

Woolf

A feminist, leader, and a female author

Woolf Context

- Born in 1882
- Victorian Era
- Interwar period (time of recovery from World War 1)
- Bloomsbury Group
- Started with Journalistic Reviews
- A Female

Early Childhood

- Born to Leslie Stephen, an eminent literary figure and first editor of Dictionary of National Biography, and Julia Jackson, a woman with great beauty and reputation for self-sacrifice (possessed social and artistic connections that were valuable in Woolf's life)
- Three siblings (all half siblings), developing rivalries
- 9 years old--wrote family newspaper that teased two siblings (beginnings of writing as form of expression)
- Family made summer trips to Kensington Gardens, shaping her views of the city vs. country
- Series of losses (Mother died in 1895, half-sister died in 1897, Father died in 1904)

Depression

- Struggled to cope with the death of her parents, causing mental instability. She had a difficult time coping with her situation; she constantly lived in fear of her next mental breakdown.
- It later became understood that Virginia Woolf was manic-depressive throughout most of her life
- Had Bipolar Disorder, but there was no treatment at the time, which she struggled with her entire life
- By the end of Virginia's treatments, she could no longer cope with her normal life, marriage began to fail
- Drowned herself in River Ouse on the March 28, 1941

Influences on Writing

- Part of the Bloomsbury Group that pushed for progression through literature
- Some autobiographical components reflected in her writing
- Rejected the idea of the “angel in the house”
- Aspired to break from properness and tradition of Victorian Era
- Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud
 - Stream of consciousness, free association

Writing Style

- Modernist
- Stream-of-Consciousness
- Disjointed timelines
- Distortion of time

Impact

- Pioneer in feminist literature, breaking traditional expectations around literature of the time