

Tribhuvan University

Gender Performativity in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

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This thesis entitled "Gender Performativity in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*" submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University by Mr. Hom Prasad Parajuli, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Orlando's masculine identity is constituted through the repetition of his courageous feats of swordsmanship, his princely manners and his behaviour of a nobleman which are endowed by charismatic personality of his handsome body, his social position at the top of stratification hierarchy and his access to the privileges and power of the state. By contrast, reiteration of the conventional feminine norms of bursting into tears on slight provocation, feeling shocked at odd events and smiling involuntarily in vanity consolidate *Orlando's* feminine identity during the process of her becoming a woman which is geared up by her dressing in a complete outfit of an Englishwoman. What counts after all is that subjected to gender, but subjectivated by gender, *Orlando's* gender identity emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves.

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I. Introduction

Virginia Woolf as a Modernist

Adeline Virginia Stephen was born on January 25, 1882 at 22 Hyde Park Gate, London to Sir Leslie Stephen (1832- 1904), a distinguished Victorian man of letters and the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*; and his second wife, the beautiful widow Julia Jackson Duckworth (1846-1895), a member of the Duckworth publishing family. Leslie and Julia had four children: Vanessa (1879-1948), Thoby (1880-1906), Virginia, and Adrian (1883- 1948). Virginia suffered through three major mental breakdowns during her lifetime- first, following the death of her mother in 1895; second, following the death of her father in 1904; and third following her marriage in 1913; and died during a fourth.

Though denied the formal education allowed to males, Virginia had uncensored access to her father's extensive library and from an early age she was determined to be a writer. Along with self- education, She began to admire strong women, an admiration which was coupled with a growing dislike for male domination in society that could have resulted from her sexual abuse by her half- brother Gerald Duckworth which she records in 'Sketches of the Past' (1939). After the death of her father, Virginia moved with her sister Vanessa and two brothers to 46 Gordon square, Bloomsbury which would become central to activities of the Bloomsbury group.

Around 1904 Virginia began her first diary and started reviewing in *The Times Literary Supplement* from 1905 which she continued for many years. On August 10, 1912 she married Leonard Woolf who along with E.M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, and Maynard Keynes formed the nucleus

of the Bloomsbury group under the Cambridge don G.E. Moore. The Woolfs founded Hogarth Press both as a hobby and as a therapy for Virginia in 1917.

The Voyage out (1915), which began as *Melymbrosia* as early as 1908 was Virginia Woolf's first book. In 1919 appeared her second novel *Night and Day*, a realistic novel about the lives of two friends, Katherine and Mary. Both of these novels are conventional in form. Her experimental writing begins with her third novel, *Jacob's Room* (1922) which was based upon the life and death of her brother Thoby. At this time modern novel was to take the mould of the modern mind itself as its subject matter. Following such modern impulse Woolf's point of interest laid in "the dark places of psychology" (qtd. in Bradbury 173). She was fascinated by the curious workings of the mind itself, as she wrote by "its oddities and its whims, its fancies and its sensibilities" (qtd. in Richter 15). In this sense, for her writing was a process of self-examination, an effort to understand one's own feeling. So Woolf took novel as a little voyage of discovery and the journey was always an inward journey.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) originally called *The Hours*, the central figure wealthy Londoner, Clarissa Dalloway is planning to host an evening party. She recalls her life before World War I; her friendship with the unconventional Sally Seton; and her relationship with Peter Walsh while shopping. At her party she never meets war veteran Mr. Septimus Warren Smith, one of the first Englishmen to enlist in the war and Mrs. Smith but whom she has symbolic relationship. The specialist who treated Smith comes to the party and reports that Mr. Smith committed suicide because of his madness caused by war experiences. This produces in Clarissa a feeling of

identification with the poor man. The novel deals with the problem of loneliness and love and the language is almost poetic, though never rhetorical.

To the Lighthouse (1927) was more experimental in form and autobiographical in content. In the novel the lighthouse is a powerful image emitting beams to which the journey is oriented. During the journey two of the Ramsay children and Mrs. Ramsay herself die. The journey is ended as the visitor Lily Brisco's painting is completed. The absence and loneliness is redeemed by the work of art. The novel ends in a sense of achievement: "I've had the vision."

The Waves (1931) which was first called *The Moths* is considered her most abstract novel of all. The novel is based on impressions of characters, each of whom presents those impressions in a series of interior monologues. Those impressions merge six identities into a common experience.

Malcolm Bradbury notes: "Critics agree in seeing the group of books ... *Mrs. Dalloway* (1924)[sic], *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931) as the centre of [Woolf's] work, the heart of her contribution to modernism" (178). Woolf wrote two more novels: *The years* (1937), a family saga which is more conventional in technique. Her final novel published posthumously *Between the Acts* (1941), is most poetic of all. Including *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), which critics take to be a novel, Woolf wrote nine novels before she loaded her pockets with stones and drowned herself in the River Ouse near Sussex home on March 28, 1941.

As an essayist Woolf was prolific. She published some 500 essays in periodicals and collections. Her essays are dialogic - her reader is often directly addressed, in a conversational tone. Virginia Woolf's concerns with

feminist thematics are dominant in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) in which she made her famous statement: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction." In the same book she appealed female writers to write like Jane Austen and Emily Bronte "ignoring the perpetual admonitions of the eternal pedagogue- write this think that." *Three Guineas* (1938) - in a sense a successor *A Room of One's Own* - also urged women to make a claim for their own history and literature.

Other works include two series of essays published as *The Common Reader: First Series* (1925), *The Common Reader: Second Series* (1932); *Flush* (1933), a whimsical biography of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog; *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940), a biography of her friend Roger Fry who had died in 1934. *The Death of the Moth and other Essays* (1942), *A Haunted House and other short stories* (1943), and *A Writer's Diary* (1953) are some of other posthumously published works.

In the essay "Modern fiction" (1919), she described the task of the modern novelist and the area that the modern novel should explore. Life was quite unlike the reality literature encoded; it was, she said "a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelops surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end"- and it was the task of the modern novelist to convey this fresh sense of life, with "as little mixture of the alien and external as possible" (qtd. in Bennett 105).

This fresh sense of life- 'moment of being'- is experienced when 'myriad of impressions' of the moment are caught within the thin transparent net. So reality is always subjective and momentary for Woolf: "Th[e] connection between self (the subject) and object can be said to constitute the

momentary 'reality' of the self" (Richter 115). This transient reality comes to the self as a flow of emotion; and this tumultuous and contradictory emotional world must be ordered in a form so as to express it in its totality. In this sense "the novel," which depicts the reality for Mrs. Woolf "is not form ... but emotion which [we] see" (qtd. in Richter). 'Consciousness' is at the heart of Woolf's novels. Malcolm Bradbury argues: "In Woolf", consciousness is flowing poetic, feminine, above, all, painter- like and aesthetic- the mean by which art can enter the realm of intuition, imaginative pattern, heightened responsiveness, a reverie of the ego rather than an emanation of the id" (177).

Another aspect that makes Woolf a modernist is 'the changed consciousness of time' which Jurgen Habermas mentions as a feature of aesthetic modernity in his essay "Modernity - An Incomplete Project (1981)." Harvena Richter notes that "Time for Virginia woolf was not measured by the clock but experienced emotionally" (38). In her novel *Orlando* the protagonist *Orlando* grows only twenty years in almost four centuries. Time is almost a character in her novel *To the Lighthouse*. Moreover, rather than the objective world she attempts to render the quality and rhythm of the thought which is perpetually colored by emotion in a less scientific and more poetic way. In contrast to the 'unified self' of the classic realism Woolf's projection of the self is disintegrated and fragmentary. Her novels are open-ended, and defy closure. She uses images rendering them specific with supporting symbols and metaphors. There is a peculiarity in her presentations of characters as Hudson has noted: "Virginia Woolf's characters are aspects of herself" (291).

Virginia Woolf makes use of stream of consciousness and interior monologue to place the reader in the mind of the character, and brings the

reader into the very centre of the work by means of abstraction, reflection, metamorphosis, discontinuity and other similar modes. "The novel as poem, the novel as emotion, idea as symbol, characters as aspects of the self: all these were to be characteristics of the new psychological fiction in general and Virginia Woolf's in particular" (Richter 23). In the final analysis it can be said that it is the emphasis upon the subject's experience of the object that separates Virginia Woolf most clearly from her contemporaries. In his book *The Modern British novel*, Malcolm Bradbury acknowledges Virginia Woolf as one of the modern Masters along with James, Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence and Forster.

Orlando: A Journey from Masculine to the Feminine World

Orlando, a Sixteen-year-old boy of a noble descent in the 'Elizabethan era' is according to the narrator-biographer, a trifle clumsy; a boy whose clumsiness is often mated with love of solitude, nature and poetry. He is favored by the Queen, is given vast estate, and is made her Treasurer and Steward. He also serves as her lover. Before his is eighteen, he has already written score of tragedies, a dozen histories and has enjoyed innumerable embraces of women by frequenting to Whapping Old stairs and the beer gardens at night, wrapped in a grey cloak to hide the star at his neck and the garter at his knee. Tired of discomfort and primitive manners of people, he quits frequently beer garden and once more appears at the Court of King James where he is received with great acclamation because of his handsome youth and wealth.

He is engaged to Euphrosyne, an aristocratic Irish girl before he has had a torrid affair with a Russian Princess Sasha who praises him for his love

of beasts, for his gallantry, for his legs and compares him with million-candled Christmas tree. Following Sasha's disappearance from the day of great Flood *Orlando* is exiled from the Court and is affected with first cataleptic fit for a week; a trance that results in an imperfect recollection of his past life. Because of his disgrace at Court and violent grief of losing Sasha *Orlando* gives himself up to a life of extreme solitude, reads Thomas Browne, tries his hand at poetry, and vows to be the first poet of his race and bring immortal luster upon his name.

However, after many months of feverish labor he decides to break silence and invites Nicholas Greene to his house hoping to learn more about poetry. However, he is bored with his mimicry, and gets rid of him by promising a quarterly pension. He is fed up with the company of men. He sets fire to his fifty- seven poetical works only retaining his boyish dream "The Oak Tree." He also vows to write not to please others but only himself. In the meantime he refurbishes his mansion and begins a series of splendid entertainments to the nobility and gentry of the neighborhood. When he is wooed by the Archduchess Harriet he suddenly realizes that he is overcome by lust the vulture. Then he asks King Charles to send him as an Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople and leaves England.

The night he is conferred Dukedom by the British Admiral Sir Adrian Scrape he is affected by a weeklong cataleptic fit for the second time; a trance that saves his life from the massacre in the uprising against Sultan. Much to our astonishment he wakes up a woman after his weeklong trance with no sign of perturbation over his sex change. With the help of Rustum el Sadi she joins gipsy tribe but fails to accommodate herself and returns to England in a

merchant ship with the help of Captain Bartolus. She handles legalities regarding his/ her dukeship and remains legally unknown. She is visited by the Romanian Archduke Harry who sheds off his feminine guise and they enjoy each other's company until Harry's pride is pricked by the feeling of being cheated by a woman in gambling. She is able to gain attentions of the literary giants of the time- Pope, Dryden and Swift. She has had romantic relationships with men and women before she ends up marrying Shelmerdine Marmaduke Bonthrop and giving birth to a son.

Critics on *Orland*

Orland has drawn numerous criticisms from different quarters especially from feminists and queer theorists since its publication in 1928. Critics generally believe that Virginia Woolf was at the height of her writing career during this period. Though most of the critics agree in its androgynous nature and think that it is a parodic biography based on Woolf's friend and lover Vita Sackville-West, some have taken great interest in the novel's technical innovations and its exploration of the theory of literary genre, sexuality, subjectivity, multiplicity of identity and destabilization of gender.

Malcolm Bradbury calls *Orlando* "a playful exercise in androgyny" (180). Nicola Thompson too, opines that "*Orlando* is obviously an exploration of the advantages of an androgynous mind" (2). However, this concept of androgyny has been critically examined by critics like Pamela Caughie who argues that "*Orlando*'s androgyny is not a stable combination of two genders - as it is often hailed by critics to be - but is an oscillation between them-a 'refusal to choose.'" (qtd. in Olin-Hitt 495). For John Graham the subtitle of the book - A Biography - indicates the object of its most sustained parody in

which "the parody is sustained by the style" (84). Christy L. Burns also finds link between parody and Victorian beliefs in the novel: ". . . *Orlando* is a parodic biography, and several strands of biographical beliefs prevalent in the Victorian era are being parodied throughout the novel" (2).

Michael R. Olin-Hitt hinting at the technical innovations overshadowed by the biographical context of the novel writes: "Woolf's project in *Orlando* is to celebrate various forms of desire and thus to open the novel to new possibilities" (494). He further adds: "In *Orlando*, Woolf subverts conventional conceptions of narrative desire and replaces the linear, end-driven desire so characteristic of classic realism with a desire that celebrates diversity and indeterminacy" (483). One of the innovations is indicated by Kathryn N. Benzel by showing Woolf's development of a narrative environment in *Orlando* in which "tension between the narrative reader (looking for representation) and the authorial reader (recognizing the text's discourse) enriches the aesthetic experience by engaging the reader with the text's multiplicity" (2).

The genre of the text has become a problem in its categorization. Nigel Nicolson calls *Orlando* "[t]he longest and most charming love letter in literature" (qtd. in Knopp 24). J.J. Wilson, after listing exhaustively all the genres in which *Orlando* could fit and into which it has been placed, smugly concludes, "it really belongs to yet another genre, the genre of the anti- novel" (qtd in Thompson 4). David Dachiess calls *Orlando* "a symbolic biography of the author's friend Victoria Sackville-West" (1161). Barbara Gabriel's comment, "Virginia Woolf's autobiography, *Orlando*" echoes the similar problem concerning novel's categorization (2). On the whole critics' inability

to categorize the novel is found in an piercing comment of D.A. Boxwell: "[U]nashamedly thieving from a multitude of genres, *Orlando* functions subversively and comically as mock biography" (2).

Another intriguing line of criticism tries to show in *Orlando* the theme of the effect of patriarchal literary culture on a woman writer: "Perhaps the main theme in . . . *Orlando* is the effect of patriarchal literary culture on a woman writer- what impact do male theories and criteria of literary value have on the female writer?" (Thompson 5).

Woolf's treatment of sexuality has intrigued many critics in *Orlando*. Critics like Winifred Holtby characterize *Orlando* as "Woolf's exploration of her own theory of sexuality" (qtd. in Burns 1). D.A. Boxwell concludes that "setting up camp, as a strategy for destabilizing normative sociocultural constructions of sexuality and gender, Woolf's novel [*Orlando*] dramatizes the lesbian project" (4).

Recent criticisms have endeavored to trace Woolf's exploration of subjectivity in her novel *Orlando*. Christy L. Burns argues that "[t]he crucial question of Woolf' novel [*Orlando*] becomes that of subjectivity, but subjectivity as it is embroiled in the problematics of historical change and sexuality" (3). Other critics have tried to bring our attention to the concept of decentered subjectivity of the text: "Th[e] conception of a subjectivity unified by structured, controlled desire . . . is the theory of personality Woolf is playfully subverting in *Orlando*" (Olin-Hitt 486). For Nancy Cervetti *Orlando* "marks subjectivity as multiple and shifting" (6). In support of the multiple subjectivity Christy L. Burns further remarks that "subjectivity itself in

Orlando is increasingly depicted as a mesh of various optional identities" (10).

The identity politics is another crucial issue worth exploring in *Orlando*. For Suzanne Ferriss, *Orlando* "inevitably highlights questions of identity, particularly the relation of sex, gender and subjectivity" (1-2). Critics trace multiplicity of identity in the text: "The possibility that multiple identities can be adopted, donned, and even invented fuels much of *Orlando's* strategies of destabilization and denaturalization" (Boxwell 5). Christy L. Burns says that "the questioning of identity in *Orlando* raises issues that are of returning importance to feminism" (3).

The cultural construction of gender has not escaped critical gaze in *Orlando*. The destabilization of gender has been pointed out by many critics as Nancy Cervetti has argued: "Gender trouble is contagious in *Orlando*, a playful trouble that questions the possibility, the need, or the advantage of any stable notion of identity" (3).

The performative nature of gender remains yet unexplored in the interpretation of the text. In this research I will interpret the text through the optic of "gender performativity". According to the performative perspective the identities of *Orlando* both as a man and a woman are constituted through the repetition of conventional gender norms. It is not *Orlando* as a subject who repeats those norms but, rather, it is the repetition of gender norms itself that creates the temporal condition and enables *Orlando* as a subject.

II. Theoretical Modality

Destabilization of Sex and Gender

"Anatomy is Destiny", Freud declared in his essay "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924). This concept is representative of the claim that "sex" is a biological given so it is natural. The naturalness of "sex" is based on the belief of the discrete differences of the human bodies which are taken to be irreducible. These differences are assumed to be the hallmarks of two different categories of sex- male and female. Among those differences external genitalia, procreative capability and shape of the body are believed to be fundamental. Males have penis and tall, muscular body whereas females have reproductive capability though their bodies are comparatively less strong.

On the basis of those physiological features human beings are categorized into two different genders, men and women, and are accordingly assigned different social roles to be performed by them. These roles in turn help them to have different experience of life. In contrast to relative stability of sex, gender changes over time because of the changing social or cultural roles assigned to genders are constantly moulded by the experience of the performance of those roles.

The specificity of gender is that the elision of sex with gender equates male and female with masculine and feminine. To put in simple words, if the proper terms for sex are male and female, the corresponding terms for gender are masculine and feminine. Sex is dependent on biology but gender might be independent of biology and has psychological and cultural connotation. In this sense, sex is unalterable, permanent and biological in origin which refers to

the physical differences of the body whereas gender is socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to males and females based on the perceived differences of the sexes themselves.

Biology - is - destiny concept of sex and taken - for- granted notion of gender have been challenged by psychological, sociological and critical theories and practices after 1970s. The advent of poststructuralism especially the works of Jacques Derrida, poststructural psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault's theoretical discourse on sexuality have brought about a radical change in the discourses of sex and gender. Those challenges are continuously aided by new theories and findings of sociology, feminist movement and literary criticism.

According to Judith Lorber "the concept of gender as constructed was explored by American feminists in the 1970s, particularly Susan Kessler and Wendy Mckenna" (4). "It is only now, in the 1990s, that a full- fledged analysis of gender as wholly constructed, symbolically loaded, and ideologically enforced is taking place in American feminism" (5). When it is established that gender is socially defined or constructed then it can also be 'undefined' or 'deconstructed.' Thinking that the social, cultural and political discourses and practices of gender lie at the root of women's subordination, feminists and others have understood the analysis of gender as necessary to the defeat of sexism and important to general social change.

Judith Lorber argues that gender is "a social institution" (15). This 'institution' came into existence with the rise of modern Europe:

With the eighteen century, seaboard Europe and North America at least, we can speak of a gender order in which masculinity in the

modern sense- gendered individual character, defined through an opposition with femininity and institutionalized in economy and state- had been produced and stabilized. (Connell 248)

When the society got its gendered structure it began to produce the gendered system of dominance and power.

It means that gender is defined in terms of binary opposition between masculinity and femininity and it operates as a means and not as an end. Barbara F. Reskin notes that "if one set of differences is successfully challenged, another set will take its place" (qtd. in Lorber 5). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick also defines gender in terms of power differentials:

compared to chromosomal sex, which is seen ... as tending to be immutable, immanent in the individual, and biologically based, the meaning of gender is seen as culturally mutable and variable, highly relational (in the sense that each of the binarized genders is defined primarily by its relation to the other), and inextricable from a history of power differentials between genders. (28)

These arguments give us insight into the constructed nature of gender. What seems to be the case is that we are born sexed but not gendered and taught to be masculine or feminine later. In the process of gendering we re-create our society's version of men and women. "Gender is both ascribed and achieved" as Candace West and Don Zimmerman have noted (qtd. in Lorber 225). It fully supports Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement, "one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one" in her book *The Second Sex*. Contemporary critics reject the necessary link between masculinity and male and femininity and female as Judith Halberstam, for example, writes: "What

we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced by and across both male and female bodies" (335).

Drawing on psychoanalysis and Foucault's writing, some critics have successfully contested the notion of gender in a radical way. "Relying on the postulated characterization of libido as masculine, Stephen Heath concludes that femininity is the denial of that libido, the dissimulation of a fundamental masculinity" (qtd. in Butler, *Gender* 68). Some critics have pointed out the interrelationship between gender and heterosexuality. In Monique Wittig's view "'masculine' and 'feminine' 'male and 'female' exist only within the heterosexual matrix" (qtd. in Butler, *Gender* 141). Judith Butler also tries to link the discourse of gender with the discourse of heterosexuality. Butler argues that "[t]he heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between 'feminine' and 'masculine' where these are understood as expressive attributes of male and female" (*Gender* 23). These 'expressive attributes' of gender require repetition in order to establish gender as an identity: "Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity, or a locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, *Gender* 179). Nay more, Judith Butler shows us the performative nature of gender which has constitutive effects upon those who repeat the gender norms:

[G]ender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes ... the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. ... gender proves to be performative - that is, constituting the identity it is

purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (Gender 33)

Not only gender but the category of sex too, has been contested. For Foucault "the category of sex, prior to any categorization of sexual difference, is itself constructed through a historically specific mode of sexuality" (qtd. in Butler, Gender 31). In psychoanalysis the emergence of sex takes place in relation to the oedipal formation. Lacan maintains that "sex is a symbolic position that one assumes under the threat of punishment, that is a position one is constrained to assume, where those constraints are operative in the very structure of language and , hence, in the constitutive relations of cultural life" (qtd. in Butler, Gender 95-96).

Judith Butler cautions us about the normative effect of sex. "Sex", for Butler, "is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled" (Bodies 1). Butler further argues that "the regulatory norms of "sex" work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative" (Bodies 2).

Theory of Performativity

Austin in his posthumously published book *How to do Things with Words* (1962), which is a collection of lectures he delivered on William James at Harvard University in 1955, differentiates two types of sentences - constatives and performatives. Constatives describe either a true or false state of affairs, whereas performatives rather than describe, perform. Performatives, he argued, in their act of enunciation constitute an action that may or may not generate posterior effects. In other words constatives have meaning and can

be true or false, whereas performatives have force and can be efficacious or not efficacious, felicitous or infelicitous.

Austin's distinction remained a specialist concern of philosophers of language until it became an issue of fierce debate overnight when it was taken by Jacques Derrida in his essay "Signature, Event, Context" (1971). In the essay Derrida's major concern is iterability, more specifically, general signification; for Derrida believes that social meanings are generated by iteration. Derrida argues that though performatives transform, they operate rather than merely refer, "a successful performative is necessarily an 'impure' performative" (796).

This notion of Austinian performative is developed into a theory of performativity by Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) and is elaborated in her text *Bodies That Matter: on the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (1993). She acknowledges that she originally took her clue on how to read the performativity of gender from Jacques Derrida's reading of Kafka's "Before the Law."

Judith Butler argues that "within speech-act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (Bodies 13). She develops her own version of 'the theory of performativity' standing on this foundational basis. She proclaims: "In the first instance, performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act" but, rather, as a reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Bodies 2). This postulation has at least four important corollaries: a) performativity is to do with repetition; b) this repetition is not singular; c)

this repetition is not an arbitrary choice; and d) discourse materializes the effects that it produces.

The first and important corollary that performativity is a specific kind of repetition is justified by her claim that "performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a constrained and regularized repetition of norms. And their repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (Bodies 95). The most important point of this argument is that in performativity the repetition itself is constitutive of the subject.

In support of the second corollary Butler further argues:

[T]his iterability implies that "performance" is not a singular "act" or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (Bodies 95)

Next comes the question of choice. Performativity is often conflated with performance but Butler says: "The reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake" (Bodies 234) because "performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it be simply equated with the performance" (Bodies 95). This implies that performance in a theatrical sense allows the subject to choose an "act," whereas in performativity the "act" of repetition is constrained, compelled.

Last but not the least is that discourse wields power by materializing its effects. Butler argues that "to materialize a set of effects, "discourse" itself

must be understood as complex and convergent chains in which "effects" are vector of powers" (Bodies 187). This discursive power works by circumscribing the domain of intelligibility. "The power of discourse to materialize its effects is . . . consonant with the power of discourse to circumscribe the domain of intelligibility" (Butler, Bodies 187). What is left out is the domain of unintelligible, the unthematizable, the unliveable, the object against which the intelligible is defined. This domain of unintelligible is what Butler calls the "constitutive outside." So for Butler, discourse operates not only through its formative power but also through exclusionary means. Nevertheless like Foucault, Butler also acknowledges the primacy of discourse: "Where there is an 'I' who utters or speaks and thereby produces an effect in discourse, there is first a discourse which precedes and enables that 'I' and forms in language the constraining trajectory of its will" (Bodies 225). If the power of discourse to materialize its effects is linked with performativity Butler writes, "the performative is one domain in which power acts as discourse" (Bodies 225).

Further, in her attempt to clarify the concept of performative, Butler writes: "To the extent that a term is performative, it does not merely refer but acts in some way to constitute that which it enunciates. The "referent" of a performative is a kind of action which the performative itself calls for and participates in" (Bodies 217). Now the question comes if performative has the power to act, where does that power or, to use Austin's and Derrida's language, 'force' come from? For Derrida, the force of the performative lies in its 'decontextualization' but "Butler reads Derrida conversely as claiming that

the force of the performative is a structural condition of language and marks the decontextualization necessary to iterability" (Hollywood 3)

In the formulation of her theory of the performativity Butler draws upon the works of Post-Marxists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who like Butler, subscribe to the view that "political signifiers are productive and constitutive of the 'political field'", (qtd. in Webster 8) and Slovene philosopher Slavoj Žižek who develops "a theory of political signifiers as performatives which, through becoming sites of phantasmatic investment, effect the power to mobilize constituencies politically" (Bodies 20-21). In Žižek's theory, Butler comments, "the political signifier becomes politically efficacious by instituting and sustaining a set of connections as a political reality" (Bodies 210). The signifier's "failure to mark that which resists symbolization, what he variously calls a trauma and 'the real'" (Bodies 21) subsists as the "permanent possibility of disrupting" (Bodies 192). In this way Butler shows that "the political signifier in Žižek's view operates as a performative rather than a representational term" (Bodies 210). This leads her to the conclusion that "the normative force of performativity - its power to establish what qualifies as "being"- works not only through reiteration, but through exclusion as well" (Bodies 188).

All those explanations boil down to a single point, central to Butler's theory - performativity as citationality:

Performativity is thus not a singular "act", for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition.

Moreover, this act is not primarily theatrical; indeed, its apparent theatricality is produced to the extent that its historicity remains dissimulated (and, conversely, its theatricality gains a certain inevitability given the impossibility of a full and final disclosure of its historicity). (Bodies 12-13)

Butler's work which critics most closely link to a new paradigm in feminist theory - radical constructivism - has drawn both positive and negative criticisms since its emergence in the last decade of the twentieth century. For critics like Susan S. Stoker, Butler helps us to "address the social stigmatization of disability" (14). Some critics try to trace similarities between Butler and other theorists as Susan Helman has noted: "In both Bordo's and Butler's theories the critical construction of exclusion is deployed to resignify the symbolic that constructs the exclusion . . . a very profitable direction for the future of feminist politics" (6).

Butler's work has not gone uncontested, though. Critics like Seyla Benhabib accuses Butler of a "complete debunking of any concepts of selfhood, agency, and autonomy" (qtd. in Vasterling 2). Similar voice is echoed by the feminist geographer Gillian Rose: "Butler's arguments are deeply hostile to models of human subjectivity as conscious agency" (qtd. in Nelson 350). Alluding to the understanding of history "Rosemary Hennessy, like Nancy Fraser, sees Butler's analysis of performativity - and especially its 'reduction' of the social to the cultural- as unable to attend the matters of history, and especially the crucial matter of historicisation" (Adkins 32).

In a relatively neutral tone Kathy Dow Magnus comments: " As Butler beings to develop a more general notion of subjectivity and shifts her focus

from gender performativity to linguistic performativity, her notion of subjective agency becomes increasingly diminished" (82); however, "by introducing the notion of recognition into the heart of her theory of discursive performativity Butler delineates the possibility of intersubjectively constituted action" (101).

Gender Performativity

It seems that in Judith Butler's perspective of performativity gender is performative in two senses: a) Gender as an "act" suggests that the essence or identity it expresses is contingent construction or fabrication; and b) the matrix of gender relations institutes and sustains the subject.

In the first sense the essence of gender appears to be the sedimented effect of repetition: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, Gender 43-44). Here we are reminded of Butler's assertion that gender is the cause of gender: "[T]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Gender 33).

These expressions which are contingent constructions are produced and regularized by the normative discourse: [Gendered] acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (Butler, Gender 173). Those discursive fabrications are constrained or

compelled in the service of gender coherence by the practices of normativity as Judith Butler has argued:

[T]he substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is constituting the identity it is purported to be. (Gender 33)

In the second sense gender constitutes the subject as an effect. According to Butler, "[g]ender is performative in the sense that it constitutes as an effect that very subject which it appears to express. "(qtd. in Barker 246). Here we are encountered with the complex notion of subject, that comes into being in and through the deed as Butler has argued, "there need not be a 'doer behind the deed', but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Gender 18). This variable construction of subject is necessarily sexed and gendered as Amy Hollywood has noted: "[Butler] argues that performativity is a kind of 'citational practice' by which sexed and gendered subjects are continuously constituted" (1).

Once it is established that gender is a copy with no original or it has no ontological foundation the same applies to the gendered body as well. Butler writes, "the gendered body is perofrmativ suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (Gender 173).

But gender is not free from the expected standards of the given society or culture. For Butler, "[g]ender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals with contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are

regularly punished (qtd. in Gabriel 1). Persons who fail to comply with the recognizable standards of gender are denied cultural intelligibility through exclusion and abjection. So in Butler's view "persons only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" (Gender 22).

We should bear in mind that "the" body comes in genders. The very process of gendering begins from the beginning of the life itself: "Gendering begins prenatally when amniocentesis reveals the sex of the child, it gets a gendered name" (Lorber 40) But the irony is that this process of gendering is not human because the matrix of gender relations is prior to the emergence of the human:

The 'activity' of this gendering cannot strictly speaking be a human act or expression, a willful appropriation, and it is certainly not a question of taking on a mask; it is the matrix through which all willing first becomes possible, its enabling cultural condition. In this sense, the matrix of gender relation is prior the emergence of the "human." (Butler, Bodies 7)

This clearly shows that the subject has subjectivated status that is the subject emerges only through its subjection which is generally known in Louis Althusser's notion as 'interpellation.'

When we accept that there is a matrix of gender relations that institutes and sustains the subject we are argued to believe that the subject is subjected to gender, where gendering is, among other things, the differentiating relations by which speaking subjects come into being. For its justification Butler argues: "[S]ubjected to gender, but subjectivated by gender, the "I"

neither precedes nor follows the process of this gendering, but emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves" (Bodies 7). The subject is a 'social construct' is an established assumption in Anglo-American enterprise of critical theory. In Foucault's view power orchestrates the formations and sustenance of subject but for Butler "construction is neither a subject nor its act, but a process of reiteration by which both "subjects" and "acts" come to appear at all. There is no power that acts but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability" (Bodies 9).

To sum up, if gender is a ritualized form of repetition, the performance required by the action of gender as in other social dramas is the constitutive of the performers.

III. Textual Analysis

Gender Parody in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* is full of gender parody. Characters frequently change clothes and perform different gender roles as per the demand of the situation or out of their own desire. Most of the character's sex is ambiguous, let alone *Orlando's* who midway through the novel undergoes sex change. It is remarkable that the ambiguous, nature of gender that different characters perform is aided by the clothing of one sex and bodily acts, gestures and movements of the other.

Such type of gender ambiguity appears in the Russian Princess called Sasha. *Orlando* looks at her when she is coming from the pavillion of the Muscovite Embassy:" . . . a figure which whether a boy's or woman's for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex" (woolf 25-26). Here, the unisex Russian clothing disguises Sasha's sexual identity and thereby creates gender ambiguity. *Orlando's* confusion about Sasha's gender is further increased when he comes across her while skating:

When the boy, for alas, a boy it must be-no woman could skate with such speed and vigor-swept almost on tiptoe past him, *Orlando* Was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question. But the skater came closer. Legs, hands, carriage, were a boy's, but no boy ever had a mouth like that; no boy had those breast; no boy had eyes which looked as if they those had been fished from the bottom of the sea. Finally, . . . the unknown

skater came to a standstill. She was not a hand's breadth off. She was a woman. (26)

Agility, vigor and sportsmanship which are conventionally attributed to man are combined with the body which has appealing face and eyes and large breasts, the bodily features commonly attributed to woman. Though *Orlando* comes to a conclusion that Sasha is a woman the confusion over Sasha's gender does not end there. When *Orlando* is waiting for Sasha at an inn near Blackfriars in the night just before the great Flood, probably to escape the disgrace at the Court, despite Sasha's delay to turn up *Orlando* contemplates: "Her courage made nothing of the adventure. She would come alone, in the cloak and trousers, booted like a man" (41). *Orlando* assumes that Sasha's courage is that of a man. Even *Orlando's* metaphorical description of Sasha like snow, cream or the waves of the sea also adds up to her shifting, evanescent, elusive identity. Sasha's attitude toward *Orlando* is equally equivocal. Sometimes she praises him and at the same moment she sneers at him; she enrages him. Sasha's tender and delightful as well as harsher and provocative attitude can be taken as an act of playing upon *Orlando*. Ordinarily no beloved is expected to treat her lover that way. Most of all, our suspect of Sasha's gender is heightened when *Orlando* himself is forced to think upon Sasha's hidden identity: "For in all she said, however open she seemed and voluptuous, there was something hidden; in all she did, however daring, there was something concealed" (33).

Sasha is not the only character in Woolf's *Orlando* with ambiguous gender identity. When Archduchess Harriet Griselda appears all of a sudden

in *Orlando's* room in the figure of a very tall lady in riding hood and mantle
Orlando is confounded:

Any other woman thus caught in a Lord's private grounds would have been afraid; any other woman with that face, headdress, and aspect would have thrown her mantilla across her shoulders and hid it. For this lady resembled nothing so much as a hare; a hare startled, but obdurate; a hare whose timidity is overcome by an immense and foolish audacity . . . she stared at *Orlando* with a stare in which timidity and audacity were most strongly combined. (80)

The audacity and obduracy of her stare immediately puts Archduchess Harriet's feminine gender into question.

After *Orlando's* sex change when she is at her home in Blackfriars Archduchess Harriet reappears in a familiar, 'grotesque shadow' at the central court of her house. *Orlando* calls her in and as she goes to fetch a glass of wine, Archduchess casts off her feminine garb and presents herself as a gentleman: "[I]n her place stood a tall gentleman in black" (125). The Archduchess, now known as the Archduke Harry asks for *Orlando's* forgiveness for the deceit he has practiced on her and tells that "he was a man and always had been one" (126). This shows that the Archduke's previous feminine identity was just a copy of a feminine identity. The text indicates that when the Archduke kisses *Orlando's* hand they act out gender: "[T]hey acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigor and then fell into natural discourse" (126). This 'acting out' is the typical characteristic of gender parody.

After the lawsuit is filed against her, *Orlando* begins to live at her father's house in Blackfrais in search of life and lover. She enjoys the company of men of genius. She goes out for the romantic adventure frequently changing clothes of both sexes. In a fine night early in April, she wears clothes she had worn as a man and lets herself secretly out of doors:

Now she opened a cupboard in which hung still many of the clothes she had worn as a young man of fashion, and from among them she chose a black velvet suit richly trimmed with Venetian lace. It was a little out of fashion, indeed, but it fitted her to perfection and dressed in it she looked the very figure of a noble lord. (151)

When *Orlando* enters Leicester Square she tosses off her hat to a young woman, Nell who raises her eyes to *Orlando*: "Through [the] silver glaze [of her eyes] the young woman looked up at him (for a man he was to her) appearing, hoping, trembling, and fearing. She rose, she accepted his arm" (12). As Nell leads *Orlando* to her room in Gerrard Street her loose hanging by *Orlando's* arm gives *Orlando* a feeling of her masculinity's gratification:

To feel her hanging lightly yet like a suppliant on her arm, roused in *Orlando* all the feelings which become a man . . . she suspected that the girl's timidity and her hesitating answers and the very fumbling with the key in the latch and the fold of her clock and the droop of her wrist were all put to gratify, her masculinity. (12-53)

When Nell changes her clothes all the time prattling just to amuse her lover, *Orlando* can't stand that any longer: "In the strangest torment of anger,

merriment, and pity, she flung off all disguise and admitted herself a woman" (153). However, Nell does not feel sad to hear all that; rather on discovering that they were of same sex, she changes her manner and drops her plaintive appealing ways and says: "I'm not in the mood for the society of other sex tonight" (153).

In the courtyards of Gerrard street and Drury Lane we catch sight of *Orlando's* frequent change from one set of clothes to another thereby changes in her gender: "For the probity of breeches she exchanged the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally" (155).

Orlando's frequent transvestite or drag role is most typical of gender parody which plays upon the distinction between the exterior and the interior as Judith Butler has argued: "The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed" (Gender 175). The performance of drag does away with the ineluctable relationship between the appearance and the reality. Esther Newton remarks:

At its most complex, [Drag] is a double inversion that says, "appearance is an illusion." Drag says . . . "my 'outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence inside [the body] is 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. (qtd. in Butler, Gender 174)

Orlando's transvestite role as a nobleman after becoming a woman also firmly establishes that 'appearance is an illusion.' What is outside is not the

true projection of what is inside; on the contrary, the outside is dramatically opposite of what is inside. *Orlando* not only performs single cross-dresser role of a nobleman she switches between a feminine and masculine role many times even performing the roles of an ambiguous gender within the period of a single day:

In the morning, she reads her books in a china robe of ambiguous gender; in the afternoon she clips the nut trees in knee-breeches; she takes a drive to Richmond for a proposal of marriage from some great nobleman in a flowered taffeta in the late afternoon; on her way back home she dons a snuff-colored gown like a lawyer's to know about her cases in courts; and at night, she walks the streets in search of adventure becoming a nobleman complete from head to toe. (Woolf 155-56)

Orlando's continuous switching over gender poles is made possible by the parodic nature of gender itself: "In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself- as well as its contingency" (Butler, *Gender* 175). When it is established that a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies; the essence of gender is performatively constituted; and the parody is not the parody of original or primary gender but of the very notion of an original then it leads us to agree with Judith Butler who argues that "gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin" (*Gender* 175).

Gendered Subjectivity and Instability of Identity in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* critiques the notion of unified humanistic subject and opens up the debates on the possibility of multiple subjectivities. In the introduction of this research I have mentioned criticisms, regarding 'constructive figuration of subjectivity' in *Orlando* and now I will elaborate on gendered aspect of subjectivity focusing upon *Orlando's* "situatedness" in his/her social order and discursive practices of gender.

Judith Butler argues that "as a strategy of survival within compulsory systems, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what "humanizes" individuals within contemporary culture; indeed we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right" (Gender 178). *Orlando's* personality is regarded as integrated until his sex change at the age of thirty. He complies with the accepted gender norms of his society and is regularly rewarded in social hierarchy.

Orlando's subjectivity is constituted by his social status. He is favored by the Queen, given vast estate and is made an ambassador by King Charles. He is handsome, pleasant, darling gentleman both to poor working-class people and to elites. His subjectivity of all-favored lordship is the result not only of his charismatic personality but also of his gender conformity. Alternation in sexual identity has punitive consequences on her. When *Orlando* returns to England she has to face a lawsuit: "The chief charges against her were (1) that she was dead, and therefore could not hold any property whatsoever (2) that she was a woman, which amounts to much the same thing . . ." (Woolf 118). The second charge that *Orlando's* being a

woman from his previous identity of a man amounts to his death raises serious question about *Orlando's* existence. In my opinion, this charge indicates that at this moment *Orlando's* subjectivity is suspended. Her existence is denied recognition, indeed, her subjectivity becomes unintelligible because it is through social recognition one comes into existence: "[T]he discursive condition of social recognition precedes and conditions the formation of the subject: recognition is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject" (Butler, *Bodies* 225-26). Legal provision that she be remained in a state of incognito until the verdict came reduces her subjectivity to nonentity.

Subjectivity in *Orlando* is highly saturated with gendered experiences. Before sex change *Orlando* does not experience any effects of clothes but no sooner as she wears female clothes after her sex change she begins to perceive important offices of clothes than merely keep us warm. ". . . it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they would mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking" (Woolf 132).

Orlando as a man feels his complete downfall when his hopes are shattered as "he is exiled from Court, in deep disgrace with the most powerful nobles of his time" (46) but *Orlando* the woman does not react so violently when the lawsuits are brought against her that snatches off of her title and her property. *Orlando* as a man is always orientated to power, position, and authority desiring control. He attains an ambassadorship even after being expelled from the Court. On the contrary, *Orlando* as a woman is always worried to come to terms with the tradition and convention. Though her

efforts to resist certain societal behavioral codes succeed, eventually she has to yield to the spirit of the age.

In contrast to the liberal humanist notion of an individual as whole and stable, the construction model of the self believes that neither the social nor individual subject is whole or self-determining because the circumstances and drives which constitute them are beyond their control. Within poststructuralism, argues Peter Brooker, "the subject is seen or constructed within language or textuality, or discursive practice or elsewhere as shaped by controlling structures and ideologies of nation, gender, race, ethnicity, the body and sexuality rather than by class or the psyche alone" (210). What interests me in this research is 'the controlling structures and ideologies' of gender in the constitution of *Orlando's* performative identities. In *Orlando's* life the structures and ideologies of gender play vital role in the emergence of what Pierre Bourdieu calls habitus – "a durable, transposable system of definition" (qtd. in Brooker 98).. As both structured and structuring, Bourdieu writes, "the habitus – embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (qtd. in Brooker 98). This active presence of the whole past perpetuates in the form of memory or experience through *Orlando's* two weeklong trances though partially affected during the first but completely unaffected during the second. *Orlando's* sex change also does not erode this 'embodied history' which she/he uses for the structuring and restructuring of her/his identities and subjectivities. Her previous experiences as a man enriches her experience that is echoed through her musing when Captain Bartolus asks her for 'a little of the fat': "Which is the greatest ecstasy? The

man's or the woman's ? And are they not perhaps the same? No she thought, this is the most delicious (thanking the Captain but refusing), to refuse, and see him frown" (Woolf 109).

The graphic description of *Orlando's* scattered and de-centered subjectivity occurs in the final chapter of the novel. When *Orlando* is driving home her subjectivity begins to splinter and dissemble putting into question her very existence:

After twenty minutes the body and mind were like scarps of torn paper tumbling from a sack and, indeed, the process of motoring fast out of London so much resembles the chopping up small of identity which precedes unconsciousness and perhaps death itself that it is an open question in what sense *Orlando* can be said to have existed at the present moment. (217)

This particular incident is the revelation of the process of self-disintegration. Numerous selves pass away in swift succession leaving *Orlando* in confusion to find her true self: "[S]he was to hear her talk, changing her selves as quickly as she drove – there was a new one at every corner . . ." (219).

The narrator biographer informs us that she is fed up with the particular 'self' 'that *Orlando*' represents and wants another but "still the *Orlando* she needs may not come" (217).

We are told that "She had a great variety of selves" for instance *Orlando* the boy who handed the Queen the bowl of rose water, the young man who fell in love with Sasha; the Ambassador the Gipsy; the fine lady and so on" (218). She is built up of those multiple selves, "One on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand" (217-18). Among those selves "the

conscious self, which is the uppermost and has the power to desire, wishes to be nothing but one self" (219). This conscious self also called the true self which is commanded and locked up by the Captain self or the Key self which amalgamates and controls all the selves we have and forms a single whole. *Orlando* is seeking this self but without success which is indicated by the narrative equivocation and vacillation at the beginning of the passage describing the Captain self: "Perhaps, but what appeared certain (for we are now in the reason of 'perhaps' and 'appears') . . ." (219).

Gender Performativity in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

The narrator-biographer discloses crucial information about *Orlando* at the outset of the novel: "[T]here could be no doubt about his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it . . ." (Woolf 9). The fashion of the time does not signify costume alone but the culture as a whole where power relations are at work that institute and maintain social regulations. The above information about *Orlando* shows us the operation or working out of what Foucault calls *bodypolitik*. For Foucault, "the body is the inscribed surface of events" (277). The events can be taken as history. And "history", according to Foucault, "is the creation of values and meanings by a signifying practice that requires the subjection of the body" (qtd in Butler, *Gender* 165). This subjection of the body is the very foundation of the culture which compels certain regulations. "To be sexed", for Foucault, "is to be subjected to a set of social regulation . . ." (qtd. in Butler, *Gender* 122). It is social regulations that entail *Orlando's* body to be sexed in one way or the other. In Lacanian terms if the sex is the assumption of a symbolic position then *Orlando's* sex change at the age of thirty can be taken to be such an

assumption of a symbolic position within "the paternal law", which according to Lacan, "structures all linguistic signification termed 'the symbolic' and so becomes a universal organizing principle of culture itself" (qtd. in Butler Gender 101).

However, my chief concern in this analysis is: what is at work in constituting *Orlando* both as a man and as a woman. If gender is defined in terms of masculinity and femininity then how these two defining features are fashioned in *Orlando's* gender constitution emerges as an important issue for the analysis. Now the question arises what makes *Orlando* a man? In my view, the physiological and psychological predisposition, social position and access to privilege and power of the state are key constraints which craft or create the masculinity thereby constituting *Orlando's* identity as a man.

Patricia Sexton argues that "male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, . . . adventure, and a considerable amount of toughness in mind and body" (qtd. in Carrigan et al. 104). All of these features are clearly visible in the life of *Orlando* as a man. "The shapely legs, the handsome body, and the well-set shoulders" are all indicative of *Orlando's* muscular and tough body (Woolf 10). Out of those physical features 'Shapely legs' alone are marked as an emblem of a nobleman by the Queen when *Orlando* visits her at the Whitehall: "When she saw his legs. She laughed out loud. He was the very image of a noble gentleman." 'The shapely legs' is the synecdochic representation of *Orlando's* handsome body which is radiant with supernatural beauty.

Because of his charismatic beauty, for Sasha, "he was like a million-candled Christmas tree [. . .] he looked as if he were burning with his own radiance, from a lamp lit within" (38).

The toughness of his mind is indicated by his nature of extreme reserve: "He was careful to avoid meeting anyone" (12). He rides on a great horse and sets out for excursion with a passion in his movements. When he is having a dinner with the Russian princess, Lord Francis Verse and Earl of Moray the thickness of his blood melts and the ice turns to wine in his veins unraveling his courageous nature: "[H]is manhood woke; he grasped a sword in his hand, he charged a more daring foe than Pole or Moor; he dived in deep water he saw the flower of danger growing in a crevice; he stretched his hand . . ." (28). Apart from horsemanship and swordsmanship his adventurous nature greatly impresses Sasha: "She praised him; for his love of beasts; for his gallantry; for his legs" (37).

Not only those bodily features but his social position also marks *Orlando's* masculinity. His noble lineage, lands, property and mansion containing three hundred sixty-five bedrooms furnished with rosewood chairs, cedar wood cabinets, silver basins, china bowls, Persian carpets and many more that covers nine acres - and which is taken care of by many servants - easily show his social position placing him at the top of stratification hierarchy. He wields the power of his social position upon the people indiscriminately: "Upon the poor and uneducated, he had the same power as upon the rich" (88).

Masculinity is often linked with authority and power. "Masculinity", argues Judith Halberstam, "inevitably conjures up notions of power and

legitimacy, it often symbolically refers to the power of the state and uneven distributions of wealth" (356). *Orlando* has had many opportunities to enjoy power and privileges of the state. When he is made her Treasurer and Steward by the Queen he becomes immensely powerful: "Nothing after that was denied him" (Woolf 17). Though he was exiled from Court, he is appointed an Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople by King Charles. He is later conferred Dukedom just before the Turks rose against Sultan.

Does her sex change alone make *Orlando* a woman? This appears to be an important question. Christy L. Burns argues that "*Orlando's* body may be altered by the sex change but her gender change can not be effected until clothing that external social trapping pressures her to conform with social expectations of gendered behaviour" (6). *Orlando's* gender alteration begins with her dressing in Turkish coats and trousers that can be worn indifferently by either sex. Soon after she changes her dress its effects begin to appear in her emotional behaviours. When Rustum el Sadi reassures her that gypsies would not mind her noble lineage and her mansion about which she explained to the gypsies she suddenly overcomes with a shame: "Then she was seized with a shame that she had never felt before" (Woolf 104). She also "burst[s] into a passion of tears" while grazing goats on the slopes of Mount Athos (106). The dress she wears takes distinct gendered form when she is about to leave for England: "[I]t was in the dress of a young English woman of rank that she now sat on the deck of the Enamored Lady" (108). This complete outfit of a woman compels her to realize her position: "[I]t was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs and the Captain offered with the greatest

politeness to have an awning spread for her on deck, that she realized with a start the penalties and the privileges of her position" (108).

As she wears a complete outfit of a woman she becomes gender conscious in her behaviour. When a sailor nearly misses his footing seeing an inch or two of her calf she immediately responds to it with a responsibility of womanhood: "If the sight of my ankles means death to an honest fellow who, no doubt, has a wife and family to support, I must, in all humanity, keep them covered" (111).

Along with her feminine dressing style her pattern of thinking also becomes gender specific: "All I can do once I set foot on English soil, is to pour out tea and ask my lords how they like it" (111).

When in a fine September morning she arrives in London, seeing 'The Tower of London,' 'Greenwich Hospital,' 'The Houses of Parliament,' the dome of Paul's and the Monument near by she is overwhelmed by emotion typical of a woman: "Do what she would to restrain them, the tears came to her eyes, until, remembering that it is becoming in a woman to weep, she let them flow" (116).

Not only that when the Archduchess Harriet visits her at her home in Blackfrais to introduce him as Archduke Harry casting off of his feminine identity and falling on his knees bursts into tears that produces shock in *Orlando* characteristic of a woman: "[S]he was beginning to be aware that women should be shocked when men display emotion in their presence and so shocked she was" (127).

Loosing a fortune when the Archduke leaves feeling cheated by *Orlando* in a game called Fly Loo, she goes into her bedroom, stands in front

of a mirror arranging pearls about her neck and feels herself 'loveliness incarnate' that brings an involuntary smile on her face typical of a female vanity: "[s]he smiled the involuntary smile which women smile when their own beauty, which seems not their own, forms like a drop falling or a fountain rising and confronts them all of a sudden in the glass" (131).

At this moment of *Orlando's* life, the narrator-biographer informs us that the reiteration of conventional gender norms has brought about a complete transformation in *Orlando's* gender identity:

[w]hat was said a short time ago about their being no change in *Orlando* the man and *Orlando* the woman, was ceasing to be altogether true. She was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little more vain, as women are, of her person. (131-32)

We are informed that the clothes that change our view of the world and the world's view of us' has molded *Orlando's* heart, brain, and tongue thereby bringing certain changes in *Orlando's* identity:

If we compare the picture of *Orlando* as a man with that of *Orlando* as a woman we shall see that though both are undoubtedly one and the same person, there are certain changes. The man has his hand free to seize his sword; the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses and fashioned to his liking. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even of suspicion. (132)

Later in her life *Orlando's* acts, gestures, enactments and behaviours appear more feminine. "She [bursts] into tears on slight provocation" (134). However, the narrator-biographer tells us that *Orlando's* gender identity is still undecidable: "Whether, then, *Orlando* was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and can not now be decided" (134). Changes of feminine gender in *Orlando's* identity are further consolidated as she begins to live much in the company of men of genius and she exchanges the seductiveness of petticoats for the probity of breeches frequently performing the role of an ambiguous gender and a nobleman.

All this results in the fixation of her feminine identity: "[N]ow that *Orlando* was grown a woman, a year or two past thirty indeed, the lines of her character were fixed, and to bend them the wrong way was intolerable" (172). *Orlando* as a man was praised for his gallantry but now becoming a woman she succumbs to fear: "She became nervous lest there should be robbers behind the wainscot and afraid, for the first time in her life, of ghosts in the corridors" (172). She even feels pleasure in weeping. The prevalent law also recognizes her as a woman: "*Orlando* was a woman-Lord Palmerton had just proved it" (189). Finally she also accepts that she is a woman: "I am a woman, she thought a real woman at last" (178). Eventually she feels that she needs someone to lean upon because she can not go against the spirit of the age and ends up marrying Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine and giving birth to a son.

IV. Conclusion

Orlando's body is subjected to the set of social regulations of his age as *Orlando* realizes later in her life that she needs neither fight her age, nor submit to it, she was of it. In the beginning of the novel *Orlando* is a sixteen year old young nobleman which is solely defined in terms of his masculinity that is constituted by his charismatic personality emanated from his handsome body, his social position at the top of social stratification hierarchy, and his access to the privileges and power of the state. 'Shapely legs' which is repeated about a dozen of times in the novel is synecdochic representation of *Orlando's* handsome body. Prosperity and graceful lordship mark his social position. *Orlando* is made Treasurer and Steward of the Queen Elizabeth and later appointed an ambassador at the Turkish court which reveals his access to the privileges and power of the state. *Orlando's* imaginative capacity of writing tragedies, romances, histories and sonnets before he is twenty-five bear testimony to his power of reasoning. Along with *Orlando's* preternatural beauty like that of a light radiated from million candles, his generous attitude towards poor and rich, his love of the exotic beauty, his fondness for beasts and other animals, his swordsmanship and his power of rational thinking all conglomerate to form his defining masculinity.

The repetition of *Orlando's* nature of never thinking twice about heading a charge or fighting a duel, his princely manners, and his behavior of a gentleman constitute his identity as a man. It is not *Orlando* the man who repeats those gendered norms but, rather, it is the regularized repetition of those masculine norms that enables him as a subject and creates temporal condition for his identity as a man.

In the second weeklong trance of his life *Orlando* falls fast asleep as a man but wakes up a woman at the age of thirty after which the process of becoming takes fast pace. *Orlando's* identity as a woman is always a process of becoming. We are informed that *Orlando* was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since.

Alternation in gender begins to take place only after *Orlando* dresses in unisex Turkish coats and trousers and moves to gipsy community where she milks the goats, collects brushwood, strips vines and herds cattle, the works commonly done by a woman. She is seized with a shame she had never felt before when Rustum el Sadi consoles her.

When wearing a complete outfit of a young Englishwoman of rank she leaves for England in a ship she covers her calves lest any men's sight fall on them in a way women are expected to cover their body parts. Not only this, she keeps on repeating other feminine gender norms that enforce her in becoming a woman. Whenever she is emotional and tears form in her eyes realizing that woman ought not restrain them she lets them flow. As Archduke Harry bursts into tears in front of her considering that woman should feel shock when men show emotion in their presence she is shocked.

Regularized repetition of those feminine gender norms has to do with fundamental crafting of *Orlando's* body. In other words those repeated feminine gender norms are materialized on *Orlando's* body. By extension the action and effect of those reiterated gender norms constitute the materiality of *Orlando's* feminine body. This fact is corroborated by the narrator-biographer's information that there being no change in *Orlando* the man and *Orlando* the woman a short time ago ceases to be altogether true. *Orlando*

becomes a little more modest, as women are of her brains and a little vainer, as woman are of her person.

In my view, at this juncture of time the process of Orlando's becoming a woman takes a distinct form. Constrained repetition of feminine gender norms are materialized into Orlando's feminine body. In other words, *Orlando's* identity as a woman is performatively constituted.

Later in her life *Orlando* becomes much more emotional and bursts into tears on slight provocation. She is afraid of ghosts and wild beasts. She is also proved to be a woman by Lord Palmerston. Eventually *Orlando* realizes that she is a woman, 'a real woman', at last. She desperately needs someone to 'lean upon' and marries Shelmerdine and ends up giving birth to a son.

All in all, if gender is repeated stylization of the body, a kind of becoming or activity, a sort of corporeal style then *Orlando's* identities both as a man and a woman are constituted by the regularized and constrained repetition of conventional masculine and feminine gender norms. The repetition of those gender norms congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance or materiality of *Orlando's* masculine and feminine bodies.

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