

difference with “marginal” Victorian economists’ focus on the “inconstant and changeable habits of discrete individuals who desire and consume” (14) to arrive at the signal contribution offered by Freud at the beginning of the new century: the libidinal economy of the desiring individual. Enter literary modernists, according to Cucullu, who are competing for control of this same representational field but who must first overcome the technical baggage of their Edwardian predecessors and the feminine domestic values enshrined within the Victorian novel. “The valuation and elevation of taste, in effect, become the impetus for a class organized around pleasure, commodity display, and consumption” (14), Cucullu posits. “[M]odernist innovations become the basis of new expert authority and the measure of a modern cultural class, as cultural reproduction assumes the centrality once accorded biological reproduction and the bourgeois family” (90).

Woolf embodies the modernist exemplar for Cucullu, leading the cadre of new literary experts by achieving the most effective symbolic matricide of the nineteenth century domestic woman among the many Cucullu catalogues across twentieth-century Anglo fiction. Woolf also, crucially, provides the most successful transformation of that domestic economy for women:

Woolf mythifies the domestic woman by turning her into art, that is, by making her over into culture, and thereby makes culture accessible to her educated daughters. By contrast, Joyce, Lawrence, and Forster bar the domestic woman from culture by turning her into nature. Both processes prepare for the genesis of a new authority and disciplinary knowledge but with far different outcomes for male and female modernists and their cultural descendants. (141)

Devoting two chapters to Woolf’s innovative method and one each to the adaptations utilized by Forster (one that enables a queer expert lineage grounded in Cambridge philosophical aesthetics) and Joyce (one that establishes an expert critique of the metropole), Cucullu traces a multi-situated struggle for control of the new field of representation, over/through/across the bodies of domestic women in order to satisfy the newly emerging desiring-individuals hungry for expert culture.

Cucullu’s analysis of Woolf’s particular style of expert knowledge-production is enacted through an insightful linking of what she considers Woolf’s two most important modernist manifestoes: “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” and the radical installation of the Hogarth Press in the middle of the Woolfs’ drawing room. Through the lens powered by Woolf’s coupling of “disciplinarity” and “technology [...] at the center of the home” (33), Cucullu reads the “domestic fiction” *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and *A Room of One’s Own* as examples of a new reproduction of culture that particularly empowers the coming class of professional women (not to mention Woolf herself as “expert”). Woolf “makes manifest her new aesthetic and feminist allegiances by nostalgizing the domestic realm that, in effect, transforms the usurped parlor into a literary exhibition of domestic reliquary that signals its decease” (27).

What is less clear is how such a thesis might work with Woolf’s later texts, where the figure of the domestic woman is differently problematized while the very idea of “expert knowledge” seems suspect to Woolf as she explores the outcomes of these new paradigms of knowledge production, i.e., the twin ideologies of fascism and consumerism. What is even more conspicuously absent in a text that continually invokes the importance of generic “female modernists” to this new class of cultural experts is precisely a discussion of other female modernists (Dorothy Richardson, a brief exception, is discussed indirectly and in negative terms). While such omissions weaken the book’s overall persuasiveness, it still sits comfortably next to recent work by Jennifer Wicke, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Emily Blair, and others regarding the tensions between the domestic and the intellectual classes. It also contextualizes Cucullu’s more recent forays exploring modernism’s gender “divide” (see her work in *Novel* as well as

Disciplining Modernism, ed. Pamela Caughie [Palgrave, 2010]), issues that find their earliest articulations in *Expert Modernists* (which, given the vicissitudes of book reviewing, escaped earlier review here).

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REVIEW

WRITING THE VICTORIANS:

THE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY FAMILY CHRONICLE

by Rudolph Glitz. Heidelberg: University of Heidelberg Press, 2009. 228 pages. € 36,00 paper.

Rudolph Glitz’s *Writing the Victorians* is an ambitious book whose central premise may seem surprising to many scholars of Virginia Woolf: that Virginia Woolf’s work bears a good deal of similarity to the work of John Galsworthy, D. H. Lawrence, and Arnold Bennett. But, taken as a whole, this is a carefully argued book that studies some of the familiar concepts about Woolf’s novels—the power of the “Angel in the House,” the oppressions of the Victorian paterfamilias—from a new and often revealing angle.

Writing the Victorians concentrates on what Glitz sees as a neglected genre: the family chronicle. Glitz’s overall aim is to trace the nature and development of the family chronicle, to show that the family chronicle as it manifested itself in the early days of the twentieth century is an unexpectedly subversive genre, and to study major examples of the family chronicle written by several major authors. For his authors, Glitz chooses Galsworthy, Bennett, Lawrence and Woolf. For his novels, Glitz chooses *The Forsyte Saga*, the *Clayhanger* trilogy, *The Old Wives’ Tale*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and *The Years*. Glitz uses a theoretical framework that shifts appropriately as he moves from topic to topic, using Roland Barthes, for example, when he discusses material objects as semiotic raw material, and Mikhail Bakhtin when concentrating on the nature of the *Bildungsroman*.

Glitz’s book is both carefully organized and thorough. An opening chapter traces the development of the concept “Victorian” from its first use to the beginning of World War II; Chapter 2 discusses the genre conventions of the post-Victorian family chronicle. Succeeding chapters examine, in turn, the material relics of the Victorian home, the Victorian mother as angel and queen, the Victorian paterfamilias, and the emergence of what Glitz calls the “modern child rebel” (171). In this context, and through a close reading of selected scenes and passages from the novels, Glitz concludes that Galsworthy and Bennett are both more subversive than they are usually seen, that D.H. Lawrence puts the family chronicle to mythic and visionary uses, and that Virginia Woolf’s *The Years* thoroughly inhabits the genre of the twentieth-century family chronicle.

In general, Glitz’s observations ring true and offer an original perspective on all four novelists. Glitz does an excellent job of analyzing Galsworthy’s use of the “material relics” of the Victorian home, and

making the point that Galsworthy's descriptions of rooms and the ways characters inhabit them are subtly critical of the Victorian ethos. In the same way, Glitz's wonderful reading of Mrs. Baines in Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale*, makes Bennett's subversive intent clear: Mrs. Baines mouths the ideal of the deferential Victorian angel but, with a husband paralyzed in bed, she is actually quite autonomous and runs the family business. In the case of Bennett, Glitz offers another nicely revealing insight that illustrates the evolution of the idea of "Victorian" in the early days of the twentieth century. When *The Old Wives' Tale* was first published in 1908, Glitz points out, readers would have interpreted Mrs. Baines' self-deception as a protective device. But by the 1920's, readers interpreted this same lack of self-knowledge as Mrs. Baines' hypocrisy.

Glitz is equally good in his discussions of the Victorian paterfamilias. He anchors this discussion in a sensitive rendering of the emotional strains placed on the Victorian father by being forced to live up to the competing demands embedded in the idea of the "paterfamilias." In this context, Glitz provides excellent readings of the father figures in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. And his discussion of Abel Pargiter in *The Years* is both corrective and convincing. Glitz takes note of what most other readers see in Abel Pargiter: Woolf's portrayal of the father figure as a domineering and oppressive representative of British imperialism. But Glitz also correctly notes that Woolf shows sympathy for Abel Pargiter. If Abel Pargiter oppresses his daughters, he is himself also emotionally trapped by the very system he personifies. Glitz concentrates here on the various ways in which Woolf reveals Colonel Pargiter's misery: his longing for genuine family ties; his inability to "connect" emotionally with any of the people around him.

But in a few places, Glitz's readings of Woolf are unconvincing, if not testy. One example is his analysis of "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." Glitz focuses on the famous passage in which Woolf discusses Bennett's characterization of Hilda Lessways and criticizes Bennett for giving "us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there" (Woolf 332). Glitz takes umbrage at Woolf's attack on Bennett and calls her assessment "misleading" (98). He eventually concludes that, for Hilda Lessways, her house is not "expressive" of her character, but instead oppressive, and that, by failing to understand the relationship of Hilda Lessways to her house, Woolf fails to understand the "markedly modern project pursued both in Bennett's saga and the contemporary family chronicle in general" (98).

In this one instance, it seems to me that Glitz misunderstands Woolf as much as he accuses Woolf of misunderstanding Bennett. In "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Woolf is surely not focusing so much on the fact that Bennett describes Hilda Lessways in terms of her relationship to her house. Instead, it seems to me, Woolf is using the idea of the house as a metaphor for Bennett's externality. Woolf's argument with Bennett is not so much with *what* he writes as with the way he writes it.

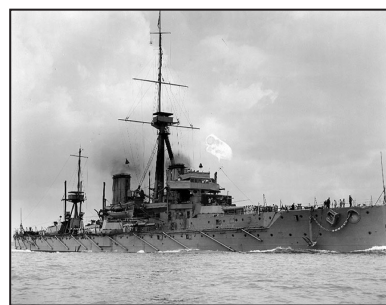
Still, *Writing the Victorians* is an excellent work of criticism that draws together a great deal of historic and genre material, that offers good close readings of texts, and that presents Lawrence and Woolf in a new and unexpected grouping. It is certainly important reading for anyone interested in the way in which authors interact with each other within the confines of the development of a literary genre.

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The Dreadnought (1906)

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HMS_Dreadnought_1906_H63596.jpg>

REVIEW

THE SULTAN OF ZANZIBAR: THE BIZARRE AND SPECTACULAR HOAXES OF HORACE DE VERE COLE

by Martyn Downer. London: Black Spring Press, 2010. 310 pages. £16.99 paper.

Of all the hoaxes perpetrated by Horace de Vere Cole (1881-1936), the most daring—and the one that made his name—was the Dreadnought Hoax. That was in 1910, when Horace, with a young Virginia Stephen, her brother Adrian, Duncan Grant, and other friends in rather ragtag fashion impersonated the Emperor of Abyssinia and his entourage and duped the Royal Navy into giving them a VIP tour of the British battleship, the greatest warship then afloat.

Cole turns up in memoirs of his era, especially as a Café Royal "fixture" (142) and Eiffel Tower Restaurant regular (Nicholson 268), as well as in thinly veiled characters such as Horace Zagreus, "a shallow observer of the art world" (180) in Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God*, but Downer now offers the first biography of this eccentric, childlike prankster, crowned as the world's greatest practical joker by the popular press. Born to wealth (his sister Anne was married to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain), he died a sad early death from drink, despair, loneliness, and poverty, having become a bore and a liability as his escapades took on a "desperate, vengeful edge" (214) with "a mind tilting toward madness" (216).

Downer's research into the life of this complex man benefited enormously from his access to Cole's papers and letters provided by Tristan de Vere Cole, born to Cole's second wife Mavis (though Augustus John probably was the father). The son has written that "it is difficult for us now to imagine how famous he was: how deeply some loathed him, how persistently others idolized him" (Owen 34) and, until now, Cole sightings in books have not been extensive and have lacked depth. Cole gets only five lines in Mark Hussey's *Virginia Woolf A to Z* as "a friend of Adrian Stephen's and organizer of the Zanzibar Hoax and the Dreadnought Hoax" (Hussey 58); Hermione Lee's *Virginia Woolf* calls him Adrian's "practical-joker friend" (Lee 278); and, Quentin Bell cites Cole's "prodigious number of hoaxes and deceptions" and "stories of public mischief" that "gathered around his name as a dog gathers burrs" in his introduction to the book by his nephew (Stephen 8). But those glancing looks rarely went beyond such statements.¹

Adrian Stephen was Cole's closest intimate at Cambridge, and Downer writes that it's doubtful Horace would have attempted the Dreadnought Hoax without Adrian by his side. Horace, Downer says, "hovered on the fringes of Bloomsbury, connected to the group principally through his

¹ Cole was certainly an interesting character of the type who nowadays is famous for being famous. Downer writes that "For a time between the wars he was constantly in the tabloid press. Anyone who read a newspaper knew him by name, and many by face too for he cut a quite extraordinary figure" (3).

