



THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF

Virginia Woolf



The Waves



EDITED BY
MICHAEL HERBERT
AND SUSAN SELLERS

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Virginia Woolf

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THE WAVES



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Virginia Woolf



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Illustrations

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General Editors' Preface

The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions.

VIRGINIA WOOLF, 'How Should One Read a Book?'

How should we read the writings of Virginia Woolf? This is not so much a question of interpretation as of practice. How are we to read this writer for whom reading is an activity that requires almost the same talents and energies as the activity of writing itself? For Woolf responds to the question, 'How should one read a book?', as a person of immense, virtuosic skill and experience in both activities. She understands the reader to be the 'fellow-worker and accomplice' (*E5* 573) of the writer. The 'quickest way to understand [. . .] what a novelist is doing is not to read', she suggests, 'but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words' (*E5* 574); and 'the time to read poetry', she recognises, is 'when we are almost able to write it' (*E5* 577). Not only has Woolf left a richly rewarding oeuvre, but she has also left ample documentation of her meticulous processes of composition and of her detailed involvement in the production and publishing of many of her works, all of which her active and conscientious reader will wish to negotiate. If we are going to read Woolf creatively and critically, if we are to follow our own instincts, use our own reason and come to

¹ VW, 'How Should One Read a Book?' (1926), *E5* 573. Subsequent references to this and other works by VW appear in the text. For full bibliographical details see this volume's List of Abbreviations and Bibliography.

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our own conclusions, as she herself advises, we need to read her works in a form that provides us with the fullest means possible to exercise these powers, one that gives us as much unmediated access as possible to the record of these processes. This Cambridge edition of Woolf's writings consequently aims to provide readers and scholars, Woolf's fellow-workers and accomplices, with an extensively researched, fully explicated and collated text.

READING WOOLF

What does it mean to be the 'fellow-worker and accomplice' of Virginia Woolf? She published ten novels, as well as numerous short stories, essays and works of biography and criticism. Her posthumously published volumes of letters, diaries and memoirs are testimony to a life of constant writing, private as well as public. An erudite writer with an apparently encyclopedic knowledge of English letters, Woolf also knew Greek, Latin, German, French and Russian. She was denied the formal education afforded her brothers, yet was able to hold her own in intellectual exchange with them and their fellow Cambridge graduates. She did not attend school but received a thoroughgoing education at home, the beneficiary of personal tuition from her father, the esteemed literary critic, Leslie Stephen, and she enjoyed the free run of his considerable library. However, Woolf undertook a serious programme of studies at King's College Ladies' Department (at 13 Kensington Square) 'for five years between 1897 and 1901, between the ages of 15 and 19'; as Christine Kenyon Jones and Anna Snaith have shown: 'She was not only registered for courses in a range of subjects, but reached degree-level standard in some of her studies, and also took examinations. The archives also show that Vanessa Stephen was also registered for classes at the Ladies' Department of King's College London between 1898 and 1900 and that the sisters studied Latin together there' (Jones and Snaith 4). Virginia Stephen, according to the records, enjoyed 'sustained enrollment in a range of subjects at the Ladies' Department, including History (Continental and English), Greek (Intermediate and Advanced), Latin and German' (Jones and Snaith 6-7). She was tutored in Classics by Dr G. C. W. Warr, by Clara Pater, sister of the

essayist and critic, Walter Pater, and by Janet Case, one of the first graduates of Girton College, Cambridge and a committed feminist.

All too aware of the historical and continuing hypocrisies and inequities of most formal academic education, in its exclusions along lines of gender, class and race, Woolf was notoriously ambivalent in her dealings with scholars and academic critics, and she pointedly refused a number of honorary degrees from distinguished universities. She nevertheless did engage in some aspects of academic life, and not only as a student. She taught for a spell at Morley College, an evening institute for working people in South London, and during her career as a writer she gave several lectures and papers both to university students and to the Workers' Educational Association. A number of these lectures and papers constituted the first drafts of some of her most significant and influential contributions to literary criticism, including her founding work on feminist aesthetics, *A Room of One's Own*, and her great modernist manifestos, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' ['Character in Fiction'], 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' ['Poetry, Fiction and the Future'] and 'The Leaning Tower'. Actively engaged in feminist, socialist, pacifist and anti-fascist politics, she probed in all her writings the complex relations between art and the real world. Woolf scholarship has flourished in tandem with the rise of modern feminism and under the impetus of its intellectual transformations of the academy. Woolf's writings have been studied, with increasing attention, in universities since their first publication; and it is testimony to the revisionary force of many of her works that they are now studied in universities by the very outsiders to such institutions that she first championed, even if her egalitarian vision for school and university entrance still remains far from realised: 'Money is no longer going to do our thinking for us. Wealth will no longer decide who shall be taught and who not. In future it is we who shall decide whom to send to public schools and universities; how they shall be taught; and whether what they write justifies their exemption from other work.'²

² VW, 'The Leaning Tower' (1940), *M* 124.

But Woolf's readers have always been, and remain, equally numerous outside the academy too. Even her most experimental works sold well to the general public from the start, and she has never been out of print. One of her best-selling novels was *Flush*, her spoof biography of a dog, which academic studies tended to overlook until very recently. Woolf understands literature as common ground open to all: 'Let us trespass at once. Literature is no one's private ground; literature is common ground. It is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves' (*M* 125). She was scornful too of institutionalised academic literary authority: 'To admit authorities, however heavily furred and gowned, into our libraries and let them tell us how to read, what to read, what value to place upon what we read, is to destroy the spirit of freedom which is the breath of those sanctuaries. Everywhere else we may be bound by laws and conventions—there we have none' (*E*5 573). In setting out her 'philosophy' in a late memoir, Woolf went so far as to declare the redundancy, if not the death, of the author: 'the whole world is a work of art; [. . .] we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.'³ Following Dr Johnson she famously 'rejoice[d] to concur with the common reader';⁴ and she was proud of her own independent, professional status as a writer. She was, from youth, a prolific reviewer of literature, for various organs, including *The Times Literary Supplement*.

In tandem with her career as a professional novelist, short-story writer and essayist, Woolf also became an influential independent publisher. The Hogarth Press, which was launched by Leonard and Virginia Woolf in 1917, was not only a vehicle for putting their own work into the public realm, but it was also responsible for publishing works by numerous important modern writers and thinkers, including John

³ VW, 'A Sketch of the Past' (1939–40), *MB* 72.

⁴ VW, 'The Common Reader' (1925), *E*4 19.

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Maynard Keynes, T. S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield, Gertrude Stein, W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice and Sigmund Freud. 'The powerful intellectual developments that made modernism a pan-European phenomenon', as Michael Whitworth observes, 'were sustained at a local level by material institutions like the Hogarth Press' (Whitworth 2000:150). In short, Woolf as writer, critic, reviewer, lecturer and publisher was a consummate public intellectual.

EDITING WOOLF

So, how should we edit the writings of Virginia Woolf? Already the danger and difficulties of words are upon us. 'We' as editors cannot forget that we are already committed and diverse readers of Woolf. Asking ourselves questions about how to edit Woolf, 'we', as general editors of this Cambridge edition (and also as editors of individual volumes in the edition), very soon recognised the need to respond as 'we', two active and different readers of Woolf. Yet, whatever our own often very different instincts, reasonings and conclusions, we nevertheless share a recognition of the intense attention to the text that Woolf's writing demands of all her readers. This is the case in respect of its textual genesis, structure and variants, as well as in its possible – and its manifest – cultural and historical referencing, and regardless of our own individual interpretations. In our role as editors we conceive of ourselves as readers in need of access to a transparent record of textual process, rather than as readers who arrive at interpretative conclusions.

One challenge to editors of Woolf is the difference between British and American first editions of her major novels, and most subsequent editions have fallen on one or other side of this first fissure. Ever since Woolf sent differently corrected proofs across the Atlantic, American readers have not been reading the same text as British readers. The American copyright resides with Harcourt, so American readers and scholars, in the several decades since Woolf's death, have not had ready access to the editions published by Woolf's own press, the Hogarth Press (and vice versa). There are other editions published in Woolf's

lifetime that also merit attention, such as the first British editions of the first two novels by the Duckworth Press, the Hogarth Uniform edition and editions by publishers such as Dent.

Methods for addressing the notorious transatlantic differences have varied in practice, either by plumping for the American or British first editions (following the copyright), or by claiming that the 'authentic' or 'authoritative' text resides in one particular set of extant proofs (or in holograph or typescript). In attempting to gain access to an unpolluted record of textual variance and genesis, readers must then negotiate the sometimes unhelpful biases of editorial argument and often idiosyncratic and silent textual impositions, derived from a less-than-intact legacy of evidence of the processes of composition and publication. Debate rages on how a more democratic and transparent methodology might work. A parallel edition of the British and American editions of *To the Lighthouse* has been suggested, for example, and the digital age certainly makes such hybrids possible in electronic form. But such solutions sacrifice important material elements of signification in Woolf's texts. It is vital that attention is given to her quite specifically designed and designated spacing and typography. It is also important not to lose sight, in the inevitably compromised pursuit of 'authenticity' and 'authority', of the historical, material text as it was first published.

The Cambridge edition, therefore, has invited editors of the novels normally to map out published and proof variants from the first British edition as copy text, with minimal interference on the page where possible, and with no silent emendation. The Textual Apparatus and the Textual Notes allow for a transparent account of process and variance. The extant draft material has been consulted by editors and is systematically listed and referenced in each volume.⁵ The Textual Notes alert the reader to significant points of departure and interest, and in some volumes there are appendices reproducing key (extracts of) draft

⁵ In the case of VW's final novel, *Between the Acts*, which was posthumously published and seen through the press by LW, the typescripts she left behind are necessarily more prominent, forming as they do the basis for the first British edition.

material. The surviving draft material for Woolf's novels, however, is so copious that no edition could accommodate its reproduction in entirety in the formal Textual Apparatus. Separate holograph editions are necessary.⁶ Woolf's non-fiction, essays, short stories and autobiographical works present further editorial challenges. The Cambridge edition aims to give readers access to variants in all extant proofs and in all editions published in Woolf's lifetime and, in the case of unpublished works, to establish the text as accurately as possible from all extant sources.

Our aim, therefore, in preparing this edition of Woolf's writings is to provide scholars and readers with a fully researched text. This Cambridge edition recognises that no emendation of spelling, syntax, punctuation, hyphenation, paragraphing or spacing should occur silently. It affords generous exploration of and reference to archival material, holograph work, drafts and proofs. In annotation we aim to be more thorough than in any previous edition, with regard to historical, factual, cultural and literary allusions, in long overdue homage to the remarkable density and breadth of reference in Woolf's work. Each volume includes a substantial introduction mapping the text's composition and publishing history, and explores its critical reception during Woolf's lifetime, except where the text was published posthumously.

However, we would be foolish to ignore the fact that the act of editing is always and already bound up with reading precisely as an interpretative act. Cherishing our differences as critics, we also cherish the opportunity to engage as closely with the processes of Woolf's writing as any active reader could wish, and to make these processes available to fellow readers as fully and transparently as possible. Transparency, not fur and gowns, is our editorial ideal, and we are guided, as Woolf has been, by King Lear: 'Through tattered clothes great vices do appear: / Robes and furred gowns hide all' (*Lear* 4.5.156-7).

⁶ Much of VW's archive of draft material has been made available on microfilm, and transcriptions have been published in basic holograph editions of some of the novels.

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ANNOTATING WOOLF

We have been guided too by Woolf's own recorded thoughts on editorial achievements. For example, reviewing as a lay reader a new scholarly edition of Walpole's letters, she 'assert[s], though not with entire confidence, that books after all exist to be read—even the most learned of editors would to some extent at least agree with that'.⁷ And as editors, we do indeed agree with that. We cannot ignore Woolf's inclusion of the common reader as part of a true scholarly community: 'Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Virgil, and Dante [...] if they could speak—and after all they can—would say, "Don't leave me to the wiggled and gowned. Read me, read me for yourselves"' (*M* 125). Woolf worries that the weighty apparatus of scholarly editions hampers readers:

But how, the question immediately arises, can we read this magnificent instalment [...] of our old friend Horace Walpole's letters? Ought not the presses to have issued in a supplementary pocket a supplementary pair of eyes? Then, with the usual pair fixed upon the text, the additional pair could range the notes, thus sweeping together into one haul not only what Horace is saying to Cole and what Cole is saying to Horace, but a multitude of minor men and matters. (*DM* 45)

In *Night and Day*, Mr Hilbery is preparing an edition of Shelley that 'scrupulously observe[s] the poet's system of punctuation' (*ND* 108–9). Her novelist's sensitivity to the comedy of this undertaking does not wholly undermine his endeavour: Mr Hilbery, the narrator tells us, 'saw the humour of these researches, but that did not prevent him from carrying them out with the utmost scrupulosity' (*ND* 109).

In preparing this scholarly edition of Woolf's writings, we share her concerns for the readability of books. Resisting the temptation to issue 'in a supplementary pocket a supplementary pair of eyes', we have devised ways of alerting the reader, on the page, to the relevant parts of the Textual Apparatus. But if Woolf worries about 'how great a strain the new method of editing lays upon the eye', she does come

⁷ VW, 'Two Antiquaries: Walpole and Cole' (1939), *DM* 64.

to acknowledge that 'if the brain is at first inclined to jib at such perpetual solicitations, and to beg to be allowed to read the text in peace, it adjusts itself by degrees; grudgingly admits that many of these little facts are to the point; and finally becomes not merely a convert but a suppliant—asks not for less but for more and more and more' (*DM* 45–6). As editors, we also respond to this spur to feed the insatiable wants of the enquiring reader, once roused.

Sharing Woolf's own readerly desire for 'more and more and more', and recognising the same urgency in our fellow readers, we have made this refrain one of our guiding principles. But, we know too that while the scholarly scope afforded by a Cambridge edition can certainly give more, no edition can ever give all. The concept of such a totality is meaningless. The work of the editor is to engage the reader in a process of informed exploration and interpretation that continues beyond the edition. We understand our readers, then, to be accomplices in a process that can impose no finite interpretation on Woolf's writings. It is our hope that our work enables and enriches the continuing process of readerly collaboration. Another refrain taken from Woolf has also frequently sounded to us, particularly during the preparation of Explanatory Notes: 'nothing [is] simply one thing' (*TL* 286). We would emphasise the open-endedness of all such annotation, and we have conceived ours in dialogue with the work of past and present readers and scholars of Woolf, with the hope of enabling and continuing the dialogues of the future.

It is nevertheless worth comparing the extreme attention now extended by critics to every minor detail of Woolf's writing, including street and shop names, as David Bradshaw urges (Bradshaw 2002:109), with some earlier critical approaches that tended to assume her otherworldliness as a writer remote from the fabric of things in the real world, and possessed of a vague, visionary aesthetics considered factually inaccurate and even deliberately careless. The attribution of factual indifference and 'essential feminineness of [...] mind' (J. Bennett 79) initially deflected interest from the fine detail and precision of Woolf's cultural and intellectual referencing that scholars now investigate with considerable care. It was not so long ago that critics felt able to presume Woolf's lack of classical scholarship, rather than acknowledge her

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satirical characterisation, in her account of Mrs Dalloway's mistaken assignation, in *The Voyage Out*, of Clytemnestra to *Antigone*. (Woolf's own translation of the *Agamemnon*, languishing in the archives, points clearly to her knowledge of the classical play in which Clytemnestra is to be found.) Explanatory Notes must also address the inevitable receding of Woolf's social and political references into a historical period and cultural context now becoming distant enough from many of today's readers to require elucidation. The research undertaken for the Explanatory Notes draws on the new wealth of scholarly work engaged in the detailed exploration of the myriad and sparkingly allusive surfaces of Woolf's texts as well as their deeper layering of cultural referencing and valences. We would also emphasise that where critical works are cited in the Explanatory Notes it is to point out the information they yield on Woolf's rich weave of literary, cultural, historical and other allusions, rather than with regard to how these allusions and references are interpreted in those works.

Reading is a sacred and infectious pleasure for Woolf, and an end in itself. So much so that she celebrates its power even to dispense with the mythic Day of Judgement itself: 'the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when he sees us coming with our books under our arms, "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading"' (*E5* 582). A declared atheist, Woolf resisted all notions of final judgement, religious, literary or political. We understand this Cambridge edition of Woolf's writings as continuing, and not capping, the ongoing processes of reading and rereading her work. We hope our fellow readers will recognise, in making use of it, the shifting processes and conditions that are implicit in following instincts, using reason and coming to conclusions about Woolf's work. For 'who reads to bring about an end, however desirable? Are there not some pursuits that we practise because they are good in themselves, and some pleasures that are final? And is not this among them?' (*E5* 582).

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Notes on the Edition

Woolf's Spelling and Punctuation

In quoting from her letters, diaries and from the drafts of her published work Virginia Woolf's sometimes idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation have been retained.

Unless otherwise indicated [by the use of editorial square brackets], all emphases, ellipses, etc. are in the original texts cited.

The Text

The Textual Apparatus normally records all extant states of the text from proof and includes every edition published in Woolf's lifetime.

Each volume maps out published and proof variants from the first British edition as copy text, with minimal interference on the page where possible, and with no silent emendation. The Textual Apparatus and the Textual Notes allow for the most transparent possible account of process and variance.

All extant draft material has been consulted by editors and is systematically listed and referenced in each volume.

Introduction

As well as an account of the editorial challenges presented by Woolf's text, the Introduction in each volume includes a composition history, a publication history, and an account of the early critical reception normally concluding at Woolf's death in 1941.

NOTES ON THE EDITION

Explanatory Notes

Each volume provides extensive and thorough annotation of Woolf's cultural and historical allusions and literary intertexts and attempts to do justice to her modernist playfulness with the multivalences of particular references. The fabric of life in the late nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century is often elliptically documented by Woolf in fleeting fragments. Close editorial attention is therefore paid to every character's name, shop name and place name, however passing.

JG and ss