

# The International Virginia Woolf Society Newsletter



Summer 2014

July 2014

## Virginia Woolf Writing the World: The 24th Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, Chicago, 5-8 June; Northern Illinois and Loyola Universities

### Report by Patrizia Muscogiuri.

Over 230 paper proposals were received this year by the organisers of the Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. Hosted at the beautiful Loyola campus on Lake Michigan, the event was brilliantly organised by Diana Swanson (Northern Illinois) and Pamela Caughie (Loyola), with the help of their graduate students. The location, the receptions, the food were impeccable, as was the variety of events offered to participants, which included a Bloomsbury Exhibit at the Newberry Library, a poetry reading at The Poetry Foundation, and theatrical performances inspired by Woolf's writing, such as, a production of Sarah Ruhl's *Orlando* and an enjoyable, avant-garde performance of "The Mark on the Wall". Most significantly, the many and wide-ranging papers presented this year



Diana and Pamela in a rare moment of relaxation ...

were arranged in panels that worked exceptionally well, covering an incredibly wide array of perspectives on Woolf and resulting in productive after-paper discussions.

Some highlights: Elisa Kay Sparks's presentation, "**Whose Woods These Are?: Virginia Woolf and the Primeval Forests of the Mind**", proved to be enticing also for the eyes; in the **Propaganda, Codebreakers, and Spies** session, Judith Allen's paper, "**Intersections: Surveillance, Propaganda, and Just War**", indicated how, at exactly one year from Edward Snowden's global surveillance

disclosures, Woolf's writing is relevant also in this context. This was followed by my own paper, "**(Un)known Warriors, Bloody Seas, and the Visual Politics of WWI**", and Suzanne Bellamy's "**The Code Breaker**". Presented via video and skype, this paper discussed Edith Rickert's 1927 study of modernism and Woolf, based on methods (drawn from her work as WWI cryptographer) which pioneer the Digital Humanities. This led to the first MA dissertation on Woolf (1930) by Elizabeth McKee Eddy. Papers on the topic of **Woolf and War**, Mark Hussey's keynote and the roundtable on **Woolf and Violence**, all provided food for thought, particularly in considering how peace history proves that non-violent actions have a significant impact in bringing about social change. The **Masculinity, Femininity, and War** panel, included Erin Douglas's paper, "**Femininity at War in Virginia Woolf's Three Guineas and Between the Acts and Sarah Waters' The Night Watch**", which explored the dual, problematic issue of femininity as an undercover agent of war simultaneously burdened with covering up the reality of the conflict, as well as romanticising it. In "**Modernism, Memorials, and Masculinity: Virginia Woolf and Christopher Isherwood**", Erica Del-sandro skilfully linked the concept of the Cenotaph as a means to "materialise and maintain absence" with stylistic features in Woolf's writing.

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For newsletter suggestions and submissions contact Kathryn Simpson at: [kathryn.simpson88@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.simpson88@gmail.com)

**Report continued ....**

Maria Aparecida de Oliveira's beautiful paper, "**Transamerican, Transatlantic, and Transamazonian Woolf. A Meeting of Waters: Woolf, Bishop, and the Amazon Writers**" linked Woolf's depiction of colonialism in the fictional colony of Santa Marina with views of the Amazon river by Elizabeth Bishop and its significance in the narrative of Brazilian writer Regina Melo. On the **Woolf's Feminism, Feminisms Today** panel, Anne Manuel gave one of the most interesting and, no doubt, the most hilarious presentations at this year's conference. Her "**Would Woolf Lean In? How *Three Guineas* Complicates Current Ideas on Women's Labor**" shrewdly compared Woolf's ideas about promoting women in the professions with Sheryl Sandberg's 2013 bestselling guide on women's workplace empowerment entitled *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Now, it may be needless for me to say, but, in case you are wondering, the answer to the question "Would Woolf Lean In?" is obviously: "NO"!

The **Vita, Pepita and Orlando** panel, not only brilliantly explored *Orlando* and time travel in the works of Vita Sackville-West (in Ann Marshall's paper), but also that Pepita was "the Elvis of the 19th century", as Julie Vandivere revealed. Debussy and others composed music for her, Hans Christian Andersen wrote a story for her, and she was featured in postcards, art glass, ceramic art, and let's not forget the popular Pepita fabric – which made the story of how the Sackville-Wests stole a fortune even more incredible.

On the **Philosophical Readings** panel Lisa Coleman's fascinating paper, "**The World(s) Written by 'The Mark on the Wall': Snail Shell as Magic Chrysalis**", read Woolf's work through Émile Benveniste's ideas and Katie Dyson's "**Modernist Intimacy: Ethical Encounters in Mrs. Dalloway**", drew on Levinas to consider the political-ethical encounter as an ethical model in recognising the humanity of the other. Josh Pfleegor's paper, "**Dialectical Synthesis of Orlando**" brilliantly traced Orlando's progression from reader to writer and from reiterator to creator of ideas.

Tuzyline Allan's keynote "**The Voyage In, Out, and Beyond: Virginia Woolf After Postcolonialism**" discussed the absence of non-white main characters in Woolf's writing at a time when Bloomsbury included many ethnic groups. On the **Life Writing** panel, Gill Lowe opened the session magnificently with her "**I am fast locked up': Virginia Woolf's 1897 Journal as Threshold Text**" exploring the duality of locks, doors and Janus, God of Beginnings, in relation to Miss Jan as persona in Virginia's journal of 1897 (*A Passionate Apprentice*). Alice Lowe's "**Woolf as Memoirist: 'I am made and remade continually'**" closed the session perfectly, emphasizing Woolf's fluid and ever-changing approach to life writing, explored in the interconnections of memory, writing, identity and aesthetics in Woolf's several versions of autobiographical texts.

Receptions, banquets and the witty, poignant, amusing and solemn delights provided by The Woolf Players confirmed this as a superb conference. Congratulations to all!

<b>Leonard Woolf Society Annual Meeting (Symposium), 24 May 2014, Brighton UK.</b>
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In the centenary year of the 1914 war, the main theme of the Symposium was:

**Leonard Woolf, League of Nations and Peace Between the Wars**

Chair: Suren Paul

Principal Speaker: Dr. Peter Wilson (London School of Economics and Political Science), author of *International Theory of Leonard Woolf: a Study in Twentieth Century Idealism*

Jane Russell and Ruth Alloun, "Political Vision of Leonard Woolf from innocent imperialist to realist internationalist"

Shihan de Silva and Hemal Jayasuriya, "*The Village in the Jungle* - Cultural Confluence and Conflict"

Anne Byrne, "Writing to Nancy, Writing to Leonard 1943-1968, Correspondence between Nancy Nolan and Leonard Woolf - 1943 and 1968".

***Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900, February 2014***

Report on The International Virginia Woolf Society panel by chair, **Lauren Short**.

Kristina Reardon from the University of Connecticut presented first on “The Body of Word and Image in ‘Kew Gardens.’” The presentation relied on textual and paratextual evidence to describe Reardon’s incorporation of word/image theory to describe the Modernist movement of “art as text; art as body; and text as sense.” She described Woolf and Bell’s synesthetic process of bookmaking, producing woodcuts, and printing the woodcuts onto marbled papers for early versions of Woolf’s *Kew Gardens*. Reardon proposed that “the body of the book is flaunted” in Woolf’s *Kew Gardens*, the first publication that Woolf and Bell collaborated on to create a decorative manuscript. Proposing that Woolf’s publications are “body-like” entities, its artistic presentation can act as a fetishistic pleasure for its reader/viewer.

Ilya Nokhrin followed with an enthusiastic presentation of “Experiments with Virginia Woolf’s ‘Own Voice’: Narrative Style in the Manuscripts of *Night and Day*.” Nokhrin discussed a lack of transcription and attention to the somewhat incomplete manuscript drafts of Woolf’s *Night and Day*, which he described as “more Modernist than previously imagined.” The speaker explored Woolf’s shifting authorial intentions between drafts in writing, typing, and editing, as well as changes in content, while also revealing that Woolf’s working title for *Night and Day* was “Dreams and Realities.”

Since Audrey M. Lehr of Kent State University was unable to present her paper on “Disability Aesthetics and ‘The Human Apparatus’ in *To the Lighthouse*,” the audience lightheartedly speculated as to what the presentation would have entailed. A lively conversation on Woolf’s work, as well as suggestions for further research, occurred between the audience and panelists. One suggestion was made for both panelists to consider Randi Saloman’s collection on *Virginia Woolf’s Essayism* and a more personal recommendation to Mr. Nokhrin was made on Brian Richardson’s work on the “implied author.”

**“To Pin Down that Moment with Date and Season”, 15<sup>th</sup> Virginia Woolf Annual Birthday Lecture given by Professor Dame Hermione Lee**

Delivered on what would have been Woolf’s 132nd birthday, Hermione Lee astutely elucidated Woolf’s preoccupation, even obsession, with the marking of specific dates in her writing. Woolf’s novels show a preoccupation with the single day—being set on or framed by, individual days. Certain dates recur in her personal writings: those of the deaths of family and friends (notably her mother, Stella, Thoby, Katherine Mansfield, Jacques Raverat, Julian Bell and Roger Fry); anniversaries (Stella’s engagement, her own marriage and that of Vanessa to Clive Bell); and birthdays (of Leslie Stephen and Thoby, and her own). Lee notes that Woolf sometimes gets the dates wrong, even the most poignant of dates, that of her mother’s death—5th May 1895—which marked “the day her childhood ended and her obsession with her dead mother began.” Drawing on Bryony Randall’s ideas about time and the everyday (in *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*), Lee suggests that Woolf’s marking of time acts as a process of accounting, of adding up or subtracting years from the total sum of life. References to time also give scope to contemplate and calculate her own and Leonard’s longevity and what they could achieve. Marking time also assesses the impact on her own life should others have lived, notably her father and Thoby, and her diary imagines an older self reading the younger. Lee argues that Woolf’s desire “to pin down” certain moments is a means of remembering and making sense of the past, of dealing with aging and the inevitability of death, but also indicates a “complicated paradox at work inside Woolf’s marking of time” which is a “refusing to be bound down by the passage of time”, and a desire to live life and to celebrate it in the present moment.

Kathryn Simpson, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

***The 16<sup>th</sup> Virginia Woolf Annual Birthday Lecture*** will be given by Alexandra Harris (University of Liverpool). Title TBC.

When and where: Saturday, 14th January 2015 at 2pm; Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU.

To book tickets contact the Institute of English Studies website ([www.ies.sas.ac.uk](http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk)) or book using the printed flyer with the September 2014 *Virginia Woolf Bulletin*. For further details, please contact Lindsay Martin on 020 8245 3580 or [lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk)

**Upcoming Events****MLA 2015, Vancouver, 8-11 January****The International Virginia Woolf Society panel:**

“Virginia Woolf and Negotiating Memory”, Presider Leslie Kathleen Hankins

“(Re)Locating Laura: Disability and Retrospection in Memoirs from Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen,” Courtney Andree (Washington University).

“Fragments of Ritual and Memory: the Constructs of Woolf’s *Between the Acts*,” Joel Hawkes (Thompson Rivers University)

“Late Modernist Woolf and *Literature as Collective Memory in 'Anon,' 'The Reader,' and Between the Acts*,” Laurel Harris (Rider University)

“Organic Memory and Biographical Form in Woolf’s *Flush*,” Alexander N. Moffett (Providence College).

**Additional Panels: “Things in Woolf”**

“Writing in Absentia: Woolf and the Language of Things,” Michelle Ty (University of California, Berkley)

“The Thing in the Mirror: Woolf on the Self as Object,” Celia Marshik (Stony Brook University)

“Imperial Objects in *The Waves*,” Jane Garrity (University of Colorado, Boulder)

“**Bloomsbury, Politics and the Essay**” (Pending MLA Selection Process)

“Some Rickety and Ramshackle Fabric: Political Spectacles and Performative Essays in the Work of Virginia and Leonard Woolf,” Jeffrey Brown (Ursinus College)

“Critically Modern: Dialectics of Dissent in the Essays of Virginia Woolf and Arundhati Roy,” Urvashi Vashist (University College London)

“The Face on the Other Side of the Page: Imagining Justice with Woolf, Césaire and Ngūgĩ,” Mara de Gennaro (Independent Scholar)

**MSA 15, Confluence & Division, November 6-9, 2014****Keynote Speakers**  
are:

Rachel Blau DuPlessis

Meta DuEwa Jones

David Trotter

Colin MacCabe

Laura Marcus

The Modernist Studies Association conference will be hosted by Duquesne University and co-sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh. The organizers are pleased to invite modernist scholars to the city of Pittsburgh, about which Marianne Moore observed:

*It is a far cry from the 'queen of jewels'  
and the beau with the muff,  
from the gilt coach shaped like a perfume bottle,  
to the conjunction of the Monongahela and the  
Allegheny,  
and the scholastic philosophy of the wilderness  
to combat which one must stand outside and laugh  
since to go in is to be lost.*

The city offers a rich site to contemplate the multifaceted impact of the modernist era and the forces of modernity.

***Calls for Papers*****Virginia Woolf and Her Female Contemporaries: the 25th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, Bloomsburg University, June 4-7 2015*****Virginia Woolf Miscellany no. 87*****Special Topic: 1930s Woolf**

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

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

Possible themes include:

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

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

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

Email proposal by attachment in word to:

Woolf2015@bloomu.edu

Deadline for proposals is January 24, 2015.

The literature of the 1930s is commonly characterized as anti-modernist because of the prevalence of documentary realism, political purpose, and autobiographically-inflected fiction. Moreover, the canonical literature of the decade is almost entirely authored by privileged young men, a phenomenon explored by Virginia Woolf in "The Leaning Tower." Interestingly, however, the 1930s bears witness to Woolf's most daring and most commercially successful novels, *The Waves* and *The Years* respectively. With this context in mind: how does the modernist — and feminist — Woolf align with the common understanding of the decade's literary figures and their production? And, by extension, does — and if so, how? — Woolf's 1930s writing shed new light on a decade of literature otherwise dominated by the Auden and Brideshead Generations?

This issue of *VWM* seeks contributions that explore Woolf's relationship to the canonical literature of the 1930s, such as but not limited to: Auden's poetry, Isherwood's Berlin fiction, Auden's and Isherwood's plays, Spender's commentary, and Waugh's comedic novels. Equally, this issue also seeks contributions examining resonances among Woolf's 1930s writing and non-canonical literature of the decade, especially literature written by women.

In addition, this issue encourages responses to the following questions: How does Woolf scholarship, if at all, engage with the critical study of 1930s literature? How does Woolf's modernism disrupt or complement the critical understanding of 1930s literature? What can Woolf's late fiction and essays reveal about the 1930s and its literature that the traditional scholarly narrative conceals or overlooks?

Send submissions of no more than 2500 words to:

Erica Gene Delsandro [ericadelsandro@gmail.com](mailto:ericadelsandro@gmail.com)

Deadline for submission:

August 1, 2014

**Other news****“Virginia Woolf: Art, Life and Vision,” National Portrait Gallery, London**

Curated by Bloomsbury biographer Frances Spalding, a major new exhibition, *Virginia Woolf: Art, Life and Vision*, will feature more than 100 Virginia Woolf-related items, including:

- portraits of Woolf by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Roger Fry
- photographs by Beresford, Man Ray, and Beck and McGregor
- intimate images of family, friends and literary peers
- drawings
- letters (including Woolf's suicide letter to Vanessa Bell)
- diary extracts
- Hogarth Press first editions

The exhibition will trace Woolf's early life, literary interests and achievements; her development as a novelist, intellectual, campaigner and public figure; her fascination with London, awareness of modernity, and her feminist and political views. Tickets are £7, with some concessions available. Book by phone on 020 7766 7343 or [online](#). Or go to: National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE. For more information, see the [NPG website](#). For more information and/or to book please contact Lindsay Martin at [Lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk](mailto:Lindsay@lindsaycmartin.co.uk).

For Woolf-related lectures and workshops at the NPG go to <http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/virginiawoolf/events.php>

**Sighting Woolf ....**

**“Life in Squares”** - a three-part serial about the Bloomsbury group that dramatises the exceptionally close, often fraught relationship of sisters Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, and Vanessa's enduring, sexually complicated alliance with gay artist Duncan Grant. To be shown on BBC2. The drama will shoot this summer on location in London and in East Sussex. For further information, go to ? <http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/virginiawoolf/events.php>.

**“Dalloway” at the Edinburgh Fringe.**

31st July, 1st-11th, 13th-25th August 2014

Dyad Productions present “Dalloway”. Written and directed by Elton Townend Jones (*The Unremarkable Death of Marilyn Monroe*). Performed by Rebecca Vaughan (*Female Gothic, I, Elizabeth, Austen's Women*).

1923: The War is over. While Clarissa Dalloway prepares a party in Westminster, Septimus Smith is diagnosed with shell shock, and their memories and dreams magically intertwine with those of 15 other disparate souls this hot blue day in June. Conjuring the hopes and regrets of middle and upper class London, this adaptation of Virginia Woolf's celebrated map of hearts, minds and memories offers a compellingly feminine response to the aftermath of the First World War.

See <https://www.edfringe.com/whats-on/theatre/dalloway>

**SAINTS!**

A musical inspired by Gertrude Stein (and Jean Mills' work on Stein) won best musical last year at NY Fringe was on at the Abron Arts Center in NYC, June 2014.

One of Gertrude Stein's artistic projects was to write the sound of American language. Theater Plastique advances this idea, setting Stein's 'saints' librettos to distinctly American genres of music. Featuring rap, country, rock n' roll, holierin', gospel, Shaker, bounce, jazz, and bluegrass, Gertrude Stein SAINTS! is an award-winning pop-opera that celebrates what it is to be American and has aptly been called a 'Theater of Joy.'



**Sightings ...****Designing the Everyday: from Bloomsbury and Ravilious to the Present Day, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne UK****17 May - 31 August 2014 (free)**

In 1934, Harrods hosted an exhibition called *Modern Art for the Table* featuring some of the greatest names of British art including Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, Laura Knight and Duncan Grant. Yet the display was not of their paintings but tea services, vases and wine glasses.

Towner celebrates the anniversary of this exhibition with a display of original objects from the Harrods exhibition, an examination of Ravilious at Wedgwood and a wider survey of artists working in British industry during the 20th century. The exhibition draws from the Towner's extensive collection with rarely seen loans from private and public collections. *Designing the Everyday* explores the work of the Omega Workshop, Shell and Ascher studios as well as the contemporary designs for the home by Angie Lewin, Mark Hearld and the company St. Jude's.

<http://www.townereastbourne.org.uk/exhibition/designing-the-everyday-from-bloomsbury-and-ravilious-to-the-present-day/>

**“Woolf Works,” Royal Opera House, London, 11th-26th May, 2015**

For his new abstract work Wayne McGregor draws on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and other works, exploring themes crucial to this great British writer. Multi-award-winning choreographer Wayne McGregor has long been at the cutting edge of choreography. He has won widespread acclaim for collaborative works that often extend far beyond the familiar boundaries of ballet. For his new ballet – his first full-length work for The Royal Ballet – McGregor draws on Virginia Woolf's epochal novel *Mrs Dalloway* and the writer's other works. McGregor and his designers create a hauntingly abstract world that finds parallels between Clarissa Dalloway's depression and repressed sexuality and Woolf's own life.

Acclaimed British composer Max Richter (*Infra* and *Sum*) creates a specially-commissioned score that incorporates electronic and live music.

<http://www.roh.org.uk/productions/woolf-works-by-wayne-mcgregor>

**How to become a member of the IVWS or updating membership:**

The easiest way to accomplish either of these functions is to go online to the IVWS homepage: [<http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/>]. Click on “How to Join” and you will get access to one of two options for payment via PayPal or check. When you click on the appropriate PayPal button, you should be directed to the PayPal site, which gives simple and clear instructions for making an online credit card payment. If you wish to pay by personal check or cash, then you can download a copy of the membership form (a .pdf file) from the same webpage. This form has on it the mailing address to which you can send your dues by regular mail.

**To access the members list:**

As a member of IVWS, you have as a benefit a list of other current members. This list is available from the IVWS homepage, by clicking on the “Member List” button: [<http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/>]. It is password protected—this password changes semi-annually and will be sent to you with your paid membership. It can also be obtained, should you lose it, if you send by e-mail a request to the IVWS Treasurer/Secretary, Jeanne Dubino, [dubinoja@appstate.edu](mailto:dubinoja@appstate.edu). You may also receive a hard copy by mail if you request it in writing from the IVWS Treasurer/Secretary.

**Need to Know Info: Membership with The International Virginia Woolf Society**

The *Three Guineas Reading Notebooks* website, which contains digital images of the three Monks House volumes, is now available to current members of the IVWS, which is funding the website. The website, originally launched by Merri Pawlowski at California State University-California, has been relocated to Southern Connecticut State University. Current IVWS members who are interested in accessing the Reading Notebooks materials should contact Vara Neverow <[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)> to request an individual account. Using the site for teaching purposes requires a separate subscription fee. Institutional access is also available for a separate subscription fee. Contact Vara Neverow <[neverowv1@southernct.edu](mailto:neverowv1@southernct.edu)> for any further information you may need.