Elizabeth Wright, Richard J. King, and Christie Jackson show us Woolf's development of her novel The Voyage Out (1915) through her own experiences at sea and her earlier version of the work, Melymbrosia, charting early twentieth-century steam travel at sea from a feminine perspective.

Abstract

Complete summary of Virginia Woolf's The Voyage Out. eNotes plot summaries cover all the significant action of The Voyage Out. The Ambroses are going to sail on the cargo ship Euphrosyne, owned by Willoughby Vinrace, Helen's brother-in-law, who plans to sail on to the Congo region after allowing the Ambroses to disembark at their resort. Also on board is Vinrace's daughter Rachel, who is, except for her talent as a pianist, a nondescript young woman when Helen meets her, though "she might be interesting" if she "were ever to think, feel, laugh, or express herself," Helen thinks. Helen's plan is to help Rachel become a thinking individual. Thus, the literal "voyage out" lasts four weeks and ends where Rachel's voyage of individuation toward authentic selfhood begins. Virginia Woolf knew all too well the forms that she was supposed to follow when writing of a young lady's entrance into the world, and she struggled to subvert the conventions, wittily and assiduously, rewriting and revising the novel many times. The finished work is not, on the face of it, a 'portrait of the artist'. No one would call _The Voyage Out_ one of Woolf's most significant novels, but it is nevertheless an interesting novel with an engaging story, and perhaps Woolf needed to write it (and her second novel, _Night and Day_) before exploring more difficult terrain. _The Voyage Out_ presents a traditional narrative structure. Her aunt Helen assumes the task of educating Rachel, of helping her to become a woman. The Voyage Out is the first novel by Virginia Woolf, published in 1915 by Duckworth; and published in the US in 1920 by Doran. Woolf began work on The Voyage Out in 1910 and had finished an early draft by 1912. The novel had a long and difficult gestation; it was not published until 1915, as it was written during a period in which Woolf was especially psychologically vulnerable. She suffered from periods of depression and at one point attempted suicide. The resultant work contained the seeds of all Virginia Woolf's later novels. The Voyage Out by Virginia Woolf Web-Books.Com The Voyage Out Chapter I.4 Chapter II. 16 Chapter III. 26 Chapter IV. One afternoon in the beginning of October when the traffic was becoming brisk a tall man strode along the edge of the pavement with a lady on his arm. Angry glances struck upon their backs. She knew how to read the people who were passing her; there were the rich who were running to and from each others' houses at this hour; there were the bigoted workers driving in a straight line to their offices; there were the poor who were unhappy and rightly malignant.