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From Literature to Film: Discussing Gender Identities

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From Literature to Film: Discussing Gender Identities

by

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ABSTRACT

The title of this work refers to the initial project that aimed to analyze how the concept of non-fixed gender identity, present in Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, was expanded and updated by two new works - Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* and its homonymous film adaptation, by filmmaker Stephen Daldry. It was our intention to consider Genette's Theory of Transtextuality and McFarlane's Theory of Adaptation in order to investigate how Cunningham and Daldry built their hypertexts. Finally, we intended to discuss the concept of non-fixed gender identity, under the perspective of the feminist and critic Toril Moi. However, this last discussion was suppressed. Presented now is a study of Literature in the second degree resulting in an analysis of the process that created *The Hours* by rewriting *Mrs. Dalloway*. This work, therefore, aims to analyze how Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* was expanded and updated by two new works: the novel *The Hours*, by Michael Cunningham and its homonymous film adaptation, by filmmaker Stephen Daldry. But first, the analysis considers Gérard Genette's Theory of Transtextuality when investigating the creation of Cunningham's hypertext from Woolf's hypotext, expanding *Mrs. Dalloway* into the novel *The Hours*. Then, this analysis continues by applying McFarlane's Theory of Adaptation in order to investigate how Daldry built his hypertext from Woolf's and Cunningham's hypotexts. The choices the novelist and filmmaker had to make in order to create their works serve as resources for our investigation of the factors that contributed to the transformation of these two works.

Key-words: transtextuality, adaptation, transfer, hypertext, hypotext.

RESUMO

O título desse trabalho refere-se ao projeto inicial cujo objetivo era analisar como o conceito de identidade de gênero não fixa, presente na obra *Mrs. Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf, foi expandido e atualizado por duas novas obras - o romance *The Hours*, de Michael Cunningham, e sua adaptação fílmica, do cineasta Stephen Daldry, também intitulada *The Hours*. Nossa intenção era, investigar, a partir da teoria da Transtextualidade, de Gerard Genette e da teoria da Adaptação, de MacFarlane, como Cunningham e Daldry construíram seus hipertextos. Finalmente, havia a proposta da discussão do conceito de identidade de gênero não fixa, sob a perspectiva da crítica feminista Toril Moi. Entretanto, essa última discussão foi suprimida. O trabalho ora apresentado consiste em um estudo da literatura em segundo grau, uma análise do processo de criação do romance *The Hours* através da reescrita da obra *Mrs. Dalloway*. O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar como o romance *Mrs. Dalloway* foi expandido e atualizado por duas novas obras: o romance *The Hours*, e o filme homônimo. Em primeiro lugar, investigamos, à luz da teoria da Transtextualidade, a criação do hipertexto de Cunningham a partir do hipotexto de Woolf, expandindo a obra *Mrs. Dalloway* no romance *The Hours*. Então, passamos à análise da adaptação fílmica *The Hours* para investigar, através da teoria da Adaptação, como Daldry construiu seu hipertexto a partir dos hipotextos de Cunningham e Woolf. As escolhas que tanto o romancista quanto o cineasta fizeram para criar suas próprias obras nos servem de dados para a investigação dos fatores que contribuíram para a transformação destes dois trabalhos.

Palavras-chave: Transtextualidade, Adaptação, Hipertexto, Hipotexto

Introduction

For years the film industry has produced film adaptations, and the market does not seem to get enough of them. The changes that one work (novel/play) undergoes in the process of becoming a new piece (for instance, a film) are always intriguing. More and more, the film industry is producing films adapted from literary works, quenching the thirst of those who are eager to compare the two works and comment on their similarities and differences. These include literature scholars, film critics, and, of course, the great public who may not have the technical tools to analyze the adaptation, but certainly have an opinion to contribute.

There are several reasons for the growing film adaptation trend. One of them may be explained, for instance by Morris Beja's report that since the inception of the Academy Awards in 1927-8, "more than three fourths of the awards for 'best picture' have gone to adaptations" (1979, p.78). Then, as McFarlane himself states, "the public often wants to see what the books 'look like'" (1996, p.63). In other words, people want to compare their mental images of the novel and its characters with those presented by the film-maker. Another reason might be the fact that for the film industry, literary adaptations have, according to McFarlane, the advantage of an already-known title; one that has achieved respectability and/or popularity in one medium—and may well achieve it in another. Finally, there is the filmmaker's great respect for literary works, since the film adaptation can be a way for him/her to pay respect to an author and, at the same time, face the challenge of creating his own "masterpiece" as an extension of the admired work.

One literary work in special is evidenced with significant awards. Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* received the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner, two prestigious awards in the United States' literary world. Later, Stephen Daldry's adaptation of this work was nominated in many categories for the Oscar Awards – the top film awards in the Cinema world.

This remarkable combination of novel and film, both highly successful, also gets attention for bringing to light one of the 20th century's icons of literature, Virginia Woolf. Her fascinating tragic history—her issues as a woman and a writer, her struggle with mental illness and her geniality in creating her characters are all carefully approached in both works. As such, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's story of a woman's life in a day is expanded into Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, which in turn, is artistically presented in Stephen Daldry's homonymous film. These three works and their interrelation are the object of study herein.

In analyzing the complex connections amongst the three works, the theoretical bases are McFarlane's Theory of Adaptation and Genette's Theory of Transtextuality. The research was divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 provides a detailed explanation of the transtextuality concept, analyzing its applicability in the relationships connecting Woolf's and Cunningham's works. It also provides an explanation of the Theory of Adaptation, which allows the analysis of the process of adaptation from Cunningham's *The Hours* into Stephen Daldry's.

Chapter 2 presents some brief comments on Virginia Woolf's life and literary style. There are also some comments on the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* in

order to provide a background for our analysis of the ways Cunningham has managed to emulate, update or expand Woolf's style and theories.

In Chapter 3 Genette's theory of Transtextuality is the basis for analyzing the strategies Cunningham used in the writing of his novel. First, there is an analysis of Cunningham's style which raises the question as to whether *The Hours* is a pastiche or not. Afterwards, we focus on the analysis of the specific strategies this author used in order to expand *Mrs. Dalloway* into his hypertext. Strategies such as diegetic transposition, heterodiegetic transposition and the use of time as a physical experience are exemplified and analyzed. There is also a discussion of chronological time versus psychological time. This is one of the key elements of Woolf's narrative in *Mrs. Dalloway*, which can also be found in *The Hours*. Later in the chapter, we analyze Cunningham's development of the plot and his use of the stream of consciousness and cinematic techniques in an attempt to emulate Woolf's narrative style.

Finally, there are some considerations about the fusion of fact and fiction. Cunningham has performed an operation which Genette classifies as an extension; that is, inserting a new element into the hypotext. By inserting the real Virginia Woolf as a character in *The Hours*, Cunningham is playing with the creation of his hypotext. In *The Hours*, the character Mrs. Woolf¹ is writing the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Cunningham has also used elements from Virginia Woolf's real life in his novel. For instance, Virginia Woolf's letter to her husband, Leonard Woolf, is in the prologue of *The Hours*. Besides this, many facts and characters from Virginia Woolf's life are merged in Cunningham's novel, blurring the borders between fact and fiction, a strategy that can also be found in some

¹ From this point on we are going to refer to Cunningham's character as Mrs. Woolf and to the real writer as Virginia Woolf.

of Virginia Woolf's works, the most famous being *Orlando*, her poetic fantasy of the life of her friend Vita Sackville-West.

The fourth chapter aims to analyze Stephen Daldry's filmic adaptation of Cunningham's novel. It presents some considerations about literature and film, as well as a brief discussion on the issue of fidelity and the theoreticians that used it as the major criterion to evaluate an adaptation. Brian McFarlane's "Theory of Adaptation" is used to analyze the transformations that occurred in the translation process from literature to film. In the analysis, the transfer processes of: plot line, time and space treatments, and Daldry's leitmotifs usage are elements to be considered. In the analysis of Daldry's "adaptation proper", a quite creative venture, his cinematic techniques are discussed in order to understand how he managed to create his own work having Cunningham's novel as his hypotext. From performing cuts to adding new elements, going through camera angles, and changing emphasis on characters and events in order to create a suspense-like atmosphere, and through a careful and selective use of voice-over, Daldry interweaves the three stories and creates a masterpiece that attempts to emulate Cunningham's style without losing his own touch.

Chapter 1- Transtextuality and Adaptation

This chapter aims to describe the two theories that guide our analysis. The first theory, Transtextuality by Gerard Genette, will be used in the analysis of Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* and its relation to Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.

The second theory, Adaptation by Brian McFarlane will serve as the basis for the analysis of the transposition from the novel *The Hours* to the homonymous film.

1. From Intertextuality to Transtextuality

All texts are somehow connected to a network of existing texts and art forms. Any exploration of the specific manifestation of this interconnection is interested in how one text creates or transforms another text, or how art creates art. The more texts we read, the more echoes, parallels and points of comparison we identify in the texts we encounter.

1.1 History – from Bakhtin to Kristeva

One of the very first scholars to deal with the relationships among texts was Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary scholar. Bakhtin saw the world as dialogic and polyphonic. He had a visionary contemplation of a world made up of textual utterances that are in constant contact with one another; that borrow from, appropriate, relate to, demand from and contradict each other. Among other contributions, he developed the concept of Dialogism:

[...] used to denote the quality of an instance of discourse that explicitly acknowledges that it is defined by its relationship to other instances, both past, to which it

responds, and future, whose response it anticipates.
(Shepherd, 2011, p. 1)

This idea is of great relevance since it shifts the emphasis from the unity of the text towards the space between the texts; it is in dialogue that the text is active and alive.

The Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva, expanding Bakhtin's discussion of dialogism, argues that any literary text inserts itself into the set of all texts. From her studies on Bakhtin's theories, Kristeva develops her own theory of Intertextuality. There is a very clear relationship between this theory and Bakhtin's idea of "dialoguicity".

"Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another"
(Kristeva, 1986, p.37).

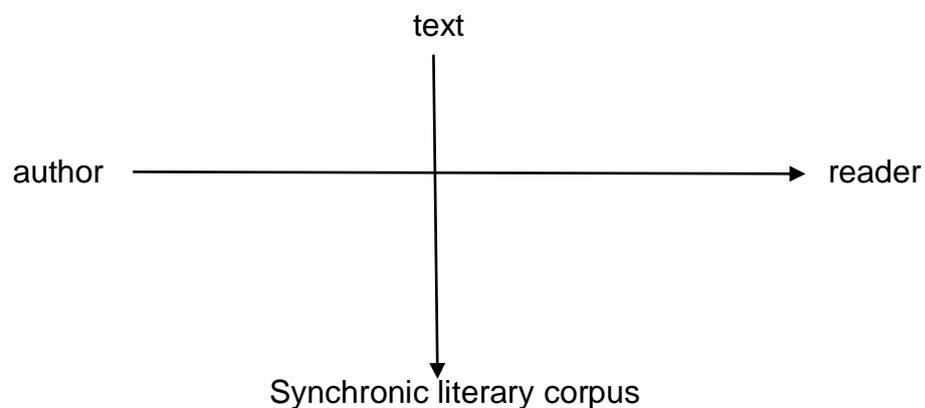
For Kristeva, reading and writing are an appropriation of one another - the author articulates the discourse of otherness in his/her own texts since she/he writes while reading the anterior or synchronic literary corpus. "The book refers to other books and [...] gives those books a new way of being, elaborating thereby, its own signification" (1998, p.30). Through this perspective, even though every text is unique, the emergence of signification is only established through the relationship maintained by this text with others.

In her essay "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" (1986), Kristeva broke with traditional notions of the author's influences and the text's sources, positioning that all significant systems are constituted by the manner in which they transform earlier significant systems. A literary work, then, is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. She understands a text as "a temporary re-

arrangement of elements with socially pre-existent meaning. Meaning, then, is simultaneously both 'inside' (reader's view) and 'outside' (society's influence) the text". Kristeva (1986, p.24)

Kristeva establishes two dimensions for the literary word: horizontal and vertical. In the horizontal dimension, communication takes place between the author and the reader, whereas in the vertical dimension the text communicates with the context:

Figure 1: Horizontal and vertical dimensions for the literary word (designed by the author)



In order to elucidate the role of the author, she also introduced the concept of utterance and enunciation.

“Utterance is the production of words by a human subject and enunciation is a form of words that stays independent of a human subject. When the uttered word is conveyed to a listener, the subjective position of the speaker is maintained but when a reader reads the uttered words years later, the subjective position of the author is missed or no longer part of it.” (Kristeva, 1986, p. 32)

1.1.2 Barthes and the Death of the Author

Kristeva's ideas find an echo in Roland Barthes' writings. In his famous essay “The Death of the author” (1967) Barthes, a French literary theorist and linguist, states that the real origin of a text is not the author, but language. A text

is a result of multiple writings brought together from a previous culture, which makes it open to different readings. Barthes refuses to give the text an ultimate meaning, giving freedom for the reader to interpret the text

“We know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the “message” of the Author-God), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, no one of which is original: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture.” (Barthes, 1967, p.4)

For Barthes, the author is just someone who is skilled in the use of a particular code. The writer translates linguistic structures or codes into particular narratives or messages. According to him, “the writer can only imitate a gesture previously presented, never original; his only power is to combine the different kinds of writing [...]” Barthes (1967, p.4). He believes that the writer, whom he calls scriptor, is born simultaneously with his text. There is no other time than that of the utterance. The text is eternally written here and now. This idea opposes that of the “Author – Authority” who precedes the text, who poses himself/herself as the source from which the text is created². By taking away the figure of the “author-God”, Barthes as well as Kristeva place greater importance on the role of the reader. In Barthes’ own words: “...the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author” (1967, p. 6). The true locus of writing is reading. The reader is considered the very space into which all the citations that make up a text are inscribed.

The modernist novel, according to Josh Rahn played a fundamental role in this shift from the “Author-Authority” to the reader. According to him the modernist novel was not immune from the self-conscious, reflective impulses of

² The word author is written here with upper case in order to emphasize the idea of authority, source of the text.

the new century. Modernism introduced a new kind of narration, one that would change the essence of novel writing. Rahn, for instance, states that “The unreliable narrator supplanted the omniscient, trustworthy narrator of preceding centuries, and readers were forced to question even the most basic assumptions about how the novel should operate” (2011, p.58). Instead of looking out into the world, modernist novelists surveyed the inner space of the human mind. The stream of consciousness emerged as a new perspective at the same time that Freud’s psychoanalytic theories came into mainstream acceptance. These changes contributed to alter people’s basic understanding of what constituted truth and reality.

After considering the changes triggered during the modernist period, it becomes clear why Kristeva’s work on intertextuality focuses the 19th and early 20th century. Writers like James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf and others created and applied these new unconventional techniques to their works, breaking with old conventions and challenging norms. Joyce, for instance, recreated the *Odyssey* in 20th century Dublin, completely transforming Homer’s 8th century text.

1.1.3 The Theory of Transtextuality

Corroborating the idea that a text does not have a single author, and similarly to Joyce, Cunningham builds a great part of his novel upon Virginia Woolf’s 1924 novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. He not only makes it very explicit that he is dialoguing with Virginia Woolf’s text, by borrowing characters and setting them in a different time, but also plays with the idea of the author – firstly, by placing Virginia Woolf, as one of the authors of the story told in his novel, and then by

killing this author in the prologue. Secondly, he places another author in his story: Richard Brown, who also dies in the novel.

This relationship between texts, above illustrated, was first called intertextuality by Kristeva in 1966. She coined her theory defining this term, intertextuality, as any relationship between texts. Genette expanded Kristeva's idea by coining a new term and a new theory. For him "the object of poetics is not the literary text³, but its textual transcendence; its textual links with other texts" (Prince, 1997, p.9). The new term transtextuality, coined by Genette in 1997 in the book *Palimpsests*, refers to "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (Genette, 1997, p.01). Transtextuality consists of five subcategories: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and hypertextuality, which will be explained as follows.

The opening sentence of *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, illustrates the first transtextual relationship, Intertextuality, defined as the literal presence of one text within another: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (Woolf, 1996, p.02). In the novel *The Hours*, the character, Laura Brown, is reading the book entitled *Mrs. Dalloway* and repeats the sentence out loud as she reads it. Furthermore, the character Clarissa Vaughan, whose nickname given by her friend Richard Brown is Mrs. Dalloway, says the sentence as she makes the decision of buying the flowers herself for the party she is throwing. The text of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is, therefore, literally present in the novel *The Hours*.

³ Here, "text" is used in the sense proposed by Barthes (1967), as a "methodological field of energy, an ongoing production absorbing writer and reader together".

Paratextuality is the second type of transtextual relationship and it refers to the liminal devices and conventions that mediate the book to the reader – accessory messages or commentaries which come to surround the text. Cunningham himself has described *The Hours* as a “riff” on Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. According to Tory Young, he has not only rewritten *Mrs. Dalloway*, but also updated it by placing Clarissa Dalloway as a lesbian editor in late 20th century New York, and inserting Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*’s author, as a character. With the headings of each section in his novel Cunningham evokes the relationship of his work to Virginia Woolf’s. The headings of the sections are Mrs. Woolf, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Dalloway. With the heading Mrs. Woolf Cunningham evokes Woolf’s presence as the author of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Then, he proceeds by evoking the presence of a character created by Virginia Woolf – Mrs. Brown – which was mentioned in one of Woolf’s Hogarth essays, “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown”⁴, published in 1924. Finally, Cunningham uses the name of Virginia Woolf’s novel and character – *Mrs. Dalloway* – as the heading for the sections involving his character, Clarissa Vaughan. Through these headings Cunningham clearly informs the reader about the nature of the connection between his work and two previous texts by Virginia Woolf.

The third type of transtextual relationship is Metatextuality, which links the commentary to the text it comments upon in a kind of critical relationship. In the novel *The Hours*, Cunningham adds a character, Laura Brown, who he affirms to be based on his mother, a housewife in the Post World War II United States. She is the one who reads the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. The same character

⁴ Caughie, Pamela. *Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown in: Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism*. Urbana:

U of Illinois P, 1991: 178-179.)

was previously created by Virginia Woolf in her essay “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown”, in which the writer discusses the character creation stating that modern times demanded a new style of writing. Mrs. Brown was the character chosen to embody the qualities Virginia Woolf believed would transform the kind of writing of the 19th century. According to the British writer, literature would be truly transformed when it portrayed ordinariness, in domesticity as well as in war. By creating Mrs. Brown, an ordinary housewife, Cunningham “embodied Virginia Woolf’s theory of characterization in modern fiction” (Young, 2003, p.33).

The fourth type is Architextuality. It refers to the generic taxonomies “suggested or refused by the titles or infratitles of a text; that is, a text’s willingness, or reluctance, to characterize itself directly in its title as a poem, essay, novel, film (Stam, 1999, p.208). According to Young, Cunningham’s novel title, *The Hours* was “borrowed” from Virginia Woolf; she, too, gave this title to her novel, but then decided to name it *Mrs. Dalloway*. In fact, the idea of architextuality is related to the notion that every writer wants to fit his/her work into a genre. In this case, the fact that Cunningham used Virginia Woolf’s draft title shows that he wants to establish a link between his work and Woolf’s work.

A category that is of great relevance for this study is Hypertextuality; the fifth type of transtextual relationship that designates the relationship between one text, called “hypertext” and a previous text called “hypotext”, by transformation, modifications, elaborations or extensions of the latter. Genette explains that simple or direct transformation consists in transposing the action from one time or place to another. The indirect transformation, which he prefers to name imitation, is a much more complex operation. In order to transform a text, a simple and mechanical gesture might be enough; however, according to

him, in order to imitate a text, one must acquire a mastery of the specific quality one has chosen to imitate. Combined with the contrast between transformation and imitation, Genette's approach yields a grid of possible hypertextual modalities - these hypertextual possibilities include playful transformation (parody), satirical transformation (travesty), serious transformation (transposition), playful imitation (pastiche), satirical imitation (caricature) and serious imitation.

Table 1: Genette (1997, pg.25)

Relation	Transformation		Imitation	
Genre	Parody	Travesty	Caricature	Pastiche

The above mentioned hypertextual modalities are described in detail below in order to provide a better understanding of the operations performed in the process of creating a hypertext:

Parody⁵ - is a transformation of a text performed by a particular writer, artist or a genre, exaggerating it deliberately to produce a comic effect. A good example is Miguel de Cervantes' "Don Quixote", a parody of romances written in his days. "Quixote" and his assistant deceive themselves to think that they are knights of the medieval romances. The novel is written in the style of Spanish romances of the 16th century to mock the idealism of knights in the contemporary romances.

Travesty - in literature is the treatment of a noble and dignified subject in an inappropriately trivial manner. Travesty is a crude form of burlesque in which the original subject matter is changed little but is transformed into something

⁵ BALDICK, Chris. The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (3 ed.), Oxford University Press, 2008, Oxford.

ridiculous through incongruous language and style. An early example of travesty is the humorous treatment of the Pyramus and Thisbe legend in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Caricature⁶ - is a device used in descriptive writing and visual arts where particular aspects of a subject are exaggerated to create a silly or comic effect. In other words, it can be defined as a plastic illustration, derisive drawing or a portrayal based on exaggeration of the natural features, which gives a humorous touch to the subject. Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* is one of the best examples: "Mr. Chadband is a large yellow man, with a fat smile, and a general appearance of having a good deal of train oil in his system." (Dickens, 1853)

Pastiche - is a literary piece that imitates another famous literary work of another writer. Unlike parody, its purpose is not to mock but to honor the literary piece it imitates. This literary device is generally employed to imitate a piece of literary work in a respectful manner. The term pastiche also applies to a literary work that is a wide mixture of items such as themes, concepts and characters imitated from different literary works. For instance, many of the pastiche examples are in the form of detective novels that are written in fashion of the original stories of Sherlock Holmes. It features either Sherlock Holmes or a main character like him.

This notion of transtextuality is fundamental in the analysis of the intertextual relationship established by Michael Cunningham between his novel, *The Hours*, and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, since it accounts for all the different ways in which these novels relate.

⁶ Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Modern Rhetoric*, 3rd ed. Harcourt, 1972

As proposed in the beginning of this section, it was necessary to explain the Theory of Transtextuality in order to treat the relationship between Virginia Woolf's and Cunningham's novels. Besides, it was also important to describe the five types of transtextual relationships so that the analysis presented in Chapter 3 would become clearer.

In the next section, the theory of Adaptation is described. This theory will be used as support for the analysis of the relationship between Cunningham's *The Hours* and Daldry's 2002 homonymous film adaptation.

1.2 Adaptation Proper

Literature and film are two different media, but they share a common characteristic; they are two “[...] ways of seeing” (Bluestone, 1973, p. 42)⁷. While literature uses words to tell a story and leads us to “create mental images of that story”, cinema tells the story, primarily, through images.

1.2.1 The concept of Adaptation

The concept of film adaptation is, most of the time, related to the cinematic version of a literary narrative piece. For a long time, this concept has implied that the adaptation process was unilateral, that is, it worked from the literary piece to the film, privileging the literature medium over the cinema. As a result, the study of adaptation had focused greatly on the comparison between the two texts. A successful adaptation was one that managed to be “faithful” to the literary work, completely transferring all the elements present in the narrative—plot, characters, point of view, time, etc. to the film. For years this fidelity criterion has dominated the analysis of film adaptations, which greatly

⁷ Expression used by Bluestone (1973) in his book *Novels into Films; the Metamorphosis of Fiction into Film*.

contributes to the lessening of its status as a form of art. Stam calls attention to a series of derogatory terms that have been used in describing film adaptations – vulgarization, copy, deformation, degradation and so on—all of them based on this criterion of fidelity.

Several theoreticians have developed approaches to compare film and literature, privileging fidelity as the major criterion. One of them, Keith Cohen, referred to the literature and cinema relationship as a “dynamics of exchange”. Another theoretician, David McDougal, analyzed how narrative elements are transposed into film, while Seymour Chatman worked along the same line, basing his analysis on Barthes’ study of narrative functions. Other analysts include Geoffrey Wagner, who classified the adaptations according to their proximity to the text as transpositions, commentaries and allegories.

The adaptation process is approached by these theoreticians as intersemiotic translation, since it aims to transmit a message/story/idea, conceived in a given medium – *literature* – into another semiotic system–*cinema*. In *Literatura e Cinema: da Semiótica à Tradução Cultural*, Diniz defines intersemiotic translation as a process of searching for equivalent elements, that is, “the search for a sign in another semiotic system–*cinema*– which has the same function as that in the first semiotic system–*literature*” (1999, p.19).

For a long time, most of the critics were specialists in literary criticism, which certainly influenced their approaches to film adaptations. However, there has been a recent change in the study of adaptations, since new critics from the film studies area have given more emphasis to the interrelationships between the two media. Some of the most important critics of this new generation are Timothy Corrigan, James Naremore, Brian McFarlane and Robert Stam.

The first two, Corrigan and Naremore work along similar lines. They go beyond the emphasis that was previously given to the form – the narrative. They now centralize interest on the cultural, political and economic issues surrounding the adaptation process. Corrigan analyzes film adaptation involving four complementary structures: historical context, issues of traditional cultural hierarchies, adaptation, and intertextuality. Meanwhile, Naremore proposes a change in the focus of the adaptation analysis in order to consider adaptation in a broader sense, including the presence or influence of sources other than the strictly literary. Naremore goes beyond fidelity and into the specificity of each medium; beyond translation and into the notion of transformation. Adaptation is, in his conception, a multidirectional, dialogic and intertextual process. Diniz explains his proposed analysis as being based on the concept of intertextual dialogism – the idea that every text is “an intersection of textual surfaces, tissues of anonymous formulas, variations of these formulas, conscious and subconscious citations, confluences and inversions of other texts” (quoted from Stam, 2000, p.11).

Although Stam and Naremore have greatly contributed to the analysis of film adaptation, McFarlane’s theory of film adaptation is used herein since it considers film adaptations as translations. This theory permits a comparison of two works produced in two different systems; therefore, analyzing how elements will be transformed, adapted or expanded in a different semiotic system.

1.2.2 McFarlane and the Concept of Adaptation Proper

Though coming from the film studies area, McFarlane approaches film adaptations as translations. His detailed analyses are based on Barthes’

narrative theory and examine elements present in both media, respecting the specificities of each. He also, and more importantly, regards his concept of adaptation proper as significant. This concept focuses on the creativity of the filmmaker and is the main aspect separating McFarlane from the previous theoreticians. Through his emphasis on adaptation proper, McFarlane values the transformations occurred in the process of translation from literature to film as the artistic touch, contrary to the negative view of transformation as violation or deformation.

Taking into consideration McFarlane's distinctions of narrative functions (1996, p. 11); as presented in this study, we will apply such concepts on the analysis of the elements which are present, that is, connecting the texts, where some have been adapted (and how), and where some have been cut in the process of making the novel into a film.

Based on Barthes, McFarlane divides narrative functions into two groups: Distributional and Integrational. The first refers to the narrative, the story and the events, and the second to the way the story is narrated.

According to McFarlane the most important transferences between the two media take place within the distributional functions, since they do not depend on the system / language, but on the events of the story and, therefore, can be directly transferred from one medium to another (Diniz, 2005, p.29.). These distributional functions can be divided into two main groups. The first main group can then be subdivided into: a) cardinal functions – related to the main elements of the narrative, such as plot and characters and b) catalyzers - cardinal function complements, denoting small action. The second main group (composed of Integrational functions related to the identity data of the

characters, atmosphere and places) is also subdivided into: a) Indices – related to the psychological information of the characters and atmosphere of the story– and b) Informants: names, ages and professions of the characters and details of the physical setting.

The table below summarizes the divisions and subdivisions of the narrative functions:

Table 2: Narrative Functions (Designed by the author)

Narrative functions⁸			
Transferable		Adaptable	
1) Distributional functions		2) Integrational functions	
Functions Proper		Indices	
a) Cardinal Functions	b) Catalysers	a) Informants	b) Indices Proper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crucial actions and events; • strung together linearly; • horizontal in nature; • have to do with operations; • refer to a functionality of “doing” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complementary to cardinal functions; • denote small actions; • functionality is unilateral and parasitic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characters’ names, ages and professions; • details of physical setting; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characters’ psychological information; • data regarding identity; • notations of atmosphere • representations of places; • vertical in nature • refer to a functionality of “being”

⁸ Barthes (1967) quoted on McFarlane (1996, p. 14 – 15)

These functions rely greatly on the interpretation of the reader, which makes them more difficult to simply transfer. They have to undergo an adaptation process.

When the elements of the Integrational functions group have to be translated, they must undergo the process which McFarlane calls adaptation proper; that is, a process in which the filmmaker has to create the same elements through cinematic devices only.

The cardinal functions that were transferred from the novel *The Hours* into the film were the main plot and characters: Clarissa Vaughan (who is preparing a party for her friend), Richard (who has just won a prestigious literary prize), Laura Brown (who is preparing a party for her husband's birthday), and Virginia Woolf (who is writing her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*). Some *catalyzers* were also transferred. For instance, Clarissa's visit to the flower shop is essentially the same in both media.

According to McFarlane, the Integrational functions, which most of the time need to be adapted, constitute the art of the moviemaker. The indices, for instance, can be illustrated by the scene in which Mrs. Woolf escapes to the train station. Daldry added a discussion between Mrs. Woolf and her husband that expresses feelings that were different from the simple and easy conversation they have in the book. The use of informants can be better visualized through Richard Brown's decadence. In the book, his chair is the symbol of such decadence. In the movie, with a little help from makeup, and an excellent performance by Ed Harris, the character Richard Brown himself becomes this symbol.

In dealing with the Theory of Adaptation, it is important to keep in mind two crucial concepts approached by McFarlane: transfer and adaptation. The concept of transfer involves a distinction between narrative (which can be transferred) and enunciation (which cannot, as it involves quite separate systems of signification). In order to better illustrate this concept, he refers to Desmond & Hawkes (2006, p. 19), who distinguishes story from plot: the story is simply the basic succession of events, the raw material which confronts the artist. The plot represents the distinctive way in which the story is made strange. Therefore, novel and film can share the same story, the same 'raw materials', but are distinguished by means of different plot strategies which alter sequence and highlight different emphases. In the case of the narrative functions used by McFarlane, the transference occurs within the level of the story.

There is a distinction to be made between what may be transferred from one narrative medium to another and which necessarily requires adaptation proper. Normally, cardinal functions, catalyzers and informants can be transferred or adapted. The integrational function *indices*, however, must always be adapted.

In this chapter, the concepts of Transtextuality and Adaptation Proper were presented in order to provide a theoretical background for the analysis of Virginia Woolf's and Cunningham's novels in Chapter 3 and the analysis of Daldry's film adaptation in Chapter 4.

The next chapter presents a background on Virginia Woolf's literary style and a brief discussion of the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Considering that this novel is the hypotext for Cunningham's novel, it is important to have more detailed information about it before diving into the analysis of the complex operations

Cunningham performed in the process of building his hypertext, which will be presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 – Virginia Woolf's Literary style

2.1 Modernism and Woolf's Writing Style

Since no text is created in isolation, it is necessary to become acquainted with Virginia Woolf's work – her concepts and ideas – in order to perceive that Cunningham's work is a hypertext of Woolf's, and to understand the complexity of his novel *The Hours*.

Adeline Virginia Woolf was a literary modernist and an experimental writer at the beginning of the 20th century. She had a complex understanding of human nature that is evidenced through her treatment of human emotions, feelings and thought processes in her narratives. Her ability to recreate events and to describe the impressions they make upon the human soul is astounding. Above all, her skilled use of the language is what enables her to convey the depth of human character. Since Virginia Woolf's main concern is to represent life as it is seen from the inside, the key themes in Virginia Woolf's works are mainly related to inner feelings, and conflicts when describing experiences, thoughts and sensations. Her writing style demands active reader participation, which leads to investigation, and deduction; it's as if the reader had to put together a puzzle in order to make sense of what s/he has been dealing with, just like in real life.

In order to understand Virginia Woolf's literary style, it is necessary to understand the nature of Modernism, since *Mrs. Dalloway* was considered her most typical modernist novel.

Jeff Wallace stated that modernism is best seen as a concept that is used to describe "the diverse range of new and experimental practices in the

arts which occurred in the period between 1880 and 1939” (2011, p.1). Modernism is thus a period in art history normally set between 1890 and 1940.

The idea of living a time of changes and novelties, which so influenced Modernism, came from the fact that at the turn of the century nobody knew what to expect. Peter Childs describes that moment as “the opportunity for a new way of living and experiencing life, a way that came into being due to the changes in society: industrialization, urbanization and secularization” (2000, p.14). Childs also adds that the effect of the trauma of war on the modern consciousness cannot be overstated. He sees the war as a defining moment for both society and the individual; “[...] the fracturing of minds – currently referred to as shell shock – seemed to represent in miniature what was happening to societies and nations at large (2000, p.20-21).

One of *Mrs. Dalloway* characters, Septimus Smith, a soldier who fought in WWI and came back to London shell-shocked, is a classic example of such idea. Septimus lost his ability to function according to the external world. He can not distinguish between psychological and chronological time, hears voices, sees hidden codes and messages everywhere and believes his dead friend Evans talks to him. Victims of war such as Septimus are a problem to English society because they are a living proof that certainties have been broken, rights have been disregarded, people and their feelings have been transformed so the world cannot go back to what it was before.

2.1.1 The Bloomsbury Group

On the other hand, during that time cities became the center of events, the place where everything happened. They were the cradle for the new

intellectual community. This lively moment brought to light the Bloomsbury group:

[...] a coterie of English writers, philosophers, and artists who frequently met between about 1907 and 1930 at the houses of Clive and Vanessa Bell and of Vanessa's brother and sister Adrian and Virginia Stephen (later Virginia Woolf) in the Bloomsbury district of London. They discussed aesthetic and philosophical questions in a spirit of agnosticism [...] (Lee, 1999, p. 82)

Nearly all the male members of the group had been at Trinity or King's College, Cambridge, with Leslie Stephen's son Thoby, who had introduced them to his sisters Vanessa and Virginia. The Bloomsbury group included the novelist E.M. Forster, the biographer Lytton Strachey, the art critic Clive Bell, the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, the economist John Maynard Keynes, the writer Leonard Woolf, and the novelist and critic Virginia Woolf. The group survived World War I but by the early 1930s had ceased to exist in its original form, having by that time merged with the general intellectual life of London, Oxford, and Cambridge.

According to Liedek Oosterik, the members of the Bloomsbury group were in conscious revolt against the artistic, social and sexual restrictions of the Victorian age. They were all from an upper middle class intellectual elite, but in their personal lives they were very productive. The group formed a bridge between the Victorians and the Moderns. For Virginia Woolf and her siblings, as well as for their Cambridge friends, this was an invigorating time to be young and passionate. They wanted to mold the world according to their way of thinking.

Jeff Wallace states that modernists wanted to "make the familiar unfamiliar, to disrupt or shatter accepted forms of representation and

understanding” (2011, p.3). The changes that especially the English society was going through allowed modernist writers to work freely on defamiliarization and fragmentation. Oosterik describes this “new world view” as an epistemological uncertainty, which affected the syntagmatic structure of modernist texts:

One of the differences between modernism and realism is marked by modernist writers’ interest in consciousness and the doubts they have about how reliable their own or their narrator’s speech is. This is what is referred to as epistemological uncertainty and everlasting doubt about knowing: both concepts that are characteristic of modernism. (Oosterik 2011, p. 27)

One of the essential characteristics of Modernism is depersonalization, which emphasizes the relativity of the individual point of view: “whatever is being said could be said differently by someone else or at a different point in time. The story plot has no priority for a modernist writer or reader.” (Fokkema and Ibsch, 1988, p.20) Therefore, the way in which the story is being told is more important. This is a strong characteristic of Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*: Reflecting on external action, the plot in *Mrs. Dalloway* is quite simple but becomes complex if the focus is on the thoughts and feelings of her characters.

2.2 Writing *Mrs. Dalloway*

Clarissa Dalloway, the protagonist, functions as the thread that interweaves the whole plot. Therefore, all the action in the story develops around her and the party she is throwing that evening, describing only one day in her life. Clarissa goes out to buy flowers for her party, walks around the streets of London, is observed by a neighbor, meets an old friend, enters the flower shop, buys her flowers, goes back home, receives the visit of another old friend with whom she was once in love, prepares for her party, and hosts the

party at her house. Parallel to Clarissa's story is Septimus' story. Septimus Smith is a former soldier, who is shell shocked. He and his wife, Rezia, are walking around the streets of London, going to see doctors about Septimus' problems. After consultations with the doctors, Septimus and Rezia go back to their apartment where he commits suicide.

Gina Wisker mentions Arnold Bennet's critics to Virginia Woolf's work, saying "she couldn't create characters that survived" (2000, p. 30.) On the other hand, many important literary figures, such as E.M. Foster and Lytton Strachey praised *Mrs. Dalloway* and believed that this book transformed the novel as an art form. It portrays the subjective experiences and memories of its central characters over a single day. Divided into parts, rather than chapters, the novel's structure highlights the finely interwoven texture of the characters' thoughts. This novel, which focuses on ordinary tasks, such as shopping, throwing a party, and eating dinner, showed that no act was too small or too ordinary for a writer's attention.

2.2.2 Moments of being

Virginia Woolf develops the book's protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, and several other characters by bringing out their interior thoughts with little pause or explanation. Childs describes Virginia Woolf's treatment of interior thought:

Several central characters and minor characters appear in the text, and their thoughts spin out like spider webs. Sometimes the threads of thought cross—and people succeed in communicating. More often, however, the threads do not cross, leaving the characters isolated and alone. Woolf believed that behind the "cotton wool" of life, as she terms it in her autobiographical collection of essays *Moments of Being* (1941), and under the

downpour of impressions saturating a mind during each moment, a pattern exists.” (Childs, 2000, p. 62)

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the characters occasionally perceive life through what Virginia Woolf called moments of being. Suddenly the cotton wool parts, and a person clearly sees reality, and his or her place. “In the vast catastrophe of the European war,” wrote Virginia Woolf, “our emotions had to be broken up for us, and put at an angle from us, before we could allow ourselves to feel them in poetry or fiction.” These words appear in her essay collection, “The Common Reader” (1924), which was published just one month before *Mrs. Dalloway*. Her novel attempts to uncover fragmented emotions, such as desperation or love, in order to find, through moments of being, a way to endure.

While writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf reread the Greek classics along with two new modernist writers, Marcel Proust and James Joyce. Woolf shared these writers' interest in time and psychology, and she incorporated these issues into her novel. She wanted to show characters in flux, rather than static, characters who think and act as they move through space, who react to their surroundings in ways that mirrored actual human experience.

2.2.3 Use of the stream of consciousness

One marked characteristic of Modernism, which Virginia Woolf mastered in *Mrs. Dalloway*, is the use of the stream of consciousness. “Modernist novels, stories, plays and poems immerse the reader in an unfamiliar world without giving an introduction or description of the situation beforehand – as did most realist writers” (Childs, 2000, p.4). According to Childs, modernist writing “plunges” the reader into a confusing and difficult mental landscape. Point of view changes constantly, often shifting from one character’s stream of

consciousness (subjective interior thoughts) to another's within a single paragraph. Virginia Woolf most often uses free indirect discourse, a literary technique that describes the interior thoughts of characters using third-person singular pronouns (he and she). This technique ensures that transitions between the thoughts of a large number of characters are subtle and smooth. That is why the stream of consciousness is an important syntactic code of Modernism: "it seems the ideal vehicle for consideration and reconsideration, for conjecture and refutation without any definite conclusion" (apud Oosterik, 2011, p.43).

According to Robert Humphrey, the writer William James coined the term "stream of consciousness", and believed that "memories, thoughts, and feelings exist outside the primary consciousness, not as a chain, in a logical sequence, but as a stream, a flow" (Humphrey, 1954, p. 18). Virginia Woolf, as well as her contemporary James Joyce, mastered techniques such as free indirect discourse to present the stream of consciousness, representing the psychic content and processes of the character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious control before they are formulated for deliberate speech (Humphrey, 1954, p.5). Woolf uses this technique in *Mrs. Dalloway*, implying that an omniscient author / narrator presents unspoken material as if it were directly from the consciousness of a character.

In terms of structure, for example, the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* has no chapter division. The entire novel is narrated in "free indirect discourse" to depict inner awareness. As illustrated by the passage below, the third person pronoun "she", as well as the names and all references to Clarissa Dalloway in

the third person, show the explicit presence of a narrator, guiding the reader all the way through. Even though the thoughts of different characters are presented and Clarissa goes back and forth, wandering through the past and present, this passage is not completely incoherent because of the omniscient narrator guidance:

She stiffened a little on the curb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright. For having lived in Westminster—how many years now? over twenty,—one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes.) There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. (Woolf, 1996, p.3)

The emphasis on the portrayal of external reality was replaced by the attempt to describe inner feelings. “The traditional structure of human activity and of motive – decision – action – result was wiped out by Freud’s theory of the unconscious” (Khan, 2009, p.56-).

Virginia Woolf is primarily concerned with an unconscious level of experience in her characters. They sometimes do not present a logical or rational behavior. Only through a study of their mental processes, it is possible to understand their feelings and thoughts. She has an ability to develop complex characters that are above and beyond conventions and standards, such as time, space and behavior. Characters from Woolf’s novels, such as Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe from *To the Light House*, Bernard, from the novel

The Waves as well as *Mrs. Dalloway's* Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith illustrate very well this emphasis on describing inner feelings.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, the core of the story lies in the minds of the characters - their thoughts, memories, feelings and impressions. However, careful and active reading leads to the conclusion that Virginia Woolf was "breaking up with the old literary schools and creating a dynamic and innovative way of writing." (Humphrey 1954, p.12)

2.2.4 Cinematic devices

This section will discuss Virginia Woolf's use of cinematic devices. Through her commitment to the esthetics of Modernism and her theories on character creation.

Virginia Woolf's style, as described above, brought about substantial innovation in terms of inner thought and feeling depiction, but above all, it proposed significant changes in the form of the novel. One of the influences for her style was the cinema, which had just become the novelty of the time. Ying Kong points out that "the development of the cinema greatly influenced literary creation in the beginning of the century" (2010, p. 24), which accounts for the extensive use of cinematic techniques.

Modernist novelists and poets lived through a period of "moving-picture craze" which took place between 1907 and 1918 (Bowser, 1990, p. 37). Literature was transformed into a kinetic art, in accordance with the film making mode. Poems by E. E. Cummings, Ezra Pound, W. C. Williams, and Wallace Stevens and the novels of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and others often run

parallel to cinematic techniques. Each poem or scene is presented to the audience as a tiny movie with "resonant images, subtly arresting sounds, intriguing characters, and significant story lines" (Bowser, 1990, p.38);

Humphrey presents the set of devices that modernists like Virginia Woolf and Joyce used to help control the stream of consciousness fiction movement: The set of Cinematic devices includes multiple-view, slow-ups, fade outs, cutting, close-ups, flashbacks and montage⁹ (1954, p.51). From all of these, montage is basic for the cinema. It is used to show the interrelationship or association of ideas, such as rapid image succession, superimposition of image or enclosure of a focal image with related ones. The *montage*, as well as secondary cinematic devices, is used in literature for transcending or modifying arbitrary and conventional time and spatial barriers. As consciousness itself cannot be controlled by the rigid progression of a clock, it is fundamental for the writer to wander freely, not attached to the conventions of time and space.

An analysis of a small excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* illustrates very well the use of cinematic techniques by the modernist novelist. In the opening passage of *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, Virginia Woolf uses time-montage, that is, the subject remains fixed in space and the consciousness moves in time.

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—

⁹ The "multiple view" designates the possibility of the concurrence of plural images at one point in time. The "slow-ups" are related to the flow of the narrative. They decrease the speed of the narrative or scene. A "Fade-out" is a technique is used to promote a smooth change between scenes, normally blurring the beginning and ending of a scene. "Cut" is a sudden or abrupt change from one scene or time into another. The "Close-up" focus attention and emphasizes the importance of a detail in a scene or dialogue. "Flashback" is a technique that alters the natural order of the narrative; it takes the story order back chronologically in time to a previous or past event, scene, or sequence that took place prior to the present time. Hayward, 1996

fresh as if issued to children on a beach. What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air.

(Woolf, 1996, p. 5)

The main device that allows the writer to give direction to the material of consciousness is “free indirect discourse”. According to Humphrey, this is what lets Clarissa (in the above passage) go from the immediate future (her party that evening) to the present moment (this fine morning) to a leap over 20 years before.

Other cinematic devices are also present in the same passage, i.e. flashback – present when she thinks in more detail of her youth at Bourton:

How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave, the kiss of a wave, chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; [...] (Woolf, 1996, p. 5) (Italics added)

and close-up - present in her detailed conversation with Peter Walsh.

looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, “Musing among the vegetables?” – *was that it?* – “I prefer men to cauliflowers” – *was that it?* He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out to the terrace – (Woolf, 1996, p. 5) (Italics added)

and finally to the near future (Peter Walsh’s visit in June or July).

Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days... (Woolf, 1996, p. 5) (Italics added)

Using the *multiple view* device, the reader leaves Clarissa's mind to observe her from a stranger's (her neighbor Scrope Purvis) point of view. The reader is then taken back to Clarissa's consciousness and her love for Westminster. After which, there is a fade-out and Clarissa starts thinking about the previous night at the Embassy when people were talking about the end of the war. Finally, there is a cut, to show her brief dialogue with Hugh Whitbread.

Through the use of the stream of consciousness in her narrative, Virginia Woolf not only challenges chronological order, but also, and most importantly, experiments with the realization of truth. According to Humphrey, Virginia Woolf wanted to formulate the possibilities and processes of the inner realization of truth; a truth she reckoned inexpressible. Hence, she found out that this realization process functions only at the unexpressed mind level. Her characters, such as Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith, are in search of their truth; that is, the meaning of their lives and their identification with the world. This search is a psychic activity and, therefore, these characters are highly sensitive to the world around them; dedicating most of their time and energy to the difficult task of "digesting" the impressions that the world prints upon them.

2.2.5 Character depiction:

In her study *Psychoanalytical Portrayal of the Women Characters by Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai*, A. J. Khan argues that Woolf was deeply influenced by the psychological theories proposed by Freud and Jung. According to her, almost every modern writer experimented with various psychological theories related to human behavior and human relationship. "The

art of characterization was deeply influenced by the new psychology” (2009, p. 12). Woolf’s novels like *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* are some important examples of this group of novels.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, throughout the story Clarissa attempts to find a balance between her internal life and the external world. Her life seems rather shallow, full of high society parties and conventions; however, she struggles in search of deeper meaning.

Clarissa has a tendency toward introspection that gives her a profound capacity for emotion, which many other characters lack. However, she is always concerned with appearances, seldom sharing her feelings with anyone. (Khan, 2009, p. 15).

Even though she celebrates life while strolling the streets of London, Clarissa’s concern is primarily with aging and death. Clarissa has never made peace with some of the decisions that shaped her life – her decision to marry Richard instead of Peter Walsh, for instance. Clarissa chose the safety of an aristocratic life with Richard because she knew that life with Peter Walsh would have been difficult. However, she wonders if she has made the right decision. After talking to Peter, on the day of the party, she even wishes to have a chance to live life over again.

Take me with you, Clarissa thought impulsively, as if he were starting directly upon some great voyage; and then, next moment, it was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them and had run away, had lived with Peter, and it was now over. (Woolf, 1996, p. 39)

By the end of the day, however, as Clarissa watches her neighbor through the window, she finally seems to have found some peace and ends up accepting the possibility of aging and even death. The oppressive forces of life have

affected her as well as Septimus Smith. However, while Septimus succumbs and commits suicide, Clarissa feels that she wants to keep on living.

She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him — the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room.” (Woolf, 1996, p. 153)

Another important character created by Virginia Woolf is Septimus Warren Smith, a veteran of World War I, who suffers from shell shock and is lost within his own mind. David Dowling states that Septimus has removed himself from the physical world, instead, living in an internal world, where he sees and hears things that aren't really there and talking to his dead friend Evans. He trusts nobody because he doesn't believe people are able to be honest or kind. However, sometimes the beauty of this world overwhelms him. This critic argues that “Virginia Woolf intended for Clarissa to speak the sane truth and Septimus the insane truth, and indeed Septimus's detachment enables him to judge other people more harshly than Clarissa is capable of” (Dowling, 1991, p.32) because he feels threatened by the world around him.

Septimus shares many characteristics with Clarissa. As her double, “he offers a contrast between the conscious struggle of a working-class veteran and the blind opulence of the upper class” (Dowling, 1991, p. 33). His troubles question the legitimacy of the English society he fought to preserve during the war. “Because his thoughts often run parallel to Clarissa's and echo hers in

many ways, the thin line between what is considered sanity and insanity gets thinner and thinner” (Dowling,1991, p. 33).

Septimus sees no other way out, so he tries to escape his problems by killing himself. His tragic attitude is what helps Clarissa finally come to terms with her own choices.

Septimus does not feel that he belongs in that society, therefore, he decides to lock the world out. Peter Capalbo argues that as a character, Septimus Smith is Virginia Woolf’s most powerful social critic:

There is little question that part of his role in the novel is to underscore Woolf’s passionate disapproval of shell-shock treatment in the post-war years, treatments she experienced personally during her own episodes of mental breakdown. (Capalbo, 2010, p. 38)

According to Alex Zwerdling “Woolf was interested in the process through which an independent, responsive, emotionally supple young man or woman is gradually transformed into a conventional member of his class” (1986, p.78). Septimus is not the only character from Virginia Woolf’s novels that has difficulties in finding his place in society. Other characters, such as Peter Walsh present the same difficulties. In Zwerdling’s words:

Peter thinks, and it is true, that he is in some sense an emotional exhibitionist ... What one sees throughout *Mrs. Dalloway* is a single disease that takes different forms. Peter’s or Septimus’... emotional compulsiveness and display, their gaudiness and profligacy, are the antithesis of the denial of feeling in the governing class. (Zwerdling, 1986, p.78)

Peter Walsh is an ambivalent character who feels very insecure about the decisions he has made in life. He is middle-aged and fears he has wasted his life, but sometimes he also feels he is not yet old. He cannot commit to a

romantic partner or even to an identity (his family is partly Indian and partly British). Having been rejected by Clarissa, he became bitter and very critical of others, especially of the Dalloway's and their bourgeois lifestyle. Nonetheless, Peter enjoys the false sense of order provided by the English society, which he lacks in his own life. Both Peter and Septimus, in their public display of emotion, defy the British norms of masculinity. Capalbo argues that Virginia Woolf's male characters represent different generations of British men: those such as Richard Dalloway, Dr. Bradshaw, and Percival accept and perpetuate the expectations of British manliness. On the other hand, Septimus Smith, Peter Walsh, Bernard and even Mr. Ramsay, "prove to be multifaceted characters who do not easily lend themselves to a rigid definition of male gender presentation". (2010, p.12)

Virginia Woolf uses yet one other character to criticize the rigid order of the British society - Sally Seton, Clarissa's childhood friend. In *Mrs. Dalloway* Sally is described as a wild handsome girl who smoked cigars and would say anything. She openly defied the norms according to which Clarissa and her family lived and that is what fascinated Clarissa. Even though Sally is now a married woman, mother of five children – holding a quite conventional position in the local society, Clarissa treasures the memory of that wild Sally and the only kiss they once shared. That kiss could have pushed both women outside of the English society; however, they succumb to the conventions of their time and become society wives.

The last character considered in this analysis is Miss Kilman, the private tutor of Elisabeth - Clarissa Dalloway's daughter. Miss Kilman is a bitter, unattractive middle-aged woman who profoundly dislikes Clarissa and all that she stands for – upper middle class superficiality and vanity. Being a fanatic

Christian, she tries to convert Elisabeth. Her lower class status and harsh life conditions are represented by her old, ugly Mackintosh coat, which she wears everywhere. The strong relationship she develops with Elisabeth Dalloway makes Clarissa wonder if there is some sort of erotic attachment between them.

2.3 Themes:

2.3.1 -The plunge into life and into death

Virginia Woolf often uses watery images in her writing. Therefore, a recurrent idea is that of “diving”, “plunging” into life or into death. In the initial scene in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the narrator describes how Clarissa is ready to plunge into the day and into life, after being ill. The same idea is present in the flashback from her days at Bourton:

What a lark! What a *plunge*! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and *plunged* at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the *flap of a wave*; the *kiss of a wave*; chill and sharp [...] (Woolf, 1996, p. 3) Italics added

Andrew McNeillie argues that “the central image of Clarissa as a diver implies her familiarity with the ocean, a knowledge of and delight in the chaotic element, also a direct confrontation with passing time, a recognition of the inevitable end” (1998, p.28). Even though Clarissa struggles with her fear of death, she decides to take life-affirming actions such as buying flowers and throwing parties. Clarissa’s fear and fascination of life and death is reflected in the following passage:

as she stood hesitating one moment on the threshold of her drawing room, an exquisite suspense, such as might stay a diver before plunging while the sea darkens and brightens beneath him, and the waves which threaten to

break, but only gently split their surface, roll and conceal
and encrust as they just turn over the weeds with pearl.
(Woolf, 1996, p.25)

Clarissa is, once again described as a diver. The fear and fascination of life and death can be illustrated by the sea, darkening and brightening beneath the diver. The dual nature of water is therefore present, representing life and death.

Another image using the idea of “plunging” is presented when Septimus is in his apartment, and he knows that the doctor is coming to take him away to a mental hospital. He keeps struggling between the fear of life and the fear of death. Finally, he decides to plunge into death:

Holmes was coming...There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury lodging house window, the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out... (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings—what did *they* want? ... Holmes was at the door. "I'll give it you!" he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings.
(Woolf, 1996, p.122)

By diving into the open air, Septimus puts an end to his life. The cyclical nature of life is represented not only by the water image, but also by the “plunging” that will bring Clarissa back to life and bring Septimus’ life to a closure.

2.3.2 Oppression and repression:

Clarissa and Septimus feel threatened by oppression – which can come disguised as religion, Science or social convention. Septimus, for example, feels oppressed by Sir William Bradshaw and his sense of Proportion and

Conversion, as well as by his scientific methods for treating mentally unstable patients. According to Sir William Bradshaw the “rest cure” was the only possible cure for cases like Septimus’. In order to get all the rest necessary, patients had to be confined to an institution. Virginia Woolf herself had to undergo this very treatment, which she clearly resented. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, through the criticism aimed at Sir William Bradshaw, Woolf shows how oppressive the system was, trying to make everybody live by the same preconceived standards:

Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalized despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion [...] (Woolf, 1996, p. 97)

Septimus also feels threatened by the conventions of British society, which could not accept the idea of a soldier with such a fragile nature. Unable to repress his madness and to conform to the social conventions of his time, Septimus ends up killing himself.

Clarissa Dalloway also deals with oppression. First, there is Miss Kilman, Elizabeth Dalloway’s teacher. After losing her job as a schoolteacher, Miss Kilman feels she has been victim of prejudice by the British society. She was dismissed because people suspected she had German sympathies during the war. Feeling hurt she wants to take revenge against the whole world. According to Isam Shihada “the cruelty of life drove her to find solace in the church” (2005, p.29). However, the church did not ease her rage; it only provided her with the means to feel she could judge the world. She “sees Clarissa Dalloway as the product of the patriarchal society by which she was victimized” (Shihada, 2005, p. 30). Therefore, she seeks revenge by humiliating Clarissa when she

reproaches her life style. In an attempt to defeat Clarissa and all that she stands for, Miss Kilman tries to convert Elizabeth. Clarissa fears that Miss Kilman is stealing her daughter away from her and worries that her influence may harm Elizabeth's future choices.

Another great source of oppression for Clarissa is the inherent loneliness, which is an essential part of living. Even though Clarissa is surrounded by people, there are moments in which she feels detached from the world: "She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone;" (Woolf, 1996, p.8). The idea of being out to sea illustrates very well how lonely she feels, how isolated from her surroundings. The fact that Clarissa represses her emotions in order to conform to the conventions of the British society adds to this feeling of loneliness. While she appears to be perfectly fine with her life, inside she is battling feelings of anxiety and a strong fear of death.

2.4 The treatment of Time

In the beginning of the 20th century modern novelists decided to break away from the conventions of 19th century literature. Modernists were interested in the time individuals experienced and how this experience of time can differ from individual to individual. The French philosopher Henri Bergson and his theories were extremely popular amongst Modernists and many were inspired by his theories on psychological time and borrowed his ideas.

As Childs puts it: "Henri Bergson's work changed the way many Modernists represented time in fiction" (2000, p.49). His ideas on psychological time were hugely influential. For him modern writers wanted to investigate the

non-linear qualities of psychological time, not the chronology in which events occur. As we are going to demonstrate throughout this work, Virginia Woolf was one of the main authors (together with James Joyce) to follow this line by focusing on subjective narratives in which time and space could only make sense through the consciousness of the character.

In the traditional novel, the structure is based on the chronological patterning of a series of events. Virginia Woolf, however, felt it was necessary for the modern fiction writer to cast off conventional attitudes when they no longer serve his/her purpose. A closer examination of the relationship between the characters and the periods of time into which the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is divided demonstrates Virginia Woolf's theory, delineated in *Orlando*, of the "discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind." For instance, although the external action of the book occupies only seventeen hours—about eleven devoted to Clarissa, ten to Peter, six to the English national character, and three to Septimus—the time range simultaneously covered within the minds of the characters is much bigger. Clarissa's mind, for example, takes her back to Bourton to the time she was a young woman, about 30 years before. The same happens to Septimus Smith, who, in his mind, goes back to his days at the war front.

According to Chris Nelson, "Woolf views time as highly personal, subjective, and variable, in contrast to time measured by the clock" (1969, p.56). The measuring of time based on observations of physical science is not natural since the human consciousness cannot be submitted to the same laws that govern objects. Virginia Woolf, then, explored the possibilities of the subjective narratives through her "moments of being".

The expression “moments of being” was first used in her essay “A Sketch of the past”, in 1939, to refer to powerful, memorable moments. In these moments the individual recalls feelings so intensely that they become more vivid than the present. The most ordinary activity can trigger one of these experiences in which the individual is absorbed in the singularity of the moment.

It is clear to us that Virginia Woolf’s psychological focus and her manipulation of the character’s point of view have expanded the limits of time and perception within her novels. According to Capalbo

we do not get directly from the author a chronological account of incidents or situations; instead, as we partake of a character's consciousness, we move up and down the stream of time, though, as earlier suggested, we do not witness its flow but its artificial stasis at moments.
(2010, pg.14)

The structure of the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is essentially based on psychological time. However, Virginia Woolf makes a point of presenting the difference between chronological time and psychological time. The former is represented by the Big Ben: “There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable” (Woolf, 1996. p.3). As a major English symbol, we believe that the Big Ben does not only represent tradition, but most importantly, it reminds characters of the passage of time. Clarissa Dalloway, for instance, feels uneasy by the chimes of the Big Ben because she fears the passage of time and the inevitability of death. The chimes of the clock serve another purpose; they represent the element that unites all the characters. They are all, somehow, under the command of those strikes. Peter, and other characters are in the grip of time, and as they age, they evaluate how they have spent their lives.

Psychological time, on the other hand, is subject to consciousness. It mingles present with the past, merging them into a simultaneous experience. For Septimus Smith, for example, the past is associated with his dead friend, Evans. Septimus is reliving the past through his “connection” with Evans. However, he is not fully either in the present or the past. He is living in one space, at one time which belongs and makes sense only to himself. For instance, in this passage in which Septimus and Rezia are at the park, waiting for a doctor’s appointment, Rezia says to him “it’s time”:

The word "time" split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time. He sang. Evans answered from behind the tree. The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids. There they waited till the War was over, and now the dead, now Evans himself—
(Woolf, 1996, pg.57)

Even though the war is over and Evans is dead, Septimus continues to experience those moments as if they were still happening. Unlike chronological time, psychological time is not imposed from outside, “but elicited by a mystical vision from the inside” (Capalbo, 2010, p.29). Septimus is so absorbed in the moment that it becomes more powerful and vivid than the present, transcending temporal limitations.

Another character, Peter Walsh, experiences the meeting of past and present in a time that is expanded, transformed only in his consciousness. As he hears the bells from St. Margareth at half past eleven, Peter thinks of Clarissa

It is half-past eleven, she says, and the sound of St. Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a

tremor of delight, at rest—like Clarissa herself, thought Peter Walsh, coming down the stairs on the stroke of the hour in white. It is Clarissa herself, he thought, with a deep emotion, and an extraordinarily clear, yet puzzling, recollection of her, as if this bell had come into the room years ago, where they sat at some moment of great intimacy, and had gone from one to the other and had left, like a bee with honey, laden with the moment. But what room? What moment? (Woolf, 1996, p. 41)

Peter is also absorbed in the moment, overwhelmed by the fusion of past and present. Even though there is a considerable distance separating Clarissa from him now, this moment brings back that intimacy, those feelings from the past, that time in which they were close and he had hopes for a future together.

By using this revolutionary way of writing, Virginia Woolf follows the ideals of modernists like James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Dorothy Richardson, and Ezra Pound, who, like herself, rejected the tired conventions of the 19th century. Virginia Woolf's innovative work has influenced generations of writers and is constantly renewed each time a new hypertext brings it to light, providing the readers with different perspectives of a timeless work. Michael Cunningham, with his prize winning novel *The Hours*, is one of the most striking examples of such a movement. Cunningham has expanded Virginia Woolf's work, in an attempt to emulate her style, by recreating her characters and showing that her themes are still up to date even on the break of the 21st century.

The next chapter brings an analysis of how Cunningham's novel is directly related to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. We are going to discuss the operations performed by Cunningham in order to build his hypertext.

Chapter 3 – From *Mrs. Dalloway* to *The Hours*

Literary critics refer to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as a typical novel from the Modernist period, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Cunningham's novel, *The Hours*, on the other hand, is considered a very good example of a novel from the Postmodernist period. Analyzing these two masterpieces should shed some light on what defines these two significant literary periods.

According to Graham Allen, Postmodernism searches for new theories and new ways of explaining the world, but at the same time, it is well aware that it can never be original. "Postmodernism borrows from the past and is not afraid to show that" (2000, p 17.).

Oosterik quotes Hutcheon on her discussion of Postmodernism: "Postmodernism uses and abuses the characteristics of modernism in order to question the latter and itself without the intention of replacing them" (2011, p. 45). These two currents have a relationship of continuity since both have a commitment to innovation and a critique of the tradition.

In order to understand this relationship of continuity between Virginia Woolf's and Cunningham's work, we are going to discuss how one has influenced the other.

Virginia Woolf's influence on Cunningham's work is not only present in *The Hours*, but in other works as well, such as *Flesh and Blood* and *Home at the End of the World* in which themes such as family, motherhood, and troubled sexuality, together with the metaphors of domesticity and water can be found. Cunningham himself describes his admiration for Virginia Woolf in a quite unconventional way. Although his adolescent ambition was to be a rock star, and he read English at Stanford University because "he did not know what else

to study” (Nelson, 1991, p. 83), he has spoken of the impact that *Mrs. Dalloway* made upon him:

“at High School. ... In a bid to impress a girl ... he headed straight for the library and found only Woolf’s 1925 novel. Although he had no idea what it was about, he recalls the depth, the density, balance and music of those sentences and, under influence of Woolf’s prose, retrospectively marries his musical yearnings with his real achievements in claiming that he ‘wanted to try and do with language what Jimmy Hendrix does with the guitar’. Admiring Woolf’s capacity to find extraordinary and unprecedented beauty in the ‘outwardly usual’, especially with reference to her celebration of London in *Mrs. Dalloway*, in writing *The Hours* Cunningham wanted to confer a similar kind of benediction ‘on the place I was from’. (Young, 2003, p. 12)

In Cunningham’s own words, “*The Hours* is a ‘riff’ on Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*” (Young, 2003, p. 33). He establishes the first link between his and Virginia Woolf’s work by using her draft title (*The Hours*) for the novel that eventually would be called *Mrs. Dalloway*. Using Genette’s concept of hypertextuality, the complex relationship between Virginia Woolf’s and Cunningham’s works is hereby analyzed, emphasizing not only the similarities between the two works, but also, the transforming operations occurring in the hypotext.

3.1 Expanding the hypotext

In order to analyze the operations performed by Cunningham in the process of creating *The Hours*, thus expanding a Modernist novel into a Postmodernist literary piece, we must first understand the theory behind these operations.

Gerárd Genette's theory of transtextuality describes the numerous ways a later text prompts readers to read or remember an earlier one. Having explained the other operations in the first chapter, let us focus on the main term discussed in this chapter: Hypertextuality. It refers to the relationship between two texts: The hypertext, and a previous text, which Genette refers to as the hypotext. The hypertext transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends the hypotext.

According to Genette, a hypertext can be created through different hypertextual possibilities: playful transformation (parody), satirical transformation (travesty), serious transformation (transposition), playful imitation (pastiche), satirical imitation (caricature), and serious imitation – all of them have to do with the processes of transformation or imitation. Imitation in his concept does not mean a simple copy, a reproduction. An imitation, in the sense here used, means “identifying the specific stylistic and thematic features of a text and practicing an exercise of that style in another text” (Genette, 1997, pg. 25) The pastiche is a good example of such imitation:

“a literary piece that imitates another famous literary work, by a different author. Its purpose is to honor the work that it imitates. It also applies to a literary piece that is a wide mixture of items such as themes, concepts and characters imitated from different literary works” (Genette, 1997, p.82).

One of the first requirements for a literary work to function as a pastiche is a “contract” sealed between author and reader. According to this “contract” the author gives the reader a foreword, a warning concerning the subject of the pastiche. Being aware of the intentions of the writer, and being familiar with the subject of the pastiche, a reader will be able to detect the similarities and

differences between the texts and engage in a stimulating literary game in which he/she has a very active role.

Cunningham warns his readers of his intentions by using a paratextual allusion: the very title of his novel, *The Hours*, alerts the reader of the existence of a relationship between this novel and *Mrs. Dalloway*, since this was the draft title chosen by Virginia Woolf. This is not the only warning, though. He uses the names of two characters from *Mrs. Dalloway* – Sally and Clarissa (Vaughan), the last assumes the nickname Mrs. Dalloway throughout the story. He decides to expand the attachment between Sally Setton and Clarissa Dalloway, exploring different possibilities for them. In order to do so he performs a diegetic transposition - transposes the action from one period (1920's) to another (1990's), changing the geographical, historical and, most importantly, the social setting.

Cunningham also brings to *The Hours* other characters from the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, though changing their names and even gender. He creates and develops stories with each one of them and, at the same time, even though they are all from different decades (1920's, 1950's and 1990's), he interweaves their lives in such a manner that they are strongly affected by each other.

These transpositions performed by Cunningham, bringing Virginia Woolf's characters from the 1920's to the end of the 20th century, giving them a new life and new possibilities clearly intend to honor her work. He did more than just bring them to a different time and place, in the case of Sallie and Clarissa Vaughan, for instance, he expanded Virginia Woolf's work by having them explore the possibility of living together, having a relationship. This idea of a homosexual attachment between Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton was

suggested, but not developed in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The two characters were attracted to each other but were also sure of the fact that they could never fully explore their feelings due to the conventions of their society. Cunningham, then, pays homage to Virginia Woolf by continuing the literary experiment that she could not or chose not to develop. In Laura Brown's case, Cunningham also explores an idea that was conceived by Virginia Woolf. In her essay "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" Virginia Woolf talks about Mrs. Brown, a character that would embody the qualities of domesticity and war. Cunningham brings Mrs. Brown to the 1950's and gives a house, a child and a husband who was a war hero. That is how Cunningham builds his pastiche, playing with Virginia Woolf's theories, resurrecting her characters, exploring new possibilities for them and showing the world that her work, and geniality are timeless.

Another characteristic of a pastiche is that it requires a mastery of that specific quality one has chosen to imitate. In Cunningham's case, besides the operations above mentioned, he also uses the stream of consciousness to narrate his story, just like Virginia Woolf:

Here on this corner (in front of what had been a head shop and is now a delicatessen) they had kissed or not kissed, they had certainly argued, and here or somewhere soon after, they had cancelled their little experiment, for Clarissa wanted her freedom and Richard wanted, well, too much, didn't he always? (Cunningham, 2002, p. 33)

In this excerpt the non-linear character of the human flow of thought is quite clear. According to John Mullan, in his review of the book *The Hours*, this excerpt shows Clarissa's thoughts going back and forth, revealing the deviating nature of consciousness: first there is the establishment of place – "this corner" – which makes us aware that what comes next is said from her point of view.

Next, she begins by saying that she and Richard had kissed, but then there is the doubt about whether the kiss had happened or not. Then, her mind tricks her again with a doubt about time - whether they had split at that moment or later, and finally, we are left with her personal judgement of Richard.

The last characteristic on which we decided to focus here is the interconnection of the themes in both novels. The plunge into life and into death, the fear of oppression and the treatment of time are mirrored and expanded by Cunningham in *The Hours*. As Septimus Smith's plunge into death brings to the character Mrs. Dalloway the conviction that life goes on – her plunge into life. In *The Hours*, Richard Brown's suicide plunge also boosts Clarissa Vaughan's desire to live. Her celebration of life in the last chapter is the expression of such feeling.

The fear of oppression is present in *The Hours* as well. This fear is more evident in Mrs. Woolf, Laura Brown and Richard Brown. These three characters have major difficulties in conforming to the roles society has imposed on them. Laura Brown feels completely out of place as a mother and wife, however, she feels the obligation to behave accordingly and the weight of that obligation leads her to consider even suicide as a possible escape. Richard Brown and Mrs. Woolf struggle with illnesses that will lead both into dementia. They feel inadequate facing the demands of daily life and hopeless facing a future that might bring only blank hours. These two characters are strongly bonded to Virginia Woolf's character Septimus Smith, since they share not only the feeling of social inadequacy by not being able to deal with daily life demands, but, more importantly, they share the same struggle with dementia and an uncertain future.

The third theme is the treatment of time. However, as this theme will be analyzed in depth in the next section, it is enough to say here that Cunningham's treatment of time is another strong bond to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Overall, by analyzing all these strategies used by Cunningham to develop his hypertext on the light of Genette's words, we would like to enumerate the reasons that led us to our conclusion: the first characteristic of the pastiche is to honor the work that it imitates. Cunningham himself stated that "*The Hours* is a 'riff' on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*" (Young, 2003, p. 33). He is clearly paying homage to Virginia Woolf. In addition, Cunningham's use of Woolf's draft title for the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, his use of the stream of consciousness, as well as his transpositions of her characters to *The Hours* and, finally, the fact that his novel carries identical themes to *Mrs. Dalloway* make his novel "a wide mixture of items such as themes, concepts and characters imitated from different literary works" (Genette, 1997, pg.82). This is why, in our analysis, we approach *The Hours* as a pastiche.

3.1.1 Changes in Time and Space

The change performed by Cunningham in time and space has strongly affected the theme of his novel. It has opened new possibilities for Virginia Woolf's characters, since her historical context was much less open to discuss homosexuality.

Having been raised under the influence of Victorian values, Virginia Woolf was familiar with the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 which charged Oscar Wilde with the crime of "homosexual gross indecency in public or private places" and sent him to prison, ruining his career. She was also

familiar with the fact that during the 19th century, many other men had been sent to the gallows for the same crime. According to Evans and Onorato, Victorian laws, however, did not address lesbianism since “authorities appeared to consider it too unimaginable or unmentionable even to condemn” (1997, pg. 37).

This silence about female sexuality in Victorian culture fomented a similar attitude in literature. However, some authors manage to challenge this rule, since in their works “the homosexual desire appeared in literature through socially acceptable and disguised forms” (Evans and Onorato 1997, p.37). One of these forms is known as the romantic friendship which was used to describe emotional asexual relationships between women.

Despite the fact that *Mrs. Dalloway* was written about 40 years after Wilde’s condemnation, those old Victorian values were still around. In 1921 The Criminal Law Amendment Act was amended in the House of Commons to include a section to make sexual “acts of gross indecency” between women illegal, and was passed in the House of Commons. However the section was defeated in the House of Lords and thus never became law. Nevertheless, this is very representative of how society still disapproved such practices.

In the 1920’s Virginia Woolf was already an enthusiastic member of the Bloomsbury group, which was not only famous for its intellectual quality in literature and other arts, but also for the homosexual behavior of its members - Duncan Grant and Maynard Keynes among others. Virginia Woolf also kept a well-known long term relationship with Vita Sackville-West, who inspired her in the writing of *Orlando*. Nevertheless, Virginia Woolf’s story of Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton carries the same ideal of the romantic friendship. Clarissa

thinks fondly of the kiss she shared with Sally; a simple kiss on the lips that turned her world upside down. She thinks of it “as if she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it” (Woolf, 1996, p.29) . Even though this feeling accompanies Clarissa for the rest of her life, she knew it could never be more than that – just a kiss:

"Oh this horror!" she said to herself, as if she had known all along that something would interrupt, would embitter her moment of happiness." (Woolf, 1996, p. 29)

While Virginia Woolf decided not to fully explore the potential of that relationship, leaving it there, latent, Cunningham, on the other hand, chooses to place Clarissa and Sally in a completely different time - the end of the 20th century – and opens new possibilities. Clarissa Dalloway is now free to make different choices. This change in time and space result in a thematic transposition, focusing, among other elements, on homosexuality and the AIDS epidemic.

In his novel, *The Hours*, Cunningham uses three different female characters as protagonists. Each character lives in a different time – Mrs. Woolf (1920's), Mrs. Brown (1950's) and Mrs. Dalloway (1990's). He dedicates different sections of the book to each character and the novel goes back and forth in time, as the sections bring the lives of the different characters, each in her own time.

In the “Mrs. Dalloway” section, he places Clarissa Dalloway – now Clarissa Vaughan, a lesbian editor – as well as other characters from the novel, in the late 20th century New York. This operation, classified by Genette as diegetic transformation or transposition, transfers the ‘narrative world’ (*diegesis*)

into another temporal/spatial frame, entailing some “pragmatic” but consistent plot modifications (Genette, 1997, p. 406). This diegetic transposition completely changes the context of *Mrs. Dalloway* by performing a temporal-spatial change. The post-World War I situation of the book *Mrs. Dalloway* is transposed to the post World War II United States of the Mrs. Brown section, and finally into the devastation of the AIDS epidemic in the late 20th century New York, in the ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ section.

Within the Mrs. Dalloway sections of *The Hours*, Cunningham uses New York as a noisy and culturally important environment comparable with London, in order to achieve the same kind of effect. The protagonist is going to give a party, buy flowers, and cross a park. The characters, though, had to change in part: there are no royal highnesses anymore, but movie stars; there is no “little troop of boys carrying cricket stumps” but “three black girls whiz past on roller skates”, functioning as indicators of contemporary street life.

Cunningham makes his novel’s fictional characters fit his purpose of transposing Virginia Woolf’s novel into the up-to-date intellectual ways of life in Greenwich Village, a place which seems to comfortably accommodate alternative family arrangements, due to its history - during the 1960s, a homosexual community formed in the Village. In 1969 a confrontation between this community and the police culminated in a riot known as the Stonewall Rebellion, regarded as the beginning of the nationwide movement for gay and lesbian rights. Greenwich Village became a gathering place for antiwar protesters in the 1970s and for activity mobilized by the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s.

This is the setting for the lesbian couple Clarissa (Vaughan) and Sally, the realization of the previous Clarissa Dalloway / Sally Seton latent lesbian attachment. Greenwich Village is also the home of the writer Walter Hardy and his positive HIV partner Evan. This writer is the transposition of Virginia Woolf's character Hugh Whitbread, an uptight government official, whose wife, Eva, was ill. And, of course, this is the home of terminally ill gay writer Richard Brown. Thus, the narrative world of the '*Mrs. Dalloway*' hypertext, that is, the world of Mrs. Dalloway in *The Hours* turns out to be much more openly homosexual than the hypotextual one.

3.1.2 Time as a physical experience

Richard Brown, Clarissa Vaughan's former lover, is terminally ill and the disease causes the deterioration of his brain. In that sense, Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and Cunningham's Richard Brown, though separated by 70 years, have the same experience of time. Time is, in Cunningham's novel, a physical experience and a physical space, represented more evidently through Richard Brown's mental confusion. He admits his detachment from time by saying: "I seem to have fallen out of time" (2002, p.62), as if time were a certain space such as a train or a room, from which one could escape.

"- The party and the ceremony are tonight. In the future.
- I understand. In a way, I understand. But, you see, I seem to have gone into the future, too. I have a distinct recollection of the party that hasn't happened yet."
(Cunningham, 2002, p.62)

As Richard's mind disintegrates, meaningless time is all he has ahead of him. He already seems to be living a perpetual present. When Clarissa enters

his apartment and greets him by saying “Good morning”, he asks if it is still morning. He remembers attending the award ceremony that is yet to take place later that day.

The treatment of time in Virginia Woolf’s novels has been discussed before. However, it is important to analyze Cunningham’s treatment of time under the light of a discussion by Saint Augustine of Hippo. According to Saint Augustine, time had to be measurable in order to suffice man’s needs. However, if one is going to look more deeply into this “measurability”, some difficulties are posed: “the past is what *was* and *is not*; the future is what *will be* and *is not*, and the present is indivisible and extensionless” (Quoted in John P. Kenney, 2005, p. 77). Saint Augustine presents a tentative solution for such a complex problem:

“The present of past things is memory, the present of the present things is sight and the present of future things is expectation....It seems to me that time is nothing else than extension; but extension of what I am not sure – perhaps of the mind itself.” (Confessions, XI, 20,26, Quoted in Kenney, 2005, p. 78.)

By considering time as an extension of the mind, St. Augustine proposes the idea of a “psychological time, based on the duration of successive images that are engraved in one’s soul” (quoted in Kenney, 2005, p.78). Both, Virginia Woolf and Cunningham, make use of this psychological time in their novels. For instance, Cunningham’s Richard Brown does not know if it is still morning and remembers being to a party that has not taken place yet. Virginia Woolf’s Septimus Smith also feels completely immersed in psychological time:

"- It is time," said Rezia.

- The word "time" split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time." Woolf , 1996, p.57

Septimus Smith, as well as Richard Brown, fails to reach a balance between psychological time (internal) and chronological time (external). Virginia Woolf's former soldier seems to have found a safe place out of time in which he can be in contact with his dead friend Evans and cope with the aftermath of the war. Both, Richard and Septimus, have found their way of escaping the present time which seems so hard to endure.

Cunningham has also challenged chronological time by inserting Virginia Woolf as a fictional character. She interweaves the stories through her writing: Mrs. Woolf is writing a novel in 1923 England, which influences Laura Brown's life in 1950 United States and which also echoes through Clarissa Vaughan's life in late 20th century New York. This is how Cunningham establishes a link uniting the three women and breaks the barrier of chronological time.

3.1.3. Changes in the characters

Even though Cunningham uses some of the names from the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, their functions change according to Cunningham's purposes. This section deals with the transformation / insertion of the characters in Cunningham's novel.

In the process of creating his hypertext, Cunningham inverts the role/gender of certain characters in an operation known as heterodiegetic transposition – it gives the reader a hint of the hypotext, however, it emphasizes Cunningham's freedom of thematic interpretation. Cunningham updates his

characters. In his novel, the Londoner Clarissa Dalloway is recreated in New York, in the figure of Clarissa Vaughan. Clarissa Dalloway's childhood friend Sally reappears in *The Hours* as Clarissa Vaughan's lesbian partner. Here Cunningham makes one important change, exercising his freedom of interpretation: Sally is a character which is described in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as a brave girl who would break with conventions, smoke cigars and speak her mind when most women would not. Clarissa Dalloway admires her defiant personality. However, Cunningham's Sally does not have the same intrepid, defiant personality. His description of this character sets the difference between the two – Virginia Woolf's and Cunningham's:

“...as if Sally were some sort of utterly banal safe haven; as if Sally herself (...) were harmless and insipid in the way of a house on a quiet street, or a good solid, reliable car.” (Cunningham, 2002, p. 20)

In *The Hours* Sally incorporates some of Richard Dalloway's characteristics. Therefore, she and Clarissa Vaughan have the same solid, bourgeois marriage as Virginia's Clarissa and Richard Dalloway. This is a very interesting change made by Cunningham because he appears to be playing with the idea that a homosexual relationship does not differ much from a heterosexual one. By performing this change, we believe, Cunningham is attempting to establish an aura of ordinareness, making a homosexual relationship sound somewhat common, even banal, not something unconventional or transgressive. Cunningham is known for being one of the

representatives of “assimilative literature¹⁰” and the example of heterodiegetic transposition discussed above corroborates this characteristic of his work.

Another example of heterodiegetic transposition is the character Richard Brown, Clarissa Vaughan’s former lover. This famous gay writer, victim of AIDS, merges traits of different characters from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. The first is Peter Walsh - he was in love with Clarissa Dalloway, however she chose to marry Richard Dalloway, considering him more capable of a solid, reputable life. The same happened, in *The Hours*, between Richard Brown and Clarissa Vaughan - she preferred to live with Sally because she considered Richard too impulsive. Both characters – Peter Walsh and Richard Brown - resent been deprecated by their respective Clarissa’s. They are equally critical of the decision both Clarissa’s have made.

As Peter watches Clarissa Dalloway mend her dress, he considers the kind of life Richard Dalloway has given her, a respectable tedious life. He is resentful of the kind of woman Clarissa has become, a conventional society wife:

“Here she is mending her dress; mending her dress as usual, he thought; here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and back and all that, he thought, growing more and more irritated, more and more agitated, for there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage, he thought; and politics; and having a Conservative husband, like the admirable Richard.”

(Woolf 1996, p. 36)

Peter thinks of the boring life Clarissa has led compared to his life, full of adventures. Had she chosen him, she would not be sitting at home, she would

¹⁰ Assimilative literature: “Fiction about gay men for straight readers. It shows gay life within the implicit or explicit context of mainstream life, and tacitly appeals to mainstream values – especially those of the family, or of monogamous love.” (Woodhouse, 1998, p.3)

have traveled, experienced the world. However, it is in the final line that he explicitly all his jealousy of Richard. By sarcastically calling Richard “admirable”, Peter expresses his resentment of all the qualities that Richard incorporated and that made Clarissa choose him over Peter. His perspective is that of a man who firmly believes he would have been a much better choice, for it seems that in his opinion, “admirable” stands for dull or unstimulating.

Richard Brown reveals very similar feelings towards Clarissa Vaughan’s choice. He can not accept the fact that his youth friend, the person with whom he shared his ideas, and above all, his lover has become a conventional society wife. Even though Clarissa is in what is considered by society as a transgressive relationship, living with a same-sex partner, Richard Brown can see in her life all the conservatism, the materialistic middle-class way of life that opposes his convictions as a gay man and an *avant-garde* writer. He blames Sally, her partner, for Clarissa’s conversion into a *bourgeois*:

“He had a habit of asking about Sally after one of his tirades, (...) Richard will neither admit nor recover from his dislike of her, never; he will never discard his private conviction that Clarissa has, at heart, become a society wife.” (Cunningham, 2002 p. 20)

Like Peter Walsh, Richard Brown believes Clarissa has made the wrong choice by preferring a more conservative, stable life and a different partner. Both men feel depreciated as lovers and betrayed in their convictions.

The second character whose traits Richard Brown merges is Septimus Smith. It is possible to better visualize that through the following observations: Due to the advanced stage of his illness Septimus is mentally disturbed. His notions of time and reality have changed and he lives in a parallel universe where birds sing in Greek and where the dead walk. Septimus has isolated himself from the outside world:

A sparrow perched on the railing opposite chirped Septimus, Septimus, four or five times over and went on, drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words how there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death. (Woolf, 1996, p. 20)

Similarly, Richard Brown is terminally ill and his disease has given him a distorted notion of reality. He escapes reality by isolating himself in his own created landscape where “mysterious voices” keep him company and sing in Greek:

I think of them (the voices) as coalescences of black fire, I mean they’re dark and bright at the same time. There was one that looked a bit like a black, electrified jellyfish. They were singing, just now, in a foreign language. I believe it may have been Greek. Archaic Greek. (Cunningham, 2002, p. 59)

Besides the fact that they are both mentally disturbed, there are more bonds connecting Septimus and Richard Brown. Both characters have identical deaths, by jumping out the window in order to escape oppression. Septimus is trying to escape Dr. Holmes and the fate that awaits him – being confined into a mental institution for not being able to conform to the conventions of his time. Richard Brown is trying to escape the oppression of social conventions, having to face his friends and the whole society at the ceremony. He also tries to escape his failure – he believes he has failed as a writer. Both characters fear the blank hours ahead of them – Septimus confined in a mental institution and Richard in his little apartment.

The third character to whom Richard Brown relates in the novel *The Hours* is Mrs. Woolf, a character created in *The Hours* and who is allegedly

Cunningham's fictional version of the real writer Virginia Woolf. The character Mrs. Woolf embodies the real writer's geniality and her thirst to capture and describe the moment accurately. This character also embodies Virginia Woolf's sensitivity to the world around her which, besides raising strong emotions, emphasizes her detachment from other people and their practical ways of dealing with daily life events. Finally, Mrs. Woolf brings to light Virginia Woolf's struggle with mental illness, another characteristic that bonds this character to Richard Brown.

Therefore, the connection between the characters Richard Brown and Mrs. Woolf is Cunningham's attempt to pay homage to the writer Virginia Woolf. For instance, Cunningham depicts Richard's geniality as something that cannot be easily recognized. Richard's novel is considered unreadable, just as some of Virginia Woolf's critics labeled her work. He also shares her ambition to produce art as something "alive and shocking enough that it could stand beside a morning in somebody's life" (Cunningham, 2002, pg. 198). The same feeling of failure and fear that the only thing left for the future is blank hours is shared by the two writers, as both fight mental disease and believe suicide is the only way out. Enclosing this multiplicity of "selves", Richard is one of Cunningham's most complex characters. And, as the creative writer echoing Virginia Woolf, presents the propensity for madness.

Other names are modified, but maintain some similarity: the radical religious Miss Kilman is transposed into radical feminist activist Mary Krull, a lesbian in love with Julia, Clarissa Vaughan's daughter. By "recreating" Miss Kilman as Mary Krull, Cunningham preserves the essence of that character. While Miss Kilman is a religious fanatic, Mary Krull is an extreme gay rights

activist. Both women defend their causes with passion, reject any trace of the bourgeois life and resent people like Clarissa (Dalloway and Vaughan), who tend to simply conform to society standards. Miss Kilman's mackintosh coat, symbol of her fight against frivolous consumerism and detachment from society's codes and norms, is replaced by Mary Krull's "rat-colored slacks and ragged white tank top" (Cunningham, 2002, p. 158).

While Miss Kilman tries "to convert" Elizabeth Dalloway into a Christian, and separate her from her mother and the frivolous life she represents, Clarissa Vaughan believes Mary Krull tries to "convert" Julia to her cause:

Clarissa wonders "But why Mary Krull, of all people? Why should a straight girl like Julia make herself an acolyte? Is she still this anxious for a father?"
(Cunningham, 2002, p. 161)

The word acolyte belongs to a religious semantic field, which denotes a clear link with Miss Kilman. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa is afraid that Miss Kilman will indoctrinate Elizabeth Dalloway in such a way that the mother-daughter relationship would be damaged beyond repair. In *The Hours*, Clarissa Vaughan, Mary Krull is the predator who came to claim her daughter. She fears that her own already fragile relationship with Julia becomes even frailer because of Mary's influence. She recognizes in her the same aggressiveness, the same self-aggrandizing quality also found in men. Clarissa thinks of her as a fraud and criticizes her attitude:

Fraud, Clarissa thinks. You've fooled my daughter, but you don't fool me. I know a conquerer when I see one. I know all about making a splash. It isn't hard. If you shout loud enough, for long enough a crowd will gather [...] It is the nature of crowds. (Cunningham, 2002, p. 160-161).

Mary Krull, on the other hand, believes Clarissa is deluded for thinking that the world hates her less for trying to assimilate into a heterosexual ideal of domesticity.

Another important aspect of the rivalry between Clarissa Vaughan and Mary Krull is that this awakens in Clarissa contradictory feelings. After living for so many years in a homosexual relationship with Sally, Clarissa pictures herself as a republican father, hating Mary Krull and equating herself with a republican father denotes Clarissa's surprising homophobic feelings. It seems that she has lived for so long in such an assimilative way of life that it is hard for her to accept Mary's radical appearance and activism. At the end, Richard Brown was right when he accused her of being a society wife by re-christening her Mrs. Dalloway.

3.1.4 Transformation and Imitation

In terms of plot, *The Hours* follows a narrative line from *Mrs. Dalloway*. Clarissa Vaughan leaves her house in the morning to buy flowers for the party she is hosting. Echoing Virginia Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway who, on a June morning in the early 20th Century, was walking through the streets of London, Cunningham's Clarissa Vaughan walks through the streets of New York, in the late 20th century, celebrating the city. She is observed by a neighbor, meets an old friend, goes to the flower shop, buys flowers for the party, and receives the visit of a significant figure from the past.

Cunningham also attempts to emulate Virginia Woolf's style through his use of the stream of consciousness technique. For instance, in the passage when Clarissa Vaughan goes out to buy flowers, just like Virginia Woolf's

Clarissa Dalloway, her mind wanders back and forth in time while she remains strolling the streets of late 20th century New York:

“What a thrill, what a shock, to be alive on a morning in June, prosperous, almost scandalously privileged, with a simple errand to run. She, Clarissa Vaughan, an ordinary person (at this age, why bother trying to deny it?), has flowers to buy and a party to give. (...) She is fifty-two, just fifty-two, and in almost unnaturally good health. She feels every bit as good as she did that day in Wellfleet, at the age of eighteen, stepping out through the glass doors into a day very much like this one (...) Richard came out behind her, put a hand on her shoulder, and said: “ Why, hello, Mrs. Dalloway.”
(Cunningham, 2002, p. 12)

The analysis of this small excerpt from Cunningham’s *The Hours* also illustrates his use of cinematic techniques, in a style that is very close to Virginia Woolf’s. In this passage Cunningham uses time-montage: Clarissa Vaughan remains fixed in space (the streets of New York) and her consciousness moves in time. There is, for instance, a flashback – it is present when she thinks of her time at Wellfleet, and the close-up of her conversation with Richard Brown, when he decided to name her Mrs. Dalloway.

A few lines down, the present device is the multiple view: this technique allows possibility of the concurrence of plural images at one point in time. As an example of this technique, in the passage below Clarissa Vaughan is walking the streets of New York thinking about her party later that day. She is cheerfully looking around and celebrating the city. Then, the reader leaves Clarissa’s mind to observe her from a stranger’s point of view, a man named Willie Bass. This is when the reader learns what Clarissa Vaughan looks like.

There she is, thinks Willie Bass, who passes her some mornings just about here. The old beauty, the old hippie, hair still long and defiantly gray, out on her morning

rounds in jeans and a man's cotton shirt [...]. She still has a certain sexiness; a certain bohemian, good-witch sort of charm [...]. (Cunningham, 2002, pg.13)

The reader is, then, taken back to Clarissa's consciousness and the profusion of images that she encounters in her walk: the abandoned tv set, and the street vendor's cart piled with broccoli, peaches and mangoes, etc.

Later, there is a fade-out – a technique used to promote a smooth change between scenes, normally blurring the beginning and ending of a scene. Here, after joyfully celebrating life through the images of the city, Clarissa thinks for a moment about Richard's illness and how people still want to live, even when they are as ill as he is.

Still she loves the world for being rude and indestructible and, she knows other people must love it too, poor as well as rich, [...] Even if we are further gone than Richard; even if we're fleshless, blazing with lesions, shitting in the sheets; still, we want desperately to live. (Cunningham, 2002, p. 15)

After this brief consideration of Richard's ill state, she continues walking and enthusiastically observing the scenes on the streets of New York. Finally, there is a cut - a sudden or abrupt change from one scene or time into another - to show her brief dialogue with Walter Hardy.

Young defines Virginia Woolf's narrative structure as—"a vast nest of Chinese boxes all of wrought steel turning ceaselessly one within another" (Young, 2003, p. 95). In creating his triptych, Cunningham has expanded Virginia Woolf's own literary theories. Firstly, he emulates her narrative style – though not leaning towards parody – by creating a narrative structure that, like Virginia Woolf's Chinese boxes, are embedded one within the other: Virginia

Woolf's character, Mrs. Dalloway, a housewife from the early 20th century London, was transposed to Cunningham's narrative as a lesbian editor living in late 20th century New York, Clarissa Vaughan. Virginia Woolf herself, inserted as a character in *The Hours*, Mrs. Woolf, is writing the story of the character Mrs. Dalloway. Finally, Richard Brown, a character in *The Hours*, has also written a narrative about a woman whom he has renamed Mrs. Dalloway – Clarissa Vaughan, his former lover. Thus, there are four different levels of narratives about Mrs. Dalloway.

3.1.5 The fusion of fact and fiction

The transformations performed by Cunningham in the hypotext illustrate and corroborate the discussion of one important 20th Century issue: the blurring of the borders between fact and fiction.

Cunningham has inserted a character based on Virginia Woolf herself. He condensed two years of her life in one day. On this day she is writing her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. There is a fusion of fact and fiction which relates to Virginia Woolf's work as well. This British modern novelist also engaged in biographical fiction. *Orlando*, her poetic fantasy of the life of her friend Vita Sackville-West, is one example of her view of biographical work, together with her essays defining New Biography as an art, in contrast with the monumentalization and memorialism of Victorian epic lives and biographies.

Cunningham's style, however, does not seek to dramatize the conflict between fact and fiction as Virginia Woolf's did, as described by Young (quoted in Marcus, 1994, p.116). His style is smoother; it blurs the borders between fact

and fiction, leading readers to mistake the life of the character Mrs. Woolf by the life of the real Virginia Woolf.

This strategy - of turning the real Virginia Woolf into a character - illustrates another operation performed by Cunningham, which Genette classifies as “extension”. This operation consists of inserting a new element into the hypotext. In this case, Virginia Woolf is transformed into a character – Mrs. Woolf – which enables Cunningham to interweave passages of Virginia Woolf’s real life and his own version of her. Cunningham has, in this way, recreated what he imagines to be the atmosphere surrounding the creation of *Mrs. Dalloway*, as if he were recreating the work that was the basis for his own.

Interestingly, in his process of recreating *Mrs. Dalloway*, Cunningham chose to begin his novel with Virginia Woolf’s suicide. In the prologue of *The Hours*, “Mrs. Woolf” is walking towards a river, with the firm purpose of killing herself. While she is carried away by the current, her body continues to absorb images. Tory Young describes this passage as follows:

The weight of the stone in her pocket allows her to be dragged under the water; as its current bears her body away the narrative presents her body as still receiving images: of shafts of light in the water, tangled weed, clouds above the surface. (Young, 2003, p. 50)

A few pages later, still in the prologue, Cunningham inserts in his text Virginia Woolf’s real suicide note. This introduction is quite unconventional since Cunningham kills the protagonist in the beginning of his novel. However, this mixture of poetic license and documentary evidence serves different purposes: it informs the readers about Virginia Woolf’s life and fiction and it determines the

tone of the novel and its themes: the human fascination with mortality and the constraints of societal roles, both directly related to *Mrs. Dalloway's* themes.

The first theme, the human fascination with mortality, shows how some people contemplate death as a possible escape – namely Mrs. Woolf, Richard and Laura Brown, while others - Clarissa Vaughan and Vanessa Bell - celebrate life in small daily events. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the plunge into life and into death also deals with Septimus' fascination with mortality and Clarissa Dalloway's desperate need to celebrate life. The second theme in *The Hours*, the constraints of societal roles, portrays the struggle of characters such as Mrs. Woolf, Laura and Richard Brown to conform to the roles society has assigned them, to the point that they start contemplating death as a possible escape. This theme is directly related to *Mrs. Dalloway's* oppression and repression theme which ends up leading to Septimus Smith's suicide.

The above discussion of the Cunningham's theme – the human fascination with mortality - takes us back to his unconventional introduction of *The Hours*. Here, it is important to understand that by killing Mrs. Woolf, the authorial figure in the very beginning of the novel, Cunningham experiments with a postmodern concept proposed by Roland Barthes: The death of the author. According to Barthes, if we ascribe an author to a text, we are limiting this text by imposing a final signification. For him:

A text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogue with each other, into parody, into contestation; but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, but the reader. (Barthes 1967, pgs. 5 – 6)

Each piece of writing contains multiple layers and meanings and it is up to the reader to distinguish the elements, not to decipher them. Barthes demystifies the Author as the “authority” in the text by ascribing the reader with a more active role. He believes that a text contains in itself different dimensions and the only power of the writer is to combine the different kinds of writing. He has chosen to experiment with Barthes’ concept: he provides his readers with 4 different levels of narratives about *Mrs. Dalloway*, challenging them to explore the multiple possibilities for interpreting these narratives. First he inserts two fictional writers – Mrs. Woolf and Richard Brown. Both characters have written a narrative about Clarissa. Mrs. Woolf, Cunningham’s character, is writing the narrative of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Richard Brown has also written a narrative about his friend Clarissa, whom he calls Mrs. Dalloway. Furthermore, Cunningham keeps making explicit references to the real Virginia Woolf, the writer of *Mrs. Dalloway*, the text that was the basis for his own. Finally, Cunningham places himself among Virginia Woolf’s readers by offering his own interpretation of *Mrs. Dalloway*. By doing so, Cunningham ends up slightly erasing his own figure as the author of a new narrative about *Mrs. Dalloway*. As a last strategy, Cunningham plays with the concept of the “death” of the author also by having his two (fictional) writers die in the novel.

The fusion of fact and fiction and the merging of elements from different narratives is also present in another of Cunningham’s strategies: Mrs. Brown, a character borrowed from one of Virginia Woolf’s essays, was inserted in Cunningham’s narrative. This character was first designed by Virginia Woolf in her essay “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown”. Having been criticized by the English novelist Arnold Bennet about her characterization in the novel *Jacob’s Room*,

Virginia Woolf answered her critics with the essay and, later, expanded it in the paper presented at Cambridge –“Character in Fiction”. According to Young, Virginia Woolf believed that all human relations had changed and, because of that, her

[...] contemporaries must forge a new style of writing rather than look to traditional novels as models. Life had changed – famously around 1910, the year of the first exhibition of Post-Impressionist painting in Britain –and now prose fiction must adapt to record it. (Young, 2003, p. 51)

Virginia Woolf stated that a new democracy between author and reader must be established. Therefore she created the theory of Character in Fiction: such theory had to do with a new character that embodied an ordinariness which blended qualities of fragility and heroism, a character that would represent life as it is, not as it should be. The character created by Virginia Woolf to embody such qualities was Mrs. Brown. According to her, once this character was captured on the page, when literature spoke of domesticity as well as war, English literature itself would be transformed. Cunningham makes his attempt to apply Virginia Woolf’s theory of character in fiction by creating his own Mrs. Brown.

In *The Hours*, the character Mrs. (Laura) Brown is an ordinary woman whose main activities are confined to domestic life. Laura, a mother and housewife from the 50’s represents life as it is, not as it should be: she is not happy with her marriage, she is not in love with motherhood, she is depressed, emotionally fragile and this inability to comply with her life gives her an aura of a tragic heroine - a woman leading a life she has no wish to live. Cunningham has taken his experiment with the theory of character in fiction in such a way that

his character elicits the themes of domesticity and war exactly as pointed out by Woolf. Mrs. Brown is not just confined to the realm of domesticity; she saw herself forced to marry a man for the sole reason of him being a war hero. However, this is not the only war present in this section of his novel. Mrs. Brown's daily war to conquer her wish to abandon her child and her life is also to be taken into consideration.

In *The Hours*, Laura Brown's conflicts are especially related to motherhood, a theme that resounds throughout Cunningham's works. According to Richard Canning, Cunningham has based this character on his own mother, a housewife in post-World War II United States. The main connection between Laura Brown and Virginia Woolf lies in the fact that they are both related to him in a "motherly" way with Laura as the incarnation of his mother, as he himself stated and Virginia Woolf, as his literary foremother. Even though Young states that Cunningham does not capitalize Virginia Woolf's role as a "literary mother", it is evident that her work has affected his literary experience as a reader and writer.

In this sense, Mrs. Brown is not just another character inserted in Cunningham's novel. Embodying the new literature concept, she is a character brought in from a third text (Woolf's essay), who has characteristics borrowed from personal experiences – Cunningham's mother. Genette classifies the presence of such a character as a contamination between texts, or between texts and borrowings from reality, as illustrated below:

Thomas Mann himself claimed his *Leverkuhn*, and therefore his *Doctor Faustus*, to have been modeled on Faust (for the protagonist's fate), Nietzsche (for his madness), and Schonberg (for his musical theory). Those are contaminations between texts, or between texts and borrowings from reality. (Genette, 1997, p.259)

Cunningham makes it very clear throughout the novel that he is attempting to develop Virginia Woolf's theory of character creation. He has caught Mrs. Brown on the pages of his novel. In order to preserve the connection between creator and creature - Virginia Woolf and Mrs. Brown – Cunningham delineates a process through which Laura Brown is nourished by the fictional character Mrs. Woolf through the medium of literature.

The first lines of the Mrs. Brown section are an excerpt from *Mrs. Dalloway*. Laura Brown is reading this book and is fascinated by Virginia Woolf's geniality. She wishes she could let herself stay there, in that world created by the British writer. She feels that she belongs more in that world of literature than at her house with her husband and child – “She knew she was going to have trouble believing in herself, in the rooms of her house...” (Cunningham, 2002, pg. 38).

A few pages later, this feeling of not belonging becomes even more evident as she describes her anxiety before entering the kitchen and greeting her husband and her son:

She is again possessed (it seems to be getting worse) by a dream-like feeling, as if she is standing in the wings, about to go onstage and perform in a play for which she has not appropriately dressed, and for which she has not adequately rehearsed. (Cunningham, 2002, pg.43)

Words such as “representing”, “playing a role”, “performing” and “acting” appear frequently in the Mrs. Brown sections and signal to the reader Cunningham's intent – play with the idea of developing a character that was created by Virginia Woolf. He does so by inserting Mrs. Brown in a context

where she has to deal with the two main themes proposed by Virginia Woolf: domesticity and war. Laura Brown was affected by WWII. Her husband had been at war and had been mistakenly reported dead. When he came back home, "from the realm of the dead", he was considered a war hero. As he proposes to her, she believes it is her duty to marry him – how could she say no to a hero? Nevertheless, she feels completely out of place having to play a character she had never wished to play, since motherhood and marriage were not in her plans. The next theme proposed by Woolf – domesticity – is where this feeling of not belonging clearly appears.

Cunningham approaches the theme of domesticity carefully. He describes details of the Brown family's life. There is conversation around the table, coffee, the ritual of waving a husband goodbye through the window, along with mother and child interaction. Within this domestic and ordinary universe Cunningham proposes a task that will define Laura as a woman (and a housewife) - the most ordinary of tasks: baking a cake. What would seem a very simple duty for most women represents a big challenge for her. She feels insecure, anxious and has to face the fact that she believes she has failed as a mother and as a wife. She does not love her husband, her child, her house or her life enough. She resents not having the possibility of fully exploring her talents. Laura is living a life she has no wish to live.

Laura's frustration with motherhood and marriage put in evidence her dissatisfaction over the role she was assigned. This dissatisfaction leads her to feelings of unworthiness and depression, and culminates in a desperate search for escape, since identification with her roles or with other characters is not an option.

Mrs. Brown escapes to a hotel room, a neutral place where she does not have to represent that domestic role, a place in which she can be somebody else, anybody she decides to be. This escape is temporary, but leads to another, that is permanent. Laura leaves her family, her role as mother and wife to become somebody else, a librarian in Canada. This shifting of her character, this need to change roles and places, illustrates her lack of compliance with the traditional gender roles that were imposed on her and how such personal conflict leads her to a dramatic gesture that seems to be the only possible solution: she abandons her children, her husband, her country and all that constrains her.

The connections here analyzed between Cunningham's *The Hours* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* reveal how pointless it would be to develop an investigation of Cunningham's novel as one isolated piece of work. The novel is undoubtedly a complete work in itself; however, all of the novelist's art, the sole expression of his creativity, and skillful language usage rely on the expansion and transformations of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

In the process of creating his hypertext Cunningham has also performed changes in time and space; changes in characters' names, roles and gender. He has inserted characters, and has promoted a thematic transposition - developing themes that were latent in the hypotext; attempting to emulate Woolf's style (use of the stream of consciousness) and cinematic techniques . All this complex work resulted in a new novel that even though is undeniably related to Woolf's style, stands on its own as a manifold literary piece of work.

By unfolding the characters, by carefully reconstructing the atmosphere and mood, by creating a complex plot interweaving all the characters and,

finally, by comprehending three completely different generations of women, Cunningham reveals an interconnection that is not only literary . He transcends literature when he blurs the line between fact and fiction by placing Woolf as a fictional character and using elements from her real life. His three main characters express the frustration of living in a world of very limited choices. The torments of Virginia Woolf are the torments of Mrs. Woolf, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Dalloway.

Peter Brooker, mentioning a review of *The Hours* by the New York Times, corroborates this idea that reading Cunningham's novel without reading *Mrs. Dalloway* is possible, however "...it would deny readers a readily available pleasure." (Brooker, 2007, pg. 114). For him, Cunningham translates Woolf and her novel into a postmodern present in ways that "raise questions about style, narrative, and identity as well as about historical reconstruction and originality." (Brooker, 2007, p.114). This critic also brings to light an interesting notion concerning Cunningham's hypertext and its relation to its hypotext:

Cunningham's novel is said to 'shadow an echo', to be 'inspired by', to 'revoice' and 'emulate' Woolf's. The assumption is that Woolf's text comes first and sets off these later echoes, but clearly this cannot be the case if we enter Woolf's novel after reading Cunningham's or read Cunningham's after viewing the film. (Brooker, 2007, p. 115)

This new perspective on how each work can be approached certainly reconstitutes our sense of them. According to Brooker, this is one of the main features of postmodernism – "texts exploit precisely this dispersed, free-ranging intertextuality. An adaptation will stand in a set of potential intertextual or dialogic relations." (2007, p.113). The reader/viewer will not necessarily be

aware of such relations in order to understand the work or draw pleasure from it. Therefore the chronology of source text and its adaptation can be reversed depending on the moment of reading or viewing. As a consequence, the notion of “original” will be resituated or transformed.

In order to continue this discussion, the next step on this analysis focuses on another hypertext – the movie *The Hours* by Stephen Daldry. So far the analysis has been based on Genette’s concept of Transtextuality, however his terms are not fit to help understand the adaptation process as translation. Therefore, McFarlane’s theory of film adaptation will be used, since it considers film adaptations as translations; that is, it analyzes how elements will be transformed, adapted or expanded into a different semiotic system.

Chapter 4 – *The Hours* versus *The Hours*: Adaptation

This chapter aims to describe how Cunningham's novel *The Hours* was transformed into Daldry's homonymous film. McFarlane's Theory of Film Adaptation was elected for the analysis of the film adaptation since this work is regarded as intersemiotic translation.

McFarlane considers transfer as "the process whereby certain narrative elements of novels reveal themselves to be amiable for display in films" (1996, p.11), while adaptation refers to the processes by which other novelistic elements must find quite different equivalences in the film medium, if that is the intention of the filmmaker.

Following is a detailed analysis of examples that refer to these two proceedings:

4.1 Transfer

According to McFarlane's theory, the elements presented in this section are examples of Distributional functions, - these functions can be directly transferred from one medium into another since they do not depend on the system or language. As an example, we can mention the Cardinal functions, a subdivision of the Distributional functions, which were directly transferred from the book to the movie. Among the transferred cardinal functions, we would like to mention the characters: Clarissa Vaughan, Richard Brown, Laura Brown and Mrs. Woolf. Another element included in the distributional functions is the plot, which is essentially the same in both media.

The challenge for the filmmaker is, then, to recreate in film the essence of a scene present in the novel. Therefore, these examples also help illustrate

the notion that the boundary separating adaptation from transfer may not be as clear as one might think, since the ability of the filmmaker to find equivalents for certain elements in the film medium is present in every single detail.

4.1.1 Plot line

In his novel, Cunningham designs a plot line based on Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* - the story of a woman's whole life in one day. The first section of the novel *The Hours* is entitled "Mrs. Dalloway". It describes Clarissa Vaughan's walk through New York, buying flowers for the party she is hosting later that day. This section echoes Clarissa Dalloway's walk through London, also buying flowers for the party she is hosting. The second section is titled Mrs. Woolf and describes an imagined morning in which the Virginia Woolf, as a fictional character, started writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. This section ends with the same sentence that begins the third section – Mrs. Brown: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." (Cunningham, 2002, p.37)

This is one example of how the American novelist shows his intention of following a plot line from Woolf's novel and to make the character Mrs. Woolf the fictional author of the novel *The Hours*. This way Cunningham interweaves the three stories and characters throughout his book.

In the movie, the character Virginia Woolf triggers the actions of the other women through her writing. One of the many examples is when Virginia is beginning to write the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* and Clarissa Vaughan is out, buying flowers. As Clarissa leaves the flower shop and walks through New York, Stephen Daldry, the director, uses voice-over. We hear the character Virginia Woolf saying: "A woman's whole life in a single day. Just one day... and in that

day, a whole life” (Hare, 2002, p.20). At this moment, there is a cut and the next scene shows Laura Brown preparing to make her cake. The three women are, each, getting started on the tasks that will represent what they are their best at, the definitive tasks that will reveal the very essence of each woman, the definite proof of their talents. Woolf with her book, Clarissa with her party, and Laura Brown with her cake are all trying to execute with perfection the tasks that identify them and, therefore, define their existence.

4.1.2 Time and space

As said in the previous section, the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is, in Cunningham’s book as well as in Daldry’s movie, the main axis that links the stories. Therefore, Cunningham follows the narrative structure of *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which there is no chapter division, only sections. The dates are mentioned in the first section of each character, after which there is a rejection of clock time and an emphasis on what Young calls emotional time. The experiences of each character are narrated in the stream of consciousness, resulting in the replacement of time by memory.

As the quality of consciousness itself demands a movement that is not rigid clock progression, it is necessary to shift back and forth, to express present, past and imagined future. In his film, Daldry has managed to achieve a similar effect in the treatment of time as an emotional element rather than a logical one by using film editing techniques such as cross-cutting. According to Susan Hayward, this technique consists in presenting consecutive shots alternating between two or more actions. The idea is to suggest that these actions are occurring simultaneously.

One example of the use of this technique is presented when the three women (Clarissa Vaughan, Laura Brown and Mrs. Woolf) are getting up in the morning. Two of them wash their faces, literally “mirroring” each other. As Clarissa Vaughan gets up and goes to the bathroom, she ties her hair up in front of the mirror. There is a cut and the next scene shows Virginia Woolf in an identical move, tying her hair up. Then, there is a scene with Clarissa staring at the mirror and as she goes down, apparently to splash her face with water from the tap. Again, there is a cut and Virginia Woolf appears, pouring water down to wash her face. She stares at the mirror just as Clarissa did before, and then goes down to splash some water on her face. Finally, there is a cut and immediately comes the scene with Clarissa Vaughan. She has just splashed her face with water. The cross-cutting technique gives the audience an idea that those actions are happening at the same time, even though they are chronologically many years apart.

One of the most impressive effects achieved by Daldry, though, refers to the structure of the narrative, which corroborates Cunningham’s idea of basing all the action and development on Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. Instead of dividing his film into sections, as Cunningham’s novel had done, Stephen Daldry built his adaptation with few flashbacks - the stories are mostly in the present. The scenes move from character to character; and the character is the only reference of time and place one gets. There is Virginia Woolf’s, Laura Brown’s and Clarissa Vaughan’s time and place, linked to one another by cross-cutting.

4.1.3 Leitmotifs

Stephen Daldry has chosen another interesting way of presenting the strong connection that exists among the three characters, whose lives are separated in time. He used leitmotifs, that is, elements such as certain themes or emotions that are repeated throughout a book, play, or movie. They can be represented by recurring events, objects or even characters that the story always makes reference to. Some of them, such as the women's companions, scenes of the women waking up, the flowers and words from the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* are present in the book as well as in the movie.

Daldry begins his movie first by showing the companion, and, then, the woman, in a clear reference to the fact that the sections in Cunningham's book begin by the women's title "Mrs." and the husbands' last names. He begins with Dan Brown, getting out of his car, carrying home a bunch of roses. Then the camera finds Laura Brown, lying asleep in her bed. There is a cut and the next scene shows Leonard Woolf walking home. As he enters, he meets the doctor downstairs. The camera goes upstairs to find Virginia Woolf, lying in her bed, staring at the ceiling. There is a new cut and the next scene shows Sally Lester, Clarissa Vaughan's companion. She is leaving a subway station, walking home. When she gets home, she undresses, and gets quietly into bed. The camera reveals Clarissa, lying apparently asleep in her bed.

Another leitmotif is the whole routine of the women, which begins with alarm clocks, first in Laura Brown's room, then, in Mrs. Woolf's and finally, in Clarissa Vaughan's. The day begins for all of them as the story begins. There are establishing shots that show the bedroom style and, consequently, the differences in time that separate the characters.

Flowers are another important leitmotif: Clarissa looks around her apartment and finds a vase of dead flowers. She shakes her head and touches the vase in a movement to pick it up. There is a cut and the next scene shows Dan Brown getting the vase with his roses and putting them on the kitchen counter. There is another cut and the next scene shows Woolf's maid putting a vase of flowers on the table. This cinematic technique is called "match cut" and it is used to link different camera shots, visually or thematically. Even though flowers are a motif present in the novel, the film director has found a new way to show them as the element connecting the continuum of the narrative.

The repeated initial sentence from the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is a crucial element connecting the characters and initiating the stories: Mrs. Woolf is in her workroom, beginning her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. She says her sentence out loud and then writes it down—"Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself". As soon as she says it, there is a cut and, Laura Brown, reading the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, reads it out loud—"Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (Hare, 2002, p.9). There is a cut and, next, there is a scene in which Clarissa Vaughan speaks to Sally, unseen in the other room: "Sally, I think I will buy the flowers myself" (Hare, 2002, p.9). This example of adaptation shows the artistry of the filmmaker in connecting the female characters. While in the book each section begins with the flower buying motif, the film places the scenes in a sequence, emphasizing the connection among them.

The above-mentioned scenes are the opening scenes of the movie. They come right after the prologue in which Virginia Woolf commits suicide. Nevertheless, these are the scenes that introduce the characters, the times, the places. Daldry, the director, has thus managed to establish the connection

among the three stories. Even though the audience still do not know who they are or what the real connection between them is, the audience learn from the editing in these scenes that these characters are somehow related, which intrigues the public about the development of the movie.

The last and most significant leitmotif in Daldry's adaptation is the kiss each female character shares with another woman. Each kiss has a different meaning, but it is an element present in all three stories, which establishes a connection among the main characters. Daldry has transferred the motif from the novel to his movie, though attributing a different meaning to it.

In the movie, the kiss first takes place in the scene in which Kitty shows Laura Brown how vulnerable she is. She is thrown off balance by the only thing she cannot do - have children. Yet, for Kitty, becoming a mother is what defines a woman's existence. Therefore she feels weak and vulnerable. As Laura Brown shares the same feeling of weakness and vulnerability in dealing with her life, this is the moment in which the balance between these two women is established. That is when Laura Brown, in an impulse to console Kitty, kisses her mouth. In the book, however, the anomalous growth discovered in her uterus makes Kitty much more concerned with the possibility of dying than that of never becoming a mother.

In the book, the second kiss takes place in the Mrs. Woolf section. She is having tea with her sister in the kitchen and they are talking about children and trivialities. Cunningham conveys the idea that his Mrs. Woolf has had a happy day, being rescued by her sister and the children from her monotonous life in the suburbs. There is a nice atmosphere of familiarity. This happiness is disturbed, however, by the presence of Nelly, the house maid, who appears to

represent a big challenge for Mrs. Woolf. Nelly constantly demands instructions from Mrs. Woolf, but she does not feel comfortable managing the household and feels that Nelly puts much pressure over her. When Nelly returns from her trip to London, Mrs. Woolf feels an impulse to do something extravagant. As Nelly turns her back, Mrs. Woolf leans forward and kisses her sister on the mouth, just to be transgressive.

It is an innocent kiss, innocent enough, but just now, in this kitchen, behind Nelly's back, it feels like the most delicious and forbidden of pleasures.
(Cunningham, 2002, p. 54)

Nevertheless, in the movie, Daldry has decided to create an atmosphere of mystery and imminent death. Therefore, there is an emphasis on the tone of desperation caused by Mrs. Woolf's depression, which gives the kiss a totally different meaning. The kiss occurs in the living room, upon Vanessa's pending departure, which makes Mrs. Woolf feel that the life of the house, the happiness she has felt, are going to be gone together with Vanessa. As Vanessa embraces and kisses her face to say goodbye, Mrs. Woolf holds her firmly and kisses her on the mouth.

The dramatic tone of the scene relies greatly on the actresses' skills. Mrs. Woolf (played by Nicole Kidman) expresses her desperation through her tears as well as through her despondent expression. Vanessa Bell (played by Miranda Richardson), Mrs. Woolf's sister, completes the picture first with a maternal look and immediately after the kiss, with a frightened look. She seems to realize that her sister might be beyond any help.

The last kiss in the movie takes place in Clarissa and Sally's bedroom. As Sally takes Clarissa's coat off, Clarissa kisses her. It is a sort of

reconciliation kiss, illustrating Clarissa's conclusion that after all, she has made the right decision to choose Sally and the kind of life they have built together. The kiss in Cunningham's novel is given by Sally, on Clarissa's forehead. It is a representation of the solid, stable relationship they have. Daldry has chosen to transfer the essence of that scene – the solid and stable quality of the relationship between these two women – in order to confer some order in the chaos of the characters' lives, especially after such a dramatic gesture as Richard's suicide.

According to McFarlane, the transference of the cardinal functions listed above – in this case the main characters, the treatment of time and space, and the structure of the narrative – characterizes Daldry's film as an adaptation proper. This is what enables analysis of the intersemiotic translation; that is, matching the elements in the filmic version that are equivalent to those first-produced in literary form.

4.2 Adaptation

Adapting a literary work to film involves a quite creative enterprise. As films lack the literary enunciation marks such as person and tense, the filmmaker must inscribe the enunciatory modes through other means that are specific for this medium; for instance, through the way shots are angled, framed and put in a certain sequence. There is not necessarily a commitment to the source novel and the filmmaker's decisions imply that the film is his "reading", his interpretation of the novel.

In the study of adaptation, it is important to consider to which extent the filmmaker has represented key verbal signs based on the visual suggestions he

got from the novel. Another important element to consider is how the visual representation used by the filmmaker affects the reading of the film text.

Daldry's maneuvers to adapt certain crucial elements of Cunningham's novel into his film are hereby analyzed. Taking into regard his use of cinematic techniques, we intend to discuss the cutting of scenes, the change in the focus of the events and the strategies to describe characters' feelings and to create a mysterious atmosphere. The discussion of these elements will enable us to understand the unfolding of the process of adaptation proper, the process through which Daldry created his film.

The music is the first element that illustrates the process of adaptation proper. The soundtrack by Phillip Glass is one example of indices proper, a category within the Integrational functions that deals with notations of atmosphere. There is only one soundtrack in the movie and not, as usual, one track for each character. As a non-linguistic sound code that enables us to "read" film narratives, the music here functions as the one powerful element of connection among the women.

4.2.1 Cuts

Daldry has performed some significant cuts in Cunningham's novel in order to create his filmic adaptation, the two most significant occurring in the initial and the final scenes.

The first cut refers to the scene in which Clarissa celebrates the city, which is present in both, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Cunningham's *The Hours*. In the novel, Clarissa Vaughan goes out to buy flowers for her party. As she steps outside, she admires the June morning and feels lucky to be alive and in

good health at the age of fifty-two. As she walks through the park, Clarissa falls in love with every detail of her city. She loves the eternity of the city, the feeling that it's been this way forever with its smells, colors and noise. There is a woman singing, girls on roller skates, street vendors, etc. Clarissa bumps into Walter Hardy, a famous writer whose partner is HIV positive. There is a visit to the flower shop and even the presence of a Hollywood star, whose identity she is not able to confirm. She feels guilty for being able to forget Richard's terminal condition and enjoy life.

In his adaptation, however, Daldry shows a few shots of the streets of New York as Clarissa walks to and from the flower shop, and when she goes to Richard's apartment. These shots serve as establishing shots rather than carry the essence of the celebration Cunningham's Clarissa Vaughan makes upon her city. The celebration of life as an extension of the celebration of the city, its colors, noises and movement is not present in Daldry's movie.

This operation performed by Daldry took place within the Integrational functions. Among the Integrational functions, there is a subdivision called *informants*, which deals with details of physical setting. The purpose of the filmmaker was to emphasize in the movie the introspective and melancholic tone expressed in the book. There are hardly outdoor scenes; the key scenes take place indoors, as a reverberation of the profusion of emotions and changes that happen inside the character's minds. This cinematic strategy characterizes an adaptation proper; that is, the filmmaker has found a creative way to express in the film medium the melancholic tone used by the novelist in his medium.

The second most significant cut in Daldry's adaptation takes place in the final scene of the film. The final section in Cunningham's book is called "Mrs.

Dalloway". In this final section, after Richard's suicide, Clarissa and Sally bring Laura Brown to their apartment. Through the whole section Clarissa's considerations about this woman who haunted Richard's life and work are narrated. They speak very little to each other and most of the information on what happened to Richard's father, sister and to Laura Brown is revealed by the narrator. In the book, then, Laura Brown's character keeps the same quiet, introverted behavior she has had throughout the story. The novel's closing scene takes place in what attempts to be a celebration of those who survive. All the women stand around the scene of the party to pay homage to Richard.

Here, then is the party, still laid; here are the flowers, still fresh; everything ready for the guests, who have turned out to be only four. Forgive us, Richard. It is, in fact, a party, after all. It is a party for the not-yet-dead; for the relatively undamaged; for those who for mysterious reasons have the fortune to be alive.
(Cunningham, 2002, p. 226)

Clarissa's party for Richard turns out also as a celebration of the moment in which Clarissa takes control over her own narrative; she is no longer Richard's character "Mrs. Dalloway".

Daldry's ending differs greatly in form, but not in essence. First, David Hare, the screenwriter, switches the attitudes of the characters. Laura Brown, so quiet throughout the movie, becomes the outspoken one, talking about the decisions she has made in her life. Clarissa, who was talkative throughout the movie, lets Laura speak, becoming more of a quiet listener. The dialogue was transferred from the book and it carries the same essence, even though it was expanded in the movie. This operation is a clear example of Indices proper, a subdivision of Integrational functions that has to do with psychological

information. By doing this, the screenwriter has adapted the emotional charge of the scene into a much longer and denser dialogue.

Daldry, therefore, adapted the last scene, preferring not to risk being overtly emotional in a sad farewell to Richard by providing Laura Brown's character with voice – she herself speaks about the choices she has made and the consequences they have brought upon her family and herself. Daldry has also given Clarissa Vaughan her independence by having her trash the last dish she had prepared especially for Richard. Symbolically, this is the moment when she breaks the bond that linked her to Richard. This is also a meaningful gesture since it represents Clarissa Vaughan's freedom from the character Richard created for her, Mrs. Dalloway, the party hostess.

At this point, it is helpful to remember McFarlane's idea that novel and film can share the same story, but, due to the work of the filmmaker, can be distinguished by means of different plot strategies which may alter sequence and highlight different emphases. Other strategies used by Daldry will be discussed in the next subsection.

4.2.2 Creating mystery and increasing tension

This time, the filmmaker has added new elements to the scenes, thus incrementing his adaptation strategies.

There are two examples of operations within the Integrational functions more specifically in the subdivision *Indices Proper* which refers to notations of atmosphere. The first example of using cinematic techniques to create a different atmosphere in the film is when Daldry decides to change the focus of the conversation between Clarissa Vaughan and Richard Brown. In

Cunningham's novel there is a dialogue between Clarissa and Richard, which rotates around the idea of his failure, his frustration, the party and the evidences of his decaying mind. On the other hand, in the movie, Daldry presents a forewarning of Richard's suicide through Richard's words to Clarissa:

Would you be angry if I died? ... I think I'm only staying alive to satisfy you. Just wait till I die. Then you will have to think of yourself. (Hare, 2002, p. 31)

As the dialogue develops, POV shots¹¹ are taken in order to show the characters proximity and their reactions to each other's lines. This foreshadowing of Richard's death creates this "aura" of suspense. After having seen Woolf's suicide scene in the prologue, the audience wonders whether Richard, the possible next tragic figure in the story, is going to commit suicide or die as a consequence of his disease.

The second example is illustrated by Louis' visit to Clarissa. Clarissa Vaughan receives a visit from a significant figure from the past, Louis Waters, who is part of her story with Richard. In the book, he comes to Clarissa's apartment by chance. He is described as a very sensitive man, who cries easily and is, seemingly, always on the verge of a crisis. He is planning to move back to New York, and through his conversation with Clarissa and his inability to control his tears, it becomes clear that even though he has a new boyfriend, he is not happy with the outcomes of his life.

¹¹ A POV (point-of-view) shot is a short scene in a film that shows what a character is looking at. It is usually established by being positioned between a shot of a character looking at something, and a shot showing the character's reaction. Sometimes it is taken over the shoulder of the character, who remains visible on the screen. Sometimes a POV shot is "shared" ("dual" or "triple"). Hayward (1996)

He can't tell why he is crying. He's back in New York. He seems to be crying over this odd garden, Richard's illness (why was Louis spared?). This room with Clarissa in it, everything. He seems to be crying over a Hunter who only resembles the actual one. (Cunningham, 2002, p.135)

Cunningham made his Louis go through a crisis, possibly as a consequence of being hypersensitive and having concluded that he misses true love, a solid relationship in his life. Daldry's Louis, on the other hand, is delicate, but not hypersensitive. He is confused by Clarissa's emotional reaction to the mentioning of Wellfleet, the place where the three of them spent a Summer, many years before and where she and Richard had a brief affair. Throughout the dialogue, there is a series of shot-reverse shot and close-ups of Louis' and Clarissa's expressions, emphasizing their reactions to each other's words and culminating at Clarissa's crisis. Through this crisis, Daldry emphasizes the idea of a presentiment, another foreshadowing of Richard's death. In this scene Daldry changes the emphasis on Louis' character and his apparent fragility in order to focus more on Clarissa and link the crisis to a presentiment.

This second crucial change performed by Daldry - having Clarissa burst into tears because of the feeling of an imminent death, a presentiment - , is an extension of the first one. This is done in order to keep the aura of mystery and impending tragedy, as Clarissa's presentiment seems to announce. The psychological aspects of Clarissa and Louis are adapted to serve the moviemaker's purposes, that is, to raise the tension and make the audience wonder who the next tragic figure is. Nevertheless, the cardinal functions were preserved by using the crisis element and the dialogue between these two characters.

Another example of *Indices proper* can be found in the use of cinematic techniques to adapt some of the crucial scenes involving Laura Brown. Daldry creates an atmosphere of mystery and imminent death in his adaptation of Laura Brown's trip to the hotel. In this long sequence, the filmmaker establishes a connection with the character Mrs. Woolf. After receiving Kitty's visit, Laura Brown feels she can no longer stand the constraints of her domestic life and feels compelled to leave the house.

In Cunningham's book Laura Brown checks into a hotel room to read. She feels relieved to be out of the constraints of her house and the presence of her son. She lies down and begins to read *Mrs. Dalloway*. Cunningham creates an atmosphere of detachment. This is a foreshadowing of Laura's later separation from her family. The excerpt she reads from *Mrs. Dalloway* emphasizes the idea of separation and creates a morbid feeling. It describes Clarissa Dalloway's epiphany of her condition as a mortal being. The lines Laura Brown reads are from the funeral song, from *Shakespeare Cymbeline*, also present in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun, or the furious winter's rages" (qtd. in Young, 2003, p. 51)¹². These words awake in Laura her own epiphany – death is a possible escape.

Cunningham creates this "window" on what Laura Brown is reading to enable the reader to share her experience, her epiphany as it takes place.

It is possible to die. Laura thinks, suddenly, of how she – how anyone – can make a choice like that. ... She could decide to die. It is an abstract, shimmering notion, not particularly morbid. ... It could, she thinks, be deeply comforting; it might feel so free: to simply go away. ... She strokes her belly. I would never. She says the words out loud in the clean, silent room: "I would never". (Cunningham, 2002, p. 48)

¹² These lines are originally from a funeral song in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Act IV, scene 2.

The idea of suicide, of death as a possible escape is present. However, she only considers it under the powerful influence of the words she read in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Nevertheless, Laura Brown does not choose death. She chooses life by leaving behind the suffocating constraints of her marriage and her life as a housewife. As a character that was once created by Woolf, Mrs. Brown acts, suffers, laughs and makes decisions through the words of her creator.

Daldry, however, expands this moment into something much more dramatic and maintains this “aura” of suspense through Laura Brown’s trip to the hotel.

First, Daldry establishes a connection between Woolf’s flirtations with death through the dead bird scene. The death element is again present through the dying bird found by the children. After being left alone with the dead bird in the garden, Mrs. Woolf spreads yellow roses on its death bed as the soundtrack plays in the background. The camera slowly approaches Mrs. Woolf as she lies down, facing the dead bird. There is a close-up of her face, trying to reproduce the point of view of the bird. Here, Daldry applies the “shot-reverse shot”¹³ technique which establishes a connection between Mrs. Woolf and the bird, creating the idea of communication between them by showing first Mrs. Woolf from what seems to be the bird’s point of view, and then, by showing a close-up of the bird, which seems to reproduce Mrs. Woolf’s point of view.

¹³ A shot-reverse shot (or shot/countershot) is a film technique wherein one character is shown looking (often off-screen) at another character, and then the other character is shown looking "back" at the first character. Since the characters are shown facing in opposite directions, the viewer subconsciously assumes that they are looking at each other. Hayward (1996)



The idea of “flirting” with death is present again, keeping the atmosphere of suspense. The connection with Laura Brown’s flirtation with death is established through this scene with Mrs. Woolf lying down, staring at the dead bird. There is a cut and there is a shot of Laura Brown lying in her bed, staring at something off-screen. In the book, a bird-sized Mrs. Woolf wants to lie in the bird’s deathbed.

Daldry has adapted the scene of the dead bird to his film by making his Mrs. Woolf literally lie down in the thrust’s deathbed. The filmmaker’s strategy is

more complex because he creates a connection with Laura Brown's imagined suicidal attempt. While in Cunningham's book the idea of death was only briefly thought of, in the movie it was expanded into a much more dramatic scene. This is what characterizes the filmmaker's artistic touch.

As Mrs. Woolf lies down staring at the bird, Laura Brown plans to go out after baking another cake and empties the contents of the bathroom medicine cabinet into her bag. This idea is only suggested in Cunningham's book at the end of the last Mrs. Brown section, after she has returned from the hotel and celebrated her husband's birthday. This scene in Daldry's movie, however, goes much farther and clearly suggests that she is seriously considering suicide.

After baking the best cake she could, she cleans the kitchen, leaving it in an orderly manner, as expected from a housewife. As the camera moves from the cake to Laura and, then, to show the whole kitchen, neatly arranged, it suggests Laura's feeling that she has performed her duty as a wife. Now, she must die.

As Laura talks to her son, upon entering the car, there is a close-up of the bag being thrown onto the back seat with the noise of the medicine bottles being heard, reminding one of the danger of her intentions. The music playing in the background adds to the feeling of an approaching threat. After she says goodbye to Richie, she turns her back to him and starts crying, walking towards the car. She enters the car and departs, leaving behind her screaming son. The attitude of the boy also suggests he fears being separated from his mother, as if he could feel what her intentions are. As she drives, the camera focuses on her worried expression and the first feeling is that she could end up in a car accident. There are close-ups from Laura to Richie, back and forth, five to six

times. She drives away from him as he tries to build a house with his wooden blocks. He finishes building his house, puts a car identical to his mother's in the garage, and, in an emblematic gesture destroys it in a foreshadowing of what is going to happen to his home.

The sequence is carefully built in order to keep the suspense concerning Laura's decision. None of this is present in the book, since it simply describes Laura leaving Richard at a neighbor's house, looking for a peaceful place to read her book.

As Laura enters the hotel, there is again a close-up of her bag. The atmosphere of suspense is maintained through the music track and Laura's determined expression. After being left alone in the room, Laura sits on the bed, takes all the medicine bottles out of her bag and lines them up beside her.

As she looks up, there is a close-up of the cake in her kitchen. Then, she takes the book, *Mrs. Dalloway*, from her bag and starts reading. The passage is narrated by Mrs. Woolf in voice-over. As Mrs. Woolf's voice is heard, there is a transition from Laura to the book's character, Virginia, who is in her living room.

The camera makes a movement called traveling in which the actress remains static while the camera moves around her. This movement is another element of connection between Mrs. Woolf and Laura Brown in this sequence. As Laura reads, the camera moves from left to right. When the camera shows Mrs. Woolf in her living room, the camera performs the same movement, this time, from right to left. By applying the 180° rule¹⁴, Daldry maintains the idea of

¹⁴ The 180° rule: a basic film editing guideline that states that two characters (or other elements) in the same scene should always have the same left/right relationship to each other. The rule gets its name from the 180° arc that extends from a point on the other side of Alice from Bob, to a point on the other side of Bob from Alice, within which Alice and Bob will always have the same left/right orientation. Hayward (1996)

a dialogue, a connection between the two women. There is a close-up of Mrs. Woolf, then another of Laura. As Mrs. Woolf repeats the sentence “it is possible to die”, Laura reacts as if Mrs. Woolf herself were saying that line to her, at that very moment. That is how time and place fuse: even though the character Mrs. Woolf is in the 1920’s England, her words said through the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* influence the character Laura Brown, who lives in the US, in the 1950’s. The close-ups of these women’s faces, the camera movements and the voice-over, with Mrs. Woolf’s words, managed to create the idea that Laura is acting simultaneously, upon Mrs. Woolf’s command. This is what we call in this work an example of the strategies of an adaptation proper, the art of the filmmaker.

In Cunningham’s book, it is not possible to establish such a connection between these two characters at this specific moment of the story. First, after the scene in the garden with the dead bird, Mrs. Woolf has a pleasant afternoon, drinking tea with her sister. After her sister’s departure, she goes to the train station, to escape to London.

What Cunningham managed to do in his narrative, Daldry also did, by linking the characters through the use of different cinematic techniques, including the L-cut¹⁵, a technique which consists of shifting scenes while the audio remains the same. In this case, as mentioned above, Mrs. Woolf’s voice-over, narrating an excerpt from *Mrs. Dalloway* while Laura Brown reads it, emphasizes the idea of a link between the two characters. This link, established by the filmmaker, is directly connected with the feelings of the characters and

¹⁵ L-cut, also known as a split edit, is a transition from one shot to another, where the picture transition does not occur coincidentally with the audio transition. This is often done to enhance the aesthetics or flow of the film. Hayward (1996)

the atmosphere of suspense, serving Daldry's purposes of interweaving these two stories at this moment.

Still in the same sequence, Mrs. Woolf, the character, is in her living room in Richmond. Her sister, Vanessa, realizes that Mrs. Woolf is not paying attention to the conversation the family is having. Vanessa manages to get her attention, though. There is a cut to show Laura Brown closing her book and getting the bottles of pills from the nightstand. There is another cut to show Mrs. Woolf in her living room with her family and as her niece, Angelica asks her "What were you thinking about?", there is a cut to show Laura Brown, lying on the bed, looking at the bottles of pills.

The hotel room is filled with water that comes from under the bed. The water is full of weeds, similar to river water. Laura Brown is covered in this water. In the scene, she drowns.



However, there is a new cut, to show Mrs. Woolf answering Angelica's question: "I was going to kill my heroine. But I've changed my mind." As Mrs. Woolf pronounces this sentence, there is a cut and the camera shows Laura Brown, as if waking up from a nightmare. She is completely dry and says out loud: "I can't". As she says that, she strokes her belly and cries. It becomes clear that the previous scene was a metaphor for her death.

Interestingly, Daldry chose the water metaphor to simulate Laura Brown's death. The river water that invades the hotel room, bringing the idea of death, is directly linked to Woolf's and Cunningham's metaphors of water—plunging, diving, swimming—and to the idea, from the prologue, that Woolf drowned in a river. This blending of fact, fiction, and different narratives shows Daldry's art. Through the music and the camera shots, Daldry manages to tell, through images, the story that Woolf and Cunningham have told through words.

In the novel, Laura checks into a hotel in order to have privacy. She scans the turquoise walls before lying down on the bed to read *Mrs. Dalloway*. As she reads the section about the immortality of the soul, Laura starts to think about suicide and the possibility of death. She feels that she may have the capacity to kill herself and understands why people choose to kill themselves in the sterile environments of hotel rooms. The idea of breaking up with the constraints of her life seems like a comforting and beautiful prospect. Laura quickly realizes she could never go through with it – because of Dan, Richie, and her unborn child, but she feels comforted, in a morbid way, to think that she could use suicide as a possible escape.

Through the operations of the adaptation proper performed by Daldry, as seen above, it is possible to visualize the shaping of a completely new work. We have approached the filmmaker changes in order to confer the story a more introspective tone. Also, we have observed the intention of the moviemaker to build a suspense-like atmosphere in the movie, concerning the characters flirtation with death.

4.2.3 Voice-over and dialogues

In order to comply with the specificities of the medium, Daldry had to transform many of the interior monologues into speeches. This considerably changes certain aspects of Cunningham's work and reshapes it into his own. As an example, here is a passage from Cunningham's book in which Mrs. Woolf flees from the house in order to secretly go to London.

Throughout the way to the train station Mrs. Woolf goes through a series of sensations such as the smells, colors and lights, the feeling of death, coming from the wind chill and the memory of the dead bird, her considerations about the meaning of life and death, her view of what Vanessa has made of her life, the hopes for an invigorating walk through London streets. She concludes that by staying in Richmond she is gently dying on a bed of roses, just like the bird. The dialogue that takes place is very simple, for all the emotional charge and the philosophical considerations are taking place inside Mrs. Woolf's mind.

It is time for us to move back to London. Don't you think?
 I'm not at all sure, he answers.
 I've been better for a long while now. We can't haunt the suburbs forever, can we?
 Let's discuss it over dinner, shall we?
 All right, then.
 Do you want so much to live in London? He asks

I do, she says. I wish it were otherwise. I wish I were happy with the quiet life.

As I do.

Come along, she says. (Cunningham, 2002, p. 172)

In the movie, all the despair, the bitterness, and the resentment for living in a place she does not tolerate any longer are voiced in the inflamed argument Mrs. Woolf and Leonard have at the train station.

I have endured this custody. I have endured this imprisonment. I am attended by doctors. Everywhere I am attended by doctors who inform me of my own interest.

...

[shouting] You have a history! You have a history of confinement. We brought you here because of your history of fits, moods, blackouts, hearing voices. We brought you here to save you from the irrevocable damage you intended upon yourself! You've tried to kill yourself twice!

...

You call me ungrateful? My life has been stolen from me. I am living in a town I have no wish to live in. I'm living a life I have no wish to live. How did this happen?

...

If there is a choice between Richmond and death, I choose death".

(Hare, 2002, p. 91-5)

Leonard eventually agrees to move back to London. Nevertheless deeply rooted feelings have been outspoken, changing the quality of the relationship the Woolfs had kept up to that moment. The filmmaker has added the speeches to the scenes, creating a more dramatic atmosphere, which corroborates his idea of suspense.

The following example, which takes place in the very last scenes, shows Daldry's use of the voice-over technique. In these specific scenes, the voice-over, together with the L-cut shots, are used to make the transition from one shot to another, where the picture transition does not occur coincidentally with

the audio transition. This is often done to enhance the aesthetics or flow of the film.

In the final lines, as Clarissa turns off the lights, finally putting an end to this day and to the story, Mrs. Woolf speaks her final lines in voice-over. These final words are spoken over the soundtrack as the scenes shift from old Laura Brown to Clarissa Vaughan and finally, back to the scene in the river, from the prologue. These lines are not present in *Mrs. Dalloway* or Cunningham's *The Hours*, they were written by David Hare, the screenwriter. However, taking into regard that these final scenes seem to be the continuation of the prologue in which Mrs. Woolf spoke the lines of Virginia Woolf's real suicide note, they gain a tone that makes them sound as written by Woolf herself.

Hare's final speech in Mrs. Woolf's voice, as a continuation of Woolf's real letter to Leonard, attempts to emphasize the immortal character of fiction. Woolf's words resound throughout time. Her story in *Mrs. Dalloway*, as well as other stories and essays written by her, even her own personal story, will be rewritten, retold by Cunningham, by Daldry and by many other authors.

This ending created by Daldry and Hare mixes fact and fiction as much as Cunningham's work does. The use Daldry has made of the cinematic techniques at the very end of the movie has contributed greatly to corroborate the idea of survival, emphasized in the book.

Cunningham and Daldry have demonstrated that by adapting a fictional work, even transforming it in a way that it becomes their own, they end up granting it new life, bringing back the ideas, concepts and values this fictional work arose.

Final Considerations

Final considerations on this study revert back to the image of Genette's *Palimpsest*. A palimpsest is a manuscript page, normally a parchment manuscript that has been written on, scraped off, and used again. The text that was written first is scraped off and another text is written over it. However, the first text is not completely erased, and can still be seen. This image is used by Gérard Genette in his book, in which he affirms that any writing is a rewriting; any literature is always in the second degree.

This emblematic image reminds us that one text can never take the place of another, never erase it completely. This image is the representation of the relationships among texts: their textual transcendence. Texts create and transform other texts and are also transformed by them. This intricate network has been the object of study of several scholars and its mechanism continues to intrigue theoreticians, critics, writers, filmmakers and artists of all kinds.

The discussion of Michael Cunningham's and Stephen Daldry's works could not be approached without reverting to the work and life of the English writer Virginia Woolf.

The film adaptation created by Stephen Daldry is another complete piece of work in itself; nevertheless, it corroborates the notion that the connections among the texts cannot be ignored. The work of adaptation carried out by Daldry highlights Cunningham's expansion of Woolf's work, but, beyond that, it transforms the novel by adapting it to a different medium. The process of adaptation and its complex operations are another layer of this palimpsest. Daldry in his skillful use of cinematic techniques bends the boundaries

separating fact, fiction and media by translating the deep reflections engraved in words into images.

Daldry's work manages to transfer most of the cardinal functions to film, which classifies his movie as a "faithful" adaptation. The very close relationship established with Cunningham's novel begins with the title they share but continues with other strategies. Through the use of the same characters and plot line, together with the editing and treatment of time and space, the filmmaker translates the essence of Cunningham's work; especially, in the portrait of the three main characters which have their issues approached with the same emphasis as in the book. The melancholy in the characters' expressions, gestures and voices are a concretization of Woolf's and Cunningham's projects to elicit the mysteries hidden in the depths of the human soul.

The operations on the hypotexts by both novelist and filmmaker, illustrate Gérard Genette's statement that "the object of poetics is not the literary text¹⁶ but its textual transcendence; its textual links with other texts" (Prince, 1997, p. 9). Any exploration of the specific manifestation of this interconnection, is interested in how one text creates or transforms another text, or how art creates art. The more the texts are read, the more echoes, parallels and points of comparison are identified among them.

Cunningham and Daldry have both updated Woolf's work by transforming it according to the context in which each work was produced and according to the specificities of the media in which they were produced. Both of them explored constraints of traditional gender roles by placing Mrs. Dalloway into the

¹⁶ "Text" is here again used in the sense proposed by Barthes, as a "methodological field of energy, an ongoing production absorbing writer and reader together". Hayward (1996)

transgressing ways of Greenwich Village at the end of the 20th century New York, and by creating an atmosphere of depression in the women for their inadequacy before the roles imposed by society. In doing so, they contributed to the revelation that even after so many years, society tends to disregard subjectivities. Daldry adds to the depiction of this serious situation by changing the emphasis on events and characters in order to create a suspense-like atmosphere, foreshadowing the tragic escapes of Mrs. Woolf and Richard Brown, due to their lack of choice.

Whether art imitates life or life imitates art, the deep issues of the human soul cross the boundaries of time, space and language, serving as fertile soil for the creativity of the ones who dare attempt to unravel them.

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