This book explores Virginia Woolf’s engagement with the professions in her life and writing. Woolf underscored the significance of the professions to society, such as the opportunity they provided for a decent income and the usefulness of professional accreditation. However, she also resisted their hierarchical structures and their role in creating an overspecialised and fragmented modernity, which prevented its members from leading whole, fulfilling lives. This book shows how Woolf’s writing reshaped the professions so they could better serve the individual and society, and argues that her search for alternatives to existing professional structures deeply influenced her literary methods and experimentation.

EVELYN TSZ YAN CHAN is currently Assistant Professor of English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She completed her PhD on Virginia Woolf at the University of Cambridge in 2010.
VIRGINIA WOOLF AND
THE PROFESSIONS

EVELYN TSZ YAN CHAN

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Contents

Acknowledgements vii
Abbreviations and Symbols ix

Introduction 1

PART I: TWO PROFESSIONS AND THREE WOMEN OF VOCATION
1  The Ethics and Aesthetics of Medicine 29
2  Virginia Woolf, Amateurism and the Professionalisation of Literature 63
3  Reconfiguring Professionalism: Lily Briscoe and Miss La Trobe 95

PART II: LITERARY AESTHETICS, THE PROFESSIONS AND THE SPECIALISATION OF SOCIETY
4  Translating the Fact of the Professions into the Fiction of Vision: The Years and Three Guineas 125
5  A Balancing Act: Between the Acts and the Aesthetics of Specialisation 151

Notes 179
Bibliography 201
Index 215
Acknowledgements

This book derives from the work I did for my PhD. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Trudi Tate, my PhD supervisor. I have benefited greatly from her generous help and guidance, and her continuing support and advice after my graduation. My secondary PhD advisor Alison Hennegan read through numerous early drafts and gave invaluable suggestions which helped to direct the work. Laura Marcus and Alex Houen read and commented on the PhD thesis as my examiners. Many of their recommendations have been taken up, and have improved this work substantially.

I also especially wish to thank two teachers to whom I owe a lifelong debt of gratitude. David Parker, to whom I dedicate this book, enthusiastically encouraged me to publish it. He has never ceased to be a source of immense support, always generously sharing his time and knowledge. Mimi Ching introduced me to Virginia Woolf in my undergraduate days, and has since then been unfailingly available for advice and guidance. They have both been the best mentors anyone could wish for.

My personal thanks go to four people. O. B. has always readily shared her time and wisdom with me and many others, and has been a teacher in life in an unofficial capacity. May has been a steadfast source of help and encouragement for as long as I can remember. Without her room in Oxford, my research into Woolf’s holographs of The Years would not have been possible. Both she and Georg helped me to access necessary material while I was not in the United Kingdom. Arjan’s abiding support and wisdom have sustained me while I worked on this book, and beyond.

The three anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press who read this book in its manuscript stages gave many invaluable suggestions that I gratefully adopted. I would also like to thank the copy editor, Alissa McGowan, and Ray Ryan, Caitlin Gallagher and Elizabeth Shand at Cambridge University Press for steering the book efficiently through the publication process.
Acknowledgements


Extracts from Woolf’s unpublished holograph drafts are quoted with the kind permission of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf; and of The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

The work on this book was made possible by the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fellowship for Overseas Studies, which funded my PhD studies at the University of Cambridge. A Direct Grant (project code 2010362) from the Research Committee at the Chinese University of Hong Kong enabled part of the research for this book.
Abbreviations and Symbols

Works by Virginia Woolf:

"AN"  “Anon” and “The Reader”: Virginia Woolf’s Last Essays
AROO  *A Room of One’s Own/Three Guineas* (1929/1938)
BA     *Between the Acts* (1940)
CE     Collected Essays, 4 vols. (1966–67)
CSF    *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf* (1985)
D      *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols. (1977–84)

“HTG”  Holograph fragments of *Three Guineas*
“HY”   Holograph of *The Years*
“IL”   “Introductory Letter to Margaret Llewelyn Davies”
MD     *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)
ND     *Night and Day* (1919)
O      *Orlando* (1928)
OBI    *On Being Ill* (1930)
PH     *Pointz Hall: The Earlier and Later Typescripts of Between the Acts* (1983)
RF     Roger Fry: A Biography (1940)
TG     *A Room of One’s Own/Three Guineas* (1929/1938)
TTL    *To the Lighthouse* (1927)
VO     *The Voyage Out* (1915)
Y      *The Years* (1937)
Abbreviations and Symbols

Symbols for holographs and typescripts:

<text> Insertion made by Virginia Woolf
<text> Text cancelled by Virginia Woolf

The holograph of The Years contains many ellipses of its own. To avoid confusion, omission of text in these quotations is indicated with ellipses inside square brackets ([…]).