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A Literary Analysis of the Book “Orlando” by Virginia Woolf through an Eclectic Approach

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Dedictory

The present thesis is dedicated to:

My parents, who with their love, unconditional support, and hard work, have allowed me to study for the past couple of years. To them for forging the person I am today, for never letting me walk alone, and for believing in my capacity to do things. I will be thankful forever.

Abstract

The literary analysis of the novel 'Orlando' has become a staple within the literature community. Throughout this project, readers can find complete analysis and explanations of the elements that compose the story. In the theoretical framework, there are descriptions of topics like the author's biography, religion during the 16th century, the overview of 'Orlando' in modern literature, and much more. A similar approach was used in the making of the methodology framework.

In chapter III, how the text will be analyzed is mentioned, for example, through the motifs, the characters, symbols, and more. Then, the core elements of the literary approaches are to be explained in order to provide an accurate analysis. Finally, the conclusion and recommendations provide a summary of what was covered throughout the project, final thoughts, and what other areas might require further investigation.

Resumen

El análisis literario de la novela “Orlando” se ha convertido en un elemento básico dentro de la comunidad literaria. En este proyecto los lectores pueden encontrar un análisis completo y explicaciones de los elementos que componen la historia. En el marco teórico están las descripciones de temas como la biografía del autor, la religión durante el siglo 16, la idea general sobre “Orlando” en la literatura moderna y mucho más. Un enfoque similar fue usado en el proceso de elaboración del marco metodológico.

En el capítulo III se mencionan las formas en las que el texto será analizado, por ejemplo, a través de motifs, símbolos, personajes y más. Luego, los elementos principales de los enfoques literarios estarán explicados con el fin de proporcionar un análisis preciso. Finalmente, la conclusión y las recomendaciones, las cuales son un resumen de todo lo que se cubrió a lo largo del proyecto, ideas finales y qué otras áreas pueden requerir una mayor investigación.

Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

The present research project explores different elements found in the analysis of literature. The correct examination of the symbolism, characters, themes, contexts, and the rest of the components of the literary work helps the reader understand the intentions of the author at the moment of adding those elements. The novel 'Orlando' is a novel that explores gender issues, and the androgynous mind and looks of some characters.

Given the fact that the author, Virginia Woolf, was openly an activist, there are some occasions on which the novel has that touch. The playful manner in which Virginia adapted some events from real-life England into the fictional world she invented makes the story rich in terms of cultural and socio-political aspects. The story shows situations with which many people can relate, as well as dialogues that may leave readers wondering and making some in-depth introspection.

The story also deals with the topics of time and history; this makes the reader jump from century to century in chronological order to explain the changes society goes through, as well as the people and the different kings and queens of each era. As mentioned before, this project researches the symbols, characters, motifs, and more in order to analyze them and later explain each of them to help break the story down into parts and have a better understanding of this groundbreaking piece of literature.

Virginia Woolf uses such delicate, proper words when it comes to the characters' dialogues, specifically their inner monologues; they are so complex because they are real thoughts, real feelings, real struggles; all of these make this fictional story sound more

genuine; therefore, more enjoyable. This literary analysis is expected to be more than helpful for the readers to get a better perception of “Orlando” and its many life lessons.

The purpose of this introduction is to provide an overview of the project’s structure and to outline the elements that will be discussed in detail, including some of the most significant topics, themes, and historical events.

1.2 Justification

Orlando, a mock “biography,” unfolds the extraordinary life of a nobleman who effortlessly transitions between genders and identities. The author, Virginia Woolf, delves into profound themes such as gender roles and historical modes, weaving a narrative that also touches on the human condition, depression, heartbreak, and sexuality. The biography spans the 16th century, traversing through the centuries with each chapter.

Orlando, a work of fantasy, stands as one of Virginia Woolf’s enduring literary triumphs. By examining this British novel through a sociological lens, readers can gain a deeper understanding of its intricate characters and complex narrative within the cultural, political, and economic context of the 16th century, a time vastly different from our own.

Throughout the book, Orlando’s journey as both male and female questions the concept of gender and gender fluidity and its dependence on social context. In addition, Orlando’s sense of belonging is often challenged, as he often overthinks whether he should pursue his dream of becoming a writer. Social changes are also present at the end of the Elizabethan era in England.

Orlando’s feelings are often hurt and torn apart by romantic situations and other characters he meets on his life journey. His physical transformation does not bother him;

his personality remains the same as a man and a woman. What changes are the opinions, perspectives, and treatment of others towards Orlando?

Virginia Woolf's 'Orlando' is a profound exploration of societal norms and social issues. Set in the 16th century, a period known as early modern Britain, the novel provides a window into a time when England was under the sway of the Catholic Church and was also referred to as the Golden Age or Elizabethan Period.

This analysis is warranted because it remains a cornerstone of British literature as its themes and characters continue to captivate readers worldwide. Woolf's exploration of complex topics provides a wealth of material for in-depth analysis and discussion. The characters, themes, settings, and plot all make this novel a vibrant and enduring reflection of life and wit, ensuring its relevance for future generations.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

1. To analyze the themes of identity and social roles in Virginia Woolf's Orlando, exploring how the protagonist's transformation challenges traditional sociological constructs of gender, class, and time, and how these shifts reflect the societal dynamics of the eras represented in the novel.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To explore how Woolf's depiction of Orlando's transformation challenges conventional sociological perceptions.
2. To explain each of the symbols from the book.
3. To conceptualize the impact of the book within the literature space.

1.4 Antecedents

The first literary background on ‘Orlando’ is from Jiawen Li and Jingdong Zhong, two students from Zhejiang Yuexiu University in Shaoxing, China. In their own research paper, they mainly talk about the gender fluidity of Orlando from the androgyny concept, but they also refer to Woolf’s androgyny theory to do a better analysis of the characters. According to Li and Zhong, the perspective of androgyny of Virginia consists of two perceptions: the first is that the whole concept is about identity performance, and the second is about the importance of androgyny in writing. The full purpose of their paper was to give the readers a better understanding of the book in general, to help them understand the gender differences in gender identity, and to make them take a profound look at the connotations in literary works.

The second literary background is from Dr. N. Sheik Hameed, an associate professor at St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education. In this research, he takes a different route from Li and Zhong, and he explores The Stream of Consciousness in ‘Orlando’. It is valid to highlight that said technique had been acclaimed in the Modernist Movement and by Virginia Woolf. He claims that in the book, people can find examples of this technique through the inner monologues of Orlando’s feelings. According to Dr. Hameed, the stream of consciousness states the observations, expressions, and doubts of a character.

The third literary review is from Carlota Palacín Jordán, a student from the Universidad Zaragoza. The title of her degree project is called “Writing and the Androgynous Mind in Virginia Woolf’s Orlando”, a known topic by now. In it, she addresses Woolf’s background and her most popular topics, such as gender and fiction. At some point in her study, she compares the androgynous mind in ‘Orlando’ to the one in ‘A

Room of One's Own', which is another of Virginia's best sellers. In the very end, Jordán mentions the difference between female and male writing and the personification of Orlando in literary history. The purpose of her research paper was to explore in parallel both literary writings and their androgynous mind.

The fourth dissertation paper is from Dr. Umaji Ananda Patil, an assistant professor and head of the Department of English, Smt. Gangabai Khivraj Ghodawat Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jaysingpur. Dr. Umaji studies feminism and gender issues in the novel, emphasizing that Virginia Woolf was openly a feminist, and in her books, she always added a touch of women's empowerment. He also centers on themes such as the concept of time, which is very present in the book, as the readers can see Orlando passing through the different centuries.

The last literary background is from a student named Olesea Brasovean, a graduate from Universidad de Valladolid. In the paper, she talks about the queerness of Orlando and the constructiveness of gender in the novel as well as sexual identity and androgyny. Olesea points out that during the trajectory of the character in history, Orlando is not considered to fit in the stereotypical gendered social class. While analyzing all these topics, she often refers to Judith Butler's perspective (Butler is a well-known gender and queer theory specialist). The ultimate goal of her research paper was to see how gender was presented in 'Orlando' and how it could relate to Judith Butler's theories and ideas.

1.5 Problem Statement

One of the central questions of this project is: how does Virginia Woolf use time and historical change to profile Orlando's growth regarding identity and personal issues? It is known that identity is one of the main topics of this fascinating novel, and the readers can

see the development of it since Orlando becomes a woman, but how is this personal growth represented? Some people might see it through the way Orlando's thoughts or beliefs change; others see it in Orlando's inner monologues or in what she/he writes through poetry.

Now, as it was said previously, time is also an important and persistent topic. It plays a significant role within the story of the book; it shows the transformation of England's society, its governors, its cultural places, and Orlando's mentality. In other words, time and historical changes are the main factors that explain Orlando's personal growth and identity development. It is a fact that as time goes on, people change for good or for bad, but there is always a change in their mindset. In this case, Orlando jumps from one century to another; this time event makes her/him experience situations that marked her memories.

Basically, time influences the development of people; there is no growth without looking at the past, present, and future. This is precisely what happened to Orlando, she lived her life as a man for almost 30 years, did all her diligences, met people, and had a job as a male, but as a woman her situation was not the same anymore; Orlando still met new people, changed her job, and came back home but things were different, her hometown was not the same, her appearance was not the same.

The point is, Virginia Woolf uses time to teach a valuable lesson, which is personal growth or any other types of development or understanding, is not bound to any historical moment, month, or year. Transformation is a constant and dynamic process that everyone goes through as they live each day. This constant movement from one point of view to another is what shapes people's identity. When they are children, they think in a certain way, when they are teenagers, they experience big changes as well, and once they are

adults, they look back at their past and realize all those situations that made them who they are today.

The same thing happened to Orlando; her years of experience, in addition to the diverse experiences she faced from the beginning, allowed her to go through an emotional roller coaster until she finally found her final identity and made peace with all those people and situations that once tormented her. How does Virginia Woolf use time and historical changes to profile Orlando's growth regarding identity and personal issues is a question that might sound tricky or difficult to answer, but it really is not; it just needs to be deeply analyzed along with the elements of time and historical changes found in the book.

Questioning time and personal transformation are vital to understand the constant search for clarity and coherence people spend their time on, because both can be seen in real-life situations and in fictional situations, and in both, it is even more usual to analyze such themes all the time. Evolution is part of human nature; that is why it is found in every moment, place, place, person, animal, story, art, and everything evolves. Something vital to highlight is that, besides time, another thing that influences change and growth is people. They can help in the renovation of someone's personality, preferences, beliefs, and even their actions.

In the case of Orlando, throughout her life, she meets people who either made her feel good, loved, and inspired, or people who made her sad, heartbroken, and confused. There is no in-between in the book when it comes to these people, but something they have in common is the fact that they help Orlando become the person readers can see almost at the very end of the last chapter. These experiences felt horrible or nice in the moment because they were fresh, but as time went on, Orlando started to heal, and those bittersweet

moments became a memory, became something that taught her a life lesson and helped her move on.

Her husband, role model, and her first-ever breakup are some examples of the people who shaped Orlando throughout the plot of the story. Besides these characters, there were some experiences that made Orlando change her mind completely. The first one is, of course, her gender switch, which made Orlando ponder what his mentality about women was way before he became one. The second one was the switch that occurred in the treatment of people towards him, especially from those whom she looked up to. And third, when she met the love of her life right after she thought love and marriage were not for her.

In summary, the way Virginia Woolf plays with the concept of time and change (in this case, historical change) is what helped shape Orlando's personal development and find her identity. Additionally, the author lets the readers know that identity is always constantly changing, moving; it is not something linear. This problem statement was something that made the readers of "Orlando" wonder if the themes of time, identity searching, and historical change were trying to tell them something or trying to make them think in a deeper way.

That's the main reason why this question was the chosen one to be presented as the problem statement; it made the book so interesting and unique.

1.6 Scope

This part of the project covers a more in-depth review and analysis through the utilization of an eclectic approach, analysis methods, and the assistance of external sources to support the research. As was mentioned in the introduction and specific objectives

section, the central aim of this project is to provide more background context to better understand the concept of the story through the examination of certain symbols, of the main characters, the most recurring themes and motifs, and a few comparisons of some historical situations from the book with real-life stories of those same moments.

Historical background is also used to explain more deeply the elements mentioned above. The main approach used to do the whole analysis is a sociological one. Analyzing the characteristics this book has, along with other relevant foundations, is what makes this project relevant and possible; giving context to certain situations is, at the end of the day, the sole purpose of a literary analysis. This project won't address the topics of feminism, gender, or the oppression of women because they are not the central themes of the analysis; however, they might be mentioned a certain number of times for the sole reason of the given context of the social norms back in the early years in England.

Moreover, the combination of these "methods" and explanations is the means by which the desired results were obtained. The final result is the full analysis of the book, as well as the analysis of the features mentioned above, which were carefully chosen to be a part of this literary examination. It is important to mention that comparisons of characters are not used, only their physical descriptions, behaviors, mentioning specific situations, and whether they are flat or round characters, and why they are. Finally, in the methodological and theoretical framework, additional background information about the ambience, sociopolitical and historical events, and more is given as a part of the literary analysis.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, diverse topics will be discussed. The explanations are better displayed than in the justification part. Additionally, an insightful exploration of diverse themes, concepts, and historical contexts is provided in this section, as well as an explanation using the chosen approach. Background information helps the reader to have a better understanding of the novel and the situations that happen all the way through. This facilitates understanding of the behaviors, thoughts, and context behind the characters and their parts in the story.

2.1 Author's Biography

As stated previously, the novel *Orlando* fixed itself as one of Virginia Woolf's bestsellers among other of her literary works, such as *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, *A Room of One's Own*, and more. Virginia was a writer, essayist, and biographer who was at the center of English literature during the Bloomsbury era. Her father, Leslie Stephen, was a man of letters, and Virginia read all the literary classics from her father's library. At some point, she shared her disapproval of her dad for never allowing her to have a proper education like her brother had. All of this was because of the mindset society had for women at the time.

Years later, Woolf taught English literature and history at an adult education college, while also writing articles and reviews for various corporations. She suffered a lot of mental breakdowns throughout her life, the first one at the age of 13, due to the deaths of her mother, father, and brother. All of this, plus the deaths of one of her most dear friends

from the Bloomsbury circle, drove Virginia to a state of severe depression, and ultimately, she committed suicide in 1941. “As her friends died, she felt her own life begin to crumble. In January 1941, Woolf became severely depressed, partly due to the strain of completing her novel *Between the Acts*” (Svendsen & Lewis, n.d.).

About Virginia’s literary influence, she always wrote about women’s mistreatment, the difficult access they had to education, the church, medicine, and more. She is regarded as one of the best writers of the 20th century, and to her is attributed groundbreaking narration techniques such as the stream of consciousness; additionally, she had a remarkable effect on the expansion of modernist literature. “As she pushed the boundaries of activism and literature, her contribution to feminism cannot be exaggerated; she is recognized by many as one of the best and brightest writers of the 20th century” (Papp, 2023).

As the previous citation stated, Woolf was a first-class activist, which always made her criticize society and its low opinion regarding women. One of her best-known feminist books is titled ‘A Room of One’s Own’. Now, approaching ‘Orlando’, it is said that Virginia based the main character on a woman named Vita Sackville-West, whom Virginia considered ‘a real woman’. As you may know by now, ‘Orlando’ explores themes such as the androgynous mind and body of the primary fictional character, so “Woolf’s relationship with Vita ultimately shaped the fictional biography *Orlando*, a narrative that spans from 1500 to the contemporary day” (Svendsen & Lewis, n.d.).

“Virginia Woolf, a luminary of modernist literature, left an indelible mark on the literary landscape with her masterpiece “Orlando” (Soufiane, 2023). The book shaped the beginning of modern themes like gender studies, criticism, identity issues, and LGBTQ+

outlooks. Right now, in the 21st century, all these topics are openly studied in literature, art, and in more areas, but back then, some people did not praise her writing style, and they criticized her narrative choices, which went against the traditional ways of storytelling. To modernist readers, even though 'Orlando' was written a while ago, it targets topics like gender identity and fluidity that it delivers as an interpretation from the 21st century. (Smith, 2023).

Even though the approach chosen to analyze "Orlando" is a sociological approach, it is important to highlight that its author was a known feminist. However, this analysis will not be focused on a feminist approach, but that is what Virginia Woolf was mostly known for, so it is an important fact to keep in mind.

2.2 England during the 16th century

Firstly, back in the 16th century, the monarchy was the standard form of government. Many European countries, including England, were ruled by Kings. These kings were said to be publicly accepted by their citizens. During this period, there were also major events such as the Renaissance period and the religious transformation that happened with King Henry VIII. That was regarding the nobility and the royal people, but there were also the citizens known as peasants. "Sixteenth-century society in Western Europe was essentially rural. Its economic mainstays were the food and the other natural resources that came from the land" (Morris, 1998, p. 12). The peasants were hardworking laborers (farm workers, more specifically) who had to do the jobs their superiors assigned to them.

Secondly, the social issues at the time. In the 16th century, one of the principal issues was the discrimination towards women, and disputes on the role of women in society

started to rise. Some people agreed to fight for women's better rights and opportunities.

Liang & Patel (2024) stated that “Government also began to regulate morals, with laws and policies aimed at controlling behavior and enforcing social norms.” So, a social improvement was starting for form in England, but in this case, the reformation was favoring women only. Debates about women starting to work on their education also emerged during this time. Once again, this analysis is not focused on feminism, but unfortunately, women at the time had extreme disadvantages and a badly treated compared to men.

The economy went through some changes when trade and commerce suddenly grew, leading to the development of new monetary systems, which affected the economy and politics positively. Regarding the political issues during the 16th century, the expansion of the commercial economy led to the formation of a new merchant class that had substantial political influence and power. In short, the social issue of the time greatly affected political, social, and economic areas, which brought up changes in the social norms, culture, and education of the 16th century.

Thirdly, the catholic church and the religious reformation. Essentially, England was under the power and influence of the catholic church. However, the changes began when King Henry VIII decided to divorce his current wife, Catherine of Aragon, so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. When his divorce request was not approved by the Pope, King Henry decided to go parts way with the catholic church; this turn of events is known as the English Reformation. The new religious era commenced with King Henry VIII as the head of the church; this transformation provoked a divided opinion between the Catholics and the Protestants, also known as separatists.

However, in 1558, England welcomed a new queen who was going to bring modifications to the religious regulations they had. Queen Elizabeth was the daughter of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn; and she was Queen Mary's half-sister, whose place she took. It is said that Queen Elizabeth wished to fix the religious state, which was not looking well, and that her sister left before her death. Elizabeth wanted England not to be split apart over some religious complications; the Members of Parliament obliged to the queen's new policy, and the decree of Queen Mary was abolished.

It is important to highlight that even though Queen Elizabeth had some deep opinions regarding religion, she always maintained a neutral posture; she was not in favor of the Catholics nor of the Puritans, she just wanted to rule in a determined way that would mark England positively. Her parents and sister affected the country enough while they were King and Queen.

Considering all the previous points, the general ambience of the country during the 16th century was going through various adjustments in areas such as politics, social norms, economy, and religion. Unfortunately, some of these changes were not warmly welcomed by the people and made them whisper and toss their heads around in dissatisfaction and disagreement, as it happened when they talked about the rights of women or their role in society was about to change, or as it occurred with the religious reformation of King Henry VIII. Fortunately, the economy and politics of the period helped greatly to ease the tense atmosphere.

2.3 Orlando's impact on 16th-century society

Now that there is a better comprehension of the social and religious context of England in the 16th century, what was the reaction of the readers of the time when they first grappled with the book? There is not much information about it, but the novel indeed had a major influence on the literature of the time. First, it introduced the topic of gender and fluidity in a different way from what it was already. 'Orlando' allowed other authors to explore topics like sexuality, fluidity, and gender roles; this, later, would lead to the making of many queer literary works.

These topics were not taboo, but 'Orlando' encouraged other writers to explore more complex themes. Secondly, Woolf challenged the traditional narrative structure. 'Orlando' had the main character jumping through different periods of time until he ends in the 20th century, which is where his story ends. This kind of narrative style demonstrated that narratives did not need linear storytelling; narratives could be fragmented and multidimensional. It inspired others to play and experiment with the sequence of events in their own stories.

Moreover, the concept of time and historical setting had an impact on 16th-century literature. This point shares similarities with the previous one, but the highlight of this one is that through time-travelling, readers were able to look at the changes in society and history. Orlando, who spent half of his life in England, at some point in the story travels to Turkey as an ambassador and stays there for a very long time. When he decides to come back to England, he realizes that so many things have changed while he was working abroad.

That was just to prove the argument about the concept of time in a historical context. However, the novel contains similar scenes where the reader is taking from one event to another in different periods of time; this is also the moment they realize that the context becomes more modern as the narrative progresses.

Lastly, there is the transformation of views in literary genres. It should be noted by now that the themes that stand out the most in 'Orlando' are gender fluidity and social norms, but Woolf included genres like fantasy, fiction, and biography. The mixture of genres motivated the writers to blend different types of genres into their works, to create something out of the traditional space for a change. This would help them produce much more profound and complex stories.

Was the impact of the book negative or positive? Based on the previous opinion, it is fair and true to say that the impact of the novel was positive; it completely changed the viewpoint of the writers that came after Virginia Woolf. It encouraged them to be more creative, to think outside the box, not only with the exploration of intense and more intricate themes for their stories, but also to experiment with storytelling as well as the historical background. All these new additions were going to improve their literary works.

To conclude, the purpose of this second chapter was to provide a more specific view or explanation of the country where the novel took place, the ambience, as well as the impact of the story on the people of the time. All these aspects help the lector to better understand the context of the book when the literary analysis begins.

2.4 The Eclectic Approach

An eclectic approach is essentially a combination of methods used to analyze texts, and in this case, literature. It is especially useful because it allows a diverse system of techniques to be used on the same study. It does not follow strictly one theory; therefore, it helps scholars analyze a text in different areas, politics, economy, feminism, and more. The approaches and their elements that are going to be used during the analysis are the sociological, formalistic, feminist, and historical approaches, as well as an andronym approach.

In other words, this approach can be used as a form of reflection about different areas at the same time. The book of choice for this project fits perfectly well with these types of approaches; in the literary analysis section, the style of the styles of each method is put into practice. They are very beneficial for a literary analysis because they focus on different areas of society, such as gender, economics, social norms and values, identity, history, and those topics are commonly present many times in literature, which makes the breakdown of each of the elements (symbols, motifs, themes) easier and more complete.

2.5 The Sociological Approach

The sociological approach examines and analyzes social facts and the way they can be related to social, political, economic, and economic contexts; all of this within the limits and information set in a specific literature work. Additionally, this approach allows the study of class structures, social values, and more within the text itself, and even within the author of the book. According to Sharma (2018), “Further, sociological approach to

literature considers the author's social origin and the socio-cultural background in which he is born and brought up.”

In other words, this approach can be used as a form of reflection about society and what’s in it. The book of choice for this project fits perfectly well with this type of approach; in the literary analysis section, the style of the sociological method is put into practice. This method is very useful for a literary analysis because it focuses on different areas of society, such as politics, economics, and even social norms and values, and those topics are commonly present many times in literature, which makes the breakdown of each of the elements (symbols, motifs, themes) easier and more complete.

2.6 Elements of the Historical Approach

According to Fiveable (2024), “Historical criticism is a method of literary analysis that examines texts within the context of their historical and cultural backgrounds.” Through this approach, people can analyze and understand the social conditions, time periods, and situations that influenced the author of a book. This type of approach is similar to the sociological approach, both focusing on the society of a specific region and in specific moments. When a reader finally understands the context behind the way an author was raised or where they were born, the entire story of the book makes more sense.

Some of the most outstanding elements found in the historical approach, also known as historical criticism, are (1) Historical context, which is where people can analyze specific economic, religious, political, and social events related to the moment when the text was written or the moment set in the book. (2) Societal and cultural context: This is another element used to examine attitudes, beliefs, and values during a specific moment in time. These attitudes can be social constructs or norms, race, and gender, to mention a few.

This is helpful to comprehend the points of view people had in past times. (3) Author's biography and life, knowing an author's life background and personal experiences helps to understand their literary intentions and perspectives. Finally (4) Interaction between text and history, this is a way to investigate how the literary work is reflected or engaged with the real historical situations.

Some additional factors belong to this approach, and these are important when analysing literature of the historical kind. The first one is that the historical approach is used to emphasize the relevance of socio-political events of a certain year and see how it forms literary characters and themes. The second one is that a historical approach is also used to consider the way historical storylines are structured and how it is represented in literature. The last additional factor is that many students can analyze a text or book from a historical point of view by examining official documents, letters, and diaries, of course, if the book and author include such material in their works (Fiveable, 2024).

These elements might sound familiar already because the sociological approach is very similar to the historical one, as previously stated. However, the sociological approach focuses more on society itself than the historical approach, so which of the factors mentioned above can be found in this literary analysis? Almost all of them. For example, in Chapter II, areas such as religion and political events and people are deeply described (Queen Elizabeth and her way of ruling the country, as well as her position regarding religion), and the economic situation of sixteenth-century England is mentioned too. In Chapter III, where part of the literary analysis began, there was one historical event mentioned in the book, which has the name of The Great Frost, said event that happened in real life, so here is where the factor of interaction between text and history appears.

The historical approach is very useful to break down events from the past that shaped the world and made it the way people know it in actuality. It keeps the history of a country alive. Nevertheless, it is relevant to highlight, though it is obvious, the fact that this approach can only be used if the text allows it. So, if the story presents a political, social, or religious event, this approach could be a good option to analyze it. Books that contain historical material let readers imagine how some situations happened back then; it is not the same point of view as the people who really experienced the events beforehand, so they have to recreate the scenes in their minds while they follow the story in the book.

Besides, this method is also a way to “criticize” social and political aspects of old times, because it is known that many countries used to have extreme rules and attitudes, which led to them making bad decisions, some of which ended up in wars. So, this is a clever method to analyze and carefully study these situations in order to create either constructive criticism or a bad one. The reason this approach in particular was chosen is because of the similarity it has compared to the sociological approach, and additionally because many of its elements were analyzed in this same project, so it only made sense to talk about this other method.

The next approach is a bit different because it is the opposite of how “Orlando” was analyzed; however, this approach is also present throughout the book and in the life of the author as well. So, just like it was said above, it only made sense to take a closer look at it; besides, it is present in modern literature, too.

2.7 Feminist Approach Elements

This approach has gained popularity over the years to the point where it has become one of the most talked-about methods to analyze literary works. Feminism (or the feminine

point of view) is not only a literary approach, but also a topic that many writers and artists have based their works on, so it is a trendy subject. According to Fiveable (2024), “Feminist literary theory challenges traditional male-centered perspectives in literature”. In other words, this approach analyzes themes such as gender roles and power dynamics in different texts. There are three important facts to remember about this approach. The first one is that the feminist approach was officially a thing in the 20th century, when the feminist movement was starting to become popular.

The second fact is that this approach often points out stereotypes and the marginalization of the female characters in books. The last one is feminist criticism interacts with other critical theories, such as Marxism and/or postcolonialism, to provide a better understanding of other social issues. Additionally, the approach not only emphasizes the experiences of female characters, but also the experiences of female writers who had no voice back in the day and had to publish their works under a male pseudonym so they would not get caught. Some examples of writers who were victims of this unfortunate event are Louisa May Alcott with the false name of AM Bernard, The Brönte sisters with the false names of Ellis, Acton, and Currer Bell, and lastly Mary Ann Evans known as George Elliot.

Basically, every time a reader comes across a text that utilizes all of these characteristics mentioned above, it most likely means that the author used a feminist approach. There are 4 elements which belong to this methodology: (1) Gender roles or gender representation, this is where people can analyze the female character and figure out the way they were portrayed. For example, they could see if a character is degraded to stereotypes. Also, here comes into play an important aspect in literature known as the male

gaze, which is essentially the tendency of heterosexual men to objectify or sexualize women.

The (2) is a critique of patriarchy; this factor is related to the examination of male dominance in areas such as the economy, politics, psychology, and social realms within a text or even in real-life situations. The (3) is reclaiming women's voices; this element aims to get back the voices of women authors who have been disregarded over the years. The last one (4) is contextualization, which is to analyze gender norms and social expectations for women. These are the core elements found in a feminist approach, also known as feminist criticism, and it is mostly an approach chosen by women. In the case of "Orlando", as Virginia Woolf was identified to be a feminist, the book has some feminist elements.

For example, the theme of gender is one of the most mentioned throughout the entire story, but in this case, it is gender as men and women, not so much as a feminist setting. There is another situation that could be analyzed through a feminist lens, which was a confrontational event Orlando had with the property law of the nineteenth century. But just like the theme of gender, this political issue was not analyzed from a feminist perspective.

This method, in particular, is excellent to analyze the differences between men and women and the way society in general draws the line for both genders. Since women have been in the shadow of men for years, a way of releasing their discomfort was through writing about the ways they are always looked down on. From that point onwards, this style became popular, and it finally raised awareness about the importance of female voices in literature and in other areas as well. Some people see the feminist approach as a way to uncover the societal norms and expectations put on women from a young age; at the same time, it tries to promote gender equality in the narratives.

Another positive aspect of this approach is in the manner all women, from every culture and background, are involved in it. Essentially, no one is left out, and most fictional situations are based on real situations, which makes the story relatable to other women, just like in the historical approach. In summary, the feminist approach or feminist criticism is all about power dynamics, gender roles, gender equality, social expectations, and reclaiming female voices.

It is important to mention that a few elements from chapter IV are not analyzed using the sociological approach; however, they are valuable additions to the story and also to the author, for that reason, they are included in the project. To conclude this chapter, there are some word definitions that must be explained, the reason is that they are important concepts within the story and, therefore, in the analysis. The first definition is androgyny, which is the quality of being neither feminine nor masculine (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In other words, it is when someone has a combination of feminine and masculine features that confuses people. The second concept is deconstruction, which is a philosophical method that declares meanings, metaphysical constructs, and hierarchical oppositions tend to be reduced and unstable by their dependence on subjective descriptors (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

The third concept is symbols, which represent objects, colors, numbers, and more. They are often mentioned many times in the story because of the meaningful feeling they hold. Symbols can be universal, regional, or personal. The fourth definition is motifs; these are repetitive elements that possess an important meaning and highlight the theme or mood of the story. The last concept to define is comparisons; in literature, comparisons are a way of analyzing two similar or contrasting situations.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This part of the research paper contains the type of research, the investigation design, and the procedures used to collect all the data. It is essential to emphasize that different literary analysis methods are going to be employed to provide more concise information. The method of choice is the eclectic approach, as stated in Chapter II. These approaches are useful for the reader to understand what lies behind the novel regarding historical events, meanings, relationships, characters, conflicts, and more.

3.1 Research Approach

Given the nature of the research paper, which is a literary analysis, the approach that best fits is the qualitative methodology. Through it, interpretations of the different contexts and phenomena present in the book can be described in more detail.

3.2 Investigation Design

The investigation's design is exploratory-descriptive; it gives the researcher the opportunity to explain how the problem of the investigation is conducted. Exploratory means that the researcher addresses or explores those grey areas that are not frequently investigated; additionally, it assists in the creation of new hypotheses. Finally, descriptive means to list the characteristics of a specific population or occurrences; in this part, the targeted population is the people of the 16th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

3.3 Procedure to Recollect Data

All the data recollection is done using trustworthy sources of information taken from diverse sources. Overall, Chapter IV is divided into separate parts to guarantee the order

and organization of the whole document. First, there is an analysis of situations and symbols using the sociological approach. Second, an explanation of the main characters of the book, a brief physical description (if possible), and if they fall into the category of flat or round characters, then the analysis of the most prominent motifs and what they represent in the story.

Finally, there is an analysis of additional symbols and themes that are important but don't belong to the approach used at the beginning of the chapter.

In summary, in Chapter IV, the analysis of the novel begins. For this part, the information is analyzed through the symbols, motifs, comparisons between the fictional scenes in the book and the real-life scenes in old England, and an in-depth analysis of each of the main characters to understand their actions, thoughts, and life situations better. After that analysis, the explanation of the characters, motifs, and even additional symbols and themes is to appear.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Here begins the analysis of all the elements listed above using an eclectic approach to examine some aspects of the novel.

The first aspect to analyze is the binary opposition man/woman in 'Orlando', and by this, I do not mean the people from the book; I mean the man and woman who live in Orlando. In the first chapter, the story opens with Orlando's presentation, a young nobleman ready to take after his father's steps, even though he knows that is not what he truly desires. Orlando, born a man and continued to be, until one day and after being in a deep sleep, he woke up in the body of a woman. Let's analyze first the events, roles, and feelings of Orlando all the years when he was a boy. As a man, he was always loved by his servants, friends, and the public in general. He was described as a charming individual who attracted both genders; he also had his way with people. He was loved by Queen Elizabeth I, Sasha, Archduchess Harriet, and Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire.

As stated earlier, Orlando was a nobleman by birth. Over the years, he became an ambassador, but his most wanted wish was to become a writer; he also would go out and visit the darkest corners of the streets of England, a place that people like him would never pay a visit to. Thanks to his gender, Orlando earned titles, houses, and states, not only from his family but also from renowned people of the society of that time. Even with all these favorable treatments, he did not have to deal with other men the way women had to. Back then, women were taught how to serve tea for the men, as they did not take part in such activities; he never had to put a price on his body to earn a few coins or be a man's shadow.

In terms of his traits, he was very manly, although sometimes very delicate and sensitive, just like a woman.

But now, look at the way Orlando slowly begins to live his life as a woman. After a week of being in a ‘trance’, Orlando, who was now in his thirties, woke up as a female. At first, she (the pronouns must change in this part) does not budge at all and goes on with her day as she normally would. By this time, she had actually escaped with some gypsies, leaving behind her position as an ambassador in Turkey, wishing to go back to England. While being on the ship back to England, she encountered the first situation every woman has ever faced, that is, men openly flirting with them. The captain of the ship, Nicholas Benedict Bartolous, tried to make a move on her at dinnertime, and to such events, Orlando had no choice but to play along with Mr. Bartolous’s game. The second inconvenience she experienced was with her clothes; she felt they were uncomfortable; she could not move freely while wearing them, and she doubted that if something happened, she could run away or jump into the sea with such garments on.

To tell you the truth, this is where Orlando started reminiscing past opinion he had made about women when she was a man, “She remembered how, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled” (Woolf, 2020, p. 101). This inner thought reflects the conflict she is going through, facing such occurrences, which sometimes leave her speechless. It is the moment to point out the opinion men had of women within Woolf’s fictional story; to comprehend the next quote, I will provide the reader with a bit of context. Sometime after Orlando landed in England, she decided to go for a walk around the neighborhood. She entered Leicester Square and saw a young girl sitting on a bench. After gazing at each other, the girl put her hand in

Orlando's arm, and off they went. The girl's name was Nelly, and maybe the only reason why Orlando is now at Nelly's house is that at that moment she was dressed in men's clothing. Orlando could not bear to keep on fooling Nell, so she came forward and confessed she was a woman, to which Nelly just laughed and said she was not in the mood for male company. What happened after is that Nelly told Orlando the story of her life; while doing so, other girlfriends of Nell joined the talk. This is when a man appeared on the stairs and, joining the conversation, stated, "Women have no desires, says this gentleman, coming into Nell's parlour; only affections. Without desires (she has served him, and he is gone), their conversation cannot be of the slightest interest to anyone" (Woolf, 2020, p. 144-145). That quote represents the judgment of women in men's words, though it is not good to suppose all men thought the same, but, in the book, there is no evidence that they thought otherwise.

Overall, the role of women was to serve the men. The opinion men had of women was that, on their own, they were boring individuals who had no desires at all, and they needed the company of the opposite sex to thrive. However, the most relevant part here is the binary opposition, men/women, in 'Orlando. When he was a man and lived life like one, when he became she and had to learn how to live like a woman, at the beginning, the whole situation seemed not to bother Orlando, but some people and some events led to her inner battles regarding gender issues and performance. "She was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little vainer, as women are, of her person" (Woolf, 2020, p. 123). On that thought, Orlando was feeling more confident in her body; she was accepting that she was a real woman.

The emotions and circumstances of each character add dimension to the whole story, and the creation of a character who is constantly reflecting upon the feelings they have as a man and a woman just adds even more to it. The consistent display of emotions and opinions from the two genders shows the reader how things worked for centuries, because at that moment, the ambience was set during the 18th century, and the 19th century was almost commencing. The most prominent themes in the book are gender, societal norms, sexuality, history, time, and, lastly, fantasy. Even though Woolf employs a bit of fantasy, she still depicts the harsh realities of the world. In this case, she conveyed her idea of what gender and social norms are through the character of Orlando continuously fights against the standards they want people to fit into.

The second, and last, binary opposition left to analyze is the relationship between love and hate. But what is going to be examined is not really a romantic relationship, or a relationship between mother and daughter or father and son; it will be love and hate that many times exist toward a dream or desire in one's life. As you may remember, Orlando was very passionate about writing to the point where they decided to become a writer. The truth is that since a very young age, Orlando was surrounded by literature and every time people looked around, Orlando had a book in hand. Additionally, he was fond of nature. Orlando had a special feeling toward oak trees, which, by the way 'The Oak Tree' was the title of their first writing experience. However, many times Orlando felt insecure when it came to his talent and creativity.

The first encounter Orlando had with the famous writer and poet, Mr. Nicholas Greene, changed his perspective completely. Mr. Greene was not exactly what Orlando

expected, but he left quite an impression on him. Virginia Woolf (2020) wrote the following for this scene the following:

Some time passed, and Orlando felt for his guest a strange mixture of liking and contempt, of admiration and pity, as well as something too indefinite to be called by any one name but had something of fear in it and something of fascination. (p. 54-55).

The whole interaction left Orlando with a bittersweet taste, but sweeter than bitter. Despite this, Greene, a few hours later, did something that altered the impression he had made in Orlando. Basically, after returning to his home, Nicholas felt inspired to write, so he sat down and wrote, in fact. He based his new story on a nobleman at home, but as you can imagine, this said noble Lord was Orlando himself; the story made fun of this nobleman. When Mr. Greene was done writing, he made sure to send it to the editor, and in no matter of time, the poem reached Orlando. He read it seriously, after this he said out loud to one of his servants 'I have done with men'. Then proceeded to lit of fire fifty-seven of his own poetical works, only preserving 'The Oak Tree'.

He thought to himself, "Love and ambition, women and poets were all equally vain. Literature was farce" (Woolf, 2020, p. 58). The unfortunate event made Orlando seclude for a while; he would not speak to others and only spent time reading and writing, and the only company he had was his elkhounds. Orlando faced disappointment and displeasure for the second time, disappointment and displeasure from some he looked up to. The first time happened with the Russian queen Sasha, but that is another story, and the only thing he always did was hide in his home for as long as possible. After all, all dreams come with ups and downs, and it indeed hurts to feel hatred towards something so beautiful, and that

makes the heart flutter every time you think about it, but I could say Orlando learnt from the experience.

Nonetheless, the bright side of a gloomy situation always rises. Before explaining the second situation, it is important to tell the readers that even though it took Orlando a long time to recover from what happened with Mr. Greene, Orlando could move on. Right now, Orlando was in the middle of a woods in the company of the gypsies who took her in; by that moment, she was now a female, after she decided to leave behind her ambassador duties. In the middle of nowhere, she could think of writing, which was her most wished desire, but she had no paper or ink. By this time, even after the disappointment she felt back in England years ago, she never lost her yearning for writing. The truth is that ever after that day, the paper which contained her most precious poem was always carried in her pocket, and everything Orlando felt like writing, she would just whip it out and get to work.

Orlando got back on her feet and began writing every time she felt inspired. Sometimes she would write after encountering a person, event, thought, or emotion that made her question the most minute of details, although some words were never engraved into the paper. It all reflects the passion for writing that never left; it was only increasing. This part represents the love every person has for their dreams and goals; it represents how alive one must feel while doing what they love the most. In Orlando's case, it is writing, but the goals differ depending on the person; for some is painting, singing, playing an instrument, teaching, and so on and so forth. Whatever makes you happy, pursue. You will encounter people and situations that are going to make you feel like you are in the wrong place or path; they will make you hate or love it. Remember, the decision is up to you.

Here ends the analysis of the binary opposition found in Orlando. Here, as well, begins the part where the symbols of the story are assessed.

Glatch (2023) stated that “A symbol is an image whose figurative meaning is much deeper than its literal one. It is an object, often ordinary and commonplace, that has been imbued with extraordinary significance.” These symbols can be colors, objects, or words that represent a specific emotion or meaning for the author as well as for the characters. Some symbols can be cultural, which means that they are objects or places from a determined region; therefore, the reader must do research on the significance of those symbols in order to understand what the author wanted to convey by placing them in the story. “For example, fire can represent destruction and evil, but it can also represent regrowth and the cycles of life” (Glatch, 2023). That is the way in which symbols or symbolisms are often analyzed. Lastly, this literary device is often found in novels, poems, short stories, and plays.

The first symbol is clothing. Gender is discussed all throughout the book, hence the utilization of clothes to represent what women and men of the time wore. Clothing, in Orlando, is the social construction of gender identity through clothes. Ever since fashion garments were invented, it was established that men have to wear pants, sleeved shirts, blazers, and women always had to wear skirts, dresses, tights, and high heels. But God forbid a man ever dared to wear a skirt or any sort of feminine piece of clothing, as he was going to be branded as a weirdo or even as a homosexual man. The same was for women who preferred wearing pants and not a dress; people would say that she was not feminine at all, and she was labeled as someone who tried to scare men away (men are supposed to like womanly looking ladies).

“Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world, the world’s view of us” (Woolf, 2020, p. 123). Basically, what makes others say if you belong to either gender is clothing and not the body. They judge a person by the way they dress, automatically labeling them. If a girl is wearing a manly outfit, she is a tomboy; if a boy is wearing a feminine outfit, he is unmanly. In the case of Orlando, she was slightly bothered at the very beginning when she started to wear women’s clothes; she was not used to the cuts of the dresses and skirts, but later Woolf reveals that she was surely adapting and was becoming more and more woman.

It is important to say that Orlando kept in her closet some outfits from when she was a man, and often visited places wearing them, then other times she would wear dresses. Other characters in the book also played with the clothing to hide their real gender. For example, Archduchess Harriet presented herself as a woman at the beginning of the story; later, readers found out she was, in reality, a man whose name was now Archduke Harry. In conclusion, clothes make up half of the look of a person, and based on those looks, society will opine whether they are a man or a woman. Some people hold the belief that they don’t belong in society as a man or as a woman.

The second symbol is the dogs. For Orlando, dogs are just as important to him as nature is, and she judges people based on how they treat animals. She is often seen with her dogs in most chapters of the book; this symbol becomes an important one as her story unfolds. LitCharts (n.d.) explained that “Dogs remain an integral part of Orlando’s life for hundreds of years.” The very first occasion where the reader can see the mention of dogs is in Chapter I. This is when the narrator was listing the characteristics of 3 women who were

ready to be his future wife (this is when Orlando was a young man). But I am referring specifically to Favilla and Euphrosyne. One day, Orlando saw Favilla whip her spaniel for ripping her silk stockings. After this spectacle, Orlando decided to break the engagement off. Virginia Woolf (2020) wrote the following for that scene the following:

Orlando, who was a passionate lover of animals, now noticed that her teeth were crooked, and the two-front turned inward, which, he said, is a sign of a perverse and cruel disposition in a woman, and so broke the engagement that very night forever. (p. 14)

Thus, Orlando did base his opinion on the treatment Favilla gave the dog. On the other hand, Euphrosyne was the favorite candidate to marry Orlando; it was said that she always had a spaniel or a whippet by her knee, always feeding them bread from her own plate. That and her many other qualities led Orlando to decide to marry her. After a few situations, readers will see that said marriage never happened. Additionally, every time Orlando isolated himself as a young boy, he only wanted the company of his books and dogs. Orlando relied more on these animals than people; people disappointed him too many times, but his dogs never did.

In short, love and care towards animals is something that characterized Orlando from the beginning of the book, as you saw, dogs were a central part of her life. As mentioned earlier, the relationship between Orlando and animals was stronger and more reliable than the relations she had with the people around her. The only exceptions were her servants, because most of them had been around since she was young and even faced the same challenges she had regarding her gender.

The last symbol is poetry. Orlando's favorite hobby was writing poems. In fact, she had full portfolios with all her works, she always had time to write and would utilize to her advantage (relationships, people, and eventful situations) to add more to her literary works. Orlando was a very creative person, and since she was young, literature always surrounded her, hence all the authors and stories she looked up to. Poetry represents half of the content of the book; in some chapters, the readers watch Orlando in artist mode, and in other chapters, it is Orlando sharing her poems and literature in general with other people. On some occasions, symbols do not have a literal meaning; for example, fire might represent rebirth, but it does not mean what the word implies. However, the symbol of poetry does represent what the word intends. Poetry is a central part of Orlando.

To conclude, this part of the chapter merely analyzed the symbols and what they represent in the book. Additionally, a brief explanation of each of them was provided for the readers to comprehend what they contributed to the text, the characters, and the author. A couple of binary oppositions were, in addition, thoroughly examined. These oppositions were helpful literary tools to understand the inner feelings or personal situations of the characters. We talked about love/hate and women/men, both extremes of elements, which helped us realize all the perspectives a character possesses.

With the symbols and Orlando's binary positions explained, it is time to analyze and explain important historical moments that are mentioned in the book that happened in real life. This way, all the events can be understood more precisely.

Now, here comes an important part of a literary analysis, the study of the characters. The first character review is, of course, Orlando. He is the main character in the book. Orlando is a nobleman whose only dream is to become a famous writer. The author makes

him a very artistic and adventurous person, who is also a nature lover. Orlando can change genders at will, so at the beginning of the first chapter, he is presented as a man, and in the middle of the story, Orlando becomes a woman. From the opening of the chapter, readers can tell that Orlando is someone gentle and with a good soul, he likes animals (dogs to be more precise), and he is the friendly type.

In terms of physical appearance, the novel describes him as a youthful-looking man with rosy cheeks, really white teeth, dark hair, and small ears fitted closely to the head. With these adjectives in mind, the readers imagine him as an attractive man, and not only they, but many people around him (in the book) also found him good-looking, men and women. Orlando falls into the category of a round character; he changes as the story unfolds. The first significant change is when he becomes a woman after almost 30 years of being a biological man.

However, Orlando reacted calmly to this substantial event; he continued living his life normally. Within this context, Orlando suffered the consequences of being a woman now; these situations made Orlando reflect on moments where he had a wrong or stereotyped opinion towards the opposite gender. His / her mentality also went through some changes, mostly thanks to the influence of other people.

The second character to analyze, in order of appearance, is Princess Marousha Stanilovska Dagmar Iliana Romanovitch. In the book, she is also known as the Russian Princess, and Orlando would call her “Sasha.” She came to England on the train of the Muscovite Ambassador; she was invited to attend the queen’s coronations, so Orlando met her at the same event. She was described to be beautiful, so much so that it made Orlando nervous as soon as he saw her from afar. Their relationship gradually escalated as days

went by, and it became apparent that something was going on between them to the point where it became the talk of the town.

The truth is that both of them made nice memories together, but just like many things in life, it all came to an end when the Russian princess decided to betray Orlando by leaving him to go back to her country. She was his first heartbreak, and it really affected him. As a character, Sasha falls into the category of a round character. She doesn't change physically like Orlando, but her mind and decisions did. Just like a real-life person, her betrayal affected Orlando's feelings and mental health, in addition to the fact that she was the reason why Orlando left the girl he had already picked out to be his future wife.

The third character in line is Archduchess Harriet Griselda. She was described to be a very tall woman with bulging eyes and a pointed nose. She and Orlando met unexpectedly, and they hung out, but Orlando felt a little uncomfortable in her presence. Later on, Orlando finds out that Archduchess Harriet is in love with him; consequently, he is overwhelmed by this confession, so he decides to escape from his home, his own country. Orlando asked King Charles to send him as an Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople, fleeing away from this persistent woman.

The plot twist about this character is shown before the end of the story, where apparently Archduchess Harriet was actually a man who dressed up as a woman to meet Orlando, but his feelings towards Orlando were never a lie. Due to this, Archduchess Harriet (or as his real name was Archduke Harry) falls into the round character category. At the end, Orlando and Harry solved their problems and, in a way, forgave each other for the past situations.

The fourth character is Nicholas (Nick) Greene. Mr. Greene is a proclaimed poet of the seventeenth century, whom Orlando happens to know only by name. One day, he decides to invite Nicholas over to his house. Orlando wanted him to take his poetry to the publishing company. After Greene's visit, Orlando realized that he wasn't who he thought, but this did not discourage him much. However, days later, Orlando finds out that Nicholas made a poem mocking him, which affects Orlando, maybe as much as the betrayal of the Russian Princess.

Many years later, Nick and Orlando ran into each other. By now, Orlando is a woman, and Mr. Greene is a literature critic, the most eminent one of the nineteenth century. Nicholas Greene is a flat character; nothing about him changes through the years. He still complains about the same things about literature and how the new writers only care about money, and how old writers were better. His mentality helped him become the greatest literary critic of the time; this time, he helped Orlando publish his poetry.

The last character, among the main ones, is Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire. Also known as Shel, he is Orlando's husband. He appears in chapter V; they met by accident but fell in love almost immediately. Shel had been a soldier, and in the moment of the story, according to the book, he was a sailor. He is described to have feminine features, which made Orlando think Shel used to be a woman, and vice versa, Shel believed Orlando used to be a man. They did not care about any of that, so as soon as they could, they got married, and they had a son. Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire, is a flat character. His personality and mentality remained the same from his first appearance until his last appearance.

Those are the main characters in “Orlando”, but there are secondary characters that deserve to be mentioned, such as Queen Elizabeth, Queen Victoria, and King James. They are key to being able to know in what century we are. Then there are characters like Clorinda, Favilla, and Euphrosyne; these three girls were Orlando’s prospects. Lastly, characters such as Mr. Dupper, Mrs. Grimsditch, Mrs. Stewkley, and Mrs. Field were Orlando’s personnel.

It’s time to talk about the motifs present in the book and explain them. The first motif is writing. Overall, this is a recurring motif throughout the story of the book. It can be seen from the beginning that the author lets the reader know that Orlando’s dream is to become a well-known writer. Then, from that point in Orlando begins his journey of writing, working on his manuscript of the poem titled “The Oak Tree.” This poem later transforms into something very special to Orlando, to the point where she carries it with her all the time.

The change in Orlando’s maturity can be seen through poetry, too. In her early years, when she was a young child, his writing was messy and very simple, but as she grew, his writing became more complex and shorter. In addition, thanks to poetry and literature in general, Orlando got to meet Nicholas Greene (a famous poet and later a literary critic), who helped her publish “The Oak Tree” and finally made Orlando’s dream come true. “Standing upright in the solitude of his room, he vowed that he would be the first poet of his race and bring immortal lustre upon his name” (Woolf, 2020, p. 47).

The aforementioned quote from the book shows how serious Orlando was about poetry and writing; in this case, the quote is made by Orlando after the Russian Princess left and became focused on his dream for real this time. The second motif is cross-dressing. This one in particular is also very present in the novel from start to finish; it refers to the

meaning/role a piece of clothing represented for the person in that moment. By meaning or role, it's the clothes society sees as only for women, such as dresses, skirts, heels, and so on and so forth, and in the case of men, there are long pants, suits, and more. With that brief explanation in mind, there were a couple of times where two characters didn't follow what society implied.

The first to break this "rule" was Archduke Harry, who dressed up as a woman to meet his crush, Orlando. Harry even changed his name to Archduchess Harriet and played that "character" for a while. After some years, Orlando came back to England and ran into Harry at the park; in that moment, he confessed to Orlando that he had always been a man and only dressed up as a woman to get close to her. The second one to break the rules was Orlando. But her case is a bit different; Orlando had become a woman, so logically she had to dress like one.

Though both cases are justified, Orlando, unlike Harry, had a rough time trying to adjust to being a woman, with the clothing she found most of them uncomfortable, and sometimes wore men's clothing just to be more comfortable. But Orlando was searching for her identity, so at some point, she realized people are more than what they wear, and everyone is the same underneath their clothes. What shapes their identity is their personality and character, not if they wear a skirt, a suit, or anything else.

"Clothes are a symbol of something hidden deep beneath" (Woolf, 2020, p. 124). This quote can be interpreted from the point of view of a person who dresses according to how they are feeling inside, according to their mood, and not according to what society dictates women and men to wear strictly. So, cross-dressing is a way to challenge societal norms; it can be interpreted as it in both the book and in real life. The third motif is transformation.

This motif can be analyzed from two points of view: (1) Orlando's gender transformation and (2) Orlando's personal transformation.

Thus, Orlando's switch from man to woman is perhaps the highlight of the entire book; therefore, it is a recurrent topic in the story. This motif is just as complex as the previous two for the sole reason that it shows how gender is not only about people's sex (men and women) but also about social roles and expectations. In the first chapters, Orlando presented as a man, and he went through a situation that was very common at the time, which is called an arranged marriage. This type of formality doesn't allow both parties to choose their partner; the only thing their families are expected to say is "yes, we are going to get married."

The point is that society puts families through this kind of tradition, and not only this tradition in specific, but there are also many other social rules or norms that people have to follow as it is mandatory, and they have no other option. In this case, Orlando went through a few situations where she faced some social norms; these situations made her do self-meditation and rethink the ways society wanted her to live and behave. For this particular part, it is important to mention that when Orlando was a man, she had some questionable ideals women had to follow, such as they had to be obedient, chaste, and exquisitely appareled.

However, now that she was a woman, she realized how mistaken her opinion was. Women were the opposite of what she, as a man, once believed. Therefore, from a sociological approach, it can be said that people's behaviors and mannerisms are controlled by society. From when they are young, they are taught what to say, how to react, to the point where what they do is not even genuine, but if they react in any other way, they will

get pointed out. For example, if a girl speaks up for herself, she could be labelled as disrespectful or crazy, and if a man cried or showed any type of weakness, he could be labelled as weak or feminine. That is how society influences people to believe in something that is not always right.

Now, Orlando has not only transformed herself physically, but she has also transformed herself as a person. Her growth as the story unfolds is so well shown by the author, as mentioned before, though poetry is one of the ways readers can see Orlando's development, another way of seeing her change in through her inner dialogues; in them readers can see the conversations she has with herself in which she notices her mentality, ideals, and thoughts are indeed changing. "‘I am growing up’, she thought, taking her taper. ‘I am losing my illusion, perhaps to acquire new ones’, and she paced down to the long gallery to her bedroom." (Woolf, 2020, p. 114).

The quote above helps exemplify the explanation of how Orlando was maturing and changing her point of view. She came back home to many changed things in her hometown, her house, the people she left, and even England experienced some historical changes that surprised Orlando. Here is valid to mention that Orlando finally found her true self, her identity, and this is not about gender or if she identifies herself as a man or woman; identity is not really about it, it is about what represents each person, like their beliefs, knowledge, personality, and what they stand for.

It is time for the themes present in the book to be analyzed; the first one is conforming to society. This topic is very present in the book as well as in some parts of the analysis project, the reason is that Woolf kind of used this story to make a critique of society; consequently, the topic is going to be all over the place. Conforming to society is

about constantly changing just to fit in with those norms and to seek people's approval. This type of situation can be seen when Orlando had to adapt herself just to be accepted by the people of the century. For example, in the sixteenth century Orlando wore expensive clothes and was the Queen's favorite, in the seventeenth-century she was an ambassador in Constantinople and had to adapt to said culture, in the eighteenth-century Orlando had to figure out how to live in her own country but now as a woman, and finally during the nineteenth-century she had to give in to the society's pressure and had to find a husband.

These situations exemplify Orlando's constant need to evolve to fit into society; in the end, she put a stop to it by living how she wanted, without seeking others' approval. Said conformity made Orlando grow tired of it, which made her realize that now she's old enough to reject the idea of conformity, and she has an independent mind now. The second theme is fact and imagination. This one is a bit different from the other ones explained above, but it is just as interesting. A worthy note characteristic of the book is how it plays with fiction and reality. For example, the book, according to the author, is a biography; therefore, most readers believe that some of the things and events in the book are true, but they are not.

This is how Woolf tells the readers that there is no beginning or end to imagination and facts in literature. The "biographer" in the book is just an unknown narrator who claims to tell Orlando's true story, but some of the events are impossible to happen in real life, like the fact that Orlando lived through 4 different centuries and had personal relationships with famous figures of history, such as Queen Elizabeth, or how she went from a man to a woman. Another way to see the fiction and fact theme is in the story of history that is shown in the novel. The story moves through time, so there were moments in which the

author referred to moments in history to re-explain Orlando's feelings and how they increase or transform as readers keep analyzing the story.

Now, here is the analysis of some additional symbols found in "Orlando." The first one is the poem "The Oak Tree." This poem is Orlando's biggest and most treasured work of art. This poem is Orlando's central identity as a poet; she carried it with her for almost 400 years, which is the time she lived for, and that is how important it was for her. As it was analyzed in the motifs section, poetry was a big part of her life, through which readers saw Orlando's growth and how she matured over the years. Well, "The Oak Tree" is precisely the only poem that can serve as proof of this fact, a poem she started writing in 1586 and finally buried it underground in 1928; by then, the poem had taken a completely different turn compared to its original form and style. In simpler words, this poem or manuscript, as many call it, represents Orlando's creative process and her transformation as a poet.

A second remarkable symbol is Orlando's ancestral house. This place represents memory, tradition, and history. This is the home that watched Orlando grow up, her first heartbreak, her isolation, her happiness, and most importantly, her artistic side. Moreover, the house was filled with people who cared about her the most, that is, her servants who waited years for Orlando to come; they were the same people who did not bat an eye when they saw that Orlando was now a woman. In the end, they were just happy to see she was back home. The house, of course, deteriorated, but it still felt like home to Orlando.

The last symbol is mirrors; it represents self-awareness and transformation. This symbol is linked to one of the motifs mentioned above because they both resort to topics of identity, appearance, and duality. For example, when Orlando woke up for the first time as a woman, she looked in the mirror and didn't react at all; she just kept walking to the

bathroom to take a shower, “The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity” (Woolf, 2020, p. 89). This line may be suggesting that identity exceeds physical form, and Orlando remained the same person she was even before the change of sex.

Mirrors are the way people are able to see their reflections, their identities. Through them, people can see the conflict between appearance and inner reality; basically, what they see on the outside is not the same thing that is on the inside. There were times when the book showed Orlando looking at herself in the mirror; during such moments, she confronted herself with her looks and what she wasn't really showing, she even sometimes questioned her gender and how she had to dress to fit in with society. In conclusion, mirrors in the story tell the readers that a body can have physical changes, but the inside of the person remains the same; their inner essence and spirit continue to be within, because that part of a person is difficult to change or erase.

These next paragraphs are to explain some comparisons of historical moments as well as situations related to the laws back in England during the old century. These flashes are not fictional; they did exist in real life, but it was so interesting to see how the author played with them in a fictional story.

4.2 The Reign of Queen Elizabeth I (16th)

The first chapter of the book takes place in England during the 16th century; therefore, the country was ruled by Queen Elizabeth I. She was a fierce woman who always looked out for her people. Her wisdom allowed her to choose correctly the counsellors to help her lead the country to success. In the book, Orlando, as a young man, made quite the impression on Queen Elizabeth the first time they met; Orlando became the queen's

favorite, and the rest is history. This social-political event added to the book a touch of realism, because many other situations in the story are rather fictional, so adding a character who was a real person, and who actually ruled the English empire, makes the story a lot more relatable.

Queen Elizabeth had a rigid system, and citizens were expected to follow her democratic rules. In that era, social classes were a relevant part of society; families that were of a higher class definitely had more advantages with the queen than the rest. Orlando belonged to the group of people who benefited from this arrangement, “For the old woman loved him. And the Queen, who knew a man when she saw one, though not, it is said, in the usual way, plotted for him a splendid career” (Woolf, 2020, p. 9). Moreover, she gave Orlando houses, land, and even gave him one of her rings. It was not possible to find any information about whether a similar situation ever happened during her reign in real life, but in the novel, Orlando was her favorite gentleman.

In real England and the one in the book, Queen Elizabeth I was a loved and cherished leader who dedicated her life to the throne; she always dealt with the most dangerous and difficult circumstances. After her death, a funeral was held, and the streets were overcrowded with people who paid their queen a last tribute; they felt grateful towards her for having reigned with outstanding skills and procedures.

4.3 The Great Frost (16th)

The Great Frost is a historical event that took place in 1684. Some online sources say that it was in 1709. However, in the novel, it happened in the year 1608. “It is considered the worst freeze England has ever experienced” (Bell, 2024). The low temperature was unbearable; it was so bad that many people saw animals frozen to death.

The biggest consequence of this terrible season was that the famous river Thames froze completely for 2 months, making it impossible for the boats that transported goods to sail. Many families faced a hard time thanks to the Great Frost; men who depended on the river lost nearly 2 months, because the water was a solid block of ice.

Meanwhile, in the book, this tragic event was described as happening in the same way. Overnight, the temperature dropped, it was very windy, and raindrops were falling. At sunrise, people realized the Thames was congealed, and the birds froze mid-flight. “Others were so dazed with terror that they sat immovable and silent, looking steadfastly before them” (Woolf, 2020, p. 35). It clearly was a horrifying situation for the people at the time; everything happened suddenly, but it lasted longer than expected. In the book, two situations took place that the real Great Frost did not have.

The first situation is the coronation of King James. A new coronation implies that Queen Elizabeth passed away in the middle of Chapter I. The readers are not told explicitly the day of her death or the reason behind it. King James decided to have a carnival, amidst the terrible winter, to gain popularity with the people as their new ruler. He gave the order to use and decorate the frozen river to assemble the alleys, booths, and grounds of the carnival. “But while the country people suffered the extremity of want, and trade of the country was at a standstill, London enjoyed a carnival of the utmost brilliancy” (Woolf, 2020, p. 15). The story says that the new king reserved many seats opposite the palace gates for exceptional statesmen, soldiers, admirals, and the new Queen.

The second situation is that the Great Frost was a background setting while Orlando was about to meet the girl who later became his very first heartbreak. Russian princess Sasha was the girl who caught Orlando’s attention. Days after they started an affair, because

Orlando was already engaged to Euphrosyne, this affair was so obvious that it made people whisper and gossip about it. The tragic part of the story is after spending a long time together, Orlando and Sasha decide to escape England. Orlando waited for the princess all night. She was supposed to meet him at the designated time and place, but midnight came, and Sasha was nowhere to be found. Orlando immediately felt like he was deceived by the princess. He still waited for her, but when the sun was coming up, very far away, he saw the ship of the Muscovite Embassy sailing off the sea; at that moment, he realized that Sasha was on the ship returning home, and he was left behind. After that, Orlando secluded himself from society for the very first time.

4.4 The English Diplomacy (17th)

In this period of time, Orlando was sent to Constantinople as an ambassador. The real reason why he became an ambassador was that he was trying to run away from Archduchess Harriet, who was crazy in love with him. Either way, Orlando was now taking part in the negotiations between King Charles and the Turks; he would meet up with kings, sultans, other ambassadors, and their wives. Under his care, there were important documents that were handed to him always by secretaries and high officials. It was a time of social and political changes for the British people; the country was making alliances, treaties with other countries. By doing that, they were expanding the English territory.

The real-life English diplomacy and imperialism went in the same similar way to that in the book. It was their time to expand the British domain. “Hence, in the century from 1689, the number of English diplomatic posts in foreign countries increased while, at home, the departments of state presiding over foreign affairs became more professionalized and more politically important” (Schweizer, n.d.). As the quote explained, ambassadors were

the mediators each country would send abroad to ensure the transparency of the deals. Inside or outside the English nations, every politician, ambassador, or else was working hard to contribute to the movement.

4.5 Orlando's Disappointment with 19th-Century Society

Orlando always preferred the Elizabethan era more than the rest. Everything from the people to the ambience of the time would bring him nostalgia. When she entered the 19th century, Orlando realized something: people were not the same. It sounds weird to say that people were not the same. Clearly, some of them were older, some of them were only months old, so what was really bothering Orlando? Bear in mind that Orlando constantly struggled to find love. The first time she fell in love, the person deceived her and left without saying a word. When Orlando became a woman, she began to notice that women were all married and with a kid on the way. This is when she concluded that 19th-century society was far from being as good as it once was during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

“But the spirit of the nineteenth century was antipathic to her in the extreme, and thus it took her and broke her, and she was aware of her defeat at its hands as she had never seen before” (Woolf, 2020, p.161). It is of great importance to mention that Orlando, due to the scenery happening in front of her, took desperate measures; the nature of the spirit of age made her buy a wedding ring, she put it on her third finger, and pretended to have a husband. Unfortunately, this plan did not help her affliction disappear; it made the situation worse. Every time she was outdoors taking a stroll, the only thing she paid attention to was the couples next, in front, and behind her, the way they were always holding hands and hugging, never letting go of each other.

The reason why this is relevant is not because Orlando had been single her entire life or to show her favoritism towards Queen Elizabeth I; the real reason is that it represents the societal changes throughout the centuries. The conflict between Orlando and society adds to the story the point of view of a character who wishes things remained the same even if centuries change. The self-confrontation of Orlando also tells the readers that for many years she had her goals clear, but the moment she realizes things have changed, she starts doubting herself, and for the first time, she is afraid of not fitting in.

The analysis of that part of the story is important to point out that times change, and people change along with them, for bad or for good, but that is not relevant right now. Society must adapt to the new changes, just like Orlando, many people will find themselves battling against the new rules or obligations, and some others will not struggle at all because the changes adjust to them better than the old ones. Both reactions to it are more than valid.

4.6 Orlando's Struggles with Gender Laws and Property (18th-19th)

Gender inequality was a prominent issue back then. Women from around the world suffered discrimination just because of their sex, and even now in the 21st century, some countries still look down on women. England was not the exception; their laws favored men more, specifically when it was about owning property and personal items. During that time, women had restricted property rights, the law saw a married couple as just one economic unit, the husband took control of the property, even if such belonged to the wife. About inheritance, in case of death or else, the properties of the wife will be passed to the son (s), and daughters could only inherit it directly in the absence of sons.

This situation was, of course, discouraging and unfair for women. Many of them had properties, but they were not allowed to have control over them. If they were receiving any sort of income from one of their properties, the money would be taken by the husband, and for the wife, there was not a single penny in sight. “It is undeniable that English law severely restricted women’s access to property, both portable and non-portable” (Dashwood & Lipsedge, 2021). In short, once a woman married, they were bound to lose all inherited properties, and when the husband was not in the picture anymore, the sons were the chosen ones to take control over the assets.

In the fictional England, the gender laws and property turned their back on Orlando when she returned to the country, but now as a woman. As I previously explained, Orlando had many titles, houses, and lands. When she was a man, she never had any issues with the law, but as soon as she returned to England, three lawsuits were filed against her. The first charge was that she was dead; consequently, she could not hold any property. The second charge was a woman, who made her unable to have any control over her properties. The last charge was that when Orlando was a man, she married a woman named Rosina Pepita, allegedly they had three sons, and the said children declared their father (Orlando) dead, thus inheriting her property.

As you can see, fiction is similar to reality, and Orlando was about to lose her belongings, just because of her gender. “All her states were put in Chancery and her titles pronounced in abeyance while the suits were under litigation” (Woolf, 2020, p. 110). Her fight against the court also implied that she spent lots of time and money. But Orlando was so happy to be back home, she decided to live her life normally while the lawsuits were

being resolved. Every servant was delighted to see her again after many years; they did not mind the shift in her gender. What mattered the most was that she was back.

She is told of the lawsuits in chapter 4, but it is in chapter 5 when she is finally sent the results of her court case. She was at home when two uniformed officers walked by the door and handed her the document. She proceeded to read the results out loud for everyone in the room to hear. The suspected marriage with Rosina was annulled, and the children were pronounced illegitimate, so they were not going to inherit anything. As for her sex, it was, without a doubt, female. At the end of the paper, it read that her states were now entailed to a male heir or in default of marriage. In this part, Orlando was getting anxious and took the rest of the message as read.

Orlando, like many other women, was a victim of the gender laws established in England. It can be said that she had a good ending, but others cannot say the same thing. Women have fought for equal rights for a long time; in the past, it was harder to achieve something that favored women and men equally. The analysis of the chapter on gender laws and property displayed the treatment there was toward women of the 18th and 19th centuries; it provided the story a relatable theme with which women might have felt heard and understood. It makes the book more fascinating and appealing.

Here begins the design of the investigation. Remember that this is done through an exploratory-descriptive style. In this part, the targeted population is the people of the 16th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. A similar investigation was conducted in Chapter II: Theoretical Framework, so a couple of topics may be repeated, and other topics are new additions. This part studies the people and the atmosphere of England in each of its eras; it includes the major changes over the years.

The first era is England in the 16th century. During the Elizabethan era, the people had deep-rooted religious convictions. The Church of England was the official state Church, and the monarch was the head of it. England at the time was highly rural, with some green areas. The Renaissance era was predominantly influenced by art and literature. “The Renaissance embraces a series of religious, economic, and political changes which ripple into areas of science, literature, and philosophy” (Judkins, n.d.). People saw the rising star William Shakespeare, and his literary works accompanied many of them even after the Renaissance was over. Those who lived in the 16th century also experienced one of the first breakthroughs of the time, which was the invention of printing in 1455.

Lastly, the country was ruled by monarchs. Royalty was important, and all citizens were taught to show their respect and loyalty towards the monarchs.

The second era is the 18th century. Here, the changes were significantly obvious. The Renaissance era was over, and the new era was the Enlightenment, also known as The Age of Reason. “The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that sought to improve society through fact-based reason and inquiry” (CFR Education, 2023). This movement changed the ideas of many citizens; they started to think more based on scientific and logical concepts.

Moreover, people at the time did not have enough money to pay for medicine, so they used to make their own remedies at home. They would use ingredients they had to come up with a “remedy” that would cure their illnesses. Another reason why people did things that way was that proper medical care was not available.

The third era is the 19th century. Queen Victoria was the supreme leader; therefore, the era was known as the name of Victorian era or Victorian Britain. In the book, the 19th century made Orlando have trouble adapting to the new era of England. Some of these changes were an increase in population, industrialization, social reforms, and more.

As mentioned before, industrialization was one of the major changes they had. England became highly urbanized and started to have more technological advances, like the invention of the steam engine. “The industrialization of Britain saw an evolutionary, but marked, growth in the wealth of the nation” (Bush, n.d.). The switch from an agrarian society to an industrial one allowed the country to rapidly increase its economy.

The last era is the 20th century. The England of this period suffered from the two World Wars, both disastrous events that impacted negatively on the economy of the country. Moreover, when women obtained their right to vote, they were more independent than before. Women also took the place of men in the factories during the century. Overall, the people and the atmosphere were much more modern than in preceding centuries.

In past chapters, elements of historical and feminist approaches were mentioned to let the reader know that some of their characteristics were used to analyze some of the parts from the book. That is why the main approach of this project is an eclectic approach, the three of them share similar foundations, specifically the historical approach, which is why they deserve to be mentioned. They are not meant to be compared to the situations of the book; otherwise, they can make this literary analysis take a different turn from the original approach, so these elements are explained in a general manner, and in a way, readers can find them in literature.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter is to give the reader the opportunity to observe the final results of this literary analysis project, the ways in which they were achieved, and if they were successfully accomplished. Additionally, the results are going to be analyzed one by one through the three specific objectives from chapter 1.

5.2 Conclusions

This is an introduction to the general conclusions drawn from this project. In summary, this literary analysis project covered an extensive list of core ideas in order to provide cultural context and background information, such as Virginia Woolf's biography, how England was during the sixteenth century, and the impact "Orlando" had on the people of the time. In Chapter III, the literary analysis began, examining most of the elements using mainly the sociological approach. The characters, symbols, and motifs were carefully explained in order to deliver an easy-to-comprehend explanation of what each of them meant in the story. Additionally, there were a few real-life situations England faced back in the day, which were included by the author in the book.

"Orlando" exceeds the limits of time, transformations, fantasy, and creativity to build an engaging narrative. It makes the readers question the social constructs, norms, and expectations. It also plays a lot with history, and therefore, it mentions a few historical changes to show the constant evolution of life. At last, "Orlando" teaches something important everyone must know, and it is to accept autonomy, celebrate the fluidity of identity, and never give up dreams and desires. Orlando's journey through the different

centuries challenged the limits of time, but the things she experienced were worth it at the end because they finally allowed her to be at peace with herself and with the bitter experiences from her early days.

Through this book, Virginia Woolf builds a story that challenges the concepts of time, societal norms, and gender rules. Those were part of the main objective of this project, and fortunately, the analysis of all of them was provided correctly and satisfactorily. The concept of time was explained through the fact that Orlando lived more than three hundred years, and she maintained her youthful looks. She also revealed herself against the expectations and behaviors society once put on her, completely breaking their pride and finally living independently and feeling free. This personal development is reflected in society as a way for other people to stop the cycle.

This story combined perfectly reality and fiction, raising awareness on delicate topics that to this day still affect people, especially the younger generation. That is why the general objective of this literary analysis was to analyze the themes of identity and social roles in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, exploring how the protagonist's transformation challenges traditional sociological constructs of gender, class, and time, and how these shifts reflect the societal dynamics of the eras represented in the novel. The goal of this main objective was successfully achieved through the examination of the social constructs old England had for men and women, also the analysis of time and the important role it plays in the story, and finally how these attitudes changed over the years as in the different rules each of the centuries had for its society and the people who finally decided to stop living a life that was not what they desired. Time had something to do with that aspect.

The general objective was valuable to accomplish because most of its themes were also analyzed in the project, but here is where the specific objectives come through.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To explore how Wool's depiction of Orlando's transformation challenges conventional sociological perceptions

The first specific objective of this analysis project was to explore how Wool's depiction of Orlando's transformation challenges conventional sociological perceptions. This point was intended to show how Orlando's physical transformation was going to be received and talked about; it can be said that the analysis of it was effectively achieved. First, the physical change itself challenged conventional wisdom from the beginning, because there is no natural way something like that could happen to someone overnight. Second, Orlando's going from man to woman brought her consequences, but in a manner that people did not expect. For example, she had trouble with the law and with her job.

However, people around her did not have a harsh reaction to her physical transformation as expected. Most of them thought it was weird and unnatural, but they accepted it as time went by, and a minority were shocked to see that the rumors of Orlando's change were true all along. Lastly, the reaction of the most important character, Orlando, to this change. It has been mentioned before, but Orlando had zero reaction to the situation. How did all situations challenge conventional sociological perceptions? Well, a man waking up as a woman is not normal nor natural. Second, it challenged society and made it think about whether it had to treat Orlando as a man or as a woman.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To explain each of the symbols from the book

The second specific objective was to explain each of the symbols from the book. This one was accomplished, too. The central themes of the story were analyzed with care. As a

reminder, the themes were clothing, dogs (or animals in general), writing, the poem or manuscript titled “The Oak Tree”, Orlando’s house, and mirrors. These were explained in order to see what they provided for the story and what they meant to the characters. In every literary work, readers can find symbols or themes that basically build the story, and they also lead to understanding a character’s actions, thoughts, and beliefs, as well as the author, because in some cases those symbols are personal or come from real-life situations they experienced.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To conceptualize the impact of the book within the literature space

The last specific objective was to conceptualize the impact of the book within the literature space. “Orlando” and its author, Virginia Woolf, hold a special place in the literary community. The book challenges society in many ways; it talks about the culture and history of a popular country of the present times, and it was written by an author who was known to be influential within modern literature. The impact this book had can be said to be positive; it opened people’s minds, and it encouraged other writers to think beyond their limits and use/add profound themes and topics in their stories. It is true that inside the story, many situations made some of the characters uncomfortable or made them feel somewhat guilty, but that is why the author made them face some experiences that were unconventional at the time. When change makes people feel awkward or weird, it means it is working.

It can be said that this specific objective was accomplished positively in two ways, (1) in a real life scenario where the book became interesting and popular for modern day readers and (2) because it became a guide to the other writes especially female writes who unfortunately had to hide because women were not allow to publish their works, or those

who were afraid of adding heavy topics or mention personal situations to the book about the oppression of women or the ridiculous rules and expectations placed on them from a young age.

Overall, all the objectives were achieved in a good way and through different methods of analysis, which gave back the expected results. The final learning of this book is specifically how people should not settle for what they do not want, and that following society's norms sometimes only brings sadness and a feeling of never fitting into their culture. Moreover, another lesson learned from the book is how time, in fact, fixes things and situations that people believe are not going to get better. Orlando proved this mentality was incorrect, feeling hurt, tired, going through changes, losing friends and lovers as well as material objects, are all part of changing, and when the time comes, all of those bad things will go away, and good things will start coming.

“Orlando” is a good book to read as the first novel by Virginia Woolf. It is light reading that won't bore people and that, once again, will make readers think about the society they live in and if they, just like Orlando, feel trapped or conditioned to the expectations placed on them. If the readers are girls, then they will feel understood by the author who knows the situations they have to go through just because of their gender, how they are only seen by their physical appearance, whether they are married with children or not, by their clothes, and not by their intelligence, talents, dreams, and skills that can change the world or at least make a positive change in their communities.

5.3 Research Question

The research question given to this project was in what ways does Virginia Woolf utilize time and historical transformation to illustrate Orlando's development concerning

identity and personal matters? All these topics were important to have in mind while analysing the story because they were present in almost every chapter of the book. Moreover, it was a relevant question to ask because once the literary analysis was over, the many ways in which Virginia Woolf used time, and historical changes could be seen as well as the different meanings she gave to them. All these aspects combined contributed a deeper meaning to the story, the characters, and the scenarios found in the novel.

5.4 Recommendations

As for the recommendations, future research can be done on the so-called stream of consciousness, which is a writing style commonly associated with Virginia Woolf. She was one of the most influential writers from the modern era to use and redefine this literary technique. Since then, the stream of consciousness is notorious in her books, including “Orlando.” Furthermore, this writing style provides the story with more realistic feelings and thoughts from the characters; this detail is not easy to find in other literary works; consequently, they might lack that flow of thoughts that characterizes Virginia Woolf.

The second recommendation is to do a further study on why the theme of gender fluidity was groundbreaking for her time. Since Woolf was a woman advocate, such an attitude is reflected in “Orlando” and in “To the Lighthouse”. Gender fluidity, queerness, and non-binary topics were present in “Orlando,” which felt revolutionary to the people of the time, and to other writers who lived in the same moment as Virginia. These topics also helped to contribute to the feminist approach and encouraged feminist writers to think outside the box and use bold topics in their writings; these themes in “Orlando” still resonate in the heads of those who have had the pleasure to read Virginia Woolf.

The third recommendation is to apply a broader study to the cultural and historical references utilized in literature. There are many of these types of mentions in “Orlando”, and the author did it on purpose only to demonstrate that history and change are independent processes and not static ones. Those who study this specific area might also realize the way she mixes them with fiction, fantasy, and even a little bit of satire, and the way she felt towards historical and cultural significance.

Another recommendation for the readers is to examine the usage of natural elements in the story or in literature in general. For example, in the book, Orlando is obsessed with nature, especially with an oak tree that is outside in her garden. But there are other elements of nature, such as landscapes, tree leaves, and sunsets, so they might hold a deeper meaning to the characters that readers realize, which is why a deeper study of them would be good.

The fifth recommendation is to study from a psychological approach some of Orlando’s experiences, such as the change of gender, her journey for self-discovery, to mention a couple of examples. Said analysis could include elements like character development, analysis of mental processes, symbolism, and hidden desires. A psychological approach analyzes the inner state of the characters, their dreams and emotions, so this approach applied to the book would fit right because Orlando is probably one of the most complex characters in the story, so it will be interesting to analyze her through a different lens.

The last recommendation is to analyze the use of irony, parody, and humor in “Orlando”. The book is supposed to be a biography combined with a bit of fantasy and history, so irony and humor are somewhat present in the story. This is a contrasting theme

because usually biographies are serious and straight to the point, Woolf changes that and instead makes it a bit playful, dramatic, and extravagant. For example, one situation that is pure irony is the fact that at the beginning, Orlando, as a man, met Duchess Harriet, who by the end of the book turned out to be a man dressed as a woman, and by the time he admitted this, Orlando was now a woman. This is one of the ways Virginia Woolf played with humor and irony throughout the book.

Additionally, through humor, she also invites people to question the idea that literature, art, and history have to be objective. She parodies the manner in which biographers, mostly men, write and leave aside women's feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Thus, further study can be done to analyze these specific subject matters to find the reason why the author decided to add them to the story and which situations she used to represent humor, parody, and irony.

Those are the six possible areas that can be studied in a more detailed manner, and which can offer a different point of view or opinion from the one that was concluded in this project. A positive aspect of this book, in particular, is the number of elements that can be explored through many approaches; it is a really flexible story, with interesting characters, and situations that reflect the culture, history, and society of old England. The use of popular and well-known characters such as Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria made the reading more appealing.

These results of these recommendations could be interesting to see, because as mentioned before the story of Orlando can be interpreted through a few different literary approaches, the story is adaptable in some areas, the symbols and themes make the reader

do an internal analysis of what life is about, if they have to live the way according to what society says, if their own freedom or identity depends on other people or it only depends on them, and how time really lets them see things more clearly.

This book is known because it experiments with so many situations that fit so well with each other and yet have a story of their own. These suggestions are always important to provide several points of view, because unfortunately, sometimes individuals stick to one single viewpoint and ignore the rest of the options they have to analyze or define something. That is why these recommendations are found to be necessary and relevant to create an atypical analysis of a literary text.

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