

I. Individual Identity Crisis in *Orlando*

The research work is primarily designed to explore and study the gender problem. The gender problem is a prominent factor resulted due to the gender discrimination which is to establish the social hierarchy on the basis of socially constructed structure where males always acquire higher status than females. The society does not truly evaluate the qualities of male and female sexes rather tries to penetrate them into the constructed gender framework. Generally females do not get any standard space status and honor but the males have high opportunity to acquire such standard space status as well as honor. Orlando, the protagonist of Virginia Woolf's novel, *Orlando*, takes the experiences of the both sexes. As a male, Orlando continuously develops his space, but after undergoing sex change she continuously loses her space though there is nothing change in her identity except in her sex. This loss represents the gender problem in a male dominated society.

In the beginning, as a boy of sixteen, Orlando enjoys by reading and writing. He loves solitude so, he often sits under the ke tree, top of the hill. He is introduced to Queen Elizabeth who loves his nature of honesty and manner of behaviors. He becomes a treasurer and steward at the court where he gets royal honor and comfort. He engages in many adventures with beautiful women by ignoring his duties. But he does not like to be followed by and ugly woman named Archduchess Harriet of Romania and to get rid of her, he goes to Constantinople as an ambassador. He enjoys space, status, honor and prosperity as a male character but he loses that when he undergoes the sex change and becomes a female. Though there is a sex change in Orlando after seven days and seven nights long sleep, her identity remains constant as previous Orlando. The only change is in sex, she cannot sustain her own honor and status. In the patriarchal society, she feels shame to hold the high rank and prosperity. She cannot adjust herself in that society by being a female and thus leaves the post of ambassador. Then she joins a gipsy tribe, where too she cannot assimilate because they do

not trust her. By losing all achievements, she returns to her own home where, as a male, Orlando has started his journey of progress. She marries with Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine to complete her long poem, "The Oke Tree". She sits under the Oke Tree recollecting the entire events of her lives.

Male Orlando is deeply inclined to literature since his childhood. As a male, he has written many plays, stories, romances and poems "some in prose, some in French, some in verse, some in Italian; all romantic, all long" (Woolf 48). He did not feel any obstacles from society and continuously lived comfortably: he easily wrote, read, and moved to places. Once, he got opportunity to offer a bowl of rose water to the Queen Elizabeth. She noticed his innocent and honest behavior properly. Next day, she wanted to examine him outwardly and inwardly either he is a noble man or not as she has supposed. He totally resembles the qualities of noble man and he was awarded with the post of treasurer and steward to which the narrator describes as:

'Come!' she said, she was sitting bolt upright beside the fire. And she held him a foot's pace from her and looked him up and down was the matching her speculation the other with the truth now visible? Did she find her guesses justified? Eye, mouth, Nose, breast, hips, hands- she ran them over. The young man withstood her gaze blessing only a damask rose as become him. Strength, grace, romance, folly and poetry youth-she read him like a page. Instantly she plucked a ring from her finger and as she fitted to his, named him her treasures and steward; next hung about him chains of office (Woolf 16).

Now, he has got money, love, respect, status and many others things. As a lady killer, he has enjoyed life with various women who are Clorinda, Favilla, and Euphrosyne.

The novel marks the period of late sixteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century where definitely male have higher space than female Orlando, had

developed an ambition to hate ugly women but he was followed by an ugly woman. As a result, he requested King Charles to send him to Constantinople as British ambassador extraordinary.

In Constantinople, he had to be formal and to engage in tight duty. He remembered the beautiful Oke Tree and pleasant movement of London which scribbled over with poetry. So, feeling tired and bored, Orlando slept for long time and people guessed that she might have died. But on the seventh day, “he stretched himself. He rose the stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumped pealed Trust! Trust! Trust! We have no choice left but confess- he was a woman” (86).

He undergoes sex change, “But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been” (87). Except in sex, Orlando’s identity remained as usual but the very change in sex had brought great storm in her life. In fact, by her sex she was a woman and by her attitude she was a man as previous male Orlando. She, thus, choose ambivalent dress- Turkish coat and trousers- which could not determine her sex. After that she “ swing her leg over it; and thus, attended by lean dog, riding a donkey in company of a gipsy, Ambassador of great Britain at the court of the sultan left Constantinople” (88). She joined to gipsy tribe where they did not allow her to stay so she sailed for England “At this, she burst into a passion of tear, and striding black to the gypsies’ camp, told them that she must sail for England the very next day”(95).

On the ship, after receiving the attraction of caption, she thought that her new role would require new responsibilities and that would bring new privileges. In England, she was considered legally dead, so her whole property was put in chancery. In her country house, she was courtly received by her servants. She has still hope and courage of progression. She joined the women of the street and pubs but the group of the women could not progress without the help of the men rather soon grew dull and respective. She could not complete her

long poem *The Oke Tree*, could not stay at home nicely and could not become a good social member without a husband. These kinds of problems she faced as a female. There is a remedy when a woman comes in bit contact with a male. This situation clearly showed the male supremacy in the society. So Orlando was forced to marry a man and to be a dependent object. Her continuous downfall limited her to the ground of male oriented social frame. She has lost everything which she had gained as a male Orlando. She wanted to be alone to search new horizon for her identity. That is why, she went to the hill where she wanted to bury her beautiful creation *The Oak Tree* as being a product of male Orlando, but when she knew the value of poetry, she let it lie unburied:

'I bury this a tribute', she was going to have said, a return to the land of what the land has given, 'but lord' ! . . . what has praise and fame to do with poetry ? Was not writing poetry a secret transaction, a voice answering a voice ?' So, she let her book lie unburied. (Wolf 203)

In this way, all her possibilities are seized. She is behaved as such because she is categorized socially in feminine gender. This gender division is social construct. And, it is said that there is problematizing gender in this novel, *Orlando*. Now she is living with the hope of entirely distinct, constant and powerful life.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English author, essayist, critic, publisher and writer of short stories, regarded as one of the foremost modernist leading literary figures of the twentieth century. She was born in London as Adeline Virginia Stephen as the third child of unconventional Victorians, Julia Prinsep Stephen, a wellknown literary figure and Sir Leslie Stephen, a notable historian, author, critic and mountaineer of his time. During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of Bloomsbury Group. Her most famous notable work include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the light House* (1927) and *Orlando*(1928), and the book- length essay *A Room of One's*

Own(1929), with its famous dictum, “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction”. Woolf’s writings are influenced by her past tragic family life. She tries to immortalize the image of her family members and relatives through the literary works. Homosexual relation between Woolf and the writer and gardener Vita Sackville – West, wife of Harold Nicolson along with the evaluation of females by male oriented ideology in the then Victorian society have also been immortalized through this literary work. *Orlando* is a fantastic straight forward biography of the central character which is also designed to immortalize the family heritage of her own lover Victoria Sackville-West, the English poet and novelist. Here, *Orlando* undergoes the experience of being both male and female. We can find sex based social discrimination though both sexes have same identity and characteristics. Really, in patriarchal society, male’s supreme power dominates the female’s potentialities and by chance if they reach to the top, they are pulled down all of a sudden. *Orlando* as a female cannot be an ambassador but as a male easily can be. The society does not have courage to see the supreme power of females on the one hand and on the other hand the females are made crippled and psychologically weak. So, they cannot hold the higher position. If they suddenly become powerful, they cannot sustain that rather have hurry to run away. In the novel, *Orlando* as a female feels shy and weak. That is why she leaves the post and runs to join the Gipsy tribe to get ease. In every tribe, there is no matter either it is lower or higher, the females are mistrusted and hated. The social convention is such a powerful thing where *Orlando* is not allowed to assimilate even in Gipsy tribe. *Orlando* as a male has written a long poem but has not completed till the sex change. Now, she becomes so feeble that she even cannot compose a single line. She cannot be secure until and unless she contacts a male, so she gets marriage with Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine. But, she is not happy with the marriage and reaches the new space.

Virginia Woolf's most famous essay book *A Room of One's Own* also expresses such kinds of theme. Here, she wants to show suppressed condition of female writer due to not having the opportunity and separate space. She says that if Shakespeare had a sister with equal capacity and creativity she would not become famous as famous as her brother because she had to be bounded in the social restriction. Moreover, she could not get money as much as she needed, could not travel as her brother, could not get market as her brother, could limit her she could not get a separate space so she share the males' space. In such situation, how can she become well creative writer? Woolf uses new techniques or methods to express the human feeling and experiences. She does not want to be limited within conventional literary framework. She introduces "stream of consciousness techniques" to penetrate into characters' mind and the inner realities of the society but it "does not get out of hand or lead the story into the hidden depths" (Majill 1994). In her novel we can find the experimentation. Her famous novel *To The Light House* moves round throughout the historical past. *The Waves* follows the stream of consciousness technique and *Orlando* follows metamorphosis as a magic realism. Commenting her innovative technique in writing Borden says:

As Virginia Woolf's novels were to follow the uncharted paths of the mind's free movement, so this diary records how she would step aside from the high road at Ives and trust to innumerable footpaths, as thin as through trodden by rabbits, which laid over hills and moor in all directions. As though she were tracking a metaphor for future work, she followed natural paths which ignored artificial boundaries. (78)

Orlando is written as a witty and parodic biography of its protagonist and charts the life and time of its central character from a masculine identity within Elizabethan court to a feminine identity in 1928. This novel provides an analysis of the historically constructed subject and a critique of gender essentialism while it also explores the important issue of gender and

creativity. To show gender discrimination and gender problem, the single identity with multifaceted selves constitutes significant role in the novel. As an identity Orlando never changes his thoughts, feelings, behaviors and every other thing but after changes comes in sex she falls under tragic faith of gender problem. As a result she loves lonely place where she can find her distinct world out of the males. As female Orlando, many female characters in Woolf's novel besides their comfortable domestic life as a woman, yearn for an escape from it for space of their own and even for loneliness. This is the main conflict run midway through her writings. They want to establish their self identity in the society but social norms and values come before them as obstacles.

In the novel, cross-dressing also plays the important role to perform the unnatural distinctions in Orlando's life. Orlando seems as female while he is male and vice versa. This has brought great dilemma in the society.

Throughout the novel, Orlando engages in cross-dressing. As a woman, Orlando occasionally falls on a man's breeches. In this manner she meets Nell, a friendly street walker who gives her the odd sensation of first being mistake for a (male) lover and then, when discovered a woman being made into a friend and confident. Orlando experiences herself as different in response to gender expectations inspired by means of cross-dressing.

Rolin-Hill argues that some characters in Orlando have androgynous characteristics. In this respect, he says this novel "subverts conventional concept of narrative desire and replaces the linear, end driven desire so characteristic of classic realism with a desire that celebrates diversities and indeterminacy" (483). Moreover, he says the protagonist easily assimilates with "societal behavior code for women" (484). The very adaptation of women's life style signifies "the polymorphous subjectivity and sexuality of Orlando that he/she most clearly deviates from the unitary subjectivity" (484).

Despite undergoing the change in sex, Orlando's behaviors remained as usual that brings the confusions of his/her sex among the people. Banzel writes, "on a thematic level Orlando develops as a rather typical protagonist, one who confronts obstacles to his/her growth, overcomes them, and gains self knowledge in spite of the sex change from male to female" (1).

Since the publication of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, it has been responded in various ways. Some critics have paid attention to the thematic analysis of the novel whereas others have tried to dig out distinctive interpretation like existentialism, structuralism and so on from different analysis. Reviewing the novel from surrealist standpoint, Hankins Leslie related the novel with Lesbian movement. He describes:

Lesbian Readings analyzed Orlando as a disruptive text, determined to befuddle and unnerve the censor and to celebrate a Lesbian moment; extending that exploration enables us to consider ways Woolf's novel resonates with French surrealist cinema. (25)

Here he means to state that this novel is examined and analyzed through the view point of surrealist notion. Similarly, another critic, Robert E. Kohn focuses on the psychoanalytical view point of the novel. He asserts:

He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the Oak tree to be ; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse that he was riding; or the deck of a tumbling ship - it was anything indeed , so long as it was hard, for he felt the need of something which he could attaches floating heart to. There is a Mediterranean water lily called the "floating heart", whose flower encloses the king of hollow space that for Sigmund Freud symbolized the feminine genital orifice. (185)

Throughout these lines, he explains that this novel is interpreted from the psychoanalytical perspective. Another critic, Frederick Kellermann interpreted the novel as romantic novel and says:

I have had Virginia her all day, and she has just gone. We had fun this morning. We went up to knoll and close pictures for Orlando. We chose obscure pictures, out of which we will take bits. That book sounds more fantastic the more I hear of it. It is quite evident that Virginia Woolf never wrote a book greater today-by- day experiences of her own life. (139)

Similarly, next critic, Victoria Smith focuses to the issue of poststructural notion and asserts as:

Language is always (at least) one step away from the thing itself, and if woman, according to feminism, occupies the space of object/ things (in culture), then woman is always one step away from herself as well – a twice removed relative of language. (64)

In this regard, it becomes clear that though the text has been analyzed through various perspectives, the gender study has not been applied yet, there exists a strong need to carry out research in this novel from a new perspective. Without a proper study on this issue, the meaning of the text will remain incomplete. Having taken this fact into consideration, the present researcher to carries out the research from the perspective of gender studies.

This study makes significant contribution, mainly in two areas of concern. First, this study brings the unknown principal characters in Orlando within the purview of critical analysis. And second, this research makes a significant theoretical connection between the feminist critique of patriarchy and deconstructionist critique of the earlier notion of male and female.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outlines of the novel's raising issues, its problems, and a short history of Virginia Woolf along with the critique on *Orlando* by different critics. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire works. It has attracted varieties of criticism and opinion. So, it is open to multiplicity of interpretation. This research is conducted by using the critical approach of gender study, which is also the dominant pattern of the text. The second chapter analyses the novel *Orlando* by highlighting the gender problem in the male dominated society. So, this chapter tries to prove the hypothesis of the study. With such epitomization of principal character, Orlando, Woolf endeavors to show natural distinction between male and female in relation to the cultural situatedness. Finally, the third chapter sums up the main points of the present research and findings of the research.

II. Problematizing Gender in *Orlando*

Gender problem is a factor which creates obstacles and results gender discrimination in the society. Establishing the social hierarchy, male always acquires higher status than female. Gender in the novel is in problem. The central character of the novel, Orlando, has the transvestite identity which is such a condition that a person derives pleasure from dressing in clothing typical of the opposite sex. In the novel, Orlando exhibits female identity while he is male and after undergoing sex change into female, she adopts the male fashions and activities. This kind of identity invites a great confusion in the society. And it also invites a great gender problem due to male oriented society. As a male, he gets everything standard, space, status and honor as well rather female Orlando loses everything that she adopted as a male Orlando. When external dress clearly signifies man or woman, the text delights in erotic confusion regarding what body is under the garment, how that body has come to be and how it performs. By such garment the women become confused so “they perched on his knee, flung their arms round his knee, from their arm round his neck and guessing that something out of common lay hid beneath his duffle cloak, were quiet as eager to come at the truth of the matter as Orlando himself” (19).

Gender study is a field of study which analyses the phenomena of gender. It examines both cultural representation of gender and people lived experience. Gender study is sometimes related to study of class, race ethnicity and location or geography. Study of gender has been undertaken in many academic areas, such as literary theory, performance theory, anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis. Theirs discipline sometimes differ in their approaches to how and why they study gender. For instance in anthropology, sociology and psychology, gender is often examined. Gender is also a discipline in itself, it is an interdisciplinary area of study.

Foucault's late work *The History of Sexuality* (1976) presents "a conveniently available, eloquently argued case for the general proposition that while the biological traits of the sexes remain constant over long periods of time, sexuality is constructed socially, and operates differently in each historical periods" (44). He maintains, specifically, that the delineation of sexuality as at once constitutive of personality and subject to scientific mapping, surveillance, and social consciousness is an attribute of modern existence that took initial shape as its features emerged across the eighteenth century and that became fully operational in the nineteenth. Feminist literary scholars have retold the story of the eighteenth century to disclose the ideological implications of writing for and the women. They have stressed above all the operative place of narrative writing in an emergent system of gendered sexuality within which the male moves as wage earner and speaker in the open realm of a public sphere, where disinterested discourse reigns, while the female is confined to the closed realm of the family, working without wages to reproduce the moral, educational, and psychological orders.

In gender studies, the term gender is used to refer to the social and cultural construction of masculine and feminine. It does not refer to biological differences but rather to long historical social construct. The field emerged from number of different areas: the sociology of 1960s and later the theories of psychoanalyst: (Lacan and his discontents) and the works of feminist such as Judith Butler. Each field came to regard gender as a practice sometimes referred to as something that is performative of gender, the philosopher Simon de Beauvoir says, "One is not born a woman: one becomes one"(54).

The British sociologist Anthony Giddnes defines 'sex' as biological or anatomical differences between men and women', whereas 'gender' 'concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females' (158). On the basis of these characterizations, it seems relatively easy to distinguish between the two categories.

However, the definitions miss the level of perception and attribution, the way gender stereotypes often influence the interaction of self and other assessment. Giddens does mention some syndromes of 'abnormal' development, such as the testicular feminization syndrome and the androgenital syndrome, that is where infants designated as 'female' at birth, even if chromosomally male, tend to develop female gender identity, and vice-versa.

In a social construction perspective not only gender, but even sex is seen as a socially developed status. In this contexts sex is understood more as al continuum constructed of chromosomal sex, gonadal sex, and hormonal sex - all of which 'work in the presence and under the influence of a set of environments' It makes no sense therefore to assume that there is merely one set of traits that generally characterizes men and thus defines masculinity; or likewise, that there is one set of traits for women which defines femininity. Such an unitary model of sexual character is a familiar part of sexual ideology and serves to reify inequality between men and women in our society.

There seems androgynous quality Orlando. Having change in sexual organ Orlando does not acquire a space in the society. Queen Elizabeth falls in love with Orlando. One of the prostitutes Archduchess Harriet Griselda of Finster-Aarhorn and Scandop-Boom follows male Orlando. Similarly, female Orlando marries with Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, esquire to complete poem Shel (The Oke Tree). Even female Orlando could not get any possibilities in the contemporary society of England. Such a gender problem seen in the novel is researched with a tool of gender studies.

Gender is viewed from feminist perspective. To dominate woman, It is nothing more than the division of sexuality and men's domination over women. Sexuality constitutes gender, not vice versa. As Catherine Mackinnon says:

Sexuality, then, is a form of power. Gender, as socially constructed embodies it, not the reverse. Women and men are divided by gender made into the sexes,

as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institution arise male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. If this is true, sexuality is linchpin of gender inequality. (Freedman 60)

Women are submissive rather than men. Socially constructed gender role prejudices woman although the both man and woman have same human qualities. Female Orlando narrowed down to the field of work. In gipsy's society, she works to be dominated:

She milked the goats; she collected brush wood; she stole a hen's egg now and then . . . she herded cattle, she stripped vines; she trod the grape; she filled the goat: skin and drank from it,. . . making the motions of drinking and smoking over an empty coffee-cup and a pipe which lacked tobacco, she laughed aloud.
(69)

Gender study focuses upon gender identity and gendered representations as central category of analysis. Gender studies use the concept of gender to analyze the wide range of disciplines. Although lines of argumentation in gender studies are inspired by feminism, broad varieties of theoretical approaches are used to study the category of gender. Gender studies include women study, man's study and gay and lesbian study. However, sex, gender identity and sexual identity refer to different aspects of oneself. Therefore, one may be any combination of sex (male/female), gender (masculine /feminine) and sexual identity (straight, bisexual and lesbian/gay). In recent history, people are oppressed on the basis of different sexual identities (bio-sexual, lesbians, gay men) and people are also oppressed on the basis of gender identity have formed communities which are partly separates and partly overlapping with one another. Gender identity refers to how one thinks of own gender; whether one thinks of oneself as a man or as a women. Society prescribes arbitrary role and gender role (how one is supposed to and not supposed to dress, act, think, feel, relate to others, think of one etc.) based on one's sex. These gender roles are called masculine and feminine.

In this light, gender studies takes over the feminist agenda by studies in masculinity, which results in transferring from feminist faculty positioned to other kind of positions. There have been cases of positions advertised a “gender studies” being given away to the bright boys. The relations between sex and gender are fraught with confusing and live of arguments goes that sexual characteristics are fixed as per the law of nature and therefore account for gender role arrangements. That is, since men and women are differently endowed by nature, their duties and capabilities also differ. Gender is not the name as sex, the biological fact; it is composed of a set of socially defined character's traits. It is a discipline that philosophies, theorizes and politicizes on the nature of the female gender as a social construct to the point of excluding the male gender from analysis. It also asserts that the ‘gender’ in gender studies is routinely used as a synonym for “women”, that men are studied as the sex that created the problem of ‘gender’ in the first place and men are studied only as a female victimizers.

A great deal of gender studies and literature has nevertheless assumed that there is a "doer" behind the deed. Without an agent it is argued, there can be no agency and hence no potential to initiate a transformation of relations of domination within society. Wittig's gender theory occupies an ambiguous position within the continuum of theories on the question of the subject. On the one hand, Wittig appears to dispute the metaphysics of substance but on the other land, she retains the human subject, the individual, as the metaphysical locus of agency. While Wittig's humanism clearly presupposes that there is a doer behind the deed, her theory nevertheless delineates the performative construction of gender within the material practices of culture, disputing the temporality of those explanations that would confuse "cause" with "result". In a phrase that suggests the intertextual space that links Wittig with Foucault. She writes :

A feminist approach shows that what we take for the cause or origin of oppression is in fact only the mark imposed by the oppressor; the "myth of

woman," plus its material effects and manifestations in the appropriated consciousness and bodies of women. Thus, this mark does not preexist oppression . . . sex is taken as an "immediate given, " a "sensible given, " physical features," belonging to a natural order. But what we believe to be a physical and direct perception is only a sophisticated and mythic construction, an "imaginary formation" (40).

This production of "nature" operates in accord with the dictates of compulsory heterosexuality, the emergence of homosexual desire, in her view, transcends the categories of sex: "If desire could liberate itself, it would have nothing to do with the preliminary marking by sexes" (41).

Wittig refers to "sex" as a mark that is somehow applied by an institutionalized heterosexuality, a mark that can be erased or obfuscated through practices that effectively contest that institution. Her view, of courses, differs from Irigaray's. The latter would understand the "mark" of gender to be part of the hegemonic signifying economy of the masculine that operates through the self-elaborating mechanisms of secularization that have virtually determined the field of ontology within the Western philosophical tradition.

After serving as treasurer to Queen Elizabeth and a British ambassador to Constantinople, and almost midway through the story, Orlando wakes up as a woman. While the reader may be startled or assumed, Orlando remains uninterested in her sex which is "a strong fact, but a true one that up to this moment she has scarcely given her a thought" (96). While she decides to sail from Turkey to England, she has to be appeared as her own belonging sex. Here she is identified by a little bit characteristics of woman. She joins to gypsies' tribe wearing Turkish trousers where "except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men" (96).

Orlando does not leave her male thought. He, moreover, wants to enjoy by experiencing the both sexes. The cross-dressing also plays a significant role to the confusion and problematic identity. Orlando's unisex is the result of people's androgyny nature where a male has female characteristics and a female has male characteristics. In other words, it means person having both the male and female characteristics. Orlando codes his dress according to practicality or sexual desire.

Many times Orlando tries to cover her femaleness due to the contemporary social realities. Orlando has compulsion to demonstrate dual figures. Orlando wears breeches and desiring the love of woman, he wears the suit of a noble man. In order to sail for England, Orlando, as a man-changed-into-a-woman has been wearing Turkish trousers, must dress like a lady. In this triple configuration, the lady signifies woman as an artifact designed from an assembly of parts. According to the text, Orlando changes to "a complete outfit of such clothes as woman than wore, and it was in the dress of a young English woman of rank that she now sat on the deck of the Enamored lady" (96). Orlando does have the experience of female gender codes while he is a male and this experience provides him very easy to adjust in woman society after being sex changed into woman. As a male, he has worn dresses from breeches to petticoats.

After being woman, various opportunities and human rights as well are snatched which suggests male superiority over female inferiority and being concerned the problems on gender.

If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribes on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as a truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity. In *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* anthropologist Esther Newton suggests that the structure of impersonation reveals one of the key fabricating mechanism through which

the social construction of the gender takes place. He would suggest as well that drag fully subvert the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of true gender identity. Newton writes:

As its most complex, (drag) is a double inversion that says, “appearance is an illusion.” Drag says (Newton’s curious personification) “my ‘outside’ appearance is feminine, but my essence ‘inside’ (the body) masculine.” At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; “my appearance ‘outside’ (my body, my gender) is masculine but my essence ‘inside’ (myself) is feminine”.
(69)

Newton claims to truth contradict one another and so displace the entire enactment of gender significations from the discourse of truth and falsity.

Throughout *Orlando*, dress is confusing and persistent theme, different clothes addressing different desires and sexual relations. From morning to night she has changed many clothes and enjoys with different practices:

So then one may sketch her spending her morning in a china robe of ambiguous gender among her book; then receiving a client or two (for she had many scores of supplants) in the same garment; then she would take a turn in the garden and clip the nut trees- for which knee- breeches were convenient; then she would change into a flowered taffeta . . . and so finally, when night come, she would more often then become a nobleman Complete from head to toe and wallet the streets in search of adventure. (138)

The notion of original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing and the sexual stylization of both male and female identities. Within gender theory, such parodic identities have been understood to be either degrading to women, in the case of drag and cross-dressing, or an uncritical appropriation of sex-role

stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexual, especially in the case of male/female identities. Orlando has cross dressing, has changed many clothes of females to show particular femaleness because all male sex changes into female sex outwardly. Here, in this novel *Orlando*, Nell changes her dress outwardly and responds as she is a man to deceive male Orlando. Archduchess Harriet disguises him into female, and Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esquire disguises herself into a male. All these examples show and identify overt appearance and inner realities of masculine and feminine.

One evening Orlando meets the prostitute Nell and suddenly she changes her own dress and responds as she is a man. Nell cannot notice her disguise and the deception of Orlando so, she easily accepts her arm regarding her as a male:

Orlando swept her hat off to her in the manner of a gallant paying his addresses to a lady of fashion in a public place. The young woman raises her head. It was of the most exquisite shapeliness. The young woman raised her eyes. Orlando saw them to be of a luster such as is sometimes seen on teapots but rarely in a human face. Through this silver gaze the young woman looked up at him (for a man he was her) appealing, hoping trembling, fearing. She rose; she accepted his arms. (135)

Orlando looks, feels and talks like a man. Still, this meeting between Orlando and Nell represents only a slightly exaggerated version of ordinary relation between men and women. Different types of clothing signal masculinity or femininity and set in personal relation of control and submission. Nell is fully deceived who does her activities to satisfy her lover as usual:

Meanwhile Nell, as the girl called herself, unbuttoned her gloves; careful concealed the left hand thumb, which wanted mending; then drew behind a screen, where, perhaps, she roughed her cheeks, arranged her clothes, fixed a

new handkerchief round her neck- all the time prattling as women do, to amuse her lover, though Orlando could have sworn, from the tone of her voice, that her thoughts were elsewhere. (135)

But Orlando cannot sustain the male status because that is only her false identity and at last, declaring her own real identity, she leaves the room. Nell also changes her attitude towards Orlando, “when all was ready, out she came, prepared-but here Orlando could stand it no longer. In the strangest torment of anger, merriment, and pity, she flung of all disguise and admitted herself a woman” (136). Then after “her manner changed and she dropped her plaintive, appealing ways” (135-36).

No more cross-dressing effort if Orlando misses such cues despite prolonged contact; later revel contextualizes certain conversation pieces Harriet displays when Harriet becomes Harry, dynamics change; Orlando no longer runs away but has to demurely drive Harry away; Harry no longer speaks to Orlando about subjects beyond what seems appropriate to have with a woman. It notes on performativity of gender and how clothes affect performance. Girshick points out, “We could not have the concept of cross-dressing of our ideas of what clothing goes with what gender were not so firmly entrenched and intractable” (89) .

Orlando, playing with clothes, sex, and love, repeats itself on the other characters such as Archduchess Harriet and Russian princes Sasha. Once Harriet has seen the portrait of Orlando, being impressed, he disguises himself into a female and reaches to Orlando to fall him in love with her. But few years later when Orlando returns from Turkey, Harriet appears as a male as Orlando appears as female even now both seen in opposite sex than the previous and they after acting the role of man and woman for sometimes Archduchess Harriet discloses his previous disguised female identity:

They acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigor and then fell into natural discourse. The Archduchess (by she must in future be

known as Archduke) told his story that he was a man and always had been one; that he had seen a portrait of Orlando and fallen hopelessly in love with him; that to come his ends he had heard of her changes and hastened to offer his services. (111-12)

In the seminal book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler points out that the gendered body is performative, comprised of acts, gestures, enactments and which are part of a disciplinary production of gender that effects a false stabilization of gender. She opines that:

Orlando picks up on this theme in many ways, beginning first with the introduction of Sasha: “a figure, which . . . filled him with the highest curiosity” .Princess Sasha’s mannerisms are so unmarked to Orlando that he cannot, at first, parse her as a woman, and instead “called her a melon, a pineapple, an olive tree, an emerald, a fox in the snow . . . things he had liked the taste of as a boy” (36).

Unable to read her performance as female, for “no woman could skate with such speed and vigor”, Orlando is initially frustrated, confirming him as a heterosexual man, but he apparently cannot countenance a relationship with a person of his own sex. It is only when Sasha comes closer that Orlando picks up on that which marks her as a woman, breasts, mouth, “eyes which looked as if they had been fished from the bottom of the sea” (37).

Then, he becomes confused either Sasha is a girl or boy. He starts to suspect her femaleness due to her activities and some parts of body. But, finally, with intensive examination he comes to the conclusion that he is no more a boy.

When Orlando meets her husband Shelmerdine, gender trouble, problem persists and prospers that is “an awful suspicion rushed into both their minds simultaneously. “You’re a woman, shel! ‘...’ You’re a man Orlalndo,” (157)! Later Orlando conforms her own gender and thinks herself that “I am a woman” indeed “a real woman, at last” (158).

A married woman is recognized by the different signs as her cultures. But Orlando does not show such sign as clear. So, the society becomes confused upon her marital status. As for example, “the several park keepers looked at her with suspicion and were only brought to a favorable opinion of her sanity by noticing the pearl necklace which she wore” (178). Even after Orlando’s sex change her apparel makes dilemma in people. Nobody knows which sex lies beneath the dress.

In addition to exploring alternatives to the binary conception of gender, gender theorists are also interested in the relationship of sex and gender: between the ways in which bodies are biologically constructed and the genders to which we are assigned. As Judith Lorber puts it, despite common belief:

[N]either sex nor gender are pure [separate, autonomous, discrete] categories. Combinations of incongruous genes, genitalia, and hormonal input are ignored in sex categorization. [as male or female], just as combinations of incongruous physiology, identity, sexuality, appearance, and , behavior are ignored in the social construction of gender statuses [masculine or feminine]. (14)

Orlando is not at all disconcerted by her change in gender because she feels no different than she did before. At first, she acts no differently, either. When she lives in the gipsy camp in the hills of Turkey, away from society and civilization, Orlando’s sexuality seems to play no role in her life at all. But when she travels on board the English ship, in women’s clothes, she immediately begins to feel the difference. The skirts that she is wearing, and the way that people react to her make her feel and act different. What Woolf is suggesting here is that gender roles are not biological but societal.

Better is it, she thought, ‘to be clothed with poverty and ignorance, which are the dark garments of the female sex; better to leave the rule and discipline of the world to others; better to be quit of martial ambition, the love of power,

and all the other manly desires if so one can more fully enjoy the most exalted raptures known to the human spirit, which are', she said aloud as her habit was when deeply moved, 'contemplation, solitude, love'. (78)

She is irritated and exhausted by incomparable behaviors, distinctions and categories by males. Sexual functions, sexuality, appearance, behaviors are ignored in gender, the social construction. So, she desires to leave such rules and disciplines which socially overlap the women and their creativities.

Gender study takes an issue that examines the transsexual or intermixes of different sexes. That perceives gender problem due to social convention.

Woolf's *Orlando* is what one could call a kind of speculative epic, spanning several centuries and a sex change that is so easy, it is, as Melanie Taylor argues that the ultimate transsexual vision. It is a sex change accompanied by clarion trumpets, after which Orlando arises, looks at herself in the mirror, and then, "went, presumably, to his bath" (Woolf 133). Immediately after, rather than address the significance of such a sex-change, Woolf moves on to "quit such odious subjects" "of sex and sexuality" (134). Though *Orlando* as a work itself is recognizably trans-temporal and trans-genre, the text has its specificities that merely touch on issues of transsexualism without interrogating, as Woolf puts it, the "odious subjects" that comprise the negotiations trans-identified individuals must face in daily life. That it is of a speculative nature, with transsexualism as an "exciting device" should not shield it from scrutiny. Thus, this paper will analyze how Woolf problematizes gender in *Orlando*, how much further Orlando could have gone, and what the modern implications of this novel are, as it is written by a woman for another woman.

A transsexual is an individual who feels that his/her gender identity does not align with his/her physical body, as traditionally defined. This individual will usually take steps to alter his/her gender role, gender expression, and body. . .

measures that are perceived as contrary to one's gender assignment and physical body at birth. (Girshick 16)

Unrelated sexes are mixed from one another which makes confuse and gender problematic because of male base society:

Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male and female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above. Of the complications and confusions which thus result everyone has had experience; but here we leave the general question and note only the odd effect it had in the particular case of Orlando herself. (92-93)

Virginia Woolf suggests that gender identity is not fixed, but can change throughout life independently of biological makeup. The novel explores many permutations of this idea. Woolf believes that sexes are intermixed, that though an individual may seem a woman, she really has the qualities of a man, and vice versa.

This idea applies not only to the literal gender of individuals, but more broadly to the gender roles within society. Once Orlando becomes a woman, she realizes all the opportunities and rights that are now closed to her. Though she feels no different at all, society treats her differently because of the clothes she wears. Encouraging the equality of gender roles is a point that Woolf makes in many of her novels.

Orlando's identity is literally constituted through Woolf's language. In fact, the very conventional sentence 'That's him' is a performative utterance of gender production, gender-production is the act of speech. Judith Butler refers to this extension (of Austin) with her definition of speech acts on all spoken and written words. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler elucidates on "how gender is produced through speech acts" One of the theorists, Bondi says

that on the men of men, the feminine language is even more problematic. Whatever the writer's intentions, it is liable to be read as an appropriation of women's experience that reinforces their sexualization while leaving men's identity as sexual beings safely out of sight. Feminists conceive language as 'a symbolical reflection of androcentric structures' (Gunther and Kotthoff 7) as one of the means of patriarchal society to discriminate, disregard and incapacitate women. In their view the language system already reflects the patriarchal structure of the societies. They opine:

The language system was analyzed as regards the treatment of women, and language was exposed as a means of legitimizing male structures with the intention, above all, of extracting women from being subsumed under general and male categories. Together with the language system, linguistic behavior was made into the object for analysis of the new research discipline and the issue of gender-specific differences was investigated in styles of communication. (32)

Orlando's language, feminine language is problematic. This is interiorized to women through language genderly biasness. Language system is the tool for dominating female even in the then English society.

Ignorant and poor as we are compared with the other sex, she through continuing the sentence which she had left unfinished the other day, armoured with every weapon as they are, while they debar us even from a knowledge of the alphabet (and from these opening words it is plain that something had happened during the night to give her a push towards the female sex, for she was speaking more as a woman speaks than as a man, yet with a sort of content after all), still they fall from the mast-head. (78)

This over domination as upon female Orlando is not sustainable. Women are always in problem even by the language uttered. One of the critics, Wittig is clearly attuned to the power of language to subordinate and exclude women. As a "materialist," however, she considers language to be 'another' order of materiality, an institution that can be radically transformed. Language ranks among the concrete and contingent practices and institutions maintained by the choices of individuals and, hence, weakened by the collective actions of choosing individuals.

If women exercise any power emanating from their sexuality, that power is precarious at the best, always at the mercy of men. This power is a disadvantaged privilege which ultimately cripples the human personality in woman is more adept at looking after a baby or a sick person. This very skill renders her a mere caretaker either as mother or wet mother, or as a nurse. He is deprived of the right to act like a father or a doctor. In heterosexuality, men occupy the first or upper position. Lesbianism, on the other hand, provides a space for female love for female. In the postmodern era, it is argued that lesbianism does not mean women are prone to having sex with women. But rather women are declined to having sex with men. As Freedman argues, "the very essence, definition and nature of heterosexuality is men first" (61).

Heterosexuality has reinforced men's supremacy over women. Women who had sex with men were supposed to be surrendering themselves to the dominance of men. Therefore, lesbianism had to be preferred with its enlarged scope. Adrienne Rich, a noted feminist critic, explains the new terrains of lesbianism:

If we expand (Lesbianism) to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support . . . we being to grasp breadths of female history and

psychology which have lain out of rich as a consequence of limited
lesbianism. (qtd. in freedman 62)

The bond between females, rather than the one between males and females, is prioritized by lesbian critics. Relation between the females in the novel is highly noticed.

Orlando slept all night in ignorance. He had been kissed by a queen without knowing it. And perhaps, for women's hearts are intricate, it was his ignorance and the start he gave where when her lips touched him . . . when female Orlando skated, which she did rather clumsily, none was at her elbow to encourage her, and, it she fell, which she did rather heavily, none raised her to her feet and dusted the shown from her petticoats. Although she was naturally phlegmatic, slow to take offence, and more reluctant than most people to believe that a mere foreigner could oust her from Orlando's affections, still even the Lady Margaret herself was brought at last to suspect that something was brewing against her peace of mind. (19-20)

There is heterosexual relation between Queen Elizabeth and male Orlando. Later male Orlando's relation with Russian princess Sasha, Archduches Harriet and shelmerdine, through Harriet and shelmerdine disguise themselves, Queen Elizabeth, female Orlando surrender themselves with male, physically attracted. This shows men's supremacy and dominance over woman. The passive role in heterosexual seduction also puts forward the female oppression or, in another word, female subordination.

In gender study, patriarchy is also a crux issue. This patriarchy system is sustained with the power gained by physical, political, government and so many other agencies. To destroy each and every threat of constructed power, females need to struggle long time with hard effort. Simone de Beauvoir says, "femininity is cultural construct. One is not born a woman, one becomes one" (209). The role of women in society is cultural construct because

female infants do not know what they are: they are just like clay and it is the society which shapes them as females. In Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969), she says, "The essence of politics is power" (205). She claims that patriarchy is the main cause of women's suppression and it makes them inferior, "Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exerted directly or indirectly, in civil and domestic life, to constrain women" (137). To identify male power and means for domination, Jackie Stacey quotes as:

Our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, sciences universities, avenue of power within society, including the coercive power of the policy, is entirely in male hands . . . If one takes patriarchal government to be the institution where by that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be two folds: male shall dominate female, elder shall dominate younger.

(Richardson and Robinson 54)

This system is used for various purposes. Firstly, historical patriarchy is used to identify the historical emergence of system of male domination. Secondly it seeks to elaborate at exploration of how patriarchy works in terms of the different activities of women and men in society and thirdly psychoanalysis analyses the operation of patriarchy on the psychic (deep rooted through an understanding of the unconscious) as well as social level (Richardson and Robinson 54-57).

Love, birth, and death were all swaddled in a variety of fine phrases. The sexes drew further and further apart. No open conversions tolerated. Evasions and concealments were sedulously practiced on both sides. And just as the ivy and the evergreen rioted in the damp earth outside, so did the same fertility

show itself within. The life of the average woman was a succession of childbirths. She married at nineteen and had fifteen or eighteen children by the time she was thirty's for twins abounded. (113)

In contemporary society of England in 19th century, women were, so given dehuman position. They were dominated, categorized at childbirth and caretaker. Patriarchy was dominant. Gender was in great problem that women, females had not been treated as human.

Androgyny tells that, regardless of one's sex, one's gender identity may consist of some combination of feminine and masculine behaviors. Questioning opens the door both for people who feel unsure of their sexual orientation and for people whose " Sex and gender identification . . . may not [have] an existing label" (Perry and Ballard- Reisch 30).

Androgynous quality upon Orlando creates gender problem. This shows confusion in the novel. The text puts it:

She supposed, to make a skirt. And then (here she blushed), she would have to buy a crinoline, and then (here she blushed), a bassinette, and then another crinoline, and son on. The blushes came and went with the most exquisite iteration . . . And if the spirit of the age blew a little unequally, the crinoline being blushed for before the husband, her ambiguous position must excuse her (even her sex was still in dispute) and the irregular life she had lived before. (116)

Orlando's biological sex change from male to female shows androgynous nature. This nature is not sustained in the contemporary society of England in 19th century. Basically, women were behaved unnaturally. Sex change, transformation from one to another sex, such dual, and confusion position was not supported there.

Sasha awakens in Orlando a deep sexual desire. Even before he knows her gender, he is drawn to her. She moves athletically and wears androgynous clothes; Orlando is attracted

to Sasha as an individual, entirely separate from what her gender is at the time. Sasha's exoticism is compounded by her foreign tongue and deceptive manner.

Some of the women, though, they may have loved and respected their husbands, were passionately attracted to women rather than to men. Virginia Woolf, who was married but who had a passionate, long-standing affair with Vita Sackville-West, is a case in point. Adrienne Rich makes use of this idea when she argues for the existence of what she calls a lesbian continuum. A lesbian continuum, Rich explains, "includes a range-through each woman's life and throughout history- of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman" (239).

Woman-identified experience includes, for example, emotional bonding through shared work or play, the giving or receiving of psychological support and the shared experience of joy in any form. Woman's identification does not preclude sexual desire or sexual activity, but neither does it require them. A woman can thus move in and out of the lesbian continuum throughout her life or remain within entirely.

Archduchess Harriet, Shelmerdine and Nell, all of them disguise themselves into opposite gender to deceive Orlando and to have close relation outwardly heterosexual but inwardly homosexual with:

Nell, as the girl called herself, unbuttoned her gloves, carefully concealed the left-hand thumb, where perhaps, she roughed her cheeks, arranged her clothes, fixed a new kerchief round her neck all the time prattling as women do, to amuse her lover, through Orlando could have sworn, from the tone of her voice, that her thoughts were elsewhere. When all was ready, out she came, prepared- but here Orlando could stand it no longer. In the strangest

torment of anger, merriment and pity she flung off all disguise and admitted herself a woman. (107)

Among them Orlando and Nell have homosexual attachment although Nell tries to disguise as a man. Shel allows Orlando to conform to the "Spirit of the age" by sweeping her feet off and acting as her husband. Orlando feels lost in the nineteenth century, as if she cannot fit in unless she is attached to a man. Orlando cannot believe she has found a man who is at once boldly courageous and as strange and subtle as a woman. Shel combines positive qualities of both genders, and is in fact, compatible with Orlando. Such compatibility is possible because Shel is not a flat, single self. His very name implies the multi-faceted aspect of his personality and his experience Orlando chooses to call him "Mar" when she is in a dreamy, amorous mood, "Bonthrop" when she is in a solitary mood, and "Shel" when she is in no mood at all. Shel challenges all labels and categories, and that he is a complicated person, make him acceptable as Orlando's husband. This shows generally a heterosexual relation, attachment between Orlando (female) and Shelmerdine (male). Shel is mostly a fantasy character, but some critics have seen resemblance between him and Vita Sackville-West's husband Harold Nicholson, who was likewise openly bisexual. In real life Vita called Harold "Mar" just as Orlando calls her husband the same name.

Gender problem is such a situation which happened due to gender discrimination in the society. Where is inequality of rights and responsibilities on the account of sex. Because of the aristocracy of male sex, females are always suppressed and depressed. Many gender and feminist theories concern about the gender discrimination and gender problem as well locating women's subordinations in their procreation or sexual status as mediated through gendered social practices and institutions. Janet Saltzman Chafetz, for example, argues that "Specialization in the productive/Public Sphere under girds superior advantage and conversely, specialization in reproductive/domestic forms the basis of extensive

disadvantage" (118). She argues that women have to bear the great burden of childbirth, child care and housework but they are never given more advantages than men rather their contribution of continuing the human race in the world becomes the mean of subordination. In term of procreation and sexuality, male and female are really different. So, they should be treated differently. In the society, women are treated not on the basis biological difference rather of political or of cultural. The males do not give any higher position to the females in every sector for example in bureaucratic organization; the top positions are expected to be male.

It is the man's body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organizational process, Women's bodies -female sexuality, their ability to procreate and their pregnancy, breastfeeding and childcare, menstruation and mythic "emotionality" - are suspect stigmatized and used as grounds for control and exclusion to function at the top of male hierarchies requires that woman render irrelevant everything that makes them women. (Acker 326-27)

The female workers are not treated as the male workers because their biological differences are considered disabilities; actually these biological differences are not their faults. So, they should be provided compensation instead of discriminating negatively. In jobs, the females' time off for pregnancy and childbirth, is taken against job or duty but the males' time off for illness is not taken as such. So, the procreation and parenting status are rooted in social politics, not biological differences. To talk about the status of women and men, we should not forget power and privilege. Male domination is spread all over the world which always advocates the supreme power of male. Such kind of gender discrimination is practicing as if it is natural because of its long time used. Such power controls over women by locking them within four walls of the Kitchen, giving the role of child minders and providing works which

do not have any surplus. This shows that the females are dominated not only on the procreation but also on the basis of roles and responsibilities, given by the power (male).

Female Orlando has gone with gipsy tribe to settle down forever. But as woman, she cannot win their beliefs and becomes the ridiculer character. They do not trust her, and her life becomes larder & larder. Then, "She began to feel that there was some difference between her and the gypsies that made her hesitate sometime marry and settle down among them forever" (92).

Once " she burst into a passion of tears and striding back to the gypsies' camp told them that she must sail for England the very next day" (95). She must have done this vow due to their hate to her. In the patriarchal society new women cannot be accepted. A woman does not have freedom to leave her own place. If she leaves, she is hatred and mistrusted. Moreover, the young man is plotting to kill her but when they know the news of her departure they cancel their decision. Indicating this event the narrator says:

It was happy for her that she did so; already the young men had plotted her death. Honor, they said, demanded it, for she did not think as they did ret they would have been sorry to cut her throat, and welcomed the news of her departure. (95)

Female Orlando has been dominated even in gipsy society. As the women are bounded with four walls for narrowing the status, female Orlando has not been given any space. Women are mostly recognized as childbirth and child caring as that female Orlando has been behaved. Gypsies attempt to plot her death and later cancelling their decision hearing her departure from the gipsy society shows all types of treatments given her.

The males know well how easy it is to control women by the mere strategy of mind control. To inculcate certain belief, males indoctrinate the women into believing their inherent fragile, sentimental. And altruistic nature to continuously remind them of their

secondary and subservient status ever since the creation of human being by God- these all are the tools of mind control. To give constancy and currency to such brain-washing and mind-controlling precept, stereotypes are formulated and given currency. Stereotypical images are based on limited experience of one time but accepted as true even after serving the great purpose of the men in subjugating the women. The stereotypical images of women are stamped and circulated as truths have been destructive to the self images and esteem of women. These myths and stereotypes function as social norms, and direct the attitude and conduct of both the male and the females in the society. What is problematic with the female stereotype is that is force, rather indoctrinates in many instances, the women not only to appear and accept that they are substandard, but to become substandard so that they can gain approval of the society as the embodiment of ideal women. And the social factors help sustain and enhance such an ideal. Limited education, experience and critical faculties-deemed ideal for women because they are not expected to be wise in the ways of the world, or to compete with the men-along with the demand that women be dedicated and attractive body to be desirable for male consumption, and countless other influences collude in the masculine mega scheme of persuading the women to believe the myth and act accordingly. Explaining how much pressure such myths, stereotypes and curbs exert upon female in twisting and narrowing their intellectual and moral qualities, Mary Wollstonecraft writes in her landmark critical text *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*:

Females, in fact denied all political privileges, and not allowed, as married women, excepting in criminal cases, a civil existence, have their attention naturally draw from the interest of the whole community to that of the minute parts through the private duty of any other member of society must be very imperfectly performed when not connected with the general good. The mighty business of female life is to please, and restrained from entering into more

important concerns by political and civil and civil oppression, sentiments become events, reflections deepens what it should, and would have effaced, if the understanding had been allowed to take a wide range. (398)

Orlando was to learn how little the most tempestuous flutter of excitement avails against the iron countenance of the law; how harder than the stones of London Bridge it is, and then the lips of a cannon more severe. Socially and politically, female Orlando is denied by all privileges. All the law suits and charges are against Orlando even in the English society. At this respect, the narrator says:

No sooner had she returned to her home in Blackfriars than she was made aware by a succession of Bow Street runner and other grave emissaries from the Law Courts that she was a party to three major suits which had been preferred against her during her absence, as well as innumerable minor litigations, some arising out of, others depending on them. The chief charges against her were (1) that she was dead, and therefore could not hold any property what so ever; (2) that she was woman, which amount to much the same thing; (3) that she was an English Duke who had married one Rosina Pepita, a dancer; and had had by her three sons, which sons now declaring that their father was deceased, claimed that all his property descended to them.

(82)

Women are deprived of the right to natural expression of their psychological and physiological needs and drives. They are expected to live up to the images men have conjured about them. This all eventually creates disease and unnatural personality in women. The influence of stereotypes and the need to live accordingly destroys the humanity in females. This is what Simone de Beauvoir also notes in “Myth and Reality” section of *The Second Sex*:

. . . as against the dispersed , contingent, and multiple existences of actual women , mythical though opposes the Eternal Feminine, unique and changeless. If the definition provided for this concept is contradicted by the behavior of flesh and blood women, it is the latter that are wrong; we are told not that Femininity is a false entity, but that the women concerned are not feminine. (996)

So powerful is the myth of femininity that the females are forced into complying with the myths. Otherwise, they would be termed aberration, but the myth would never be questioned as to their authenticity. One of the most powerful myth produced by men against women is the myth of the ‘us’ and ‘them’. The ‘self’ and the ‘other’; the men are the natural component of humanity; whatever they see, say or do is right and universal.

In the patriarchal society women have own limitations. According to the social convention, females have to save their chastity. In the new place, a woman cannot save her purity that bounds her within own society. If she has broken her purity she is taken as sinful woman. But in case of male, there is need not to be pure; he can enjoy with many women. The freedom of male and limitation of female plays the important role to be male as oppressor and female as oppressed. In the novel, Orlando returns to her own homeland due to this underlying fact. If she is not female, she can enjoy anywhere but as a female to save her virginity, she has to stay within four walls of purity, she has to run away. To which the narrator describes as:

In normal circumstances a lovely young woman alone would have though nothing else; the whole edifice of female government is based on that foundation stone; chastity is their jewel, there centerpiece, which they run mad to protect, and die when ravished of. But if one have been a man for thirty years or so, and an ambassador in to the bargain. If one has held a Queen in

one's arms and one or two other ladies. If report to be true, of less exalted rank, if one has married a Rosina Pepita, and so on, one does not perhaps give such a very great start about that. (96)

The above mentioned extract clearly shows the gender problem in the patriarchal society. The rule and regulations do not late them to get away from the grip of males. That is why, they are always treated as second sex. This is the result of her downfall. Her downfall condition troubles her because she does not have power as previous.

In a nutshell, all these descriptions give the sense that the female gender always falls in the problem rather than male gender in the male oriented Victorian society. A woman cannot live freely as man. A woman with various possibilities is not given space, status, responsibilities and honor etc. Either she has desire or not, she must follow patriarchal values. Certainly, those values are not in favor of females. Males always look females from the secondary perspective. This very cause is highly responsible for Orlando's downfall. All these matters inspire to problematize the gender in this novel, *Orlando*.

III. Female Orlando's Downfall

Personal identity is determined by the social and cultural beliefs. In *Orlando*, both male and female Orlando are the living images of the surface reality of society. Although both are central characters in the novel, male Orlando has occupied central role but female Orlando has occupied marginal role. Female Orlando has been double marginalized firstly by male secondly by the contemporary society of 19th century England. Different bitter realities are vividly presented in the novel. The patriarchal society is guided from the ideology of male supremacy. The cause calls out the gender discrimination in the society which invites gender problem. Woolf's *Orlando* is the real portrayal of the male dominated society where we can find the different positions of different gender; normally in the patriarchal society male acquires higher position and female lower.

In the society the individual status is determined on the basis of gender, but not on the basis of qualities and performances where male is always superior and female is inferior. As a result females are exploited and dominated which is also their inevitable destiny in the male made society. In the society this gender discrimination is internalized as natural due to its over uses. There, the females are confined within the sphere of domesticity and males are given absolute right everywhere. As a male, Orlando gets freedom of everything and everywhere. He acquires respected ranks, enough wealth and adequate honor and love. He has used his total freedom provided by the society the easily raises his own journey of progression and gets the rank from treasurer to dukedom. He is always looked from positive eyes, thought that he should be given the adequate opportunities to disclose his inner potentialities. These social concepts pave have him to acquire his status, honor and wealth.

On the other hand, the society views females from just opposite concepts of males. According to the belief of society, the female should not be wealthy, happy superior, educated, rational and so on. These are the social constructed means of women's

subordination. If any woman who tries to go beyond the boundaries fixed by the society she cannot easily exist in the society. It means no one can survive by breaking away completely from the notion of the patriarchal society. This is the reason that female Orlando cannot dare to go against the role of woman as house wife confining within four walls of the house. She does not have any changes qualities from male Orlando. In another words her identity remains as usual while she is female. Only in the change is sex, she cannot hold her rank honor and wealth. If she has same identity and qualities why she has lost her rank, honor and wealth? Certainly, it is the cause of gender discrimination and gender problem in patriarchal society. Such society does not provide any opportunity to female to be superior to male. That's why she has to leave each and every achievement.

Though she has desire to hold her position, she herself becomes psychologically feeble and feels shame to the society and runs away leaving each and every achievements to join gypsy tribe. The social norms are so strong that nobody can go beyond it. This social based network is the cause of Orlando's gender problem and downfall. Till Orlando becomes as a male, he continuously develops his prosperity, power, rank and respect but when he undergoes the sex change, she continuously downfalls from the position, wealth and honor. In other words, she loses all achievement acquired as a male Orlando, though she does not have any desire to leave such achievements. No doubt, here, the gender discrimination becomes the only root cause of her gender problem and downfall.

If there would not be gender hierarchy, she could easily hold such power, wealth, honor and position. But, there is not the small sense of equilibrium between male and female. As a result, she has to confine within the male's framework where females are always inferior and males are always superior. Then she gradually accepts the women's roles in the patriarchal society leaving all achievement and potentialities.

Now, she has to face miserable condition but she does not worry about it because she has aroused her hatred towards the male dominated society; she wants to leave every achievement acquired as a male. She thinks that woman cannot raise their heads in that society until and unless the male constructed social structures are changed. She fully knows the existing gender discrimination and also knows that along with internalizing the male constructed codes, she cannot get the liberation. After changing biological sex from male to female, then all the possibilities of female Orlando are snatched due to male oriented 19th century English society which creates gender problem. So, she desires to create female's own cultures, rules and so on. That is why, she wants to live in a lonely place that is under her favorite 'The Oke Tree' top of the hill, being free from the male aristocracy.

To sum up, Orlando's gender problem and downfall are the only causes of gender discrimination in the patriarchal, male oriented society. As other women, she also has to face same fate of women inferiority. Since she undergoes the sex change, the society does not provide the same opportunity as male. Moreover, because of her androgynous qualities, it is not allowed her to continue her achievements. As a result, she has to face downfall continuously one after another.

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