaps the floor) in J. J. Wilson's hotel room at an MLA in New Orleans, a group of us talking about how we needed a "conference of our own" and, rather rashly, saying "I could probably do that at Pace." How homespun that first event seems now (we called it the "First Annual" proleptically, not knowing if there would ever be a second). As proposals came in, we put people who seemed to be working in similar areas in touch with one another so that by the time they were sitting together on a panel in New York they had already discussed their ideas back and forth (but how? I don't remember in 1990 whether there was anything other than landlines and faxes). During the conference, Evelyn and I (we got married the following June, ensuring that I would almost never be home on our anniversary) went out to local delis or to the Food Emporium to buy food for the breaks and closing reception—organizers rarely get to attend their own conference. I remember having a brief argument with a store owner who seemed to think I'd paid for only one urn of coffee, not for supplying the whole event—somehow that was resolved and there was coffee aplenty. Probably all the money went through either my checking account or the Woolf Society's—a circumvention of bureaucracy and delay that would be unthinkable today. Pace students ran the registration desk and shepherded people around the single campus building. The MTA provided a free carton of subway maps. Did the Vista Hotel (destroyed on September 11, 2001) give us a block of rooms at a discount? I seem to remember that they did. At some point in 1990, I had gone to the New York Theater Workshop to see Lisa Peterson and David Bucknam's musical version of *The Waves*. I got in touch with them to tell them I was planning a Woolf conference downtown and,

miraculously, Lisa organized a group of actors to come and perform her and David's oratorio *Mrs. Dalloway and the Aeroplane*. As long as we could schedule it in time for the actors to get to their shows on Broadway later that evening, it could work. The performance was extraordinary, and I remember sitting in the dark auditorium listening to the singing, my "eyes full of a hot liquid ([I] did not think of tears at first)."¹ Exhausted, happy that it had worked, that a second annual conference might indeed happen.

¹ Editorial note: Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*.



Attendee

Reflections on the First Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

**Jeanette McVicker
State University of New York at Fredonia**

Between the IVWS panel at the 1990 MLA held in Chicago (and chaired by Marilyn Zucker) and the first annual Virginia Woolf conference organized by Mark Hussey at Pace University the following summer, I was privileged to participate in what I know now to be a unique, sustaining feminist scholarly community. Only a couple years out from my Ph.D. (my dissertation included a chapter on *Mrs. Dalloway*) and new on the tenure track, these two professional events launched my career by introducing me to colleagues who not only provided impeccable models of scholarship and teaching, but also conviviality (I'm channeling Madelyn Detloff here). That first conference particularly yielded many mentors with whom I would eagerly collaborate on future Woolf-related projects, among them Mark Hussey, Vara Neverow, Beth Rigel Daugherty, Jane Lilienfeld, Karen L. Levenback, and Laura Davis. Laura and I would eventually co-edit two volumes of papers from future Woolf conferences (the 7th and 8th), one of the most gratifying professional experiences I have had to this day.

The first conference provided several moments of awe-struck gratitude: that I was participating at a conference with people whose books I'd recently read for my dissertation (e.g., Alex Zwerdling, Nancy Topping Bazin, among many others) was overwhelming for this first-generation college girl...hearing Louise DeSalvo's groundbreaking research on incest was an especially riveting and disturbing moment; seeing Leslie K. Hankins's moving film on Talland House allowed me to visualize Woolf's early life and surroundings for the first time. Though thoroughly out of my league, I was nevertheless welcomed into this remarkable community in ways that not only sustained me personally for what would be many years to come; it altered and expanded my ideas of how to lead a meaningful academic life.

**Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations
2nd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 11-14, 1992
Organizer: Vara Neverow
Southern Connecticut State University
New Haven, Connecticut, USA**

Organizer

The Themes and Variations of the Second Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

**Vara Neverow
Southern Connecticut State University**

Having conspired with Mark Hussey in envisioning the first conference, I decided that my own institution, Southern Connecticut State University, was the logical choice for the next event. Southern is the red-brick "other" university in New Haven (Yale is in the heart of New Haven and, regardless of its title, the University of New Haven is...in West Haven). Southern started as a two-year women's teaching college in 1893, and

its ambience almost a century later still matched up neatly with the miserable conditions of the Oxbridge women's colleges Woolf describes in *A Room of One's Own* (the underfunded campus was not radically transformed by the admission of male students at the point when it evolved into a four-year college that later would offer graduate degrees and eventually be designated as a university in 1983).

Early in the stage of planning the conference, Mark, Morgne (Patricia) Cramer, Donna Risolo (a brilliant graduate student who wrote her master's thesis with me), and I gathered at Morgne's satellite campus of the University of Connecticut (now relocated to a much fancier building in downtown Stamford). We spent six hours mapping out the details of the four-day conference, crafting the call for papers, pondering the possible keynote guests, and considering other nitty-gritty matters. The larger conference committee included, in addition to Mark and Morgne, John Briggs from Western Connecticut State University; Katherine Hill-Miller from Long Island University—C. W. Post Campus; Denise Lynch from Central Connecticut State University; Marcia McGowan from Eastern Connecticut State University; and Beth Rosenberg from New York University.

During the year of preparation for the conference, I worked from my dismal office at Southern. It was 7 x 14 feet with an 11 foot ceiling and a single window facing west with the blazing sun streaming in and no air conditioner (I was told that to get one, I would have to buy it, bring it to campus, and donate it to the university; I never pursued the option). I shared that office with a colleague. Our gray metal desks and chairs were fully military in style. We also shared the phone line with the two professors in the adjacent office—just one phone number allocated to four faculty members. That rotary dial phone in the office dated back to the 1940s and the handset was heavy enough to qualify as a weapon. Oh, and we didn't have an answering machine. As I started to get multiple incoming phone calls about the conference, the ringing annoyed one of the faculty members in the other office, so he refused to take phone numbers and didn't even tell me who had called, which was a bit awkward. When I found out about this situation, I had to wrangle with the administration to get a new phone number for my colleagues since the shared number had been advertised for the conference (and I then had to buy my own phone and answering machine. I even had to purchase a plug to modify the fascinating four-prong outlet in the wall of the office). "What a lark!" it decidedly was not.

But, thanks be, the faculty involved in the then-nascent SCSU Women's Studies program enthusiastically pitched in to help with all aspects of the conference organizing and even the memorabilia (which included t-shirts, imprinted with an image of Woolf on the front and "It's a Woolf thing" on the back). In the early 1990s, the university had a very rewarding but peculiar financial structure where all funds were pooled. There were no budgets or assigned distribution to departments or programs, and money could be spent freely on anything—so I was able to allocate the conference expenses at will. *That* truly was a lark! And, because the Special Olympics was scheduled at the same time as the conference, my SCSU colleagues and I were able to avoid the dilapidated campus setting and host the event at a nearby motel with a relatively large conference room that could be used for the plenaries and the meals, as well as three medium-size rooms that we used for panels.

As the conference approached, there were some rather strange moments about paying for registration. Two that I recall quite vividly were the argument that ensued with a graduate student who thought aspiring scholars should have free access to the conference and an older man who proffered his 12-year-old daughter as a childcare volunteer in exchange for free registration (there were no children present, so that attempt at bartering was moot—and I do think the student ultimately paid). Of course, the weather was lovely (historically very few of the Woolf conferences have ever had bad weather).

Mark's conference had featured one presentation on Woolf and lesbianism (it was Morgne's paper). In our brainstorming for the conference, Morgne suggested we include "lesbian" as one of the

suggested topics in the CFP for the conference, and the number of proposals that flooded in was quite impressive. Ultimately there were four panels focused on the topic, and many of those papers were included in the *Selected Papers* that followed. Apparently, "if you build it, it will come" is something to keep in mind for future conferences.

I have no memory of the meals or even the menu for the banquet, but I know we had both the caffeine and tasty munchies that should always be offered during the essential thirty-minute breaks between panels. That long break was something I had enjoyed at a Utopian Studies conference in Kentucky in 1989—and I made sure it was integrated into my own conference. The pause between sessions is not a waste of precious conference time; it's a form of inspiration, a chance to converse about the presentations that have just ended, and an invaluable opportunity to mingle, meet, and make new friends.

At the conference I met both Jean Moorcroft Wilson and Isota Tucker Epes for the first time. At the Saturday night, there were live performances (note for all future organizers: there always must be at least one performance at a Woolf conference!). The first was *Two Together: Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell*, written by Dianna MacLeod and directed by Ellen McNally. It was followed by the after-dinner performance: "Virginia's Friends . . .," organized by Marilyn Zucker. I think the script drew on the series of 1969 interviews on BBC radio, and I recall that Jean performed the role of one of the servants who worked for Woolf. Jean has continued to participate in the conferences over the years and her husband, Cecil Woolf (who came to Bonnie Kime Scott and Ann Ardis's 1999 Woolf conference), began to attend regularly starting with the 2007 conference organized by Madelyn Detloff and Diane Royer where he spoke at the dinner. His charismatic presence was greeted with raucously wonderful enthusiasm, and he continued to speak each year until 2017 (Mark Hussey presented Cecil's speech at the 2018 conference because Cecil was not well enough to come to Canterbury).

Themes and Variations was the first Woolf conference that the amazing Isota attended, and, though her work was not in the program, she was able to display the slides of her paintings during one of the breaks. I think that Jane Lilienfeld, who had bravely opted to host the third conference at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, must have immediately seized the moment. She definitely invited Isota to exhibit her extraordinary work the following year.

Jane Marcus was a vivid presence at my conference . . . and she was fully Jane Marcus in every possible way. It was also the first time that I met lovely Georgia Johnston. Unforgettably, as the last day of the conference wound down, J. J. Wilson gave me a full set of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* from its inception in Fall 1973 to the Spring 1992 issue.

In the aftermath of the conference, Mark and I coedited the conference papers. We had also collaborated on the first volume, and we decided to change the subtitle from "*Proceedings*" to "*Selected Papers*" for the second conference. That phrasing was retained until Clemson University Digital Press shifted to the Clemson University Press and paired up with Liverpool University Press. The volumes now focus on longer in-depth essays rather than a representative range of works and are published two years after the conference rather than the following year.

That motel, formerly the Quality Inn, is still there—with a different name. It's somewhat more worn and derelict than it had been in the 1990s, but it's still open to guests. And, as Mark and I wrote at the end of our Preface to the *Selected Papers* from the conference, for me, "there are [still] ghosts that wander gently through this parking lot and hotel like the ethereal visitors of 'A Haunted House'" (15).¹

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¹ Published in Virginia Woolf's *A Haunted House and Other Stories* in 1921.



Attendee

A View of a Woolf Conference from the Outside

Heather Levy

Western Connecticut State University

I was a graduate student in Montreal when I attended the Virginia Woolf Conference hosted by Southern Connecticut State University and organized by Vara Neverow. The atmosphere was welcoming. It was scorching for June, and I went swimming after the first day of sessions with Elizabeth Lambert and Eileen Barrett, and now, decades later, I continue to admire their scholarship and ethics. I remember standing outside a building with fine marble columns and seeing delegates standing in small groups in the shade during an afternoon break and thinking that something of the future was revealed.

I attended other Virginia Woolf conferences over the years and the convivial atmosphere prevailed. One of the stars over the years was Christine Sizemore. Her insights about Woolf were electric, and she delivered them with remarkable sincerity and humility. I travelled around in my early days and sometimes five or ten years would pass before I made it back to another Woolf conference but whenever I saw her, she was always kind and brilliant. I remember walking with her to a session at another Woolf conference. It was another very hot afternoon, and she was talking about her students with real concern and affection. I did not have any students at that point in my life and I remember thinking that if I ever did, I should try to be as good.

I have settled down for a twenty-five year stretch in Connecticut. I drive past the columns every three or four months. They are not exactly proverbial or Proustian but they retain a flash of a more hopeful time. My greyhound Madison who was once a seventeen-pound puppy in my arms is now limping through what is likely her last summer, gamely attending eight-hour chemotherapy sessions which I hope will help her. I am astounded that some of the admirable Woolf scholars have retired or even died. Time has real weight and I worry about aging without grace or declining into bitterness. It is even possible that despite my faith in innovative medicine, death may not be an optional exercise by the time that I get there.

I remember seeing a copy of the November 1934 portrait of Virginia Woolf by Man Ray in the middle of a book one afternoon when I was a student in Montreal. My room on Rue Marianne faced the south and her image was almost ecstatic. How could someone who hated mirrors sit for a portrait and even agree to wear lipstick? She must have believed him when he said that it would be invisible in the photograph. It was an act of faith in an era of devastating mining accidents, Dust Bowls and massacres by Hitler and Stalin. I have to remember that it was also the year that cat's eyes (reflective road studs) were invented to provide night drivers with a reflected sense of safety. I hope we shall all continue as long.

Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives
3rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 10-13, 1993
Organizer: Jane Lilienfeld
Lincoln University
Jefferson City, Missouri, USA



Organizer

VWC 1993

Jane Lilienfeld
Lincoln University

Lincoln University hosted the Third Annual Virginia Woolf Conference in June of 1993. Lincoln University is an historically Black College, founded "at the close of the Civil War [by] the soldiers and officers

of the 62nd United States Colored Infantry" ("Profile" 10)² "[as an] institution designated for the special benefit of the freed African-Americans" ("Profile" 10). It is appropriate that an institution founded to sustain and further the education of formerly enslaved people should serve as the site for a reconsideration of the work and life of Virginia Woolf; Virginia Woolf's paternal grandfather, James Stephen, was an ardent abolitionist who drafted one of the first anti-slavery bills emancipating those enslaved in British colonies (see Noel Annan, *Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time* [Harvard UP, 1952], 11-13).

The early literary response to Woolf's novels marked her, as Professor J. J. Wilson noted in her keynote speech at the conference, as "a minor lady writer" (Lilienfeld 8). One of the many ways to challenge this view, as the Conference organizers decided, was to call it "Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives" and to expand the contexts in which to examine Woolf's background and published and unpublished work. The various lenses through which to view Woolf's work and life were numerous, including investigations of Woolf's works in context of the novels and essays of African American women writers such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, among others. Further perspectives included discussions of Woolf's works through the lens of science, in context of French feminist theory, and Woolf and bio/psycho/graphies. As I wrote in the Introduction to the volume of *Selected Papers*, "the internationalism of Woolf's readership" was evident when "the Conference welcomed 230 attendees from 26 states and four continents, including participants from Japan, India, England, Wales, Australia, and Canada" (Lilienfeld 9). The internationalism of Woolf Studies was further demonstrated by, for example, Jean Moorcroft Wilson, the wife of Cecil Woolf, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's nephew, who came from London to present a featured talk on "Woolf and Anti-Semitism."

Additionally, Isota Tucker Epes in her own featured presentation explained how "Virginia Woolf brought me up." Epes' paintings were showcased in the University's Memorial Hall, where she and Dr. James Tatum, Professor of Art, hung them to great effect. Epes' "A Reader's Guide to *A Room of One's Own*: Acrylic on Canvas, 36' by 30,'" represented in black-and-white reproduction on page 25 of the *Selected Papers*, shows women writers thinking back through their literary mothers. Epes signifies those whom Virginia Woolf termed "Common Reader," a non-academic, intelligent reader, those readers whom Woolf wanted to reach. Although she had taught for many years, Epes explained that she had studied no formal literary theory as a way to interpret the works of Virginia Woolf. She loved Woolf's works and found them relevant to the meaning she created out of her daily observations (Epes 19-25): "[Thus, in her painting,] I have, in my own fashion, paid tribute to the person most responsible for my upbringing in the best way I was able to devise" (Epes 23).

Similarly, Professor J. J. Wilson demonstrated that her early reading of Woolf's works was informed by almost no literary theory, as almost no academic work existed. She, too, was a "Common Reader" in some respects. Her featured presentation outlines the slow way in which she found others who wished to form a community of readers that would meet and share interpretations of Woolf's works. Wilson's main idea was that we at the conference should not behave as many academics did, via rivalry and competition. Instead, she wished us to continue as a true community. Her challenge to us rings true to the spirit of the Woolf Society and members and the free-standing Conferences: Through rigorous scholarly effort, "let us not be bound by our past readings and indeed why give any energy to putting others down or being competitive with one another [...]" (Wilson 17). Instead, Wilson exhorts us to "fall in love with one another [...]" [L]isten with Simone Weilian attention to one another during these intense few days together" (Wilson 17). How well this exhortation expresses the spirit of the Virginia Woolf Society and our yearly Conferences! And this spirit of community did indeed

² This reference cannot be accessed at this time. Please see the Lincoln University webpages "Our History" and "The Soldiers' Dream" in the Works Cited. These are substituted for the paginated "Profile" and provide similar information.

¹ Jane Lilienfeld passed away on December 24, 2021.

animate our activities, for joy prevailed, not jockeying for competitive advantage. Enacting the community spirit, several scholars presented scenes from Woolf's novels, an event organized by Marilyn Zucker, including Judith Allen, Evelyn Haller, Leslie Hankins, Mark Hussey, Denise Marshall, Vara Neverow, and Jean Moorcroft Wilson.³

As an aspect of the spirit of inclusiveness that is the basis of our community, the Woolf Conferences strive to include undergraduate students. Students presented papers on undergraduate panels. Those Lincoln students who were members of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honors Society, served as "Shepherds" so that the Featured Speakers and panelists always had someone to help them during their participation in the Conference. Additionally, a one-credit undergraduate course that could also be taken for graduate credit followed the proceedings, team-taught by Professors Val Gough of University of Liverpool, England, Mark Hussey of Pace University, Vara Neverow of Southern Connecticut State University, and Ken Luebbering, and Jane Lilienfeld of Lincoln University.

Lincoln University "responded" to the Supreme Court's Brown vs. Board of Education decision by opening its doors to all applicants meeting its entrance criteria. Today Lincoln University "serves a diverse clientele" ("Profile" 10). The integration of the student body has shaped the university as a model of friendship and cordiality among those of different backgrounds and cultures. In this context, issues of race, class, gender, and Empire underpinned much of the discussion of Woolf's work and life (Lilienfeld 7). As part of its mission, Lincoln University offers rigorous training in the Liberal Arts, Business, and the Sciences. In keeping with this mission, the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Philosophy emphasizes the art of writing, and, thus, the Woolf Conference stressed the importance of Composition theory in several excellent presentations by, among others, Professor Vara Neverow (Hussey and Neverow 58-65) and A. Deborah Malmud (Hussey and Neverow 121-26).

Highlights of the Conference included Professor Barbara Christian's "chronicling Morrison's life as an African American woman graduate student studying Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner in the 1950s at Cornell University and after" (Lilienfeld 8). In Professor Christian's "electrifying yet unsentimental narrative, Woolf and Morrison conversed, synthesized one another's works, raised divergent yet interrelated questions, moved forward to inspire other writers differently" (Lilienfeld 8). Carrying on this inspection of the interconnected voices of Woolf and Morrison, Professor Eileen Barrett compared and contrasted the war veterans Shadrack and Septimus in her talk, "Woolf and Morrison Envision the Madness of War," while Professor Ann Harris discussed "Woolf and Morrison: Moments from the Critical Dialogue" (Hussey and Neverow 26-38). Michelle Cliff's brilliant critique of Empire revealed that, "in racial matters, Woolf's vision was narrowed by her own class and racial privilege" (Lilienfeld 9). Elizabeth Abel "synthesized some of the many themes of the Featured Events panels" (Lilienfeld 9) and "moved from Woolf's and [Alice] Walker's essays into a discussion of the imperialist women whose unthinking enactment of the racial subtexts of her own culture is fictionalized and scrutinized in all of Woolf's novels" (Lilienfeld 9).

This conference was made possible by the hard work of the members of the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Philosophy, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Rosemary Hearn, and, in particular, by the efforts of Professor Ann Harris and numerous student workers, among them Ms. Angela Aggison, and many other indefatigable student workers. Dr. Krista Ratcliffe of the University of Missouri-Columbia, now at Marquette University, chaired the Off-Site Local Arrangements Committee and "worked tirelessly to raise money, organize and coordinate mailings, and to publicize and help organize the Conference" (Lilienfeld 10). Without the generous monetary and in-kind donations of numerous area businesses, local and international universities such as William Woods University, the

University of Missouri-Columbia, the James Joyce Foundation of Ohio State University, and the Virginia Woolf Society of Japan, the conference would not have been possible. Notably, Krystyna Colburn of Somerville, MA, loaned generous conference seed money to Lincoln University. Too, Krystyna organized the-much-enjoyed silent auction fund-raising activity (Lilienfeld 10).

Contributing to the pleasure of the conference, the weather was beautiful, with sunny (if humid) days and splendid sunsets. In those days, the idea of the now-evident Climate Crisis was not widespread, but three weeks after the end of the Conference, the 500-year flood inundated the state of Missouri, a harbinger of increasing natural disasters. One might say that, as always, Virginia Woolf was thus in the vanguard of events that signaled cultural paradigm shifts.

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Attendee

Lincoln University Woolf Conference

Eileen Barrett

California State University, East Bay

On or about June 10th, 1993, Woolf scholars began to arrive in Jefferson, Missouri, for three days of panels, featured events, meetings, and conversations on emerging perspectives in the writings of Virginia Woolf. We were the guests of eminent scholar Jane Lilienfeld, known for her groundbreaking feminist interpretations of *To the Lighthouse*, who welcomed us to her campus. Established in 1866 by the Colored Infantry, Lincoln University was founded for the education of freed African Americans. How appropriate that the third annual Woolf conference, dedicated to the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, should take place on an HBCU campus. In his talk about its history, Gary Kremer drew parallels between Anna Julia Cooper, who had taught at Lincoln from 1906-1910, and Woolf, who during the same period had been teaching working-class students at Morley College.

Students were central to the conference. They were there to register, assist, and herd us about the campus. Undergraduates and graduate students presented papers, and panelists highlighted pedagogy and analyzed rhetoric, classical structure, audience, and compositional practice throughout Woolf's essays. How lucky we were to share Woolf with other teacher-scholars for, as J. J. Wilson reminded us, studying Woolf had been a lonely pursuit in the 60s until she discovered signatures in the Berg collection logbook at the New York Public Library. With her usual verve, J. J. described inviting all whose names she found to meet at the MLA in 1970, a gathering that brought together scholars of Woolf and planted the seeds for the Woolf Society. We are all, after all, as the late Isota Tucker Epes affirmed with her personal narrative about an education in Woolf, students of Woolf. How wonderful as well that Isota's Woolf-inspired paintings graced the walls of Memorial Hall. As Isota told us, "Hang ten paintings on the walls of a single room and there they all are, insisting on their presence with line and color, darks and lights, complementing and contrasting one with another, sometimes sparring and battling" (23).

Highlights from the conference included discussions of Woolf, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker; Woolf and Imperial discourses; Woolf and aesthetics; and Woolf's feminism. Panelists analyzed how Woolf critiques empire and class; uses laughter to dismantle patriarchy in the private and public spaces, and disrupts gendered assumptions. We discussed the new biographies of Woolf, spatial poetics, lesbian sexuality, and Woolf's relationship to numerous other writers. It was enough to set any Woolf scholar's brain on fire.

³ Editorial note: An early version of the Woolf Society Players.

Today, as we read Woolf through the lens of the Black Lives Matter movement, I especially remember the featured events with the late Michelle Cliff and the late Barbara Christian. Speaking compassionately about the brilliance of Woolf's writing, Michelle insisted we confront the racist imagery that mars and stunts Woolf's genius, the image, to cite Michelle's example, of Orlando "slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the rafters" (Cliff 96). With references to racist comments in Woolf's private writing, Michelle effectively and powerfully illustrated how "Racism flattens the imagination. It makes the creative, uncreative" (99).

Michelle's questions about the beheaded Moor remain with me, "Is Woolf, the daughter of the Victorian tea table, who learned the racial attitudes of her time and place, able to see the African? To have tears in her eyes? What is captured in her mind's eye, she who had imagined him?" (98).

Barbara Christian imagined what might have been in the mind's eye of Toni Morrison when she read Woolf in the 1950s. Could Woolf have realized that while she had to kill the angel in the house, Morrison had to "kill the mammy in the Big House"? (167). "What did Virginia mean when she used the term 'woman writer'? Was she speaking about you?" (167), Barbara wondered. Woolf may have wanted to expand the subject of women's writing beyond romantic love to include "poetry, dreams, imagination" (175), but Barbara illustrated how, "In [Morrison's] world, love is not so much romance as it is primal 'risk,' and 'freedom,' incapable of being completely contained" (175).

Woolf conferences often take place at small liberal arts or public institutions, where funding is limited and resources stretched. Yet with thoughtful preparation, stimulating sessions, unforgettable events, and thrilling conversations Jane Lilienfeld overcame these obstacles and inspired a new generation of readers, writers, and scholars of Woolf to, in Barbara's words, "read and write in layered rhythms" (175).

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Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf
4th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 9-12, 1994
Organizer: Paul Connolly
Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, USA

◆ ◆ ◆

Organizer

4th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Paul Connolly
Bard College

Paul Connolly, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of Humanities and director of the College's Institute for Writing and Thinking at Bard College, organized the Fourth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, titled "Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf" held in June 1994. He died in 1998.

Attendee

Scraps and Fragments of Memory from the Fourth Conference

Karen Levenback

When AnneMarie Bantzing first asked me to contribute to this special issue of the *Miscellany* celebrating thirty years of Woolf Conferences, my response was immediate and enthusiastic, the more so perhaps because, having seen my name appearing in the earliest *Selected Papers*, she wanted me to concentrate on those that have—and in particular one that had—a special significance to me. It was, she explained, the "personal touch" that she was after, special memories—and what I saw as the distinct scraps and fragments of memories recalled by one conference or another.

Scraps and fragments largely define what is left after so many conferences over so many years. What makes memories of a conference special? One might begin with the papers and there have been many memorable papers delivered at Woolf conferences through the years, as one can see in the volumes of *Selected Papers* (particularly those that include the conference program)—and of these my most memorable may be the 10th at UMBC—where one of my students, Katie Marts, was on the panel I assembled on teaching *A Room of One's Own*. Or the panel Beth Daugherty and I assembled ("Editing and Edited: Woolf in the Classroom") at the Denver Conference (#18), and my own paper on using holographs in teaching Woolf. Or the roundtable/panel assembled to honor Cecil Woolf and his Monographs—just two days before he died on 29 June 2019.

But Woolf conferences are memorable for more than the papers. The torrential rain at the 8th conference in St. Louis—and unflappable cool of organizer Georgia Johnston through it all—like that of Jeanne Dubino during the 7th Conference at Plymouth State, as motorcycles roared and sputtered through town en route to a simultaneous gathering. My husband Michael and I both remember following Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson up the steep hill (which seemingly seemed steeper to me than to Cecil and Jean) to the conference at the University of Glasgow for the 21st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, where I organized a plenary on "Approaches to War and Peace in Woolf." Scraps and fragments like these are so much a part of the experience of a Woolf Conference that isolating one requires a special discipline and a volume of *Selected Papers* from the conference to recall to mind what was forgotten and so many of these volumes themselves begin with a question from the organizers/editors.

So—where to begin? Scrap or fragment? Let us begin twenty-five years ago, after J. J. Wilson, Jerome Ford, and I drove in a big Lincoln Continental (with a car phone—no cells in those days) on the New Jersey Turnpike from DC to the beautiful campus of Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, for the 4th Annual Conference: Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf. But—what made this conference memorable? Let me count the ways. First—it was only the fourth—but the first (and only one of the thirty) that had been organized by a renowned Humanities Professor—Paul Connolly—who was not a Woolf specialist, which added to the uniqueness of the event—for example, of the four keynotes, only one was a "Woolf scholar," but in keeping with the theme—each was a reader of Woolf.¹ Secondly—the trip to Val-Kill, where Eleanor Roosevelt lived, right after the plenary by Blanche Wiesen Cook (on Eleanor Roosevelt and Virginia Woolf), immediately following registration, on the first day. Then, there was the panel put together on the spot by J. J.—with Stuart Clarke and me and several others remembering our first involvements with Woolf.² Then, fourthly, my own paper on Virginia Woolf and Civilian Immunity, on a panel organized by Wayne Chapman, that included both Jean Moorcroft

¹ In addition to Blanche Wiesen Cook, there were Sara Ruddick, Joan Bolker, and Woolf scholar Patricia Laurence.

² My participation on the panel was not revealed to me until we arrived at the assigned room. (J. J. subsequently sent me a couple of snapshots—which I will give to the IVWS archive at the University of Toronto.)

Wilson and Evelyn Haller. And finally the banquet, where I remember J. J. waiting tenaciously until after the President's address at the banquet to propose a toast to my soon-to-be husband, Michael Neufeld, and me as we left the next day to be married in a gazebo, overlooking Sandy Bay (near Bradley Wharf, "Motif #1": "the world's most recognizable fishing shack") at Rockport, Massachusetts, amidst lobster traps and intermittent fog, and scraps and fragments of memory.³

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"Rockport, MA motif #1." Google. 24 August 2019.

³ I have no memory of what was said, but Paul Connolly includes the toast itself in his description of the banquet in his Introduction to the *Selected Papers*.

Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts
5th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 15-18, 1995
Organizer: Beth Rigel Daugherty
Otterbein College
Westerville, Ohio, USA



5th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, 1995

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

Rereading the introduction to the *Selected Papers* from the fifth conference, with its dialogue snippets sprinkled throughout, took me back: what a crazy, swirling, cacophonous, demanding, marvelous party it was! Full of what I had hoped and planned for: lots of conversation.

What I remember:

- my thrill at having Woolfians come to Otterbein!
- the support of so many people around campus, from a small summer conferences staff to custodial services, from food service to business office, from academic affairs to the English Department. I was so lucky. Everyone, and I mean everyone, worked with me to make the party happen, and I knew then what I still know, I simply could not have done it without them.
- the work of Melissa LaFayette, my volunteer intern; what a force of nature! She kept everything organized and moving, working with a complex database, answering email and making phone calls, distilling messes into coherent lists, checking in with me, overseeing other students, on and on and on. I saw her blossom into a colleague.
- all the student volunteers who made it easy for presenters, attendees, and me.
- the whirlwind of inundating, constant, insane details: the late arriving person who discovered she had no sheets in her dorm room after staff had gone home—a friend dashed to her close-by home to get some; arranging transportation for someone after the school bus shuttles had ended for the day—getting a taxi in Westerville was *not* easy; being expected to have the wherewithal to glue a heel back on a shoe at 10 pm! The desire that everyone have a good time at the party, multiplied to the nth degree, becomes an internal pressure cooker fueled by adrenaline. Only years later did I realize it took me almost two years to recover. As I confessed to Gary, my partner, "I learned *so* much, [...] and I hope I never have to use any of it again!"
- the eye and skill of Kate Gorman, who created lovely Bloomsbury/Omega Workshop-looking green designs for brochures, flyers, posters, cups, bags, and T-shirts.

—the consistent, steady help, and advice of past organizers—thank heavens for them!—but even so, a lot was new, a lot had to be created on the fly.

—when Louise DeSalvo's last-minute stress fracture meant she could not come to discuss and read from *Vertigo* (two featured events), the incredible dedication and generosity of Marilyn Brownstein, Jane Lilienfeld, David Eberly, Toni McNaron, and Christine Froula who, in a day and a half, put together remarks and a roundtable on responses to Louise DeSalvo's *The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, and of Mary Beth Pringle who wrote a moving memoir in two and a half days (!) to join Jean Moorcroft Wilson, Toni McNaron, and Alicia Ostriker for the Woolf and Contemporary Women's Memoirs/Readings evening.

—the common reader, student/teacher, and conversation focus.

—the 60s/70s Woolf scholars, some no longer with us, who kindly agreed to share, either in writing or in person, their experiences of working on Woolf when that was a lonely endeavor indeed; their memorable roundtable was what I was proudest of, along with having two local book clubs hold their meetings on *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway* in public.

—my workaholic conference schedule—breakfast at 7am and evening receptions at 10 or 11pm so we could hold concurrent panels to six per time slot and allow half an hour between sessions.

—my huge financial mistake: misunderstanding what I was told, I charged participants for one set of towels when they should have paid for three; unfortunately, Wayne Chapman's conference at Clemson bore the cost of that mistake....

—the complaint that turned into a compliment. Located northeast of Columbus, Westerville was "dry"—it has an important role in temperance history (see Ken Burns)—which meant few nice places existed uptown for evening meals. The campus was also dry, which meant dorm attendees got to pretend to be college students in more ways than one! Because getting anywhere nice to eat required a car and taxis were few and far between, all meals were on campus, even the banquet. Continental breakfasts and snacks were in the classroom building lobby, but box lunches and dinners were in the cafeteria where we sat around rectangular tables. The food was great and offered some choice (though we had to warn meat eaters, who "forgot" what they had ordered, to leave the vegetarian options alone!); and the conversation was wonderful, continuing what began in sessions. Virginia Woolf was, as she often is, right: "a good dinner is of great importance to good talk. One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well" (AROO 18). Participants uniformly praised the sense of community fostered by the conference, but ironically, circumstances we didn't like (no wine) had a great deal to do with that: we had to walk together to meals that we then had to sit down together to eat, all the while talking, welcoming, asking, following up, pondering, sharing, and laughing, and then we had to get up and walk to the next thing—where else was there to go?!

Observations to share:

- location and context determine much of what a host/institution can, cannot do.
- campus support (or lack thereof) determines even more what can and cannot be done.
- topical or thematic strands running through a program help attendees plan, but no matter what, they sometimes want to be two or three places at once!
- people who volunteer to host a conference are 1) crazy, 2) dedicated, 3) patient, 4) crazy. But also 1) blessed, 2) richly rewarded, 3) grateful. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to throw a party for people who care about Virginia Woolf as much as you do—what could be more glorious than that?



Attendee

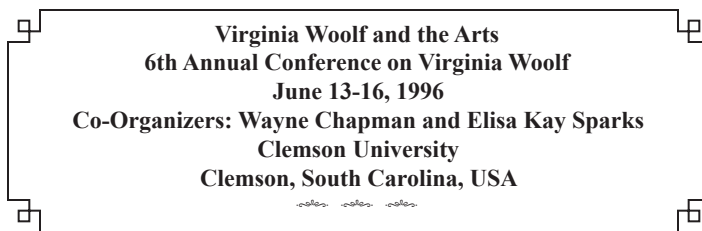
Memories of the Fifth Conference

Elizabeth Lambert

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Emeritus

As I fit that plug into the wall and listen in to the past, traces of emotions from 1995 do come back but specific memories elude me. One trace was my surprise and dismay, which amused me even then, that Westerville, Ohio, was a dry town—no alcohol allowed. Someone with a car and directions to a nearby town helped solve that problem. Another trace was the gracious presence of Beth Rigel Daugherty, who hosted the conference. Nearly 25 years later her warmth and kindness during those days stand out in my mind.

The theme of the conference, “Texts and Contexts,” called forth a variety of presentations that I wish I could recall, but until my recent look at the *Selected Papers* from the conference, I didn’t even remember the topic of my own paper correctly. Clearly, scholarship wasn’t foremost in my mind. The general buzz and slight giddiness of hearing new ideas have persisted across time, along with the excitement of seeing friends from earlier conferences. To me, it was a party full of smart people with a common love of Virginia Woolf.



Co-Organizers

The Sixth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Wayne Chapman and Elisa Kay Sparks
Clemson University, Emeriti

Co-organized by myself and Elisa Kay Sparks, Clemson University’s conference became the first in the South in the US. It remains one of the most thoroughly preserved conferences in a published volume of 45 complete papers, 11 abstracts, entitled *Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (illustrated), ed. Diane F. Gillespie and Leslie K. Hankins (Pace UP, 1997), as well as a special themed issue of *The South Carolina Review* 29.1 (Fall 1996), on the 11 plenary presentations featured under the title “Virginia Woolf International.” The latter became, until recently, the first of four themed sites maintained on the internet by Clemson University Press. The theme “Virginia Woolf and the Arts” allowed the host institution to show off new facilities such as the Robert Howell Brooks Center for the Performing Arts (the main conference site) and the Madren Center. Besides the broad focus on Virginia Woolf as a writer, for 50 concurrent sessions over four days, the conference embedded within it a symposium on the reception of Woolf internationally, which was assisted by Jane Marcus, its primary inspiration and one of its dozen featured speakers.

The perspective of this first-ever international symposium on Woolf ranged from the USA to the UK, Europe, and the Far East. Speaking to the issue of her reception in North America, Marcus and Susan Stanford Friedman helped launch the symposium and conference after an important keynote address by Jean Moorcroft Wilson (the wife of Cecil Woolf) on the Woolf family perspective. Biography, literary criticism, and feminist and other politics were prominent in the formal presentations and informal discussions led by these and other symposium participants. England, Woolf’s homeland, was particularly well represented because, paradoxically, her reception there in 1996 was still a divided issue. Surveys of British criticism, of biographical perspectives (old ones seen in light of forthcoming new biographies), of the textual

issues of canonicity and ethics in the complicated post-copyright world outside the United States, are all matters that British scholars Sybil Oldfield, Marion Shaw (represented by David Bradshaw), and Julia Briggs put before nearly 250 conferees from an impressive array of nations. Thereafter, European perspectives of Woolf in Scandinavia (especially Sweden), Germany, and France were given, respectively, by Catherine-Sandbach-Dahlström, Vera and Ansgar Nünning, and Pierre-Eric Villeneuve. As the fifth symposium session dealt with the exotic, problematic case of communist China’s response to Woolf—particularly remarkable considering the difficulty that all non-European translators face in her Modernist experiments with English language genres and considering the crackdown on Western literature in China during the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s—scholars Patricia Laurence, Melba Cuddy-Keane, and Kay Li bore witness to the irrepensible appeal of Virginia Woolf well beyond her own geographic region.

On the whole, perhaps, there was an Anglo-American bias not unlike that of the eurocentricity of Modernism itself, and we did not have the confrontation that was overdue between the American side of the “Woolf industry” and the more reactionary side of English opinion. Thus, it was hoped that yet another meeting, possibly on English soil, might take place to confront such differences. In the free-discussion period that closed the Sixth Annual conference, participants acknowledged, however, that an important, if practical beginning had been made in the reassessment of Woolf’s artistry in international terms—that her readers elsewhere (say, in the Ukraine or Latin America) might be heard after this. So much the better that a significant share of the content of this conference (more than 550 pages) was captured for dissemination in *The South Carolina Review* and in Diane F. Gillespie and Leslie K. Hankins’s edited volume of the Virginia Woolf Conference’s *Selected Papers* series (eventually transferred to Clemson University Press in 2003 and now published in collaboration with the Liverpool University Press).

Some of the more ephemeral highlights of the conference were the premiere of the film *The War Within: A Portrait of Virginia Woolf*, followed by discussion with directors John Fuegi and Jo Francis; the Ethel Smyth and Dominick Argento/Virginia Woolf music recital (ushered by the second through fourth verses of Smyth’s “The March of the Women”); a staged reading of *Freshwater* with a brief informance by Lucio Ruotolo (who had published an edited version in 1976); and library exhibitions on the making of *Flush: A Biography* by the students of a concurrent class entitled “Virginia Woolf and Her World” and on selected photography by Julia Margaret Cameron. All wonderful creations made public by multiple hearts and minds and hands.



Attendee

Virginia Woolf and the Arts: The Sixth Annual Conference

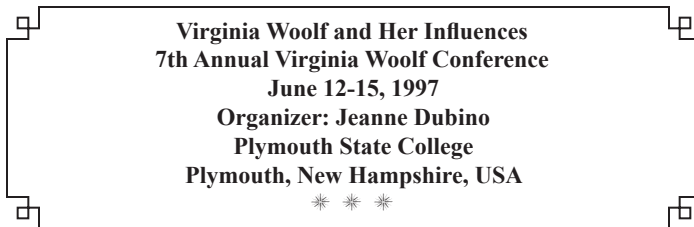
Diane F. Gillespie

Washington State University, emerita

The Sixth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf (June 13-16, 1996), “Virginia Woolf and the Arts,” was co-hosted capably by Wayne Chapman and Elisa Kay Sparks. Since I had known Wayne since he was doing his PhD work at Washington State University, I enjoyed seeing him in this Clemson University/Woolf Conference setting. For a concurrent Symposium on the Reception of Virginia Woolf, he brought in thirteen international speakers. Jane Marcus and Julia Briggs who both spoke at the conference are regrettably no longer with us. The five plenaries didn’t follow the arts emphases of the many less formal panels—five to seven to choose from in a single time slot! They didn’t mesh with the exciting arts events—photography (Julia Margaret Cameron), music (Dominick Argento and Ethel Smyth), drama (*Freshwater*), and film (Fuegi and Francis’s *The War Within: A Portrait of Virginia Woolf*). Still, the symposium defined complexities and disparities in Woolf’s reputation and treatment that are still evolving.

In 1996 I was in my fifties and no young, unpublished scholar. There were the usual worries about pre-power-point slide technology for my presentation of “Photography and Constructions of the ‘I’: Virginia Woolf and Bernard Shaw.” Our panel (including Helen Wussow and Krystyna Colburn) went well. Permissions for the visuals would have been elusive, however, and more younger scholars deserved inclusion in the *Selected Papers* Leslie K. Hankins and I went on to co-edit. It’s the one conference paper I’ve never published.

Never having been to South Carolina before, I travelled around a bit afterwards. In retrospect, I am struck by the number of people who were there who are still conference regulars, but also by the number who have since died. Then there are those, some still productive scholars, who have vanished from the Woolf conference scene. I wonder why. All those lost papers, connections and conversations!



Organizer

The Seventh Conference

Jeanne Dubino

Appalachian State University

The Seventh Annual Virginia Woolf Conference, “Virginia Woolf and Her Influences,” was held on June 12-15, 1997, at Plymouth State College (now University) in Plymouth, New Hampshire. That also happened to be the annual motorcycle week, billed as “The World’s Oldest Motorcycle Rally.” Naturally, the amazing organizing committee and I decided that we must feature Woolf on a motorcycle, with Pinka¹ riding shotgun in the sidecar, as the cover art (thank you, Bill Megenhardt!). Plymouth greeted us all with a banner welcoming “Bikers and Scholars” draped across Main Street. The entire town and college threw themselves into the conference: the movie theater showed Marleen Gorris’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, the local (and college) bookstore dedicated itself to all material Woolfian objects, and the town library set up reading groups. The college’s art gallery featured sculptures and prints by Suzanne Bellamy, who came all the way from Australia for her first of many Woolf conferences. Stephen Pelton staged his *Death of the Moth* along with Joan Wiegers’s and Paul Rogalus’s *Dances with Woolf*. The conference abounded with multiple genres and media. There were documentaries, such as John Fuegi and Jo Francis’s *The War Within: A Portrait of Virginia Woolf* (1995) and Joseph Christopher Schaub’s *Waves of Pure Lemon*; displays of Quentin Bell’s books and memorabilia (thanks to Edward Hungerford); and periodicals and magazines in which Woolf’s articles and essays first appeared (thanks to Linda Langham); representations of Woolf in popular culture (thanks to Bert Yarborough); *Major Authors on CD-ROM: Virginia Woolf* by Primary Source Media;² and more.

As I peruse the program, I am awed by the number—there were more than 250 conferees—and names of those who attended. The keynotes included Joanne Trautmann Banks, Gillian Beer, Hermione Lee (whose landmark biography had just been published), Beth Daugherty, Maxine Kumin, and Brenda Silver. There were four featured panels that did not have as much competition as the concurrent panels, but as I look at all the sessions, including the featured ones, I am reminded of scholarship, ideas, and conversations that swirled around. Many conferees responded

¹ Editorial note: Pinka, a Cocker Spaniel, was given to Virginia Woolf by Vita Sackville-West. The dog was featured on the cover of the first edition of *Flush*.

² One of the most invaluable resources on Woolf I have ever used that, alas, is now incompatible with most platforms.

directly to the theme of the conference, with multiple panels on influences on Woolf and her influences on other writers, but other topics included psychological, philosophical, medical, religious, lesbian, theoretical, biographical, creative, pedagogical, and popular cultural approaches to Woolf. Two panels featured high school students, including one titled “Elizabeth Dalloway Talks Back: Students and the *Mrs. Dalloway* Experience.”

The conference excursion was a tour of the Augustus Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, just over an hour away from Plymouth. Though, with its setting in the foothills of the White Mountains, Plymouth itself is a tourist destination, there are not that many hotels right next to campus, and so most conferees stayed on campus. The residence halls tended to be spare, but the food was plentiful! I took heed from past conference organizers who emphasized the importance of providing food, and so I did. Conferees came from all over the world, and, as I look back, I realize how much work it took for them to attend. Many flew into Boston’s Logan International Airport and from there took a two-hour bus ride or rented cars and drove to the middle of New Hampshire. I remember greeting Madelyn Detloff and others late at night because the college had shut down. Fortunately, the weather cooperated and above all, so did the campus community—the faculty and above all the students, without whose help Woolf conferences could never be as rich as they are. The conference was a great hit with the college and the town; for years I was asked when I was going to hold the next Woolf conference. That mantle was for others to pick up, and it continues to be thrilling to see how each conference builds on the previous ones, just as “Virginia Woolf and Her Influences” was influenced by the first six conferences.



Attendee

**An Annual Virginia Woolf Conference Memory:
Virginia Woolf and Her Influences, Plymouth State College,
Plymouth, NH**

Celia Marshik

Stony Brook University

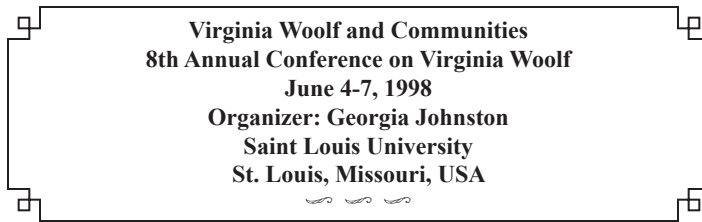
The conference at Plymouth State College, organized by Jeanne Dubino, doubtless featured many wonderful plenaries, papers, and performances that have since been forgotten. Thankfully, we have the *Selected Papers* from Virginia Woolf and Her Influences (1998) to preserve some of the work presented there. When I think back to that meeting in June 1997, a single event remains vivid: Dubino arranged for a screening of Marleen Gorris’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. The movie had not yet been generally released in the United States, so this was the first opportunity to view it for many attendees.

I recall the assembled Woolf scholars walking en masse to the small, local cinema that screened it. We know wolves move in packs, and on this occasion, it felt like Wolves did as well. We chatted away after entering the theater, but when the lights dimmed, we were quickly hushed. I had the sense that everyone in attendance was rapt from the title sequence to the credits. And though we all knew that Woolf’s novel didn’t end with Clarissa dancing with Peter, tears streamed down my face, and the faces of many others, as we left the building, conversation quickly resuming.

In the hours and days that followed, I recall hearing many criticisms as well as celebrations of the film. Was Vanessa Redgrave too old to play Clarissa? Did it matter that the film provided more satisfying closure to Peter and Clarissa’s relationship than did Woolf’s original? Were passages crucial to understanding Woolf’s novel omitted in its adaptation to the screen? These and other matters were debated between panels and before dinners. For my part, I was planning to be married two weeks

after the conference ended, and the visualization of Clarissa's choice of suitor, as well as her musings on a possible life with Peter Walsh, were completely moving. Did I still want to get married, my advisor, Christine Froula, asked? Perhaps inappropriately for the Woolfian setting, I could only answer by citing the last words of *Ulysses*: "yes I said yes I will Yes"¹

¹ Editorial note: There is no period at the end of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.



Organizer

8th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Georgia Johnston
Saint Louis University

Georgia Johnston organized the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, Virginia Woolf and Communities. The event was hosted by Saint Louis University in June 1998. Georgia was a gifted scholar, a brilliant teacher, a valued colleague, and a dear friend of many Woolfians. She served as President of the International Virginia Woolf Society from 2009-2011. She died in 2017. Those who knew Georgia will always cherish their memories of her and remember her presence, her sense of humor, her profound kindness, her gentleness, and her grace. Those who did not know her will appreciate her insightful scholarly work. Issue 91 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* includes a bibliography of her work (pages 14-15; <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/vwm91spring2017.pdf>) and links to an obituary from her university (<https://www.slu.edu/news/announcements/2017/march/georgia-k-johnston-obituary.php>) and to Paula Maggio's remembrance on *Blogging Woolf* (<https://bloggingwoolf.org/2017/03/22/in-memoriam-georgia-johnston/>). Issue 94 of the *Miscellany* features "A Memorial Cluster in Honor of Dr. Georgia K. Johnson" (pages 8-14; <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/vwm94fall2018winter2019.pdf>).



Attendee

Remembering the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, Saint Louis University (June 4-7, 1998)

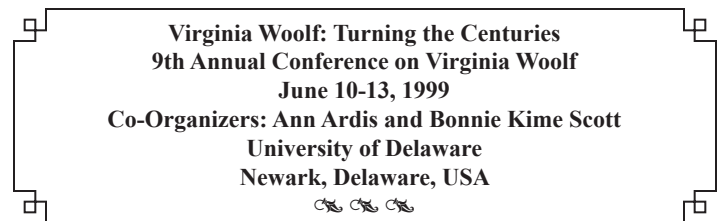
Marlene A. Briggs
University of British Columbia

I attended my first Conference on Virginia Woolf while I was writing my doctoral dissertation at the University of Ottawa, Canada. The theme of the conference hosted by the late Georgia Johnston (1959-2017), "Virginia Woolf and Communities," intersected with my analyses of civilians and veterans in the aftermath of total war in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). The call for papers reads: "Community may be interpreted as national, geographical, pedagogical, sexual, gendered, ideological, economic, racial, cultural, psychoanalytical, colonial, post-colonial." Although I had participated in other academic conferences, this one was special: the living room in my basement apartment showcased oversized portraits of Woolf in a makeshift modernist collage. Her resilience and vulnerability, exemplified by her experimental writings, feminist commitments, and unconventional relationships, resonated powerfully in my own life. I looked forward to inspiring talks by Rachel Bowlby, Christine Froula, and Jane Marcus who had contested received discourses and dominant norms in their feminist reconstructions of Woolf's oeuvre.

On my first trip to the American Midwest, I flew in a small turboprop plane that dipped and dove and looped and lurched in the seriocomic

mode of free indirect discourse in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Unlike Woolf's Londoners who decipher the letters of a skywriting aircraft from the ground, I peered at the illegible traces of the clouds from a cramped window seat. As I careened to my destination, a mood of personal exhilaration vied with a sense of general apprehension. My professional path as a scholar remained uncertain. I stayed in the dormitories at Saint Louis University where I diligently marked the conference program with asterisks and circles. I was amazed by the number of panels and speakers. I still have the orange booklet featuring The Gateway Arch (1968) that commemorates westward colonial expansion on the Mississippi River. I attended sessions on community and politics, madness and sanity, mourning and loss, and narration and narrativity, to name a few. Tuzyline Jita Allan's stimulating address on Woolf and imperialism, to mention one plenary event, examined exclusion as a condition of belonging. Throughout the congress, a subversive ethos often associated the critical reception of Woolf with manifold possibilities for social and political change. In several days, I met Woolfians of all stripes, including the early career scholars Mónica Ayuso, Madelyn Detloff, and Jane Fisher. Subsequently, I have taught essays by critics listed in the program such as Jessica Berman, Karen Levenback, and Judy Suh.

The conference was a formative personal and professional experience. My presentation led to my first publication in the volume of selected conference papers edited by Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (1999), an essay which Michael H. Whitworth highlights in his readers' guide to essential criticism on *Mrs. Dalloway* (2015). In my teaching and research, I revisit the inextricable problems of peace and war that motivated my first conference proposal on Woolf. More broadly, the inclusive and oppositional spirit animating the proceedings in Missouri exceeded the occasion, linking multiple generations across staggered social networks. I vividly recall Georgia Johnston's rapt expression despite her illness during a plenary session at the Fifteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf in Portland (June 9-12, 2005) organized by Rishona Zimring. The radical ethos of the Conference on Virginia Woolf in its various incarnations supports my work as an insider/outsider to the neoliberal public university amidst escalating ecological and institutional crises that call for fundamental reconfigurations of collectivity.



Organizer

The Ninth Conference—The Turning of the Century

Bonnie Kime Scott
San Diego State University, Emerita

Having turned two decades since this conference, whose theme encouraged temporal thoughts, it is revealing to see what remains vivid. I recall the shocking discovery that the University's conference center, including its fine meeting rooms and accommodations, was due for remodeling, just when we wanted to use it. So, we made do with the Student Center, housed some conferees in dorms and some down South College Avenue in motels. Some haven't let me forget that it was extremely warm, especially in the vintage dorms, which despite their Georgian charm lacked air conditioning. My late husband Tom, who loved all Woolfians, found a new vocation providing shuttle service to and from the motels. And word has it that those dorms were lively enough to encourage the attention of the campus constabulary.

My favorite festivity was the "Orlando Costume Ball and Banquet," which christened what was then a brand-new building, Gore Hall, a

much-touted return to grand Georgian architecture. We wound the columns of its showy foyer with yards and yards of purple tulle, and participants went shopping for costume items up and down Newark's Main Street—to the eternal gratitude of the 5 & 10 Cent Store. My personal favorite among the costumes was a group effort at representing the Great Frost. Then there was the gentleman (not in costume) whom everyone took for Peter Walsh. The conference also offered (as part of a dramatic presentation titled “A Synopsis of *Orlando Ever After*”) the only “Rave” I can recall being staged at a Woolf Conference. I saw a different side entirely of a group of treasured graduate students. Another visual treat was an artistic enterprise in which two of our talented artists, Suzanne Bellamy and Isota Tucker Epes, both offered their versions of Lily Briscoe's paintings in *To the Lighthouse*. A print of Suzanne's triptych is among my eclectic art collection to this day.

Putting together a conference volume can be challenging, especially when it comes to grouping potential submissions. Among the clusters that endure for me, in addition to the historical content to be expected from turning a century are “Moving Images” and “Disciplinary Traversals.” The conference also sponsored a lively debate about queer theory and moved well with the field and looked forward to advances in electronic archives.

So much has receded, so much has moved on, in twenty years. This includes me and my invaluable colleague and co-organizer, Ann Ardis. Ann now serves as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University. I left Delaware for California in 2001, joining the Department of Women's Studies at San Diego State University, and I am actively retired. The Woolf network helped bring Julia Briggs to a keynote role in the conference; she became a valuable collaborator for the anthology I edited, *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections*. We lost her in 2007 but retain her fine biography of Woolf. Also gone are Cecil Woolf, who stayed with my neighbors next door, Isota Tucker Epes, and the second keynote, Ntozake Shange, who shared her experiences teaching Woolf and her sense of “history without an omniscient narrator.” Even that fancy building we couldn't use for the conference is now scheduled for demolition. But the field of Woolf Studies remains strong, now headed by some who made their early contributions in Delaware. And the 5 & 10 lives on.



Attendee

Virginia Woolf: Turning the Centuries
University of Delaware, 10 to 13 June 1999

Lesley Higgins
York University

Conferences typically have three main affordances: the papers one is privileged to hear; the people one meets, often for the first time; and the pleasures of the place. I arrived a day early for the 9th annual Woolf conference, along with my friend and co-presenter Marie-Christine Leps, so that we could visit the Delaware Art Museum and enjoy its splendid collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Also on display and entirely new to us was the gorgeous *Persian Window* installation by Dale Chihuly, glassmaker and sculptor, and his *White Sea Form* (five undulating glass “baskets” nested one inside the other). Throughout the Woolf conference, I kept thinking about these two different kinds of aesthetic expressions—the hyper-realism of the Pre-Raphaelites and the vivid, medium-defying formations of Chihuly and his associates—and the ways in which they instantiate the pressures, both personal and cultural, to define an era's avant-garde. They also reminded me of how much Woolf's writings function as a “hinge” (to borrow a key motif from *Mrs. Dalloway*) between past artistic practices and a series of present innovations.

The presentations that immediately stood out were, not surprisingly, the ones that would contribute significantly to new directions in Woolf scholarship for the coming decade (or two). Melba Cuddy-Keane's

exacting scholarship was focused on the contentious issue of “literary value,” which, among male modernists, was too often a cudgel to be wielded against Woolf and her female peers. Thanks to Stephen Ramsay, Woolf's Hellenism was spotlighted, another way in which her texts were and are poised between—and connect—the endeavors of her Victorian predecessors (Walter Pater, especially) and the now-emerging possibilities of a world literature approach to her canon. Despite the excellent transcription and editorial work of Susan Dick (for *To the Lighthouse*) and J. W. Graham (for *The Waves*), few Woolf specialists in the late 1990s were utilizing a textual studies approach. Kathryn Benzel, however, demonstrated what could be learned from tracing the development of “Kew Gardens” from typescript to publication. (Julia Briggs also mentioned Woolf as a “reviser.”)

Pamela Caughie not only brought Woolf and her contemporary Walter Benjamin into dialogue, and asked us to rethink the “aura” of individual works, she demonstrated the links between technologies emerging in the twentieth century and the sensual experiences of everyday life. Several papers, including ours, discussed Woolf and the cinema—not just the challenges of filming her novels but the ways in which Woolf critiqued the new medium's aesthetic possibilities (see “The Cinema,” the 1926 essay in which she suggested that “the film maker must come by his convention, as painters and writers and musicians have done before him,” so that film also has “some relation with the great veins and arteries of our existence” *Essays* [E4 352]).

Several presentations re-evaluated the function of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intertextual gestures in Woolf's canon. Julia Briggs's keynote presentation was memorable for both its argument about “the life” and her engaging delivery. (A panel on Woolf as biographer/biography similarly tried to refreshen the subjects.)

The Delaware Art Museum's incandescent Pre-Raphaelite collection does not include works featuring Woolf's mother, Julia Prinsep Duckworth Stephen, who was a model for Edward Burne-Jones (*The Princess Sabra, The Annunciation*) and George Frederic Watts (and was featured in the experimental photography of her aunt, Julia Margaret Cameron). Woolf's early diaries, however, reveal the social networks connecting her family to the artists (Adrian Stephen, for example, was friends with Burne-Jones's son, Philip); her 1917 essay “The Old Order” demonstrates how to respect Watts and Burne-Jones, George Eliot and Henry James, without succumbing to “an uncritical devotion” (E2 170). As for Chihuly: I think that the author of “Kew Gardens” and *The Waves* would enjoy the undulating surfaces and glowing colors of his vitreous fantasies.

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Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds
10th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 8-11, 2000
Organizer: Jessica Berman
University of Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Organizer

Reflections on the 10th Annual conference on Virginia Woolf
“Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds” 2000

Jessica Berman
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

It's hard to imagine that more than 20 years have passed since I organized the 10th Annual conference on Virginia Woolf: “Virginia

Woolf Out of Bounds” at UMBC. It was such an honor and a privilege to welcome celebrated Woolf students, readers, and scholars from around the world to our campus. I recall being so nervous, as a not-yet-tenured junior faculty person, to be contacting those I had read and revered to ask them to give a talk or join a panel. Not a single person blew me off and very few turned me down—and even then, very kindly. My experience building the conference plenaries confirmed what I already knew—that the Woolf community was, and I hope, still is, extraordinarily welcoming. In fact, it was this welcome I had felt at previous conferences, at MLA panels, and at the Woolf gatherings that accompanied the MLA, which made me want to get more involved and host the conference. I continue to be supremely grateful for this welcome, which began while I was on a protracted search for a full-time position and continued as I moved on in my career. It helped me know I could and should stick with it and that there would be a place for me somewhere in scholarly life. I have tried to pay that forward whenever I can as a legacy from Woolf herself and the many Woolfians who supported me.

It’s hard to conceive now, but I felt the choice of topic “Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds” to be very bold at the time! I wanted particularly to invite interdisciplinary and transnational approaches and to encourage a variety of border crossings at the conference. Beyond many superb talks and roundtable discussions, we had an exciting exhibit of Suzanne Bellamy’s work featuring conversations between Woolf and Gertrude Stein and the late Isota Tucker Epe’s paintings inspired by *The Waves*. I invited a colleague in our Theatre Department to stage Marjorie J. Lightfoot’s adaptation of *The Waves* with a group of undergraduates. That became a very moving and compelling performance. To bring more postcolonial perspectives to the conference, we held a screening of Satyajit Ray’s film *Charulata* (based on Rabindranath Tagore’s story *Nashtanir*). I think those in the room felt deep resonances with *A Room of One’s Own* and the potential for new kinds of international approaches to reading Woolf. Since his novel, *The Hours*, had been a recent Pulitzer winner, I was excited to invite Michael Cunningham to be our closing keynoter. That choice was certainly controversial among the conference committee and attendees (as was the book). But when Cunningham admitted to me that he was nervous to meet real Woolf scholars, I knew it would be ok. (I even forgave him for being late to the morning session when he told me he had been up all night watching a drag competition he had somehow managed to find at the airport hotel!) Beyond the keynotes and other featured talks there were so many great presentations. I look at the program now and see so many names who have continued to play a role in Woolf scholarship in the two decades since then. How lucky those of us at the conference were to be together over those days to learn, share, and connect with each other!



Attendee

**The Woolf Conference
at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

Todd Avery
University of Massachusetts—Lowell

The tenth annual conference initiated me into the wild and wonderful, larking and plunging world of the Virginia Woolf community. It is the community that I have come to treasure most in my academic life, and, as I suspect is the case for so many of us, it looms large in my life in general. Over the years since Baltimore, the members of this community have become friends and comrades modeling how to navigate, through their fierce examples and kind support and stunning brilliance and determined curiosity, the always messy, often tragic, but also magical business of ordinary life. In their introduction to the conference’s *Selected Papers*, Jessica Berman—what a superb host of the event!—and Jane Goldman begin by situating Woolf and her works “on the threshold

of numerous intersecting worlds and disciplines” and reminding us that “she pushes us to cross regional, temporal, and disciplinary boundaries of all kinds” (1). The tenth Woolf conference was my first academic conference out in the world beyond the campus of Indiana University Bloomington, where, in the summer of 2000, I was wholly absorbed in finishing my dissertation on the Bloomsbury Group’s ethical beliefs and commitments and trying to answer a few questions for myself about modernism and radio. I could not have known—I certainly did not foresee—how this conference would be the germ¹ from which grew many meaningful aspects of my life and academic career.

Shaking in my boots, with a combination of excitement and terror—How thrilling to hear all of these scholarly luminaries in verbal action! How frightening to have to actually talk with them as if I knew anything at all about Virginia Woolf! How intimidating to be working on Woolf herself!—I could not have foreseen how this single event would shape my own life and work. Nor did I yet understand how privileged I was, in that June moment, to begin forging relationships with Woolfians who reflexively took me under their lovely wings and created possibilities for which I remain indebted. I could not have foreseen, thanks to Vara Neverow and Karen Levenback, writing regular book reviews or co-editing a special topics section for the *Miscellany*. I couldn’t have anticipated Mark Hussey’s Zooming into my Bloomsbury Group seminar years later in the middle of a pandemic to share his encyclopedic knowledge with yet another generation of young Woolfians. I wouldn’t have dared imagine sharing keynote duties with Jessica Berman at a conference about the BBC in 2017 in London. Jane Goldman, sadly absent from the tenth conference, would become a vigorous supporter of mine in after years and would form a strong bridge across many generations of Woolfians.

As I write this reminiscence, and as I continue to explore the origins of biographical fiction in works by Woolf and her Bloomsbury Group friend Lytton Strachey, I am preparing to lead my students, to whom I strive to bring scraps and fragments of wisdom I’ve garnered from those and myriad other Woolfians across the years, through a discussion on Michael Cunningham’s brilliant, poignant novel *The Hours*. Before the conference’s keynote reading and talk, I was lounging outside in the late-afternoon sunshine, callowly affecting a pose of sublime casualness and ease, finishing a cigarette, when a tall, rugged, chiseled, middle-aged man in a crisp white shirt strolled over and, with genuine ease and casualness, asked me for a light, and offered me a Marlboro in return. I didn’t know him. Neither of us shared our names. We smoked together, mostly in silence, exchanged a few words about Woolf—naturally—and—of course—the weather. Ten minutes later, Jessica introduced the author of *The Hours* to a packed auditorium where the handsome smoker mesmerized me, as his book had done a week or two before. At the reception afterward, Susan Gubar, a professor at Indiana, invited me to co-teach a course on Woolf with her the following spring. And so it began—a germ germinating and a life enriched beyond quantity by the Woolf community gathered in Baltimore twenty-one years ago. It feels like last week.

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Woolf, Virginia. “Old Bloomsbury.” *A Sketch of the Past*. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, 1985.

¹ Editorial note: This phrase is a reference to Virginia Woolf’s memoir, “Old Bloomsbury”: “These Thursday evening parties were, as far as I am concerned, the germ from which sprang all that has since come to be called [...] by the name of Bloomsbury” (186).





Voyages Out, Voyages Home
11th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 13-16, 2001
Organizer: Michael Whitworth
University of Wales
Bangor, UK



Organizer

11th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Michael Whitworth
University of Wales

Michael Whitworth (now at Merton College, Oxford) organized the first Woolf conference hosted outside of the United States. The volume of the *Selected Papers* from the 11th conference, edited by Jane de Gay and Marion Dell, was published by Clemson University Digital Press (now Clemson University Press) in 2011, ten years after the conference had convened (Pace University Press ceased to publish the *Selected Papers* after the 10th conference).



Attendee

A Very Personal Impression

Angeliki Spiropoulou
Professor of European Literature and Theory
Peloponnese University
Research Fellow, School of Advanced Study—London University

2001-2021. Twenty years. Significantly, the *eleventh* annual IVWS conference at Bangor University in 2001 was the first to be held outside the US. More significantly for me, it was also the first Woolf conference I ever attended, being a European ‘outsider’ to the world of English studies. That conference changed my perception of academia from a world full of competition and loneliness to a stimulating and fantastically supportive community of scholars united by their love of research, and Woolf.

Panel discussions and social conversations alike proved that for most participants Woolf was much more than a subject of professional engagement; rather, reading her work had transformed their lives and turned them to open, democratic, empathetic, encouraging colleagues. There, I first met authors whose insightful writings had influenced my own thinking on Woolf; that rare constellation felt like a feast. Also, among the participants were scholars who became life-long, though long-distance, friends and companions. I am most grateful for this.

I also remember being mesmerized by the dramatic Welsh landscape glimpsed through my train window. Tall white cliffs plunged steeply into bright blue waves; such an appropriate setting for a Woolf conference, I thought on my way there. And what a stellar line-up of speakers that special conference featured, as arranged by the tireless Michael Whitworth!

At Bangor I was lucky to see for the first and last time Julia Briggs and Jane Marcus, two bright stars who went out too soon afterwards. There was also the radiant Laura Marcus, my supervisor at Sussex, who lit the auditorium with the brilliance and warmth of her plenary talk. Although she never missed a Woolf conference, and I often saw her since in different contexts, that auratic moment has stayed with me. For there she was. But she began her own voyage out just months ago. RIP.

Across the Generations
12th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 6-9, 2002
Organizer: J. J. Wilson
Sonoma State University,
Rohnert Park, California, USA



Organizer

The Hummingbirds of Memory

J. J. Wilson
Professor of English, emeritus
Sonoma State University

It is perhaps instructive to know that I remember everyone else’s Virginia Woolf conferences better than I remember our own “Across the Generations” here at Sonoma State University in 2002. The chock-full days passed in a flurry, from the Welcoming Party—a wine tasting provided by Starrett Dalton with *boeuf en daube* dishes prepared from VW’s family recipe with one vegetarian variation—to our last get-together in my backyard where Stuart Clarke, from England, got to see his first hummingbirds. He uttered the ultimate review of all academic conferences: “I may forget all the panels and papers I’ve heard here but I’ll never forget these hummingbirds.”

Our most vivid memories are of the planning for the conference. I was the main impediment but co-directors Eileen Barrett and Katy Dang learned to work around me though at one point Katy did explode: “J. J. Wilson, NO MORE IDEAS!” Those two ingenious geniuses brilliantly spread-sheeted all the proposed papers into a manageable and handsome program.

One idea which all the planners did agree upon was the Walk Across Campus to the more utilitarian Corp Yard, there to have a tour of the facility where the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* was printed up. Our cortège was hospitably greeted by the workers, and it was Liona Springer, a reader of Woolf, who walked us through all the steps needed to produce the newsletter. This tangible and interesting expedition was good exercise, and everyone was glad to have the opportunity to thank the people whose work on this publication had done so much to keep us together, work now continued by Vara Neverow at Southern Connecticut State University—but she has a computer!

Another idea—which I wish had become standard—was a “clinic” where people with works in progress on VW and Bloomsbury could meet one-on-one with senior scholars in order to brainstorm and get advice from them. A success—well enrolled and I can still hear that purposeful hum of talk in the area designated.

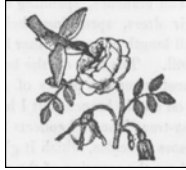
A Bloomsbury Art Show in SSU’s gallery, featuring of course our brilliant Suzanne Bellamy and the late Isota Tucker Epes as well as local artists also gave Peter Stansky a chance to share generously his extensive private collection of Bloomsbury. The parallel exhibits were meticulously curated by Elissa Baker. Of course, as with most art exhibits, the attendees seemed more interested in talking with one another and eating the canapes than in looking at the art....

The other arts were represented also, with Sarah Baker’s musical essay *Inneracts*, Stephen Pelton’s *Dance*, and Tod Randolph’s adaptation of *A Room of One’s Own*. Even the flower arrangements by Mary Basham were Bloomsbury inspired. My nephew Daniel Harris used his art of driving in order to make the big State van into an indispensable part of the intricate machinery of the events.

I will list here the presenters at the Opening Roundtable because it was a never again to be replicated group: Marilou Awiakta, Jane Emery, Florence Howe, Mark Hussey (for whom Stuart N. Clarke read the paper because Mark could not attend), Karen Levenback, Herbert Marder, Vara Neverow, and Tillie Olsen. Isota Tucker Epes was not well enough to

come; Anne Carson declined our invitation, claiming to be intimidated by “all those brilliant and brave Virginia Woolf scholars.” So touching and telling to hear them speak to our initial questions about when and how they first began to read Virginia Woolf and what changes they have seen in Woolf Studies and what will we all be up to next.

Banquets, panels, presentations, and probably best of all, the intimate conversations all went by in a flash, but the connections remain. At the thank-you party held later for the self-less volunteers who had enacted all those ideas, Karen Petersen organized a treasure hunt where the “prize” was the original painting by Mary Lou Downing made for our Conference Posters. I have that treasure still here on the wall of The Sitting Room Library. The hummingbirds are also still humming around.



<http://www.reusableart.com/hummingbird-02.html>

Attendee

Across the Generations: The Twelfth Annual Conference

Leslie Hankins
Cornell College

To me it seems just like yesterday. In 2002, J. J. Wilson outdid herself as the magical community-building artist Clarissa bringing us all together in Sonoma. My memories from the conference are eclectic: first, sitting on J. J.'s patio eating delicious *boeuf en daube* leftovers and watching a large lemon growing on a small potted lemon tree while listening to J. J.'s melodious voice wafting through the twilight. What else do I recall? Hilarity, conversations, my role as Suzanne Bellamy's assistant for one of her dazzles—and the artwork of Suzanne and Isota, workshops for mentoring, the procession idea, and so many insights and visions floating around. All throughout, “Virginia Woolf is the oxygen within which we breathe,” as Jane Lilienfeld so succinctly captured the ambience. Alas, my memory recalls the delight, the camaraderie, a few moments of being, but not details to share. Memory is a capricious mistress Fortunately, memory has its minions and one of these is cinema, which in this particular instance was J. J.'s unique innovation of having the conference filmed and making a video available, aptly titled Moments of Being: Across the Generations. Watching the video again seventeen years later was an astounding and uncanny experience, overwhelming, magical, poignant. Virginia Woolf recounted a similar experience in “The Cinema,” where watching a newsreel of years past, she writes:

From this point of vantage, as we watch the antics of our kind, we have time to feel pity and amusement, to generalise, to endow one man with the attributes of the race. Watching the boat sail and the wave break, we have time to open our minds wide to beauty and register on top of it the queer sensation—this beauty will continue, and this beauty will flourish whether we behold it or not. Further, all this happened ten years ago, we are told. We are beholding a world which has gone beneath the waves. Brides are emerging from the Abbey—they are now mothers; ushers are ardent—they are now silent; mothers are tearful; guests are joyful; this has been won and that has been lost, and it is over and done with. (*Essays* 4 592)

Footage of colleagues now ghostly presences reel by: we mourn their loss as we experience their wisdom and wit, and we celebrate others in the pink of youth attending a first conference. There we are. There we are, intense, energized, spilling over with insights and sharing them. And there is J. J., so brilliantly articulating our mission, as the film and conference “director” par excellence. The conference, with its emphasis on cross-generational bridge-building and mentoring, new forms of workshop and camaraderie, procession and artwork, was a gift, a treasure. The video version makes it a gift that keeps on giving.

I urge the IVWS to get involved with the Woolf conferences in reviving such projects for future events to build this archive.

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Woolf in the Real World
13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 5-8, 2003
Organizer: Karen V. Kukil
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

Organizer

Woolf in the Real World at Smith College

Karen V. Kukil
Smith College, Emerita

Nearly 200 papers were presented on the conference theme of “Woolf in the Real World” to the delight of over 350 delegates from eight countries. Presenters examined broad topics including women's education, pacifism, family life, and social class, through the lens of Woolf's career as a writer, journalist, teacher, and feminist. Woolf scholar Marilyn Schwinn Smith coordinated the program committee, and the conference was organized by associate director of donor relations Stephanie Cooper Schoen and myself, curator of the Virginia Woolf, Bloomsbury, and Sylvia Plath collections at Smith College.

On the first evening of the conference Smith President Carol T. Christ and former President Jill Ker Conway talked about the history of women's education and Woolf's integral place in the curriculum. Manuscripts and rare books donated by Smith alumnae Frances Hooper (Class of 1914) and Elizabeth Power Richardson (Class of 1943) were showcased in an exhibition *Woolf in the World: A Pen and Press of Her Own* at the William Allan Neilson Library. Photographs from Leslie Stephen's family album were framed on the walls of the Book Arts Gallery. Additional exhibitions about *Virginia Woolf's Influence on Sylvia Plath* were on display in the Mortimer Rare Book Room. In a nod to the Hogarth Press, local book artists gave printing and binding demonstrations at the reception replete with flowers, flowing wine, sumptuous food, live classical music, and good conversation.

The Smith College Museum of Art was featured on the second evening of the conference. Ann Safford Mandel's 50th reunion gift of Vanessa Bell's 1912 portrait of Virginia Woolf was the centerpiece of the exhibition *Vanessa Bell and Bloomsbury*. Plenary speakers included art historian Frances Spalding on Roger Fry and Virginia Woolf and biographer Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina on Bloomsbury and Race. Earlier in the afternoon there was an interview with the first president of the International Virginia Woolf Society (IVWS), feminist scholar Carolyn Heilbrun, whose papers are part of the Sophia Smith Collection, a women's history archive at Smith, where they were on display. Provost Susan C. Bourque conducted the interview followed by the IVWS's reception in the atrium of the Brown Fine Arts Center.

A reception and exhibition in the Lyman Plant House on *Woolf: A Botanical Perspective* capped the third day of the conference, which began with a plenary lecture by Lyndall Gordon on Virginia Woolf and Biography and ended with a keynote address by Hermione Lee on Woolf, Illness, and Reading. After a festive banquet modeled on the men's college dinners described in *A Room of One's Own*, Hermione Lee signed copies of the Paris Press edition of *On Being Ill* for which she wrote the introduction. Outside the conservatory delegates were serenaded by croaking bullfrogs in the botanic gardens illuminated with Japanese lanterns. “Milk and Cookies” in the Jordan House Common Room facilitated late night discussions among delegates staying in the

Quad. Many new Woolf scholars were welcomed into the fold, including future IVWS presidents and Woolf Conference organizers Kristin Czarnecki and Drew Patrick Shannon.

Optional field trips to The Mount, Edith Wharton's house in Lenox, Massachusetts, and to Emily Dickinson's Homestead in Amherst, Massachusetts, inspired later biographies of Edith Wharton by Hermione Lee and of Emily Dickinson by Lyndall Gordon. Throughout the conference a nightly film series Woolf in the Reel World even included sneak previews of DVD extras from *The Hours* featuring some conference delegates. Suzanne Bellamy, the conference artist-in-residence, exhibited her work at the Northampton Center for the Arts. Special refreshments included locally-made ice cream delivered to campus in an old London double-decker bus. Performances provided bookends to the conference: Clare Dalton in *A Room of One's Own* on Thursday, June 5, and a staged reading on Sunday, June 8, of the correspondence of Lytton and Virginia adapted by Sean Smith from the original letters in the Frances Hooper Collection of Virginia Woolf Books and Manuscripts at Smith.

Selected Papers published by the Clemson University Digital Press and online versions of the exhibitions continue to share elements of Smith's exciting Woolf conference with future scholars. Digital projects conceived at the conference including the Woolf Online Database by Julia Briggs came to fruition a decade later.



Attendee

Woolf in the Real World: The Thirteenth Annual Conference

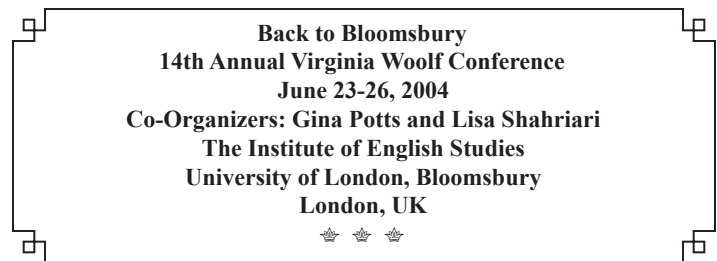
Susan Wegener
Purdue University

When I think about my experience at the 13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf held at Smith College in June 2003, I remember feeling excited about ideas and impressed by scholarship. But I was still an undergraduate and didn't yet have the background to follow many of the literary references and theoretical concepts. This was actually an advantage because it meant I could focus on the physical and emotional experience of being stirred by art and intellectual passion. I didn't know that Julia Briggs was an accomplished and well-known scholar, but I remember her bright lipstick, beautiful smile, and striking presence when she talked about "Paris: A Poem." The room was so crowded that I was sitting on the floor practically at her feet and after the talk she looked me in the eye and asked, "what did you think, darling?" I didn't know what to say—I hadn't heard of Hope Mirrlees at the time—so I told her I enjoyed the talk and was inspired to read the poem on my own. I also should have confessed how I was moved by her words and that the entire room seemed mesmerized by her ideas.

As academics we often downplay the emotional and performative aspects of presenting our work, but we have all felt the energy that sometimes happens when a speaker taps into or invokes the affective response of a group. The conference at Smith cultivated these sensual pleasures of scholarship. I spent much of my free time gazing at the carefully curated collection of Woolf's letters and notebooks and standing as close as possible to the display cases. Although eager crowds wandered through the exhibits all day, the rooms were always quiet, as though talking would mar the sacredness of the spaces. Conference goers were encouraged to explore the town of Northampton as well, and one afternoon I took some time off to enjoy a glass of wine with a friend and debrief after a long day of panels and plenaries.

While I admit I can't remember the topic of Hermione Lee's keynote speech I do remember waiting in line for her autograph, shaking her hand, and flaunting my newly signed copy of her book. Meeting Carolyn

Heilbrun was a physical experience as well. In what would become one of her final interviews, Heilbrun discussed Woolf's humor and marriage and even offered her opinion on *The Hours* (the film had just been released, and Heilbrun was not a fan). After the plenary I forced myself to approach her even though I was terrified. While I know I spoke too softly and stumbled over my words, I was proud that I introduced myself to one of my academic heroes. I was awestruck by these celebrity public intellectuals and privileged to make such connections on the opulent grounds of Smith College. But I think it was really the ordinary interactions that prompted me to return to Woolf conferences year after year. I was still learning to discuss my work, and when I presented a chapter from my honors thesis, the panelists and audience were gracious and supportive. I'll always remember attending my first IVWS meeting and having dinner with senior scholars who generously discussed my work and offered guidance. It was the second professional conference I attended, and the first time I knew that I was part of an academic community.



Organizer

Reflections on Back to Bloomsbury, the 14th annual Virginia Woolf Conference, 23-26 June 2004

Gina Potts

The moment the idea for the Back to Bloomsbury conference was born feels like a lifetime ago. It was in June 2001 in Bangor, Wales. I was attending the annual Woolf conference at the University of Wales, Bangor. I was a PhD student and Graduate Teaching Assistant at Birkbeck, University of London, and was giving a paper for the first time at a major international academic conference. I had attended other conferences before, but what was striking about attending the annual Woolf conference was how I immediately felt at home and so warmly welcomed by an amazing family of scholars, many of whom I 'knew' virtually via the VWoolf Listserv. Meeting the community of Woolfians for the first time in person was transformative. It was when I was chatting with Jeanne Dubino during one of the breaks that I happened to ask why the annual Woolf conference had never taken place in Bloomsbury. She explained it was simply because no one had put forward a proposal to host the annual conference there. My response was that the Woolf conference and Woolfians need to come to Bloomsbury, and that I wanted to make that happen. Three years later that moment of vision became a reality.

Back to Bloomsbury, the 14th annual Virginia Woolf conference, took place on 23-26 June 2004 at the University of London's Institute of English Studies. Lisa Shahriari, a fellow PhD student doing her PhD on Woolf at the University of Essex, was convinced to join forces with me to organise the conference, and in the process became a dear friend. We worked together to organise what turned out to be four wonderful days of lectures and panels, art and book exhibitions, dance and drama performances, Bloomsbury walking tours, a poetry reading, a banquet and more. The conference included a delegacy of 320 scholars from 17 countries across 5 continents, amongst them 152 speakers across 48 panels. Amongst the featured speakers were Gillian Beer, Laura Marcus, and Cecil Woolf—all so inspiring, and the latter two much-missed. The day before the conference started, a large group of Woolfians joined the coach trip to Rodmell where we enjoyed a pilgrimage to Monks House,

a walk to the River Ouse and lunch at the Abergavenny Arms. The conference finale was an unveiling of the Virginia Woolf memorial in the southwest corner of Tavistock Square by Anne Olivier Bell for the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain.

After the conference Lisa and I edited a two-volume collection of papers arising from the conference which was published by Palgrave Macmillan. Looking back on those volumes and reflecting on the conference now 17 years later, reminds me how very relevant Virginia Woolf continues to be, and also how inspiring the Woolfian community is. It is moving to know that new generations of Woolf scholars continue to be welcomed each year to the annual conference, just as I was back in 2001. Long may we continue to celebrate the great work and influence of Virginia Woolf and each other as inspiring Woolf scholars and enthusiasts.



Attendee

Back to Bloomsbury: Juxtapositions and Associations

Maggie Humm

Emeritus Professor, University of East London

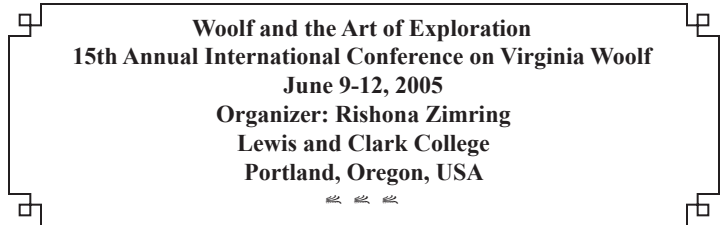
The Back to Bloomsbury 14th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf 23-26 June 2004 was a commemoration conference. It celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Woolf's first move to Bloomsbury in 1904. The conference was matched by other Woolfian commemorations: Bloomsbury: A Celebration by University College London and the North London Orchestra, and Charleston's 100 Years of the Bloomsbury Group. Woolf loved Bloomsbury and London. She and Leonard owned over a dozen books about London but "we should be willing to read one volume about every street in the city and should still ask for more" (*Essays* 2 50).

One other celebration in the city, the same weekend as the conference, was dedicated to the forthcoming Olympics in Greece. On the last day of the conference, the Olympic torch traversed thirty-one miles of London streets in its journey from Wimbledon Centre Court en route to Athens. It was the first time that the torch had been in London since London hosted the 1948 games. The torch procession was a serious event. Pets were banned as well as the jokey costumes beloved by the London Marathon. At least 70,000 people attended a free concert in the Mall with its incongruous stars—Rod Stewart and Ozzy Osbourne. As Woolf would have appreciated, the torch's journey subverted the class boundaries of her favourite city, with its torch-bearers running through rich and working-class areas. To link Woolf with Athens seemed to me a way of celebrating the moment of the conference. So I gave a plenary paper about Woolf's two visits to the Acropolis, comparing her "uncannily" similar reactions on her second visit with Freud's when he visited in 1904 (just as Woolf was moving into Gordon Square). Both writers' accounts raised, for me, fascinating issues of memory, disassociation and the roles of fathers. Woolf also loved Athens. Although the rights and wrongs of returning the Elgin marbles to Athens involve complex arguments, Woolf, following Byron, lamented how sad it was that such fragments of Athens were exiled to London. But while in Greece in 1932, Woolf thought about London—"women sat at the door—I thought of Piccadilly at this hour[.] [...] This is England in the time of Chaucer. [...] I'm not sure if I'm in Greece or London" (*Diary* 4 92, 96). The juxtaposition of Athens, London and Woolf in our Bloomsbury location, seemed then to match Woolf's own associative views. About London she said: "Owing to the capricious way in which the place has come together, contrasts of the strangest kind are everywhere laid side by side, like strips of different colour" (*Essays* 1 202). These strips of different colours in the conference mirrored Woolf's sense of place. "There is room for all diversion of opinion about London; and, however often you

may walk her streets, you are always picking up new facts about her" (*Essays* 2 51).

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Organizer

**Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration,
Lewis and Clark College, 2005 (a reminiscence)**

Rishona Zimring

Lewis and Clark College

It was fun to announce the 2005 conference at the 2004 conference, which was "Back to Bloomsbury" in (of course) London. It was exciting to invite people to the Pacific Northwest. I said something about rain; in my memory, Gillian Beer was next up on stage, and said (or even sang) something about singing in the rain. The mood was festive. I had been to a few Woolf conferences in this early stage of my career (I had just received tenure). The first Woolf conference I ever went to was in 1997 in Plymouth, New Hampshire. I was new to my job at Lewis and Clark; my father had died a year earlier. I flew to Boston and rented a car. Emotionally, I was lost. More seasoned scholars of Woolf were supportive listeners at my presentation at that 1997 conference and hosting the conference in 2005 felt both like a way to welcome people to this beautiful corner of the country and to contribute to and express thanks to the community that had offered me encouragement and inspiration. I felt less lost.

I dove into organizing, with much help from the administrative coordinator of the English department at the time, the wonderful Joanie May. Much help came as well from the colleagues who graciously contributed their keynote speeches (Jed Esty, Maria di Battista, Christine Froula, Diane F. Gillespie, Doug Mao) and the colleagues who, with care and immense dedication, co-edited the volume of selected papers (Helen Southworth, Elisa Kay Sparks). There was an art exhibit (Suzanne Bellamy); there was a concert (Emilie Crapoulet). Trevor Bond brought expertise and exhibits from the Washington State University collection of Woolf materials. Reed College's Kathleen Worley performed her riveting one-woman stage version of Woolf's writing. Lewis and Clark's astronomer gave a tour of the stars to interested participants who wished to visit the college's rooftop observatory. Amazingly, for that night it did not rain, and people could see the stars. In my recollection, Doug Mao made a pun about the leaves of trees and books, and behind him we could all see the lush foliage outside dancing in a downpour. Eleanor McNees said something kind; so did Mark Hussey and Vara Neverow. I hope many people who attended enjoyed it. I'm sorry there wasn't enough wine. Best wishes to all.



Attendee

**Reminiscences from the 15th Annual IVWS Conference:
Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration
Lewis and Clark College, June 9-12, 2005**

*Jean Mills
John Jay College-CUNY*

If Virginia Woolf herself hadn't on occasion taken up the topics of food and drink in her work (in order to make a political point, of course, about the lack of funding of women's colleges, especially, in comparison to the wealth and support thrown behind the men's colleges), I would hesitate to begin my own personal reminiscence of the 15th Annual IVWS Conference at Lewis and Clark College, "Virginia Woolf and the Art of Exploration" with the following statement:

There was no wine with dinner.

Imagine our surprise when we discovered that evening at the banquet that Lewis and Clark (at least, at that time, and perhaps I'm misremembering, but I doubt it!) was a dry campus. I was still in grad school in 2005, and our table consisted of a group of us, mostly students of Jane Marcus, encouraged to attend and participate in the Woolf conferences and to report back with all of the new ideas and Woolf scholarship taking place throughout the weekend. I'm going to go out on a limb and speak for the entire group, here, when I say, remembering the looks on our faces, that it was clear to me that we all needed a drink. Not a political statement. Just a slight (like a whisper of vermouth on a martini slight) disappointment—bearable, but duly noted.

In any case, once we gathered our reserves, I do remember being treated to a vivacious, engaging, and richly detailed presentation by Trevor Bond, the archivist at Washington State University, on Virginia and Leonard Woolf's personal, working library. And, again, if I'm remembering correctly (I doubt it!), he turned his presentation into a bit of a trivia game?!? It was so much fun as we shouted out answers to "whose handwriting is this?" "Who drew this sketch of Shakespeare's death mask," etc. that we soon forgot all about the no wine with dinner and struck up more conversations generated from the rich display of research on tap that weekend on Woolf's relationship to nature, scientific thinking, and environmental attitudes throughout the world. And to that spirit of camaraderie, intellectual rigor, and resilience I've found over the years at so many Virginia Woolf conferences and in our community of thinkers and common readers, in general, I raise my glass with a deep sense of gratitude and good cheer!

Woolfian Boundaries
16th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 22-25, 2006
Co-Organizers: Anna Burrells, Steve Ellis, Deborah Parsons, and Kathryn Simpson
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Central Square, Holliday Street, Birmingham, UK
❖ ❖ ❖

Co-Organizers

The 16th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
Anna Burrells, Steve Ellis, Deborah Parsons, and Kathryn Simpson
University of Birmingham

Woolfian Boundaries, the 16th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf was hosted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Birmingham rather than the university campus. Among the many events, the

conference included a speech by Ruth Gruber, who also wrote the Foreword to the *Selected Papers* from the conference, and a talk by Victoria Glendinning about her forthcoming biography of Leonard Woolf.



Attendee

People, Not Papers
Woolfian Boundaries:
The Sixteenth International Conference on Virginia Woolf
University of Birmingham

*Ruth Webb
University of London*

I've a number of non-Woolf-related reasons for remembering the 2006 conference in Birmingham (UK), so it's stayed in my memory as conferences in other locations have not. Mostly, I remember the people I met rather than the papers that were given. I'll say a little more about conference papers and their presentation towards the end of this piece, but first I'll recall the people, a few of whom are no longer with us.

I'd met AnneMarie Bantzinger at the 2004 London IVWS conference. She had been sitting at a table in the lunch-hall during that conference, and I'd asked her if I could claim a seat at 'her' table, and if she would "keep an eye on my bag" whilst I queued for my lunch. When we met again in 2006 at Birmingham, the first thing she said to me was, "Would you like me to keep an eye on your bag?," and we've been firm friends ever since.

Reina van der Wiel, a compatriot of AnneMarie's, was also attending the Birmingham conference. At that time, she was living in London and finishing her PhD on trauma in Woolf. She later worked at Birkbeck, for which university Jean Moorcroft Wilson, wife of the late, lamented Cecil Woolf, taught for many years, as did I. At the Birmingham conference, as at so many others, Jean and Cecil had a stall for their Bloomsbury Heritage booklets.

Emily Cersonsky, then an American undergraduate, was one of the youngest delegates, just embarking on her researches in Modernist literature. Another of the young delegates whom I first met at the 2006 conference was Emma Sutton, now a Professor at St Andrew's. She and the late Jim Stewart, at Dundee University, were working with an American colleague on the Cambridge University Press edition of *The Voyage Out*. Jim and I had met at the 2004 London conference, where we and the late Julia Briggs had got into conversation about the influence of Greek literature on Woolf's writing—a conversation engendered by a conference paper we'd all three heard.

I wish I could remember more such conference-paper-generated conversations. The one from 2006 that I remember as sparking the most memorable discussion was given by Stephen Barkway, a founder and, for many years, the Chair of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain. What made his conference paper stand out was as much Stephen's method of presentation as its content. It caught everyone's interest because he looked at audience members and presented his ideas as a *talk* rather than as a read paper. We all found it refreshing to be talked-to rather than read-at. I don't know if conference paper-presentation skills have improved much in the last dozen or so years—I've long been out of the conference-loop—but I really hope they have.

Although conferences are essential to the careers of academics, my experience is that they are far more essential to the participants' sense of academic 'fellowship' and to establishing lasting friendships. I hope your experience has been similar to mine.



Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism
17th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 7-10, 2007
Co-Organizers: Diana Royer and Madelyn Detloff
The Marcum Conference Center of Miami University of Ohio
Oxford, Ohio, USA

Co-Organizers

Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism

Madelyn Detloff and Diana Royer
Miami University

The 17th annual conference on Virginia Woolf was held at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 2007, “Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism.” Our wonderful Woolf Pack of graduate students helped facilitate the conference by running errands, helping delegates, troubleshooting during the panel sessions, and transporting attendees to and from airports in Dayton and Northern Kentucky. All of them had been participants in a pre-conference Graduate Summer Institute course on Woolf and subsequently presented their seminar papers in panels at the conference. They also facilitated informal discussion sessions held throughout the conference on *Jacob’s Room*, a book read in common by participating attendees. The conference artwork gracing the program, tote bags, and T-shirts was the lovely result of a Miami student art contest, which was won by a regional campus undergraduate student.

Our plenary dialogues attempted to bridge generations, with (at the time) up and coming scholars Jane de Gay and Urmila Seshagiri alongside well established Woolf scholars Susan Stanford Friedman and Pat Laurence. Anne Fernald gave a brilliant pedagogy workshop sponsored by Miami’s Howe Center for Writing Excellence, and Susan Gubar read a delightful piece from her new book *Rooms of Our Own*. Suzanne Bellamy created a magnificent canvas backdrop for an ensemble presentation that was typically witty and wise. To our knowledge, the 17th annual conference also began what later became something of a tradition by inviting Cecil Woolf to speak informally during our banquet about his experiences with Virginia and Leonard. We are not sure whether the mistake the caterers made (it was supposed to be a cash bar, not an open bar on Saturday night) helped to liven up the event, but it was simply magical. Since Oxford is a small college town in an otherwise rural section of southwest Ohio, we attempted to make the conference self-contained—from on-site catering by the Marcum Center to local events (a film screening, a play, the banquet, and, on Sunday, a field trip to the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati). The members of the Woolf Pack can trace a lot of continuing friendships to the conviviality that we shared at the conference.



Attendee

Reflections on the 2007 International Virginia Woolf Conference, Miami University, Ohio

Yuko Ito
Chubu University

After I was offered a pleasurable opportunity by AnneMarie Bantzinger to write about the 2007 conference at Miami University, which I accepted only with joy, I had difficulties sketching the past trying to find, in vain, all those documents written as well as digital in my university research room and also in my old computers which are about to be broken here in Japan. However, what a lark, what a plunge! Today, the 7th of July 2021, coincidentally, exactly the same day 14 years after the 17th Annual Conference: Art, Education, and Internationalism, I have finally found the conference document set placed under bulk of papers on my bookshelf. I am thrilled to find the date June 7-10, 2007, and feel the invisible tunneling process of the consciousness in the Woolf community although we are apart by oceans.

It was my third IVWS after Plymouth (1997) and St. Louis (1998) to which I flew from the UK. My memory after I took the long flight from Nagoya, my first flight to the USA from Japan, begins with Gaile’s kindest pick up at Cincinnati Airport where I met AnneMarie. Right after we arrived at a cozy guest house, Flower Hall, AnneMarie, I, and other conference attendants hitchhiked with a gentleman, also an attendant whose name I do not remember, who offered us a drive to a local Italian restaurant recommended by Madelyn Detloff and Diane Royer, who beautifully organized this conference with full charm and consideration. If my memory is correct, even a pretty bottle of shampoo selected for the guestroom was labelled “Virginia,” which I still treasure. The campus impressed me with its meditative calmness and green.

The conference which began with a film screening, *The Big Parade* (1925), went on seamlessly with enthusiasm, full investigations and discoveries. In my own session I spoke about fancy dress balls and was honored to be with Georgia Johnston (on the *Dreadnought Hoax*¹) and Celia Marshik (on Miss Kilman’s mackintosh²) in a panel entitled “Fashioning Politics.” Georgia’s and Celia’s presentations invoked the audience’s inspirations and insights. I met Georgia at St. Louis in 1998 when she was the conference organizer. She recommended I try a very good bookshop in the town (St. Louis) to which I adventured to visit by bus. We had a wonderful discussion on the *Dreadnought Hoax* as well as “Bunga bunga,”³ the words which the party tried to use on the ship. Did they really know the significance of the words? According to my former colleague, Prof. Emeritus Masaoki Miyamoto, a Swahili and African literature scholar, the word means “fool,” “simpleton,” and thus the party of hoaxers were repeating “You are a fool” to the Navy.

Georgia and Mark Hussey suggested, at the banquet, the possibility of hosting an Woolf conference in Japan, which I brought back to the VWS Japan (VWSJ). The judgment was no, lacking confidence, but they did begin to hold Japan-Korea International Virginia Woolf Conferences, which counted the 4th in 2019. The interrelation with Woolfians in Korea began at conference at Plymouth in 1997. Just to note, I hosted the 40th VWSJ (the first online) conference, in November 2020. I had met VWSJ members Erika Yoshida at Miami, and also Megumi Kato at Plymouth, the friendship with whom always partakes of the exquisite memory of having shared the Woolf conference spatio-temporality. That splendid memory encompasses you all.

I dedicate this writing to Georgia Johnston.

¹ Editorial note: The 1910 *Dreadnought Hoax* was organized by Horace de Vere Cole. The imposters he recruited included Virginia Stephen and her brother Adrian as well as Duncan Grant.

² Editorial note: Miss Kilman is a character in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

³ See the *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary*, ed. Frederick Johnson (Oxford UP, 1939) and Toleo La Kwanza, *Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza* [Swahili-English Dictionary] (University of Dar es Salaam, 2001), for example. I express my gratitude to my former colleague, Prof. Emeritus Masaoki Miyamoto, a Swahili and African literature scholar.

Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf
18th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 19-22, 2008
Organizer: Eleanor McNees
University of Denver
Denver, Colorado, USA

Organizer

Reflections on the Eighteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf: Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf

Eleanor McNees
University of Denver

The impetus for the venue and theme of the Eighteenth Annual Woolf conference, Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf, stemmed from two principal

considerations. On a practical level, recent implementation of a new light rail system in Denver provided easy access to the University of Denver from downtown and permitted conference participants the option of staying in a city-center hotel with a chance, especially for those unfamiliar with Denver, to explore other city sites. The second consideration arose from my belief, encouraged by a conversation with Mark Hussey, that the topic both of Woolf's editing of her own work and scholars editing Woolf's work had evaded adequate recognition amidst the landslide of critical and cultural approaches to Woolf. This conference would allow opportunities for presentations of editorial projects in process, significantly those of the late Julia Briggs and Nick Hayward on an electronic edition of "Time Passes," and that of Jane Goldman and Susan Sellers, general editors of the new Cambridge University Press editions of Woolf's work. Both Hayward's presentation and Goldman's panel emphasized the shifting modes of editing in the burgeoning digital age and the crucial opening of access to Woolf's manuscripts.

Furthermore, it seemed appropriate on the cusp of such current editorial activity to celebrate significant projects that had enabled scholars to mine what had previously only been accessible in archives or in incomplete collections. Upon reflection, I believe that the conference theme was the single most important decision we made. It assembled writers and scholars—seasoned and novice—and united them in significant discussions about the scholarly and creative value of editing. It allowed writers and scholars latitude to reinterpret the nature of editorial work both within Woolf's own oeuvre and also in the Woolfs' Hogarth Press publications. Issues of editing ranged from minute details of punctuation to larger questions of editorial control and censorship. The theme also emboldened me to press both of the veteran scholar/editors Andrew McNeillie, editor of *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* and assistant editor of the *Diaries*, and Brenda Silver, editor of *Woolf's Reading Notebooks*, to participate as keynote speakers. I was pleased when James Haule agreed to deliver a plenary on textual editing and when Stuart Clarke, then the future editor of the last two volumes of *Woolf's Essays*, gave what perhaps proved to be the most provocatively titled paper of the conference: "A Few Cigarettes in Lilian's Ash Tray": Woolf's Revisions to her Essays."

But it is to another aspect of the conference and to the planning that I attribute primary importance: the indefatigable assistance at every level of my primary graduate assistant, Sarah Hitt (recently recruited from her position at the Colorado School of Mines to initiate a humanities program at a university in the UK) and the astute editorial expertise of my graduate co-editor of the *Selected Papers*, Sara Veglahn. To the host of other graduate students who devoted hours from ushering participants to the correct rooms to chairing panels and to ensuring that the conference ran smoothly, I owe another debt. These current and future writers and scholars have been able to venture into academic and even creative territory denied to Woolf. I suspect she would have applauded their success.

Perhaps the two most artistic aspects of the conference owed themselves to former administrative assistant Helene Orr, who designed both the conference program and the cover of the *Selected Papers*, and University of Denver PhD and Writing Center professor Carol Samson who edited, produced and directed a theatrical performance of *A Writer's Diary*. The final indelible piece was the post-conference trip to Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico and to Mabel Dodge Luhan's house near Taos where a frequent visitor was the artist and Woolf acquaintance Dorothy Brett. Over ten years on, I can still "tunnel" myself back to recall precise moments—wide-ranging conversation with Andrew McNeillie at a little Mexican restaurant after I'd picked him up from the airport, questions about lack of coat hangers and soap in the dorm where a number of participants were staying, the awe of the post-trip participants as they saw O'Keeffe's landscapes and wished (along with our guide and conference veteran Elisa Sparks) that Woolf and O'Keeffe had met, perhaps in the American Southwest!



Attendee

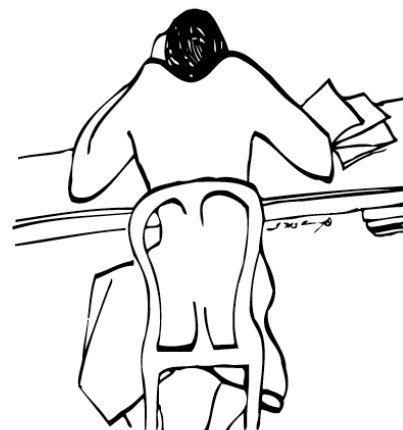
"For it was the middle of June"— the 18th Annual Woolf Conference in Denver

Elisa Bolchi

Università degli Studi di Ferrara

The 18th Annual Woolf Conference was my first Woolf conference. It was held in Denver in 2008; I had just finished my PhD in Literary Criticism and so it was not only my first Woolf Conference but my first conference at a US college. I had to pay for everything myself, and, since it was a very expensive journey and I was an unpaid post-doc who taught English in an evening language school for a living, my boyfriend and I decided it should be a holiday for us. We stayed in New York for three days, and then we flew to Denver. I remember getting to Denver on a very sunny and warm day—as if issued to children on a beach—and I remember taking the tramway to the campus, and then walking through this huge and empty campus being afraid of getting lost. While I was walking, looking desperately at my map, I met another person who asked me if I was looking for the Woolf Conference registration too. She offered to walk together; she asked me about my paper, I told her it was on the reception of Virginia Woolf in Italian literary periodicals under Fascism, and she was immediately interested because she was editing a book on Woolf, so she would listen to my presentation, she said. That person was Jeanne Dubino, that volume was her *Virginia Woolf and the Literary Marketplace* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and that was my welcome in that big, international, warm and friendly family which is the International Virginia Woolf Society,¹ in which renowned scholars were genuinely interested in what I—an unknown student from Italy—had to say. Mark Hussey made me feel very welcomed too, he was nice and friendly, and after my presentation he wanted to know more about my book and my work. Since then, I have been to many other conferences, and to many other Annual Woolf Conferences as well, but that first one will always remain special to me, not only for what I learnt—and it was a lot!—but for the shared feeling of wanting to know more from each other. I also remember a session with Elisa Kay Sparks, and I remember how she sat down next to me during a break and told me about her research and about how she was teaching Woolf to her students. I remember the banquet and the warm summer sunset on the terrace talking about English and American translations of Dante with a glass of wine in our hands. That welcoming feeling of people caring about others' words and about others' ideas is something I've cherished ever since, and it was with that same feeling in mind that I founded the Italian Virginia Woolf Conference with Nadia Fusini, Liliana Rampello, and Iolanda Plescia in 2011.

¹ Editorial note: Many of the attendees at the Woolf conferences are members of the International Virginia Woolf Society, but the IVWS is not directly involved in the conferences. Each conference is independently organized by one or more faculty members at the institution that hosts it.



Woolf and the City
19th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 4-7, 2009
Organizer: Anne Fernald
Fordham University, Lincoln Center
New York, New York, USA

Organizer

Woolf and the City

Anne E. Fernald
Fordham University

Asking a conference organizer to describe her memories of the conference will necessarily present a strange and partial view, one clouded by the administrivia that dominates the days leading up to and during the conference. One of my dominant mental images of that conference is of spreadsheets—rows and columns of names, addresses, times, and snack orders. But enough of that.

To be honest, my memories of other Woolf conferences are funnier. I remember putting together a panel with several fellow graduate students from Yale and Princeton at the second conference in New Haven. We were nervously assembled in a row at the front when a young woman walked in, took one look at us, and flounced out, “I thought this was going to be a REAL Yale panel.” I remember smuggling booze into dry dormitories in dry towns for late-night parties in the common room. (This was not a unique event.) I remember going to a town park with a friend to work on our papers and having it dawn on us that we were in a cruising area, being solicited. I remember driving Lucio Ruotolo and Jane Marcus to an offsite reception and worrying that if I got into a crash, I’d wipe out American Woolf studies. I remember so many times when a person I met after a paper or at a banquet became a friend.

By the time I hosted the conference at Fordham, I knew what I wanted: midcareer plenarys, lots of participation from artists and creative people, and abundant snacks. There were piles and piles of cheese cubes at the opening reception, and the weather for the closing reception was fine enough that we could be out on the plaza, with Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson in their finest party outfits—a simple striped shirt for him and a really gorgeous plumed hat on her. I do remember someone telling me something that was wrong with the food, but I’ve blocked the details.

Watching Anna Snaith, Tamar Katz, and Jessica Berman give gorgeous, polished lectures felt like a declaration that our generation had arrived. I had wanted to put these people in conversation with pioneering Woolf scholars from an earlier generation, but when I invited one woman, she so clearly intended to give a long, long speech that I withdrew the plan. Some groused at my giving Rebecca Solnit a keynote, as she was not a scholar but an essayist, so I take special joy that she adapted her address for the final essay of *Men Explain Things to Me*. I still look back with pleasure, too, on listening to Ruth Gruber, Susan Sellers, and Kristen Lundberg describe the ways in which they’d been inspired by Woolf in a conversation with Katherine Lanpher. Almost no one came to Roxana Robinson’s panel where she spoke with several other fiction writers about how Woolf inspired her. I still feel anxious and sorry that it was so ill-attended and grateful for the grace she’s shown me since. Her novels *Cost* and *Sparta* especially are so infused with her deep understanding of Woolf, and I am always hoping others will share my admiration.

I don’t think I grasped how much I was asking when I asked Stephen Pelton to choreograph a dance and perform with live music, especially since that live music was the band Princeton—very young, very alternative, boppy surf music with a literary bent. But I insisted and continued to believe that the collaboration was necessary, would be cool, and was a key feature of the conference. Despite the fact that someone came up to me, disbelieving the fact that he’d been at a rock show at

an academic conference—or maybe because of it—that performance remains the highlight for me. They pulled it off and I felt like a magician after a wildly successful illusion. It was awesome.

Our theme was Woolf and the City and we printed a giant poster of a long-ago destroyed Duncan Grant mural of a woman descending the subway stairs. I told one of the grad students to guard that poster with her life. I still wonder what happened to it. I really wanted it for my office.

I hosted the Woolf Conference at Fordham University’s Lincoln Center campus in 2009. I think it was one of the very good ones.



Attendee

Woolf and the City: Wow!

Paula Maggio
Blogging Woolf

For a girl born in Brooklyn, transplanted to Ohio at the age of three, and engaged in a longtime love affair with both Virginia Woolf and New York, could there be anything better than a Woolf conference in New York City? I think not.

And that is why “Wow!” was my immediate reaction to Woolf and the City, the 19th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. Ten years later that is still my emotional response when I think of that 2009 event, which is why I chose the New York City conference as my personal hands-down favorite among the ten Woolf conferences I have attended.

Held June 4-7 at Fordham University on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and organized by Anne Fernald, the conference was the second I had attended. But it was the first one I wrote about on *Blogging Woolf*, the site I created in July of 2007.

Now, those blog posts, including one aptly titled “In the aftermath of Woolf and the City, one word—Wow!” help me recall the high points of the conference I described as “dynamite.” It featured 50 panels, attracted 200 Woolf scholars and common readers from around the globe, and introduced me to notable authors I never dreamed I would meet.

One was Dr. Ruth Gruber, who died in 2016. Ninety-seven at the time of the conference, she was known as a journalist, photographer, and the author of *Virginia Woolf: The Will to Create as a Woman* (1935).¹ She shared fascinating stories of her 1930s experiences as a journalist who visited the Soviet Arctic and a writer who met Virginia and Leonard Woolf in their Tavistock Square flat. I remember chatting with this redhead curbside as she patiently waited for the cab that would take her home.

Another was Susan Sellers, author of *Vanessa and Virginia*, the novel based on the relationship between sisters Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, which was receiving rave reviews in the US at the time. I recall her graciousness as she signed books and chatted with readers.

Others I listened to but did not meet included keynote speaker Rebecca Solnit, a prolific author whose work is so timely and compelling today, and Tamar Katz of Brown University who spoke about the importance of “pausing and waiting” in life and in Woolf.

The iconic Frances Spalding of Newcastle University was there, as was Pace University’s Mark Hussey of *Virginia Woolf: A to Z* fame. It was my first time hearing Mark speak, and I was awed. I would later learn he is the most approachable and helpful of Woolf scholars.

What else struck my fancy? Here’s the list:

—A visit to the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, where we were treated to a private viewing of pieces in the Virginia Woolf

¹ The 75th anniversary edition of the original dissertation, accompanied by additional materials, was published by Carroll & Graf in 2005.

collection, including the walking stick rescued from the River Ouse after her death. Being there felt more sacred than church.

—A performance of the 2004 play *Vita and Virginia*, written by Dame Eileen Atkins and directed by Matthew Maguire, director of Fordham's theatre program.

—A performance that combined rock-out music from an L.A. band called Princeton with dance from the Stephen Pelton Dance Theatre as the group performed cuts from its four-song album "Bloomsbury" based on the lives of Virginia and Leonard Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, and Lytton Strachey.

—And, of course, the cherished presence of Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson and their collection of Bloomsbury Heritage Series monographs, including my first, which debuted at that conference—*Reading the Skies in Virginia Woolf: Woolf on Weather in Her Essays, Her Diaries and Three of Her Novels*—making Woolf and the City extra memorable.

Virginia Woolf and the Natural World
20th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 3-6, 2010
Organizer: Kristin Czarnecki
Thomas & King Leadership and Conference Centre
Georgetown College
Georgetown, KY, USA

Organizer

Virginia Woolf and Nature

Kristin Czarnecki
Georgetown College

What a lark, what a plunge it was to host the Virginia Woolf Conference at Georgetown College! By 2009, I had attended four Woolf conferences and grew excited at the prospect of hosting my own in central Kentucky, home to hundreds of beautiful horse farms and acres of lush, rolling bluegrass. My call for papers included an excerpt from one of the interludes in *The Waves*, inviting students, scholars, readers, creative writers, and artists to explore Woolf's engagement with the natural world.

Thus began a hectic but exhilarating year of planning. I am forever thankful for the program committee of Woolfians, generous as always with their time and talents; for colleagues willing to jump in and help in any way they could; for students who designed the posters, t-shirts, conference program, and signage and who presented their Bloomsbury Group papers at a session for undergraduates; for the Art Department for putting on a fabulous art exhibition; and for local thespians, who staged a play based on Woolf's diaries. I feared people might sniff at traveling to Kentucky, particularly after conferences in London and New York City. I need not have worried, however, for the proposals came pouring in, and all who attended enjoyed the intimate atmosphere and rural-ish environs—complete with an excursion to the Kentucky Horse Park. Before the dinner that night, we had a hayride around the grounds. Unfortunately, the horses were feeling anti-social; we saw them only at a distance.

Over the four-day conference, we had papers on birds, dogs, foxes, rabbits, gardens, water, forests, and flowers; on ecofeminism, bioaesthetics, mountaineering, swimming, and diving. We had scintillating keynotes from Carrie Rohman, Diana Swanson, and Bonnie Kime Scott, along with Beth Rigel Daugherty's presentation on equine references in Woolf and a talk by the inimitable and dearly missed Cecil Woolf, not to mention the sparkling conversation of his wife, Jean Moorcroft Wilson. Between sessions, attendees enjoyed conversation, cookies, and coffee; book vendors hawked their wares; piles of t-shirts sat unsold; and I tried to heed the words of those who assured me that if

anything went wrong, no one would notice as long as they were fed well and fed often.

On Sunday afternoon, after the last keynote ended, after the remaining attendees picked up their last box lunches, boarded the bus to the airport, and blew air kisses at me as the vehicle pulled away, after I dropped a woman off at her B&B, and after locking the doors of the conference center behind me (I didn't really, but it makes for a good ending), I went home and promptly collapsed—and was due at an 8:00 a.m. all-day meeting the following morning. Ten years later, I remain happy and proud to have hosted the 20th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf and to have joined the echelon of the conference steering committee, helping those who continue to carry the torch.

"What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?" asks Peter Walsh as *Mrs. Dalloway* draws to a close. For me, it's the gathering of kindred spirits, from all over the world, at the Woolf conference every June.



Attendee

Visions of Elvedon: Virginia Woolf and the Natural World (2010)

Patrizia A. Muscogiuri
Independent Scholar

Attending a Woolf conference was something I had considered for a while. But when I finally submitted an abstract, I couldn't foresee that "Virginia Woolf and the Natural World" would be only the first of many other Woolf meetings I would participate in, as the event turned me into an even more passionate reader of Woolf's work, while, most crucially, revealing to me what I thought must be a new species of extraordinary human beings: Woolfians. Indeed, as my proposal was accepted, I prepared to go to a conference I thought would be like many others—only it wouldn't. It had something very different from other symposia, a quality, as I would discover, proper to these annual Woolf gatherings: its regular attendees were amazing people from around the world who, besides sharing a common passion for Virginia and incredible knowledge, focused on making each new participant feel appreciated and every new approach to Woolf sound valuable, whether the newbie was a student, an academic, an artist, or, very much in Woolf's own spirit, a common reader. It felt as if Woolf, through the gift of her writing, had accomplished this rare marvel of bringing together an array of truly brilliant people with great sensibility and exquisite generosity, bodying forth an unparalleled community of readers, scholars and, ultimately, friends.

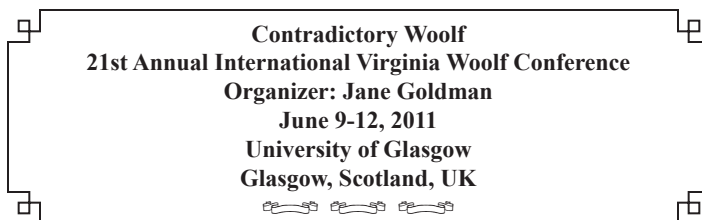
As the plane landed across the pond, on the bus taking participants to Georgetown College, Kentucky, I immediately felt welcomed when another attendee, obviously a veteran of these annual meetings, amiably replied to my queries and was genuinely interested in who I was: the first Woolfian I ever met was the lovely Diane Gillespie. On campus, another Woolfian soon impressed me with her generosity, Diana Swanson, whose kind words at the start of the conference were life-changing. Then, I met Valentina Mazzei, an artist from Rome who was there to exhibit her impressive sculpture of Virginia; adding the genial Paula Maggio of the *Blogging Woolf* website, here was a trio of (mostly) Italians at the conference (Paula being Italian-American) who were having a nice time together. Upon hearing of our shared roots, the wonderful Cecil Woolf, Leonard and Virginia's nephew, began recounting his experiences in Italy during the war, a new installment every time I met him at future conferences. With subtle humor and his unique style, that year Cecil also shared his recollections of his famous aunt and uncle in an unforgettable plenary. But the (private) conversations with Cecil and his wife, the gorgeous Jean Moorcroft Wilson, were for me some of the best moments. Indeed, meeting them both is one of my most cherished memories of the conference, so affable and lovely they were that I've

always looked forward to seeing them, year after year, and keep thinking of them with the greatest affection.

But I think with love and affection of quite a few Woolfians first met on this occasion (as well as at other Woolf conferences), some of whom I have now the privilege of calling my friends—quite a unique outcome for a scholarly event! Affinities emerged instantly, sometimes almost mutely. For instance, I clearly remember going together to a keynote and sitting with Judith Allen and Suzanne Bellamy on my left and Jane Goldman on my right, in an uncanny anticipation of photos of the four of us together taken at future Woolf conferences as, by then, dear friends: here I had only known them for a few days, but it felt so natural being with them and so intimate, it was as if we had known each other forever.

This extraordinary atmosphere was certainly due to the nature of Woolfians, but also to a conference which was a masterwork of organization: intellectually stimulating and immensely enjoyable as a result of a smart and smooth programme, awesome papers, keynotes, social events including a memorable hayride, and great food—everything so impeccably planned that it was astonishing to see how effortlessly cool, self-assured and relaxed, as well as stylish, Kristin Czarniecki, fab organiser, looked. Everybody seemed to feel at ease, among friends, part of a community. But how would this amazing community receive my paper, I wondered? Several parallel sessions meant I could relax speaking to a small manageable audience. Yet, to my surprise, later that day I was greeted and complimented on my paper by people who were not in the audience: the word had spread, and that was Woolfians' way of saying that, although not everybody could be there, the paper mattered, and they appreciated my research. This is how I met Gill Lowe, who was the first of a small group of colleagues, including Kathryn Simpson, to come to my table at dinner to report the lovely things they had heard about my paper. Today, I'm blessed with their friendship, yet I suspect they have no idea how heartening that was. In awe of their genius and keen benevolence, Woolfians made me wish to return repeatedly to these events, sharing knowledge and support, cordiality, great fun and, in many cases, deep and genuine friendship, unlike any ordinary conference. Indeed, the word feels inadequate to describe what these outstanding scholars have achieved (and Woolf too, through them) while channeling light from the “flowers and leaves” of her works. So maybe a new word should be coined to indicate how unique a Woolf conference is (Woolference, I venture?) Undeniably, she brought us together—a living “mosaic of single sparks” gradually “form[ing] into one whole” (*The Waves*)¹ each time we meet, creating that marvelous, open to all, and always welcoming garden that the Woolfian community is.

¹ Editorial note: This passage appears in the second interlude of the novel.



Organizer

**Some memories of ‘Contradictory Woolf,
the 21st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf’
University of Glasgow, 9-12 June 2011**

Jane Goldman
Glasgow University

It was very nearly called ‘the BUT conference’, but ‘Contradictory Woolf’ prevailed in the end.

It arose from a burning desire to say a huge Woolfian ‘But’ in the Bute Hall—named after John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, 3rd Marquess of Bute

(1847–1900), aristocrat, industrial magnate and apparently in his time the richest man in the world—the patriarchal heart of the magnificent Victorian neo-gothic monstrosity dominating the campus of Glasgow University; but it opened up that space for me in unexpected ways. I began to see the place throbbing over those four days with queer, avant-garde potential.

It was so all-consuming, so exhausting, and yet utterly thrilling to plan the conference and then exhausting and thrilling in a different way to live through and actually experience it. Planning and preparation took years, but those four days in June 2011 themselves defy temporal measure. Each day seemed at the time to last forever yet also to pass in a flash. Ten years have passed yet still much of it remains so vivid, so fresh. The conference’s published selected papers, the numerous photographs and the film (of the pageant), nevertheless, as records of what I did or did not personally witness, continue to surprise me.

I could not have done it without the well-honed template of previous conferences, without the wisdom and advice and lived experience of previous conference organisers and participants.

I could not have done it without the unflagging support of my academic colleagues at Glasgow and our magnificent team of postgraduates, not least Derek ‘I’m William’ Ryan, who went on to host the magnificent 2018 conference at Kent University. I bow down to his stamina.

I could have done without the entrepreneurial dark arts of the formal university Conference Services whose baffling protocols (sector-wide it seems), along with the university’s internal economy for room bookings, meant our conference fees were more expensive than they could have been. I lobbied our Principal who kindly intervened to reduce the cost of room bookings, but even so the fiscal cost of an intervening ‘But’ in the Bute certainly stung. Ditto the cost of ‘IT support’ (apparently outsourced to a contract worker at the week-end) which crucially failed me when I wanted to display an image by Nancy Spero in my introductory remarks for Marina Warner’s keynote plenary. But I remember enjoying resorting to clumsy ad hoc ekphrasis, realising that being fallible was okay in a conference organiser, being present was everything. I also remember feeling a rising anger at the ways in which the ethos and ambitions of Woolf conferences past and present (which so sustained and sustain me) were being directly challenged, distorted and thwarted by the commodifying trends that have continued to let rip through the academic sector in recent decades. It was a bitter-sweet experience occupying the Bute Hall for those four days in 2011, and my memories of it only become more so.

The present pandemic context obviously makes the memory of such a vibrant in real life conference so tender. Other matters also continue to press. Ten years later, many of the postgraduates whose prospects looked so fine then and who worked so hard to make that conference happen, as well as many of those postgraduates who gave such wonderful contradictory papers at that conference, if they have not been driven out of academic life altogether, now find themselves still on precarious short-term contracts delivering along with others like them the bulk of the undergraduate curriculum in various universities around the world, including Glasgow, with little prospect of decently paid permanent posts. And some of those that did go on to so-called successful careers find themselves a decade on burning out, in failing institutions, and even forced to take pay cuts. Ten years later, my university has published its own self-indicting report, ‘Understanding Racism, Transforming University Cultures’, and hard questions are being asked in and of the Bute Hall concerning the overwhelming whiteness of the university and the long overdue decolonisation of our curriculum.

What do I recall of the Bute Hall? The way the ‘Woolf and the Chaucer Horse’ banner painting made by Suzanne Bellamy for her amazing pageant keynote and presiding over the entire conference fluttered and rippled and its gold touches were shot through with the rays of the setting sun as the Bute hall emptied and I lingered behind with Marina

Warner for photographs in front of it following her intimate memoir keynote and before being whisked off to the Glasgow City Chambers for the reception and dinner (and one of the sauciest speeches ever, delivered by Cecil Woolf). The way the young postgraduate in charge of the roving mic was so in awe of the intellectual fireworks exploding out of Patricia Waugh's keynote he had to be coaxed back to attend to his duties with the dangling mic. The number of times and the number of ways Judith Allen said the word 'but' in her brilliant keynote. How the imposing pillars of the Bute Hall seemed to me to supplement Michael Whitworth's illuminating annotations of a contradictory obelisk and its contexts in *Night and Day*. How Laura Marcus and David Bradshaw had us all enthralled, tears one minute, howls of laughter the next over Woolf and class. How the Bute Hall is also a corridor as well as a maze through which I would tiptoe en route to sample as often as I could various panel sessions, all humming like an enormous hive. I remember feeling how odd it is that the keynotes inevitably come to take up an organiser's time and energies in ways that as an attendee of conferences previously I had not quite appreciated.

The freedom to be dipping in and out of simultaneous panel sessions, eavesdropping, is such a delicious and compensatory prerogative for an organiser (although I did also chair a couple of panels). As an organiser I also remember feeling curiously unmoored (not having that singular focus of a panel paper to give), yet at the same time permanently alert and on duty (not able to slope off). I was cast as both Mrs Manresa and Queenie Leavis in the pageant, an unexpected pleasure on both counts. I remember feeling as conference organiser, however, more so cast as both Mrs Dalloway and Lucy, the latter role being much more the actual job spec and of course much more thankless. How lovely to be out buying the flowers before hosting the hell out of the party, but someone also has to stay home to have the doors unhinged.

What would I do differently? The tee shirts! We should not have stinted on the printing; we should have gone for the more permanent screen-printed option. How pristine they looked on the day, but how after years of wear and machine-washing they have bled and faded.

Seriously, what would I do differently? Everything and nothing. I remain very proud of Contradictory Woolf. But the event was haunted then and is haunted now by the spectre of the 'not here tonight'—that is, the 'many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed', as Woolf has it. However inclusive we tried to be then, ten years ago, and try to be now, I think of those excluded 'other women' recognised in the contradictory argument of *A Room of One's Own* as well as all those *other* others who feel excluded and/or who are excluded by it, and I am ashamed.



Attendee

GLASGOW 2011

Suzanne Bellamy

Independent Scholar and Artist

Every Virginia Woolf conference is unique, different. Each has a tone, a shape, drama, undercurrents, players. For me the Glasgow 2011 conference was special in life-changing ways. Invited to be a keynote speaker by Jane Goldman, I had the freedom to explore beyond the 20-minute time slot. Focusing on *Between the Acts* and Woolf's exploration of pre-history, what emerged was a performance piece of The Pageant (updated),¹ the painting "Woolf and the Chaucer Horse" (a

¹ The Pageant Script is reprinted in Suzanne Bellamy's essay "'The Play's The Thing BUT We Are The Thing Itself.' Prologue, Performance and Painting. A Multimedia Exploration of Woolf's Work in the Late 1930's and Her Vision of Prehistory" (43-56), published in *Contradictory Woolf: The Selected Papers of the Annual International Conference* (Clemson, South Carolina: Clemson University Press 2012), edited by Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki.

set canvas) and an exegesis. That was the plan. I was excited to infuse some of the Miss LaTrobe method into my own approach, to work from the idea of the unrehearsed, the village, the unexpected, and the uncontrollable. As if by magic, life of course intervened in unexpected and deeply emotional ways, unseen and powerful. The studio work went well, the research into medieval Psalters and Chaucer was rewarding, but all the parts still had to be pulled together. Then suddenly my wonderful mother Valeria at 98 began her final journey. In the last week of her life, I sat at her bedside and finished the script when she could sleep, rich veins of humor surprisingly pouring out. My writing experience is fused with this precious time, inseparable. I finished everything, and a week after her funeral I was on a plane from Sydney to Edinburgh, weary and still grieving, a bit out of body, jetlagged and on the other side of the world in all ways. What I had hoped would be a conference experiment in spontaneous unrehearsed performance with players cast from our wonderful Woolf community of scholars, transformed into a personal passage as well, surreal and demanding detail from a place of exhaustion.

Edinburgh and Glasgow were splendid; Jane Goldman had planned a marvelous experience for us, and I felt safe knowing that Jane, a child of artists, loved and understood artists and was a brilliant host. I arrived with the canvas in my luggage, 13 feet long, barely dry. It needed some framing or hanging structure for the venue, so I managed a trip to a hardware store, bought wood and elementary carpentry tools, banged and sawed what was needed on the hotel room floor. All very well until I realized it wouldn't fit in the lift to get it out of the building. The comedy had really begun at this point as we somehow carried it down a hotel staircase in a tricky spiral of tiny movements and out onto the street. An obliging taxi with me hanging out the window with long poles, and we made it to Bute Hall, the grand venue.

The second phase was Casting for the Pageant!! I have found it best to just tell people what you want and not ask, and mostly this worked. This way they don't have time for fear and performance anxiety to kick in. Having been attending these annual conferences since 1997, I had a sense of who to grab, whose energies resonated with the characters of *Between the Acts*. Looking back now some of the choices were more than inspired, especially Jane as both Mrs. Manresa and Queenie Leavis, with her lipstick and venom, delicious. Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson as the Audience were brilliant, Cecil standing up and shouting, "What about the army?" over and over, so funny and perfect. I had cast Jane's 14-year-old daughter Robbie McLean as our musician with her saxophone, and perhaps one of the moments that shone most for me privately was a revelation of Scottish independence. I asked Robbie to play "God Save The Queen" at one point, and she said she didn't know the tune!!! My old Australian colonial childhood flashed back as I recalled being forced to sing this anthem at every school event. I loved that Robbie didn't know the tune, but we quickly improvised, and she learned something of it, a triumph of the comic that hid in the detail of the day. Miss LaTrobe would have appreciated that comic moment, as would Woolf.

It all happened: so many little moments of improvisation and error occurred, the conference audience played their part as well, and we got through. I had wanted to invoke the Amateur, the Unrehearsed, the village, embodied in the novel. I think it worked. In so many ways it was an homage to my mother, to Woolf as a muse in the present moment, and to Jane for letting me have the space. My lasting memories of the conference are a glittering array of poetry, Marina Warner, new ideas, dinners, having fun with Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson at the trade/art/bookfair tables where every year we would gossip and laugh. My sadness was lifted through exhaustion to a place of really letting go, finding form in the company of Chaucer, Woolf, and fellows on the road. It was more than clear that *Between the Acts* was never Woolf's last work but a new beginning, as it was also for me.



Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf
22nd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 7-10, 2012
Organizer: Ann Martin
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Organizer

**Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf:
The 22nd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
7-10 June 2012 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada**

Ann Martin
University of Saskatchewan

For a number of months following the 2012 conference, a Google search of Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf would result in an image of a Robertson's Ground Squirrel. This seemed particularly apt for a conference that was tied deeply to a different conceptualization of geography. The first International Conference on Virginia Woolf to take place in Canada, it was held in Saskatoon on Treaty Six Territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis. Bringing Woolf's legacy into conversation with Canadian contexts and our colonial past allowed us to move within and beyond academic spheres and to bring together diverse disciplinary and cultural perspectives. Keynotes by Leslie K. Hankins, Alexandra Harris, Maggie Humm, the Orlando Project (Susan Brown, Patricia Clements, Isobel Grundy), and Brenda Silver ranged across visual, cultural, literary, digital, and musical territory. Equally diverse panels on interdisciplinarity and papers delivered by scholars from throughout the world involved similar exchanges across epistemological and institutional boundaries.

Institutional space was rendered anew in such dialogues. Indeed, the community members who came to campus to participate in the Access to Education and the Legacy of Sexual Violence panels facilitated a reciprocal learning experience. This had begun for the conference organizers when the Gabriel Dumont Institute provided guidance on the Land Acknowledgement—and books for the silent auction! Like the reading at the Mendel Art Gallery by poet and Elder Louise Halfe, Sky Dancer, such moments were grounded in Saskatoon, but linked profoundly to the implications of Woolf's writing. The conference donation to the Gordon Oakes / Red Bear Indigenous Student Centre was a marker of our deep appreciation of such teachings.

What now emerges from a Google search for the conference are images associated with the many students who made the experience possible: the conference artist, Robin Adair; the conference assistants and volunteers, including Jasmine Liska, Terriann Walling, Lisa Buchanan, Mandy Elliott, and Amelia Horsburgh; the director of *Angel in the House*, Charlie Peters. Their work can be connected to the research posters created and presented by students from the third-year Women's and Gender Studies conference course, as well as to the research assistance provided by Michael Horacki and Taylor Witiw who enabled the publication of interdisciplinary articles on the pedagogical dimensions of the conference co-authored with Kathryn Holland at MacEwan University.

These interconnected actions and moments, like the multiple impulses of Woolf's work, speak to the scope and complexity of community. If, as James Ramsay¹ realizes, "nothing was simply one thing," Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf is not merely a series or days or a location for dialogue. Rather, it is an experience of connections, and it has implications that—in common with all Woolf conferences—have the potential to transform richly, deeply over time and space.

¹ Editorial note: The youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*.



Attendee

Remembering Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf

Maria Aparecida de Oliveira
Universidade Federal da Paraíba

It has been almost a decade since I first attended the Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. The first one was in Glasgow in 2011, when I first had the pleasure to join this wonderful, brilliant, bright, and welcoming community. My second year at a Woolf Conference was in Saskatoon, Canada at the University of Saskatchewan, organized by Ann Martin, whom I met in Glasgow. Joining the conference was a great opportunity for me to meet my bibliographical references, walking in flesh and blood, such as Vara Neverow, Mark Hussey, Judith Allen, Jeanne Dubino, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Bonnie Kime Scott, Pamela L. Caughie, Brenda Silver, and Jane Goldman among others. The theme of the conference was Interdisciplinarity and Multidisciplinary Woolf, which involved the concepts of "community," "communion," and "collaboration," investigating the multiple 'Woolfs' in interaction with different fields and methods and dealing with multiple pedagogical possibilities in an international academic community. The key speakers were Leslie Kathleen Hankins, Cornell College; Alexandra Harris, University of Liverpool; Maggie Humm, University of London; Susan Brown, University of Guelph; Patricia Clements, University of Alberta; Isobel Grundy, University of Alberta; and Brenda Silver, Dartmouth College.

The name of the city Saskatoon derives from a berry of the same name, and Saskatchewan, the prairie province, means "swiftly flowing river" in Cree. The province has a significant number of aboriginal people, and I remember the talk of Kristina Fagan, Assistant Dean, about Aboriginal Affairs, at the Mendel Art Gallery, when she mentioned that we were in an indigenous territory, and it was important to address that. Besides that, there were several interesting cultural events at the conference, such as a poetry reading, a film, and a play called *Angel in the House*, directed by Charlie Peters. At this conference, I presented an article on Woolf and Clarice Lispector, using Hélène Cixous's feminist perspective to analyze the Brazilian writer. The essay was published in the *Selected Papers* of the conference.

I could mention many people who had a great impact on my work, however I will limit my comments, as I do not have much room in this brief text. The first one was the lecture of Brenda Silver, "Waving to Virginia," in which she analyzed the movie *Before Night Falls*, based on the autobiography of the Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas. Silver's work became a model for me in order to investigate Woolf's representation in Brazil. Elisa Kay Sparks's presentation "Sunflower Suture: Disseminating the Garden in *The Years*" also had a great impact on my work; Elisa inspired me tremendously with her investigation on the flowers in Woolf's novels and the relationship of these motifs with the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe, a painter I have always admired. Melba Cuddy-Keane has been an enormous inspiration for my work, and I have been following her since the first time I heard her paper—"Woolf, History, Us"—at that conference, where she also mentioned her recent paper, "Paradigms of Global Conscience in and around Virginia Woolf," which offers a broader view and a new perspective on a comparative and contextual work of Woolf. Suzanne Bellamy has been another reference for me since we met in Saskatoon and started collaborating in many panels dealing with transnational perspectives on modernism at Woolf conferences. I could keep on mentioning so many people. But my time is up, and I must cease. Woolf Conference has not only been an inspiration; it has also been a transformative experience in my life as an educator.

Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader
23rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 6-9, 2013
Organizer: Helen Wussow
Simon Fraser University
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Organizer

**The 23rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf,
June 6-9, 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

Helen Wussow¹
New School, New York

“What a lark! What a plunge!” recalls Clarissa Dalloway of when she opened the French doors at Bourton into the morning air. She remembers experiencing a feeling of trepidation, a sense that “something awful was about to happen.”

Such were my collective feelings when I volunteered to organize the 23rd Annual Virginia Woolf Conference on June 6-9, 2013 in Vancouver, under the auspices of Simon Fraser University. I had never organized a conference before, and it became clear that this conference was a very special gathering, both an academic conference and a party, a gathering of colleagues and friends.

From the outset, I wanted to honor the ethos of Simon Fraser University and the very special location of Vancouver. It is a city located on unceded Aboriginal land, and it looks to the North as much as it does out to the Pacific.

And, thus, the title of the conference, “Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader.” I invited writers from the multi-voiced Vancouver area to read their work, which spoke severally within and against the context of Empire and Canada’s position as a Commonwealth realm. It was appropriate that the University’s division of continuing education helped host a conference focusing on the work of a lifelong learner and adult educator. An evening event, “Word Squatting Virginia Woolf,” featured adult writers from the Thursdays Writing Collective, which includes residents from Vancouver’s economically challenged Eastside.

“As a woman, I have no country. [...] As a woman my country is the whole world.” Jordan Abel reminded us that a “whole world” can be stolen. Tears rolled down my face as Mr. Abel read poetry over the recorded voice of Franz Boas, the “father of American anthropology.” Boas looted the cultural/common wealth of multiple First Nations communities to enrich the American Natural History Museum in New York City and the Field Museum in Chicago.

For three days the presenters and attendees shared in the common distribution of a wealth of learning and perspectives. Perhaps, after all, hosting a conference is like throwing a huge party. As one waves goodbye and focuses on the aftermath, one swears never to do it again. Then the horrible thought occurs: wouldn’t it be interesting to visit Boas’s stolen treasure on the island bought from Native Americans for US \$24? It would be like throwing open French doors onto memory.

¹ Dr. Wussow was then Dean of Lifelong Learning and Associate Professor, English at Simon Fraser University.

² Editorial note: The passage is from *Three Guineas*, Woolf’s 1938 feminist manifesto.



Attendees

Remembering the Vancouver Conference

Kristin Czarnecki Erica Delsandro
Georgetown College Bucknell University

Spectacular ocean vistas. Brisk early-morning walks along the shore. Blue heron and eagle sightings. Conversation and laughter—so much laughter!—with cherished friends. A dog entranced by the song “Stormy Weather” (when sung by Patrizia Muscogiuri). And of course, Helen Wussow’s elegant, colorful caftans. These are the memories that come flooding back when thinking about the Woolf conference in Vancouver, B. C., in June 2013.

We met up at the Vancouver airport, took a taxi to the conference hotel, and shared a room for the next five days. (On day five, we realized we could have been opening the windows and letting some of that sea air into our room!) After checking in and getting settled, we headed outside and were thrilled to discover we were just a stone’s throw from the ocean. We sat on sand-colored boulders, turned our faces up to the sky, sat quietly, and basked in the sunshine while listening to the water lap the shore. Bliss! We then had a bite to eat, bumped into Paula Maggio and Alice Lowe strolling around, and knew that we were embarking on a very special conference experience. Our time in Vancouver truly was enchanted!

Accustomed to the eastern time zone, we woke up on our own at 5:00 a.m. on the first full day. It was already light out, so we donned our gym clothes and headed out for a long walk along the water, catching each other up on our lives after months apart. With each passing day, it got a bit harder to rouse ourselves at the crack of dawn, but we did it, unwilling to miss out on the glorious atmosphere. On the last day, after the conference officially ended, we took a three-hour walk around Stanley Park on another impossibly beautiful sunny day. But we get ahead of ourselves.

After our walk, each day of the conference began with breakfast outside on the patio—with fresh cut fruit, no less!—where we talked and caught up with old friends and made new friends, too. The rest of the day was filled with brilliant, thought-provoking papers, plenary talks, and roundtable discussions. Jotting down the names of authors, books, theorists, and artists mentioned in the presentations. Scribbling down questions to ask during the Q&A. Chatting a mile a minute during the coffee breaks. Dashing outside now and again for another glimpse of the ocean and clear blue sky. Other highlights include a wonderful reception at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art in downtown Vancouver. Lunch outside at a Greek restaurant. Browsing used bookstores.

The banquet. Our rowdy table. Sneaking down to the shopping atrium under the hotel for another bottle of wine after the one at our table quickly ran out.

Helen at the helm through it all—ensuring the smooth running of the conference, floating by in her beautiful caftans, making sure each and every one of us felt welcomed and had everything we needed. Her warmth and serenity making it all look so easy, and we know from experience that it’s not!

And then our last day—a glorious end to a memorable conference. We snuck out to Stanley Park, eager to take full advantage of our breathtaking locale. We walked and talked. We sat and stared at the water. And although our souls were sated by friendship and natural beauty, our stomachs were grumbling when we completed our tour of the park. Luckily, an Italian restaurant greeted us, and we dined well, quite the opposite of Woolf’s dinner at Fernham in *A Room of One’s Own*.

Sadly, the next day we parted ways, returning back East. But the memories stay with us, and not a Woolf conference goes by that we don’t reminisce about our time in Vancouver. (And wish that we, too, had colorful, flowing caftans of our own!)

Virginia Woolf: Writing the World
24th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 5-8, 2014
Co-Organizers: Pamela L. Caughie and Diana L. Swanson
Loyola University Chicago and Northern Illinois University
Chicago, Illinois, USA

Co-Organizers

Virginia Woolf Writing the World

Pamela L. Caughie **Diana Swanson**
Loyola University Chicago **Northern Illinois University**

The location along the shoreline of Lake Michigan provided a beautiful backdrop for the 24th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, held at Loyola University Chicago June 5-8, 2014. The venue, the Mundelein Center, was most apropos for this conference, for it was the former site of a women's college, Mundelein College, which was founded by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs). Construction of the college's iconic skyscraper (now the Mundelein Center) began in 1929 and those enterprising nuns raised the funds during a recession and bucked the Archbishop of Chicago by creating an art deco rather than classical structure. The historical significance of this building with its exquisite design, including two large sculptures of women figures on the building's façade, made the site all the more welcoming. Our opening reception was held in the beautifully restored mansion, Piper Hall, along the lakefront, also a former Mundelein College building, and the second in Mundelein Center's Palm Court with its outdoor balcony and stunning views of Lake Michigan and the campus.

The conference theme, "Virginia Woolf Writing the World," embodied our goal of making this conference as global as possible in terms of topics, perspectives, and presenters. A large world map hung in the reception area and over 220 attendees were invited to put pins in the map to show their countries of origin. Not surprisingly, the US, UK, and Canada were prominently represented, but we had presenters and attendees from Sweden, Argentina, Norway, Japan, Taiwan, France, Qatar, Turkey, South Korea, The Netherlands, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Poland. Our keynote speakers and round table addressed worlds inhabited and created by Virginia Woolf. Marking the centennial of World War I, the opening round table, moderated by Mark Hussey and featuring Sarah Cole, J. Ashley Foster, Christine Froula, and Jean Mills, focused on the theme of violence. The two keynote speakers, Maud Ellmann and Tuzyline Allan, drew attention to the "everyday" as constituted by radio waves, air raids, and weather, and to the archival and critical work that remains to be done to make questions of race, ethnicity, and globality more prominent in Woolf studies.

We still remember fondly the excitement of greeting the first guests to arrive on campus, coming in early for the Newberry Library exhibit, hosted by Mark Hussey and Liesl Olsen, and the poetry reading by Sina Queyras at the historic Poetry Foundation in downtown Chicago, the first permanent home for Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine, which began publishing in 1912. We were entertained by a hilarious performance of Sarah Ruhl's *Orlando*, directed by Loyola's Professor Ann Shanahan and performed by Loyola students; by a superb multi-media performance, *The Glass Inward*, by Anna Henson of DePaul University, a performance also inspired by *Orlando*; and (as always) by the Woolf Society Players at the closing banquet.

When we finally bade farewell to our guests, we were overcome by mixed feelings of relief and nostalgia. After three years of planning and organizing, negotiating contracts and creating spreadsheets, sampling food (fun!) and controlling costs (not!), and spending time at each other's homes where we deliberated the details, drafted the program, and drank the wine (and pushed Diana's car out of a snow drift), we got to know each other well, making us deeply grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the history of this extraordinary annual conference.

Attendee

Writing the World

Amy Smith
Lamar University

Since my husband is from Chicago, he went with me to the 24th annual Woolf conference and we combined our trip with a family visit. During the conference we stayed in the dorms at the Loyola University Lake Shore Campus, where we were pleased to reconnect with Ben Hagen in the front lobby when we arrived.

Trying to select memories from such big events is tough. I remember that I gave two presentations at that year's conference, which was exciting but also kind of crazy. I remember how welcoming Diana Swanson, Pamela Caughie, and their team were. There were so many great papers, performances, and conversations at the conference. For me, one of the most powerfully inspiring and memorable talks was Tuzyline Allan's keynote lecture about Virginia Woolf after postcolonialism. A handful of us stayed afterwards to speak with Tuzyline, and I just remember how exciting that conversation was.

One thing that I always remember about the conferences is the spaces we inhabit, whether on campus or in city centers. Loyola University is such a beautiful campus, right next to the windy lake with lovely little walking paths. I loved the stone buildings and great lawns. My husband and I really enjoyed exploring the nearby neighborhood to find interesting restaurants. I remember that we ate at a Nigerian restaurant twice, which was very exciting for me because we ate some foods from childhood (my parents lived in several West African countries before I was born, and we grew up with the food and music in our home). We also found an amazing Korean burger joint that blew our minds.... I still remember that burger more than five years later! But probably my favorite memory of a local eatery was when a big group of us went to a restaurant with an outdoor garden. There, Ben Hagen, Vicki Tromanhauser and I had a helpful conversation with Julie Vandivere, organizer of the 2015 conference at Bloomsburg University, and Ann Martin, who had organized the 2012 conference, which helped us gain the confidence to consider hosting the conference ourselves—Lamar will be hosting the 31st conference in 2022.

Our favorite destination when visiting Chicago is the Chicago Botanic Garden in the northern suburbs of the city. It is an oasis of peace, nine islands of gardens of all varieties. Because we cannot resist this garden, we went out there twice during this trip. The combination of rich Woolfian discussions, the beauty of the garden and discussing the day's events with my partner every evening have blended together in my mind to create such warm memories of this conference.

Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries
25th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 4-7, 2015
Organizer: Julie Vandivere
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, USA

Organizer

Reflections on the 25th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf—"Virginia Woolf and her Female Contemporaries," 2015

Julie Vandivere
Bloomsburg University

Perhaps hosting the Virginia Woolf Conference is nothing more than a small fish, merely a guppy, to some others in big cities or R1 universities. But for me, my undergraduate students, Bloomsburg University, and the town of Bloomsburg, it was a catch of a decade. We are, after all, living in one of the most centrally isolated places on the eastern seaboard. Close to three hours from a major airport, Bloomsburg University is a

bucolic spot among the trees and rivers with nary an English or literature graduate student in sight. And yet, thanks to an amazing dean, Dr. Jim Brown, the graphic genius of Elise Nicol, a virtual army of dedicated undergraduates, Megan Hicks, Emma Slotterback, and Katie Starliper, and the persistent good will of the Woolf community, we had an amazing four days that the university and the town has not forgotten.

People I knew in the Woolf community convinced me that Woolf scholars are persistent, that they would not be put off by the three hours from an airport, the cinder-block dorm rooms that were the only accommodation, or even the obscene Pennsylvania liquor laws that make Pennsylvania a wine prison where an adult in need of a glass of wine would need to hitchhike Route 11, perhaps accept a ride in a pickup, and buy a bottle from a very limited supply of beverages in a state owned liquor store. These roadblocks had prevented Bloomsburg University from ever hosting an international conference, and yet, Woolf scholars flocked in. We had more than three hundred scholars from eleven countries, and it was a landmark event for all of us.

Perhaps it was a landmark for some because they will never be able to forget sleeping on thin mattresses in a basement dorm room, but it was a landmark for others because it was four days of thought and laughter, brilliance and humor that made us think broadly and deeply. Yes, we did circumvent the alcohol restrictions by investing in large amounts of very good wine that we could serve without a cash bar at every afternoon and evening event. And we had the support of an amazing food service led by Maria Bauman who had white-clad servers carry out heavy trays of strawberries, biscuits, and whipping cream in the afternoon. But this line of culinary accoutrements merely set the stage for the intellectual feast that filled the four days as the Woolf community demonstrated that they believe in a democracy of scholarship. Established scholars attended panels by undergraduates. Jane Garrity, Anne Fernald, Allison Pease, Celia Marshik, Missy Bradshaw, Susan McCabe, and Linda Leavell brought their well-known expertise in Woolf and other women writers to set the foundation in a series of dialogues that inspired us throughout the four days. Ellen McLaughlin came out from New York and led the Bloomsburg Theater Ensemble in her play *Septimus and Clarissa*. Our little town was transformed, and our campus changed by the intellectual force of the Woolf community.



Attendee

Old Home Week: The 25th Conference on Virginia Woolf, at Bloomsburg University

Emily Kopley
Concordia University

Academic conferences often feel like old home week. One's mentors and co-editors, former students and former professors, friends from graduate school and other past lives—all flash before your eyes, darting hurriedly by you in the hallway, winking from the audience at your panel, hugging you in the elevator, suddenly approaching with two cups of cucumber water in the hotel lounge. I find this half-accidental unity startling but joyous.

For me, the twenty-fifth conference on Virginia Woolf, held in June 2015 at Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, was old home week as well as *old home* week. I grew up an hour and a half away, in the small town of State College, which hosts Penn State University. For the conference, I flew from my home in Montreal to my hometown, where my parents met me at the airport and drove me to Bloomsburg. They later joined in the triumphant concluding banquet, at which I introduced them to many Woolfian friends, Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson, and three of my former students. One student had been an undergraduate at Stanford when I was a graduate student there and was now pursuing a PhD in English at Cornell; the other two students were undergraduates at McGill who had been in my seminar on Woolf the previous Fall term. After the conference, I returned with my parents to my childhood home, where I had eighteen hours to marvel at

the many parts and places of my life before flying back to my husband and infant son. Startling but joyous.

The conference theme, “Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries,” seemed to provoke terrific talks. Often these were stories, stories about publications, institutions, or lives made vivid by the archival research of our speakers. Cathy Clay on *Time and Tide*. Nicola Wilson on the Book Society. Catherine Hollis on Emma Goldman. Jane Garrity's plenary on Mary Hutchinson. Steve Putzel on two sisters disdained by Woolf, Katherine Beatrice and Georgina Elizabeth Meinertzhagen—actress and writer, respectively. Helen Southworth's plenary on Elizabeth Senior, who heard “Women and Fiction” at Newnham, became an artist and art historian, and, in 1941, at age thirty, was killed by a bomb in a London air raid, leaving behind a ten-week-old baby. There were also a series of short talks remembering Jane Marcus, who had died a few weeks before. And at the Saturday night banquet, Jean Moorcroft Wilson interviewed Cecil Woolf about his aunt, and he shared a memory he had only recently retrieved: “my last view of Virginia was up an apple tree, picking apples, on a ladder.” Many moments of the conference implied that the past can be recovered. Much comes back.

After the banquet a giddy late-night energy possessed us. In the lobby of the dorm where we were all staying, Julie Vandivere, the conference organizer, operated as bartender, selling for \$13 bottles of wine that retailed for \$26. She had bought hundreds of bottles because the restaurants in town didn't have liquor licenses and was eager to sell them off before the end of the conference. We readily bought up the wine and, since the dorm was “dry” and we were supposed to set a good example, tripped down to the basement to enjoy our purchases discreetly. (Two basement-prowling undergraduate women poured a glass each.) In the tiny, windowless basement, where sofas and chairs were few, fifty of us huddled around our bootlegged booty as though around a campfire, warmed as much by the fire as by the campfire camaraderie. Julie still went home with many bottles.

Throughout the conference I had noticed signs on campus suggesting a Sunday farmer's market if I followed the town's main street. So, at 8am Sunday morning, awake early despite the late night, I chatted with sellers of honey, bread, and flowers in mason jars. In high school summers, I had spent many Friday mornings in just the same way. At 9am I returned to the conference headquarters and presented Vara Neverow with a little basket of blueberries. She taught me that the basket had a British name: it was a “punnet.”

Since Bloomsburg, I haven't been able to attend another Woolf conference, partly for family reasons—my son now has a sister. I also haven't returned to central Pennsylvania, and I may never return—my parents have since moved, for their retirement, to Boston. My students have graduated from their programs. Cecil Woolf has died. The past can be recovered only in part. Much does not come back. But we can always come back to the Woolf conference, which creates, wherever it is—and whether it is physical or virtual—an old home.



Co-Organizers

Virginia Woolf and Heritage

Jane de Gay, Anne Reus, Tom Breckin
Leeds Trinity University

The 2016 Woolf Conference was the one with the Haworth Trip and the Caribbean cultural evening; the one that featured David Bradshaw's last public lecture; the one that saw a virtuoso performance of reminiscences

from Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson. It was also the one with the cake. Gateaux. In plentiful supply. At every break.

The conference was Jane's brainchild. Having attended Woolf conferences since 1997, she had long wished to repay the compliment by hosting one herself. However, since this was the first Woolf conference to be held in the UK for 5 years (and only the fifth in its history), we needed to entice international delegates. The draw was provided by Haworth, home of the Brontës and the subject of Woolf's first article to be accepted for publication, and Giggleswick School, where Woolf was staying when she visited Haworth, both of which are within easy reach of Leeds Trinity. Since these places connected Woolf with the literary and cultural past, heritage seemed a natural topic. We encouraged as broad a definition as possible, encompassing Woolfian legacies and the representation of Woolf within the heritage industry.

Tom and Anne, Jane's PhD students at the time, were on board from the early planning stages. Initial meetings between us were an exciting exchange of ideas, and we were keen to start promoting the conference as widely as possible. We started a Twitter account to share news and updates, and later to live-tweet from the conference. We then started a full website to share the programme and details of the activities we had planned, as well as showing off pictures of the beautiful Yorkshire landscape we were inviting delegates to come and visit!

Neither Tom nor Anne had organized a conference before, and Anne remembers it as 'a trial by fire'—yet thanks to Jane's impeccable organization (as well as the untiring efforts of Julie Wadsworth, our administrative assistant), the Woolf conference remains the gold standard of how a conference should be run. With clear areas of responsibility, regular meetings and the tidiest inbox ever encountered, we set about planning the programme, liaising with venues, and dealing with last-minute queries about travel, transport, and attendance.

The conference was bookended by cultural trips. Even before the opening paper was delivered, a group of attendees had started exploring Woolf's literary heritage by visiting Haworth and the Brontë Parsonage Museum. Delegates enjoyed a tour of the museum before being specially invited to view the guest book at the page signed by Virginia Stephen on her visit in 1904. Woolf's visit to the Parsonage with her cousin's wife, Margaret Vaughan, was the basis of her article, 'Haworth, November 1904'. Attendees then followed in the Brontës' footsteps with an invigorating walk up to Top Withens, the ruined farmhouse that had provided inspiration for Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. Our afternoon in Giggleswick rounded off the conference for a small group of adventurous delegates. We received a hearty welcome from Headmaster Mark Turnbull and school archivist Barbara Gent, who had organized a lovely afternoon tea in the old library for us. After a quick tour of the headmaster's house, we split into two groups. The more adventurous braved the rain to follow Woolf's tracks on a walking tour with Jane, while the others wandered to the chapel for a concert of 20th-century English organ music by Head of Music James Taylor and organist Phillip Broadhurst, ending with a Carillon that imitated the clanging church bells that had annoyed Woolf during her stays at Giggleswick.

We had two memorable cultural evenings. The first day concluded with a literary evening at Leeds West Indian Centre. A steel-drum band provided a musical accompaniment to all the conversations about the day's papers, and the amazing food was well received by attendees! This was followed by an open-mic event organised by Dr Amina Alyal and WordSpace, and featured a selection of original readings from conference delegates. The Saturday concert, 'Virginia: A Musical Portrait', formed part of the now established Virginia Woolf and Music series by Dr Emma Sutton and Lana Bode. The songs and song cycles using Woolf's diaries and letters really brought out the poetry and natural musicality of her style, and created an introspective and emotional ending to a full day.

But the crowning glory of the conference was its scholarship. The keynotes were an intellectual delight. Suzanne Raitt's engaging talk 'Houses and Heritage: Virginia, Vita, and Knole' began by showing

how Woolf's own accounts of 'great men's houses' revealed her interest in finding the dirt behind the heritage gloss, and went on to show how Woolf gives a similarly intimate picture of Sackville-West's ancestral home in *Orlando*. This talk was a foretaste of Raitt's superb edition of *Orlando* with Ian Blyth. David Bradshaw's absorbing plenary, "'The Very Centre of the Very Centre': Herbert Fisher, Oxbridge and 'That Great Patriarchal Machine'", explored Woolf's complicated feelings towards her cousin, the historian and politician H.A.L. Fisher. Bradshaw deftly illustrated how Woolf was both critical and respectful of Fisher, and how he offered the most vivid connection to her parents of anyone Woolf knew. Laura Marcus's "'Some Ancestral Dread': Virginia Woolf and Shame" offered a new reading of Woolf's more negative inheritances. In a thoughtful and wide-ranging keynote, Marcus explored how Woolf uses the concept of shame, arising from her childhood abuse as well as her Puritan inheritance, for a productive exploration of identity, memory and intimacy in autobiographical writing.

Following Julie Vandivere's example from 2015, we included a plenary dialogue. This explored female mentoring across the generations, with Marion Dell discussing Woolf's treatment of Anny Thackeray Ritchie¹ and paying tribute to Julia Briggs, and Jean Mills exploring Woolf's debts to Jane Harrison, while celebrating her own mother and Jane Marcus. This sparked off a lively discussion about how far Woolf succeeds in thinking back through her mothers.

Panellists explored heritage from many different angles: education; archives; heritage sites such as Monk's House and Charleston; queer and feminist histories; literary influences from the classics to the Victorians; biofiction; music and drama. A prevalent emerging theme was the inheritance that scholars, students and feminists had taken from Woolf, including panels on pedagogy and discussions about the translation and transmission of Woolf across cultures. The *Selected Papers* reflected this diversity of scholarship, but also revealed a lively debate on heritage: some contributors criticised its exclusivity and links with patriarchy, others drew attention to Woolf's ambivalence about aspects of her heritage, while many others showed how Woolf asserts women's claims to the wealth of literary and cultural traditions.

It was as much a tribute to the Woolf community as to the organizers that one of the delegates described it as 'engaging and thought-provoking marked as it was by genuine intellectual colloquy and remarkable spirit and generosity'. Colloquy and cake: now that's a recipe for an unforgettable experience.

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¹ Editorial note: Born Anne (Annie) Isabella Thackeray Ritchie, her nickname—Anny—was typically used by her father..



Attendee

"...my mind was sated, not the treasure exhausted" (Virginia Woolf, "Reading" 151): Recollections of Virginia Woolf and Heritage, the 26th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, Leeds Trinity University, 16-19 June 2016

Anne Byrne

National University of Ireland, Galway

On the evening of 15 June 2016, I looked out the fourth-floor hotel bedroom window in Leeds to get a sense of the local geography. A gigantic electronic billboard with a red and blue lightning bolt on a white background filled the view. Slowly the meaning of the message unfolded.

David Bowie had died (10 January 2016) and this was one of the many public tributes to the artist that gave the world *Aladdin Sane*. I thought about the connections between the public lives of Bowie and Woolf—not so far apart as might be assumed. Both played with gender norms, sexualities and alter-egos eschewing one path only, constantly changing, vibrating energy, people who gave and gave and kept on giving. Both attracted a diversity of fans, followers, friends, disciples and scholars. Both are ‘stars’ with a legacy by which they are remembered. A constellation has been named in honor of Bowie, plaques, portraits and sculptures remind us of Woolf’s star light. The augur of death followed us throughout the 2016 conference. The next day, we learned that Jo Cox, Labour MP was murdered on her way to meet constituents in Birstall, a few miles southwest of Leeds (16 June 2016). Cox, a Labour Party feminist also served the public and common good through her anti-war work and appeals for compassion for the victims of war seeking refuge in Europe. By her actions and words (“We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us”) she too was a star.¹ Did Jo Cox read *Three Guineas*?

This was my first Woolf conference and like all that is new to us in experience, I was looking forward to days of immersion in the Woolf community of scholars and readers with expectation and trepidation. The program was astounding, a gorgeous tapestry of panels, plenaries, keynote addresses, excursions, a concert, a steel band, art works, a banquet, a performance and a silent auction interspersed by meals and tea/coffee/bun breaks. The International Virginia Woolf Society and the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain displayed their wares, side by side with Woolf publishers. Here I met Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson, standing proudly over their display of golden-yellow, red and green illustrated covers of the Bloomsbury Heritage publications. A treat to behold. Rigorous stamina and firm discipline were evidently required to attend all events; I resolved to rise early and no late nights! Looking back, I am laughing at my naiveté. The late-night conversations in the hotel bar quaffing ale with my co-conspirators were as much a part of the conference gathering as the formal program and as equally enjoyable (apart from the ale).

In reflecting on that experience, I reach for a bright orange notebook labelled ‘Woolf, Leeds 2016.’ The pages are interleaved with ephemera such as flyers for new publications on Virginia Woolf, a page torn from a notebook with the email address of a new Woolf friend, a copy of the conference feedback questionnaire, the bus timetable for transport from Leeds Trinity into the city, a bookmark from the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain graced with a quote from Woolf’s 1919 essay “Reading,” and the conference program, an essential guide for the days ahead. My programme is marked with larges ‘Xs’ indicating panels attended (e. g., Women’s Futures, Heritage Ambiguity: Archives and Artifacts, Print Culture and Social Class, Literature and Visual Arts, Musical Woolf, Composers in Conversation on Woolf’s Diaries and Letters, Curating Woolf, War and Tyranny, Changing Family Life, Rose Wattle Bird of Paradise, *To the Lighthouse* and there it is—Writing Life and Death). The black X’s mark a journey across ‘heritage’ sites in a multi-dimensional multiverse of time, space and territory, aspects of which are ineffable. I wonder now how other attendees navigated their journeys across these treasured filled spaces?

Looking back at my first Woolf immersion I am aware of the distinctiveness of the conference based on the life, legacy and works of one person. Just as Woolf is “born into a large connection” (“A Sketch of the Past” 65) constantly renegotiating her own biography and the biographical writing of lives, the Woolf conference is active and dynamic, performing a collective biography of Woolf in the moment, a process of constant imaginings, new orchestrations, compositions and visualizations. On behalf of Woolf, we become a collective self for the duration buoyed up by the effervescence of working together, a tribe committed to Woolf scholarship. The contemporary relevance of Woolf’s words startles me. Quotations from her writings are scrutinized

in the panel sessions, regarded like a painting, circulated, pondered over, discussed and flung about with playful abandon. I scribble quotes into my notebook. Where is that from? What can she mean? Some quotes are clearly instructions to readers. “Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice” (“How Should One Read a Book?” 259). Some quotations deliberately disturb. I feel the emotional tension of our discussion on the failures of memoir writing and Woolf’s observation that they “leave out the person to whom things happened” (“A Sketch of the Past” 65). We cluster around Woolf’s words, having “loosened the ligatures” (cf. *Diary* 2 320) prompting scholarly, artistic flights into the unoccupied and expanding workspace that fills and flows hour by hour. The invisible labor of the conference organizers, Jane de Gay and the team at Trinity Leeds, is first expressed in the programme schedule. The baton is handed over to panels, roundtable and workshop participants and plenary speakers to bring their work to fruition. I was a member of a panel on “Leonard Woolf and Heritage” with Vara Neverow and Wayne Chapman. It was a privilege to be in the company of these wise scholars. Positioning those new to Woolf side by side with renowned scholars is an example of the generosity of spirit that is part of the ethos of the conference. Though I presented nervously without getting to the point of what I thought I wanted to say, I was reassured by Vara and Wayne’s kindly presence (and later feedback). Cecil Woolf and Jean Moorcroft Wilson were in the audience that morning too listening to our papers on Cecil’s uncle Leonard. Cecil smiled encouragingly and so I kept going. Later I attended their joyful spontaneous performances with the Woolf Society Players. Looking back, I understand that the conference is also a space to play, to experiment, to take a risk now and then. News of Cecil’s death after the conclusion of the Woolf Conference in Ohio (10 June 2019) was met with private grief and a collective sense of a very particular loss. Cecil was another star who gave and gave and gave.

David Bradshaw’s plenary “The very centre of the very centre” was a personal highlight as he excavated the ambiguous relationship between Virginia Woolf and her cousin H. A. L. Fisher, MP and Oxford historian. Woolf and Fisher were more intimate and intellectually entangled than Woolf herself would allow, Bradshaw quietly argued, given her disdain for convention and the patriarchal machine of the university. Fisher was one of Woolf’s relations who brought back her parents to her whenever they met or corresponded. Fisher’s pioneering contributions to educational reform and foreign policy were illuminated by Bradshaw. Scholarships were introduced for the less well-off and for ex-service men to attend university as a result of Fisher’s reforms. But Bradshaw also revealed Fisher’s culpability for sending the ill-disciplined military recruits, the ‘Black and Tans,’ to Ireland during the War of Independence. Fisher’s involvement in Irish policy and the deleterious consequences for Irish-British relations precipitated much public and private opposition from Leonard Woolf. Bradshaw’s luminous plenary and brief conversation after the lecture inspired me to keep going. I later learned of Bradshaw’s death with sadness and disbelief (13 September 2016). But Woolf consoles: “[...] and there, thrusting its head up undaunted in the star light, the rose will flower, the crocus will burn” (*On Being Ill* 21).

The Woolf constellation, “thick with the stardust of innumerable lives” (“The Lives of the Obscure” 150) keeps on giving, flooding and stimulating our collective imaginations with scholarly connections and friendships, textual impressions, rhythms, sensations, color, sounds and much pleasure. It is this last that draws me back year after year. As I left the protected space of that world in 2016 tired but stimulated, I underlined Virginia’s words on the bookmark from the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain “[...] my mind was sated, not the treasure exhausted.” The editors and contributors to the annual publications of the papers from Clemson University Press, now associated with Liverpool University Press, are gifts from that treasure. Thank you Woolfians for all the gifts and for welcoming me and many others into your very own “large connection.”

¹ Maiden speech to Parliament, Jo Cox MP, 3 June 2015.

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Virginia Woolf and the World of Books
27th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 29-July 2, 2017
Organizer: Nicola Wilson
University of Reading
Berkshire, UK



Organizer

Woolf and the World of Books

Nicola Wilson

University of Reading

The 27th Annual Virginia Woolf conference began life in the back of a taxi cab in Vancouver. Leaving Helen Wussow’s 23rd Annual VW conference elated and on a high, I was with MAPP colleagues, heading back to the airport. Buzzing with ideas, we started to conceive of a conference based around the centenary of the Hogarth Press, then upcoming in 2017, and how perfect this would be at the University of Reading (UoR), where the business and editorial archives of the Hogarth Press are held. We cooked up a dream-list of keynotes, hyped by all the letterpress and printing-related workshops we might hold. When I got back to the UK, I sought buy-in from colleagues in English Literature and the Department of Typography, from the archivists in Special Collections, and the University higher-ups. Before long we were set.

So like any big international conference, Woolf 2017¹ was years in the planning. It was conceived in a burst of collaborative energy and this carried me through the following years into meetings with colleagues in parts of my own University who I hadn’t worked with before—with our Events team, with Hospitality—and enabled me to reach out to stars in the public worlds of Woolf and publishing who made stellar contributions to the event: Clara Farmer, editor at Hogarth; Uzma Hameed, dramaturg of Woolf Works; Nicola Beauman, head of Persephone Books. My international MAPP colleagues (Claire Battershill, Alice Staveley, Helen Southworth, Elizabeth Willson Gordon)—plus Vara Neverow, brought in to offer long-standing Woolf conference guidance—contributed their contacts, wit, and panache to the organisation. The final programme looked wonderful: keynotes from Ted Bishop, Susheila Nasta, and Anna Snaith, plus two roundtables (one on the launch of the Modernist Archives Publishing Project and the other on Woolf and Editions), a publishers’ session with Persephone and Hogarth, plus all the added extras: a Hogarth Press 100th birthday party (cake designed by Cressida Bell, cut by Cecil Woolf and Clara Farmer, with a printing press on the side run by Typography’s Martin Andrews); a pre-conference letterpress workshop; tours of the archive; a post-conference excursion to Chawton House, home of Jane Austen’s brother; a 3-month

¹ Also referred to as Woolf2017 based on the link www.woolf2017.com (the link is no longer live).

public exhibition in Special Collections—#HogarthPress100—displaying objects and materials from the archive alongside new letterpress works sent in by artists who responded to an open call for works; a Whiteknights Press (UoR) pamphlet designed by a Typography student and featuring an unsigned reader’s report from the archive on John Hampson’s first works published by the Press.² It was fantastic and glorious and even listing it all feels exhausting. And of course, it took its toll.

I’ve learnt a lot about myself from Woolf2017. I’ve learnt that I’m good at being calm and organised and am generally seen as being capable (‘we thought you were superwoman’, I remember my HoD said to me, when she found me on my office floor at the end of the second day). I’ve learnt that I’m good at collaborating and enjoy working with others. And I’ve also learnt that no-one is superwoman. We need to ask for help when we need it, and demand help when it’s not been offered because everyone thinks we’ve got it under control. I’ve relearnt some of the basics: we need to eat and to rest, to look after the body, and to spend time with friends and family always but most especially when we are overworked and feeling stressed. I’d not experienced panic attacks before—I haven’t had any major ones since thankfully but have had the odd warning sign of anxiety—and I’m more mindful now of mental health and seeking support and talking to colleagues when term is busy, deadlines are looming, and we’re all getting stressed. After months of being in control before the Woolf conference (and not only that of course but putting together the exhibition with Special Collections and the Whiteknights pamphlet) there was something oddly exhilarating about letting the body take over—the body smashes itself to smithereens’ Woolf writes in her essay “On Being Ill”—as wave after wave of adrenalin coursed through my body, making my toes and legs, arms and fingertips stiff with pain as though they had minds quite separate to my own.

We toasted to “feminism, friendship and collaboration” at the Saturday banquet and I’m so glad we pulled off such a fantastic event. It was hugely successful and enriching and I’d do it all again in a flash. I’m grateful for the friendships I’ve made through the Woolf conferences and the generous, exuberant community of scholars they attract. Since Woolf 2017, I’ve endeavoured to pay more respect to mental health and in my own teaching and working practice I try and make more space for these conversations—not only with students—but especially with colleagues. The academy demands a lot of us, and like most high achieving professions, there aren’t many inbuilt support structures. The more we talk about the struggles, the more we can work together to make those supports commonplace. We have so much to learn from how we work with and support each other.

² See page 43 in Issue 92 of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* (Fall 2017/Winter 2018) for Vara Neverow’s brief review of John Hampson’s Whiteknights Press pamphlet.



Attendee

Virginia Woolf and the World of Books

Cecilia Servatius

University of Graz

“And so the smashing and the crashing began”¹—in this case, the sounds signified not the emergence of a new writing style, but the enthusiastic participation of attendees of a keynote lecture on ink, grinding gall-nuts into dust with mortar and pestle. The mortars were passed through the

¹ Editorial note: This quotation is from Virginia Woolf’s “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” and refers to the shift from the Edwardian to the emerging Georgian age. The scan of a copy of the 1924 Hogarth Press pamphlet can be accessed at <http://www.columbia.edu/~em36/MrBennettAndMrsBrown.pdf>. The quotation appears on page 20.

hall, allowing each in turn a chance at the delicate balance of listening to the lecture while pounding the pale nuggets into powder. After the talk, we lined up to use the resulting surprisingly dark inks to scrawl a note (and commiserate about the inevitable stained fingertips).

Of course, the 2017 conference, “Virginia Woolf and the World of Books,” began earlier than this moment: the previous day had featured a letterpress workshop and archive tours, and there was a first panel prior to Ted Bishop’s inky keynote. Personally, the memory that stands out as “beginning” the conference is the joyous cry of “A Woolfian!” which greeted me as I was trying to orient myself on campus. This was, of course, Vara Neverow, greeting old friends and complete newcomers with equal enthusiasm. Instant camaraderie ensued as more and more Woolfians gathered to have a drink together. Any nervousity about presenting evaporated—awash in welcoming chatter, I felt more like a newcomer at a family reunion than a graduate student entering the field. This sense of immediate belonging was so strong that, when a friend asked if I had made any “networking connections” at the conference, I answered, “far better than that—I feel like I’ve been adopted.”

While the first official day began with mortar and pestle, it was far from a grind: a whirlwind of experiences—from the talks, each arresting in its own right (choosing which panels to attend was agonizing—the only surety being the necessity of attending my own presentation) to the events: there was another inky opportunity, in which we were guided through printing a woodcut in an odd sort of creative obstacle course consisting of the line to print, the knots of conversation, people moving to see the various exhibits, the resulting pages strung to dry throughout the room, and the odd precariously balanced drink.

The ensuing celebration of the centennial of the Hogarth Press involved Cecil Woolf giving a moving speech of his memories of his aunt, uncle, and on the beginnings of the press—this gave life, presence, and emotional resonance to the numbers, catalogues, and documents we’d seen in the archives. Clara Farmer’s presentation on the Hogarth 2017 “Two Stories” gave an equally immediate sense of the future. (Cressida Bell’s beautifully decorated cake was appreciated in the transient moment.) Thus ended just the first day of four! The rest of the conference is a bit of a blur, but Michiko Theurer’s fascinating “Circling the Waves” violin performance to the backdrop of paintings stands out in my memory as does the conference’s final keynote: Anna Snaith’s talk on “Virginia Woolf’s ‘Gigantic Ear’” (which some of us attended slightly-the-worse-for-wear after a brilliant conference banquet and ensuing festivities) brought the conference full circle—back to a crashing and smashing of sound and sense.



Organizer

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace:
The 28th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf

Derek Ryan
University of Kent

Bringing the Woolf conference to Canterbury was the realisation of a vision I set out in my job interview at the University of Kent several years beforehand. Where better to host a Woolf conference, I remember saying, than on the very campus that boasted a college named after her and in a county that was home to her lover Vita Sackville-West. Connections between Woolf and Kent came into sharper focus for me when I was asked to give a lecture at the university’s 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015. Not only had she once written that there is ‘no lovelier place than Canterbury’ (to Emma Vaughan on April 25, 1904),

but her story ‘Together and Apart’ features declarations of love for the city by interlocutors Roderick Serle and Ruth Anning (details of which can be found in my piece in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*). Woolf herself took numerous trips to Canterbury, most significantly in 1910 when she spent the best part of June recuperating from illness in Moat House, located just a stone’s throw from what is now the university’s campus. But this lecture also gave me the impetus to look into exactly why and how Woolf College came to receive its name. After making a few enquiries—with Jonathan Friday, then Master of Woolf College, and with Keith Mander, retired Deputy Vice-Chancellor—I learned that after a wide consultation with staff and students a shortlist of candidates who were of the ‘stature’ of Darwin, Eliot, Keynes, and Rutherford (the existing Colleges) was drawn up. Those on the somewhat diverse shortlist included the 15th-century merchant, diplomat, writer, and printer William Caxton; the founder of ‘The Body Shop’ Anita Roddick; philosophers Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead; pioneer of research on radioactivity Marie Curie; the chemist and X-ray crystallographer Rosalind Franklin; founding feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft; and computer scientist Alan Turing (who did in the end also get his own College). In reaching their decision I was told that the Executive Group felt firstly that the choice should be a woman and secondly that the author of *A Room of One’s Own* was a particularly good choice for a residential building (it houses postgraduate students). Thankfully Woolf beat off this stiff competition, or I suspect we could have been attending a quite different conference in 2018.

Hosting the Woolf conference was both an honour and an education. There were so many highlights: the pre-conference trip to Knole and Sissinghurst; mind-expanding keynotes from Rosi Braidotti, Claire Davison, and Jane Goldman; ‘The Particle and the Wave’, a multimedia performance by Himali Singh Soin and David Tappeser inspired by Woolf’s use of semi-colons; the concert *Pacifism and Pierrot*, featuring Debussy’s children’s ballet *La boîte à joujoux* and showcasing the talents of Lana Bode (piano) and Suzanne Fischer (soprano); the screening of Hana Leaper and Jonathan Law’s film, *The Famous Women Dinner Service: In Conversation with Contemporary Art*¹; the ‘Polylogue’ of ‘Time Passes’, read aloud in over a dozen European languages; or the Banquet, which included Cecil Woolf’s reflections on peace (made all the more poignant by his absence due to illness) and his speculation that Leonard Woolf would probably have voted for Brexit—a claim that startled the audience, and no one more so than Mark Hussey who had kindly agreed to step in and read Cecil’s speech! In these inspired events and across over 150 papers, our dual theme of ‘Europe and Peace’ was approached from an array of perspectives, many of which are captured in the two volumes of *Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace* (Clemson University Press, 2020), which I had the immense pleasure of editing alongside my wonderful co-organisers Peter Adkins, Ariane Mildenberg and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán. Among these many gifts that the 2018 Woolf conference gave me, the most unexpected of all was being serenaded by the delegates’ impromptu rendition of ‘Happy Birthday’ after I had given my welcome speech on June 21. I suspect my face went as red as the roses on our conference logo.

¹ Editorial note: The film from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpS-0Q4h__Y



Attendee

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace
The 28th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
Woolf College, University of Kent, Canterbury
June 21-24, 2018

J. Ashley Foster
California State University—Fresno

Every year I eagerly anticipate the Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. I look forward to the panels, the papers, the intellectual engagement and stimulation, but mostly, I look forward to the people.

I feel like the Woolf community raised me as an academic and has fostered both my career and my spirit, and so it is with gratitude that I contribute to the memories and documentary project of collecting reminiscences of the conference.

I landed at Heathrow on the Tuesday before the conference and went straight to the University of Kent. That gave me Wednesday to spend in the glorious Canterbury, where I rode the bus into town, visited the Cathedral, and walked around. Lunch at an outside café under a red awning eating a croque madame was especially lovely. The heel on my shoe fell off on the tube from Heathrow, which gave me a perfect excuse for some shopping. I don't remember the name of the store, but I was struck by how there were rows and rows of gorgeous choices and thought that those of us from the United States have a lot to learn about footwear from the British.

The conference organizing committee—Derek Ryan, Ariane Mildenberg, Peter Adkins, Patricia Novillo-Corvalán—put together a program rich with music, art, performance, and, of course, pacifist activism and thoughts of peace.

One of the major highlights of the conference was Jane Goldman's Saturday keynote address, "'Messages of Peace': Bloomsbury's Peace Terms," a brilliant mixture of attentive close reading and creativity. Goldman introduced us to thinking peace—a "Woolf peace and Bloomsbury peace"—as "*otium queer*." Adopting the Latin term, Goldman unpacked the *différance* of the many meanings, ambivalences, and states of peace, while connecting it to poetry and artistic creation. At the end of her talk, Goldman left us with her own poetry, "portable peace conference," illuminating the interdisciplinary, artistic, and inspired stream of imagination that flowed through this conference.

After the talk, we adjourned to the conference banquet. The reception was held outside the Canterbury Cathedral, so while we sipped our drinks and mingled, we were greeted with the stunning view of an architectural and historical wonder. Comradery and good spirit flourished, "And thus by degrees was lit, halfway down the spine, which is the seat of the soul, not the hard little electric light which we call brilliance, as it pops in and out upon our lips, but the more profound, subtle and subterranean glow, which is the rich yellow flame of rational intercourse. No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself. [...]—in other words, how good life seemed, how rich its rewards[.][...] how admirable friendship and the society of one's kind [...]."¹

¹ Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Annotated with an Introduction by Susan Gubar. Gen. ed. Mark Hussey. Orlando: Harcourt, 2005. 11.

Virginia Woolf and Social Justice
29th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 6-9, 2019
Organizer: Drew Shannon
Mount St. Joseph University
Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Organizer

Memories of the 2019 International Conference on Virginia Woolf

Drew Patrick Shannon
Mount St. Joseph University

In the photograph, taken by Vara Neverow, I am standing at the top of a metal staircase in the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati, Ohio, during the opening-night festivities at the 29th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. I'm grinning broadly, and it's not just the copious amount of wine I've consumed that's making me smile: the first day of the conference exceeded all of my expectations, and the presence of

all of my old Woolfian friends and dozens of new ones filled me with joy. The photograph, quite apart from being a document of a beautiful night, now feels like an artifact from another era. I find it difficult if not impossible to think of the Woolf Conference at Mount St. Joseph University without thinking of what happened to the world just a few months later. The memories of the experience are now bound up with quarantine and lockdown, and the thought of embracing my colleagues and friends is shot through with fear and uncertainty. But all of that was in the future when I stood on that staircase, smiling down at Vara.

The 2019 conference might stand as the last of the conferences in the old, pre-pandemic model; Benjamin Hagen's beautifully successful 2021 virtual conference proved that an online component can not only work, but is a necessity for our future endeavors. I suspect that the days of all of us assembling in one big auditorium for plenary talks are over—many of us will now be watching from scattered locations around the world. This fact has tinged my recollections of the 2019 conference with an almost impossible-to-believe nostalgia, for how can one feel such nostalgia for an event that occurred so recently? But there it is: the conference feels far back in time, in a world that for all its turmoil—political and cultural upheavals, both in the United States and in Europe—seems weirdly innocent. I look at the photographs from those four days and think, "Not one of us knew what was coming."

Despite the fact that I view the conference now through the lens of what came after, I remain deeply pleased by the event itself. On the first day, in my opening remarks, I wanted to make sure to acknowledge Vara Neverow and Mark Hussey, who welcomed a very nervous and tentative young graduate student to his first Woolf Conference in 2003 and made him feel seen and important; I was determined to do the same for all the newcomers when it was my turn to host. And one of the joys of the conference was welcoming the many newcomers who have now become very close friends. And I remain dizzy by the range of presentations and panels, and by the quality of the plenary speakers, and by the warmth and exuberance and the passion for Woolf that finds its outlet once every summer. I always told my colleagues and students (particularly those in my "Woolf Pack") that the Woolf community is unique among scholarly societies. I think many of them were mildly amused by my insistence. But then they met everyone and realized I was right. The Woolf community has been my home for nearly twenty years, and it was an honor to serve it in the role of conference host. And I look back on those four days in 2019 and see a world that feels very far away, but on the verge of return.



Attendee

"Moments of being...in Cincinnati: Reminiscing the 29th Conference on Virginia Woolf"

Stefano Rozzoni
Università degli Studi di Bergamo

"Why go all the way to Cincinnati, when there are so many other, similar conferences here?"

I remember that I was expecting a pat on the back when He flung this pointed question at me and deflated my Woolfian pride. After years spent studying Modernism, I considered my debut attendance at *the* major conference on the writer who inspired me to pursue a career in literary studies as a life-long achievement. But when I saw it being dismissed so abruptly by my professor, tears started from my eyes.

Since one cannot perhaps entirely understand Virginia's work without experiencing being an outsider in his or her turn, I obstinately embraced that challenge and bought my plane ticket straightaway, animated by the desire to prove that, yes, there are in fact quite a few reasons why one should cross the Atlantic "only to talk about a writer."

And it is at the exact same moment when you think of being a lone wolf that you realize you are already part of a tight-knit w(o)lf-pack, as the brilliant conference host, Drew Shannon, helped me discover. Despite being a newbie, a mere 24 hours after landing in the United States I had already found myself invited to a special dinner-out with some hardcore members of the IVWS. After 48 hours, I was reading passages of *The Waves* after a special early-morning yoga session. After 60 hours, I had already organized a (cheap) wine reception in the dorms (and also lost my favorite conference jacket because, when you become completely engrossed by a conversation about Vita Sackville-West, you will not even care about where you leave your stuff). And at the end of the event, I promised I would try my best to give back to this community as much as I had received from it.


“But all these things could have also been experienced by staying home! Why then go that far?” He would now say....

“Well, it is because of this conference that I have finally understood what being at home is, Sir. And Cincinnati is definitely a new one for me. After all, I have not even gone that far away....”

If you have ever felt like entering a new world after opening *Mrs. Dalloway* for the first time, the conference will be a unique chance to reunite with a huge family, of which you had previously been unaware, that is spread around the world. What a lark!—it was meeting my brothers and sisters and discovering that we share the same way of talking, thinking, and behaving! What a plunge!—it was finding my new papa(s) and mama(s) who lovingly take care of you and make sure you have enough food for lunch!

If there is no place like home, then there is no place like the International Annual Conference. And when you, *mon frère*, are asked “why go all that way, just for a conference?” remember the main lesson that I have learned from this valuable experience: as a Woolfian you have no country.

Virginia Woolf: Profession and Performance
30th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 10-13, 2021
Organizer: Benjamin D. Hagen
University of South Dakota
Vermillion, South Dakota, United States



Postponed, Remote, Still Connected

Benjamin D. Hagen
University of South Dakota

At the time of this writing, over six months have passed since the 30th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, which had been postponed from June 2020 to June 2021. Very few of us, I think, foresaw that we would still be struggling, even in December 2021, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. But here we are. Time has passed and continues to pass, as Woolf always reminds us. Indeed, we will have to wait at least six more months for a face-to-face, in-person, feet-on-the-ground, having-meals-and-drinks-together, dialogue-and-debate-in-rooms-of-our-own-together Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf.

I had no idea how “Virginia Woolf: Professions and Performance” was going to go this past summer. I assumed it would lack the polish of previous years, that that there would be logistical errors and technological glitches. But one thing I did know was that the postponement of the conference and the move to an online format would allow more people to participate and connect than would have in 2020. It would allow more people to attend than would have in 2020. Though the virtual modality makes it more challenging to study, share, enjoy, and learn things from each other about (Woolf and) **performance**, my sense is that, though the future is uncertain, “Profession and Performance” was

an occasion to reflect on what we **profess**, what we value, and how we might anticipate the needs of each other across institutions with deeply engrained and often obscured (and denied) inequities.

“Profession and Performance” was an important event for Woolf studies (I’m very proud of it), and yet the whole planning process since late 2018 feels hazy and, I admit, bittersweet. There’s so much that was and is easy to forget (partly because much of it couldn’t come to fruition): the meetings with the Housing office at the University of South Dakota, the application to serve alcohol at evening events on campus, the initial website build, the room reservations, the first outreach to plenary participants, the first official launch of the Call for Papers, the plotting of a letterpress workshop, the coordination with colleagues across divisions, the desire to show my mentors where I’ve ended up. And I recall snippets of conversation at the Modernist Studies Association convention in Columbus (2018) and, later, in Toronto (2019). In Columbus, I first floated my idea for a conference theme by Anne Fernald, Mark Hussey, and Vicki Tromanhauser; in Toronto, I passed out flyers at panel sessions, brainstormed topics with Urmila Seshagiri, and discussed logistics over drinks with a number of friends and colleagues. I treasure the kindness and encouragement of everyone at the 29th Annual Conference in Cincinnati; so many offered support—logistical and financial—and others shared paper ideas they had thought up during a plenary dialogue or panel session. You all made it seem possible and such an honor and pleasure.

Between its postponement and its actualization, I came to accept that the conference I originally planned for 2020 was not going to happen. But during that long interlude, I also became better friends with colleagues in this community. We gathered over Zoom monthly (sometimes twice a month!) to catch up, talk politics, and discuss the life and work of a writer who has anchored our interests, intrigues, and inquiries for the past several decades. In 2020, I also launched—with Shilo McGiff, Drew Shannon, and Amy Smith—the **Woolf Salon Project**, a successful experiment that has kept many of us connected through and late into this pandemic: thinking, laughing, discussing, learning, teaching, and sharing new (and old) ideas.¹ I consider it one of the most rewarding professional and personal experiences of my life, not just because it has drawn me closer to Shilo, Drew, and Amy but because it has helped me get to know many of you just little more. The Salon Project also helped clarify for me the importance of the Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, as well as the many bonds and acts of love that will keep this legacy of scholarship and conviviality alive through and beyond the 2020s.

¹ For more on the Woolf Salon Project, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/home>. We invite you to contact us and join us for future events.



Attendee

Reflections on the 30th Woolf conference: Digital Performances

Elisa K. Sparks
Clemson University, Emerita

As an inveterate if not compulsive attendee of Woolf conferences (I think I have been at 23 of the 29 held so far), I was poised to be somewhat disappointed about the all-virtual rendition of 2021, anticipating how much I would miss seeing all my old buddies, the hugs, the news, the excited exchanges over fresh ideas and sources, the affectionate smiles and shoulder nudges when presentations were exceptionally good, and especially the after-hours confabs about everything under the moon as we gathered in hotel rooms to gossip and assess the days.

However, the 30th conference happily proved my expectations to be wrong on practically every level. Perhaps it was because so many of us had spent the pandemic Zooming with each other—in Woolf drop-ins and Woolf Salons, at book launches and other online Woolf events—

but there was a comforting familiarity to the digital medium. As the conference proceeded, I began to realize how many new people I had already met that year, gotten to know from their screen appearances, begun following their work because of digital presentations. A panel on Brazilian Perspectives early Thursday was a good example of the extensive international reach provided by Zoom. Throughout the conference, the organization of the platforms was so superb that sessions were nearly seamless; the chats and follow-up discussion sessions worked in some cases even better than in person, the chats in particular equivalent to the buzz of conversations going on in the back of the room at an in-person conference.

And then the momentum began to gather and roll. Friday featured a superb creative plenary from Norway, dancing through a printmaking exhibition by Ane Thun Knutson. As was fitting for a conference centered around the concept of performativity, it was a pair of performances on Saturday that created a magic I had not anticipated was possible on a digital platform. First, Kathleen Chalfant performed a one-woman play composed by Ellen McLaughlin out of excerpts from the collection of short stories *Mrs. Dalloway's Party*. Exquisitely acted, the sequence re-contextualized many of Woolf's words in ways which made us re-see them with new intensity, ending with the line "let the celebrations begin" which seemed like a gentle benediction on the entire conference. After a break, Kathleen, Ellen, and Drew Shannon performed a new play written by Drew and Ellen, composed from letters written between Virginia (Kathleen), Lytton Strachey (Drew), and Vanessa Bell (Ellen). The play of letters started out wickedly funny, but modulated gradually into greater intimacy, and ended with Lytton's death: the moment when Drew's screen darkened was particularly moving, given the losses and absences we have all lived through lately. These two performances were a miraculous reminder of the power of theater to create community, even on Zoom, moving many of us to tears of both joy and sorrow.

Perhaps lit by this match, calls for after-hours social time were even more intense that night and Suzanne Bellamy, a dear friend of many and a conference stalwart, was able to zoom in from Australia. Despite being somewhat under the weather from medical treatments, she ended up staying online for nearly ten hours, from the nighttime socials through the morning sessions, when she treated younger Woolfians to a stirring lecture on their political responsibilities.

All in all, the thirtieth conference was intense, enlightening, full of laughter, insights, and references to things I need to read and watch. I left with a list of new compatriots, a renewed sense of community, and a profound sense of gratitude for the most generous, adorable people I know.

Virginia Woolf and Ethics
31st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf
June 9-12, 2022

Organizer: Amy Smith
Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu
A Virtual Conference
hosted by Lamar University
Beaumont, TX, USA



CALL FOR PAPERS

Woolf and Ethics, the 31st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, will be hosted by Amy Smith at Lamar University. Please see page 4 of this issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* for the details of the Call for Papers.

Submissions (250 words long for single papers and 500 words for panels) are due by **February 15, 2022**.

If you have questions, please contact Amy Smith at Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu.

Remembering Those Whom We Have Lost

Over the 31 years since the first Woolf conference was launched, a number of people ranging from Woolf's relatives to scholars and common readers who participated in the various conferences as speakers or simply as attendees have died. Those who are mentioned in the contributions to this special issue of the *Miscellany* are identified below.

Jane Lilienfeld

January 26, 1945–December 24, 2021
 Lincoln University
 Woolf scholar; organizer of the 3rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
 Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives
 June 10–13, 1993, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri
Obituary: (Carol Jane Lilienfeld)
<https://www.millardfamilychapels.com/obituaries/Carol-Lilienfeld?obId=23489657>

Laura Marcus

March 7, 1956–September 22, 2021
 Goldsmiths' Professor of English Literature
 New College, Oxford
 Woolf scholar
Remembrance:
<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/professor-laura-marcus>

Edward Hungerford

September 24, 1921–February 17, 2021
 Southern Oregon Univ. at Ashland, emeritus
 Woolf scholar
Remembrances:
Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 97 (Spring/Summer 2021): 10–12.
<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/vwm97spring-summer2021.pdf>
Obituary:
<https://www.soobituaries.com/adportal/listingView.html?id=3399>

Linda Langham

April 25, 1950–May 5, 2020
 Woolf scholar and book collector
Remembrance:
 The Linda Langham Virginia Woolf Collection,
 Pace University Library
Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 95 (Spring/Summer 2019): 30.
https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/vwm95springsummer2019_final.pdf
Obituary:
<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/buckscountycouriertimes/name/linda-langham-obituary?id=8500823>

Cecil Woolf

February 20, 1927–10 June 2019
 Nephew of Leonard Woolf; Husband of Jean Moorcroft Wilson
 Founder of Cecil Woolf Publishers
Remembrances:
Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 95 (Spring/Summer 2019): 8–13.
https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/vwm95springsummer2019_final.pdf
Obituary:
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jun/26/cecil-woolf-obituary>

Louise DeSalvo

September 27, 1942–October 31, 2018
 Hunter College
 Woolf scholar
Remembrance:
Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 91 (Spring 2017): 8–9.
<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/vwm91spring2017.pdf>
Obituary:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/11/obituaries/louise-desalvo-dead.html>

Ntozake Shange

October 18, 1948–October 27, 2018
 Playwright and poet; plenary speaker at the 1999 Woolf Conference
Obituary:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/28/obituaries/ntozake-shange-is-dead-at-70.html>

Georgia Johnston

1958–March 20, 2017
 St. Louis University
 Woolf scholar
 President, International Virginia Woolf Society, 2009–2011;
 Organizer of the 8th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
 Virginia Woolf and Communities
 June 4–7, 1998, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri

Remembrances:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 91 (Spring 2017): 13–14. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/vwm91spring2017.pdf>; *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, Issue 94 (Fall 2018/Winter 2019): 8–13. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/vwm94fall2018winter2019.pdf>

Obituary:

<https://www.slu.edu/news/announcements/2017/march/georgia-k-johnston-obituary.php>

David Bradshaw

1955–September 14, 2016
 Worcester College, Oxford
 Woolf scholar

Remembrances:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issues 89 and 90 (Spring 2016/Fall 2016): 9–10. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/vwm89and90-edited-final.pdf>; <https://bloggingwoolf.org/2016/09/19/in-memoriam-to-david-bradshaw/> <https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/professor-david-bradshaw>

Jim Stewart

1955–June 24, 2016
 University of Dundee
 Woolf scholar

Remembrances:

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum/exhibitions/this/>; <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/education/higher-education/214468/university-lecturer-dr-james-stewart-dundee-man/>

Michelle Cliff

November 2, 1946–June 12, 2016
 Allan K. Smith Professor of English Language and Literature
 Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut
 Keynote speaker at the 3rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
 “Virginia Woolf and the Imperial Gaze: A Glance Askance.” *Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives: The Third Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Pace University Press, 1994). 91–102.

Obituary:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/books/michele-cliff-who-wrote-of-colonialism-and-racism-dies-at-69.html>

Jane Marcus

December 23, 1938–May 28, 2015
 CUNY Graduate Center
 Woolf scholar

Remembrances:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 87 (Spring/Summer 2015): 11–15. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/vwm87springsummer2015.pdf> <https://bloggingwoolf.org/2015/05/29/in-memoriam-to-woolf-scholar-jane-marcus/>; <https://www.centerforthehumanities.org/programming/jane-marcus-feminist-university>; <https://indypendent.org/2015/06/remembering-jane-marcus-cuny-prof-was-a-tenaciously-brilliant-scholar-activist/>

Isota Tucker Epes

1918–May 17, 2009
 Artist and “Common Reader”

Remembrances:

J. J. Wilson and Suzanne Bellamy
Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 78 (Fall 2010): 7. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/vwm78fall2010.pdf>

Julia Briggs

December 30, 1943–August 16, 2007
 De Monfort University
 Woolf scholar
 Founder of *Woolf Online*: <http://www.woolfonline.com/>

Remembrance:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 72 (Winter 2007): 5–8. <https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/vwm72fall2007.pdf> <https://bloggingwoolf.org/2007/08/16/the-passing-of-noted-scholar-julia-briggs/>

Obituary:

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/aug/30/guardianobituaries.booksobituaries>

Carolyn Heilbrun

January 13, 1926–October 9, 2003
 Columbia University
 Woolf scholar
 President of the Virginia Woolf Society, 1977–1979

Obituary:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/11/arts/carolyn-heilbrun-pioneering-feminist-scholar-dies-at-77.html>

Lucio Ruotolo

March 14, 1927–July 4, 2003
 Stanford University
 Woolf scholar
 Co-founder of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*
 President of the Virginia Woolf Society, 1986–1987

Remembrances:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 63, Summer 2003
 Special Issue: Remembering Lucio Ruotolo

Edited by J. J. Wilson

<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/vwm63summer2003.pdf>

<https://news.stanford.edu/pr/03/obitruotolo723.html>

Barbara Christian

December 12, 1943–June 25, 2000
 University of California, Berkeley
 Keynote speaker at the 3rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
 “Layered Rhythms: Virginia Woolf and Toni Morrison,” *Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives: The Third Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Pace University Press, 1994), 164–77.

Remembrance:

<https://150w.berkeley.edu/barbara-christian>

Paul Connolly

1942–April 23, 1998
 Bard College
 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of Humanities
 Director of the College’s Institute for Writing and Thinking
 Organizer of the 4th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
 Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf
 June 9–12, 1994, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Obituary:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1998/04/24/classified/paid-notice-deaths-connolly-paul.html>

Quentin Bell

August 19, 1910–December 16, 1996
 Nephew of Virginia Woolf
 Author of the two-volume *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 1972.

Remembrance:

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue 49, Spring 1997
 Special Issue: Dedicated to the memory of Quentin Bell

Edited by Peter Stansky

<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/vwm49spring1997.pdf>

Obituaries:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-professor-quentin-bell-1315047.html>
<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/19/arts/quentin-bell-the-chronicler-of-bloomsbury-dies-at-86.html>

**A HISTORY OF THIRTY-ONE YEARS OF THE ANNUAL (INTERNATIONAL) CONFERENCE ON VIRGINIA WOOLF
AND THE *SELECTED PAPERS* FROM THE CONFERENCES**

<p>Virginia Woolf Miscellanies 1st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 7–9, 1991 Organizer: Mark Hussey Pace University New York, NY, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf Miscellanies: Proceedings of the First Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Mark Hussey and Vara Neverow-Turk Pace University Press, 1992</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations 2nd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 11–14, 1992 Organizer: Vara Neverow Southern Connecticut State University New Haven, CT, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations: Selected Papers from the Second Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Mark Hussey and Vara Neverow-Turk Pace University Press, 1993</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives 3rd Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 10–13, 1993 Organizer: Jane Lilienfeld Lincoln University Jefferson City, MO, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf: Emerging Perspectives: Selected Papers from the Third Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Mark Hussey and Vara Neverow-Turk, with an Introduction by Jane Lilienfeld Pace University Press, 1994</p>
<p>Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf 4th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf Organizer: Paul Connolly June 9–12, 1994 Bard College Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, USA</p>	<p><i>Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf: Selected Papers from the Fourth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer, with an Introduction by Paul Connolly Pace University Press, 1995</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts 5th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf Organizer: Beth Rigel Daugherty June 15–18, 1995 Otterbein College Westerville, OH, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts: Selected Papers from the Fifth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Beth Rigel Daugherty and Eileen Barrett Pace University Press, 1996</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and the Arts 6th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 13–16, 1996 Co-Organizers: Wayne Chapman and Elisa Kay Sparks Clemson University Clemson, South Carolina, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and the Arts: Selected Papers from the Sixth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Diane F. Gillespie and Leslie K. Hankins, with Introductions by Beth Rigel Daugherty and Diane F. Gillespie and by Wayne Chapman Pace University Press, 1997</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and Her Influences 7th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference June 12–15, 1997 Organizer: Jeanne Dubino Plymouth State College Plymouth, NH, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and Her Influences: Selected Papers from the Seventh Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Laura Davis and Jeanette McVicker, with an Introduction by Jeanne Dubino Pace University Press, 1998</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and Communities 8th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 4–7, 1998 Organizer: Georgia Johnston Saint Louis University St. Louis, MO, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis, with an Introduction by Georgia Johnston Pace University Press, 1999</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf: Turning the Centuries 9th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 10–13, 1999 Co-Organizers: Ann Ardis and Bonnie Kime Scott University of Delaware Newark, DE, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf: Turning the Centuries: Selected Papers from the Ninth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Ann Ardis and Bonnie Kime Scott Pace University Press, 2000</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds 10th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 8–11, 2000 Organizer: Jessica Berman University of Maryland Baltimore, MD, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds: Selected Papers from the Tenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Jessica Berman and Jane Goldman Pace University Press, 2001</p>

<p>Voyages Out, Voyages Home 11th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 13–16, 2001 Organizer: Michael Whitworth University of Wales Bangor, UK</p>	<p><i>Voyages Out, Voyages Home: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Jane de Gay and Marion Dell Clemson University Digital Press, 2010</p>
<p>Across the Generations 12th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 6–9, 2002 Organizer: J. J. Wilson Sonoma State University Rohnert Park, CA, USA</p>	<p><i>Across the Generations: Selected Papers from the Twelfth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Merry Pawlowski and Eileen Barrett Center for Virginia Woolf Studies California State University, Bakersfield, 2003 https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/woolf-across-the-generations-selected-papers-from-the-twelfth-international-conference-on-virginia-woolf/</p>
<p>Woolf in the Real World 13th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 5–8, 2003 Organizer: Karen V. Kukil Smith College Northampton, MA, USA</p>	<p><i>Woolf in the Real World: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Karen V. Kukil Clemson University Digital Press, 2004</p>
<p>Back to Bloomsbury 14th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference June 23–26, 2004 Co-Organizers: Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari The Institute of English Studies University of London, Bloomsbury London, UK</p>	<p><i>Back to Bloomsbury: Selected Papers from the Fourteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari, Center for Virginia Woolf Studies California State University, Bakersfield, 2008 https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.wordpress.com/back-to-bloomsbury-selected-papers-from-the-fourteenth-annual-conference-on-virginia-woolf/ <i>See also:</i> <i>Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 1, Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice,</i> edited by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 and <i>Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 2, International Influence and Politics,</i> edited by Lisa Shahriari and Gina Potts Palgrave Macmillan, 2010</p>
<p>Woolf and the Art of Exploration 15th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 9–12, 2005 Organizer: Rishona Zimring Lewis and Clark College Portland, OR, USA</p>	<p><i>Woolf and the Art of Exploration: Selected Papers from the Fifteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Helen Southworth and Elisa Kay Sparks, with an Introduction by Rishona Zimring Clemson University Digital Press, 2006</p>
<p>Woolfian Boundaries 16th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 22–25, 2006 Co-Organizers: Anna Burrells, Steve Ellis, Deborah Parsons, and Kathryn Simpson Crowne Plaza Hotel, Central Square, Holliday Street Birmingham, UK</p>	<p><i>Woolfian Boundaries: Selected Papers from the Sixteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Anna Burrells, Steve Ellis, Deborah Parsons, and Kathryn Simpson Clemson University Digital Press, 2007</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism 17th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 7–10, 2007 Co-Organizers: Diana Royer and Madelyn Detloff The Marcum Conference Center of Miami University of Ohio Oxford, OH, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf: Art, Education, and Internationalism: Selected Papers from the Seventeenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf,</i> edited by Diana Royer and Madelyn Detloff Clemson University Digital Press, 2008</p>

<p>Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf 18th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 19–22, 2008 Organizer: Eleanor McNees University of Denver Denver, CO, USA</p>	<p><i>Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf: Selected Papers from the Eighteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Eleanor McNees and Sara Veglahn Clemson University Digital Press, 2009</p>
<p>Woolf and the City 19th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf June 4–7, 2009 Organizer: Anne Fernald Fordham University, Lincoln Center New York, NY, USA</p>	<p><i>Woolf and the City: Selected Papers from the Nineteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Elizabeth F. Evans and Sarah E. Cornish Clemson University Digital Press, 2010</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and the Natural World 20th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 3–6, 2010 Organizer: Kristin Czarnecki Thomas & King Leadership and Conference Center Georgetown College Georgetown, KY, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and the Natural World: Selected Papers from the Twentieth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Kristin Czarnecki and Carrie Rohman Clemson University Digital Press, 2011</p>
<p>Contradictory Woolf 21st Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf Organizer: Jane Goldman June 9–12, 2011 University of Glasgow Glasgow, Scotland, UK</p>	<p><i>Contradictory Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-first Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki, with a Preface by Jane Goldman Clemson University Digital Press, 2012</p>
<p>Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf 22nd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 7–10, 2012 Organizer: Ann Martin University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada</p>	<p><i>Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-second Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Ann Martin and Kathryn Holland Clemson University Digital Press, 2013</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader 23rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 6–9, 2013 Organizer: Helen Wussow Simon Fraser University Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader: Selected Papers from the Twenty-third Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Helen Wussow and Mary Ann Gilles Clemson University Digital Press, 2014</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf Writing the World 24th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 5–8, 2014 Co-Organizers: Pamela L. Caughie and Diana L. Swanson Loyola University Chicago and Northern Illinois University Chicago, IL, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf Writing the World: Selected Papers from the Twenty-fourth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>,¹ edited by Pamela L. Caughie and Diana L. Swanson Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2015</p>
<p>Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries 25th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf June 4–7, 2015 Organizer: Julie Vandivere Bloomsburg University Bloomsburg, PA, USA</p>	<p><i>Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries: Selected Papers from the Twenty-fifth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf</i>, edited by Julie Vandivere and Megan Hicks Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2016</p>

¹When Clemson University Digital Press transitioned to Clemson University Press, it began to collaborate with Liverpool University Press. The arrangement began with the volume from the 24th annual conference and the volumes shifted from paperback to hardcover. Longer essays replaced the range of representative work from the conference. The first instance was the two-volume set from the 28th conference. The volumes also are now published two or more years after the conference.

Virginia Woolf and Heritage

26th Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 16–19, 2016
Co-Organizers:
Jane de Gay, Tom Breckin, and Anne Reus
Leeds Trinity University
Horsforth, Leeds, UK

Virginia Woolf and Heritage:

Selected Papers from the Twenty-sixth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf,
edited by Jane de Gay, Tom Breckin, and Anne Reus
Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2017

Virginia Woolf and the World of Books

27th Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 29–July 2, 2017
Organizer: Nicola Wilson
University of Reading
Berkshire, UK

Virginia Woolf and the World of Books:

Selected Papers from the Twenty-seventh Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf,
edited by Nicola Wilson and Claire Battershill
Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2018

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace

28th Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 21–24, 2018
Organizer: Derek Ryan
Woolf College,
University of Kent
Canterbury, UK

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace:

Volume 1: Transnational Circulations,²
edited by Ariane Mildenberg and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán
Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2020
and
Volume 2: Aesthetics and Theory,
edited by Peter Adkins and Derek Ryan
Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press, 2020

Virginia Woolf and Social Justice

29th Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 6–9, 2019
Organizer: Drew Shannon
Mount St. Joseph University
Cincinnati, OH, USA

Virginia Woolf and Social Justice,

edited by Drew Shannon and Shilo McGiff,
Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press,
anticipated in 2022

Virginia Woolf: Profession and Performance

30th Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 10–13, 2021 (Virtual)
Organizer: Benjamin Hagen
University of South Dakota
Vermillion, SD, US

Virginia Woolf: Profession and Performance,

Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press,
anticipated in 2023

Virginia Woolf and Ethics

31st Annual International Conference
on Virginia Woolf
June 9–12, 2022 (Virtual)
Organizer: Amy Smith
Lamar University
Beaumont, TX, USA

Virginia Woolf and Ethics,

Clemson University Press and Liverpool University Press,
anticipated in 2024

² Beginning with the volumes from the Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace conference, the term “*Selected Papers*” has been discontinued. .

Here ends the special topic on the recollections from
the first thirty-one Annual (International) Conferences on Virginia Woolf.



Truly Miscellaneous

REVIEW

“*The Waves in Quarantine*”

“*The Waves in Quarantine*.” Video-theatre experiment, inspired by a music-theatre adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*. Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Digital video, 94 minutes, streamed free on demand April 21-June 30, 2021. Writer and director: Lisa Peterson. Cast: Carmen Cusack as Carmen/Jinny; Nikki Renée Daniels as Nikki/Susan; Darius de Haas as Darius/Neville; Raúl Esparza, associate director, as Raúl/Bernard; Manu Narayan as Manu/Louis; Alice Ripley as Alice/Rhoda. Music and lyrics: David Bucknam and Adam Gwom. Music director: Mary-Mitchell Campbell. Audio engineer: Benedict Braxton-Smith. Line producer: Mélisa Annis. Director of photography: Zelmira Gainza. Production design: Rachel Hauck. Post production: Marathon Digital.

On or about the fourteenth month of a pandemic that inflicted shattering disruption and distress around the world, the Berkeley Repertory Theatre offered a gift. With theatres dark and theatre practitioners out of work, the Berkeley Rep, led by Johanna Pfaelzer, programmed an ambitious new project for its Rep On-Air season: “*The Waves in Quarantine*.”¹ This daring intermedial hybrid work has roots in the 2018 music-theatre adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* by Lisa Peterson, David Bucknam, and Adam Gwom. But, far from a video version of a live stage performance, its improvisatory concept arises from an innovative doubling. Living and working in isolation in their far-flung worlds, its six actors move fluidly between playing themselves, playing the six personae of *The Waves*, and playing both at once. Behind the scenes was not the usual backstage bustle amid scenery, costumes, props, and lights but a team of actors, musicians, writer-directors, and digital production experts, all collaborating to surmount the formidable challenges of working remotely to create it. Supported by a shockproof orange case filled with state-of-the-art video and sound equipment that traveled around the country from one performer to another, the actors practiced their craft not for a live theatre audience but for a camera’s eye. To do so, they swotted up an array of new skills to stage, light, dress, make up, and film themselves. As Alice Ripley describes it, “every day is tech week. There’s no waiting in the corner while the assistant sets up the lights. There *is* no assistant”—just the actors, the orange case, and the creative and technical teams who worked from afar to script, direct, edit, and coordinate each performer’s contribution to this experimental play at the borders of literature, of theatre, life, and film.²

If the medium is the message, how does twenty-first-century video-streaming technology, thrust by circumstance upon a company devoted to live theatre, shape the message of “*The Waves in Quarantine*”? Both medium and method make this fascinating “fictional documentary” a unique entry in the ever-expanding array of Woolf-inspired theatrical and cinematic adaptations.³ Indeed, “*The Waves in Quarantine*” is less an adaptation than a creative homage, at once personal and communal, to Woolf’s great work of art and its power to solace not only modernity’s existential nausea but the shared loss, pain, and loneliness of our Covid-blighted moment ninety years on.

“*The Waves in Quarantine*” has a distant origin in a music-theatre adaptation by Lisa Peterson and the late composer and lyricist David

¹ Berkeley Repertory Theatre, “*The Waves in Quarantine*: Opening Night Conversation.”

² Berkeley Repertory Theatre, “*The Waves in Quarantine*: Opening Night Conversation.”

³ Lisa Peterson in “*The Waves in Quarantine*: Opening Night Conversation.” Steven Putzel lists five adaptations of *The Waves* for theatre and one for BBC Radio 4 in *Virginia Woolf and the Theater* (2012).

Bucknam (whose idea it was), first performed at the New York Theatre Workshop in 1990.⁴ A new version, with Bucknam’s music revised by Adam Gwom, was produced at the Vassar & New York Film and Stage’s Powerhouse Theatre in July 2018.⁵ With cameras standing in for the audience, “*The Waves in Quarantine*” splashes ad hoc performances excerpted from the musical’s script and score over the broad canvas of the quarantined actors’ everyday lives to create a new design: a scripted video collage of artistic, reality-theatre, and documentary elements laid into six short thematic “movements”: “Memory,” “Those We Love,” “The Female Gaze,” “Absence,” “The Sun Cycle,” and “Reunion.”⁶ Within this structure, the actors speak to their cameras, alone and with one another, about their lives in quarantine, *The Waves* and other Woolf works, and their experimental project-in-progress. They break into arias in, around, and on the kitchens, windows, couches, stairs, desks, bookshelves, pianos, lawns, rooftops, streets, parks, porches, and beaches of their everyday worlds, and they even sing together in digitally orchestrated chorus.

How does *The Waves* appear in this digitally-mediated homage? Not, of course, as anything resembling Woolf’s daring and masterly dramatic whole—a fluid play of soliloquies, punctuated by interludes that track the sun across the sky of a single day to figure the characters’ shared lifetime—nor even Peterson’s Sondheimesque music-theatre adaptation, its aesthetic already a bold departure from the book. Rather, we glimpse *The Waves* in discontinuous moments—in lyrical passages read and sung by the actors; in visual images of seascapes, cityscapes, scudding clouds, changing skies; in biographic pictures of St. Ives and Talland House; as a book held in an actor’s hand, or mind; as embodied dance, gesture, emotion—in other words, in performed moments, passages, fragments cut out and threaded through the actors’ everyday worlds by Peterson’s creative team.

Given this freedom of treatment within a virtual medium further constrained by the pandemic, it’s not hard to see how spectators familiar with *The Waves* might be dismayed to find so little lyrical sublimity amid so much prosaic reality in this splintered reflection.⁷ Yet how many isolated viewers dispersed around the world found themselves moved to tears by this elegiac palimpsest, as I did, without quite knowing why? If few would expect “*The Waves in Quarantine*” to approach the philosophical profundity and aesthetic grandeur of Woolf’s abstract masterpiece, to take it on its own terms is to discover something real, familiar, and valuable in *The Waves* brought to the fore and made new. A very early manuscript page of *The Waves* bears the tentative title “The Moths? or the life of anybody.”⁸ After drafting hundreds of unsatisfactory pages, Woolf at last hit upon a “speaking voice” for her book’s dramatis personae, one that functions so that, she noted, “quite naturally, you can say what you want to say. As this morning I could say what Rhoda said.”⁹ This technical breakthrough “proves that the book itself is alive: because it has not crushed the thing I wanted to say, but allowed me to slip it in, without any compression or alteration”; the technique’s capacious elasticity augured “a large & potential theme.”¹⁰

⁴ New York Theatre Workshop 1989-1990 Season: *The Waves*.

⁵ New York Stage and Film; *TheaterMania*.

⁶ Berkeley Repertory Theatre, “*The Waves in Quarantine*.”

⁷ For example, Karen D’Souza regrets that this “daring project tries to dive headlong into Virginia Woolf’s deep pool of existential dread, the terrible beauty of her insights into longing,” but “just ends up skimming the surface of the languishing that has marked our lives of late”; for Lily Janiak, “Being meta isn’t the same thing as spending 94 minutes searching for something to be meta about”; Lynne Stevens notes that “there is not much Virginia Woolf.”

⁸ See J. W. Graham, ed., Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves: The Two Holograph Drafts* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1976): “The Moths? / or the life of anybody. \one/ / life in general. or Moments of Being / or The Waves” (draft 1, page 1). *The Moths*, the book’s working title, reflects its inspiration in an experience recounted by Vanessa Bell.

⁹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, pp. 297-98, 17 March 1930.

¹⁰ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, pp. 297-98, 17 and 28 March 1930.

A few months after this discovery, the people of *The Waves* are talking away in what J. W. Graham designates the “pure present”¹¹ as their author listens and echoes: “The rain pelts—look at it (as the people in The Waves are always saying) now.”¹²

Moreover, Woolf’s “you” (“you can say what you want to say”), meaning “one,” frames this fluid voice as a technique that not only she but others—“anybody”—can use, “As this morning I could say what Rhoda said.” This “you” gestures toward a mysterious continuity between *The Waves*’s six inner voices, cast in an abstract style that opens without strain to anything the writer wants to say, and the six actors’ embodied voices in “*The Waves in Quarantine*”—which, lifted out of time by the video medium as *The Waves*’s voices are by print, carry the “pure present” of 1931 forward to 2021. A form to capture the way she, we, “anybody” thinks, distinct from the particularizing stream of consciousness technique that differentiates the inner voices of Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, and Molly Bloom, the voice of *The Waves* belongs “naturally” to all its personae—and not solely to them. Though shared among the six characters and the narrator of the interludes, the voice of *The Waves* is not bounded and contained by them. Rather, it opens a “large & potential theme,” a mode of thinking and being in the world that goes on unfurling even now in our fraught, stressed world and time. As the actors play their Covid-bound selves moving in and out of Woolf’s characters in speech, song, and dance with hardly any changes of clothes, their tripled personae (*Waves* character / Peterson script / actor) attune us to *The Waves*’s deep reality and the way it escapes the book’s covers to open into “the life of anybody.”

Within their very different aesthetics, then, an everyday intimacy binds *The Waves*’s abstracted characters and sublime lyricism to the embodied specificity of “*The Waves in Quarantine*.” As the voices’ style in *The Waves* renders its thematically differentiated figures translucent to a shared condition of Being, so that they are and are not “characters” (“Odd, that [...] The Times [...] should praise my characters when I meant to have none,” Woolf mused¹³), in “*The Waves in Quarantine*” the actors’ charm and charisma draw us into a reality that they and we all share. We see them living their hours and days (distilled in Peterson’s video script); we hear them read from *The Waves*, wonder about it, give its voices new life by performing them in their own persons. “Who’s afraid of Virginia Woolf?” sings Carmen Cusack to the camera in her kitchen. “I am! I am!” Then she transforms herself into Jinny, singing and dancing on the grass in a kimono (figure 1).



Figure 1: Carmen Cusack: Carmen / Jinny. Courtesy of Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Nikki Renée Daniels, mother of two Covid-homebound children, gazes wistfully through a window. At once herself and Susan, she sings of feeling “glutted with natural happiness”; yet she imagines Jinny’s and

¹¹ J. W. Graham, “Point of View in *The Waves*: Some Services of the Style,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 39 (1970): 193-211; 194 & *passim*.

¹² *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, p. 31, 6 August 1930. On Woolf’s arduous composition process see my “Unwriting *The Waves*.”

¹³ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, p. 47, [8] Oct. 1931.

Rhoda’s freer lives and wishes “sometimes that the fullness would pass from me and the weight of the sleeping house--ri-i-i-ise.” Playing herself and Rhoda, Alice Ripley flees the horror of the camera’s dead eye that fixes her in her apartment to a rooftop where snowflakes fly (the camera, of course, follows her). She feels herself a cork tossed on a rough sea, a ribbon of weed, the foam that sweeps whiteness over the rocks, and a girl, here in this room. Manu Narayan sits on the floor amid packing boxes and, peering through a houseplant’s leaves, sings Louis, the expatriate outsider putting down metaphysical roots: “I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world.” In a heartrending moment that is a dramatic high point, Darius de Haas sits on the stairs and sings an aria wrought from Neville’s lament for Percival: “I will not lift my foot to climb the stair. I will stand for one moment beneath the immitigable tree We are doomed, all of us. . . . Yet you shall not destroy me. . . . I press you to me. Come, pain, feed on me. Bury your fangs in my flesh. Tear me asunder. I sob, I so-ob” (figure 2; *The Waves* 152).



Figure 2: Darius de Haas: Darius / Neville. Courtesy of Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Intermittent shots of the name PERCIVAL writ large in the sand and washed away letter by letter by the incoming tide limn the wordless fate that this silent character who looms up from the heart of grief in *The Waves* shares with everyone, inside and outside the book and video.

Raúl Esparza, the project’s co-creator, associate director, and impresario, opens “*The Waves in Quarantine*” with the book’s last section, Bernard’s closing monologue (figure 3).



Figure 3: Raúl Esparza (Raúl/Bernard/Associate Director). Courtesy of Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Merging his voice with Bernard’s, he reads from *The Waves* in his kitchen; sings at the piano; grieves Percival’s early death and that of the musical’s first composer, his friend David Bucknam. As the waves beat on the shore, he tries to sum up his own and his friends’ uncapturable lives, a panoply of myriad experiences that elude all stories, all efforts to sum up. Gallant and full of heart, riding alongside Bernard with spear couched against the threat of annihilating emptiness, “*The Waves in Quarantine*” embraces what is *still* ordinary, common, shared, and

inescapable in the mystery of being and—as Bernard throws himself unvanquished and unyielding against Death, as Rhoda flings her “penny bunch of violets [...] into the wave that flings its white foam to the uttermost corners of the earth” in tribute to Percival and in defiance of death—offers us this gift (*The Waves* 164).

Shocked by Percival’s death into vivid appreciation of ordinary sights—loitering sailors, amorous couples, rattling omnibuses—Rhoda says, “I will give; I will enrich; I will return to the world this beauty. I will bind my flowers in one garland and advancing with my hand outstretched will present them—Oh! to whom?” (*The Waves* 57). Oh! to whom? The virtual medium of “*The Waves in Quarantine*” shapes its audience no less than its message. For theatre practitioners and performing artists, no virtual medium can approximate the live and present spectators lost to the pandemic or simulate the magic synchrony between performers and audience. The spectators too must wonder what to make of a diminished thing, a musical-theatre work reduced to an experimental video destined for individual viewings on computer screens and cell phones widely scattered in time and space. But in one way, at least, less became more: free stream-on-demand carried the Berkeley Rep On-Air’s leap of faith to an incalculably broad audience, uncontained by any theater walls—perhaps a million or more people who watched, if not from the uttermost ends of the earth, from at least as far as Hawaii and Uzbekistan. In a further manifestation of *The Waves*’s large and potential theme, these spectators, no less real for being isolated, dispersed in time and space, and invisible behind screens, reciprocated with the gift of their attention, as Rhoda’s violets do Percival’s: “Percival, by his death, has made me this gift [...]. There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place.[...] The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation” (*The Waves* 163). All the makers of this adventurous project deserve bouquets in celebration of their courage to create, to experiment, to risk failure, to make something new, to float it out into the world, to move some spectators to tears. In its own way, and for its own time, “*The Waves in Quarantine*” offers a perfect dwelling-place, an imaginary shelter from death’s dominion over the lonely, sad, vulnerable, burdened spirits of the Covid era.

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Two Poems

cullenders, frying-pans, chicken in aspic, ice-cream freezers, pared crusts of bread, lemons, soup

Over the years, Bloomsbury bashers have delighted in plucking quotations from Woolf’s letters and diaries that expose her in the most unflattering light, such as snarky remarks about servants. There are plenty to choose from. But there’s Mrs. Walker and

Lucy in the midst of her modernist masterpiece, indispensable to the success of Clarissa’s party. All her life Woolf sought to draw back the curtain on the basement scullery, peer inside the attic room. Get to know the shopgirl, the lavatory attendant. The obscure. She

became adept in the kitchen, learning a repertoire from her cooks. Confronted the mess in the bombed-out wreckage of her home in Tavistock Square. Beat the carpets. Salvaged whatever books she could. Towards the end of her life, she got down on her hands and

knees and scrubbed her own floors. Unheard of for a woman of her social class. Her sister, Vanessa, never would have done it. Their mother, Julia, long dead, would have been appalled. On her last day, before the river, she dusted with her maid, Louie.

Pantoum for Septimus

The young man walks with his wife in the park
Changed by his years in the war overseas
Heeds the mad high singing of larks
Scribbles down prophecies whispered by trees

Changed by his years in the war overseas
The poet cries out at shades of the dead
Scribbles down prophecies whispered by trees
Tossed by the storms that rage in his head

The poet cries out at shades of the dead
Mumbles and frets this warm summer day
Tossed by the storms that rage in his head
Feels himself falling, burning away

Bearer of truth no one’s willing to hear
The young man walks with his wife in the park
Deemed crazy, cowardly, foolish, and queer
Heeds the mad high singing of larks

Kristin Czarnecki
Georgetown College

From *Sliced*, forthcoming from dancing girl press (dancinggirlpress.com).

Book Reviews

FROM THE BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

All publishers, authors and scholars should direct inquiries regarding books to Karen Levenback, the Book Review Editor, as should anyone interested in reviewing books for the *Miscellany*.

Please direct any queries to Karen Levenback at
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REVIEW

MRS. DALLOWAY

by Virginia Woolf. Garden City, NY: Dover Publications, 2021. iv + 140 pages. \$7.00 paper.

MRS. DALLOWAY

by Virginia Woolf. Introduction by Michael Cunningham. NY: Vintage Classics, 2021. xviii + 219 pages. \$9.95 paper.

MRS. DALLOWAY

by Virginia Woolf. Edited by Jo-Ann Wallace. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Editions, 2012. 270 pages. \$10.95 paper.

MRS. DALLOWAY

by Virginia Woolf. Edited by Anne Fernald. Norton Critical Editions. NY: W. W. Norton Co., 2021. xxxii + 365 pages. \$12.50 paper.

THE ANNOTATED MRS. DALLOWAY

by Virginia Woolf. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Merve Emre. NY: Liveright, 2021. lxxiv + 242 pages. \$35 cloth.

The Dover Thrift edition of *Mrs. Dalloway* states that it is “an unabridged republication of a standard edition of the work” (ii). Given the very complicated publication history of this novel, that seems somewhat disingenuous (it is a US edition), but it is not likely the reader of a Dover edition will look to it for insight about the work’s textual idiosyncrasies. With its concise and useful brief introduction (by T. N. R. Rogers, about whom no information is provided), and centered asterisks indicating space breaks, this would be an ideal edition to take on vacation and leave as a gift for the next occupier of one’s lodgings without regret.

The mysterious laws of copyright go on engendering new editions of classic works, and publishers often seem to worry that readers need to be eased into them by way of an introduction by a celebrity author. The new Vintage edition has an attractive Vanessa Bell-esque cover, and an introduction by Michael Cunningham. His very successful novel *The Hours*—together with its film version—led to a spike in sales of *Mrs. Dalloway*, so it might reasonably be supposed that his name on the cover will attract new readers. The jacket copy claims that this follows “the original British publication” but it is unclear if by this is meant the first British edition. If so, one of the more notable errors in that edition has been silently corrected (emending “said Richard” to “said Peter” [218]) but, again, this is not the kind of edition to which readers might turn for insight into textual cruxes.

Oddly, Cunningham claims that although *Mrs. Dalloway* is “one of the great novels of World War I” (xi) it is “seldom [...] discussed as such”

(xi). This will be news to modernist scholars. Furthermore, he states that the novel is set in an England that “had lost as many as one hundred fifty thousand people” (xi): as no source I have ever seen puts the English casualty figure lower than 700,000 this is a curious error. An introduction for common readers, though, is an occasion for subjective opinions, a personal take on a favorite book, about which there can be no argument. If Cunningham finds *Mrs. Dalloway* to have a “bit of a riff-ish, ‘early work’ aspect to it” (xiv), who are we to disagree?

Two of these editions, however, are intended for the classroom. Both of them are superb for that purpose. Jo-Ann Wallace, a professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta, whose edition has been available now for some years, acknowledges that it is difficult for any reader to come to Woolf “innocently” (9), given her iconic cultural image (as explained by Brenda Silver in *Virginia Woolf Icon* [1999]), but Wallace points out the dominance of the “depressed and vulnerable” (9) version of Woolf that often eclipses a richer understanding of her life. Wallace’s introduction deftly connects to the work of other scholars and biographers, acknowledging her sources unobtrusively as she provides an insightful contextualizing of Woolf’s aims within the framework of those famous literary manifestos “Modern Fiction,” and “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.” Wallace explains with great insight how *Mrs. Dalloway* analyzes power. She also notes that the novel is not a “stable, self-contained text” and, as such, that it affords “a particularly rich archive for the study of Woolf’s creative process” (20 n1).

The Broadview follows the first English edition, published by the Hogarth Press, retaining its errors (which are explained in footnotes). Although Wallace usefully explains the novel’s complicated publication history, her notion that discerning the intentions of the author remains the key question in textual scholarship is perhaps now somewhat dated. However, her own edition is motivated by the different question of within what “individual, social, and historical contexts” was the novel produced (41). In both her introduction and her annotations, Wallace does an excellent job of explaining the genesis of *Mrs. Dalloway* as an aspect of Woolf’s emergent modernism. She describes the work as the second in a trilogy of war novels, and the one that “offers the most sustained and overt analysis of the social and psychic causes of war, and indeed of all forms of oppression” (26). Wallace returns repeatedly in her ancillary material to *Three Guineas* as a way of showing how *Mrs. Dalloway* fits into Woolf’s consistent political vision. I would identify attention to Woolf as a war novelist beginning somewhat earlier than Wallace does (*Virginia Woolf and War*, after all, was published in 1991), but this edition certainly provides teachers and students many productive ways to think of the novel in that context.

The appendices comprise a selection of contemporary reviews (with helpful annotations where necessary)—something I’ve found students often are interested to know about—and a number of other reprints that will be welcomed by readers. These include literary context: passages from *The Voyage Out*, where the Dalloways made their first appearance, the short story “Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street,” and extracts from “Modern Fiction” and “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.” Particularly helpful are three appendices on Political, Medical, and Educational and Social contexts for the novel in which more difficult to come by materials are provided. Wallace points out that readers in 1925 would have been well aware of the unstable state of British politics and its imperial fortunes. Ramsay MacDonald explaining that the working class always disproportionately bears the costs of war, as well as articles on the status of German women in England during World War I, the British empire in India, and the coming Labour government all add depth to our understanding of particular characters in the novel. Writings by Woolf’s own doctors, George Savage and Henry Head, as well as by W. H. R. Rivers on shell-shock, and information on Morley College and working men’s colleges complete this very well thought-out and richly detailed edition that is eminently suitable for both undergraduate and graduate classes.

Anne Fernald's Norton Critical Edition, too, is an exemplary classroom text. As Fernald notes in her Cambridge edition of *Mrs. Dalloway*, "very few people have read the novel in its original form" (lxxxiv) due to its complex publication history. Woolf, as *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* readers no doubt know, had three separate sets of proofs, only two of which survive—the American proofs (which are housed at Indiana University's Lilly Library), and the so-called "Raverat proofs," which she sent to her friend the painter Jacques Raverat as he lay dying; these are at UCLA. The British proofs have been lost. Most significant, perhaps, is the question of the space breaks in various editions, with only the first British edition having twelve sections, corresponding to the hours marked off by the booming of Big Ben. But, as Fernald points out in the Cambridge edition, there are more than 300 differences between the British and American first editions of the novel (lxxxix). As is the case with other works by Woolf, the reading experience in different countries can be quite distinct. For the Norton Critical Edition—the format of which is dictated by the series—Fernald follows the first American edition. One of the most significant textual issues resulting from this is the absence of a section break near the end of the novel when Clarissa returns to her party guests "from the little room" (131) where she has contemplated Septimus's death. As Fernald, and other editors, explain, Woolf added to the American proofs the sentence "He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun" (131) but did not mark a section break after Clarissa's return to her party. Both Wallace and Fernald provide information about the textual issues in *Mrs. Dalloway* that will enable readers to think through their implications for understanding Woolf's writing and publishing practices.

Like Wallace, Fernald assumes that readers will have some knowledge already about the novel, even if they have not yet read it. Her introduction, which opens with a paragraph brilliantly unpacking the novel's very first sentence, does not treat the reader as a blank slate, preferring to adumbrate the riches that will be found in the back matter. The discrete sections of the introduction might well be titled "For your consideration..." as rather than dictating to her readers, Fernald invites them to consider several different ways in which this modernist work might be approached. She shows how Woolf was working with the stream-of-consciousness technique that came to characterize her generation of writers, and explains how the novel "explores the ongoing reverberations" of the War (xii). References to both Woolf's diary and to the manuscripts of 'The Hours' (at the British Library, and transcribed by Helen Wussow) are used with great insight—for example, in drawing attention to Woolf's note about perhaps using aspects of her friend Gerald Brenan in the characterization of Septimus (xv).

As in Wallace's edition, annotations to the text appear as footnotes, which choice affords a more fluent reading experience. Some of the notes are inspired: explaining that sandwich men are like "walking easels," for example, conjures up an immediately clear image for readers who might have been distracted by wondering what the term meant (4 n4).

The materials chosen for the extensive Contexts section afford a great deal of room to maneuver for a creative teacher. Extracts from a variety of sources provide a subtle and thought-provoking network of connections between *Mrs. Dalloway* and Woolf's letters and diary, some of her related short fiction, and some non-fiction, including extracts from Memoir Club pieces, as well as a 1918 review of Dorothy Richardson's novels. Woolf's diary entry (14 December 1917) about visiting Leonard's brother Philip, who was wounded by the same shell that killed their brother Cecil, is a startling example of how memory works in transmuting life into art: "I can imagine that he is puzzled why he doesn't feel more," she wrote several years before inventing Septimus Warren Smith (147).

This serious and scholarly edition contains riches worth an entire semester's exploration, though it would certainly be a valuable resource for any course on Woolf or on modernism. Literary sources from the

Odyssey to Mansfield's "The Garden Party," historical contexts from Rivers's presentation on "Repression of War Experience" (and its subsequent Q & A session), to Trudi Tate on the Armenian genocide, and Elizabeth Outka on the 1918 pandemic, as well as a selection of criticism from 1925 to very recent work by Sarah Ahmed, Paul St. Amour, and Celia Marshik all support the view of *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel of inexhaustible interest. Woolf is very well served by Fernald in this impressive new edition.

The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway is more difficult to place in terms of the reader for whom it is intended. Described by its publisher's marketers as "an incomparable gift to all lovers of literature," it does, indeed, seem intended as a gift for completists. Apparently, *Mrs. Dalloway* has "long been viewed [...] as Woolf's masterpiece" (flyleaf), but the breathless prose of marketers must be excused for overlooking other candidates. This volume strikes me as an example of a peculiar kind of gentrification: after the years of restoration and improvement performed in obscurity by academics, a "brilliant young Oxford scholar and critic" makes the text marketable to a very different class of reader.

If this text of Woolf's novel has been "edited" it seems to have been done in the spirit of having one's cake and eating it: Emre preserves "He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun" from the American edition, but *also* has the space break from the English edition (229), thus creating a unique hybrid version of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Oddly, she writes that Woolf "struck" the sentence "from the British proofs" (229 n416), but this is the wrong way around (and in any case, the British proofs have not survived): Woolf added the sentence to the American proofs. The text of Emre's *Mrs. Dalloway* is hemmed in on each side by notes in pale blue ink that quickly overwhelm Woolf's narrative. Only forty-seven of Woolf's words manage to make it to the opening page of the novel, and by page 10 they have disappeared entirely, sunk like Lady Bradshaw beneath waves of annotation.

The avalanche of facts, unfortunately (for me, at least), has the effect of obscuring some of Emre's more astute insights. There is a Wikipedian character to some of the notes: why, for example, is it relevant to *Mrs. Dalloway* that "Hatfield House was later used as a filming location for the 1992 film version of *Orlando* with Tilda Swinton" (62 n132)? And in explaining a reference to the Suez Canal, do we need to know about the crisis of 1956 (233 n423)? Reading the scene of Septimus's suicide and its aftermath for Rezia, what kind of reader would pause to consider the history of Brighton (187 n336)? A judicious editor could have saved Emre from some of her excesses, allowing her more valuable notes greater visibility. She writes enlighteningly about Alexander Pope, for example, weaving together passages from *The Voyage Out*, Edith Sitwell, Leslie Stephen, and Lytton Strachey (15 n33).

Emre's introduction focuses to a large extent on the Woolfian art of character-reading and is itself both imaginative and insightful. Although it is an extremely rare publication that escapes any errors (and there are a few minor mistakes in both Wallace and Fernald), some of Emre's are quite distorting. Woolf did not write in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" that "everyday questions arise" (xiv) for which the act of reading character is necessary (she wrote "every day [...]"). A more egregious error is having Ralph Partridge studying at Oxford "with Lytton Strachey" (lvii). Slips such as "Sally Seaton" (lix) or "Gerald Brennan" (lvii)¹ might not amount to much, but they contribute to the sense that this edition of *Mrs. Dalloway* has not been vetted as closely as it should have been.

Although Emre usually makes astute use of 'The Hours' holographs—as, for example, in an interesting note on Woolf's "fear of sentimentality" deriving from her father's hypocrisy and its relation to the characterization of Peter Walsh (59 n126)—she makes a strange error in the transcription of a passage from those notebooks concerning Septimus at the doctor's office. A facsimile of the passage is on the facing page

¹ Editorial note: The correct spellings are Sally Seton and Gerald Brenan.

(lx-lxi). What I at first took to be a typo—reading ‘best’ as ‘heat’ in the line ‘His sense that this is not worth/having: that only the best is/worth while’ (as Wussow transcribes it, appendix 2, p425)—turns out to be a misreading on which Emre then bases an argument connected to the recurring line from *Cymbeline*, “Fear no more the heat o’ the sun.” I also found some dubious interpretations in the annotations. Commenting on the phrase “those Indian women,” Emre draws attention to a “fascinating debate among critics on the limitations of Woolf’s feminist and anti-imperialist thought” (16-17). This debate is important, and, as Emre suggests, Supriya Chaudhuri’s essay on the issue is indeed excellent (though it takes a little sleuthing to discover where it is published as Emre’s ‘Works Consulted’ is highly selective and only gives details of the volume of essays, edited by Jessica Berman, in which it appears). But, the context makes clear that this phrase must refer to British (white) women, women who, Clarissa thinks disdainfully, can understand how Peter Walsh “cares”—“silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops” like (presumably) the Daisy he tells Clarissa he is going to marry (16). It is not *Indian* women Clarissa is thinking about. Emre returns later to the issue of Woolf and race in a note on the term “coolies” (71 n146): “A racist term [...] and a term Woolf used liberally in her diaries.” Is this perhaps an instance of virtue-signaling? The term—which Fernald points out was “widely accepted” in the 1920s (35 n3)—appears in *Mrs. Dalloway* and in *The Waves*. It appears *nowhere* in Woolf’s diary.

The introduction to *The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway* nicely weaves together a biographical narrative and moments where that narrative intersects with the novel. Like Fernald, Emre excels at catching in Woolf’s diary odd anecdotes, scenes, and reflections that become part of the matrix from which *Mrs. Dalloway* emerged. At times, though, Emre inserts those kinds of judgments that can only be either accepted or rejected because they are so subjective as to allow of no discussion: I cannot agree, for example, that *The Voyage Out* is “an inept affair—prettily written, but confusingly plotted; garrulous yet dull” (xxxvi). Such blunt pronouncements occasionally extend also to her discussion of *Mrs. Dalloway*: “Woolf based [Rezia] on Lydia Lopokova” (lvi). A photograph of Lydia, then, implicitly becomes an image of a character who, for all she might owe to the ballerina, is not solely that. Indeed, like Woolf, Emre blurs the line between fact and fiction: for some mysterious reason, Liveright offered to “transcribe” the novel for her (lxvi). At Monk’s House, she “ascended” (lxviii) to Woolf’s bedroom via an outdoor staircase—an imaginative feat of entering a ground floor room off the garden! Further destabilizing our sense of in what register the introduction is written, Emre plays with allusions to Woolf’s writing in what I think is an invented tale of meeting a kind of sprite in the form of a docent in Woolf’s bedroom who is left by Emre “still holding her treasure” (lxix) in that haunted house.

In addition to over four hundred annotations—many of which are commentary or interpretation—there are a lavish number of images included in Emre’s edition, ranging from the cover of *Jorrocks’ Jaunts and Jollities* and an advertisement for Durnall & Co. to drawings and paintings sometimes only tangentially related to the novel. A number of photographs from the Monks House collection (housed at Harvard) enhance the text, and it is a treat to have reproduced here in color paintings by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant (as well as several others). It is as if a Pinterest devoted to *Mrs. Dalloway* had been printed out and enclosed within covers. The edition has its charm, and its quirks will delight some while irritating others, but its uneven citational practices, factual errors, and highly idiosyncratic readings make *The Annotated Mrs. Dalloway* a curiosity.

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REVIEW

A MOMENT IN THE LIFE OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

by Louisa Amelia Albani. London: Night Bird Press N2, 2020. Np. £10 paper.

VOS

by Erik Fuhrer. Foreword by Laci Mattison. Bangalore, India; Monee, IL: Yavanika Press, 2019. 60 pages. \$12 paper.

Many of my Zoom conversations with Woolfians lately have concerned Woolf’s recurrence in the contemporary arts.¹ During these conversations, one question we return to again and again—it is fun to speculate, after all—pertains to the variable suitability of this or that medium. Does Woolf’s work translate to the stage, for instance, better than it does to film? And why? (I owe this question to Drew Shannon.) We might add: how do the non-verbal arts capture something *Woolfian* in their craft, especially when the style of Woolf’s “words, words, words” seem so inextricable from whatever we might mean by “Woolfian” (L3 342) in the first place? Though these conversations readied me to review Louisa Amelia Albani’s and Erik Fuhrer’s respective experiments with the juxtaposition of visual art beside Woolf’s words, my recent study of their projects raises other questions regarding Woolf’s recurrence in contemporary art: what do we make of art that rearranges and redeploys her words *without* the pressure of adapting her fiction into another medium? How do we read, interpret, evaluate, and enjoy art that makes *use* of Woolf’s words toward ends other than adaptation? Does this art still capture or convey a Woolfian style or spirit? Must it? Adapting the title of J. L. Austin’s famous lecture series, how else might artists do things—good, beautiful, and surprising things—with Woolf’s words?

Louisa Amelia Albani’s pamphlet, *A Moment in the Life of Virginia Woolf*, reproduces all sixteen of the original pieces from her 2020 Virginia Woolf Art Exhibition.² Though we lose, in facsimile, the texture of Albani’s handmade printing techniques, collage, pen work, inks, and metallic thread stitching and paste,³ this loss is mitigated by the pieces’ vivid and purposeful serialization. In its effort to reimagine the moment when “one day walking round Tavistock Square” Woolf first “made up” one of her novels “in a great, apparently involuntary rush” (“A Sketch of the Past” [SP] 81), the pamphlet crafts a multi-angular “visual portal into” a “revelatory moment of literary inspiration” that connects, as Albani puts it, a “creative process” with “a healing” one (np). The brief Introduction to *A Moment in the Life* invests much value in this connection between creativity and healing, taking heart from the example of *To the Lighthouse* (1927)—the writing of which “was able to lay the ghost of” Julia Stephen “to rest” (np). Albani anticipates that many of us may find that we desperately need such an example of

¹ For example: the transformation of her diaries into libretto for the recent production of Dominick Argento’s *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1974); the ballet *Woolf Works* (2015); the adaptation of “Kew Gardens” (1919) that concludes the anthology film, *London Unplugged* (2019); Eileen Atkins, Sarah Ruhl, and Ellen McLaughlin’s respective adaptations of Woolf to the stage; and the brilliant exhibitions of graphic designer and print artist Ane Thon Knutsen.

² As of this writing, a couple of these pieces are still available for purchase. Visit <https://www.nightbirdpress.com/louisa-albani-art-works> to view these pieces as well as prints and the pamphlet reviewed here.

³ Albani’s *Night Bird Press* site details the techniques and mixed media she adopts in the creation of each piece.

healing now, especially at a time when “the world itself has experienced a kind of collective ‘shock’ with the Coronavirus outbreak” (np). As a series of images arranged on sequential pages, her reproductions do not convey Woolf’s moment of inspiration as a story but, rather, as a series of visions and remembrances that bring together, much as “A Sketch of the Past” (1939-1941) does, childhood memories in Cornwall, a mother’s death at Hyde Park Gate, a summer day in Tavistock Square decades later, and chains of other memories and images that layer the past with present moments of reflection and creation.

Albani often positions images of Woolf—pensive, at work in the foreground—at the edges or in the lower corners of pages that otherwise center a vivid background or, fittingly, the panes of a window. On some pages, the outline of an initially unnoticed object or structure appears to *deepen* the background, achieving a remarkable distance that then rushes forward, toward the Woolfian plane, when our eye catches, for instance, the edge of St. Pancras Church on Euston Road or the gleam of a lighthouse or the wing of a butterfly or the patterned spread of tree limbs and branches. This carefully composed play of background and foreground, of line and curve, of light and dark, of present and past brings to mind, at least for me, the most visually stunning passages of *To the Lighthouse* and “A Sketch of the Past”—both texts that Albani quotes on the respective pages that face each image. Perhaps this connection between Woolf’s literary style and Albani’s visual style can help us see that though the former’s pen work differs in kind and in degree from the latter’s that Woolf’s paragraphs also engage in a similar project of conveying moments of creative intensity: from Mrs. Ramsay’s meditation on the “wedge of darkness” (*To the Lighthouse* [TTL] 66) to Woolf’s sudden pause—in the midst of memoir-writing—to “think how many other than human forces are always at work on us...the light...an apple...a little owl” (“Sketch of the Past” [SP]133).

But what of the words Albani takes from Woolf’s diaries, memoir, and novel? What do they bring to the pamphlet? How do they work with and beside the reproductions of visual art that so compellingly depict Woolf at work against varied backgrounds and portals? Far from serving as the origins of the artworks beside which they sit, the passages provide interpretive frames that direct our eyes and inflect our moods. Albani titles and situates the quotations with her own writing—e.g., “On the Influence of Her Mother”; “Virginia Woolf on the Novel”—and also plays with typefaces. Passages of life-writing appear in centered italics, rearranged and lineated as if they were poems while the quotations that Albani draws from *To the Lighthouse* appear more substantial, in blocks of bold and greyed text. The bold sentences step forward while the greyed sentences support that step, mirroring in words the play of background and foreground we see on the facing pages. Anchored by Lily Briscoe’s question, “What is the meaning of life?” (TTL 164), for instance, a passage early in the last section of *To the Lighthouse* faces Albani’s piece, “Virginia Woolf on a twilight walk near Euston Road.” The passage—in which Lily reflects on “little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark” (TTL 165)—lends us some textual sense to appreciate, think about, and resonate with Albani’s depiction of Woolf on Euston Road. Woolf’s words help confirm a bond between twilight and rumination in the facing image; they help emphasize Albani’s play with the pockets of illumination that light up a gathering darkness (each streetlamp seems ripe with new questions and revelations); the words amplify the locatedness, contingency, and intense focus of creative labor. All of Albani’s image-text compositions in *A Moment in the Life* thus convey, perhaps even perform a lesson for us about, Woolf’s visual imagination. But they also express Albani’s own powerful visual imagination, which confirms Woolf’s insight that “the arts are closely united” (*Essays* 6 44).

While Albani juxtaposes her visual recreations of a biographical moment beside words drawn from “A Sketch of the Past” and *To the Lighthouse*, Erik Fuhrer’s *VOS* (2019) employs a different technique that directs us past—even as its poetry honors—Woolf’s life and writing. Each of the

thirty poems in *VOS* (“Voyage Out Sonnets”) exclusively uses Woolf’s words as its material. To craft his poems, Fuhrer selects passages from *The Voyage Out* (1915), erases most of the verbal material, and refashions what remains into new phrases and clauses. He then rearranges these new syntactic combinations into fourteen lines, creating a sonnet through the erasure of prose. Facing each poem, Fuhrer also places a series of thirty black-and-white pictorial collages: each one also exhibiting the effects of erasure. “For each collage,” he explains, “I picked three words that struck me from the paired texts, and then chose images that resonated. Then I erased portions of those images. Until there was a wholeness to the fragments” (xii). Though Fuhrer’s use of erasure in poetry and image directs our attention away from the plot and characters of his source text, this aspiration to fragmentary wholeness echoes “A Sketch of the Past,” which he draws on for *VOS*’s epigraph. Indeed, Woolf’s belief in “a pattern” of connections that hide behind “the cotton wool” of daily life anticipates the technique of aesthetic erasure (SP 72). “Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet” may be, Woolf writes, “the truth about this vast mass that we call the world,” yet “there is no Shakespeare...Beethoven... [or] God” (SP 72). This erasure of a cosmic Author leaves Woolf free to participate in patterns she glimpses, to become an artist, to experiment with inventing a few patterns of her own. “The strongest pleasure known to me,” she writes, “is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what”: “a great delight” in “put[ting] the severed parts together” (SP 72). For Woolf, the erasure of a cosmic Playwright or Composer or Creator gives her space and freedom to make new connections, to work with but also beyond the moments of being that leave their shocking impressions on her unfolding life.

Woolf’s aesthetic ontology and Fuhrer’s method are not perfectly aligned, of course. While Woolf’s philosophy deletes Shakespeare, Beethoven, and (presumably) herself, Fuhrer’s book remains haunted by Woolf, even as each poem exceeds the features and beauties and pains of the source text. As Laci Mattison writes in her preface to Fuhrer’s collection, *The Voyage Out* “is a kind of ghostly presence” in *VOS*, “felt more than glimpsed” (vii). Fuhrer himself suggests that this hauntology is how we might come to understand erasure not as “censorship” of an original but as a mode of loving “tribute” (xi). As an homage to lessons Fuhrer has learned from Woolf—that “art” is “fluid and fragmented” (x), that there is “a wholeness to the fragments” (xii)—*VOS* strives to inhabit “the breaths between the story” of Rachel Vinrace, Terence Hewett, Helen Ambrose, and the many other characters who populate Woolf’s first novel (xi). Indeed, for Woolfians, reading the sonnets in *VOS* can be an uncanny experience. Woolfians will half-recognize words and phrases, sometimes recalling the exact page or scene where they appear in *The Voyage Out*. If they manage to sense Woolf’s ghost haunting Fuhrer’s pages, Woolfians may indeed catch something of “the trace of the impression [that Woolf’s] language has had on [Fuhrer]” (xi).

This recognition is uncanny (familiar/strange), for the edges Fuhrer’s verbal and visual erasures give to his imagery interrupt, with cutting suddenness, our recognition of the many ghosts who haunt his pages (Mattison vii). For instance, in the second quatrain of its first sonnet, some of *VOS*’s readers will identify Ridley Ambrose’s statement of relief after the Dalloways’ departure: “Well, that’s over” (*The Voyage Out* 69). But Fuhrer’s recombination of Ridley’s relief with words drawn from other nearby passages shakes us out of this recognition, directing us past this familiar scene to face a new (fragmentary) wholeness:

[...] How horrid
the silver kiss in the shake of two backs. “Well, that’s over,”
said a long sentence. Empty hearts parted knowledge to justify
they could feel. (Fuhrer 2, lines 5-8)

Readers of Woolf may want to keep their copy of *The Voyage Out* nearby as they read *VOS*, stopping frequently—several times in every line—to locate and cross reference Fuhrer’s words and phrases with the novel. And yet, to do so risks missing the richness, humor, and brilliantly

disconcerting technique with which Fuhrer generates new associations, glimpses new scenes, centers different bodies (and body parts), and conjures feelings of passionate and disquieting estrangement. My favorite standalone line? From sonnet 17: “The Enlightenment thought everything was a ballroom dance” (34, line 11).

My initial responses to Fuhrer’s collage–poem pairings varied widely during my first reading of *VOS*, including surprise, laughter, confusion, bewilderment, joy, discomfort, and recognition. Sonnet 10, for instance, begins with *Orlando*-like absurdity, “Shakespeare was too introspective for breakfast and seaweed,” and ends, “Honestly inhuman, he laughed with the dogs” (20, lines 1, 14). The “he” in the final line may refer to “Bach” (line 13), but the collage on the facing page triangulates the cut-out face of the Bard, staring out at us above two other cut-outs: one of a pathetic “stockbroker pug dog” beside a pack of longer-snouted retrievers (line 12). The eyes of Shakespeare, directed at the reader/viewer, are but one of many eyes collected in *VOS*—not all of them human—staring out from Fuhrer’s collages (15, 21, 25, 27, 41, 45, 47, 57). And other images seem to be visual metaphors or metonymies of these eyes: the moon (1, 51, 59); the empty sockets of a skull (29); circular gears (31); lips (33, 47, 59); half of a black circular blotch or pupil (35); eyebrows (51, 57); an ear (51); and the top-down view of a splintered tree stump (55). Plenty of other images point us away from the eyes/face, but these specific components of Fuhrer’s project repeatedly met my reading gaze and readied me to track the many body parts strewn across his sonnets’ lines: “Eyes, a coil of rope. Legs gaze on the hot morning [.][...] Broken fingers remember who they were” (56, lines 2, 7). In erasing *The Voyage Out*, Fuhrer also erases our presumption of the human body’s wholeness, giving us glimpses of corporeal fragments that also strive for wholeness. These gently uncanny body parts echo, even if they cannot entirely sync, with the horrors that we encounter in *The Voyage Out*: some stifled, some subtle, some twistingly agonizing. But the bodies and body parts in *VOS* are not just human: “Glow-worms [also] fold tiny suffering into their bodies” (52, line 10). Fuhrer’s poetic wonder disturbs, but it also moves. Here, in this poetry, the dead dream (60, line 5) and the simple act of looking (reading? erasing?) “knit[s] the open air” (60, line 14).

Albani and Fuhrer’s respective books are inexpensive, thought-provoking, often beautiful, and always careful in their respective labors of love. Please buy them.⁴ Both artists teach us that Woolf’s life, plots, characters, style, sensibility, and even her simple choice of individual words can be the material not just of translation or adaptation but, as Eleanor Pargiter utters after yet another air raid, efforts “to expand; to adventure; to form—new combinations” (*The Years* 216).

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⁴ To purchase Albani’s pamphlet and other work, visit the site listed above in footnote 2. Visit <https://www.erik-fuhrer.com/books> to purchase *VOS* or his other poetry collections. In addition to these collections, the artwork of Kimberly Androlowicz is also available for purchase on Fuhrer’s site. Her painting “untitled 2” appears on the cover of *VOS*. See <https://www.erik-fuhrer.com/prints-by-kimberly-androlowicz> to learn more.

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REVIEW

BEHIND THE TIMES:

VIRGINIA WOOLF IN LATE-VICTORIAN CONTEXTS

by Mary Jean Corbett

Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2020. 296 pages. \$48.95 cloth.

In her exploration of Virginia Woolf’s second-generation Victorian female predecessors, sandwiched between the more famous mid-Victorian third-generation and Woolf’s first-generation contemporaries, Mary Jean Corbett pursues an aim she articulated in her previous book, *Representing Femininity: Middle-Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women’s Autobiographies*: ‘reconstructing’ instead of ‘deconstructing’ the lives represented in a range of largely forgotten autobiographies by nineteenth and early twentieth century women (*Representing Femininity* 6). Both books usefully seek to recover obscured literary and social/political voices of Woolf’s female predecessors, but the second study swerves from autobiography to examine the historical and social contexts within which Woolf’s immediate predecessors performed what Corbett terms an “imperialist-maternalist ‘mission’” (185), one that Woolf implicitly critiques in her novels and explicitly denigrates in her diaries and letters. *Behind the Times* interrogates Woolf’s perplexing occlusion of a cadre of these immediate predecessors from novels by Sarah Grand, Mary Augusta Ward, and Lucy Clifford to social activists Octavia Hill, Josephine Butler, and Frances Willard. Corbett includes more intimately connected family friends Janet Case and Margaret Llewelyn Davies as well as Woolf’s own relatives, specifically Woolf’s mother Julia Duckworth Stephen, and her mother’s “Pattle” cousin, Isabel Somerset, in what Corbett terms Woolf’s “erasure of the late [female] Victorians” (31). To support her thesis that Woolf refused to “think back through” this “maternal generation” and thus failed to “forg[e] professional and personal solidarity with other women writers [...] across generational divides” (145), Corbett underscores Woolf’s aversion to the coercive philanthropy and feminist activism these second-generation women variously undertook. For Woolf, Corbett states, late Victorian female philanthropy was tarnished by what Barbara N. Ramusack terms “maternal imperialism.” Woolf’s critique of female characters’ imperialistic philanthropy runs throughout her novels but is particularly prominent in *Night and Day* and *The Years* where social and political activism, especially that of the suffragettes, comes under fire most directly.

Throughout the book Corbett disputes stark divisions (often maintained by Woolf) between the late Victorians (1880-1890) and Woolf and her contemporaries. Instead, she emphasizes the affinities and affiliations, most persuasively the subtly imperialistic ones, both between periods and among the second-generation women themselves even when their attitudes—especially toward female suffrage—clearly differed from each other. Corbett suggests that as Woolf aged and befriended women who were actively involved in women’s causes (the Strachey sisters, Ray Costello Strachey, Ethel Smyth) she became more tolerant of the social activism she had previously satirized. Thus *The Years* offers a broader perspective as the characters themselves progress from the late Victorian 1880s to the post war modern 1930s. Woolf takes her final “historicist turn” in *Between the Acts* where she deals most explicitly with historical shifts marked both by the pageant and the reactions of several generations of spectators.

Following the corrective tendency to recognize Woolf’s affiliation with, instead of rupture from, the past most prominently noted by Gillian

Beer, Laura Marcus, and Anna Snaith, Corbett poses her thesis at the beginning of the first chapter, “Gender, Greatness, and the ‘Third Generation’”: “Rethinking Woolf’s relationship to the immediate past leads to new conclusions about where and how she does or does not borrow from, resist, or reject its legacy, conclusions that ought to enable us to understand her own legacy more precisely” (31-32). The ensuing chapters tackle female writers and activists from the 1880s and ’90s through the first decade of the twentieth century to argue for a more nuanced view of Woolf’s relation to her immediate female predecessors, several of whom continued to publish concurrently with Woolf. In attempting to unearth this legacy and implicitly to soften the sometimes strident oppositional tone of *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas*, Corbett marshals and extensively quotes from an often overwhelming number of sources from sociological theorists and philosophers (David Scott, Barbara Ramusack, Pierre Bordieu) to Woolf scholars and historians in addition to drawing on extensive biographical and archival materials. More subtly, the reader is directed to the accumulated evidence of 25 pages of endnotes. This weighty scholarly apparatus, however, is perhaps inevitable given the range of figures, works and historical contexts Corbett engages.

Divided into five chapters plus an Afterword and, like *The Waves* and *The Years*, separated by three brief “Interludes,” *Behind the Times* offers close comparative readings of novels Woolf ostensibly either ignored or did not read alongside analyses of Woolf’s own novels. The interludes operate almost as extended notes to explain both the masculine literary tradition Woolf inherited from her father and his associates and to provide further cultural and historical context. In particular, “Duckworth and Company” (the third interlude), while feeling like an abrupt detour, nevertheless offers unusual insight into George Duckworth’s paradoxical lack of interest in most literature save for Ibsen’s plays and the novels of his few Edwardian friends, Galsworthy, Ford and Belloc. Chapter two juxtaposes Woolf’s early novel *The Voyage Out* with “second-generation” Sarah Grand’s 1893 New Woman novel *The Heavenly Twins*. Corbett intriguingly suggests that, in spite of her highbrow companions’ advice, Rachel Vinrace is actually reading Grand’s novel, which she leaves unfinished. Corbett speculates that if Woolf did in fact read Grand’s work, she would have found the “politicized aesthetic” antithetical to her own method.

Chapter three takes up Woolf’s inherited disdain for the commercial aspects of the literary marketplace to posit another reason for her slighting of her parents’ literary friends Lucy Clifford and Mary Augusta Ward. Both women were too prolific and sensationalist for Woolf’s tastes, Clifford suffering the added pressure of having to write for a living after her scholarly husband (a friend of Leslie Stephen’s) died. Corbett cites Woolf’s letters to Violet Dickinson denouncing Ward and her memoir *A Writer’s Recollections* to suggest that, unlike Ward, Woolf strove to dissociate herself from the Oxbridge-educated male relatives that Ward’s uncle (Matthew Arnold) and Woolf’s father represented. Chapter four moves closer to home to explore Julia Stephen’s and Julia’s cousin Isabel Somerset’s “maternal imperialism” in light of the more disturbing aspects of late century philanthropy—social purity and eugenics. Julia Stephen’s support of social reformer Octavia Hill’s house projects and Isabel Somerset’s alliance with the temperance movement suggest coercive tactics Woolf would anathematize in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Unobtrusive social activists like Julia Stephen and more politically assertive ones like Isabel Somerset covertly upheld the imperialist status quo, Corbett suggests, in their upper middle-class assumption of the role of ministering angel to the poor and socially outcast.

Corbett’s final chapter connects the private philanthropy of these maternal imperialists to its counterpart in public suffrage organizations to underscore Woolf’s persistent distrust of both private and public forms of persuasion. Yet as she moves toward Woolf’s first-generation friends and feminist activists, specifically Pippa and Pernel Strachey and Ray Costello Strachey, Corbett seeks to persuade us that by the 1930s Woolf

had mitigated her criticism of female social activism. If one compares the ultimately “fixed” quality of Mary Datchet’s single-focused commitment to female suffrage in *Night and Day* with the shifting views of the Pargiter daughters in *The Years*, especially of Eleanor’s increasing open-mindedness, Corbett implies that Woolf too had begun to loosen her own more fixed views about female activism.

Perhaps the urge to impose a teleological progression on Woolf’s work from her earliest to her last novel pushes Corbett to take up *Between the Acts* in the Afterword where she argues that by her last two novels Woolf had begun to reconcile past and present or, more precisely, to recognize affinities between third, second and first-generation women writers and activists. Speaking of *Between the Acts* but also echoing her discussion of *The Years*, Corbett concludes, “Constructing yet challenging firm distinctions between past and present, Woolf registers both continuity and change, identifying perspectives on the past as variable depending on the age and experience of those who witness and respond to the pageant” (230). The book provides a road map to guide us through the obscured routes of Woolf’s neglected second-generation female predecessors. Corbett makes us pause to consider diversions from the Victorian male-dominated high road trodden by Woolf’s father’s venerated literary companions—Hardy, James, Meredith—and in some ways by Woolf herself. If by the end we fail to “understand [Woolf’s] own legacy more precisely” (32), we have nevertheless discovered multiple routes taken by the second-generation women Woolf, perhaps inadvertently, helped to obscure. Through extensive research—patiently plodding along these archival paths—Corbett has made some of those second-generation voices more richly accessible to us.

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REVIEW

VIRGINIA WOOLF AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE

by Jane de Gay. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019. 245 pages. \$105 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

RELIGION AROUND VIRGINIA WOOLF

by Stephanie Paulsell. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019. 237 pages. \$28.94 paper.

Given her presumptive if not notorious nonreligiosity (“certainly and emphatically there is no God” [Woolf 72]), the sheer number of writings on Virginia Woolf and “religion” (i.e., Christian religion) may seem incomprehensible to some. Bibliographies/works cited on the topic include references to well-known books by recognized scholars (e.g., Mark Hussey and Ann Banfield) though none seems to be on topic, and many include essays notable for their indirection, where “mysticism” (Gough); “spirituality” (Smith and Cuevas); and “theological issues” (Groover) replace the r-word. A casual JSTOR search (“Virginia Woolf and Religion”) on 15 January 2021 yielded 11,253 results; a Google

Scholar search about 72,000.¹ The bibliography in the “Virginia Woolf and Spirituality” issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* (Smith and Cuevas) is four single-spaced pages and includes more than 150 titles, many of them not directly related to either religion or spirituality. Granted, definition is hard to come by, even if we accept the common distinction that spirituality lacks the structure and “rules” considered central to organized religion. Even the titles of the works under review here suggest indirection and the none-too-firm firmament of the topic, “Christian Culture” and “Religion Around,” respectively (emphasis added).

Religion *per se* is not eschewed in writings on Woolf so much as circumscribed, not directly confronted so much as looked at from different angles. We could of course say that about any critical enterprise, particularly any critique having to do with belief (individual or communal)—and this is fair enough. Yet, what writings on Virginia Woolf and religion have in common is that every one includes an apologia for bringing up the topic at all when common wisdom tells us that Woolf was antireligious, if not a-religious; “the subject of religion” is considered, as Amy Smith and Isabel Cuevas assert, “incompatible with—if not antithetical to—Modernist values” (1). Charles Taylor believes that living in a secular age means that “religion or its absence is largely a private matter” and that life can be lived “without ever encountering God” (1). To phrase it diplomatically, finally, as Emily Griesinger says, “Virginia Woolf’s relationship to Christianity was complicated” [439]—or conflicted. In this, everyone is agreed, and untangling the concomitant issues therein raised is beyond the scope of this review—which focuses on the only full-length volumes on the subject.²

Although similarly positioned vis-à-vis conventional views about Virginia Woolf’s agnosticism/lack of faith, there are distinct approaches in the books. The first, Jane de Gay’s *Virginia Woolf and Christian Culture*, begins with Virginia Woolf, but gives equal weight (as seen through the coordinating conjunction in the title) to “Christian Culture,” and offers a complex and nuanced exegesis of Woolf and belief; de Gay is both an ordained Anglican priest and a professor of English literature as well as an important Woolf scholar. Stephanie Paulsell’s *Religion Around Virginia Woolf*, offers a different emphasis, possibly because this book is part of the “Religion Around” series and may well have been guided by a different standard.³ Aside from the titles and the relative importance given Virginia Woolf therein, a further clue to what distinguishes these two treatments of Woolf and religion may be seen in the acknowledgments—Jane de Gay names the names and repositories with which we in the Woolf community are most familiar, while acknowledging her dual vocations, as “Priest and Professor” (vii), and Stephanie Paulsell thanks colleagues and supporters in the Harvard Divinity School and students in her “seminars on Virginia Woolf and religion” (x). This is not to say that one is superior to the other (as each has stellar credentials), but rather that each book is addressed to an audience with different levels of commitment and understanding of Woolf. De Gay’s book (seven chapters and a conclusion) begins with the agnostic writings of Leslie Stephen and “Woolf’s debates with Christianity,” underscoring what the book aims to do: to show that Woolf’s “detailed knowledge and understanding of faith” provides a hitherto unexplored context for her work (2). On the other hand, Paulsell begins and ends her introduction with reference to T. S. Eliot’s “Religion and Literature” and situates Woolf in relation to what Quentin Bell calls her “aggressive agnosticism” (2) (unlike George Eliot, for example, she was raised without religion and thus “had no faith to lose” [1]). She finds

¹ A Google search on 16 July 2021 yielded 78,500 hits.

² A third volume, published at about the same time, is edited by Katherine Groover and includes Jane de Gay’s essay, “‘Some restless searcher in me’: Virginia Woolf and Contemporary Mysticism.”

³ This is volume 6 in a series that also includes *Religion Around Shakespeare*, Emily Dickinson, Billie Holiday, John Donne, and Mary Shelley and “examine[s] the religious forces surrounding cultural icons” (front matter).

that Woolf’s use of religious imagery and religious language “create[s] a literature that could do the work of religion” (8). Thus, the first is poised to be more robust and incisive, aimed at the expert—and the second offers a beginning for those without a thoroughgoing grounding and investment in Virginia Woolf.

This is not to say that Paulsell lacks expertise in her approach to Virginia Woolf; her work on the intersection of literature and religion is well known and an important essay she wrote involving Woolf and “mystical experience” is included in de Gay’s bibliography (233; see Paulsell, *Writing*). But her book, while providing a useful primer to the topic, lacks the gravitas and depth of the de Gay critique. Like the others in the Penn State University Press series, the five chapters in Paulsell’s book are useful in providing the basics in ascending order. The Introduction suggests “Something More” and each chapter formulaically builds from there: “Family Resemblances” to begin; followed by “Fresh Chapels,” “Religious Reading,” “‘Still Denser Depths of Darkness’: Virginia Woolf and God,” and, finally, “Overflowing Boundaries: Sacred Community and the Common Life,” but the chapters lack resonance and spirit. There is a limited scholarly apparatus (this too undoubtedly a requirement of the series) and footnotes are confined largely to page citations and only a couple of informational notes of a line or so. In a blurb, published on the rear cover of Paulsell’s book, Jane de Gay points to its “significance for anyone interested in the spiritual value of literature”; actually, in addition, Paulsell’s *Virginia Woolf and Religion* may also serve as an introduction to de Gay’s *Virginia Woolf and Christian Culture*.

De Gay’s critique develops ideas barely touched upon in Paulsell’s, taking as a given the spirituality of Woolf’s work and plumbing the depths for elucidation: “In addition to a belief that we live in and through one another, and to a certain extent in tension with this belief, Woolf also had an understanding of the individual soul as the essential part of a person beyond appearances which may have the capacity to survive death” (11). Notwithstanding the “tension in [Woolf’s] relationship with Christianity” (14), again and again, de Gay maps a route to seeing into Woolf herself. It is through de Gay’s exegesis of Woolf’s works that we find the balance in the title between Virginia Woolf and Christian culture, implicit in the “even-handed approach to faith and to characters’ beliefs” (16); in appreciating the “complexity of Woolf’s position, it becomes possible to identify threads of Christian ideas and concepts as intertexts within the intricate skein of her work” (17). By beginning with the family, whose members—whether religious or not—were always deeply inquisitive and unwaveringly humane, de Gay explores the “subtle ways in which the customs and attitudes of Evangelical Christianity had influenced her practice as a writer” (48). By ending the penultimate chapter, “How Should One Read the Bible?” (clearly and directly alluding to Woolf’s own “How Should one Read a Book?”) in the library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf (and the “seventeen volumes of the Bible or books about the bible, making it the book with the most duplicate copies in the entire collection” [186]), de Gay posits the “Passion Trilogy” (*Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves* [202]) en route to concluding that whatever her ambivalence, “Woolf had a sense of the sacred that *could* be accessed through Christian culture” (219) if that culture were read through a lens free of prescription allowing for “the possibility of spiritual experience in the present moment” (225).

Finally, both books begin at about the same place, moving forward from the family influences. Ending with an interrogative: “Conclusion: A New Religion?” (219), de Gay echoes the indefiniteness and richness in Woolf’s textured agnosticism and informs Woolf’s presence in the thinking of contemporary feminist theologians. Paulsell, concluding with Woolf’s rejection of the religion of “Milton’s bogey” (194) and a nod toward T. S. Eliot, offers an affirmation of the importance of community but seems less poised to explore the future beyond encouraging readers to find in Woolf “an experimental religious quality” (195). The credentials of each author reveal that the value and importance of each book is relative and depends on the audience to which it is directed. In gauging their relative contributions in exploring the signification of Virginia

Woolf and religion, we might apply a variation of Leonard Woolf's title of his final autobiographical volume: It is the journey and not only the arrival that matters.

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REVIEW

LEONARD WOOLF: BLOOMSBURY SOCIALIST

by Fred Leventhal and Peter Stansky. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 213 pages. \$45.95 cloth.

British history specialists Fred Leventhal and Peter Stansky draw on their knowledge of Bloomsbury and Leonard Woolf to give us a sharper picture of the life and times of the man and his work. Both had the privilege of meeting Woolf to learn more about his work, colleagues, and family. These meetings provided the authors with a more personal sense of Leonard, his values and his work. Leonard was a prolific writer and a tireless political activist who seemed to thrive on complexity in his public and private life. The varied interests and activities that he shared with us in print sometimes seem to overshadow him as a person. So insights about Leonard that the authors may have gained through personal contact give us a better sense of the man.

The work is part of Oxford University Press's Spiritual Lives series. Peter Stansky guides us through Leonard's personal journey from childhood to marriage to Virginia Stephen. Then Fred Leventhal takes us through Leonard's political journey into socialism and the Labour Party. This division of Leonard's life results in some overlap in both parts of the book, primarily in chapters three and six on Leonard's experience as a colonial civil servant and in chapter four and in subsequent chapters on Leonard's and Virginia's marriage and work.

Stansky and Leventhal build on the work of earlier biographies and provide a more complete picture of Leonard's life and work, especially his political activism. Duncan Wilson's *Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography* (1978) focuses on Leonard's political work. Peter Wilson's *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth-Century Idealism* (2003) builds on Duncan Wilson's work. And Victoria Glendinning's *Leonard Woolf: A Life* (2006) is a literary biography.

Jean Moorcroft Wilson points out in *Leonard Woolf, Pivot or Outsider of Bloomsbury* (1994) that Leonard was "racially rather than religiously Jewish" when he became a member of the Bloomsbury Group (9). Even so, his commitment to family and ethical values—what Leventhal calls his "moral barometer"—was part of Leonard's Jewish identity (185). After Leonard became an atheist, he found guidance at St. Paul's and at Cambridge University through classical studies, particularly of Greek culture and its tradition of democracy and freedom. Thus, Hebraism and Hellenism contributed to Leonard's "moral and spiritual evolution" (188).

Leonard's political journey, his work for world peace through international government and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and his work for a more equitable society that provided opportunities for all citizens, drew him into careers in politics and publishing.

Margaret Llewelyn Davies mentored Leonard in his work for the Women's Co-operative Guild, work that led to the publication of his articles in *The Nation* and the *New Statesman*. Consequently, Fabian Socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb recruited Leonard to write a blueprint for international government for the Labour Party. Woolf continued writing for those journals and served on the editorial boards of *The Nation* and *The Nation & Athenaeum* in the 1920s. He also joined William Robson on the editorial board of the *Political Quarterly* in the 1930s.

Woolf's Labour Party committee work served to shape party policies, especially on international issues. Through his political and journalistic work, for example, he became one of the "principal publicists" (200) for the League of Nations. Leonard and Virginia founded the Hogarth Press, a very successful independent press that published their own works and those of other writers, including the translated works of Sigmund Freud (see 200). Leonard also provided Virginia with the support she needed to be successful in her extraordinary career as a writer. Through his own writings, especially his multivolume autobiography, Woolf has provided us with invaluable insights into his own time and into the influential Bloomsbury Group. Leonard Woolf has left us with an impressive legacy through his political activism, publishing, and writings, including articles, essays, and books.

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The Woolf Salon Project Overview and Events

The Salon “Conspirators” (Ben Hagen, Shilo McGiff, Amy Smith, and Drew Shannon) began The Woolf Salon Project (<https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/home>) in July 2020 to provide regular opportunities for conversation and to foster conviviality among Woolf-interested scholars, students, and common readers during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Each Salon is accompanied by posters (<https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/poster-archive>). As the Salon Project continues into 2022, the conspirators encourage interested Woolfians to submit a proposal to host a future salon (<https://sites.google.com/view/woolfsalonproject/call-for-hosts>). Members of the International Virginia Woolf Society have access to the recorded versions.

“Time Passes” (A Reading)

10 December 2021, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#15)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

Hauntings

29 October 2021, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#14)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

The London Scene

24 September 2021, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#13)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

“...stay, this moment”

27 August 2021, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#12)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

Open Mic Woolf

30 July 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#11)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

The Post-Woolfian Era: Reception and Adaptation

21 May 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#10)
Hosts: Marie Allègre, Valérie Favre, Henrike Krause, and Suzanne Présuney

Woolf and Bloomsbury Men

30 April 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#9)
Hosts: Morgne Cramer, Mark Hussey, and Todd Avery

On Being Ill with Virginia Woolf, Sinéad Gleeson, & Others

26 March 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#8)
Host: Rita Viana

A Room of Your Own Will Not Protect You: Woolf and the Second Wave Feminists [Woolf/Lorde]

26 February 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#7)
Hosts: Erica Delsandro and Jennifer Mitchell

“A Sketch of the Past”

29 January 2021, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#6)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

Virtual Holiday Office Woolf Party

18 December 2020, 3:00–5:00pm ET [not numbered; not recorded]
Hosts: Elisa Kay Sparks and Salon Conspirators

“Solid Objects” and “A Society”

20 November 2020, 2:00–4:00pm ET (#5)
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

Planetary Woolf

23 October 2020, 12:00–2:00pm ET (#4)
Hosts: Jeanne Dubino, Catherine Hollis, Celiese Lypka, Vara Neverow, and Paulina Pająk

Kew Gardens & London Unplugged (A Pastoral)

25 September 2020, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#3) [not recorded]
Hosts: Shilo McGiff, Stefano Rozzoni, and Elisa Kay Sparks

“The Leaning Tower”

28 August 2020, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#2) [not recorded]
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

Imagining a Woolfian Criticism

23 July 2020, 3:00–5:00pm ET (#1) [not recorded]
Hosts: Salon Conspirators

(The *Society Column* continues from page 60.)

aims to promote conversation about the topic across disciplinary boundaries. We hope to explore Woolf’s engagement with specific ethical issues in her writing. These may include, but are not limited to, war and pacifism, human rights, human-animal relations, environmental ethics, bioethics, fascism, empire, patriarchy, racism, and bigotry.

Individual proposals of 250 words or panel proposals of 500 words should be sent to Virginia.Woolf@lamar.edu. The deadline for submissions is 31 January 2022. See page 4 for the full CFP or visit <https://v-woolf-society.com/acvw>.

Though I look forward to seeing many of you over Zoom in the coming months (MLA 2022, Woolf Salons, IVWS virtual events), I wish we could see each other in person in June at the Woolf conference, but I fully support Amy Smith’s decision to move the 2022 conference online. Hopefully, the conference in 2023 will be held in person! (For anyone who wants to discuss hosting a future Woolf conference, please contact Mark Hussey at markh102@gmail.com.)

Benjamin Hagen
President, IVWS



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Serving from
January 2021 through December 2023

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the Virginia Woolf Society



The Society Column

I write this column in Vermillion, SD, as 2021 draws to a close, not many days after canceling my travel plans to Washington, DC, for the 2022 MLA Annual Convention. It's hard to accept, after a few hopeful weeks or months, that we may be entering another pandemic year. I hope all of you are able to stay safe and have access to tests, vaccines, and quarantine support. On behalf of the IVWS, I extend best wishes for a Happy New Year to readers of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

Amanda Golden, Vara Neverow, and Susan Wegener kindly collaborated on the Society Column in Issue 97, hitting many IVWS-related items that would be of interest to readers of the *Miscellany*. In this column, I'll cover some of the events that took place over the year.

MLA 2021

Though the 2022 MLA Annual Convention will offer a mix of in-person and virtual sessions, MLA 2021 took place entirely online in the first weeks of 2021. As an MLA-affiliated organization, the International Virginia Woolf Society hosted one session, "Archival Woolf," organized by Mary E. Wilson (U Mass Dartmouth). Pamela Caughie (Loyola U) presented "Teaching with Woolf Online," which both introduced her audience to and elaborated pedagogical uses for the excellent *Woolf Online* resource, for which she serves as co-editor. Zöe Henry (Indiana U) followed Pamela with "Queer Persistence: Chance Encounters and Revision in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* Page Proofs," offering a fresh account of what we can learn from the traces of Woolf's practice of revision. Michelle Taylor (St. Hilda's College, Oxford U) closed out the panel with "Coterie Production as an (Anti-)Archival Practice," which took up Woolf's *Freshwater* and Quentin Bell/Jane Bussy's "Ladies and Gentleman, or, 100 Years After." Mary E. Wilson also served as respondent. To read print versions of these presentations, see *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, no. 97, Spring/Summer 2021, pp. 29-37 (<https://virginiawoolfmiscellany.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/vwm97spring-summer2021.pdf>).

Website

The IVWS launched a new WordPress site, which took over as the primary online home of the organization this year. The Toronto site, managed by Melba Cuddy-Keane and Alex Nica, will remain accessible. The new site offers new membership benefits (a Members List, access to recordings of Woolf Salons and other IVWS virtual events, and more). It also hosts a blog, for which the Society will be soliciting posts in the coming months. In addition to membership benefits and the blog, the IVWS plans a few more new website features, so be on the lookout for those in 2022! Visit the new site at <https://www.v-woolf-society.com>. If you are not a member of the IVWS and/or would like to donate to the Society, click "Join/Renew/Donate" on the homepage and follow the instructions.

2021 Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize

The winner of the 2021 Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize is Gabriela Zetehaku for the essay, "In this book I practice writing: Virginia Woolf's Diary-Keeping Practice and the Creative Process of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)." The officers were impressed with this piece and look forward to seeing it appear in a future issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*! (See the call for the 2022 Angelica Garnett Undergraduate Essay Prize on page 3 of this issue.)

November and December Events (and Salons!)

It was my pleasure to host, as President of the IVWS, Emily Kopley (Concordia/McGill) for a virtual Zoom event on 8 November 2021.

She delivered the Society's inaugural IVWS Fall Lecture, "Virginia Woolf's Poetry Library." Much of this talk was drawn from Emily's new book, *Virginia Woolf and Poetry* (Oxford UP, June 2021) and from a forthcoming essay, of the same title as this talk, in the book *Unpacking the Personal Library: The Library in Private and in Public* (ed. Jason Camlot and Jeffrey Weingarten, Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2021).

The following month, on 6 December 2021, members of the IVWS attended "Clive Bell and Virginia Woolf: A Presentation and Discussion," which featured Mark Hussey (Pace U). Mark opened the event with a presentation on Clive Bell's relationship with Virginia Woolf, which focused on Bell's role as "first critic" of the drafts of Woolf's "Melymbrosia" (an early draft of *The Voyage Out* [1915]). After this presentation, Mark discussed with attendees his recent biography of Clive Bell and his current project on Bell's letters. To learn more about Mark's research and much more, visit his website: <https://www.markhusseybooks.com/>.

The second half of 2021 also saw several exciting installments of the Woolf Salon Project:

Woolf Salon No. 12 (27 August): "... stay, this moment"

Woolf Salon No. 13 (24 September): The London Scene

Woolf Salon No. 14 (29 October): Hauntings

Woolf Salon No. 15 (10 December): "Time Passes" (A Reading)

If you were unable to make it to one (or all) of these events, IVWS members have access to all IVWS and IVWS-affiliated event recordings. Please contact me (Benjamin.Hagen@usd.edu) if you are an IVWS member and need help accessing them. To repeat, if you are not a member of the IVWS, visit v-woolf-society.com, click "Join/Renew/Donate" on the homepage, and follow the instructions.

Upcoming Conference Sessions

As covered in the previous Society Column (Issue 97), the IVWS will host two sessions at the 2022 MLA Annual Convention (6-9 January 2022; see page 3 of this issue for the details). I will share updates about these sessions in a future Society Column.

The IVWS will also host a session at the upcoming Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture after 1900 (17-19 February 2022). Many thanks to Emily Hinnov (Great Bay Community College) for organizing! The session will feature four presentations: Jamie Millen (U of Mass, Boston), "A 'Risk that Must Be Run': On Substantive Modes of Emptiness and the Creative Process in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*"; Patrick Eichholz (Virginia Military Institute), "*Jacob's Room* at 100"; Kika Kyriakakou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), "Rooms, She Sheds, Gardens and Feminism in Light of a Global Pandemic"; and Rupeng Chen (U of Edinburgh), "'What you see beside you, this man, this Louis, is only the cinders': *The Waves* as an Allegory of Coal and Capitalism." Benjamin J. Wilson (U of Louisville) will chair the panel, and Suzette Henke (U of Louisville) will serve as respondent (see page 3 of this issue).

Call for Papers for the 31st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf

Hosted by Amy Smith at Lamar University, the 31st Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf will be held virtually from the 9th to the 12th of June 2022. The theme is "Virginia Woolf and Ethics." As Amy states in her Call for Papers, the conference:

(The *Society Column* continues on page 59.)