

VIRGINIA WOOLF WITH AND WITHOUT STATE FEMINISM

by *Catherine Sandbach-Dahlström*

I

I have been asked to speak on the European panel. Sitting down to write the paper that you—dear reader—may now be reading. I am struck both by how appropriate and how strange this is. It is appropriate because I speak from a supranational or perhaps multinational position about a writer who rejected simple patriotism or nationhood for women. It is strange because British citizen that I am, I have been asked to speak not on the British panel but on the European — and I am to speak out of Scandinavia. This is strange since Britain has long belonged formally to Europe whereas Sweden where I now live has only recently and somewhat unhappily been incorporated into the Union. Norway, of course, also a part of Scandinavia but rich in oil, remains apart.

My subject is Woolf's position as a political writer in Scandinavia at the end of the nineties, and I intend to approach the topic through a collage of past and present, private and general, national and transnational and to do so in three sections. The first one is indulgently autobiographical; the second approaches reconstructions of Woolf inside and outside the academy, primarily in Sweden; and the third reads one of Woolf's prophetic statements against the background of post-welfare state Sweden. My purpose throughout is to stress the continuing importance for me, and I hope for others, of Woolf's political writings.

I would like to start in a manner reminiscent of the early years of feminist confessional to remind us that Woolf scholars are seldom neutral at heart or even dispassionate.

Some time around the end of the nineteen seventies I became involved—almost by accident and much to my surprise—in academic feminist politics. Why should this have been a surprise? I boast a respectable feminist genealogy with both my grandmothers suffragists and with a mother who questioned almost all authorities, yet I had somehow failed to identify myself with feminist politics or with the continued lack of privilege in other women in my environment.

In the years following my emigration to Sweden in 1963, I had been engrossed by the business of getting by: coping with a series of insecure teaching positions in the Swedish High School, bringing up a young family and making the adjustments any immigrant must make to the demands of another culture. Ironically enough, I had experienced my condition as freedom, for in the late sixties and early seventies most women in Sweden were still homemakers when their children were young, which was a state of affairs endorsed by public ideology and tax policies. There was, for instance, a married man's allowance. Always determined to be self-supporting, come what may, I had consequently convinced myself that my 3/4-time employment represented liberation. Admittedly, most of my rather modest salary was spent on childminders, my well-paid businessman husband was

often away from home, thus placing most of the domestic burden on my shoulders, and I suffered from weekly migraines and bouts of depression. Nonetheless, my life appeared more demanding, true, but also more expansive, than the lives of the women around me in our suburb. When I did break away, it was, I believed, only from the dead end of school teaching and from the elementary language exercises which threatened my native tongue. Entering the graduate program at Stockholm University was a move designed, I thought, primarily to save my mind, not to redirect my private or social life.

No sooner had I entered the program than I was swamped with what at the time seemed like privileges: teaching duties, a post as the Chair's personal assistant. My native tongue, now with its nuances and inter-texts reactivated, was an advantage in my career; my gender affiliation was apparently no hindrance. At this moment in time I attended, through curiosity or to satisfy an unrecognized need, a protest meeting staged by women faculty and post-graduates from many parts of the University. They were asking for equal treatment, promotion and the incorporation of the woman's perspective into the curriculum. Before I knew it, I had joined a pressure group, maintaining to those who would listen that I was not underprivileged and that my gesture implied solidarity with others — no more.

My new friends in the movement had all read *A Room of One's Own*. I had not. Of course, this gap might be attributed to the repressions sketched above but my resistance was more distinctly personal and culture-based than that. The truth was that on several occasions I had started to read *A Room* and then stopped round about page 7 in the Hogarth edition: the text is familiar:

— but here I was actually at the door which leads into the library itself. I must have opened it, for instantly there issued, like a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings, a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman, who regretted in a low voice as he waved me back that ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction.

Before me on the printed page my father—deprecating, silvery, kindly, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, guardian with others of the secrets and wonders of the Wren library into which as a child, semi-concealed in the shadow of his gown I had sometimes been allowed to peep. No wonder I stopped here: with the normalities of my childhood suddenly defamiliarized before my eyes. Sudden memories of the times when, accompanying my father, I *did* walk upon the grass and not the gravel and the other times, when alone, with my mother or a Scandinavian au-pair girl, I did not.

As we all know, Woolf's alienation from the mysteries of Oxbridge was both metaphorical and literal; *she* was denied a university education. In my case, in contrast, the learned patriarchy had done its best to incorporate me intellectually — however unsuccessfully. Other memories follow of later phases; the private lessons in how to respect the bound volume at the hands of that ultimate guardian

of library mysteries, the Cambridge University Librarian, the schooling designed to convert girls into honorary men, the Oxford history course with its reiteration of the conflicts armed—and otherwise—of the past. It took me years to realize that my unwillingness to learn at Oxford was not simply a personal weakness but also a response to the kind of knowledge imparted, and a symptom of an ongoing rejection of many of the values inculcated by school and family. With hindsight it is clear that my rejection of the world I grew up in, first my refusal of a civil service career and later the choice of a partner from the commercial world instead of the promising classical scholar pressed upon me by family friends, came with early signs that I was adopting an Outsider status without—need I say—understanding what I was doing.

In Sweden—despite a period when I feverishly sought assimilation—my role as an Outsider was, of course, a given not a choice, though I needed years to acknowledge and later to mourn and finally to embrace its inevitability. It is understandable, then, that my rediscovery of Woolf coincided with the new awareness of my own outsider situation, as a woman, as a feminist and as an immigrant that developed as I made my way through Swedish academia. It is thus hardly surprising that my research interest has been directed mostly to Woolf's essays where the problems of being an Outsider in relation to the academic world and other establishment structures are most extensively explored. Nor is it surprising that I return to *Three Guineas* more than any other text. For it is here, of course, that outsider status both as choice and inevitability is explored through the dilemma of the educated man's daughter—her containment within patriarchy and her alienation from it. For me, as a relatively successful academic, moreover, *Three Guineas* necessarily highlights the paradox we live, namely that only by colluding with the establishment can we gain the independence necessary for autonomous and dispassionate thought. The letter writer's dreams of a rich feminine education, or a position of genuine influence in public life, or even of co-operation between men and women under the banner of Justice, Equality and Liberty founders in the face of the brutal realities of political and social power which women must nonetheless negotiate.

II

In being concerned with political Woolf, I remain in tune with the climate of the women's movement I joined at the end of the seventies. My colleagues had not only read *A Room of One's Own* but, appropriately enough, as children of 1968 they knew Woolf biographically as the socialist, the teacher at Morley College. For them *A Room*, available in Jane Lundblad's 1958 translation, represented their aspirations—their hopes for female spaces and for a future when, to evoke Woolf, Olivia and Chloe did not merely share a laboratory but also had control over the kind of research conducted there. For our generation, this construction of Woolf remains the most central, but for the Common Reader and for a new generation of students there has been a shift, as I shall demonstrate below, towards a depoliticized figuration of the writer.

As my friends have begun to realize their aspirations and to move into positions of academic power they have taken an optimistic understanding of Woolf's feminist politics with them. In the eighties several of these feminist scholars were involved in the "women's section" of a Government investigation into the power structures at work in Swedish society. In the last essay of their special report a political scientist, Maud Eduards, concludes her arguments for the importance of women's collective agency by quoting the final paragraph of *A Room of One's Own*:

For my belief is that if we live another century or so—I am talking of the common life which is the real life and not of the little separate lives that we live as individuals—and have five hundred a year each of us and rooms of our own; if we have the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think; if we escape a little from the common sitting-room and see human beings not always in their relation to each other but in relation to reality; and the sky, too, and the trees or whatever it may be in themselves; if we look past Milton's bogey, for no human being should shut out our view, if we face the fact, for it is a fact, that there is no arm to cling to but that we go alone and that our relation is to the world of reality and not only to the world of men and women, then the opportunity will come . . . (264-65)

For Eduards, who is interested in a future for women as subjects and citizens, the most important concepts here are the common life and freedom itself. For a number of other reasons, however, much in this quote has resonances in the Swedish situation. In the first place, the State structure comprises both the commonality of corporatism and the individualism of representative democracy. Secondly, it has been generally recognized that there can be no gender equality which is not materially based in an income of one's own. Thirdly, freedom of speech, as well as access by the public to government and civil service documents are seen as cornerstones of the Swedish way of life. Finally, the sense of an ultimate reality lodged in the world of nature—in the sky, in the trees—appeals to a people whose sense of themselves as individuals and as members of a nation state is intimately tied to their natural environment.

If Woolf's text appeals both directly to general traits in Swedish culture and to individuals who were involved in political activism in the 1970s, it has also been an important subtext for the women scholars who at much the same time wished to reinscribe women's writing in the national culture. In the departments of literature women's writing has generally been underrepresented although Swedish literature boasts a number of prominent women writers whose work is well known internationally—to name a few, Frederika Bremer (best known in the English speaking world for her travel books), Selma Lagerlöf (author of *Nils Holgerssons Wonderful Journey*) and, in our time, that leading writer of children's books and creator of Pippi Longstocking, Astrid Lindren. When women scholars have attempted to redress the balance Woolf's commentary on women and writing has

provided an important base for their work. For instance, at the beginning of a major project initiated in the late seventies and designed to map the maternal history of the novel in Sweden, Birgitta Holm turned for her controlling idea to *A Room of One's Own*. Her study is a response to Woolf's critique of the masculine assumption that "football and sport are 'important' and that the worship of fashion and the buying of clothes 'trivial,' or that a novel dealing with war is 'important' whereas a novel describing women's feelings is not."¹ And her text circles round the image of the common sitting room to posit an essential connection between the sitting room and the novel as genre. Indeed her analysis of Frederika Bremer's novels as products of the domestic space is a reenactment both of that perspective with its inevitable constrictions, and also of the imperative generated there to explore the nuances of the human psyche.

Other attempts to valorize the domestic space of the women novelists have since been published in the face of an intellectual tradition which applauds the abstract at the expense of the concrete, praises "continental" literature as opposed to that of the Anglo Saxons and often validates aesthetic sophistication rather than readerly pleasure.² The image of "the angel in the house" has, for instance, been evoked to explain the relation of women to writing in the early years of this century.³ More interestingly perhaps, another leading literary scholar, Ebba Witt Brattström, in studying the work of Moa Martinsson in relation to writing and desire in the thirties, has drawn a parallel between the fate of modernist women writers in Sweden and the rivalry between prominent male and female writers — such as Eliot and Woolf, or Pound and HD (184). In Sweden the literary histories have resolved this rivalry at the expense of the female writers, and they are in this respect, of course, analogous with many a critical work on English High Modernism. It is this imbalance that Swedish critics with Woolf as a subaltern have attempted to redress.

The Woolf of feminist resistance has thus been vital for Swedish academic criticism. This figure, however, has coexisted in society at large with a relatively uncritically represented Queen of Bloomsbury. Quentin Bell's biography has been translated without comment and with his introductory refusal to attempt a literary critique intact. The other translated book on Woolf is Frances Spalding's coffee table life.⁴ This seems to suggest that for a cultivated reading public, the Swedish equivalent of the chattering classes in the United Kingdom, Woolf's life is deemed of greater interest than her work. This would, however, hardly be a fair estimate of the situation. Since the vast majority of the Swedish literati are in command of English, Woolf criticism is accessible to them; and for the Common Reader her works are available in translation.⁵ Critical studies of Woolf and such important products as Andrew McNeillie's edition of her essays have often been reviewed on the cultural pages of the national newspapers and libraries regularly buy the latest scholarly works.

On the other hand, this awareness of Woolf's importance amongst common readers has not been matched, historically speaking, by an equivalent recognition in the academy. Here Woolf studies have mirrored international trends, starting with an approach inspired by many British critics' misjudgments. In the 1970s, for instance, Swedish undergraduates studying English literary history were reading

either Anthony Burgess's introduction, where Woolf is marked down as hard to classify and less important a novelist than Jane Austen, or Walter Allen's *Tradition and Dream*, where they learnt that Woolf's novels

are distinguished by a discriminating intelligence and an acute self-consciousness which together weave a close sieve through which, no doubt, much of the common experience of life will not pass. . . . Nor are the moments of revelation and illumination always illuminative in any real sense. Sometimes they don't amount to much more than a series of short, sharp feminine gasps of ecstasy, an impression intensified by Virginia Woolf's use of the semi-colon where the comma is ordinarily used. (42)⁶

Later Swedish academics responded in the wake of American feminist interest—as did scholars in the United Kingdom—to the explosion of Woolf studies.⁷ An indication that a change was in progress, and that the earlier kind of patronizing and evaluative style of criticism was no longer acceptable, was the publication of Adrian Velicu's Uppsala dissertation, *Unifying Strategies in Virginia Woolf's Experimental Fiction*, in 1985. This monograph, which acknowledged the extent and richness of Woolf studies, aimed—if not always entirely successfully—to pay serious attention to her aesthetics. In the same year my own department introduced *To the Lighthouse* into one of the most popular undergraduate optional courses.

The old image of the feminine aesthete has thus given way to a recognition of Woolf's position in the canon of twentieth-century writing. Whereas Woolf was still regarded as a special interest author in the early eighties, her novels—particularly *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*—are now recognized as significant contributions to the modernist canon and are guaranteed a place on the reading lists.⁸ Another sign of the times is that in Norway new translations of her novels complete with scholarly introductions are being published.

This growing interest in Woolf's major fiction should be welcomed, of course. There are, however, aspects of this new interest that can disturb '60s survivors such as myself. More troubling than the propagation of a Bloomsbury myth in coffee table culture is the evident shift amongst readers away from the old interest in a political Woolf towards an emphasis upon what is seen as an apolitical and transcendent aesthetic. Recently, for instance, Sally Potter's film version of *Orlando* has been many students' passport to Woolf. However, in turning to the text of *Orlando* they pay little attention to the significance of transsexuality or cross dressing. Instead, in accordance with present trends in critical practice, they read the novel as being primarily concerned with the philosophical issues of time and identity. While understandable as a post-feminist rejection of seemingly naive identity politics, and indeed a valid response to the recognition in *Orlando* that gender identity belongs to the imaginary rather than the real, this approach leads to a neglect of the more obvious problems of gender, society and literary politics reenacted in the novel.

Woolf's actuality and concurrent depoliticization in Scandinavia today is also interestingly demonstrated by the film about her in *The Women of Power* series.⁹ The script is evidently a product of the 1990s which reconstructs Woolf's radicalism in primarily personal and aesthetic terms through a directed selection of material. The film highlights her relation to her Victorian past, her fictional experimentation, her love affair with Vita Sackville-West and her pacifism. There is some acknowledgment of the Woolfs' political engagement by mention of Leonard's work with the League of Nations, but their socialism, their life-long affiliation to the Labor party, is not mentioned. Moreover, even if *Three Guineas* is presented as Virginia's most radical book, it is not made clear how that radicalism is expressed except insofar as it mirrors the natural fear of a Jewish family facing the possibility of Hitlerism in Britain. Some of the choices made by the film makers are understandable in the light of a foreign audience's problems in understanding the complex patterns of class and class snobbery that Woolf explores in various ways in her writing.¹⁰ Virginia Woolf's refusal to deny the difficulties of empathy erected by class difference is indigestible in cultures where class difference has often been denied or ignored. It is more troubling for international feminism that the pervasive anti-masculinism present in so much of Woolf's writing which reaches its culmination in *Three Guineas* is not clarified. As Quentin Bell is made the spokesman for Bloomsbury, Woolf's critical stance in relation to the Apostles and other representatives of the male elite is glossed over. There is no shadow over Leonard Woolf or the Woolf marriage except the suspicion voiced by Angelica Garnett that the absolute truthfulness upon which the relationship was officially based may have had its shadier moments.

For, me as a feminist scholar, another serious problem posed by the film is its neglect of Woolf's role in the history of letters, and its failure to address the issue of her education. The script reproduces Woolf and Strachey's sometimes prejudiced views of a restrictive Victorian past; and since these prejudices closely correspond to popular mis/conceptions, Woolf's diabolization of Leslie Stephen is also accepted more or less without question. Her enormous intellectual debt to her father and to her literary heritage is disregarded. In terms of the writing of literary history—even for a general audience—the omission is serious, since playing down her intellectual power once again contains Woolf within the personal and the affective. It also effectually conceals a real problem in the reception of Woolf's work outside the English speaking world, namely the readers' limited knowledge of contemporary Anglo-Saxon culture. My teaching experience tells me, for example, that it is Woolf's learning—and the breadth of allusion, the intertextuality of her texts—that is one of the greatest difficulties encountered by young students meeting her work for the first time. This difficulty also explains the drift towards the philosophical and mythopoetic readings of Woolf which they tend to favor.

III

In the light of my concern that an important aspect of Woolf's work may be in danger of concealment in Scandinavia, I should like in this third section to turn once again to *A Room of One's Own*. Catherine Smith has suggested that *Three Guineas* may be read in the tradition of women's prophetic writing (225-41). The

same can, I believe, be argued of *A Room of One's Own* with its foreshadowing of times when women's situation will have changed radically, when Chloe will be a working mother and will put her experiments on the shelf and go home to her children. Read as a prophetic text, one of its moments of foreshadowing may be tellingly related to contemporary trends in Scandinavia. When the narrator returns home from her excursion to the British Museum, she pauses to meditate on the question of women's place in the social body. "In a hundred years," she reflects,

women will have ceased to be the protected sex. Logically they will take their part in all the activities and exertions that were once denied them. The nursemaid will heave coal. The shopwoman will drive an engine. All assumptions founded on the facts observed when women were the protected sex will have disappeared -- as, for example . . . that women and clergymen and gardeners live longer than other people. Remove that protection, expose them to the same exertions and activities, make them soldiers and sailors and engine-drivers and dock laborers, and will not women die off so much younger, so much quicker than men, that one will say, "I saw a woman today" as one used to say, "I saw an aeroplane" (41-42).

The narrator's remark that the loss of protection will actually endanger woman as a species offers tantalizing general problems of interpretation. Should it be taken as a Utopian image of a gender-free society where "anything may happen"? or should the threat of increased mortality in women be taken seriously? Is the narrator's fear given us as an ironic comment directed at women who argued that emancipation would be detrimental to women's health, or does it express a genuine fear at the risks involved in abandoning the orderly domestic world for good? These questions are unanswerable, although I believe that Woolf's premonitions are often more dystopic than utopian.¹¹ Read dystopically in the Scandinavian context, this moment of foresight is especially interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it points to policies which have been initiated and to some extent—though not entirely satisfactorily—implemented. Secondly, it suggests a new condition for women which may be facing us at this very moment.

In the spirit of Woolf's prophecy, then, Government policies have often aimed to encourage the shopwoman to become an engine driver: retraining programs designed to provide women with traditional male skills have been initiated, and there has been some affirmative action for men wishing to enter all female professions such as nursery teaching. Despite these attempts to produce a literal balance, the Swedish labor market has remained sex-segregated to a very considerable degree.¹² There have indeed been changes in the structure of the labor market with women entering professions previously dominated by men such as high school teaching or positions in the public legal system. But the entry of women into these professions has also resulted in the loss of status and pay that usually accompany feminization. Thus, appropriately enough in a country where the state is represented metaphorically as the peoples' home, civic society reproduces

domestic structures; not only have women failed to become engine drivers or dock-laborers to any extent, but they have in effect extended reproductive labor into public life by working as civil servants, teachers, social workers, librarians, nurses and other careworkers. Even if at a personal level women have gained far greater independence as wage earners and tax payers in their own right, womanhood has continued to be a protected occupation despite the large-scale exodus from the private house. Insofar as women are now supported by public finances, both through their wages and through other forms of state benefit, such as child allowances, the protection of the individual patriarch has in effect been replaced by the protection of the patriarchal state.¹³ This connection has been particularly evident in the generous allowance for parental leave which—although theoretically available to both parents—is primarily used by mothers and in the fact that the state guarantees maintenance payments to those granted the custody of children—once again, usually the mothers.

However, at this moment, the protection offered women by the patriarchal state in the Scandinavian countries is weakening and it may be that womanhood is about to cease to be a protected occupation. For example, as drastic cuts are made in Swedish public finances to reduce, we are told, a galloping deficit, women's jobs in the public sector and particularly in health care and social services are threatened. At the same time, benefits are being reduced or withdrawn. The general child allowance and the allowances for maternity leave, which have increased steadily since they were first introduced, have been cut back; hospitals are to be amalgamated and polyclinics closed. Only education which provides therapy for the unemployed is planned to expand.

In fairness, traditional male jobs in heavy industry, in defense, etc. have been lost as well, but inevitably dismantling the welfare state changes the parameters for what has been called state feminism, namely government measures designed to support and protect women as women. This indicates that womanhood in itself is ceasing to be protected as before, one symptom of this being the increasing feminization of poverty. Paradoxically, however, the state—which I choose for polemical purposes to equate with patriarchy still—appears likely to offer its protection to some groups of women: those in work who benefit by equality legislation in the workplace and the group of women I represent, the daughters of educated men in the professions and in the universities. In concrete terms, this means, for instance, that the relative failure of the academy to promote women has been counteracted by the government sponsorship of thirty chairs specifically designed for women.¹⁴ Given the powerful evidence for discrimination, it is hard to quarrel with this measure—though many have on the familiar grounds that affirmative action will result in lowered standards.

From a political point of view, however, another recommendation also designed to improve the situation for the daughters of educated men is far more troubling. It would mean that domestic help for well-off families where both partners are employed would be subsidized by taxes. Such a proposal is controversial, needless to say, and it has met with much resistance. Nonetheless, it has received some serious attention and, although the proposal was first put forward as gender

neutral, it was soon suggested by one leading trade unionist that a suitable labor reserve for domestic work might consist of immigrant women. Moreover, the debate has made it clear that the need for domestic help is perceived as emanating from highly educated women. It would seem, in other words, that at a moment in time when some women are gaining real political influence, there is a parallel movement towards a reinforcement of class divisions. Strangely enough, we can also look to Woolf's text for a commentary on this particular dilemma.

Of course, Woolf's position in relation to class is notoriously unclear, even if charges of snobbery are simplistic and exaggerated. We do not need to accept John Carey's judgment that Woolf merely reproduces the "social prejudices of an upper-middle class intellectual" in her configuration of such figures as Miss Kilman in *Mrs. Dalloway* (19). On the other hand, we must accept that her representations of working-class women often demonstrate an indecisive mix of condescension and idealization. This is, I would suggest, not so much a question of empathic failure as a recognition of the "contradictory and complex feelings which beset" transclass communication and which we would do well to acknowledge (Woolf, "Memories," 141).

In "Memories of a Working Woman's Guild," a text torn apart by guilt and ambivalent class feeling, the autobiographical subject movingly addresses the issue of the privileged woman's difficulty in engaging fully in the difficulties of her disadvantaged sisters. This difficulty is actually rooted in the body since "the imagination is largely the child of the flesh;" women's different physical experiences actually prevent understanding (136). Moreover, the possibility to desire differently—"Mozart rather than Einstein," "ends rather than means"—sets up an impassable barrier between classes, inducing guilt in middle-class women and contempt amongst the working classes who deride ladies for their lack of contact with reality (139). A striking demonstration that this kind of barrier is still with us, even in an egalitarian Scandinavian society such as Sweden, is the breach that opened between privileged women and other working women over a prominent woman politician's financial problems. Going public in her defense, several leading feminist intellectuals stated that they too had sometimes failed to pay bills in time. The implication that they had better things to think of than the vulgar details of domestic life distanced them effectually from their constituency, ordinary women who noted, rightly, that they could not allow themselves such luxuries as failing to pay on time without reprisals.

More honestly than this group of Swedish intellectuals who, in other contexts, express unequivocal solidarity with all women, Woolf's persona, listening to demands for larger wages, shorter hours, better sanitation and education, recognizes the limitations of her engagement with working-class women's demands:

If every reform they demanded was granted this very instant it would not touch one hair of my comfortable capitalistic head. Hence my interest is merely altruistic. It is thin spread and moon colored.

There is no lifeblood or urgency about it. . . . I am a benevolent spectator. I am irretrievably cut off from the actors. I sit here hypocritically clapping and stamping, an outcast from the flock. (135)

My intention in drawing a parallel between present differences between women and Woolf's struggles with class guilt in her own polemics is not primarily to attack other feminists over what has, after all, been feminism's historical difficulty — the problem of any woman ever attempting to speak for all women. I wish only, as noted before, to ask that in our enthusiasm for Woolf's literary achievement we should not forget her political writing. Moreover, I would point to the subtleties and nuances of the political texts as they in effect illumine our present-day dilemmas.

As I wrote at the start, being the daughter of an educated man, I have often returned to *Three Guineas* since it is there that the dangers of collusion with a patriarchal establishment are so plainly spelt out. The emphasis on collusion in that text serves as a timely reminder of the risks we face today in Sweden. When women in the universities gratefully accept the continued protection of the state, as I think we must do if women are to be properly represented in the academy, we should not forget the losses sustained by other groups of women. Quite apart from the ethical issue of solidarity, it would be unwise of us to disregard their example, since it is evidence that protection is always conditional and may be withdrawn at any time—that, to return to *A Room of One's Own*, in the last resort for us as women “there is no arm to cling to, but that we go alone and that our relation is to the world of reality” and not to metaphysics alone.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Holm, 12.
2. In some circles, at any rate, and historically, the English language novel is regarded primarily as a feminine genre and as entertainment. See Claesson Pipping, 1993.
3. E.g. Svanberg, 1989.
4. Translated in 1992 by Margareta Ekström, an excellent translator of many of Woolf's texts who has done much to promote Bloomsbury Woolf in Sweden.
5. The first novel to be translated was *The Years* in 1942, the latest *Between the Acts* in 1993. Of Woolf's full-length fictions, only *Night and Day* remains untranslated into Swedish.
6. Burgess, *English Literature: A Survey for Students*, was for many years an infinitely influential textbook both in Europe and the developing nations.
7. I do not wish to denigrate the contribution to Woolf studies made by British critics of various persuasions, starting with Winifred Holtby and including Hermione Lee, Roger Poole, Lyndall Gordon amongst others and, more recently, John Mepham as well as Rachel Bowlby with her valuable deconstructive study of Woolf's feminism. However, it is no secret that French critics were amongst the first to treat her work with proper seriousness and that the vast mass of Woolf criticism comes from the United States.
8. I have this on the authority of another scholar who has worked at several universities in the country, Mark Troy, now at Umeå University.
9. A co-production with Danish TV, with the commentary translated into Swedish but all the English speaking participants subtitled, and with Anne Massey reading Woolf's texts.
10. See, for instance, Zwerdling, Chapter 4, 87-119.
11. See Sandbach-Dahlström.

12. As one Swedish sociologist has noted, there has been a logical weakness in policies which have been aimed primarily at convincing women that they should not choose typical female occupations that fail to address the issue of men's choices both within and without the home (Sundin, 107).
13. The condition of women under state patriarchy has been fully explored by Helga Hernes, 1987.
14. The fact that no more than 9% of all full professors are women is an embarrassment in a country where most women work outside the home and where 40% of the members of Parliament are women.

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