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**Open, Clear Decisions: Virginia Woolf's Orlando and Clarissa Dalloway as Bisexuals**

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In *Orlando* Virginia Woolf, shows Orlando as a person with a clear conscience who knows what he/she wants. Like Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway*, who is also often regarded as a lesbian because she loves Sally fondly her whole life but chooses to marry Richard, Orlando loves Sasha regardless of what changes her body undergoes, but chooses to marry Shel. Neither Clarissa nor Orlando is forced into marriage. Both choose to marry and abandon their active lesbian tendencies because they know what is most comfortable for them. As bisexuals they show the confusion of desiring both sexes, and instead of staying in flux and being constantly overwhelmed by sexual excitement, both choose men who allow them freedom and comfort. Using Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* to establish that Clarissa and Orlando are bisexuals readers will understand where Woolf's ideas in *A Room of One's Own* where coming from when she wrote "there are two selves in the mind corresponding to the two selves in the body" (98) and that in order to be an artist one must be, "profoundly bi-sexed, "bi-selfed," self-different" (41) like Orlando and Clarissa.

In *Orlando* Virginia Woolf, shows Orlando as a person with a clear conscience who knows what he/she wants. Many scholars consider *Orlando* a lesbian and feminist text. During her time as a man, she is engaged to be married, falls in love with Sasha, and has an affair with Pepina. During her time as a woman she engages with the Sea Captain, female prostitutes, and eventually marries Shel. Due to Orlando's interest in the female sex throughout the novel it is evident why scholars have claimed Orlando as a lesbian, feminist, or androgynous figure; however, this is not an accurate reading. I will argue that Orlando is bisexual, most obviously because she physically embodies both sexes during her life time, but also because her desires are two-sided. Like Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway*, who is also often regarded as a lesbian because she loves Sally fondly her whole life but chooses to marry Richard, Orlando loves Sasha regardless of what changes her body undergoes, but chooses to marry Shel. Neither Clarissa nor Orlando is forced into marriage. Both choose to marry and abandon their active lesbian tendencies because they know what is most comfortable for them. As bisexuals they show the confusion of desiring both sexes, and instead of staying in flux and being constantly overwhelmed by sexual excitement, both choose men who allow them freedom and comfort. Arguing against the lesbian readings of Leslie Kathleen Hankins, Lisa Haines-Wright, Traci Lynn Kyle, and the androgynous analysis of Karen Kaviola, which are valid given Woolf's history, I will use Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* to establish that Clarissa and Orlando are bisexuals.

According to Leslie Kathleen Hankins in her article, "Orlando: A Precipice Marked V Between A Miracle of Discretion and Lovemaking Unbelievable: Indiscretions Incredible," "Woolf's lesbian narrative in *Orlando* suggests love and erotics between women, mocks compulsory heterosexuality, challenges homophobia, and slips coded lesbian signatures and

subplots into the novel” (181). Although it is true that, Orlando is interested in her own sex, she also likes men. Feminists and lesbians alike have claimed, “Woolf’s original agenda for the novel... included her assertion of lesbian feminism in the face of oppression” (Hankins, 182). Although Woolf may have written *Orlando* to mock heterosexual norms, it also seems evident that she was promoting bisexuality. In *A Room of One’s Own* Woolf writes about the need for a creative mind to be bisexual. She envisions two people getting into a taxi and she wonders if, “there are two selves in the mind corresponding to the two selves in the body, and whether they also require to be untied in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness” (Woolf 97). She then begins, “to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female” (Woolf, 97).

Orlando and Clarissa are examples of this dual mind. Hankins asserts that while, “we may reclaim *Orlando* as the longest and most charming lesbian feminist love letter in literature, recognizing its narrative strategies as specific responses to the heterosexist censorship and non-feminist gay and lesbian cultures of Woolf’s day” (182), this does not follow suit with Woolf’s own theory in *A Room of One’s Own*. Hankins further emphasizes that *Orlando* is a lesbian when she refers to the scene where Orlando is with the Sea Captain: “Orlando is promptly punished when she allows the male to intrude into the sexual fantasy” (192-3). Hankins notes that when Orlando is engaged in this heterosexual encounter, “the orgasm is interrupted and she is mocked by the ghost of Sasha; Orlando on the arm of the sea-captain ‘felt, scampering up and down within her, like some derisive ghost who, in another instant will pick up her skirts and flaunt out of sight, Sasha the lost, Sasha the memory” (163). Hankins feels, “Orlando bemoans the price of heterosexual privilege (reigning as a consort): ‘If it meant conventionality, meant slavery, meant deceit, meant denying her love, fettering her limbs, pursing her lips, and

restraining her tongue” (163) (Hankins, 192-3). Orlando and the Sea Captain do not have physical sex. Orlando’s orgasm happens due to nature, she is overwhelmed by the beauty of the mountains and the company of the Captain.

Hankins feels Orlando is distasteful towards heterosexual relationships, but if Orlando “bemoaned the price of heterosexual privilege” she would not marry Shel. Although Orlando does not love the Sea Captain that does not mean she does not like men at all. Regardless of humans sexual preferences we all have individual likes and dislikes, and because a person is heterosexual does not mean her or she likes every member of the opposite sex. Orlando is not raped or forced by the Captain into sex; in fact she is having an orgasmic moment, admiring nature, when she thinks of Sasha which suggests extreme pleasure. If she were forced or raped, calling her a pure lesbian would be understandable, but she engages with the Captain willingly.

After Orlando changes into a woman, she quickly realizes the modifications she must make in her appearance, as she states, “I must, in all humanity, keep them covered,” Orlando thought. Yet her legs were among her chieftest beauties” (116). Orlando understands immediately how she must behave as a woman, and realizes she is disadvantaged, but that does not make her a lesbian. Woolf makes a strong feminist argument by highlighting the disadvantages Orlando has as a woman when she writes, “all I can do, once I set foot on English soil, is to pour out tea, and ask my lords how they like it. D’you take sugar? D’you take cream” (116)? This does not make Orlando happy, in fact, “she was horrified to perceive how low an opinion she was forming of the other sex, the many, to which it had once been her pride to belong” (116). Woolf mocks English society’s closed mind, just as she does in *Mrs. Dalloway*, by making fun of the necessity for women to behave properly at tea parties. In having Orlando

realize women are subservient to men, Woolf makes a clear argument for the equality of women, but she does not call Orlando a lesbian.

Scholars such as Blair also see Orlando as a lesbian/ feminist character. In her article, “Gypsie and Lesbian Desire: Vita-Sackville-West, Violet Trefusis, and Virginia Woolf,” Blair compares Orlando to the gypsies, “who were perceived and defined as a separate nomadic people possessing their own language, customs, and beliefs. They are traditionally viewed as inspirational artists, musicians, and dancers – and as thieves, horse stealers, and witches” (143), which suits Orlando well because she is nomadic, she has her own bisexual style, and she is an artist/poet. “In both nineteenth – and twentieth – century descriptions, gypsies are shifty hard to categorize, and associated with display and deceptive performance – flamboyant dress, extravagant song and dance, trickery and sleight of hand” (143), which is also true of Orlando who always dresses extravagantly regardless of what sex he/ she is. Blair concludes, “with regard to gender, these associations meant that they appeared to resist neat definitions” (Blair, 143), as does Orlando.

Blair refers to the gypsies as “shifty hard to categorize, and associated with display and deceptive performance”. As a man, Orlando believed women to be such, yet when Orlando awakes as a female she begins to realize her misconceptions. Woolf illustrates this, “and as all Orlando’s loves had been women, now through the culpable laggardry of the humans frame to adapt itself to convention, though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved” (119-20). When Orlando realizes this, “a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the sexes and let’s linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was removed” (119-20). At this moment Orlando loses her ignorance and begins to understand the perspective of both sexes. She realizes she is still attracted to

women, but she does not rule out being attracted to men. She finds refuge with the gypsies because, “claiming kinship with gypsies, provided one means for women engaged in same-sex relationships to play with gender roles, particularly by emphasizing their femininity while also consciously representing femininity as a masquerade”(Blair, 143). The gypsies, as Blair points out, are important for two reasons: they are not accepted by society, and they are accepting of homosexuality. The gypsies are not manly women either, as Blair notes they “emphasize their femininity” while they also desire females. Orlando, like the gypsies, “resists neat definitions”. Though Orlando is different, her originality is not her lesbianism, but it is her bisexuality. It is immediately after Orlando physically changes sexes that she seeks refuge with the gypsies because she knows they will accept her duality.

Blair quotes Rachel Bowlby and Karen Lawrence who, “observes that these gypsies “intriguingly...do not make any apparent (visible) distinction between the sexes” (168), and Karen Lawrence reads them both as androgynous and as raising the possibility of “polymorphous sexuality” through their orientalism” (271) (Blair 157). Though Lawrence and Bowlby point out that the gypsies are liberal and “polymorphous,” Blair calls Orlando’s tendencies homosexual and androgynous rather than bisexual.

After spending time with the gypsies Orlando starts to acclimate to being a woman and leaves the gypsy camp. As she became accustomed to her femininity, “she would to restrain them, the tears came to her eyes, until, remembering that it is becoming in a woman to weep” (122). Orlando establishes pride in being a woman even if it means crying, and she leaves the gypsies to venture back into strict English society to defend her new sexuality. She initiates defending women when Mr. S. W., states, “that when they lack the stimulus of the other sex, women can find nothing to say to each other. When they are alone, they do not talk; they

scratch” (Mr. R.R. has proved it) (160-1). This makes Orlando tremendously angry which shows that she is leading to think and feel more and more like a feminist. Mr. R.R. concludes, “that women are incapable of any feeling of affection for their own sex and hold each other in greatest aversion” (160-1). This is proven to be untrue of Orlando who, “professed great enjoyment in the society of her own sex” (161). Also, Mr. R.R. sees women as only being cruel to one another, which Orlando and Clarissa prove is not true. For example, when Orlando is with the prostitute, Nell for the first time, “when all was ready, out she came, prepared— but here Orlando could stand it no longer. In the strangest torment of anger, merriment, and pity she flung off all disguise and admitted herself a woman” (159). When Orlando does this, “Nell burst into such a roar of laughter she might have been heard across the way” (159). Much to Orlando’s surprise Nell says, “Well my dear...I’m by no means sorry to hear it...the plain Dunstable of the matter is, that I’m not in the mood for the society of the other sex tonight” (159). Nell proceeds to tell Orlando her whole life story and the two spend the night together enjoying both, each other’s minds and bodies. Likewise, Clarissa and Sally founded their friendship primarily on discussions, not sex. Clarissa and Sally have one kiss throughout the whole novel, but the rest of their relationship is based on discussions of a high intellectual level. Woolf shows through Orlando and Clarissa that women do not always “scratch”; they are capable of conversation on as high a level as any man. In fact one reason Peter Walsh wants Clarissa to marry him is because she is intelligent, and she has her own opinions. Peter also befriends Sally because he values her intelligence and liberal opinions on politics, as Woolf notes, “there they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world” (33). Furthermore, “they meant to found a society to abolish private property, and actually had a letter written” (33), which shows that Clarissa and Sally do have intellectual ideas.

“The ideas were Sally’s, of course – but very soon she was just as excited— read Plato in bed before breakfast; read Morris; read Shelly by the hour” (33), proving that Clarissa is capable of studying and understanding and conversing just as any man. She and Sally do not only kiss, but they also talk like Nell and Orlando. Orlando is a very positive character because she is in charge of her desires, like Clarissa, and she speaks up for herself. Both Orlando and Clarissa prove Mr. R.R. wrong in that they desire other women, and consider them intelligent companions.

A second popular reading of *Orlando* is through an androgynous lens. According to Karen Kaviola in her article, “Revisiting Woolf’s Representations of Androgyny: Gender, Race, Sexuality and Nation”, “Orlando’s identity is androgynous, that androgyny is mobile, not static: presenting not a smooth synthesis of oppositions but a more chaotic hermaphroditic ‘intermix,’ Orlando’s gender – and her desires – constantly change” (235). Androgyny consists of having both masculine and feminine characteristics, in appearance, attitude, or behavior, which Orlando does. Bisexuality, however is when one is sexually responsive to both sexes. Orlando is androgynous and bisexual because bisexuality includes androgyny. Kaviola argues for androgyny as she explains, “there is no doubt of Orlando’s sex in the opening scene, by the end there is plenty of confusion: not only does Orlando’s body metamorphosize into that of a woman, but her identity is compromised” (252); arguably, however, Orlando’s identity is not compromised when she changes sex, it is enhanced. Instead of only understanding what it is to be a male, and desire women, Orlando is able to understand what it is to be a woman who desires women and men. Kaviola continues to defend her argument noting, “the symbolic significance of the attic as a place of homosexual desire and confusion for such characters as Clarissa Dalloway and Nancy Ramsay” (252); however, when Orlando is in the attic he is a heterosexual

man. Kaviola believes, “an attic might also imply the need to mask the extent to which his English male identity is not absolute, pure, or self-equivalent. In fact, Orlando’s biographer soon calls his masculinity into question” (252). Although Orlando’s masculinity is not very pronounced, he never engages in sexual relations with other men. It is not until Orlando becomes a woman that she begins desiring both sexes, therefore to assume the attic is Orlando’s homosexual refuge is risky.

Kaviola’s argument shows androgyny as a possibility, but Orlando is a step beyond androgyny. Orlando is a bisexual like Clarissa because not only does Orlando have masculine and feminine characteristics, in appearance, attitude, and behavior, but she is also sexually responsive to both sexes. Orlando marries Shel because, “what Orlando and Shelmerdine understand about each other is that neither is entirely satisfied by the social practices held in place by that logic- that is, by compulsory heterosexuality and white middle-class sexual respectability” (254), both embody bisexuality.

Lisa Haines-Wright and Traci Lynn Kyle in their article, “From He and She to You and Me: Grounding Fluidity, Woolf’s Orlando to Winterson’s *Written on the Body*”, agree that Orlando is androgynous as they write, “with Woolf’s playful sex-change, readers confuse biological sex with gender identity, and thus see Orlando as first man and then woman, rather than as always both and more” (178). Orlando is androgynous because she is “both and more” just as she definitely embodies lesbian tendencies. When she says, “I am nature’s bride” (182), she gives up on finding a mate and binds herself to nature. Later she says, “trees... I love trees, trees growing there a thousand years” (228). After admitting her love for trees Orlando falls, “flinging herself to the ground, she felt the bones of the tree running out like ribs from a spine this way and that beneath her” (237). She is overwhelmed and confused by her feelings for both

sexes so she chooses neither, and embodies nature. Her physical nature is both sexes, and she realizes that few humans will accept her for that. Although *Orlando* studies have primarily considered her a lesbian because she enjoys other women physically throughout the novel, or an androgynous figure because she marries nature, she is a bisexual because she admits to taking pleasure in her own sex, but awakes and marries a man. Although Orlando has same sex encounters up until this point in the novel, when she awakes from declaring to be nature's bride, she marries a member of the opposite sex and remains faithful to him, just like Clarissa does with Richard.

Orlando is not completely heterosexual or homosexual; as Judith Butler in her book *Bodies that Matter* notes, she is bisexual which many "fail to recognize" (112) because homosexuals and heterosexuals see "bisexuality as a kind of failure to loyalty or lack of commitment" (112). Homosexuals do not accept bisexuals because they do not believe one can be indecisive towards his/her desires. They believe that if one enjoys the company of the same sex they are definitely gay. Likewise heterosexuals believe that if one desires a member of the opposite sex he/she is definitely straight. This is a lack of understanding on both parties' sides; as Butler calls it, "a failure to recognize" true bisexuality. This is also evident with Clarissa Dalloway who many assume is a closeted lesbian rather than a bisexual, but both Orlando and Clarissa do not fit into neat definitions. Butler agrees that there are more possibilities, such as: "the lesbian femme who refuses men, the masculine gay man who challenges the presumptions of heterosexuality; and a variety of other figures whose characterizations by conventional notions of femininity and masculinity are confounded by their manifest complexity" (110). Orlando and Clarissa are too complex to be put into one category or another. Although Orlando always loves Sasha and Clarissa always loves Sally, they do not "sustain gay" positions throughout. As Butler

notes, sometimes Orlando is a “feminine lesbian,” sometimes she is a “butch-femme”. Clarissa always appears feminine, but that is not necessarily how she feels. Both embody this “manifest complexity” successfully.

Butler continues to argue that, “even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution (which will become a question), there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two” (8-9). This is true of Orlando and Clarissa because they do not desire one sex or the other; they desire both simultaneously. “The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it” (Butler 8-9). Orlando’s gender mirrors her sex, and both her sex and gender change. “When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice,” (Butler 8-9) Orlando’s gender is not independent of her sex, and neither is Clarissa’s. Whatever gender Orlando dresses as reflects her sex, even when she cross-dresses. When she is anatomically a woman, and she dresses as a man, her anatomy is manly. She may not physically have a penis, but she can use a pretend one, and become a male, or she can consider her clitoris her phallus. “With the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one” (Butler 8-9), gender embodies unlimited possibilities. Therefore just because Orlando looks like a woman does not mean she truly is one.

Butler understands that there does not only need to be two categories for sex; male/female, straight/ gay. She also notes that gender and sex are two different things. When Orlando is a young man in the beginning of the novel, his anatomical sex is masculine and his gender is masculine. Although Orlando may seem feminine as a man, he never sexually engages with

other men. When Orlando is a woman, her anatomical sex is female yet she sometimes disguises her gender in male clothing. As Butler reiterates, “gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one.” In *Clarissa Dalloway*’s case gender is not so ambiguous. Clarissa always appears in dresses and fancy hats which are the common fashions of her time for women.

Butler also asks, “does masquerade construct femininity as the reflection of the Phallus in order to disguise bisexual possibilities that otherwise might disrupt the seamless construction of a heterosexual femininity” (10-1)? In Orlando and Clarissa’s cases, yes. Once Orlando becomes a woman she must wear women’s clothing to disguise her true thoughts and feelings, which are manly. In her mind, she still has a male phallus, and to disguise this bisexuality she masks herself in appropriate attire. Likewise, in a similar attempt to cover or disguise, Clarissa always dresses as a respectable lady; although in her mind she does not only want a phallus, she has one, her clitoris, and with it she desires Sally.

Butler quotes Newton’s writing on “Drag” in her work. Newton argues that, “appearance is an illusion.” He personifies “Drag” which 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” (Butler 186). If “appearance is an illusion” then when Orlando appears as a man, he is a woman inside, and when Orlando appears as a woman, he is a man inside. This statement is only partially true. When Orlando is a man, he is a man both inside and outside. Prior to becoming a woman, Orlando never thinks like a woman or desires to be one, rather he gets quite frustrated at the female sex, especially after Sasha leaves him. As a woman, however, Orlando

does play with appearance and illusion because it works to her advantage to cross-dress. When she anatomically becomes a woman, inside her mind she still thinks like a man. When she cross-dresses as a man, she shows her inside, her manly thinking, can correspond to her exterior, her manly clothes.

Butler further writes that, “we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimension of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance” (187). For Orlando all of these categories are bisexual. Her anatomical sex is both male and female. Her gender identity however is male, female, and cross. Her performance is also male and female. Clarissa Dalloway’s anatomy is always feminine and her gender identity is never questioned by those around her, yet when she kisses Sally, she performs as the opposite sex and admits she feels what men feel for women. Neither Orlando or Clarissa are gay because of these distinctions; they are bisexual. The fact that Orlando’s “anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance” are all in flux in a variety of way makes Orlando an extremely confusing character; however Orlando, like Clarissa does not seem to be confused about her sexuality. Orlando and Clarissa, as bisexuals, have endless possibilities at their disposal, but what is most amazing about them is that they can consider all those possibilities at once, embody them, and decide on them. They make their overwhelming situations plausible, unlike others around them.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf shows Clarissa as a woman with a clear conscience who knows what she wants. Through her friend Sally she explores the passion women can sexually have for one another, and through Peter Walsh and Richard she contemplates the heterosexual world. Woolf shows the confusion and the reality of what living with feelings for both sexes is like. The more choices you have, the harder it is to decide, but Clarissa does. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf portrays an array of male and female characters, all of whom are sexually

and romantically confused or unsatisfied. Central to the book are Clarissa herself and Sally Seton, but others such as Elizabeth, and Miss Kilman, Lady Bruton, Mrs. Bradshaw, and even Septimus Warren Smith are also sexually charged and unable to satisfy themselves due to society's constraints. Clarissa may feel passion and desire for Sally, but she also feels strongly towards Peter and Richard. This confusion and pain is what drives the characters to search for a solution that does not exist.

The novel starts out with Clarissa preparing to host a party. Immediately it becomes apparent that Elizabeth's friend and teacher Miss Kilman bothers Clarissa, Woolf writes:

Miss Kilman: had become one of those specters with which one battles in the night; one of those specters who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants; for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No. (12)

Clarissa's inability to connect with Miss Kilman is representative of her own inability to connect with her own lesbian desires. Clarissa does not even really know or understand what bothers her about Miss Kilman besides her differences in class. Clarissa feels jealous that her daughter Elizabeth is spending so much time with Miss Kilman, but she cannot pin point why. This confusion stems from her confusion as a bisexual. Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* writes about imaginary threats. "To identify with a sex is to stand in some relation to an imaginary threat, imaginary and forceful, forceful precisely because it is imaginary" (100). Kilman is an "imaginary threat" to Clarissa. She is "one of those specters with which one battles in the night", and that makes her threatening. As a true lesbian she reminds Clarissa of the tendencies she left behind when she married Richard.

Woolf goes on to show Clarissa's sexual confusion as she writes, "she could not resist something yielding to the charm of woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly"(31), showing Clarissa's desires for women. She continues, "and whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident- like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt" (31-2). In this passage Woolf shows that Clarissa is truly capable of being aroused by both sexes. She feels "what men feel" when she sees other women she is attracted to. Woolf, by calling this feelings "men's" shows society's constraint on sexuality. Clarissa is trained to feel her feelings towards women are manly, just as many scholars assume Orlando is a lesbian because she is attracted to her own sex.

Woolf goes on to describe Clarissa's feelings in the form of an orgasm as she writes, "a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion," in this she directly describes the action of one woman touching another's clitoris to sexually arouse it. When Woolf writes, "some pressure of rapture, which splits its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation" she refers to the moment when orgasm has been achieved and the woman is coming. The "gush" which Woolf refers to, is the fluid produced by a woman's vagina when she climaxes. Woolf continues, to describe the moment using flower imagery as she writes, "for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over –the moment" (32). The moment that is over is the orgasm. In writing "the close" Woolf refers to the contracting of the vagina as it orgasms and relaxes.

Similarly when Orlando is with Sasha, her Sally, he refers to her as a "gem" (35). Like a clitoris, a gem is a small, valuable object that women are attracted to. Woolf writes, "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. So the green flames seemed hidden in the emerald.” (35) This is very similar to the moment Clarissa experiences an orgasm with Sally. In watching Sasha, Orlando has this vision which is highly sexual and lesbionic. The clitoris is hidden on the body, like this emerald, and Orlando wishes to arouse it. Woolf also uses flowers in *Orlando* as sexual imagery like she does in *Mrs. Dalloway*. She states, “girls were roses, and their seasons were short as the flowers” (21). Flowers are representative of female genitalia and the “short season” can be seen as an orgasm. Paula Bennet in her article, “Critical Clitoridectomy: Female Imagery and Feminist Psychoanalytic Theory,” writes about the clitoris and its association with a flower or diamond as she states, “the little could also be great, the insignificant could be meaningful and valuable” (236). The clitoris is a very small object of great power and importance among women. Bennet goes on, “the clitoris is uniquely adapted to a sexual mission, being better supplied with nerve endings proportionate to its size than any other human body part, the penis included” (238). It is important to compare the penis and the clit because both are sources of arousal, however since two clitoris’ can not reproduce, the clit’s only function is, “pleasure... unlike the penis, which is also employed in reproduction and excretion, the clitoris has no reason beyond pleasure for being” (238). Bennett adds further, “investigating the clitoris’s effacement is therefore a passage into understanding the historical and theoretical suppression of women” (238-9). When Woolf writes that Clarissa, “felt the world come closer” from this clitoral arousing, she shows that what really excites Clarissa is female/female sex. The fact that she can feel the world move, she can feel she is alive when her clitoris is aroused, shows her sexual tendencies towards women are very powerful.

Bennett goes on to describe clitoral excitement as, “‘anticipatory’ sex— that is, the sexual leisure achieved through clitoral masturbation – is preferable to the so-called fulfilled sex of marital intercourse and vaginal penetration” (241). She adds, “The Language of Flowers has been Western culture’s language of women. Most specifically, it has been the language through which woman’s body...and women’s genitals have been represented and inscribed” (242). Georgia O’Keeffe, who was born only five years after Woolf, painted huge flowers that came to be known as representations of female genitalia. Like Woolf, O’Keefe too was a bisexual. Both artists show, “the clitoris, which becomes erect with stimulation, the bud, or little seed, is a spear; it is sheathed; it possesses a hood; it trembles and pulses; it is tender, soft, and white” (246), as an important facet to female sexuality. Gay Wachman in his essay, “Pink Icing and a Narrow Bed: Mrs. Dalloway and Lesbian History,” also mentions the importance of small objects as he notes “the precious stone recalls Clarissa’s wrapped up diamond which represents both her clitoris and her memory of romance (349). This is also evident in Orlando’s life long desires for Sasha, her gem. Sasha, like Sally, is Orlando’s constant “memory of romance”. Buds of flowers and precious stones such as a diamonds constantly remind Clarissa and Orlando of the women they first loved.

Bennett refers to “Judith Roof’s essay, “The Match in the Crocus: Representations of Lesbian Sexuality,” which begins with a quotation from *Mrs. Dalloway* in which Virginia Woolf struggles through a series of approximations to express what Roof calls the “unrepresentability” (102), of lesbian sexuality”(Bennett 251-2); she also highlights Woolf’s phrase, “in Woolf’s words, an ‘illumination, a match burning in a crocus, an inner meaning almost expressed’” (251-2) and agrees that flowers and small valuable objects represent female genitalia and that it is difficult to find language to do so. “Woolf’s difficulty in finding words for Clarissa Dalloway’s

desire, Roof argues, is a symptom of the “crisis“ that lesbian sexuality provokes,”(Bennett 251-2) because it is, “a system of representation which is reliant upon a symmetry, if not sameness, between the sexes“ (100). Because, “the lesbian does not desire the penis – the natural and visible complement to her own presumed lack – she threatens the schema on which “normative heterosexuality” is based (251-2). Clarissa and Orlando are sexually charged towards both men and women which makes their situations even more difficult and painful. According to Butler in *Bodies the Matter*, “heterosexuality does not have a monopoly on exclusionary logics” (Butler 12). Therefore Orlando and Clarissa, “can characterize and sustain gay and lesbian identity positions which constitute themselves through the production and repudiation of a heterosexual Other“ (Butler 112). True of both because they are bisexuals. They are not “normative heterosexuals“; instead they are the “heterosexual Other” because they desire men, but they also desire the “Other“ sex.

During the time when Woolf was writing it was very popular for women to live with other women or have sexual relationships with other women because women’s rights were a budding phenomenon. Woolf goes on to describe Clarissa’s relationship with Sally as she writes, “but all that evening she could not take her eyes off Sally. It was an extraordinary beauty of the kind she most admired, dark, large-eyed, with that quality which, since she hadn’t got in herself, she always envied” (33). Like Clarissa, many women in the early 1900’s wanted to be able to express themselves, but felt insecure or confused. “The relationship between Sally Seton and Clarissa Dalloway exemplifies the romantic friendships between women that were thriving at the turn of the century.” (Barrett 146) Woolf adds, “Sally’s power was amazing, her gift, her personality. There was her way with flowers, for instance“ (33). Clarissa looks up to Sally because she does not hide her desires. Woolf continues to describe the originality and pioneering

qualities of Sally as she writes, “Sally went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias – all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together – cut their heads off, and made them swim on top of water in bowls” (34). In this passage Woolf shows that Sally is unique. Not only does Sally enjoy flowers, as she does the clitoris, but she also enjoys them in a nontraditional way.

Clarissa’s return to comfort when she is presented with flowers is also seen, “after her hatred for Miss Kilman first flares up, she is soothed by the experience of the florist’s shop, ‘as if this beauty, this sent, this colour... were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up’” (13)(Littleton, 37). Here Jacob Littleton in his essay, “Mrs. Dalloway: Portrait of the Artists as a Middle-Aged Woman,” also emphasizes the sexual imagery that is associated with flowers by showing that flowers comfort Clarissa from her fears which she projects on Miss Kilman. Since Kilman represents Clarissa’s “imaginary threat” (Butler 100) Clarissa essentially punishes herself by letting her daughter spend time with Kilman. As Butler notes, “when the threat of punishment wielded by that prohibition is too great, it may be that we desire someone who will keep us from ever seeing the desire for which we are punishable” (100), Clarissa desires Sally, but feels punished by Kilman for not executing those desires, “and in attaching herself to Kilman, it may be that she effectively punishes herself in advance and, indeed, generates desire in and through and for that self-punishment” (100). Clarissa, as Elizabeth’s mother and the head of the household, could dismiss Kilman or restrict her daughter from seeing her, but she does not.

Sally and Clarissa clearly desire women, especially each other, yet both marry and lose touch. Clarissa feels, “the strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feelings for Sally. It was not like one’s feelings for a man” (34). Clarissa knows she desires Sally, but she also knows she desires Richard and Peter, though, “they spoke of marriage always

as a catastrophe” (34). Clarissa also seems content in her marriage and her lifestyle. The intensity that Clarissa feels for Sally and Peter overwhelms her, just as Sasha overwhelms Orlando, like a clitoral orgasm itself.

Wachman also notes that flowers are not only an integral part of Clarissa and Sally’s sexuality. He notes that in addition to Clarissa, Kilman and Lady Bruton receive flowers in the novel; however, Clarissa is the only one who embraces them. Barrett adds in her essay, “Unmasking Lesbian Passion: The Inverted World of Mrs. Dalloway”, that, “several critics note that Doris Kilman functions as Clarissa’s alter ego” (159), and, “Emily Jensen argues that Clarissa’s feelings for Doris Kilman reveal her self-destructive rejection of her own lesbianism” (159). Clarissa’s lack of eating is therefore representative of her lack of sexual fulfillment, whereas Kilman, “tries to sublimate her desire with food – ‘The pleasure of eating was almost the only pure pleasure left her’ (130)–the éclair she fingers and devours cannot compensate for losing Elizabeth” (160). Clarissa’s bisexuality, and ability to desire both the homosexual and heterosexual world makes her a more fully realized character, whereas Miss Kilman, as her name suggests, only wants women, which Woolf portrays as pathetic.

Gay Wachman feels the lesbians in the novel are repressed, “and at the novel’s heart Clarissa Dalloway stands, rigid and solitary beside her narrow bed, recreating her memories of lost lesbian desire” (349). I do not agree that Clarissa has lost her desire. She is more awake than ever when Sally arrives at the party, or even when Peter stops by in the morning. Clarissa on the other hand seems to embrace all her desires and then chooses the simple answer, Richard. Although Peter comes as a close rival to Sally in as far as Clarissa is not sure whom she desires more, Sally does ultimately seem to be the person Clarissa feels the most sexually drawn to. Woolf shows this as she writes, “then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing

a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down!” (35) Again, flowers are involved and the world seems to stop for Clarissa.

When Sally arrives at the party Woolf adds, “it was Sally Seton – the last person in the world one would have expected to marry a rich man and live in a large house near Manchester, the wild, the daring, the romantic Sally!” (72) On many levels the novel explores, “the tragedies of married life.” (77) Barrett states, “beginning with Evelyn Whitbread, while Hugh Whitbread maintains a ‘manly’, ‘perfectly upholstered body’(6), Evelyn suffers from ‘some internal ailment’(6) that suggests the toll marriage takes on the female body” (Barrett 152). She also shows that, a similar tragedy befalls Lady Bradshaw, the wife of Sir William Bradshaw” (Barrett 152). Lastly, “marriage can also be a catastrophe for men such as Septimus... Septimus is haunted by his love for his comrade Evans” (Barrett 152), “- and he sneers at heterosexual couples” (Barrett 153). Barrett emphasizes that marriage has not been the best choice for these characters, but that society guided them to feel initially that it was. For these characters such as the Whitbreads, the Bradshaws and the Smiths, marriage does seem detrimental, however Clarissa is not sick like they are. Barrett argues that this is because, “Septimus sees his homosexuality as a crime against nature, Clarissa accepts hers as a gift bestowed by nature in her wisdom” (157). This is due to the fact that Clarissa is not simply a lesbian, like, “a number of female characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* who live with other women in similar situations” (156). For example, “throughout Clarissa’s party, Ellie Henderson makes mental notes of everything to tell her companion, Edith (*MD* 169, 194)...as well as the relationship between Lady Bruton and Milly Brush.” (156) Instead Clarissa is a bisexual, who allows herself the best of both worlds. The same goes for Orlando who eventually does marry and has a child. Like Clarissa, Orlando

would not have married and reproduced if she did not want to. Also like Clarissa, Orlando has a healthy marriage and child, which further reiterates that these women are bisexuals not lesbians.

Clarissa realizes at her party that, “it was the girls she thought of, the young girls with their bare shoulders, she herself having always been a wisp of a creature, with her thin hair and meager profile” (168). Clarissa’s preoccupation at her party is constantly visible. When Sally enters the party she states, “I thrust myself in—without an invitation....” (171), also highly sexual. In a phallic gesture, Sally, thrusts herself through Clarissa’s doors, or vaginal lips. When Sally pushes herself into Clarissa’s party and life, Clarissa feels exuberated and scared. Sally represents a time and feeling in Clarissa’s life that Clarissa has let escape her. When Clarissa is with Sally her feeling and passions are so strong she cannot do anything other than kiss Sally and think of flowers. Sally, as the romantic idealist, tries to keep Clarissa in this state, “she still saw Clarissa all in white going about the house with her hands full of flowers” (188), but Sally must accept that this is lost. Clarissa as we know decided to marry Richard, not because society told her too, but because it was what she could emotionally handle given her desires for Peter and Sally. Both Sally and Peter represent a passion Clarissa feels is too much for her, just as Sasha and the Duke do for Orlando. Littleton adds, “she has changed so much that one of the central emotions of that time—her love of Sally—seems dead to her” (39). However, “the principle lines of force in her life are the rites of memory established at Bourton: her marriage, her love/ antagonism for Peter Walsh, her half-awareness of her love of women” (39). Clarissa shows, not just lesbian desires, or patriarchal constraints, but she also shows the confusion and chaos of desiring both sexes.

Bisexuality and androgyny can be linked in *Mrs. Dalloway* as in *Orlando*. Bisexuality becomes so confusing and ambiguous, it is a form of androgyny itself. Kaviola writes that,

“Woolf’s representations of androgyny are no exception. They are embedded in a web of associations among race, nation, sexuality, and class” (238). She goes on, “the value of idealized androgyny might lie, however paradoxically, in its ability to figure an egalitarian social ideal that remains contradicted by persistent social inequities – inequities that Woolf’s intermix may foreground but cannot change” (357). Kaviola shows androgyny as an ideal which in Clarissa’s case seems inaccurate. She is not sexless at all, rather she is very feminine, and although she desires women she stands beside her husband as the perfect hostess. For Clarissa, androgyny, similar to her bisexuality, is overwhelming and anxiety producing, not reassuring. Littleton also states that, “Woolf’s presentation of Clarissa Dalloway is itself subversive on many levels. By creating a viable heroine with many intellectual attributes ascribed solely to man, Woolf destabilizes gender boundaries“ (52). Clarissa, Sally and Miss Kilman are all conforming to the patriarchy even if they are not certain they want to. They push boundaries, but they do not push them to the point where they change society’s views. This is also true of Orlando who experiments with living with gypsies, and cross-dressing, but ultimately marries a member of the opposite sex.

Although Clarissa is a character with anxiety about her sexuality, she is more in control than most of the people in her life because she is in touch with her insecurities. She is aware that Kilman bothers her. She is aware that Sally and Peter over excite her. She is aware that Richard is boring, and yet she does her best to make herself happy and live a life that suits her. When scholars criticize her for not understanding Kilman, or not running off with Sally, they prove that they do not understand, what bisexuality means. Bennett continues, “other theorists, Johnson (1989) in particular, insist, female sexuality, like female pleasure, is multiply sited. It presents, therefore, multiple ways in which it can be constructed – as well as experienced – by individual

women” (Bennett, 238). Bisexuality is difficult for many feminist scholars to accept compared to lesbianism because it is not definitive and it includes men.

Woolf was not a lesbian; she was a married woman who openly also slept with women, like Georgia O’Keeffe and Frida Kahlo during her time. Confusion, androgyny, and ambiguity come to this novel from the duality of Clarissa’s desire, however meager her hostess position may seem, and however thin her bed may be, to understand everyone. Her strength as Martin points out in his article, “Sleeping Beauty in a Green Dress: Mrs. Dalloway and Fairy Tale configuration of Desire“, comes from her ability to not be “a passive princess” but rather, “an active queen, defending herself” (30) even against Sally.

Clarissa’s bisexuality is evident in her desires for Sally, Richard and Peter, whereas Orlando’s is physically evident in her sex change, and later her cross-dressing. Gilbert and Gubar in their article “Sex Changes”, “argue that this is the case for two interrelated reasons: the sexes battle because sex roles change, but, when the sexes battle, sex itself (that is, eroticism) changes” (768). When Orlando becomes a woman her erotic desires change. Prior scholars that have established Orlando as a lesbian argue that her eroticism does not change because she still prefers women, but they neglect to realize that she also chooses men. As a man, Orlando does not choose other men, but as a woman she enjoys both sexes, so Orlando’s sex change is the first proof that she is a bisexual. Gilbert and Gubar state, “the constructs, ‘female’ and ‘male’ are shaped by carrying cultural interpretations of anatomical distinctions between the sexes even while these arbitrary constructs are used to perpetuate cultural evaluations of such distinctions” (772). They explain, “when we ourselves use the words “woman” and “man”, “female” and “male”, “feminine” and “masculine”, we are always deploying what we, too, understand as

artificial, socially determined signifiers” (772). When Orlando changes sex she puts these “signifiers” into question. Since she is a bisexual she does not fit into one category or the other.

Clarissa Dalloway is a bisexual because she desires men and women, and Orlando is too; however, in creating Orlando, Woolf went a step further and not only made a character that is bisexual in desire, but also in physical anatomy. Gilbert and Gubar reference Derrida who, “added about such gender undecidability that ‘Man and woman change places. They exchange masks *ad infinitum*’ (111) ( Gilbert and Gubar 777). This is very true of Orlando who changes her dress several times, from a Renaissance man, to a Turkish ambassador, to a woman and finally to a cross-dresser. If “man and woman can change places and exchange masks *ad infinitum*”, than Orlando changes her place from a man to a woman, and in being able to do so she claims, “bisexuality- that is to say the location within oneself of the presence of both sexes”. Woolf shows this as she writes, “Orlando had become a woman – there was no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity“ (102). In this passage Woolf shows that Orlando is a bisexual through his/ her sex change. By embodying both sexes, and being able to think as both sexes Woolf creates an ideal character that proves mind and body can be two sexes simultaneously.

Woolf shows Orlando embrace bisexuality and the ability “to exchange masks *ad infinitum*” as she begins to acclimate to being a female as she writes, “she remembered how, as a young man, she has insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely appareled” (115). Orlando begins to regret such thoughts as she notes, ““now I shall have to pay in my own person for those desires,’ she reflected; ‘for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely appareled by nature“’ (115-6).

She realizes, “they can only attain these graces, without which they may enjoy none of the delights of life, by the most tedious discipline. There’s the hairdressing,’ she thought, ‘that alone will take an hour of my morning’” (115-6). When Orlando becomes a woman, she embodies femininity. She calls it a “tedious discipline” but she engages in it nonetheless.

Orlando’s bisexuality is also evident through her clothing. When she anatomically changes into a woman, Woolf shows the possibility to be bisexual in anatomy. When Orlando begins to cross-dress Woolf shows bisexuality in the mind, “unmasking gender performativity, on however deep a level, does not do away with gender or even gender identity“ (Martin 111). However it does have, “the potential of making “gender” less controlling” (Martin 111), therefore when Orlando begins to cross-dress she allows herself to control her gender. Gilbert and Gubar note these advantages in their article, “Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature“ stating, “women’s clothing is more closely connected with the pressures and oppressions of gender in part because women have far more to gain from the identification of costume with self or gender” (Gilbert and Gubar, 393). Orlando never dresses as a woman, when he is a man, which emphasizes Gilbert and Gubar’s point that men do not gain any advantages from pretending to be women. She does however benefit from dressing as a man when she is a woman because society is sexist, and men are taken more seriously.

According to Gilbert and Gubar, “Orlando’s metamorphosis is not a fall; it is simply a shift in fashion” (405). Orlando cross-dresses to be with female prostitutes and to be taken seriously when she voices her opinion. Woolf shows that as Orlando begins to wear female and male clothes, her personality adapts to how she is dressed. Woolf shows the influence of female clothing as she writes, “she was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little more vain, as women are, of her person” (138). Orlando realizes that, “the change of

clothes had, some philosophers will say, much to do with it...They change our view of the world and the world's view of us" (138). This shows that in dressing as a woman, Orlando becomes more feminine. Likewise, when Orlando wears trousers again, she reverts back to her manly ways. Her clothes dictate her behavior and her desires. Since she is able to do this fluidly, she shows she is comfortable as a bisexual, as Gilbert and Gubar note with, "Orlando, all is in flux" (405), and that "flux" is very positive.

Woolf goes on to emphasize the importance of clothes for Orlando as she writes, "thus, there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking" (138). Woolf demonstrates that Orlando's clothes control her mind. Woolf goes on, "so, having worn skirts for a considerable time, a certain change was visible in Orlando, which is to be found even in her face" (138). This shows that clothing molds character. If one wears skirts, they become feminine, if one wears pants, they become masculine. Orlando mixes the way she dresses and acts as Woolf notes, "for it was this mixture in her of man and woman, one being uppermost than the other, that often gave her conduct an unexpected turn" (139). As Orlando begins to turn in style it was, "Orlando herself that dictated her choice of a woman's dress and of a woman's sex (because) different though the sexes are, they intermix" (188) (Gilbert and Gubar 405). As a bisexual it is inevitable that Orlando's clothing is a mix of men's and women's. "Orlando rejoices in the flux and freedom of a society where there need be no uni-forms, for indeed (as is confusing nakedness and costume) Woolf remarks that Orlando's own 'form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman's grace'" (138) (Gilbert and Gubar 405). Orlando is advantaged because she is a bisexual. In being both sexes she is able to have the best of both worlds. When she wants to be a woman, she may and when she wants to be with women

she may, and it is clothes that allow her that freedom. She crosses society's boundaries, unlike conventional heterosexuals or lesbians. "Orlando has the best of both sexes in a happy multiform which she herself has chosen. And in accordance with this visionary multiplicity, she inhabits a world where almost anyone can change his or her sexual habits at any time" (Gilbert and Gubar 405-6), through other characters such as the Arch Duke/ Duchess change sexes, none do so with the same comfort as Orlando, just as women such as Ms. Kilman are not as strong as Clarissa.

As an androgynous, bisexual figure Orlando uses clothing to her advantage throughout her life. "Her androgyny and bi-sexuality are outwardly symbolized by her customary morning *habille*: a 'China robe of ambiguous gender'" (221). Boxwell in her essay, "(Dis)orienting Spectacle: The Politics of Orlando's Sapphic Camp" draws attention to Marjorie Garber's book *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, noting that, "orientalizing cross-dressing is 'the escape hatch' of repressed fantasies of polymorphous sexuality and multiple identity (321) (Boxwell, 319-20). Though Orlando settles on being a bisexual, when she first awakes as a woman, she has a lot to learn. In initially choosing to dress in a genderless robe, she immediately uses clothing to her advantage. As the novel progresses she takes on feminine qualities by wearing feminine clothes. When she realizes she still desires women she begins to cross-dress. All these situations require Orlando to manipulate clothes to her advantage. "Woolf has an acute understanding of clothing as a semiotic system: 'Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath'" (188) (Boxwell, 319-20). Orlando's clothes hide her anatomy.

Garber's book adds that, "cross-dressers have no interests in changing their bodies" (Garber 129). This is true of Orlando. Orlando desires women for their female body parts. She enjoys stimulating the female clitoris, just like Clarissa Dalloway. She also, like Clarissa, enjoys

male bodies because she marries a man and conceives a child. Woolf proves this of Orlando as she asks Shel, “Can it be possible you’re not a woman? And then they must put it to the proof without more ado” (189). This “proof” that Orlando and Shel must engage in is intercourse. They must have intercourse in order to see each other’s anatomy, and prove they are opposite sexes because their gender is ambiguous. Garber continues, “gender here resides in the imaginary, and the symbolic, like Orlando’s Turkish trousers” (Garber 134-5), Orlando’s gender is imaginary and symbolic because she is in control of it. Again referring to Butler who states, “to identify with a sex is to stand in some relation to an imaginary threat, imaginary and forceful, forceful precisely because it is imaginary” (Butler 100), Orlando’s cross-dressing is frightening because it is an imaginary construct of her gender. She had the power to imagine herself as whatever gender she may choose. Since she physically has been both genders, and her mind has the ability to think as both genders, her clothing is a symbol of her mental state, as Garber concludes, like Boxwell that, “clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath” (Garber 134-5). Orlando’s cross-dressing is original and necessary for Orlando to be in harmony. Woolf notes, “Orlando, it seemed, had a faith of her own” (128). This “faith,” is a faith in her bisexuality and cross-dressing motif. This “faith” is also her confidence to know what sex she wants and when, like Clarissa Dalloway.

Woolf continues to support the need for clothing to help Orlando define her bisexuality as she writes, “different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above” (139). Woolf shows that Orlando is comfortable in men’s and women’s clothes, which is a projection of her comfort with her own bisexuality. Woolf continues, “for her sex changed far more frequently than those

who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive nor can there be any doubt that she reaped a twofold harvest by this device" (161). Many heterosexuals would be uncomfortable switching into clothing of the opposite sex. Likewise, homosexuals do not enjoy dressing as both sexes. For Orlando however, "the pleasures of life was increased and its experiences multiplied. From the probity of breeches she turned to the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally" (161). This is because she is a bisexual. She is not a lesbian, or an androgynous figure who is sexless. She is both sexes, and she loves it.

According to Lisa Carstens in her article, "The Science of Sex and the Art of Self Materializing in Orlando", "between 1880 and 1910, the reproductive sciences, sexology, and psychoanalysis all accepted and developed variants of the theory that bodies are bisexually constituted"(40). This helps readers understand where Woolf's ideas in *A Room of One's Own* where coming from when she wrote "there are two selves in the mind corresponding to the two selves in the body" (98). Carstens notes, "Woolf's imaginative development of this idea in *Orlando* confirms that she takes the narrator's explanation quite literally: she does not imply that the body is a neutral site that can be performed as a man or a woman, and certainly not at will;" (40) Carstens adds that Woolf, "implies that the mind is male and female, and that the body performs differently depending on which sexual mode demands expression and how historical conditions pressure particular gendered performances" (40). *Orlando* is direct proof of this. Orlando's sexuality is reflected of each historical time period he/ she lives in. When she cross-dresses and marries, she does so because society gives her that outlet. She falls to the ground in the Victorian period when women had no choice but to marry, and claims to be a bride. In the Elizabethan period however, he remains single, because as a man, society does not force him to take a wife. Historical conditions pressure his/ her gender performance throughout the novel.

When Orlando does eventually marry and have a child, she is living in the Modernist Era where androgyny is the style for women, thus she appears androgynous. As Carstens concludes, “Woolf argues that to be an artist “one must be woman-manly or man-womanly” (104). Orlando is not man nor woman so much as an artist, where artist is both – which is to say that the artist is profoundly bi-sexed, “bi-selfed,” self-different” (41). Orlando, through out the novel has been working on his/ her poem “The Oak Tree” and not until she enters the Modern Era is her poem accepted for publication. Through Orlando’s poem “The Oak Tree” and Clarissa’s party, Woolf proves that bisexuality is necessary in the development of all female artists.

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