Centro de Estudios de Postgrado
Online Master in English Studies

UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Centro de Estudios de Postgrado

Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo Fin de Máster

VIRGINIA WOOLF´S FICTIVE AND NON-FICTIVE WORLDS: *ORLANDO* AND *A ROOM OF ONE´S OWN*.

Student: Gómez Jurado, Elena María

Tutor: Dr. Nieto García, Jesús Manuel
Dpt.: English Philology

November, 2022

1. ABSTRACT/RESUMEN

The following study, *Virginia Woolf's fictive and non-fictive worlds: Orlando and A Room of One's Own*, focuses on the analysis of two major works by Virginia Woolf. Both works were critical in the formation of the time's cultural and social panorama, and their effect may still be seen today. What Woolf meant to convey to the society in which she lived will be examined, as well as how her novel influenced other works and vice versa, in particular, what aspects *of A Room of One's Own* can be found in *Orlando*, and how the writing and ideas presented in the former are reflected in her fiction and whether the character or the novel itself reflects what she stands for in her non-fiction.

This paper is organised into five parts, each with its own primary elements and sub elements. The first part offers a social backdrop that considers the author's cultural setting. The second section briefly describes the books and articles used in this dissertation. The third examines certain biographical features of Virginia Woolf, focusing on both her professional career and her personal life. The different subsections of part four correspond to the main works of Virginia Woolf and a brief description of the two works, consisting of a detailed study of this essay's two primary works: *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*. The following part displays the correspondent's conclusions, which summarise this essay's most essential points. Finally, the last section is devoted to the references mentioned in this essay.

Keywords

Fiction, non-fiction, Virginia Woolf, analysis, *Orlando*, *A Room of One's Own*

Resumen

El siguiente estudio, *Virginia Woolf's fictive and non-fictive worlds: Orlando and A Room of One's Own*, se centra en el análisis de dos importantes obras de Virginia Woolf. Ambas obras fueron críticas en la formación del panorama cultural y social de la época, y su efecto puede verse todavía hoy. Se examinará lo que Woolf quiso transmitir a la sociedad en la que vivía, así como la forma en que su novela influyó en otras obras y viceversa, en particular, qué aspectos de *Una habitación propia* pueden encontrarse en *Orlando*, y cómo la escritura y las ideas presentadas en la primera se reflejan en su ficción y si el personaje o la propia novela reflejan lo que ella defiende en su no ficción.

Este trabajo está organizado en cinco partes, cada una con sus propios elementos primarios y secundarios. La primera parte ofrece un telón de fondo social que considera el

entorno cultural de la autora. La segunda sección describe brevemente los libros y artículos utilizados en esta disertación. La tercera examina ciertos rasgos biográficos de Virginia Woolf, centrándose tanto en su carrera profesional como en su vida personal. Los distintos subapartados de la cuarta parte corresponden a las principales obras de Virginia Woolf y a una breve descripción de las mismas, que consiste en un estudio detallado de las dos obras principales de este ensayo: *Orlando* y *Una habitación propia.* La siguiente parte muestra las conclusiones de la autora, que resumen los puntos más esenciales de este ensayo. Por último, la sección final está dedicada a las referencias mencionadas en este ensayo.

Palabras clave

Ficción, no ficción, Virginia Woolf, análisis, *Orlando, Una habitación propia*

2. INTRODUCTION

The history of women writers has been long and complicated. It is hard to say when the first woman writer as such appeared in Britain, but some experts believe it was in the 17th century with Aphra Behn, who was the first professional writer who was able to earn money with her works. However, due to the lack of research on women writers, it is impossible to determine who the first woman writer was. On the other hand, it is believed that the first novel written by a woman is *The Tale of Genji*, which is also considered to be the world's first novel, written a thousand years ago.

Some of the earliest female writers were aristocratic ladies who wrote about courtship, love, and marriage. Their writings were considered scandalous because they wrote about topics that were not appropriate for women to discuss at the time. This is exactly what Virginia Woolf discusses in some of her works. That is why this work is dedicated not only to studying the relationships between *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own*, but also to shedding light on women's writing, which is increasingly being studied critically.

The major goal of this essay is to compare and contrast the two works in order to determine if the ideas presented by Woolf in her nonfictional writing are present or not in her fictional work, and how. The main goal of this paper is to gain an understanding of the world and culture in which the author grew up. With this in mind, the text includes a broad overview of several key aspects that influenced the author's overall work: a broad overview of her career, including a basic history of her life as well as the society she lived in.

The second section of this text, on the other hand, is dedicated to the analysis of Virginia Woolf's two works. Both analyses focus on the works' most important elements. Both will be analysed individually to get at the results, and both will be analysed to see if Virginia Woolf's nonfiction concepts can be also seen in her fiction.

3. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.

In order to better understand her works, it is necessary to highlight both the cultural and historical background in which she lived, since context serves to bridge the distance between authors and their audiences, improving comprehension and reducing misinterpretation of the writer's goal.

First of all, we can say that Woolf was born in 1882, when Modernism, which was a cultural movement characterised by innovation in all areas of the arts, was starting. Modernist writers sought out new ideas in order to break free from the Victorian era's rigid restrictions. Moreover, Scutts (n.d.) mentions that Virginia Woolf lived at a time when the world was

transitioning from Victorianism to modern times. The industrial revolution reinforced Britain's economic strength and made it the "factory of the world" in the nineteenth century. The British Empire had reached its pinnacle of strength and influence and the church had a vital place in people's everyday life, and class and gender norms appeared to be set in stone. Despite this, practically every element of British life altered between the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, when Woolf was 19, and the end of WWII. Also, due to the impact of two world wars, the end of the British Empire, a prolonged economic depression in the 1930s and the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as rival world powers, Britain had lost its global pre-eminence by the latter half of the twentieth century, and had witnessed radical social, cultural, and political changes.

Furthermore, Scutts (n.d) says that people began to challenge orthodoxy and tradition, agitating for fairer treatment of the poor and women as the radical views of scientists and philosophers such as Marx, Freud and Einstein gained traction and the power of religion waned. Virginia Woolf and her older siblings moved out of the family house and into the London neighbourhood of Bloomsbury to build a new form of living arrangement in this spirit of contemporary revolt. Virginia and her sister Vanessa despised the concept of a household run by a woman like their mother, the Victorian 'angel in the house,' and instead decided to engage in intellectual debates with their brothers and friends instead of serving tea and being pretty. Woolf and her free-thinking 'Bloomsbury Group' of friends and associates, on the other hand, never questioned the necessity of employing staff to operate even the most progressive of houses.

Additionally, Whitworth (2009, p. 43-44) highlights the importance of the city of London in Woolf's works, he says that all of Woolf's novels have at least one portion set in London. Woolf was born, raised, and spent the majority of her adult life there; her time away from it, including her exile in Richmond, allowed her to romanticise it. Despite the fact that Woolf's image of London is mediated by other works, the history of the city is an important aspect of her setting. By emerging as a centre of financial services and maritime services, Britain was able to weather the economic stagnation of 1873-96 (the "Great Depression") and the more severe agricultural crisis of 1878-80. The City of London became the world's financial capital.

Virginia Woolf's youth was significantly impacted by the laws of the social structure of the period, but not directly. This was an era typified by austerity in all senses: a community characterised by hard work, devotion, and strong religious convictions. Whitworth comments on this saying that standards of housing altered throughout Woolf's lifetime, as evidenced by

the London County Council's slum clearance programmes, as did the notion of what constituted a 'household.' Woolf's emphasis on a woman writer having her own room–both as a physical and mental space– reflects her own privileged upbringing, but standards of household privacy were shifting across the board at this era (Whitworth, 2009, p. 45). Furthermore, he says, in terms of social classes, that when compared to her understanding of gender difference, Woolf's awareness of social class divisions and usage of class vocabulary has been overlooked in critical analyses. True, she does not make class distinctions or socioeconomic advancement a central theme in her stories (p. 52), especially if we compare her to other writers of the time, such as D.H. Lawrence.

Additionally, as it has already been mentioned women's roles in society have changed drastically over the years. They were often seen as lesser beings, unable to speak up for themselves or make decisions. During centuries 16th until 19th, the home realm, which included marriage, childrearing, and managing household duties, was the sole domain of women. Also, the education provided to the women was initially intended to help them be better housewives and better at doing their domestic tasks while also making sure they didn't take up professional careers and change the established social structure. However, some women were able to leave the home and become recognisable in the outside world because of their intelligence or their written works. Those who dared to publish literary works were permitted to do so as long as they didn't violate any restrictions put in place at the end of the Middle Ages, such as prohibiting religious writings or translations. Despite all this, it was not until the early 20th century that women were able to start breaking these barriers and claim their rights. Women writers in England during this time period had little opportunities for education and publishing, yet still managed to use whatever outlets they had available to them to publish their work and stand up for themselves through writing.

In addition, women's rights were severely restricted in this civilization, which was also distinguished by a strong patriarchal regime. Women were completely cut off from intellectual life at the period, and they could not express themselves in public. As a matter of fact, Whitworth (2009) says that the biological distinction between male and female is simple; the cultural distinctions between masculine and feminine, 'girl' and 'woman,' and 'woman' and 'lady,' on the other hand, are more complicated; they involve many hazy borderlines, and factors such as age and social class further complicate the situation. Moreover, he mentions Denise Riley (1988), who has argued that "'Woman' is a historically variable category; moreover, not only does it vary from era to era, but, at any given moment, different social groups will define it differently."

Furthermore, Whitworth (2009) talks about the different roles that men and women used to have during those years. The anticipated duties of upper middle-class men were defined by contrast: the woman's domain was the domestic, while the man's was the public realm. The exceptions, 'public' problems like charity and education, might be gendered as 'feminine' activities and fit into this framework, but with some difficulty. This division has been justified in a variety of ways. Some claimed that women's hormones were so unpredictable that they could not participate in public activities (p. 60).

Whitworth (2009) also builds on the notions of womanhood and femininity at the time, which he says can also be described in terms of their relationship to non-gendered traits like "humanity" and double-gendered qualities like "androgyny." The development of the sexes was frequently used to explain the gender divide. For some, the human race was progressing toward a point when sexual distinctions would be diminished; for others, sexual differentiation was a characteristic of 'young' or degenerate races. Moreover, suffrage supporters were split on whether to demand the vote on the basis of a shared humanity or on the basis of women's unique talents and needs being democratically reflected. Whitworth completes this explanation saying that "following the partial success of 1918, the division became more acute, and led to a distinction between the 'old feminism' and the 'new feminism'." (2009, p. 62) The new feminism, he says, aimed to recognise women's uniquely feminine characteristics, which in fact meant childbirth, so that the 'endowment of motherhood' was a key component of the new feminist movement, while the old feminism focuses on the importance of the human being. Both approaches, he says, had potential flaws: old feminism risked adopting a definition of 'human being' based on male and masculine standards, while modern feminism risked defining 'woman' only on the basis of her feminine qualities. Moreover, the definition of female groups was also heavily influenced by age. Finally, he highlights that class and social mobility were inextricably tied to education, as the emergence of the "educated classes" suggests. Before Woolf was born, the most fundamental reforms in educational legislation had happened. Despite these advancements in women's education, colleges were still overwhelmingly filled by males from the upper middle and high classes who had received their education nearly exclusively at fee-paying 'public' schools.

4. VIRGINIA WOOLF

Virginia Woolf (London 1882- Lewes, Sussex 1941) is now widely regarded as one of world literature most important Modernists, along with James Joyce, Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka. Celtel et al. (2018) explain that Adeline Virginia Stephen (later Woolf) grew

reared in a wealthy upper middle-class family in London. Woolf was a novelist, essayist, and feminist who was at the forefront of the modernist movement, revolutionising fiction with her unique style and establishing a space for women in literature. Moreover, Virginia Woolf had four half-siblings from her parents' previous marriages, with Virginia, Vanessa, Thoby and Adrian being the offspring of the second marriage.

The ties of the family place this vast and bustling home at the centre of Victorian literary and intellectual culture. However, the boys were treated very differently than the girls. Virginia, an exceptionally bright kid, was schooled at home, but with unfettered access to her father's huge library, while her brothers were sent to prestigious schools and universities. Moreover, all these experiences led to Virginia's first mental breakdown which occurred after her mother died when she was thirteen years old. *To the Lighthouse*, published thirty-two years later, captures the transient bliss of her youth and the tragedy of time passing. Furthermore, Woolf's diaries reveal that in the years following their mother's death, both she and Vanessa were sexually assaulted by their half-brothers, and her already delicate mental state was exacerbated by the terrible death of her half-sister, Stella (Celtel et al., 2018, p.189).

In addition, because Virginia Woolf was being pursued by Leonard Woolf, a publisher and civil servant, a marriage proposal from a Bloomsbury Group founder, Lytton Strachey, was initially retracted. She referred to him as a "penniless Jew" and was not drawn to him because of the casual racism of the period. Despite this, they married in 1912. Next, after a failed marriage, Virginia Woolf started to explore her sexuality and her close friend Vita Sackville-West, an aristocratic writer and garden designer, encouraged her to write, and the two women became lovers in the Bloomsbury set's milieu (Celtel et al., 2018, p.190).

Moreover, Woolf's debut novel was published in 1915, and she went on to write seven more before her death in 1941. Her final novel, completed just before her death, was released after her death. Woolf's writing was well-received in her day, and she was recognised as one of contemporary literature's brightest stars. Her notoriety has only grown after her passing. She is regarded as one of the twentieth century's best novelists (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p.10).

In addition, Woolf's works from the mid- to late-twenties were her signature works. *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, her multisensory experience works, were followed by the feminist polemic *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which examined the issues women faced in a society where males wielded disproportionate authority. Finally, she prepared goodbye messages, packed her pockets with stones, and went into the Ouse River near Rodmell in 1941, at the age of 59, to terminate her life, leaving a legacy of journals, letters, essays, and nine "modern" novels that continue to astound readers today (Celtel et al., 2018, p.191).

Additionally, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) highlight that Woolf was intensely aware of the problems women faced, as well as the psychological effects of being a smart woman in a predominantly misogynistic culture, at a time when literary renown and intellectual respect were unusual for women.

4.1 Virginia Woolf's most relevant literary works

Throughout her life Woolf wrote more than 40 works, including essays, novels, collections of short stories, letters, biographies, diaries and several other genres. She began her writing career in journalism in 1900, and she began work on her first novel in 1907. *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), and *The Waves* (1931) were among the eight books that followed *The Voyage Out* (1915). Moreover, *Modern Fiction* (1919), *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) are her best-known nonfiction writings. Woolf's writings gave her literary fame during her lifetime, and she is now regarded as one of the best authors of the twentieth century (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p.16)

In their study, Celtel et al. (2018) mention several of Woolf's works. *The Voyage Out* (1915) was Woolf's debut work, it is tinged with a phobia of sexual closeness. It was a difficult production that resulted in another breakdown and a suicide attempt before its release. Three years later, Woolf published *Jacob's Room*, an experimental work in which she depicts her main character almost exclusively through the eyes of the women in his life. Furthermore, *Mrs. Dalloway*, published in 1925, depicts a day in the life of a society hostess through stream of consciousness that includes the lives of other characters. Also, Celtel et al. mention that Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*, written in 1927, is an attempt to comprehend her past as well as the nature of time and eternity (189-191). Another work of Woolf worth mentioning is *The Waves* (1931), which is considered her most experimental work in which six characters speak through soliloquies: Bernard, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, and Louis. Whitworth (2009) believes that Woolf emphasises the individual's relationship to the group in this novel, with 'the group' here referring to both the imperial nation's wider group and a small circle of friends. She uses a lexicon of unanimism to express communal awareness. The author's idea of theme is most veiled in The Waves than in any of her other novels, but it emerges in the nuances of word and imagery. Woolf's image of the enigmatic 'fin' amid the wastelands suggests a desire to avoid the 'finality' that an authorial consciousness may impose (pp. 166-67).

As has been mentioned, the term 'stream of consciousness' was commonly used, if not overused, during Modernism. As Virginia Woolf expressed it in an article titled "Modern

Fiction", an author's goal is to "study for a minute an ordinary mind on an ordinary day." However, various writers use the approaches in different ways. For instance, James Joyce shared Virginia Woolf's desire to depict characters' inner lives, although Virginia Woolf was aiming to delve into her characters' minds, but she was not attempting to deal with as many different sorts of individuals and circumstances as James Joyce did.

Finally, apart from her stated intention to reflect awareness, Woolf had a number of important issues to deal with. She was captivated by time as a series of moments and also in terms of years and centuries, as well as the distinctions between external and interior time. *Mrs. Dalloway* takes place in the minds of various people over the course of a single day, whereas *Orlando* recounts the history of a single character who returns across several centuries.

5. A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Published in 1929, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is a seminal work of feminist literary critique. Kronenberger (1929) highlights that in 1928 Woolf "asked to speak at Cambridge before college women on the subject "Women and Florition" –for this was a lecture before it was an essay […]." *Women and Fiction* was initially published in the United States in the 1920s in Forum Magazine, "a well-known literary publication, this essay, together with the lectures, was subsequently published in 1929 as *A Room of One's Own*."

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is an essay in which she muses extensively on women and literature, two themes about which she is enthusiastic. She poses a lot of questions in response to this topic. One of them is to draw attention to the close connection that exists between reality and literature. Literature is, or should be, a direct and unadulterated mirror of the world we live in. But, as she explains, this is not the case since the world of writing is ruled by males who force their point of view.

This work includes a metaphorical picture that compares women to a magical mirror that distorts reality in favour of males: men develop as a result of their perceived inferiority, believing themselves to be stronger, wiser, and more powerful than they are.

What challenges do both men and women face when it comes to composing good works, according to the author? Time, space, and attention are all factors to consider. It was challenging enough for males to achieve mental stability, but it was considerably more difficult for women. They lacked their personal space, which was necessary for breathing in peace and quiet and concentrating. In addition, women had to overcome one or two more barriers in order to become writers: the conventional and nonsensical belief that women, even if gifted, could not write a novel in the culture of the time.

Moreover, as Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) highlight, the essay focuses on "two central questions: why have there been so few great women writers in history? And what does one need in order to write?" (p.10)

The second question is answered first by Woolf. The title of the essay comes from a line in her response: "To write, one must have a private space." The second need is that one has sufficient funds. Woolf settles on a yearly salary of £500, which was a reliable and comfortable sum in 1929. These are required for writing, according to Woolf, because writing is based on daily life. "In order to write, you must have privacy, and you must be free of worries about money. Only with privacy and security can a person create art" (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p. 10).

Furthermore, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) go on to affirm that "the first question—why have there been so few great women writers?— is more complicated." Women were commonly regarded to be less brilliant than males in the early twentieth century, and the paucity of prominent female authors and artists throughout history was frequently used as evidence. Woolf, on the other hand, considers that women are equally brilliant as men and searches for other factors. She claims that if women have not produced excellent works, that is because something has kept them from doing so.

According to Woolf, society has created conditions in which no woman has been able to write throughout history. Women have lacked privacy, financial resources, and access to education. Even the most gifted woman, according to Woolf, would be unable to write in such a society. The realities of ordinary life, not intellectual deficiency, have made it difficult for women to compose literature.

A third reason for the scarcity of great female authors now, according to Woolf, is the absence of prominent female writers in history. She claims that in order to generate excellent work, female authors require a tradition of elder female writers (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p.12).

Mary Beton, an ordinary middle-class girl who is fortunate enough to have two very important circumstances for a woman's survival in a world where there is only room for men: the right to vote and an inheritance of £500 a year for the rest of her life, is one of the most representative figures in the essay. Without a doubt, the acquisition of a reasonable salary was most essential to her, as it would help her to forget the terror and anger she felt when she had to survive on the little she earned doing labour that did not satisfy her, and which was the only thing a woman could do until 1918.

In addition, Virginia Woolf provides us an ideal picture of a plane of the spirit in which there are two powers: the masculine and the feminine, after polemicizing about male and female ideals and points of view in the essay. She claims that the optimal condition for writing is a merger of the two, in which the two abilities may coexist together. This essay "concentrated on the impact of daily life on women's psyches and talents." The article aims to explain why there are so few works by women writers in the literary canon. Working from the cultural materialist premise that art is inextricably linked to "material" life—a person's economic circumstances, clothing, access to private space, and interactions with other people—Woolf claims that material conditions that persistently favour men have prevented potential female writers from writing throughout history (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p. 15).

Furthermore, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) highlight that "*A Room of One's Own* should be seen in three intellectual contexts: Woolf's own intellectual background, the history of feminism, and the history of literature," as all of these contexts have influenced Virginia Woolf and her writing and, in particular, *A Room of One's Own*.

Woolf profited from her personal connections to the period's literary and intellectual elite. Leslie Stephen, her father, was a journalist, biographer, and intellectual historian who founded the Dictionary of National Biography. Woolf grew up in a rich intellectual atmosphere as a result of this education. Her brothers Adrian and Thoby Stephen, who met at the university of Cmabridge the talented thinkers who subsequently formed the basis of the Bloomsbury Group at the University of Cambridge, provided additional connections to the intellectual elite.

Intellectually, feminism was likewise at a crossroads. Increased rights for women were frequently met with a hardening of old societal biases against them, and feminist groups were rife with heated discussions regarding the character of women.

Finally, during the early decades of the twentieth century, the modernist movement upended and revitalised established forms in disciplines like architecture and music. The English-language literature saw massive changes in the decade after 1918. The poet and writer D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), T. S. Eliot's epic poem The Waste Land (1922), and James Joyce's novel Ulysses are all considered seminal modernist writings. As Eliot argued in his influential essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), modernism's connection to tradition and the literary canon was fundamental. Woolf's consideration of a hypothetical female canon in *A Room of One's Own* was shaped by this interest (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 18-20).

Moreover, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) move on to answer the two questions that have been mentioned earlier: why are there so few female writers in the literary canon? And what conditions are required for women to write great fiction?" (p. 23).

On the one hand, the first refuted a common assumption in antifeminist discourse at the time: that women were less clever and capable than men. The absence of well-known female authors throughout history was commonly used to support such claims. Woolf, on the other hand, accepts that men and women have equal intelligence and skill, and instead inquires as to what historical circumstances have stopped women from becoming great authors. She was attempting to refute the idea that women lacked literary aptitude by investigating the true origins of the scant feminine literary legacy.

On the other hand, the second important question was the ongoing project of the British women's movement. Women faced continued injustices and biases despite gaining full suffrage in 1928, just two months before the lectures that produced *A Room of One's Own*. Women were still relegated to a secondary position in British society due to social expectations (such as those relating to education, marriage, and work), institutional bylaws (such as those preventing female students at the University of Cambridge from receiving degrees until 1948), and material conditions (lack of money or privacy) (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 23-24).

Dealing now with the approach of the essay, as I said before, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) also highlight that *A Room of One's Own* is a complicated blend of essay and short story that developed out of lectures. The text starts in the middle of a phrase ("But, you may ask"), as though the reader were late for a lecture. The narrator then goes on to explain that she will tackle her subject with "all the freedoms and permissions of a novelist." What follows is a fictional account of the narrator's experiences in Cambridge (dining at both a male and female college) and London (researching for the lecture, reading a contemporary female writer's novel), as well as a thought experiment in which the narrator imagines the life of a talented Elizabethan woman.

They move on to say that Woolf takes this unique technique to combine critical observations about female authors and their position in history with a first-hand description of her own female writing experience. It gives her access to both classic literary criticism's analytical logic and historical facts, as well as the emotional resources of narrative fiction. It also means she may contribute to and critically analyse the "Women's Question" in a different way than writers like Olive Schreiner who make ardent political arguments. As a major means of comprehending and relating to Woolf's thesis, the reader is encouraged to engage with the narrator.

Finally, they mention that another important aspect of Woolf's approach is her emphasis on life's material circumstances. The narrator's assertion that possessing money "seemed immensely more significant" than having a vote has sparked debate. What it underlines, however, is Woolf's cultural-materialist belief—those human qualities are inextricably linked to economic conditions and even the tiniest material parts of existence (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 29-30).

Dealing now with the main ideas of the essay, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) agree that "the central theme of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is that, as Woolf states: 'Intellectual freedom depends upon material things.' She sums this up in the memorable phrase that gives the essay its title, a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." Woolf's demand is physical as well as symbolic: they are genuine necessities for her, but they also signify greater issues. "Money represents the ability to consider... a lock on the door represents the ability to think for oneself," says the author. Her key point is that intellectual growth, particularly writing ability, is not based on a romantic concept of intrinsic brilliance, "but on the most basic conditions of life." This idea, they say, lies behind the narrator's highly controversial notion that money and private space are more important than voting rights (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 34-35).

Having said that, cultural materialism is at the heart of Woolf's thesis in *A Room of One's Own*: the premise that people's personalities, intellectual talents, and opinions are shaped by the social structures and economic conditions of their environment. This is also to argue that a society's culture—from popular songs to newspapers, art, poetry, and fiction—is directly influenced by the "material conditions" of that society's life. This is in sharp contrast to the widely held belief that "art" is the result of exceptional individuals whose minds are capable of "rising beyond such things," as Woolf puts it. To believe that this is conceivable is to neglect the influence of everyday realities on the artist, according to Woolf (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p. 35).

Moreover, Woolf's argument is based on the assumption that great work originates from a tradition, in addition to its cultural-materialist grounding. This is a central idea in the modernist literary movement. Also, they add, Woolf believes that all writers are reliant on their predecessors. These arguments come together to explain why women have been underrepresented in the literary world throughout history. To begin with, a male-dominated society—"patriarchy" in feminist parlance—has continuously denied women the economic independence and physical privacy needed to write. Second, those few women in a material position to write the female literary heritage that would have aided them in creating great

literature have been denied. The fact that there have been so few great female writers throughout history is not proof that women cannot write; rather, it is proof that their societal conditions have prevented them from doing so (p. 35).

Furthermore, Robinson & Smith-Laing (2017) also deal with language and expression. They say that the essay "combines aspects of critical writing and lectures with techniques from fiction—most notably Woolf's use of a narrator. Though written in the first person, with the narrator speaking as 'I,' Woolf makes clear that 'I' is not meant to be the author herself." Along the name of Mary Beton, previously mentioned, Woolf says "here then was I (call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please—it is not a matter of importance)" (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 4). Woolf employs the tactic to demonstrate that women in 1920s society are in no better position than their foremothers, and that patriarchal society treats them in many respects as interchangeable and similar, despite their distinct names. This is a recurring theme in her argument. The three names, which come from a sixteenth-century song, emerge in the essay as the narrator's aunt, the head of the imaginary "Fernham" College, and a female author, respectively. The approach also allows Woolf to integrate many aspects of genuine, lived female experience and deliver them clearly, as if directly, to the reader through the fictitious experience of the narrator (p. 36).

Finally, Robinson & Smith-Laing also highlight that *A Room of One's Own*, in addition to its stylistic creativity, which shares much with Woolf's novels, makes as much use of comedy and sarcasm as it does of direct critical study of its topic. The narrator of Woolf's essay openly mocks the type of male "authority" who publishes misogynist literature as if it were scientific reality (p. 36).

Another idea to highlight about the essay is that of Shakespeare's sister, Judith. Woolf's Judith, a fictitious sister of William Shakespeare, shows how women's voices have been stifled or suppressed throughout history. This concealment is neither easy nor purposeful, as Woolf points out. It is convoluted and oblique: because Judith's father loves her and does not want her to be socially isolated, he discourages her from reading. She, like her brother, flees to London to pursue her ambitions of writing and performing. But, unlike William, she is mocked and outcast, and she finally kills herself when pregnant with an illicit child. Woolf utilises this imaginary existence to explore how and why there are so few female authors in history.

Continuing on from "Judith Shakespeare," Woolf's narrator traces the few female writers in English who make up the literature's scarce "female tradition": Aphra Behn, the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, and George Eliot, to name a few. The narrator claims that women's "creative capacity" differs substantially from men's, and that women's work should represent

that difference. However, later on, the narrator wonders if writing should be gendered in this way. If there are "two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body," do they "also require to be joined in order to get total contentment and happiness," so that great literature may be created? If this is the case, does this negate the concept of "female writing" or a potential "female canon"? (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 38-39).

Consequently, "Judith Shakespeare" is important to *A Room of One's Own's* argument about women's voices being silenced. Woolf uses the creation of a female parallel to the greatest writer in English history to show that a woman in Shakespeare's day could never have been "Shakespeare," regardless of her innate skills. "Judith" also exemplifies the complicated and indirect nature of women's oppression: she is silenced by societal conditions more than by men's wilful hostility (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p. 39).

Furthermore, Woolf might understand what has been lost through women's "infinitely inconspicuous lives," a constant forced stillness underneath the clamour of male history, with this perspective. Woolf asks the reader to consider the possibilities hidden behind that stillness, which is one of the text's most enduring contributions to feminist literary criticism: "When ... one reads of a witch being ducked, or a woman possessed by devils, of a wise woman selling herbs ... then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen." The issue of what a real "women's fiction" might look like remains unanswered for Woolf, a topic that leads directly to one of the essay's less-discussed ideas: literary androgyny (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, pp. 39-40).

Subsequently, they say, it is difficult to talk about neglected themes in an essay as concise and important as *A Room of One's Own*, but the narrator's beliefs on whether writing can or should be "gendered" remain more vague and baffling than the essay's major statements. In debates of the text, these principles are occasionally overlooked. It also allows for a lesbian reading of the work, establishing *A Room of One's Own* as an early "queer" as well as an early feminist book. The narrator claims in Chapter 5 that "women's fiction" can only arise from a feminine tradition since "creative power differs substantially" between males and females. Later on, she begins to doubt this notion. Seeing a couple getting into a London cab together makes her ponder "if there are two sexes in the mind" as well as in the body, and whether they must be balanced together in literature, as much as in reality, for "full fulfilment and happiness." If that is the case, should there be a distinction between "masculine" and "female" writing, or should all writers be "androgynous"—male and female at the same time? (pp. 40-41).

The concept of the "man-womanly" or "woman-manly" mind, of "female" and "masculine" parts coexisting, was a recurrent motif in modern sex theories. Homosexuality was

usually coupled with androgyny. Woolf was well aware that *A Room of One's Own* would have a lesbian undercurrent. Lesbianism was a significant component of Woolf's personal sexuality, despite the fact that it is barely hinted in the essay. Her novel *Orlando,* published in 1928, is about a character who, throughout the course of an extraordinarily long existence, changes genders. As a result, the brief study on literary "androgyny" is significant not just in terms of "women's writing," but also in terms of what would become known as "queer writing" (Robinson & Smith-Laing, 2017, p. 41).

6. ORLANDO

Virginia Woolf questioned the disparities between men and women one hundred years ago. One of the solutions she provided for the world was *Orlando,* a satire of the biographical genre in which a young aristocrat with literary ambitions changes himself into a woman; however, this is not the only transgression in this curious work—an example of English literary modernism in the early 20th century— as the life of this androgynous character is strangely long: Orlando was born in 1588, during Elizabethan times, and died in the interwar period, in 1928

Moreover, with the explicit goal of parodying this genre—to which Woolf's own father, Leslie Stephen, was devoted, as it has been said before—she originally intended this book to be read as a biography. The omniscient narrator of the biography, who more than once outperforms even the most knowledgeable biographers, uses the lifespan of his subject to provide a historical overview of English society.[1] Although she is never specifically addressed, Orlando is introduced to Queen Elizabeth I; nonetheless, he falls from favour and departs the court; by the time he returns, James I has taken over. Orlando falls in love with a Russian princess during the 1683-1684 winter that became known in England as "The Great Frost," but she deserts him when the ship he is on is no longer stranded in the frozen waters of the Thames. Because this book is mostly a love letter from Virginia Woolf to her dear friend Vita Sackville-West, to whom she dedicates the work, rather than a parody of biography or feminist debate, it is argued that the passionate affair with Sasha represents Vita Sackville-West's infatuation with Violet Trefusis, as Blair (2004) mentions in her article, saying that "Woolf's interest in Sackville-West's gypsy blood is both obliquely and directly referenced in *Orlando*, a text which, of course, draws on Sackville-West's life and on her account of her love for Trefusis."

[1] From this point onwards, Orlando, as an androgynous character, will be referred indistinctly as ‘he’ and ‘she’.

Having said that, it is important to highlight the most important aspect of this fictional work, which is the moment when Orlando changes his gender. He lives, as has been previously stated, an exceptionally long life, and on top of that, he does not age, therefore the storyline of the work may be termed fantastical. These gaps in reality are, however, given a significant symbolic charge that turns them into poetic allegories about life, death, identity, gender, and literature rather than factual truths.

An illustration of what has been just mentioned is the passing of the change: "would that we might spare the reader what is to come and say to him in so many words, Orlando died and was buried" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 101), the narrator writes. But the narrator is unable to operate in such a reckless manner since, as the narrator states earlier, "our simple duty is to state the facts as far as they are known, and so let the reader make of what he may" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 69). As it proceeds, it foreshadows what will happen and what it has not yet revealed to the reader:

> But here, alas, Truth, Candour, and Honesty, the austere Gods who keep watch and ward by the inkpot of the biographer, cry No! Putting their silver trumpets to their lips they demand in one blast, Truth! And again they cry Truth! (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 101).

The narrator has little option but to reveal "the truth" about what transpired, i.e., that Orlando changes gender; note the sarcasm and exaggeration in the "but here, alas" line, by personifying the concepts of truth, frankness, and honesty to emphasise the virtues of a good biographer, who has already included into the tale the crucial aspect that would enable the reader to forgive this breach. Additionally, it is interesting to highlight that the biographer does not start using the 'she' and 'her' pronouns until the narrator explains it, saying "His memory—but in future we must, for convention's sake, say 'her' for 'his,' and 'she' for 'he'—her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 103).

Furthermore, the scene ends when the narrator states "we have no choice left but confess—he was a woman" (p.103). Here, Orlando has undergone change, a genuine and long-lasting transition, yet its core has not changed. Being male is the same as being female. If there are any disparities, they are awkward misconceptions on society's part. No one is astonished by his transformation into a woman, and no one questions that he is still the same person. Because of this acceptance, the reader might view the transition as evidence for the author's claim that gender distinctions have no bearing on a person's psychology or soul. Being a man or a woman

does not actually alter who you are as a person. In fact, the differences that the narrator highlights in the novel are based on physical changes, as can be seen in the following passage:

> If we compare the picture of Orlando as a man with that of Orlando as a woman we shall see that though both are undoubtedly one and the same person, there are certain changes. The man has his hand free to seize his sword; the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses and fashioned to his liking. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even of suspicion. Had they both worn the same clothes, it is possible that their outlook might have been the same too (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p.124).

Also, the narrator mentions that Orlando is changing her attitudes due to her clothes: "the change of clothes had, some philosophers will say, much to do with it" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], 211). The changes that the biographer mentions are the following: "she was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little vainer, as women are, of her person. Certain susceptibilities were asserting themselves, and others were diminishing" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 211).

This scene is, as has already been mentioned, one of the most important scenes in the novel, if not the most important, as it portrays Orlando's change in a very natural way, which is what links it to one of its main themes, androgyny. Now, in order to understand the concept of androgyny, it is important to clarify what the meaning of gender and sex is.

In University of Jaén (n.d.) we can find comments upon the differences between sex and gender, saying that the “anthropologist Margaret Mead” is credited with establishing the difference between sex and gender in her work *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935). Gender is the culturally formed manifestation of sexual difference; it is the masculine and feminine ways in which men and women should act: "Sex is the biological category." Moreover, they state that the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir emphasises the fact that under this paradigm, "woman is the Other: the kind of person whose characteristics are described by contrast with the male norm". Gender is more of a created or adopted identity.

Moreover, in University of Jaén (n.d.) gender is a category used to distinguish between "men and women, boys and girls, male and female, and masculinity and femininity," with the exception of its limited use in languages that give "masculine/feminine/neuter status" to linguistic concepts. The emergence of academic feminism has corresponded with a greater focus on gender as a category of analysis, notably in the social and behavioural sciences. "The

category has undergone numerous revisions throughout history, but it is typically" used to distinguish sex from gender in the following manner: men and women clearly differ biologically from one another (sex differences), and these biological differences form the basis for the social construction of distinct roles for men and women (gender differences), though these can vary from culture to culture. Although the roles given to men and women are not required by biological differences, they do permit various social connections, which are thus frequently "(mis)understood to be 'naturally' dictated by biology" (p. 4).

The notion that men and women have distinct natures is an old one, but in the nineteenth century, when the concept was the subject of formal research, it began to acquire the epistemic authority of science and medicine. Victorian science gave "women's weaker constitution special attention and alternated between attributing to them either sexual passivity" ascribed to "bourgeois women" or wild "promiscuity, attributed to lower-class women and women of colour", again according to University of Jaén (n.d.). However, it was described in medical or biological terms, and it was said that a woman's nature was distinctly inferior to a man's.

Delving now into the topic of androgyny, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* describes androgyny as "the quality or state of being neither specifically feminine or masculine: the combination of feminine and masculine characteristics: the quality or state of being androgynous" ("Androgyny" n.d.).

Moreover, Baumann (2017) affirms that Woolf is of the opinion that "gender and sex are constructed socially and culturally. There should be no need to differentiate between them." For instance, the protagonist in *Orlando* does not immediately alter her identity when her biological sex is changed. She does not experience a big alteration until after being exposed to society and its gender conventions. Due to these problems, in chapter 4, Orlando decides to put on men's clothes and after spending hours in these outfits, she decides to change sex at will, which makes her life more complete.

Another interesting aspect of this novel is everything that happens after Orlando changes gender. In the second part of this novel, when Orlando is already a woman, it can be seen how she suffers several problems due to her gender, such as no longer being entitled to own a castle, or the fact that she cannot go for a walk on her own. Related to this, De Gay (2007) affirms that the novel illustrates some of the limitations Orlando faces as a woman. Orlando "hides her manuscript when people" enter the room because she learns that it is prohibited to describe "sullen and foreign-looking" (Woolf, 1928, p. 252-3, cited in De Gay, 2007, p. 65) girls, even if this was okay when she was a guy (p. 65).

Additionally, the poem that took three centuries to compose, "The oak," is the book's finale and an obvious homage to Vita Sackville-West's narrative poem "The land," as Blair (2004) mentions:

> Sackville-West was strongly drawn to traditional rural life, and her works, such as Sackville-West's prize-winning poem *The Land* (1926), reveal a deeply reverent attitude toward nature. Woolf makes a playful dig at this nature worship in Orlando's mystical attachment to her oak tree (p. 148).

Another interesting aspect, which is also a very important detail in the novel, is clothing, as the change of sex is constructed through clothing: "Clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 274). In fact, when Orlando meets Sasha, the Russian girl, for the first time, the narrator says "whether boy's or woman's, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 90). Related to this, it is important to highlight that, although he is said to be a man, the narrator uses a description of Orlando that could make the reader think he is a woman; an example of this is:

> The red of the cheeks was covered with peach down; the down on the lips was only a little thicker than the down on the cheeks. The lips themselves were short and slightly drawn back over teeth of an exquisite and almond whiteness. Nothing disturbed the arrowy nose in its short, tense flight; the hair was dark, the ears small, and fitted closely to the head (Woolf, 2006 [1928], 13).

Furthermore, De Gay (2007) goes on to highlighting one element in *Orlando*, which she says Woolf satirises with. The concept of "the spirit of the age" as a controlling ideological force is parodied by Woolf in *Orlando*. Significantly, this is "strongest in the nineteenth-century" part, as Orlando's behaviour is consistently influenced by "the spirit of the age," causing her to feel ashamed at the thought of becoming pregnant, restricting her work, and pressuring her to wed. Orlando has never been interested in marriage, therefore "this development may be seen as the outcome of coercive violence" (p. 65).

In addition to making fun "of Stephen's [her father] way of characterising literary" eras, Woolf utilises periodisation in her mockery of "the spirit of the age" to discredit Victorian

beliefs as archaic artefacts of their time. When she uses The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century to describe that era, she makes a very similar allusion to Stephen's contemporary John Ruskin. Woolf parodies Ruskin's assertion that a 'storm-cloud' or 'plague-cloud' was 'peculiar to our own times' (De Gay, 2007, p. 65) by comparing the entrance of the nineteenth century to the descending of a fog that has an impact on all facets of existence (p. 65).

Time is another important element in *Orlando*, as there is a time span from the 1600s to the 1900s. One of the quotes that best describe this is the following: "Orlando had inclined herself naturally to the Elizabethan spirit, to the Restoration spirit, to the spirit of the eighteenth century, and had in consequence scarcely been aware of the change from one age to the other" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 149). In this aspect, Kramelová (2015) affirms that a part of the uncertainty described by the biographer in the preceding remark has to do with Orlando's extremely long life. The narrator is aware that since life starts "at birth and ends at death," it is possible to quantify it extremely precisely. But what lies in the middle of these two distinct locations might vary greatly depending on the individual. Someone's life may seem relatively short and without much excitement if they are very inactive and uninterested "in new experiences and activities. In this case, the biographer would have nothing to report and to write about, and the subject's life would be almost empty" (p.44). However, Kramelová (2015) continues, if someone deliberately "lives a life full of experiences", it may appear to us that they have lived many lifetimes or have had an extraordinarily lengthy existence. In the case of Orlando, it is clearly evident that the actions take place over the period of three centuries because the novel makes numerous historical references to various eras, "kings or queens, and historical events. What if there were no allusions to them?" At that point, it might be concluded that Orlando had lived a very busy, complete life that was filled with numerous adventures. As a result, if life is judged "by experiences and knowledge" rather than by the passage of time, it becomes exceedingly subjective (p. 44).

De Gay (2007) continues saying that in order to establish a close connection "between herself and the Elizabethan era, Woolf here gives history a voice" and brings back into existence long-dead characters in her mind. By modelling Orlando after Sackville-West, taking cues from his/her relatives in Sackville, and basing "Orlando's estate on Knole, Woolf was able to convey a sense of connection with the past" (p. 70). Moreover, this author (2007) believes that *Orlando* uses her lengthy life to trace a history "for a twentieth-century woman writer all the way back to the Renaissance" enacting the imaginative effort to uncover lost beginnings that Woolf had recommended in *A Room of One's Own*. She attacked Victorian patriarchal metanarratives that tried to package the past in a way that supported patriarchal ideology and left out the history of

women authors in satirising Stephen and Ruskin's approaches. Instead, she leans toward "a school of critics" who aimed to channel the energy of the past and unleash them, and who employed the techniques "of fiction to make history" come to life and exist in the here and now (p.70). De Gay (2007) finishes her analysis saying that we may understand why Woolf chose to create "Orlando rather than a nonfictional book to remake history" by situating her "feminist historiography in the Pater and Lee tradition. For Woolf, the imagination was the only effective tool for embracing the past that had been lost" (p.70).

7. A COMPARISON OF *A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN* AND *ORLANDO*

The relationship between both works, at first, may not seem to be direct, however, after the analysis of both works it can be said that both works are related to each other, which would also be explained by the short time that elapses between one work and the other. Here, it is important to highlight that although the essay was published after the novel, the talks, those in which the essay is based, that Virginia Woolf offered in Cambridge took place in 1928. In fact, as De Gay affirms, Woolf "was writing her fantasy novel *Orlando: A Biography*, as she began preparing *A Room of One's Own*" (p. 63).

The very first difference we encounter with these works is the type of work they are. While *Orlando* is a fictional novel, *A Room of One's Own* is a non-fictional work. This should mean that they are significantly different from one another. Firstly, fiction is made up and based on the imagination of the author. While locales, story ideas, and characters in fiction can occasionally be based on actual people or events, writers often utilise these as starting grounds for their own invention. An example of this is, as mentioned before, Sasha, who some experts argue that this character might be based on Vita Sackville-West. Contrarily, nonfiction is factual and presents accounts of actual events. While a few fabrications in a nonfiction work can make the entire narrative untrue, a few smatterings of fact in a work of fiction do not make it truthful.

Moreover, fictional works are subjective while non-fictional works can be taken to be more objective. This explains all the different opinions experts have about *Orlando*; while some of them believe it is a masterpiece, others explain that it is not a novel at all. Thompson (1993, p. 315) here clarifies that many critics fail to recognize how "Woolf's achievement only demonstrates the limits (and masculine bias) of novelistic theory; Woolf's attempt to provide both theory *A Room* and example in *Orlando* demonstrates how polyphonic, capacious, and indeed, how novel the novel can be."

Furthermore, a fictional work can have different points of view, and although in *Orlando* there is a third person narrator, sometimes we can see Woolf experimenting with the

stream of consciousness displaying Orlando's thoughts. By contrast, in a non-fictional work like *A Room of One's Own* there is an authorial point of view in which we read the author's personal viewpoint, personal convictions, personal perspective, and personal opinion. Related to this, in this novel it is very interesting to see how Virginia Woolf is who is talking to the readers but she says we can call her Mary Beton, because, as it has been mentioned before, names in women were not important.

Finally, the last major difference between fiction and non-fiction is that while fictional works focus on the interior, non-fictional works focus on the exterior, that means that compared to nonfiction, literary fiction frequently focuses more on the inner lives of its characters. This can be seen in Orlando as we can see her feelings towards the society and how mistreated she feels when for example she is stripped of her belongings because a woman could not be in possession of anything. However, in *A Room of One's Own* we also can read the feelings of Woolf when she is rejected to enter a library on her own, but this is not as common as in fictional writings.

Virginia Woolf also seems to give an answer with *Orlando* to many of the questions raised by *A Room of One's Own.* Some of these questions are "Why did men drink wine and women water? What effect has poverty on fiction? On poetry? What conditions are necessary for the creation of a work of art?" (Winterson, 2018).

As for the wine question, in *A Room of One's Own* Woolf tells us that women do not drink wine because in the universities they were served water because not enough money was invested in women's universities. By contrast, in *Orlando* only men drink wine because they are the only ones who have time to go drinking as women are in charge of the housework, taking care of the children... However, it is interesting to see how Orlando after having changed gender still drinks wine, even though she is a woman, this is a clear example of how drinking wine or not was, in the end, an imposition of society that Orlando had not lived before.

As for the question of poverty and its effect on fiction, it is interesting to stress the fact that if Orlando had not been lucky enough to be born into a wealthy family he would not have been able to dedicate himself to writing regardless of his gender. We can find an example of this when he goes to the gypsies and we see how Orlando explains that he cannot write because they have no ink, as well as the comparisons between the austere life of the gypsies and Orlando's life with the luxuries, parties, and clothes. This leads us to conclude that not having money to pay for writing materials or having to work in order to have some money, which leads to not having time to write, results in not being able to write fiction nor poetry.

Additionally, to the question of what conditions are necessary to be able to create art, the answer she gives in *A Room of One's Own*, as already mentioned, is to have money, 500 pounds a year being the amount Woolf determines appropriate for the creation of art and a room of one's own to write in. In *Orlando*, one can of course see that the character has more than enough money to create art, and not only does she have a room of her own, but she has a castle, which seems to be the only element in Orlando's life that, like her, has not changed.

Related to this, Thompson (1993) says that *Orlando* criticises and rejects any theory that may confine the book to such a framework. *A Room of One's Own* attempts to break out from the limiting and exclusionary univocal structures developed by male reviewers to analyse the book. Orlando provides a key to future authors and readers who could find it difficult to enter the book because "of critics like the gentlemanly Beadle, who forbids the female narrator of *A Room of One's Own*" from entering the renowned Oxbridge library. In *A Room of One's Own* (2005 [1929]), when Woolf tells us that she wants to enter the library, there is a person who closes the door and does not let her in, as in those years women could only enter accompanied by a professor or with a letter of introduction.

In relation to this, there is an important connection between the works, this relation is based on the experiences that women have in society. First, in the wine scenes that have already been mentioned. Also, the fact that women in those years could not only not own a castle but neither a house. Next, De Gay (2007) mentions in her work that the moment in which Orlando has to "hide her manuscript" it refers to the "anecdote from the life of Jane Austen which Woolf cited in *A Room of One's Own*" (p. 65).

Another important issue that appeared in both works is the difference between male and female writing. Jacobus makes reference to this issue in her essay *The difference of view* (2012). First of all, Jacobus talks about how George Eliot and the women of the time faced such a male-dominated world as education. The position of women in both a cultural and educational environment, in a culture dominated by males, was that women strive for intellectual independence and to reclaim their voices. This culture gives males the right to speak for women and denies women the opportunity to demonstrate their intellectual abilities.

On the other hand, Jacobus mentions that Woolf said that women are not so easy to describe. Women like George Eliot, she believed, struggled with this difficulty by accumulating knowledge. This understanding enables women to transcend their roles as "virgins, wives, and mothers"(10). Instead, they become educated individuals capable of speaking for themselves and altering the inflexible system that has been working against them thus far.

Moreover, something also very important that Jacobus mentions is how Eliot's heroines who were able to break free from their burden created a confusion in the readers and led contemporary feminist criticism to stress pleasure instead of suffering. This new expression in literature led to a liberation of pleasures in language and so they said women's language should communicate what males are unable to write. This example is similar to the one we encounter with Orlando, when he becomes a woman, she breaks free. He starts to change clothes and attitude at will choosing what is best on every occasion.

Furthermore, another important issue Jacobus talks about is that women's writings on women are written from the inside out, rather than from the outside in. While men frequently write about women as love interests or in relation to them in the literary tradition, women are not portrayed as distinct people with their own goals and aspirations. Related to this, in *Orlando* women are referred to as "the mistress of a King" while "every man has been a Prime Minister" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 130). Women criticise men's writings about women. Women's writings attempt to dismantle what men have constructed, what they have misconstrued and misunderstood. D.H. Lawrence, for example, claims that women symbolise the incomprehensible, the unattainable by males.

Finally, when Jacobus addresses Woolf's notion in *A Room of One's Own*, it is one of the most essential themes she discusses, the importance of women having an inheritance in terms of education and power as it helps them to be able to write and have the same opportunities as men.

Related to this, Virginia Woolf believed that in order to write well, the mind needs not to be aware of its own gender, which implies that men and women traditionally write differently. These differences are the result of the different opportunities and rights that men have had and not women, which have led them to write differently. Men have always been able to write because of their own tradition. Since the beginning of oral tradition, men have been the ones who have developed their own literature, style, and topics to write about. There was no millennium tradition for women. They struggled to publish their writings because it was not deemed suitable for them to write literature, therefore they did so either anonymously or behind a male pen name. In relation to this Woolf talks about the necessity of having a tradition in writing in order to write a masterpiece. On page 63 of *A Room of One's Own* Woolf (2005 [1929]) states:

> For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass

> is behind the single voice. […] All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn […] for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.

Moreover, women could not write, not only because of the differences between men and women, but also because they were considered inferior to men based on their own biology, so they were not worthy of the 'pen'. Woolf says that men "insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. That serves to explain in part the necessity that women so often are to men" (2005 [1929], p. 40).

Furthermore, women have always felt guilty because of patriarchal oppression, especially when they leave the home, as "it was impossible for a woman to go about alone. She never travelled; she never drove through London in an omnibus or had luncheon in a shop by herself" (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 64). Reading, speaking, writing, and other typically male activities were not for women. Men and women have diverse perceptions and expectations as a result of their disparate historical backgrounds and experiences. Topics, approaches, and writing style may vary. As a result, it is more difficult for a woman from a previous century to compose something exceptional. They have been denied access to training and education. Additionally, it was stigmatised for respectable women to write. Writing by a woman is contentious, while writing by a man is not. Men's writing is therefore clear and exudes a sense of self-assurance that would not be achievable without support and a strong tradition. According to Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*, men have been bred and educated to believe that their perspective is the one that matters. Women, especially the first female writers, were heavily impacted by men's opinions and were unable to write freely or express themselves. Consequently, in *Orlando* the narrator mentions that:

> A woman knows very well that, though a wit sends her his poems, praises her judgment, solicits her criticism, and drinks her tea, this by no means signifies that he respects her opinions, admires her understanding, or will refuse, though the rapier is denied him, to run through the body with his pen (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p.136).

All these burdens that women have suffered throughout history is something that Orlando realises. When he was a man he lived accepting these burdens of women and insisted that all women must follow those rules, but when he is a woman he realises what women have been living through all these centuries, the invisibility, the prohibitions, the rights they lacked, something that now she is living, as it was mentioned before, since she encounters a number of

issues as a result of her gender, such as the loss of her right to possess a castle and the inability to go for a solo walk, and she remembers:

> How, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled. "Now I shall have to pay in my own person for those desires," she reflected; "for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled by nature (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 111).

Despite all the difficulties that women may encounter on their way, Woolf insists that they continue to write and to achieve their dreams if that is what they want, she tells them to write because they can pay homage and be an example to the next generations because "great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh" (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 94). This is also found in Orlando, who, despite all the barriers she has encountered as a woman, managed to finish her book and become a renowned writer with a continuing presence.

Dealing now with the concept of androgyny, it is present in both works. Woolf believes that in order to have an extraordinary mind and to be able to carry out the creative act, it is essential for a man and a woman to work together, that is why Woolf defended that "it is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly" (2005 [1929], p. 89). Woolf believes that being androgynous is the secret to compose timeless literature and to be a genius. Men and women differ in difficult-to-define ways. In *Orlando*, the lines separating them are frequently blurred. From the beginning of the book until the end Orlando is presented as an androgynous character, his physique has the characteristics of a woman and later the narrator will tell us that "Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot now be decided" (Woolf, 2006 [1928], p. 126).

Baumann (2017) highlights that in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf examines the concept "of thinking and writing androgynously." According to this author, "physical appearance is simply one aspect of androgyny." Woolf talks about having an androgynous mentality and being androgynous. Woolf said "[it] is disastrous for anyone who writes to think of their sex," for instance. Pure and simple masculinity or femininity is dangerous; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 120). According to her, "the androgynous mind is resonant and porous; that it transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent, and undivided" (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 114). Moreover, Orlando's sex changes, but her intellect is able to maintain both her new femininity and his previous masculine

identity. He or she represents the androgynous mind in human form and as Woolf comments in her essay:

> The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her (2005 [1929], p. 85).

Related to this, De Souza Kappke (2017, p. 13) quotes Woolf saying the following:

> Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace (Woolf, 1929, p. 121, cited in De Souza Kappke, 2017, p. 13).

Additionally, gender is thought to be a social construction, and this is very clear in *Orlando*, as the character is always challenging gender conventions. Playing with clothes implies that there are no absolutes and that gender distinctions are merely surface level. In fact, the narrator tells us that "there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking".

Moreover, De Souza Kappke (2017) affirms that according to Woolf, "being androgynous would be the ideal mental" condition for creating a masterpiece. Woolf's definition of androgyny does not exclude gender, it is not genderless. According to Woolf, androgyny is accomplished when the "masculine and feminine components are balanced evenly". This might be difficult for the author, and maybe much harder for women. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf discusses how the experiences of men and women may differ and how this may impact the writing that each group produces. Men were not only given access to more privileges than women, such as money, intellectual freedom, and their own space, "but they were also permitted to leave the house and travel far more frequently" (De Souza Kappke, 2017, p. 13).

Furthermore, Thompson (1993) also mentions that she would want to propose that Woolf does, in fact, have well-developed thoughts about the book, but that these ideas have been misinterpreted and attacked because they defy accepted critical norms. For instance, while

discussing the connection between the book and real life in *A Room of One's Own*, "Woolf makes the claim that the values of patriarchal society are reflected in analyses of the values found in (and of) novels" (p. 308).

Moreover, Thompson (1993) explains that *Orlando*, which focuses on the relationship between sex and writing as well as the relationship between writing and the age in which it is produced, is a practical investigation of Woolf's views about the novel: "In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf describes the ideal writer as androgynous in the sense that the male and female sides of the brain would be equally recognized and in harmony" (pp. 308-309). Furthermore, other similarities between the two novels demonstrate how they both stem from the same fundamental reflections and concerns. Both have writing styles that appear to be light-hearted, one that downplays the gravity and complexity of these problems for Woolf. The preface to *Orlando* makes a reference to William Black, who reportedly wrote the well-known book *Judith Shakespeare* in 1883, in which the heroine outperformed her brother, and speculates about what happened to Judith Shakespeare, the poet's fictional sister in *A Room of One's Own.* And Nick Greene, who represents "patriarchal literary convention in *Orlando*", also makes an appearance in *A Room of One's Own* as the stage manager who teases Judith about her acting aspirations, which results in her getting pregnant and ultimately leading to Judith's miscarriage (p. 309).

Thompson (1993) moves on to affirm that critics have been troubled by "the genre of *Orlando*" ever since it debuted because it is unpredictable and ambiguous. *Orlando* purposefully breaks literary rules by refusing to categorically classify itself as either "a biography or a novel". The book's mixing of serious and light-hearted components, its use of both "private and public" references, its blend of history and imagination, but most importantly, its jokingly asserted "claim to be a biography", have all drawn criticism from readers. Woolf said that "biography is too much about big men in *A Room of One's Own*" (Woolf, 1929, p. 109, cited in Thompson, 1993, p. 309), and in a way, this too sombre "patriarchal type of biography serves as a metaphor of what Woolf is criticising in the persona of the biographer" (Thompson, 1993, p. 309). Also, Woolf thought that the novel was something for men and that the novel had to be changed in order to make it also about women. For this reason, with *Orlando* she received a lot of criticism because some experts did not understand what she was trying to express, in *A Room of One's Own* she says "Thus a novel starts in us all sorts of antagonistic and opposed emotion. Life conflicts with something that is not life. Then since life it is in part, we judge it as life" (Woolf, 2005 [1929], p. 66).

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to contribute to exploring the relations between Virginia Woolf's fictive and non-fictive worlds. Based on the analysis conveyed, it can be concluded that both works are related in topics and themes and that indeed Virginia Woolf uses *Orlando*, as it has been said, as the answer to some of the questions that she proposed in her essay *A Room of One's Own*. Both works talk about androgyny, which is the main topic in *Orlando*, gender's differences and the conditions necessary to write.

Finally, it is important to highlight the influence that Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own* had on all women in English society at that time, not only did she talk to them about the situations they lived in those years, but she also criticised the society in which they lived thinking that someday that situation would change, and she also gave wings to women writers who at that time were afraid to write for fear of being criticised by a society that oppressed women. This essay is a call for economic and social independence and for poetic licence and personal freedom to create art. Woolf observes that women have been kept away from writing because of their relative poverty, and that financial freedom will bring women the freedom to write. On the other hand, with *Orlando*, Woolf speaks openly, arguably for the first time in history, about androgyny, which could help people of that time. Furthermore, she teaches us that gender has no differences, but that these are imposed by society and finally with her works Woolf shows the world the difficulties and injustices that women experienced for centuries and still experience today. In conclusion, Woolf's thoughts remain constant throughout both her fictional and non-fictional works because the subjects she covered in her essay are flawlessly represented in the plot, characters, setting, and style of *Orlando*.

9. REFERENCES

Baumann, M. (2017). Androgyny in Virginia Woolf's "Orlando". Grin Verlag. Retrieved from: https://www.grin.com/document/416824

Blair, K. (2004). Gypsies and Lesbian Desire: Vita Sackville-West, Violet Trefusis, and Virginia Woolf. *Twentieth Century Literature, 50(2),* 141–166. https://doi.org/10.2307/4149276

Celtel, K., Cleary, H., Weeks, M., Kramer, A., Grant, R. G., Loxley, D., Ripley, E., Seymour-Ure, K., Vincent, B., & Zaczek, I. (2018). *Writers: Their lives and works*. Dorling Kindersley.

De Gay, J. (2007). Virginia Woolf's Feminist Historiography in "Orlando". *Critical Survey*, 19(1), 62–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41556201

De Souza Kappke, N. (2017). *Writing, Gender and Androgyny in Virginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography.* (PhD. Instituto de Letras, Porto Alegre.) Retrieved from: https://lume.ufrgs.br/bitstream/handle/10183/217652/001068286.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Jacobus, M. (2012). The difference of view. *In Women writing and writing about women* (pp. 10–21). Routledge.

Kramelová, L. (2015). *The Concept of Time in Virginia Woolf 's Novels* (Orlando, The Waves) (PhD. University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice.) Retrieved from: https://theses.cz/id/ukia8q/15026404

Kronenberger, L. (1929, November 10). Virginia Woolf Discusses Women and Fiction. *New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/17/specials/woolf-room.html

Mead, M. (1935). *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Merriam-Webster (n.d.). Androgyny. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/androgyny

Riley, D. (1988). *'Am I That Name?': Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*. Macmillan.

Robinson, F., & Smith-Laing, T. (2017). *An analysis of Virginia Woolf's A room of one's own*. Routledge.

Scutts, J. (n.d.). *Historical Context for To the Lighthouse | The Core Curriculum*. Retrieved from https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/node/1767

Thompson, N. (1993). Some Theories of One's Own: "Orlando" and the Novel. *Studies in the Novel, 25(3),* 306–317. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29532955

University of Jaén (n.d). *Race and Gender in Contemporary American and Canadian Literature*. Platea. (UJA). Retrieved from: https://platea.ujaen.es/mod/book/view.php?id=54266&chapterid=3367

Whitworth, M. H. (2009). *Virginia Woolf*. Oxford University Press.

Winterson, J. (2018, September 3). 'Different sex. Same person': how Woolf's Orlando became a trans triumph. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/sep/03/different-sex-same-person-how-woolfs-orlando-became-a-trans-triumph

Woolf, V. (2005[1929]). *A Room of One's Own*. Harcourt Inc.

Woolf, V. (2006 [1928]). *Orlando: A Biography*. Harcourt Inc.