

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

VIRGINIA WOOLF

1882-1941

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

VIRGINIA WOOLF

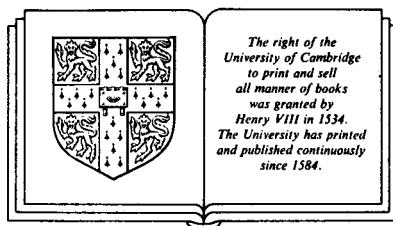
Her Art as a Novelist

BY

JOAN BENNETT

Fellow of Girton College, Cambridge

Second Edition



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON · NEW YORK · MELBOURNE

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521099516

This edition © Cambridge University Press 1964

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1945
Reprinted 1945, 1949
Second edition and first paperback edition 1964
Reprinted and paperback reissued 1975
Reprinted 1979, 1986
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-04160-7 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-09951-6 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Prefatory Note</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	ix
<i>Chapter I</i> Introductory	i
II Characters and Human Beings	19
III Stories and Sequences	42
IV Morals and Values	64
V The Form of the Novels	91
VI <i>Between the Acts</i>	112
VII <i>A Writer's Diary</i>	132
VIII Virginia Woolf as Critic	151
<i>Index</i>	171

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE AND DEDICATION

TO

GEORGE RYLANDS

I have dedicated this book to you because without your penetrating and constructive criticism it would never have been completed. But you are not to blame for its inadequacy. I have omitted what you constantly demanded, a chapter on the author's style. This book is about Virginia Woolf's vision of human life, and it is about her sense of values, and it attempts to analyse the form of her novels; but nowhere does it analyse the evocative images and flexible rhythms upon which all this depends. Yet almost every sentence bears her hall-mark. Who but she could have written:

"How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, 'Musing among the vegetables?'—was that it?—'I prefer men to cauliflowers'—was that it?"

Her sentences feel their way from point to point, they are fluid, superficially inconsequent, yet beautifully ordered and controlled in their rhythm and their sequence of images. All this and much more the discerning reader will discover in the many quotations. Similarly he will discover her all-pervasive humour. Again and again I have quoted passages

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFATORY NOTE

to illustrate this or that and quoted them with an apparent disregard for the play of fancy, the ironic inflections, the odd juxtapositions which are a continual source of delight. Her humour is too subtle for me to analyse; it is a sense of the incongruous, a trick of “associating things apparently unlike”, a power of standing aloof and amused and yet compassionate.

Incomplete though it is, I have dedicated this book to you because it is owing to your belief that I could write it, and to the keen discernment of your criticism of my first attempts, that it is now as good as I can make it.

JOAN BENNETT

1944

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

A new edition has given me the opportunity to add two new chapters, taking account of posthumous publications, one about *A Writer's Diary* and one about Virginia Woolf's critical essays. The *Diary* enables us to watch the development of each of her novels from its first conception to its completion; this does not of course affect our response to the finished works, that will depend neither on her first intention, nor on the ensuing modification, but solely on the final result. What we can gain from the *Diary* is insight into her creative process and a fuller understanding of the technical problems that she had to solve in her continually renewed experiment in the art of fiction. Her critical essays are relevant to her art as a novelist, not only because many of them are about novels and novelists, but because her highly individual way of responding to experience is as evident in them as in her fiction. I have made no change of substance in chapters I to VI, although the modern reader probably needs less explanation of Virginia Woolf's departures from tradition than did readers in 1945. At that time it seemed proper to emphasize her innovations; today I should want to emphasize the continuity with tradition. Fiction for Virginia Woolf, as for Jane Austen or George Eliot, was a representation of life; she never used a character as a symbol nor shaped a story as an allegory. I hope the two new chapters will help to correct any over-emphasis on what she rejected and help to indicate the importance of what she retained.

1963

J.B.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09951-6 - Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist, Second Edition

Joan Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE NOVELS

<i>The Voyage Out</i>	1915	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	1927
<i>Night and Day</i>	1919	<i>The Waves</i>	1931
<i>Jacob's Room</i>	1922	<i>The Years</i>	1937
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>	1925	<i>Between the Acts</i>	1941

OTHER WORKS

<i>The Common Reader: First Series</i>	1925
<i>Orlando: A Biography</i>	1928
<i>A Room of One's Own</i>	1929
<i>The Common Reader: Second Series</i>	1932
<i>Flush: A Biography</i>	1933
<i>Three Guineas</i>	1938
<i>Roger Fry: A Biography</i>	1940

POSTHUMOUSLY PUBLISHED

<i>The Death of the Moth and other Essays</i>	1942
<i>A Haunted House and other Short Stories</i>	1943
<i>The Moment and other Essays</i>	1947
<i>The Captain's Death Bed and other Essays</i>	1950
<i>A Writer's Diary</i>	1953
<i>Granite and Rainbow</i>	1958

All these were published by the Hogarth Press and it is owing to the kindness of Mr Leonard Woolf that I have been able to quote from them so liberally in this book.