

THE ANALYSIS OF ARTISTIC FEATURES OF THE NOVEL “ORLANDO” BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

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Annotation. This article analyses artistic features of the novel “Orlando” by Virginia Woolf and shows gender characteristics of the work. The manifestation of gender characteristics in the novel is one of the most important artistic features of the work. The gender aspect of the novel is an important element of the artistic structure of the text. W. Woolf explores the nature of masculinity and femininity through the unusual character of the main character. Through the method of changing gender stereotypes, W. Wolff tried to prove that there are no clear boundaries between male and female qualities.

Key words: biographical novel, artistic feature, artistic structure, literary style, literary technique, androgynous, Orlando, masculinity and femininity characters.

The end of each novel did not bring satisfaction and relief to Woolf, but caused even more nervous anxiety. Only the novel “Orlando” was an exception (“Orlando”, 1928). This is partly due to the fact that the novel was conceived as a “declaration of love” for Vita Sackville-West, an aristocrat from an old English family [5]. In the novel, Woolf completely destroys the reader’s perception of the reality of the events he describes. He deliberately emphasizes that we are not looking at real people, but at a changing and unique reality, not at imaginary characters, but at the imaginary space of an artistic text. Here, Woolf’s focus is not only on the material, but also on the artistic process itself. The narrator acts as the translator of the novel, and the interpretation is embedded in the work itself. The novelist stops her story every

minute, as if she is taking a breath. He is not averse to talking to the reader and explaining the rules by which she works. Woolf breaks down her text and shows how it was created, her focus on the creative process. Sometimes the material itself recedes into the background and does not interest the author, for example, in the fourth chapter of the novel: “and while he is driving, we take the opportunity (because the landscape outside the window is an ordinary English landscape that does not need descriptions) and during the story here and we draw the reader’s detailed attention to several of our writings there”[6]

The process of creating a work of fiction and Woolf’s least favorite work, the Biography novel, come to the fore as themes of Orlando. In her earlier works, the writer neglected the technique of biographical narration. Now she incorporates them into her text and plays with irony, exposing their conventionality. Orlando tells us how a biographical novel is written, or rather, how a narrator cannot write it. The mechanisms and methods of creating such a novel do not work at all. With their help, it is impossible to tell about a person’s life and personality, because the narrator tells us at the beginning of the story: “If we look at this forehead and these eyes and a thousand unpleasant things that every self-respecting biographer needs we will have to admit”[6]. For Woolf, the techniques of biographical prose and traditional plot composition paradoxically do not work where they could. For example, almost nothing is said about the Constantinople period of Orlando’s life, although we are told that it was very eventful. Any biographer in Woolf’s shoes would have bombarded us with dozens of adventure stories — but he cheats the reader’s expectations. Facts and events are never the main material and are not mandatory for the presentation, because they do not bring us closer to understanding the character. Dissecting and destroying the biographical method, exposing its fictionality is carried out in different ways in the novel. First of all, Biography always claims to be true, and this contradicts the fictional plot on which the novel is based.

After all, the reader will never believe that he can live three hundred years and even change his gender from male to female in a dream, as in the novel “Orlando”.

Furthermore, the text that Virginia Woolf herself points to us is riddled with mistakes and deliberately crude attempts to mystify the reader. The narrator links the actions of some historical characters to others, constantly distorting the most famous historical facts. And finally, deliberate coincidences look the most intelligent - for example, in the fourth chapter of the novel, Orlando, returning to his homeland, sees three famous English writers in the window of a coffee shop: Addison, Dryden and Pope. Dryden Pope died when he was only 12 years old - and in the novel they are all the same age.

In addition, famous writers are interpreted with suggestions from their works. According to this template, any novel in which historical figures appear is conventionally constructed, and Virginia Woolf draws on such methods, exposing them for their absurdity, their fantasy and convention. Biographical Prose techniques cease to work in Orlando, as they are combined here with the impressionistic techniques of Virginia Woolf’s earlier works. After the first few pages, it may seem that Woolf pits one method of narration (psychological Prose) against another (plot-biographical). The reader sees impressionistic sketches, perceives reality through Orlando’s eyes, and learns that Biography is not good. But there is a fundamental difference between the use of the impressionistic method in Orlando and Lady Dalloway. Even the most careful reading of the novel does not allow us to feel that we are immersed in the real changing world with which Mrs. Dalloway comes into contact. Playing with the technique of biographical prose, Virginia Woolf reveals her impressionistic method in the same way. Partly, the writer departs from her own artistic style and satirizes herself. In the middle of the second chapter, like a critic or a philosopher, she tells the reader about the relativity of the perception of time and space, and does not apply it so much as interpret it.

In the novels ‘Jacob’s Room’, ‘Mrs. Dalloway’, ‘To the Lighthouse’, the world presented in the perception of the character is constantly changing; feelings develop, flow together, but never become an idea, a concept: otherwise we lose the essence of disembodied energy. In ‘Orlando’, the character experiences emotions, but they always lead him to an idea, a concept, or even a simple music video. Sometimes Virginia Woolf completely destroys the method by expressing an idea, and then ‘reveals’ its emotional background. In the novel Orlando, you can find other ways to reveal the mechanisms of impressionistic prose (for example, in the third chapter, Virginia Woolf’s favorite technique is played - the perception of the hero by several characters).

‘Orlando’ is the place where the exciting play of literature takes place, and therefore, despite the obvious lack of unity, it is completely homogeneous. However, this game is more complicated than it seems at first glance. After all, Orlando’s life reflects the history of English literature with interest. Let us remind you that Virginia Woolf was not only the greatest writer, but also one of the most influential critics of her time, leaving many articles and essays[1]. And in ‘Orlando’ he plays with irony the methods of critical analysis that he developed. Virginia Woolf has always been against the scientific analysis of a work of art, which ‘measures’ it, divides it into components, destroys its organic integrity, mystery. In most of her essays, Virginia Woolf tried to feel this unique mystery and to attract the reader to it. His attention is always focused not on the artistic matter, but on the intonation of the artist analyzed by him, on some external insignificant details that the reader may not notice[2]. Woolf’s essays force us to dive into the core of the work, beyond the linguistic markers that separate us from its ‘soul’.

In Orlando, of course, there is a principle of the work of the essayist that we have described [3]. Literature does not give us historical or scientific information about each literary period, but gives us the opportunity to feel its spirit, to look at it as if the reader lived. We are first told about how people perceived the world around

them. Everyday reality passes through the mind of Orlando, who lives in different eras. Therefore, what he sees and how he sees it reflects the spirit of the art of the corresponding century. Elizabethan Orlando, like all art of that time, has the ability to distinguish all aspects of the world, to feel the fullness of every moment of life [4]. In the Baroque period, this feeling is filled with thoughts about the fragility of the bright forms of the external world, the imminence of death and decay, the irrational and mysterious forces that control the universe - themes that can easily be found in the poems of English metaphysical poets. A reader who has even the remotest idea about the cheerful and somewhat reckless morals of the Renaissance will immediately understand the changes that have happened to Orlando: the hero likes to arrange the interiors of his house and organizes luxurious parties. The artificial world of salons in which Orlando finds himself and the witty literature convey the atmosphere of the 18th century very clearly. And finally, the sense of obscuring the external forms of reality (romanticism), and then the supernatural primacy of the Victorian era allows the reader to feel the worldview of a person of the 19th century.

And yet “Orlando” is fundamentally different from Woolf’s main essays. Here the writer deliberately reveals the technique and style of her literary and critical works. The reader is shown the entire tool of the author’s analysis. We begin to realize that any interpretation is conditional, and Virginia Woolf encourages us to this conclusion, does not allow us to trust the narrator’s critical judgment.

Thus, in the first chapter of the novel, we learn that England at the end of the 16th century had a completely different climate to that of the 20th century: “It was Elizabethan; their morals were not the same as ours; well, poets too and climate and even vegetables. Everything was different. The weather itself, the cold and heat in summer and winter, were probably on completely different levels. The bright, loving day stood out from the night as clearly as the water from the land. The sunset was thicker and redder; the sunset was brighter and whiter” [6]. Of course, we are talking

here about people's worldview, perception of nature. And in a series of essays, Woolf uses a similar technique. But in this case, it is impossible not to notice the excessive categoricalness of the behavior. She seems to be telling us that her statement is false. The reader will never believe that the climate in England has really changed in three hundred years. The play of this technique is even more dramatic at the beginning of the novel's fifth chapter, where the narrator constantly reflects on the nineteenth century, influencing English life and worldview.

Let's note one more feature. In many of her essays, Woolf often comments on one or another author, limiting herself to analyzing some minor nuances and details. But the most surprising thing is that such an analysis leads her and her reader to understand the most important thing in the work of this author. In "Orlando" we find this technique, but Virginia Woolf again only reveals its mechanism. The narrator does not move from specific details to a general understanding of the literary period; on the contrary, having the most general "bookish" knowledge of a given period, she simply "selects" the necessary facts to suit the trends of that period. In the novel, you can also find it on a linguistic level. Woolf uses the language of different periods, in the relevant chapters he restores the characteristics of artistic speech, for example, Baroque authors, eighteenth-century prose writers or Jane Austen, whom he respected. He dissects their techniques, showing the reader that language is an unrealistic system. It's not about what to say, but how to say it, because form itself is important and can change the way we see the world. Only the person remains unchanged in the novel. Time and even the change of gender does not make it different. Orlando is forced to look at the world through the stereotypes of each era, but remains the same inside. His desire to break through the fence of linguistic signs to the truth and essence of life is conditioned by the need to feel their relativity. A brilliant literary play, started by Virginia Woolf in Orlando, aims to defend the idea of the inner freedom of man, because only he is given the opportunity to create and change the world. However, the pleasure of this carefree game will be short-lived.

In the novels of the 1930s, it is replaced by tragic intonations emphasizing the suffering of man and civilization.

The manifestation of gender characteristics in the novel is one of the most important artistic features of the work. The gender side of the novel can be explained by the fact that the work was conceived as a kind of “declaration of love” for Vita Sackville-West, an aristocrat from a very old family, whom W. Wolfe had been friends with for twenty years. It was the Vita, which was the prototype of the Orlando. The gender aspect of the novel is an important element of the artistic structure of the text. W. Woolf explores the nature of masculinity and femininity through the unusual character of the main character. She also came up with the idea of changing Orlando’s male gender to female, showing that most people, like the subject of the novel, are consciously androgynous, meaning they can combine male and female qualities. Through the method of changing gender stereotypes, W. Wolff tried to prove that there are no clear boundaries between male and female qualities. V. Woolf emphasizes that Orlando’s description of a person is more related to stereotypical female qualities.

In conclusion, W. Wolff’s novel “Orlando” is of direct interest from the point of view of the gender factor, because the artistic identity of W. Wolff’s novel “Orlando” is achieved due to the intersection of male and female characteristics in the character of the hero.

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