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**TEMPORAL-SPATIAL CANVAS OF CREATIVE SPACE
IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S «ORLANDO»**

This paper studies how the novel «Orlando» by Virginia Woolf presents an intricate narrative that disrupts traditional literary structures through its fluid exploration of time, gender, and reality. While prior analyses have largely focused on the novel's examination of gender performativity, androgyny, and identity, this study adopts a more comprehensive approach by investigating Woolf's creation of a distinctive creative space within the novel. This space transcends conventional boundaries, establishing a complex temporal-spatial framework that reflects Woolf's innovative narrative techniques.

In «Orlando», Woolf manipulates temporal and spatial dimensions, enabling the hero to traverse five centuries of English history and literature with negligible aging. This manipulation challenges the linear progression typical of biographical narratives. The present study posits that Woolf assumes a demiurge-like role, exerting control over these elements to underscore the fluidity and plasticity of existence within the novel. This approach not only critiques rigid societal norms but also serves as a meta-commentary on the evolution of English literature.

The novel's extensive intertextuality – manifested through interactions with literary figures of Shakespeare, Donne, Pope, and Tennyson – is analysed as a form of literary play reminiscent of Don Quixote. Woolf's deliberate amalgamation of fact and fiction, coupled with her deployment of vertical and horizontal spatial metaphors, facilitates a nuanced exploration of various literary epochs and their impact on Orlando's development. This spatial representation, intertwined with the integration of external landscapes and internal psychological states, further obscures the distinction between objective reality and subjective experience, illustrating Woolf's sophisticated intertwining of character and environment.

So, Woolf's construction of a narrative that not only exemplifies her mastery of literary techniques but also compels readers to reevaluate conceptions of time, identity, and reality within the context of literary history.

Key words: Virginia Woolf; Orlando; temporal-spatial narrative; intertextuality; literary tradition; creative space.

Introduction. Virginia Woolf's «Orlando» (1928) stands as a testament to the author's unparalleled ability to create a narrative that defies conventional literary canons. For this reason, this novel has continually captivated scholars worldwide, inspiring diverse interpretations and analyses since its publication. Even in the last decade, scholars have made significant contributions to its investigation, focusing on such topics as gender performativity, androgyny, identity issues, Woolf's critique of rigid gender categories, and urban space.

Recent scholarship, including work by Moslehi and Niazi on gender performativity [Moslehi & Niazi] and by Alberto García García-Madrid on fashion and identity construction [García-Madrid], has shed new light on Woolf's creation of a character who transcends sexual restrictions and uses clothing as a tool for identity across historical periods.

While many researchers have focused on the novel's treatment of gender and identity, there is growing recognition of the need to explore Woolf's creation of unique time and space, which reveals the author's intentions within the work. Derek Ryan suggests that, by having Orlando «look at the world through the prism of each epoch, without changing himself/herself psychologically», Woolf creates a constant vantage point from which to observe the changing literary and social landscapes [Ryan : 78].

While these studies have contributed to our understanding of «Orlando», there remains a need for a more comprehensive analysis of the novel as a manifestation of Woolf's creative space, which transcends conventional boundaries of time, gender, and physical laws, creating a specific temporal-spatial narrative canvas that reflects the writer's innovative approach to storytelling. There is a notable gap in the analysis of this work in terms of the 'creative space' the author constructed, examining the interplay between her ideas, the literary process, and the resulting narrative, from which this research could benefit.

Main text. As a literary critic herself, Virginia Woolf demonstrates a mastery of techniques for crafting engaging prose, developing unique characters, and cultivating distinctive styles. She conceived «Orlando» as a 'joke novel' and an opportunity to look at her own work from a different angle. In her diary in March 1927, she wrote: «In

fact, I feel the need for a merry escape after all these serious lyrical experimental books, the form of which is always so carefully thought out <...> Satire should be the main note: satire and restlessness. <...> My lyricism needs to be presented in a satirical light. Everything is to be parodied» [Woolf 1980 : 131].

This intention is evident in her construction of the novel's narration. At the heart of it lies a young poet, Orlando, whose very being exemplifies the malleability of existence within Woolf's constructed world. However, the manipulation of reality, in which the protagonist exists, extends far beyond the gender transformation that has been examined by scholars earlier. The author has the power to transform time and space concepts according to her intentions. Thus, we see time-travel through five centuries of English literature and history, with Orlando aging at a glacial pace, if at all. This disregard for temporal norms is evident when the narrator states, «But Time, unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality, has no such simple effect upon the mind of man» [Woolf 2018 : 52]. By controlling aspects such as a character's age and gender, Woolf positions herself as a demiurge-like figure, able to manipulate reality in her fictional world, further emphasizing the novel's fluidity and malleability.

This novel represents a complex literary game in which the author creates a rich intertextual tapestry reflecting the history of English literature from the Renaissance to Modernism while simultaneously challenging and subverting the conventions of the biographical genre. «Orlando» is primarily a novel about literature, with the main character being not only a poet but also a literary critic capable of analysing English literature over several centuries (from Shakespeare to Hardy). This can be traced in the manner of depicting the hero and the fictional world and in many quotes and allusions.

The first chapter of the novel, according to H. Lee, is «a general paraphrase of Elizabethan poetry» [Lee : 146]. It is represented by William Shakespeare, who is introduced in the novel as a 'shabby man' sitting at the servants' table. This encounter serves to root the young nobleman and poet in the rich literary tradition of the English Renaissance and is exemplified in Orlando's

early attempts at poetry: «He was describing, as all young poets are for ever describing, nature» [Woolf 2018 : 5]. Orlando's experiences echo Shakespearean tragedies, from romantic encounters reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet to dramatic scenes recalling Othello.

As Orlando moves through the 17th century, Woolf introduces various literary figures and styles, reflecting the changing literary tastes of this era. The novel's progression through time allows Woolf to explore different literary movements, including the metaphysical poets of the 17th century. These poets, like John Donne, were known for experimenting with literary devices such as obliquity, irony, and paradox, often complemented by dramatic and direct language and rhythms that echo the patterns of everyday speech.

Interestingly, Orlando's gender transformation happened during this time. As an ambassador to Constantinople, he explores a different culture and way of life. So, he undergoes a mysterious transformation, waking up to discover he has changed gender to female. Compared to metaphysical poets who focused more on analysing emotions rather than simply expressing them and delving deeply into their consciousness, this transformation is not depicted as a shocking or traumatic event but rather as a natural progression in Orlando's life: «The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory – but in the future we must, for convention's sake, say 'her' for 'his', and 'she' for 'he' – her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle» [Woolf 2018 : 75]. This passage not only highlights the fluidity of gender in the novel but also pays attention to the conventions of language and narrative.

As a woman, Orlando returns to England and time-travels through the Enlightenment era, represented by Alexander Pope. Orlando's interactions with Pope serve to highlight the wit and satire characteristic of the period. Joseph Addison, John Dryden, and Alexander Pope are mentioned as part of the intellectual society in London that Orlando experiences. Notably, Woolf deliberately creates an anachronism by depicting these writers as contemporaries, although they lived at different times. This is one of the many ways Woolf

subverts traditional biographical techniques of linear timing, challenging the reader's expectations of historical accuracy.

The narrative progresses through Romanticism, represented by Lord Byron's influence on Orlando's poetic endeavours, and into the Victorian era, where Tennyson's presence reflects the period's preoccupation with nature and symbolism while subtly critiquing its rigid social norms. The novel concludes in Woolf's own modernist era, with implicit references to her contemporaries, such as T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, in the fragmented, stream-of-consciousness style that characterizes the final chapters. This stylistic shift mirrors Orlando's own evolution and the changing literary landscape. By the end of the novel, Orlando has achieved literary success and recognition, completing her long-deferred ambition to be a writer.

This journey through literary history serves multiple purposes in Woolf's narrative. It allows her to comment on the evolving role of women in society and literature, as Orlando's gender transformation coincides with significant social changes. Additionally, it provides a platform for Woolf to critique and celebrate various literary movements, showcasing how each era's artistic sensibilities reflect broader cultural shifts. The novel's spanning of centuries also underscores Woolf's exploration of time as a fluid concept, challenging linear narratives and conventional notions of identity and experience. As we can see, in each prominent literary period, Orlando meets the main authors who expressed that period's artistic features and, through their heritage, influenced the next development of English literature. Shakespeare, Donne, Pope, Lord Byron, Lord Tennyson, T.S. Eliot, and others are depicted as experienced writers, in contrast to Orlando, whose artistic path evolves gradually over the centuries.

In addition, the figure of critic and poet Nicholas Greene serves as a bridge between different literary periods, illustrating the continuity and evolution of English literature. Meeting Orlando in both the Elizabethan and Victorian eras, Greene evolves from critic to mentor, dismissing contemporary writers as mere 'giants' of the past, such as Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson.

By weaving well-known names into Orlando's journey, Woolf creates a rich intertextual tapestry that serves as a meta-commentary on the history

of English literature. This perspective aligns with Harold Bloom's observation that «Orlando» belongs to those books that «are, first of all, interpretations of other literary texts» [Bloom : 507].

Woolf's novel blends fact and fiction, combining fantasy, literary experimentation, and reflections on human experience. It challenges traditional notions of time and identity, exploring modernist themes of subjective reality and consciousness. The novel's self-awareness adds another layer to this creative space.

There is a clear literary and intertextual game at play in Woolf's *Orlando* that can be compared to «*Don Quixote*». Harold Bloom notes that «after *Don Quixote*, all novels are doomed to rewrite Cervantes' universal masterpiece» and emphasizes the 'organized play' present in both novels [Bloom : 507]. Both works are primarily interpretations of other literary texts, and their protagonists are avid readers who can be considered alter egos of their bibliomaniac authors. Just as *Don Quixote*'s reality is transformed by chivalric romances, *Orlando*'s world is constantly reshaped by the literature of each era. Woolf deliberately emphasizes the fictional nature of her narrative: everything changes except the human being – neither time nor gender makes *Orlando* psychologically different, forcing the protagonist to look at the world through the prism of each era while remaining essentially unchanged.

Orlando's ability to live through multiple centuries allows Woolf to comment on the evolution of society, culture, and literature from a unique, almost eternal perspective. Woolf portrays literature as transcending time and space, reflected in *Orlando*'s multiplicity of selves – far more than the six or seven a typical biography accounts for – representing literature's ability to encompass diverse perspectives and experiences. In examining the spatial dimensions of «*Orlando*», we can observe how Woolf ingeniously represents different literary epochs through alternating vertical and horizontal metaphors. This spatial organization not only reflects the changing literary landscape but also mirrors *Orlando*'s personal evolution and the broader cultural shifts across centuries. The Elizabethan era, dominated by the recurring symbol of the oak tree and the towering figure of Shakespeare, is primarily vertical in its representation. This verticality echoes the hierarchical

social structures of the time and the lofty aspirations of Renaissance literature. Choosing an oak as the title («*The Oak Tree*») and image for *Orlando*'s poem is symbolic; it is considered part of England's heritage due to its deep historical, cultural, and practical significance. As *Orlando* evolves from a young nobleman to a mature woman, the oak tree's symbolism highlights this journey of growth and self-discovery. It represents a grounding force amidst the fluidity of time and identity, providing *Orlando* with a sense of permanence. The novel explores the concept of literature as a transcendent force. Jane de Gay interprets *Orlando*'s centuries-long process of writing and revising «*The Oak Tree*» as a metaphor for the enduring nature of artistic creation. She likens this process to a spiritual pregnancy, connecting artistic creation to biological processes and to time [De Gay].

In contrast, the 17th century introduces a striking horizontal plane with the Great Frost episode, where the frozen Thames becomes a level playing field and social boundaries temporarily dissolve. The 18th century returns to vertical imagery, representing the period's intellectual growth and the rise of the novel as a literary form. The Romantic period expands horizontally through vast natural landscapes and *Orlando*'s travels, symbolizing the era's fascination with exotic locales. The Victorian era reverts to verticality, reflecting rigid social hierarchies and industrial chimneys, while the Modern era presents a complex interplay of both dimensions – technological advancements reach skyward as traditional boundaries expand horizontally.

This spatial analysis reveals Woolf's nuanced approach to representing literary history. The alternation between vertical and horizontal spaces metaphorically captures the tensions between tradition and innovation, constraint and freedom, that characterize the evolution of English literature. Through this technique, Woolf not only charts *Orlando*'s journey through time but also creates a rich, multidimensional portrait of the literary epochs that shaped both the protagonist and the author herself.

In addition to representing space in two dimensions (vertical and horizontal) to characterize literary epochs, the novel reveals a spatial layer of creative reality that can be experienced through different senses.

Woolf creates a space where landscapes in «*Orlando*» often serve as external reflections

of the protagonist's internal state, blurring the lines between objective reality and subjective experience. When Orlando falls into a trance-like sleep after his heartbreak, the narrative itself mirrors this obscurity. Through such vivid descriptions, Woolf creates a world in which the boundaries between inner and outer realities are permeable, landscapes and weather patterns become extensions of the characters' psyches, and readers are challenged to reconsider reality as far more subjective and malleable than conventional narratives typically allow.

In essence, «Orlando» presents a narrative space that operates on the logic of imagination rather than physical laws. Locations are not merely settings but become active participants in the narrative, shifting in response to Orlando's moods and experiences. The space of «Orlando» becomes a metaphor for the act of writing itself – a realm where the artist can reshape reality according to

their creative vision. «Orlando» becomes more than just a story; it's a meditation on the nature of storytelling itself, where reality can be bent, time compressed or expanded, and identities fluid – a space where the only limits are those of imagination, allowing her to explore themes of gender, time, identity, and creativity in revolutionary ways.

Conclusions. To sum up, implementing a temporal-spatial approach provides a deeper understanding of «Orlando» as a complex artistic creation reflecting Woolf's unique vision and mastery of literary craft. Through this sweeping narrative, Woolf chronicles English literature from the Elizabethan age to the early 20th century as a meta-commentary on literary evolution. The time-bending narrative and spatial metaphors allow her to explore gender roles, examine creativity and the artist's role, and challenge conventional notions of time, space, identity, and reality, ultimately pushing the boundaries of what a novel can be.

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**ТЕМПОРАЛЬНО-ПРОСТОРОВА КАНВА ТВОРЧОГО ПРОСТОРУ
В РОМАНІ ВІРДЖИНІ ВУЛФ «ОРЛАНДО»**

У статті досліджується, яким чином роман Вірджинії Вулф «Орландо» репрезентує складну наративну структуру, що порушує традиційні літературні моделі завдяки плинному осмисленню часу, гендеру та реальності. Хоча попередні дослідження здебільшого зосереджувалися на проблематиці гендерної перформативності, андрогінності та ідентичності, у цій роботі запропоновано ширший підхід, спрямований на аналіз створення письменницею своєрідного творчого простору в межах роману. Цей простір виходить за звичні межі, формуючи складну темпорально-просторову модель, що відображає новаторські наративні техніки Вулф.

У романі «Орландо» письменниця маніпулює часовими та просторовими вимірами, дозволяючи протагоністу подолати п'ять століть англійської історії та літератури майже без ознак старіння. Така маніпуляція підважує лінійну послідовність, притаманну біографічному наративу. У дослідженні висувається теза про те, що Вулф постає в ролі деміурга, здійснюючи контроль над цими елементами з метою підкреслення плинності та пластичності буття в художньому світі роману. Подібний підхід не лише критикує жорсткі соціальні норми, а й виконує функцію метакоментаря щодо еволюції англійської літератури.

Широка інтертекстуальність твору, представлена взаємодією з такими літературними постатями Шекспіра, Донна, Поупа і Теннісона, аналізується як форма літературної гри, співвідносна з традицією «Дон Кіхота». Свідоме поєднання факту й вигадки, а також використання вертикальних і горизонтальних просторових метафор, уможливають багатовимірне осмислення різних літературних епох та їхнього впливу на становлення Орландо. Така просторова репрезентація, поєднана з інтеграцією зовнішніх ландшафтів і внутрішніх психологічних станів, ще більше розмиває межу між об'єктивною реальністю та суб'єктивним досвідом, ілюструючи вишукане переплетіння персонажа й середовища у поетиці Вулф.

Тож, створений Вулф наратив не лише демонструє її майстерність у володінні літературними прийомами, а й спонукає читача до переосмислення уявлень про час, ідентичність і реальність у контексті історії літератури.

Ключові слова: Вірджинія Вулф; Орландо; темпорально-просторовий наратив; інтертекстуальність; літературна традиція; творчий простір.

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