

Ethnography: Different Life and Customs in Orient and Occident in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

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Abstract—By clarifying ethnography, this paper demonstrates the cultural distinctions between Occidental and Oriental lifestyle and customs. In this way, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is investigated based on the theories of Edward Said (1935-2003), James Clifford (1945-) and Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) regarding cultural diversities between the Occident and the Orient. By using ethno-methodological and cultural theories, this paper focuses on the cultural diversities between 'Us' or West and 'Them' or East and the West's perspectives regarding its cultural strength in comparison to Orientals and 'Others' weakness and backwardness which leads to British authority and supremacy over the 'Others.' It also displays the prejudices of main character, Orlando regarding non-European people, land and traditions. Throughout the main character's travel to east, the paper indicates how Woolf compares and analyzes the different ways of Occidental male/female traveler's gazes and observations toward Oriental people, life, lands and culture. Consequently, it demonstrates the differences and comparisons between Occidental and Oriental lifestyle and custom by stating directly that the Oriental values and culture of East is the polar opposite with her motherland, Britain and it reveals how Woolf as an ethnographer and traveler maps the superiority of British people and culture in comparison to inferiority and weakness of oriental ones.

Index Terms—Ethnography, culture, different lifestyle, different custom, travel.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to show the cultural diversities between the Orient and the Occident through ethno-methodological and cultural studies. The origin of ethnography is tied to the requirements of British Empire and it is described as a system which distinguishes the diversities between the different cultures and societies. In this process, Ethnography culturally separates groups from each other based on distinctive characteristics such as history, class, habits and custom. Thus ethnic signs are dynamic and easily transported across ethnic cultures which are inseparable from setting and then diversities in settings indicate diversities in culture. These cultural diversities in European people's perspective are led to the representation of their superiority over non-European.

Different subjects such as ethnography, Orientalism and traveling can be found in Virginia Woolf's novels. Woolf and her family traveled to Turkey in 1906. She was fascinated by surrounding and was impressed by Turkish lifestyle and

custom. This travel influenced her thought, and she returned home on "the famous Orient Express" [1]. Woolf's friendship with Vita Sackville West (1892-1962), the aristocratic writer whose husband Harold Nicolson (1886-1968) was the ambassador in Turkey, helped her to become more familiar with the concepts of Orient and East. She experienced many travels inside and outside of her home, Britain. Through her travels, Woolf encounters different cultures and people. Her *encounter* with 'Other' shapes her idea towards their culture. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate Woolf, as a British woman ethnographer and traveler who indicates her devotion and love to her homeland, Britain.

Therefore, Woolf's journey to Turkey inspired her to write her autobiographical and ethnographical novel, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928, *O*). The novel portrays a male/female aristocrat's life and travels which begins in sixteenth century and ends in twentieth century. In this way, the main character, Orlando experiences various events such as falling in love with Russian princess, Sasha, traveling to Turkey as a British ambassador, metamorphosis in an Oriental land, living among distinct ethnic groups, experiencing different life, habits and customs and subsequently comes back to her motherland, England. Besides, *Orlando* occurs mostly in exotic spaces rather than in homeland. Furthermore, Woolf's vision of travel tradition makes her not only as a modernist novelist but also as an ethnographer and historian. Hence, this paper aims to show how Woolf, as a British woman traveler, believed the superiority of her own culture over the 'Others.'

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper ethnography and cultural differences in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* is discussed from ethno-methodological and cultural viewpoint. It shows these cultural diversities in Western people's perspective are led to the representation of their cultural superiority over non-Westerns and 'Others.' Clarifying different ethnographic traditions as well as demonstrating ethno-methodological and cultural studies is the prominent aspect of this paper. Edward W. Said in his book, *Orientalism* (1978) focuses on the cultural differences between West or the Occident and East or the Orient. He states, "[t]he world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident" [2]. In this regard Said quotes Henry Kissinger (1923-) who believes, "[t]he differences between cultures first as creating a battle front that separates them and second inviting the west to control contain and otherwise govern [...] the Other" [2]. Said suggests that a semiotic power of Orientalism would examine the different discourses of European that construct 'the Orient' as a unified geographical, political, cultural and racial region of the

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world. Then, it is essential for the West or the Occident to generalize the culture of Orientals or 'Others.' Hence, the Orient, the East or in another term 'Other' appears as "under humanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric and so forth," they are "reduced to considerably less than the eminence once seen in it" [2]. Occidentals believe that the 'Others' are subordinated intellectually to the west.

Moreover, culture as civilization, in its broad ethnographic sense, is complicated and includes knowledge, art, customs and any other abilities and habits. The focus of ethnography is on the structure and representation of culture. Hence it can be explained that ethnography is related to culture. Ethnography is the practice of anthropological investigation based on direct observation on people's life and customs but not only based upon the observations but also regarding the experiences thus it represents the organized explanation of other cultures. James Clifford, in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986), defines, "[e]thnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion" [3]. Therefore John D. Brewer (1951-) defines, "ethnography can produce universally valid knowledge by accurately capturing or representing the nature of the social world" [4]. The exact observation is one of the central tools of this consideration. In this manner ethnography concerns itself with recording the life and habits of persons from different societies and it emphasizes the differences rather than the oppositions. Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) in his book, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), explains what an ethnographer is encountered is "[a] multiplicity of a complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted in to one another, which are strange, irregular, and inexplicit" [5]. Consequently, ethnographers produce their own understanding of culture through what might be explained as the insider's point of view.

According to critics such as Edward Said, James Clifford, and Clifford Geertz who study different aspects of ethno-methodological and cultural studies, this paper concentrates on the concepts of ethnography and its related subjects. Along with such critics, Woolf, as a British woman ethnographer shows how occidentals believe that their civilization, values and culture are superior to oriental ones in *Orlando*.

III. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Demonstrating West/East and Occident/Orient dichotomies which are the result of Woolf's love and affection to her homeland, Britain in *Orlando* are the other aspects of this paper. Woolf as an experienced ethnographer tries to show the distinctions between West and East through the differentiations between their life, habits and customs. She observes and gazes at Oriental ways of life and customs. Furthermore she gazes at the foreign culture from her own Britishness. Woolf progressively through an androgynous experience depicts an Occidental male/female traveler's experiences in an Oriental country. Hence she shows the differences and comparisons between Oriental and Occidental lifestyle by stating directly that the Oriental values

and culture of Turkey is the polar opposite with her motherland, Britain. Woolf defines Oriental culture against its English counterparts. She shows how European people glorify the West as civilized and dishonor the East as uncivilized. She signifies the British people as ordered and structured in comparison to the other people and countries. She shows how the main character is proud of his noble heritage and the magnificence of imperial past. Woolf believes British race as the most ancient and cultured which is the greatest of all among the other races. Moreover, she indicates the British people and culture as a perfect and an ideal archetype in contrast to non-English people. In this sense, this paper reveals how Woolf as a British writer uses ethnic distinctions and cultural differences to stress the superiority of West over East in her novel.

A. Ethnography and Its Related Theories

Ethnography can be regarded as a kind of style of research that is distinguished by its objectives and goals which are to understand the activities of people in a setting. Therefore, style, figure of speech, setting, historical and social circumstances will be concerned as significant principles in ethnography. In this manner, Clifford Geertz defines ethnography as "establishing rapport, selecting information, transcribing text, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary" [5]. In the science of anthropology or in social-oriented anthropology, the tasks of researchers are to study ethnography. Then what an ethnographer is encountered with is collection of complicated structures that are superimposed into one another, which are strange, vague and irregular. Ethnographers study people's manner in everyday situation. Based on Brewer's idea, there are two kinds of definitions, one uses 'ethnography' as a synonym for qualitative research as a whole and depicts any method as ethnographic that "avoids surveys as the means of data collection this called big ethnography or ethnography-understand-as-the qualitative-method" [4]. Others define ethnography the same as "'field or field work' and this can be called 'little ethnography' or 'ethnography-understand-as- field work'" [4]. In this regard, ethnography can be considered as one special way of performing qualitative study. The aim of 'little ethnography' is to work scientifically on people in natural setting, and the research's task is to discover and clarify what people are doing in that setting by participating directly in it.

Brewer points out that ethnographic explanations are "partial, selective even autobiographical" [4]. Therefore the observation of the ethnographer is recorded based on selection and it provides a description of his/her beneficial view point. In this way, preliminary observation is essential. Regarding to this issue, the ethnographers are considered to be both scientists and those who are storytellers. They change from an observer who is sympathetically authoritative to a figure who is unflattering although often they represent the cultural and political prejudices of their own society. Consequently, the subject's capacity is to constitute the ethnographic object in order to be an indefinite self-objectification.

Furthermore, ethnographers can be considered as travelers among cultures. Leila Baradaran Jamili (1965-), regarding

travel writing, mentions, “[e]thnographers are the other group of travelers and travel writers” [6]. In this regard Clifford explains travel as the “practices of leaving ‘home’ to go to some ‘other’ place” [6]. Hence this other place refers to “abroad, exotic places or even pseudo-places” [6]. In this way, Said puts emphasis on the notion of travel books. He writes about travel books or guide books as texts that are natural as well as logical in their manner of composition. He continues, however, many travelers express their own experiences in new country and they explain their experience was not what they imagined, it means that it was not what those travel books supposed it would be. Authors of travel books arrange them in order to express that a country is like this or better, “[t]hat it is colorful, expensive, or interesting” [2]. What an Oriental ethnographer affirms regarding the Orient is hence to be understood as Edward William Lane’s (1801-1876) idea, “description obtained in one-way exchange; as they spoke and behaved, he observed and wrote down” [2].

B. Different Cultural Life and Customs in Orient and Occident in Woolf’s *Orlando*

Ethnography can be described as the process of participating “in the daily life of one’s hosts” though, making an exact record of their lives in the form of field observation which is recognized as “participant observation” [8]. One of the aspects which is investigated in ethnography is the way of life of a certain group. Therefore lifestyle differentiates between class and status of different cultures. Lifestyle concentrates on individual behaviors and these behaviors are learned through social relations. In *Orlando*, when Orlando encounters Russian princess, Sasha, he is fascinated by an Oriental female traveler. English Orlando, with his whole Occidental tendencies, begins to compare his/her own British culture to that of the ‘Other.’ Orlando’s encountering with Sasha leads him to experience different traditions and rituals which are totally in comparison with his own. Regarding this subject, Baradaran Jamili mentions, “Woolf reads the culture as ‘manuscript–foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries’” [6]. Therefore, Orlando obtains knowledge regarding Sasha’s way of life and begins to translate and decode it: “[o]bstacles there were and hardships to be overcome. She was determined to live in Russia, where there were frozen rivers and wild horses and men she said, who gashed each other’s throats open” [7]. By comparing and contrasting his culture with Sasha’s culture, Orlando understands the differentiations between “us” and “them.” He believes that the relationship between these two different worlds is the relationship of superiority. Then for Orlando the relationship between the Orient and the Occident is the Occidental superiority over Orientals. Orlando observes the Oriental life and practices as something inferior and lower to himself. According to Said, Occidentals believe, “Orientals lived in their world ‘we’ lived in ours” [2]. He observes Oriental behavior of Sasha in order to understand her culture. This kind of interpretation through encountering Oriental Sasha shapes Orlando’s Occidental mind regarding the way of Oriental lifestyles. Moreover Woolf portrays the Oriental way of life as barbarian, savage and uncivilized.

Sasha also, as an Oriental female traveler, observes and experiences the Occidental lifestyle:

Suddenly the princess would stamp her foot and cry, “take me away, I detest you English mob”, by which she meant the English court itself, she could stand it no longer it was full prying old women, she said, who stared in one’s face, and bumptious young men who trod on his one’s toes, they smelt bad, their dogs ran between her legs. It was like being in cage. In Russia they had rivers ten miles broad on which one could gallop six horses abreast all day long without meeting a soul [9].

She observes and gazes at Occidental ways of life. Sasha, as an Oriental traveler, cannot understand and decode Occidental lifestyles, therefore she cannot tolerate it. In this way, Baradaran Jamili argues, “[t]here is reciprocal interaction between the gazer and the gazee during which they encounter each other” [6]. Consequently, Woolf places the broken ice as the embodiment of the Occidental Orlando encountering with Sasha: “[h]e appeared to have an imperfect recollection of his past life. He would listen when people spoke of the great frost or the skating or the carnival, but he never gave any sign” [7]. In this manner, the historical aspects of London’s great frost resembles Orlando’s broken love affair with Oriental Sasha. Briggs argues:

An unforgettable vision of London and the River Thames in the grip of the Great Frost of 1608 which parallels the frozen passion that grips Orlando [...] it poses him as he and Sasha has sweep and swoop over the ice. As it thaws her love melts, carrying Sasha back to Muscovy and Orlando into the frenzy of grief [9].

Indeed, Orlando attempts to delete the cultural conflicts between himself and Russian princess, although his efforts are defeated because of distinctive cultural perspective between Orient and Occident. Even Orlando’s effort to display family heritage does not draw Sasha’s admiration but leads her to leave England.

Most of the definitions of *Orlando* are said based on Vita Sackville West’s travels to Turkey and Persia. Karen R. Lawrence (1949-) states, “Woolf draws relatively from her own trip to Trunkey in 1906, she relied on other writing by Sackville-West such as *Challenge, Passage to Teheran* and *Twelve Days*” [10]. Woolf’s experiences also obtained through her travels at home and overseas. Based on these expressions Woolf’s main focus moves toward Orientals and cultural differences between East and West. *Orlando* is a model of nomadic travel and finally a metaphor of travel. Orlando, as an Occidental traveler, encounters the ‘Other’ and seeks for the self. Throughout Orlando’s travel to east, Woolf compares and analyzes the different ways of Occidental male/female traveler’s gazes and observations toward Oriental people, life, lands and culture. In this regard, Occidental male travelers’ writing usually emphasizes the imperial enterprise. By changing a male traveler into a female traveler, Woolf portrays the different Occidental views toward Orientals. Additionally western women’s travelling

shows the binary opposition between Occidental male and female views toward Oriental lifestyle.

In the novel Orlando frustrated by the memory of Russian princess asks King Charles to send him to Constantinople. Hence He leaves for Turkey. Turkey, as an Oriental country, stands for the foreign, unfamiliar, exotic and the unknown. It is also a place for escaping from bewilderment and frustration as well as an imaginative land filled with opportunities that a person could ever long for. Orlando travels to change and modify his life, he can be considered as “[a] traveler who likes ‘to stay and dig in (for a time)’ in the host society” [6]. Moreover, Orlando’s travel from west to east is a sign of his/her desire to discover the comparisons of these two distinct worlds. In this sense Baradaran Jamili states, “Woolf like an ethnographer reads the Orient” [6]. She considers the East or the Orient as unknown mystery which should be encountered with its traditions, institutions and values to be understood. Orlando observes and gazes at the Oriental life and the details in Constantinople. He discovers the differences between the familiar and foreign. In short, Orlando crosses the cultural lines between Orient and Occident, he goes among Turks and “mingle with the crowd on the Galata Bridge; or stroll through the bazaars; or through aside his shoes and join the worshippers in the mosques” [7]. Orlando crosses the boundaries, encounters the ‘Other’ and as a British traveler obtains these privileges to observe the things not as they are represented but as truly they are. He as an Occidental traveler begins to interpret the different patterns of life of Orient which are in total contrast with his/her ideal home. According to Bhabha, “[t]he observer himself is a part of his observation [...], the total social fact must be appropriated from outside like a thing, but like a thing which comprises within itself the subjective understanding of indigenous” [11]. Therefore Orlando as an Occidental traveler is under the control and power of the scenes he sees. He investigates the manners and mores of the native people. He begins to evaluate and compare his own culture and lifestyle with the other culture. Then an inner challenge created with the culture, values and customs which Orlando has in his thought. Furthermore, Orlando realizes that his pattern of life is completely different from that of ‘Others.’ Baradaran Jamili believes, “Orlando gazes at the Orient, reads it, translates its culture and is influenced by it” [6]. In the novel, Woolf makes Orlando’s travel to turkey serve as a departure from Occidental values to Oriental values.

As a British ambassador in Constantinople, Orlando’s duty is to maintain the imperial order, although he is fascinated by Oriental culture. Moreover, he marries a gypsy woman Rosina Papita:

But at length they came upon a document of far greater significance. It was nothing less, indeed, than a deed of marriage, drawn up, signed, and witnessed between his Lordship, Orlando, Knight of the Garter, etc. etc. etc., and Rosina Papita, a dancer, father unknown, but reputed a gypsy, mother also unknown but reputed a seller of old iron in the market-place over against the Galata Bridge [7].

Orlando escapes from the British practices and rituals by getting involved with a non-English woman. His anti-conventional marriage to a gypsy dancer can be regarded as a beginning point of his departure from British conventions and mores. He discovers himself replying to non-English conventions rather than being disposed to organize it. Papita resembles freedom and rootlessness of Oriental culture and lifestyle in contrast with Occidental Orlando’s structured lifestyle. Orlando’s marriage symbolically expresses his union with Oriental lifestyle despite all Oriental and Occidental distinctions.

Moreover, Orlando’s metamorphosis occurs in an Oriental place. Orlando becomes an Occidental female traveler in the Orientalized Turkey. Baradaran Jamili argues, “Orlando (the woman) is more Oriental than Occidental and assimilates herself to the Orient” [6]. Clearly Orlando experiences the different lifestyles in Constantinople by means of her intimate contacts with Oriental culture; that is a group of gypsies. Orlando participates in the daily life of gypsies, Woolf refers to it:

She washed in streams if she washed at all; [...] she milked the goats, she collected brush woods; she stole a hen’s egg now and then but always put a coin or a pearl in place of it; she herded cattle; she stripped vines; she trod the grape; she filled the goat-skin and drank from it [...] they were willing to help her to become more like them; taught her their arts of cheese-making and basket-weaving, their science of stealing and bird-snaring, and were even prepared to consider letting her marry among them [7].

Orlando incorporates in the daily activities of gypsies’ life. Indeed, Orlando embraces the gypsy’s lifestyle by milking goats, smoking from a pipe and occasionally stealing chicken eggs. The nomadic nature of gypsies is in the complete contrast with western culture. Orlando lived in a manor house in Britain; she experienced the Occidental aristocratic lifestyle while gypsies, with whom she is living now, inhabit in nomadic nature. They live beyond the reach of private property. There are no “documents to seal or sign, no flourishes to make, no calls to pay [...], there was not a key” [7]. However, after understanding the cultural differences between her own culture and Oriental gypsies, Orlando is led to embrace the gypsies’ lifestyle but not fully. In other words, Orlando’s way of life and behaviors remain English and Occidental, however she attempts to embrace the gypsies’ lifestyle. Although she tries to behave like the Turkish women all her attempts to embrace their lives fail to join with Oriental beliefs and principles. Consequently Orlando believes that Occidental civilization; ritual and culture are superior to Oriental’s and decides to return to England. She returns home as an Oriental traveler that her “[h]orizon of expectation, gazes and observations are completely changed” [6].

Custom refers most often to the tradition which is associated with antecedents and culturally is related often to a group heritage. Bhabha writes, “[c]ultural diversity is also the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs” [11]. Traditions and customs refer to “[s]ocial and cultural

patterns-ways of doing things-that continuously occurred 'before'" [6]. In this way, the traveler recognizes the meaning of one special behavior or custom by observing it in the direction of the whole of that culture. Then the meaning of the whole culture related to the meaning of that special behavior or custom. In this sense, one of the subcategories of custom which can be explained in *Orlando* is costume and different dressing style in Orient and Occident. Woolf investigates the importance of costume and dress in the Orient and the Occident which shape the "people's cultural identities" [6]. Costumes and dressing style signify the social and cultural values and norms of "the host country" [6]. They can be classified by what they wear; Clothes organize, classify and clarify people. Clothing in *Orlando* is shown as something that is shaping the identity. Most of the definitions regarding the Oriental clothes are taken from Sackville West. As R. S. Koppen, in his book, *Virginia Woolf, Fashion and Literary Modernity* (2009), writes "having experienced the Orient at close hand during her husband's posting to Constantinople and Teheran, Vita included Turkish dress in her repertoire of performative style, a fantasy which of course Woolf episodes of *Orlando*" [12].

Woolf depicts clothes as significant signs in cultural differences of east and west; these cultural, historical and geographical distinctions are presented through the use of clothing and costumes. Clothes and dressing style can be classified as symbols and traces that gives "the traveler a view of the culture of travellers from inside rather than from outside" [6]. In this case, Melba Cuddy-Keane, in her book, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere* (2003), writes Orlando "lives through the cataclysmic effects of periodization-the changing clothes, customs, roles, assumptions that constitute the character of each age" [13]. In this regard, Woolf shows that the distinction between east and west is recognized with concerning "Orient, its people, customs, mind, destiny" [2]. She portrays the importance of costume in various ways, for instance at first time Orlando meets Russian Princess, Sasha with her "extraordinary seductiveness" [7] and her strange costume contributes to hiding her feminine characteristic:

A figure which, whether boy's or woman's, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity. The person, whatever the name or sex was about middle height, very slenderly fashioned, and dressed entirely in oyster-coloured [sic] velvet, trimmed with some unfamiliar greenish-coloured fur [7].

Clothes cause uncertainty regarding Sasha's appearance. Additionally Orlando is absorbed by Sasha's Oriental and androgynous dress. Sasha as an Oriental woman wears trousers which are totally in contrast with British woman in as much as she comes from a different culture. In Turkey, Orlando first puts on Turkish clothes to hide her feminine identity. After sex transformation, Orlando, as a British woman, wears Turkish clothes, "Orlando had now washed and dressed herself in those Turkish coat and trousers which

can be worn indifferently by either sex; and was forced to coincide her position" [7]. She, as a British woman, uses Oriental mask to conceal her real identity. According to Baradaran Jamili, "clothes are suitable masks, which hide the real nature of man and help the travelers and adventures to assimilate themselves with the cultural and social codification and norms in the Orient or Occidents" [6]. Hence Orlando observes Oriental dress as a means of covering all beauties of woman, "what an odd pass we have come to when all a women's beauty has to be kept covered" [7]. Oriental dress shows the cultural and social rules and conventions of that country. Woolf portrays *Orlando* in a way which gives "an ethnographic view" [6]. Moreover Woolf, through the use of different clothing and costumes, tries to show how each period and area with their own distinct culture have their own customs and norms. Orlando starts to dress herself in female Oriental clothing outside her motherland, Britain,

It is a strange fact, but a true, that up to this moment she had scarcely given her sex a thought. Perhaps the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn had done something to distract her thoughts; and the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men. At any rate, it was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs [7].

Orlando's Turkish clothes and dark face make her similar to the gypsies; her experience among gypsies in an Oriental country empowers her to confront the limitations of female gender role in Britain. She changes her clothes frequently; costumes and clothes give Orlando this opportunity to perform various roles, Orlando's clothing directly is associated to the gendered identity and the changes in clothing then shows the shift in identity. Therefore, she, as an Occidental, wears like Oriental gypsies. Orlando, as a British traveler, is able to observe a different cultural divergence in dressing as well as in gender difference. Gypsy's culture does not differentiate between its men and women. Orlando understands the gypsies as a community in which she can freely experience life as a woman without the trouble of clothing. Subsequently, there is no need for Orlando to consider how to play male/female roles while she gets along with the gypsies. After leaving gypsies, she begins to dress in Occidental feminine clothing in English ship. Oriental setting makes Orlando be prepared to confront the limitations of conventions of her homeland on women. After returning from her travel to Broussa, Orlando as a woman has to purchase "[a] complete outfit of such clothes" that women wear, a dress of "a young Englishwoman of rank," and to abandon "the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn" [7]. Orlando prepared herself with the experience of her travel to Orient and subsequently is able to observe the distinct cultural divergence in dressing between Orient and Occident.

Another kind of custom which distinguishes two cultures and nations from one another is the concept of language. Here Woolf shows that language difference is one of the effective cultural distinctions between east and west. She compares and contrasts the British people's culture, their customs, behavior

and values with non-European's. Woolf re-emphasizes the difficulties of understanding of language between two different cultures and countries. As Bhabha states, "[t]he problem of cultural interaction emerges only at the signifiatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated" [11], therefore culture can be regarded as "a protective enclosure" [14]. For instance in the novel, Sasha's language as an Oriental traveler cannot be understood by Orlando. Sasha as an Oriental traveler knows how to use language as a mask, revealing and hiding herself at the same time: "[s]he talked so enchantingly, so wittily, so wisely (but unfortunately in French, which notoriously loses its flavor in translation) [...], English was too frank, too candid, too honeyed a speech for Sasha" [7]. Although Orlando can answer "her as freely as she asked him, speaking, as she did, in perfect French" [7], but French still is the third language, the foreign language between them. Then English language for Sasha loses its dominant power.

Orlando tries to outline and organize Sasha but she is always unusual and irregular. He attempts to define Sasha with language but fails. As Said asserts, "if languages were as distinct from each other as the linguists said they were then too the language users-their minds, cultures, potentials and even their bodies were different in similarly ways" [2]. Accordingly when Orlando is placed among the gypsies, Orlando expresses her compliment for food by telling "how good to eat," because "gypsies have no words for beautiful" [7]. Then language is regarded as another cultural aspect for showing the dichotomy between East/West and Orient/Occident. Therefore the difficulty of translation and language diversities which are rooted in cultural distinctions, create a great gap between Orient and Occident.

IV. CONCLUSION

One of the main themes in *Orlando* is the projection of the main character, as an occidental male/female traveler, regarding the supremacy of West's culture, rituals and values over 'Others.' This paper indicates how an Oriental lives in a different world of his own, a world with the national and cultural boundaries and principles. It displays how Woolf appropriates the Oriental form of communication by putting the main character among different ethnic groups. Therefore, the paper focuses the cultural diversities between 'Us' or the West and 'Them' or the East and the West's perspectives regarding its cultural strength in comparison to Orientals and 'Others' weakness which leads to British authority and supremacy over the 'Others.'

The paper reveals how Woolf evaluates occidental social behaviors and habits with the 'Others.' Besides, the main character's encounter with oriental people and culture leads him/her to defense of his/her occidental culture. It signifies how Woolf creates the portrait of British man and woman as a perfect person contrary to unintelligent, unconventional and

irrational 'Other.'

Accordingly, the paper represents how Woolf through travel writing tries to explore that the Occidental travelers cannot leave their Occidental habits and customs. It reveals how British traditions are in comparison to Oriental traditions. Considering this point, Woolf represents the cultural gap between Occidental/home culture and the Oriental/host culture. It also expresses that Woolf shows Occidentals believe their values and culture are superior to oriental ones.

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