

THE CHARACTER ORLANDO, A READER-RESPONSE REFLECTION

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Abstract: *The present paper is a reading of Virginia Woolf's novel Orlando through the lenses of reader-response theory. The evolution of the character is analysed from a thematic perspective, where literary devices such as irony, repetition and description are used to frame the critical ideas reflected in the novel. The character construction responds to the modernist aesthetic of experimentation and novelty. Thus, the present study aims to offer a reflective interpretation that applies David Miall's empirical approach in literature studies.*

Keywords: *Modernism, character construction, freed consciousness, Reader-response*

1. Introduction

Approaching literature has become a challenge due to the several types of interpretation open to readers who want to attain a complex and in-depth understanding of writings. Critical theories and criticism come as the background necessary for such endeavours. Studies such as *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2010), edited by Vincent B. Leitch, *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (2017), edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide Second Edition* (2006) by Lois Tyson, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2008) by Terry Eagleton, *Beginning Theory* (2009) by Peter Barry, and many others reveal the multiple perspectives and theories that can be considered when analysing literature.

Lois Tyson connected theory to real life and explained how it influences thinking and understanding. He stated that pursuing theoretical understanding reflects behaviour towards us as participants in social communities, politics or education systems¹. Mirroring this theoretical part, character analysis might reflect both aspects. Besides approaching the culture of another century, the reader also meets a change of personal perspective.

The approach of theory with literature in the 20th century meant evolving perspectives and schools of thought centred on different perspectives such as Phenomenology, Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Formalism, Deconstruction, Poststructuralism, Reader-response, to name just a few. The attention was placed on the reader and on the cultural background that shaped the existence of the writing more than in previous centuries. Roland Barthes' 'death of the author' was a theoretical acknowledgement of this shift in critical approaches to literature². The reader comes to play the key role because each generation will discover the meaning. Modernist writers challenged this power of revival since the main technique of creation developed in modernist texts, the stream of consciousness, engaged words in a flow of meanings that

¹ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today. A User-Friendly Guide* (2nd edition), New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006, p. 2.

² *Ibidem*.

cannot be fixed within a singular course of understanding. Modernist writers explored the topic of identity in a very diverse and experimental frame of thought that involved several layers, such as literary, psychological, philosophical, and social. Therefore, we consider a reader-response model to trace the evolution of the character Orlando and observe the main literary devices and techniques used by the author to reveal the facets of personality.

Virginia Woolf wrote in her essays about the shift towards the character and the very importance of truthfulness: “I believe that all novels, that is to say, deal with character, and that it is to express character”³. In the same essay, *Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown*, she highlighted the connection between author and reader by employing language: “The writer must get into touch with his reader by putting before him something which he recognises, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to cooperate in the far more difficult business of intimacy”⁴.

Lois Tyson divided the reader-response criticism into five aspects that should be considered when discussing the reader’s role in the perception of a literary text: “transactional reader-response theory; affective stylistics; subjective reader-response theory; psychological reader-response theory, and social reader response-theory”⁵. The transactional reader-response theory refers to the transaction between text and reader, both equally important. The text generates meaning as long as a reader perceives it, and a reader creates new meanings as long as he reads. Affective stylistics focuses on the effect produced by the text, its structure, and its words in the readers’ minds.

The subjective reader-response theory is associated with David Bleich. It draws attention to the fact that certain images are formed through reading. Therefore, the interpretation is based on those images named by the author ‘symbolization’: “our perception and identification of our reading experience create a conceptual, or symbolic, world in our mind as we read”⁶. This type of response is based on the reader’s straight encounter with the text. Each experience of this kind is different for each person. As a result, the meaning created by the reader is subjective as it is everything written because “knowledge is created collaboratively”⁷.

The psychological reader-response theory is associated with Norman Holland. According to him, the way someone views a text is driven by his psychological identity. He claims that everyday life with fears, desires, traumas, etc. influences the interpretation of a literary text: “A literary interpretation may or may not reveal the meaning of the text, but to a discerning eye it always reveals the psychology of the reader”⁸.

The social reader-response theory is associated with Stanley Fish. He maintained in his works that every interpretation of a literary piece follows the conscious or unconscious rules acquired within the community in which one grew up.

Wolfgang Iser proposed in a later study that Reader-response evolves into literary anthropology, placing the imaginary in a dialectic relation to fiction: “So there is a split between what is represented and what the representation stands for, and interpretation is

³ Virginia Woolf, *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, London, Hogarth Press, 1924, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁵ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today. A User-Friendly Guide* (2nd edition), New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006, p. VIII.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

an attempt [...] to heal the split by translating it into a semantic whole”⁹. Thus, literature and anthropology become both sources of culture.

Richard Beach approached the Reader-response criticism from five other theoretical perspectives: “the textual, experiential, psychological, social and cultural”¹⁰. Each perspective was intended to reveal one aspect concerning the reader-text transaction. Meaning is created in a many-faceted manner, and the announced perspectives would reveal how readers include their knowledge, previous experience, personality, social context, and personal cultural values when interpreting a literary text¹¹.

All these theories have the purpose of highlighting what agents might influence the process of assimilating a literary text and what reading implies because one cannot detach from everything learnt or experienced before, both in real life and academic training. The most important aspect is the result of the constant search, namely the interpretation: “the ultimate goal of reader-response criticism is to increase our understanding of the reading process by investigating the activities in which readers engage and the effects of those activities on their interpretations”¹². These effects reveal a deep understanding of reality, deep knowledge about personal identity and identification of meaningful elements in assimilating written texts.

2. Reader-response and psychoanalysis

Regarding terms such as consciousness, unconscious, dreams, behaviour, repressed memories, and other words connected to the internal system, the Psychoanalytical criticism is worth mentioning because it adds new insights to the analysis of modernist texts. According to Lois Tyson, one major issue concerning words is that they all have a common usage since they were included in the everyday speech of people¹³. Most of the time, people use such words without even bothering to search for meaning or know more about what is happening in the brain and, for example, how dreams come to appear during sleep. There is that ‘common usage’ perceived by others through hearing, and unfortunately, too many think that it does not trouble their living because they do not feel pain and they cannot track visible wounds. Nevertheless, these concepts describe parts of the unseen reality of the human mind. They imply psychological wounds and accumulations that can be treated, diminished, or accepted only if known. In their pursuit of acquiring knowledge and self-understanding, characters discover such wounds reflected in lost or harmful paternal or personal images that reflect a vivid memory which finds a kind of healing in art. Some examples would be Joyce’s and Woolf’s characters. Stephen Dedalus refused to pray for his mother when she died. He then found psychological retreat in art quests. Reading and writing were his priorities throughout his youth life. Neville, who was in love with Percival, but never had the chance to share his love, filled his voids with poetry.

⁹ Wolfgang Iser, *From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*, London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 233.

¹⁰ Richard Beach, *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories. NCTE Teacher's Introduction Series*, Urbana, National Council of Teachers of English, 1993, p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹² Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today. A User-Friendly Guide* (2nd edition), New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006, p. 188.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

The unconscious is defined by psychoanalysts as “a dynamic entity that engages us at the deepest level of our being”¹⁴. No experience comes as ‘neutral’ because it has a more significant or slighter impact on us, depending on the person’s background, education, personality, and way of being. The individual is supposed to find encouragement and support from the family at any time. If this does not happen, then the person is somehow obliged to search for moral support somewhere else. The transitions one encounters throughout life imply inner conflicts or concerns that imprint the formation of future identity. In literature, modernist characters’ transition through states of consciousness is described in detail, and attaining a balance is involved in the process. For example, Woolf’s character, Rhoda, could not find the answers she was searching for, and she finally secluded in her safe place.

Regarding perception, the mechanism of selecting information is as well individual: “selective perception (hearing and seeing only what we feel we can handle), selective memory (modifying our memories so that we don’t feel overwhelmed by them or forgetting painful events entirely), denial”¹⁵. Lois Tyson calls them ‘defenses’ and names as one of the most complex defences ‘regression’: “the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived. Regression can involve a return either to a painful or a pleasant experience”¹⁶. This act of regression can be tough for a person because it involves returning to fears, anxieties, and mostly sorrows, but it means healing due to the relief it brings. Dreams are further discussed as the access to the unconscious¹⁷.

Until now, her theory has followed Freud's psychoanalysis, but she also mentioned the nontraditional psychoanalytic theory belonging to Jacques Lacan whose concepts of ‘Imagery order’ and ‘Mirror stage’ are relevant here, in the context of art and culture perceived as reflecting the character’s image. Looking into a mirror creates a particular fascination as there is a moment of intimacy between outward appearance and inwardness. Modernist characters find themselves in a constant search for answers about selfhood, thus art and culture frame their reflection as individual consciousness. Challenged simultaneously by the natural landscape, the characters’ sensory experiences contribute to their perception. An example of nature-driven impulse is referenced in *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf when the character Susan feels the coldness of the water: “I let the cold waters stream fanwise through my fingers”¹⁸. Another example of both sensory and then in-depth reflection is Bernard’s bath when water functions as the transcendental mirror towards his personality: “Rich and heavy sensations form on the roof of my mind”¹⁹. This reflection phenomenon contributes to the characters’ increasing awareness of their selfhood.

The ‘Mirror stage’ describes the first conscience thought of the baby with him as a unity: “Whether the child sees itself in an actual mirror or sees itself “mirrored” back to itself in the reactions of its mother, the point is that the infant now develops during

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹⁸ Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, London, Penguin Books, 2000, p. 55.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

this stage a sense of itself as a whole rather than a formless and fragmented mass”²⁰. The mirror as an object, as stressed here, is as important as the image of the mother when talking about the effect produced by them. According to Jacques Lacan, as interpreted by Lois Tyson, this experience of the mirror initiates the ‘Imagery Order’: “the Imaginary Order, by which he means the world of images. This is not the world of the imagination, but a world of perception. It’s the world that the child experiences through images rather than through words”²¹. To an extent, the world of images contributes to the development of speaking. Watching and admiring landscapes sometimes inspires a feeling of freedom, of unchaining the mind and freed thoughts. We suggest that the stage of the imaginary order evolves into word expression when cultural experiences are a constant part of the child’s growth.

For example, Woolf’s characters in *The Waves* experience this world of images, but they are more engaged in describing them rather than just admire. The ‘imagery order’ abounds with words as well. The fact that characters play with words and images reflects how the author established the literary setting.

3. Reader-response theory in the 21st century: David Miall

The theoretical aspects which are illustrated in literature function as lenses of interpretation for the present reader. The Modernist characters are analysed as cultural examples reflecting human consciousness, including all the psychological events such as regression, mirroring, dreams, and the unconscious evolving into experiences perceived as contributing to the acknowledgement of their identity.

Important remarks about the reading process, the effect of literature on readers, the purpose of literary reading, and reader responses belong, among others, to a contemporary researcher, David Miall, Emeritus Professor of the University of Alberta. He explains the affective implications of literary reading and stresses the role of empirical perspective. Empiricism focuses on senses and direct experience of the person with the environment surrounding him. Related to literature, the empirical approach involves the real reader, not the supposed reader.

David Miall highlighted the importance of feelings and how the reader changes with every ‘expressive enactment’ reading. This type of reading appears when the reader identifies himself with what he reads. More precisely, the words have an impact because they name a certain repressed sorrow or unfulfilled anxiety. Reading literature means, in his view, ‘forms of self-implication’ called by David Miall ‘metaphor of self-identification’: “Reading enables us to re-experience and acknowledge negative feelings while locating them in a novel perspective where they can be considered critically by the reader, perhaps allowing the reader to gain insight into them and greater control over them”²².

Accordingly, literature does have this power to stir the self: “Literary reading has the capacity to implicate the self and deepen self-understanding”²³. There are two forms

²⁰ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today. A User-Friendly Guide* (2nd edition), New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006, p. 27.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² David S. Miall, *Literary Reading: Empirical & Theoretical Studies*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2006, p. 306.

²³ Kuiken Don et al., Forms of Self-Implication in Literary Reading. *Poetics Today*, 25, 171-203, 2004, p. 171.

of self-implication examined by David Miall and the other scholars: “A is like B: there is explicitly recognized similarity between personal memories and some aspect of the world of the text; A is B: the reader becomes identified with some aspect of the world of the text, usually the narrator or a character”²⁴. The reader is the ‘A’ from the formula because the present world has generations who find easier ways to reach information, but they lose track towards authentic self-implication. The point of these researchers is very interesting as they investigate a different engagement of the reader with the literary works. They searched to identify the way readers experience rather than interpret literature²⁵. Adapting their empirical method to analyse the characters’ behaviour in novels might be a way of revealing how cultural consumption makes characters become aware of their levels of understanding.

Moreover, their empirical approach shows how feelings mediate the process of knowledge and understanding of literature, thus making active reading possible: “We examine how the sense of self, as manifest in the activities of actual readers, is both implicated and modified during literary reading”²⁶. Modifications occur as reading is an experience, and the individual learns from his own experience. Regarding characters, the events and changes happen on a psychological level.

Every literary text has certain parts, phrases, or words that activate thinking through feelings acknowledged in the moment of reading. They might be considered as the ‘foregrounding’ of the experience: “the points at which readers begin to develop their sense of meaning often seem related to the stylistic high points, or foregrounding, that they encounter in a text”²⁷. Foregrounding is personal for any reader because it is based on feelings connected to life experiences. Therefore, the process of ‘defamiliarization’ takes place: “Feelings provide a resource at moments of defamiliarization, when automatic response is blocked, such as the moment when some significant foregrounded feature is encountered”²⁸. Defamiliarization challenges the conventional shaped in the reader’s mind, and foregrounding appears due to these moments of surprise or awe when new meanings arise in a new light of understanding. The alteration of feeling is classified by David Miall and other scholars in terms of four domains: evaluative, aesthetic, narrative, and self-modifying²⁹. The most complex domain is the last one because it describes the purpose and significance of written words. In terms of the effect, literature is the best example because it implies these direct self-modifying perspectives which occur with every literary reading.

This empirical approach presents the reading process as something felt through reading, not just accomplished passively. Only then does literature mean self-renewal and enlightenment of the mind through imagery: “Literature may enable readers to

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ David S. Miall, *Literary Reading: Empirical & Theoretical Studies*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2006, p. 3.

²⁶ Kuiken Don et al., Forms of Self-Implication in Literary Reading. *Poetics Today*, 25, 171-203, 2004, p. 174.

²⁷ David S. Miall, Empowering the Reader. In Roger J. Kreuz & Susan M. MacNealy. (Eds.). *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics* (pp. 463-478), London, Bloomsbury Academic, 1996, p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²⁹ Kuiken Don et al., Forms of Self-Implication in Literary Reading. *Poetics Today*, 25, 171-203, 2004, p. 175.

become more conscious and more critical of the emotions they feel. In this way, through the emotions we bring to it, literature develops and reshapes the themes of the self³⁰.

Past and present ideas mentioned about reading and literature prove how Reader-response criticism and more recent developments of reader-response theories imply theory is connected to reality. Lois Tyson's theoretical aspects and David Miall's stress on the practical implication of the reading process open the conceptual perspective when tracing how characters approach their cultural environment, including reading.

4. Orlando-the character

The novel *Orlando: A Biography* was published in 1928 and reveals a character struggling to reach self-realisation. The topics of identity and gender are explored as part of the character's journey, which is presented mainly through 3rd person narration. Orlando, the name in the title, is the main character, and he is not a traditional one. What makes him different is that throughout the novel, he changes his gender, being a man as long as a woman, no matter that Orlando comes from Roland and points directly to a masculine figure.

The name does not have a restrictive power towards the gender of the character. He lives from the 16th century to the 20th century and finds a new self along with each period: the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the reign of James I, Charles II, the Age of The Enlightenment with Addison, Dryden, and Pope, the Victorian Age and finally the beginning of the 20th century.

The beginning of the novel suggests the evolution of this unique and different biography and the issue related to gender: "HE—FOR THERE could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it"³¹. Irony is used here as the main device which creates the reversed effect of the meaning: the reader is supposed to question the character to discover its true image.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Orlando is a boy, but three striking elements announce the changing of the character's perception throughout times and societies. The first one is the feeling of uncertainty that was envisioned through repetition: "for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side; the heart that seemed filled with spiced and amorous gales every evening about this time when he walked out"³². We have initially learned that the character's heart and inwardness were tightly bonded to art, namely the art of writing: "Orlando slowly drew in his head, sat down at the table, and, with the half-conscious air of one doing what he does every day of his life at this hour, took out a writing book [...] Soon he had covered ten pages and more with poetry"³³. Thus, nature was the natural pillar for the character seeking to discover purpose throughout his existence. The oak tree was his favourite company, a tree known as mythical due to the tradition coming from the Celts, more precisely, the Druids: "The Oak tree is considered the most powerful and most sacred of the trees to the Celtic peoples. [...] the Moon of Oak also poses the essence of power and balance. In truth, She is androgynous"³⁴. The

³⁰ David S. Miall, Empowering the Reader. In Roger J. Kreuz & Susan M. MacNealy. (Eds.). *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics* (pp. 463-478), London, Bloomsbury Academic, 1996, pp. 10-11.

³¹ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando A Biography*, London, Hartcourt, Inc, 1928, p. 13.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 19.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

³⁴ Katherine Torres, *Moon Mother of Oak*, 1998, Retrieved September 29, 2024, at <http://www.thegoddess-tree.com/trees/Oak.htm>.

Moon of Oak has come to be known as the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year. It is a natural phenomenon that marks “an agreement” between day and night, cold and hot, summer and winter. It symbolises a centre unifying the halves and dissolving them at the same time because there is just one possibility: being one or another, as in the case of men and women. One cannot be both.

The second element is the laughter of the Queen upon her sight of Orlando’s legs: “Did she find her guesses justified? Eyes, mouth, nose, breast, hips, hands—she ran them over; her lips twitched visibly as she looked; but when she saw his legs she laughed out loud”³⁵. The fashion of the Elizabethan era meant wearing pumpkin hose for men. Therefore, their legs were quite exposed to the public eye. The rhetorical questions highlight that Orlando does not fit in the traditional image of the Elizabethan citizen.

The third element is the idea of marriage. Like the Queen herself, Orlando does not engage in any marriage: “The third, Euphrosyne, was by far the most serious of his flames [...] In short, she would have made a perfect wife for such a nobleman as Orlando [...]with the suddenness and severity that then marked the English climate, came the Great Frost”³⁶. The Great Frost may be seen as a pathway to a new stage, this time during the reign of James I.

The character also suffers from an incurable “disease”, namely the love for literature. He secludes himself within this disease and irony is once again inferring a sharp criticism of the society: “he was a nobleman afflicted with a love of literature [...] The disease gained rapidly upon him now in his solitude. He would read often six hours into the night”³⁷. This episode frames the guiding principle of the character’s life, which is reading and mirrors the immersion of his thoughts into the realms of imaginary at an early age: “The taste for books was an early one. As a child he was sometimes found at midnight by a page still reading”³⁸.

Awakened from a seven-day sleep, the notion of “time” has changed, and Orlando experiences the valences of outer versus inner time: “This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind is less known than it should be and deserves fuller investigation [...] Some weeks added a century to his age, others no more than three seconds at most”³⁹. The character’s perception of existential issues such as: “What is love?”⁴⁰ intertwines with a great power of imagination, which leads him to metaphors and daydreaming, confirming how he did not really wake up from his previous sleep.

The 18th-century world is felt by Orlando as a woman but possessing the same personality traits: “For it was this mixture in her of man and woman, one being uppermost and then the other, that often gave her conduct an unexpected turn”⁴¹. Her passion for reading and writing was still a primary interest and pursuit: “for she now began to live much in the company of men of genius, yet after all they were not much different from other people. Addison, Pope, Swift, proved, she found, to be fond of tea”⁴². Her meeting with intellectually gifted people announces the character’s future status of “author”, confirmed later in the 20th century when the author was no longer

³⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando A Biography*, London, Hartcourt, Inc, 1928, p. 24.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 97-98.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 189.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 208.

associated with the Gods or Divinity. Instead, they were perceived as ordinary people, responding no longer to their burning inner issues but to the readers' requirements. Modernist writers fought against those "low" forms of culture that developed due to mass taste because the very primary idea of art meant depth of meaning.

The Victorian Age continues for the character as a feminine presence haunted by the idea of finding a wealthy husband in order to be socially recognised and to have a decent life. The entire existence of the woman living in that century was related to marriage and the role of the wife. Therefore, Orlando obeyed this rule, and, as a woman, she married a seaman. Once again, harsh criticism of Victorian society is described.

The end of the novel proves that Orlando chooses to be an independent existence, avoiding the influence or restrictions of society. He does not feel strange either as a man or as a woman, even if each society from each period had its rules and set of ideas that would decide who fits or not.

Orlando is physically changing from century to century, but the most important aspect of this whole set of experiences is how the character attains inner balance due to literature. The manuscript of her poem, *The Oak Tree*, accompanies her through all the centuries and all her struggles. Her ultimate thoughts about the effect of poetry upon the person confirm the value of literary and cultural models: "Was not writing poetry a secret transaction, a voice answering a voice? So that all this chatter and praise, and blame and meeting people who admired one and meeting people who did not admire one was as ill suited as could be to the thing itself—a voice answering a voice"⁴³.

Critics observed these character transitions, strengthening the present perspective about a character, a literary and cultural example whose perception is changed due to literature. Jane Goldman observed the sequence of selves: "Woolf explores in Orlando how different contexts, including spatial as well as temporal contexts, require different selves. Orlando is described in the process of self-fashioning, of mustering the right self for the occasion"⁴⁴. Julia Briggs tackled the subtle reference to fashion and clothes from the novel: "Both explore the problems that Woolf had first posed in Orlando, where she used fashion as a figure for wider cultural change"⁴⁵. Her representative quote from the story was the following: "clothes [...] change our view of the world and the world's view of us [...] there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us, and not we them"⁴⁶. Hermione Lee stated that: "Orlando is a series of brilliant essays on history, fashions, literary periods and sexuality"⁴⁷. The character is at first glance strange and different due to all the periods and direct shifts. Still, its evolution becomes transparent as the character becomes increasingly engaged in meditation and reading, as well as concerns about the writing process.

In conclusion, the novel reveals identity as a form of freed consciousness. The perception of the character and his actions are sometimes dictated by the social rules, but up to the end of the story, Orlando succeeds in attaining a sort of inner balance based on

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 325.

⁴⁴ Jane Goldman, *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Julia Briggs, The novels of the 1930s and the impact of history, In S. Sellers (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge Companions to Literature, pp. 70-88), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 76, doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521896948.004.

⁴⁶ Virginia Woolf, *Orlando A Biography*, London, Hartcourt, Inc, 1928, p. 188.

⁴⁷ Hermione Lee, Virginia Woolf's essays. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge Companions to Literature, pp. 89-106), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 96, doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521896948.005.

imagination. His creative thoughts develop until the end of the novel. The oak tree becomes the symbol of the imagery order, describing the entire evolution of the character, and writing is the constant practice that keeps him aware of his traits, feelings, desires, and personality.

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