

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Scholarly & Creative Works Conference

#10

Presenter: Hunter Candrian-Velez

Session & Time: Oral_III / 2:40 to 3:00pm

Room: Guzman 104

Discipline: English Literature, History

Faculty Mentor: Jordan Lieser

ZOO link:
https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71090937040?pwd=ZFaibWRoad9QwjPcu9qzuUaKCXG6ym.1

ZOOM Passcode: DUC

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: Virginia Woolf and The Lesbian Literary Tradition

Abstract:

Modernist English authors, such as Virginia Woolf in her novel Orlando: A Biography, built upon a pre-existing and long tradition of underground lesbian literature dating back to Sappho in Ancient Greece. Prior to Woolf, female writers of the 19th century continued this tradition by establishing the literary trope of the “Victorian Romantic Female Friendship,” which would later take on different shapes and connotations with discoveries made in the early 1900s related to sexology and homosexual inversion. These discoveries would lead writers to code their work in the hopes of avoiding censorship and government punishment. Writers such as Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Gaskell, Djuna Barnes, and Gertrude Stein all used different creative techniques to

avoid censorship while also telling queer stories. Works by these authors are integral to the lesbian literary tradition and have created a unique style which incorporates imaginative elements to tell these stories in the mainstream. Since their publications, the works by these authors have caused a cultural stir especially for queer subcultures in women's colleges, all-female boarding houses, and other same-sex communities throughout America and England. Authors like Virginia Woolf experienced a resurgence in cultural relevance in the 1970s during the gay liberation movement. Feminist scholars such as Bonnie Zimmerman, Lillian Faderman, and several others were fundamental in legitimizing lesbian studies and literature in the academic sphere. Through the use of comparative literary analysis, historiographic research, and historical contextualization using primary and secondary sources; this research aims to explain the evolution of sapphic dynamics within the historical context of these novels authorship: Cranford by Elizabeth Gaskell, Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf, Orlando by Virginia Woolf, and Nightwood by Djuna Barnes