

Virginia Woolf Miscellany, Issue #105

Special Topic: Panoramic Woolf

Fall 2026, CfP

Please submit article proposals of approximately 300 words by 1st December 2025

Final article drafts (no more than 2500 words including Works Cited) will be due by 15 May 2026

Please send submissions to:

panoramicwoolf@gmail.com <mailto:panoramicwoolf@gmail.com>

Proposal (first draft): When Dance Disrupts: Abel Pargiter and the Limits of Patriarchal Panoramas

This article offers a new reading of Abel Pargiter in *The Years*, examining his movement—and retreat to the drawing-room chair—in relation to Sara and Maggie's garden dance, an aspect of the novel that has not received sustained scholarly attention. By focusing on this scene, it argues that Woolf stages the limits of patriarchal panoramic mastery: Abel attempts to oversee the dancers and maintain a totalizing view, yet the smoke from the fire burns his eyes, physically obstructing vision and forcing withdrawal. The young women's dance, full of vitality and movement, actively disrupts his authority, asserting the irrepressible agency of youth and female desire.

Abel's bodily and spatial retreat embodies both ironic authority and impotence. The chair, situated in a domestic, feminized space, contrasts with the dancers' energetic freedom, dramatizing the tension between static patriarchal control and dynamic, liberatory movement. Panoramic mastery—especially male-centered—proves incomplete, always threatened by perspectives and forces it cannot encompass.

Reading Abel's withdrawal through the lens of the panorama illuminates Woolf's engagement with fragmentation, limited vision, and resistance to totalizing perspectives. His inability to see or control the dance underscores the instability of authority and the power of embodied movement to challenge comprehensive social and aesthetic visions. By linking dance, space, and sensory limitation, this essay contributes an original perspective to Woolf studies, showing how *The Years* stages feminist resistance while simultaneously interrogating patriarchal claims to panoramic oversight.