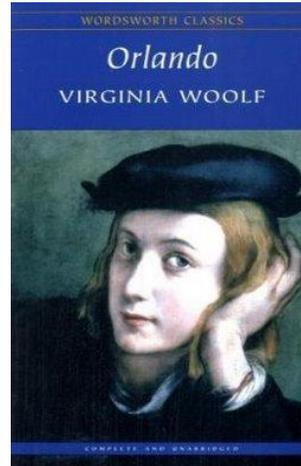


## Lesbian Writers : *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf



*“The difference between the sexes is happily one of great profundity.”*

*- Virginia Woolf*

When one thinks about lesbian literature, many writers’ names come to mind: Gertrude Strain, Djuna Barnes, Jane Rule, Isabel Miller, Dorothy Allison, etc. However, one of the writers who has influenced lesbian literature the most is British novelist, Adeline Virginia Woolf.

Born in 1882, Virginia Woolf wrote many literary pieces treating lesbianism in different ways. *Orlando* (1928), one of Woolf’s classic novels, is a semi-biographical novel inspired by her lesbian adventure with Vita Sackville. Considered the most important book of homosexual literature, *Orlando* is the story of a young Englishman named Orlando who does not want to grow old. He falls in love with the queen and after her death he systematically feels affection for another woman, the Princess of Russia. This love story represents the relationship of Woolf’s ex-lover, Vita Sackville with Violet Trefusis, an English lesbian writer. When the Princess of Russia returns to her country,

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Orlando is left alone. Later on, he is sent to Constantinople as British ambassador and during the night, he transformed into a woman. Following this, Orlando realizes what are the pros and also the cons of becoming a woman. The story's timeline changes through the novel from the Elizabethan period to the Victorian period.



*Orlando* cannot be defined as a fantastic novel. It is a reflection on the human being and this is what makes it a modern novel. There is also a strong influence from the Romantic Movement. There are numerous nature descriptions as well as reflections on the world's delusions. Orlando's life is divided into fame and and also by loneliness. Such oppositions are similar to those that characterized the life of Virginia Woolf. Like Woolf, Orlando is under pressure because of the literary society and he finally decides to desert is ancient life.

Finally, it is not a surprise that *Orlando* became an important novel in women's literature. The reader is constantly aware of the quality of Virginia Woolf's writing as well as her delicateness in transporting the reader through different centuries. Even with its fine writing, *Orlando* is accessible for all kind of readers and this is another example that shows Woolf's talent and capacity to represent humanly gender differences in modern society.

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