

Characters in *Orb: On the Movements of the Earth* Compared to Classic Literary Figures

An Educational Analysis for 12th Grade Students

Introduction and Educational Purpose

This document helps 12th-grade students and educators explore how contemporary anime/manga characters connect to classic literary archetypes, deepening understanding of universal human motivations and moral complexity. By comparing characters from *Orb: On the Movements of the Earth* with familiar figures from literature, students can:

- **Recognize universal character archetypes** across different cultures and time periods
- **Analyze moral complexity** beyond simple good vs. evil characterizations
- **Connect historical and fictional persecution** to contemporary social issues
- **Develop empathy** for characters facing difficult moral choices

This analysis builds upon your knowledge of character development, motivation, and thematic analysis from previous literary studies, encouraging you to think critically about how different mediums explore similar human experiences.

PROTAGONISTS

Rafal - The Passionate Truth-Seeker

Character Arc: Young prodigy who chooses intellectual pursuit over personal safety, ultimately



Spoiler alert

for scientific advancement.


Core Motivation: Deep love of astronomical knowledge and truth, willing to face persecution and death to preserve scientific understanding for future generations.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Rafal (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Values truth and beauty over safety; driven by intellectual curiosity	Climate scientists facing industry opposition
Victor Frankenstein	<i>Frankenstein</i>	Very High	Both are brilliant young minds consumed by forbidden knowledge, risking everything for scientific discovery despite dangerous consequences	Researchers pursuing controversial but important studies
Atticus Finch	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	High	Both choose moral truth over personal safety, stand against established authority, and maintain principles despite persecution	Whistleblowers exposing institutional corruption
Elizabeth Bennet	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	High	Both are intellectually gifted individuals who refuse to conform to expectations, value truth over convenience	Students challenging academic or social norms

Character Growth: Rafal begins idealistic and becomes increasingly aware of the real-world consequences of his pursuit of truth, yet never wavers in his commitment to knowledge over safety.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Rafal's willingness to  for knowledge compare to modern scientists who risk careers for controversial research?
- What makes Rafal different from Victor Frankenstein, who also pursued dangerous knowledge?

Oczy - The Reluctant Hero

Character Arc: Transforms from pessimistic, fearful character to someone who finds purpose in preserving forbidden knowledge despite personal trauma.

Core Motivation: Initially driven by despair and fear, gradually finds meaning through contributing to the preservation of astronomical knowledge.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Oczy (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Initially pessimistic, eventually finds purpose in preserving forbidden knowledge	Students overcoming depression to find meaningful goals
Hamlet	<i>Hamlet</i>	High	Both are melancholic, reluctant heroes who eventually find resolve in pursuing truth despite deep personal suffering	Young people struggling with purpose who find meaning in activism
Holden Caulfield	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	High	Both are pessimistic, traumatized characters struggling with purpose and meaning in a world that seems hopeless	Teens dealing with trauma who eventually find constructive outlets
John Proctor	<i>The Crucible</i>	High	Both are reluctant heroes who transform from self-preservation to sacrificing themselves for a greater truth	Individuals who overcome personal struggles to stand for principles

Character Growth: Oczy's journey represents the transformation from despair to meaningful action, showing how even the most traumatized individuals can find purpose in serving something greater than themselves.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Oczy's gradual transformation relate to modern struggles with mental health and finding purpose?
- What role does community and shared goals play in Oczy's character development?

Badeni - The Methodical Scholar

Character Arc: Mature researcher who approaches dangerous astronomical work with scientific rigor and careful planning, balancing intellectual courage with practical wisdom.

Core Motivation: Driven by intellectual integrity and systematic advancement of human knowledge, taking a measured approach while remaining committed to uncovering truth.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Badeni (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Methodical scholar pursuing scientific truth through rigorous research	Professional researchers balancing innovation with responsibility
Atticus Finch	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	High	Both are mature, principled professionals who use systematic approaches to pursue truth in hostile environments	Experienced professionals maintaining ethics under pressure
Victor Frankenstein	<i>Frankenstein</i>	Moderate	Both are scholarly and research-focused, but Victor is reckless while Badeni is methodical	Scientists who learn from others' mistakes and proceed carefully
Jean Valjean	<i>Les Misérables</i>	Moderate	Both show dedication to improvement and helping advance human understanding	Mentors who transform their fields through patient, ethical work

Character Growth: Badeni represents the archetype of the wise mentor-researcher who has learned to balance intellectual passion with practical caution, showing how experience can guide dangerous pursuits.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Badeni's methodical approach differ from Rafal's passionate pursuit of knowledge?
- What can modern researchers learn from Badeni's balance of courage and caution?

Jolenta - The Pioneering Woman Scholar

Character Arc: The only woman pursuing astronomical knowledge in a male-dominated environment, facing both religious persecution and gender discrimination while refusing to abandon her intellectual goals.

Core Motivation: Driven by intellectual curiosity and passion for astronomical knowledge, but must navigate the double burden of forbidden science and gender-based exclusion.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Jolenta (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Pursuing academic knowledge while facing both religious persecution and gender discrimination	Women in STEM fields navigating workplace discrimination
Elizabeth Bennet	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	High	Both are intelligent women who refuse to conform to limiting gender roles and pursue their goals despite societal barriers	Female students in male-dominated academic fields
Antigone	<i>Antigone</i>	High	Both challenge male-dominated institutions for higher principles, willing to face persecution for their convictions	Women activists challenging systemic barriers
Portia	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Moderate-High	Both are brilliant women who must navigate male-dominated professional environments using intellect to overcome gender barriers	Professional women breaking glass ceilings

Character Growth: Jolenta's determination to succeed despite compounded obstacles makes her particularly compelling, representing how individuals can pursue their passions despite facing multiple forms of discrimination.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Jolenta's experience as the only woman in her field relate to modern gender equality discussions?
- What strategies does she use that women today might recognize or employ?

Draka - The Pragmatic Outsider

Character Arc: Evolves from seeking financial security for her nomadic tribe to understanding the value of knowledge and truth, balancing pragmatism with intellectual curiosity.

Core Motivation: Initially driven by survival and wealth acquisition, gradually embraces a larger purpose of preserving truth and knowledge for future generations.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Draka (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Balances pragmatism with intellectual curiosity, evolves from self-interest to pursuing truth	First-generation college students balancing family expectations with education
Elizabeth Bennet	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	High	Both defy restrictive social structures as intellectually gifted women in male-dominated environments	Women navigating between traditional and progressive roles
Antigone	<i>Antigone</i>	High	Both risk persecution to uphold personal convictions against oppressive systems	Individuals choosing principles over security
Jay Gatsby	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Moderate	Both pursue wealth as means to security/power, but Gatsby's motivations are romantic while Draka's are survival-driven	People seeking financial stability for family/community

Character Growth: Draka's arc demonstrates how exposure to new ideas can transform someone's priorities, showing the power of education to expand one's sense of purpose beyond immediate survival needs.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Draka's evolution from pragmatism to idealism reflect real-world educational experiences?
- What role does community responsibility play in her character development?

Albert Brudzewski - The Anxious Student

Character Arc: Intelligent young man torn between practical concerns and intellectual curiosity, struggling with anxiety about pursuing higher learning while questioning the "usefulness" of knowledge.

Core Motivation: Caught between his father's practical teachings about "useful" knowledge and his mentor Rafal's inspiration to learn "because he wants to know," representing the universal student dilemma.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
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Albert Brudzewski (Orb)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Represents the everyman caught between safety and intellectual pursuit	Students torn between practical career paths and intellectual interests
Hamlet	<i>Hamlet</i>	High	Both are intellectually gifted but hesitant to act, torn between contrasting authority figures and plagued by self-doubt	Students facing pressure from different mentors/influences
Pip	<i>Great Expectations</i>	High	Both come from modest backgrounds, influenced by opposing mentors, struggling with whether to pursue ambitions or remain safe	First-generation college students navigating competing expectations
Nick Carraway	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Moderate-High	Both serve as audience surrogates, torn between practical values and exciting but dangerous pursuits	Young people balancing security with adventure/growth

Character Growth: Albert's journey represents the relatable struggle many students face when choosing between safe, practical paths and risky but fulfilling intellectual pursuits.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Albert's anxiety about "useful" knowledge relate to modern debates about education and career preparation?
- What can his historical significance (as future teacher of Copernicus) teach us about the long-term value of following intellectual curiosity?

ANTAGONIST

Nowak - The Complex Authority Figure

Character Arc: Inquisitor who genuinely believes he's protecting souls and society, representing the complex psychology of institutional authority rather than simple villainy.

Core Motivation: Enforces religious orthodoxy because he truly believes heretical astronomical theories threaten both individual souls and social stability.

Literary Character	Work	Similarity Level	Key Connections	Modern Parallel
Nowak (<i>Orb</i>)	<i>Orb: On the Movements of the Earth</i>	Reference	Complex authority figure torn between duty and doubt, genuinely believes persecution serves greater good	Authority figures who restrict freedoms believing they're protecting society
Danforth	<i>The Crucible</i>	High	Both are institutional authorities who genuinely believe their persecution serves a greater good; struggle with doubt but maintain duty	Officials who enforce controversial policies from genuine conviction
Javert	<i>Les Misérables</i>	High	Both are unwavering enforcers of institutional authority who see their role as maintaining moral/social order, even when causing suffering	Law enforcement or officials prioritizing order over individual circumstances
Judge Hathorne	<i>The Crucible</i>	Moderate-High	Both represent rigid institutional thinking, though Nowak shows more internal complexity and genuine religious conviction	Institutional leaders resistant to changing evidence

Character Growth: Unlike simple villains, Nowak demonstrates how well-meaning people can become instruments of oppression when they prioritize institutional loyalty over individual compassion.

Discussion Questions:

- What makes Nowak more complex than traditional "evil" antagonists?
- How do his genuine beliefs make him more dangerous than someone acting from pure malice?
- Can you think of modern examples where people cause harm while believing they're doing good?

MAJOR THEMES THROUGH CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The Seeker Archetype (Rafal, Badeni, Jolenta)

Characters driven by knowledge and truth, willing to face persecution for intellectual advancement. This archetype appears across cultures and time periods, suggesting fundamental human drive toward understanding.

The Reluctant Hero (Oczy, Albert)

Characters who initially resist their calling but eventually embrace meaningful action. This pattern reflects real human psychology of growth through adversity and finding purpose through community.

The Pragmatic Outsider (Draka)

Characters who approach situations from practical perspectives but are transformed by exposure to higher ideals. Represents how education and exposure to new ideas can expand one's sense of purpose.

The Complex Authority (Nowak)

Authority figures whose genuine convictions lead to harmful actions, demonstrating how institutional loyalty can override individual compassion. This challenges simple good vs. evil narratives.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Modern Parallels Students Can Recognize:

- **Academic Freedom Debates:** How Rafal's persecution mirrors modern academic freedom controversies
- **Gender in STEM:** Jolenta's experience reflects ongoing challenges women face in male-dominated fields
- **Career vs. Passion:** Albert's dilemma mirrors student struggles between practical careers and intellectual interests
- **Institutional Accountability:** Nowak's character illuminates how well-meaning policies can have harmful consequences

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Character Motivation Analysis:

1. **Empathy Building:** "Write a diary entry from Nowak's perspective explaining why he believes his actions are justified. How does understanding his motivations change your view of him?"

2. **Modern Connections:** "Choose one *Orb* character and identify a contemporary figure (real or fictional) who faces similar challenges. What can we learn from comparing them?"
3. **Moral Complexity:** "Which character's moral choices do you find most difficult to judge? Why does moral ambiguity make characters more interesting and realistic?"

Character Development:

4. **Growth Patterns:** "How does Albert's anxiety about 'useful' knowledge relate to your own educational choices? What can his historical importance teach us about following intellectual curiosity?"
5. **Archetype Recognition:** "Which classic literary character most reminds you of yourself, and why? How might understanding these archetypes help you navigate your own challenges?"

EDUCATIONAL VALUE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Skills Development:

- **Critical Thinking:** Moving beyond simple character judgments to understand complex motivations
- **Cultural Literacy:** Recognizing universal themes across different cultural contexts
- **Empathy Building:** Understanding how even antagonistic characters can have genuine motivations
- **Contemporary Application:** Connecting historical and fictional persecution to modern social issues

Assessment Opportunities:

- **Character Analysis Essays:** Compare an *Orb* character to a classic literary figure, analyzing both similarities and differences
- **Creative Projects:** Write modern adaptations showing how these character archetypes appear today
- **Discussion Leadership:** Lead class discussions about moral complexity in literature and current events

Extension Activities:

- **Research Projects:** Investigate the historical figures that inspired *Orb* characters
- **Character Interviews:** Create dialogues between *Orb* characters and their literary counterparts
- **Modern Parallels Portfolio:** Document contemporary examples of each character archetype

CONCLUSION

Orb: On the Movements of the Earth offers rich opportunities to explore universal human experiences through characters that transcend simple moral categories. By comparing these figures to classic literature, students develop more sophisticated understanding of character motivation, moral complexity, and the timeless nature of human struggles.

The series' strength lies in its refusal to create simple heroes and villains, instead presenting characters whose genuine beliefs and complex motivations mirror real human psychology. This approach helps students develop empathy, critical thinking skills, and the ability to navigate moral ambiguity—essential skills for engaged citizenship in a complex world.

Through these character studies, students learn that great literature—whether classic novels or contemporary anime/manga—succeeds by revealing universal truths about human nature while respecting the complexity of individual experience and moral choice.