

## The Distorted Image of Male Identities in Virginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography (1928) and William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929)

الصورة المشوهة للهوية الذكورية في رواية فرجينيا وولف "اورلندو: سيرة" (1928) ورواية وليام فوكنر "الصخب و العنف" (1929)

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**Abstract:** This article tackles issues related to the representation of masculine identities in modernist literature, in addition to this, it investigates the subversive forms which impede male protagonists from improving their masculine role, identity and presence in society. In Virginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography (1928), her selected protagonist Orlando often appears with clear androgynous qualities. Such qualities exist to subvert the originated masculine identity. In addition to this novel, in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929), the selected male character Benjy is portrayed as a childish man who never grows up. This kind of portrayal does determine Benjy's masculine loss, sufferance and ambiguity as well. In both selected works, male protagonists are portrayed as less masculine men due to the characterized forces of gender identity subversion. Therefore, the main aim behind this article is to emphasize the undergone struggle of those male protagonists to ensure their masculine resistance on behalf of such subversive conditions.

**Keywords:** identity, gender role; males; men's performance; masculinity; subversion.

**المخلص:** هذا المقال يعالج مسائل متعلقة بتقديم الهوية الذكورية في الأدب المعاصر. بالإضافة إلى هذا، يحقق في الكشف عن الأشكال التخريبية التي تعيق الشخصيات الذكورية من تحسين أدوارهم الرجولية، هوياتهم وحضورهم في المجتمع. في رواية فرجينيا وولف "اورلندو: سيرة" (1928)، الشخصية الذكورية المنتقاة "اورلندو" عادة ما يظهر بصفات مخنثة واضحة. هذه الصفات تؤدي بشكل كبير، إلى تخريب هويته المتأصلة. بالإضافة إلى هذه الرواية، في رواية وليام فوكنر "الصخب و العنف" (1929)، الشخصية الذكورية المنتقاة "بانجي" مصور كالطفل الرجل الذي لا يستطيع النمو. هذا النوع من التصور عادة ما يقر الضياع، المعاناة والغموض الذي يعاني منه "بانجي" كشخصية ذكورية. في كلا الروايتين، الشخصيات الذكورية المنتقاة تبدو أقل رجولة بسبب قوى التخريب الجندي. إذن، الغرض الأساسي من هذا المقال هو التأكيد على الكفاح القائم والرامي إلى تعزيز مبدأ المقاومة التي تهدم كل صورة تخريبية وراء الهوية الذكورية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الهوية، الأدوار الجنسانية، الرجال، الأداء الرجولي، الذكورة، الذكورة.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Aspects of gender and sex conditions have been clearly debated by Modernist authors. Those authors started to emphasize characters' and protagonists' gender identities by investigating their delivered masculine/feminine practices. These hierarchical practices might be affected by the newly asserted gender subversions. Hereby, the subversive forms of gender identities tend to reinforce the existing selections of gender roles being enacted by male and female characters. Undeniably, diverse forms of sex identification tend to support multiple gender identifications. As being already clarified, the sexual selections and gender variations are featured to indicate the masculine/feminine diversity of identity performance. The masculine/feminine performance could be chaotically supported or simply empowered by multiple sex/gender traits. These traits may exist to mislead the traditional forces of gender role enactment being strategically empowered by pure and originated masculine/feminine qualities.

In this regard, Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography* is characterized with different gender conditions. These gender conditions urged her to design other reconciliatory conditions between males/females under well-established gender traits. In fact, Woolf tried to introduce a new gender identity which exists beyond gender binary qualities. This identity combines both masculine and feminine traits under one unified gender body. This feminist choice may lead to distort the masculine presence of the protagonist by significant subversive forms. Moving to Faulkner's literary masterpiece *The Sound and the Fury*, his character Benjy appears to be a man with childish manners. This man would never grow up due to his severe mental/physical conditions. These conditions may clearly implicate his masculine identity. This identity, however, tends to be marked or simply characterized with a clear masculine loss.

## **2-Masculinities and Modes of Representation:**

### **2-1-The Masculine Identity as Being Distorted by Sexuality:**

In modernist literature, most feminist writers have employed diverse sex

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choices as a mean for exploring new feminine identities. This emerging trend of describing the feminine representation of the self does effectively convey critical imagination about the ultimate sense of destructing or modifying traditional femininities. Thus, female characters have been attracted with new gender roles in more sustainable manners as to ensure their hegemonic presence in that modern world. Indeed, women started to promote positive and similar roles to men simply to facilitate their essential needs for recovering true and sensitive womanhood <sup>(1)</sup>. This characteristic includes typical aspects of inherent dignity and limited responsibility for their reproduction of sexual behaviours. Hence, women's responsibilities are appropriately measured to include roles which lessen the burden for them. This means that women's traditional responsibilities of child-rearing and other household works should be achieved by harmonious participation of men simply to stimulate balanced structures in their reproductive roles. From this regard, women will have possible role-choices for social integration.

It is essential to remember that women felt less secure with the feminine aspects of the social practice. In fact, women started to encounter difficulties typically related to their gender and, as a result, they did not employ such feminine practices. Women's abilities to accept the social practices are totally confused by ensuring new statuses or roles that are different from the traditional ones but similar or typical to men's experienced roles (Chusmir, 1990). This could suggest that men who cannot strive to conform to standard masculine roles are easily competed with women as to locate themselves in a gender network. Cross and Bagilhole (2002) believe that women's masculinised femininity is the consequence of serious challenges to men's gender. They argue that women prefer jobs which facilitate the task for them to challenge men in their social positions. Importantly, a new type of masculinity is formed by those women who are very selective in their strategies to create the change or the difference. This feminine masculinity, thus, is limited by its available means just to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> This concept refers to the state of being women. Womanhood or womankind prescribes the general characteristics which express female consciousness. Women have been made to feel the conscious aspects of sympathy, tolerance, and forgiveness which are realistic to their valued principles. When women enact masculinised roles they surely lose their featured sense of womanhood.

women's negotiation processes for positioning themselves as "different women" who are typically similar to men (Bagilhole, 2002).

Similarly, (Barr, 1987) argues that women encounter different challenges related to their female gender roles. Women generally do embrace wide feminine qualities as a specific strategy to popularize their featured aspects of femaleness. Femaleness, by that, is a significant socio-cultural notion which relates women's values to the conventional aspects of femininity. For Barr, women have to employ varied feminine qualities which prove their comforted performance of different roles within society. Women's roles could be truly feminized if they are categorized, charged, or overloaded by varied aspects of femaleness. Rosalind Coward suggests that femininity is the established consequence of female-gender performances in valuable social contexts. Females have applied autonomous strategies in order to ensure their processed construction of feminine identity. By no means, femininity becomes reinforced by various aspects of femaleness as to deconstruct the patriarchal beliefs of the social structure. By constructing the feminine existence, it would be asserted that femaleness exists to struggle for the organized order of femininity in what can be schematized as a pure gender identity.

It could be evident that in most patriarchal societies, the process of applying equality between different gendered groups may principally affect the masculine existence. Men may experience certain frustrations which come to threaten their social existence. Thus, men who ascribe to traditional masculinities may be vulnerable to lose their masculine gender positions. In fact, women's intentions to ensure equal treatment may negatively affect men to be competed due to their prestigious positions. As Cross and Bagilhole (2002) have asserted, social inequalities attracted most feminist writers and critics to rectify women's roles. Women, thus, tended to cover, select, or simply choose masculine qualities as a primary need for settling legal and acceptable equalities. As a reaction to this feminist tendency, men started to practically reform their masculinities simply to ensure their proper male hegemony and eliminate all kinds of gender equalities as well. Connell (2001) believes that men/women have different experiences which

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could never put them in equal balances. Men's/women's roles do actually differ in accordance to their different participations in various social fields. Ultimately, gender inequality could be more considered as a creative experience rather than a legitimate entity.

Many sexologists and queer theorists do argue that any gender category can represent a typical sexuality especially when it is combined or influenced by those social classifications of gender distinction. By these distinctions, the degree of sexuality may overlap from one gender group to another. In addition, some gender categories could appear to be more influential than others. Gender awareness and sex consciousness tend to be reinforced and reinsured by the "performative" roles of those sexual groups (Heilbrun, 1973). By that, the valid sexual identity appears to be repressed or simply offended by other gender performers. Those performers often prefer to imitate the virtual "performativity" of the typical sex identity. In relation to that, the existing binary system of gender identities does naturalize gender exclusion for individuals who belong to indefinite sex category (Butler, 1990). In fact, individuals with ambiguous sex qualities appear to be easily excluded from any existing gender category. Those individuals are considered as sexual performers who typically refuse to belong to any gender identity. Some authors do employ this sexual freedom (which represents sex ambiguity) as a conceiving strategy that helps to dislocate gender markers, performers and characteristics.

Most notably, sex-gender features are selectively designed to locate re-gendered identities and diverse sexualities (Goldman, 2006). Thus, Woolf attempts to fuse diverse sexualities simply to validate, empower, and perpetuate particular gender categories. The manipulated text design does purposefully serve her sexual declaration and re-gendered identification. The sexualisation of characters can be varied and open to strategic text-changes. By that, her characters may appear to be re-gendered due to their ambiguous language selections. Those characters are unsure about their own gender identifications. This can widely interpret Woolf's feminist politics for gender dissolution, elimination, and deconstruction as well. Her textual establishment does not make the reader feel "secure" about the reconstructed sexuality. This reader has to refer

to various textual clues in order to understand or identify the biological sex of characters. In fact, the reader has to figure out the biological sex and gender identification from textual clues. Ultimately, Woolf has clearly constituted a coercive combination between language, text, and sex in order to ensure her decisive determinations for gender identity development and refreshment as well. These determinations indicate the existing sex choices being offered to feminize male characters. Woolf's newly designed gender roles are established to cover male and female gender roles with multiple sex choices. So, Woolf's sexual choices and gender determinations can extremely reflect her deeper intention to re-construct new gender roles being based on diverse sex qualities (Butler J. , 1990, 21).

Undeniably, authors' gender perspectives are characterized by the implicated force of narration. This narrative force comes to ensure or simply declare the gendered reference of the author. More clearly, authors' gendered identities could be directly stated or distorted throughout the characterized aspect of narration. Some queer theorists and gender analysts do clarify that authors who are deeply feminized by certain feminist ideologies insist on de-familiarizing gender identities. Those authors tend to highlight characters' ambiguous gender attitudes and sexualities. Sometimes, readers get confused about the ambiguous sexuality being ensured by the author. They start wondering whether the selected protagonist or character is identified as a male or a female. This confusion is, of course, created by authors simply to highlight the ambiguous gender identities. Those authors appear to be sexually confused, unknown, or unidentified due to their gender philosophies and sex ideologies. They mostly prefer to disturb the common gender structures by hiding or disguising their self-identities. Such disturbance can interpret their desires for deconstructing gender binaries and sex traditions (Burns, 1994).

As a result to this, readers' modes of interpretation may appear to be influenced by the implicated gender possibilities of the author. Certainly, the implied style of the author is reinforced by ambiguous gender pronouns which make readers schematically confuse between aspects of maleness and femaleness. Stressing Woolf's literary style, her narrative structure is

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characterized with the employed techniques of consciousness. Unsurprisingly, Woolf has employed techniques of consciousness just to make her protagonists spontaneously express their desires, inner attitudes, and cognitive reflections. In addition to this employment, she intentionally portrayed protagonists with mixed clothing items just to hide their typical identities. Woolf's narrative style is widely reinforced with confused gender features simply to make her protagonists sexually disfigured (unknown). This confusion is indicated by the employed gender pronouns and adjectives which all together constitute indeterminate gender selections. Indeed, Woolf's confused gender applications are designed to unify or simply diversify the human body with inappropriate sex references (Burns, 1994).

By that, Woolf has rebelled against the traditional gender distinction by presenting protagonists with bisexual or androgynous characteristics (Anna, 2003). Woolf's protagonists are portrayed with multiple gender qualities which purify their re-configured sexuality. Hence, her bisexual selections are clearly organized to create the link between masculinity and femininity. This correlated link between both aspects is rather harmonized to effectuate equality in gender distribution. So, equality in gender qualities does conceptualize features of similarity between maleness and femaleness. By aspects of bisexuality, Woolf tends to fuse these gendered aspects (maleness/femaleness) all together with deliberate feminine perpetuations. Both androgynous and bisexual characteristics are deeply connected or interrelated simply to introduce new ideological understandings about gender issues (Belsey, 1989). In this respect, Woolf's sexual classifications are overemphasized as to depict the newly designed gender roles. This sex classification is deeply based upon fused gender traits and qualities just to eliminate the traditional gender binary forms. In general, Woolf combines qualities of maleness and femaleness within well-unified androgynous bodies simply to eliminate the stereotypical gender distinction.

In addition, qualities of masculine/feminine attraction and gender influence are critically debated as to highlight the new tendency of gender subversion and sex liberation. Male/female protagonists are generally characterized with conflicting gender positions. Those protagonists are expected to ensure their

masculine/feminine traits via well-approved gender structures. In so many occasions, those protagonists feel obliged to re-direct their gender roles. Authors' narrative selections have been diversified to ensure the modernized sense behind gender politics. Authors' intentions to subvert gender roles are primarily supported by their featured modes of liberation. These modes of gender liberation are designed to effectuate particular qualities of subversion. Gender subversion, by that, does negatively influence men/women in performing adequate gender roles. Traditional forms of masculinity/femininity exist to be challenged by indecisive gender practices. Men, in particular, may attempt to maintain the newly designed masculine sense by depending on mixed gender traits. This gender mixture does critically falsify the actual practice behind masculinity. Ultimately, the challenged form of masculinity can greatly devalue men and their performed roles.

Consequently, the existing gender selections are based on diverse sex qualities which directly disorient the traditional gender categories. Butler further clarified that individuals often feel liberated whether to construct identities being based on codified gender categories or implement renewed gender selections. This mode of gender liberation is purified to indicate the decisive manners of individuals themselves. Butler further adds that traditional gender categories exist to be implicated by the confused set of renewed sexualities. Such sexual confusion can impede the purified roles of males/males due to its diversified selections. More particularly, the masculine man who has been traditionally equipped with valued practices appears to be confused, stressed, and frustrated about how to improve his male identity. This man can either reinforce his originated masculinity or simply re-direct it towards renewed gender applications. In masculinity studies, the modern man often re-directs his traditional practice of masculinity towards diversified sexualities. Such individualized selection does reinforce the civilized form or simply express the modernized image of males. This image does not ensure or theorize the originated sense behind masculinity. Rather, it extrapolates the sense of masculinity via applicable manners of disintegration (Badinter, E., 1992).



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### **2-1-1- The Fe/male Orlando:**

It should be clearly asserted that Woolf's literary selections tend to reinforce females' degrees of consciousness. This reinforcement is legitimized by valid sex/gender balances. More particularly, the literary portrayal of Orlando has been portrayed within deeper values and virtues. In relation, Woolf's writing style appears to be logically codified by different gender understandings. Hereby, male-authored products have fused the masculine identity with qualities of power and dominance whereas female-authored products have related femininity with more masculinised traits as to empower their gender positions. As an aspect of modernizing masculine/feminine attributes, Woolf has inserted additional gender forces to her selected protagonists. Orlando, For instance, appears to be attracted by other feminine qualities. In addition to this fe/male protagonist, there are other males who appear to be attracted by other feminized qualities. Indeed, male characters are qualified with feminized traits and female protagonists tend to be masculinised. In general, Woolf's protagonists are portrayed with mixed or indefinite gender identities. This allusive depiction is widely supported due to its validity in re-generating bisexual, dual or double identities.

Respectively, individuals often express their sexualities via different sex/gender combinations. Those individuals are free to design their sexual expression (Gardiner,J,K., 2005). Reinforcing these words, Woolf's fictional protagonists are mainly characterized with diverse sex qualities. Such diversity is clearly highlighted by Woolf as a vivid picture for expressing the sexual plurality. Orlando's bisexuality, for instance, reflects his/her coercive development of androgyny. This genuine sexuality is refreshed by various sex possibilities. Sex possibilities, variations, or pluralities are psychologically ensured for their gender liberation. Orlando who appears as an un-gendered protagonist is sexually liberated by diverse gender choices. Woolf employs bisexuality as a strategic feature for gender subversion, deconstruction, and confusion. This feature offers greater opportunities for sexual liberation with indeterminate gender references. The bisexual protagonist often represents his/her emotional and sexual attractions with valid features of intimacy. H/she does not express his/her sexual identity via violent perspectives. Rather, s/he

conveys his/her intimacy, sexuality, as well as attraction through supportive conditions. This can be clearly notified through Orlando who is sexually and emotionally respected and attracted by his/her close intimates.

Stressing Orlando's costumes, Woolf as many other feminist authors has implemented costumes in such a way which is totally different from male counterparts (Gilbert, 1980). Stressing Gilbert's words, this implementation is: **"in part because women's clothing is more closely connected with the pressures and oppressions of gender and in part because women have far more to gain from the identification of costume with self or gender."** (Gilbert, 1980: 16). Hence, Woolf does not employ costumes as things which restrict the self. Rather, she employs such body-designed costumes as features that re-shape the identity. This process of re-configuring the human identity is tolerated by its qualified sense for developing the inner self, body, and desire as well. Woolf, in particular, represents protagonists and characters with well-designed costumes simply to create the ameliorated capacity of gender identity. This amelioration is, certainly, restricted to body covering items, physical appearance, and other fashionable costumes. The valid combination between these elements is accepted by its assured development of gender identity. This could mean that Woolf's protagonist Orlando comes to re-assure his/her true gender identity by depending on such fused elements. In relation to the process of identity re-assurance, Orlando's cross-gender dressings do effectuate his/her gender shift and sex transformation.

From these perspectives, Woolf describes her protagonist's personal identity as a "project" that is shaped throughout his/her cross-dressing selections. This protagonist is identified as a "fe/male" whose identity is covered by mixed dressing items. Orlando's decisions about his/her gender capacities are related to diverse fashionable clothes which characterize his/her external body. Unsurprisingly, Orlando's indefinite gender identity appears to be reinforced by his/her bodily-dressed costumes. These dressed costumes exist to enlarge the developmental process of gender performance. Such performance does reflect the potential capacity of the fe/male for creating the desirable change. This fe/male protagonist has combined his/her mixed gender performance with diverse cross-

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dressing costumes simply to create or ensure the intended gender identity. Indeed, Orlando's femaleness appears to be fused with selective dressing costumes which exclusively purify his/her feminine sense. However, Orlando's masculinity is not appropriately expressed or flourished by his male covering costumes. Instead, this masculinity tends to be eliminated, shifted, or transformed by the newly organized feminine behaviours and dressing costumes.

Undeniably, Woolf has purposefully employed multiple cross-gender dressing items to validate her proper feminine design. She was extremely fascinated by clothes and fashion as key elements for providing the appropriate gender change. Orlando has been clearly qualified to be a fe/male due to his/her employed qualities of re-dressing. By depending on such qualities, the fe/male Orlando comes to prove his/her gender shift on behalf of his/her existing sex duality. This duality urges the protagonist to re-dress his/her body with diverse costumes. Such duality further appears to be gradually dissolved due to Orlando's gender-shifting attitudes. In this regard, his/her ability to create the sexual change tends to be fused with acceptable aspects of cross-dressings. Orlando's body appears to be dressed with male gender costumes, then, again re-dressed with female gender costumes. This combination reflects Orlando's ability of performing dual gender roles. Those roles are not combined or directed to process the progression in gender existence. Hereby, Orlando's gender shift may come to theorize or ensure his/her gender existence. His/her existence tends to be progressively effectuated by the operational mode of gender shift. This shift is, certainly, approved or designed by the featured qualities of cross-gender dressing.

Accordingly, men's attitudes to feminize their roles could be regarded either as a free selection or a conditioned obligation (Davis, 1997). This means that women's perceptual needs to re-design their roles could negatively impact men's positions. Feminists' intentions to improve their roles and positions urged to perturb men's hegemonic masculinities (Spender, 1984). By no means, the masculine existence could be necessarily threatened. Women's desires to imitate masculine models have undeniably affected men's thought as to enact, select, or perform feminine roles. Men, however, felt obliged to feminize their roles as to

accept women's conditions for gender shifts. From this perspective, men's feminized roles could, to some extent, subvert their masculine identities. Feminised masculinity, whether being intentionally feminized or determined to be feminized, may distort the hegemonic presence of most men. For Spender, the processed subversion of masculine identity has been primarily a feminist interest. Indeed, the varied expressions of femaleness have proved an excellent elimination of male participation. The feminized male could assert his limited performance of legitimate masculinity. Men's newly performed roles tend to subvert the traditional masculine identity. This subversive representation leads to distort the masculine identity due to the newly inserted feministic traits (Tylor, 1998).

In this vein, the acts (roles) being performed by Orlando do express his/her harmonic sense of androgyny. This androgynous harmony does not clearly reflect the correlative interaction between male and female behaviours. For Woolf, these androgynous behaviours are necessary for the subversive production of new gender qualities. Woolf, in most of her works, has clearly explored gender identities and the subversion of masculine/feminine roles throughout her expressive reinforcement of androgyny. By androgyny, Woolf aims to perpetuate the female identity and presence via mixing various gender qualities all together. Such mixture can create certain privileges for both sex categories (Rajchman, 1995). It can also elevate one particular gender category at the expense of the other. More clearly, Orlando's mixed performances widely explain Woolf's authorial determinations which are based on diverse sex selections. Throughout this model of androgyny, female authors' discourses tend to exhibit more feminine qualities with extra and valid privileges. Indeed, femaleness as a particular gender quality exists to be supported by different androgynous aspects which are positively perpetuated by the feminine authority.

Ultimately, androgyny is understood (according to Woolf) as a balanced shift in qualities rather than a balanced fusion between values. Indeed, her protagonist Orlando does not show his/her balanced performance between masculine and feminine qualities. Instead, s/he has clearly selected the other feminine category as a supportive mode to cope with different life conditions. So, the protagonist's

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androgynous mind is fully overloaded with feminine virtues which exist to liberate her body from the masculine traits. Thus, the mixed balance in gender qualities is partly achieved by the perpetuated quality of femininity. In addition, androgyny tends to be falsified by certain conceptualizations which determine gender shift from one category to another. Androgyny exists to combine both sex categories under one purified and fused body (Farwell, 1975). This androgynous combination has to be reported by the balanced shift from masculine to feminine qualities and from feminine to masculine qualities as well. By that, gender shift comes to be successfully represented by those fused values of both sexes. Such fusions should be correlated all together to produce one androgynous mind with equally-balanced male and female traits.

Further, such fusions do lead to create multiple sexualities and queer attitudes. In her famous book: "Introduction: Works on the Wild (e) side - Performing, Transgressing, Queering", Jane Goldman (1999) illustrates that most queer attitudes are paradoxically equipped with sincere moralities which largely make queer individuals survive without any kind of sex or gender degradation. Normalizing queer behaviours as an identical set of appropriate practices could underpin the actual sex quality (Goldman J. , 1999). She widely denotes that the act of normalizing queer behaviours and attitudes is in itself an effective method for re-activating the traditional gender capacities. By this enactment or enrichment of different gender identities, the functional process of sexuality turns to be positively re-affirmed. From these perspectives, individuals' queer performances would be accepted as normalized sex-abilities which successfully redefine their "shamed" practices. Goldman further explains that the process of queer degradation turns to be functionally validated due to those newly signified acceptances. In this sense, the queer identity comes to hold a new affirmative set of meanings. Butler (1990), in response, has deeply negotiated the queer practice by saying:

**It will have to remain that which is never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes. This also means that it will doubtless have to be yielded in favor of terms that do that political work**

**more effectively** (Butler J. , 1990, 21).

To more clarify, Orlando's gender shift from one sexual category to another may come to achieve his/her transgender quality which is organized on behalf of his/her bisexual identity. This identity is bisexually designed to correlate the protagonist's double enactments of diverse androgynous performances. In other words, Orlando is bisexually qualified to perform double or dual roles which ensure his/her diverse sex-selections. By these selections, the protagonist appears to be free in enacting various roles depending on the desired needs. More clearly, the bisexual identity reflects Orlando's sexual duality being represented either by particular androgynous selections or by other transgender qualities. Undeniably, s/he most of the time enacts indefinite sexual roles by insisting in the qualified aspect of bisexuality. Such quality does clearly represent the protagonist's free selections or transformations depending on his/her psychological and sexual desires. Hereby, Orlando may move from masculinity to femininity or from femininity to masculinity. S/he may also integrate both of these gender aspects throughout selected bisexual configurations. So, the protagonist's androgynous, transgender, bisexual, homosexual, or heterosexual qualities are defined by accurate dualities or sexualities which reflect the dual or the double attraction towards the "same" or "different" sex groups.

## **2-2- The Masculine Identity as Being Distorted by Disability:**

The existing combination between disability studies and literary criticism comes to redirect the issued social perceptions about disabled individuals (Kuusisto & Kuppers, 2007). The erroneous image about disabled characters tends to reflect the fallacious practice behind disability. The study about disability illustrates the effective participation of disabled individuals within the social life. This participation is ignored and eliminated by the strategic stereotypes which deeply characterize the social norms. Society's norms are implemented to reinforce and theorize the legitimate practice being performed by "normal" individuals. These "normalized" practices are prejudged by the ruling traditions of society. Kuusisto and Petra Kuppers further denote that literature often portrays the social reality and this reality is, in response, challenged by

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literature. Hence, the coercive fusion between society and literature is codified by the resulting perceptions behind the accurate practice. This practice being performed by individuals appears to be strictly transformed or simply reformed in literature due to the accurate perceptions behind it. By that, the critical literary frame exists to modify as well as purify the accurate practice and perception behind disabled characters.

In a related issue, it is essential for mentally impaired individuals to be provided with instructional trainings to better learn and acquire the socially needed skills. These skills help in ameliorating social behaviors, interactions, and participations as well. Appropriate social behaviors mostly indicate the purposeful strategy being developed by trainers for improving mental quality, action, and reaction. The neurological order of mentally impaired persons is designed by implicated cognitive schemes which definitely make the reasoning process approximately deficient. Most psychotherapists aim to improve the interactive acts of patients who suffer from severe mental disorders. This guidance is delivered as an essential strategy for reframing cognitive skills. By structuralizing adequate skills of personalization, the socialized relations between patients and their families could be based on meaningful and comprehensive interactions<sup>2</sup>. The gradual improvement of personal skills urges for proper social achievements. Social skill acquisition is the preferred vehicle for promoting a sense of belonging and acceptance as well (Waldron, 2006).

Hence, individuals who suffer from implicated sensory deficiencies do mostly show their organized engagement with diverse mental operations which practically refresh their impaired senses. These levels of engagement are carefully monitored simply to repair the productive process behind the organic senses. The reflective combination between the organic senses and mental processes leads to activate the strategic power of self-control. This quality of controlling diverse sensory acts is purified by the applied activity which directly

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<sup>2</sup> For different psychotherapists, the developed sense of self-perception leads to generate adequate cues of socialization. Mentally impaired individuals mostly have deficient cognitive frames of self-perceptions. If these schemes are appropriately developed by trained therapists, medical care instructors, and qualified family members, the social sense and quality of acceptance (of those mentally impaired individuals) will be highly elevated.

refreshes the cognitive process of self-assessment. Hereby, individuals may clearly depend on self-evaluation strategies that empower their processed qualities of sensory reproduction. Throughout these reproductive manners, individuals do clearly implement defensive strategies which help them to monitor their operational modes. In this respect, the sensory production is validated by the systematic coordination between the operational modes, the regenerated outcomes, and the monitoring conditions. These cognitive fusions are designed to ensure the accurate sensory productivity. This productivity comes to express the desirable manners of disabled individuals by extrapolating their sensory preferences, choices, and selections as well.

Likewise, physically impaired persons often attempt to create a possible world of similarities (Gronvik, 2011). This world should represent similar equalities and opportunities between all social participants. Such social equalities serve to effectuate the realistic sense of power relations. More clearly, dis/abled bodies should be equally treated, viewed, and evaluated. Impaired bodies often show reconciliatory manners towards their deficient systems of productivity. The functional mode of productivity is activated by personalized desires. Features of impairment are socially theorized as devalued codes of personalized inspirations. Deficient inspirations are codified by the impaired functions of body/brain system. Such impaired system fails in developing accurate practices. The featured aspect of impairment is about creating possibilities for people with disabilities to live as other social members. Those people, for Grönvik, have the right to decide for their lives as other “healthy” participants. To achieve this, the ideological meaning behind all disability modes has to be relatively changed. This change may create wider possibilities for obtaining secured styles of patterned lives.

The social construction of disability is theorized under severe conceptual perspectives which demonstrate the marginalized treatment of disabled persons (Noll & Terent, 2004). This aspect of marginalization is constituted to reflect the social negligence of individuals who suffer from severe types of disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have been socially and historically neglected or



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marginalized due to their deficient functioning systems<sup>3</sup>. These perceptions, for Noll and Trent, are recently revisited due to the positive role of disabled individuals within society. Such renewed conceptualizations are critically reviewed to reinsert disabled individuals within the accurate social practice. To some extent, those individuals with diverse disabilities have ensured their roles and positions with much appropriateness. This perfection or appropriateness behind disabled individuals is gradually indicated to normalize or validate their social positions. The process of normalizing individuals who suffer from severe disabilities is socially advocated. According to Noll and Trent, disabled individuals can clearly strengthen their social existence by applying or advocating adequate reformatory conditions.

Hereafter, most psychotherapists clarify that deformity (referring to disability) can occur in the early stages of childhood. This quality of deformity does not necessarily ensure the featured aspect of disability. To some extent, disabled bodies are severely deformed by occasional or eventual accidents which certainly impede their performed acts. In this sense, disability reflects the predefined feature of deformity. This feature may come to be physically marked due to the resulting outcomes being visibly traced. In this respect, features of chronic paresis, paralysis, or muscle imbalance are visible indicators of bodily-deformed organs. The deformed body is signified by illusive perturbations which directly affect the functioning system of cognitive productivity. Psychiatric disorder is a kind of mental illness which significantly causes distress or impairment. These qualities of mental disorder are systematically encoded by featured signs of deformation. Evidently, the disordered design of the mind reflects the predefined aspect of organic retardation. Body organs which are biologically deformed due to the retarded growth may urgently affect the psychiatric development. Ultimately, deformity is a medical concept which reflects the degree of deficiency that affects the systematic order of the body

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<sup>3</sup> Any kind of mental or physical disability reflects the deficient functioning system of various psychological, physiological, and biological operations. Such operational deficiency does certainly affect the human mind/body and often leads to disturb the systematic processes of organ functions.

(Reeve, 2002). This body is implicated by the existing confusion which asserts its characterized deformation.

Further, the human mind can be disempowered by diverse implicated features. These features are developed to create the state of disability. By that, disability is typically related to the dysfunctional mental operations. Mentally challenged characters are unable to schematize their perceptions due to particular mental implications. These implications are effectively conditioned by the deliberate aspects of disability. As being already clarified, aspects of disability come to interrupt, disturb, or disrupt the functioning system of the mind. Mentally disabled characters are critically disoriented due to their dysfunctional operations. The deficient mind can hardly process information or filter knowledge. Such difficulties are characterized to ensure aspects of madness, idiocy, and other types of mental disruption. Hereby, the painful aspect of madness can clearly impact the living experiences of characters. Those characters are definitely neglected or mistreated due to their featured deficiencies. Mentally disabled characters are challenged by diverse problematic conditions which may positively affect their virtualized and purified senses (Dolmage, 2013). These challenging conditions can typically re-orient the practice of disability towards acceptable directions.

In general, physically impaired characters are more tolerated due to the active mind which serves to control the whole system of the body. Hereby, characters who are physically disabled do gain the chance and power to refresh their perceptual frame. Those characters are glorified due to the controlling aspect of the brain. As being said, this brain tends to deliver the positive energy for body redevelopment. Thus, physical disability does not ensure the severe type of illness. Instead, it reflects the implicated physiological function which has been occasionally deficient. Deficient body organs may appear to be temporarily or permanently damaged due to the consequential conditions of sudden injuries, burn-accidents or malformations. Such deficiencies may, to some extent, affect the functioning style of the brain and frequently cause certain sequences of mental shock. However, doctors within the field of psychological therapy mostly work to develop the inner mind by assessing its cognitive abilities. Further,

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centers of medical rehabilitation exist to develop the psychological and physiological manner of physically impaired persons. Those centers do also work to help patients who suffer from autism, dyslexia, and other mental illnesses to better develop their cognitive abilities. Such medical support can provide positive results especially for individuals who have significant mental perturbations.

### **2-2-1-The Child-like Man Benjy:**

In Faulkner's novel, the main character Benjy has a deficient masculine identity. His characterized disabilities do strategically reinforce the process of masculine loss. Benjy is lost and mostly have perturbed cognitive senses. Such impaired senses can clearly mark his state of mental loss. By that, the character's mental disorder implicates his male traits and masculine qualifications. Unsurprisingly, Benjy's masculine nature would be threatened by the ensured feature of disability. Such disability exists to fortify the masculine failure. In fact, most of his male acts would not be elevated to be recognized as valid masculine performances. Rather, these acts reflect and symbolize his childish manners. This idiot child is not qualified enough to produce adequate male acts. The childish Benjy is mentally unaware and physically unable to perform appropriate male acts which seriously reflect his masculine nature. This nature is forcibly deconstructed, deformed, or simply distorted by the existing qualities of mental/physical disabilities. These forms of disability may help to threaten the originated nature of Benjy's masculinity. His pure masculine sense can simply denote the deep aspects of innocence, tolerance and fidelity. Such values are implicitly misallocated as to falsify the fact behind Benjy's masculine nature. Unfortunately, his masculine inspirations, values, and virtues exist to be misinterpreted due to the strategic qualities of disability.

Therefore, the selected character Benjy is portrayed with severe mental/physical disabilities. These disabilities do clearly devalue his masculine nature. Benjy is not considered as a man but rather as a child. This childish man is "lost" within a world of absurd realities. These realities urged him to re-act against such absurdities which negatively affect his realistic world. Benjy's masculine absurdity, for instance, works to assert his deficient male

performances. Such deficiencies often qualify him as a disabled man who cannot even control his behavioral manners or properly perform his daily duties. Benjy's abilities are definitely restricted due to his characterized mental and physical deficiencies. Further, these deficiencies may clearly deepen his mode of sufferance. This impaired man appears to be challenged by deficient conditions which dramatically misinterpret his masculine sense. In this regard, Benjy's challenging disabilities work to mark his masculine failure. This failure is asserted to indicate the absurd reality behind his male manners. Hereby, the absurd masculine sense of Benjy is featured to indicate the perturbed reality behind his existence. This existence is misunderstood due to the distorted mode of masculine practice (Gerschick, 2011). Consequently, the masculine performance of Benjy is decisively impeded by the ensured quality of disability.

In this regard, this "idiot" child cannot grow up. Such deficiency does widely indicate the failure for proving the self. The disabled man has been given a masculine sense which exists to be dissolved by diverse impairing conditions. Benjy cannot react to prove and improve the sense of self-being. Further, Benjy's characterized deficiencies have already marked his absence as a man. This character is not recognized as a conscious man who properly performs his social duties. This "child man" feels unable to defend for his male existence. Indeed, this child-like man can neither prove his maleness nor improve his masculinity. Benjy is a child and not a masculine man. He is not even considered as a "normal" man who perfectly behaves, reacts, or interacts with others. In relation to this, these negative characterizations help to deepen his childish sense. In fact, Benjy's childish manners and deficient communication do not work to elevate his masculine identity. By contrast, such negative qualifications do clearly classify him as a disabled child with severe mental/physical conditions. In this respect, disability conditions are featured to measure out the degree of deficiency. Effectively, these conditions are validated to measure out the existing failure which covers the masculine reality. This reality is distorted by diverse implicative forces as to diminish Benjy's senses for validating the masculine proficiency.

Moreover, the masculine force exists to be resolved, restricted, or simply

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distorted by the existing modes of disability. These modes work to limit his dignified male identity. As being stated, Benjy's male performances are not clearly established to determine his masculinity simply because these performances are characterized by clear childish manners. The limited or the absurd masculine qualities of this character are aesthetically theorized as to validate the emptiness of the male gender role. Such emptiness has been clearly reinforced by the strategic modes of disability. This could lead to mean that Benjy's childish manners, deficient language (the speechless talk), and the severe mental illness work all together to eliminate the existing masculine power. Indeed, his masculine power is clearly distorted by the stigmatized qualities of self-identification. Hence, Benjy is a child whose masculine characteristics can never be developed. This child cannot be considered as a "normal" man with humanized male conditions. Instead, he is considered as a "human dog" with unsupported behavioural manners. The social rejection of this "disabled" man may simply urge to marginalize his existence. In other words, his masculine rejection and marginalized identity are codified by the structuralized norms of society.

This society does not accept "individuals" with severe health problems. Hereby, disability conditions may clearly reinforce the social rejection of "individuals" whose restricted capacities devalue their sense of existence. Benjy's cognitive forces often help him to empower his existence and ameliorate his sense of existence. Effectively, this disabled man often activates his inner mind and schematize his perceptions as to properly locate himself in society. Such process of identity improvement is felt throughout his reactions and manners of interaction. This childish man cannot situate himself in society but can elevate his human sense of existence. Such elevation is marked by the resistive power of self-development. Stressing Faulkner's critical viewpoints, this "idiot child" is marginalized due to his impaired mentality and deficient body. This "child man" is struggling against the destiny as to prove and improve his sense of existence. In so many cases, he cannot correctly re-locate himself within society due to the determined force of rejection. Indeed, Benjy is not welcomed by "others" surrounding him. This handicapped man is not considered as a

“human being” but rather recognized as “an idiot child” who can never make a positive advance.

Undeniably, Benjy’s human dignity exists to be misinterpreted due to the conditional forces of disability. His masculine presence is simply eliminated or deconstructed. This child can never be elevated to be a man. By that, his male traits are trapped within enclosed features of childishness. These features indicate and assert his masculine absence. From these perspectives, masculinity in Faulkner’s novel is regarded as a deficient quality being implicitly and explicitly distorted. The idiot character’s masculinity is codified by deficient male attributes. Such state of deficiency is pre-determined by the assertive mode of disability. Hereby, the deficient masculine qualities are strictly related to the existing signs of disability. Accordingly, disability as a state of being (physical, mental or sensory) tends to denote the deficient performance behind male/female roles (Robillard, 1999). This kind of deficiency is not optional. Instead, it is overemphasized with certain difficulties related to the appropriate gender performance. In this regard, Benjy’s masculine deficiency is structuralized by the impeding qualities of disability. The impeding quality of disability leads to mark the deviant masculine role. As a result to this analysis, the child-man’s male performance is deviant from the standard masculine norms.

Such deviance is legitimized by the existing mode of disability. This mode urges Benjy to deviate from the proper masculine conditions. His deviance from the standard masculine norms is determined by the existing force of disability. This force has been perpetuated by the strategic features of idiocy, madness, and childishness. In fact, the idiot man’s masculine qualifications exist to be lost and trapped within these strategic forces. Therefore, features of “abnormality” and “disability” exist to devalue his masculine identity. This identity is characterized by the absurd male traits which strategically limit and restrict the masculine value. The existing abnormality which characterizes Benjy’s mind works to assert the stigmatized male act. Acts of stigmatization validate the masculine absurdity behind the performances being enacted by this childish man. His abnormal mental state is typically related to his dysfunctional mode of

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recognition. Such abnormality exists to design diverse modes of masculine perturbation. In this respect, the “performative” male acts of the idiot man are underlined by the declared qualities of mental abnormality and physical disability which all together indicate his masculine emptiness.

Throughout *Benjy*, it appears evident that Faulkner has purposefully portrayed masculinity with deficient characteristics. Such masculine deficiency tends to devalue the existing human values of the selected disabled man. This man often behaves with tolerance and wisdom. These characteristics reflect the true sense of the human behavior. *Benjy's* human values and virtues are strictly codified with improper mental/physical qualifications. Features of idiocy and mental disability work to misevaluate the human value of this child-like man. For Faulkner, *Benjy* is a “human dog” whose male characteristics are not socially tolerated. The social rejection of this handicapped character comes to denote the existing characteristic of human misidentification. Hence, the social failure of approving “the self” cannot be rectified by the humanistic values of *Benjy*. In other words, the true human sense of *Benjy* does not appear to legitimize his masculine conditions. These conditions are fortified with invalid features of mental retardation and physical disability. This idiot man exists to be socially marginalized and disqualified. Such kind of marginalization is reinforced by the author as a mean to prove the harshness behind the idiot man's behaviours. From critical perspectives, *Benjy's* human behaviours are misinterpreted due to his severe mental/physical illnesses. These negative qualifications do affect his healthy state but do not underline or determine his human inspirations.

Indeed, *Benjy's* healthy conditions may, to some extent, reflect his physical disabilities and cognitive perturbations. Further, his glorified human sense cannot be easily affected by the existing healthy conditions. The human value of remains perpetuated despite any type of health problem (Thomas, 2007). Hereby, *Benjy's* health cannot be asserted to devalue his humanistic manners. These manners are done to denote particular human inspirations being regenerated from “a human man” and not “a human dog”. In this regard, *Benjy's* idiocy does not eliminate his humanistic traits. In addition, it cannot validate or ensure his socialized marginalization. This childish man appears to be wise and intelligent. Such

characteristics are clearly illustrated throughout his narrated memories and nostalgias as well. The idiot child can easily remember memories of childhood with delivered modes of huge inspiration and profound faithfulness. This man does not have deficient human qualifications. Rather, these qualifications are intentionally implicated by the strategic forces of idiocy. By that, his masculine identity exists to be eliminated or simply deconstructed due to the implicative forces of idiocy. Benjy can never be recognized as a human man simply because his identity is fulfilled with clear animalistic traits. Unfortunately, these animalistic features tend to distort his masculine dignity and dislocate his humanistic sense.

Meanwhile, Faulkner's idiot character tends to have illogical, deformed, and mostly non-sensual perceptions (Cecil, 1982). This idiot man seems to severely struggle against his deficient mental inspirations just to re-validate and re-ensure his presence among his brothers. His mental deficiencies do lead to ensure his masculine deformation. This deformation is devoted to illustrate the existing failure behind the enacted male performances. These performances are supported by childish manners which clearly perpetuate features of idiocy and mental retardation. Benjy's struggle reflects his purified aspects of patience, tolerance as well as wisdom. From critical perspectives, these aspects do not denote his idiocy but rather reinforce his intellectual intelligence and mental capacities. Such capacities have been dramatically deformed as to ensure Benjy's mental/physical failure to prove and improve the self. Hereby, his mental deformations and physical disabilities portray the existing forces of power and strength. These forces are not legitimized by features of idiocy but rather purified and naturalized by those inner capacities and abilities as well. In this regard, Benjy who is explicitly characterized and portrayed as a handicapped man (child) appears to be implicitly empowered due to his humanistic values (Roggenbuck, 2005).

Furthermore, Benjy's implicit capacities and humanistic values tend to ensure a particular masculine nature. This masculine nature reinforces the dignified male performances being initially supported by wisdom, tolerance, and innocence. As a result, it should be asserted that Benjy's masculinity is



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aesthetically deformed by deficient performances. These deficient performances are not elevated to ensure his powerful masculine presence. The idiot man's masculine identity does represent two sides of male performances. The first side reflects his implicit power due to the cognitive forces and the perceptual senses whereas the second side reflects his explicit deficiency which practically denotes the existing type of physical disability. As a result to this, the idiot man's implicit sense of masculinity is completely different from his explicit sense of masculinity. Indeed, his masculine sense being explicitly deformed exists to be implicitly empowered. Effectively, Benjy's explicit male performances are deficiently implicated by features of idiocy, physical disability and mental retardation. His implicit masculine sense is rather validated by aspects of wisdom, dignity, and tolerance. However, such aspects do not clearly work to ensure the appropriate practice of masculinity. To large extent, Benjy's masculine identity is completely deformed by those explicit features of male deficiency.

From these dimensions, the idiot man's masculine identity tends to be severely threatened by unsupported deficiencies. Such deficiencies exist to determine his masculine loss. The absurd masculine conditions work to eliminate the proper presence and existence of Benjy. This elimination is marked by the existing failure to prove the self. Hereby, the failure to prove or improve the masculine self is legitimized by well-defined deficiencies. These deficiencies are highlighted by Faulkner to theorize the emptiness of the idiot man's mind. This demonstrated emptiness is measured by the severe qualities of madness. Such quality of madness can never represent the true sense of masculinity. This true sense of masculinity is surely validated by the implicit conditions of morality. Therefore, the masculine absurdity of the disabled man is qualified by definite forms of mental/physical deficiency. This absurdity is logically empowered by deformed male traits. Stressing Benjy's "childish" manners, his conscious desires for improving the masculine self are still functioning. In other words, he often makes efforts to ameliorate the deficient self. Benjy who is mentally and physically restricted by severe implicative forces does positively work to ensure the proper manner and behavior as well. Unfortunately, the severe

healthy conditions do widely impede him from re-assuring the proper masculine presence. In so many occasions, Benjy appears unable to re-establish the valid male identity being already distorted by strategic modes of deficiency.

### **3-CONCLUSION:**

As a conclusion, both of Orlando's and Benjy's masculine identities appear to be deformed by various forces of gender subversion. These forces have clearly affected their male presence. Stressing Orlando's masculine identity, his/her implemented sex choices urged him/her to effectuate the shift from masculine attributes to female attributes. This sexual shift was selectively implemented as to re-free his gender identity. Such form of freedom could be understood as a decisive manner to subvert his originated masculine presence. By that, Orlando's sexual selections urged him to definitely redirect his masculinity towards femininity. The feminine shape of Orlando helped to design his sexual transformations. These transformations have been based on androgynous determinations. Hereby, the pure masculine power exists to be overloaded with diverse sexual attractions. These multiple attractions could help to fortify her feminine side at the expense of the distorted masculine identity. Stressing Benjy's masculine identity, the existing features of idiocy and mental/physical disabilities work to determine his deformed male role. Benjy's masculinity was eliminated due to the declared mode of physical impairment and mental handicap. The severe force of disability urged to theorize his childish manners. Effectively, Benjy was considered as a child who never grows up. Indeed, he was not expected to be a man due to his childish manners and restricted Physical/mental abilities. These conditions have vividly ensured Benjy's masculine loss.

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