Virginia Woolf’s writing has generated passion and controversy for the best part of a century. Her novels – challenging, moving, and always deeply intelligent – remain as popular with readers as they are with students and academics. This highly successful Cambridge Companion has been fully revised to take account of new departures in scholarship since it first appeared. The second edition includes new chapters on race, nation and empire, sexuality, aesthetics, visual culture and the public sphere. The remaining chapters, as well as the guide to further reading, have all been fully updated. The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf remains the first port of call for students new to Woolf’s work, with its informative, readable style, chronology and authoritative information about secondary sources.

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A complete list of books in the series is at the back of the book.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

VIRGINIA WOOLF

EDITED BY

SUSAN SELLERS

Second Edition
For Julia Briggs
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor gratefully acknowledges the following institutions and individuals in the creation of this volume: Anthea Ballam, Ian Blyth, David Bradshaw, Cambridge University Press, Helen Carr, Stuart N. Clarke, Patricia Morgne Cramer, Melba Cuddy-Keane, Maria DiBattista, Susan Dick, Jane Goldman, Joanne Hill, Maggie Humm, Hermione Lee, Laura Marcus, Andrew McNeillie, Suzanne Raitt, Sue Roe, the School of English at the University of St Andrews, Michael Whitworth, Elizabeth Wright.
## ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Between the Acts</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>Virginia Woolf: The Collected Essays</td>
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<td>CR</td>
<td>The Common Reader</td>
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<td>Jacob’s Room</td>
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<td>Night and Day</td>
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<td>Orlando</td>
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<td>VO</td>
<td>The Voyage Out</td>
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<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>A Woman’s Essays</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>The Years</td>
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Unless otherwise stated in the notes to individual chapters, the above abbreviations refer to the editions listed under ‘Works by Virginia Woolf’ at the start of the ‘Guide to further reading’.
CHRONOLOGY

1878  Parents Leslie Stephen and Julia Duckworth (*née* Jackson) marry (26 March).

1879  Sister Vanessa Stephen born (30 May).

1880  Brother Thoby Stephen born (8 September).


1883  Brother Adrian Stephen born (27 October).

1888  First extant letter (to James Russell Lowell, 20 August).

1891  Along with Vanessa and Thoby Stephen, begins writing the family newspaper, *Hyde Park Gate News* (January–February). Leslie Stephen resigns from the DNB.

1892  Writes, with Thoby Stephen, ‘A Cockney’s Farming Experiences’ (22 August–26 September) and ‘The Experiences of a Paterfamilias’ (10 October–19 December) for *Hyde Park Gate News*.

1893  Meets Rupert Brooke (summer).

1894  Stephen family spend their last summer at Talland House.

1895  Julia Stephen dies (5 May).

1896  Keeps a diary for a short period of time. Travels to France (November).
Begins her first extant diary (3 January). Half-sister Stella Duckworth marries Jack Hills (10 April), but dies soon afterwards (19 July). Begins classes in Greek and History at King’s College, London (November).

Begins studying Latin with Clara Pater (October).

Thoby Stephen goes up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he meets Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Saxon Sydney-Turner and Leonard Woolf (3 October).

Takes up bookbinding (October).


Writes ‘[Phyllis and Rosamund]’ (20–3 June), ‘The Mysterious Case of Miss V.’ (summer) and ‘[The Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn]’ (August). Travels to Greece and Turkey, via France and Italy (8 September–29 October). Thoby Stephen dies (20 November).


Nephew Julian Bell born (4 February). Travels to Wales, Italy and France (18 August–30 September).
1909 Engaged, fleetingly, to Lytton Strachey (17 February). Meets Lady Ottoline Morrell (30 March). Travels to Italy (23 April–9 May) and Germany, where she attends the Bayreuth Festival (5 August–3 September). Writes ‘Memoirs of a Novelist’ (rejected by the Cornhill Magazine, 10 November).


1911 Rents Little Talland House in Firle, Sussex. Travels to Turkey (22–9 April). Negotiates rental of Asheham House in Beddingham, Sussex (October). Moves to 38 Brunswick Square with Adrian Stephen, Duncan Grant and Maynard Keynes (20 November). Leonard Woolf moves into 38 Brunswick Square (4 December).


1913 Delivers manuscript of The Voyage Out to Duckworth (9 March), novel accepted for publication (12 April).

1914 House-hunting in London, first at 65 St Margaret’s Road, Twickenham (9 October), then 17 The Green, Richmond, Surrey (17 October).


1916 Nelly Boxall and Lottie Hope begin working for the Woolfs (1 February). Begins writing Night and Day (reaches Chapter XII by October). Meets Katherine Mansfield (early November?).


1919 Hogarth Press publishes *Kew Gardens* (12 May). Buys Monks House in Rodmell (1 July), moves in (1 September). Duckworth publishes *Night and Day* (20 October).

1920 First meeting of the ‘Memoir Club’ (4 March). Begins writing *Jacob’s Room* (May).

1921 Hogarth Press publishes *Monday or Tuesday* (7 or 8 March) – all subsequent publications are with the Hogarth Press.

1922 Publishes *Jacob’s Room* (27 October). Meets Vita Sackville-West (14 December).


1924 Buys lease for 52 Tavistock Square (9 January), moves in (13–15 March). Publishes *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* (30 October).


1926 Begins writing *To the Lighthouse* (8 January). Meets Thomas Hardy (23 July).

1927 Travels to France and Italy (30 March–28 April). Publishes *To the Lighthouse* (5 May). Begins writing *Orlando* (5 October).

1929

1930
Meets Ethel Smyth (20 February).

1931

1932

1933

1934

1935
First performance of *Freshwater* (18 January). Travels to Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy and France (1–31 May).

1936
 Begins working on *Roger Fry* (autumn). Begins writing *Three Guineas* (November).

1937
Publishes *The Years* (15 March). Julian Bell killed in Spain (18 July).

1938

1939
37 Mecklenburgh Square (17 August), but spends most of her time at Monks House.


SUSAN SELLERS

Introduction

Virginia Woolf’s writing has generated passion and controversy for the best part of a century. Her novel *The Waves*, often cited as her showcase of high modernism, was variously described by its contemporaries as ‘a masterpiece’, ‘beautiful’, ‘bloodless’ and ‘dull’.¹ Ruth Gruber enrolled for the first PhD on Woolf in 1931 (the year *The Waves* was published); nowadays, university courses and postgraduate dissertations on her work abound.² It is not only within the academy that Woolf’s writing is influential. Recalling her insistence on the importance of the ‘common reader’ (the title Woolf chose for her two volumes of collected essays), her fiction is currently available in a plethora of affordable paperback editions, and has been the inspiration for recent novelists, playwrights, film-makers, composers – even rock bands.³

This second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, like its predecessor, is directed towards those wishing to augment their reading through an introduction to the interrogations and discoveries of Woolf scholars today. For – as Michael Whitworth explains in chapter 6 below – attempts to keep Woolf out of the newly formed discipline of English in the 1950s and 1960s were abortive: it is now difficult to conceive of the terrain of English Literature without some reference to Woolf’s work, and Woolf studies has evolved into a vibrant and burgeoning arena in its own right. Laura Marcus, in chapter 8, reveals how Woolf’s engagement with gender led to increased interest in her work in the wake of 1970s feminist campaigns, while more recent awareness of Woolf’s attentiveness to the wider social, political and cultural contexts within which she wrote has led to significant shifts not only in the way her writing is read, but in our understanding of modernism more generally. This revised edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* delineates these transformations and presents the current debates within Woolf studies by some of the leading proponents in the field.

Like its predecessor, this volume begins with an overview by Andrew McNeillie of the thinkers and artists whose work and ideas Woolf engaged
with. The next three chapters provide detailed readings of Woolf’s fiction, divided according to period: Suzanne Raitt on the early novels up to and including *Jacob’s Room*; Jane Goldman on the middle novels with a new focus on Woolf’s aesthetic and formal concerns; and Julia Briggs on the later novels. Recent recognition of Woolf not only as a writer of fiction and biography, but also as a prolific writer of non-fiction, is the source for the following chapter, Hermione Lee’s study of Woolf’s essays. The next three chapters cover areas that remain at the forefront of Woolf studies: Michael Whitworth on Woolf’s relation to modernism and modernity; David Bradshaw on the socio-political vision of the novels; and Laura Marcus on Woolf and feminism. The final essays in the collection encompass some of the new interests and departures in Woolf scholarship: Patricia Morgne Cramer on Woolf and sexuality; Helen Carr on Woolf, empire and race; Maggie Humm on Woolf and visual culture; and Melba Cuddy-Keane on Woolf and the public sphere. Choosing what to keep in and what to leave out of this revised edition involved difficult decisions, only partially mitigated by the knowledge that any material from the first *Companion* not included here will remain available in libraries. All the chapters retained from the 2000 edition have been fully revised and updated, as has the ‘Guide to further reading’.

Given the abundance and diversity of available versions of Woolf’s novels, this new *Woolf Companion*, like its predecessor, has opted not to privilege a particular edition but instead has allowed individual scholars to choose the one that seems best suited to their purposes. The only standardisation occurs with Woolf’s non-fiction, where competing editions are rare and consequently there is a greater degree of consensus. These standard editions are referred to as *CE*1–4 (*Collected Essays*, 4 volumes), *D*1–5 (*Diaries*, 5 volumes), *E*1–6 (*Essays*, 6 volumes) and *L*1–6 (*Letters*, 6 volumes). It is hoped that the accessibility of on-line versions of the novels will make it straightforward for any reader using a different text to locate specific references.

Julia Briggs sadly died before she was able to revise her chapter for this volume. Early email correspondence with her indicated that though she would have updated her contribution, she would not have rewritten it substantially; accordingly, I have taken the decision to alter it only in the sense of including references to more recent writing on the topic. This second edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* is dedicated to Julia: to her superb scholarship and writing, to her dedication and passion as a teacher, and above all to her desire that Virginia Woolf should be enjoyed by as wide a range of ‘common readers’ as possible.

Susan Sellers, University of St Andrews
Notes

1 These adjectives refer, respectively, to a phone conversation with Harold Nicolson noted in Woolf’s diary (D4, p. 47); to Winifred Holtby’s *Virginia Woolf* (London: Wishart, 1932, p. 195); Frank Swinnerton’s review of the novel in the *Evening News* (9 October 1931); and H. C. Harwood’s in *The Saturday Review* (10 October 1931).

2 Gruber’s PhD, ‘Virginia Woolf: A Study’, was awarded by the University of Cologne and published in 1935 by Tauchnitz Press. See Ruth Gruber, *Virginia Woolf: The Will to Create as a Woman* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2005).

3 Michael Cunningham’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Hours* (1998) is perhaps the best-known novel to have been directly influenced by Woolf’s work. Its adaptation by award-winning playwright David Hare into Stephen Daldry’s 2002 film of the same name starred Hollywood actresses Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore and Meryl Streep. Musicians inspired by Woolf include Ludovico Einaudi, Regina Spektor and the British rock band *The Smiths*. The Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain records wider cultural references to Virginia Woolf and her work in its quarterly *Bulletin*; these have included quotations in British broadsheets, allusions in the highly popular American animated sitcom *The Simpsons*, and the use of Woolf’s image and words to market a range of products from greeting cards to drinking mugs.

4 At the time of going to press, the available editions of Woolf’s novels adopt varying approaches, for instance in deciding between the differently corrected first British or first American publication as a base text, and in the degree of transparency adopted when introducing editorial changes. It is hoped that the forthcoming Cambridge University Press edition of Woolf’s writing will go some way towards rectifying this confusing situation.

5 In an email dated 12 April 2007, Julia indicated that although she felt there were limitations to her chapter, she thought it ‘fit for purpose’. However, she did suggest that she might add a new paragraph on the following lines: ‘what I would want to add is the way that the seeds of both 3 Guineas and of Between the Acts are actually to be found in The Years notebooks, and to emphasise the way that all the major work of the thirties is a development rather than a departure’ (personal email to the editor).