

Film Adaptation as the Art of Expansion

The Visual Poetics of Marleen Gorris' *Mrs. Dalloway*

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Abstract This article discusses changes in central metaphors through which contemporary adaptation studies strive to chart the enormous territory of film adaptations that exists today. Previously concerned with privileging literary texts over their media 'replays', these 'new wave' studies tend to prioritize other aspects of the adaptation process: intertextual overwriting (Stam 2005), reappropriation of the literary past for the sake of the present (Sanders 2015), exploitation of literature (Cartmell 2017), etc. Departing from the metaphor of 'competition' between media (Jameson 2011), we suggest that the adaptation process be discussed as the art of expansion. The key issue in this research lies in bringing to the forefront the filmmaker's visual poetics and the place his/her adaptation has among other cinematic works of the same period. This article shows how Marleen Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) reveals its 'expansive' potential when read both through the lens of the heritage film style and the previous filmmaker's work, *Antonia's Line* (1995).

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Adaptation Effects: Competition vs. Expansion. – 3 The Comforts of the Heritage Film. – 4 The Interplay of Auteur Poetics and the Heritage Film Style. – 5 Conclusion.

Keywords Film adaptation. Auteur adaptation. Visual poetics. Film adaptation effects. The heritage film. Woolf. Gorris. Mrs. Dalloway.

1 Introduction

Contemporary film adaptation studies have undergone considerable evolution and have been actively engaged in the discussion and reinterpretation of their central concerns and issues, and their controlling metaphors. Surprisingly, a number of earlier studies of film adaptations did not engage with their own central metaphors. For instance, George Bluestone, who pioneered systematic close reading of literary originals and their film versions, called his work *Novels Into Film* (1957), thus describing the process in a detailed way yet without striving to attain any conclusion about the concept of adaptation.¹ Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film* (1996) appears to have followed

¹ More recently Bluestone introduced the metaphor of 'metamorphosis' (Bluestone 2003).

Bluestone's example by suggesting a purely narratological methodology for the analysis of filmic adaptations of literary texts. On the other hand, Joy G. Boyum, in her book *Double Exposure: Fiction Into Film* (Boyum 1985), introduced the influential and promising metaphor of 'double vision'. Boyum analysed the spectator's experience of watching a film adaptation, creating a balance between viewing and reading, looking back on literature and at the same time being subjected to the flow of audiovisual images.

A major change in adaptation studies occurred with the introduction of the intertextual approach and the idea of the continued 'overwriting' of previous works by new ones. This dialogic nature of adaptation, discussed, among others, by Robert Stam (2005) and Linda Hutcheon (2006), popularised the metaphor of 'palimpsest', which shows great explanatory potential for the field. Other important metaphors of 'appropriation' of the literary past for the sake of the filmic present (Sanders 2015) and the exploitation of literature on screen (Cartmell 2017) elaborate on this palimpsestic interplay of the filmic and the literary, the visual and the verbal.

There are other studies showing a different approach, among which stands out Simone Murray's attention to the cultural economy of film adaptation (2012). It marks a new turn in the discipline, replacing the textual and the viewer's response aspects of adaptation studies with the specificity of the adaptation industry and its players. The historic turn in film adaptation studies (as represented, for instance, by Greg Colón Semenza and Bob Hasenfratz) builds on Murray's results to demonstrate how film adaptations both emerge from film history and continue to shape it.

2 Adaptation Effects: Competition vs. Expansion

In his afterword to *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity* (2011), Fredric Jameson offers an interesting interpretation of contemporary adaptation studies. He points out that, in adaptation discourse, the approach based on the fidelity to the original text has become extremely unpopular. This is partly due to the postmodern erasing the cultural hierarchies between the literary and the adapted/filmic. Indeed, although the most prominent scholars working in the adaptation field (Stam 2005; Cartmell 2017; Hutcheon 2006; Leitch 2009) have approached their objects of study from different angles, they essentially agree on what Jameson calls "Derridean vigilance" (Jameson 2011, 215) about the many forms difference takes in adaptations, 'celebrating' the multiple interpretations literary texts acquire through different media replays. 'Identity or difference' is, according to Jameson, the philosophical form of contemporary adaptation debates. He sees the necessity to accentuate the difference, even antagonism, among texts that are linked through their plots (as a novel

and its film adaptation, for example), but that belong to different media:

This philosophical emphasis on antagonism and incompatibility does seem to me the most productive course to follow, allowing for an insistence on the material structure and constraints of the medium full. (Jameson 2011, 231)

Jameson also suggests that we should think about what happens in contemporary media in terms of the metaphor of ‘competition’. Different media (film, literature, theatre, TV, video games, etc.) compete to gain attention of their imaginary audience. This leads Jameson to consider the concepts of ‘antagonism’ and ‘incompatibility’ of media, which in turn allow to focus on their material specificity that constitute both their potential and their limit. Jameson argues that this ‘competition’ is implicitly present in a number of cases,

whenever a film pauses on a television monitor or a computer screen, whenever a television program projects a movie clip, or indeed when any of the visual media pause on the spectacle of someone reading a book. (232)

In order to grasp the ‘competition’ among media, Jameson suggests to apply Mihail Bakhtin’s ideas on the specificity of the novel: the novel as a younger genre competes with older genres such as the epic, or tragedy. Jameson mentions Bakhtin’s classic work *Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel* (Эпос и роман <О методологии исследования романа>, 1941) and quotes a passage in which Bakhtin formulated a distinction between those genres that assume a finished quality and the ‘unfinished’ novel. The novel, according to Bakhtin, is at war with older genres: where it triumphs, the older genres go into decline. Jameson finds a similarity between the novel understood in this way, and a film adaptation that, in Jameson’s interpretation (reformulating Bakhtin), “gets on poorly” (231) with literature as an older medium and fights with it. Jameson offers a picturesque allegory to highlight this idea:

The novel, even when written for adaptation by film, necessarily wishes the latter’s eclipse and death, and seeks to demonstrate the debility of a medium that has to rely on a literary ‘original’. But at one and the same time film believes that its triumphant incorporation of the literary and linguistic hypotext into itself, in a generic cannibalism or anthropophagy, sufficiently enacts its primacy in the visual age. (232)

We note the aggressiveness of the metaphors here suggested (“generic cannibalism”, “anthropophagy”). In contemporary criticism too adapta-

tions are widely discussed through an aggressive vocabulary, partly due to the Neo-Marxist stance and terminology of scholars, e.g. 'exploitation' (used by Cartmell 2017), or 'appropriation' (used by Sanders 2015).²

In this article I shall employ the term 'art of expansion'. In my opinion, it is of utmost importance that a film adaptation be regarded as a way to expand the literary original through other media means and resources. To see an art of expansion in the practice of adaptation allows us to prioritise the filmmaker's visual poetics and media context over the imaginary responsibility ('fidelity') that any film adaptation owes to its literary progenitor. The idea of expansion also allows to glean one of the effects of film adaptation from Jameson's 'competition': the film must make the viewer feel that, behind any adaptation, a contest is taking place between media, that a film seeks to triumph over a novel, and a filmmaker over a literary classic.

It is particularly auteurist adaptations that aim to produce the effect of competition and rivalry with their literary sources. For this reason Jameson, elaborating the metaphor of competition, offers a detailed case study of Andrey Tarkovsky's adaptation of Stanisław Lem's *Solaris*. The film adaptations of Marleen Gorris (b. 1948) can be expected to produce the same kind of effect. Gorris is a Dutch film auteur with a radical visual imagination and strong feminist beliefs. However, in spite of undoubtedly auteurist tendencies in Gorris' approach to adaptation, our task here is to demonstrate that her work helps to elaborate a different view of contemporary adaptation practices - not *in competition with* literature, but as other media's *expansion of* literature.

Gorris, if we can presume to reconstruct her intention (although risking the 'intentional fallacy'), aims less at competition than at cooperation. Cooperation (unlike competition) as a practice inclines one to consider one's potential contribution to the already existing creative work, in this case Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Dramatising Woolf's text, Gorris expands it by way of two types of visual imagery. The first derives from the well-established tradition of the heritage film. The other is rooted in Gorris's auteurist style, her visual poetics. The meeting of the heritage film, Gorris's filmic style, and Woolf's literary text produce an effect called 'expansion'. Through the expansion of the literary by the filmmaker's sensibility and style new meanings grow, multiply, and become more complex. This is how the literary survives and grows: the 'original' substance is performed by the new media and a new author.

In the next, third, section of this article I will focus on key features of heritage film stylistics to illustrate how Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* fits into

2 To compare, Canadian narratologist André Gaudreault calls adaptation "an art of borrowing" (Gaudreault. Marion 2018, 327).

the comfortable visual schemes created by that style. In the fourth section I will examine Gorris's radical visual imagination as it creates discomfort for the viewer, to demonstrate how the filmmaker's visual poetics and the heritage film style are integrated in her *Mrs. Dalloway*, and how a classic text changes its meanings when viewed through the lens of two different visual systems. The main task of this article is to define the performative meaning of an auteurist adaptation that does not exploit or appropriate but expands the literary through the filmic.

3 The Comforts of the 'Heritage Film'

Film adaptations of the prose of Virginia Woolf have been discussed in detail by Earl G. Ingersoll in *Screening Woolf: Virginia Woolf on / and / in Film* (2017). Ingersoll focuses on close readings of three adaptations (apart from two pastiches, *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham and its filmic adaptation by Stephen Daldry, and *Mr. Dalloway* by Robin Lippincott): *To the Lighthouse* (1983) by Colin Gregg, *Orlando* (1992) by Sally Potter, and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) by Gorris. Though it is difficult to underestimate her detailed, nuanced readings of the films in their comparison to the literary sources, Ingersoll obviously supports a literature-centred approach to adaptations and, therefore, focuses on the filmic 'difficulties' and 'failings' involved in adapting Woolf's texts.

In this article I offer a different approach and explore the film's visual systems as they incorporate the literary text. The first system to be considered is that of the heritage film style.

'Heritage film' is a term we apply here to a corpus of films shot in Britain in the eighties-nineties and often adapted from literary classics. A heritage film is a period film that reconstructs with a nostalgic stance the past of 'Britishness', that is, the British Empire before the First World War and between the wars. All that influences the viewer's visual expectations lies in the imagery: the costumes, landscapes and interiors. The heritage film provokes an escapist reaction on the part of the spectator, who looks back upon a problem-free, comfortable, aestheticized British past. The heritage film represents a model of the past that is 'likable', inoffensive, and user-friendly.

The heritage film flourished in Great Britain at the time when American investments in British film fell off dramatically: from \$270.1 million in 1986 to \$49.6 million in 1989 (Colón Semenza, Hasenfratz 2015, 323). The central canonic films of the heritage tradition belong to American film director James Ivory and are adapted from the works of E.M. Forster (*A Room with a View*, 1985; *Maurice*, 1987; *Howards End*, 1992). Another important name in heritage film production is Charles Sturridge who also adapted Forster (*Where the Angels fear to Tread*, 1991) and Evelyn Waugh (*A Handful of Dust*, 1988).

The heritage film continues an influential tradition in American and British film industries, that of films that transport the viewer to a romanticized past by way of period costumes, interiors, and picturesque English landscapes. In the thirties this niche was occupied by the so-called 'prestige films', such as *Wuthering Heights* (1939) by William Wyler and *Jane Eyre* (1943) by Robert Stevenson. The term 'prestige film' refers to classic Hollywood and British adaptations of works that occupy a higher position in the Western canon. In the sixties-seventies the so-called 'Panavision adaptations' came to the forefront. The term was introduced by Colón Semenza and Hasenfratz and refers to films like *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) by David Lean, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1967) by John Schlesinger, *Justine* (1969) by George Cukor, *Wuthering Heights* (1970) Robert Fuest, *Women In Love* (1969) by Kurt Russel, *The Duellists* (1977) by Ridley Scott. Colón Semenza and Hasenfratz explain:

[w]hile the earlier prestige films were generally shot in black and white, projected onto screens in the Academy ratio, and filmed largely in studio, these films employed wide-screen formats, usually Panavision, made full use of color, and were passionately dedicated to location shooting and a pictorialism arising from it. (Colón Semenza, Hasenfratz 2015, 270-1)

Thus, the heritage film emerges against the background of a well-established tradition of visually spectacular adaptations of the British classics.

The most representative figure in the heritage tradition, James Ivory, is renowned for working with the same international team, including script-writer Ruth Praver Jhabvala and producer Ismail Merchant. Ivory's work is a model for the heritage film proper. The structure of his films builds around a group of characters, the action developing slowly and gradually, with considerable weight placed on elaborate dialogue. Particular attention is paid to the style of the *mise-en-scène* and its elements such as setting and costumes. Heritage films usually do not pride themselves on experimental montage or sound effects. The *mise-en-scène* creates a special museum space ('heritage space', according to Andrew Higson): the elements of the setting are as if put on display, more spectacular than functional. Higson compares the heritage film with a 'jewel box' containing the treasures of a traditional past (Higson 2003). Elaborating on this image, we might imagine that the screen is the shop window of a jewellery boutique, opening onto the treasures on sale.

In the proposal episodes in *A Room with a View*, Ivory layered heritage elements one atop the other: a meadow in an English province with a horse walking on the grass; a young couple – Cecil Vyse (Daniel Day-Lewis) and Lucy Honeychurch (Helena Bonham Carter) – in an English garden, a blooming white rose in the foreground, a piece of garden décor, a small

fountain or a column. The next scene is set indoors, where the viewer can admire interior pieces: armchairs with embroidered cushions, glass bottles and decanters (responsible for the picturesque spots of light), a folding screen, a tortoise, figurines on the bookshelves.

In her comprehensive study, *Heritage Film Audiences* (2011), Claire Monk focuses on several types of pleasure audiences obtain when viewing these films. She considers visual pleasure in general, and the pleasure of looking at realistic/authentic details in particular. The spectator does not so much seek engagement in the plot, themes, and emotional context, but first and foremost appreciates the film's visual texture. This opposition of two audience responses, appreciation and engagement, is central to understanding the effects of the heritage film. Appreciation comes before engagement; moreover, viewers want to think that what they appreciate is well made, both materially and symbolically. Viewers, thus, are reminded that what they are watching has a high cultural value.

The heritage-film adaptation seeks to support spectators in their choice of a well-made film based on well-made literature dramatised by 'quality' directors and actors; spectators thus achieve endorsement that their taste is good. To a certain extent, this type of adaptation reduces the classical to the qualitative, prestigious, and respectable. Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* fits well into this stylistic system. Its leading roles are played by actors with an 'Ivory film past': Vanessa Redgrave (Mrs. Dalloway) had appeared in *Howards End* as Ruth Wilcox and Rupert Graves (Septimus Warren Smith) played a number of roles in the heritage films shot by Ivory and Sturridge. Special attention is given to settings, costumes, and props, and on-location shots remind viewers of the museum and jewelry box metaphors applied by Higson to Ivory adaptations of Forster and Henry James. Green lawns, young girls' white dresses and men's light summer suits; leisure hours spent reading, drinking tea, gardening, and taking long walks in the countryside; all these visual emblems of 'Britishness' are present in Ivory's films almost independently of plots and themes. Spotting the same visual markers in Gorris's film, viewers find themselves on the familiar territory of the typical heritage *mise-en-scène* with its comfort and visual stability.

The viewer's gaze is invited to take pleasure in the imagery of Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway*. The importance of the 'pleasure-gaze' is emphasised in the repeated scene of Clarissa's gazing at herself in the mirror (the lady in the mirror is a key motif, present, for example, in Woolf's short story *The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection*, 1929). On the one hand, the woman's gaze in the mirror offers a way to forefront the notion of passing time. The mirror is a register of changes, so obvious in appearance. On the other hand, Clarissa's gaze in the mirror is hardly only critical, or regretful. She looks at herself because she likes what she sees: admiring oneself in the mirror (vanity) is part and parcel of her preparations for



Figure 1. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

Figure 2. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

the evening party, where everyone admires each other's as well as their own looks (figs. 1-2).

The film's *mise-en-scène* (the work of production designer David Richens and costume designer Judy Pepperdine) invites the viewer also to admire, to 'window-shop', as it were, pictorial space and its details.

Another type of gaze, exploited in the film, is the sweeping gaze of the flaneur. It can also belong to Clarissa (though not only to her). Woolf's motif of strolling is dramatised in the film, as it becomes a *mise-en-scène* formula allowing the characters to walk through the city, their gazes sweeping over the cityscape. This journey of the gaze is replicated by the viewer watching the film. The viewers swap visual pleasures, which are both static (the costumes, the props) and dynamic (the camera work of the strolling gaze). And yet, the idea of elegant visual pleasures seems to contradict Gorris's style and the messages that her films seek to impart to viewers.

4 The Interplay of Auteur Poetics and the Heritage Film Style

Thematically speaking, Gorris confronts the condition of women in a world dominated by men. Her first film, *A Question of Silence (De stilte rond Christine M, 1982)*, explored an absurd criminal case in which three women, complete strangers to one another, murder a shop-owner who had accused one of them of shoplifting. The main character's refusal to speak and the inexplicable nature of the conflict force the women's court-appointed psychiatrist to take stock of her own life and its priorities. Another radical film by Gorris, *Broken Mirrors (Gebroken spiegels, 1984)*, focuses on events taking place in an Amsterdam brothel. According to the IMDb genre definition, the film is a 'psychological thriller'. *Mrs. Dalloway* then does not meet the typical expectations of Gorris's audience. Her adaptation of *Mrs. Dalloway* might seem to represent a discontinuity in her filmmaking practices. From our vantage point, however, no such discontinuity exists, and Gorris's adaptation of Woolf's text will be examined through the lens of her earlier film, Oscar-winning *Antonia's Line (Antonia, 1995)*. Thus I hope to demonstrate that, in her adaptation, Gorris is still working with her favourite themes and motifs, expanding the literary through the filmic.

Antonia's Line is a family saga that unfolds against the background of provincial Dutch landscapes. The events of this saga are juxtaposed to the idyllic background. Its plot centres on five generations of women; Antonia is the head of the family. Though she and her daughter, granddaughter, etc., face with a number of hardships (from religious hypocrisy to pregnancy out of wedlock, and male violence), all the women persist in having their own way, in accordance with their 'line', as the film's English title suggests. The filmmaker's explicit feminist views are dramatised through the figure of Antonia, her integrity, self-sufficiency, and strength.



Figure 3. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

Figure 4. *Antonia's Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia's Line International N.V./ Antonia's Line Ltd

Interpreting *Mrs. Dalloway* through the lens of *Antonia's Line* requires that we focus on two aspects of filmic narrative structure: the plot and stylistic leitmotifs. The similarities between the two plot structures are obvious from the very opening episodes of both films. They visualize one day in the life of a woman advanced in years. The continuity of the narrative, centered on the events of one day, is interrupted by a number of flashbacks/memories (almost a film-long one in *Antonia's Line*; shorter, more sporadic ones in *Mrs. Dalloway*). In the final scenes, having relived the past, the main heroines find peace. Antonia finds it in death. She dies surrounded by her large family, having done the most important thing in her life: she completed her personal project, 'drawing' her 'line'. While Clarissa paradoxically finds peace in her ability to embrace life again, for just another day, perhaps. On the level of plot, both films work with embedded narratives, shifts in time, shifts in the characters' age and appearance. In *Mrs. Dalloway* the role of the central character is played by two actresses, Vanessa Redgrave and Natascha McElhone (figs. 3-4).

The heroines' memories are stylistically marked in a similar way. Gorris uses double exposure and blurred focus to represent the transition from the present to the past, thus introducing a flashback. In doing so, she uses a common formal cliché to emphasise the importance of the frames and embedded structures in her film. This familiar technique marks the moment the heroine 'enters' the past. The same cannot be said about the point of 'exit' from the memory of the past back into the present time. The result is that both films blur the borders between the past and the present: eventually Gorris wants to emphasise that the present and the past are merged for her characters, and that there is no obvious hierarchy between them. This is visualised in the dancing scenes in both films. In the dancing scene in *Antonia's Line*, old Antonia acquires her middle-aged looks and waltzes with her 'dead' husband; to enhance the scene's metaphorical message Gorris resurrects a number of the dead characters of this narrative. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa dances with both Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh, changing partners, until finally there appears a freeze frame, an emblem of the idyllic times at Bourton (figs. 5-6).

In the visual poetics of both films a significant role is played by another *mise-en-scène* element, the shots of a woman by the window (figs. 7-8). In *Antonia's Line* there is a minor character, Mad Madonna (Malle Madonna in the Dutch version), a mad woman who howls at a full moon. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa opens the window and pronounces her inner monologue, which includes her suicidal intentions. Leaving aside the choice of the nickname "Mad Madonna", the issues that Gorris has with Catholicism and catholic neuroses, we need to explore this purely cinematic element, the visual rhyme that exists in the shot. The window places the two women in an imaginary framework producing the portrait of a woman that catches the viewer's gaze. The fact that the window is open underscores the visual



Figure 5. *Antonia's Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia's Line International N.V./ Antonia's Line Ltd

Figure 6. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P



Figure 7. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P

Figure 8. *Antonia's Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia's Line International N.V./ Antonia's Line Ltd



Figure 9. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc. / Newmarket Capital Group L.P

metaphor: the two women do not stand behind closed windows as silent witnesses, but open the windows to address the world and let their voices sound. While in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* Clarissa behaves like a distant observer, looking at an old lady across the street, in the film not only does she observe, but also tries to communicate. However, Gorris's Clarissa attempt at speaking out her feelings involves a communication failure, which emerges clearly when we compare the two scenes in the films: in fact, neither of the two women can indeed speak aloud. Mad Madonna does not articulate any language but only emits a sound. Clarissa speaks with a muffled voice, pronouncing a long inner monologue. The visual rhyme develops an important theme of Gorris, that of the question of the silence of the women who are unable or unwilling to talk about their condition.

This detail reveals how Gorris interprets Woolf's text, and how she manages to expand those themes that are more important for her through her visual poetics. Gorris's expansion makes use a feature that is characteristic of her style, that is, her technique of disrupting narrative continuity with short grotesque episodes that represent the characters' subjective vision. For instance, in *Antonia's Line* Danielle is a visionary artist who transforms reality with her gaze. A funeral scene is interrupted by Granny rising from the dead, sitting up on her coffin and singing an old popular song, *My Blue Heaven*. Her singing is accompanied by an imaginary choir, and the song is incorporated into the funeral hymns in a fine and absurd way, in a

scene that is both discomfoting and amusing for the audience. Another picturesque example that has become a visual emblem of *Antonia's Line* is the scene in which a school teacher, who Danielle fancies at first sight, turns into Botticelli's Venus.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* similarly disruptive elements are associated with both Septimus Warren Smith (who sees a friend killed in battle) and Clarissa (who sees Septimus in her mind's eye). Septimus's hallucinations are set in a scene in the park where the character sees his friend Evans wearing a uniform, blood smitten, slowly advancing toward him. "Evans, for God's sake, don't come", Septimus cries out, and Evans explodes, to be replaced by two laughing Londoners taking a walk in the park (fig. 9).

Reading the film adaptation of *Mrs. Dalloway* through both the heritage film tradition and the auteur style allows us to arrive at a conclusion about how an auteur works with the literary source. To represent the antagonism of the comfortable and the radical, the feminine and the feminist that Gorris considers essential in Woolf's text, she uses the conflict of visual emblems, opposing her visual poetics to the heritage film style. This conflict needs to be revealed for a number of reasons. First, Gorris works with Woolf's historic context, the world after the First World War. Septimus Warren Smith suffers from shell shock and thereby embodies echoes of the war. Gorris, an attentive reader of Woolf, depicts a world that is dangerously balanced between newly-established harmony and memories of the war. Second, Gorris links this context with the present, touching on issues of modern formations of feminine identity. The visual emblems of the heritage film, the accent on the material culture of the past, the beauty of costumes and interiors are linked to the feminine, womanly and comfortable. This is Mrs. Dalloway's choice, according to the plot. The emblems of Gorris's style, marking the problem zones (hallucinations, death, forbidden sex), belong to the territory of risks that Mrs. Dalloway tries to shut out of her life but contemporary womanhood, according to Gorris, cannot.

The resulting dialogue between the auteur's style and that of the heritage film translates Woolf's fragility of the inner and the outer, a fine line between the comfortable and the uncomfortable, fear and confidence, splashes of sensuality and frigidity, intense vividness of moments and everyday routine.

5 Conclusion

Using the film *Antonia's Line* as a lens for 'reading' *Mrs. Dalloway* helps us to discern a meaningful change that occurs in Gorris's version of Woolf's novel. In *Antonia's Line*, Gorris creates a model of a family of a radical type. In Antonia's house, at a big table, very different people get together: her new husband with his many sons, a former priest, two village fools,

two lesbian lovers, a village bookworm, etc. These people share the same values of tolerance that unite them more than family ties could do. However, this family does not look ultra-modern in its tolerance but reminds the viewer of pre-historic tribes, of the communal existence based on simple earthly cares. Antonia, if we follow Gorris's logic, takes all the responsibility for her family by reviving the values of matriarchy. She is a village matron, feeding, caring, defending. The characters of the film seem to accept this pagan ideology; they also live in tune with natural rhythms (haymaking, harvesting, etc.).

The accent on woman's central role is present in *Mrs. Dalloway* too. But it is *Antonia's Line* that helps us to see the affirmation of feminine vitality in that filmic adaptation of a classic novel, and appreciate the undoubted importance of what Clarissa is doing. Clarissa is not just arranging a party, she is organising a paradoxical family get-together; this family exists according to the rules established by her. Gathering a family is a womanly impulse that on the basis of Woolf's text Gorris fixes and affirms. In her interpretation this impulse offers a way to organise a woman's life and a way to oppose male dominance.

The detailed analysis of Gorris's two films reveals an important point for our analysis of cinematic adaptation of literary works: a close reading of the adaptation that prioritizes its links with its cinematic context allows us to see in the adapting practice the process of expanding literature. A cinematic version made by an auteur sets out to expand the literary and thereby to complicate it.

For scholars of film adaptation, I believe, a director's visual poetics offer a more productive point of focus than the poetics of the literary source. The literary source is not 'translated' onto the screen; instead, it is expanded through different media resources. This expansion is the effect of film adaptation that lies at the core of a film director's art and constitutes the viewer's experience.

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