

FROM FANTASY TO FRAGMENTATION

Forster's Illusion of Unity and Woolf's Reality of Division

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Background

In Edwardian Britain, **1/3** of the national income flowed to **less than 1/30** of its citizens. In response to this tension, the Edwardian and interwar periods produced literature that grappled with questions of class division, social responsibility, and human connection.

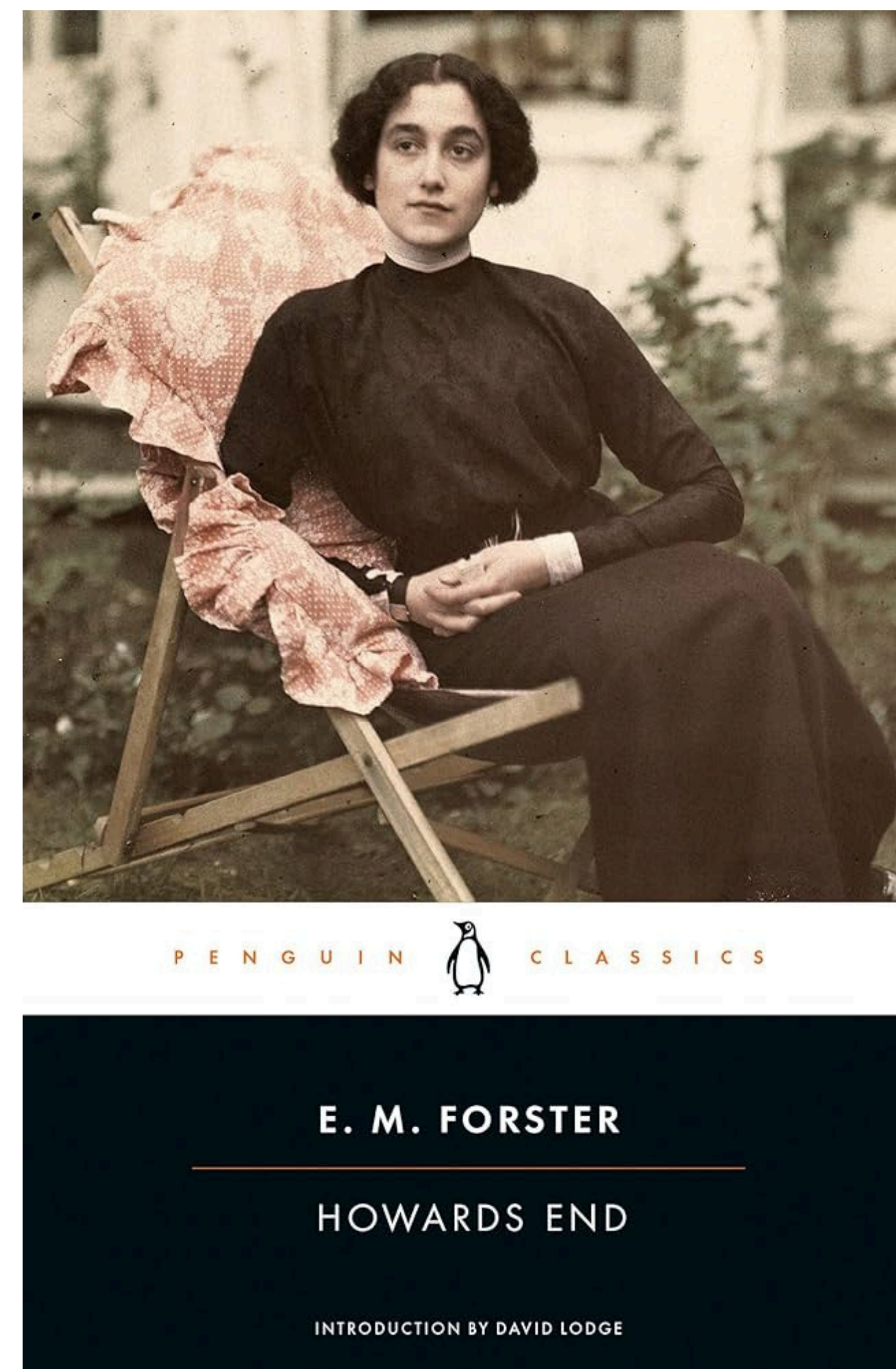
Howards End (1910) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) reflect two distinct responses to this fractured landscape.

Howards End

E.M. Forster's *Howards End* envisions connection across class divides, manipulating plot elements to unite three social classes. However, this promising resolution sidesteps the deeper economic and social forces that maintain class divisions, offering a resolution that feels more symbolic than substantive.

Mrs. Dalloway

Unlike *Howards End*, which forces a symbolic resolution through inheritance and marriage, *Mrs. Dalloway* exposes the reality of disconnection through fragmented interactions and unresolved struggles.

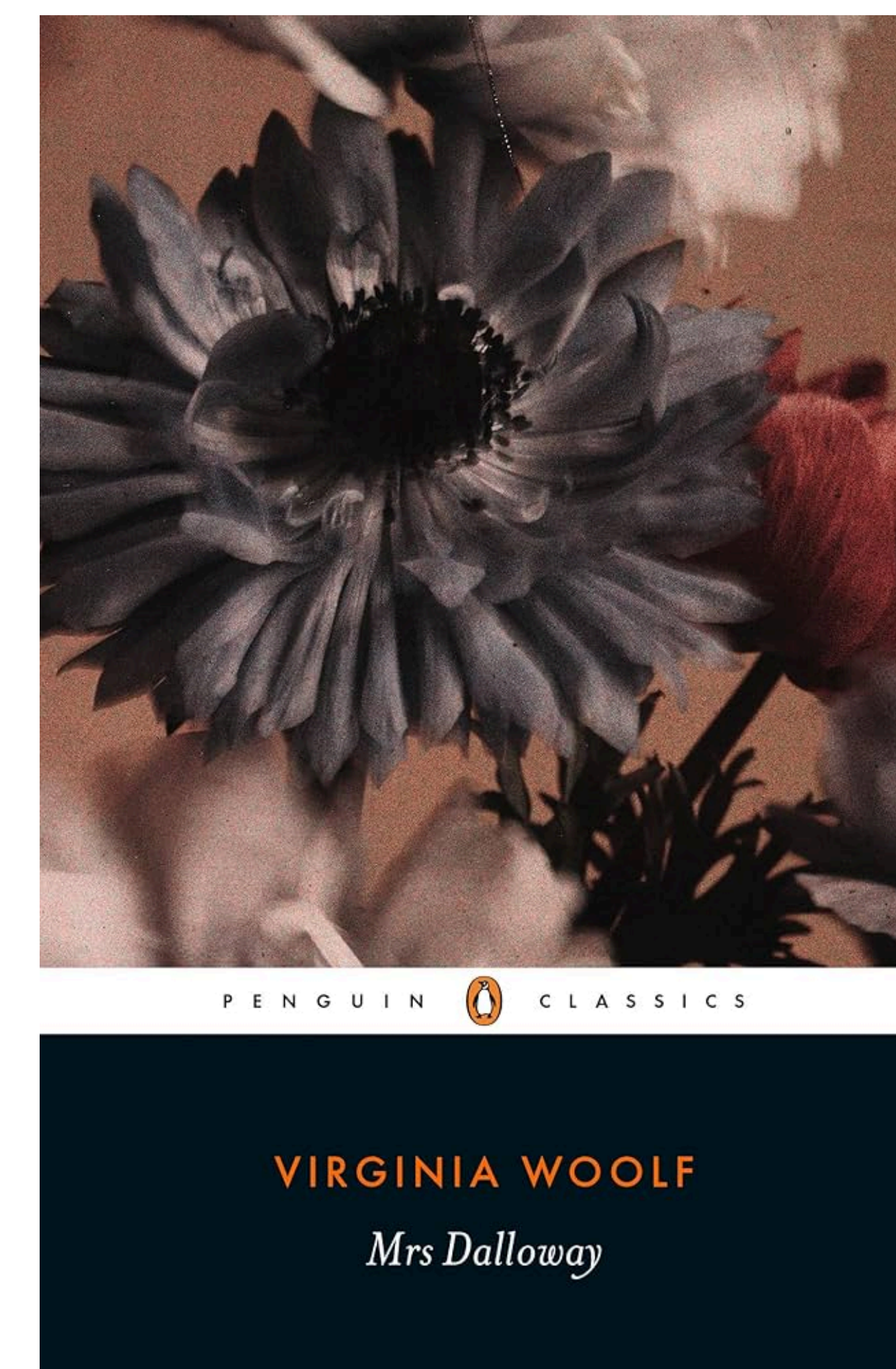


Only Connect...

The epigraph of *Howards End* frames the narrative's attempts to unite disparate social worlds through marriage, inheritance, and empathy.

The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him...

While Septimus's suicide evokes a fleeting kinship, the moment is exactly that — fleeting. Connection fails in the London of *Mrs. Dalloway*, where suffering passes unnoticed or is aesthetically absorbed, failing to penetrate the surface.



Authors



E.M. Forster



Virginia Woolf

E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf were both writers in the Bloomsbury Group, a loose yet influential circle of British writers, artists, and intellectuals active in the early 20th century. While Forster uses a traditional narrative to connect characters across class lines, Woolf employs stream of consciousness to reveal internal divisions and social isolation in postwar Britain.

Conclusion

The comparison between *Howards End* and *Mrs. Dalloway* presents two visions of connection in a divided society: cautious hope, and deep skepticism. Their contrasting perspectives raise a question that remains urgent today: In the face of enduring social divisions, is a unified future still imaginable?