

Virginia Woolf:

She was born in London in 1882, she grew up and was educated in a highly cultivated atmosphere. After her father's death, she lived with her brothers and sisters and her family soon became the centre of a circle of artists and intellectuals known as "Bloomsbury Group". Starting from her brother's death in 1906 she suffered of depression and mental illness for the rest of her life. In 1912 she got married and completed her first novel "The Voyage Out". Her writing style moves from realism to experimentalism. She also wrote essays, reviews and criticism. In 1941 she drowned herself in a river near her home in Sussex.

Virginia Woolf embodied the modernist experimental spirit. She is considered one of the most important introspective novelist in the language, because she shifted the focus of novels from plot and action to thought, memory and feeling, using the stream of consciousness technique too. Another technique used by Woolf was the "free indirect style": her characters' thoughts are narrated in the third person, but the author frequently omits reporting verbs and imitates the kind of language the character would use, and also follow the shifts of focus as new thoughts occur.

A Room of One's Own:

In her essay, Woolf uses metaphors to explore social injustices and comments on women's lack of free expression. Her metaphor of a fish explains her most essential point, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction". She writes of a woman whose thought had "let its line down into the stream". As the woman starts to think of an idea, a guard enforces a rule whereby women are not allowed to walk on the grass. Abiding by the rule, the woman loses her idea. Here, Woolf describes the influence of women's social expectations as mere domestic child bearers, ignorant and chaste.

The political meaning of the text is directly linked to this metaphor. When the emergence of the 'new woman' occurred, this awareness of injustice made a clear political statement regarding women's intellectual potential in their own right. Therefore, the broader literary influence of this argument reveals the increase in social tension as the century's shift looms. Woolf suggests that the absence of female fiction is a result of a lack of opportunity rather than a distinct absence of talent.

The association between poverty and low achievement can also lead to disadvantages for generations. As women have been for decades marginalized and the patriarchy dominated literature, Woolf's general theory can be extended to many political circumstances. In this case, children are extremely conscious of their social status and thus aware of their own possibilities or absence, similar to the 'fish' metaphor in which women were aware of their position and lost their 'thinking'. It helps us to see how social problems shift shape, but the absence of opportunity still causes isolation and inequality.

The essay examines whether women were capable of producing, and in fact free to produce, work of the quality of William Shakespeare, addressing the limitations that past and present women writers face.

Woolf's father, Sir Leslie Stephen, in line with the thinking of the era, believed that only the boys of the family should be sent to school. In delivering the lectures outlined in the essay, Woolf is speaking to women who have the opportunity to learn in a formal setting. She moves her audience to understand the importance of their education, while warning them of the precariousness of their position in society. She sums up the stark contrast between how women are idealised in fiction written by men, and how patriarchal society has treated them in real life.

In the essay, Woolf constructs a critical and historical account of women writers thus far.