J.H. Willis, Jr. *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press, 1917–41*. Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1992. xvi, [2], 451, [1] pp.; \$35.00 U.S. ISBN 0-8139-1361-6.

Any scholar embarking on a history of the Hogarth Press up to 1941 (the year of Virginia Woolf's death) is overwhelmed by a profusion of primary literature and daunting commentary. The historian must not only be acquainted with the 488 known imprints of the press in the context of publishing in Britain during this period of the twentieth century, he or she must also understand the personal and cultural complexities of the Bloomsbury phenomenon. The founders of the press, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, were prolific authors. Virginia's many letters and diaries have been published. A selection of the extant 8,000 letters written by Leonard Woolf was edited by Frederic Spotts and published in 1989. In addition, Leonard kept diaries, was a meticulous record keeper, and chronicled the history of the press, chiefly in the second volume of his autobiography *Downhill All the Way* (1967). If this were not enough, those associated with the press such as the poet and editor John Lehmann, who was manager of the press in 1931–32 and managing editor and partner from 1938 to 1946, have written in detail about their experiences. Even a young apprentice, Richard Kennedy, has recorded his reminiscences entitled *A Boy at the Hogarth Press* (1972). Biographers and critics have been fascinated by the creative interplay between publishing and the literary and artistic accomplishments of the Bloomsbury Group. Quentin Bell's well-known biography of Virginia Woolf, the chapter on the Hogarth Press in George Spater and Ian Parson's *A Marriage of True Minds* (1977), and Donna E. Rhein's *The Handprinted Books of Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1917–1932* (1985) are but a few examples of the ongoing research. Bibliographers have also been busy: B.J. Kirpatrick on the canon of Virginia Woolf, Leila Luedeking and Michael Edmonds on Leonard Woolf, and J. Howard Woolmer's *A Checklist of the Hogarth Press, 1917–1946* (second ed., 1986). In short, what more can be said on this subject that has not been said before?

In his preface J.H. Willis, Jr. recounts how he gaily set out on his history over a decade ago. 'There were papers, letters, diaries aplenty by the Woolfs,' he points out, 'an embarrassment of riches on Bloomsbury, and a few documents relevant to the Hogarth Press, but no detailed publisher's records' (p. xi). At the offices of Chatto and Windus, which subsumed the Hogarth Press as a limited company in 1947, he was led to a cluttered storage room where he unearthed thirty-two boxes of Hogarth Press records. Completely overlooked by previous researchers, the boxes were covered in grime, and had not been opened in over twenty years. Their discovery along with Leonard Woolf's account books deposited at the University of Sussex eventually prompted Woolmer to revise his *Checklist*, originally issued in 1976. The newly found records provided Willis with an in-depth portrait of every aspect of publishing undertaken by the Hogarth Press — printing, binding, paper, royalty statements, advertising, distribution, personnel, profits, and losses.

The Hogarth Press was an amateur enterprise when it was established in 1917 in the drawing room of Hogarth House, the home of Leonard and Virginia Woolf in Richmond, Surrey. In his opening chapters Willis nicely recreates the background and events that set the stage for the Woolfs' venture into publishing. Virginia, in particular, wanted a stimulating pastime of a manual nature that would provide her with an alternative and keep her mind off her literary work. In view of her interest in bookbinding, the choice of setting type by hand seemed appropriate, although Leonard soon regarded the work as drudgery. In addition to his keen ability to recognize literary talent in the making, Leonard's genius lay in his understanding of the financial and editorial sides of publishing. He took pride in efficiency and exactitude, noting expenditures and incomes and the amount of time and materials required for each item printed.

In his autobiography Leonard was adamant that theirs was not a private press. He and Virginia were disdainful of finely printed books that looked beautiful but were left unread. Prior to 1924 when the Woolfs moved to Tavistock Square in London and expanded their operation commercially to the publication of translations, social and political tracts, and the International Psycho-Analytical Library, the Hogarth Press concentrated primarily on short pieces of fiction and poetry of their friends and acquaintances. These early imprints (thirty-four were hand-printed by the Woolfs) were plainly printed and were usually bound in inexpensive, colourful wrappers or marbled boards, often accompanied with illustrations by Vanessa Bell, Dora Carrington, or other Bloomsbury artists. They include important imprints such as Leonard and Virginia's *Two Stories* (Woolmer 1), Katherine Mansfield's *Prelude* (Woolmer 2), and T.S. Eliot's *Poems* (Woolmer 4) and *The Wasteland* (Woolmer 28).

Willis is appreciative of the historical, literary, and iconographic significance of these imprints. At the same time his focus is critical and measured. In spite of their desirability as collector's items, most of these hand-printed books are not exemplars of printing, Willis maintains. The Woolfs were proud of their achievements as printers, but they did not pretend to be craftsmen of the first rank. In his discussion of various authors whose work was published by the Hogarth Press, Willis provides ample biographical information on these authors and on their work as a whole. His judgement on the specific publications which the Hogarth Press issued does not lead him into exaggeration. The Woolfs, for example, printed seven titles by E.M. Forster, two of which inaugurated new series. None of these titles, however, are major works of the stature of *Howards End* or *A Passage to India*, and Willis rightly concludes that the 'Hogarth Press did not loom large in E.M. Forster's life as a writer' (p. 349). In a similar vein Willis recognizes other limitations of the Hogarth Press in its handpress period. Notably, the Woolfs rejected James Joyce's *Ulysses*, not only because the book was beyond their capability in printing, but also because they were repulsed by it and the commercial printers whom they approached feared prosecution.

In many ways Willis's history is a model of clarity, comprehensiveness, and presentation. His knowledge of publishing history is impressive. The staggering cast of Bloomsbury characters is discussed with easy familiarity. The use of archival and other documentary sources is extensive. Detailed factual informa-

tion is conveyed again and again in an interesting manner. There are appendices devoted to statistical charts on volumes published annually by category, profits and losses, and the yearly sales and the profits and losses of the International Psycho-Analytical Library. Chapters alternate in approach in terms of chronology and subject. On the thematic side there are individual chapters on Russian translations, pamphlets and politics, and Freud and the Freudians. We also learn about the human side of publishing — the difficulties in getting dependable staff, Virginia's literary triumphs and her bouts with mental illness, the tensions between the Woolfs and Lehmann, and tragedies such as Julian Bell's death in the Spanish Civil War and Virginia's suicide.

According to Willis the Hogarth Press had foreign agents in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The extent of this agency is not explored, however. There are at least two Canadian issues of Virginia Woolf's books, *A Room of One's Own* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1932) and *Roger Fry: A Biography* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1940). Both use sheets from the editions of Harcourt, Brace, the first American publisher to form a contractual agreement with the Hogarth Press. The American edition of *Roger Fry: A Biography* is itself a photo-offset reprint of the English edition. Besides these two issues, there is an edition of Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941), published by the Hogarth Press but with a dust jacket from the Macmillan Company of Canada. The only book of a Canadian author published by the Hogarth Press is Frank Prewett's *Poems* (Woolmer 15). Nicknamed 'Toronto,' Prewett was a war veteran and friend of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, but his work as a Canadian was quite unknown until only recently.

Although there is relatively little by way of a Canadian connection to the Hogarth Press, it should be noted that two major collections of these imprints reside in Canada. The most well known is at the E.J. Pratt Library of Victoria University in Toronto. A recent exhibition from this collection, including works of Virginia Woolf and pieces of Bloomsbury art, was held in conjunction with the December 1993 Modern Languages Association meeting of the Virginia Woolf Society. The other major collection of the Hogarth Press in Canada was purchased by McMaster University Library in October 1993 from the estate of George Spater. The importance of this latter collection is noted by Willis himself, who acknowledges Spater's assistance in the following way: 'The late George Spater kindly allowed me to work in his private collection of press publications, the most complete in existence' (p. xii).

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