

The 4th Japan-Korea International Virginia Woolf Conference 2019

Abstracts

Room 1: Multiple Approaches to *Mrs Dalloway* (Room 307)

Chair: Akemi Yaguchi

- ① **Misako Yora** **Woolf's Early Deprecation of "the World of Professional, of Public Life":
Clarissa Dalloway's Party-giving as Her Calling**

"Your world, then," Woolf speculates in *Three Guineas*, "the world of professional, of public life, seen from this angle undoubtedly looks queer," ascribing impending war to the existing male-dominated system. My presentation will show her deprecation of the "professional" can be traced back to her 1925 novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, in which its central character, Clarissa Dalloway intends to justify her party-giving. While scholars have not reached an agreement as to whether she can be seen as a sort of artist, I will instead demonstrate how her party successfully embodies the world of play under the interwar cult of recreation. For my presentation, it would be insightful to draw on Elizabeth Sewell's statement that the stress of play "is on doing rather than making." Whereas the male professionals who are present disparage Clarissa's party, I will argue, Woolf divests them of authority and instead grants a sense of redemptive vocation to her. By arguing so, I wish to suggest Woolf's earlier novel anticipates her polemic essay in 1938 in terms of her criticism of the professional organization status quo.

- ② **Kanako Asaka** **Is Clarissa Dalloway Snobbish?: A Comparison of the Speech and Thought Representation
in *The Voyage Out* and *Mrs Dalloway***

Clarissa Dalloway appears in *The Voyage Out* (1915) for the first time and becomes one of the main characters in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). In *The Voyage Out*, the conversation between the characters in the form of the direct speech mainly constructs the story. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, on the other hand, the free indirect thought representation mainly constructs the story as this work is often referred as a successful work as a 'novel of sensibility'.

Clarissa Dalloway speaks in the former novel and thinks in the latter novel for most of the time. The shift from the speech to the thought representation in two stories reveals the change of the style, especially with the use of the indefinite pronoun *one*. *One* tends to be interpreted as an arrogant usage considering Woolf was a woman in the Victorian Era. The function of the pronoun, however, exhibits the difference even though it represents the same character's point of view.

I will compare the use of the indefinite pronoun *one* in Clarissa Dalloway's speech and thought in these two novels, and examine the development of Woolf's 'stream of consciousness' technique.

- ③ **Joori Lee** **What Women Want: The Erotic Touches in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse***

A number of South Korean celebrities, including writers, artists, and college professors, among others, have been accused of sexual harassment in the last few months. A feminist social movement called Me Too has encouraged women to publicly announce that they have been sexually harassed. In attempting to share their own experiences, the Korean women report that the men have been touching them inappropriately even for decades. As the women address, the most pervasive form of sexual violence is an "inappropriate" touch and bodily contact. How to avoid or reject all types of uncomfortable touches? This is a pivotal question that the 21st century women might share. Tracing back to the early 20th century, we find that the British writer, Virginia Woolf was highly sensitive to the issue of touch between a man and a woman, and a husband and a wife. As a woman who understands the pain of the "uncomfortable" touch, the writer explores what kind of touch can create a genuine sense of pleasure for women. She expresses her imagination of the touch through her fictions, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Echoing contemporary women's desire toward a mutual, delightful, and affective touch between lovers, the two fictions engage exquisite moments of erotic touches, distinguished from a male-oriented bodily contact. By looking at the qualities of the represented touches, this presentation tries to reveal how the works of Woolf can illuminate what women want in terms of touch in our time.

Room 2: Women's Life and Art in Woolf's Writing (Room 308)

Chair: Yuko Ito

④ Chiho Omichi Single Women in London: Women, Work and Living in *The Years*

My presentation will aim to explore the possibilities and limitations of lives open to single women in the early 20th century, focusing especially on housing and job opportunities portrayed in Virginia Woolf's *The Years* (1937). The novel traces the lives of extended family members of the Pargiters, an upper-middle class Victorian family in London. The story covers more than half a century, from 1880 to mid-1930s, and we see the Pargiter children maturing into their old age. As if to reflect the actual history of the time, female characters living independently, increase generationally as the story proceeds, so that finally, more than half of the women characters are living on their own. Yet, whether they are happily liberated from the Victorian role of 'Angel in the House' and whether they achieved a complete private space seem to be another question—many struggle with poverty, and many are disturbed by the 'presence of others' in a seemingly private new 'home'.

Interestingly enough, few women in the novel talk about paid work, nor about their world outside the original family community. Many are still involved with care work in various forms. I would like to delve into the nature of their work and its spaces. Because this is not entirely apparent from the text, we must consider what they achieved or lost by freeing themselves from the Victorian 'home' life. A 'Room of One's Own' was, after all, a continuing interest of Woolf and her contemporaries.

⑤ Joseph Yosup Kim Effect of Food on Virginia Woolf's Mental State and Writing

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf claims "[o]ne cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." From this quote, one can find that she emphasizes the importance of food. In fact, she had an eating disorder and mental illness. Woolf rejected food when she suffered from mental illness. There was a British physician named George Porter Phillips who lived in London in the same age as Woolf. He made an interesting hypothesis that he would find the cause of depression from a person's digestive system. The aim of this paper is to examine how Woolf's rejection of food affected her writing where she perceives food as a means of human interaction in her novels including *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*. Ending her life by suicide, Woolf sometimes showed a loss of motivation for her life as an act of refusal to eat. As Dr. Phillips considered food as a factor in mental illness, I will investigate whether Woolf's mental illness was caused by food and how such matter was reflected in her novels, mainly in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves*. This paper discusses relationship between Woolf's reflection on food in her works and her mental state.

⑥ Meng Deyan Woolf's Representations of Women's History and Art: The Old Singing Women in *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To The Lighthouse*

Both in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf creates two old beggar women who sing at the bank or the tube station respectively. Their streets songs associate the urban city with the earth and the archaic history of London. In *To the Lighthouse*, the singing woman character is transformed into a specific minor character—Mrs. McNab who restores the damaged house during her gay singing. In the history, feminine speech and writing are both inhibited because of the patriarchal system, as Woolf criticizes in *A Room of One's Own* that woman is absent from history and "the sentence was unsuited for woman's use". In her novels, Woolf employs the images—the old singing women to articulate the hidden voice of woman. Their mystical songs are their feminine language and art that are absent from the record of human history. The old women are related with the earth image, carrying profound human feelings and emotions, which are alien to the industrial civilization of the urban city. They are also the neglected delivers of the postwar society, just as they did in the history.

Plenary Session: Empathy and Politics in Virginia Woolf (Room 307)

Chair: Fuhito Endo

⑦ Masayuki Iwasaki **Modernist Ecological Imagination: Woolf's Empathic Writing in *Flush***

In his biography of Virginia Woolf, Quentin Bell, Woolf's nephew, writes that *Flush*, a biography of poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog, was a work written not by a dog lover but "by someone who would love to be a dog." He emphasizes Woolf's desire to understand the feelings of people around her from the viewpoint of animals. Bell's inclusion of Woolf's becoming-animal desire raises a complicated question: does the author's inclination towards nonhuman agencies signify any particular position in literary modernism? Although conventional critics disregarded *Flush* as a minor work amongst Woolf's fiction, recent studies have identified the book as an unmistakable example of the modernist ecocritical imagination. Some of these studies have observed Woolf's unique perspective on the nonhuman world; however, her "empathy" with animals still remains to be examined. This paper explores how Woolf's empathy influences her modernist biography and argues that her empathic writing, with its consideration of nonhuman agency, indicates a decisive characteristic of modernism.

⑧ Yukiko Kinoshita **William Plomer, Virginia Woolf and Japan: Individuals in Society and Art and Artists in Politics in Early Twentieth Century Britain and Japan**

Chance led William Plomer (1903-1973) to Japan in 1926 and he ended up staying in the country over two years. His views of Japan, its people and culture which his social and sexual marginality sharpened were complex, or, in his own term, "double," being the mixture of appreciation and censure, endearment and disgust. His anti-racism, anti-colonialism, pacifism and humanism—which his first novel *Turbott Wolfe* (1925) published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press exhibits—made him severely critical about Japan's narcissistic patriotism, growing militarism, imperialism and fascism; but his friendships with individual Japanese and his appreciation of its traditional aesthetics yielded his lasting love of its art and culture and its people not as a mass but as individuals. Yet his reservations lay in his keen awareness that no individuals and art are, to a degree, socially and politically conditioned, and that individuals are, after all, responsible for the making of their society. Plomer's *Paper Houses* (1929) and *Sado* (1931)—both of which were published by the Woolfs—express these intellectual, moral and emotional dualities over Japan. My thesis is that Plomer's dualities were shared by Virginia Woolf and several other Bloomsbury intellectuals and artists who had been exposed to Britain's *japonisme*.

⑨ Soonku Lee ***Mrs Dalloway*: Women as the Subjects of a New Civilization**

Viewing *Mrs Dalloway* as an analysis of Western culture, this paper argues that, in the novel, Virginia Woolf searched for the future direction of human civilization in the gloomy circumstances of the times from a feminist perspective. There are two hypotheses in this text: the one is the revelation, through World War I, of the de facto failure of patriarchal rule by men, the protagonists who hitherto have developed Western civilization; and the other is the need, with the failure of men's governance, for women now to come forward and to create a new civilization in their own ways. Consequently, this paper seeks to examine the writer's criticism of patriarchal Western civilization and the contents of the mystic feminism that she presents as its alternative. In particular, under the view that Woolf's mysticism stemmed from the mystic tradition among British women, it restricts discussions to the small attic and analyzes the democratic, feminist utopia envisioned by Clarissa Dalloway as a mystic feminist. Formed through solidarity among women, the utopia in the novel actively reintegrates groups excluded from existing history based not on the patriarchal ruling methods of exclusion and exile but on acceptance and integration. This paper thus seeks to advocate the writer's pacifism and mysticism, which have been frequently criticized by not only contemporary radicals but also male literary critics, as radicalism in relation to her feminism.

Symposium: Virginia Woolf, Feminism and East Asia

Chair: Shintaro Kono

① **Boosung Kim** **How Are We to Prevent Gender War?: *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* and the Emergence of a New Wave of Feminism in South Korea**

Over the last few years, Korea has been experiencing a new wave of feminism. Ranging from the #MeToo movement inspired by the silence breakers in the U.S. to the “escape the corset” movement, Korean feminist movements of today are being led by young women who want to break away from their mothers’ monolithic ways of life and to raise their voice against patriarchal injustice and violence. As a way of understanding Korean feminist movements of today, this paper focuses on Korean writer Cho Nam-ju’s feminist novel *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*, which has been viewed as a source of inspiration for many young Korean feminists since its publication. Written from a third-person perspective, *Kim Ji-young* depicts the life of an ordinary Korean woman in her mid-thirties in a matter-of-fact tone. As a women’s narrative, the life of Kim Ji-young is both anybody’s story and nobody’s story inasmuch as her life shows typicality rather than individuality. Making an unprecedented success in both Korea and Japan, the novel’s ongoing reception energizes and gives shape to a new wave of feminism in East Asia. In Korea, the novel has sold over one million copies as of November 2018. The Japanese version of this novel was published in December 2018 and immediately ranked No. 1 in Amazon Japan’s Asian Literature sales. This paper will analyze the novel’s narrative strategies generating affective responses such as horror, exhaustion, bewilderment, fright, confusion, and frustration against the backdrop of feminist agendas Virginia Woolf set up in her two essays *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* and will shed light on the ramifications of the novel’s (inter)national reception.

② **Noriko Matsunaga** **Reading English Literature and Feminism in Japan in the #MeToo Era: Angry Young Women in Sheila Delaney’s *A Taste of Honey***

Much discussion has revolved around the definition of ‘postfeminism’ in women’s studies, media studies and English language literature, and there has been little agreement about its implications. While most critics have reached an agreement that postfeminism is included within the neoliberalist context, the lack of consensus of the meanings of postfeminism is due to the indefinite meaning of the ‘post’ prefix. If ‘post’ in postfeminism signals the ‘pastness’ of feminism, it could evoke a sense of generational shift among the younger generations of feminists (‘we are no longer in the era of second wave feminism’). Contradicting such an understanding, critics such as Genz and Brabon understand the ‘post’ prefix to be a part of a process of ongoing transformation. Genz and Brabon claim that one must see continuity between the second-wave feminism, postfeminism, and neoliberalism.

Within this framework of postfeminism, this paper examines *A Taste of Honey* (1959), a ‘kitchen sink’ play written by Sheila Delaney, notable for her working-class backgrounds; the drama tells the story of a young working-class girl who eventually becomes a single mother. The text was praised by early critics of such ‘kitchen sink’ dramas. The play is still widely known and read in the contemporary UK, for example as a text for English Literature General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), probably because the text offers views from a broad spectrum (class, gender, sex, sexuality, homosexuality as well as race). However, the drama is mostly ignored by Japanese textbooks of the history of English literature.

This paper first examines the descriptions of the working class in the postwar era by examining Japanese textbooks on English literature, particularly works revolving around ‘Angry Young Men’, to see how working-class women were overlooked in Japanese academics. Second, it explores possible feminist topics, particularly relevant in the #MeToo Era, by examining *A Taste of Honey*. By so doing, the paper aims to reconsider the education and pedagogy of English literature and feminism in Japan.

③ Aki Katayama Feminist Books, Feminist Activism, and Virginia Woolf in Japan

For a couple of years in Japan, we have witnessed two phenomena related to feminism. For one thing, some feminist novels and essays, including Cho Nam-joo's *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*, have attracted much attention. For another, some feminist activism is getting more visible, such as #KuToo and Flower Demo. My paper explores the connection between the two, reading and doing feminism, and argues that we can gain some valuable suggestions from Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*.

I translated both essays into Japanese, which came out in 2015 and 2017 respectively. Neither was the first Japanese translation, but I believe Woolf is worth updating. After the publication, *A Room of One's Own* has been received fairly well, reprinted twice, and referred repeatedly in reviews, magazine articles, blog articles and twitter postings. On the other hand, the readership of *Three Guineas* has been smaller, but referred enthusiastically in some reviews and twitter postings. On the whole, both are given the status of feminist classics, and sometimes displayed together in bookstores among other feminist books.

Judging from those responses, Japanese readers feel a close affinity with Woolf, finding her criticism of patriarchal-militaristic society revealing, her proposals for action refreshing. By reading *A Room of One's Own*, quite a few readers feel empowered by her call to "live in the presence of reality," while some are dissatisfied that she ends up by stressing individual efforts after all. As for *Three Guineas*, although some readers regard the essay entirely as satiric, some others think it was how Woolf went beyond her earlier emphasis on individual efforts. As I am going to show, here is an idea useful for feminist activism.

④ Gui-woo Lee Anger and Feminism in Korea and Virginia Woolf

Since 2015, angry young women have been the most visible part of a wave of feminist activism in South Korea. I review a brief timeline of the rise of radical feminist movement in Korea: the shrinking job market for young Koreans and the explosion of hate speech at Ilbe.com (a misogynous website); a militant feminist website, Megalia (2015- 2016) and its more extreme and separatist version called Womad; a misogynous killing at the Gangnam Station in 2016; the #MeToo movement that was triggered by a female prosecutor in 2018. The angry young feminist use the "mirroring" strategy by parroting back misogynic comments by simply replacing the words 'women' with 'men.'

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf describes this cycle of anger and hatred between men and women: "I had been angry because he was angry." Woolf does not approve of militant feminism as she shows in *Three Guineas*, because militarism is interconnected with violence that results from patriarchy. Even though the mirroring tactics of Korean angry young feminists awakened the public to the women's issues, and made some notable changes, we need more reflexive anger rather than the destructive anger/hostility of some feminist groups.