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Challenging Mainstream Thinking  
in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*:  
Learning About and From Literature from Text to Image.

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	7
<b>CHAPTER ONE: The Importance of Teaching Literature through Films</b>	8
A) The Various Artistic Languages and their Connections	8
1) Adaptation as Rewriting	8
2) Literature and Films: Two Different Types of Artistic Expression	10
B) Adaptation as a Source of Inspiration, Both for the Creator and the Viewer	13
1) The Use of Art to Defend a Cause (The Link between Art and Society)	13
2) Creativity as an Escape for Both the Creator and the Viewer	16
C) The Cultural Purpose of Studying Both the Written and the Visual	20
1) Teaching History Through Literature and Cinematographic Adaptations	20
2) Acquiring Knowledge to Become Enlightened Citizens	22
<b>CHAPTER TWO: How to Develop Creativity Through Interpretation?</b>	25
A) The Link between Analytical Abilities and Imagination	25
1) Freedom of Mind and Analysis Through Imagination and Creativity	25
2) Kant's Notion of "Productive Imagination" and Its Application to Teaching	28
B) Learning How to Organise Ideas and Rules of Conduct through Play Activities	33
1) Studying Film Adaptation to Create Connections and Interactions	33
2) The Effectiveness of Play-Based Learning	36
C) The Importance of Associating Words with Images	39
1) Stimulating a Pupil's Imagination to Create Connections	39
2) The Link Between Studying Film Adaptations and Learning a Language	43
<b>CHAPTER THREE: Didactic Application of Dickens' and Virginia Woolf's Works</b>	45
A) Cultural Purpose	46
B) Linguistic and Communicative Purposes	50
C) Educational Purpose	55
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	60
<b>APPENDIX A: Mentioned Extract (II, A)</b>	62
<b>APPENDIX B: Teaching Sequence</b>	64
<b>APPENDIX C: Extracts Studied in the Teaching Sequence</b>	70
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY/WEBOGRAPHY</b>	81
<b>INDEX OF CONCEPTS</b>	88
<b>INDEX OF PROPER NOUNS</b>	89



## Introduction

“Further 65% of the general population are visual learners”<sup>1</sup>. This quotation shows the importance of visual information today, hence the value of including cinematic works in teaching. During my practice as a trainee, I noticed that pupils memorised the content of various courses more easily when they were able to associate a written document with concrete representations of what they were reading, which further convinced me of the benefits of audio-visuals in the learning process. This MA dissertation deals with the relevance of tackling canonical literature through film adaptation, and how pupils can learn from and about literature from a cultural, linguistic, and ethical point of view. It also aims to show how imagination and creativity, which characterise every artist, can be transferred to teaching and enable pupils to learn more quickly and in a more playful way. The sphere of imagination is often put aside after primary school, although it represents a central point in the intellectual development of adolescents. It is therefore necessary to give it a central place in teaching, and to propose creative activities so that pupils learn and memorise various pieces of information in the most natural way possible. This study focuses mainly on Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* and their film adaptations by Sally Potter and Clive Donner. These works discuss several types of inequalities, whether they are related to social status or to gender or sexual identity, which are highly crucial matters to address. Teaching canonical literature through a visual medium makes it more accessible to pupils from the outset, and makes the exercise of literary and filmic interpretation less intimidating. Indeed, canonical literature is a field of study that is increasingly neglected by the younger generation, especially because it can be difficult to understand in terms of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and address subjects that do not necessarily fascinate adolescents. One of my purposes is to see how to give young people a taste for canonical literature through cinema, which for most is a familiar field, while showing them how art can reflect reality and deal with current issues. I think it is even more necessary today to help pupils to take a critical look at the world around them, and to ensure that they are educated to understand the society of tomorrow, to make it more equal. Through this paper, I will analyse the role and importance of film adaptation in the study of Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* and Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, and the place of imagination and

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<sup>1</sup> Zalani, Chintan. “Visual Content Marketing: Statistics You Need to Know.” *Elite Content Marketer*, July 30, 2022. Retrieved from <https://elitecontentmarketer.com/visual-content-marketing-stats/>. (Consulted on August 8, 2022).

creativity in the learning process, especially in the process of interpretation and the development of critical thinking. I shall first see the importance of teaching literature through films (Chapter I). I shall also try to approach the way in which pupils can develop their creativity through interpretation (Chapter II), before finally laying the foundations for a didactic application in which Virginia Woolf's and Dickens' works will be examined more in depth (Chapter III).

## **I- The importance of Teaching Literature through Films.**

### *A) The Various Artistic Languages and Their Connections.*

#### **1) Adaptation as Rewriting**

When one thinks of the term adaptation, the notion of rewriting itself is necessarily implied, especially because of choices to be made about what to adapt and what not to adapt. Film theorists are divided on this concept, since to adapt a literary work into a film, one must necessarily betray it in some way, since one is moving from one artistic language to another. However, the question that regularly arises is whether adaptation should be considered an artistic embellishment or a violation of the original text. Indeed, some people started to see adaptation as “the epitome of betrayal”<sup>2</sup> because of its so-called lack of fidelity and accuracy, but Thomas Leitch, an American academic and film scholar, suggested that “it would help redress the balance between literature and literacy to think of each adaptation not in terms of what it faithfully reproduces [...], but of what it leaves out”<sup>3</sup>, which comes back to the issue of choices. I think it is an interesting way of approaching the notion of adaptation because I personally do not think that it is necessary to be faithful to each element of a literary work to make a brilliant and genuine film adaptation of it. The simple fact of capturing the essence of a novel, and managing to transcribe what the author wanted to say in a different way is sometimes sufficient. Although some film adaptations are extremely well done because they follow to the letter every detail of the plot of the original work, this should not be what determines the quality of the film. Indeed, if one takes the examples of Clive Donner's film adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Sally Potter's adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, one can clearly

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<sup>2</sup> Lhermitte, Corinne. “Adaptation as Rewriting: Evolution of a Concept”. *E-journal* [online], Vol. II - n°5 | 2004, uploaded on December 9, 2009. Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/lisa/2897>. (Consulted on June 4, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Leitch, Thomas. *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*. Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 18.

notice that the two screenwriters have made completely different choices in adapting their respective works, but one can nonetheless assert that these are two excellent adaptations. For instance, Clive Donner's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* includes all the elements of the classic work, and even uses the illustrations from the story to create the settings such as the three ghosts' appearances. Indeed, the scenes in the film perfectly match Dickens' descriptions of the encounters between Scrooge and the different spirits. On the contrary, Sally Potter decided to adapt the essence of the novel rather than remaining faithful to each event in it. One can mention the final scene of the film with the androgynous angel who is seen singing in the sky, highlighting the idea of oneness and implying that Orlando's gender is not defined as one can clearly understand from the lyrics "Neither a woman nor a man". As angels are said to have no sex or at least their sex is a matter of dispute, just like Orlando's, one can say that it is used as a symbol. The appearance of this angel was not in the original work, but it is, in my opinion, a very clever choice from the director as it perfectly reflects the general idea of the novel. Moreover, the fact that Sally Potter decided to cast Jimmy Sommerville, who is a homosexual singer to play the androgynous angel is very symbolic as the film is all about acceptance and gender liberation. She could not have made a better choice to embody Orlando's quest for identity. Beyond the fact that film adaptations are regarded by many as more or less faithful rewritings of original works, one might equally point to the idea that some literary works can be seen as rewritings of reality. Indeed, art in general, not only literature, can act as a mirror or an imitation of reality, but as the word "imitation" indicates, it cannot be an accurate reproduction. This is exactly why Plato regarded creators as "deceivers"<sup>4</sup>, highlighting the point that artists, especially writers in the case of literature, draw on their own experience, and manipulate reality to turn it into fascinating fiction. One can take the example of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and the connection of the eponymous character with Vita Sackville-West. Indeed, Orlando was created for her, as Virginia Woolf clearly stated in her diary, describing the main character of her novel as being "Vita; only with a change about from one sex to the other"<sup>5</sup>. This shows how Virginia Woolf managed to rewrite reality through creativity and imagination. It can be perceived by some as a sort of deception as Orlando is a fictional character, but he or she seems so real that sometimes, one may have the impression that Virginia

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<sup>4</sup> Euron, Paolo. *Aesthetics, Theory and Interpretation of the Literary Work*. Boston, Brill-sense publishers, 2019, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Winterson, Jeanette. "'Different sex. Same Person.': How Woolf's Orlando became a trans triumph.". London, *The Guardian*, Sept. 3, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/sep/03/different-sex-same-person-how-woolfs-orlando-became-a-trans-triumph>. (Consulted on December 27, 2021.)

Woolf's novel is a real biography. Moreover, one might even assume that she did not portray reality as everyone knew it, but her own version of it, which can harken back to Aristotle's theory of the artist imitating reality not "as it is but as it should be"<sup>6</sup>. From there, one can refer to film adaptation, which is a form of artistic imitation in its own right, since it reproduces an existing work by switching from words to images. While saying this, it is almost impossible not to think about translation, which also involves reproducing an existing work, although this time, it is a matter of moving from one language to another, and not from one medium to another. Along with film adaptation, translation often gets a lot of criticism, mainly for being a poorer version than the original. One may partly agree with this, because it is undeniable that when one translates a text from one language to another, one inevitably loses some of the subtleties of the original language. However, it is worthwhile to view translation as an art, and translated works as full pieces of literature, not as copies, in order to appreciate the quality of the latter. Matthew Reynolds, a professor of English and Comparative Criticism at Oxford University, discussed this topic at a conference, explaining that translation is one of the most complicated exercises ever, and that it is necessary to be detached from the original work when reading a translation in order to truly appreciate a translator's gift for writing as one can read in the following quote:

Translations are never as good as their originals or so we tend to think. Why should that be? Surely translation can involve gain as well as loss? But, if it does that, doesn't it stop being translation and turn into something else: a 'version', 'interpretation' or 'poem' in its own right?<sup>7</sup>

The same idea could apply to film adaptations. Indeed, they could be considered as works of art in their own right, not only as interpretations, in order to be genuinely valued by viewers. If one watches a film as an artistic creation, one is not watching it as an adaptation, which could help to restore the image of film adaptation, and give it a real place in the art of filmmaking.

## 2) Literature and Films: Two Different Types of Artistic Expression.

Films and literary works are two very distinct forms of artistic expressions, as they tell similar stories in different ways. Indeed, novels are mainly based on words even though some

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<sup>6</sup> Baktir, Hasan. *The Concept of Imitation in Plato and Aristotle*. Ankara, METU Faculty of Education, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Reynolds, Matthew 2013. "Translations as Literature". *Oxford Alumni Weekend*. Oxford, University of Oxford, September 20-22.

authors can add illustrations to their works. On the contrary, films mostly rely on images and sounds such as music, or dialogues. Moreover, unlike literary works, which require a high degree of imagination on the part of the reader, when watching a film, viewers have access to the physical characteristics of the actors who play the different characters, their gestures and facial expressions, which can help them understand the plot more easily. Furthermore, one may say that time and space are expressed differently in both media. Indeed, in a novel, time is “conveyed through the use of verbal tenses”<sup>8</sup> and specific vocabulary, whereas in a film, viewers can be informed of the time period and the passing of time by the indications on the screen, or merely by watching the images. One can also mention the difference in temporality between reading a novel and watching a film, since “film ‘reading’ is regulated by the forced running time of the movie, whereas lines on a page can be read according to as many individual readings as there are readers”<sup>9</sup>. As to the representation of space in literature, and film adaptation, one can assume that it is completely different, notably because the film industry is based on visuals, and therefore provides more possibilities for stagecraft. Space is represented mentally in literature, which gives readers more freedom of imagination, whereas it is shown directly in films through the camera angles and framing chosen by the director. This is why it is important to study both media to understand all the subtleties of a work. For instance, Orlando’s witty comments in Virginia Woolf’s eponymous novel were translated into images in Sally Potter’s film adaptation through direct addresses to the camera. The director also paid particular attention to movement and tried to capture the ideas of modernity and change which were so prevalent in Virginia Woolf’s novel. Indeed, from 1:25’26 onwards, the camera stabilises in a long shot to let viewers see the whole scenery, which suggests modernity and informs them that they are in present times. The music, which starts as the motorbike approaches is clearly influenced by electronic music, which once again hints at modernism, and creates a sort of dynamism. Since the camera is placed at the front of the motorbike, the viewers have a close shot on Orlando, who is stable, despite the moving landscape, which allows them to see that she is at ease in the modern world. As for Clive Donner’s adaptation of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, one can notice that the facial expressions of George C. Scott, the actor who embodies Scrooge in the film, perfectly represents the main character’s fear of dying alone. From 1:23’50 onwards, the high angle shot of Scrooge’s tombstone followed by the close shot

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<sup>8</sup> Bellardi, Marco. “The Cinematic Mode in Fiction.” *Frontiers of Narrative Studies*, vol. 4, no. s1, 2018, pp. 24-47. Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/fns-2018-0031/html> (Consulted on June 16, 2022)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/fns-2018-0031/html>

on his face clearly depict how desperate he is. Clive Donner's choice to represent Scrooge's despair is highly insightful, as it can allude to Dickens' description of the same moment as indicated in the following quote: "he cried, upon his knees."<sup>10</sup> I think there is a close link between literature and film, even though they do not use the same artistic language. Indeed, they inspire each other, as it is proven that film is a source of inspiration for novelists, and that literature is a source of inspiration for the cinema. One can therefore claim that the different artistic languages are connected and complementary. If one takes the example of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, one can notice that it has had a major influence in the literary and cinematographic fields. One can, for instance, mention Dr. Seuss's novel *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957) and its numerous adaptations, as its main character shares a lot of similarities with Scrooge. They both despise Christmas. One can also compare Frank Capra's film *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), with Clive Donner's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, as they "are telling the exact same story, inverted from each other"<sup>11</sup>, which once again shows how inspirational Dickens' work was for other artists. Besides this complementarity between literature and cinema, one can easily claim that cinema is first based on literature, since the written precedes the visual, especially for the writing of the script or the screenplay. Each and every detail of a filmic work is first expressed through words before being translated into images, whether it be an original creation or a film adaptation. Therefore, I think it is undeniable that these two artistic media are connected, and influence each other. The invention of cinema had a considerable impact on literature. Indeed, the film industry participated in the development of visual writing, as one can read in the following quote:

Writers have always been aware of the importance of the way things are presented, but after the influence of cinema, there is a tendency to precise the optical point of view from which objects are described, and the physical variation of the characters when they move. A good example is John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, which abruptly sets us in the middle of the action. His purpose is putting the facts in front of the reader's eyes as visible as possible. Other techniques like the "slow motion" descriptions, exterior narrative mood or changing perspectives can be read in novels the same as in films, such as in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Eghian, Shant. "Why A Christmas Carol and It's a Wonderful Life are the Same Story". Liberty Island [online]. December 23, 2019. Retrieved from <https://libertyislandmag.com/2019/12/23/why-a-christmas-carol-and-its-a-wonderful-life-are-the-same-story/> (Consulted on June 16, 2022)

<sup>12</sup> Garcia, Carlos. "Subject 61 – The Influence of Cinema on the Diffusion of Literature in the English language". *PreparadorInglesAcademia* [online]. Madrid, 2021, p.5.

In this quote, one can plainly perceive how cinema has completely changed the way authors approach literature, especially descriptive writing. One can assume that film making encompasses many fields. Indeed, it deals with photography since cinema is a photographic and pictorial art. It also uses the narrative aspect of literature since it contains a narrative scheme and follows a thread which is the script like the plot of a novel. Last but not least, it can be considered as a sort of performing art just like theatre, since actors embody a role and act as comedians on stage, but in front of a camera. Cinema is a more widespread form of entertainment than literature, since the visuals keep the viewer's alert from beginning to end, and this is one of its primary purposes. Watching a film for purely aesthetic reasons or for entertainment is much less mentally and visually tiring than reading a book, which requires additional work on the part of the reader, who has to imagine the content of the story and what the author wanted to say through his or her words.

*B) Adaptation as a Source of Inspiration, Both for the Creator and the Viewer.*

1) The Use of Art to Defend a Cause (The Link between Art and Society)

The artist's commitment to his or her work influences the way the work is perceived by the audience, simply because if he or she believes in what he or she is producing, he or she is bound to be more convincing since his or her emotional involvement will be felt. One can irrefutably argue that artists are "a vehicle for expressing universal emotions"<sup>13</sup>, since they somehow tell a story, which can echo the lives of as many people as there are on earth. Indeed, even though each person does not appreciate art in the same way, and each person is free to appreciate one work of art and not another, it can be said that each work of art can awaken something in someone. Art can be interpreted in many different ways depending on one's experience, which reinforces this idea of universality, despite the fact that the "meeting" between a person and a work of art takes place individually. This universal nature allows artists to have a certain influence on people. Indeed, they have the power to change mindsets, or to make people react to controversial subjects, whether or not they are directly affected by the issue being addressed. The mere fact of giving visibility to a situation that may sometimes be voluntarily put aside by society, to avoid outbursts, excesses, or protest movements, already

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<sup>13</sup> "What Is the Artist's Role in Society?". Artwork Archive. (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/what-is-the-artist-s-role-in-society>. (Consulted on June 11, 2022)

paves the way for change. This is exactly why censorship was introduced at the time. Society was aware of the power that art could have over the world's population, and therefore sought to control its diffusion. One can take the example of gay literature, which was not well received by the society of the time, since homosexuality was considered to be an abnormality. For instance, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* was severely criticised at the time of its publication for its alleged "power to corrupt"<sup>14</sup>, and indeed was censored following numerous criticisms of its so-called obscene and depraved nature, to the extent that the author was taken to court. It can be clearly seen that censorship was a means of removing works that dealt with controversial subjects for the time, such as sapphism in the case of Radclyffe Hall's novel, to avoid negative influences on the population. Virginia Woolf also dealt with homosexuality and transgenderism in *Orlando*, but was not censored, partly because the novel had supernatural features that made these subjects acceptable as one can read in the following quote:

Unlike *The Well of Loneliness*, Virginia Woolf's ambiguous and androgynous treatment of sexuality in *Orlando*, published on 11 October 1928, was reviewed entirely in terms of its wit and charm. Woolf's novel is an extended love letter to Vita Sackville-West, taking incidents from Vita's life and aspects of her personality and weaving them into a fantastical narrative. For anyone with the perception to read between the lines, the book is a celebration of love in all its forms – by the end of the novel Orlando has enjoyed the love of men and women equally. The conceit of having Orlando change sex halfway through the novel served to make same-sex love more acceptable to audiences at the time, and helped the book escape condemnation in the press. Woolf regarded everyone as, to some degree, vacillating from one sex to another during their life, with only conventions around clothing maintaining the rigid distinctions between male and female.<sup>15</sup>

The fact that Virginia Woolf discusses subjects which were still very controversial for her time in a very poetic, and sometimes almost metaphorical way, shows that she is not trying to confront the reader directly, but rather to make him or her think in order to change the situation permanently and thus have a real impact on the world. *Orlando* is a highly committed novel, which deconstructs with bewildering subtlety "the prevailing order of things."<sup>16</sup> If one also focuses on the film adaptation of this novel, which was directed by Sally Potter in 1992, one can clearly see that it is an engaged work, particularly regarding the distribution and the stage

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<sup>14</sup> Buzwell, Greg. "The Censorship of Lesbian Fiction: From *The Well of Loneliness* to *Tipping the Velvet*". British Library [online], 23 oct. 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights/articles/the-censorship-of-lesbian-literature>. (Consulted on June 28, 2022)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Retrieved from <https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights/articles/the-censorship-of-lesbian-literature>.

<sup>16</sup> Cassigneul, Adèle, "A Far Cry from Within: Virginia Woolf's Poethics of Commitment", *Études Britanniques Contemporaines*, 2013, p. 45.

choices. Moreover, the fact that the film was directed by a woman is highly symbolic, and reinforces the feminist commitment of the original work. I think that no matter what time one is in, artists are in the best position to defend a cause or denounce a situation that they feel is not right, simply because they are more visible than most people. This is why committed art always causes a stir, and succeeds in raising the awareness of many people in the world, especially today with the rise of the media. One can argue that a work of art, whether it is visual or written, has a definite impact on the person who sees it, since it conveys particular emotions, and guides one's perception in an explicit or implicit way, through subliminal messages for example. These works allow the world to reflect upon topics that they may not have thought about, or imagined from the same perspective. This is why the angle of presentation chosen by the creator is important, depending on the message he or she wants to convey. For instance, unlike Virginia Woolf, Dickens exposes suggestively and more aggressively the issues of his time such as extreme poverty and the rich's selfishness and greed. The fact that he is a male writer probably gives him more rights in the way he chooses to approach these subjects, although they are still very controversial, his words have more impact than if he had been a woman, especially in Victorian times. In the case of film adaptations, one can argue that images can be more powerful or shocking than words, which is why they play an essential role in the reception of a work. If one takes the example of Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* published in 1985, and the dystopian TV series of the same name, one can clearly notice the differences in the way violence is represented. Indeed, the sexual assaults, and the physical and psychological abuses are described in the novel, but the fact that readers are not directly confronted with this violence, and have to imagine it, may seem less shocking to the mind, than in the series where these scenes unfold directly in front of our eyes, and nothing can be omitted. An example of this is the story of Janine's rape, and the blaming of the victim as she tells her story. This is a very difficult section to read, whether the reader identifies with the character or not, especially because it creates a feeling of oppression, as shown in the following quote:

But whose fault was it? Aunt Helena says, holding up one plump finger. Her fault, her fault, her fault, we chant in unison. Who led them on? Aunt Helena beams, pleased with us. She did. She did. She did. Why did God allow such a terrible thing to happen? Teach her a lesson. Teach her a lesson. Teach her a lesson.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). New-York City, Vintage; New e. edition, 2000, p.72.

In this quote, Janine's public punishment can be seen as a violation of the character's privacy, since her trauma, which is supposed to be part of her private sphere, is exposed to the public eye. It can be said that this victim-blaming reinforces this reification of the female body, and further legitimises sexual assaults, which is a central theme of the novel. This scene is psychologically highly violent, and may arouse a feeling of revulsion on the reader's part, particularly as it may echo contemporary events. However, I find that it is sometimes easier to read a violent scene than to see it in images, especially because one is free to imagine and leave out what one wants, whereas on the screen, except if one closes one's eyes, one witnesses the violence of a scene in its entirety, even when it appears to be much too shocking. In the TV series, I found that the scene of Janine's public punishment took on a different dimension, particularly because Janine is constantly seen in close-ups, and one can see on her face how traumatised she still is after what happened to her. One can witness the evolution of her facial expressions as the circle of people around her closes on her to make her feel guilty, and to push her to admit that she is the only one responsible for her fate, and that the men who raped her are innocent. The fact that Aunt Lydia is constantly seen from Janine's perspective from a low angle reinforces the ideas of oppression and submission of the victim, as Aunt Lydia appears much more imposing than she really is. Although the two scenes are identical in terms of plot, they do not leave the same psychological impression. In all cases, whether it is literature, cinema or another art form, artists have the power to make people react to subjects that can sometimes shock them, and to change people's attitudes. An artist who defends a cause, especially when it is still taboo or not very well accepted in a society or in the world, can help to make a difference, because such works make people think, which is already a great achievement. A work of art that gets talked about, whether for positive or negative reasons, has an influence on people, which shows the close link between artists and society.

## 2) Creativity as an Escape for Both the Creator and the Viewer: The Ongoing Process of Rediscovering Works Through Film Adaptations, and the Infinite Different Possibilities of Adapting the Same Work.

Depending on the artistic direction a director takes, or the aspect of a literary work he or she decides to focus on, the adaptation will not be perceived in the same way. Indeed, depending on what the director wants to tell, and the message he or she wants to convey to the audience, he or she will not make the same stage choices. This is why a work can be adapted many times, and why each adaptation is different. Literary works such as Virginia Woolf's or

Dickens' are full of details and symbols that can be used by directors, and they are not compelled to use them all. As mentioned earlier, the interesting thing about film adaptation is to look at the choices made by the director, since the film analysis can be based on the elements of the original work that have not been selected. Asking questions about why or how the director chose to present a work from one angle and not another can lead to further reflection on the film adaptation, especially if one also takes into account the director's connection to, and experience with, the original work. If one takes the example of Sally Potter, the director of the adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, which is considered by many to be an 'unfilmable'<sup>18</sup> novel, one can better understand the commitment that shines through in her work. The unfilmable side of *Orlando* is part of the intrinsic character of modernist novels, which are considered unreadable, and therefore very difficult to translate to the screen as one can read in the following quote:

First, the commercial pressures on mainstream cinematic production have historically (at least since the early 1930s) demanded slick products that do not challenge viewers, whereas high literary modernism demands scrupulous attention from readers. Second, the interest among modernist writers in unreliable narrators, psychologically complex characters, fragmented perceptions, and mythical allusions are devices that rarely translate smoothly into film without technical complication or dilution of creative intent. And, third, the modernist disdain of bourgeois culture does not sit comfortably with the liberal ideology that is usually upheld in commercial film.<sup>19</sup>

A film is meant to be accessible to a wide audience, which implies that it cannot include too many elements that could hinder understanding. Bringing a modernist novel to the screen therefore requires a lot of work on the part of the director, in order to create an adaptation that is both understandable and faithful to the original work. Studying both the novel and its film adaptation can help the pupils to better understand the subtleties of the work, and thus make both the novel and the film accessible to them so that they can come up with an analysis. Indeed, this adaptation perfectly reflects the poetic aspect of the original work, and transcribes the author's wit. When one looks at this film with a more critical eye, the work done by the director on the original work is obvious, and it is undeniable that she has a special interest in it, as can be seen in the following quote: "It had an incredible effect on me", Potter says of reading Woolf's novel as a teenager. 'I remember feeling that I wasn't just reading it, I was watching

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<sup>18</sup> BBC Culture. "Sally Potter Describes How to Film an 'Unfilmable' Book". 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20171031-sally-potter-describes-how-to-film-an-unfilmable-book>. (Consulted on July 1, 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Halliwell, Martin. "Modernism and Adaptation", *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan, CUP, 2007, pp. 90-91.

it... I could see it,' she says."<sup>20</sup>. The fact that Sally Potter has a special connection with this work, and that it has left such an impression on her, can also be seen as one of the reasons why this is such a good adaptation. Indeed, if the work had been directed by another director, the result would not have been the same, and he or she would probably not have made the same choices. No matter which work is adapted into a film, there are as many possibilities for adaptation as there are directors. One can refer to the numerous adaptations of Dickens' works that have been made, notably the adaptations of *David Copperfield*. Unlike *Orlando*, which was only adapted to the screen once, Dickens' novels were almost all adapted several times. This can be explained by the fact that his novels are highly visual, particularly because the author thought of each scene as a play, which makes them easier to adapt to the cinema. His novels have an important social dimension, and the author addresses the problems of poverty and social class differences. These themes should therefore be integrated in the various film adaptations, since they are central to the work, and are among the elements that Dickens wanted to highlight. However, if one takes the example of the adaptations of 1935, and of 2019, they do not have the same aim at all, the former follows the plot of the novel in its entirety keeping the same social aim, and the latter takes a rather satirical direction and turns it more into a comedy, which could be considered by some as a distortion of the original work. Keeping in mind the fact that the social aim was seen by Dickens as central to his novel, one may consider that the second adaptation does not respect the plot. Besides, the 2019 version can be seen as a new interpretation full of anachronisms. The director has decided to move away from the very dark, almost pathetic side of Dickens' universe to feature characters of all ethnicities living together. In the end, this adaptation has a kind of social aim since it seeks to show an inclusive world, but it is historically unreliable, and does not correspond to the original novel, which could be debatable. It may be interesting, as teachers, to ask the pupils' opinions on this adaptation, and see what arguments they can come up with. Apart from the question of stage choices, one can mention the possibility of creating a world of one's own to get away from everyday life through literature and cinema, since the author's world in a novel can become the reader's, who imagines it and immerses himself or herself in the atmosphere. I think it is important to be and feel represented in an art form, whether it is in a literary work or on screen, especially for younger generations who are trying to find themselves, and need a sense of belonging. One can therefore refer to the impact of Orlando's character, and its resonance with modern times,

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<sup>20</sup> BBC Culture. "Sally Potter Describes How to Film an 'Unfilmable' Book". 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20171031-sally-potter-describes-how-to-film-an-unfilmable-book>.

regardless of the period in which the readers find themselves. Indeed, the novel tackles subjects, which can help many people to deal with their lives, and accept who they are such as androgyny, transidentity, or homosexuality. In my opinion, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* is one of most brilliant novels ever written, as it presents, with a puzzling poetry, subjects that may still be taboo today. Virginia Woolf shows that sexuality and gender are fluid and have nothing to do with each other. The fact that the author presents homosexuality and transidentity as perfectly normal and natural through her eponymous character's introspective attitude can help people who are afraid to show who they are to do so. This has been the case for many well-known authors such as Val McDermid, a Scottish novelist who wrote:

With its gender-bending fluidity, it offered a whole range of romantic options but most of all, it fizzed with joie de vivre. It suggested that falling in love outside the mainstream was not a direct route to misery. And the language glowed, in startling contrast to everything else I came across. It stopped me feeling ashamed.<sup>21</sup>

This quote shows how art can help people come to terms with who they are, and I believe that studying canonical works like these in high school is important because school is the first form of society in which the pupils find themselves, and it is essential to educate them about these subjects, so that they become aware that difference is not to be rejected but accepted. The study of literature and film adaptation does not only have a cultural purpose, but also an educational one that is worth pursuing. The pupils' social development can also be achieved through the study of fiction, which again shows the importance of creativity and imagination in the development of teenagers, as their critical mind is not only a means of analysing works of art, but also the society around them. Last but not least, one can clearly state that without the reader, a novel does not come to life or is rapidly forgotten, since no one is there to interpret it, and what is the purpose of art if not to live again and again through the eyes of the audience? Film adaptations allow an author's world to be discovered by a wider audience, and potentially attract new readers, thus sharing the work and ensuring its legacy.

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<sup>21</sup> Walters, Sarah, White, Edmund, Winterson, Jeanette, Callow, Simon, Kay, Jackie, Tòibín, Colm, Donoghue, Emma. ““At last, I felt I fitted in”: Writers on the Books that Helped them Come Out”. London, *The Guardian*, July 1, 2017.

### C) *The Cultural Purpose of Studying both the Written and the Visual.*

#### 1) Teaching History Through Literature and Cinematographic Adaptations

The study of literature and cinematographic adaptations can allow pupils to discover the cultural specificities of a country. Indeed, literature is a way to allow pupils to be exposed to a particular historical context, and to understand the issues of a period through fiction, which can sometimes seem more enjoyable and accessible to pupils than a classical history lesson. Nevertheless, I find that associating the literary part with a visual representation, especially through film adaptation, can be beneficial, especially for them to remember the content of the lesson more easily. Visual means often make it easier to understand the stereotypes, archetypes, or concepts associated with a territory or a certain period, as images tend to be more remembered than words. This process of quick and lasting memorisation is called “the picture superiority effect”<sup>22</sup>. This is most used in the marketing industry to imprint images in the minds of potential future customers, and to entice them to buy products that they do not necessarily need. However, it can be worth using in education, especially for anything related to history, since it can help pupils to recall events more easily, hence the advantage of using films. In Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, the author tackles subjects such as gender and sexual stereotypes, and clearly tries to deconstruct them as one can read in the following quote:

Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male and female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above. Of the complications and confusions which thus result everyone has had experience; but here we leave the general question and note only the odd effect it had in the particular case of Orlando herself.<sup>23</sup>

In this quote, the author not only questions the concept of gender identity, but also deconstructs the stereotypes associated with the female sex back then. Indeed, through the issue of gender, she questions the very principle of gender roles in society, as women were fundamentally considered to be the weaker sex. As a result of her change of sex, Orlando is denied opportunities and her rights are restricted. Although she does not feel any different from the person she was before her transition, the fact that she wears clothes associated with the female

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<sup>22</sup> Stevens, John. “How to Use the Picture Superiority Effect to your Advantage”. *Wordtracker*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.wordtracker.com/academy/social/visual/how-to-use-the-picture-superiority-effect-to-your-advantage>. (Consulted on June 22, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 132-133.

gender automatically takes away the privilege of being respected within the society of the time. Through this quote, one can address the issue of gender, and how it has changed over the years, thus highlighting the fact that Virginia Woolf was a committed artist ahead of her time. One can also discuss the place of women in society, gender expectations, and the notion of separate spheres. In the film adaptation, the notion of gender identity is strongly present, as well as the idea that gender is not a fixed item, notably through the fact that the actress playing Orlando has a very androgynous appearance. It may therefore be interesting to compare the way in which the issue was addressed in the two media. Orlando's dispossession of her properties after her change of sex can make readers feel indignant, as there is a clear difference between men's and women's rights. This can make pupils more committed to their learning, as it appeals to their emotions. Linking knowledge to emotions can make it more enjoyable to learn about history, because it is no longer a question of pure facts, but of a historical context within a story including characters to whom the pupils can relate and identify to a greater or lesser extent as one can read in the following quote:

If I say to you the king died and then the queen died, that's a sequence of events. If I say the king died and the queen died of grief, that's a story. That's human. That calls for empathy on the part of the teller of the story and of the listener to the story.<sup>24</sup>

In Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, readers are given a real insight into the lives of poor people in the Victorian era, particularly through the character of Tiny Tim, a disabled child, whose role is precisely to make the reader feel empathy and interest in his plight. Indeed, he cannot be cured because of Scrooge's selfishness, which can trigger a sense of outrage. One has everything but does not want to help others and the other has no money but still spreads joy around and gives as much as he can despite his limited means. Through this binary pattern, Dickens intends to underline social class differences, and the appalling working and living conditions of the working class during the industrial revolution. This novel can therefore be used to discuss the period of the industrial revolution, the poor laws, child labour, and everything related to the working and living conditions of the working classes, in a more socially responsible manner. In the film adaptation, these themes are dealt with in the same way as in the novel. However, seeing the characters in their daily lives, and witnessing the social misery of the time directly, may be more shocking to the learner. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, watching a scene without any filter can be more powerful than reading about it, which can strike a chord with pupils. From there, one can mention Charlotte Mason's idea of "emotion and

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<sup>24</sup> Forster, E.M, *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2016, p. 52.

empathy as critical components of history's ability to speak to the human heart"<sup>25</sup>, since it can be linked to teaching history through stories so that pupils feel more involved, and remember the information more easily. Teaching history through the perspective of several characters of different genders, or social classes, can provide a broader view of life at the time. It can allow pupils to really understand the differences related to the treatment of different parties, whether it be the treatment of women or that of the working classes, and enable them to discuss these differences. One can therefore mention the concept of historical fictions, which can be valuable for learning history, as it can break down the complexity of it and make it available to everyone. Besides, since the notion of historical fiction includes the term fiction, it implies that there is a degree of imagination as "the author of historical fiction must blend historical facts with imagination and creative style to master his art"<sup>26</sup>. For instance, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* recounts through the eyes of several characters the great depression that shook Britain in the early 1840s and, caused a wave of unemployment and starvation among the lower classes, a period known as the "Hungry Forties". This historical aspect blended with the fictional side of the Christmas story can allow pupils not only to access historical knowledge, but also to understand how the author managed to draw inspiration from historical facts to create his story. Through the study of historical fictions, the pupils can also reflect on the role of creativity and imagination in the writing process. I think that this kind of analysis can subsequently lead to a final task related to the creative process of writing a historical fiction.

## 2) Acquiring Knowledge to Become Enlightened Citizens.

The notion of intertextuality is also extremely important in literary and film analyses, especially when it comes to the ability to identify external references in the canonical works studied in class. The fact that many works inspire each other, whether through clear quotations or simple allusions, shows how the different artistic works are connected to each other. The teachers' goal is to develop the pupils' cultural awareness so that they can recognise these references, and suggest an analysis of them in context. For instance, Sally Potter's adaptation of *Orlando* can be seen as a form of intertextuality, since she adapted Woolf's novel into a film.

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<sup>25</sup> Berg, Rea. "Why Teach History through Literature?". *Beautiful Feet Books*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.bfbooks.com/Why-Teach-History-Through-Literature>. (Consulted on June 2, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Herz, Sarah K. "Using Historical Fiction in the History Classroom". *Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute*. (n.d.).

Moreover, if one considers the fact that Orlando's character was itself inspired by Vita Sackville West, one can state that the director also adapted a part of Virginia Woolf's life, which is somehow another sort of intertextuality. In her novel, Virginia Woolf regularly refers to other famous works or authors such as Shakespeare as one can read in the following quote: "He – for there could be no doubt of his sex, through the fashion of the time did something to disguise it – was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor, which swung from the rafters"<sup>27</sup>. If one considers the rest of the novel, and Orlando's admiration for Shakespeare, whom he considers the greatest poet of all time, one can clearly see that the reference to the "Moor" is a direct allusion to *Othello*, which was first known as *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice*. The reference is not easy to spot if one has not read Shakespeare's work, which may be the case for high school pupils, so the aim is to get them to think about the meaning of this quotation in relation to all the other allusions<sup>28</sup>. Virginia Woolf leaves nothing to chance, and everything she writes has a meaning for her, or for her character. It is therefore important to understand intertextual references to better understand the novel studied in class, and work on it, since it is precisely by making links between different works, and by drawing on the knowledge they already possess, that pupils can develop their critical mind and provide good analyses, as can be read in the following quote:

This idea of intertextuality is a very vital tool to use in the classroom, especially in an English classroom. Having students understand how texts are intertextual is very important in helping students grow as readers and critical thinkers. We tend to rely on intertextuality to make meaning of what we are reading. For example, if we read something and it is about a topic, location, religion, culture, specific person, etc. that we are not familiar with, then we can easily find another piece of writing that looks at that specific thing that we need to learn more about<sup>29</sup>.

The notion of intertextuality allows pupils to become more enlightened citizens, since everything they learn, and all the cultural knowledge they acquire, can be used in their daily lives to understand the world around them, or to perceive references that they had not thought

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<sup>27</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2019, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Here are some of the allusions I am referring to: Orlando and Sasha attend a theatre performance of *Othello* during the great frost, which becomes part of the connection between Shakespeare and Orlando. Orlando is also the name of a character in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, which can be seen as a direct allusion. Finally, Virginia Woolf implies that Orlando unknowingly met Shakespeare as a young man, describing him as "the shabby man" at the beginning of the novel.

<sup>29</sup> Miss Pringle's Teacher page. "The Importance of Intertextuality in the Classroom". Feb. 21, 2020. Retrieved from <https://mspringleteacherpage.weebly.com/teaching-writing-blog/the-importance-of-intertextuality-in-the-classroom>. (Consulted on July 13, 2022).

of before. Indeed, intertextuality is everywhere, and references can be found in any field, whether in the artistic or commercial sector. For example, one can mention the well-known Ray-ban advertisement in 2019, which clearly alluded to the pop art movement, and to Andy Warhol's famous silkscreen painting, *Marilyn Diptych*. In the music industry, one can also refer to Bowie's song "We are the dead", which directly alludes to Orwell's *1984*, as these words are the last ones that Winston Smith and Julia exchange before they get arrested by the thought police. Some of these references cannot be perceived if one does not know about the literary works behind them. Besides, understanding the world better, and acquiring cultural knowledge can be seen as a means of boosting the pupils' self-confidence, as the more a pupil understands, the more he/she wants to learn. Therefore, it is important to work on intertextual references, be they literary or historical, as they can be found in other subjects than English. If pupils perceive and/or understand an element in a text or an image, they will immediately feel more involved as they will feel that they have something to contribute to the analysis during the group discussion, which may encourage them to participate. The more a pupil feels that he/she is encouraged to speak, and that his or her contributions are valued, the more self-confident he/she will be and the more he/she will dare to speak up. In addition to what has been said, it can be interesting to use literature to encourage pupils to reflect on the past in order to better understand the present, and to make links between history and what is happening in their lives. From an educational point of view, Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* can be worth analysing, especially in terms of class differences<sup>30</sup>. This study can allow teachers to draw parallels with the social discriminations that exist in the world today, to make pupils reflect on these differences, and to lead them to understand that it is necessary to accept others regardless of their social backgrounds. Furthermore, canonical literature, cinema and history can also be relied upon to develop pupils' critical thinking, particularly through the confrontation of points of view, to teach them to step back from events and not assume that everything is true. Teachers have to goad them into becoming active readers or viewers. For instance, one can refer to the characters' different points of view in *A Christmas Carol*, which can be helpful for working on focalisation and reliability as can be read in the following quote:

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix C pp. 70-75.

struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. [...] Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, “My dear Scrooge, how are you?”<sup>31</sup>

In this quote, one can clearly notice that the narrator is unreliable, as it is obvious that he does not like Scrooge. Instead of writing a neutral description while allowing readers access to the thoughts of the character, as it is often the case with third-person omniscient narrators, the narrator here allows himself to give his opinion of Scrooge, whom he openly mocks, and establishes a clear distance between himself and the character to convey a sense of emotional detachment. It might be interesting to have the pupils work on this descriptive part, and to ask them how they feel about Scrooge, in order to infer that the way he is described and the negative implication of the narrator contribute to the readers’ instinct to loathe him from the start of the story.

## **II- How to Develop Creativity Through Interpretation?**

### *A) The Link Between Analytical Abilities and Imagination*

#### 1) Freedom of Mind and Analysis Through Imagination and Creativity.

The action-oriented approach was proposed by the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for languages in 2001 and 2008, which aims at seeing the pupils as “social agents engaging in different types of language activities”<sup>32</sup>. Since then, pupils are no longer considered as passive learners, but have a genuine role in their learning, which can be a motivating factor. Indeed, the fact that the pupils are now placed at the centre of the educational process, as the central pillar of the class, and no longer as mere observers, allows them to have more freedom, in their willingness and ability to express themselves within the classroom or in the management of their learning. With such a system, the teacher is no longer seen as the sole holder of knowledge, but more as a medium of transmission, and language learning becomes more playful, and loses the very codified aspect that could exist in previous approaches. This redefinition of the codes and contents of language teaching is considered “a

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<sup>31</sup> Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Piccardo, Enrica, North, Brian. *The Action-Oriented Approach: A Dynamic Vision of Language Education*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 2019, p. 22.

driving force for learners' creativity and personal development"<sup>33</sup>, which brings a very innovative side to the notion of learning. This new aspect can be particularly useful in the case of literary analysis as the pupils are now allowed to produce personal analyses and give their own vision of the extracts that are submitted to them in class. It can be stated that teachers can make the pupils even more active by giving them freedom of thought and enabling them to provide creativity in their interpretation because as a result of these, they feel listened to, and know that their opinion is considered. As one of the cornerstones of education is encouragement, pushing them to think for themselves, and to appeal to both their critical and creative minds, encourages them to be autonomous, and gives them confidence in themselves, and in what they can produce. This is exactly what Robert J. Marzano, a researcher in educational science at the University of Washington, has categorised as "instructional strategies to increase student voice"<sup>34</sup>. This is interesting for several reasons, as it highlights how giving pupils more freedom of expression, by allowing them to use their imagination, and not restricting their thinking, can have a very beneficial impact, both on the way they view learning, and on the school climate in the broadest sense. From what I have seen so far, observing the behaviour of several pupils in class, it is obvious that a pupil who gets to grips with his or her learning, who shares with the teacher, and who is encouraged in his or her reasoning, even when this is the opposite of what was expected, has a much higher degree of understanding in the end than a pupil who is not pushed to think for himself or herself, and who is prevented from speaking when what he or she has imagined from the text is not what was actually expected. I think it is very important to let a pupil use his or her imagination, and express his or her creativity through the analysis and interpretation of literary texts, and films, because it is proven that "[it] is a powerful factor to be stimulated and developed in teaching literature"<sup>35</sup>, mainly for the fact that "through imagination, the students [are] able to access their deep feelings, which lead them to access their deep thinking"<sup>36</sup>. Thus, I can argue that even if a pupil's interpretation and understanding of an excerpt from a literary work or a film clip is incoherent at first, the fact that he or she tries to find a meaning in the text, or to reveal a certain symbolism through the film's images, already allows him or her to learn to develop his or her critical mind. As a result, all the things that may appear as a waste of time will save time afterwards, since the pupil will

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 196.

<sup>34</sup> Marzano, Robert J. *Delivering on the Promise: The Education Revolution*. Bloomington, Solution Tree, 2008, p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> Hussein, Marwa Sami. "Teaching Imagination through Literature". *Tikrit University Journal for Humanities*. Vol. 21, n° 7, July 2014, p. 1656.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1656.

have understood the process to discover the meaning of a text or a film, without necessarily having understood all the words. To sum up, imagination allows pupils to create their own learning paradigm from the knowledge given by teachers, which makes it easier for them to move on to analyse information through the use of learning strategies. From there, I can draw a parallel between how the pupils think and what they think, since, as I previously mentioned, what matters in the first place is not necessarily the content of the pupils' interpretations, but the way they use their analytical skills, because this part is what makes them progress. Undoubtedly, the pupils can develop their thinking skills and critical abilities through creative thinking and imagination, notably because a pupil who learns how to think creatively is more likely to transfer it into critical thinking, as he or she will have created automatisms. I can assume that imagination, creativity, and critical thinking work synchronously in the case of literary and film analyses, since "[one] need[s] creativity in critical thinking to come up with arguments, counterexamples, and alternative explanations. And creativity needs critical thinking in evaluating and improving new ideas."<sup>37</sup> Learning how to be critical requires a certain amount of creativity as it calls on imagination, which is useful to understand abstract concepts and ideas, perceive the more subtle aspects of a literary work, and thus get what the authors of the message tried to convey. Virginia Woolf, for instance, uses very regularly abstract concepts, symbols, and images, which aim at "express[ing] some genuinely new ideas or inner thoughts of human mind which cannot be conveyed through the conventional medium of language in its literary capacity"<sup>38</sup>, meaning that sometimes words cannot fully reflect an author's thoughts, and that it is necessary to be creative in order to understand what he or she meant through the images and symbols used, as one can read in the following excerpt:

But if sleep it was, of what nature, we can scarcely refrain from asking, are such sleeps as these? Are they remedial measures—trances in which the most galling memories, events that seem likely to cripple life for ever, are brushed with a dark wing which rubs their harshness off and gilds them, even the ugliest, and basest, with a lustre, an incandescence? Has the finger of death to be laid on the tumult of life from time to time lest it rend us asunder? Are we so made that we have to take death in small doses daily or we could not go on with the business of living? And then what strange powers are these that penetrate our most secret ways and change our most treasured possessions without our willing it? Had Orlando, worn out by the extremity of his suffering, died for a week,

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<sup>37</sup> Lau, Joe Y. F. *An Introduction to Critical Thinking and Creativity: Think More, Think Better*. New-York, Wiley, 2011, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Sekh, Sujana. "Elucidate that Virginia Woolf Conveys Human Consciousness and Inwardness Through the Use of Imagery and Symbols in Her Novels". *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*. Muzaffarpur, India, B.R.A.B. University, vol. 6, issue 1, Feb. 2018, p. 872.

and then come to life again? And if so, of what nature is death and of what nature life? Having waited well over half an hour for an answer to these questions, and none coming, let us get on with the story.<sup>39</sup>

This quote implies that the reason why Orlando manages to live through the centuries without ageing is that he dies “in small doses,” and that his daily deaths or transitions are similar to recharging naps or rebirths. The notion of temporality in *Orlando* is quite abstract and confusing, because it is completely deconstructed, and does not conform to the usual pattern, as it seems to have no past, no present, and no future, but instead seems to stop, or follow its own rules. It is at this point that imagination has a role to play, since in order to interpret what is written, one must be able to put oneself in the author’s shoes, and imagine why he or she made one choice and not another. Here, the passage of time is associated with the ideas of change and transformation, which Orlando does not experience the same way, and that is exactly why it does not have the usual pattern. Time is socially constructed and is therefore a new constraint, so just as Orlando defies the laws of nature, and social expectations, he also resists the passage of time, and seems to dissolve it. Given what one has seen in the previous analysis, the process of imagination appears to be a necessary tool to access what is beyond the reach of our eyes and mind. Imagination allows for the creation of new connections between the conscious and unconscious that can subsequently allow for a more accurate and detailed analysis.

## 2) Kant’s Notion of “Productive Imagination” and Its Application to Teaching.

Imagination is an essential faculty for developing the ability to synthesise because after reading a text or watching a film, it allows us to recreate mental images of what we have just read or seen, in order to extract the essential elements. When Kant dealt with this subject, he introduced it as the “transcendental function of the imagination”<sup>40</sup>, which means that people are able to turn the unconscious into the conscious to create a sort of physical experience from a mental one, and to add a sense of temporality to what has just been seen or read. In the case of literary and filmic analyses, this function makes it possible to have a synthetic image of all the elements that have just been mentally processed, and to make choices or associations between

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<sup>39</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). London, Penguin Classics, 2007, p. 253.

several ideas that coincide with each other. If one considers Kant's definition of synthesis, namely "the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition"<sup>41</sup>, one can easily realise the value of imagination in this process, since it is impossible to make a selection between various elements without first remembering all that has been seen so far, an action that is only possible through the use of imagination, especially because memory is derived from it and vice versa. I think that teaching canonical literature through film adaptations is extremely important to develop the synthetical aspect of the pupils' imagination because some of them are more sensitive to images than to words, and having them study both the written and the film version of a novel can help them to create visual images, which they can then use to interpret the text. This is one of the many reasons why film adaptation can be considered as a good supplement to the original work, especially for educational purposes. Teaching a student to create visual images from the written material, through film adaptations, can enable a teacher to make pupils aware that a written work, although using words, can also be considered as visual. This is particularly the case with Virginia Woolf, whose works have a rather impressive photographic dimension as they "[are] shaped by her knowledge of, and fascination with, visual cultures."<sup>42</sup>, which explains why photographs and other types of visual art can often be found throughout the pages, as in *Orlando* for instance. It can thus be argued that the visual is linked to the ability to synthesise, since without this capacity, no mental image can be created by the learner, and therefore interpretation is more difficult, since he or she cannot make any connections. Nevertheless, before making associations, it is important for the pupil to understand the work and make sense of it. It is in this light that one can use Kant's view on imagination, and the questioning of assumptions. Indeed, it can be a valuable tool both to guide pupils in their process of understanding, and to develop their critical thinking skills, as it can allow them to confirm their assumptions or not, and reflect on the ideas of their classmates, thereby fostering communication. Interpretation is based on personal judgement, which can be considered as a schematic vision of an element from which a subjective meaning is derived, and thus an effect of one's imagination. This is actually Kant's theory of "the schematisation of imagination"<sup>43</sup>. He used the example of Mathematics, which is usually a science based on reason, and facts, showing that even a hard science uses imagination in its process. I noticed that his vision could

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210.

<sup>42</sup> Humm, Maggie. "Virginia Woolf and Visual Culture". *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 214.

<sup>43</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement* (1790). Birmingham, Free Press, 2008, p. 514.

be extended to many different fields, including human sciences, and literary and film analyses. Indeed, Kant thought that to be able to understand a very abstract idea, people had to conceptualise it in their minds through the process of imagination. He used the example of “a triangle”<sup>44</sup> to prove his point, asserting that geometrical construction is only possible because people can visualise the object without seeing it, which means that if they see the same object several times in a row, namely “a triangle” in the present case, it will be easier for them to identify it as such, and associate it with elements of the same category, *i.e.* geometrical shapes, no matter where they see it. When one tries to interpret an excerpt from a literary work or a film adaptation, the concepts of “productive imagination”<sup>45</sup> and “sensible intuition”<sup>46</sup> can also be used, because one has to be able to associate motifs, and symbols together and classify them in different categories to analyse them and create an outline. When one reads or hears a word, or sees an image, one’s brain automatically creates connections with other concepts that may echo the words one has read or the images one has seen, all through the schematic faculty of one’s imagination, in the same way that it is used to know that a triangle is a triangle, because it has three sides, and that it is a geometric shape like a square or a rectangle. In literary interpretation, as in Kant’s mathematics, the process of questioning assumptions has the same place, since it allows the brain to make selections directly to exclude all elements that have no relation to what one wants to prove, hence the importance of anticipation in the analysis of a literary or filmic extract. In my opinion, the best way to describe the function of one’s productive imagination is to say that it “creates unity”<sup>47</sup> in one’s mind, which is an essential aspect of learning, and teaching, mainly because having a structured mind allows the teacher to convey a precise message, which will then be understood clearly by the pupils. In the case of film and literary analyses, structure and content are inextricably linked, since an interpretation cannot be properly understood without a clear outline and flow of ideas, hence the value of the process of understanding to make sense of a document. From Kant’s account of the significance of productive imagination in questioning hypotheses in mathematics, and the way I applied this to human science, I was able to identify four main steps that could enable pupils to make sense of a document on their own, which worked particularly well with Virginia Woolf’s and Dickens’ works. The first step, which is anticipation, as previously mentioned, is the most important one

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<sup>44</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). London, Penguin Classics, 2007, p. 52.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 240.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 245.

<sup>47</sup> Geniusas, Saulius. *Stretching the Limits of Productive Imagination*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018, p. 7.

in my opinion, since it makes the first link between the pupil and the document, which means that it has to be coherent, and really enhance understanding. It consists in imagining the content of a document from the title of the work or a small extract, for instance. Then comes the second step, which is based upon the reading of the text or the viewing of the film, to allow the pupils to reflect upon their assumptions and compare them with the information provided in the document. This makes it possible for the pupils to make a preliminary selection of elements that they can potentially use in their analysis. After this initial observation in the text or film clip, they might be able, on a second viewing or reading, to extract the essential elements of the plot, this time in greater depth, by associating the information they have found on their own, and then during the group discussion in class. Finally, the last step involves the interpretation and detailed analysis of the document, in which the pupils can once again use their imagination, and all that ensues from it, according to Kant, namely their critical judgement, and their creativity. This process can be applied to any type of text, regardless of the era, as one can witness with the study of Dickens who is a 19<sup>th</sup> century author, and Virginia Woolf who is a 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist writer. I am now going to use an excerpt from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, more specifically "Stave Two: The First of the Three Spirits"<sup>48</sup>, and an extract from Clive Donner's film adaptation from 31'02 to 34'02, to illustrate the four steps I have just mentioned, and show how I would have proceeded in a real classroom situation. I chose to deal with Dickens' work, and not Virginia Woolf's for this example to have the opportunity to present an anticipation from the title of the work, which is most widely used, and not with a quote from the novel, as I would have had to do with Virginia Woolf, the title being far too vague to act as an introduction. To be more specific, this class session could be carried out with a final year class specialising in English, on the theme "Arts et débats d'idées", and the first axis of study, namely "Art et Contestation", so as to deal with the social purpose of Dickens' tale. In our case, the anticipation will therefore be based on the title of the work, as previously stated, and the name the chapter so that the pupils can infer that it is a Christmas tale, and thus find some lines of thought based on the traditions and values linked to this celebration such as family, generosity, sharing. They should also know that there are three ghosts in the story, and that the extract under study features the first one. Then, the pupils can read the entire extract and watch the corresponding film clip to check their hypotheses by looking for allusions to Christmas such as "we're to be together all the Christmas long" (p. 60) or "it was Christmas time again" (p. 61), and they can notice afterwards that, in the film, there is no allusion to

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<sup>48</sup> See appendix A p. 62.

Christmas at the school is not decorated for the occasion, which suggests that the celebrations here were not particularly cheerful. As it was previously stated in the anticipation, the pupils can also try to identify references to family such as “I have come to bring you home dear brother” (p. 60) or “Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home’s like Heaven!” (p. 60). In the film clip, as in the novel, the notion of family has a rather ambivalent meaning as Scrooge seems to be happy to see his sister again, but is quite reserved when talking about his father. Indeed, the pan shot from 31’06 onwards, following Fan’s movement as she runs to find her brother, highlights her eagerness to see and hug him, which demonstrates her attachment to him. On the contrary, the shot reverse shot from 32’17 onwards reflects more an idea of distance and coldness between Scrooge, who seems happy to see his father, and the latter who immediately pushes him away. The ideas of generosity and joyful feelings, which are often associated with Christmas time, are also present as one can read in the following quotes: “laughed”, “embrace”, “clapped her hands” (p. 60), and “she had a large heart” (p. 61). They are portrayed in the film by the close shot on Scrooge and the ghost, showing the character’s nostalgia at 33’40. It is clear that all the joyful elements are associated with his sister, both in the film and the novel, suggesting that she was his only source of happiness. To conclude on this stage, one can assert that, in this part, the pupils can already start to spot how the main themes are represented in the text, and how they have been adapted, which will be useful for their future interpretation. After rereading the excerpt, watching the film clip again, and checking their hypotheses, the pupils can extract the essential elements of the works, namely the importance of family for Scrooge, who seems to have a particularly strong bond with his sister; traditions, since Christmas is associated with the joy of returning to the family home and reuniting with loved ones; and the threat of the passage of time and the forgetting of memories, since Scrooge has lost the zest for life that animated him as a child, and which the ghost reminds him of, by making him relive this episode in his life. From there, one can surely understand that Scrooge’s sister is an important part of his past because she is the one who brought joy and innocence in his life, which he clearly lacks in the present time. The fact that his sister insists that his father now accepts his return to the family home, although described in a very positive way, implies that Scrooge, as a child, has been removed from his family, and thus reinforces the loneliness and neglect he has suffered from. This explains his loathing of Christmas, and the reason why the character becomes withdrawn and chooses to be alone, rejecting all the people who are close to him. Indeed, the family he has left, especially his nephew, reminds him of all that he has lost and can never get back. This is even clearer in the film clip when the Ghost of Christmas Past says that Fred “bears a strong resemblance to [his] sister” at 33’49.

Unlike his past self, who had no choice in being alone, he now has the power to choose, which gives him a sense of control over his life. In this example, outlining the main phases of understanding of the works, one can witness the constant progression of thought between each phase, showing the role and importance of each one in creating a detailed analysis, and in the process of developing critical thinking skills that evolve and sharpen as the commentary is built up, both for good pupils, and for those with more difficulties. These four steps appear as a funnel, starting from the most general meaning of the document to its deepest appreciation. It is important to carry out feedback as a whole class to allow pupils to discuss their ideas and build a commentary together, combining thorough argumentation and detailed analysis of the documents. As well as developing critical thinking, this process also helps to promote communication skills “that students ultimately need to be successful beyond the educational institution.”<sup>49</sup>. Indeed, the act of communication is a requisite skill, as it is connected to the ability to question oneself and think about the world, which leads the pupils to become enlightened citizens. In order to reach this point, imagination also has a role to play as all social constructs involve imagination, which means that if one is to think, one needs to imagine first, which is why this faculty is important in the educational process. In short, imagination is the basis of knowledge.

### *B) Learning How to Organise Ideas and Rules of Conduct Through Play Activities*

#### 1) Studying Film Adaptation to Create Connections and Interactions

One of the most interesting aspects of teaching a foreign language is to be able to open up the pupils’ minds and provide them with knowledge that is not only theoretical, as it is the case with many other subjects, but also more practical and social-oriented knowledge. Indeed, teaching is mainly based on oral communication and learning a foreign language is, above all, about communication. However, when it comes to speaking in a foreign language, the pupils tend to be reluctant, usually for fear of judgement, and the challenge is to find a way to get them to express themselves without necessarily making them feel that it is a tremendous effort or a daunting task. This is precisely the reason why debates and roleplays are so valuable, as they allow the pupils to express themselves easily, learn vocabulary, and improve their grammar,

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<sup>49</sup> Johnson, Lisa. *Cultivating Communication in the Classroom*. Thousand Oaks, Corwin, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, March 2017, p. 20.

while acting. It was proven that they tend to be less shy and more engaged in discussions, when they “assume the role of a person or act out a given situation”<sup>50</sup> as they already know what they have to do, and are less anxious about expressing themselves since it is not their ideas that are being communicated, but those of a character. In the case of literary and film analyses, it can be interesting to create an activity in which the pupils could play the role of film or literary critics to share opposite views and challenge them to respond to each other’s comments in a creative way, using body language for instance. Moreover, debating is a good way to evaluate if a pupil understands what he or she reads and if he or she is able to justify his or her interpretation of the words in an organised way, while “encourag[ing] [them] to think more critically about complex and controversial subjects, and see[ing] situations from a different perspective.”<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, dealing with the study of a literary work and its film adaptation in depth through debates, and roleplays is a real asset to enable the pupils to learn, and enjoy their learning, as they are more subtly confronted to the subject they have to analyse, which can be considered as a vector of motivation. Apart from this, the pupils can be asked to do personal research on topics related to the novel, the film, or the author to learn more about the work in question and be more autonomous. To do so, teachers usually have to split the work into several elements so that each pupil is not assigned the same task. In doing so, they can exchange what they have found with their classmates in the next lesson, and create the need, *i.e.*, an information gap for the pupils to provide feedback to each other. This can encourage the pupils to share with their classmates, and think together, which once again favours communication and allows them to learn how to provide detailed information confidently<sup>52</sup>. Moving on to the role and importance of debate in the English classroom, one can say that this activity is a good way of giving the pupils an additional reason to be involved in class, because of its challenging aspect, while at the same time allowing them to put their knowledge into action and learn from it. For the stimulating and valuable educational aspect, literary or cinematographic debates are very interesting because they allow the pupils to discuss a wide range of subjects and to really grasp the salient points of a work in a more playful and attractive way than a standard description and analysis. Through this discussion and exchange of ideas, they can learn to confront points of

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<sup>50</sup> Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. “Role Playing”. *Instructional Guide for University Faculty and Teaching Assistants*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois University, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide>. (Consulted on March 12, 2022.)

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* Retrieved from <https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide>.

<sup>52</sup> Ministère de l’éducation nationale. *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues* (CECRL). Paris, éditions Didier, 2005, p. 67.

view and create a coherent argument, while developing their learning skills, responsiveness, and oral fluency. Since the pupils have to collaborate with their classmates while contradicting them, this activity can really allow them to develop strong language skills, in order to aim for the highest level of the CEFR<sup>53</sup> in the field of oral production for final year pupils specialising in English, the level on which I have decided to focus throughout my analysis. This is level C1, described as such “the learner can express himself/herself fluently and spontaneously almost without effort; only a conceptually difficult topic is likely to interfere with the natural and fluent delivery of speech.”<sup>54</sup> If one takes the example of a debate on Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* or Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* and their adaptations, one can ask the pupils to discuss the essential themes of the novels to make sure they all understand what they have read. Then, they can be asked to share their interpretations with each other, and find the differences and similarities between what they have read and how the words have been adapted, and asked whether they think it is a clever or a poor adaptation. The pupils can work on specific skills such as being able to express themselves clearly, participate in a discussion, and use correct grammar and a rich and varied vocabulary to construct a claim, and justify their choices in an organised way. The benefits of studying film adaptation in class are not limited to linguistics, and the vast number of topics that can be covered in debates, but also allows for the development of the pupils’ analytical skills, which are transferable to everyday life, such as using judgement and logic when making decisions, or solving problems. Through the study of a work, and its filmic adaptation, learners can better understand what is at stake, since they have access not only to the words, but also to the non-verbal language of the actor or actress, which is an essential part of the speech. Indeed, it also conveys information, which can enable them to interpret implicit elements to produce a more detailed analysis as they “interpret the language in a full visual context”<sup>55</sup>. The pupils can also work on sounds, camera angles, or lighting to explain a specific situation and learn to organise the different elements they find in an outline, and categorise them to make a relevant interpretation, which can help them to become autonomous thinkers. To demonstrate what I said earlier about of the benefits of film adaptation, I suggest the following analysis of a film clip from Clive Donner’s adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* that I can work on as indicated in this dissertation with final-year pupils specialising in English. The

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<sup>53</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (French CECRL)

<sup>54</sup> Ministère de l’éducation nationale. *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues* (CECRL). Paris, éditions Didier, 2005, p. 100.

<sup>55</sup> Donaghy, Kieran. “How can film help you teach or learn English?”. British Council, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-can-film-help-you-teach-or-learn-english>. (Consulted on December 20, 2021)

excerpt studied is between 1:08'16 to 1:09'30, and portrays the encounter between Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Future. It would be interesting to work on the different elements of the film such as sounds, lighting, and shots separately before putting the ideas together with the whole class to come up with an interpretation that could be used as a written record and that could be similar to the one below:

The long shot from 1:08'16 onwards allows us to see Scrooge entirely, as he tries to find the Ghost of Christmas Present, which has left him alone in the dark. The overall atmosphere of the film is made very oppressive by the extradiegetic sounds, which were added such as the sound of raindrops and the wind, which almost seems to reach us. This reinforces the supernatural character of the work, and perfectly translates Scrooge's anguish. Moreover, the close shot on Scrooge at 1:08'57 allows us to see the actor's facial expressions as he portrays Scrooge's despair at being abandoned by the ghost. Even when he does not speak, his slumped posture and blank stare perfectly convey the characters emotional desolation.

Through the analysis of this film clip, I can really make the pupils realise the importance of sounds and lighting in the communication of emotions, and the impact of body language on the perception of a message.

## 2) The Effectiveness of Play-Based Learning in the Case of Teenagers.

A teenager's brain is still developing and play-based learning, using creativity and imagination, helps to develop neural connections and facilitate the process of learning. Indeed, it allows teenagers to appropriate their learning, and to create meaning in what they learn by themselves, which allows them to memorise information more easily, and permanently. A piece of information set in a person's memory never completely vanishes, even though one may feel that one has forgotten it if one does not re-use it. It only needs to be reactivated by re-associating it with an event or activity that left its mark on the brain at the time of learning, hence the value of play-based approaches. According Claire Liu, S. Lynne Solis, Hanne Jensen, Emily Hopkins, Dave Neale, Jennifer Zosh, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, and David Whitebread, who are neuroscientists interested in child and adolescent learning, it is easier to remember and reuse information when the learning process has called on the creativity of the pupils and has been

based on play. Joy is indeed an essential part of the process of memorising, since it increases dopamine levels, which enhance mental capacity as one can read in the following quote:

The presence of dopamine associated with joyful experiences can result in an enhanced ability to process and retain information. Thus, understanding the reward system can help us explore its role in memory, mental shifting, motivation, and creativity, as they contribute to learning. Dopamine can enhance processes that have been shown to correlate with creative thinking, such as working memory, but the relation could be more direct. While the exact mechanism is unclear, individual creativity has been found to relate to activation in brain structures associated with the dopamine reward system (Takeuchi *et al.*, 2010), suggesting perhaps that joyful experiences are related to creative thinking.<sup>56</sup>

In this quote, one can clearly notice that giving the pupils the opportunity to express their creativity in order to make them want to learn is highly beneficial. To establish this approach, teachers can ask the pupils to make creative final or intermediate tasks, which in the case of a teaching sequence on film adaptation is rather easy to find. For instance, they can be asked to create a screenplay or even a short film scene related to a novel studied, and then discuss an existing adaptation of the same novel in order to compare it with their productions. This can be part of an interdisciplinary project with the possibility of external interventions, which is often very much appreciated in schools. In a final year class specialising in English, I could ask them to study the screenplays<sup>57</sup> of Sally Potter's *Orlando* and Clive Donner's *A Christmas Carol* to use them as modelling documents and then ask them to recreate one from another extract from one of the two literary works. The fact that both novels are very visual can help the pupils with their productions, as they can get an idea of what might be asked of them, and not be completely lost in the middle of the words. When a pupil is given a lot of information in a row, such as when reading a novel, he or she may find himself or herself overwhelmed with all the elements, to the point of not knowing which ones to remember. The fact that the two works studied are illustrated can help to visualise the events, understand their meaning, and thus be able to suggest a possible interpretation. The creative approach to teaching is a major asset in the way pupils view their learning, as it is not enough for a course to be structured to be attractive, especially with teenagers who do not necessarily like English. One has to bring learning in such a way that pupils do not feel they are learning, so that they do not suffer from their education. I think this is the most difficult point to achieve, even if it seems easy in educational books. I have

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<sup>56</sup> Claire Liu, S. Solis, Lynne, Jensen, Hanne, Hopkins, Emily, Neale, Dave, Zosh, Jennifer, Hirsh-Pasek Kathy & Whitebread David. "Neuroscience and Learning through play: a review of the evidence." (Research summary). The Lego Foundation, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> See Appendix C p. 80.

experienced the effectiveness of the creative or play-based approach with my own classes, and I have noticed that pupils are much more motivated when I give them more freedom, and that they really take ownership of their learning, by manipulating the material, or having a visual support to illustrate the theoretical part of the course. I used a lot of drawings and illustrations to make them understand the vocabulary, without translating the words, as translation is not recommended in secondary school until year 9. This is what Sarah M. Fine, a PHD student in educational sciences, calls “intellectual playfulness”<sup>58</sup>, which is, according to her, the most important aspect of learning, especially for the psychological development of teenagers. To illustrate this dissertation, I analysed a case study with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade class in Pierre Joannon secondary school in Saint-Chamond, and I asked the pupils after each class to tell me what they thought of the course. I noticed that the use of visual aids in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class helped me to capture the pupils’ attention, in particular the use of 3D models of London monuments. They clearly told me that these had helped them to learn and memorise quickly, as they were able to manipulate the models, which allowed them to associate the names with the corresponding monuments easily. I noticed that the use of visuals such as the use of 3D models, was a major asset, particularly in applying differentiated teaching, and allowing the pupils with more difficulties to follow the course and improve themselves at the same pace as the others. The pupils were particularly motivated and appreciated the fact that there were several working materials, so that they could choose what suited them best, as well as the alternation between working independently and working as a whole class, which is particularly advisable for keeping everyone’s attention and applying differentiated teaching<sup>59</sup>. This “intellectual playfulness”, in addition to favouring learning, can develop social skills to enable the pupils to create connections, and learn “rules of conduct”. This is particularly true with theatrical activities, as they allow pupils to learn to work together, and to foster communication and oral fluency. For instance, Dickens’ works are meant to be performed, and a possible task with a final year class specialising in English would be to recreate a scene from the work studied both in its written form, and in film adaptation. In Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, there are a lot of illustrations which could help the pupils to create a setting, and a script. As one can clearly see

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<sup>58</sup> Dr. White, Rachel. “The Power of Play”. Minneapolis, Minnesota Children’s Museum, 2012. Fine, Sarah M. “A Slow Revolution: Toward a Theory of Intellectual Playfulness in High School Classrooms”. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol.84 n°1 Spring 2014. pp. 1-23.

<sup>59</sup> « Différenciation Pédagogique : Comment Adapter l’Enseignement pour la Réussite de tous les Elèves ? » (Paris, 7 & 8 mars 2017). Bucheton, Dominique. « Quelles Postures l’Enseignant et les Elèves Doivent-ils Adopter dans le Cadre de la Différenciation ? », CNESCO, p.8.

with the example above, play-based learning and the creation of artistic tasks can help the pupils to learn how to organise ideas, since creating requires a framework. They can learn to work on their own and develop their organisational skills, which are easily transferable to other subjects. Through their lessons, teachers also have to convey civic values, not just learning skills. With a final year class specialising in English, it is easier to deal with more controversial subjects, and to get them to think about social issues, as they are older and supposed to be mature enough to do so. *Orlando* and *A Christmas Carol* are very interesting from an educational point of view, and can easily be used as a basis for an artistic school project on the fight against social inequalities or for gender equality, which are part of a teacher's tasks. The creation of such a project can enable the pupils to learn to be autonomous and organised, while at the same time enlightening them about social issues.

### *C) The Importance of Associating Words with Images*

#### 1) Stimulating a Pupil's Imagination to Create Connections and Help Him or Her to Memorise Better and Faster.

There is an undeniable link between imagination and memory, as it allows for the creation of connections between several parts of the brain, which actually determine if a sensory experience is meaningful or not, and if it has to be memorised or completely forgotten. When one thinks about memory, one does not necessarily realise how important imagination is even though it is an essential part. Indeed, imagination is vital to create mental images and make "cross temporal transactions"<sup>60</sup>, which are combinations between past events and the present time. This process is what enables an individual to recall events or dates years after they happened. In the educational field, this can allow the pupils to remember and re-use elements that have been learnt in previous weeks, months, or even years. I have personally experienced the impact of imagination on memory, particularly through the use of visuals with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade pupils I had in class during my practice as a trainee. I prepared a two-week teaching sequence on the British Empire and the colonisation of Australia by Captain James Cook as this theme was in line with the notion of encountering other cultures. During my first lesson, I presented the pupils with a map of the British Empire that I had brought back from my personal collection

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<sup>60</sup> Keightley, E. & Pickering M. *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice*. London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, p. 43.

with the representation of Britannia with her trident, sitting on the globe, and the various journeys of British settlers to expand the Empire. I asked the pupils to move around and point to the territory we were going to work on, which was Australia, and to trace the route of Captain Cook. I was very surprised during my last lesson to realise that many of the pupils had remembered the name “Britannia” with details of the map such as the trident, and were able to give me details of the history, which I had briefly mentioned, but which were not relevant to the subject, all because they had had access to a visual aid. They had been able to work on a real map, and this activity had somehow left an impression on them. I think that visuals, be they a film adaptation or in this case a map, help the pupils to create mental images through their imagination, which then help them to develop long-term memorisation. This idea of visualising elements to be able to remember them is closely related to the concept of combination, through the creation of mind maps, for instance, because this tool makes it possible to create a schematic and synthesised vision of all the elements seen in class. This is exactly what Ann Pendleton-Jullian refers to as “Pragmatic imagination”<sup>61</sup>, or imagination for a purpose, which in our case is the development of memory. According to her, a pupil would be more likely to memorise a piece of information, which previously made use of his or her imagination. In the case of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, which is one of the two novels I decided to work on, one can easily think of a way to create a mind map to summarise all the significant elements in relation to the passages of the three spirits, as they structure the story. One can even think of adding images from Clive Donner’s film adaptation to create bridges between the two works, and allow the pupils to have an overview of them, the better for them to visualise the different scenes through “pragmatic imagination”, and target the elements they need to memorise, hence the idea that this type of imagination has a specific purpose. The theorists who were interested in this process agreed on the fact that imagination and action are indivisible, as indicated in the following quote: imagination [is] entangled with action, and put to purpose.”<sup>62</sup>, which means that if a pupil uses his or her imagination to develop his or her memory, the knowledge stored up will be more easily reused, especially if it is applied to a specific activity. During my practice as a trainee, I had thought of a final task that I unfortunately did not have time to apply, but which fits perfectly into the functioning of this practical imagination, and includes everything I have been saying from the beginning of this dissertation about the importance of visuals, and creativity. I wanted the pupils to create a board game related to Captain Cook, and the conquest

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<sup>61</sup> Pendleton-Jullian, Ann M., Brown, John Seely. *Design Unbound: Designing for Emergence in a White Water World*, Cambridge (MA), The MIT Press, 2018, p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

of Australia, in which I would have asked them to imagine game cards with questions regarding the cultural objectives of the sequence, but which would allow them to reuse, at the same time, the linguistic objectives on which I focused, namely the expression of hypotheses, the past perfect tense, and the way in which dates have to be phrased in English, an element which was not planned, but which was not yet understood by the pupils. These questions would have been linked to symbols or images to enable them to create associations, which would have helped them to answer if they had had memory lapses. Apart from that, I had thought of asking them to create little British flags to be used as points, as the aim of the game would be to collect as many flags as possible according to the answers given. I also wanted to exercise their memory by dividing the game into several rounds, so that all the pupils could answer a question and the questions could be asked several times to see if the pupils could remember what had been said previously. This final task would have allowed the pupils to memorise the lesson more easily, and the grammatical structures seen in class without even noticing it, while putting their imaginations into action. As I have previously mentioned, memory is based on experience, and imagination is based on a fictional type of reality. However, in order to remember something, it is necessary to consciously or unconsciously create mnemonic aids through imagination, hence the importance of associating words with symbols or images. This idea of using combinations to create a sense of order and improve memory was perfectly described in Cicero's *De Oratore*, when:

He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves<sup>63</sup>.

The creation of these mnemonic tools is only possible thanks to a specific type of imagination called the “mnemonic imagination”, which is the main link between memory and the notion of experience, since its functioning is based on the mental impact of an event or an image on a person, and the way in which the latter manages to reconstruct meaning from the psychological effect that these elements have had on him or her<sup>64</sup>. As one can clearly understand, there are several sorts of imagination, which all serve a different purpose, and which do not necessarily exclude each other. In other words, a person can use both his or her pragmatic imagination, and his or her mnemonic one, and synchronise them to complete a task. When one tackles the

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<sup>63</sup> Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Chicago: The U of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Keightley, E. & Pickering M. *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice*. London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, p. 56.

subject of film adaptation, one can say that the same process is somehow used because to interpret a literary or filmic extract, one needs to remember the whole work, and be able to make associations, particularly with regard to themes or symbols, which are usually recurrent to leave an imprint on the readers' or viewers' minds, and to make them understand that these elements are important. If one takes the example of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and its adaptation by Sally Potter, one can claim that this system of associations is essential, especially because the same symbols are used in both works, even if they are not presented in the same way, and one has to be able to identify them. Indeed, I can mention, for instance, "the oak tree", being both the natural element, and the poem the eponymous character is writing, which is highly symbolical both in the novel and the film adaptation, as it shows Orlando's intimate relationship with nature, and represents the growth of the character's identity as a poet, and a person. It is mentioned numerous times in the literary work as one can read in the following quote, showing how Orlando gives herself/himself to nature:

He sighed profoundly, and flung himself - there was a passion in his movements which deserves the word - on the earth at the foot of the oak tree. He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the oak tree to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse that he was riding; or the deck of a tumbling ship - it was anything indeed, so long as it was hard, for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side; the heart that seemed filled with spiced and amorous gales every evening about this time when he walked out. To the oak tree he tied it and as he lay there, gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself; the little leaves hung, the deer stopped; the pale summer clouds stayed; his limbs grew heavy on the ground; and he lay so still that by degrees the deer stopped nearer and the rooks wheeled round him and the swallows dipped and circled and the dragonflies shot past, as if all the fertility and amorous activity of a summer's evening were woven web-like about his body.<sup>65</sup>

In this quotation, one gets the impression that Orlando is bound to nature, and lives along with it, which may explain his/her 400-year-long existence. In the film, "the oak tree" also has a special place, as the manuscript of the poem entitled "the oak tree" is present throughout the entire story, and crosses time, and the natural element is found in both the opening scene, and the ending scene of the film, which shows its paramount importance.

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<sup>65</sup> Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, p. 6.

## 2) The Link Between Studying Film Adaptations and Learning a Language

The visual is an undeniable motivating factor in education, when used appropriately, which explains why the study of the film adaptation of a novel can enable the pupils to better understand and appreciate the original work. Moreover, in today's world, the pupils are almost all used to watching Netflix, and sometimes like series or films which are adapted from canonical literature without even knowing it, so analysing both media can re-ignite the desire to read such works. During my practice as a trainee, I noticed that the pupils had a very critical view on literary classics, which they considered "too complicated" to understand, or "far too distant from their everyday life," which is not surprising and completely understandable for middle school pupils, most of whom have never had to read canonical works. However, the issues raised in 19<sup>th</sup> century novels such as Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, or in 20<sup>th</sup> century novels such as Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* are very contemporary, and can echo issues or situations to which learners can identify. *A Christmas Carol*, for instance, tackles subjects, which are still relevant today such as "the commercialism that surrounds Christmas"<sup>66</sup> and the contrast between those who have and those who have not, which is a thoroughly up-to-date social issue. It is precisely to restore the appeal of the classics, and to make the pupils understand that these works are of interest both for the time in which they were written, but also for the world in which they live, that film adaptation is interesting. From there, one can mention the BBC One mini-series adapted from *A Christmas Carol* in 2019, which has been a huge worldwide success, as many people have discovered Dickens' tale through this series, which buttresses the importance of film adaptations in the rediscovery of literary works. Apart from the particular interest that pupils may have in the film adaptation for its very visual aspect, and the more "modern" dimension of the original literary works, the study of a film adaptation is very valuable from an educational point of view, especially for its cultural and linguistic qualities. Indeed, the pupils can be confronted with different authentic accents, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and language registers, which may help the learners to improve their English skills, especially because "film provides students with examples of English used in 'real' situations outside the classroom, particularly interactive language – the language of real-life conversation"<sup>67</sup>. Last year, I had the chance to teach a final year class specialising in English

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<sup>66</sup> Murray, Stephanie. "Literary Experts Look at Why the Classic Dickens' story 'A Christmas Carol' Still Draws us Today". Manhattan, Kansas State University News, 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/dec13/dickens121013.html>. (Consulted on January 14, 2022)

<sup>67</sup> Donaghy, Kieran. "How can film help you teach or learn English?". British Council, 2014.

for a few hours, and I noticed that the pupils had difficulty recognising and understanding certain accents, particularly because they were not used to being exposed to an English-speaking environment, and the flow of speech was sometimes too fast for them. Film adaptation may have a role to play in enabling those pupils who are not accustomed to dealing with native speakers to be provided with “a real-life language input”<sup>68</sup>. In the cases of Sally Potter’s adaptation of *Orlando*, and Clive Donner’s adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, one can point to the differences in language registers between Orlando, who represents the upper social classes, and the Cratchits in the adaptation of Dickens’ novel, who represent the poorer classes. It may be interesting to compare the way in which the different characters in both works address each other, their attitudes, the flow of speech, the expressions used, which may also be indicative of their social status. This part can be integrated into the sociolinguistic objective of a teaching sequence, and allow a broader moral on the acceptance of difference, and the fight against social discriminations. Moreover, getting pupils used to hearing different accents from the British area, and different social groups through film adaptations can enable them to work on all kinds of communicative skills, as “a whole film or sequence can be used to practise listening and reading, and as a model for speaking and writing”<sup>69</sup>. I tried this with the final year pupils I had last year, and it proved to be quite successful, as I noticed that many of the pupils had improved their written and oral expressions from one programme to the next. We worked on David Grann’s *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon* published in 2009, and James Gray’s 2016 film adaptation of the same name. The fact that the pupils worked on a medium they knew, did oral comprehensions and renditions of passages in English enabled them to make progress, since many pupils succeeded in moving from the mere repetition of the script to a real summary using only certain expressions they had heard when listening. In my opinion, integrating film and film analysis into the language classroom is a real asset for modern language teaching, as it is a rather playful and relevant way of bringing students face to face with a wide variety of accents, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and registers, while adding an entertaining aspect to the learning process. In addition, the use of film and of the audio-visual field, which is a subject area that many pupils understand, allows teachers to provide a safe environment for them which facilitates their learning, especially because the study of a

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Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-can-film-help-you-teach-or-learn-english>. (Consulted on December 22, 2021)

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-can-film-help-you-teach-or-learn-english>.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Retrieved from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-can-film-help-you-teach-or-learn-english>.

film can help to structure the course with the cutting of different scenes, for example, to allow each pupil to make progress at their own pace. Indeed, the more a pupil feels at ease in the classroom, the easier it will be for him or her to learn, which means that teachers have to find ways to create a safe learning environment. In other words, it is necessary to provide learners with a sense of comfort and security so that they learn properly, and adding elements that are familiar to them such as film adaptations can help to create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

### **III- Didactic application of Dickens' and Virginia Woolf's works**

For the didactic application of Virginia Woolf's and Dickens' works, I chose to focus on the theme of "Arts et Débats d'idées," more precisely the first axis of study which is "Art et Contestation". The main idea developed in this axis is "Art for a cause and the expression of a form of resistance to social oppression, and discrimination against women and sexual minorities"<sup>70</sup>, which corresponds to the themes of both Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which are both highly committed works. I decided to work on a section of each work, rather than the entire works, simply because it seemed more logical. In the case of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, the section from page ninety-seven "they retire in haste" to page one hundred and nineteen "the suits were under litigation" will be studied. As for Sally Potter's adaptation, the extract from 55'15 to 1:06'26 will be dealt with. For Dickens' work, the section from page seventy-one to page ninety-four will be tackled, which corresponds to "Stave three – The second of the three spirits". The corresponding excerpt from 44'26 to 1:08'11 will be examined in Clive Donner's adaptation. The final task I chose for this didactic application is the following one: "you want to adapt a literary work into a film, defending a particular cause, and have to present a part of your script to a panel of judges. You thus decide to introduce a scene clearly stating the cause defended in your project, the literary passage chosen, and the

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<sup>70</sup> Ministère de l'éducation nationale. Mise en œuvre du socle commun de connaissances et de compétences : Programmes d'enseignement du cycle terminal. Bulletin officiel, 30 juillet 2020, p. 12.

way in which you have decided to adapt it”. The targeted level for final year pupils specialising in English is the level C1<sup>71</sup> of the CEFR<sup>72</sup>.

### A) *Cultural Purpose*

In Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, the theme of Gender and Society, especially the social differences between men and women such as the right to have a title can be dealt with. Indeed, Orlando is not allowed to keep it as a woman as indicated when the narrator says that “all her estates were put in Chancery and her titles were put in abeyance while the suits were under litigation” (p. 119). She is deprived of her noble rank as if she no longer deserved it as a woman, although she had earned it based on her services to the crown. This shows that men and women are treated differently in society, and as Orlando experiences both sexes, she is forced to endure these social differences in her own flesh. She even starts to question her own behaviour towards women when she was a man as one can see in the following quote:

She remembered how, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled. ‘Now I shall have to pay in my own person for those desires,’ she reflected; ‘for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled by nature. (p. 110)

This quote also highlights the differences between men and women’s sexualities, as a man is free to have several sexual relationships whereas a woman must stay chaste because it defines whether she is respectable or not. In the film, this theme is obvious when Orlando is surrounded by intellectuals from 1:04’02 onwards, with close shots on each of them, suggesting that they are staring at her, which illustrates this idea of opposition between men and women. This is even clearer with the pan shot from 1:04’32 onwards, which follows the characters one by one as they openly criticise women in front of Orlando who is seen from behind, stating what a woman should or should not do. It is a rather appropriate introduction to the place of women in

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<sup>71</sup> At C1 level, pupils are expected to understand in detail long and more complex texts, whether or not they are related to their area of study, to follow a speech of some length on abstract or even complex topics outside their area of study, but may need to clarify some aspects. Pupils should also be able to write well-structured texts on complex topics, and to give an oral presentation or description of a complex topic, introducing secondary arguments and developing particular points to reach an appropriate conclusion.

<sup>72</sup> Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (French CECRL).

society and the way men viewed them in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The study of this novel can also be useful to tackle the notions of misogyny and sexism at the time. Indeed, Orlando describes men as “the other sex” (p. 113), which highlights gender differences. These differences are clearer when Orlando enumerates the things she can and cannot do now that she is a woman such as “lead[ing] an army” or “wear[ing] a coronet” (p.113). As a woman, she can only “pour out tea” and ask men if they want some “sugar” or “cream” (p. 113), which once again underlines gender roles, and the notion of separate spheres *i.e.*, the idea that women were only created to serve men. In the film, the medium shot from 1:03’14 onwards, showing Archduke Harry and the countess having tea, highlights women’s place in society and their subordinate status as she keeps on praising him, and almost steps aside, as if her role were only to let him take the spotlight, and to serve him as one can hear when she asks him if he wants cream at 1:03’39. At the time, women were “considered naturally the weaker sex, built biologically, emotionally and socially for their role as child bearer and homemaker”<sup>73</sup>. One can also examine gender differences, and their social construction considering the “gipsy” society, in which women “differ very little from gipsy men” (p. 108), and the English society where gender differences are highly important as one can notice when the narrator mentions the name of the boat aboard which Orlando travels back from Constantinople, “the *Enamoured Lady*” (p. 108), underlining the fact that women are driven by passion while men are driven by reason. One can also mention the fact that Orlando must wear a dress. Clothing is what determines her social class, and the very fact that she is now a woman. She thinks being a woman is a plague as suggested by the following quote: “these skirts are plaguey things to have about one’s heels.” (p. 109). The heaviness of her dress symbolised by the word “plaguey” illustrates the oppression that weighs on the female gender. Moreover, the fact that women have to wear clothes, which appeal to men, and not to them, reinforces the idea that clothing is a social construction as one can see in the following quote:

Here she tossed her foot impatiently, and showed an inch or two of calf. A sailor on the mast, who happened to look down at the moment, started so violently that he missed his footing and only saved himself by the skin of his teeth. ‘If the sight of my ankles means death to an honest fellow who, no doubt, has a wife and family to support, I must, in all humanity, keep them covered,’ Orlando thought. (p. 110)

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<sup>73</sup> Hazarika, Karabi. “Social Status of Women in 18th Century English Society as Reflected in a Dictionary of the English Language of Dr. Johnson”. *IJCAES Special Issue on Basic, Applied & Social Sciences*, Volume II. CMJ University, Shillong, Meghalay, October 2012, p. 355.

Orlando's legs look the same as when she was a man, but the fact that she wears a dress makes her more desirable in the eyes of the sailor. In the film, Orlando's dress illustrates the absurdity of gender roles based on clothing, as it is much larger than her, and prevents her from moving properly, symbolising the oppression and pressure felt by women because of conventions and expectations. The full shot from 59:24 onwards showing Orlando in her dress also highlights the absurdity of gender roles based on clothing as one can clearly see that it takes up the entire frame. The fact that she cannot move properly is even more obvious when the camera slowly pulls back to follow her path in the corridor from 59:34 onwards, as she cannot walk between the furniture without being in profile. The fact that she wears a white dress of the same colour as the sheets on the furniture blends her into the set, again symbolising her place in society since women were considered as chattels and were only supposed to stand there and look good. She is made to look like a piece of furniture. They were part of the house, whereas men were meant to be in the spotlight, participating in the life of society. A woman was seen as a frail creature in need of a man as the prevailing view at the time was that she was not able to take care of herself, and needed to be constantly rescued. This dependence on men is clear when Alexander Pope says that a woman who is not married is "lost" at 1:06'19. The same idea is developed in the novel, as women are also said to be dependent on men, and as Orlando becomes a woman, she is also expected to be dependent on the male gender as indicated in the following quote: "I should have to trust to the protection of a blue jacket. Do I object to that? Now do I?" (p. 109). Moreover, if one compares both works, one can see that appearances are central to each of them. In *Orlando*, the notion of appearance is used to highlight gender differences, particularly through clothing. In *A Christmas Carol*, this notion highlights social differences, no longer through clothing, even though it is obvious that clothing is a social indicator, but through housing. Indeed, if one compares Bob Cratchit's house to Scrooge's, one can notice that the latter is much smaller and much less luxurious as indicated in the following quotes: "the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!" (p. 78), compared to "It was his own room. [...] the walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove, from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened." (p.72). The description of the room, although transformed by the ghost, conveys an impression of spaciousness and luxury that does not exist in Bob Cratchit's small house, thus symbolising a difference in social class and wealth. In the film, from 45'28 onwards, one can clearly notice the luxurious aspect of Scrooge's house with the Victorian four-poster bed, which is a sign of wealth, the size of the living-room with the paintings, the chandelier, and the candlesticks, compared to Bob Cratchit's small house with a gloomy tiny undecorated living room at 48'59.

The study of this work can also be used to introduce the Hungry forties, “a period in the early 1840s when Britain experienced an economic depression, causing much misery among the poor”<sup>74</sup>. In the film, the sumptuousness of the meal reflects a difference in social class, and in financial resources, as the Cratchits cannot afford a meal as great as Scrooge’s. The pan shot and the dolly in from 52’02 onwards reveal the size of the meal, especially the goose, which is very small for the number of people in the Cratchit family. The pan shot at 1:04’07 allows the viewers to see the place where the poorest homeless people gather for shelter, and then the camera zooms in on a poor man whose despair is obvious as one can hear when he says “I want to work. I want to have bread for my children. It’s not right that there’s no work”, highlighting the social misery that prevailed among the working classes at that time, particularly because of unemployment. This idea can be associated with the poor laws, and people’s social disgruntlement, especially the ambivalence of the concepts of poor relief and charity as one can read in the following quote: “The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker’s doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch” (p. 77). It highlights the ignorance and lack of accountability of the upper classes and the transparency of the poorest people. Indeed, the rich consider themselves charitable, but they are neglectful, which reinforces this idea of selfishness as they are unaware of what is really happening among the poorer classes, and seem not to care about the fate of the poor. In the film, people from the upper class are clearly represented as superior beings who oppress the poorer classes. The low-angle shot at 52’02 translates an idea of greatness and superiority. It makes Scrooge appear much more impressive than he really is compared to the Cratchits who are often seen from above, which conveys a sense of oppression and suggests that they are inferior. From 1:03’58 onwards, the close shot on Scrooge whose face expresses a kind of incomprehension and ignorance underlines his own ignorance. This is even clearer when he says “where are we now? I’m sure, I don’t know this place.” at 1:03’59. In Dickens’ novella, the consequences of this ignorance on the poor children in the workhouses are clearly shown as one can read in the following quotes: “They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility” (p. 92) and “This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.” (p. 94). These highlight the effects of Scrooge’s vices

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<sup>74</sup> Wright, Edmund. “The Hungry Forties.” *A Dictionary of World History*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 155.

on poor children and how they are neglected by the higher classes. The fact that the two children represent “want” and “ignorance” is highly symbolic, as they represent the main evils and vices of the Victorian society, and show Scrooge what happens to people who let themselves be corrupted. It may also be interesting to identify intertextual references, and thus make a connection with other Dickens’ works such as *Oliver Twist*. Indeed, this scene suggests that the young boy is destined to become a criminal because he is a poor ignorant child and therefore his soul can easily be corrupted, as is the case with Fagin’s gang in *Oliver Twist*, who are all impoverished children who turn to delinquency in exchange for shelter. In the film, from 1:06’20 onward, there is an over-the-shoulder shot, presenting the poor children who were hidden beneath the ghost’s robe. The trumpet sound effects convey an idea of shock that is reinforced by the close-ups on each of the characters’ faces. This highlights the lack of consideration of the rich towards the distress of the poor, through the character of Scrooge, and the consequences their vices have on the poorer classes, personified by these two stunted children in ragged clothes. In this scene, Scrooge’s speech is symbolic as it underlines the rich’s wilful ignorance, as indicated in the following quote: “Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? [...] Cover them, I don’t wish to see them.” Scrooge would rather ignore the plight of these children, and pretend never to have seen them, than face reality and try to make a difference, which once again exposes his selfishness. Social disparity and class differences are also revealed through child labour in the Victorian society. The richest children are not expected to work to support their families whereas the eldest children in poor families have to financially help their families as one can read in the following quote: “‘Here’s Martha, mother!’ cried the two young Cratchits. ‘Hurrah! There’s such a goose, Martha!’” (p. 79). The fact that she is forced to help feed her siblings reinforces the existing social disparity between poor and rich people, as the father or the man is not the only breadwinner in the family. This can be compared to Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, in which women are supposed to be dependent on men, and certainly not work.

### *B) Linguistic and Communicative Purposes*

The linguistic and communicative objectives involve the four language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. At the end of a teaching sequence, the pupils are expected to have acquired additional skills in each of the four blocks, and to be able to re-use what they have learnt to complete their final task. The two literary works under study are

linguistically enriching, both in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and can allow the pupils to improve their knowledge and skills in both oral and written language. Working in parallel on the two film adaptations can enable teachers to offer more varied activities, so that pupils develop the four language skills in an equal way. From a phonological point of view, I think it is necessary to remind pupils of the pronunciation of the phoneme -ed, as it is often forgotten over the years. In Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, one might be interested in page seventy-one, which contains many -ed forms, whether they be past participles or simple past structures such as "turned," "established", or "acquainted". The pronunciation of these words can help pupils to become familiar with existing phonetic rules, as they are all pronounced differently. It is necessary to remind them that <ed> is pronounced /d/ after a vowel or a voiced consonant as in the word "turned," /t/ after a voiceless consonant as in "established," and /ɪd/ after the sounds /t/ or /d/ as in "acquainted." In Clive Donner's film adaptation, an oral comprehension of the scene from 58'22 onwards, which contains many -ed forms, can be planned so that the pupils work on their listening skills and are able to identify the forms they have just seen in writing but orally through an original document. For instance, one can hear Scrooge say the word "amused" at 58'45 whose ending is pronounced /d/ or the verb "visited" at 59'49, which is pronounced this time with the sound /ɪd/. The pupils can also work on intonation and rhythm by analysing the film script. The latter can be used as a modelling document for the final task and a possible basis for the following activity. Indeed, they can be asked to read and interpret the dialogue from page seventy-two to page seventy-four, which corresponds to the first encounter between Scrooge and the ghost of Christmas Present. Through the study of this text, the pupils can work on three of the four skills, namely writing, because they are expected to write a script for this scene, reading, which is the first thing to do before interpreting, and speaking in interaction, since a theatrical activity can be organised to recreate this scene orally in pairs. This theatrical activity aims to improve the pupils' memory through creativity, and encourages communication between peers, in order to better prepare the final task, which is both written and oral. In Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, the extract from page one hundred and eight to page one hundred and nine can also be used to work on pronunciation. Pupils can be asked to read the text aloud to work on the different types of intonation such as the rising intonation in the following questions: "Do I object to that? Now Do I?" (p. 109) or "Which is the greater ecstasy?" (p. 109), the falling intonation at the end of sentences as in "he asked." (p. 109), and the fall-rise between "thought" (p. 108) and "when she had recovered" (p. 108) in the sentence "'Lord,' she thought, when she had recovered from her start" (p. 108). In Sally Potter's film, the excerpt from 1:04'13 onwards is highly interesting to work on because

of the numerous fall-rises in the intellectuals' conversation. It is also possible to suggest a more playful theatrical activity, as with Dickens' work, so that the pupils can improve their pronunciation. For instance, they can use the script of *Orlando's* film, especially the monologue of the eponymous character during his/her sex change, which is valuable both from a linguistic and an educational point of view. In terms of grammar, a reminder can be given about the simple past tense, which could be associated with the phonological objective and the pronunciation of the phoneme-ed. Much of this can be found in the extract from *A Christmas Carol* mentioned earlier, namely pages seventy-one and seventy-two, as can be seen in the following quote:

But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands; and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise and made nervous. (p. 71)

From the same extract, the pupils can work on the different types of adjectives, and learn how to place them in a sentence. Indeed, Dickens uses a lot of portmanteau words in his writings, and when one analyses his works, one can notice that he is particularly keen on adjectives and adjectival phrases in general, which makes this study relevant as one can read in the following quote:

Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkey, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. (p. 72)

In this excerpt, the pupils can be asked to pick out all the adjectives, and classify them into various categories, such as simple adjectives as in "delicious steam," suffixed adjectives as in "juicy oranges," derived adjectives with -ING verbs as in "seething bowls," and the structure composed of two successive adjectives as in "red-hot chestnuts." In the different texts studied, the pupils can also learn about modality and adverbs which can be useful in writing a script to modify an action and express the subjectivity which characterises both the narrator of the story and the characters. In the extract from page eighty-one to eighty-two, which I have selected as one of the interesting texts to study, there are many adverbs such as "never," "carefully," or "thoughtfully," and many modal verbs such as "shall" and "will," which are worth focusing on. These two modals are particularly interesting to analyse within the framework of the topics addressed in this didactic application, notably the different types of inequalities, since, whether it is the idea of ineluctability expressed by "will," or the ideas of obligation, or of problematic

link expressed by “shall,” they both express all the intricacy of the topic. It may be interesting to have pupils compare the different meanings of “shall” and “will” so that they understand that although they are often associated, one of them is a sign of non-congruence, while the other does not interfere with the relationship between the subject and its predicate as can be seen in the following quote: “Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die?” (p. 82). “Will” conveys an idea of willingness, and is associated with the verb “decide,” which somehow implies that Scrooge has a choice, and keeps his free-will. The predicative relationship between the subject “you” and the predicate “decide what men shall live, what men shall die” is not problematic and is self-evident. On the other hand, the use of “shall” in the following two clauses implies an idea of predication which is not self-evident, and which consequently contradicts the idea of volition expressed by “will.” The film clip for this section is very faithful to the original version, with the same dialogues, allowing the pupils to have both the written and the spoken versions for them to associate the spelling with the pronunciation. The analysis of the film excerpt can also allow the pupils to understand how modality is transcribed on screen, through non-verbal language. One might even consider cross-referencing Virginia Woolf’s and Dickens’ works, and drawing parallels on the use of modals in both works, and their purpose. Indeed, In Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, the author uses the modal “shall” to express the idea of obligation and duty associated with the female gender, in order to transcribe on paper all the pressure that rests on women’s shoulders, as can be seen when she writes:

“‘And that’s the last oath I shall ever be able to swear,’ she thought; ‘once I set foot on English soil. And I shall never be able to crack a man over the head, or tell him he lies in his teeth, or draw my sword and run him through the body, or sit among my peers, or wear a coronet, or walk in procession, or sentence a man to death, or lead an army, or prance down Whitehall on a charger, or wear seventy-two different medals on my breast.’” (p. 113)

Besides the use of modals, Virginia Woolf also made extensive use of phrasal verbs such as “shut out” (p. 97), “peeped in” (p. 98), or “look up” (p. 98). I think it might be interesting to see if the pupils are able to tell the difference between a phrasal verb and a simple verb with a preposition, and if not, to explain how to distinguish them. When it comes to vocabulary, which is the last of three items in the linguistic objective, there are numerous themes that would be worth learning, but teaching is also about making choices, and it is necessary to select the categories of words that seem most relevant to the context and the final task. To begin with, the most important aspect is to provide pupils with the words that will enable them to analyse both the extracts from the novels and the extracts from the films, namely glossaries of literary and film vocabulary. I think that learning how to analyse film is a major asset for pupils, both

for their daily lives and their future professional lives, because today's world is ruled by visual information, and being able to analyse it can give them a better understanding of society and additional opportunities as the following quote shows:

Certainly, being able to critically analyse visual information the way one would analyse text is a key skill in today's world. Teenagers are bombarded with visual stimuli and need to be able to pick it apart and ask questions of it. Many advocates of using film and TV in the classroom point out that kids need to learn how to tell if something in the media is a social construction. They should learn how to evaluate if a movie is biased, or if a TV show is portraying cultural stereotypes.<sup>75</sup>

Giving the pupils the keys to analysing the films under study allows them to have an additional linguistic input to evolve as the teaching sequence progresses, but also to better understand the world in which they live. If one wants to examine the works a little further, one can mention the vocabulary of gender differences in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and all the sub-themes related to it such as identity and sexual orientation which are also part of the author's commitment. For instance, one can refer to the adjectives used to describe what a decent woman should be such as "obedient" (p.110), "chaste" (p.110), "scented" (p. 110), or "apparelled" (p. 110), or the vocabulary of human emotions and desires linked to Orlando's homosexual leanings such as "rapt" (p. 115) "enchanted" (p. 115), "quicken" (p. 115), "deepen" (p. 115), "raging and conflicting emotions" (p. 115), or "lain with" (p. 115). As for Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, one can focus on the vocabulary of traditions, celebrations, and religion, which include the words related to benevolence and tolerance compared to intolerance and hatred. This contrast can be linked to social class differences, and numerous words of vocabulary can be transferred to other contexts, which can be interesting for the final task. For instance, one can mention the vocabulary of emotions which, as in Virginia Woolf's work, reveals a lot about the situation of the characters, and the links between them. One can quote the words "penitence" (p. 82), "grief" (p.82), "hope" (p.83), "joyful" (p.74), "cheery" (p. 74), or "afraid" (p. 74). One can also mention the vocabulary related to the poor compared to the words related to Scrooge's luxurious life such as "meagre" (p.92), "ragged" (p. 92), "scowling" (p.92), or "wolfish" (p. 92) versus "bright" (p. 72), "possession" (p. 72), or "gleaming" (p. 72). Once the novels have been analysed, the pupils can see how they have been translated onto the screen. For the communicative objective, it is possible to think of activities linked to the linguistic objective, especially for the sociolinguistic sphere. Indeed, pupils can deal with the differences in accents

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<sup>75</sup> Barry, Caitlin. "Teaching Film in a High School Classroom." *Huff Post*, February 29, 2012. Retrieved from [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/teaching-film-in-a-high-s\\_b\\_1307408](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/teaching-film-in-a-high-s_b_1307408). (Consulted on August 7, 2022).

and vocabulary within the same linguistic group, and the evolution of language according to time and geographical area. Through the study of the adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, the pupils can compare the way in which Scrooge speaks to the other characters and the way in which the poor of the charity speak to each other, to highlight the differences in speech depending on the social background and the environment in which the characters live. In Sally Potter's *Orlando*, one can also note the differing registers between the two genders, especially when comparing the words of the countess, and the way Alexander Pope addresses his friends or Orlando. It can be noticed that women are, from the outset, more polite and respectful towards men, always using distinguished vocabulary to praise them, unlike men who use a condescending tone of voice and a slower pace to mark a certain superiority towards the female gender, as women are considered more ignorant. Pupils can also work on paralinguistics, and how the actors' non-verbal language contributes to their performance. From a more pragmatic and methodological point of view, students can learn to structure an argument to convince an audience, based on Alexander Pope's speech and Orlando's reply from 1:04'02 onwards. This section can help pupils to learn to pause in their speech and modulate their voices to convince, which is necessary to complete the final task. The study of the different extracts from literary and film works, as well as the suggested activities, can enable pupils to learn to analyse a literary work and then to come up with a film script, including both the dialogues and the most appropriate shots to shoot the scene of their choice and best convey the message they want to convey.

### *C) Educational Purpose*

The study of Dickens' and Virginia Woolf's works can allow teachers to advocate benevolence, and tolerance in the face of differences. Indeed, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* tackles subjects such as gender differences, which can be useful to then discuss the fight for gender equality. One of the teachers' goals is to deconstruct gender stereotypes and attempt to move towards a society that is more respectful of differences, and therefore more equal. Today, there are still some careers or activities that are attributed to certain genders, and it is sometimes difficult to break out of the pre-established framework. Within the school setting, it is necessary to break down these pre-existing codes and encourage pupils to go into areas that they enjoy, regardless of the pre-conceived ideas that others may have about them. During my practice as

a trainee, I attended an orientation meeting for pupils in which external speakers were openly misogynistic, and played heavily on gender stereotypes. One girl was particularly interested in motorcycling and wanted to make a career out of it. The speaker told her that it would not be possible for her to enter this sector because, being a woman, she was docile and had neither the qualities nor the physical characteristics necessary to work in this field, adding that she could, on the other hand, encourage the men in the stands. This is an extreme case of inequality of opportunity within the school system, which cannot be tolerated. This makes it even more important to include this kind of thinking within the teaching sequences, and to make pupils think about these issues in order to open their minds and make them understand that, even if men and women do not have the same physical abilities, they can have the same chances to succeed in any field. Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* is particularly interesting to analyse because the eponymous character has both feminine and masculine features, which can allow pupils to reflect on what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman, based on their own understanding of the situation, and on what they understand from the novel. This can help to deconstruct gender stereotypes and make pupils realise that gender has no bearing on who you are, that it is a much broader concept than the male/female binary, and that it is partly a social construct, which like everything else can be deconstructed. Combining academic knowledge with more moral discussions on social issues can have a real impact on the way pupils perceive reality, and thus change it. Indeed, knowledge paves the way for critical thinking, and the more the pupils think about issues such as gender, the more they can challenge these stereotypes as can be seen in the following quote:

If knowledge about the world and humanity integrates and values men and women equally and highlights how they build and rebuild the relationships between them and within each of them, this knowledge becomes more comprehensive and closer to reality and incorporates a larger range of models of human being. This is an essential condition for both, girls and boys, to claim the same right to choose their school careers, professional careers, and life projects.<sup>76</sup>

This deconstruction of gender stereotypes can promote gender equality, but also address the issues of identity, and sexual orientation. Indeed, the cisgender and heterosexual spectrums represent only one aspect of the notions of gender and sexual orientation, but remain the most, if not the only ones, represented in the school curriculum. There is a need to introduce pupils to other gender categories and other sexual orientations, by addressing subjects such as gender

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<sup>76</sup> Alvarez, Theresa. "Combating Gender Stereotypes in the Educational System." *Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality: Helsinki Conference Presentation*. CEMRI/Open University, March 2019, p. 6.

fluidity, transidentity, non-binarity, and homosexuality so that each pupil feels represented, no matter how he/she identifies himself/ herself. In a society where LGBT-phobia is still very present, it is even more essential to raise these issues at school. The study of *Orlando* can be an opportunity to discuss these notions, and to study the way in which they were dealt with by Virginia Woolf, making the pupils reflect on why she was not censored, even though the novel was published at a time when they were still controversial. In the novel, the author highlights the fact that Orlando's transition from a man to a woman is just a way to be true to herself. It does not alter her identity, because it is who she really is, and things seem to be just natural as one can read in the following quote: "The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it." (p. 98). From an educational point of view, this quote can allow pupils to reflect on transidentity, and normalise it, by showing that Orlando was a man, and that transitioning makes her as much a woman as a cisgender person. Virginia Woolf also points out the difference between gender and sexuality, and challenges stereotypes and expectations as homosexuality was not accepted at the time. Orlando's love for women is not changed by her change of sex because it is part of her identity, which remains the same throughout as one can understand it when reading the following lines:

And as all Orlando's loves had been women, now, though the culpable laggardry of the human frame to adapt itself to convention, though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had as a man. (p. 115)

The study of *Orlando* can help to challenge the heteronormative writings that prevail in school syllabuses, and to propose queer representations, and to show that homosexuality is just as acceptable as heterosexuality. I think that it is crucial, as teachers, to bring up these subjects, especially during adolescence, which is the period of life when people are most searching for their true selves. In Sally Potter's film, the heartbeat sounds from 55'38 onwards can be linked to the idea that "the change was accomplished painlessly" (p.98) in the novel as the transition was as quick and as regular as a heartbeat. One can assume that this aims at symbolising the fact that she finally feels alive. From 56'30 onwards, the close-ups on the bowl of water, and Orlando's hands dipping into it followed by a tilt shot going up on Orlando's face who sprays herself with it can be a symbol of purity and fertility. It is highly significant since she is now a woman, and will later give birth to a baby girl. One can also say that there is a biblical overtone, as her spraying herself with water can allude to baptism, which reinforces the idea of purification of the soul, and rebirth. This can symbolise the fact that she is now the person she

should have always been, namely a woman. The music also has a kind of magical effect, which perfectly illustrates her transition, which is somehow magical. It goes on and on until the camera stops on Orlando, looking at her new physical appearance in a mirror. At 57'18, the close-up on her face and the music fading as she starts to say: "Same person. No Difference at all," before addressing the viewer directly saying, "just a different sex" shows the intimate connection between Orlando and the viewers. This is a clear transition in the story since, as in the novel, the event seems completely natural. I reckon that discussing transidentity through literature and film is a good way to demystify the issue, which is still taboo for many people. It is important to make pupils understand that they have the right to be themselves, and having some representation of LGBTQ people in schools can make some pupils feel more integrated and represented. One can even make a possible link with contemporary society, and the importance of coming out for people in the process of accepting their identity and being true to themselves, which may not be easy for everyone. Moreover, "there's years of research that demonstrate that curriculums that include respect for others regarding their sexual orientation and gender identity are more effective"<sup>77</sup>, probably because it helps to create a more inclusive and equal school, which is therefore more conducive to learning. This idea of inclusive education can also be applied to people with disabilities and their integration into the school. One can easily tackle this topic through the study of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, especially through the character of Tiny Tim. This boy cannot do anything to improve his health, and death threatens him, but he is still good to everyone, unlike Scrooge who has everything but is still selfish as one can read in the following quote:

"“Spirit,” said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, ‘tell me if Tiny Tim will live.’ ‘I see a vacant seat,’ replied the Ghost, ‘in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.’” (p. 82)

Through Scrooge's eyes, the reader is invited to feel empathy and compassion for the little boy, which can allow teachers to encourage support and integration of people with disabilities instead of rejection. In Clive Donner's film adaptation, the close shot on Tiny Tim saying "Amen" at 52'49 also aims at provoking compassion in the viewer. He is a central character in the story as he is the one on whom Scrooge's choices have the most impact. In this scene, Scrooge begins to realise that his selfishness and lack of consideration for his employees is

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<sup>77</sup> Meckler, Laura. "Gender Identity lessons, Banned in Some Schools, are Rising in Others." *The Washington Post*, June 3, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/06/03/schools-gender-identity-transgender-lessons/>. (Consulted on June 6, 2022).

having a real impact on their lives, particularly for the Cratchits, who do not have enough money to provide medical care for their son, who will die if he does not change. The introduction of disability into a lesson plan allows pupils to become aware of the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, and promotes understanding between peers. Raising awareness about disability is an essential part of the process of discovering and accepting others, thus preventing any kind of discrimination. I think it is necessary to show pupils that, even though they are all different, they are all equal and alike. If I were to do a lesson on this work, I would focus heavily on this part to bring a moral to the story. I would make sure that the pupils understand the purpose of the interpretation in order to develop their critical thinking skills, while at the same time encouraging them to discuss what the character of Tiny Tim means to them. I would like them to tell me how they feel when they read this part, and watch the scene in the film to get them to discuss the issue of disability in society, and within the high school in which they find themselves. Dealing with these sorts of topics at school participates in “creating an environment where all [pupils] feel included and valued,”<sup>78</sup> which can then give them confidence in themselves so that they can enjoy their schooling, but also face their adult life in a more peaceful manner. In addition to the notion of disability, the study of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* can be used to discuss social differences, and to fight against all forms of hatred and discrimination. In his work, the author is particularly committed and seeks to shock his readers into realising the appalling living conditions of the poor and the way in which the better-off classes treat them to bring about a social awakening. I think it is relevant to make pupils reflect on their own situation, on the progress and ever recurring problems in our contemporary society, and on the importance of these committed artists in raising people’s awareness. In many cases, the civic education of the pupils is sidelined in favour of linguistics and the cultural aspect of the English course, whereas it could be much more emphasised through discussions, projects, or activities in which the latter would have a central place. Studying Virginia Woolf’s and Dickens’ works can really bring a sense of morality, and have a real impact on the way pupils perceive the world. I find it interesting to work on the artist’s relationship with society and their influence on it. Indeed, committed artists often have strong ideas about the societal problems of their time, and comparing the vision of the time with a more contemporary vision, considering the different evolutions that have taken place, can allow pupils to express themselves on these

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<sup>78</sup> Baylor University. “How to Teach Children About Disabilities and Inclusion.” Wako, December 3, 2019. Retrieved from <https://onlinegrad.baylor.edu/resources/teaching-children-disabilities-inclusion/>. (Consulted on June 22, 2022).

subjects and compare their points of view. Moreover, it is possible to evoke other works to draw parallels such as Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, which is a very committed essay, highlighting gender inequalities, or Dickens's *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*, which highlights the plight of the poor, particularly through the Poor Laws, and child labour. In this didactic application, I would like to propose activities that enhance this civic objective, especially when it comes to Virginia Woolf's work. Indeed, the author discusses topics that are not often discussed in the classroom, such as transidentity and homosexuality, but which deserve to be highlighted. I admit that these are delicate subjects to deal with, especially for teachers who are not familiar with the LGBT community, but the fight against homophobia and transphobia is still a subject that needs to be emphasised today. The study of *Orlando* can provide interesting activities in this respect, especially if the texts studied by the pupils are well targeted<sup>79</sup>.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, the focus was on the role and importance of film adaptation in the study of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and the place of imagination and creativity in the learning process, especially in interpretation and the development of critical thinking. It started with a discussion of the value of studying literature through films, focusing on the different artistic languages, and their connection to each other. It was shown that film adaptation was considered by many to be a rewriting of the original work which, as the term implies, raises questions of accuracy, as would be the case with a translation. It was, however, mentioned that the written and the visual are not and should not be seen as the same artistic expression since they do not use the same artistic language, while showing that they are two different types of entertainment that inspired and/or complemented each other. The impact that art can have on the world, and the role of the artist in society, was also discussed, with reference to the issues of censorship and engaged art, since Virginia Woolf and Dickens were two very committed writers. Committed art is a way to change people's perception of the world, and can influence public opinion on sometimes controversial issues, hence the importance of introducing pupils to this type of works so that they can be more open-minded,

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix B p. 64.

and develop a critical view of the society around them. Rediscovering canonical works such as *Orlando* or *A Christmas Carol* through films can allow pupils to have a different vision of them, particularly when considering the choices made by the director on what to adapt and what not to adapt. Through the study of these works, the pupils can discover the English-speaking world and its history both in a written form and through a visual representation, as images can be more evocative than words, both from an emotional and an educational point of view, particularly for the civic education of pupils. Focusing on the creative process of a work, and its impact on the world through interpretation, can enable pupils to be more enlightened citizens, but also to develop their own freedom of mind, through imagination and creative interpretation. Pupils can develop various skills such as memory and critical thinking through imagination and the association of words and images. Analysing the works of Virginia Woolf and Dickens which deal with inequalities based on social, gender, and/or sexual orientation and discriminations related to these can enable teachers to help pupils develop autonomous thinking and make them aware of the need to be tolerant of other people's differences. Given what is happening in the world at the moment, and the fact that society is currently experiencing a regression in terms of minority rights, particularly in the United States with the revocation of abortion rights, the desire to suppress homosexual marriage, or the return of censorship for gay literature in certain large supermarkets such as Target, it is all the more necessary to show pupils that it is important to accept difference, in order to fight against all forms of obscurantism. Art is a means of expression to fight against oppression, and the teachers' role is also to show the pupils that what happened in the past with certain canonical works that were censored because they were considered too controversial, such as Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, can happen again, and that it is crucial that freedom of expression stays a fundamental right.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Mentioned Extract (II, A)**

**Extrait mentionné II, A :** Dickens, Charles. “Stave Two: The First of the Three Spirits”. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, pp. 60-61.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her “Dear, dear brother.”

“I have come to bring you home, dear brother!” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. “To bring you home, home, home!”

“Home, little Fan?” returned the boy.

“Yes!” said the child, brimful of glee. “Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home’s like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you’re to be a man!” said the child, opening her eyes, “and are never to come back here; but first, we’re to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.”

“You are quite a woman, little Fan!” exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, “Bring down Master Scrooge’s box, there!” and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of “something” to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge’s trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the

children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray.

“Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered,” said the Ghost. “But she had a large heart!”

“So she had,” cried Scrooge. “You’re right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!”

“She died a woman,” said the Ghost, “and had, as I think, children.”

“One child,” Scrooge returned.

“True,” said the Ghost. “Your nephew!”

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, “Yes.”

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

## APPENDIX B

### Teaching Sequence

<b>Notion Programme :</b> Arts et débats d'idées / Axe 1 : Art et contestation		
<b>Titre Séquence:</b> Art as a means of resistance against social oppression and discrimination against women and sexual minorities.	<b>Nombre de séances :</b> 9	<b>Classe/ Niveau visé :</b> Terminale LLCE Anglais (C1)
<b>Problématique:</b> The role and importance of committed art in denouncing injustice, and its inclusion in major social debates: Writing and challenging mainstream thinking in Virginia Woolf's <i>Orlando</i> and Dickens' <i>A Christmas Carol</i> .		
<b>Tâche finale:</b> You want to adapt a literary work into a film, defending a particular cause, and have to present a part of your script to a panel of judges. You thus decide to introduce a scene clearly stating the cause defended in your project, the literary passage chosen, and the way in which you have decided to adapt it.		
<b>Objectifs culturels de la séquence:</b> The role and place of women in society over the centuries. Social differences in Victorian England (Poor Laws, Child Labour, Hungry Forties, etc.).		
<b>Objectifs Linguistiques :</b>  <b>Grammaire :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rappel du « simple past » et « past perfect »</li> <li>• Composition et placement des adjectifs</li> <li>• Modaux (Shall, Will, et Must obligation,)</li> <li>• Les verbes à particules (comparaison avec verbe + préposition)</li> </ul> <b>Lexique :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lexique de l'analyse littéraire et filmique (glossaires distribués)</li> <li>• Lexique des différences de classes. (<i>A Christmas Carol</i>) (+ sous-thèmes comme l'oppression ou les émotions liés à ces différences)</li> <li>• Lexique des traditions (<i>A Christmas Carol</i>)</li> <li>• Lexique du genre et de la sexualité. (<i>Orlando</i>) (+ sous-thèmes comme le code vestimentaire ou la notion de chasteté)</li> </ul> <b>Phonologie :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rappel de la prononciation du -ed.</li> <li>• Le rythme et les différents types d'intonations (Rise, Fall, Fall-Rise → travail sur les dialogues, et lecture à voix haute)</li> </ul> <b>Objectifs communicationnels :</b>  <b>Pragmatique :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprendre à rédiger et délivrer un argumentaire pour convaincre : pauses, modulation de la voix, intonation, etc. (travail sur « le dialogue » entre Orlando et les intellectuels dans l'adaptation de Sally Potter cf. Séance 8)</li> <li>• Apprendre à rédiger un dialogue / un script.</li> </ul> <b>Sociolinguistique :</b> Comparaison des registres par rapport au genre ou à la classe sociale (vocabulaire, accents en fonction du temps, etc.)		

Compétences du socle commun travaillées et objectifs citoyens visés :

Réflexion sur la propre situation des élèves et la société contemporaine (discussions sur les discriminations basées sur le genre, l'orientation sexuelle, ou sur une question sociale ou raciale. Promotion de la tolérance et de la bienveillance face à la différence, ainsi que la déconstruction des stéréotypes)

Activités Langagières et Stratégies Retenues (autonomie et communication entre pairs) :

CO/ CE/ EE/ EO(I) → encourager la communication entre pairs à travers un échange d'idées et des travaux de groupes (mise en commun en classe entière des interprétations et organisation de roleplays, et de scénettes théâtrales).

Encourager les élèves à être autonome à travers des recherches sur les auteurs, et la réalisation de traces écrites, ou d'interprétations littéraires et cinématographique personnelles.

**Compétences travaillées en fonction des activités langagières :**

Compréhension orale : C1 – « Suivre une intervention d'une certaine longueur même si elle n'est pas clairement structurée et même si les relations entre les idées sont seulement implicites, et non explicitement indiquées. »

« Suivre un film faisant largement usage de l'argot et d'expressions idiomatiques. »

(Comprendre et analyser les extraits filmiques proposés, pour ensuite être capable d'interpréter les propos des personnages, et la manière avec laquelle les acteurs les incarnent)

Compréhension écrite : C1 – « être habile à utiliser les indices contextuels, grammaticaux et lexicaux pour en déduire une attitude, une humeur, des intentions, et anticiper la suite » (compréhension orale/ écrite)

« Être capable de comprendre dans le détail une gamme étendue de textes et [...] identifier des points de détails fins, y compris des attitudes, que les opinions soient exposées ou implicites »

(Comprendre, et analyser les extraits littéraires proposés, et être capable d'en produire une interprétation fine, et personnelle.)

Expression écrite : C1 – l'écriture créative visée pour la tâche finale « peut écrire des textes bien construits dans un style sûr, personnel, et naturel approprié au lecteur visé »

(Apprendre à rédiger un script pour adapter un extrait d'une œuvre littéraire engagée de leur choix)

« Peut exposer et prouver son point de vue assez longuement à l'aide d'arguments secondaires, de justifications, et d'exemples pertinents. »

(Analyser, et rédiger des commentaires construits sur les différents extraits littéraires, et filmiques proposés.)

Expression orale : C1 – S'adresser à un auditoire « Peut faire un exposé clair et bien structuré sur un sujet complexe, développant et confirmant ses points de vue assez longuement à l'aide de points secondaires, de justifications, et d'exemples pertinents. »

(Le but de la tâche finale est également de faire en sorte que les élèves soient capables de défendre leur projet devant un jury – Apprendre à s'exprimer avec fluidité et sans effort)

Exercice de répétition (scénette théâtrale) pour améliorer la fluidité de la langue, et l'aisance des élèves à l'oral.

Tâches intermédiaires :

Séance 2/3 : activité théâtrale en binôme (travail sur le dialogue (structure, composition, etc.) et reproduction de la scène de la rencontre entre Scrooge et le fantôme du présent)

Séance 4/5 : rédaction d'un script sur un extrait de l'œuvre au choix (possibilité de choisir un extrait étudié en classe)

Séance 8/9 : rédaction d'un dialogue entre Orlando du passé (homme) et Orlando du présent (femme) → souligner les différences de genres, et les obligations, droits, et privilèges d'un sexe par rapport à l'autre et/ou expliquer en quoi la transition d'Orlando n'a pas changé sa nature profonde (genre et sexualité).

Supports retenus et intérêt pour les élèves :

Extraits littéraires : *A Christmas Carol* de Dickens et *Orlando* de Virginia Woolf → familiariser les élèves avec l'écriture romanesque dans la littérature canonique (vocabulaire, structures grammaticales cf. le « stream of consciousness » de Virginia Woolf, contexte historique, etc.)

Séquences filmiques : Les adaptations des œuvres ci-dessus par Sally Potter et Clive Donner → utiliser le visuel comme vecteur de motivation et permettre aux élèves de mieux comprendre les œuvres à l'étude en associant les mots et les images. (Découvrir et comprendre les deux procédés artistiques)

Etude des scripts : comprendre le processus d'écriture d'un film et mise en lien avec la littérature. (L'écrit avant le visuel).

Sources:

- Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019.
- Donner, Clive. *A Christmas Carol*. 1984.
- Potter, Sally. *Orlando*. 1992.
- <http://www.sp-ark.org/searchResult.php?ss=SCRIPT&tag=1>.
- [https://natedsanders.com/script\\_for\\_\\_\\_christmas\\_carol\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_the\\_1938\\_mgm\\_ver-lot23834.aspx](https://natedsanders.com/script_for___christmas_carol_____the_1938_mgm_ver-lot23834.aspx).

Détails séances :

Séance 1 : Travail sur les extraits 1 et 2 (lecture comparée).

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulaire abordable dans l'ensemble (vocabulaire des sentiments, de la description, des traditions, de la nourriture, etc.)</li><li>• Les dialogues permettent d'identifier facilement les personnages, et les noms sont clairement cités.</li><li>• Aucune difficulté au niveau des temps verbaux (prétérit simple)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Le contexte historique est inconnu.</li><li>• La critique sociale sous-jacente peut ne pas être perçue par les élèves (dénonciation du travail des enfants à travers le personnage de Martha, ou de la négligence des classes supérieures envers les classes ouvrières.)</li><li>• La formation des adjectifs (l'obstacle peut être levé en décortiquant les différentes parties)</li></ul>

Séance 2 : Reprise de la trace écrite du cours précédent et étude des extraits filmiques suivants : Donner, Clive. *A Christmas Carol*. 1984.

- De 45'31 à 47'05
- De 50'58 à 52'06
- De 1 :03'58 à 1 :05'59

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrigue connue (les élèves savent ce qu'ils vont voir, connaissent le sujet, et peuvent se concentrer sur autre chose que la compréhension du thème.)</li> <li>• L'accent est clair et le débit est plutôt lent. (Articulation)</li> <li>• Les élèves peuvent avoir une idée plus précise du contexte historique (apport du visuel)</li> <li>• Aucune difficulté syntaxique, ou au niveau des temps verbaux.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L'analyse filmique est un exercice relativement nouveau (Il est nécessaire de les accompagner dans l'exercice dans un premier temps, et ne pas les laisser immédiatement en autonomie.)</li> </ul>

Séance 3 : Travail sur les extraits 3 et 4 (lecture comparée)  
Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le contexte historique est connu.</li> <li>• Les dialogues et les descriptions permettent de bien identifier les personnages et les lieux. (Aspect théâtral qui facilite la compréhension : scène facilement visualisable.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La longueur des textes. (Lever l'obstacle en scindant les textes en plusieurs parties, et en demandant aux élèves de se concentrer sur des éléments précis lors du parcours de compréhension)</li> <li>• L'utilisation des modaux « shall » et « will » → la nuance entre les deux peut ne pas être perçus par les élèves (PRL)</li> <li>• Les références intertextuelles (extrait 4) → allusion à <i>Oliver Twist</i> (lever l'obstacle dans l'analyse fine du texte, la dernière étape du parcours de compréhension)</li> <li>• Eléments inconnus du contexte historique : « workhouses » → décortiquer le mot, et demander aux élèves d'émettre des hypothèses par rapport au contexte historique.</li> </ul>

Séance 4 : Reprise de la trace écrite du cours précédent et étude des extraits filmiques suivants : Donner, Clive. *A Christmas Carol*. 1984.

- De 52'32 à 55'05
- De 1 :06'17 à 1 :08'08

Travail sur le script de *A Christmas Carol* (premier document modélisant pour la tâche finale)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scène identique à celle de l'œuvre littéraire.</li> <li>• Accent clair/ débit lent</li> <li>• Contexte historique connu.</li> <li>• Le visuel peut favoriser la compréhension (différence au niveau du ressenti des élèves)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse paralinguistique (les élèves peuvent avoir des difficultés à interpréter le jeu des acteurs)</li> <li>• Manque de concentration (l'analyse filmique nécessite une concentration accrue afin de percevoir et analyser les détails, et messages cachés derrière les plans) → intérêt de proposer des extraits courts pour éviter de perdre l'attention des élèves.</li> <li>• Analyse du script (structure nouvelle : prendre le temps de décortiquer chaque partie)</li> </ul>

Séance 5 : Travail sur les extraits 5 et 6.  
Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peu de vocabulaire complexe.</li> <li>• Sujets facilement repérables.</li> <li>• Temps verbaux connus (rappel)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La structure du texte (la longueur des phrases, et les digressions peuvent perdre les élèves : introduction du « stream of consciousness »)</li> <li>• Contexte historique inconnu.</li> </ul>

Séance 6 : Reprise de la trace écrite du cours précédent et étude de l'extrait filmique suivant :  
Potter, Sally. *Orlando*. 1992.

- De 55'57 à 57'34

Travail sur le script de *Orlando* (deuxième document modélisant pour la tâche finale)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Les élèves ont déjà travaillé sur un script.</li> <li>• Ils commencent à se familiariser avec l'analyse filmique (possibilité de leur laisser plus d'autonomie.)</li> <li>• Sujet connu, déjà évoqué (presque aucun dialogue/ débit très lent)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le sens de chaque plan peut ne pas être perçu par les élèves (nécessité de les faire travailler sur des éléments précis lors du parcours de compréhension + émission d'hypothèses/ discussion, etc.)</li> </ul>

Séance 7 : Analyse des extraits 7 et 8.  
Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928)

Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contexte historique global déjà évoqué dans les deux extraits précédents.</li> <li>• Modalité déjà traitée (facilité de compréhension de la subtilité sémantique des différents modaux)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manque de connaissance sur l'auteure et son engagement. (Jugement sous-jacent)</li> <li>• Quelques mots de vocabulaire en rapport avec le contexte culturel et historique peuvent poser problème aux</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulaire connu comme le vocabulaire lié au corps et au sexe féminin.</li> <li>• Sujets facilement repérables (la compréhension globale ne présente aucune difficulté)</li> </ul>	élèves cf. « Whitehall », « paduasoy », etc.				
<p><u>Séance 8</u> : Reprise de la trace écrite et étude de l'extrait filmique suivant : Potter, Sally. <i>Orlando</i>. 1992.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De 59'15 à 1 :06'26.</li> </ul>					
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Eléments facilitateurs</th><th>Eléments obstacles</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contexte historique connu (nouvelle approche)</li> <li>• Débit lent/ aucune difficulté syntaxique (mis à part les paroles de la chanson qui peuvent être difficile à percevoir si on n'y accorde pas une attention particulière)</li> </ul> </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrait long (possibilité de le scinder en plusieurs parties)</li> <li>• Beaucoup de personnages : cf. la discussion entre les différents poètes (lever l'obstacle en créant un tableau pour les différencier et extraire les arguments de chacun)</li> </ul> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Eléments facilitateurs	Eléments obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contexte historique connu (nouvelle approche)</li> <li>• Débit lent/ aucune difficulté syntaxique (mis à part les paroles de la chanson qui peuvent être difficile à percevoir si on n'y accorde pas une attention particulière)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extrait long (possibilité de le scinder en plusieurs parties)</li> <li>• Beaucoup de personnages : cf. la discussion entre les différents poètes (lever l'obstacle en créant un tableau pour les différencier et extraire les arguments de chacun)</li> </ul>	
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<p><u>Séance 9</u> : Séance dédiée à la tâche finale (explicitations des consignes, questions potentielles, etc.)</p>					

## APPENDIX C

### Extracts Studied in the Teaching Sequence

**Extrait 1 :** Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, pp. 77-79.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the baker's shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was. God love it, so it was.

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

'Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch.' asked Scrooge.

'There is. My own.'

'Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day.' asked Scrooge.

'To any kindly given. To a poor one most.'

'Why to a poor one most.' asked Scrooge.

'Because it needs it most.'

[...] And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that. Bob had but fifteen bob a-week himself;

he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!

[...] ‘What has ever got your precious father then.’ said Mrs Cratchit. ‘And your brother, Tiny Tim. And Martha warn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!’

‘Here’s Martha, mother!’ said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

‘Here’s Martha, mother!’ cried the two young Cratchits.

‘Hurrah! There’s such a goose, Martha!’

‘Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are.’ said Mrs Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

‘We’d a deal of work to finish up last night,’ replied the girl,’ and had to clear away this morning, mother!’

**Extrait 2 :** Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, pp. 72-74.

The moment Scrooge’s hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge’s time, or Marley’s, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty’s horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

‘Come in.’ exclaimed the Ghost. ‘Come in, and know me better, man!’

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

'I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,' said the Spirit. 'Look upon me.'

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust. '

You have never seen the like of me before.' exclaimed the Spirit. 'Never,' Scrooge made answer to it.

'Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years.' pursued the Phantom.

'I don't think I have,' said Scrooge. 'I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit.'

'More than eighteen hundred,' said the Ghost.

'A tremendous family to provide for.' muttered Scrooge. The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

'Spirit,' said Scrooge submissively, 'conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.'

'Touch my robe!'

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

**Extrait 3 :** Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, pp. 82-83.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

'A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.' Which all the family re-echoed.

‘God bless us every one.’ said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father’s side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

‘Spirit,’ said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, ‘tell me if Tiny Tim will live.’

‘I see a vacant seat,’ replied the Ghost, ‘in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.’

‘No, no,’ said Scrooge. ‘Oh, no, kind Spirit. say he will be spared.’

‘If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race,’ returned the Ghost, ‘will find him here. What then. If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.’

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

‘Man,’ said the Ghost, ‘if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die. It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man’s child. Oh God. to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust.’ Scrooge bent before the Ghost’s rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

‘Mr Scrooge.’ said Bob; ‘I’ll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast.’

‘The Founder of the Feast indeed.’ cried Mrs Cratchit, reddening. ‘I wish I had him here. I’d give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he’d have a good appetite for it.’

‘My dear,’ said Bob, ‘the children. Christmas Day.’

‘It should be Christmas Day, I am sure,’ said she, ‘on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow.’

‘My dear,’ was Bob’s mild answer, ‘Christmas Day.’

‘I’ll drink his health for your sake and the Day’s,’ said Mrs Cratchit, ‘not for his. Long life to him. A merry Christmas and a happy new year. He’ll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt.’

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn’t care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter’s being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income.

**Extrait 4 :** Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* (1843). London, Penguin Classics, New e. edition, 2003, pp. 92-94.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children’s Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

‘Are spirits’ lives so short?’ asked Scrooge.

‘My life upon this globe, is very brief,’ replied the Ghost.

‘It ends to-night.’

‘To-night.’ cried Scrooge.

‘To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.’ The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

‘Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask,’ said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit’s robe,’ but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw!’

‘It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it,’ was the Spirit’s sorrowful reply. ‘Look here.’ From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

‘Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!’ exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

‘Spirit. are they yours?’ Scrooge could say no more.

‘They are Man’s,’ said the Spirit, looking down upon them. ‘And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it.’ cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. ‘Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end!’

‘Have they no refuge or resource?’ cried Scrooge.

‘Are there no prisons?’ said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. ‘Are there no workhouses?’

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

**Extrait 5 :** Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 97-98.

They retire in haste, waving their draperies over their heads, as if to shut out something that they dare not look upon and close the door behind them.

We are, therefore, now left entirely alone in the room with the sleeping Orlando and the trumpeters. The trumpeters, ranging themselves side by side in order, blow one terrific blast—

“THE TRUTH!”

at which Orlando woke.

He stretched himself. He rose. He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! Truth! we have no choice left but confess—he was a woman.

The sound of the trumpets died away and Orlando stood stark naked. No human being, since the world began, has ever looked more ravishing. His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman's grace. As he stood there, the silver trumpets prolonged their note, as if reluctant to leave the lovely sight which their blast had called forth; and Chastity, Purity, and Modesty, inspired, no doubt, by Curiosity, peeped in at the door and threw a garment like a towel at the naked form which, unfortunately, fell short by several inches. Orlando looked himself up and down in a long looking-glass, without showing any signs of discomposure, and went, presumably, to his bath.

We may take advantage of this pause in the narrative to make certain statements. Orlando had become a woman—there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory—but in future we must, for convention's sake, say ‘her’ for ‘his,’ and ‘she’ for ‘he’—her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle. Some slight haziness there may have been, as if a few dark drops had fallen into the clear pool of memory; certain things had become a little dimmed; but that was all. The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it. Many people, taking this into account, and holding that such a change of sex is against nature, have been at great pains to prove (1) that Orlando had always been a woman, (2) that Orlando is at this moment a man. Let biologists and psychologists determine.

It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since.

**Extrait 6 :** Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 115-116.

And as all Orlando's loves had been women, now, through the culpable laggardry of the human frame to adapt itself to convention, though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man. For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the sexes and lets linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was removed, and if there is anything in what the poet says about truth and beauty, this affection gained in beauty what it lost in falsity. At last, she cried, she knew Sasha as she was, and in the ardour of this discovery, and in the pursuit of all those treasures which were now revealed, she was so rapt and enchanted that it was as if a cannon ball had exploded at her ear when a man's voice said, 'Permit me, Madam,' a man's hand raised her to her feet; and the fingers of a man with a three-masted sailing ship tattooed on the middle finger pointed to the horizon.

'The cliffs of England, Ma'am,' said the Captain, and he raised the hand which had pointed at the sky to the salute. Orlando now gave a second start, even more violent than the first.

'Christ Jesus!' she cried.

Happily, the sight of her native land after long absence excused both start and exclamation, or she would have been hard put to it to explain to Captain Bartolus the raging and conflicting emotions which now boiled within her. How tell him that she, who now trembled on his arm, had been a Duke and an Ambassador? How explain to him that she, who had been lapped like a lily in folds of paduasoy, had hacked heads off, and lain with loose women among treasure sacks in the holds of pirate ships on summer nights when the tulips were abloom and the bees buzzing off Wapping Old Stairs? Not even to herself could she explain the giant start she gave, as the resolute right hand of the sea-captain indicated the cliffs of the British Islands.

**Extrait 7 :** Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando* (1928). London, Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2019, pp. 110-113.

She remembered how, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled. 'Now I shall have to pay in my own person for those desires,' she reflected; 'for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex)

obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely appalled by nature. They can only attain these graces, without which they may enjoy none of the delights of life, by the most tedious discipline. There's the hairdressing,' she thought, 'that alone will take an hour of my morning, there's looking in the looking-glass, another hour; there's staying and lacing; there's washing and powdering; there's changing from silk to lace and from lace to paduasoy; there's being chaste year in year out...' Here she tossed her foot impatiently, and showed an inch or two of calf. A sailor on the mast, who happened to look down at the moment, started so violently that he missed his footing and only saved himself by the skin of his teeth. 'If the sight of my ankles means death to an honest fellow who, no doubt, has a wife and family to support, I must, in all humanity, keep them covered,' Orlando thought. Yet her legs were among her chiefest beauties. And she fell to thinking what an odd pass we have come to when all a woman's beauty has to be kept covered lest a sailor may fall from a mast-head. 'A pox on them!' she said, realizing for the first time what, in other circumstances, she would have been taught as a child, that is to say, the sacred responsibilities of womanhood.

'And that's the last oath I shall ever be able to swear,' she thought; 'once I set foot on English soil. And I shall never be able to crack a man over the head, or tell him he lies in his teeth, or draw my sword and run him through the body, or sit among my peers, or wear a coronet, or walk in procession, or sentence a man to death, or lead an army, or prance down Whitehall on a charger, or wear seventy-two different medals on my breast. All I can do, once I set foot on English soil, is to pour out tea and ask my lords how they like it. D'you take sugar? D'you take cream?' And mincing out the words, she was horrified to perceive how low an opinion she was forming of the other sex, the manly, to which it had once been her pride to belong. 'To fall from a mast-head', she thought, 'because you see a woman's ankles; to dress up like a Guy Fawkes and parade the streets, so that women may praise you; to deny a woman teaching lest she may laugh at you; to be the slave of the frailest chit in petticoats. and yet to go about as if you were the Lords of creation. – Heavens!' she thought, 'what fools they make of us—what fools we are!' And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each.

**Extrait 8 :** Virginia Woolf. *Orlando* (1928). Londres : Penguin Classics; 1er édition, 2019, pp. 108-109.

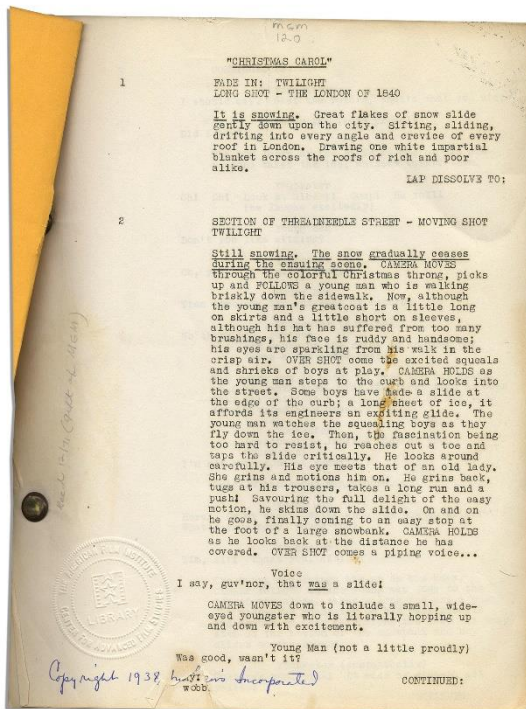
With some of the guineas left from the sale of the tenth pearl on her string, Orlando bought herself a complete outfit of such clothes as women then wore, and it was in the dress of a young

Englishwoman of rank that she now sat on the deck of the “Enamoured Lady”. It is a strange fact, but a true one, 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 and the Captain offered, with the greatest politeness, to have an awning spread for her on deck, that she realised with a start the penalties and the privileges of her position. But that start was not of the kind that might have been expected.

It was not caused, that is to say, simply and solely by the thought of her chastity and how she could preserve it. In normal circumstances a lovely young woman alone would have thought of nothing else; the whole edifice of female government is based on that foundation stone; chastity is their jewel, their centrepiece, which they run mad to protect, and die when ravished of. But if one has been a man for thirty years or so, and an Ambassador into the bargain, if one has held a Queen in one’s arms and one or two other ladies, if report be true, of less exalted rank, if one has married a Rosina Pepita, and so on, one does not perhaps give such a very great start about that. Orlando’s start was of a very complicated kind, and not to be summed up in a trice. Nobody, indeed, ever accused her of being one of those quick wits who run to the end of things in a minute. It took her the entire length of the voyage to moralise out the meaning of her start, and so, at her own pace, we will follow her.

‘Lord,’ she thought, when she had recovered from her start, stretching herself out at length under her awning, ‘this is a pleasant, lazy way of life, to be sure. But,’ she thought, giving her legs a kick, ‘these skirts are plaguey things to have about one’s heels. Yet the stuff (flowered paduasoy) is the loveliest in the world. Never have I seen my own skin (here she laid her hand on her knee) look to such advantage as now. Could I, however, leap overboard and swim in clothes like these? No! Therefore, I should have to trust to the protection of a blue-jacket. Do I object to that? Now do I?’ she wondered, here encountering the first knot in the smooth skein of her argument.

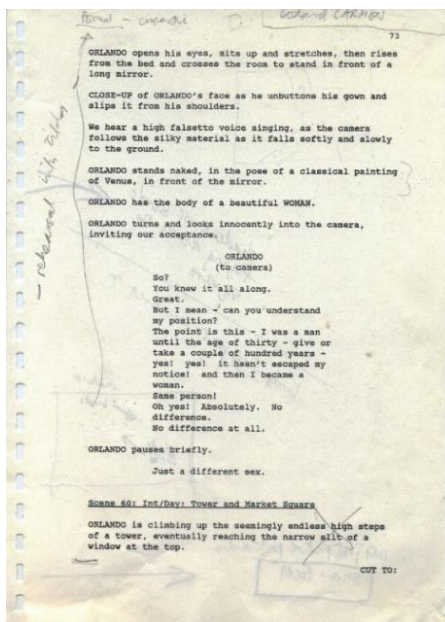
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## **INDEX OF CONCEPTS**

### **A –**

Action-Oriented Approach 22

Adaptation 5,6,7,8,9,10,12,14,15,16,17,18,  
19,20,26,27,28,30,31,32,34,36,37,39,40,41  
,42,47,48,51,55,57

Archetypes 17

### **C –**

Censorship 11,57,58

Creativity 6,16,19,23,24,28,33,34,38,48,57

Critical Thinking 21,24,26,30,53,56,57,58

### **D –**

Disability 55,56

Discrimination 21,41,42,56,58

### **G –**

Gender 4,6,16,17,18,19,36,43,44,45,50,51,  
52,54,55,56,58

### **H –**

Homosexuality 11,16,53,54,57

Hungry Forties 19,45

### **I –**

Identity 4,6,16,18,39,51,53,54,55,57

Imitation 6,7

Intertextuality 20,21

### **M –**

Memory 17,26,34,36,37,38,48,58

Mnemonic Imagination 36,38,39

### **P –**

Picture Superiority Effect 17

Play-based Learning 33,36

Productive Imagination 25,27,28

### **R –**

Rewriting 5,6,57

### **S –**

Sensible Intuition 27

Social Class 15,18,19,41,44,45,46,51

Stereotypes 17,18,51,52,53,54

### **T –**

Transidentity 16,53,54,55,57

Translation 7,35,57

## **INDEX OF PROPER NOUNS**

### **A –**

Andy Warhol 21

Ann Pendleton-Jullian 37

Aristotle 7

### **B –**

Bowie 21

### **C –**

Charlotte Mason 19

Cicero 38

Claire Liu 34

Clive Donner 5,6,8,9,28,33,34,37,41,42,48

### **D –**

Dave Neale 34

David Grann 41

David Whitebread 34

Dickens 4,5,6,8,9,12,14,15,18,19,21,27,28,  
32,35,340,41,42,46,47,48,49,51,52,55,56

Dr. Seuss 9

### **E –**

Emily Hopkins 34

### **F –**

Frank Capra 9

### **G –**

George C. Scott 8

### **H –**

Hanne Jensen 34

### **K –**

Kant 25,26,27,28

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek 34

### **M –**

Margaret Atwood 12

Mathew Reynolds 7

### **O –**

Orwell 21

### **P –**

Plato 6

### **R –**

Radclyffe Hall 11,58

Robert J. Marzano 23

### **S –**

Sally Potter 5,8,12,14,15,20,34,39,41,42,  
51,52,54.

Sarah M. Fine 35

Shakespeare 20

S. Lynne Solis 34

**T –**

Thomas Leitch 5

**V –**

Val McDermid 16

Virginia Woolf 6,11,16,17,20,28,50,54,57

Vita Sackville-West 6,11,20

## **Abstract**

This research paper deals with the contribution of art in society, and the way in which the artist interacts with his/her environment. It analyses the power of committed art in conveying a message, or countering mainstream thinking over time, through the study of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. From a didactic point of view, this argumentation demonstrates the importance of studying committed art with high school pupils, whether in written form through literature, or visually through the film adaptation of these canonical works. This dual approach highlights the connection between different artistic languages, and shows the role of the artist in representing a diversified society to fight stereotypes based on social, gender, or sexual orientation issues. This MA dissertation proves that the detailed analysis of these works allows for the development of pupils' creative, emotional, and visual-spatial intelligence so that they can capture the essence of the novels beyond the mere understanding of the words. Interpretation fosters the development of intuition through the study of symbols, patterns, and recurring imagery, and does not favour logic which is usually the most promoted element in the school system. Imagination and creativity which characterise every artist are especially valued in education as they help teenagers to develop their cognitive abilities such as memory and the ability to question themselves.

Key words: Virginia Woolf, Dickens, Committed Art, Creativity, Imagination, Subversion of Stereotypes, Canonical Literature, Film Adaptation, Artistic Language, Education.

## **Résumé**

Le présent mémoire traite de l'apport de l'art à la société, et la manière dont l'artiste interagit avec son environnement. Grâce à l'étude conjointe de *A Christmas Carol* de Dickens, et de *Orlando* de Virginia Woolf, il analyse le pouvoir de l'art engagé dans la diffusion d'un message ou dans l'opposition de la pensée prédominante au fil des époques. D'un point de vue didactique, cette étude démontre l'importance d'étudier l'art engagé avec des élèves de secondaire sous différentes formes, que ce soit écrite à travers la littérature, ou visuelle grâce à l'adaptation filmique de ces œuvres canoniques. Cette double approche permet de mettre en lumière le lien entre les différents langages artistiques, et montre le rôle de l'artiste dans la représentation d'une société diversifiée pour lutter contre les stéréotypes basés sur des questions sociales, de genres, ou l'orientation sexuelle. Ce travail démontre que l'analyse détaillée de ces œuvres permet de développer l'intelligence créative, émotionnelle, et visuelle-spatiale des élèves afin qu'ils soient capables de capter l'essence des romans au-delà de la simple compréhension des mots. L'interprétation favorise le développement de l'intuition à travers l'étude des symboles ou des motifs récurrents, et ne privilégie pas la logique, qui est l'élément le plus mis en avant dans le cadre scolaire. L'imagination et la créativité, qui caractérisent tout artiste, sont particulièrement appréciées dans l'éducation car elles aident les adolescents à développer leurs capacités cognitives telles que la mémoire et la capacité de raisonner.

Mots clés : Virginia Woolf, Dickens, Art Engagé, Créativité, Imagination, Subversion des Stéréotypes, Littérature Canonique, Adaptation Filmique, Langage Artistique, Education.