

A Life's Vision and Its Transformation in Feministic Impulsions in Adeline Virginia Woolf

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Abstract

Virginia Woolf, the third child of Sir Leslie Stephen, was a prominent critic and historian, but suffered from severe illness, even going into a coma, during a period of significant historical, political, and social change. Her work, a literary achievement, focuses on the thoughts and feelings of her characters, Vanessa, Thoby, Virginia, and Adrian, who relocate to London's 46 Gordon Square. Her internal monologue captures life's singularity, making it intriguing and personal. In 1906, after Thoby's death, she felt devastated and lost her sister Vanessa's engagement to Clive Bell. Despite Leonard's advice to see a doctor, she refused, stating she could withstand another attack. Understanding her interest in women's concerns is crucial before exploring her major contributions to feminism. Since her early years, she has held a profound and undefined dislike for the way men treat women famous for her modernist writings, she was an English novelist who tragically abandoned her in 1941 from mental illness and despondency. Her death serves as a reminder of the transient nature of human awareness and the profound challenges that even brilliant minds may face. Despite her tragic death, her innovative books and essays continue to inspire readers and authors worldwide, remaining a testament to her legacy.

Keywords: Sex, Feminism, Gender Sufferings, and Family Discrimination

Virginia Woolf flourished during an instance when women experienced significant historical, political, and social transformations. In feminist history, the growth of the women's movement and the focus of the suffrage battle during Woolf's adulthood were unparalleled. Woolf began her literary career during a period in history when most of the exterior fights had been won and women had been awarded adult suffrage, the ability to divorce, the freedom to own property, and admission to colleges and schools, but the real conflict had not yet started. Woolf's views have become essential reading for most 21st-century scholars because she probed depths that previous feminists had mostly ignored with her ability to observe and divine. Woolf's writing and speech have greatly benefited from her developing understanding of the Women's Movement of her day as well as her personal experiences in both the public and private spheres of her life as an adult. Her writing is based on her convictions about the lives of women and her own personal experiences.

Woolf's personal experiences and real-life characters and relationships are evident in all of her works, with varying degrees of autobiographical content. In a similar vein, sex and gender themes are discussed in some capacity in each of her works. For any serious analysis of Woolf's life and writings, the enormous quantity of biographical information still accessible about her is indispensable.

Feminist academics have found great guidance in her personal writings, diaries, letters, novels, nonfictional works, and lectures while examining her works. Therefore, it is worthwhile to have a peek at her life and the political, social, and cultural context in which she has resided.

Adeline Born at No. 22 Hyde Park Gate, London, on January 25, 1882, Virginia Woolf was the third child of renowned critic and biographer Sir Leslie Stephen, who also served as the first editor of the esteemed Dictionary of National Biography. Her parents were Julia and Leslie Stephen. The children of three marriages lived in the household, while her parents had both been married once and had both been widowed. Julia's first spouse, Herbert Duckworth, gave birth to three children: Gerald, Stella, and George Duckworth. The children of Leslie and Julia are Vanessa, Virginia, Thoby, and Adrain. Leslie was first married to Harriet Marian Thackeray, with whom she had a daughter, Laura Makepeace Stephen. Woolf inherited her mother's exquisite sensibility and taste in art, as well as her father's intelligence, but she was more reflective and speculative. Her initial years were spent in the captivating world of books, which inspired her to learn, read, and express herself. Virginia was taught at home and was not allowed to attend school due to the strict regulations of Victorian society. But Leslie, a man of literature, had a vast library at home and urged females to major in subjects that were appropriate for their gender. Virginia's extensive time spent in her father's library made up for her lack of formal schooling. Leslie and Julia had made the decision to homeschool their kids, whether it was due to monetary constraints or confidence in their own pedagogical skills. In other words, while females would receive their primary education, it appears that Leslie and Julia handled the majority of the instruction for the boys. Although Virginia's father taught her mathematics and her mother Latin, history, and French, she was not proficient in any modern languages that she would later learn. Whatever her level of linguistic skills, there's no denying that her father encouraged his children to develop as thinkers by teaching them how to listen, read, investigate, write, and weigh criticism.

The family's yearly vacations in St. Ives, Cornwall, where Leslie got rid of the magnificent Tolland House, sparked Virginia Woolf's early imagination. As Quentin Bell records it in his biography, 'Cornwall was the Eden of her youth, an unforgettable paradise...' (Bell). Here, Virginia, her family, and her half-brothers and half-sisters, Stella, George, and Gerald Duckworth, had a number of get-togethers and picnics. There was a lot of excitement when playing cricket and Virginia stood out as a strong bowler. When Virginia was just thirteen years old, her mother passed away from 'influenza', bringing an unexpected and painful end to her happy time. Her fickle constitution nervously collapsed as a result of the irreversible loss. When Virginia's father passed away in 1904, her emotional state deteriorated. Virginia suffered lifelong agony from the memory of the sexual abuse she endured at the hands of Gerald and George, who took on the role of guardians for the young girls. Her terrifying experiences appalled her, and she was tormented by a voice that urged her to end her life every night. Day by day, her health deteriorated due to excruciating migraines and episodes of madness. After receiving the proper rest and medical attention, she overcame her sickness and made the decision to begin a new life with her siblings in a new environment, far from all the traumatic experiences. Shortly after her sickness was resolved in 1904, Virginia Woolf enrolled at London's Morley College, an evening program for working men and women. She taught English, history, and literature to her adolescents throughout her three years at the institution, encouraging them to express themselves bravely in both prose and poetry. The Guardian published an undersigned review by Woolf in 1904, which was her first published work. Her writing career benefited tremendously by her affiliation with The Guardian, where she routinely published journalistic pieces on a variety of subjects. To make up for her lack of a college degree, she read extensively while writing. She was asked to evaluate a book for the Times Literary Supplement, with which she remained friends for the rest of her life, a year after the Guardian published her review. Essays on simple and romantic subjects, such as a day spent in the country, a visit to Earl's court, a night spent taking in the music and dancing by a neighbour, were

found in her diaries. She also wrote about Aunt Mary Fisher, George Duckworth, and Carohne Stephen's humorous quips. Virginia had by now readied herself for a career in letters. She began writing her first book, *Melymbrosia*, in 1907; five years later, it was published as *The Expedition Expulsion*. Despite having a strong friendship with a few guys, Virginia never had a passionate connection with any of them. Her innate shyness toward people of the other sex and her painful childhood experiences having sex with her stepbrothers George and Gerard might both play a role in her abstinence. In 1909, she became engaged to writer and academic Lytton Strachey, but their engagement was short-lived when he revealed his gay desires to her. Virginia released him, understanding his hesitation, but they remained close friends all the way to the end.

Duckworth eagerly agreed to publish *The Voyage Out*, but the pressure to finish the project led to a protracted depressive and unhealthy phase. She endured years of suffering, even going into a coma. Vanessa, Thoby, Virginia, and Adrian moved to 46 Gordon Square in London, a total and permanent separation from Hyde Park Gate, to avoid the pitiful recollections of their parents' deaths. After graduating from Cambridge, Thoby stayed in contact with his pals from the university. This group of brilliant and talented individuals includes well-known figures like John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, and E.M. Forster. These intellectuals got together at Virginia's residence on Thursday nights, which marked the beginning of the Bloomsbury Group. According to Andrew McNeil, 'the intellectual heritage of the Bloomsbury Group illustrates that the English aestheticism of the turn of the century was grounded in Plato, impacted by Kant, and revitalised by G.E. Moore, who effectively brought aesthetics and morality together'. Naturally, the circle grew to include people like Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Roger Fry, Desmond MacCarthy, Leonard Woolf, Mary MacCarthy, Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf's decades lover, and Arthur Waley. All of their lives were impacted by Cambridge's intellectual atmosphere. They expressed their disapproval with Victorian customs and looked for alternative ways of living and thinking. Their philosophical mentor was

G.E. Moore, the author of 'Principia Ethica', and the conversations between these learned men resulted in several masterpieces and priceless literary works. 'Sweetness and Ught' - 'love beauty and truth' were their own terms - was the only and purely impractical goal of Moore's adherents (Moody). She was deeply affected by Thoby's 1906 death and felt that her sister Vanessa's engagement to Clive Bell was an irreversible loss. She moved into Fitzroy Square with her younger brother Adrian due to separation anxiety. After marrying Leonard Woolf in August 1912, Miss Virginia Stephen became Mrs. Virginia Woolf. Woolf had a notable career serving in the colonial service in Ceylon. Drawn to Virginia's uniqueness and beauty, Leonard Woolf left his job in Ceylon to get married. Despite her lack of physical attraction to him, she was overcome by his love and devotion for her, she said openly. She was enraged by forceful sexuality, as her nephew Quentin Bell observes. When Leonard discovered that she was incapable of evoking a sexual reaction, he ultimately eventually came to terms with the marriage being a major life sacrifice. Virginia's marriage turned out to be a fortunate choice since Leonard loved her with patience and tenderness. He was a big part of her recovery during her deep depressive episodes. He truly valued her work and insulated her from the brutal outer world. In 1941 her entries into her journal were obsessed with 'death and misery'. She was often extremely enthusiastic and plagued with a death-like sensation. She refused to go to the doctor even though Leonard convinced her to, insisting him she was able to endure another assault. Sadly, she lost her courage and sent two final letters to Vanessa and Leonard. In the final letter she wrote to Leonard Woolf, she described how powerless she felt to escape her manic depression. When hardship led her to the river home, where she killed herself with a big stone in her pocket, she wrote, 'I cannot fight any longer'. Leonard found just her walking stick as he dashed to the river. Throughout the last twenty years of her life, Virginia experimented a lot with fiction. Among these, Virginia Woolf's 'Stream of Consciousness' technique - which was also greatly influenced by James Joyce and Irish writers - had a profound effect on novel writing. She was considered one of the most significant impressionist and

modernist writers, known for her daring experiments with the language, form, and subject matter of her books. The English world produced a truly sensitive and brilliantly intellectual writer named Virginia in the years between the two world wars. Woolf's main goal in exploring human psychology was to reveal how people behave. Initially, her objective was to present existence as a feature and operation of the intellect. In her literature, she interprets reality as a mental image that concentrates mostly on the ideas and emotions of her characters. Her literary masterwork, the internal monologue or stream of consciousness method, is astounding. She had made an effort to portray life in all of its uniqueness, which was fascinating and extremely intimate. By rejecting the terrible narrative business of the realists, Virginia Woolf had created a new genre in literature. She says that's just ordinary, untrue, and unreal. The traditional authors' usually upbeat attitude turned her off. She believed that reality was made up of a sequence of mental occurrences as opposed to the tidy stories of purported realism. She felt that the novelist's job was to capture the spirit of the undefined, varied, and unconstrained in all of its variance.

'The burden and the complexity of womanhood were not enough; she must reach beyond the sanctuary and pluck for herself the strange bright fruits of art and knowledge. Clasp them as few women have ever clasped them, she would not renounce her own inheritance, the difference of view, the difference of standard...' (Leonard).

A Room of One's Own and *Three Guineas*, two of Virginia Woolf's critical treatises, are totally feminist in nature. They take aim at male privileges by highlighting the long-standing disadvantages that women have borne from their lower social status. Her delicate intellect became disturbed by the savagery of a civilization ruled by men. Through her writings, she spreads the idea that women's perspectives, financial autonomy, and privacy might lead to the development of new social norms. Her feminism aimed to achieve a balance between the sexes in order to improve society, not to incite conflict between men and women. Her feminism encompassed raising awareness of feminine issues in all domains as well as advocating for women's rights. Prior to delving into her significant contributions to feminism, it

is important to examine the factors that sparked her interest in women's issues and the reasons she came to connect with them. She had harboured an unidentified, deep-seated animosity for men's behaviour toward women since the beginning of her life. She was raised in a culture that distinguished between the responsibilities that men and women were expected to play, with women's roles limited to being mothers and taking care of the home. It was impossible to call the lady who tried to overcome her home constraints a decent woman. Victorian culture saw women as subservient to males, set oppressive rules for them, and neglected to recognize their significance for global advancement and well-being. Before Virginia Woolf was born, women's legal standing was the same as it was throughout the Middle Ages. Eventually, it got worse since women were seen as stateless, having no history, present, or future—just the capacity to serve the wants of the other sex. Virginia Woolf discovered countless examples of masculine control and savagery in every facet of her existence. She discovered intellectual rigidity in the mind, masculine domination in the state, and paternal tyranny in the home. Leslie Stephen, her father, was a staunch Victorian who thought women should lead rigorous lives. Despite his intelligence, he was not a liberal thinker; instead, he was strong, domineering, and persuasive at home, and he wanted his kids to abide by the social mores and boundaries of traditional British society. Virginia felt excluded and alienated from her parents because of their lack of concern for the way the boys and girls were treated differently. Vanessa and Virginia were taught at home by Thoby when he attended school and then Cambridge, shielding them from the exposure required for every person to reach their full potential. She identified as a 'outsider' on a frequent basis. It seems that her feminist ire was stoked inadvertently by being denied access to knowledge that was exclusively available to males. Many of her works convey her disdain for the insufficient education provided to girls and the separation of knowledge into fields deemed masculine and feminine. *The Voyage Out*, her debut book, seeks to highlight the flaws in the conventional, self-serving procedures to women's education. Katherine Hilbery's covert adoration of mathematics is indicative of Virginia

Woolf's own assertion that women should have less access to higher education. Not only in England, but globally, *Three Guineas* is a warning about the necessity of 'proper women's education' to prevent war and the dangerous and deceitful mentality that accompanies it. Virginia listened attentively to Bloomsbury's discussions, read a lot in her father's library, and paid great attention to life and society in order to make up for her lack of formal education..

Her strong bond with her mother might be an indication of Leslie Stephen's authoritarian and controlling behaviour. He had a terrible temper and would scream the loudest if he was angry (Leaska). His lifelong obsession with approval and admiration resulted in instability and intense emotion in his family (Bloom). Julia's persistent state of anxiety stemmed from her dread of her husband, and she felt pressured to provide for both him and the rest of the family. He wanted Julia to feel sad when he was sad, and for her to cry when he was angry. The majority of her life was dedicated to serving him. 'To Virginia, it must have seemed as if her mother was all a gift and her father all demand' (Poole). Woolf's works are characterised by a deep affection and respect for her mother. Julia Stephen can be partially or entirely compared to Mrs. Hilbery in *Night and Day*, Mrs. Ramsay in *To The LightHouse*, and Helen in *The Voyage Out*. She was the centre of the family, providing her children with loving care and her husband with consolation and compassion. She was a vital family member that everyone could rely on since she was perceptive and compassionate. 'Julia Stephen was the most arresting figure which her daughter tried to resurrect and preserve' (Lyndall). Woolf observed her mother taking care of her kids, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic duties, but she also neglected to acknowledge and encourage her husband when he was feeling down, disappointed, or self-conscious. Leslie was an excellent student, but he also had moments of emotional coldness. He was completely dependent on his wife to give him the comfort, inspiration, and assistance he needed at all times. Woolf couldn't understand why crimes were only committed by women and why men would behave in a tyrannical way all the time. She started acting abnormally in her daily life and became quite upset after meeting her mother. And more than her

life was celebrating in the society and the celebrated English author Virginia Woolf, who is recognized for having pioneered modernist literature, passed very tragically on March 28, 1941. Woolf drowned herself in the River Ouse near her Sussex home because she was suffering from significant mental health concerns and a deep feeling of hopelessness. The emotional agony that permeated much of her art was poignantly reflected in her death. In addition to being viewed as a devastating loss, Woolf's suicide has served as a stark reminder of the transient nature of human awareness and the profound challenges that even the most brilliant minds may encounter. But her innovative books and essays which still serve as an inspiration to and impact on readers and authors worldwide remain a testament to her legacy.

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