Fernanda Farias Friedrich

FROM *DEAD UNTIL DARK* TO *TRUE BLOOD*:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NARRATIVE IN THE NOVEL

AND THE TELEVISION SERIES

Florianópolis
2013

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Esta Dissertação foi julgada adequada para obtenção do Título de Mestre em Letras e aprovad(o)a em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/ Inglês e Literatura Correspondente da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

Local, 28 de fevereiro de 2013.

_____
Prof. Dra Susana B. Funck
Coordenador do Curso

_____
Prof.ª Dr.ª Susana B. Funck
Orientadora

_____
Prof.ª Dr.ª Maria Teresa Collares
Corientadora

_____
Prof. Dra. Maria Lúcia Martins
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

_____
Prof. Dra. Brígida de Miranda
Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina

_____
Prof. Dra. Magali Sperling Beck
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

Este trabalho é dedicado aos meus queridos pais e ao meu amor, Diego, por sempre me incentivarem a ir além.

ACKNOLEGMENTS

If there's specific resistance to women making movies, I just choose to ignore that as an obstacle for two reasons: I can't change my gender, and I refuse to stop making movies. It's irrelevant whom or what directed a movie, the important thing is that you either respond to it or you don't. There should be more women directing; I think there's just not the awareness that it's really possible. It is.

(Kathryn Bigelow)

RESUMO

O que acontece quando uma história é adaptada de um meio para outro? Todas as escolhas de uma adaptação são baseadas na conversão de uma mídia para outra ou existe mais além da adaptação do que ajustes técnicos e econômicos? Essa dissertação estuda o caso particular da adaptação do romance *Dead Until Dark* para a série de televisão *True Blood,* analisando as diferenças entre os dois meios. Partindo de aspectos da narrativa, técnicos e comerciais até a inclusão de discursos sociais e multiplas vozes culturais na série de televisão, o trabalho investiga o processo na adaptação do romance de Charlaine Harris para a série da HBO adaptada por Alan Ball.

Palavras-chave: **Adaptação, Série de Televisão, Romance, Narrativa, Discurso Social, Filme**

ABSTRACT

What happens when a certain story from one domain is adapted to a different media? Are all choices based on adapting a story from one domain to another or there is more in the adapting process than technical and economical adjustments? This thesis studies the particular case of the adaptation of the novel *Dead Until Dark* into the television series *True Blood,* analyzing the differences between both domains. From narrative, technical, and commercial aspects of the adaptation to the inclusion of a social discourse and multiple cultural voices in the television series. This work investigates the processes in the adaptation of Charlaine Harris's novel to the Alan Ball's HBO television series.

Keywords: **Adaptation, Television Series, Novel, Narrative, Social Discourse, Film**

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

REMARKS CONCERNING ADAPTATION AND THE CORPUS
OF THE THESIS

Adaptations from page to screen are common in our days. However, such work can be done in many different ways: from literature to film or television, from romance to drama or gothic, among many others choices that can be made. As the process of adapting a novel into a film or a television series is an issue that has been studied before, researchers have identified certain patterns in the adaptation of pages to screen, highlighting some recurrent uses in filmic adaptations. Those modifications include changes in the narrative style, the creation of new characters or substantial changes in the representation of a character, the creation of new story plotlines, among others. As Robert Stam states, "[a]daptações fílmicas caem no contínuo redemoinho de transformações e referências intertextuais, de textos que geram outros textos num interminável processo de reciclagem, transformação e transmutação'' (2006, 21). Although both, film and novel are strongly connected, one represents a rereading, transmutation or even the recycling process of the other (the original story).

The particular case which I will investigate in this thesis is the adaptation of the novel *Dead Until Dark* into the television series *True Blood*. It is a case of a novel that inspired a television series, and although it has similar characteristics to a filmic adaptation, it is important to emphasize that it is a different process, as the final product airs in a different domain. *Dead Until Dark* is the first book of a series of novels called *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels,* written by Charlaine Harris. *True Blood* is a television series that has been aired on HBO, a cable television channel, since September 2008, written and created by Alan Ball. The New York Times described *True Blood* back in 2009 as "the biggest thing on the channel since 'The Sopranos'", mentioning the series impressive ratings at the time, around 12 million viewers (Carter, par. 1) *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels,* also known as *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, is a series of novels written by Charlaine Harris. Until the year 2012, twelve novels were published, while In the year 2012, *True Blood* reached its 5th season, based on four different novels of *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels*

Although the first season of *True Blood* is an adaptation of the respective book of the series of novels, not all seasons are exclusively an adaptation of the respective novel in *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels*. Due

to the amount of possibilities in this work, my range will be limited in one novel and one episode in order to explore more deeply the relation between both. Moreover, in the present thesis I will only analyze the first book of the novel, *Dead Until Dark,* and the first season of *True Blood* – which was inspired in the particular novel. Nevertheless, as each season of *True Blood* lasts for 12 episodes of nearly one hour each, I intend to focus this research on the first episode of the first season, the one in which the main characters and the narrative style of the series are introduced. Thus, I will analyze how *Dead Until Dark* inspired *True Blood's* narrative, analyzing the plot and the characters adaptation to the television series.

   Dead Until Dark and *True Blood* both deal with the topic of vampires "coming out of the coffin" (Harris, 2001, 1). Novel and television series tell a story about how vampires and mythical creatures would be received in our contemporary world. As the vampires belong to Gothic genre, even if they are put in a social discussion such as the one *Dead Until Dark* and *True Blood*, it is important to stress that the vampires and the Gothic genre have gained highlight in literature, television, and film through out the last years[1]. However, the use of Vampires nowadays surpass its first propose as a Gothic object[2]. Brian J. Frost, points out as one of the most outstanding characteristics of vampires their ability to adept and fit in different categories (1989 1). In both *Dead Until Dark* and *True Blood* the vampires are portrayed differently from the first wave of vampires, which had its focus on portraying vampires as creatures far from human. Vampires were described as cold-blooded monsters, and even their appearance was not appealing, as James Twitchell describes in *Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic   Literature.* (1997 3). Nowadays vampires are much more pleasant to look at, and not only are they charming, vampires also are stressed as highly intellectual, being portrayed as creatures who are pursuing knowledge (Twitchell 1997 24). Instead of having the erg to kill humans, vampires have greater interests. But it is

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[1] As Catherine Spooner mentions: "In contemporary Western culture, the Gothic lurks in all sorts of unexpected corners. Like a malevolent virus, Gothic narratives have escaped the confines of literature and spread across disciplinary boundaries to infect all kinds of media, from fashion and advertising to the way contemporary events are constructed in mass culture" (2006, 8).

[2] Rosemary Ellen Guiley points out that Folkloric vampires were the source writers based themselves on when they wrote novels that turned the undead into characters inside Gothic literature (2005 xiii). That fact explains why when vampires first appeared on literature their existence was manly about frightening people, just like the images of Folkloric vampires were used to scare people.

important to stress that even though vampires are described as having other agenda, "the vampire's predatory nature is never completely vanquished" (Twitchell, 1997, 146). Although many of the Gothic characteristics of the vampires have remained, new elements were adapted to fit a different type of reality we live nowadays, just as Frost mentions it has happened throughout time (1989 1).

Hence, the story *Dead Until Dark* and *True Blood* revolves around the creation of synthetic blood which allows vampires to openly live among human beings. As they are segregated from society, they start to demand their rights in order to be treated as regular citizens. While the discussion continues between both parties, a telepathic[3] 25-year-old waitress from Bon Temps, Louisiana, USA, named Sookie Stackhouse meets a vampire named Bill Compton. Sookie reads other people's minds since she was a child. She tries to deal with her ability and control it, but she often cannot do it and she ends up reading minds that she was not willing to read. She suffers for being seen as different from everyone else and she endures trying to fit in.

When Sookie meets Bill she finds out that she cannot read vampires thoughts. The fact makes her feel comfortable around vampires, which results in her falling in love with Bill. Before she met the vampire she already had struggles for society to accept her as she was and after she and Bill become a couple, her fight is for society to accept them as a couple. Nevertheless, while in *Dead Until Dark* most of the story revolves around their romance, *True Blood* introduces us to other characters and plotlines, maintaining the love story between Sookie and Bill, but adding other plotlines, characters, and social discussions to it.

The story in the novel has a limited point of view, and an intradiegetic format, as the readers are limited to the narrator's perspective of what goes on in the story. The protagonist of the novel, Sookie Stackhouse, is the narrator of *Dead Until Dark*. When an event that is on the story goes on and Stackhouse is not around as a witness to it, other characters of the story tell her what they witnessed. Hence, as the speaker becomes the storyteller, Stackhouse ends up mentioning the facts that were told to her in a similar way she describes the ones that were actually witnessed by her.

However, the television series *True Blood* works in a different

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[3] Throughout the *Sookie Stackhouse Novels* and other seasons of *True Blood* this gift is revealed to be a characteristic of another mythical creature, a fairy. However, Sookie finds out she is a fairy in a future novel and a future season.

way. The narrative style is different, as it does not maintain the original first-person narration style of the novel. *True Blood* also presents more fully developed characters, revealing additional information about the character's personalities and the plots involving them. This development increased the differences between Harris's novel and Ball's television show, as *True Blood* viewers were able to witness new plotlines developed from a point of view of multiple narrators. *True Blood* has many points of view, each of them representing different characters and camera perspectives, while in *Dead Until Dark* the narrative works with only one non-omniscient narration and one point of view. Hence, filling out the main plotline with characters, plots, and increasing social discussions is part of the procedure of adapting the novel into *True Blood*.

1.1 The research objects

The general context of this investigation involves the study of the adaptation of narratives. What is necessary to change in the narrative of a novel to create a television adaptation of such work? Thus, the specific context of this investigation concerns the detailed study of the adaptation of the novel *Dead Until Dark* into the television series *True Blood*. Which recurrent action in the process of filmic adaptation are we able to identify in this particular case? What do the changes applied result into the new narrative? What might be the interests behind this particular adaptation?

As mentioned above, in *Dead Until Dark* only Stackhouse's point of view is revealed while in *True Blood*, new storylines are developed, since the narrative of the television series is open to the points of view of secondary characters and even an omniscient narrator, the camera. As a consequence, a more flexible narrative form takes place in the adaptation as new narrators with new individual utterances appeared. Since Stackhouse does not conduct the story as a narrator in *True Blood,* other characters gain notoriety to interact with her in order to translate her thoughts and behaviors from the novel into the television series. The interactions expose Sookie's point of view as well as the points of view of characters that are conversing with Sookie, and even the ones that are interacting among themselves without Sookie's interference.

The new utterances and multiple voices appeal to a broader range of viewers, as there is a more significant representation of many different discourses. Additionally, social discussions that were left out of *Dead Until Dark* are stressed in the adaptation, as the multiple voices allow multiple points of view to appear. That development permits a bigger approximation of the viewers to a bunch of different – and common in our society - struggles that the characters from *True Blood* go through in the television series. Social discussions gain space along with the representation of minorities groups in order to increase the social debate about segregation. That fact attracts more viewers who identify somehow with the struggles of fitting in the characters go through.

Hence, the main question raised by this study is related to how the story in *Dead Until Dark* went through changes to become the story in *True Blood*. I will investigate the transformations that the story went through, looking for evidences that demonstrate that even if changes were done in order to fit the new domain – and all of them are somehow connected to the change of the medium- , other substantial modifications

were made in order to increase the social debates. Thus, I will investigate the hypothesis about the social debates working as a tool for adapting the narrative of the novel into a television show. I will examine how the present adaptation works as a way to raise social debates among the audience, questioning prejudices, the necessity of fitting in and stereotypes. Even when acknowledging financial, cultural, social and technical aspects of the new medium, I intend to look for evidence that demonstrates the addition of cultural debates as an alternative by the team who adapted *True Blood*.

I will show throughout this thesis how other characters gained notoriety having their own utterance and showing their own story through individual plotlines. I will discuss how those new perspectives attract a broader type of audience, including who seeks for more than a female, heterosexual, white, young, from the southern part of United States, narrator. As mentioned before, reaching for a broader audience is a demand of the television domain as it reaches for a broader audience. Thus, *True Blood* had to fit the requirements of the domain. However, there were many tools for that to occur and I believe that increasing the social debates in the television show is a concern that goes beyond attracting more viewers for economical reasons. The possibility of all types of public being able to relate to the story in a deeper way increases the number of viewers – as the commercial demands of the television domain asks for. But *True Blood* also spreads a social discussion about many issues that are in vogue nowadays and are important for people to acknowledge. I believe, and I will demonstrate in this thesis, that beyond technical and financial aspects that concern an adaptation, *True Blood* has new voices, characters and plotlines working as a way of bringing a reflection about social differences to the mass audiences of television.

Unlike *Dead Until Dark*, a novel appealing to young woman because of its protagonist, as a television series, *True Blood* also set sights on male, gay, older, black, poor, and rich, among other viewers. In the first episode of the season we are able to identify eight minority characters in the television series, some of them fitting more than one minority group. In order of appearance: Nan Flanagan (woman and vampire), Unidentified Vampire from the liquor store (vampire), Sookie (woman and Special abilities person), Sam (Shape shifter), Tara (woman and black), Lafayette (black and gay), Bill (vampire), Rennè (cajun). There are other debatable minorities which includes only being a woman or being a redneck, both might fit as minorities by itself or not, depending on the point of view.

Moreover, the minority groups are highlighted in *True Blood* as

the series develops characters from the novel and adds multiple narrators' providing the person who watches the show additional information about the other characters in the plot. It creates a larger empathy with different types of narrators/characters, including the minorities, more than *Dead Until Dark* was able to present. Hence, from a technical point of view, the new plotlines that were added to *True Blood* also work as a particular resource to make the story longer, supplying more conflicts to the original plot. Therefore, by adding different discourses, the overall story becomes more suitable for the audiovisual domain. Thus, I highlighted some significant concepts about film adaptation I think are fundamental in order to understand the theoretical aspects concerning the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* into *True Blood*.

1.2 The research tools/ Theoretical Framework Concerning Adaptation

Comparing one medium to another is not the only task that must be done in order to analyze an adaptation. As Stam points out, there are some other issues that must be investigated: "[o] problema que importa para os estudos da adaptação é que princípio guia o processo de seleção ou "triagem" quando um romance está sendo adaptado? Qual é o "sentido" dessas alterações?" (Stam, 2006, 41). When Stam questions why certain changes have to be made in order to adapt the narrative of a novel in to a new medium, he questions the meaning of those changes and what they will represent inside both domains. The article "*Teoria e Prática da Adaptação"* analyzes films, which were inspired by novels, and are received, thought, and criticized by the audience. As it gives an overall look on the issue of adapting novels into screen, Stam writes about understanding an adaptation as an intertextual practice.

The discussion Robert Stam rises about the importance of acknowledging ideologies and social utterance as tools used when adapting a novel into the audiovisual domain (2006, 44) is applicable to my studies about the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood*. It reveals the interests that might have delineated the selection of what formed the narrative of the television series. Stam questions why certain plots are closer to the narrative of novel and other are more independent than the narrative of original piece. Moreover, he questions about what determines that the plot has to create more or less plotlines or/and characters and what social discussions have to be deeper.

The importance of the cultural and political aspects are reminded by Stam when analyzing the way the adaptation is made, all those aspects are relevant for the understanding of the adaptation and the significance of some adaptations in the narrative. Stam analyzes not only the social utterance, but also the needs of the new format and how it sometimes requires changes to the original piece to make it more synchronized with what is happening when the adaptation is made (Stam, 2006, 43). "Muitas adaptações televisivas ou das tendências dominantes de Hollywood fazem o que pode ser chamado de uma "adequação estética às tendências dominantes" (2006, 43). That fitting results in a fitting to the interests of the public nowadays, attracting the audience with what they wish to see.

True Blood brings many of the issues that are being discussed nowadays into consideration. From prejudice to drug addiction, it is all contextualized in the television series. While *Dead Until Dark* was superficial while dealing with many issues that could have been

approached in a different way – those will be highlighted further on this thesis –, *True Blood* aimed at stressing what was polemical inside the novel by creating other appealing discussions and representations. Bordwell and Thompson justify some emphasis audiovisual reproductions make by arguing, "often what sells to be social reflection is simply the film industries effort to exploit the day's headline". (2008, 327). On the other hand, Brian McFarlane considers that "[a] film-maker who admires a novel may legitimately feel challenged to represent in audio-visual images as close a correspondence as he can to his own personal response" (1996, 194). By that, he acknowledges that the personal interest of the person who adapts is relevant to define the adaptation's path.

However, personal readings, personal interests, tendencies, financial reasons are not the only criteria relevant in the analysis of the process of adaptation. Stam reminds us about technical aspects as an extra factor that must be considered when analyzing an adaptation. In *New Vocabularies in film Semiotics*, co-written by Robert Borgoyne and Sandy Lewis, he considers:

> In the cinema, this narratorial encoding is complex and utilizes both visual and audio channels: lighting, editing, camera angle and movement, color, mise-en-scène, can all be attributed to the visual articulations of the narrator. Music and voice-over or voice-off can be understood as its audio manifestations. (Stam Burgoyne and Lewis 1992 116)

The discussion of the media as a factor that has an influence on the narrative is important for this thesis as it raises questions about differences between both mediums of an adaptation and the technical changes that are inevitable when an adaptation occurs. Marshall McLuhan considers that "Film is not really a single medium like song or the written word, but a collective art form with different individuals directing color, lighting, sound, acting, speaking" (1964, 219). According to McLuhan, in order to understand the narrative we have to acknowledge all that is implied in the making of an audiovisual piece, and criterion such as technical aspects are also involved in the building of a narrative. By analyzing semiotics from an audiovisual perspective, Stam aims at interpretation of meaning as well as in technical aspects that allow those interpretations, tracing a path between Intertextual and technical analyzes. In *New Vocabularies in film Semiotics,* he reveals the relation between image and language inside a film, dealing with

language, narrative, and technical aspects connected, working together in the making of an audiovisual. Thus, Stam argues the format interferes directly in the adaptation as a whole.

Bordwell and Thompson highlight the importance of technical choices when showing interaction and conflict between characters inside a narrative presented on the screen. The authors emphasize, "characters create causes and register effects. Within the film's formal system, they make things happen and respond to events. Their actions and reactions contribute strongly to our engagement with the film" (2008, 78). We connect the creation of plotlines and conflicts as a requirement of an audiovisual narrative. Thus, new conflicts that are not included in the original novel – such as the ones in *True Blood* - are justified as an overall change that an audiovisual narrative goes through when it is adapted from a novel. Moreover, which conflicts or character are chosen to appear in the new domain and why is a question this thesis intends to discuss.

The "transfer" concept thought by Brian McFarlane in *Novel to Film: An introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* might help in finding out why certain changes happen in an adaptation. McFarlane deals with the way in which the message should be translated to another domain and what message ought to be translated to another domain is useful in this discussion. McFarlane points out that some aspects of the narrative have to be "transferred" from one medium to another in order to make sense to the viewer. That is how the "transfer" concept fits into the process of adaptation, as it translates the narrative from a textual to an audiovisual domain, thus making the narrative understandable in another medium (McFarlane, 1996, 13).

Robert Stam also emphasizes the idea that different mediums require different interpretations of the plot by considering that an adaptation is a highlight that another author has made, a work that is reinterpreted by a new point of view. (Stam, 2006, 48) Stam stresses that due to the different communication medium, an adaptation is "automatically" different from the first medium (2006, 20). Stam understands an adaptation as "rewriting", "critique", "translation" [4], among other of a story that already exists. Here, the faithfulness issue

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[4] The concepts of "rewriting", "Critic", "translation", "recreation", "resuscitation" are explained by Rober Stam: "Cada termo joga luz sobre uma faceta diferente da adaptação. O termo para adaptação enquanto "leitura" da fonte do romance, sugere que assim como qualquer texto pode gerar uma infinidade de leituras, qualquer romance pode gerar um número infinito de leituras para adaptação, que serão inevitavelmente parciais, pessoais, conjunturais, com interesses específicos". (Stam, 2006, 27)

appears: is the process of translation faithful to the original or not? When George Bluestone wrote *Novel into Film* in the 1950s, technology was much different from today. As time passed by, many techniques were added to the process of filmmaking and studies were done to improve the same process. However, the process of adapting a novel into a film is still similar and his considerations on how fidelity should not be used as a criterion to analyze adaptations shed new lights on the debate about adaptation. However, Brian McFarlane diverged from Bluestone, by considering that fidelity could be useful if it was used in a proper way depending on "the kind of adaptation the film proposes to be" (McFarlane, 1996, 22).

However, the economic bounds cannot be excluded from the selection of what is translated from one domain to another and what is created to be a part of the new domain. "The economical strings attached to an audiovisual product are stronger than the ones connected with a novel, as the apparatus of studios are highly expensive. Those strings lead to a product that aims a bigger profit and bigger sales to pay itself" (Bluestone, 1973, 35). Thus, the viewers preferences are decisive when choosing what will be a part of the new domain, as a way to please the audience and fulfill the economical attachments that transform a television series such as *True Blood* in a product.

What interests the public is what catches their attention, what makes them watch television and increase the audience. The more the viewer identifies with it the more s/he will feel attached to the product. McQuail considers, "In general, the more local the source, the stronger the potential for social relationship to exist between sender and receiver" (1987, 23). This leads us to believe that the audience is a main reference for choosing what will be adapted from one domain to another. Then again, Laura Mulvey reminds us that everything that appears on screen is there for a certain reason, as there is no coincidence in audiovisual domain. The message that is going out there is not innocent, someone has thought about its meaning, whether it is the same as in the original plot or different from it:

> Playing on the tension between film as controlling the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and film as controlling the dimension of space (changes in distance, editing), cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire. (Mulvey 1993 9)

Hence, whenever adaptation is the topic, questions are raised about fidelity to the original plot. Stam stresses that fidelity is as a concept that does not fit into the reality of adapting a domain into another. The author highlights that the textual permutation issue should be considered more appropriate as a criterion to analyze an adaptation (2006, 21) and find out why particular stresses were made. Yet, Stam points out how adaptations are often treated as if it were a bad version of the original piece.

Stam introduces some concepts defined by Mikahil Bakhtin and Gerard Genette as tools for a better comprehension of the process of adapting the narrative of a novel into a film or a television show. Bakhtin's idea of a hybrid construction of a plot is mentioned when Stam questions what is originality as a concept and also what is faithfulness inside an adaptation as a concept.

> A expressão artística sempre mistura as palavras do próprio artista com as palavras de outrem. A adaptação, também, deste ponto de vista, pode ser vista como uma orquestração de discursos, talentos e trajetos, uma construção "híbrida" ... A originalidade completa não é possível nem desejável (Stam 2006 23)

However, faithful or not, adaptations share the idea that "mutations are probable the moment one goes from a given set of fluid, but relatively homogeneous, convening to another […] changes are inevitable the moment one abandons the linguistic for visual medium" (Bluestone, 1973, 5). Bluestone translates a timeless reality of adaptation, no matter how it is done; it will never be the same as different mediums compel different interpretations of a story. In the article *Teoria e Prática da Adaptação: Da Fidelidade à Intertextualidade*, published decades later than *Novel into Film*, Robert Stam considers filmic adaptations as "hipertextos derivados de hipotextos pré-existentes que foram transformados por operações de seleção, amplificação, concretização e efetivação" (2006, 33). Stam restates the fact that a novel and a film belong in different domains and, because of that, there will never be a novel equal to a film. However, one might inspire the other, interpreting and reproducing some of its content in a different format.

Stam demonstrates that it is possible to create and transform inside adaptations since "O texto original é uma densa rede informacional, uma série de pistas verbais que o filme que vai adaptá-lo pode escolher, amplificar, ignorar, subverter ou transformar (2006, 50).

The author emphasizes the power that an adaptation has to rewrite a story in a way that the medium requires, giving birth to a new work. It is as if all of original story, the characters, the conflicts, the settings were able to inspire the screenwriter to write a new piece (Bluestone, 1973, 62). When the adaptation admits its role as a new work (Stam, 2006, 48) the new medium automatically presents elements that differentiate the adaptation from the novel, and the novel is seen to have particular elements that will not be translated into a new domain.

Hence**,** before making a filmic adaptation, there is a process of selecting what will be part of the film, how it is going to be showed, what will be amplified from a domain to another, which character will be highlighted and which will be irrelevant in the new format, how the narrative will be constructed and how it works, among other actions (Stam, 2006, 33). In sum, there is a selection of what aspects of the narrative will remain or will be cut off. A copying and pasting process is not applicable when you move a story from a domain to another. Brian McFarlane relates it to common superficial thought about filmic adaptation: the obsession with the fidelity of the adaptation, the superficial thought that both stories must be similar, and the thought that a film is just a film and a novel is superior to a film (McFarlane 1996 196).

In fact, there is a comparison between the efficiency and importance of a novel in contrast to a film. But again, as both belong to different domains, a comparison between novel and film does not have a winner. In the words of Stam, "a adaptação faz parte de um espectro de produções culturais niveladas e, de forma inédita, igualitárias. Dentro de um mundo extenso e inclusivo de imagens e simulações, a adaptação se torna apenas um outro texto" (2006, 24). As mentioned earlier, in order to understand an adaptation, it is crucial that both novel and audiovisual are seen as different products, with different objectives and reasons of being.

Bluestone argues: "where the novel discourses, the film must picture" (1973, 47). Such thought compares the "percept of the visual image" to "the concept of the mental image" when a story goes through the process of adapting. Each medium is related to a different perception of the story, indicating and pointing out the differences between a narrative for literature and the narrative of an audiovisual. When Marshall McLuhan wrote about media and its content in *Understanding Media: The extinctions of man*, he highlighted the differences from one domain to another:

> In terms of other media such as the printed page,

> film has the power to store and to convey a great
> deal of information. In an instant it presents a
> scene of landscape with figures that would require
> several pages of prose to describe. In the next
> instant it repeats, and can go on repeating, this
> detailed information. The writer, on the other
> hand, has no means of holding a mass of detail
> before his reader in a large bloc or gestalt.
> (McLuhan 1964 314)

McLuhan states that in order to make an adaptation from one domain to another, the audiovisual domain reveals itself more meticulous than the printed page, as the first medium is actually showing images and it demands certain details that might not be as relevant for novels as they are for audiovisual. While certain pieces of information might wear out the reader, the same information might be crucial for the screen. An example of that difference between domains is when a novel does not describe how characters look. The film has to do that, and the creation of details such as the appearance of a character by the author who is adapting the text creates more data, details and even conflicts in the plotline.

The creation of new characters and new plotlines that were not included in the novel - in adaptations such as what happens in *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood* - also indicates a method that has been used in order to picture what the novel discourses and add more conflicts and content to the adaptation. In *True Blood,* for instance, some characters that were already in the novel gained more plotlines, making them relevant in the story and presenting more fully developed characters – as additional information about their personalities and the plots involving them are revealed. Hence the differences from novel to television show created in the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* allow viewers to witness new plotlines developed from a point of view of multiple narrators, they are also introduced to those new narrators, getting to know who they are.

The way characters gain notoriety in *True Blood* is a reflection of how multiple voices can generate new knowledge and empathy for the reader or viewer. The mix of multiple voices and interrelationships between utterances generates a series of "alien words" that produce a new understanding of the plot for the audience, leading them to acknowledge that "each character has its own speech and its own belief system, being semantically autonomous" (Bakhtin, 2008, 315). Thus, Bakhtin defends that characters are different from each other and each one should have its own utterance, and its own differentials.

Although the book *The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin*, does not deal with the specific field of the present investigation, Bakhtin's ideas about multiple voices and interrelationships between utterances and languages being fundamental inside a novel (2008 263) are applicable to the narrative of an adaptation of a novel into a film or a television series as well. The diversity of individual voices inside utterances and languages is fundamental for the story to have different voices that represent the different characters inside the plot and make different viewers to feel more intimate with those characters. Therefore, as "new voices" are revealed, characters become better delineated.

> "A novelist may even choose not to give his character a direct discourse of his own, he may confine himself to the representation of the character's action alone; in such an authorial representation, however, if it is thorough and adequate, the alien discourse (i.e., the discourse of the character himself) always sounds together with authorial speech (Bakhtin 2008 335)

Following Bakhtin's lead above, we can relate the creation of additional information about other characters in the plot of an adaptation with the development of characters and multiple narrator's style. Bakhtin stresses as fundamental in a plot the variety and the differentiation among voices in a novel inside a narrative. As multiple voices and interrelationships between utterances and languages generate a series of "alien words" it produces a new understanding of the plot for the audience, leading them to acknowledge the autonomy of each character (2008 315).

The individuality in multiple narrators is reflected in *True Blood*, in opposition to the one omniscient narrator style in *Dead Until Dark*. The use of multiple narrators emerges as an option. Balogh indicates the use of more resources than just the camera as the narrator and the voice over when adapting a novel into an audiovisual piece. I stress that Balogh's analysis of the change in the narrative of the adaptation, *Memórias do Cárcere* may be compared with the adaptation from *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood*, since both are similar.

> *Memórias do Cárcere* é com foco narrativo de primeira pessoa, para ser fielmente transposto ao fílmico teria de ser atualizado por uma grande câmera subjetiva e, eventualmente em voz off do narrador, ambos os recursos muito desgastantes para serem usados ao longo de todo o filme.

(Balogh 2005 67)

Nevertheless, there are different choices that can be done while adapting the point of view of a narrator from novel into screen, such as "*the subjective cinema*" or "*oral narration or voice-over*". McFarlane explains that the first type uses point of view shots as a mean to replace entirely the words from a novel with a narrator to the images on the movie (1996, 16). The second type replaces the first-person narration in the book by a first-person voice-over narration in the film. Both are different forms to represent the narrator in the novel, even if it is not a single narrator or if the first-person narration style is not kept in an adaptation. Still, McFarlane notes that even if an oral narration takes place "[t]hose words spoken in voice-over accompany images which necessarily take on an objective life of their own. One no longer has the sense of everything's being filtered through the consciousness of the protagonist-speaker" (1996, 16). Thus, multiple voices are present in the screen either way – being represented in words, with the existence of other narrators, or only by the camera as a narrator by itself.

In *Conjunções Disjunções Transmutações,* Anna Maria Balogh explains "[a] televisão cria mecanismos próprios de produção de sentido" (2005, 146). The image and the camera as the narrator works as if an adaptation is able to bring a novel into "vida", allowing the characters to have a voice of their own (Balogh 2005 27). Specifically in the case of television adaptations, it demands that those voices are appealing to their public. Even though filmic adaptations also demand that the voices in a film attract viewers, the requirement is not as intense as the demand in television series. In television, the requirements are amplified as the television suffers from a larger "battle" for attention (Balogh 2005 142).

Balogh considers that when people watch a movie they are concentrated in the movie and do not give in to exterior interferences as much as the viewer of television does. According to her, television shows have to gain the attention of the viewer among many exterior factors, including other channels (2005 142). Hence, each domain asks for a particular narrative in order to please its audience, as Bluestone highlights "For each medium presupposes a special, though often heterogeneous and overlapping, audience whose demands condition and shape artistic content" (Bluestone, 1973, 31).

Television series translate a novel differently from the ways a novel is adapted into a film. Nonetheless these are all audiovisual media and are similar to each other, television and film require different

formats of adaptation. The American Film Institute[5] considers that a feature film has to last at least for 40 minutes to be considered as such. According to a research[6] done in the website Internet Movie Data Base, the average size of feature films in the 2000's is 127,5 minutes. Meanwhile, a television series, such as *True Blood*, has more than 11 hours per season. Balogh explains some particularities in television series, as she elucidates that television shows and series always try to differentiate one from another (Balogh, 2005, 146). As television shows and series are usually competing against the content of other channels and even against other shows and series that come after or before it, a more intense and concrete Intertextual relation for a television adaptation is demanded in order to win the viewers attention.

Moreover, Lester Asheim investigated 24 film adaptations and concluded that 17 of them presented an emphasis on love, increasing the romance on the original novel to the adaptation. Happy endings, love, and other adjustments might be described as conventions of the medium (Bluestone 1973 42), making a film more appealing to the mass audience as well as the appealing notation makes a novel more attracting to its audience. "Since entertainment generally is sold to a mass audience", (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, 4) the goal of the distributors of a film or a television series is to conquer the larger number possible of spectators. The target audience might be investigated nowadays with the help of the Internet and it might be explored with the help of merchandising (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, 39). HBO series, for instance, have a considerable amount of sex scenes. Television Series such as *Sex and the City*, *The Sopranos*, *Game of Thrones*, *Girls*[7], *True Blood* among others are know by their high amount of sexual scenes.

Even thought Charlaine Harris's *Dead Until Dark* accomplished certain success[8] as a novel, to reach a certain level of achievement, *True Blood*, as a different product for a different domain,

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[5] Numbers provided by the American Film Institute, available at http://www.AFI.com/ Site visited in January 15 2013.
[6] Research done by the website http://www.slashfilm.com/ in Internet Movie Data Base (IMDb) http://www.imdb.com/ Site visited in January 15 2013.
[7] *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) is a show about the friendship of four woman; *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) is a show about the American-Italian mob in New Jersey; *Game of Thrones* (2011-) is a medieval fantasy about power; and *Girls* (2012-) is also about a group of female friends. All of the series mentioned are original HBO series, some also based on novels.
[8] *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels* is considered a success due to the constant renovation of the publisher company (Ace) for other novels of the same series and due to the fact that it caused interest of different studios in order to make an adaptation. Alan Ball and HBO were the chosen ones because of their previous work, as mentioned by Charlaine Harris in an interview.

had other priorities to reach. The television series aimed at another type of public, particularly the specific audience who watches the cable television network HBO. HBO is a paid channel in the United States of America and other 151 countries including Brazil. It's programming reaches 29 million subscribers in the USA, which makes it the second most watched paid channel in the country. HBO programming consists basically of motion pictures and original series for adults. Thus, the audience of the channel is presumed to be middle class or higher, adults both male and female.

The differences between the public that reads novels and the public that watches HBO cannot be taken for granted: "Upon the medium, then, lies the shaping power of businessman and the audience. On the one hand, commercial production; on the other, mass consumption" (Bluestone, 1973, 42). Bluestone's definition is applicable to all adaptations, as all aim at a certain market, from mass audience to independent festivals. Since all adaptations aim at a certain audience, not only the theoretical issues must be considered while evaluating the motifs a particular adaptation followed a certain path. Evaluating how the producers chose to reach the public must be considered. As the changes in the narrative reproduce their point of view of what the audience wants to see, not forgetting about what the producers want the public to see.

Moreover, the amount of sex content in *True Blood* is highly over the amount of sex content in *Dead Until Dark*. While acknowledging that commercial aspects such as the appeal of eroctism might have influenced changes in the narrative of the adaptation being investigated, another question this thesis will investigate is: Why does the television series has a more sexual appeal than the novel? It is common knowledge that sex appears as one of the main interests of our society, which leads to a decision made in order to catch the attention of the viewers. I stress that this issue will be further discussed throughout the thesis, along with the interests of the viewers.

Thus, modifications such as the ones that occur from Harris's book to Ball's television series, as mentioned before, are common in the world of adaptations. Such changes occur due to the fact that adaptations from page to screen require changes in order to fit the first medium into a new one, and also because there are other writers/producers with different backgrounds and interests as well all a whole new audience to the new product. Moreover, *Dead Until Dark* had to go through transformations in many ways in order to become *True Blood* and even

remaining strongly connected, both domains follow different paths to tell a similar story.

To sum up, this thesis will continue to investigate the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* into *True Blood* throughout the next chapters, analyzing the differences between both domains and what the changes in the narrative represent in this particular adaptation. Each of the following chapters will focus on a particular discussion that has been mentioned here. Chapter 1 is about "Different points of view and the narrator in Harris's novel and Ball's series", chapter 2 deals with "Developing and creating characters and plotlines in *True Blood*", and chapter 3 brings my final remarks on the topic.

CHAPTER II

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW AND THE NARRATOR IN HARRIS'S NOVEL AND BALL'S SERIES

In order to investigate procedures and choices in the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood*, the narrative style of both novel and television series will be analyzed throughout this chapter. As a consequence of the story being translated from one domain to another, the narrative style from *Dead Until Dark* goes through major changes to become *True Blood*. As pointed out in the previous chapter, Sookie Stackhouse, the main character in the story, is the narrator in *Dead Until Dark*. However, she has a limited point of view in the story and the narration happens in an intradiegetic format, as the readers are limited to the narrator's perspective of what goes on in the story. When Sookie does not witness an event in *Dead Until Dark*, she narrates it anyway, as she narrates what is told to her by other characters. Hence, as Sookie is the storyteller, she ends up mentioning facts that were told to her in a similar way she describes the ones that were witnessed by her.

In *Dead Until Dark* the narrative style includes one narrator that shapes what the reader's perception may be, as everything the viewer reads is filtered by one character (McFarlane, 1996, 16). However, when adapting a novel to an audiovisual domain, even if the screenplay writer adopts a voiceover style, the power that the words of a narrator have will not be the same as in a novel. As McFarlane points out "(t)hose words spoken in voice-over accompany images which necessarily take on an objective life of their own. One no longer has the sense of everything's being filtered through the consciousness of the protagonist speaker" (1996, 16). As *True Blood* does not have a voice over, this sense of having the information filtered is even weaker, because as the viewer is able to see from many points of view of other characters without voice-over narration. Even if sometimes the public is not provided with all the information about a certain plot, they are provided with a sense of being omniscient at times. Hence, in the audiovisual field, either television or film, whether there is a voice-over narration or there is not, we are able to see with our own eyes what the camera is showing us, which is what the director chose for us to observe. "One now sees everything the camera sees, not just what impressed itself on the hero-narrator's imaginative responsiveness" (McFarlane, 1996, 16), as McFarlane points out.

In *Understanding Media: The Extensions of a Man*, Marshall McLuhan describes television as a "cool medium", which indicates that "TV insures a high degree of audience involvement, the most effective programs are those that present situations which consist of some process to be completed" (1964, 348). McLuhan acknowledges that when a medium has low definition, it is classified as cool medium, as it leaves more spaces open for the audience to fill in with their ideas, having a higher participation of the public. However, when the medium acquires more information, it is classified as high definition and hot medium, which indicates less public participation. For instance, "(a) photograph is, visually, 'high definition.' A cartoon is 'low definition,' simply because very little visual information is provided" (McLuhan, 1964, 26), and because of that, the public might interpret the cartoon in different ways and turn it into a medium in which they will feel more involved with, as they feel they are a part of the interpretation of the domain. Therefore, television in comparison to a novel, just as a cartoon in comparison to a photograph, acts as a cool medium, allowing a larger interaction between viewers and the series.

There are scholars that do not agree with McLuhan's point of view, mentioning that the novel has a power of interaction with the reader way beyond the one a television series has with the viewer. McQuail, for instance, acknowledges the novel as a "high involvement" piece while the television supplies opportunities for audience to get involved with the plot and for losing themselves in the experience "it (television) seems typicality a more detached experience" (1987, 23). McQuail considers that the television does not retain the attention and participation of public in the same level a novel does.

Furthermore, McQuail considers a novel as something individual, which allows a wider participation of the reader as s/he is able to visualize and contextualize what s/he is reading by her/his own imagination while in television that image already exists. However, as the author himself admits, television is a kind of collective media appealing to many people at the same time (McQuail, 1987, 22). Nevertheless, the television's appeal to a wider audience results in a faster participation of the public, who exposes their opinion in a large amount of people together, as everyone has access to a television series at the same time – the showing time. Even if the novel reaches as many readers as the number of people who watches television, its unlikely they will read the novel and respond to it at the same time, a factor that is common in television.

Regardless of the domain, having multiple narrators in the plot results in changes in ways to create suspense, surprise, expectations, or generate information (Bluestone, 1973, 88). The viewer knows what happens to characters other than Sookie - and most times they know more than she does about everyone in the plot. That extra knowledge helps to generate a certain expectation from the audience. Bordwell mentions restricted narration as a resource used by the mystery genre. He explains the choice of not having voice-over supplying information working as a tool for keeping suspense on the screen (Bordwell, 1985, 67).

In *True Blood*, although the viewers know more about what happens to all characters than the narrators of the story know, they do not have access to everything that is happening, as many issues are left open for the viewers to discover. Those gaps lead the audience to feel like they are part of the mystery in finding out some of *True Blood*'s secrets. Even when the viewers feel like they are omniscient at times because they know more about the plot than the characters know, the result is still a suspense feeling, as the viewers expect reactions from Sookie and other characters to facts these characters do not know about it. Questions such as "Will Sookie see what Jason is doing? Will he be able to explain himself?" were not implied in *Dead Until Dark* because nothing the reader knew was different from what Sookie narrated. However, in *True Blood* there is suspense of knowing things the main character does not know and there is an expectation from the audience for Sookie or any other character to find out what is happening in another plotline to another related character.

Balogh mentions that in audiovisual field enunciation is usually not explicit "O ato de produção do discurso, a enunciação, é sempre presente no produto que dele resulta, o enunciado, ou seja, a enunciação nunca é explicitada, mas deixa no enunciado as suas marcas" (2001, 70). Unlike in the novel, where we know exactly how Sookie feels about something or someone, in *True Blood* we get the clues as she externalizes some of her thoughts, but we do not get to be omniscient about how she feels. *True Blood*'s narration style matches the description by Balogh since what Sookie and other characters feel and go through are not as explicit as it would be if there was a voice-over narrating their plots. Although Sookie might show how she feels about vampires many times, more than in the novel, it is not as explicit as it is on her own narration.

Thus, *True Blood* fits a suspense profile, such as the one David Bordwell illustrates when he mentions suspense as something that

occurs when the narration is holding back details from the viewer (1985 40). Bordwell and Thompson describe suspense as involving "a delay in fulfilling an established expectation. Since the term implies, suspense leaves something suspended not only the next element in a pattern but also our urge for completion" (2008, 57). As we do not know when the characters are going to find out what we, the spectators, already know, there is a delay in them receiving the information we possess. This delay engages the viewer to the narrative, creating an attachment to the story.

As Bordwell and Thompson consider, "puzzle films tease the audience to find clues to enigmatic narration or story events which attracts viewers to watch the television series" (2008, 96). In *True Blood* viewers look for clues about how characters are going to find out things about other characters. The creation of suspense in *True Blood* works as a method of adapting the plotlines to the new medium and stimulating people to watch the series. Since modifications from novel to series generate certain "tease" to the audience, the need of adapting the story into the different medium seems to be a way of turning it into an object or product that is more appealing to audiences.

In television series, more than any other medium, having the viewer attached to the story is of main importance for creators of the domain. Anna Maria Balogh explains in *Conjunções Disjunções Transmutações* some particularities in television series, as she elucidates that television shows and series always try to differentiate one from another (Balogh, 2005, 146). As television series are usually competing against the content of other channels and even against other shows and series that come after or before it, a more intense and concrete Intertextual relation for a television adaptation is demanded, in order to win the viewers attention. Therefore, suspense works as one of the tools to attach the viewer's attention to the series.

Another tool for catching the audience's interest is the creation of new plotlines in *True Blood*, as it is related to the fact that the television series demands characters that are more close to the viewers. In television series, characters that cause empathy with the audience are more appealing to the viewers. Moreover, this issue will be widely discussed throughout chapter two, "*Developing and creating characters and plotlines in* True Blood".

Furthermore, another important tool for the adaptation of a medium to another domain is considering the interests and the characteristics of that particular audience. The interests of the public must be taken into consideration in order to achieve a plot that appeals to the consumers of each domain. As mentioned before, *True Blood*

aims at a much bigger public than the one *Dead Until Dark* appeals to. That is not only a characteristic of the television field and how it works, but also a choice of the team who worked on the adaptation from the novel to the television series.

The choice could have been to make *True Blood* as a film, or a television series, which would air on a small television network aiming at a small, or a segmented public. Instead, it became one of the top series of a channel that airs around the World: HBO. That fact, by itself, already demands the audience issue to be taken under consideration, which demands the team working on the adaptation to question "will it be a series for woman, for rich people, for heterosexuals or for a major audience?", for instance.

About those types of changes, Stam acknowledges:

> Muitas das mudanças entre a fonte do romance e a adaptação têm a ver com ideologia e discursos sociais. Nesse sentido, a questão é se uma adaptação empurra o romance para a "direita", ao naturalizar e justificar hierarquias sociais baseadas em classe, raça, sexualidade, gênero, religião e nacionalidade, ou para a "esquerda" ao questionar ou nivelar as hierarquias (Stam 2006 44)

According to Stam, the decision of highlighting minority groups and questioning their position in society is a discussion that presumes interests of the "left". As that highlight happens many times in *True Blood* it reveals one of the interests the crew who adapted *Dead Until Dark* had.

When Stam mentions ideology and social utterance as something to be taken under consideration while analyzing an adaptation, he reminds us that no choice in adapting is an innocent choice. All of the choices while translating one means to another have a background, in sum, it all has a reason. In the particular case which I am dealing in this thesis, Alan Ball, his team, and HBO had their own interests while adapting *Dead Until Dark*, which according to Stam fits the interests of the "left". Thus, I chose to investigate throughout this thesis the choices that lead the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* into *True Blood*. Likewise, this thesis acknowledges that attracting more viewers is certainly not the only factor that might have been the aim of the developers of the television series.

Points of view such as the one Stam presents about a "left" or a "right" orientation throughout the adaptation highlights that even when it aims to please the audience the adaptation role as a political product it

is still present. An adaptation goes beyond attaching more viewers to the plot. In *True Blood*'s case, the television series has gained the responsibility of raising issues for discussion and provoking the audience about certain topics that might influence their everyday lives. Thus, the nature of the issues that are highlighted from the novel to the new domain depends on the choices of the team who adapts the story. They have the control of which topic will be in vogue and how it will be presented, with a "left" or a "right" orientation.

In spite of this, the "left" tendency of *True Blood* appears in a delicate way, where the debate about differentiation in society rises but it does not sound like the television series is imposing a point of view, even if it portrays people with prejudices as the bad guys of the plot. Still, if *True Blood* imposed a point of view the amount of viewers would not be as big as it needed to be. Again, *True Blood* aims at a broader appeal to the public than *Dead Until Dark* has. One of the reasons, as mentioned before, is because of its domain, the television, which demands a significant audience in order for the series to go on financially. Without profit, the television show would not be aired still.

Thus, any creation and exposure of topics in the overall utterance is evaluated in order to fit the medium. Although "it is difficult to set up a regular methodology for investigating how far cultural conditions (e.g. the exigencies of wartime or changing sexual mores) might lead to a shift in emphasis in a film as compared with the novel on which it is based" (McFarlane, 1996, 22), we know that cultural conditions are fundamental to reach the audience and attach them to what is being presented on screen. Hence, the new utterance in *True Blood* had to be reasonable in order to reach out for a balance between pleasing the audience with what they what to see and providing them information that - they might not know they want, but – the adaptation team considers they need to have.

Under the classification of Anna Maria Balogh *in Discurso Ficcional da TV True Blood* works as a continuous television series. Furthermore, it demands certain characteristics in the plotlines in order to work as such. "A serialidade implica o recurso reiterado a gêneros e formatos consagrados, a reiteração de fórmulas e esquemas que foram sendo sedimentados pela aceitação do público" (Balogh, 2001, 91). *True Blood* works by repeating information all the time, with recurring clues, and reaffirming information that has already been given before. The classification as a continuous television series implies certain patterns: "A cultura culta valoriza o produto único; irrepetível, enquanto a cultura de massa, sobretudo a TV, para atender à demanda intensa e continua, se

vê obrigada a serializar seus produtos" (Balogh, 2001, 91). Thus, Balogh justifies the choices an author makes when writing the adaptation of a novel into a television series as creating new aspects in the new narrative to fit the story into a certain medium, so the narrative will fit into a new domain. In consequence of those patterns, an adaptation such as *True Blood* has to consider how the medium works and who it reaches when choosing what aspects will be chosen, amplified, ignored, subverted or transformed (Stam 2006 50) when adapting a novel to television. Therefore, by analyzing the profile of the viewers and turning the narrative appealing to them, the narrative starts to fit into the television series medium.

According to Balogh, television shows have to gain the attention of the viewer among many exterior factors, including other channels (Balogh, 2005, 142). However, she considers that movies are mainly seen in theaters, which is a special place where the viewer dedicates him/herself to watch something, while television shows are watched at home, where the viewer does not have a special moment (Balogh, 2005, 142). Hence, each domain asks for a particular narrative in order to please its audience, as Bluestone statement encounters Balogh idea "(f)or each medium presupposes a special, though often heterogeneous and overlapping, audience whose demands condition and shape artistic content" (Bluestone, 1973, 31).

Nevertheless, as a novel is a written piece, it appears as a hot medium. However, as mentioned before, the television series appears as a cold medium, allowing more interaction between the public and the series. "Any hot medium allows of less participation than a cool one, as a lecture makes for less participation than a seminar, and a book for less than dialogue" (McLuhan, 1964, 27). Therefore, the dialogues in *True Blood* are essential to generate a link between the domain and the audience. For those dialogues to be more appealing to the viewers, the television series needs to have different characters, in different plotlines, generating complicity between the series and a broader public.

Thus, *True Blood*'s style of narration, including various narrators, contrasting to the first-person narrative style that is featured in *Dead Until Dark*, reveals many points of view. The other narrators in the television series end up narrating not only their stories, but Sookie's story as well. The different narrators in *True Blood* narrate the whole plot and in some specific moments we are able to see what used to be narrated by Sookie turned into a conversation between the characters of the series. I highlighted here and excerpt of the beginning of the book, in

which Sookie thinks about – and narrates – how she dreamt about meeting a vampire:

> I'd been waiting for the vampire for years when he walked into the bar […] And he sat at one of my tables—the vampire. I knew immediately what he was. It amazed me when no one else turned around to stare. They couldn't tell! But to me, his skin had a little glow, and I just knew. I could have danced with joy, and in fact I did do a little step right there by the bar. Sam Merlotte, my boss, looked up from the drink he was mixing and gave me a tiny smile. I grabbed my tray and pad and went over to the vampire's table. I hoped that my lipstick was still even and my ponytail was still neat. I'm kind of tense, and I could feel my smile yanking the corners of my mouth up. (Harris, 2001, 1)

In contrast to that, *True Blood* shows a scene in which she interacts with other characters in order to express her feelings out loud. In the series, as seen on the first episode, that is the equivalent to the part of the book mentioned before. Sookie's is talking to Sam and Tara, we can hear the noises of people talking and a country song that is playing on the bar. Suddenly we cannot hear the song anymore as a mystery sound effect takes over. We cannot hear anyone's voice for a while and Sookie's attention is unexpectedly drawn away from Merlotte's booth and from her friends. She turns around and watches a dark-haired stranger walking towards a booth in the restaurant. There is no other sound than a melancholic love song that starts to play as soon as she sees him. He sits down and then looks at Sookie, they stare at each other until she turns around to Sam and Tara. All the noises in Merlotte's are back as if she is back to reality again.[9]

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[9] The description listed represents my remarks about the scene.

3.1

3.2

3.3

3.4

3.5

"SOOKIE.   Oh, my God! I think Merlotte's just got its first vampire! (3.5)

SAM.   I think you're right.

SOOKIE.   Can you believe it?! Right here, in Bon Temps?! I've been waiting for this to happen since they came out of the coffin two years ago!¹⁰ (Ball, 5)"

Hence, the interaction with other characters in *True Blood* provides the person who watches the show complementary information

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¹⁰ I wrote the dialogue transcript from *True Blood*. The reference number 5 states that the dialogue happens in scene 5.

about the protagonist, just as if the person was able to read Sookie's thoughts in the first-person, non-omniscient style presented in the novel. But instead of reading what her reaction was, by what she described to be feeling, *True Blood* viewers are able to watch how she behaves, interpreting the actress actions as Sookie's feelings at the moment. Moreover, the viewers are able to watch Sookie talking to others about how she feels, externalizing her thoughts to other characters and to the viewers. "Dialogue serves two main purposes: Either it moves the story forward, or it reveals information about the main character". (Field, 2005, 72). Field's description of how dialogue serves in a plot fit's Tara Thorton's role in the narration, as she reveals information about Sookie (and also about herself). Tara also fits into the other function Field mentions, as with her – and with all the other dialogues created between other characters - the narrative of *True Blood* goes beyond it did in *Dead Until Dark* mentioning new topics and issues through conversations, moving the narrative forward into deeper social discussions.

Therefore, even with the changes from one domain to another, Sookie was kept as the main character, revealing also a choice of maintaining a woman as the main character, even if she is not the only narrator anymore. However, as Balogh mentions "As ações executadas pelos personagens para atingir os seus objetivos constituem o cerne da narrativa" (2001, 61). Maintaining Sookie as the main character, implicated in maintaining Sookie's objectives in the plot and plotlines as the main ones still, the ones more relevant to the story. In order to maintain Sookie as the main character with a different narrative style some changes were applied to make the viewers understand Sookie's thoughts and behaviors without the use of a voice-over narration. As other characters interact with her, the viewer is provided with interactions that reveal Stackhouse's thoughts even when she is not narrating the story in fist-person. In the book *Invisible Storytellers*, Sarah Kozloff, mentions:

> [W]hen information is told to us by a narrator, it automatically becomes tented with subjectivity […] only showing events without commentaries allows spectators to have a direct communication with the images and interpret their meaning and significance for themselves (Kozloff, 1989, 13)

While introducing a narrative that is not closed to one narrator only, *True Blood* allows a web of interpretations to be made about the characters. Instead of reading "Sam Merlotte, my boss, looked up from the drink he was mixing and gave me a tiny smile" (Harris, 2001, 1) and

not knowing how Sam Merlotte reacted to her excitement about the vampire, in the television series we are able to observe, without any commentary of any of the parts involved, that Sam reacts in a jealous way. This "direct communication", as Kozloff mentions, only happens because of the lack of narration in the scene combined to the scene existence by itself – without the image of Sam's reaction there would not be a reaction to see.

Moving further on the same scene, in spite of the excitement she feels about having a vampire in her work, in the novel Sookie does not seem to flirt with Bill like she does in *True Blood*. Sookie treats him kindly, but not distinguishing from other costumer she served.

> "What can I get you?" I asked, happy almost beyond words. He raised his eyebrows. "Do you have the bottled synthetic blood?" he asked. "No, I'm so sorry! Sam's got some on order. Should be in next week.". "Then red wine, please," he said, and his voice was cool and clear, like a stream over smooth stones. (Harris, 2001, 2-3)

Meanwhile in *True Blood,* Sookie's dialogue with Bill is extended and a flirtation is added to the narrative. As Sookie rushes to the vampire's table, Tara and Sam nod in disapproval. She is visually exited to be talking to him as she asks for his order. While he seems to be uncomfortable at first, her excitement makes him more at ease as they start to flirt with each other. The dialogues are exceedingly paused, focusing on the actor and actress reaction and chemistry to each other.

3.6   **3.7**

3.8

SOOKIE: (grinning):Hi, and what... what can I get for you tonight?

BILL: Do you have any of that synthetic bottled blood?

SOOKIE:No, I'm ... I'm so sorry. Sam got some a year ago, but nobody ever ordered it, so it went bad. You're our first vampire.

BILL: Am I that obvious?

SOOKIE:I knew the minute you came in. I can't believe nobody else around here seems to.

BILL: (looks toward Sam): He does.

SOOKIE: (glances back, sees Sam disapproval): Oh! Don't worry about Sam! He's cool. I know for a fact he supports the Vampire Rights Amendment.

BILL: How progressive of him.

SOOKIE: Well ... anything else ... you drink?

BILL**:** Actually, no. But you can get me a glass of red wine so I have a reason to be here.

SOOKIE: Well ... whatever the reason ... I'm glad you are.

Again, the scene has third person point of view, which allows the interpretation of their dialogue and actions among each other, without the interference of a voice-over narration. However, the narrator in the novel does not describe the way Sookie and Bill flirt with each other. The acting of both actors combined with the dialogue leads the audience to a sensation of flirting between them. As in the novel the description of her happiness to see Merlotte's first vampire is narrated in first person and in the television series it is not, the flirting works as a tool – other than talking to Sam and Tara – to demonstrate through out Sookie's happiness with the encounter. The repetitive style of the television appears again, as we are able to see how she behaves and than we have that information reinforced by the conversation Sookie has with her friends, reaffirming how she feels for the audience to have no doubt about it. In *Dead Until Dark*, as we read Sookie's narration of the story it becomes clear her interests for Bill, just as Kozloff mentions that a narration such as the one in *Dead Until Dark* "is like a strong perfume –

a little goes a long way"(1989, 45). Hence, the flirtation between Sookie and Bill on screen might have been a tool to show the viewers what was clear in Sookie's narration and to fit the television narrative style that demands repetition.

The dialogues that were created in *True Blood* also work as a way to attach the viewer to the plot. The interaction between Sookie and another character function as a certain "action" and the audiovisual domain relies on action and interaction to attract viewers. Bordwell and Thompson consider that even "a simple action asks the audience to participate actively in the ongoing process by wondering about what will happen next and readjusting expectations accordingly" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, 57). The dialogue by it self, the way the characters that are participating of the conversation will react to each other responses, in sum, all those conflicts involving a simple conversation reflects in the viewer's attachment to the plot.

The interaction between characters also highlights characters that were not as important in the novel as they are in the show or that did not even exist in *Dead Until Dark.* As they gain their own voice in *True Blood,* they become more developed, independent, and we, as viewers, are able to relate to them more that we could when they only existed throughout Sookie's superficial narration about them. In some cases, the characters have few dialogues in *Dead Until Dark,* but still, their representation was not as relevant as they are in *True Blood.* In the novel, Sookie mentioned characters and their life story superficially, most of the times she would not get into details. However, as Balogh mentioned, it is a characteristic of television to reiterate and reaffirm information (Balogh, 2001, 91). Repeating information's about characters to the viewer makes them more familiar with the characters and more intimate with the plotlines, and in *True Blood* that resource is used many times.

Furthermore, the fact that characters have a voice, such as most characters gain in *True Blood,* is pointed out by Bakhtin as an essential factor when forming a fictional utterance (2008, 261). Bakhtin argues that multiple voices and interrelationships between utterances and languages are fundamental to generate a series of "alien words" that produce a new understanding of the plot for the audience, leading them to acknowledge that "each character has its own speech and its own believe system, being semantically autonomous" (Bakhtin, 2008, 315). This individuality of each character reaches up to more people, who are able to feel empathy to a certain profile that is closer to their own or to someone who they identify with.

An allegory of individuals against prejudice is visually formed in *True Blood*. Walter Benjamin describes in *Illustrations* how an allegory works in a narrative: it "always proceeds from an abstract notion and then invents something palpable to represent it almost at will (Benjamin, 2007, 12). Benjamin's thought fits exactly how the characters in the television series are filled with a baggage of social differences. In *True Blood* characters become not only a symbol for some of society struggles, but also a reflection of what the minority groups go through.

Yet, the author reminds us that an allegory must be situated in order for its message to be received properly:

> "(t)he allegory must be explained before it can become meaningful, a solution must be found to the riddle it presents so that the often laborious interpretation of allegorical figures always unhappily reminds one of the solving of puzzles even when no more ingenuity is demanded than in the allegorical representation of death by a skeleton. (Benjamin, 2007, 12)

Without the contextualization of the allegory its significance can be lost throughout the way, leading to a misunderstanding of what the character stands for. Nevertheless, *True Blood*'s approach to different groups and mainly minority groups reveals an interest of the television series to became more appealing to those groups as well. The white, blond, waitress shares her screen time with a black homosexual cooker, a redhead divorced redneck, and even minorities that only exist in the story, such as vampires, wolves, shape shifters, fairies. All are discriminated by 2society for "not being normal". They all suffer from some kind of prejudice, but at the same time they are portrayed just as "regular" people are portrayed in the plot. In *True Blood* all the aberrations have problems, feelings, just like anyone who is considered normal by society.

At the same time the individuality of the characters conquers a bigger audience, it also reaches the minorities who identify themselves someway in the plotline, just as Roland Barthes mentions, "All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different, even opposing, cultural backgrounds" (1977, 76). Again, Stam's observation about how adaptations always consider political sides seems relevant, as the viewers accompany minorities' struggles and feel empathy for the ones that are being left out. Probably people who feel prejudice among

minority groups are not big fans of *True Blood* as it is evident in the series how minorities are important to the plot and how they are portrayed as "the good guys" while the ones who are judgmental are portrayed as "the bad guys".

When Stam complements his thoughts about ideology and social utterance in adaptation, he mentions "Já que as adaptações fazem malabarismos entre múltiplas culturas e múltiplas temporalidades, elas se tornam um tipo de barômetro das tendências discursivas em voga no momento da produção" (2006, 48). The representation of minority groups in our society nowadays is a very contemporary discussion. For instance, since late 2000's homosexual rights are being much more discussed than ten years ago. As the series was first aired in 2008, the year United States elected their first black president, racial, sexual, class, among other issues, were popular – and still are. The fact that the man responsible for the adaptation Alan Ball is openly homosexual might have an influence on particular choices as well.

The producers' interest in provoking an attachment with the viewer is directly linked to financial interests, hence, their option for the imitation of reality - even if it is not reproducing a special event on screen - must be considered. In the book *Unthinking Eurocentrism* by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam both mention how important it is to refer to other cultures in a way of running away from the euro centrist point of view, but not surrounding to the stereotypes of minority groups (or the ones that are far from the white European perspective): "Films which represent marginalized cultures in a realistic mode, even when they do not claim to represent specific historical incidents, still implicitly make factual claims" (Shohat and Stam, 1994, 179). In order to stand for marginalized cultures, one has to be careful to not recreate situations that restore historical situations with false presumptions.

When both mention the fact that some of the portray of minority is completely unreal, and even able to destruct a historical memory about a fact and turn it into a wrong presumption, it is evident that when highlighting some issues from novel to television there are many facts to reconsider in order to not mislead the audience. In *True Blood*, all the social topics were increased in order to stress utterances and put emphasis on discussions that are in vogue. However the television series focus on attaching the viewers by causing identification with *True Blood,* and not by causing curiosity about minorities. That choice reminds us "if dominant cinema has historically caricatured distant civilizations, the media today are more multicentered, with the power not only to offer countervailing representations but also to open

up parallel spaces for symbiotic multicultural transformation" (Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, 1994, 45). Whereas the representation is able not to work as a ludicrous or a stereotyped portrayal, it might actually stand for marginalized cultures and bring the insiders to understand the outsiders.

In spite of the first excerpt of the novel, the first scene of *True Blood* is different from Harris's book. In fact, the first television scene does not exist in the novel. It starts from black as it fades to a couple inside a car. The soundtrack is actually the song they are listening to the radio. As they start to fool around inside the car until they run by a sign that says "We have Tru Blood[11]", we see their car approaching the store. The scene is cut to inside the store, and the to television that is airing an interview with Nan Flanagan, described by the subtitle as "American Vampire League". The camera goes from close-up to a slow zoom-out that shows a man watching the interview. The camera shows his clothes in details, showing his gothic dress style. We acknowledge that he is the clerk of the store as we see him looking at a "redneck" customer, all dressed in fake army clothes and a hat with a Dixie flag on it. The customer seems to be looking for beer and the clerk turns his back to continue watching the interview. The couple from the car enters the store and questions the clerk about vampires and "Tru Blood". The clerk imposes himself as a gothic person, trying to impress the couple by making them believe that he is a vampire. The scene is cut to the other customer in the store who still is in front of the beer refrigerator and seems to be upset with the dialogue between the clerk and the couple. There is a close-up on the clerk's teeth and he reveals that he is not a real vampire and he was only joking. The "redneck" customer approaches them and we suddenly see that he is holding a pack of an unknown drink in his arms. When the clerk and the couple start to talk about "V-juice[12]" the customer approaches them in an upset way. There is a close up on his sharpen teeth which reveals him as a vampire. The couple runs away and the clerk looks terrified. The vampire places his pack that is now revealed as "Tru Blood", pays for it, and leaves after threatening the clerk.

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[11] "Tru Blood" is the brand of synthetic blood invented.
[12] Both "V" and "V-juice" stands for vampire blood. When humans consume it it makes them powerful, strong, and excited. Because of its power it has been treated like a drug.

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NAN FLANAGAN: We're citizens. We pay taxes. We deserve basic civil rights, just like everyone else.

REPORTER: Yeah but... come on. Doesn't your race have a rather sordid history of exploiting and feeding off innocent people? ... For centuries?

NAN FLANAGAN: Three points: Number one, show me documentation. It doesn't exist. Number two, doesn't your race have a history of exploitation? We never owned slaves, Bill, or ... detonated nuclear weapons. And most importantly, point number three, now that the Japanese have perfected synthetic blood which satisfies all of our nutritional needs, there is no reason for anyone to fear us.

The clerk behind the counter turns as a stocky man in front of refrigerated case.

NAN FLANAGAN: I can assure you that every member of our community is now drinking synthetic blood. That's why we decided to make our existence known. We just want to be part of mainstream society. (applause)

The entry doorbell sounds, a couple enters the store. The clerk stands up behind the counter and stares at them menacingly.

"GIRL: Hi. Y'all have Tru Blood ...for real.

GUY: You get vamps in here? I didn't even think we had any in Louisiana.

CLERK: You didn't know that New Orleans is a Mecca for the vampire?

GUY: Seriously? I mean, New Orleans? Even after Katrina? Didn't they all   drown?

CLERK: Vampires cannot drown ... because we do not breathe.

GUY: Dude, no harm intended. We're just a little drunk.

CLERK: Nice. I could use a cocktail! Kelly starts to whimper and cling to Brad, who's scared speechless.

CLERK: (laughing): Score! I totally had you guys!

GIRL:: That wasn't funny.

CLERK: Yeah, it was.

GUY: No, Kelly, that was pretty funny.

MAN: I didn't think it was funny.

GUY: What? Brad turns quickly around and faces the stocky man who has come up behind them.

GUY: We don't care what you think. (turning back to the clerk) Dude, you know where we can score any V-juice?

GIRL: Gross! Brad, no!

CLERK: How much you need?

GIRL: I knew a girl who knew this girl, who did vamp blood during Greek Week ... she like ... clawed her own face off!

GUY: Seriously, I can pay good money.

MAN: OK ... You two need to leave.

GUY: All right. Fuck you, Billy Bob!

MAN**:** Fuck me? I'll fuck you, boy. I'll fuck you, and then I'll eat you. (shows his fangs)

MAN: You ever pretend to be one of us again, and I'll kill you. Got it?

CLERK: Got it.

MAN : Have a nice day, now."

(Ball, 1)[13]

The plotline of this scene does not exist in *Dead Until Dark,* however it works as personification of many things that were narrated throughout the novel about vampires co-existing in society. Elements such as how people react to vampires, how vampires included "Tru Blood" in their diets - grocery shopping to buy "Tru Blood"-, the addiction to "V" and its effects, among other issues that are introduced in the first scene. All of it is mentioned by the narrator, Sookie, through out *Dead Until Dark*. When Stam mentions that in an adaptation "um único personagem em um filme pode acumular traços de vários personagens do romance" (2006, 41), we are able to fit that thought also into plotlines. In this scene all characters represent other characters, plotlines, conversations that happened and topics that have been discussed deeply or not by other characters in *Dead Until Dark*. It is all gathered in some characters that show the viewers in the scene what the world is like with vampires co-existing with human as minorities groups.

In *True Blood*'s first scene we first get to know the situation of the vampires instead of being introduced to the main character. That occurs not only because the main character is no longer narrating the story, with no omniscient view, but it also introduces us to a story that has many different characters that are linked somehow to Sookie's plotline, but also have their own stories. These characters are not directly related to Sookie and she could not narrate their story because they were not part of her network in *Dead Until Dark*. The fact that we, as viewers, are closer in the adaptation to the point of view of "strangers" than the point of view of the narrator of the novel brings us closer to other perspectives, while enhancing the narrative in *True Blood* with multiple voices.

When Bakhtin wrote about novels, he mentioned how a diversity of social speech types leads to "individual voices flourishing" in a novel

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[13] My transcription of the scene.

(2008, 263). This diverse social speech is improved with the representation of characters in *True Blood*, as they represent the variety of speeches and utterances inside the plot of the television series. As a result of those multiple voices, "the novel requires speaking persons bringing with them their own unique ideological discourse, their own language" (Bakhtin, 2008, 332). His thought leads us to what could be a gap in *Dead Until Dark* that was filled in *True Blood* according to Bakhtin. *Dead Until Dark* has some few moments where Sookie is not narrating and there is a dialogue going on. However, if the uniqueness of utterance is fundamental for a novel, more dialogues should happen in order for the reader to be more in contact with different social speeches. Moreover, the adaptation agrees Bakhtin's idea and social speeches appear more strongly in the television series than in the novel and Ball is responsible for a narrative with many distinctive aspects from the original novel.

The artistic representation of differences in the speech highlighted in *True Blood* – from the individuality of the character to his exclusive fate – represent different people in the audience. "This fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel, that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the *speaking person and his discourse*" (Bahktin, 2008, 332). Without dialogues, the voice-over narration of Sookie could not be enough to represent the characters that are part of the story. And it would be more challenging for the audience, especially in an audiovisual domain, to feel empathy or gain knowledge about the characters personalities as the public has when they are able to know the characters utterance.

Another choice that might have influenced the identification of a broader public with the narrative and characters in *True Blood* is related to the casting of actors of different counties. Instead of just focusing on casting actors and actresses of different races, the main cast of *True Blood* has many foreigners that have an appeal for their own countries. As *True Blood* airs in all continents, having cast that represents other countries is a way of reaching atypical viewers by reasons beyond the story itself. The actress that plays Sookie, Anna Paquin, is Canadian. The actor that plays Bill Compton, Stephen Moyer, is from England. Although both play American characters, they are from out of United States, which appeals to their countries of origin. Thus, it is important to point out that the impact of the casting must not be left out of the discussion while studying the adaptation of a story from novel to audiovisual.

While dealing with novels, Bakhtin mentioned, "the novelistic word arose and developed not as the result of a narrowly literary struggle among tendencies, styles, abstract world views – but rather in a complex and centuries-long struggle among tendencies" (2008, 83). The author conveys the development of the narrative as a whole, with the development of the range of the narrative, related to how authors opened spaces for tendencies, listening to what people or potential readers were talking and applying that to the narrative of the novel, giving to people what they wanted. The more utterances you present, the more people will feel empathy with the characters represented in your story.

Therefore, "in the film, more than in any of the other arts, the signature of social forces is evident in the final work" (Bluestone, 1973, 35). According to Bluestone, the importance of the social force in an audiovisual piece is stronger than in a novel, as it becomes more attached to the public's will. As mentioned before, television is a medium that attracts viewers because of the high participation it allows them to have (McLuhan, 1964, 27). The social utterance is part of what is showed in television, embracing the public's will and what is being discussed by society. Thus, *True Blood* shows in the first episode of the series many of the issues we argue about being discussed in contemporary society, even if disguised by the topics that are mentioned in the series. Topics such as the prejudice against some of us (by the way the vampires and minorities are treated), the generalization issue (when Nan Flananghan answers the reporter who asked about vampires exploring humans "doesn't your race have a history of exploitation?"), the presumption (the fat guy who looks like a regular Louisiana men being called redneck while the clerk who dresses in a gothic way is assumed to be a vampire), the addiction to drugs (the search for a "V dealer"), the individualism reflected in the lack of politeness and respect (how the young couple does not care about other people in line) appear in the series. Other topics such as the woman's sexual independence (how the scene starts with a mentioning of sex between the couple), and free speech (even if discriminated, vampires have the right to go to television to try to defend themselves) somehow also appear in the first scene of *True Blood* under the umbrella of other issues about those fictional characters.

The six characters in the first scene work as a tool to deep a thought that had already been mentioned in the novel but not so deep as it is in the television show. The way vampires struggle to be a part of society is shown from everyone's point of view in *True Blood:* from the point of view of the vampires, from people who are against them, and

people who agree with vampire's rights. The vampire issue represents an actual struggle of people who suffer trying to fit in and how many people are victims of prejudices for many different reasons.

Furthermore, in the first scene, one detail stands out. The "redneck" vampire, as mentioned before, is wearing a cap that has the Confederate Flag, also known as the Dixie Flag on it. The flag stands for the southern part of the USA during the Civil War. Although it never officially represented the southern states in the war, it became a symbol for the people of the South. While some argue that the flag stands for southern heritage, other disagree pointing out that the flag was associated to the Neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan, as it stands for a fight from people who wanted to maintain a culture where black people were treated differently from white people. The controversy between the flag'ss semantically representation still affects the American citizens.

Either way, it is controversial to see a vampire, who is struggling to be acknowledged as equal to human, and gets angry when people are talking about his race or type, to support a controversial cause wearing a cap that has a flag that also works as a symbol for people who agree with a racial distinguishing between black and white people. Those controversial behaviors and the social utterance *True Blood* puts in vogue will be discussed further on chapter 2, as *True Blood* has an emphasis in raising social debates and bringing people to notice and argue about situations such as the one presented.

Prejudice is discussed throughout the television series along with other matter that is being largely discussed in our society

nowadays: stereotypes. The image of the vampire being a gothic creature, wearing dark clothes, and having a dark personality is not kept in the series and it is discussed since the first scene. Since the vampires first appeared on literature, they were seen as Gothic creatures. They were portrayed as powerful and evil, and they were described far beyond human characteristics. In the book *The encyclopedia of Vampires, Werewolves and other monsters,* the author Rosemary Ellen Guiley, describes the living dead as the "entity, force, or presence that brings illness, misfortune, death, and destruction. It is the demon parasite that threatens to such health, vitality, and life away from its victims" (xiii). Consequently, writers were inspired to create novels with vampires because of their supernatural powers; their ability to drain vitality and blood; because of their capacity of being possessed by evil, among others. Guiley points out that Folkloric vampires were the source writers based themselves on when they wrote novels that turned the undead into characters inside Gothic literature (Guiley 2005 xiii). That fact explains why when vampires first appeared on literature their existence was manly about frightening people, just like the images of Folkloric vampires were used to scare people Thus, the way the vampires looked was repulsive, as they were not created to be sympathetic creatures such as characters from a typical romance.

However, that reality has changed. Brian J. Frost mentions the differences between the classical vampire to the one presented to us in today's fiction literature and audiovisual. In *The Monster With a Thousand Face: Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature*, he mentions "Ever moving with times, it has evolved over untold centuries from obscure beginnings – probably as some hideous monstrosity – to its present-day embodiment as a psychopathic killer with a blood fixation" (1989, 1). Vampires are portrayed in a different way nowadays, and specially in *True Blood* they are far from the classical vampire image as the series intends to break stereotypes. When the clerk who pretends to be a vampire, dressing like a vampire stereotype of previous films released are revealed not being a vampire and the guy who seems to be a fat redneck, dressed with a fake army clothes and a Dixie Flag reveals himself a vampire, the viewer is provided with a break of perspective as s/he is able to realize that the classic image of vampire does not exist in *True Blood* and anyone might be or become a vampire independently from their looks.

For Gloria Anzaldúa, crossing and reworking different identity categories instead of separating them with borders is a way of defining an identity by mixing consciousness to "nourish our struggle and keep

alive our visions to recuperate, validate, and transform our histories" (155). In this way, Ball has developed characters and plotlines that represent many cultural identities, not segregating one from another, but as Anzaldúa remarks "crossing" and "reworking" distinct characters to share plotlines and the story by it self. In *Dead Until Dark* the mix between diverse identities is not as frequent as it is on the television series, mainly because there is not as many interactions between characters and the spotlight remains predominantly on Sookie, without great efforts to mix her with different cultures and identities other than herself and the vampires.

The "what you see may not be what you get" kind of posture of the first scene works as an introduction to the narrative of the television series. Brian McFarlane argues that "Conditions within the film industry and the prevailing cultural and social climate at the time of the film's making (especially when the film version does not follow hot upon the novel's publication) are two major determinants in shaping any film, adaptation or not". (1996, 21) Hence, it becomes part of the process of translating one mean to another to consider social forces and the atmosphere inside the new media. *Dead Until Dark*'s translation into *True Blood* makes it clear on which side the team who adapted the novel into the series is. Stam's questioning about the adapters choices and interests on an adaptation (Stam, 2006, 44) is answered as the crew who adapted *True Blood* increased the minority's discussion in the plot and clearly took its side.

Another example of issues being presented in *True Blood* in singular ways is how the introduction to "V" occurs in a different way from the novel to the television series. Although the effects of "V" appear to be the same in both medium, the way it appears in the plot is different from one domain to other. In *Dead Until Dark* and *True Blood*, as "V" became a popular drug since the vampires came out of the closet, some people are addicted to the power of "V" while others, such as the couple in the scene, are willing to try it for the first time because of its fame. In *True Blood*, we are able to see how curious the couple is about the drug and even hear the girl mention a story that she heard about someone who took "V". Nonetheless, in *Dead Until Dark*, there is not a character other than Sookie who mentions "V". It happens in the beginning of the novel. We get to know the drug when Sookie introduces us to "V" in another occasion.

> Since vampire blood was supposed to temporarily
> relieve symptoms of illness and increase sexual
> potency, kind of like prednisone and Viagra rolled

into one, there was a huge black market for genuine, undiluted vampire blood. Where there's a market there are suppliers; in this case, I'd just learned, the scummy Rat Couple. They'd formerly trapped vampires and drained them, selling the little vials of blood for as much as $200 a piece. It had been the drug of choice for at least two years now. Some buyers went crazy after drinking pure vampire blood, but that didn't slow the market any. (Harris 2001 2)

Sookie just mentions how "Vampire Blood" works in order to explain how the "Rat Couple" are dangerous. Although it is supposed to be a superficial introduction, as it is not the main topic Sookie is narrating, it gives us different details about the "V-Juice" than the ones presented by the characters from *True Blood* in the first scene. While the guy says that he can pay good money for the drug we assume that it is illegal, while in *Dead Until Dark* we read that it is illegal when Sookie narrates it. Thus, it is important to point out here also that whether in a film or in a television series, the viewer is able to watch what happens by him/herself and get to his/her own conclusions about the way vampires are treated. The dialogues from the television series speak for itself, with no need of a narrator telling the audience what is going on, and the spectator learns by him/herself how the vampires blend in within the society inside the plot.

While there are many points of view in *True Blood's* first scene dealing with the issues mentioned before, in the novel Sookie introduces vampires co-existing with humans as complementary information while she is narrating other major events of the plot. Changing the perspective from Sookie to various narrators allows, for instance, the viewers to experience how people mock vampires or how they fear vampires as well as how they behave when looking for "V", instead of reading from Sookie's point of view about the same issue. Again, the narrative of *True Blood* allows the viewer to have other data about the plot than what Sookie acknowledges. Because it is possible to view what Sookie describes in the film from another perspective, analyzing directly the behavior of someone who is looking for "V" instead of having the information Sookie filters.

In the article *Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses*, Colin MacCabe mentions

"we can split the discourses of the various characters from their situation and compare what

> is said in those discourses with what has been revealed to us through narration. The camera shows us what happens - it tells the truth against which we can measure the discourses" (MacCabe 47 1974)

Instead of receiving information that is related to what the narrator believes in, filtered by Sookie's opinions and thoughts, in *True Blood*, we, as viewers, interpret the story with our own beliefs, taking into consideration the director's choices. Our unique interpretation of the television series happens because everything is narrated in a different way than it is in the novel, not only by different characters, but also acknowledging the camera as a narrator, not forgetting the impact of the audiovisual medium in a narrative in comparison to a novel.

> The camera in this sense becomes the narrator by, for instance, focusing on such aspects of mise-en-scène as the way actors look, move, gesture, or are costumed, or on the ways in which they are positioned in a scene or on how they are photographed: in these ways the camera may catch a 'truth' which comments on and qualifies what the characters actually say. (McFarlane 1996 17).

Not only we have contact with the plotline of a character or a story, we also have a deep interaction with aspects of mise-en-scène, which allows the public to go beyond and have different conclusions about the same fact that is being narrated by the camera. It allows the viewers to have a different point of view than that the characters of *True Blood* have. The viewer gets to question their behavior, providing us, the viewers, a deeper interaction just as McLuhan mentions.

Hence, in *Dead Until Dark*, most of the topics are not highlighted as they are in *True Blood*. For instance, Sookie describes her gift of mind reading many times while narrating other main events. Her gift is not something that she narrates individually and exclusively. Even when she mentions it the first time, she only says "I have a disability. That's how I try to think of it" (Harris, 2001, 1). However, she doesn't explain her "disability" until later on "I'd very rudely listened in to their thoughts —I know, pretty low-class of me. But I get bored like everyone else, and though I spend most of my time blocking out the thoughts of other people that try to pass through my brain, sometimes I just give in" (Harris, 2001, 2). Therefore, details about how she reads other people minds are described little by little, throughout the novel and do not have the highlight it has in the television series.

In *True Blood*, Sookie's first appearance is in scene 2. It shows Merlotte's bar, the place where Sookie works and it mainly illustrates Sookie working. In scene 2 she hears other peoples thoughts and we are able to listen to what is going on in her mind while she listens to them. The scene works as if we were able to listen to her thoughts along with her moving along the bar, in a voice over style of narration. Although in this particular scene we are able to listen to what she is listening, we are not able to listen to what she is thinking about as Sookie does not narrate the story in voice-over.

In the following scene, as the place where Sookie works is presented, we see working at Merlotte's. As she walks by the costumers to serve them, we hear as a voice-over what they are thinking about. The camera shows her reaction to the costumer's thoughts and their behavior while thinking what they are thinking. While serving one of the tables, she accidently replies to a kid about what he is wondering to himself, leaving him and his parents surprised. She gets embarrassed and walks away from the table. She moves away from the costumers and the camera focus on her only, as she concentrates to leave everybody's thoughts out of her mind. For the first time on this scene there is a silent pause in her hearings of other peoples thoughts and suddenly all we hear is the music playing in Merlotte's. In this scene, we are able to visualize her descriptions in *Dead Until Dark* of how she listens and tries not to listen to what other people say. In this scene we are also able to visualize people judging her from being different from all the rest.

2.1   2.2

2.3 **2.4**
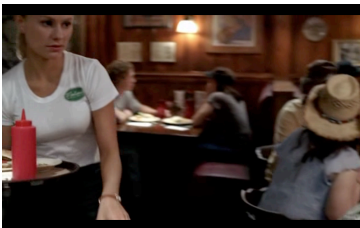
2.5 **2.6**

2.7 **2.8**

2.9

Although we are hearing what people are thinking through her point of view (we listen to the voice-over as it was one of the many voices in her head), we visualise the reaction of others by an outside prespective, the camera prespective. Again, as one of the greatest dissimilarity from words and audiovisual is that we can make our conclusions about how other people react to her "weirdness" instead of reading her point of view of how people react to her presence. Of course there is the intervention of the director's point of view in the making of the scene, however the information seems to be less filtered than the one that is provided for us by the first person point of view of a narrator. It becomes clear that the multiple narrators and point of view work in *True*

Blood in order to open the narrative for different perceptions, other than Sookie's.

Even when she is still omnicient in a scene, because she is aware of other people's thoughts, her perspective is not absolute. *In New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, the authors mention the resource that is used throughout this scene and throughout many of *True Blood*'s other scenes.

> (T)he control of point-of-view is the most powerful means of inducing a kind of imaginary response on the part of the spectator, "positioning" the spectator by addressing the viewer through visual devices such as the point-of-view shot and shot/reverse-shot cutting in order to fashion a very tight bond between spectator and text. In this way, the text may be said to "interpellate" the spectator into the fictional world so that its values, and its ideology, become one with the viewing subject (Stam, Burgoyne, and Lewis, 1992, 91)

Eventhough Sookie does not narrate the scene, the voices we hear as voice-over and the movement of the camera as it was somehow presenting her vision of Merlotte's, gives us the perseption Stam mentions, that we, as viewers, are being positioned to see from her perspective. However, the scene alternates from a camera point-of-view to a reverse shot – where we see Sookie as we were in front of her. Therefore, we also get to see from an external point of view her emotional and cognitive state, which gives us an understanding of what is going on with her at the same time we can understand the same scene from a third person's point of view, being more judgmental about it.

In *True Blood*, we get to question Sookie's actions more than in *Dead Until Dark*, because in the television series we are able to analyze how she behaves from a different perspective. That occurs not only because of the lack of first-person narration, but by the way her character is positioned throughout the series. For instance, while in the novel the first introduction of Sookie we have is of her describing how she hoped a vampire "would come to Bon Temps", in *True Blood* , Sookie's first scene is the one where she hears people's thoughts. Before acknowledging her empathy for vampires, we get to know that she has a special gift that she desperately tries to control. Instead of knowing what she desires, we actually see how she behaves, leading us to know more about how she is than what she thinks, externalizing our knowledge

about her and allowing us to judge her by our own beliefs, interpreting her actions along with our values and ideologies.

Hence, most of the plotlines of the scenes in the first episode, *Strange Love,* and most of the scenes presented in this work have more details about characters and relations than the novel that has inspired the adaptation has. *True Blood* also deepens discussions that are related to the ones that are happening since the beginning of the television series, in 2008. The social utterance is presented when the characters of the first scene represent how vampires are seen and how they co-exist in the society, where there is a personification, interpretation and highlight of most facts that are narrated in *Dead Until Dark*. The personality of characters, the relationship between society and vampires, the relationship between characters, among other aspects became more apparent in *True Blood*. At the same time those changes happens as a demand of the new medium, it appears clearly as a personal choice of who is adapting the story as well.

The only character included in the first scene of *True Blood* that is a recurrent character of the television series is Nan Flaninghan, the vampire described as an authority between vampires. Nan appears many times throughout *True Blood*, always representing political issues. However, that character does not exist in *Dead Until Dark*. Nevertheless, the importance of the creation of characters such as Nan Flaninghan will be discussed thought out the next chapter, "Developing and creating characters and plotlines in *True Blood*".

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING AND CREATING CHARACTERS AND PLOTLINES IN *TRUE BLOOD*

Robert Stam points out that adaptation is nothing more than "um trabalho de reacentuação, pelo qual uma obra que serve como fonte é reinterpretada através de novas lentes e discursos" (2006, 48). *Dead Until Dark* had an utterance of its own, dealing with political issues in a way it was not the main topic of the novel, highlighting Sookie's plotline, her feelings, and her affection for Bill Compton. Although the relationship presented between a woman and a vampire makes us to reflect on prohibited relationships and relating it to the differentiation of classes, colors, gender, religions, and others, the main issue of the novel is Sookie's life, focusing on how she feels about the world, what happens to her, and what she will do to be with the one she loves, in an egocentric point of view.

Moreover, *True Blood* still has its eye on Sookie's feeling, but the fact that this particular romance is seen badly by society seems to gain more importance in the plot than the protagonists' feelings by itself. The utterance in *True Blood* – although it remains strongly connected to the one in *Dead Until Dark* – is different. In the television series the differentiation among groups of people whether they are humans, non-human, black, white, homosexual, heterosexual, man or woman, is the main topic of the series. Sookie is the main character inside this plot, as she is one of the victims of discrimination. She is judged by her love for a vampire and for her abilities of mind reading that differentiate her from a "normal person". Her skills classify her as a "freak" – as she is referred to many times in *True Blood*.

In order for the utterance to be altered from one domain to another, the television series went through changes that revealed the discrimination issue as the main one in the plot of the series. The developing and creation of characters and plotlines occurred in order to present other realities than Sookie's, showing the discrimination in other levels than the one which *Dead Until Dark* focus the most. When Bakhtin wrote about discourse in the novel, he considered that a plot in a novel should

> "(O)rganize the exposure of social languages and ideologies, the exhibiting and experiencing of

> such languages: the experience of a discourse, a world view and an ideologically based act, or the exhibiting of everyday's life of social, historical and national worlds (…) the novelistic plot serves to represent speaking persons and their ideological worlds". (Bakhtin, 2008, 365)

According to Bakhtin, in order for multiple voices, with multiple points of view to be heard, the plot must expose ideologies situated within our actual time and history in order to make it relevant for people nowadays. The multiple voices concept was not strong in *Dead Until Dark*, as it assumed Sookie's discourse almost as the only one in the plot. Nevertheless, in *True Blood,* many voices are presented in different approaches that were created throughout the adaptation. The segmentation of narration in the plot, – presented in the last chapter – is one of them. By adding narrators and voices to the television series, Ball came up with new plotlines, new issues and a new way to deal with subjects that are not dealt with in Harris's novel. The other way to create multiple voices in the television show was to create and develop characters and plotlines that brought to *True Blood* a touch of social utterances.

Each new plotline that was created or complemented relied mostly in the new configuration of characters. Most plotlines were developed around characters that did not have a life of their own in *Dead Until Dark,* since they were only descriptions made by the narrator of the novel some with few lines of their own. The new plotlines deal with the point of view of characters that received a new perspective and brought a new network of characters to the overall plot. Moreover, some of them did not exist in all Harris's series of novels and others exited only in subsequent *Sookie Stackhouse Novels*, therefore they do not appear in *Dead Until Dark.*

However, not all characters were created, some of them already existed, but their importance and their plotlines got deeper with the change of medium. Characters that were irrelevant for the narration of the novel became main characters in *True Blood*. The authors of the television show created a discourse that belongs to each one of the developed characters, which resulted in plots exposing distinctive ideologies. Ball's changes can be analyzed according to Bakhtin's considerations about the act of creating characters and developing plotlines and a speech of their own in literature. Moreover, Bordwell considers that in order to delineate a character, their "class position, job, social actions, and political views" (Bordwell, 1985, 235) should be

taken into consideration. When considering aspects such as the ones mentioned, the character starts to have a life of its own, with a discourse that belongs to her/him and carries the characters background.

On the other hand, Bordwell does not assume a character that has individual characteristics, which its differentiations from other characters, as an exclusive voice. "Characters also lose the uniqueness sought to some degree by classical narration and to a great degree by art-cinema narration; they become prototypes of whole classes, milieux, or historical epochs" (Bordwell, 1985, 235). According to Bordwell's thought, the personification of a character, adding to it a background and an utterance of its own does not turn the character into an exceptional figure. It actually works in order to make people relate to the characters personality, finding a reflection of her/himself in some attributes the character presents.

When the viewer identifies her/himself with the character, s/he brings her/his own experiences to the character, projecting her/his history in the story of the character.
John Ellis wrote about how the identification process works between viewer and character, describing two different tendencies in the course.

> First, there is that of dreaming and phantasy that involve the multiple and contradictory tendencies within the construction of the individual. Second, there is the experience of narcissist identification with the image of a human figure perceived as other (…) identification involves both the recognition of self in the image on the screen, a narcissistic identification, and the identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration (Ellis 1982 43)

Hence, the process works in a way the viewer expects to be represented in the narrative somehow, either by a "narcissist identification" or by a fantasy of "narcissist identification", meaning that the viewer knows that it is not her/his image but what s/he dreams to be like in a representation of her/himself. Those dreams lead the viewer to identify her/himself with the image portrayed in an audiovisual as well they identify with the real image of themselves. Balogh mentions that television and cinema work as tools to make dreams come true (Balogh 2001 193) and this is what happens when a person is able to visualize and relate to an image s/he wishes to be the representation of the viewer in real life. Viewers can dream to be or to do something that is not possible in real life.

Certain expectations are created when that relation between spectator and character is created. Feeling close to the character makes the viewer know her/his limits, as Bordwell puts it "the viewer brings to these films a few highly probable schemata. Already-known stories, drawn from history, myth, and contemporary life, furnish a fairly limited range of options for the overall cause-effect chain", (Bordwell, 1985, 241). Nevertheless, whether the spectator feels limitations in the plot or not, s/he feels involved with it. And that identification only happens because of the multiple voices the utterance of *True Blood* has.

However, the multiple voices are not the unique reason why the creation and development of new characters and plotlines was essential in the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark*. When Balogh talks about television, she mentions that typically television series more time and, as a result of that, content than films and novels. Balogh emphasizes the establishment of new plotlines in the adaptation from a novel into a television show as a mean of adapting the story to fit the screen and provide more content to the new domain (2005, 152). Her remarks remind us about the choice of creating and developing characters and plotlines in the television series being related to the domain *True Blood* airs on. Comparing television time with novel is not a simple task, however as *True Blood's* first season has approximately 11 hours and *Dead Until Dark* has 292 pages, Balogh's considerations are relevant in order to understand that more content had to be created in order to fit the novel into the screen.

Nonetheless, the particular choice of highlighting social utterances in *True Blood* characterizes an option the crew responsible for the adaptation had to take. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the choice could have been another, as an adaptation allows the creation of a whole new plotline, in ways that Sookie might have been turned into a secondary character, for instance. Including social dialogism in a narrative "requires the concrete social context of discourse to be exposed, to be revealed as the force that determines its entire stylistic structure it's "form" and its "format" determining it not from without, but from within" (Bakhtin, 2008, 300). Thus, Alan Ball and the team that worked on the adaptation were aware of the role social utterance had in *True Blood*. In fact, this thesis hypothesis is that the social utterance in *True Blood* is far more intense than in *Dead Until Dark.*

Balogh considers that new plotlines and characters created in adaptations of novel to audiovisual are attached to the main ones that existed in the novel. For her, it is a fact that new plotlines and characters end up following a pattern from the main plotline that generated the

adaptation (Balogh, 2005, 156). We will see here that somehow, *True Blood* amplified discussions that already existed in *Dead Until Dark*. As a result of that, many of the plotlines in the novel exist in the television series, but the reciprocal is not correct. The original plotline of the novel, which includes the romance between Sookie and Bill, Sookie's boss being attracted to her, her brother being a womanizer, among other ramifications, inspired new plotlines and characters to be created. Somehow, all that was created in *True Blood* follows a similar context from what already existed in the novel.

McFarlane mentions that although adaptations rely on the creativity and the view of the person who is adapting has of the original novel, it require "a kind of selective interpretation, along with the ability to recreate and sustain an established mood" (McFarlane, 1996, 17). Knowing how to match what is created with what already exists is fundamental for the plot to work as one and to have an overall utterance that leads to the same path. The characters and plotlines created must be homogeneous in the plot. For instance, the adaptation of *Dead Until the Dark* to *True Blood* we, as viewers of *True Blood*, are not able to differentiate what is originally taken from the novel and what was written in the adaptation.

Characters such as Nan Flaninghan were inserted in the plot where a gap would appear if that character did not exist in the television series. Without Sookie's narration, a character such as Nan Flaninghan had to appear in order to contextualize the viewer about many issues that are further more relevant to the plot of *True Blood* than they were to *Dead Until Dark*. On the first scene of the television series, Nan Flaninghan appears with the purpose of situating the viewer in relation to the fight vampires are holding for their rights. She appears only in one scene in *Strange Love,* however she becomes a recurrent character of *True Blood*, appearing in many other episodes, from season one to the last season of the series aired, season five.

Nan Flaninghan became the symbol of the vampires fight for equal rights in the television series. In *Dead Until Dark* as the discussion for vampire's rights was not as deep as it is in the television series, there was no character that would represent such thing. Whenever the topic of vampire's rights came up, Sookie, as the narrator, would situate the viewer about the issue, but she would not go into further details. The topic did not have a plotline of its own in the novel, it was just a part of the struggle Sookie had to go through in order to maintain her romance with a vampire. As new voices and topics appear in *True*

Blood, the modifications appeal not only to the new medium, but also to lead the viewers to social discussions *Dead Until Dark* left behind.

> "O romance original, nesse sentido, pode ser visto como uma expressão situada, produzida em um meio e em um contexto histórico e social e, posteriormente, transformada em outra expressão, igualmente situada, produzida em um contexto diferente e transmitida em um meio diferente" (Stam 2006 50)

As Stam states the original novel should be accepted by the adapter as an inspiration for her/him when making a version of that story for another medium. We have to acknowledge that each of it has its own timing and context, and both should be taken into consideration in order for the adaptation to be appealing. The social waves of the time the adaptation occurs in should be thought about in order for the society to see its own struggles and questionings in the screen.

As mentioned before, *Dead Until Dark* did not deepen most of the social discourses the novel could have explored in order to focus on the main character and her main plotline. However, in *True Blood* some examples show situations where the adaptation took advantage of something that was already on the novel but no attention was given to the matter. Both novel and television series are situated in Louisiana, southern United States of America. Historically, that particular location had slavery permitted until the 1860's and allowed many differentiations between white people and black people until the Civil Rights Act, signed in 1964. That segregation occurred until less than 50 years ago.

The discrimination against black people is still a recent issue in Louisiana, vastly discussed by all Americans in 2005 after the incident of the hurricane Katrina. The southern region of United States of America still deals with matters such as the prejudice against African Americans. While in *Dead Until Dark* we only find one mentioning to prejudice against black people, in *True Blood* the prejudice is further discussed. The issue is mentioned throughout different plots and characters many times, being highlighted in the television show. Moreover, in the novel, Sookie's only mention to prejudice against black people is in the middle of the book, while she narrates the entrance of two black vampires in Merlotte's.

> Folks in Bon Temps were getting accustomed to Bill, but the flamboyant Malcolm and the equally flamboyant Diane caused quite a stir. My first thought was that this wasn't going to help people get used to Bill and me (…) Blacks didn't come

into Merlotte's much, but if any black was absolutely safe there, it was Diane. (Harris, 2001, 151)

Since the narrator in *Dead Until Dark* mentions that black people do not often visit Merlotte's and specially mentions the safety of black people, a topic to be further discussed stands out. Then again, in the novel no further comments else comes from that thought of Sookie. In spite of that, *True Blood* has many scenes throughout the series showing the concern with that issue, with critics and discussions that are absorbed by the public.

When describing the Soviet cinema style, Bordwell mentions characteristics that are classic in the audiovisual field and, as a consequence, are found in the adaptation field. Bordwell mentions that "character types find their roles within specific generic motivations". (Bordwell, 1985, 236). Whereas a debate that intends to go further into the discussion of differentiation among people must be representative enough to stand for all who are distinguished in nowadays and were differentiated throughout history. In the creation and developing of some strong characters in *True Blood* the characters reveal themselves to the public for what they stand for. Hence, the characters in the television shows a representative force in the narrative. Bordwell completes his idea by saying that characters are "emblematic of forces within a politically defined situation" (Bordwell, 1985, 236), which fits into the representative style of the characters in *True Blood*.

When the team who adapted the novel embraced the topic of segmentation of black people in United States of America into the main plotline of *True Blood*, new characters had to be created. And along with them, individual plotlines, in order to exemplify their reality and situate the viewer in the type of life they live. As a result of it, in the television show characters that are important to the main plotline of the story are black and they have their own utterance inside the series that shows more clearly the prejudice issue.

Shohat and Stam mention that the portrayal of black people in film is usually attached to an image that shows them as "spectacles whose social thrust is primarily shaped by others" (Shohat and Stam, 1994, 187). According to the authors black characters are often secondary on the plot and their existence is connected to white characters. As mentioned before, *Dead Until Dark* relies totally on Sookie's existence in order for it to make sense and in the novel, Sookie does not have relations with many black people. In fact, there are four

black characters that are mentioned by Sookie throughout the whole novel.

However, in the television show her best friend is a black woman, called Tara Thornton. In the plot, they were practically raised together by Sookie's grandmother. In *The Southern Vampire Novels*, the series of novels that *Dead Until Dark* belongs to, Tara appears in some of the other novels playing an insignificant role, where she is friends with Sookie, but not on the same friendship level or importance as in *True Blood*. She does not have plotline of her own and she only has minor appearances and a small importance in the novel. Sookie only mentions Tara superficially and by what she describes she is just an ordinary character. In *True Blood*, although Tara's existence is somehow connected to Sookie – after all, Stackhouse is the main character in the plot – she is independent in the plot, and if Sookie's character died, for instance, she would still have importance in the narrative. Ball and his team created and developed plotlines and characters that are able to survive without the main character, and even turn into spinoffs if that is necessary, not following the pattern identified by Shohat and Stam.

Another important distinctive characteristic from the series of novel to television series is that Sookie describes Tara (in the other novel she appears on) as her being a white woman instead of being black. Even if the other novels from the series are not the corpus of this thesis a parenthesis must be done here about that fact. The way Tara is portrayed in the other novel is by no mean even close to how she appears in *True Blood*. By analyzing Tara's character we can come to a conclusion that her name is the only thing that makes us think that the Tara from the novel and the Tara from *True Blood* derivate one from another. But again, in *Dead Until Dark* there is not a single mention about the existence of a character named Tara. Also, no black character stands out in the novel and, just as curiosity, in the other 10 novels from the *The Southern Vampire Novels* no black character has any highlight.

Tara's name is actually part of a conversation she has with a client of Merlotte's in scene 18 on *Strange Love*. Tara is serving as a waitress in Marlette's. She is on the bar reading a book and talking to Lafayette. A man who is sited on the Bar snaps at Tara for her to serve him. She gets angry and replies rudely.

> TARA: Uh-uh. Do do not snap at me. I have a name. And that name is Tara.   And isn't that funny? Black girl being named after a plantation.

The man chuckles.

TARA: No, I don't think it's funny. In fact, it really pisses me off that my mama was either stupid or just plain mean, which is why you better be nice if you plan on getting a drink tonight.

GUY: Sorry, ma'am.

TARA: Okay. [14]

Whether the adapters kept the name Tara in order to use it as another reason to justify the new characters attitude or not, we cannot tell. However, it seems like an explanation for the particular name to be used in the television series. In United States of America most of the black slaves from the southern part of the country used to work in plantations. Tara's Plantation is actually the name of a plantation in the classical novel and filmic adaptation *Gone with the Wind.* Moreover, the overall creation of Tara's character in *True Blood* situated her as one of the main characters in the story, having a plotline of her own instead of only being shown just as Sookie's best friend. The third scene of the series features her as the following excerpt shows. The scene occurs at a department store. Tara is comfortably seated in a chair in a hallway reading a book when a heavy-set woman walks up to her. The camera starts to zoom in. Tara does not give the woman much attention until the customer starts to get upset with the situation. Tara closes her book and stands up to talk to her. As Tara provokes the woman the customer gets upset and asks for the manager. Tara screams the managers name and takes of her uniform from the store mentioning that she is going to quit her job. When the manager approaches Tara slaps him on his face and starts to talk more ghetto, with an accent that is typical known as the blacks accent in USA. She starts acting like a stereotype of a single black mom. As both costumer and manager believe on her acting Tara gets even more upset and accuses them from being racist.

4.1   **4.2**

---

[14] My transcription of the scene.

4.3   4.4

4.5   4.6

4.7   4.8

4.9

"TARA: Welcome to Super Save-A-Bunch. (4.1)
WOMAN: Hi, I'm looking for that thick, translucent plastic sheeting ... the kind they hang in front of the doors of walk-in refrigerators.
TARA: We don't sell that here. You could try Home Depot.

WOMAN: I tried them already. They sent me here.

TARA: Oh… (4.2)

WOMAN: Now, I cannot believe you don't have that stuff. Oh, I don't even know what it's called!

TARA: Sorry

Woman. Well, you're supposed to have everything!

TARA: Well, we don't have that stuff that you don't even know what it's called!

WOMAN: Your website says that this is the most well-stocked store in five parishes! Now, I just drove over an hour from Marthasville ...

TARA: Does our website have a phone number? (4.3)

WOMAN: Well, I suppose it does, but...

TARA: So, it never occurred to you, before you drove an hour, to pick up the phone and call us, to see if we stocked whatever the hell it is that you're looking for?

WOMAN: Well, I think that if a business chooses to classify itself as …

TARA: (raises her voice): Why didn't you just find it on-line and have it delivered to your house? Or were you just looking for an excuse to wear them ugly-ass clothes? (4.4)

WOMAN: I would like to speak to your manager.

TARA: Fine. (screams) Waylon! (4.5)

TARA: Trust me, you are not getting me fired! I am quitting! You were just the fucking catalyst! And for that, I ought to thank you!

WOMAN: You are a very rude young woman!

TARA: Oh, this ain't rude. This is uppity!

TARA: That's for patting my ass too much! I'm going to get my baby daddy, who just got out of prison, to come and kick your teeth in!

WAYLON: Jesus, Tara. Please don't do any … (4.7)

TARA: Oh, my God! I'm not serious, you pathetic racist! I don't have a baby! Damn! I know y'all have to be stupid, but do you have to be that stupid? Shit! fuck this job! (4.8)

Tara grabs her book and leaves the store (4.9)"

(Ball, 3) [15]

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[15] My transciption of scene 3 of *Stange Love*.

The scene mentioned shows Tara's personality better, as we are introduced to her character in a very strong and particular way. Some of her issues are quickly exposed such as suffering from racism, not dealing well with orders, having a doubtful attitude while working, among others. The fact that she has a personality that is unique distinguishes her from other characters in the novel, and puts her in a position of spotlight in the plotline. The character is not just a background act; she has goals of its own. Syd Field characterizes a main character as "a character who plans things, who acts" (2005, 48). Field's differentiation applies to various characters in *True Blood,* all fitting his description.

However, Sookie's character is the link between many worlds that exist in *True Blood,* setting her as the central character that connects all the plots. Sookie can be considered as the "main main" character, while there are other main characters that are also a part of the plot of the television series. As Field also points out, "Frequently a story is about what distinguishes the main character from the other characters" (2005, 47) whereas Sookie's and Tara's personalities are the ones delineating the differences between both characters and the others as both have unique characteristics.

Furthermore, Tara's personality distinguishes her from all the others. That is highlighted in a scene that did not exist in the novel, involving characters that did not exist in *Dead Until Dark.* The scene already presents her as a main character, introducing her point-of-view, showing to the viewers her world. Later on, when we learn she is Sookie's best friend, we already know something about her uniqueness, since Tara has been presented for us, the viewers, in the previous Super Save-A-Bunch store scene.

Bordwell and Thomson define that main characters are the ones who "reaches his or her initial goal" (2008, 104). According to their thought, Tara's goal should be presented if she is a main character. Throughout the television series we observe Tara's struggle with the issue of prejudice against African Americans in the southern part of the United States – as well as in many other regions of the world – stands out. Her main goal is defined by her attitude against prejudice, as she fights in order to be treated as equal to any other culture. The prejudice topic was already in the novel, but in television it is shown in a deeper way, so that we can see what Tara goes through and watch her fighting for her goal. Thus, we connect to her point of view.

Stam mentions that audiovisual contemporary productions tend to be "fóbicos em relação a qualquer ideologia vista como "extrema",

seja ela proveniente da esquerda ou da direita. As adaptações hollywoodianas freqüentemente 'corrigem' suas fontes ao extrair delas o que é controverso (2006, 42). According to Stam's thought, the fact that *True Blood* highlighted an issue that was not considered relevant to the story shows two tendencies of audiovisual products: it does not underestimate social issues and it does not abandon controversial situations that might provoke the public.

When Sookie mentions in the novel that "if any black was absolutely safe there, it was Diane" (Harris, 2001, 151) it definitely sounds as there is a strong prejudice against African Americans in Bon Temps. However, it sounds like Sookie is neither aware of it nor caring about the issue too much. Bakhtin considers that "(a) passive understanding of linguistic meaning is no understanding at all, it is only the abstract aspect of meaning" (2008, 281). By that, Harris's position in *Dead Until Dark* is passive in relation to topics such as racism as the narrator's position does not flourish a deeper questioning from the readers about racism and other issues beyond the vampires trying to fit in and people accepting Sookie's relationship with Bill and her abilities. The romance between the narrator and the vampire is on the spotlight of the novel and other issues are secondary and not relevant enough to distract the readers from the main plotline of the novel, that consists in Sookie's world, specially her infatuation with a vampire.

However, in *True Blood*, with the appearance of new characters such as Tara and new plotlines such as scene two, alien words appear as a new form of dialogism, revealing new issues and other realties for the viewer. "This dialogism bears a more subjective, psychological and (frequently) random character, sometimes crassly accommodating, sometimes provocatively polemical" (Bakhtin, 2008, 282). Therefore, the television series ends up provoking viewers to question certain issues, which increases the level of participation and interest of the public in the story that is being presented. Since television is a cold medium, it brings the audience closer to the plotlines, attaching the viewers to the story.

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, in order for a character to gain importance enough in the plot of *True Blood* to instigate the public to question issues such as racism, the character has to have its own plotline. The independence of the character shows the viewer its importance in the plot and attracts the audience in the criteria Ellis mentioned, involving dreams, fantasy, and narcissist identification (Ellis 1982 43). Throughout *True Blood* Tara's plotline is filled with conflicts with her drunk imprudent mother - which she mentions in scene 11, her

feelings for Sookie's brother Jason – mentioned in scene 11 and 20, her relationship with her cousin Lafayete and her friendship with her best friend Sookie. As reported by Stam, "Ao revelar os prismas e discursos através dos quais o romance foi reimaginado, as adaptações fornecem aos próprios discursos um tipo objetivo de materialidade". (2006, 49). The own utterance of *True Blood* helps to build characters and plotlines that fit into the message that is going out to the viewers, as an overall discourse in the plot.

Hence, the creation and enhancement of characters and plotlines supply pillars to the new domain, which helps the overall utterance to be built. Yet the overall utterance also helps when creating both characters and plotlines. It's a two-way effort that results in a homogeneous discourse. "(T)he character speech almost always influences authorial speech (and sometimes powerfully so), sprinkling it with another's words (that is, the speech of a character is perceived as the concealed speech of another)" (Bakhtin, 2008,315). Then again the utterance only exists because there is an overall guidance that leads to that new speech to be created. A direction that allows the new utterance to fit into the overall discourse and to be mixed into the narrative as if created with it.

Tara's character also plays another important role in the development of the plotline in *True Blood*. Since it is the first scene the character has a significant highlight in the series as Tara externalizes Sookie's thoughts. Many of Sookie's thoughts in the novel are portrayed similarly in the television show, but as a conversation with Tara. As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Sookie's thoughts are externalized in some moment. It happens in order to inform the viewer about her feelings since in the novel the reader would actually read from Sookie's point of view, which included how she felt about many things. However, in *True Blood*, without the resource of voice-over[16], characters such as Tara – and above all Tara – are responsible for those externalizations.

Moreover, Lafayette is a character in Tara's plotline that is included in *Dead Until Dark* but it is not relevant to the story. Lafayette is Tara's cousin in *True Blood*, and he works as a cooker in Merlotte's. He is also Sookie's workmate, both in the novel and in the television

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[16] Sarah Kozloff describes voice-over by analyzing each word and uniting it in order for it to make sense. "*Voice* determines the medium: we must hear someone speaking" and "*Over* pertains to the relationship between the source of the sound and the images on the screen" (Kozloff, 1988, 2-3). She emphasizes "voice-over is distinguishable by the fact that one could not display the speaker by adjusting the camera's position in the pictured story space" (Kozloff, 1988, 3).

show. In the novel, he is black and gay which corresponds to the characteristics the character has in *True Blood*. In *Dead Until Dark* some of the dialogues in which Lafayette participates are narrated by Sookie, however there is not a deeper portrayal of the character beyond her mentioning superficially that he is black and gay. In *True Blood* Lafayette is far from being only black and gay character, he has a strong personality standing out in the crowd. He is a bit controversial: he looks very tall and athletic, but he wears make-up; he mixes men's and woman's clothes, and while he seems fragile and understanding in others he appears as a strong and mean person.

From all the mentioned characteristics of Lafayette in *True Blood* the only one that is clearly present in *Dead Until Dark* is the fact that he wears make-up, since Sookie mentions once that he is polishing his nails. All the other characteristics he acquires in the translation of the novel to the television show were inspired in the brief appearances of the character has in *Dead Until Dark.* The following narration is the most detailed description Sookie gives us about Lafayette in the novel.

> Dawn had never gotten along with Lafayette, whether because he was black or because he was gay, I didn't know ... maybe both. Arlene and Charlsie just accepted the cook, but didn't go out of their ways to be friendly. But I'd always kind of liked Lafayette because he conducted what had to be a tough life with verve and grace. (Harris, 2001, 211)

In spite of the appearance issue, again, it seems there is a bigger matter involving the prejudice that occurs in the novel. Again the narrator does not explain it right: "Is his life tough because he is black, gay or both?". The rescue of those issues occurs in *True Blood* matching the idea that an adaptation must encounter the actual concerns of society. Denis McQuail describes in his book *Mass Communication Theory* how the audience influences the choices of a producer of any media, including television. McQuail portrays the audience as the "most important of the clients on influences in the environment of any media" (McQuail, 1987, 160) which explains how Alan Ball and his team working on *True Blood* paid attention to the concerns of the audience in order to portray it in the narrative.

Films and television shows that portrayed prejudice come a long way. However, nowadays it is more frequent to see films and television series that expose the issue. Bordwell and Thomson argue that a *"reflectionist"* view of audiovisual prevails when it is assumed that

"genres reflect social attitudes, as if in a mirror" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, 327). On the other hand, Bordwell and Thompson highlight that "(a) genre film may reflect not the audience's hopes and tears but the filmmakers guess about what will sell" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, 327). Hence, the reflection of the team who adapted *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood* is portrayed as the adaptation works as a reflection of their own interests and their view of what are some successful topics to be in vogue.

According to McQuail, a reflection of the interests of audience reproduces a representation that "may be based on personal experience, imagination or a stereotype, but it helps the creator to 'test' the product in the course of its formation" (McQuail, 1987, 244). Thus, *True Blood* works as a mix of what the society expects with what the adaptation team thinks the society is looking forward to watch and should see. Either way, even if filtered by an interpretation of who is adapting the piece, the final work reflects what it happening in society at a certain period. The *"reflectionist"* view of audiovisual suggests that the attitudes of the public serve as inspiration for all medias for a long time in history:

> For instance, do the science-fiction films of the 1950s, with hydrogen bombs creating Godzilla and other monsters reveal leans of technology run amok'? The hypothesis is that genre conventions, repeated from film to film, reflect the audience's pervasive doubts or anxieties. Many film scholars would argue that this reflectionist approach helps explain why genres vary in popularity. (Bordwell and Thompson, 1985, 327).

Thus, *True Blood* reflects what is popular nowadays: discussions about society and its prejudices. An audiovisual product that pleases the audience pleases the producer who is expecting the audience to watch, enjoy and consume his product. McQuail notes that tendency as evident, "the competence and power of the audience to influence the producer/distributor"(McQuail, 1987, 244). However he highlights that "it depends on the character and setting of the audience in question." (McQuail, 1987, 244). Moreover, McQuail assumes that only using or creating a character that fits into the story is not enough. There must be something else to engage the audience. Something that appeals and provokes the public.

Since Lafayette's plot became more and more independent throughout *True Blood*, he became one of the most acknowledged

characters of the television series. Lafayette's growth reflects the audience's sympathy for his role inside the plot. Lafayette's importance in *True Blood* was improved in relation to the series to the novel because the audience of television accepts well characters such as he is. The public of the series accepted him very well, as they were appealed to his unique characteristics and personality. Hence, his growth as a character inside the television series happened because the character generated a big empathy with the public. As *True Blood* continues to be written, the author continues to highlight and enhance narratives that are successful among the audience.

The immediate response of doing what the audience prefers is a characteristic of the audiovisual domain. Since the media has a larger investment it implicates on a need of an economical response, and the public's opinion as well, as its approval is essential for the domain to pursue. "From a market perspective, the key fact about audiences is their attention-giving behavior, expressed mainly in acts of purchase (sales, box office) or viewing" (McQuail, 1987, 222). When the author reflects in the plot what the society wants to see, the response of the public is faster. This exchange makes the author's new response even faster, creating a kind of dialogue between the public and the writer, as a cold medium exchange is characterized. In television, the conversation seems to occur faster than in other domain.

In an adaptation, the economical strings occur as an extra factor to the adjustment of the content of the plot in the new domain. In order for those changes to happen, the new social context of the story is considered by the one who adapts and it is recreated inside the narrative to situate and attract the viewers. McQuail foregrounds that the content of a media should "provide companion ground for talk, topic, illustrations – pegs on which to hang opinion" (McQuail, 1987, 229). Those characteristics attract viewers for a television show such as *True Blood* as it highlights discrimination and differences among society, a topic that currently being discussed by everyone.

When McQuail talks about mechanisms to help that mutual relationship between audience and source he mentions "(t)he best available device for doing so is to profile and package the offer in terms of styles, tastes, genres, special interests and stars or personalities" (1987, 247). It all comes together as a group of factors that attracts viewers into watching the television show. Hence, the more the product pleases the audience, the more viewers it will have, and the producers and advertisers will invest more in the product.

Another tool for pleasing the viewers, vastly used by producers is the sex factor. The exploitation of sex attracts audiences around the world who are appealed to sexual portrays. Judith Buttler mentions the origins of sexuality in our society, arguing it "is as much motivated by the fantasy of retrieving prohibited objects as by the desire to remain protected from the threat of punishment that such a retrieval might bring on" (1993, 100). Thus, society created bounds with sexuality that reflects what they too wish to see on as screen, as McQuail highlights the producers attention to aspects of society such as "cultural tastes and preferences" (1987, 228). Sexual curiosity in life for most people is reflected in a sexual curiosity the screen might satisfy.

In *Dead Until Dark* sexual intercourse was rarely mentioned and by no ways described. After Sookie has sex with Bill the more explicit remark she makes about it is "Sex with him was absolutely great. I had never dreamed it would be that wonderful"(Harris, 2001, 162) which in comparison to what *True Blood* shows about sexual relations seems like a naive approach to the theme. *True Blood* sexualizes most of its characters showing them engaging into physical contact. Moreover, there is also a sexualization in dialogues between characters. The following insert of a dialogue in the television series between Sookie, Lafayette, and some other waitress who work in Mertlotte's shows. The scene starts with Sookie and Lafayette talking to each other and him questioning her about her looks. The camera focuses on the details of their bodies, turning out to be a provocative scene.

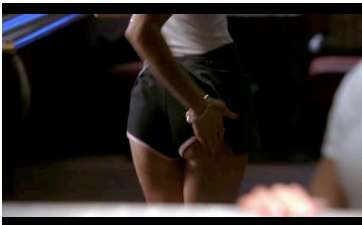5.1   5.2

5.3   **5.4**

5.5   **5.6**

5.7   **5.8**

5.9

"SOOKIE: Onion rings. And if you drop a few of them on the
    floor, that's fine with me. (5.1)
LAFAYETTE: Got it. Oh, Sookie. Chicka-chicka-bow-wow.
    You're looking like a porn star with that tan and pink lipstick.
    You've got a date? (5.2)
SOOKIE: No. When I wear makeup, I get bigger tips. (5.3)

LAFAYETTE: Yes, girl, that's it. These damn rednecks are
suckers for packaging.

SOOKIE: And I get even bigger tips. When I act like I don't
have a brain in my head. But, if I don't, they're all scared of
me.

Arlene approaches the kitchen.

LAFAYETTE: They ain't scared of you, honey child. They
scared of what's between your legs. (5.4)

SOOKIE: Lafayette. That's nasty talk. I won't listen to
that.(5.5)

ARLENE: Do you even know what's between a woman's legs,
Lafayette?

LAFAYETTE: I know every man, whether straight, gay, or
George mother fucking is terrified of the pussy. (5.6)

SOOKIE: Lafayette!

Dawn approaches the kitchen.

DAWN: Oh, What are we talking about?

LAFAYETTE: Pussy.

ARLENE: Hey, listen, not everybody is gay, okay? Not
everybody wants to have sex with you. (5.7)

LAFAYETTE: Oh, You would be surprised Arlene. People you
know.

LAFAYETTE: That's all I'm saying.

DAWN: Well, I don't wanna have sex with you.

ARLENE: Uh. Me neither.

LAFAYETTE: Shit. Y'all bitches don't know what you're
missing. I got six gears on these hips. (5.8)

DAWN: Uh. No, baby. You don't know what you're missing.
You can watch her walk away. Make you wanna slap it? Huh,
you wanna slap it? (5.9)

Dawn goes away and slaps herself.

LAFAYETTE: Everybody knows it. Everybody's been there.
Ain't that right?"
(Ball, 4) [17]

Provocative dialogues such as the ones that appear on *True
Blood*'s fourth scene is common throughout the series. It mostly
illustrates a tension around the sex topic. In *Dead Until Dark,* Sookie is
also a virgin until she has sex with Bill, but the subject is treated in a
very subtle form. There is an excerpt of the novel when Sookie mentions

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[17] My transcription of scene 5 of *Stange Love.*

she feels desire: "I never looked at anyone that way, not because I don't have hormones boy, do I have hormones— but they are constantly tamped down because sex, for me, is a disaster. Can you imagine knowing everything your sex partner is thinking?" (Harris, 2001, 25). In *True Blood* Sookie has sexual dreams many times before the sexual act actually happens and she often is portrayed as a sexual figure whereas in the novel even her physical characteristics and clothing style is not as revealing as it is in the television series.

A sexual exploitation of woman in film is recurrent through history. Many academics have discussed about the topic, and Laura Mulvey introduced us to the theory of the "male gaze" in cinema. The "male gaze" stands for how the camera represents a masculine point-of-view, positioning woman in a way they are treated like objects for the male viewer, the one who has the power over the woman's image. "Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified. (Mulvey, 1975,11). The castration anxiety, responsible for that portrayal of woman, is healed in audiovisual in two different ways: "preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery)" (Mulvey, 1975,11) or by "the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object" (Mulvey, 1975,11).

Although I believe, and I have been demonstrating in this thesis how *True Blood* raises social discussions and stands for minorities, some aspects of commercial film/television industry can not be totally left out in an adaptation. The Scopophilic Instinct, described by Mulvey as "Pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object", (Mulvey, 1975,12) is one of the tools that attract viewers that was used throughout the making of the television show, adapting the novel and its characters in a way sexuality would be more noticeable.

However, the novel has originally a characteristic that belongs to Mulvey's list of reactions to the castration anxiety, the punishment of the guilty object, as a serial killer murders only women who had some kind of relation with vampires. The entire *Dead Until Dark* novel, which reflected in *True Blood*'s first season, deals with the mystery of who is killing women in Bon Temps. In the first episode *Strange Love* the first woman is murdered and a series of killings happen after that. In the television show we get to see the details as the camera shows us much more particulars than the narrator of the novel gave us, since Sookie did not go to most of the crime scenes to describe them.

While in the novel Sookie's narration is attached to her point of view of how woman are being killed and how she fears to be the next one, in the television series we hear and see about the killings from different perspectives, which makes us consider Mulvey's theory. Back to the plot, the narrative style makes us suspect of certain characters in the television series. In both novel and television series, Jason Stackhouse, Sookie's brother, is pointed out as the main suspect for killing women in Bon Temps, as all of them have somehow a relation to Jason, most of them had sex with him a little before they were killed. However, in the novel we, as readers, get to suspect about Jason just as much as Sookie suspects. In the television series we know it is not him, while Sookie and most of the other characters do not know. In *Dead Until Dark* we get to know about the sex tapes that show Jason and the woman that were killed having intercourse through Sookie's notes. Then again, in *True Blood* we actually visualize the content of the tapes even before the women is killed.

Therefore, *True Blood* has a particularity that contradicts Mulvey's theory of sexualizing woman. Not that woman are not sexualized in the television show, yet from all the characters that are sexualized in the television show in relation to the novel – both male and female characters – the one that has the most sexual scenery related to it is Sookie's brother, Jason. Even though in *Dead Until Dark* Jason was described as a kind of womanizer, no details other than his looks, the fact that he recorded sex tapes, or that he had a lot of dates, were given. In *True Blood* we are able to notice great differences between the character that was presented in the novel and the one that is shown in television. Most of them involve the sexual personification of the character. Moreover some of it also appears to describe Jason in a "dumber" way. The character is less aggressive, less "macho", more naive, and even stupid sometimes in the television series.

The introductory scene where Jason appears in the television series is one of the several scenes that show him seducing and having sexual intercourse with a women. Through his first scene five of the first episode of *True Blood, Strange Love,* Jason is naked – as it is the woman, Maudette – and they are having sex until he sees a vampire mark on her tights. It leads them to an argument and later on to watch a sex tape of Maudette having sex with a vampire.

Meanwhile, in the novel Jason is introduced in this excerpt:

> My brother, Jason, came into the bar, then, and sauntered over to give me a hug. He knows that women like a man who's good to his family and

> also kind to the disabled, so hugging me is a double whammy of recommendation. Not that Jason needs many more points than he has just by being himself. He's handsome [. . .] Jason grinned at me, and I marveled that other women could not see the selfishness of that smile (Ball, 5)

While the introduction of Jason above is the first and the only moment where Sookie introduces us to her brother in the novel, in *True Blood* Jason's first appearance is naked and having sex with a woman. Since Sookie is not the narrator anymore, it is no surprise she does not introduce Jason, however, there were other ways to introduce Jason than showing him having sex with a woman right away. The choice of highlighting a sexual portray of that particular character represents the decision of increasing sex scenes in the plot and using it as a way to attract more viewers. Bordwell and Thompson reinforce that thought: "the spectator's emotional response to the film is related to form as well. (…) Often form in artworks appeals to ready-made reactions to certain images (for example, involving sexuality, race, or social class). (2008, 59).

The sexual factor involving Jason can be related to race and social issues that *True Blood* also presents. All of those characteristics, because of its appeal to public, work as ways to attract viewers and for fitting what the domain demands. Since McQuail considers television as the most managed and controllable media he justifies that consideration by mentioning the large influence publishers and advertisers have in the content that goes in the air (McQuail, 1987, 22). Then again, a financial interest might justifies certain choices in the adaptation.

The television series presents a superficial Jason, in a way similar to the character that is introduced by the narrator in *Dead Until Dark*. The dialogues that are added in the television show somehow translate Sookie's view of Jason in the novel. However, in *True Blood*, Jason becomes a character who shows other feelings beyond the ones the narrator of *Dead Until Dark* mentions. While in the novel he is pointed out as selfish, sexist, and shallow, in *True Blood* he maintains those characteristics but there are others that appear more strongly than those. In the television show he appears more as being dumb and addicted to sex than any other description. It is almost as if he has been turned into a ludicrous figure of himself in the novel.

Jason's character follows the path of other characters presented in this chapter since Jason was also developed from the novel to *True Blood*. The character has a plotline of his own, related to the main one

but independent from Sookie's plotline, as most things that happen to him do not concern her. The development of characters such as Jason is related to Bordwell thought about adapting a character "By confining the text to the limited viewpoint of the implied subject of the perspective picture, the novelist makes language a vehicle for vision" (1985, 8). Therefore, Bordwell assumes that when selecting a piece of a novel and turning it to action, the one who is adapting the original text makes a choice to accentuate or forget about certain characteristics of the plotline or the character. Applying that thought to Jason's character in *True Blood*, his sexual personality fits as a characteristic that was chosen and enhanced for television.

Jason, as well as most characters of *True Blood* fits Laura's Mulvey description about the importance of the good-looking portrayal of characters in films. Laura Mulvey, describes on her article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, the importance of the good-looking portrayal of characters in films. "The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect" (1975, 13). Mulvey affirms that when the viewer sees a character that is pleasant looking there is a reaction that attracts the audience to what is on screen. "The scopophilic instinct and, in contradistinction, ego libido (forming identification processes) act as formations, mechanisms, which this cinema has played on" (Mulvey, 1975, 14), she identifies.

Thus, the market is aware of the viewer's attachment to the screen, and by adapting a novel into a television series; the characters of the new domain have to fit into what it demands. It is not only the change of the medium that determinates which character and plotline will be created or enhanced but the commercial aspects surrounding it and the choices of the ones who are adapting it. As McQuail highlights, "the behavior of a given audience group is almost always patterned by the factor that more generally shape social behavior (McQuail, 1987, 228) which means that what the viewers look for in the screen is what they usually see or wish to see in real life, in social life, shaping the spectators behavior. And this real life, as it turns out to be what the audience expects to see, leads to adaptations such as *True Blood*.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this thesis we have seen how two different domains have distinctive characteristics and demands. From the technical aspects that differ a medium that relies mostly purely on imagination based on what is written by an author to a domain in which we can visually follow the characters actions, interpreting not only the actors' behavior, but also images from the mise-en-scene. Each medium has its own pros and cons, uniqueness and its own public. Thus, the domains of *Dead Until Dark* and *True Blood* have their own particularities, which is reflected in the way each medium portrays both particular stories stressing vampires, the minorities, Sookie's life, among others. Moreover, the choices of those who translate a novel to television also convey new meanings and a whole new interpretation of the previous text. The adaptation gives life to distinctive topics, space for new discussions as well as a singular voice to all characters, whether they are new in the adaptation or not.

As seen before, one of the implications of the television domain is the urge of aiming a larger audience. A television series, such as *True Blood,* differs itself from a film or a novel because it airs on a certain day and hour and people usually prepare themselves to watch the series at that time (Balogh, 2005, 158). While McQuail sees novel as an individual media, television is seen as a collective kind of media. In McQuail's point of view, a novel is more independent. It has less commercial attachments which allows each person to have their own reading of it, individually. Meanwhile television creates a kind of collective perspective of the narrative, where many people have access at the same time to the plot that is being shown. The impression about the story of the ones who watch the show is also formulated with the help of the opinion of others, making it more a collective kind of media than the novel is. (McQuail, 22, 1987)

The mass consumption is a reality in the television domain. People who watch television series, frequently watch it at the same time. Many times the television series are watched by groups of people who interact among each other. Everyone – or the majority of the viewers – are "on the same page" of the show, accompanying the story at the same time it is screened in television. Viewers of a mass consumption domain

wait for the unraveling of the present mysteries and plots of the television series at the same moment. Furthermore, since television reaches a mass of diverse viewers, a television series aims to attract the audience and turn them into loyal viewers, using a narrative that is appealing for the viewers. Hence, it is common the appropriation of resources that are likely to compel the public to watch the series and keep the audience rate high such as the use of new narratives, cliffhangers, mystery, and other tools for attaching the television audience.

Moreover, the economic approach from one domain to another is as different as the domain themselves. The economic attachment of an audiovisual product is "stronger than the one connected with a novel, as the apparatus of studios are highly expensive. "Those strings lead to a product that aims a bigger profit and bigger sales to pay itself" (Bluestone, 1973, 35). Hence, economical aspects are also part of the characteristics that implies in a transformation of the content while it is being adapted. Although there are many other factors that influence the translation of a novel into the plot of a television series, one of the more relevant influences is the attachment to a monetarily return, which means having more and more viewers.

However, in order for the audience to feel attached to television, and the economical goal to be fulfilled, the viewer has to feel appealed to what is being shown in the series. S/he has to be attracted enough to not switch the channel or turn off the television. The goal is to make them tune in to watch all episodes until the end and then, tune in again at the next time the series is aired. The bond between the audience and the series can happen in a way they feel attracted to the narcissist identification of her/himself or by a portrayal that represents something the person relates to. It can be either something that s/he wanted to be or that s/he expects to become (Ellis 1982 43). In both ways the public feels compelled to the narrative.

Accordingly, there are many tools that producers use in order to cause a narcissist identification and in consequence a recognition with the plot. Some of those tools were identified in the adaptation case this thesis studies. For instance, *True Blood* has more sex scenes and dialogues mentioning sex than the novel has which can be identified as one of the tools to attract viewers. As mentioned previously, the sex issue attracts human beings. Bordwell and Thompson identify "people's fascination with and simultaneous anxieties about sexuality" (2008, 332) which occurs specially with young people. Stam, Burgoyne and Lewis relate sex exploitation in cinema with psychoanalyses, linking it also to

Scopophilia and to voyeurism. (1992, 163). Whatever the case may be sex in the audiovisual domain compels the viewer attention and fits into the commercial needs of the medium.

However, it is not only sexual exploitation that works as a way of attaching viewers. "People whom we would despise in life may become spellbinding as characters in a film. We can be enthralled by a film about a subject that normally bores us. One cause of these experiences lies in the systematic way we become involved in form" (Bordwell and Thomspon, 2008, 59). If what is legitimate in terms of economical importance inside an adaptation is the involvement the plot causes in the audience, the form and the content must cause the effect Bordwell and Thompson describe in order to do so. It must involve the viewer with plotlines and characters that attract the public. For that to happen, particularities of the domain must be taken into consideration. Only knowing how the domain works and how people feel attached to the characters and the plotlines an adaptation will be able to fulfill the involvement Bordwell and Thompson mention. The connection between the series and the audience that is generated by those patterns is what will solidify the audiovisual as a valid investment.

Moreover, Stam remarks "A corrente estética dominante é compatível com a censura econômica, já que as mudanças exigidas numa adaptação são feitas em nome da soma de dinheiro gasta e dos lucros esperados" (Stam, 2006, 45). As Stam mentions, the modifications in an adaptation uses those tools to adapt the content from one domain to another. Hence, the way of highlighting topics that are in vogue nowadays is, perhaps, one of the most important ways of conquering viewers. And certainly the one that is used the most throughout the adaptation of *Dead Until Dark* to *True Blood*.

The television series presents new utterances, new points of view, new plotlines, and new characters. All of them are important in order to cause empathy, the narcissist identification Ellis mentions, attracting viewers to watch *True Blood*. Presenting different characters that represent different groups of people, more cultural groups will feel represented by the series, and that will increase spectators' recognition, thus, the number of viewers. Characters, utterances and plotlines that *Dead Until Dark* did not focus on because of its spotlight on Sookie, gained life in *True Blood* , restoring the interest of people who did not - and do not - identify themselves with the main character of both stories.

Even if Sookie is the main character in both novel and television show, she has a different degree of importance in the overall story. While in the novel everyone is attached to her and no one has their own

plotline, in *True Blood* many things that happen are beyond Sookie's reach. Unlike in the novel, she is not omniscient, and there are many narrators in the television series. Although the new aspects in the narrative of the television series works in order to attract more viewers, it also highlights social discussions *Dead Until Dark* failed to get into. *True Blood*'s multiple voices are extremely important to portray different types of people, with different struggles, most of them are debated in our society nowadays. From prejudice against black people, to the discrimination of homosexuals, foreigners, woman, among others, it is all somehow portrayed in *True Blood.* Tools such as the creation of multiple utterances are not only a resource used in order to supply the lack of the one narrator style of the novel, *True Blood*'s new characters and plotlines show the discrimination against minority groups and their struggle to fit in.

Dead Until Dark has clues about such prejudices going on, especially against vampires and Sookie. However, the focus is on Sookie's life, and the story does not mention much about other people's lives and their struggle. As the narrative of the novel is all narrated in first-person by Sookie, we get to know about how she feels about everything and everyone, and the rest we know is by descriptions and deductions she makes or by the few dialogues the novel has. Most characters are irrelevant to the story, as they only exist as a complement of the narrative, but they do not bring something relevant to the plot.

McQuail mentions that "the behavior of a given audience group is almost always patterned by the factor that more generally shape social behavior. To that extent, audience behavior is almost inevitably social" (1987, 228). Therefore, the author means that the behavior of the audience in choosing what they will watch is strictly related to what the audience is going through in their everyday lives. Thus, as mentioned by Elis, the factors that attract the audience to the audiovisual are related to the viewer's own conduct. Whereas, since in *True Blood* the viewer identifies her/himself with the minorities or with the ones that feel prejudice, they get attached to what they see.

In *True Blood* the characters of the television show have a different role than in the novel. Each of them is the narrator of their own realities, along with the camera. Since we get acquainted to things that Sookie does not know, what was not possible in the novel, we get to see how each of them struggle and see what they represent to society and how they are treated by it. The social approach to topics such as prejudices results in the television series going beyond rules to raise the number of viewers and their interest in the screen. Moreover, there are

other tools that could have been used – or more used than they were in the novel – that could have a similar result to the discussion of minorities in order to attract viewers to the television series.

The way *True Blood* shows multiple utterances and deals with prejudice reveals a choice that was made by Alan Ball and his team, not only to attach more viewers, but also to provoke discussions among them about the topics *True Blood* shows. Highlighting struggles to fit in and prejudice against different people appears as an option to increase the identification between viewer and television series. However that concern comes along with a preoccupation of stressing political utterances and discussions in the narrative.

There are many tools that the television series used in order to turn the plot more appealing for television, and among them is the creation of new characters, the segregation of utterances, the multiple voices, the relevance given to the social utterances, the exploitation of sex, among others. However, even if all of them were developed in order to raise the number of viewers, that preoccupation with minority groups reveals that Alan Ball and his team were able to use the tools to adapt from one domain to another along with a political concern of raising important debates about social practices.

Bordwell and Thomson highlight a characteristic in Genre films that can be spotted in *True Blood'*s plot, as the "conception of a genre's social function holds that genre films are centrally concerned with social groups particularly women and racial minorities that are oppressed and feared by many in a society" (2008, 336). As well as Genre films, *True Blood* presents a concern that should be valued in audiovisual, as it gives entertainment more that just the ability of entertaining, but transforms it on something that is also informational. Thus, at the end of this research, I firmly believe that *Dead Until Dark* focused mainly on telling Sookie's story, while *True Blood* raises social discussions that could have been left out as they were in the novel. Of course there was a concern in increasing the viewers by attaching them to the plot, however it is also noticeable a concern in stressing social debates for the mass audience to reflect about. Hence, as *True Blood* is aired on a mass communication medium to the audience, the adapters took advantage of the fact that many people watched and talked about the show to raise issues that have to be discussed by the mass.

> In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the

> message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. (McLuhan, 1964, 7)

Thus, believing the medium is the message, even with commercial duties to fill, the product should be able to bring a reflection to the ones it reaches as an obligation of the domain that get in touch with these much viewers. Throughout this thesis I have shown that *True Blood* was able to do that, as it raises debates that were important to be foregrounded. Hence, *True Blood* is different from *Dead Until Dark* not only because both are in different domains, but also because both have particular approaches to social discussions.

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APPENDIX

***True Blood was* produced by**

Executive producer: Alan Ball
Co-executive producer: Brian Buckner
Co-executive producer / co-producer: Raelle Tucker
Co-executive producer / co-producer: Alexander Woo
Co-producer / producer: Bruce Dunn
Associate producer / co-producer: Christina Jokanovich
Co-executive producer / supervising producer: Nancy Oliver
Executive producer: Gregg Fienberg
Associate producer: Luis Patiño
Producer / line producer: Carol Dunn Trussell
Executive story editor: Chris Offutt
Series Original Music: Nathan Barr
Series Cinematography: Romeo Tirone
Series Cinematography: Matthew Jensen
Series Cinematography: John B. Aronson
Series Cinematography: Checco Varese
Series film editing: Michael Ruscio
Series film editing: Andy Keir
Series film editing:Peter B. Ellis
Series Casting: Libby Goldstein
Series Casting: Junie Lowry-Johnson
Series Production Design: Suzuki Ingerslev
Series Art Direction: Catherine Smith
Series Art Direction: James David Goldmark
Series Set Decoration: Rusty Lipscomb
Series Set Decoration: Cindy Carr
Series Costume Design: Audrey Fisher
Series Costume Design: Danny Glicker
Department head makeup artist / makeup department head: Brigette A. Myre
Makeup effects producer / prosthetics supervisor : Dan Rebert
Key makeup artist / makeup artist: Lana Grossman
Department head makeup artist / makeup department head : Brigette A. Myre
Makeup effects producer / prosthetics supervisor : Dan Rebert
Key makeup artist / makeup artist: Lana Grossman
Production supervisor: Marlis Pujol

Post-production supervisor: Luis Patiño
Unit production manager: Howard Griffith
Production supervisor: Liz Brandenburg
Production supervisor: Bob Bates
Second assistant director: Bradley Morris
Second second assistant director : Scottie Gissel
Additional second assistant director: Saleena Lockett
First assistant director: Romney Pearl
Dga trainee: Alexis Schmidtberger
Second second assistant director: Seth Hansen
Assistant art director: Macie Vener
Art department coordinator : Maggie Smith
Construction coordinator: Mike Wells
Paint supervisor / paint Foreman: Grahame Budd
Toolman: Jorge Dorado
Labor Foreman: Mike Wiley
Construction estimator: Carmen Roderiquez
Storyboard artist: Dan Caplan
Location Foreman: Dale Riggs
Greens foreman / head greensman: Chris Dery
Plaster Foreman: Ray Lopez
Property máster: Steven M. Levine
Set dresser: Charles Jason Randolph
First assistant props : Bryan Duff
Stand-by greens: Vincent Dery
Gangboss / set dresser: Donald S. Foster
Set dresser: Paige Bossier
Second assistant props : Michael Hoapili
Leadman: Tom Wilson
Paint Foreman: Ron Blessley
Props / assistant : Cher Young
Stand-by painter: Serge Genitempo
Greens Foreman: Michael Cole
Set dresser: Nick Chavez
Second assistant props: Bill King
On-set dresser : Andrew L. Rael
On-set dresser: Phillip Joffrion
Greensmen: Ronnie Lombard
Lead set designer: Lynn Christopher
Greens: Shreveport: Robert Joey Greenwell
On-set dresser: Keith Abel

Greens stand-by: David Broone
Lead set designer / set designer: William J. Law III
Set dresser: Shreveport: Will E. Drummond
Stand-by painter: Shreveport: Steve Swanson
Paint foreman : Jackson Beale
Welder Foreman: John Bullard
Greensman: Justin Freibrun
Leadman: Shreveport: Frank Hendrick
Location foreman : Rich Robinson
On-set dresser: Shreveport: Cook Allender
leadman: Shreveport: Chris Britt
Greens: Shreveport: Lisa Akes Crouch
Additional property master: Shreveport: Stephen Finders
Construction medic: Shreveport : James Forest Jr.
Set dresser: second unit: Chad Harris
Stage Foreman: J. Jensen
Greens stand-by: Shreveport: Robert Joy
Food stylist: Stephanie Limas
Set decorator: Shreveport: Michelle Marchand II
Greens: Shreveport: Charles Nelson
Construction medic: Jeff Rodgers
Greens: Shreveport: Brett J. Smith
Greens foreman: Shreveport: David Tureau
Construction Foreman: Russell Wilson
Dialogue & adr editor / dialogue editor : Jason Krane
Sound re-recording mixer: Kevin Roache
Production sound mixer : Roger V. Stevenson
Boom operator : Mark Fay
Supervising sound editor: John Benson
Sound effects editor : Stuart Martin
Boom operator: Lawrence L. Commans
Adr mixer: Jeremy Balko
Sound re-recording mixer : Elmo Ponsdomenech
Foley artist: Zane D. Bruce
Foley artist: Jeff Gunn
Sound effects editor / foley editor: Jordan Wilby
Recordist / sound recordist: Laura Schmadel
Utility cable: Shreveport: Slaid Parker
Post-production sound: Scott Delaney
Utility cable: Shreveport: Ron King
Special effects Foreman: Michael Arbogast

Special effects gangboss / special effects technician: Chris Nelson
Special effects technician: Danny Cangemi
Visual effects coordinator / visual effects producer: Sean Tompkins
2D supervisor / 2d supervisor: Steven Meyer
 3D supervisor: Andrew Orloff
Digital compositor / Inferno artist: Paul Hill
Head of production: Zoic Studios: Kristen Branan
Rotoscope artist: Andrea Hernandez
Stunts / utility stunts: Jeff Danoff
Stunt: Dennis Scott
Stunt: Brian Patrick Collins
Stunt: Wesley Scott
Stunt: Craig Jensen
Stunt: Donna Evans
Stunt: Ann Scott
Stunt: Adina Porter
Video assist / video engineer: David D. Scott
Steadicam operator : Simon Jayes
Still photographer: John Johnson
Key rigging grip: Josh Drew
Electric best boy: Gonzalo Gonzalez
Grip: Chris Godfrey
Video assist operator: Shreveport: Larry Clifton
Lamp operator: Erica Kim
Additional second assistant camera / second assistant câmera: Robin Rudenberg
Video playback: Bernie Video
Casting associate: Lisa Soltau
Extras casting coordinator : Lisa S. Beasley
Assistant editor: Charles Bunn
Colorist: dailies: Mark Hartzell
On-line editor: Heydar Adel
Music supervisor: Gary Calamar
Music coordinator: Alyson Vidoli
Music editor: Eduardo Ponsdomenech
Music scoring mixer : Joel J. Richard
Transportation coordinator : Douglas Miller
Driver: Mark L. Hendrix
Driver / transportation captain: Shaun Ryan
Driver: Tim Fennel
Script coordinator / production assistant: Daniel Kenneth

Craft service: Josh Van Ermen
Stand-in: Josh Van Ermen
Production secretary: Khadija Brockington
Stand-in: Nathan Bailey

Cast of *True Blood*:

Sookie Stackhouse: Anna Paquin
Bill Compton: Stephen Moyer
Sam Merlotte: Sam Trammell
Jason Stackhouse: Ryan Kwanten
Tara Thornton: Rutina Wesley
Andy Bellefleur: Chris Bauer
Lafayette Reynolds: Nelsan Ellis
Arlene Fowler: Carrie Preston
Eric Northman: Alexander Skarsgård
Terry Bellefleur: Todd Lowe
Pam De Beaufort: Kristin Bauer van Straten
Hoyt Fortenberry : Jim Parrack
Jessica Hamby: Deborah Ann Woll
Sheriff Bud Dearborne: William Sanderson
Steve Newlin: Michael McMillian
Nan Flanagan: Jessica Tuck
Maxine Fortenberry: Dale Raoul
Lettie Mae Thornton: Adina Porter
Mike Spencer: John Billingsley
Maryann Forrester: Michelle Forbes
Rene Lenier: Michael Raymond-James
Eggs: Mehcad Brooks
Lorena Krasiki: Mariana Klaveno
Ginger: Tara Buck
Deputy Kenya Jones: Tanya Wright
Deputy Kevin Ellis: John Rezig
Jane Bodehouse: Patricia Bethune
Coby Fowler: Alec Gray
Lisa Fowler: Laurel Weber
Karl: Adam Leadbeater
Adele Stackhouse: Lois Smith