Virginia Woolf’s frequent contributions to several American magazines, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, form a side of her writing life influenced by financial concerns, since American magazines paid more than British ones (Lee 551). Studies of Woolf’s relationships with periodicals have explored aspects of these activities from her literary apprenticeship to her business interests. As a complement to such previous studies of Woolf and periodicals, this paper examines how one American magazine, *The Bookman*, a journal that promoted New Humanism, a philosophical movement endeavoring to return American society to certain humanistic values, used Woolf’s works and name for this purpose.

According to Robert Kenton Craven’s in-depth study of *The Bookman*, the journal began without any particular ideological tendency; however, from late 1927 to 1933, when Seward Collins became owner and editor, *The Bookman* was devoted to espousing the cause of New Humanism (8). Collins was such a strong a supporter of New Humanism at this time that he rejected any articles that could be construed as hostile to its philosophy (Underwood 202). Virginia Woolf’s appearance in this magazine at least ninety-four times during Collins’s era—in the form of essays, other writers’ articles on her, advertisements, and other smaller references—indicates how greatly he appreciated the
importance she had for his project of championing New Humanism. Nevertheless, Collins's treatment of her texts was problematic: when Woolf's writings were reprinted or quoted, they were often placed in contexts at considerable variance to those of the original.

After discussing the significance of citations of and references to Woolf in The Bookman, my essay will address the journal's editorial column entitled “Chronicle and Comment,” revived by Collins and used primarily to defend New Humanism (Craven 35). Notably, mentions of Woolf appeared four times in “Chronicle and Comment.” Though Craven claims that Collins carefully “sprinkled” writers who seemed irrelevant to New Humanism to obscure his true purpose, it is also possible, considering the way Collins used and evaluated her texts, to regard Woolf as a writer who was given an important role in the advancement of New Humanism rather than someone who was used as a mere red herring (35).

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The New Humanism associated with The Bookman was a school of thought established by the American thinkers Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More in the late nineteenth century, and several decades later came to be the center of some controversy among literary magazines in the late 1920s to the early 1930s. The main concern of this philosophy was to secure the universal and immutable ideal status of humanity, aspiring after the “wisdom of the ages” as reflecting “normal human experience... set above the shifting tides of circumstance” (Babbitt, “President Eliot” 3, 4). As a means of attaining this status, Babbitt and others advocated a program of training that reinforced absolute criteria such as a “universal norm” (Babbitt, “Humanism” 28), “standards,” “the will to refrain” (Babbitt, “What” 84), and “the law of measure” (Babbitt, “What” 85), all concepts the New Humanists discovered in classical art. They believed American society to be in decline, a fall they attributed to tendencies toward romantic “self-expression” (Babbitt, “The Critic” 162), and they sought an antidote to this degraded state in the “wisdom of the ages,” a philosophy which had shaped the human mind with an emphasis on “controlling emotion” (Scholes 252).

This inclination to conservative values, and tradition in general, invited mixed reactions, including fierce criticism. More and Babbitt were celebrated as saviors of tradition in “Chronicle and Comment” in the November 1929 Bookman (299), while elsewhere, their old-fashioned, patriarchal attitude toward the younger generation generated