

A composer's context is the strongest influence on their creation of texts.

Evaluate this statement with reference to the intertextual connections between *The Hours* and *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Woolf's novel Mrs Dalloway is influenced by its post-WWI context and an emerging feminist movement in exploring values of life's moments and an individual's personal agency in a time plagued by death and conflict. Daldry extrapolates the same central values in Mrs Dalloway, and creatively reshapes them in the form of his 2002 film The Hours to depict his post-modernist context of a war-weary world and the progress through each wave of feminism. Both composers challenge society's obsession with mortality as a result of a world terrorised by death and conflict. Despite differing contexts, both composers through their texts highlight the importance of valuing life's moments and individual's personal agency in a world of constant unrest.

Woolf's novel Mrs Dalloway explores the ontology of 'being' that arises from the shock of millions of people being killed in WWI, made possible by advancements in technology. The ontology of 'being' is explored through Septimus, who suffers from shell shock as a result of his near-death experiences in WWI, and feels that "I am dead, and yet am now alive." The juxtaposition of the two binary opposites, life and death, reveals that he has accepted the inevitability of death, and it is through this awareness that he is able to instead focus on life and the value of its moments. The sudden awareness of death also resonated with civilians that lived through the war and experienced their own losses. Clarissa, as a result of living through the war also has an awareness of death that allows her to appreciate ordinary moments in her life through her emphasis in "what she loved was this, here, now, in front of her"; an emphasis on the value of moments. The overlapping narrative of Septimus and Clarissa is ultimately connected by the mention of Septimus' suicide at Clarissa's party. The party is symbolic of a communal event where behind facades of festivity, a fear of ageing and death unites the guests, and it is this knowledge of their common fate that allows them to value the moment. Daldry similarly explores the ontology of 'being' in his text, thus both composers highlight its importance in a world where society is blinded by the fear of mortality.

Daldry's film creatively reshapes the universal fear of death that arose in a world that has suffered two world wars and constant conflict, to convey the value of moments. The universality of death is conveyed through the film's triptych form, that is ultimately connects the separate lives of its characters through the music score in the opening scene, thus establishing a unification of society through death, just like Woolf's symbolism of the party that unites its guests. Furthermore, the fast editing of flowers in all three character's life is a recurring motif in *Mrs Dalloway* that is creatively represented by Daldry to portray how the value of moments in ordinary things is what provides individuals with happiness. The contrast of the flowers' colours against the dull background further supports the emphasis on valuing things or moments that give colour and happiness to life, both explored by Woolf and Daldry. Daldry also incorporates intertextuality of Woolf's novel, which likens its characters to Woolf's and conveys that although written in different contexts, the world constantly suffers from conflict. Hence, both composers highlight the value of moments throughout the years for individuals as a way to cope with the conflict around.

Furthermore, Woolf's novel explores the value of personal agency as a right for all individuals, influenced by the emerging call for female empowerment through the Suffragette Movement. The opening line in Mrs Dalloway, "Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" is symbolic of female independence, yet the insignificance of the task also challenges the lack of agency women are given over their lives, restricted from any choice in providing their vote. The motif of the flowers throughout the novel again represents the inevitability of death, as flowers do not last forever. The

flowers are representative of the lack of choice individuals had over their life and death in the war, as civilians were forced into contributing to the war effort and became directly involved in WWI with no control over death. The lack of personal agency is challenged by Woolf through Septimus, in which war deprives an individual of their choice to live. Septimus' lack of personal agency is depicted through "but he did not want to die, life was good", where he perceives Dr Holmes as trying to dictate the way he lives by attempting to cure him of his shell shock. Septimus thus resorts to suicide, where the only way that allows him to feel a sense of agency over his life is by deciding his own death. Daldry's character Richard similarly explores agency through his resemblance to Septimus, thus both composers highlight the value of personal agency as a right for all individuals, in a world where death is out of our control.

Likewise, Daldry explores the value of personal agency through the progression of each wave of feminism, creatively using his three characters living in different times to illustrate and progress and change in society and challenge the lack of. Laura and Kitty's story, which takes place through the second wave of feminism, challenges societal perceptions that "I don't think you can call yourself a woman when you can't be a mother", illustrating the constricting nature of 1950's suburbia society that limits a woman's value to their role as a good housewife. Thus, Daldry demonstrates the lack of change in a female's personal agency despite his differing context to Woolf and highlights its importance as a right for all individuals like Woolf did. Additionally, it is the nature of time and how it inexorably goes on and does not stop for anyone that Daldry explores through the opening of his scenes with an alarm clock. The alarm clock symbolises the constraints of time and how it dictates each character's lives, a reminder of the limited time they have. The symbolism of the clock is similar to the clock motif in Mrs Dalloway, which Daldry creatively uses to demonstrate the existence of time throughout that we live by. The cross-cutting between the reflections of the characters further emphasises the lack of agency that comes as a result of societal constraints and expectations. The mirror symbolises each character's true self that is trapped behind, thus highlighting their lack of agency during times of conflict and ostracism of females and minority groups.

Ultimately, Daldry utilises his differing context to Woolf's to demonstrate that both values of moments and personal agency are values that transcends time, which both composers highlight as important in a world of constant conflict and death.