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**MRS. DALLOWAY IN THE BOOK AND THE FILM: THE
CONSEQUENCES OF AN ADAPTATION**

**CAMPINA GRANDE – PB
DEZEMBRO 2012**

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Monografia Apresentado à disciplina Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso como requisito para conclusão de curso de licenciatura em letras na Universidade Estadual da Paraíba na área de Letras Inglês sob a orientação da professora Ms. Raghuram Sasikala.

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RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo comparar as diferentes apresentações da personagem Clarissa Dalloway no romance *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) de Virginia Woolf e no filme de 1997 dirigido por Marleen Gorris. A ação do livro limita-se a um dia na vida da protagonista, quando ela relembra seu passado e reavalia as decisões tomadas na época. Woolf utiliza a técnica de fluxo-de-consciência para comunicar os pensamentos e as memórias da personagem. No filme, a diretora utiliza flashbacks para fazer isto. As exigências da mídia cinematográfica obrigaram a diretora a descartar alguns detalhes e enfatizar outros. Assim sendo, a Clarissa Dalloway do livro acaba se tornando uma personagem muito mais rica do que a personagem do filme. A crítica feminista de Wollstonecraft, Beauvoir, Heilbrun e da própria Virginia Woolf foi utilizada como base para explicar a situação das mulheres como Clarissa Dalloway no início do século vinte.

Palavras Chaves: comparação, adaptação, fluxo-de-consciência, situação das mulheres

ABSTRACT:

This work attempts to compare the presentation of Clarissa Dalloway in Virginia Woolf's novel , *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and in the film version of 1997 directed by Marleen Gorris. The action in the book is confined to one day in the life of the protagonist, when she rethinks her past and the choices she has made. Woolf uses the stream-of-consciousness technique to convey the character's thoughts and memories. In the film, the director uses flashbacks in order to do this. The demands of the cinematic medium have obliged the director to discard certain details and focus on some others. Therefore, Mrs Dalloway in the book, comes across as a much richer character than Mrs Dalloway in the film. The feminist criticism of Wollstonecraft, Beauvoir, Heilbrun and Virginia Woolf herself has served as the basis for explaining the situation of women like Clarissa Dalloway in the early twentieth century.

Key words : comparison, adaptation, stream-of-consciousness, situation of women

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	8
2. WOMEN IN TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLAND	
2.1 EDUCATION.....	10
2.2 MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY.....	12
2.3 MARRIAGE AND LITERATURE.....	15
3. FROM THE BOOK TO THE SCREEN	18
4. CONCLUSION.....	34
5. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES.....	36
6. ANNEXES.....	38

1. INTRODUCTION

The period of transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a time of significant changes with regard to the role of women in society. England moved forward from the repression of the Victorian Age. Even in the early twentieth century women were considered merely reproductive beings, as we can see in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, published in 1905 under the heading of *National Duties*: “The unproductive man, as well as the unproductive woman, does not have a place in a healthful community ,[...] infinitely happy is the woman who is born to give the light to many beautiful children” .(1956, p.258). Fortunately, these attitudes gradually began to change.

In spite of all the economic and social changes that occurred in the world, the role of woman, although a little more free, was still tied to man’s life. Although now women could work, write and even support a family alone, a very common occurrence at the end of World War I, marriage was still highly valued. This was in spite of the fact that, in twentieth century England, “independent” women became more and more present in the English routine. But the majority of such women, had acquired such “freedom” against their will, due to the death of husbands or parents in the war, being as a result forced to work to support themselves and their children properly. Marriage was still very desirable for women as a means of acquiring status, as we can observe in the words of Beauvoir:

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married, or have been, or plan to or suffer from not being.[...] for both parties marriage is at the same time a burden and a benefit; but there is no symmetry in the situations of the two sexes; for girls marriage is the only means of integration in the community.(1993, pp.447-449)

Although economic evolution had improved the condition of women with relation to marriage, they often lived in their husbands’ shadow without an identity of their own.

It was in this context of transformations that Virginia Woolf, British writer of the twentieth century, located her character Clarissa Dalloway in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*

(1925). In this work, Woolf gives us a view of the life of upper class British wives. Clarissa Dalloway is the wife of Richard Dalloway, and the mother of Elizabeth. Throughout the novel Clarissa is presented to the readers as a woman who does not have the opportunity to express her own feelings and opinions and who has no special talents. Having fulfilled her role as mother, she now keeps herself busy with the organization of sophisticated parties, for her friends and acquaintances. Mrs. Dalloway does not live her own life, living in the shadow of her husband, a very common situation among married women of the time.

This novel was adapted for the screen by Marleen Gorris in 1997. All directors, when working with the adaptation of a novel, especially when the work is by a writer as famous as Virginia Woolf, have to be specially careful in trying to convey the author's message. This is because a literary text may be interpreted in many ways. That is why the term "adaptation" worries theoreticians so much; "There are many kinds of relationships between film and literature, but 'adaptation' is the one that really preoccupies the theorists." (McFarlane, 2007, p.15). Therefore, for an adaptation to be successful, many cinematic techniques, such as mise-in-scène, editing, the use of flashbacks and sound, must be utilized. Cinema possesses its own language with its codes and sub codes that influence a production. It is using this language that this work intends to analyze the similarities and divergences between the presentation of the character Clarissa Dalloway in Virginia Woolf's novel, and in the screen adaptation by Marleen Gorris, pointing out which aspects have been emphasized or reduced during the process of adaptation of this character to the screen. An attempt has been made to show how the choices made by Gorris to adapt this character to the screen could influence the viewer's reaction to and interpretation of Clarissa Dalloway.

2. WOMEN IN TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLAND

2.1 EDUCATION

With regard to education, the most obvious change in the twentieth century was the fact that women were now allowed to enroll in Universities, an option which had not been available to them previously. Before this time, women only had access to a tutorial education, and this type of education was not available to all social classes. Women belonging to poor households received an education confined to the domestic arts. Upper class women were educated at home, but the kind of education they received did not help them to develop intellectually or prepare them for any profession. They were given a superficial education focusing on music, painting, and needlework. The aim was to teach them to please and attract men, so that they could marry well. In this connection, Mary Wollstonecraft states that she has:

[...] a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women [...] are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes [...] The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state[...] I attribute [this] to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers. (1988,p.7)

Wollstonecraft points out that this deficient education has left women in “a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone.” (Ibid, p.9)

This patriarchal and prejudiced vision existed during many centuries, as we can see from Alchin’s observations about Elizabethan women: “The Elizabethan woman would have to learn how to govern a house and to become skillful in all the house work [...] All Elizabethan women would have to be married and to be dependent on their masculine relatives during all their lives.” (ALCHIN, 2010) In *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf speaks of the situation of middle class English girls in the sixteenth century:

She was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers.(1981, p.47)

The twentieth century, with all its transformations, brought a new range of possibilities for the feminine contingent, but these rights was not granted spontaneously. It was the result of years of struggle on the part of feminist groups who fought for women's rights, groups such as The Langham Place Group, which was founded in the middle of the nineteenth century. These groups defended the idea that a superior education (and not the tutorial education that women used to receive) was the key through which women could someday have the possibility to achieve the same social and economic role as men. Their idea is an echo of Mary Wollstonecraft's words: "To prevent any misconstruction, I must add, that I do not believe that a private education can work the wonders which some sanguine writers have attributed to it. Men and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in." (p.21, 1988) In *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf points out that though women belonged to the same social class as the male members of the family, they were unprepared in the fields of economics, politics and international relations, because of their lack of a formal education.

Initially, many people defended the idea of women receiving a superior education because they believed that this would make them better wives, mothers and teachers. Only a small part of society perceived that a superior education could modify women's lives and provide them with the same rights as men. Many women felt indignant and frustrated by the fact that they had been denied the right to a superior education, as in the case of the writer Virginia Woolf. Those who had had the chance to attend courses at a university suffered in the beginning, due to the fact that they did not receive a degree. Without one, they were deprived of certain privileges such as, the right to vote, egalitarian status, and so on, as we can see in Claire Jones' article, "*Women's access to higher education: An overview (1860-1948)*" in the *Herstoria Magazine*:

But studying at a woman's college at Cambridge or Oxford, and passing the examinations, did not mean that women received degrees. [...] Women were not awarded degrees on an equal basis to men at Cambridge until 1948, partly because if women had degrees they would also have the privileges that came with them, i.e. equal

status, voting rights and a share in the governance of the institution.(JONES, 2012, retrieved July 26, 2012 from <http://herstoria.com/?p.535>)

The key-expression that weakened the situation of educated women was lack of freedom, because this privilege was available only to the male sex, making a larger experience of life available to them. This would give a better support to their education, differently from women, who lived in an isolated dome due to centuries of patriarchal domination.

2.2 MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY

As mentioned previously, twentieth century women gained more space in the completely patriarchal society in which they lived. The industrial Revolution and the First World War obliged women to contribute economically to society. Many women suddenly became the pillars of their families with the death or incapacitation of their husbands in World War I. But, in spite of all these changes, marriage was still desired by the majority of women: a married woman was more respected than a single one. Mary Wollstonecraft comments that women “spend many of the first years of their lives in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments [...] [due] to the desire of establishing themselves- the only way women can rise in the world, -by marriage. And this desire [makes] mere animals of them.” (1988, p.10) According to Virginia Woolf , in *Three Guineas* : “Marriage,[was] the one great profession open to our class since the dawn of time until the year 1919; marriage, the art of choosing the human being with whom to live successfully” (1966, p.6) .

It is true that many transformations had occurred, with reference to marriage, as a consequence of the many social and economic changes taking place in England. Now it was illegal to force women to marry men chosen by their parents. In earlier times, according to Virginia Woolf: “she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger” (1981,p.44). If she protested, she was likely to be punished: “She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father” (Ibid, p.47)

In the twentieth century, women also acquired the right to receive an inheritance, and, what was even more important, for the first time in history they had the right to guardianship of their children in the case of divorce, or the death of the husband. Marriage now was a free union of two independent people, as we can see in the words of Heilbrun: “The impeccable defenses of marriage have, for the most part, been breached. If not a union of equals, marriage has become at least a contract between two recognized parties acting on their own behalf.” (1990, p.120). In this context, Beauvoir says: “Economic evolution in woman’s situation is in process of upsetting the institution of marriage: it is becoming a union freely entered upon by the consent of two independent persons;[...]divorce is obtainable by the one or the other on the same conditions.” . (1993, p.447.)

Though women began to acquire a space in society through marriage, this space was always conditional to the wealth and status of their husbands. With marriage, the woman ended a stage of her life, broke with her past to enter a new stage, in this case, into the life and family of her husband:

In marrying, woman gets some share in the world as her own; [...] but she becomes his [husband’s] vassal. He is the economic head of the joint enterprise, and hence he represents it in the view of society. She takes his name, she belongs to his religion, his class, his circle, she joins his family, she becomes his ‘half’. [...] She breaks more or less decisively with her past, becoming attached to her husband’s universe. (BEAUVOIR , 1993 ,p.451)

Although women in the early twentieth century had the possibility of working, and were not obliged to get married, the professional options available were neither many nor income-producing nor pleasant. The options never existed at the higher levels, and the superior functions remained with the men. A single woman or widow who really wanted to work would find a vacancy in some factory, as housekeeper, as nurse, or could opt for celibacy, which, according to Beauvoir, was not an option well accepted by society: “Celibacy was not a good choice for a girl, because it would reduce her to the rank of” parasite and pariah” (1993 ,p.449).

In spite of the many changes in ideas and laws concerning marriage, it still continued with many patriarchal characteristics that demean women, as, for the great masculine majority of society, women only served to play three roles in marriage. They were to procreate, to satisfy their husbands sexually and to take care of the children and the house, whereas the husband only had the obligation of supporting them, in exchange for these favors; an unfair exchange. In marriage, according to Beauvoir, the active and passive roles were easily identified, because a woman is delivered in marriage, while the man takes her as wife. In this social context, the woman becomes practically a “vassal” of her husband, not having any autonomy: it is her destiny to become mother and housewife: “At the beginning of the marriage women try to think that they are extremely necessary to their husband and children, but in the end, they find themselves alone, and realize that they were not so necessary at all. Then they find nothing to do with or for themselves.” (BEAUVOIR, 1979, p. 479)

At the end of the nineteenth century, marriage was not just a possibility, but accepted as inevitable. In spite of all the changes that this century brought to society, a woman who came from a high class family would only please her family and feel safe by getting married. This was because, besides its connections with money and property, marriage was the only option for women who were not trained for any career. It is clear that some “happy” marriages existed. In such marriages, as can be observed in romances such as *Persuasion*, the woman often assumed a more active role than the traditionally accepted one, as we can observe below: “Only occasionally is there a glimpse of a marriage which seems to hold the promise of life. In these marriages [...], the woman is noted for being unusually competent, for sharing to a rare degree her husband’s life, decisions, and adventures, and for being openly admired by him.” (HEILBRUN, 1990, p.119)

The tyranny imposed by marriage was not a secret to any woman in the early twentieth century. Despite all these negative points marriage presented a very advantageous option to the young women of this period. A professional career was risky, and the options available were scarce and conditions of employment, unjust.

Social life was almost inexistent for married women, as they had to spend so much time taking care of their homes. The home began to reflect aspects of their personalities and individuality in the way they were decorated: “Their [women’s] homes reflect their own personality, “she is the one who has chosen, made, hunted out furnishings [...] they reflect her individuality while bearing public witness to her standard of living.” (BEAUVOIR, 1972, p.474). Summing up, even with all the changes occurring from the end of the Victorian Age to the beginning of the twentieth century, many difficulties led women to think of matrimony, because even with the possibility of working outside the home to take care of themselves, working conditions were completely inferior in relation to all the possibilities and opportunities given to men.

2.3 MARRIAGE AND LITERATURE

In literature, the presentation of “marriage” does not differ much from the earlier picture presented in this work, because in most of the literary works that talk about marriage we can often find a woman who is already married at the beginning of the novel and suffers due to her submission to this state, or someone who intends to get married. Marriage at the end of the novel implied a happy ending. In the nineteenth century, marriage was still regarded by most writers as an inevitable burden to both parties, especially women. According to Heilbrun, marriage could easily be compared to death, because once married, the individual would lose his or her individuality: “Marriage, like death, seemed a bourn from which no traveler returned, not, at least, as more than a ghost of his former self.[...] Marriage was not really presented, but was accepted, like death, as one of the unavoidable conditions of life.” (1990, pp.113-119)

One of the possible causes for marriage being portrayed so negatively in literature, according to Heilbrun, maybe because marriage is not explored in all its complexity. There are aspects that exist in this kind of union that people are not conscious of being part of their lives.

These details are often neglected in literature, making portrayals of marriage boring, and monotonous:

There is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit that they know, that which they feel to be a part of life and that which they allow to enter into literature. It is my contention that marriage was not allowed to enter into literature, except as a condition universally acknowledged, but either unobserved, or glimpsed so occasionally that little was discovered beyond casual misery or boredom or both..(HEILBRUN 1990,p.114)

In the literary landscape of nineteenth century England marriage was still considered something viable, but finding a marriage in this era that could be considered "alive" was something very difficult, if not impossible; because there usually there was no interaction between husband and wife, considering the hierarchy of power where men would always play the active role and women the passive one. This resulted in a relationship where one rules and the other obeys without the right to complain. In the rare cases of successful marriages, as found in the works of Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf, women had an unusual responsibility for the social aspect, sharing decisions and adventures, and being, therefore, openly admired by their husbands, because once these women conquered this space in their marriage, they would probably become a model to be followed or to be avoided by other women.

In the twentieth century, most literary critics were male, and the authors attributed their own beliefs about the immutability and inevitability of the patriarchal structure in which marriage was the cornerstone, thus highlighting the issue, because "marriage" had been unquestioned for so long. In spite of this, for the authors of this century, marriage was losing its status of inevitability, because it was no longer necessary to be married to have children or to have sex. For many modern writers, marriage now served more for the discovery of identity: "Perhaps coincidentally, marriage ceases to be an absolute economic necessity at the same time that it ceases to be taken as an inevitable stage in human development, like death." (HEILBRUN,1990, p.121). According to Heilbrun, another factor contributing to the decline of marriage not only in society, but also in literature, was the lack of freedom for women to talk about their sexual experiences, for this subject was still taboo among couples: "There can be no question that marriage would have been a different institution had women been free to talk

openly about their sexual experiences, and had their sense of their own sexuality been revealed.”
(Ibid, 1990, p.12,)

Marriage as an institution became quite a controversial subject and much talked about among the authors of the twentieth century, where we can find a lot of differing opinions about it. For the novelist D.H. Lawrence’s model of marriage, for example, sex and companionship never would work together. Marriage was a strictly carnal institution., But for people like Martin Green and other authors of the twentieth century, marriage would only be successful with the merger of these two things, sex and companionship, because the presence of only one or the other would not be able to sustain the marriage, condemning not only the relationship but also women, putting them in a situation of total exclusion and indifference or animalization: “Other modern authors, however came to see that the lack of friendship in marriage doomed not only marriage but women.” (HEILBRUN,1990,p.123). As for Auden, in a healthy marriage both physical desire as well as values and mutual interests should be present, where the dominant feeling would be mutual respect between equals.

Lewis felt that a man and a woman would be too different to have something in common that could turn them into friends because of the completely different life experiences society provided for each, an affirmation that can be simply explained by observing the rule of society at that time, where men were born to study, work and be heads of families, and women were born to be good wives and mothers : “ where men are educated and women not, where one sex works and the other is idle, or where they do totally different work, they will usually have nothing to be friends about.”(HEILBRUN , 1991, p.125). Woolf argued that marriage was formed more by friendship than by passion, being one of the few women in the modern period to try to change the conventional view of marriage. Unlike George Eliot, Virginia Woolf was able to convey in fiction what she lived in her own marriage, the need for individuality:

They [Leonard and Virginia Woolf] never experienced jealousy of another person or of a talent unshared. She deeply respected his judgment on what meant most to her, her writing; and he, lacking the flight of searing imagination and recognizing that she possessed it, shielded her, watched her fluctuating health, nurtured her genius, and with

instinctive understanding left her alone in a room of her own, while he remained always available in the common room between them.. (HEILBRUN, 1990,p.130)

Virginia Woolf was fortunate enough to find a nurturing companion in Leonard Woolf, just as George Eliot had, in George Henry Lewes.

3 FROM THE BOOK TO THE SCREEN: THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ADAPTATION

An adaptation from a novel to the screen must be made with great care, in view of the fact that in an adaptation, the Director possesses total freedom and control over the image that he /she intends to convey to the spectators. It is true that an adaptation cannot diverge completely from the original work, having to conserve its essence and the original characters. However, the manner in which the characters are presented in a film can vary, this being one of the most risky features of an adaptation, as it is capable of completely changing the way a character is perceived by the audience. It is from this perspective that this work intends to analyze the film based on Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, examining the way in which the protagonist, Clarissa Dalloway, and her loss of individuality, are presented in the adaptation for the cinema and at which points this reconstruction differs from the original work. As is to be expected in any adaptation, many trifling details have been omitted. How Clarissa Dalloway sees herself, and

how others see her, in the book and in the film, has been examined in this work in order to see what impression someone who has never read the novel will have of her character.

Marleen Gorris, the director of the film *Mrs Dalloway*, faced an unusual challenge in adapting Woolf's novel, as there is little action in the book, which deals with one day (June 20th, 1923), in the life of the central character. Miller describes this single day in the following way "[...]the day of *Mrs Dalloway* may be described as a general day of recollection. The revivification of the past performed by the characters becomes in its turn another past revived, brought back from the dead, by the narrator." (1988, p.90). The book focuses on the contrast between what Woolf called "time-on-the-clock" and "time-in-the-mind". We follow the movements of the principal characters and their thoughts, reflecting the weight of the past on the present. Miller comments that for the characters in the novel, "The present... is the perpetual repetition of the past.[...] the weight of all the past moments presses just beneath the surface of the present, ready in an instant to flow into consciousness, overwhelming it with the immediate presence of the past." (1988, p.86)

From Virginia Woolf's viewpoint, external events were less important than the consciousness of the characters, their thoughts and impressions. In the essay "Modern Fiction" Woolf comments:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions [...] From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; [...]so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose[...]there would be no plot [...] in the accepted style [...] Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the novelist's task to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit? (WOOLF, 1962, p.189)

This quotation makes it clear that Gorris's task in adapting the book for the cinema was not an easy one. As Hermione Lee points out, "...Clarissa does not...simply walk through Green Park and up Bond Street and back again during the first thirty pages of the novel. She perceives, thinks, remembers and generalizes, and in doing so, she suffuses her present experience with the feelings and experiences of thirty years ago."(1988, p.21) Gorris makes constant use of

flashbacks in order to portray on film, the events recapitulated in the minds of the central characters.

In the film, Clarissa Dalloway is always dressed in white in her youth. This corresponds to the book, where the colour white is mentioned several times in connection with her clothes. As a middle-aged woman, Mrs Dalloway in the film uses pale colours, which may reflect her conventional personality. She is a woman who observes the rules of society as a wife and mother. Another interpretation is that her personality is colourless and that as a woman, her life has no significance. This was true of many women of the time, as Beauvoir and Heilbrun have pointed out.

The film opens with a war-time scene in Italy, showing Septimus Smith's friend, Evans, being blown to pieces.. This is totally different from the opening scene of the novel, which begins: "Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." (WOOLF, 1925, p.3), a sentence, which, according to Lee, "looks deceptively like the start of a conventional story"(1988, p.21) . Maria DiBattista comments that "The novel begins with a gaiety and an inconsequence that both belie and confirm the "momentousness" of the events that follow". (1988, p.39)

The focus in the opening page of the novel is on beauty and femininity and not on the masculine sphere of war. The book therefore begins with an implicit reference to Mrs Dalloway's party, with which it ends. Virginia Woolf clarified the connection between Mrs Dalloway and Septimus Smith when she said about this novel: "I adumbrate here a study of insanity and suicide, the world seen by the sane and insane side by side." (WOOLF, apud RIGNEY, 1980, p.41). Edwards, in an essay entitled "War and Roses" comments that "the politics of *Mrs Dalloway* are such that life is possible only when roses, parties and joy triumph over war, authority and death." (1988, p.162).

The second scene of the film presents the middle-aged Mrs Dalloway coming down a staircase, emphasizing her isolation. The novel does not mention this. Mrs Dalloway's thoughts are voiced in the film: "Those ruffians, the Gods, shan't have it all their own way[...] the Gods , who never lost a chance of hurting, thwarting and spoiling human lives [...] there [are] no Gods." (WOOLF, pp.117-118). These words occur much later in the book, and form part of

Peter Walsh's recollections of the younger Clarissa. Quoted out of context in the film, they reflect Clarissa's skepticism. In the book, the reader sees that this attitude is a result of seeing her sister die a horrible death, killed by a falling tree. The opening of the novel makes no direct mention of the party. In the film, Mrs Dalloway tells her maid Lucy "What a day for my Party!" This creates an impression of Clarissa as a frivolous and self-centred society lady.

The first flashback of the film follows. Clarissa has always thought "That it was very, very dangerous to live even one day." The fine day makes Mrs Dalloway (both in the book and the film) exclaim "What a lark! What a plunge!" (WOOLF, p,3). Miller says that this phrase:

contains in miniature the two contrary movements of the novel. If the fall into death is one pole of the novel, fulfilled in Septimus Smith's suicidal plunge, the other pole is the rising motion of "building it up", of constructive action in the moment, fulfilled in Clarissa Dalloway's party. (1988, p.85)

Then the film flashes back to her youth at the family home in Bourton, which, according to Elizabeth Abel is "to Clarissa a pastoral female world..." (1988, p.108). The older and younger Clarissa both share the feeling "that something awful was about to happen"(Ibid) in spite of the calm day. Clarissa recalls her relationship with Peter Walsh.

On her way to buy flowers, Clarissa meets Hugh Whitbread. Comparing the film and the book we can perceive that Clarissa in the film is much more shallow than Clarissa in the novel. In the book, Clarissa not only thinks about her love of London, but also about the destruction of war and the deaths of young men. In the film, it is Hugh who mentions the war, while Clarissa addresses him with "I am going to buy flowers for my party!" The film once again shows a more self-centred and frivolous Clarissa. In the book, she reflects on her reasons for giving the party: "...she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party" (Ibid, p.6) In this connection, McLauren comments that Clarissa brings people together at her party "so that for one moment they feel their common humanity. This is itself only a symbolic gesture, a greeting to other beings across the emptiness which she sees at the heart of life." (1988, pp.13-14) Taking into consideration the fact that women were powerless in early twentieth century England, as we have seen in the first chapter, she sees this as a contribution she can make to society. Beauvoir points out the significance of a party in *The Second Sex* :

A reception involves something more than merely welcoming others into a woman's own home; it changes this dwelling into a domain of enchantment; the social function is at once a party and a ceremony. The hostess displays her treasures : silver, linen, glassware; she arranges cut flowers.[...] The idea is to devise gracious gifts, which, while supplying the needs of the guests, anticipate their desires; the repast is changed into a mysterious ceremony. (1993, p.567).

This comment explains why Mrs Dalloway is so worried about the success of the party.

This scene of the meeting with Hugh is followed in the film by a second flashback, where Clarissa remembers a moment with Peter Walsh, when both speak of Hugh, and Peter criticizes him while Clarissa defends him. We can observe that in this flashback Clarissa is shown seated in a swing which is pushed by Peter. She is once more in white, with imprisoned hair, transmitting to the spectator an image of innocence and purity, as well as someone subject to male domination. The film then cuts to the present time with Clarissa going silently to the flower shop, whereas in the book, we can observe that she questions herself about Peter's current situation and remembers how much she used to like their quarrels and the way his comments made her think, and how he used to say that she would become a perfect hostess, thus pointing out "the defects of her own soul" (WOOLF, p.9). She wonders if she made the right decision in refusing to marry Peter and accepting Richard Dalloway instead. She feels she has more freedom with Richard than she would have had with Peter:

...(she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of a perfect hostess, he said. [...] she had been right—and she had too—not to marry him. For in marriage, a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her and she him. (WOOLF, p.10)

In the book the reader can perceive Clarissa's consciousness about her lack of knowledge when the narrator says:

Not that she thought herself clever, or much out of the ordinary. How she had got through life on the few twigs of knowledge Fräulein Daniels gave them she could not think. She knew nothing; no language; no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed. (WOOLF, p.11)

Clarissa's poor education was a feature she shared with most women of her time as Beauvoir and Woolf pointed out. However, Mrs Dalloway also feels she has a special quality : "Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct, she thought, walking on .If you put her in a room with

someone, up went her back like a cat's, or she purred.” (WOOLF, p.11). Clarissa Dalloway in the novel is also capable of analyzing her motives for doing things, and how these are different from Richard's:

It was silly to have other reasons for doing things. Much rather would she have been one of those people like Richard who did things for themselves, whereas, she thought, waiting to cross, half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew[...] for no one was ever for a second taken in. (WOOLF, pp.13-14)

This quality is not present in the Clarissa of the film. Edwards points out that Clarissa's feelings of inferiority and weakness are a result of her powerlessness:

Seeing ourselves as insignificant, inconsequential, unimportant outside of the sphere of home, family and friends, we see our world as both small and trivial. We dislike ourselves, because, like Clarissa Dalloway, we fear that we are “spoilt” (1988,pp.160-161).

Returning to the film, in the scene where Clarissa is leaving the flower shop, the viewer can observe the first self-questioning of the character about her loss of identity after being called Mrs. Dalloway by the attendant. In the novel we can also observe a similar emotion when Clarissa perceives that:

She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.(WOOLF, p.14)

Continuing with the film, after such questioning the viewer can observe one more flashback that had already been presented in the book. The director has fitted it in perfectly with the following scene, where a young Clarissa can be observed talking to Peter in the garden, where he makes a prediction about her future, saying that she will marry a prime minister, and will receive guests at the top of a staircase, will give parties and be a perfect hostess, as if she were born to it. Once more we can observe the character using white clothes and occupied with an extremely feminine activity. In the earlier flashback she is shown on a swing, and in this one we can observe her collecting flowers in the garden, accompanied by Peter, who awakens her

critical sense. During this scene, Peter criticizes her saying that she could do so many things and be so much instead of choosing a boring future (marrying Richard), and Clarissa makes it clear that she does not want to face an uncertain future by marrying Peter. We are again reminded that in the early twentieth century there were few career options for women and marriage was extremely desirable.

At the next moment, the film shifts to the present, where Clarissa returns home alone, after buying the flowers for the party. At the door, she shows her maid, Lucy, the letters written by an aeroplane in the sky, advertising Kreemo's Toffee. This may show either that Mrs Dalloway is a kind mistress, sharing things with her maid, or her joy in life. . This exchange does not occur in the book, where Mrs Dalloway asks Lucy what they are all looking at.

We can only clearly observe the personal questionings of the character with the assistance of the book. Before she leaves for her room Mrs Dalloway feels a mixture of disappointment and gratitude to her husband for having provided her with a calm, stable life. In the film, when Clarissa enters her room the character expresses to the viewer a reflection about the stage she has reached in her life: "Fear no more, fear no more the heat of the sun, nor the furious winter's rages." This quotation from Shakespeare is a leitmotif which runs throughout the book, linking Clarissa with Septimus Smith. In the film Clarissa concludes "It is all over for me. The sheet is spread and the bed is narrow". In the book, she also feels "like a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils". (WOOLF, p.42). Her isolation and loneliness are emphasized in both cases. Lee comments on Clarissa's withdrawal :

Clarissa going indoors...going upstairs to her narrow bed...virginal, failing Richard sexually, unable to abandon herself, feeling her slice of life dwindling away... is possessed of a cold, ageing world, in contrast to the warm, passionate experiences of her youth... (1988, p.24)

Later, at the moment where she looks at the mirror holding her party dress it is transparent to the spectator that she feels a nostalgic solitude. Once more we observe another flashback that completes and explains the scene better, because, in this memory we can visualize Clarissa and Sally preparing for a party, looking at in the mirror, not with a nostalgic expression, but with the expectation of the enjoyment of an entire life before them.

Once more, the image of Clarissa, conveyed to the spectator is of an ingenuous and pure woman, who does not question anything, and who experiences many fears. In the flashback Sally argues with Clarissa on the abolition of private property, demonstrating at this moment some knowledge of world, while Clarissa only expresses her fear of how this could come to affect her. In all the flashbacks so far Mrs. Dalloway always needs the presence of somebody to stir up her questionings about life, in this case, Sally Seton. Once more her consciousness about her situation is not revealed in the film, though it is to be found in the book when the narrator says:

Sally it was who made her feel, for the first time, how sheltered the life at Bourton was. She knew nothing about sex --- nothing about social problems.[...] There they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world. They meant to found a society to abolish private property, and actually had a letter written, though not sent out. The ideas were Sally's, of course. (WOOLF, p.49).

Clarissa's poor knowledge of the outside world was a characteristic of the women of her time as pointed out by Beauvoir and other feminist writers and critics.

In the book we can observe Clarissa's devotion, love and admiration for Sally Seton. Woolf based this relationship on her love and admiration for her cousin, Madge Symonds, when she was a teenager. In the film these feelings are revealed by the director in another flashback where the excitement printed on Clarissa's face is explicit while she runs to meet Sally in the garden, just to let her read lying on her lap, a sign of intimacy between them. This scene does not appear in the book. In middle age, Clarissa thinks about "the purity, the integrity of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women." (WOOLF,p.50). In this connection, Edwards comments that Clarissa's love for Sally is impersonal: "It is unmarred by the self-regard and possessiveness that makes Peter Walsh, for example, stamp all women with the indelible imprint of his own private vision of them and so flaws his passion..." (1988, p.173). With regard to the way in which the relationship between Clarissa and Sally is shown in the film, Goldman comments that the film version has been criticized "for emphasizing heterosexual relations and eliding homosexual ones from Woolf's novel." (2006, p.58).

Another evidence of their great intimacy is shown to the spectator in the same flashback, while Clarissa and Sally exchange caresses and debate on marriage, with Sally always arguing how destructive marriage can be for woman, while Clarissa is resigned, conscious that this

destiny is inevitable for women: "...(they spoke of marriage always as a catastrophe)" (WOOLF, p.50). Abel points out that Clarissa's love for Sally "precedes her allegiances to men; [...] Clarissa perceives Peter in this period primarily as an irritating intruder." (1988, p.110).

This resignation is transmitted by the director not only through dialogue, but also through the images of the characters. Sally always can be seen with loose hair and dark clothes that could symbolize her individuality and rebellion, while Clarissa is always shown with well-arranged hair, and white clothes as signs of her purity and submission. Returning from the flashback once more, we see a Clarissa who is nostalgic and conscious that she has arrived at the end of her existence, and does not have anything to fight for or to conquer when she says: "It is all over for [me]. [I've] come up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun!" (WOOLF, p.70). In the novel, a moment after these memories about Sally, Clarissa thinks about Peter and makes it obvious, to whoever is watching, that she has the knowledge that she has a role to play in society, as perfect mother and wife, not being allowed to show her imperfections and fears, as we can observe below :

How many million times, she had seen her face, and Always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self---pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives, a refuge for the lonely to come to, perhaps; She had helped young people, who were grateful to her; had tried to be the same always, never showing a sign of all the other sides of her--- faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions [...]." (WOOLF, p.55)

The above quotation also shows Clarissa's sense of responsibility and her purpose in hosting parties. She is not as frivolous as she seems to be. With this, we can observe how the director has opted once more to omit another instance where Clarissa questions herself, changing it for a scene apparently of small importance to the viewer. Edwards points out that Clarissa's choice to give parties and bring people together is because she endorses "the heart rather than the brain, [choosing] roses and not war. Such freedom, Virginia Woolf suggests, is more easily available to women precisely because they have less power in society and therefore less of a vested interest in either society or power." (1988, p.175).

Coming back to the film, after the meeting with Elizabeth and Miss Kilman, Mrs. Dalloway has another flashback, this time remembering her discussions with Peter. Here she makes her discomfort at the way Peter loves her very clear, complaining of her need for her own space and saying that he demands too much of her by wanting every little bit of her, and leaving nothing to her. She finds his attitude suffocating.

After this flashback we return to the scene where Clarissa fixes her dress and realizes that Peter is back in London and has come see her. In the book we can first observe Peter's thoughts about Clarissa, of how she has aged and of how he is disappointed with what she has made of her life:

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; [...], he thought, growing more and more irritated, more and more agitated, for there's nothing in the world so bad for women as marriage, [...]" (WOOLF, p.61)

In the film, the first thoughts which appear are from Clarissa when she is surprised by the feeling that Peter awakens in her only with his presence. Peter's critical thoughts about Clarissa are not revealed. We can observe with the sequence of the scenes that more and more of Clarissa's reflections have been cut out.. At the moment where Peter says that he is in love with a married younger woman, the mother of two children, we can observe (in the film) only passive resignation as Clarissa's reaction. However, in the novel we can find a rebellious Clarissa who is jealous of Peter's feelings, because, in spite of being older than her, he is still capable of feeling emotions that she does not feel anymore, as we can observe in the lines below:

"In love! She said. That he at his age should be sucked under in his little bow-tie by that monster[...] he is in love. He has that, she felt, he is in love. But the indomitable egotism which forever rides down the hosts opposed to it, the river which says on, on, on; even though, it admits, there may be no goal for us whatever, still on, on; this indomitable egotism charged her cheeks with colour, made her look very young; very pink; [...] he was in love! Not with her. With some younger woman, of course. [...]What a waste, what a folly! All his life long Peter had been fooled like that; first getting sent down from Oxford, next marrying the girl on the boat going to India, now the wife of a Major in the Indian Army—Thank Heaven she had refused to marry him!" (WOOLF, 1925, p.p.67- 68)

At the end of this scene in the film, Peter questions Clarissa closely if she is happy. In the book, Clarissa concludes, in spite of her criticism of Peter, that it is her life which is really

finished. In the film, this brief moment of privacy is interrupted by Lucy, the maid, who makes this situation less embarrassing. In the novel they are interrupted by Elizabeth, who makes Clarissa feel uncomfortable. She introduces her to Peter as “My Elizabeth!”, a detail that annoys Peter and makes him criticize her (Clarissa) for being insincere.. This criticism is once more concealed from the audience. Clarissa is quite conscious of Peter’s criticism of her attitudes: “Always making one feel too frivolous, too empty-minded, a mere silly chatter-box” (WOOLF, p.65). She is also aware that she has lost something by not marrying Peter: “If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day.” (WOOLF, p.70). Once more the issue is a woman’s search for position and security in marriage.

Before the scene in the film when Richard Dalloway goes to lunch with Lady Bruton, we need the aid of the book once more to be able to observe another moment of self-awareness in Clarissa., Here, through Peter’s thoughts, the narrator makes it explicit to the reader that Clarissa knows about the limitations in her position as a married woman, a detail that is not revealed in the film:

With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes—one of the tragedies of married life. With a mind of her own, she must always be quoting Richard [...]. These parties for example were all for him, or for her idea of him.” (WOOLF, p.116)

In the following passage from the book, Peter talks about Clarissa’s capacity to enjoy life:

And of course she enjoyed life immensely. It was her nature to enjoy.[...] Anyhow there was no bitterness in her; none of that sense of moral virtue which is so repulsive in good women. She enjoyed practically everything.[...] She had a sense of comedy that was really exquisite, but she needed people, always people, to bring it out, with the inevitable result that she frittered her time away, lunching, dining, giving, these incessant parties of hers, talking nonsense, saying things she didn’t mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing her discrimination.” (WOOLF, , p.118-119)

.Peter also perceives Clarissa’s special gift:

She had a perfectly clear notion of what she wanted. Her emotions were all on the surface. Beneath, she was very shrewd [...]and with it all, purely feminine; with that extraordinary gift, that woman’s gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be>She came into a room,; she stood, as he had often seen her, in a doorway with lots of people round her. But it was Clarissa one remembered. Not that she was striking; not beautiful at all; there was nothing picturesque about her; she never said anything specially clever; there she was , however; there she was. (WOOLF, pp.114-115)

The presentation of the older Clarissa in the film does not make this aspect clear at all, as she is presented as someone tired and resigned to life.

After the scene where Richard and Hugh have lunch with Lady Bruton we are presented with another flashback, of the young Richard Dalloway taking flowers for Clarissa.. This scene is shown parallel with the scene of the older Richard in the present, also taking flowers for his wife, making it possible for the viewer to make a comparison between the two moments. Both in the past and in the present, Richard does not have the courage to express his feelings. But in the novel we can see that Clarissa understands: “But how lovely, she said, taking his flowers. She understood; she understood without his speaking; his Clarissa. [...] He had not said “I love you”; but he held her hand. Happiness is this, he thought.” (WOOLF, p.179-180). The understanding between husband and wife is more clearly conveyed in the book than in the film.

This is followed by a brief conversation between Richard and Clarissa, where we can perceive once more that the director has chosen to conceal Clarissa’s dissatisfaction at the way everybody criticizes her and her parties. In the film, Richard consoles a worried Clarissa, telling her that she worries too much about these events. The novel makes it clear that Clarissa resents the fact that both Peter and Richard do not understand why she gives parties:

Her parties! Both of them criticized her very unfairly, laughed at her very unjustly, for her parties [...]Well, how was she going to defend herself? [...]They thought ...that she enjoyed imposing herself; liked to have famous people about her; great names; was simply a snob in short.[...] Richard merely thought it foolish of her to like the excitement when she knew it was bad for her heart.[...]And both were quite wrong. What she liked was simply life. [...] all she could say was (and nobody could be expected to understand): They’re an offering; (WOOLF, pp.183 -184)

After the scene between Richard and Clarissa, the audience sees Elizabeth taking tea with her tutor, Miss Kilman, in a cafeteria. At this instant we can observe a moments in the film where the spectator can observe a character criticize Clarissa. In this case the criticism comes from Miss Kilman who says that it is a great pity that women like Mrs Dalloway have nothing better to do than give parties She says that it is not their fault because they are spoiled. In the book there are many moments, in which Miss Kilman criticizes Mrs. Dalloway. She despises her because she is not good or serious from her point of view, but vain and deceitful:

But Miss Kilman did not hate Mrs. Dalloway. [...] Fool! Simpleton! You who have known neither sorrow nor pleasure; who have trifled your life away! And there rose in her an overmastering desire to overcome her; to unmask her.[...]. But it was not the

body; it was the soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue; make feel her mastery. If only she could make her weep; could ruin her; humiliate her; bring her to her knees crying.(WOOLF, p.189)

In the sequence of the film which follows the episode involving Septimus and Rezia, we can observe the moment where Peter arrives at the hotel where he is put up and reads a letter that Clarissa has sent him soon after he left her house. This leads to another flashback where we observe the young Clarissa and Peter arguing. This scene serves to give information to the viewer who has not read the book. Here Peter criticizes Clarissa for choosing to marry Richard because he will make her feel safe and offers her the comfortable and elegant life of a society lady. He says Richard is a fool and that he will make all his decisions for her. Clarissa argues that Peter is too demanding and will not give her any freedom. Hermione Lee explains that:

Clarissa respects “the privacy of the soul”, which is signified for her by the idea that “here was one room; there another.” On the one hand, the party – the drawing together and harmonizing of people – expresses her love of participation [...] But in contrast with such involvement is her withdrawal. (1988, p.24)

The scene of Mrs Dalloway’s party as presented in the film, is similar to the book. In both the film and the book, she is full of doubts at the beginning:

Why, after all, did she do these things? Why seek pinnacles and stand drenched in fire? [...]She did think it mattered, her party, and it made her feel quite sick to know that it was all going wrong, all falling flat. Anything, any explosion, any horror was better than people wandering aimlessly, standing in a bunch at the corner[...](WOOLF, pp.254-255)

Throughout the party scene in the film we can observe that all of Clarissa’s concerns revolve around the success of the party, forgetting about herself, concerned only with what others would think, confirming Peter’s earlier opinion that she would become Mrs. Dalloway, a perfect hostess. At the beginning, she comments in the film that her party is a disaster and that she is humiliated. After this crisis of panic Clarissa starts to observe her guests and notices that the party will not be a disaster and that everybody is having fun: “So it wasn’t a failure after all! It was going to be all right now – her party. It had begun. It had started. But it was till touch and go.” (WOOLF, pp.258-259). Beauvoir says the following about society parties:

If there is pure generosity in this service rendered to others, the party is truly a party. But social routine has had the effect of quickly changing celebration into institution ...and of elevating the party to a status of a rite. (1993, p.568)

After this, the mismatches between the book and film begin again. In the book, after recognizing that the party will not be a failure, we can observe what Clarissa thinks about her party and how she feels, details that are presented in a summarized manner in the film adaptation. The book allows us to observe Clarissa as having a critical sense, and opinions of her own, being different from the puppet-like figure presented in the film, as we can observe below:

And yet for her own part, it was too much an effort. She was not enjoying it. It was too much like being--- just anybody standing there, anybody could do it; yet this anybody she did a little admire, couldn't help feeling that she had, anyhow, made this happen, that it marked a stage, this post that she felt herself to have become, for oddly enough she had quite forgotten what she looked like, but felt herself a stake driven in at the top of her stairs. Every time she gave a party she had this feeling of being something not herself, and that everyone was unreal in one way; much more real in another. It was, she thought, partly their clothes, partly being taken out of their ordinary ways, partly the background, it was possible to say things you couldn't say anyhow else, things that needed an effort; possible to go much deeper. But not for her; not yet anyhow. (WOOLF, pp.259-60)

Returning to the film, we can observe the sequence of scenes where Clarissa meets Sally Seton, now married and with five children, then she receives the Prime Minister who also comes to her party. An instant after this moment of happiness where the character enjoys the success of her party, new guests arrive, the well-known psychiatrist Dr. Bradshaw and his wife, talking about the suicide of one of his patients, leaving Clarissa infuriated by the fact that they are talking about death in her party. At this moment the spectator can observe the hatred that the character feels for psychiatric doctors and how much this episode makes her reflect on death and the values of life:

What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party – the Bradshaws, talked of death[...] But why had he done it?. (WOOLF, p.280)

Clarissa Dalloway's hostile reaction to psychiatrists may reflect that of Virginia Woolf, who had been submitted to psychiatric treatment during her mental breakdowns. At the same time Clarissa identifies herself with the dead man:

He had killed himself – but how? Always her body went through it first, when she was told suddenly, of an accident;[...] He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes.[...] and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. (WOOLF, p.280)

Lee (1988, p.30), explains that the difference between Clarissa and Septimus, between sanity and madness, is that Clarissa does not lose her awareness of the external world as something external to herself.

In the next sequence of the film, Clarissa has withdrawn from the party to her room, and is looking through the window and thinking about the young man who had killed himself. Miller says that “Her withdrawal from her party suggests that she has even in the midst of her guests kept untouched the privacy of her soul, that still point from which one can recognize the hollowness of the social world” (1988, p.96). At this moment, the adaptation allows the spectator to identify the changes that occur with the character who was until then haunted by doubts, fears and uncertainties. As in the book, Septimus’s suicide makes Clarissa rethink her life and be grateful for everything that has happened to her. The way the young man (Septimus) could break free from everything when he gave up his life allows her to perceive that she does not want to lose what she already had, that she wanted to continue living and feeling, enjoying each emotion until the end. DiBattista comments that:

In orchestrating Clarissa Dalloway’s spiritual recovery with the suicide of Septimus Smith, Virginia Woolf saw that her original intention in writing the novel – “to depict the world seen by the sane and insane side by side” – would only be justified if she could bring the two visions into conjunction. (1988, p.41).

Finally, after these thoughts, she realizes the real reason that has kept her alive all this time - the people whom she loves (Sally, Peter, Richard and Elizabeth). This scene has been very well adapted by the director, who succeeds in transmitting all the feelings that emanated from the character to the spectator, without the need of the book to convey such emotions. In this scene Clarissa is shown parallel to the scene where Peter and Sally talk about her, reinforcing for the viewer everything that Clarissa thinks about them. This can be observed in the transcription of the questionings from the character:

Why did he do it? Why did the Bradshaws talk of it in my party? He threw it all away, his life, just like that! I once threw a coin into the Serpentine, but he threw his life away! But then he will always stay young. All day long I’ve been thinking of Bourton! Of Peter and Sally...we’ve grown old. We will grow older.

(FLASHBACK OF CLARISSA AND SALLY KISSING)

A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured [...] get obscured gradually, every day in corruption, lies and chatter./ Your parents just hand it to you—life to be lived right to the end--- We must walk serenely,

but in the depths of my heart that have been some awful fears that I couldn't go on. Without Richard sitting there calmly reading *The Times*, while I crouch like a bird and would gradually revive, I might have perished./ What makes us go on?/ I must go back to my party, to Sally and Peter. That young man killed himself, but I don't pity him. I'm, somehow, glad he could do it, throw it away. It makes me feel the beauty and somehow feel very like him, less afraid!" (MRS. DALLOWAY)

After this moment of recognition from Mrs Dalloway, the audience can observe the final moments of the film, where Clarissa and Peter, Richard and Sally, and Elizabeth and a young man dance in the hall. The film ends with a last flashback of Clarissa, Peter and Sally in their youth, seated in the garden. Throughout the analysis, we can perceive through the comparisons between the book and film how much the spectator who is unaware of the novel is moved to make a prejudiced judgment of Clarissa Dalloway's character, because the director has not chosen to show in her adaptation, the many moments in the book where we can observe a critical Clarissa, who has a complete knowledge of her condition and the space she occupies in society. Clarissa Dalloway, as portrayed in the film, seems for the most part to be a spoiled, empty woman, easily manipulated, and not possessing her own opinions. The real Clarissa is shown only at the final moments of the film.

It is worth observing that time limitations force a director to make choices. It is impossible to transfer a complete novel to the screen. As has been pointed out earlier, Virginia Woolf has chosen to give importance to the thoughts of the characters, and not their actions. This makes the transposition into film difficult, as the director must find a way to show these thoughts, while capturing the viewer's interest and avoiding tedium.

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout the process of analyzing the film version of Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, directed by Marleen Gorris in 1997, the intention has been to show the dangers that are involved in an adaptation. An adaptation can be completely free, being tied to the original only by the main characters and its primordial essence. For this reason, a single novel can be the origin of many different versions. But all this freedom can become, as seen in this work, a negative point. Besides, it is very difficult, not to say impossible, for a film to make use of all the little details from an original novel because of the lack of financial resources, as well as time limitations, and the varying demands of film audiences and novel readers. However, wrong choices of what to place or not in an adaptation, can influence the spectator to make a mistaken and prejudiced judgment of the characters, distorting the image that the author wanted to communicate. This has occurred with the character Clarissa Dalloway, as shown in this work.

Those who are familiar with the novel understand that Woolf intended to show to her readers the profile of a high society woman, married, and the mother of a family, in the beginning of the twentieth century. In other words, Clarissa Dalloway is a reasonably educated woman who has many qualities, a critical sense, consciousness of the reality that surrounds her and her own opinions. However, because of her social and cultural status she would have to keep her opinions to herself, keeping up appearances and playing the role of mother and perfect wife. For this reason, instead of judging the character presented in the film as empty and ignorant, the viewer could be able to make a comparison between the character as presented in the book and the film taking in consideration all the difficulties involved in the adaptation process. The viewer who is unaware of the original work has only the option to accept the version presented by the film. That is why it is so important for a Director who intends to produce an adaptation to try to know and to convey in his/her work at least the intentions that the author proposed to express through his/her work.

To be fair to Gorris, it should be recalled that Virginia Woolf used the stream-of-consciousness technique in her novel, concentrating less on action, and more on the thoughts, impressions and memories of the characters. For this reason, *Mrs Dalloway* is not an easy book to bring to the screen. If Gorris's version does not present a complete picture of Clarissa Dalloway, its stunning visuals certainly convey the atmosphere of early twentieth century Britain and give the viewer an idea of life among the upper classes at that time.

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ANNEX A

Biography of Virginia Woolf (1882 -1941)

Virginia Woolf, daughter of Leslie and Julia Stephen, was born in 1882 in London and had three siblings, Vanessa, Thoby, and Adrian, besides two half-brothers and a half-sister from her parents' previous marriages. The Stephens belonged to the English upper middle class. They were cultured intellectuals, a fact that had a great influence in the intellectual development of Virginia. When she was only a child she already had complete access to the father's library. In her adolescence she received lessons in Latin and Greek at home, a rare privilege for a girl in the Victorian Age. In spite of this privileged treatment, Woolf was frustrated by the fact that she was denied a superior education, because Universities did not admit women at that time. At nine, she already demonstrated her literary gift when she produced with her brother Thoby. a small periodical called *Hyde Park Gate News* where a great part of everything that was written were of her authorship, because of the fact that her brother spent most of the time at school.

Woolf went through her first great crisis when only thirteen, when she lost her mother, causing her first nervous collapse. In this period, her half-sister, Stella took over the management of the household.. Sometime after recovering from her collapse, Virginia had to face another difficult situation caused by Stella's marriage and premature death.

In 1904, Leslie Stephen passed away, the victim of cancer. This caused Virginia Woolf's second nervous breakdown. During this period Woolf received dedicated care from her friend Violet Dickinson, with whom she fell in love. This was not the first time that Virginia had developed feelings for a person belonging to the same sex. Before this Woolf had fallen in love with her cousin Madge Symonds, who probably served as an inspiration for the creation of Sally Seton, in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

After their father's death and Virginia's recovery, the Stephen siblings decided to move from the house where they had been born to go to live in a neighborhood which was unconventional for people of their social class, Bloomsbury. .After graduation, her brother Thoby decided that their new house would be a meeting place for his University friends and

other intellectuals, who came to be known as the Bloomsbury Group. Virginia and Vanessa also joined in the lively discussions. .

In 1906 Virginia lost her brother Thoby, who passed away, the victim of typhoid fever, after a trip to Greece. The death of her brother was a blow from which Woolf would never recover. In the same year her sister Vanessa married one of the integrants of the group, Clive Bell. Virginia and Adrian moved to another house. This factor helped her to lose her shyness and to have more confidence to speak on any subject. Before moving to Fitzroy Square with her brother Virginia already had initiated her professional career, writing criticism for the *Guardian* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. In 1912 Virginia married Leonard Woolf, after refusing other proposals. One year after her marriage, Woolf had a serious nervous breakdown, which lasted up to 1915. Amazingly, after her crises Virginia were able to remember everything she had experienced. This was the inspiration for the creation of the character Sépitmus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

In 1917 Leonard and Virginia bought a manual press and started to print their works at home. With this, the Hogarth Press was born. Something that had started as a therapy for Virginia, ended up becoming famous and income-producing.

Woolf's first published works were *The Voyage Out (1915)* and *Night and Day (1919)*. In 1919 the couple moved to Monk's House at Sussex, the place where Virginia produced her great works, *Jacob's Room* in 1919, *Mrs. Dalloway* between 1922 and 1924. In 1925, while she was producing *To the Lighthouse* Virginia suffered another collapse that left her fragile until the beginning of 1926. The novel was finished in 1927. In 1929, one year after a lecture given in Cambridge, Woolf published *A Room of One's Own*. In 1931 she published *The Waves* and in 1937, *Three Guineas*. In 1941, depressed by World War II and the possibility of a German victory, Virginia Woolf, felt another breakdown coming. She was also afraid of the consequences of a Nazi victory because her husband was a Jew. She committed suicide by drowning, in the River Ouse, filling her pockets with stones.

MRS. DALLOWAY (1925)

PLOT SUMMARY¹

Mrs. Dalloway covers one day from morning to night in one woman's life. Clarissa Dalloway, an upper-class housewife, walks through her London neighborhood to prepare for the party she will host that evening. When she returns from flower shopping, an old suitor and friend, Peter Walsh, drops by her house unexpectedly. The two have always judged each other harshly, and their meeting in the present intertwines with their thoughts of the past. Years earlier, Clarissa refused Peter's marriage proposal, and Peter has never quite gotten over it. Peter asks Clarissa if she is happy with her husband, Richard, but before she can answer, her daughter, Elizabeth, enters the room. Peter leaves and goes to Regent's Park. He thinks about Clarissa's refusal, which still obsesses him.

The point of view then shifts to Septimus Smith, a veteran of World War I, who was injured in trench warfare and now suffers from shell shock. Septimus and his Italian wife, Lucrezia, pass time in Regent's Park. They are waiting for Septimus's appointment with Sir William Bradshaw, a celebrated psychiatrist. Before the war, Septimus was a budding young poet and lover of Shakespeare. When the war broke out, he enlisted immediately for romantic and patriotic reasons. He became numb to the horrors of war and its aftermath: when his friend Evans died, he felt little sadness. Now Septimus sees nothing of worth in the England he fought for, and he has lost the desire to preserve either his society or himself. Suicidal, he believes his lack of feeling is a crime. Clearly Septimus's experiences in the war have permanently scarred him, and he has serious mental problems. However, Sir William does not listen to what Septimus says and diagnoses "a lack of proportion." Sir William plans to separate Septimus from Lucrezia and send him to a mental institution in the country.

Richard Dalloway eats lunch with Hugh Whitbread and Lady Bruton. They are members of high society. The men help Lady Bruton write a letter to the *Times*, London's largest newspaper. After lunch, Richard returns home to Clarissa with a large bunch of roses. He intends

¹ SparkNotes Editors. "SparkNote on Mrs. Dalloway." SparkNotes LLC. 2004. <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/dalloway/> (accessed November 23, 2012).

to tell her that he loves her but finds that he cannot, because it has been so long since he last said it. Clarissa considers the void that exists between people, even between husband and wife. Even though she values the privacy she is able to maintain in her marriage, considering it vital to the success of the relationship, at the same time she finds slightly disturbing the fact that Richard doesn't know everything about her. Clarissa sees off Elizabeth and her history teacher, Miss Kilman, who are going shopping. The two older women despise one another passionately, each believing the other to be an oppressive force over Elizabeth. Meanwhile, Septimus and Lucrezia are in their apartment, enjoying a moment of happiness together before the men come to take Septimus to the asylum. One of Septimus's doctors, Dr. Holmes, arrives, and Septimus fears the doctor will destroy his soul. In order to avoid this fate, he jumps from a window to his death.

Peter hears the ambulance go by to pick up Septimus's body and marvels ironically at the level of London's civilization. He goes to Clarissa's party, where most of the novel's major characters are assembled. Clarissa works hard to make her party a success but feels dissatisfied by her own role and acutely conscious of Peter's critical eye. All the partygoers, but especially Peter and Sally Seton, have, to some degree, failed to accomplish the dreams of their youth. Though the social order is undoubtedly changing, Elizabeth and the members of her generation will probably repeat the errors of Clarissa's generation. Sir William Bradshaw arrives late, and his wife explains that one of his patients, the young veteran (Septimus), has committed suicide. Clarissa retreats to the privacy of a small room to consider Septimus's death. She understands that he was overwhelmed by life and that men like Sir William make life intolerable. She identifies with Septimus, admiring him for having taken the plunge and for not compromising his soul. She feels, with her comfortable position as a society hostess, responsible for his death. The party nears its close as guests begin to leave. Clarissa enters the room, and her presence fills Peter with a great excitement.