

## **Feminist and genderqueer – modernist British Fiction: Radclyffe Hall and Virginia Woolf**

This seminar will focus on two classic texts of the modernist period – Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Both novels have become milestones in the history of feminist, lesbian or genderqueer literature. Yet although both novels were published in the year 1928, one of them caused a scandal and was banned while the other met with great acclaim in the literary establishment and beyond.

Our reading these novels alongside each other will offer insights into the texts' distinctive perspectives that radically deviate from the dominant heteronormative discourse and practice at the time. From an intersectional perspective, we will situate the novels in a wider historical and cultural context, and we will attend to their reception at the time. In addition, we will also consider shorter texts – such as Virginia Woolf's manifesto, *A Room of One's Own* among others.

Furthermore, we will discuss theoretical texts that introduce more recent concepts for the analysis of gender and sexuality. We will explore how these concepts may help us to make sense of the novels, in their time and today. And we will discuss the significance of genre and novelistic form in all of this. Do these novels share a modernist aesthetic? Or how does their specific literary form shape their radical perspectives? We will conclude this seminar by discussing selected (film) adaptations that present more recent comments (1992 and 2023) on Woolf's *Orlando*, in particular. Beyond familiarizing you with two canonical texts, this seminar will help you to a footing in gender and adaptation studies and introduce you to salient features of the modernist period.

### **Please note:**

You will have to buy the two novels. The theoretical texts and other material will be provided online. There will also be 6 quizzes, meant as encouragement to keep up with the assigned reading, of which you will have to pass at least 5 in order to get credit for the course.

To help you organize your reading: the texts will initially be tackled in the following order: Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*; (recommended edition: Penguin Modern Classics, intro M. Duffy); Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (recommended edition: Penguin Modern Classics, Lyons/Gilbert).

### **Credit requirements for maximum credits:**

- Regular attendance
- 6 quizzes (pass 5)
- participation in an expert group with a task assigned
- possibly 3 short written responses preparatory to sessions
- Oral contributions
- Term paper