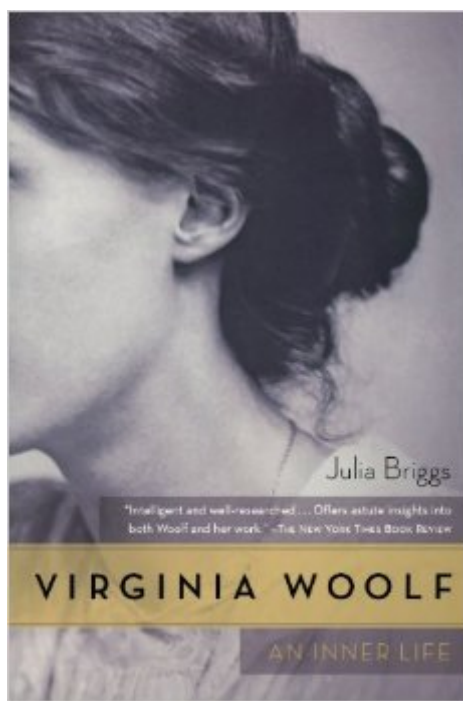


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Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life



Synopsis

Virginia Woolf is one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century literature. She was original, passionate, vivid, dedicated to her art. Yet most writing about her still revolves around her social life and the Bloomsbury set. In this fresh, absorbing book, Julia Briggs puts the writing back at the center of Woolf's life, reads that life through her work, and mines the novels themselves to create a compelling new form of biography. Analyzing Woolf's own commentary on the creative process through her letters, diaries, and essays, Julia Briggs has produced a book that is a convincing, moving portrait of an artist, as well as a profound meditation on the nature of creativity.

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Customer Reviews

Briggs biography of Virginia Woolf follows a form that makes perfect sense for a biography of a writer. That is, it is a "biography" of her books as much as it is a biography of Virginia Woolf herself. Not a great deal of time is spent going into Woolf's pre-natal background and infant years. The text quickly gets to the task of looking at the formative influences of Woolf the writer, and the circumstances and stimuli that influenced the creation and formation of each of her books. A chronological approach is followed. We begin with the first efforts of writing, the first novel, and proceed sequentially through each of her books. A full chapter is given to the period in which each book was written and published. Each chapter concludes with details on the actual book, including such items as the novel's original cover illustration (usually done by her artist sister Vanessa), the size of the print runs, the critics responses, and how the book fared over the years, even up into the

1990s. Honestly, I found information like this very interesting. For one, it was interesting to see how first print runs increased as Woolf gradually grew in popularity. What I most like about Briggs's approach is that you come away with key insights that any appreciator of Woolf should cherish. One learns a great deal about the process that Woolf went through in creating her works as well as about the life of Woolf herself.

this book as a biography or as a series of critical essays of Virginia Woolf's novels and other works. I lumped this book with the other three biographies of VW that I have read this past year (Quentin Bell's, Hermione Lee's, and James King's) but Julia Briggs's "biography" is actually quite different, and probably should stand alone, not be compared with the other three. Each of Briggs' fourteen chapters covers one specific work by VW. For example, chapter 4 is "Jacob's Room"; chapter 5 is "The Common Reader"; chapter 6 is "Mrs Dalloway"; and, chapter 13 is "Roger Fry." Briggs provides an exhaustive look and interpretation (sometimes, almost too exhaustive) of each of VW's works, and uses these works to explore VW's psyche. VW was intensely interested in psychoanalysis (as was Gertrude Stein) and one could argue that Briggs has used VW's works as a way to psychoanalyze her. Briggs is well qualified in this endeavor: for many years she was professor of Woolf studies at Hereford College, Oxford, and is currently the editor of the Penguin UK reprint series of Woolf's novels.

Julie Briggs is an amazing author and biographer. She is an English prof at DeMontfort University in Leicester, England. She was the general editor for the Penguin UK reprint series of Woolf's novels so knows Virginia's work very well...I think this knowledge of the work and the structure of the work makes this rather in-depth analysis of the famous author's motivation for writing the novels, personal circumstances surrounding the writing, her marriage, her friendships and her ever-declining health and mental problems is what makes this book so fascinating...It's no ordinary bio-- it concentrates on the work and the impetus for the work. Reading this book is like being allowed inside the writer's head and her 'office' while and after she creates her many volumes. Don't I wish I had read this book in college-- it really makes you understand not only writer motivations but the implosion the world around makes on the writer and his/her works. Great for any Woolf fan or for use in teaching Woolf or for any writer or would-be writer. Fabulous for use in women's studies programs...and fascinating for anyone struggling with their own creativity or stifled dreams/goals.

A thoroughly, intelligent well written book about an intelligent, thoughtful writer. The prose takes you

into the creative processes of V. Woolf allowing you to see how her thoughts are then "translated" into a book. Not only is the inner turmoil of the creative process given light, but also her inner demons that caused her extreme stress. The every day problems, the practical issues of making a living, plus the censorship of the day, and the general condescending attitude towards women, are all given space in this extremely interesting book. Read it.

This book is unique in that it is actually a biography of Woolf's writing process itself, and will therefore be far more illuminating and fascinating to many readers and writers than the kind of standard biography that focuses on its subject's social and personal life. Julia Briggs had a brilliant knack for weaving together an enormous amount of intricate research into highly readable narratives. I wish she had lived to write more writers' biographies like this one. I recommend this book wholeheartedly to Woolf fans, to writers, and to anyone interested in a closer understanding of the creation and growth of an artist's work.

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