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**Gender Formations and Queer Identities in Virginia
Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and in Later Revisions of the Text**

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ABSTRACT

In *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) Virginia Woolf presents Clarissa as a complex main character, who is highly fragmented and unstable in terms of gender identity and sexuality. In the same line, revisions of this text in later years are significantly characterized by portraying characters with fluid and non-fixed identities as well. Therefore, my study will focus on the analysis of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and three of its later adaptations; namely, Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* (1999), Stephen Daldry's film *The Hours* (2002) and Robin Lippincott's novel *Mr. Dalloway* (1999). I attempt to contribute to the state of the question by adopting the approach of queer theory and, thus, by analysing characters as queer identities/subjects. More precisely, in this study I intend to shed more light on the formation and cultural construction of identities in the aforementioned texts, especially focusing on gender and sexuality. Additionally, the present study intends to challenge the traditional belief in a hierarchical relationship between an 'original' text and its adaptations.

KEY WORDS: Virginia Woolf, adaptation, queer theory, Judith Butler, gender.

RESUM

A *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) Virginia Woolf presenta Clarissa com una protagonista complexa, amb una identitat de gènere i sexualitat fragmentades i inestables. Seguint la mateixa línia, les revisions d'aquest text en anys posteriors estan caracteritzades també per la voluntat de representar personatges amb identitats fluides i que es resisteixen a ser fixades. Per tant, el meu estudi se centrarà en l'anàlisi de *Mrs Dalloway* de Woolf i en tres de les seves adaptacions posteriors, concretament *The Hours* (1999) de Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (2001) de Stephen Daldry i *Mr. Dalloway* (1999) de Robin Lippincott. Tractaré de contribuir a l'estat de la qüestió adoptant l'enfocament de la teoria *queer* i, per tant, analitzaré els personatges com a identitats/subjectes *queer*. Més específicament, aquest estudi intenta llançar nova llum sobre la formació i la construcció cultural d'identitats en els textos abans esmentats, especialment centrant-me en el gènere i la sexualitat. A més, l'estudi present intenta desafiar la creença tradicional en una relació jeràrquica entre un text 'original' i les seves adaptacions.

PARAULES CLAU: Virginia Woolf, adaptació, teoria *queer*, Judith Butler, gènere.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mrs Dalloway is widely known as one of Virginia Woolf's most notable works. Published in 1925, this Modernist novel encompasses a single day in the ordinary life of Clarissa Dalloway, who is anxiously absorbed in preparing the party she organised for that evening. Behind her quotidian concerns for maintaining domestic order, this middle-aged upper-class housewife is a far more complex character than one would first suspect. She has an apparently stable and well-off life with her husband Richard and her daughter Elizabeth in London. Nonetheless, as the day goes by and she receives visits from old close friends before the party, Clarissa's apparent stability begins to crumble. Through the technique of the stream of consciousness, Woolf allows the reader to have an insight into this character, who is highly fragmented and unstable in terms of gender identity and sexuality. Clarissa feels trapped within the realm of domesticity in both the private and public spheres of life, since the society she inhabits is extremely patriarchal and does not allow women to show their true selves. Instead, they are forced to 'perform' a culturally imposed gender identity, labelling as deviant whatever goes beyond the patriarchal norm. Therefore, this single-day structure used by Woolf "allows the particular (a single day) to reveal the whole (an entire life)" (Schiff 363), true not only to a single woman but to a whole female community.

In this line, because "Woolf's work is relevant to contemporary culture, particularly in the area of gender and sexual orientation" (Schiff 379), several revisions of this novel have been written in later years. Therefore, apart from analysing *Mrs Dalloway* itself, the present study attempts to examine three later adaptations of the text which are significantly characterized by portraying characters with fluid and non-fixed identities as well. Namely, my study will focus on Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* (1999), Stephen Daldry's film *The Hours* (2002) and Robin Lippincott's novel *Mr Dalloway* (1999). Whilst they share many thematic aspects, these texts also present a delicate and sophisticated tapestry of intertextual references, which makes their study more complex and relevant.

Firstly, the well-known and award-winning novel *The Hours* is one of the most critically acclaimed revisions of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Cunningham audaciously reproduces the single-day pattern presented by Woolf, though this time he

does not recount the story of a single woman. Instead, he presents the complexly interweaved stories of three different women, all of them somehow connected to the story written by Woolf: the story of Virginia Woolf herself whilst writing *Mrs Dalloway* in 1923, the story of Laura Brown reading the novel in 1949 and the story of Clarissa Vaughan (referred to as 'Mrs Dalloway' by her friend Richard) at the end of the 20th century. The characters' names are certainly not a matter of coincidence. In spite of the fact that they inhabit different periods in time, the three women share an internal anxiety over their identity, which is fluid and fragmented as the protagonist in *Mrs Dalloway*.

In the second instance, Stephen Daldry majestically adapted Cunningham's novel into a film version bearing the same name, which was released in 2002. Whilst Daldry maintains the same plotline and characters as in the novel, the film introduces new narrative techniques that the medium of cinema allows for, such as music and visual resources (lighting, colour...), offering a new layer of meaning to the text itself. Furthermore, he focuses on specific motifs that are central in the novel, namely flowers and water (Diehl 94). Though he portrays his characters as fragmented and unstable beings, the film bravely emphasises female oppression and entrapment in domesticity and homemaking, thus implying a ferocious critique of patriarchy.

Last but not least, Robin Lippincott's novel *Mr Dalloway* offers a shift of perspective by focusing on the character of Richard, who is only sketched and barely explored in Woolf's novel, and his relationships with other male characters. Furthermore, Lippincott introduces a remarkable variation in the story as he presents Richard as an homosexual or bisexual character. Hence, this novel portrays Richard's sexual orientation as ambiguous and complex as his wife's, following Woolf's "notion that we possess multiple selves" (Schiff 373).

Additionally, the present study intends to challenge the traditional belief of a hierarchical relationship between an 'original' text and its adaptations, which relegates the latter to a secondary and inferior position. Though this discourse has been endorsed by numerous scholars and by Woolf herself, I will follow Linda Hutcheon's approach on the topic, which regards adaptation as "a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary" (9). She argues that an adaptation is valuable and worth analysing in itself because it is representative and works as a mirror of the culture that has adapted it. Because contemporary resonance is essential for a text to be

revised, I attempt to argue how the topics discussed by Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* still speak to a contemporary audience. Hence, the aim of this study is to show that whilst the selected adaptations draw on Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* as a source of inspiration, Woolf's text is at the same time inflected by its revisions. This topic will be further explored in chapter two of the present study.

With regard to previous studies, many scholars have written about Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and its intertextual relationships with the aforementioned revisions, especially with Cunningham's *The Hours*. The character of Clarissa in *Mrs Dalloway* has often been analysed in terms of the modernist notion of the fragmented self. Furthermore, the work of Iraj Montashery explores identity formation of Woolf's characters according to the understanding of theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler and Susan Bordo's. An approach to queer theory has also been followed in the work of Kate Haffey, who explores the theme of the kiss in relation to Queer Temporality. Moreover, scholars such as James Schiff and Maria Lindgren Leavenworth, to whom I will be referring later, analysed the "three-step adaptation process" from *Mrs Dalloway* to *The Hours* (film). Their approach rejects fidelity criticism and understands the texts as an "ongoing dialogic process" (Lindgren 504). Moreover, Schiff goes on to argue that whilst Woolf presents "ambiguity of sexual identity and desire", Cunningham and Lippincott's revisions offer "changes in public attitudes toward social orientation" (364). Both Schiff and Lindgren believe that identity is a central theme in both texts. Additionally, Karen Diehl significantly points at the theme of the authorial in the film *The Hours*, as it explicitly and overtly introduces the author of the revised text.

Though *Mrs Dalloway* has been approached from the perspective of queer theory in some instances, it is true that this approach has been far less explored regarding its adaptations. Hence, I attempt to contribute to the state of the question by adopting a feminist perspective, more specifically the approach of queer theory, on the analysis not only of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, but also of the aforementioned revisions: Cunningham's *The Hours*, Daldry's *The Hours* and Lippincott's *Mr Dalloway*. In order to further support my analysis, I will draw on several notions presented by queer theorists. The main aim of my work is to shed more light on the formation and cultural construction of identities in the selected texts, especially focusing on gender and sexuality. More precisely, I intend to analyse characters as queer identities/subjects and

provide an account of how they ‘perform’ their gender identities according to the values and patterns established by their contemporary society. This seems to be particularly prescriptive in the case of female characters, who need to construct their identities to fit in a patriarchal society where feminine identity is considered less worthy.

According to the critic Maggie Humm, feminism encompasses a complex mosaic of ideas. Nonetheless, they all share “three major perceptions: that gender is a social construction which oppresses women more than men; that patriarchy shapes this construction; and that women’s experiential knowledge is a basis for a future non-sexist society” (194). As Virginia Woolf herself criticises in one of her most ground-breaking texts, *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), women are trapped and oppressed within a male-centred society that diminishes and excludes them. However, not only is criticism an essential constituent of feminist theory, but the movement also endorses a sense of “construction” (Humm 194).

Precisely, the emergence of queer theory in the early 1990s meant the creation of new ways of thinking that would debunk the essentialist notions of sex, gender and sexuality at the time. Originated from gay liberationist and lesbian feminist movements, it reappropriated the term ‘queer’, previously a derogatory term for ‘homosexual’, to designate “a new political identity” (Jagose 95). Though the term ‘queer’ itself is highly ambiguous and resists to be fixed, it generally refers to non-normative subjects or identities. Assuming the post-modernist notion of identity as something fragmented, unstable and ever-changing, queer theory goes on to challenge “the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire” (Jagose 3). In other words, queer theory challenges normative models and discourses on identity formation. Therefore, it “marks a suspension of identity as something fixed, coherent and natural” (98). Because of its fluid nature and defiance of set boundaries, queer is often defined as “a zone of possibilities” (Edelman 114).

What is more, in the present study I will draw on the insights of Judith Butler, one of the most prominent queer theorists, in her works *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (2003). In the 1940s Simone de Beauvoir already pointed at the understanding of gender as a construct by saying that “[o]ne is not born a woman but becomes one” (43). From that moment on, the term gender has been used “to denote culturally constructed femininity and masculinity as opposed to biological sex

differences” (Jackson 131). However, Butler goes beyond this and states that “this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed perhaps it was always already gender” (*Gender* 7). Assuming that both gender and sex are fictive and socially constructed through discursive and non-discursive practises, Butler argues that “bodies become gendered through the continual performance of gender” (Jackson 137). In other words, Butler states that gender is performative, a construction for which there is no original. As opposed to what some critics have understood, “gender performativity is not a matter of choosing which gender one will be today” (Butler; *Bodies* 22), since it is not deliberately selected by the subject. Instead, “gender performativity consolidates the subject through reiteration, it is the process through which the subject is constituted” (Jagose 86-7). In Butler’s words, “[p]erformativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject” (*Gender* 95). Butler also places some emphasis on the connection between gendered and sexed bodies and “the normative, hegemonic status of heterosexuality” (Jackson 140). In other words, “[g]ender operates as a regulatory construct that privileges heterosexuality” (Jagose 83). Hence, the binary between heterosexual and homosexual identities depends on gender, and those who step out of the boundaries of normative gender identities are ostracised and oppressed.

In the same line, Adrienne Rich is another queer theorist who further contributes to this topic in her essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980). Rich exposes that female heterosexuality is neither an “innate” or “natural” orientation nor a “preference” or “choice”, but rather “something that has had to be imposed, managed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by force” (648). Thus, ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ is presented as a culturally and socially imposed construct or, as she puts it, “an institution founded on male interest and prerogative” (654). She understands this institution as another tool for patriarchal dominance and control which oppresses women as the subordinate gender, and marginalizes and silences lesbian experience. As a response to patriarchy, Rich proposes the creation of a “lesbian continuum”, which makes reference to a broad range of relationships among women based on “the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support” (648-9). Hence, Rich does not refer so

much to sexual relationships between women, but rather to ideas of “female friendship and political comradeship” (Palmer 144). Furthermore, similarly to Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own*, who points out the absence of a female literary tradition, Rich criticises that “lesbian experience” has “been lived without access to any knowledge of a tradition, a continuity” (649), often silenced by privileging male homosexuality. Therefore, this “lesbian continuum”, also described as a “woman-identified experience” (648), aims at the empowerment of women and highlights their potential often limited by compulsory heterosexuality.

In relation to these notions of heteronormativity, the queer theorist Judith Halberstam significantly argues that there are several time periods which are “considered to be desirable within the life cycle of the Western human subject”, especially for women: “the heteronormative time of reproduction”, which refers to the culturally scheduled time in which women are expected to have children in the context of an heterosexual family; and “the time of inheritance”, when one is expected to transmit the family’s values and morals to the child, which “also glances ahead to connect the family to the future of both familial and national stability” (4-5). This notion supports Rich’s view of the pressures that impinge on female sexuality and identity and how women are culturally driven to follow heteronormative life cycles, often rendered invisible within a male-dominated society, whilst also severely objectified.

That being said, this dissertation attempts to analyse the characters in the selected texts as instances of queer identities, subjects who transgress categorisation, making reference to the aforementioned queer theorists. Ultimately, the study will be divided into seven main chapters or sections. Firstly, I will give an account of the approach on adaptation followed and how it deviates from traditional discourses. Then, chapter three, four, five and six will involve the analysis of the selected texts. Finally, chapter seven will include the conclusions reached throughout the study.

2. “DERIVATIONS THAT ARE NOT DERIVATIVE”¹

As early as 1926 Virginia Woolf addressed the issue of adaptation in her article “The cinema”. In her reflections, she could not help attacking the emerging medium of cinema as, according to her, it was completely unable to reproduce reality to the same extent as words do. Taking the adaptation of *Anna Karenina* as an example, she referred to film as “a parasite” and the literary text as its “prey” and “unfortunate victim” (Woolf; “Cinema” 269-70). This hierarchical view on revisions of literary works has been traditionally endorsed not only by Woolf but also by many critics and scholars throughout the history of adaptation. Though this discourse is still widespread nowadays, it goes back a long way.

According to Mireia Aragay, the history of adaptation has been closely associated with the history of cinema. Adaptation theory and film studies emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States and the United Kingdom from English literature departments (Aragay 11). The conditions of this inception favoured a “hierarchical view of the relationship between literature and film”, which regarded the literary text as the “valued original” with an “immutable essence” in opposition to adaptations, conceived as “merely copies” (Aragay 12). This view was partly due to “the novel’s coming first” and to “the ingrained sense of literature’s greater respectability in traditional critical circles” (McFarlane 8). Furthermore, the binary ‘original vs. copy’ was based on the assumption that the author of literature was the only origin of meaning, the “source and centre” of the text (Aragay 12). As a result, fidelity criticism became the main approach in the field of adaptation. As Brian McFarlane states, this discourse was based on the notion of “having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct ‘meaning’ which the film-maker (adaptor) has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with” (8). Instances of the belief in the superiority of the literary text may be encountered in many works, such as George Bluestone’s *Novels into Film* (1957), the book that officially inaugurates the field of adaptation studies, Geoffrey Wagner’s *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975) or Maurice Beja’s *Film and Literature* (1979), to mention a few.

¹ Hutcheon 9.

Adaptation studies underwent a notable development in the 1980s in the light of scholars such as John Ellis, Dudley Andrew and Christopher Orr, who began to challenge fidelity criticism (Aragay 19-20). In order to do so, Orr makes reference to the ground-breaking poststructuralist text “The Death of the Author” (1968), by Roland Barthes. He supports Barthes’s view of the text as “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture”, a “multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (Barthes 170-1). Barthes’s announcement of the death of the Author/God as the origin of meaning debunks the conception of the text as containing a unique, essential meaning which needs to be faithfully adapted. Instead, “meaning is produced by an actively participating reader” and, thus, a text can be “endlessly (re)read and appropriated in different contexts” (Aragay 21). Then, the text is no longer perceived as a container of meaning but rather as a space where to negotiate and generate a plurality of different meanings. Orr, hence, moves away from earlier scholars who supported fidelity criticism by arguing that “the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but rather how the choice of a specific source and how the approach to that source serve the film’s ideology” (Orr 72)².

Furthermore, a turning point in adaptation studies was the publication of *Film Adaptation* (2000), where James Naremore argues for a shift in adaptation theory from “formalistic concerns” to the study of “contextual (economic, cultural, political, commercial, industrial, educational) and intertextual factors” (Aragay 25). Moreover, in the same anthology, Robert Stam proposes a view of the text as an ever-changing, ever-developing entity that has no origin and, consequently, may allow for revisions of equal value. Based on the transtextual relationships that Gérard Genette proposes in *Palimpsests* (1982), Stam understands film adaptations as “hypertexts derived from pre-existing hypotexts that have been transformed by operations of selection, amplification, concretization, and actualization” (66)³. Additionally, he draws on Bakhtin’s notion of

² See also Dudley Andrew’s “The Unauthorized Auteur Today” in *Film Theory Goes to the Movies* (1993).

³ For more information, see Stam’s “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation” (2000), where he describes an adaptation as an “intersemiotic transposition” (62) because it involves two different media, clearly drawing on the concept of “intersemiotic translation” (233) which was coined by Roman Jakobson in “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1959).

'dialogism' to introduce the phenomenon of adaptation as intertextual dialogism, challenging in this way the traditional dichotomy 'original vs. copy' (Aragay 25). More precisely, Bakhtinian 'dialogism' may be understood as an "open-ended play between the text of the subject and the text of the addressee" (Moi 34) or, in other words, a constant dialogue between one text and another. This is because, according to Bakhtin, no utterance (or text) is independent or exists alone, but rather it depends on previous utterances (or texts) and on the utterances (or texts) that will follow. As he puts it, "every word exceeds the boundaries of the text. Any understanding is a correlation of a given text with other texts" (Bakhtin 162). Bakhtin surely was a pioneer in proposing "a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure", a conception of the text as "a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee and the contemporary or earlier cultural context" (Kristeva 35-6; emphasis original). Nonetheless, the concept of 'dialogism' later gave rise to the postmodernist scholar Julia Kristeva's theory on 'intertextuality', which has been highly regarded within the field of adaptation. She argues that "each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (Kristeva 37). Therefore, the concept of 'intertextuality' illustrates that "any text is constituted as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva 37). Ultimately, Bakhtin and Kristeva share the idea of the text as a space of multiple possibilities where meaning is constantly being produced rather than being fixed or stable.

This being said, the present study attempts to challenge the traditional discourse of fidelity and the hierarchical binary between a literary text and its adaptations. In order to do so, I will follow Linda Hutcheon's approach on the topic as she reflects in *Theory of Adaptation* (2006), which has been considered a notable work within this field. She defines an adaptation as "an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art" (170). However, she states that "not all adaptations necessarily involve a shift of medium" (170). So as to support this statement and illustrate the many possibilities that adaptation allows for, this study has selected three revisions of the same text belonging to different mediums: whilst one of them is a film, the other two are literary adaptations. Yet, the most remarkable argument in Hutcheon's work is that "multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically" (XV). Hence, she debunks the

discourse of fidelity and “any notion of priority” by preferring to use the term ‘adapted’ text rather than ‘original’ or ‘source’ text (XV). As a result, she firmly puts forward the idea of an adaptation as “a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary” (9). Additionally, Hutcheon states that not only does the adapted text influence its revisions, but the prior work is at the same time inflected by the adaptations themselves (139). As she argues, it is a ‘lateral’ relationship that benefits both sides. What is more, she claims that a revision is not at all “vampiric” because it may in fact “keep the prior work alive” (176).

According to Hutcheon, there might be many motivations for a text to be adapted. She acknowledges that revisions may be triggered by “economic, legal, cultural, pedagogical, political and personal” reasons (95). Nonetheless, the greatest pleasure of adaptation lies in combining “the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty” (Hutcheon 173). Whilst it is true that revisions are appropriations of already existing stories, every single one of them brings some variation and, thus, results in a completely independent work (Hutcheon 100). As Hutcheon puts it, “each adaptation must also stand on its own” (173). Because adaptations are often bound to specific contexts —cultural, ideological, social and historical— they tend to work as a mirror of the culture that has adapted them. It is precisely for this reason that a revision is valuable and worth analysing in itself, as it provides an insight into a specific society.

Finally, in the light of the aforementioned approach, this study intends to analyse Cunningham’s *The Hours*, Daldry’s *The Hours* and Lippincott’s *Mr. Dalloway* as ‘derivations’ of Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* that are not ‘derivative’. Though Cunningham’s *The Hours* and Lippincott’s *Mr. Dalloway* maintain the medium of the adapted text, they both provide altered plots and different perspectives on the prior story. In contrast, Daldry opts for a cinematic adaptation, allowing the use of a wide range of techniques which are not possible in literature. Therefore, all these works bring new variations to Woolf’s story, creating a complex mosaic of intertextual relationships among them. Additionally, because contemporary resonance is key for a text to be adapted, these recent revisions of *Mrs Dalloway* may indicate that the topics discussed by Woolf are still relevant nowadays.

3. VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS DALLOWAY*

3.1. *The Modernist Fragmented Self*

The modernist movement emerged in the late 19th century and reached its peak at the beginning of the 20th century, rejecting the assumptions and values previously established during the Enlightenment and its concomitant style, Realism. According to the scholar Peter Childs, Realism is “an attempt objectively to offer up a mirror of the world, thus disavowing its own culturally conditioned processes and ideological stylistic assumptions” (*Modernism* 165-66). Nonetheless, this alleged objectivity was insufficient for modernist writers, who believed it only allowed a restricted representation of characters. In contrast, “Modernism is associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism: to represent consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and the individual’s relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunneling” (Childs; *Modernism* 165). Hence, modernists explore the individual as a fragmented and unstable self, an ambiguous subject encompassing many realities.

Coming from a well-educated background, Woolf became part of an intellectual elite known as the Bloomsbury Set, constituted by a series of undoubtedly talented English writers, artists and philosophers, including her future husband, Leonard Woolf. Her membership to this social group “allowed her to blossom as a writer, because she was given the encouragement and freedom she needed to experiment with her prose” (Cheshire ix). It is precisely this experimental, modernist writing that she presents in *Mrs Dalloway*, published in 1925 and considered by many scholars one of the greatest modernist novels. According to Malcom Bradbury and James McFarlane, Woolf presents three notable narrative techniques typical from modernist writing (481). Firstly, the absence of a reliable omniscient narrator is compensated by the use of the stream of consciousness, constantly flowing in and out of the characters’ minds. Though Woolf still includes a narrator in the story, it exists always in subordination to the characters’ voices (Oosterik 35). Secondly, the novel offers an open-ended narrative, in which the ending is left uncertain and ambiguous. Last, the narrative defies the traditional chronological pattern. Whilst chronology does exist in public or “real time”, it completely dissolves during the time spent in the characters’ consciousness, what Childs calls “private time” (Childs; *Modernism* 171).

On the other hand, Woolf also experiments with a more profound way of representing character by offering an introspective and reflective point of view. In her own words, “I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters, I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth” (Woolf; *Diary 2* 263). Thus, she indeed endorses the modernist concern for exploring the deep complexities of the individual, these ‘beautiful caves’, moving away from the more traditional writing techniques of Realism. As Childs argues, the consciousness of the character comes to the fore through what he calls a “tunnelling” technique, going hand in hand with the literary innovation known as the stream of consciousness (*Modernism* 165). Childs states that “she would burrow into the characters’ pasts in order to unearth their history. Her characters are then revealed to the reader as split beings who are living in the past and the present” (*Modernism* 165-66). By immersing into the characters’ memories and associations, Woolf portrays their pasts into a single-day novel. Ultimately, Woolf’s innovative form of characterisation illustrates the multiplicity and intricacy essential to human experience.

3.2. ‘Queerness’ in Mrs Dalloway

In relation to the modernist fragmentation of the individual, the present analysis will focus on two particular characters in the text which are highly fragmentary. Though this discussion will concern Clarissa Dalloway for the most part, there will also be references to Septimus Warren Smith, who also represents the modernist notion of the artist as a visionary. Both characters portray a “sexual division in the mind that Woolf terms ‘androgyny’”, interpreted by Childs as “just one part of her wider assault on the coherence and stability of unitary consciousness” (Childs; *Modernism* 167). In other words, Woolf fuses and challenges the traditional constructions of femininity and masculinity by presenting two highly ambiguous characters in terms of gender and sexuality. Thus, Septimus and Clarissa may be read as instances of queer subjects, whose fluid identities defy culturally set boundaries. Whilst they are both in an heterosexual marriage and are, therefore, trapped in what Rich calls “compulsory heterosexuality” (654), there are also hints of their homosexual feelings towards other characters. Nonetheless, this stepping out of normative gender formations leads towards feelings of virtual annihilation and anxiety in both characters.

On the one hand, Clarissa Dalloway is presented in the narrative as an ordinary woman of her time, more precisely, a middle-aged upper-class housewife. By emphasising the character's marital status in the title of the novel, Woolf is already pointing at a female protagonist who depends on others for self-definition, a woman "defined in terms of her husband, her identity submerged in his, even her first name erased by her social signature" (Showalter). What is more, this is emphasised in the novel by describing her as "being Mrs Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs Richard Dalloway" (Woolf; *Dalloway* 12). Paraphrasing De Beauvoir, Montashery claims that "throughout history women have been reduced to objects for men" and, therefore, they "have been deprived of subjectivity" (126). In fact, Clarissa herself "had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown" (Woolf; *Dalloway* 12). This idea, furthermore, goes back to Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), where she states that "women serve as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (Woolf; *Room* 30).

Assuming the queer notion that gender identities are culturally and fictionally constructed through discursive and non-discursive practises, Clarissa may as well be read in the light of Judith Butler's theory of performativity⁴. This character is repeatedly performing the prescribed position for the female at the time, that is, the role known as the 'angel in the house'⁵: the devoted, submissive, ever-pleasing, self-sacrificing wife and mother. As Butler argues, "this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (*Gender* 95). Then, the formation of subjectivity is only achieved through the process of becoming, as she asserts that "gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts" (Butler; *Gender* 25). Hence, Clarissa constructs herself as a subject by performing the normative gendered behaviours established by the society she inhabits. Nevertheless, because this society is male-centered and strongly patriarchal, female subjects are often diminished and silenced. Additionally, her obsession for ordinary domestic concerns culminates in the preparation of the party set for that evening. She

⁴ See also Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* and "On Being Directed" in *Living a Feminist Life*, where she argues that society 'orients' women through norms towards following specific 'life lines'.

⁵ This term comes from the title of Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House", published between 1854 and 1862, in which he describes the courtship of his idealized wife.

then performs the role of the “perfect hostess” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 9), who “did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 12). Again, Clarissa constructs her identity only in relation to others since, as Montashery points out, “without her social mask, Clarissa is nobody, a woman with no distinct identity” (127). Because of this fear of annihilation, it is natural for her to be entirely devoted to her party.

Though seemingly superficial and slight at first, Clarissa encompasses many ambiguities and uncertainties as an individual, as Woolf later reveals by unveiling her troubled thoughts, anxieties and hidden memories as the day passes by (Showalter). Her façade of decorum gives way, thus, to the internal crisis of the fragmented subject, which is directly related to what Childs names her “sexual division” (*Modernism* 167). While it is true that Clarissa submits to heteronormative values, she also represents, at the same time, female resistance against oppressive patriarchy by attempting to dismantle and transcend its assumptions (Montashery 126). As Montashery argues, she first does so by displaying “rather masculine traits” instead of “feminine” ones (128). Whilst she is described as “timid”, “hard”, “arrogant”, “prudish”, “devilish” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 61-2), “cold as an icicle” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 82), her old friend Peter Walsh further reaffirms this by calling her “cold, heartless, a prude” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 9). Peter, hence, is here the embodiment of the patriarchal society they live in, which believes the aforementioned descriptions are more appropriate for a man rather than a woman: “Qualities such as reason and activity are associated with masculinity, whereas emotion and passivity are aligned with femininity” (Montashery 128). Other instances of characters who embody phallogentrism may be Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw. Paradoxically, Clarissa’s description is juxtaposed to that of Peter Walsh, who is depicted “as being a womanly man” (Childs; *Literature* 111). Because the qualities connected to men are perceived as superior and more valuable, “empowered men use their positions of power to subordinate women” (Montashery 126). More precisely, this is illustrated by Peter’s frustration after being rejected by Clarissa. “Peter finds her impenetrable and unyielding, and takes this as a sign of her ‘indomitable egoism’” (Montashery 126). Nonetheless, by resisting to Peter she is challenging patriarchal hierarchy, dismantling traditional gender boundaries and moving to some sort of “little independence” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 9). Yet, because she is ostracised and

annihilated as a subject by dominant culture, she is never allowed “to experience full subjectivity” (Montashery 126). With that regard, Clarissa’s enthusiasm for organising parties is also an instance of her resistance, as Peter and Richard are highly critical of them: “Peter and Richard, and by extension patriarchal society, plot to drive Clarissa to the attic like a madwoman to alienate her” (Montashery 127). It is precisely at the height of her party that she has her final move away from phallogocentric values, when she sympathises with Septimus’s suicidal act and accepts the view of ‘death as an embrace’ (Montashery 127).

In relation to sexuality, Clarissa’s implied lesbian attraction towards Sally Seton further challenges traditional gender constructions. The kiss between the two women, which constitutes one of the most remarkable moments in the novel, is described as “the most exquisite moment of Clarissa’s whole life” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 37). As Childs asserts, “we are told of Clarissa’s pleasure, which is like a man’s, when kissing Sally Seton” (Childs; *Literature* 111). This homosexual experience is indeed described as emotional and physical, further blurring and troubling the boundaries between gender identities. Therefore, at this moment “Clarissa resists the phallogocentric assumption that desire runs from one sex to another (opposite sex)” and steps out of the culturally imposed gender pattern by kissing another woman (Montashery 128).

Nonetheless, her attempts for subject definition and re-definition against dominant values are ultimately frustrated by what Rich calls “compulsory heterosexuality” (654). This culturally imposed construct based on male dominance serves as an apparatus for controlling and subjugating women, especially marginalizing lesbian experience. As a result of the overriding force of patriarchy, Clarissa is driven to divest herself from her homosexual feelings, annihilate her physical self by marrying Richard, finally submitting to culturally imposed heterosexuality (Showalter). Furthermore, this entails fitting into the prescribed heteronormative life cycles, what Judith Halberstam identifies as “the heteronormative time of reproduction” (4-5). Clarissa ends up in the core of an heterosexual family, marrying Richard and having a daughter, as any other woman of her time would have been expected to do. Even the apparently rebellious Sally is eventually overcome by heteronormativity. Simultaneously, Woolf introduces the striking of Big Ben “as the analogy between the hours of the day and the female life cycle” (Showalter).

On the other hand, the character of Septimus is also worth mentioning regarding gender formations. According to Elaine Showalter, “Woolf contrasts Clarissa’s crisis with the despair of Septimus Warren Smith, a young veteran suffering from mental disturbances”. Septimus, therefore, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, what is also known as ‘shell-shock’. Because mental instability and emotional vulnerability were highly perceived as ‘feminine’ at the time, Septimus is hence believed to be “lacking ‘manly’ courage” (Childs; *Literature* 111). Woolf further distorts gender boundaries by introducing undertones, albeit very subtly, of homoeroticism: Septimus grieves the death of his beloved friend (and perhaps lover) Evans, thus suggesting an ambiguous relationship between the two. This brings Childs to argue that while “Woolf gives us the archetype of social masculinity, a soldier”, he also encapsulated “what Western culture perceives as both aberrant and feminine” (*Literature* 111). Additionally, Septimus absolutely rejects the aforementioned patriarchal figures of Dr. Holmes and Bradshaw, who would like to ‘stabilize’ his identity by forcing him to conform to a conventional lifestyle. Because he is a highly fragmentary and unstable subject, Septimus is rejected and annihilated by the society surrounding him, leading him to leap out of the window at the end of the novel. Suicide, then, is seen as the only way of escaping this entrapment within patriarchy. Ultimately, “by linking Clarissa and Septimus emotionally and symbolically, but never physically, Woolf shows two sides to a single identity” (Childs; *Literature* 111), an identity which is non-fixed and uncertain.

In conclusion, Woolf troubles and dismantles the traditional formations of gender identities by presenting two characters who transgress categorisation and, therefore, might be illustrative of queer subjects. By challenging gender categories Woolf is precisely bringing their fictional and constructional nature to the surface. Clarissa, the protagonist of the fiction, both gives in to heteronormative assumptions and challenges male-centered patriarchy through her “sexual division in the mind” (Childs; *Modernism* 167). Though she endeavours to construct her subjectivity as a unified individual, this is eventually shattered, as identity is inherently socially constructed (Butler) and inevitably fragmentary, dynamic and always in the process of becoming. Because the discourses that construct gender identities are highly patriarchal, feminine identity is often ostracized and rendered invisible, as well as any subjectivity stepping out of the traditional gender patterns.

4. MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM'S *THE HOURS*

4.1. *An Update of Mrs Dalloway*

Cunningham's widely acclaimed novel *The Hours* has been considered by many as the most notable and successful adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, revising not only its structure but also its motifs. Having received the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award, it offers a "rewriting, a recycling, or perhaps rather an update not only of events and ideas from Mrs Dalloway but of characters and relationships as well" (Lindgren 506). More precisely, Cunningham overtly presents the novel as an adaptation through the title itself, as it directly refers to Woolf's first full-length manuscript of *Mrs Dalloway*, also titled "The Hours" (Schiff 380).

In terms of intertextuality, Liedeke Oosterik states that connections between Woolf's and Cunningham's works may be established at three different levels, namely the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic (38). Regarding the syntactical level, Cunningham reproduces the single-day structure presented in Woolf's novel, or rather the "idea of a woman's whole life in a day" (Lindgren 504), whilst he also adopts the narrative technique of the stream of consciousness. Nonetheless, Cunningham remarkably expands the story into a "postmodern polyphonic narrative" (Lindgren 504). He presents a tripartite narrative by interweaving the stories of three women living at different time periods and locations, all of them connected to the novel written by Woolf: the story of Virginia Woolf herself whilst writing *Mrs Dalloway* in 1923 in Richmond, the story of Laura Brown reading the novel in Los Angeles in 1949, and the story of Clarissa Vaughan as the protagonist of Woolf's fiction at the end of the 20th century in New York.

With regard to semantics, Cunningham purposely names some of his characters after those present in works by Woolf, also making reference to her personal life by transforming her into a fictional character (Oosterik 40). Instances of this might be the character of Laura Brown, whose name is inspired by Woolf's essay "Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown" (1923), and also the scene representing Woolf's suicide. In relation to the pragmatic analysis, Oosterik mentions three specific events that unite both novels: the suicide, connecting the character of Septimus with Cunningham's Richard; the kiss, present in the three narrative strands and making reference to the famous scene between

Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton; and, finally, the “unnamed illness” connecting the troubled Septimus with Laura Brown and Woolf’s mental condition (41). Furthermore, the three women spend their day preparing a party to some extent, further reinforcing the intertextual links with the protagonist in *Mrs Dalloway*.

This being said, the present analysis will focus on one of the most relevant instances of Woolf’s legacy in *The Hours*: the portrayal of highly ambiguous and unstable characters who comprise “multiple selves”, reflecting the modernist and later postmodernist notion of the fragmented self, which is pivotal in *Mrs Dalloway* (Schiff 371). Throughout the novel characters reflect on their life choices and imagine multiple fictive selves, thus emphasizing their instability as subjects and the complexity of human experience. This multiplicity is “enhanced in *The Hours* by the fact that these three women, whose lives echo one another, can be viewed as ‘identities-in-relation’, aspects of a collective female self, three versions of a twentieth-century woman” (Schiff 371), thus leading to Rich’s notion of a “lesbian continuum” (648). Finally, because their ambiguity as individuals is highly portrayed in terms of gender and sexuality, the characters in *The Hours* may be read as instances of queer subjects.

4.2. Cunningham’s Queer “Identities-in-Relation”⁶

The three protagonists in *The Hours* have “similar psychological states” and “thematic affinities”, especially regarding their gender and sexual identities, which are portrayed as uncertain and constantly fluctuating (Lindgren 510). Precisely, this constitutes one of the main reasons for adapting *Mrs Dalloway*, since this ambiguous nature of the self in terms of gender and sexuality “has even greater currency within a contemporary world actively and openly exploring gender construction” (Schiff 364). Additionally, Cunningham further expands this topic by acutely introducing some “changes in public attitudes toward sexual orientation since Woolf’s time”, mostly in the story of Clarissa Vaughan (Schiff 364). On the whole, his characters still disrupt socially defined and constricted identity categories and may, therefore, be described as queer. As a result, they feel trapped and nullified within a social system that rejects transgression, just as Clarissa does in *Mrs Dalloway*, so they end up questioning “assigned and sometimes uncomfortable and painful roles” (Lindgren 511).

⁶ Schiff 371.

To begin with, Cunningham's three main protagonists are introduced through chapter headings, more specifically, Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown. Significantly, they are "all markers of identity", which directly links to the title of Woolf's novel (Lindgren 511). As in *Mrs Dalloway*, these titles "suggest heterosexual marriages, a suggestion which is made problematic", as the three women are initially defined in relation to others (Lindgren 511). Whilst Mrs Woolf and Mrs Brown have indeed received their last name as a result of their marriage, Mrs Dalloway is instead an assigned literary name to Clarissa Vaughan. Yet, the character who chooses her nickname is a man. Then, Cunningham's choice of the characters' names is deliberately intended to emphasize "the role imposed on a woman through marriage", which "can alter the character's personality" (Lindgren 512). As a matter of fact, all three protagonists seem to be 'performing' specific gender roles and thus support Butler's notion that gender is "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts" and cultural practices that "produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (*Gender* 33). Specifically, characters perform the assigned role patterns of the female at the time, that is, the identity as mother, wife and life partner. As Woolf's Clarissa, they also represent the hostess identity, as "questions of nurturing, of preparing food, of hosting parties are central" in each story (Lindgren 512). Nonetheless, these roles are "made problematic in all three strands of *The Hours*", as all women struggle and fail to fulfil them to some extent (Lindgren 13).

On the one hand, Laura Brown "wants to be a competent mother reading calmly to her child; she wants to be a wife who sets a perfect table" (Cunningham 101). After World War II women were expected to return back to their roles as housewives, especially devoted to nurturing their husbands and "creating a comfortable home for the returning war hero" (Kokkonen 22). This is the case of Laura, who decides to marry a war veteran "out of guilt; out of fear of being alone; out of patriotism" (Cunningham 106). However, she feels nullified by her new identity and dissatisfied with this lifestyle, which has deprived her not only of her maiden name but also of her identity as an independent subject. Illustratively, Laura feels driven to "perform a play for which she is not appropriately dressed, for which she has not adequately rehearsed" (Cunningham 43). This undoubtedly links to Clarissa's feeling of not being "Clarissa anymore" but actually "Mrs Richard Dalloway" (Woolf, *Dalloway* 12). As a means of

escaping this suffocating reality, Laura immerses herself in reading Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, a book that becomes crucial in the rethinking of her life choices. However, Laura is forced to "rise and be cheerful" because "she must please, she must continue" to perform the prescriptive standards of a woman in the 1940s (Cunningham 41-205). Furthermore, this narrative strand also explores the topic of motherhood. Laura intends to love her son unconditionally, but this ends up being an all-devouring relationship which is full of tensions, and hence she feels unable to ease herself into this role. Laura attempts to excel as a housewife and mother by baking a birthday cake for her husband Dan, which may be read as a symbol for "successful femininity" (Kokkonen 25). Because she fails in making the perfect cake, her identity as a wife, mother, hostess and, ultimately, as a woman, metaphorically crumbles, since she has been unable to fulfil the duties expected from her. This is further emphasized with the visit of Laura's neighbour, Kitty, who represents the embodiment of perfect wifeliness. Consequently, her struggle to perform the expected identity and her feeling of worthlessness lead her to a hotel room where she contemplates suicide. Though she discards this option, she feels "trapped here forever, posing as a wife" (Cunningham 205), and thus decides to formulate "a plan for the rest of her life, a plan that will entail leaving her family" (Lindgren 519). Ultimately, Laura represents the resistance against culturally imposed gender roles and the possibility of escaping them, although in the eyes of society she will always be "the lost mother, the thwarted suicide... the woman who walked away" (Cunningham 221).

On the other hand, the character of Mrs Woolf in the novel "is not fulfilling the traditional role of a mute homemaker reserved for women any more than the real Virginia Woolf" (Kokkonen 46). As Laura Brown, Virginia Stephen also left her old self behind when she became Virginia Woolf. Leonard sees her as Virginia Stephen, "pale and tall, startling as a Rembrandt or a Velásques" but also as Virginia Woolf, "suddenly no longer beautiful" (Cunningham 33). Virginia opts for staying in her room to write her novel *Mrs Dalloway* rather than performing the expected domestic wifely duties, such as managing the servants and the household. Consequently, she struggles with her right to work, precisely as a writer, which needs to be yielded in order to fulfill the role that has been assigned to her: "Virginia's need to work and her ability to work override all her responsibilities as a wife and as a proper matron" (Kokkonen 48). This

directly connects with Laura's difficulty in maintaining her identity as a housewife and, while she escapes through reading, Virginia does so by writing. Virginia's performance especially crumbles in front of Nelly, a servant who highly disapproves of her for not being a competent mistress. Similarly to Laura's story, Virginia's failure is further highlighted by the visit of her sister Vanessa, who is the personification of the Victorian 'angel in the house' and fits in the role of wife and matron flawlessly, as Cunningham states that "Vanessa manages beautifully" (87). As a result, Virginia's attempt to perform the housewife identity and to pretend to be healthy in front of Leonard "makes Virginia's personality seem somewhat blurred and certainly unfixed" (Kokkonen 62), which is further reinforced by her illness. Additionally, the traditional identity as husband is also disrupted and unstable in this story, since Leonard acts as Virginia's caretaker and nurturer, a role culturally associated with women. According to Eerika Kokkonen, "he is somehow effeminized", as he is portrayed as a fragile and sensitive man who worries about her wife's illness and supports her work, a description which deconstructs him as a patriarchal figure (56). Nonetheless, the only way Virginia can escape the pressures to become an ideal woman is by drowning herself in the river Ouse.

With regard to Mrs Dalloway, Cunningham introduces a modern version of Woolf's protagonist under the name of Clarissa Vaughan, living in New York City in the mid-1990s. Due to the progress achieved in legal terms and also in public views on homosexuality over the second half of the 20th century, Clarissa is allowed "to live a domestic and sexual life largely unavailable to Clarissa Dalloway in the 1920s London" (Schiff 368). Whilst Woolf's Clarissa was driven to repress her lesbian attraction and conform to heteronormativity, Clarissa Vaughan is openly a lesbian living with her long-term partner Sally. However, her marriage is ordinary and conventional, seen as a parallel to that between Clarissa and Richard in Woolf's novel, its only non-traditional element being the homosexual relationship (Haffey 152). What unites Clarissa to the two other protagonists is that, however disruptive her family may seem at a glance, she still "battles with the legacy of traditional femininity" (Kokkonen).

According to Butler, "there are structures of psychic heterosexuality within gay and lesbian sexuality and relationships", as each partner may adopt 'masculine' or 'feminine' characteristics. Caring, nurturing and domesticity are still assumed to be

feminine roles. This is the case of Clarissa Vaughan who, despite being a lesbian, is described as “a society wife” (Cunningham 20). Because Clarissa constructs her identity as a housewife, as a mother and as a perfect hostess, Kokkonen claims that “she has not managed to avoid the roles and performances of femininity” which Laura and Virginia strive to achieve (Kokkonen 79). Hence, Clarissa’s family is traditional except for the fact that it lacks a patriarchal figure. Yet, this masculine role is present in the peripheral character of Richard Brown, Clarissa’s old friend and lover who is suffering and dying from AIDS. However, their relationship now resembles more that of a mother and a child (Kokkonen 72), since Clarissa has devoted herself to nurturing and taking care of him. As Louis thinks, “[s]he’s gone beyond wifeliness. She’s become her mother” (Cunningham 130). Not only does she mother Richard, but she also performs the role of the mother with her daughter Julia, being her sole biological parent. Because their relationship is another instance of heteronormativity, Clarissa feels guilty for “depriving her of a father” (Cunningham 157), further emphasizing her position as a self-sacrificing and servile female. The tension increases with Clarissa’s attitude of disapproval regarding Julia’s relationship with Mary Krull, a parallel to Clarissa Dalloway’s views on the friendship between her daughter and Miss Kilman. Mary Krull stands in clear contrast to Clarissa Vaughan, representing a “threatening feminist agenda” (Lindgren 513). In fact, Mary sees Clarissa and Sally as “queers of the old school, dressed to pass, bourgeois to the bone, living like husband and wife” (Cunningham 160). Additionally, Clarissa Vaughan is also hosting a party that evening, just as Clarissa in *Mrs Dalloway*, in this case as a celebration for Richard. Though the party “brings her a sense of safety”, the hostess identity is an uncomfortable role for her and produces “a sense of dislocation” (Cunningham 91). Significantly, she never gets to host the party, since Richard dies just a few hours before.

As in the two previously analysed characters, Clarissa Vaughan is also oppressed by patriarchal roles and trapped in her identity as wife, mother and hostess, leading her to a sense of nonbelonging and to feel “as if she’s suffocating” (Cunningham 222). This is reinforced by Richard’s use of her nickname, Mrs Dalloway, which “is hardly the ideal image of a woman” (Lindgren 515). In response, Clarissa wishes “to dispense with the old nickname” (Cunningham 55). Nevertheless, she is only able to leave behind this identity after Richard’s suicide, which echoes Septimus’s

suicide in Woolf's novel. As Cunningham puts it, "here she is, herself, Clarissa, not Mrs Dalloway anymore. [...] Here she is with another hour before her" (Cunningham 226). Ultimately, by presenting a character who does not differ much from Woolf's protagonist, "Cunningham suggests that strict demarcations between queer and straight are problematic and that sexual orientation is complex and fluid" (Schiff 368).

Having said this, all three characters in *The Hours* have succumbed to the pressures imposed by the heterosexual society they inhabit and, thus, have settled down to a comfortable life in "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich 648), just as Clarissa in *Mrs Dalloway*. Making reference to Clarissa Vaughan, Kokkonen claims that "not even lesbian co-existence is liberating", as the character still responds to "housewifery and domesticated femininity" (67). In relation to this, all women in the novel conform to Halberstam's "heteronormative time of reproduction" (4), a sense of temporality which is symbolically represented by the title of the novel. Whilst they all live in an heteronormative marriage, only Virginia remains childless. Nonetheless, Cunningham disrupts this heteronormative time by delivering a reproduction of the well-known Woolfian kiss in each of the narrative strands. First, Laura kisses her neighbour and friend Kitty and Cunningham states that, albeit in the presence of Laura's son Richie, "they both know what they are doing" (110). This leads her to "dream of kissing Kitty again someday" while still feeling desire and love for her husband (Cunningham 143). Furthermore, her performance as a mother and as a housewife crumbles when the possibility of a different life opens up in front of her eyes. Secondly, Virginia kisses "not quite innocently" her sister Vanessa (Cunningham 210). Virginia's performance, consequently, falls apart in front of Nelly. This kiss, which is fully charged with sexual tension, is described as "the most delicious and forbidden of pleasures" (Cunningham 154). For Virginia it "represents the life she cannot reach and which she can only reinvent for her character of Mrs Dalloway" (Kokkonen 59). Last, Clarissa recalls a kiss with her old lover Richard and wonders "what might have happened if she'd tried to remain with him; if she'd returned Richard's kiss on the corner of Bleecker and MacDougal" and realises that "[s]he could have had a life as potent and dangerous as literature itself" (Cunningham 97). In this case, "there is this sense of missed opportunity" (Cunningham 97).

Therefore, each female in *The Hours* is forced to question and examine the nature of her sexual identity through the Woolfian kiss, trespassing prescriptive boundaries and reinforcing “the fluid, non-stagnant and unfixed nature of gender and sexuality” (Kokkonen 77). Having experimented with both heterosexual and homosexual identities, they remain uncertain of their choice, thus challenging the stable and constricted gender constructions of compulsory heterosexuality. In other words, Laura, Virginia and Clarissa become queer subjects who reject categorisation. As Schiff states, because “each of these women desires to touch or kiss someone whose gender is not that to which they are usually drawn”, Cunningham “universalizes the ambiguity of sexual identity and desire” (371). Additionally, the kiss represents “a moment of possibility, of stepping outside daily routines and conventional narratives”, or rather of breaking with heteronormative reproductive time (Haffey 157). What is more, all kisses entail the feeling that “anything might happen” (Cunningham 210).

Ultimately, Cunningham presents three queer protagonists whose lives reflect and influence each other and may be interpreted as “identities-in-relation” (Schiff 370). Not only are they “linked together by their connection to the book written by one of the first wave feminists”, but they are also connected in a lesbian continuum (Kokkonen 17). As Rich argues, this “woman-identified experience” consists of “the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the receiving of practical and political support” in order to challenge and resist traditional, compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 648-49). Precisely, the women in the novel support and assist each other in the struggle against dominant patriarchy. Finally, the novel forces us to “go back to the very creation of the preceding text” and “read it differently”, not only because of the extremely elaborate intertextual tapestry that Cunningham has achieved, but especially for the lesbian continuum encompassing the protagonists from both texts (Lindgren 507).

5. STEPHEN DALDRY'S *THE HOURS*

Whilst adaptations of literary works may be produced in any form and genre, it is true that, since the beginning of adaptation studies, special emphasis and importance has been particularly given to film adaptations, mainly due to their success and popularity. According to Hutcheon, cinematic techniques allow for many advantages over other mediums: “the use of a multitrack medium, with the aid of the mediating camera, can both direct and expand the possibilities of perception” (Hutcheon 42-43). This move “from telling to showing” involves a “different grammar”, as “description, narration, and represented thoughts must be transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and images”, and a successful narration is finally achieved through “various shots, linking and editing” (Hutcheon 36-40). Therefore, it is highly enriching for this study to include a reworking of *Mrs Dalloway* belonging to the medium of film, in contrast to the other selected revisions.

Having said this, Stephen Daldry's 2002 film *The Hours* is an acknowledged adaptation of Cunningham's novel *The Hours* or rather, according to Lindgren, “a three-step adaptation process: from written text to written text to film” (Lindgren 504), obviously making reference to the connection with Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Starring Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore and Meryl Steep in the leading roles, the film reproduces Cunningham's polyphonic narrative by visually illustrating the interweaving of the three different stories presented in the novel: Virginia's story is “sepia tinted”, Laura's story is “represented in bright colours”, and Clarissa's story is “depicted in plain, realistic hues” (Lindgren 504). Furthermore, the film allows for the condensation of the narrative plot presented in the novel, as the “stories are interlaced within each other in terms of setting, crosscutting, sentence-following-sentence [...] not only in the manner of shuffling the episodes” as in the literary text (Levy).

Additionally, the new medium also gives more depth and brings to the fore certain themes introduced by Cunningham, especially the topic of female entrapment in patriarchal gender constructions, that is, in domesticity and homemaking, which is much more overt and explicit than in the novel, thus becoming central in this cinematic adaptation. The film's focus on social and gender politics is achieved through Daldry's choice of cinematic techniques, namely dialogue, editing, framing, setting and movement (Levy). Even in the story of Clarissa Vaughan, marriage is portrayed as a

catastrophe for women, thus emphasizing the view of marriage as a patriarchal device to nullify them⁷. Because Clarissa and Sally have a lesbian relationship in this story, this means that heteronormativity is not only present in heterosexual marriages but also in homosexual ones. In other words, women are by all means confined in what Rich calls “compulsory heterosexuality” (654), no matter their sexual orientation. Hence, Clarissa is still trapped in her identity as a housewife. With regard to this character, there is a scene in the film where Daldry’s cinematic style particularly enhances her sense of confinement in domesticity, and by extension, in patriarchal gender constructions. After receiving the visit of her friend Louis, Clarissa experiences an outburst of anxiety and angst, which is portrayed through her physical expressions (00:52:16-00:55:57). Furthermore, this is supported by the movement of the camera and the frame’s design, as it transitions from a full-shot to a close-up: Clarissa moves from standing in the kitchen to “slowly approaching the corner of the kitchen, progressively shrinking her body until she is seated on the floor”, while “the shot gradually narrows as the frame catches less of Clarissa, up to the point that she seems to be trapped in the kitchen corner” (Levy). Significantly, the kitchen symbolises domesticity and homemaking, the forces oppressing the character.

As regards the character of Laura Brown, she is portrayed as a challenge to conventional motherhood, another central theme of the film. Daldry especially deals with this topic in the conversation between Laura and her neighbour Kitty. During this encounter, Laura’s pregnancy is juxtaposed to Kitty’s inability to have children, which leads to Kitty’s comment that “You’re lucky, Laura. I don’t think you can call yourself a woman until you’re a mother” (00:38:36-00:38:42). This statement clearly introduces the idea that “motherhood is the only real indication of womanhood”, thus reinforcing the traditional female identity as a mother (Lindgren 514). Nonetheless, Laura does not feel comfortable performing this role, as may be seen whenever she is in company of her son Richie. The child is constantly watching and examining her and, especially because the word ‘mommy’ is present in almost all the sentences he utters, he contributes “to the pressure and serves as a constant reminder of the centrality of this particular identity” (Lindgren 518). What is more, Richie’s obsessive sense of

⁷ For further research on the topic of marriage and family life in Daldry’s *The Hours*, see Julianne Pidduck’s “The Times of *The Hours*: Queer Melodrama and the Dilemma of Marriage”.

observation may be read in the light of Laura Mulvey's theory of the "male gaze" (837). According to her, one of the pleasures offered by the cinema is scopophilia, that is, the pleasure of looking. Nonetheless, "[i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female", which means that women are looked at and displayed as images (and objects) whilst the male gaze "projects its phantasy on to the female figure" (Mulvey 837). In this case, Richie is clearly the bearer of the look, thus representing this male gaze, whilst Laura is the object being looked at. Going back to Butler, she indeed needs to adequately 'perform' her femininity.

On the other hand, both the aforementioned compression of plot and Daldry's cinematic style enhance "not only the representation of [female] oppression, but also resistance to it and release from it" (Levy). The sense of domestic confinement and entrapment experienced by the characters is "analogous to a state of form of death within life" (Levy) from which they attempt to escape. Hence, Virginia intends to catch a train back to London, Clarissa wants to set free from Richard's nickname, and Laura Brown leaves her husband and children behind (Levy). This may thus be read as a form of female resistance in order to release themselves from patriarchal roles and expectations, this resistance also being more explicit in the film than in the novel. What is more, the motif of death is pivotal in this cinematic adaptation, functioning "as a space through which, even if indirectly, feminist resistance is achieved, as a possible escape from the confinement of a living death" (Levy). Significantly, this theme is directly inherited from Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, in which Septimus's death serves as a reaffirmation and validation of life for Clarissa. Therefore, "it is thus not only death itself that offers escape, but also the vicariousness of it" (Levy), that is, another's death allows the validation of one's life. Similarly, the topic of a death that validates life is also recurrent in the film. Whilst Richard Brown's suicide frees Clarissa Vaughan from her nickname, and by extension from her constructed gender identity, it also reaffirms the value of her life. In the same way, Virginia Woolf's suicide makes Laura Brown realise that her life is "a form of living death" and, rejecting the idea of her own suicide, she "chooses a life that is liveable for her" (Levy), though it will entail abandoning her family. In her own words, "[i]t was death, I chose life". Hence, both Laura and Clarissa

are, directly or indirectly, released from their sense of entrapment through another person's death.

Because the notion of death as validation of life is central in the film, Daldry uses the character of Virginia Woolf to explicitly voice it. When her husband Leonard asks her "[w]hy does someone have to die?", Virginia replies "[s]omeone has to die in order that the rest of us shall value life more. It's contrast" (01:32:54). As a significant cinematic choice, Daldry doubles Virginia's suicide scene, since not only is it depicted at the beginning as in Cunningham's text, but also at the end as an epilogue, thus functioning as a metaphorical frame for the film. Moreover, the cinematic language used in this scene further contributes to the concept of death as release from oppression. The extreme close-up on Virginia's hands while she writes her suicide note metaphorically expresses her feeling of entrapment (00:02:07-00:03:11). In contrast, this is juxtaposed by the open long-shot in the filming of her suicide, in which the frame not only includes her figure in the middle, but also the view of the river and the sky (Levy). Then, Virginia's death "is shown as it is crosscut against the stories of the two other women as they end their day", thus interlacing the three stories and pointing at their final escape from an entrapping life (Levy). Ultimately, Daldry uses the theme of death as a catalyst for valuing life and achieving release from oppression and, as a result, choosing life over a living death (Levy).

With regard to the interweaving of the three stories, not only do the three characters relate and influence each other in the film, but also "it seems as though they in fact live alongside each other, as if the years do not come between them, and, in a way, live within each other" (Levy). Hence, this new medium allows an even richer and more successful representation of Rich's "lesbian continuum" (648), going one step beyond Cunningham's text. As in the novel, the three protagonists may also be interpreted as different representations converging into just one single woman, for multiplicity is an inherent characteristic of the modernist self. In order to transfer this sense of intertwined identities to the frame, Daldry uses several cinematic techniques: crosscutting scenes, "a series of motifs that recur in each of them separately" and "the repetition of dialogue lines" (Diehl 94). In this sense, it is worth noting that, even with the lack of dialogue, the cinematic language used in the opening scenes of the film is already presenting the three women as interlaced characters, with "a crosscutting of the

three women, equating their lives and statuses” (Levy). More specifically, “all three women are first introduced in bed, after a presentation of their spouses”, who “are all first presented as they walk back toward their respective homes” (Levy). The spouses are presented in wide shots where both the camera and the characters are in movement. In contrast, the opening scenes of Virginia, Laura and Clarissa are filmed in much more narrow shots where only the camera moves while the women remain in a static position (00:03:35-00:06:23). Therefore, Daldry presents these three lives “as analogous to each other, and insinuates to their parallel sense of entrapment, being those who are static in the domestic space, versus their partners, who are presented in movement” (Levy). Yet, the three stories are deliberately distinguished by the use of titles.

In relation to the motifs connecting the various narrative strands, Diehl highlights “eggs being cracked for cooking, food being thrown away or disregarded, two women kissing each other (in two cases there is a small child watching), parties” (94). Furthermore, the theme of flowers, especially yellow roses, is skilfully used by Daldry in the opening scenes of the film in order to “join thematically and visually the three women”, as a “series of match cuts show vases of flowers lifted off tables in one setting and put down in another” (Lindgren 510) (00:08:11-00:08:28). Nonetheless, the most powerful visual theme connecting all three women is water. Firstly, the film begins with a literal plunge of Virginia Woolf as she walks into the river with stones in her pockets, making direct reference to the writer’s chosen mode of suicide. Significantly, this scene will return at the end, the imagery of water thus becoming a framing device in this adaptation. In connection to this, the cathartic scene in a hotel room is visually powerful as well, this time in Laura Brown’s narrative strand (Levy) (01:04:47-01:05:32). According to Lindgren, “the film’s dramatic rising river is used as a visual connection to the scene opening the film” (519). The use of water and Laura’s struggle to breathe metaphorically represent her internal debate since, similarly to Woolf, she is contemplating suicide. However, in contrast to Woolf, Laura jumps up from her fantasy of drowning and chooses to live.

As for another connecting device, several lines are repeated throughout the film, “always originating in the character of Virginia, either in her writing or her dialogue” (Diehl 94). For instance, the scene when Virginia writes the first sentence of *Mrs Dalloway* is significant in this sense. After talking to Leonard, Virginia goes to her

room and starts writing, and a cut takes the action to Laura Brown picking up the book and starting to read. Both Virginia and Laura say the first sentence aloud: “Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself” (Woolf; *Dalloway* 1). Immediately after this we cut to Clarissa Vaughan in New York saying to her lover: “Sally, I think I’ll buy the flowers myself”. As Lindgren states, “these scenes establish in an instant, both visually and audibly, that the women’s lives are intertwined”, noting that “this instantaneousness is virtually impossible in the written form” (Lindgren 511). Similarly, when later on Laura continues to read the novel, “the voice of the character of Virginia Woolf is the one that is heard” (Levy), as a voice-over, thus bridging the two characters. Then, dialogue lines are repeated in more instances, such as “What does it mean to regret, if you have no choice?” (Virginia to Leonard and Laura to Clarissa), and “I don’t think two people could have been happier than we have been” (Virginia to Leonard and Richard to Clarissa) (Diehl 94).

In addition, whilst the book “mostly relies on the consciousness of the three main female characters”, the film allows focalization in other characters by incorporating their point of view, among which Richard is the most relevant one (Levy). As in Cunningham’s text, the end-of-century Richard is suffering and dying from AIDS within a society that highly stigmatizes this illness, which is relevant when analysing Richard as a queer identity. As Annmarie Jagose claims, the emergence of queer theory was partly “in response to the AIDS crisis”, especially in order to resist the “growing homophobia brought about by the public response to AIDS” (94). Remarkably, “AIDS enables—and at times, demands—a radical rethinking of the cultural and psychic constitution of subjectivity itself”, just as queer challenges stable and fixed constructions of identity (Jagose 95). Therefore, Richard is a clear instance of a queer identity reinforced by his fluid sexuality, since we learn that he has experienced both heterosexual and homosexual relationships in the past. Additionally, the character of Richard is especially connected to Woolf’s Septimus and also to Virginia Woolf herself. Firstly, both Septimus and Richard are trapped in moments of death: whilst Septimus holds on to the loss of his friend and lover Evans during the war, Richard feels confined in his illness. In contrast, Clarissa Dalloway and her contemporary impersonation, Clarissa Vaughan, repeatedly recall a summer of their youth, which may be interpreted as a moment of happiness and life. Therefore, these two sets of characters clearly

endorse two opposite visions of life. For one thing, both Clarissas find pleasure in the little things in life, thus escaping any prospect of suicide. Contrarily, Septimus and Richard, similarly to Woolf, transcend this vision only to find absurdity and meaninglessness, that is, no sense in life. As a matter of fact, this transcendental approach to life is precisely the most relevant connection encompassing Septimus, Richard and Woolf, all of them portraying the modernist notion of the artist as a visionary. Furthermore, they also represent the relationship between artistic creation and madness as, significantly, all of them are writers and suffer from a mental disorder. At last, the three characters escape the futility of life and the hostilities of the system they inhabit through suicide.

Ultimately, Daldry's use of cinematic techniques allows for a remarkably rich and complex revision of Cunningham's *The Hours* and, by extension, of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Not only does he depict the constrictive nature of gender constructions and the exploration of female identity, but he also illustrates the inherent complexity of human beings. What is more, whilst in Woolf's text the fragmentation of the self is represented as a tragedy, Daldry translates the complexity of the individual into multiplicity that needs to be celebrated. In other words, the modernist notion of the subject has been rewritten from a postmodernist perspective. In order to do so, Daldry adopts Cunningham's three main characters, unfolding Woolf's Clarissa into three different women and, at the same time, these three women converging into just one, thus representing the multiplicity of the self. As in Cunningham's text, the choice of three characters living in different points in history not only portrays the construction of femininity throughout time, but it also shows the historical progress of homosexuality in Western culture. It is through the insightful use of visual and auditory narration that Daldry's adaptation contributes to the already existing intertextual relationship between Cunningham's *The Hours* and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Once more, an adaptation feeds back into the adapted text(s).

6. ROBIN LIPPINCOTT'S *MR. DALLOWAY*

Though Robin Lippincott's novella *Mr. Dalloway* is perhaps not so well-known as other revisions of *Mrs Dalloway*, it is still worth analysing because of its contribution to Woolf's text, especially regarding queer identities. In contrast to Cunningham, Lippincott decides to set his story in the same time period as the adapted text and appropriates some events from it as well. Nonetheless, as his most remarkable innovation, he shifts the narrative perspective by "transfocalizing Woolf's story, now told mainly from the point of view of Richard" (Latham 18) whilst Clarissa becomes a secondary character, thus giving voice to a minor character who is only sketched in *Mrs Dalloway*. According to Monica Latham, Lippincott presents Richard as the main protagonist of his novella and gives him "more substance, a life of his own, his own memories, sensitivity, moments of being", through a "process of migration" where "the Dalloways bring with them their own Dalloway-esque narrative universe" (18-27). Therefore, Lippincott's parallel world "adds a new layer of fiction to a pre-existent familiar setting" which is not only considered a "creative response", but also a "sequel" of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (Latham 12-21).

On the one hand, Lippincott adopts many themes from Woolf, among which the modernist and postmodernist notion of the fragmented self, as Richard states "[h]ow many selves we have. [...] And probably each of those personas held at least ten different personalities within them so that, my God — one had forty selves" (Lippincott 37). What is more, similarly to Cunningham and Woolf, this instability and fluidity of the subject is especially portrayed in terms of gender and sexuality. Whilst both Woolf's and Cunningham's texts have references and allusions to homosexuality, albeit very subtle and encoded in the former, they are considered to be "female-centred" (Schiff 374). Then, though it is true that gender constructions and sexual orientation have been previously addressed in Woolf studies, "the focus has been on lesbianism" (Schiff 374). In contrast, Lippincott seems more interested in exploring male homosexuality, namely Richard's, Robbie's and Duncan's, thus becoming the central topic in the novella. In order to do so, Richard Dalloway is "limned as gay or bisexual [...] to demonstrate that (his) sexual orientation, like that of his wife Clarissa, is equally ambiguous, complex, and veiled in secrecy" (Schiff 372). Therefore, Richard is clearly portrayed as a queer subject in *Mr. Dalloway*.

To begin with, Lippincott significantly includes paratextual elements at the beginning of the novella, more specifically, ten extracts from previous works by Woolf, mostly *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Voyage Out* (1915). These carefully selected quotes “hint at the various aspects of Richard’s character that have not yet been fully developed or articulated”, thus anticipating the direction where the novella is headed (Schiff 373). As Schiff argues, some extracts point at the uncertainty behind Richard’s “whereabouts” (373): “For in marriage a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house [...] (Where was he this morning for instance?)” (Lippincott i). Then, there is also a sense of mystery regarding the relationship with his father: “I didn’t get on well with my father” (Lippincott i). Nonetheless, what is most relevant for this study is that his “potential androgyny”, or rather his ‘queerness’, is suggested (Schiff 374): “No one understood until I met Richard. He gave me all I wanted. He’s man and woman” (Lippincott ii). As Latham notes, this extract not only highlights the complicity and affection between Richard and Clarissa, which is ever-present in *Mr. Dalloway*, “but also Richard’s dual human and sexual nature, as well as his feminine and masculine sensibility” (Latham 19).

Similarly to Cunningham, Lippincott reproduces the single-day structure presented by Woolf, though this time centred around Richard’s life. As the narrative advances we learn that Richard has a “secret” (Lippincott 7), that is, that he has had an extra-marital affair with another man called Robert Davies, or rather Robbie, for ten years. Then, we are also told that only “Clarissa knew. And she had understood” (Lippincott 10). During the novel both men “transgress some of the ground rules governing their relationship”, as not only does Robbie go to Richard’s house without any notice, but he also shows up at his party without having been invited (Schiff 374). Therefore, the tension of the story stems between “Richard’s public life with Clarissa and his secret life with Robbie” (Schiff 374), questioning whether the secret will be revealed. Additionally, the character of Richard is portrayed with the same “deeply introspective nature” (Latham 22) as Clarissa and Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway*, as he also spends his day reflecting on his present and past life. Similarly to Septimus’s hallucinations about his past lover Evans, Richard “hears the voice of his dead brother and sees his ghost several times during the day” (Latham 23). What is more, Lippincott implies the existence of a passionate homoerotic relationship between Richard and his

brother Duncan by saying that “One of his earliest memories was of Duncan and him in bed together, [...] It was what they had done together only a handful of times — exploring; discovering” (Lippincott 41-62). This relationship is comparable, to a certain extent, to the one between Clarissa and Sally Seton. Furthermore, as Septimus Smith in Woolf’s text, Duncan commits suicide, a traumatic event that troubles Richard’s life evermore. Symbolically, Robbie also attempted suicide by throwing himself off a window, a theme that connects him with Cunningham’s Richard.

On the other hand, as in *Mrs Dalloway*, the protagonist is entirely engaged in preparing a party arranged for that afternoon. This time, though, it is not Clarissa who is in charge, but rather Richard himself, who assumes Clarissa’s position by performing the role of the host, the role that Clarissa “loved most and was best known for” (Lippincott 137). Then, Richard decides to prepare a surprise party to celebrate the thirtieth wedding anniversary of the Dalloways, which will consist in a trip to see the eclipse at Brandon Fell, North Yorkshire⁸. Nonetheless, because the role of the host tended to be assigned to women, Richard is constructed as being rather ‘feminine’ or ‘feminized’, this also relating to his homosexuality: “it was just like Richard to buy the flowers. For there had always been something — was ‘feminine’ the right word? There had always been *something*, whatever it was, about him [...] it was something soft, something pliant and unmanly” (Lippincott 153; emphasis original). Yet, a significant instance of Butler’s theory of gender performativity is the moment when Clarissa prepares for the party and arranges “her entire countenance and dress, the person she would present that night at the party, Mrs. Richard Dalloway of thirty years, Clarissa Dalloway, Elizabeth’s mother” (Lippincott 112). As in Woolf’s text, she still conceives herself in the identity of the mother and wife, thus nullifying her own autonomy as a subject.

In the same line, Eileen Barret argues that marriage in Woolf’s novel destroys not only women, but also those “men whose passion is for their own sex” (154). That is, compulsory heterosexuality nullifies women as well as homosexual men, as they feel trapped within the constrictive nature of heteronormative gender categories. In Richard’s own words, “Richard is a ‘we’. He thought now. A ‘we’ — sanctioned by

⁸ This event was experienced by Woolf herself and later described in her diary. See *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, edited by Anne Olivier Bell.

marriage, by society” (Lippincott 76). This “we” not only refers to Richard’s multiplicity as a subject, but especially to his ambiguity in terms of sexuality, which transgresses heteronormativity and, hence, is “sanctioned” by mainstream culture. Because of his transgressive relationship with Robbie, Richard thinks that “[e]verything, absolutely everything that he has ever known — beliefs, ideas, thoughts, feelings — all has been thrown off” (Lippincott 13). He is simply unable to identify with the patriarchal values he has involuntarily learned through culture. Consequently, “life as he had known it had felt so very, so terribly threatened; fragile” (Lippincott 33). Nevertheless, Schiff states that Richard’s plan to bring his guests together outdoors symbolizes “his desire to reveal publicly, and this way to legitimize, his secret inner life”, thus “facilitating (his) self-discovery” (373). At the end of the novella, Richard holds hands, albeit only for a moment, both with Robbie and Clarissa, which has been read as “a moment of true liberation [...] where Lippincott celebrates this moment of public disclosure; bestowing on his characters a freedom and self-acceptance that they are denied in Woolf’s text” (Schiff 375). Indeed, social norms are thrown off in a second. This is, therefore, a highly significant contribution to Woolf’s text. As in *The Hours* (both novel and film), *Mr. Dalloway* does not understand the fragmentation of the individual as a tragedy, but rather as a celebration of multiplicity. Remarkably, the novella ends with the sentence “It was a beginning” (Lippincott 215). Yet, Oscar Wilde’s trials and imprisonment are still recalled by Lippincott’s characters as a reminder of menacing patriarchy: “what Wilde had done and, subsequently, what had been done to him, had been hammered, repeatedly, again and again, into the minds of the young men of Robert Davies’s generation” (Lippincott 67).

Additionally, Lippincott fills his narrative with what Latham calls “Dallowayisms”, meaning not only metafictional references but also stylistic patterns combining “asyndeton (sentences juxtaposed by semicolon), ellipses, parenthesis [...]” (Latham 25) characteristically used by Woolf. Moreover, Richard and Clarissa ironically discuss Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, “which here remains unnamed, [...] acutely aware and oblivious to the fact that this novel contained them as characters” (Latham 24). This shows, precisely, an excellent use of postmodern playfulness and irony. What is more, Richard criticizes the novel for failing to portray his representation, saying that “despite (Woolf’s) keenly perceptive mind and — he must admit — considerable

descriptive powers, had not captured it all [...] *for she did not know; could not have known* — only Clarissa knew” (Lippincott 16-17; emphasis original). Undoubtedly, this statement refers to Richard’s homosexuality. Therefore, in spite of Lippincott’s obvious admiration towards Woolf, he manifests his desire to rewrite Richard. Later on, Virginia Woolf herself appears as a character in the novella, accompanied by Vita Sackville-West. Hence, “both the creator and her creature-character are transposed from their original environments and evolve together in a parallel narrative universe” (Latham 26), thus collapsing the diegetic levels of the text and blurring the boundaries between the real and the fictional.

Ultimately, Schiff states that even though “Lippincott’s act of ventriloquy is accomplished”, it is still rather “disappointing and hollow”, because “whereas Cunningham reinvented, Lippincott mostly borrows” (Schiff 372-73). Nonetheless, Lippincott’s contribution lies in giving a previously unheard voice an opportunity to speak, especially taking into account that this voice is queer. In Schiff’s words, “by adding depth and complexity to Richard’s character [...] Lippincott generates a more interesting, conflicted, and sympathetic figure” (Schiff 376). Furthermore, he also alters our vision of the Dalloway’s marriage by portraying it as much more complex than in Woolf’s text, showing that Richard as an individual is as fragmented, unstable and unfixed as Clarissa, especially reinforcing his fluctuating sexual orientation. In other words, Lippincott fills in gaps left by Woolf and opens up new paths for her characters, thus enriching and adding more layers to the adapted text.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The present study has attempted to show how later adaptations of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* not only draw on the prior text, but also inflect it by offering complementary layers of meaning. At the same time, revisions also seek to bridge the gap between the adapted text and the contemporary audience. In this regard, Woolf dealt with topics that still have great contemporary resonance, such as, for instance, the introduction of characters with fluid gender and sexual identities. More precisely, the emergence of queer theory just a few decades ago supported the unstable nature of identity, which was strongly endorsed by modernist writers and Woolf herself, by challenging normative models and discourses on gender constructions. It is precisely for this reason that this dissertation intended to analyse the characters in the selected texts as queer subjects, that is, as instances of highly ambiguous, non-normative individuals who resist categorization. One of the main aims of this study, indeed, has been to show how, by troubling and dismantling the traditional formations of gender identities, they are precisely bringing their fictional and constructed nature to the fore.

On the one hand, the study has demonstrated that the chosen adaptations can be read from the point of view of Judith Butler's theory of performativity, especially in the case of the female characters. In *Mrs Dalloway* Clarissa is constantly performing the identity of mother, wife and, above all, the hostess. In the same way, the characters in *The Hours*, both novel and film, are also trapped in the performance of prescriptive roles. This may be seen, for instance, in the character of Laura Brown, who is constantly reminded by her son to perform her role as a mother. In the case of Richard in *Mr. Dalloway*, he voluntarily assumes the role of the hostess, or rather the host, thus placing himself in a prototypically 'feminine' role. Yet, what encompasses all the main characters of the aforementioned texts is the fluid nature of their gender and sexual identities: they all have experienced, to a certain extent, both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, but their sexual orientations still remain undefined. Because they transcend the constrictive nature of traditional gender categories, not only do they feel uncomfortable performing the heteronormative patterns imposed by the society they inhabit, but they in fact feel trapped within what Rich calls "compulsory heterosexuality" (654). This situation is especially oppressive for women, who are also subjected to "the heteronormative time of reproduction" (Halberstam 4). The menacing

force of patriarchy leads, ultimately, to their anxiety and nullification as subjects, which is directly linked to the issue of suicide in the analysed texts.

On the other hand, all the selected rewritings of *Mrs Dalloway* involve, in one way or another, resistance to oppressive male-centred patriarchy. Significantly, both Cunningham's and Daldry's *The Hours* illustrate Rich's notion of a "lesbian continuum" (648) by providing three main female protagonists who not only influence each other, but also support themselves in transgressing traditional boundaries. Even though this interconnection among characters is already very strong in the novel, Daldry's cinematic techniques bring the intertwining of the three stories to a whole new level of complexity. Then, whilst Woolf's text regards the fragmentary nature of identity as a tragedy for the individual, precisely represented by Septimus's suicide, both *The Hours* and *Mr. Dalloway* support the postmodernist perspective of multiplicity as something that needs to be celebrated because it is liberating. Additionally, Lippincott significantly contributes to the dialogue between *Mrs Dalloway* and other adaptations by offering a male perspective on fluid sexuality, or rather, queerness. Hence, it further contributes to fragment Woolf's Mr Dalloway and to render it more complex.

Therefore, because these revisions are set in different historical moments, they allow for an overview not only of the developments in the construction of femininity and masculinity throughout time, but also of the changes in public attitudes regarding homosexuality and non-normative identities. Nevertheless, Clarissa Vaughan's narrative strand in *The Hours* is purposely used to highlight that, in the 21st century, and although there have certainly been notable improvements, there are still some aspects that have not changed much. That is, whilst she is able to live overtly as a lesbian, she is still trapped within heteronormative roles that suffocate her. In the same way, it is true that contemporary society is evolving towards an ever more inclusive mindset. Yet, gender and sexual equality is still a pending issue affecting not only women but also any identity that could be considered queer. In addition, even though it is true that later revisions of *Mrs Dalloway* include multiple layers of oppression in depicting their characters, something that remains yet unexplored in relation to this text is the topic of race. Hence, this may give rise to possible future adaptations of the text, as well as to further research which may explore how characters who are racially marked as 'Other'

are depicted in the adaptations, and how this contributes to inflect *Mrs Dalloway* by adding further layers of meaning regarding the fluidity and constructed nature of identity.

In short, Cunningham's *The Hours*, Daldry's *The Hours* and Lippincott's *Mr. Dalloway* establish an insightful dialogue with the adapted text, that is, Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, providing different perspectives on the prior text and creating a complex tapestry of intertextuality. This mutual relationship, thus, benefits both sides. Whilst Daldry and Cunningham engage in what may be an update of the story, Lippincott opens up new paths for already existing characters in Woolf's fiction. As a result, these revisions force us to look back at the adapted text in a different light. Hence, this dissertation has successfully proved that "multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically" (Hutcheon XV). In other words, all the analysed texts are "derivations that are not derivative — work[s] that [are] second without being secondary" (Hutcheon 9), thus debunking the traditional discourse of fidelity. What is more, this study has shown that, to the degree that identity is fluid, multiple and in constant evolution, so are texts and their possible adaptations, for it is the complexity of human experience that they are trying to reproduce after all. For this reason, adaptations may be regarded, as the term queer itself, as a productive, enriching and valuable "zone of possibilities" (Edelman 114).

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Barcelona, a 20 de juny de 2017

Signatura:

