



Woolf Farming and Processing, Chinese Version Case Solution

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VIRGINIA WOOLF

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"There is no gate, no lock, no bolt
that you can set upon the freedom
of my mind"

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Historical context

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The period of Virginia Woolf's life spans the transition from the Victorian to the modern world. The Victorian age takes its name from Queen Victoria and is remembered as an age of progress, stability and great social reforms but at the same time characterised by poverty, injustice and social unrest. Another important aspect of this period is the large-scale expansion of the British imperial power, indeed during the 19th century, the British Empire extensively expanded its colonial presence in many parts of Africa, in India, in the Middle-East and in other parts of Asia. This process caused many long-term effects, including the increasing use of the English language outside Europe and the growing trade between Europe and distant regions. After the Industrial revolution Great Britain had become the 'workship of the world' and increased its economic power. In the second half of the 19° century, the British Empire was at the height of its influence. In people's daily lives the church occupied a central place, and class positions and gender roles seemed fixed. When Queen Victoria died, in 1901, her son Edward became king, as Edward VII. Virginia Woolf was 19. During his reign, known as "the Edwardian age", he began to enact laws which mark the beginning of the "welfare state". When Edward died his son George became king as George V. His reign saw the years of World War I, which broke out in 1914. Europe was divided in Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria and Italy) and Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia). In June 1914, during their visit to Sarajevo, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were murdered by a Bosnian Serb nationalist. Supported by Germany, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum and then declared war on Serbia. According to the agreements provided by the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente all the allied countries, with the exception of Italy, entered the conflict in a few days. On 4 August 1914, the German army invaded Belgium starting officially the First World War. At the end of the year the conflict had become a long war of position fought in trenches under inhuman conditions. The First World War was a global conflict, with the participation of nearly thirty countries. It involved more than 60 million soldiers and caused approximately 8 million victims. This war affected society as well, with the greater involvement of women in the productive system, furthermore, during the fighting technological innovations (like airplanes, dynamite, telephone) were perfected and tested with significant consequences also for civilians. With the outbreak of World War II new weapons and technologies were added. So, while in 1882, Virginia Woolf's date of birth, there were horses and carriages, by the time she died, in 1941, the radio, the telephone and the automobile altered the rhythms and expectations of everyday life, and formations of jet aircraft roared overhead and threatened people from the air.

The Second World War

By the late 1930s Europe was afflicted by another war. Germany was ruled by Adolf Hitler and his Nazis. He wanted Germany to be powerful again, after the defeat suffered in the First World War. He built up a strong army and air force and began to annex territories with German-speaking population of some neighbour countries. In September 1939 the Germans invaded Poland. For this reason France and Britain declared war on Germany. In May 1940 Winston Churchill became the British Prime Minister. He had a strong faith in victory. In June Germany was ready to invade Britain after the defeat of France. So in August, in the well-known Battle of Britain, it began its bombing of airfields, aircraft factories, harbours and radar stations, hoping to destroy the Royal Air Force. Later Germany decided to concentrate on bombing London to threaten the entire population. Before long, Americans entered the war against Germany, Italy and Japon. The latter had launched a surprise attack on the US Navy base of Pearl Harbour in Hawaii.

In July 1943 the US and British Forces invaded Italy which quickly surrendered but Germany fought on. At the same time the Americans joined the Royal Air Force in a series of bombing raids on German cities. In 1944 the Allied commanders planned the D-day landing. On 6th June a fleet of boats carried an invasion army to the beaches of Normandy.

After France and Belgium were liberated, the Allies marched on Germany in early 1945. From the east came the Russian soldiers who had driven the Nazis from Russia and Eastern Europe. Berlin fell in April and Hitler killed himself. Germany surrendered on 7th May. The War ended on 14th August 1945, after Japon surrendered. 50 million people lost their lives during the Second World War.

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THE ROLE OF WOMAN CHANGES

First World War



Lottie Meade, munitions worker who died of TNT poisoning

Women also volunteered and served in a non-combatant role. They mostly served as nurses in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) and from 1917, in the Army when the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), was founded.[4] The WAAC was divided into four sections: cookery; mechanical; clerical and miscellaneous. Many women volunteered on the home front as nurses, teachers, and workers in traditionally male jobs. Large numbers were hired in the munitions industries. The latter were let go when the munitions industries downsized at the end of the war. They volunteered for the money, and for patriotism. The women working in these munitions factories were called Munitionettes; another nickname for these women was the "Canaries" The work which these women did was long, tiring and exhausting as well as dangerous and hazardous to their health.

Munitions factories

The women working in munitions factories were from mainly lower-class families and were between the ages of 18 and 29 years old. A critical role consisted of making gun shells, explosives, aircraft and other materials that supplied the war at the front, which was dangerous and repetitive work because they were constantly around and encased in toxic fumes as well as handling dangerous machinery and explosives. Some women would work long hours. The factories all over Britain in which women worked were often unheated, Some of the common diseases and illness which occurred were loss of appetite, cyanosis, shortness of breath, vomiting, anaemia, palpitatio.

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