

THE ONE IN THE COUPLE (2001)

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"Out of Myself and Myself only, there becomes a couple"

Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*

The impossible couples and the math of love

In this essay I will attempt to answer the questions related to the concept and the structure of the couple. What is the dynamics of the identities in the focus of the couple, observed from a perspective of the primary identity instability of the subject with reference to any other structure, esp. with reference to the structure of the couple?

I will introduce the starting thesis immediately, the thesis that this essay begins with, that the couple, in its nature, is always an impossible couple.

I will restrict the reading of the impossible couples to several novels of the world literature. In the introductory part of my essay I will comment on the psychoanalytical reading of the essay *Romeo and Juliet: love-hatred of the couple* from the book *Tales of Love* by Julia Kristeva.¹ The second part of the essay studies the analysis of the "couple with the foreigner" as a version of the "impossible couple" in the narrations of the novels "Death in Venice" by Thomas Mann, "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë and "Orlando" by Virginia Wolf.

The main inspiration for this essay originates from my engagement in the conference on "Reading the Balkan Subject and its Genders" (2001) on the Ohrid Summer University, conducted by professor Miglena Nikolcina from the University in Sofia. The initial concept on this course was that "Love is a state where the identities and differences in the dynamics of the couple are intensified". That means that "the national, ethnic identity, the religion, race, social standards, age, sexual orientation become more intensified, but also more fragile in the economy of love, which aims to level and unify those differences through the act of eroticization and emphasis on those differences". Hence, the idea of the possibility of love and the couple is challenged, because love as a formula does not solve the tensions created by the question of the identities, because by exploitation of the tensions, which result from the different identities, it only proves its own impossibility.

I think that the key question that will address the problem of the couple is: what is the relation between Love and Law? This question is legitimate, because the lover, in his/her ontological position is close to corruption, crime and madness. The lover is the one who challenges, restructures, and ultimately always wants to defy the Name. The Name as language and given structure, and above all, the Name of the Other in the couple. The thesis that I regard crucial in the psychoanalytical texts of Kristeva is the thesis that not two, but only one subject makes the couple. In the book "Tales of Love" she says: Out of Myself and Myself only, there becomes a couple. I will illustrate this sentence with a formula: $1=2$

Before we study the structure of the love paradox $1=2$, we ought to observe the relation between love and law, because this relation directly impacts the paradox of the lovers.

The capital investment in the theory of law and its always restrictive nature in relation to the Subject is given by Michel Foucault in History of Sexuality (1980). In the last chapter of the first tome of this book, Foucault defines the strictly legal sense of the law, through myriad of negative notions: forbiddance, prohibition, limitation, regulation, and control in the name of protection of the subject. This means that in the name of the negative strategy of the Law, the Subject is always defined as prohibited, limited, regulated and controlled Subject. However, since the Law is not an abstract act, and it functions precisely in the moment of its implementation, the bearers of the Law are at the same time its agents, who are anonymous before the law and at the same time they are active on several levels. That means that the limited Subject- limits, the controlled one- controls, and the regulated one- regulates. As Slavoj Zizek says in his text "The ideology between fiction and phantasm" from the collection "Metastases of enjoyment"², the faculty of the power refers not only to the visible, public power (Zizek, 1996:59) but often more perilously refers to an obscure, hidden, "mad" structure of the power. It is known that Foucault chose to study the Law (both its public and obscure power) through its capillary, i.e. extreme forms. For Foucault, paradigm of capillary forms of the Law are prisons, clinics, hospitals, schools, monasteries, i.e. all structures which are celled and function on the principle of control, supervision and series of praises and punishments.

In the book "Surveillance and punishment: The birth of the prison" (1975)³, Foucault analyses the capillary units of power on the structure of the prison as a mental and social structure, whose historical background demonstrates the normative functions of the power and formation of knowledge in the contemporary society. The Law amounts to logo- centrism, which is essentially phallo-centric, it sets up objects of exclusion. The object of exclusion is obscure, concealed, hidden in Zizek's sense of the word. With the transformation of the system of punishment and the establishments of prisons, Foucault explains that the guillotines, which represented public stage for the execution of the punishment, disappeared. On these events, the public expressed an undefined horror with the public punishment, and had an opportunity to demonstrate their frustration with the visible arm of the Law. When prisons were established, administration and bureaucratization took place, which was nothing but seclusion of the arm of the Law.

This is because the prison proclaims itself to be, not a place of death, but a place for punishment in the form of improvement and rehabilitation. The secrecy, obscurity, and the invisibility before the Law is, as we'll see, the crucial moment in the establishment of the structure of the impossible couple, i.e. the initial state of love between Romeo and Juliet. The Law transforms into obscure and invisible, consists of series of trainings, i.e. discipline, which demands a closed space and partition. Each individual has

his/her own place, which enables supervision of presence/absence. "Supervision, assessment and reprimand" (Foucault, 1975:138). The purpose of this system is surpassing the chaos, idleness, disorganization, the lack of control and motivation.

The explosion of all these characteristics happens precisely in Love, because the main feature of Love is non-ego-centrism, which means that Love happens as an ontological opposition of the Law. That is why for the Love we can always say that is love-out of- law, transgression love, or adulterous love. (Kristeva, 1987:209) And what about the marriage? I think that we can employ Foucault's analysis on the marriage, because the marriage represents extended legal form of love- although marriage is essentially antonym of love. The marriage equals the Foucault's celled units, at least in two crucial instances: 1. The married couple is capillary in structure, and the family, even childless, represents a capillary unit of the society. 2. The married couple is never an intimate category and is always sanctioned by the city, the society, and the law. As a legal couple, the married couple is always supervised, controlled and subject to the same series of punishments and appraisals as the structures analyzed by Foucault.

There is another issue that is very interesting, an issue that Kristeva raises in her analysis of Romeo and Juliet. Although love is always outside the law, the lover craves to legalize his/her love. As opposed to the incompatibility between the idealization and the law, the Law represents a synonym of power and therefore, appeal. "...The reason may be that the law, which is external to the Subject, is an area of power and attraction that can merge with Ego Ideal". (Kristeva, 1987:209) The given legal form of love is marriage. In the marriage, as well as in the Law, from which the marriage results, the negative notions are in force: restriction, prohibition, limitation, and control. The marriage is based on daily stereotypes, whose goal is socialization of the couple, practical transformation of the couple into social Contract. Let's go back to the problem of secrecy and obscurity and invisibility of the lovers before the Law, that we addressed a few lines above.

The Shakespearian story of Romeo and Juliet is such a game between Love and Law. The Law says that the families Capulet and Montague nurture century-old hostility. That is why the challenge that the lovers face is protected with the veil of secrecy. That secret is the initial condition for their love. Kristeva says: "Do they joy in the fullness of being together or in the fear of being reproved? ... Take away the third party, and the whole construct often crumbles, lacking a cause for desire" (Kristeva, 1987:211)

The secret becomes foundation for Romeo and Juliet's love. The third party, which Kristeva writes about, protects that secret: the families, relatives, the Law. The couple is utopia, says the Shakespearian drama, the real love happens after the death, with the corruption of the Law; love exists only outside the law, which sanctions life. The couple is utopia, and its roots are in the childhood. Kristeva says that the couple mania (Kristeva, 1987:222) is the essential state of the child who wants to become one with the ideal father and the protective mother. This couple mania, mania to be in the couple, is the antediluvian desire of the child, who wants to make 2 out of the 3. From the condition Me-> Father-> Mother there should remain Me->FatherMother. This formula, from Kristeva's essay, may be presented in this way:

3=2

The couple is everything, except dual, implies Kristeva. Let's imagine a situation like this: Romeo and Juliet defeat the hostility; they overcome the century- old misunderstandings between the families, and get married. There are two possible options for the end of this marriage: 1. The cynical answer: after the

tension has gone, and the secrecy and the obscurity of love, the couple Romeo-Juliet has transformed into a banal marriage, the passionate love disappeared into thin air, only the obligation of the Law remains, which overbears the couple. 2. They continue to love in a passionate relationship, for which Kristeva says that the only definition is sadomasochism. Spawned from the battle with the law, this love can only continue through the endless libidinal charges and discharges, love and hate. In this structure, the female energy of Romeo and the male energy of Juliet will be exchanged. I will summarize this structure in the formula:

4=2

Because it is outside of the Law, the lover seeks to destroy the Law, in order to make his/her love possible. He/She has to destroy the loved one as well, in order to confirm the Law. The lover has to defeat the Name, which supports this Law. When Juliet meets Romeo, her monologue goes like this: "Tis but thy name that is my enemy;...it is nor hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part, belonging to a man.... O, be some other name!" Kristeva interprets this as a need that the lover has to de-fragment the body of the loved one, so that the loved one becomes total, one, complete entity. The same destruction must strike the Name, i.e. the Name must be lost. The series of murders that are happening in the tragedy – Romeo kills Tybalt and Paris – these murders leave Romeo unsatisfied and he says: "O, I am fortune's fool!" This shows, says Kristeva, that death has missed its object, because the object of death is Juliet. The death of Romeo and Juliet is a series of misunderstandings in itself- the aim was for Juliet to be produced in rigid, but not dead, only sleeping body. Her body is supposed to be beautiful and rigid, because it is that precise body did not make way for the intended violence. When Romeo dies by his own hand, he doesn't embrace Juliet. "The dark cave is their only common space, their sole true community. These lovers of the night remain solitary beings". (Kristeva, 1987:216) Briefly, the love formula is 1=2

The math of the Subjects in the couple swings between the need for multiplication and the ultimate need for destruction of everything in the couple, except oneself.

4=2

3=2

....

1=2

As we can see, Kristeva analyses/ "reads" the love couple as a fundamentally impossible category. The couple is the one in the couple, who always searches his/her self- actualization in the act of the coupling. Having said this, we will continue to analyze the novel "Death in Venice" by Thomas Mann.

In a Couple with a Foreigner

The short novel Death in Venice⁴, by Thomas Mann, represents the structure of a lover in love with a foreigner. The impossible couple here includes the homosexual love between an old man and an

underage boy. This love is impossible according to the Law of the community, which is why it needs violation of the Law and collapse of the values of the Society, in order for the love to be possible.

The hero of the novel is Gustave von Aschenbach, well known and recognized German writer, who is advanced in age and faces a creative crisis as a result of the disciplined, strictly controlled creative life. One morning, after the hard, but sterile creative session, takes a walk around the graveyards of Munich and sees a strange figure of a newcomer. The foreigner, dressed as a tourist, has a peculiar bearing, and reminds Aschenbach of jungles, tigers and southern countries. Exhausted from the pressure of writing, Aschenbach decides to take a trip to Venice. On the ship that travels to Venice, he observes a group of boys, and among them, a boy dressed as an old man, with fake teeth, wig and rouge, which upsets and disgusts Aschenbach. He runs away from the "young-old horror" as Mann's narrator describes him, and gets on a gondola, which is to take him to the city. The gondolier is a criminal subject, as Aschenbach find out later "a man without a license". The gondolier takes him to a wrong address, and doesn't accept money for the ride, saying that his trip will be "paid out". In the hotel, a Polish family with many children attracts his attention. Among the children, Aschenbach sees the beautiful face and body of the 14-year-old Tadzio. Aschenbach is thrilled by his appearance and very excitedly compares him with Greek gods and the ideal of male aesthetics. Aschenbach is obsessed with the young Tadzio, he follows his play on the beach, the strolls with his mother and the nannies, until he admits to himself that he is actually- in love with him. Tadzio becomes aware of the glances of the old German tourist, and gradually begins to look back at him. At the same time, in Venice cholera is spread, coming from the Indian ships. Although the local hotel owners deny the disease, more and more tourists leave the place. Aschenbach finds out about the devastation of the city, and although he wants to inform the Polish family about it, he abandons the romantic gesture of a savior, when he realizes that his most intimate wish is that neither he, nor Tadzio leave Venice. Even more so: to stay in the city where all the values have collapsed, and all life is destroyed, because only this collapse is a condition for their possible love. While the city is ruined by the disease, Aschenbach, obsessed by love, goes to a barber shop and has his hair dyed, with makeup applied to his face, and is beautified to look like a young-old figure. The Polish family finds out about the disease and decides to leave, while Aschenbach dies from the cholera.

The first question is: why is the saga taking place precisely in Venice? Venice is a city built in water, and represents a victory of will over the forces of nature. But, at the same time, behind the glitter of the Venetian buildings, the death takes a peek to the city, which is sinking in the water. The cholera that devastates Venice originates from India, topos that represents not only the repressed impulses, the southern countries, but also the birthplace of Dionysius. On the other hand, Venice is portrayed as poly-lingual, tourists from many parts of the world are visiting: one can hear Russian, Polish, German, Italian words. This mixture of languages is another face of the defeat of the Name, celebration of the echo, as a bodiless voice. We shall return to this problem of the echo later, since it is crucial for the understanding of the impossible love between Aschenbach and Tadzio.

It is now interesting for us to see what is the role of the above mentioned myth of Dionysius, because Mann's novel is best read through the formula: psychology + myth. In the novel there are lengthy paragraphs where Aschenbach is contemplating the battle between Apollo and Dionysius. In the 13 chapter of the novel, Aschenbach has a dream where Dionysius and Apollo have a fight. Dionysius wins

and Apollo leaves. Dionysius dances passionately, driven to climax. Actually, the fight that takes place is a fight for reduction or multiplication of life.

As Deleuze says, there are two types of suffering: suffering for the sake of profusion of life and suffering for reduction of life. At the beginning of the novel Aschenbach is negating life for the sake of art. He transforms madness into fear, the pain into affirmation of life. He praises the rational self-discipline and represses his impulses. The idea does not serve life, but life serves the idea, and that is why the ideas seize and he becomes sterile. The necessary transformation leads to suffering and profusion of life, transformation of enjoyment into activity, but that means affirmation of the last principle- death.

The structure of a city under siege of cholera is a topos known ever since the Sophocles' Oedipus. The cholera in Oedipus is connected to the patricide: the murder of the Father, and according to Apollo, the only remedy is justice for the murderer of the King and the Symbolic Order. The punishment for this crime is exile of the murderer, his departure into asylum, i.e. his transformation into a foreigner. Similar loss of the Symbolic Order is seen in Mann's novel, where the madness of the unstable Society is seeking for restoration. The homosexual love, and the love between an old man and an underage boy is a threat for the social order, because this love in the code of the narration represents the end of the procreation. The annulment of the principle of the procreation, to certain extent means murder of the Mother, which is why the cholera in Mann's novel is not related to the patricide, but quite on the contrary- with the matricide, the murder of the Mother.

Oedipus: patricide -> cholera

Aschenbach: matricide -> cholera

In this narration the Mother is absent, Aschenbach is the one that doesn't have a mother. Kristeva says that this is exactly the key for structuring the foreigner. In the book "Foreigners to Ourselves" (1991:1-40) Kristeva invests in the theory of the foreigner. The foreigner, the one that is in exile, the fanatic of the lost, does not have a mother. In the "Stranger" by Camus, the alienation takes place after the death of the mother. According to Kristeva, this loss is crucial for the development of the homosexual drives. In the essay for Romeo and Juliet, Kristeva writes that in 1609, Shakespeare lost his mother, published the Sonnets, where he praises the homosexual love. (Page 219) Tadzio becomes not only an image of the Ideal Father, whom the Son is in love with, but also becomes God of Love, becomes Foreign God, as Mann's narrator describes. That is a God who wakes the impulses of Aschenbach for unity with the Father, ultimately with the Symbolic Order. Return to the primal outcome of the child's fantasy, realization of the couple: The Son + FatherMother. Aschenbach becomes a subject who seeks to find the lost community, that which has sent him in exile in Venice.

The potential lover Aschenbach craves to be subdued to his threatening Father, to the Foreign God, to the Symbolic Order, with the same zest he needs the defeat of that Order, in order for the love to be acknowledged. Aschenbach knows the secret of the city, which is ruined in cholera, but he doesn't tell that to Tadzio, because he needs the crisis as much as he needs the love. The crisis for him is the condition for the possibility for love. Earlier we said that the lover seeks to defy the Name. In order to explain this thesis, we will analyze a very interesting moment from Mann's novel. When Aschenbach sees Tadzio for the first time on the beach in Venice, he cannot hear clearly the name, which the Polish family uses to address him. He recollects the echo of and he reconstructs the name: the boy's name is probably Tadzio. The Polish words are alien to him, they are echoes.

The echo is important for illumination of another principle. Tadzio is portrayed as a beautiful God, Narcissus. He is well aware of his beauty, he glances back at Aschenbach, and he smiles at him once: Tadzio is bearer of the defeating love that seduces. The myth about Narcissus, as it is known, says that when the nymph Echo fell in love with Narcissus, he rejected her in cruelest way. Out of sadness, she lost her body, and turned into an echo, into voice without body. At this point, we will refer to Kristeva's thesis about the one in the couple. Falling in love with the Narcissus, Aschenbach loses his body, dies from cholera, and what remains behind is his voice, his echo. As a renowned writer in Germany, he turns into a voice without body. This structure shows that the couple Aschenbach- Tadzio is a couple where the Narcissus Tadzio destroys the body of the other, of Aschenbach, in order to remain one, complete, total entity.

Finally, the road to the demonic space of love leads through a few initiating codes. Entering into the reality of death, Aschenbach passes the water in a gondola, which reminds him of death. The gondola is black on the outside and soft on the inside. The gondolier is an association of Heron, who transports the bodies over the river Styx. His red hair is the same as the hair of the man who sells the tickets to Venice, and is also the same with the hair of the musician on the terrace of the hotel in Venice, which represents the liberation of Dionysius. Those demonic figures, as well as the first tourist that Aschenbach meets in Munich, who also has red hair, are figures of the foreigner, figures on the other side of the Order. But, symbolically, they represent liberation of the metamorphosis, similar to the one that Aschenbach lives through when as an old man he transforms into someone much younger. Just like the passenger on the ship to Venice, the "young- old horror", that figure is incarnation of Dionysius, who is to mark the suffering for the sake of affirmation of life.

Almost identical is the narration of *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë: here is presented one more image of the uncontrolled, non- logo-centric love with the foreigner. The *Wuthering Heights* for Brontë is what Venice is for Thomas Mann: bare, horrific and forbidden landscape, landscape in crisis, uncanny landscape. The intentionally confused introductory chapters illustrate the family of the relatively rich Earnshaw, who owns the *Wuthering Heights*. Earnshaw already has two children, Catherine and Hindley, when he adopts Heatcliff. This moment marks the breaking of the social order, because Heatcliff assumes socially ambiguous status: he is of unknown, probably gypsy origin, and in the family receives the most privileged status among the children Earnshaw. After the death of the father, Heatcliff begins a love affair with the sister and a relationship of humiliation and hatred with the brother.

Catherine states that her love for Heatcliff has such a character, that they are not two different subjects but one: "We are one person", she says. Catherine legitimates the status of the foreigner, as the one that lives in every one of us. "Regardless of what the souls are made of, mine and his are the same". Kristeva points that the foreigner is a hidden face of my own identity, and my deepest hatred for the foreigner happens when I have to legitimate in relation to his/her own identity. According to Kristeva, the foreigner becomes a symptom that makes the couple impossible, that turns "us" into a problem.

Although Catherine loves Heatcliff, she decides to marry the rich neighbor Linton. This act is motivated not only by her need to be the "the most dazzling lady in the country", but more by the hatred and

humiliation that consists her love towards Heatcliff. Hindley, Catherine's brother, transforms the hatred towards the foreigner into a long series of humiliations. He demands that Heatcliff be placed with the servants. Catherine feels the same hatred, when she proclaims Heatcliff dirty, as opposed to the expected cleanliness of the one that is not a foreigner: "If I marry Heatcliff, that would degrade me"- she says.

The economy of the foreigner, says Kristeva, is based on the simultaneous respect and criticism of his/her dissimilarity. The face of the foreigner is a witness of the uniqueness, exclusiveness, and dissimilarity. That face, those eyes, lips, cheeks witness that: "I am at least that unique, as is this foreigner, because I love him. But I prefer my uniqueness and exclusiveness, because I want to kill him." (Kristeva) That is the devastating role of the Subject in the couple, because the ancient need to make One where there are Two deepens with the challenging identity of the Other.

Heatcliff is constantly reminded that he doesn't belong in the Wuthering Heights, as every foreigner is reminded that he/she doesn't belong on the new territory. Kristeva says that the foreigner is the one who doesn't respect his/her hosts- he/she considers them blind and narrow minded. He has developed a distance that separates him from the others. He doesn't own the truth, but can always invent it. Heatcliff nurtures hostility towards the Heights, because he is the newcomer who remembers his old territory, he has biography, while the people of the Wuthering Heights are "victims of the mono-valence", as Kristeva says. They have an estate and mediocre routine. He has a biography. Heatcliff leaves the Heights and returns rich, in order to be able to take revenge: he buys the estate; he marries Linton's sister, and at the end of the novel makes Catherine's daughter a servant. Sacrificed in the name of the foreigner in her (Catherine), Heathcliff's continuous position is a mixture of enjoyment and horror.

The state of a foreigner in the case of Heatcliff is detected as permanent nostalgia for legality of the foreigner in him, but also as a paradox of the artist. He constantly wears masks that can make him what they want him to be. When Catherine marries the rich Linton, Heatcliff leaves and becomes rich. But, as he is obsessively tied to his aim, he displays the typical fanaticism of the foreigner, which is discussed by Kristeva. That fanaticism represents the need for him to become one with the land that he inhabits. And the fanaticism has two faces: extreme devotion and at the same time, extreme separation, nostalgia for the non-belonging. He, together with the others, witnesses his presence, where others cannot find him.

The novel *Orlando*,⁶ (1928) by Virginia Woolf also deals with love with a foreigner, and that makes it similar with the couples of Mann and Brontë. Unlike them, in *Orlando* also mixture of sexes/genders takes place within the couple, and this opens a new door for analysis of the performance of the gender and its influences on the structure of the couple and the dynamics of the subjects within.

The first sentence from the Woolf's novel is: "He, for there should be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of time did something to disguise it" - and this helps us to enter the essence of the novel in which the position of the sexes depends on the clothes that they are wearing. At the beginning of the novel, there is a scene, very indicative of the sign of the gender. It is a harsh winter, Orlando, who is 16 and lives on the court of Queen Elisabeth, meets the princess from Moscow. The winter is hard, everything is frozen, the ship of the Russian embassy is stuck on Thames and the queen organizes a reception for the members of the Russian embassy. The Russian fashion, says Woolf's female narrator, is

such that was used to cancel/ defeat/ de-signify the gender: their wide tunics and trousers, for which one could not say whether they were made for men or women, attracted Orlando.

The first meeting with the Moscow princess happens on the party on skates, where Orlando perceives a figure and is not sure whether it is a boy or a girl, but he is curiously attracted to him/her. When the figure passes closely by Orlando, he realizes that this person is a woman. This is the description of the first love adventure of the young Orlando with the princess from Moscow, Marushka.

I would like to state my definition of Woolf's Orlando as a novel without gravity! My starting intuition about the absence of gravity in Woolf's Orlando does not result only from the fact that Orlando lives 400 years and freely travels throughout centuries, as if the gravity doesn't apply to him, but from the utter description of Orlando as someone with a "floating heart". Woolf's narrator says: "Under the summer ephemera, he wanted to feel the earth axis under himself" because he "felt the need to tie down his floating heart to something" (12) Absence of gravity is a condition that repeats in all crucial scenes of the novel. At the first gender confusion in the novel – when Orlando falls in love with the princess- no one walks and everyone skates, because the water on the river Thames is frozen, walking is impossible, and with it, time becomes timeless. The floating, the skating, isn't only an external signal for not having a fixed identity, but more substantial form of the possible couple. The couple can only exist as a timeless couple. At the moment of defrosting of Thames gravitation is back and the love of Orlando and the princess from Moscow evaporates.

Orlando becomes a woman after a long dream, during his envoy service on the Orient. It is not a coincidence that the birth of the female subject is orientalized. Woolf criticizes not only the strict, fixed Western-European identity, which doesn't allow the play with the fluctuating identities, especially gender identities, but also it is a criticism of the logo-centrism, ultimately always phallo-centric attitude for the female sexuality which is dislocated beforehand. In other words, the femininity is always in a place that no one can locate. The femininity is always in the area of the nonexistent, unknown, non-fixed, outside of the Language, the Order. It's been said that Orlando is a novel about the androgynous. For us, Orlando can only be defined not as the One in the Couple, but as the Couple in the One! As a subject, Orlando is always attracted by androgynous qualities, and he himself becomes a woman in the middle of the novel, who retains all the capacity to remember her male qualities. The androgynous in the novel is not only avoidance to make a choice, but also unification of the identities, because Orlando is not freed from the tyranny of the gender, but only freed of the tyranny of reference, of the mark of the gender, the clothes of the gender. The internal Orlando doesn't cease to be the same person. The novel plays with the signifiers: not only the Russian, but also the Elizabethan fashion is used to cancel the gender, the differences that transform the essential binary combination: man- woman into multipolarity, and ultimately to cancel the opposition of the Indo-European grammar: being and non-being, in the sense that the one is never only one, as the dead is never only dead. In the novel, the queen Elizabeth leaves a message to Orlando: to remain young forever. This is an act of exchange of goods: The queen Elizabeth assigns to Orlando the highest honors and estate, and his task is never to grow old: He had to be son of her old age, hand of her weakness, an oak that she can lean her breakdown on ". In Sally Potter's film - the filmed version of Woolf's novel, Elizabeth poses Orlando a concrete task: to remain her son forever. This is not only a question of the Great Queen's dream for immortality, a dream for loss of gravity, but also a dream for the timelessness of the couple: Mother-Son (The Queen- Orlando), the couple of lovers (Orlando- Marushka) Woolf gives an answer to the question 'when does a couple become possible?'- a couple is possible when the dynamics of the

identities in focus dies out, when the identity instability of the subject becomes its ontological position in the structure, and when the economy of love is no longer a force that is able to level the differences of the identities, but it is a force that confirms them in the phenomenon of the One.

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 2. Slavoj Žižek, *Metastases of Enjoyment*, 1994 (from the Serbian translation: *Metastaze uzivanja*, Belgrade 1996).
 3. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, Gallimard, Paris, 1975 (from the Serbian translation, Publishing House of Zoran Stojanovic, Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad, 1997)
 4. Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*, 1912 (Macedonian translation: *Smrt vo Venecija*, Detska Radost, Skopje, 1997).
 5. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Croatian translation, Orkanski Visovi, Nakladni Zavod, Zagreb, 1976).
 6. Virginia Woolf: *Orlando*, 1928, (from the Serbian translation: *IP Svetovi*, Novi Sad, 1991).