MASTER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA

THE NEWER THE BETTER?
A COMPARISON OF THE 1974 AND 2013 FILM
ADAPTATIONS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S NOVEL
THE GREAT GATSBY

MASTER DISSERTATION

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GRANADA, SEPTEMBER 2013

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Abstract

The present work deals with the question whether a new adaptation of a literary work, in spite of unconventional elements and the blockbuster cinema, can outclass a prior and more traditional version. Moreover, it aims at demonstrating the importance of moving away from fidelity discourse in the field of film adaptation studies and of considering different aspects for the evaluation of a movie. For this, we compared and analyzed some selected elements of the narration, the historical background of the Roaring Twenties and the contextual frameworks of the 1974 and 2013 adaptations of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. This examination demonstrated that it is, in fact, the new movie that successfully recreates this classic in a personal way without setting aside the range of aspects and the author's criticism. Therefore, it does not reduce the story to a simple romance as happens with the older version. Additionally, the analysis proved that only a variety of strategies and aspects, shifting away from the strict faithfulness to the original that contravenes the individual creativity, can do justice to an adaptation and the filmmaker's interpretation of the source text. As a result, it stresses the importance of further developing this new way of approaching and evaluating modern film versions with the help of a multifaceted view, drawing the distinction between analysis and review.

Introduction

In 2012, 152 new movies were produced for the U.S. theatres, 73 of which were adaptations and seven of them, in turn, led the top ten of the highest-grossing films registered by the box offices[1]. In this great number of productions based on a prior work

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[1] As it will be pointed out, the present work considers adaptations in a modern and broad sense and does not follow restricting studies. Therefore, I also include in this number of adaptations movies based on cultural icons, non-fictional sources, biopics, remakes, etc, e.g. *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Vow* and

and the success that came along with them – not only last year but generally speaking, being adaptations a third of the total number of Oscar winners in the 84-year-history of the Academy Awards (Desmond and Hawkes 2006: 2) – an undisputable reality becomes manifest: literary works are not only a popular and valuable source for filmmakers but they do also still attract the audience's attention and curiosity. With the newest version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, Baz Luhrmann follows this tendency and, by means of this, demonstrates three key facts. Firstly, the latest adaptation of a famous and admired novel can differ considerably from the prior ones. Secondly, for the critics, it gives rise to the comparison with its predecessor – in this case Jack Clayton's 1974 movie – and, naturally enough, with the original source. And, thirdly, when evaluating the adaptation, the criterion of strict faithfulness, which was also long persistent in film adaptation studies, often predominates and guides the judgment. Especially now, in the latest generation of the blockbuster cinema, new versions often have to fight against the prejudice of modernity which seems to be a major obstacle for "correctly" adapting a classic.

By playing with the usually biased view regarding new adaptations, the present work takes up the idea of contrasts and asks: can the newer be the better? Is the version of a director nowadays necessarily too modern for adapting a classic novel such as Fitzgerald's? This study aims at proving the exact opposite and, moreover, wants to show the importance of including a variety of evaluating tools that goes beyond the mere faithfulness, both for film adaptation studies and the practical application.

In order to reverse the fallacy, this work draws the comparison of the 1974 and 2013 versions of *The Great Gatsby* and will analyze a number of elements in both adaptations. Regarding the methodology and the content, it is essential to first elaborate a general theoretical approach for considering the movies and, afterwards, to take into account the source text and its background, highlighting the value of the aspects that will be examined in the analysis.

Thus, the work at hand can be subdivided into a theoretical and a practical part. The first chapter will give a succinct overview of film adaptation and conclude with the proposal of a personal approach that will be applied to the practice. The framework also consists of the necessary background information about the subjects of interest (chapter

Contraband. The seven most successful adaptations of 2012 are: *Marvel's The Avengers*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *The Hunger Games*, *Skyfall*, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2* and *The Amazing Spiderman*.
(Retrieved from: http://www.boxoffice.com/statistics/alltime_numbers/domestic/data/2012)

2): whereas section 2.1 and 2.2 are devoted to the author, his novel and the historical period of the 1920's, chapter 2.3 draws the attention to the existing film adaptations, emphasizing on the selected ones and giving information about their reception. The second and main part of the work (chapter 3) will then consist in the direct comparison of the two movies and the analysis of the representation and consideration of three key aspects: the narrative elements, the historical period and the context of the adaptations. In the end, these features will be of prime importance when returning to the main thesis in the conclusion.

1 Film adaptation: An overview

The popularity of adaptations for filmmakers – including well-known directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg and Francis Ford Coppola –, their attraction for the audience and the appreciation and honor with one or several of the much-coveted Academy Awards are, undoubtedly, reasons for which scholars consider film adaptations worthy of studying[2]. Before drawing the attention to the characteristics contained in the term "adaptation" and the development in the field of these specific studies – decisive for the approach of the present work –, it is necessary to consider, on the one hand, the reasons why filmmakers are tempted to accept this great challenge and, on the other hand, for what purpose spectators respond to it[3].

The why and wherefore
The choice to adapt a pre-existing literary work is no recent trend but lies in the very beginning of the narrative film just beyond the turn of the twentieth century, as Desmond and Hawkes (2006: 14) explain. Therefore, the early reasons for adapting can be attributed to the creation of the cinematic art: the demand for narrative movies made by the audience burgeoned quickly and stimulated the use of already existing literary sources because of the resulting simplicity – in the end, it was less work without today's well-known copyright restrictions for motion pictures – and their quick transformation to the screen (*Ibid*.: 14-15). Later on, after the invention of the so-called *talkies* as

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[2] See, for instance, Desmond and Hawkes (2006: 2) and Rodríguez Martín (2013b: 162).
[3] The following subdivision of aspects in film adaptation in this chapter can also be found in Desmond and Hawkes (2006) and in Hutcheon (2006) who answer several questions on this topic. Although the formulations of the questions are similar, I approach them in a personal way and will address different contents.

opposed to silent films, theatres took advantage of literature's prestige for luring the middle class into the theatres: at that time, it was in particular the working class that went to the cinemas for watching silent movies since these ones did not constitute a linguistic problem (*Ibid*.: 15). Obviously, the latter aspect had something to do with the cinema's controversial reputation as a new art form and the advantage of the words' status, as Giddings *et al* (1990: 9) point out: "Cinema with its vaudeville and fairground origins struggled in its early years for respectability, which partly explains its desire to acquire some of the novel's apparent cultural distinction by absorbing and adapting novels for the screen". In addition, adapting pre-existing works contained (and still does) a teaching effect given that canonical literature, as a cultural component, was brought home to the spectators (Desmond and Hawkes 2006: 15).

The last two reasons refer to the least and most common intentions: the personal fascination with the text and, obviously, the profit and money making. The former aspect alludes to a "powerful person's" choice, for example the decision of a "producer, star, or director", to adapt a book because of his or her special interest in the literary work, author or subject (Desmond and Hawkes 2006: 16). In this, we could also enclose the desire to make an unexplored work known to the public or guarantee its immortality, or to take up a "cinematic challenge", for instance. The latter aspect would be one of the most mentioned arguments, if not the most mentioned one, when carrying out a survey on this topic. Expenses and box-office successes are, by all means, closely intertwined: what filmmaker or production company does not intend to make a considerable profit with a movie? Literary works – whether canonical texts or recent best-sellers – almost guarantee the success or at least the revenues because of the automatic attraction they are holding for the audience (*Ibid*.: 16).

The reasons for a director to adapt a literary work – sometimes well-known, sometimes lesser – can vary considerably and are subject to a large range of factors; however, what is it that makes the spectator decide to watch an adaptation, why does he feel attracted to it?

The most obvious motivation for this is, undoubtedly, the question: do our imagination and the images provided by the film match? After having read a literary work, may it be years ago or recently, we create our own imaginary world and have "[t]he simple, even crude desire to see, as it were, what the book looks like" (Beja 1979: 79). In their work *In/Fidelity: Essays on Film Adaptation* Kranz and Mellerski (2008a) support this opinion and note the following:

> Part of the thrill of watching cinematic adaptations of canonical, famous, or bestselling literary works, we surmise, lies in witnessing how the personally remembered or culturally widespread understanding of those beloved artifacts is reproduced or transformed in the new medium.
>
> (Kranz and Mellerski 2008a: 2)

Although we know that the adaptation will – almost certainly – not mirror our imagination, in the end, the curiosity and the "thrill" win. In this sense, filmmakers have an easy job given that "[t]hey'll [the viewers] recognize the association and that will bring them to the theaters" (Snyder 2011: 201). Of course, this can also be transferred to those spectators who do not have personally read and experienced the literary source. Here, it is important to take into account the before mentioned automatic attractiveness and popularity of classic works and best-sellers: the simple fact of knowing about its source, whether read or not, and the status of literature in every culture make us, the spectators, want to be part of it. In this, the interest in being "versed" in literature and possessing a piece of general knowledge is also a relevant aspect since watching a film is, from a biased point of view, considered to be less time-consuming and easier to understand since a movie cannot reach the literature's complexity. Following this argument, the adaptation of a literary source is a fast and compressed tool to obtain information. Just carry out a survey among students who have to do a compulsory reading: how many of them do fall back upon the film when being under time pressure?

The what

If one can almost easily imagine the reasons why directors decide to adapt a literary work and spectators spend their money on watching it, it is more difficult to define the term "adaptation" since the delineation of a concept is always subjective and dependent on a variety of factors. However, it is necessary to pigeonhole it in a framework giving that the definition is closely related to what will be discussed in the next section, the question of fidelity. This consideration is quite understandable: someone who sees adaptations as the mere copy of an original work will focus on the faithfulness to the source; in turn, examining an adaptation as a reinterpretation or rereading will be more receptive to the result. Although the frameworks of the "what" and the "how" merge

into each other, as will be seen, this section intends to give a general description and list the term's characteristics.

We could agree on saying that, first of all, when thinking of an adaptation in general terms, we are dealing with the transfer of a material from one medium to another, being the latter related to the former to a certain degree. Although we would initially consider a literary text and especially a novel as the source, and a film as the target medium, this is just a one-sided notion of adaptation. Adaptations can be made from a variety of media into a variety of media or within one and the same, as Hutcheon (2006: 9) shows when referring to songs, ballets, operas and musicals as well as "musical arrangements and song covers, visual arts revisitations of prior works and comic book versions of history, poems put to music and remakes of film, and videogames and interactive art". This consideration points out the importance of not "overrestricting" the notion of the term since, especially nowadays in the modern and technologically advanced world, new media and art forms broaden the category.

Moving away from this general reflection on adaptation, Desmond and Hawkes (2006: 1) provide a good base delineating the term in connection with the motion picture as "the transfer of a printed text in a literary genre to film" and stating that "[a]daptations may be made from novels, short stories, novellas, plays, nonfiction books, essays, graphic novels, or narrative poems". As in the case of Hutcheon, this enumeration shows that in modern times, we are departing from excessive restrictions and limitations and can now widen the circle of film adaptations. Leitch (2008) supports the idea of diverse sources. Nevertheless, since he would not only take in printed material, he criticizes this one-sided consideration by stating that

> Even though a growing number of films eligible for Academy
> Awards for Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another
> Medium borrow that material from print journalism, franchise
> characters, television series, comic books, video games and
> toys, academic studies of adaptation remain stubbornly attached
> to literature as cinema's natural progenitor.
> (Leitch 2008: 64)

Although Kranz and Mellerski (2008a: 1) do not include Leitch's idea of different source material, which I highlight as an important aspect, they describe film adaptation

as the "transformation of printed works to another medium" and, therefore, draw the attention to the change inevitably included in the act of transferring. This last definition leads to another important notion: adaptations cannot be considered a simple end-product opposite to the source text; they are characterized by a process which requires different steps for obtaining the result, as defined in the Oxford Dictionaries website[4] and as claimed by Sarah Cardwell (2002). Her work, *Adaptation Revisited – Television and the Classic Novel*, offers new and interesting insights into this field. Cardwell devotes the initial chapters of her book to the definition of adaptation as a process and as an end-product because "[…] it is more useful to explore what is commonly meant and understood by the term 'adaptation', in order to expose the fundamental assumptions that have shaped scholars' work" (*Ibid.*: 9). She highlights the fact that adaptations constitute a "cultural form and ontological problem within theories of adaptation and studies of specific instances of adaptation" (*Ibid.*: 10). Therefore, she points out a decisive aspect: what we understand by the literary term "adaptation" depends on our cultural background and doctrines; consequently, our understanding, as before mentioned, is highly subjective and individual. Cardwell gives the example of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or *King Lear*: although adaptations of a folk-tale and play for their part, they are considered to be the original, turning any other "use" of the source into an adaptation (*Ibid.*: 18). In the work *True to the Spirit – Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity*, MacCabe (2011) also pays attention to this culturally dyed aspect and refers, apart from *Macbeth*, to the works *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles and *The Knight's Tale* by Chaucer, hold as "canonical literature", for verifying this position and proving this type of mistaken belief. These works are not taken for adaptations but, in fact, they are[5]. Indeed, at that point in time, the retelling and re-use of other sources was something popular and common, and it was not until the beginning of the 19th century and the Romanticism that falling back upon texts was regarded as inferior and vulgar, lacking originality and own creativity (2011: 3-4). Hence, travelling back in time and taking the point of view of a Renaissance scholar, we can guess, would completely change the notion of what makes an adaptation.

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[4] See entry "adaptation" in the online version of Oxford Dictionaries: http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/adaptation?q=adaptation

[5] A modern example could be the director Alfred Hitchcock whose films *Psycho* and *Vertigo*, among others, are based on literary sources. Nevertheless, giving the fact that the originals are lesser-known and Hitchcock bought the rights of the novels, he possesses the culturally believed originality (Rodríguez Martín 2013a: 174).

So far we have seen that an adaptation is a process of transfer and transformation rather than a static end-product, including a variety of different media – being the most common novel into film –, subject to the personal, general and also cultural opinion. Particularly from the 2000s on, as will be specified in the next section, scholars defend the view that, in fact, adaptation is an act of interpretation and personal recreation, which justifies changes and underlines the importance of seeing an adaptation as an independent work of art. Hutcheon (2006: 33), for instance, thinks of an adaptation as "a creative and interpretive transposition of a recognizable other work or works" as well as "a kind of extended palimpsest and, at the same time, often a transcoding into a different set of conventions". Therefore, she emphasizes three important considerations: firstly, an adaptation is a subjective interpretation of the source, which makes it an artistic and creative act resulting in an own original contribution; secondly, adaptations and works in general can be based on more than just one text, which shows the importance of different influences on a work, sometimes subconsciously, and underlines the notion of a process; thirdly, the "set of conventions" refers to a whole new context of an adaptation, including the medium, the director and his aesthetics, era and technologies, etc. In particular this latter aspect plays an important role and influences the interpretation of the source material. Desmond and Hawkes (2006: 2), too, point out the idea of rereading and reinterpreting by commenting that an adaptation involves "at least one person's reading of a text, choices about what elements to transfer, and decisions about how to actualize these elements in a medium of image and sound". As every person is unique, an interpretation or reading is just as much. Besides, the verb "actualize" perfectly describes the process of adapting a work to a whole new context.

To sum up, the term "adaptation" itself, in general terms but also with regard to the medium of film, contains a series of characteristics that point out the fact that we are not dealing with a mere copy or repetition of the original source. Moreover, it ideally brings out the notion of process, change, actualization and context which the source, naturally enough, experiences.

The never-ending how

Since the very beginning of the cinema and the production of adaptations, these ones offered a target to criticisms and judgments, which had largely been put down in writing. Therefore, the present work does not aim at giving an overview of all the approaches and theories in the field of film adaptation studies. Nevertheless, the notion

of fidelity, that is to say the faithfulness of the adapted work to its original source, should be stressed here giving that it is much discussed[6] and still an important aspect: fidelity is not only intertwined with the definition of the term, as we have seen in the previous section, but it can also be a useful starting point when analyzing adaptations, as will be specified later on. The problem with fidelity discourse rather lies in the evaluative and condemning comparison that discriminates the adaptation against the original and that has been dominant for the most part of adaptation history[7].

A first turning point came in the 1960s with film studies entering universities and Bluestone and Richardson publishing their writings on this topic, as Corrigan (2007: 39-40) explains. Since the 2000s, many scholars broke the lockstep and turned their backs on fidelity analysis[8], among them Cartmell and Whelehan (1999, 2007, 2010), Naremore (2002), Stam (2000, 2005), Desmond and Hawkes (2006), Hutcheon (2006), Leitch (2007, 2008) and Brooker (2007), because, as the latter comments,

> [t]he criterion of 'fidelity to the original' is perhaps the most
> stubborn, and most futile and deluded of these attitudes – futile
> because, strictly speaking, fidelity can only mean literal
> repetition and deluded because a judgment of success or failure
> is clearly dependent on differently situated strategies of
> interpretation.
> (Brooker 2007: 108)

Stam joins this opinion and draws the attention to the fact that an adaptation deals with two different media and, thus, changes are a natural side effect or consequence of this process, turning fidelity not only into something undesirable but also practically unachievable:

> The shift, in adaptation, from a single-track, uniquely verbal
> medium such as the novel to a multitrack medium like film,

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[6] Wright highlights the particular importance fidelity discourse had in the discussions and writings commenting that "[c]ritical perspectives on the proper role of fidelity in adaptation theory have varied from enshrining the source text as the ideal that a film must emulate to the other extreme of according it no importance at all" (2011: 176).

[7] For more information about the different approaches in film adaptation studies see Cardwell (2002: 43-76).

[8] Kranz and Mellerski (2008a: 3, footnote 5) refer to this important change and provide a comprehensive list of works that "attack fidelity, at least partly and more or less based on post-structuralist or related arguments".

which can not only play with words (written and spoken) but also with music, sound effects, and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelihood, and I would suggest even **undesirability**, of literal fidelity. Along with the semiotic differences, practical and material contingencies also render fidelity in adaptation virtually impossible. (2005:17, bold type in original).

Additionally, the anti-fidelity-authors reject the hierarchization of the two media – which gives literature as the high art the precedence over cinema as a phenomenon of mass culture – and, furthermore, try to balance the importance of both book and movie, establishing adaptations as independent works of art[9]. They repudiate terms such as 'infidelity', 'betrayal', 'deformation', 'violation', 'bastardization', 'vulgarization' and 'desecration' (Stam 2005: 3), and concentrate on the process of adaptation (not the mere result) and the notion of reinterpretation, rereading and rewriting of the source text. Hence, as McFarlane (2007: 15) comments, "[…] every reading of a literary text is a highly individual act of cognition and interpretation; that every such response involves a kind of personal adaptation on to the screen of one's imaginative faculty as one reads". Hutcheon (2006: 20) goes a step further and adds an interesting aspect, reflecting upon this topic from a reversed point of view: "Perhaps one way to think about unsuccessful adaptations is not in terms of fidelity to a prior text, but in terms of a lack of the creativity and skill to make the text one's own and thus autonomous". That is to say, copying the source with no personal contribution and "own character" is what makes a bad adaptation.

However, post-millennial scholars do not just emphasize the notion of reading and personal understanding of a source text; what is more, they move away from solely considering the fidelity and add new ideas, for instance the narratological or intertextual perspective or the concept of refraction[10]. The consideration of the whole context which surrounds the adaptation is an important factor to bear in mind: technology, historical background, the filmmaker's ideology and aesthetics, the cinema's parameters at a

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[9] Snyder (2011) criticizes film adaptation scholars for placing film over literature and centering their attention just on film. However, as Rodríguez Martín (2013b) highlights, scholars such as Stam or Gutleben and Onega, among many others, do not overlook the source; in fact, they analyze the relationship and dialogue between original and adaptation and, therefore, enrich the analysis (2013b: 170).

[10] For more information consult McFarlane (1996), Stam (2000, 2005) and Gutleben and Onega (2004).

certain time, the choice of film stars, the audience (located in time and space) and its reception, advertising strategies, etc.[11] influence the reading, (re)writing and production of the original source and adaptation, resulting in a unique and autonomous work of art[12].

Approach for the present work

The work at hand takes the comparative approach as a cornerstone for the analysis of adaptations giving that the demonstration of differences can clarify "the question of what the filmmaker sought to accomplish by adapting a particular work, a necessary first step in ascertaining whether or not the adaptation is successful", as Wright (2011: 174) points out. The importance does not lie in the complete exclusion of the source text – in the end, an adaptation is an adaptation because it refers to a certain extent to an original – but in the "mindful" use of it, as Snyder (2011: 2) expresses. Therefore, the comparison is not an evaluative criterion but a tool to explore the reasons why the director chose to introduce changes.

The basis of my analysis is the combination of different strategies that complement each other and give an overall picture of the movie. Apart from merely relating adaptation with original, it will consider the narrative elements and the movie's context. With the help of McFarlane's (1996) narratological approach[13] we will be able to identify first differences in the formal framework of the adaptation which provide insight into the director's concrete choices. However, the exclusive focus on the narrative elements is too restrictive in the sense that it leaves out the important contextual factors[14]. In consequence, the analysis will also take into account specific aspects of Stam's suggested series of so-called *filters* (2005: 46) and Desmond and Hawkes's features (2006: 3) which influence the adaptation's whole framework. Moreover, Stam's (2000: 64) notion of intertextual dialogism, expressing that "[a]ll texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and

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[11] See, for instance, Andrew (2011:32), Hutcheon (2006:142f.), McFarlane (2007:26), Stam (2005: 17) and Wright (2011:180).

[12] In their work *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema*, Cartmell and Whelehan (2010) provide an interesting and well-resuming graphic on the state of adaptation theory today which includes the following factors: close textual analysis, fidelity, taxonomies of 'degrees' of adaptation (nature of the adaptive relationship), authors vs. 'commerce': high art vs. mass culture, cultural and historical context, reception, new contexts of consumption, intertextuality and tense/narration/narratology (2010: 14-15).

[13] Other authors have applied McFarlane's framework to the analysis of adaptations, see Rodríguez Martín (2003).

[14] McFarlane refers in his work to "extra-cinematic codes" (1996: 29) but he does not develop them in detail. These factors are later explored by authors such as Stam and Desmond and Hawkes.

unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts", will be considered given the fact that it draws the attention to the influence of the filmmaker's own filmography and style, other directors' works, additional literary sources apart from the original, etc. as potential impacts for the adaptation[15].

2   The background of *The Great Gatsby*

For the better understanding of the analysis in chapter 3, this chapter aims at giving the necessary information about the author, the selected novel and the historical background of the American 1920's as well as the existing film adaptations, with special emphasis on the subjects of the present work.

2.1   Author and Novel[16]

A brief glance at the rather tightly structured chronology of the most important dates in Francis Scott Fitzgerald's life[17] gives rise to the suspicion that, in comparison with the other two great American writers of the 20th century, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, Fitzgerald did not only have a short life (1896-1940) but also a short-term creative activity, clouded by the many rumors and prejudices surrounding him. His public persona was associated with excessive drinking, financial problems, the relationship and troubles with his wife Zelda – from their life in New York to their residence in France –, his writing for money[18] and the general opinion that he himself had wasted his talent as a writer, as Kazin (1966: 9) observes: "Of course they [the critics] thought him [Fitzgerald] a great big kid and recklessly wasteful of his talent.

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[15] See, for instance, Rodríguez Martín who applies Stam's intertextual dialogism to Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Psycho* in "*Psycho* (1960) Revisited: Intertextuality and Refraction" (2013a) and to the analysis of Jane Austen's novels in "Unfaithfulness to Jane Austen? Communicating Readings and Interpretations of her Novels through their Film Adaptations" (2005) and "Film Adaptations as Failed Texts or Why 'the Adapter, It Seems, Can Never Win'" (2013b).

[16] This section does only highlight some important facts about the author; for more information on Fitzgerald's biography and work see, for example, Mizener (1963), Eble (1963), Kazin (1966) or Hook (2002).

[17] See, for instance, Mizener (1963: 169).

[18] Fitzgerald did not only write short stories for magazines but he also worked for the media company Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer where he produced screenplays and, interestingly enough, adapted existing literary works. Hence, as Fra López (2002: 20) comments, he can be considered one of the most representative examples among the writers who, typically for the 1930s and the economic situation, turned to Hollywood.

And inevitably, his personal legend interested them as much as his books did". In fact, the interest in him as a celebrity seemed to prevail over the attention to his serious writing, perceived in the reception of his four complete novels *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and *Tender Is the Night* (1934). Eble (1963) gives a review of the criticism in his day and highlights the fact that the success of Fitzgerald's works did not only end swiftly – since he did not survive for long against his competitors at the top of the bestseller list – but they were also condemned and devaluated by the critics (1963: 155)[19].

Bryer (1978: x) coined the expression "Fitzgerald revival" which illustrates the interest in Fitzgerald not just as the example of great failure in this eventful period but as an artist and serious writer. This attention became apparent after his death in 1940 with editors and scholars starting to record his life and to analyze his works, and filmmakers increasingly engaging in transferring his material to the screen (Eble 1963: 154), as will be detailed subsequently. This new recognition and reputation contribute, on the one hand, to the acknowledgement of his extensive and versatile literary production[20], and, on the other, to the better understanding of Fitzgerald as a writer who, belonging to the Lost Generation, contemplated the new and modern age critically and cast "a critical eye over the myths and claims of the founding dream of abundance and democracy" (Currell 2009: 36). Far from being just a simple contemporary witness and recorder of the Roaring Twenties, he – as an outsider and incomer from the Middle West – observed and lived the 'Jazz Age'[21] and its society in New York City, in particular people's behavior and manners, to such a degree that his fiction is interwoven with autobiographical references, as Mizener (1963b: 157) states: "Fitzgerald's life and opinions cannot be wholly separated from his work and ought not to be; the connections are too intimate". Consequently, Fitzgerald took up own experiences and topics of his personal life such as nostalgia (Morris 1963: 25) and failure (Troy 1963: 20) as well as "the history of the New World" characterized by the quest for "romantic wonder",

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[19] One example is the review of the *The Great Gatsby* by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1925. Critic Ruth Hale commented the following: "Find me one chemical trace of magic, life, irony, romance or mysticism in all of 'The Great Gatsby' and I will bind myself to read one Scott Fitzgerald book a week for the rest of my life" (recorded by Bryer 1978: 197).
[20] Gale (1998) refers in his encyclopedia on Fitzgerald to his constant production of works between the start of his professional career in 1919 up to his death in 1940, including the four complete novels and the unfinished one *The Last Tycoon*, approximately 180 short stories, reviews and essays, poetry, plays and screenplays (1998: ix).
[21] As Currell (2009: 70) explains, Fitzgerald himself invented this term.

which includes eternal youth as well as beauty and money, and the seduction, that is, the "capitulation to these terms", as remarked by Fussel (1963: 43-44).

These aspects are recurrent topics in Fitzgerald's writings and explain his mindset and self-reflection. Therefore, it is not surprising to find this kind of "personal revelation and prophecy" (Morris 1963: 30) in his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*, published in 1925, which represents the starting point for the comparison of two of its adaptations.

As mentioned before, at Fitzgerald's lifetime, *The Great Gatsby* was subject to criticism and rather hasty decisions which led to a slack selling of the book[22]. Nevertheless, after his death and with the increasing interest in his literary production, the novel gained artistic merit and acquired prestige, becoming the author's best known work. Today, it is considered representative of the Roaring Twenties and one of the most important modern works, belonging to the canon of American literature and the "centre of literary history", as Reynolds (1993: v) calls it.

Set in the fictional towns of West and East Egg on Long Island, New York, in the summer of 1922, the short novel deals with the life of Jay Gatsby, a mysterious self-made millionaire who is famous for his hedonistic and Broadway-style parties, trying to win the heart of former lover and socialite Daisy, now married to wealthy Tom Buchanan. Told from the point of view of first person narrator Nick Carraway, who does not only observe the happenings but actually – and sometimes inadvertently – gets involved, it represents and portrays characters rejecting social conventions and class structures, trying to rise through the ranks in different ways.

To say that the quintessence of *The Great Gatsby* is just the authentic representation of the 1920's would be too simple and one-sided. Although it is true that Fitzgerald perfectly depicts this eventful and vivid "new world" with all its modern advances, technologies and new artistic expressions – in a word, the changes in mindset and materialism –, as it is the case of other novels such as *The Beautiful and Damned*, he shows the two sides included in every story. Therefore, Fitzgerald criticizes a materialistic and selfishly thinking society, marked by an excessive consumer behavior and money-driven attitude. This critique is also extended to life and work in New York: impromptu riches are related to criminal activities, businessmen are ever-conforming

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[22] As Mizener (1963b: 2) informs, in 1939, the Modern Library stopped the publishing because "it failed to sell".

and only interested in consumption, and the city of New York also stands for stress, chaos, anonymity and loneliness.

Altogether, the novel shows a darker dimension of the American Dream full of illusions, dangers and fallacies, contrasting two different worlds with different values – the traditional vs. the new, the past vs. the future, Middle West vs. New York – and the feeling of a decade-long party against the cruelness of reality. Hence, Fitzgerald leaves a negative overtone, presaging the saying *All that glitters is no gold* and transferring the symbol of the American Dream and its decay, caused by materialism, to various levels of everyday life, for instance love, friendship and the business world but particularly to the sphere of values and personal principles[23].

2.2 The Roaring Twenties

The American 1920's symbolize a decade of considerable and influential changes at the economical, cultural, social, demographical and political level which, perhaps more than in other ages, paved the way for the following generations. The economic growth and the resulting prosperity played here a pivotal role since the increase of the industrial production, unlike Europe that struggled with the aftermath of World War I, turned the United States in "the most productive and prosperous nation in the world", as Currell (2009: 4) observes in her work *American Culture in the 1920's*. The booming creation of new industry sectors and businesses – and therefore the formation of a real business world – entailed the invention of new technologies and the development of existing ones[24], generating mass production and consumption. In everyday life and at almost every conceivable level, these cultural artefacts were ubiquitous and encouraged the population to buy[25]: the usefulness of the automobile to go out, meet people and shop; the development of the infrastructure (telephone lines and road network) to communicate and connect; radio and phonograph but particularly the talkie motion picture to entertain; and

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[23] In this section I have included my personal reading of the novel. For more information on *The Great Gatsby* and different interpretations see Eble (1963), Northman (1965) or Wyatt (1976).

[24] Here the importance does not only lay on the improvement of the products, but especially on the availability for the average consumer given the fact that the mass production reduced the purchase price of consumer goods, e.g. the car (Shepley 2011: 12).

[25] It is also important to mention that advertising strategies – both in the materialistic and psychological sense – boosted the high sales in consumer goods, as highlighted by Currell (2009: 174). Shepley (2011: 16) shares this opinion and, what is more, talks about the "scientification of sale" which led to psychological insights into the consumer behavior and, consequently, created new target groups.

new electric devices to simplify the housework – which also resulted in the rise of leisure time (cf. Currell 2009).

The social horizon did broaden to the advantage of two minority groups: African Americans and women. The Great Migration, on the one hand, led to a population growth in the cities and positively influenced the living conditions for African Americans. Although the change had already started years before, it is especially this period of time that represents the "fruition of black pride and activism in cultural and intellectual life, as well as in the social sphere" (Currell 2009: 25). Furthermore, it was not only the people that immigrated but with them the symbol of the transition between post-war era and modern age, as Ogren (1989: 7) highlights: the jazz, a new musical and artistic expression. Women, on the other hand, also benefited from the cultural revolution: the number of working women and independent wage earners increased; they gained the right to express themselves, also sexually; and they represented a key target group for the consumption, e.g. of cosmetics and household appliances (cf. Currell 2009). This new freedom was emphasized with the public perception of the modern woman, "smoking, drinking and jazz dancing", revolutionizing fashion with flapper dresses and bobbed hair (*Ibid.*: 29).

All these aspects but in particular the changes in music, dance and fashion, the expansion of the cinema with the invention of the sound, meeting the approval of the population, and the consumption boom make up the Roaring Twenties. However, there are two sides to everything, something which becomes clear when contemplating the drawback of this era. The prohibition of alcohol in 1919 gave rise to the opening of new nightclubs and speakeasies as well as the activity of bootleggers and, as a result, increased illegal businesses and criminality (Currell 2009: 177). In addition to this, a negative mood was expressed by artists and intellectuals, especially the writers of the Lost Generation such as Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Dos Passos. These writers saw not only the splendor and gaiety, but they also tackled the changes critically, perceiving a tension between past and present (*Ibid.*: 36). Hence, their critical and partially pessimistic attitude expressed the battle of opposites included in an era caught between the "'return' to normalcy after World War I" and "the youthful, exuberant, and 'roaring'" (Ogren 1989: 3).

In the end, the decade concluded with the Wall Street Crash in 1929, leading to the Great Depression and resulting in an economic and moral crisis for the United States. Hence, these aspects show the other side of the coin and allow us to gain an insight behind the façade.

2.3   Existing film adaptations

Fitzgerald's literary works, whether novels or short stories, gave many filmmakers grounds to transfer his stories to the screen; nonetheless, it is especially *The Great Gatsby* that aroused a great interest, serving as a basis for five adaptations to date[26].

Only one year after its publication in 1925, Herbert Brenon directed a silent film version, starring Warner Baxter as Jay Gatsby, Lois Wilson as Daisy Buchanan and Neil Hamilton as Nick Carraway[27]. Unfortunately, this movie is a lost film since there are no copies available. Twenty-three years later, in 1949, Elliott Nugent filmed a new version, starring the popular actor Alan Ladd as Gatsby, Betty Field in the female leading role and Macdonald Carey as Nick. This second black-and-white movie, benefiting from the introduction of sound, contains a great number of changes, for example, the breaking away from the literal dialogue, modifications with regard to the content as well as the retrospective way to start the movie[28]. Robert Markowitz's television version was broadcasted in 2000 and stars Toby Stephens as Gatsby and the well-known actors Mira Sorvino and Paul Rudd in the roles of Daisy and Nick. This film shows, compared with the original source, more faithfulness to the dialogues and facts.

The adaptations to be analyzed in this dissertation are the films directed by Jack Clayton in 1974 and Baz Luhrmann in 2013. The former, with a screenplay by Francis Ford Coppola, stars Robert Redford in the role of Gatsby, Mia Farrow as Daisy and Sam Waterston playing Nick. In 1975, it was honored with two Academy Awards for Best Costume and Best Music. Desmond and Hawkes (2006), who analyze this movie as a failure of film adaptation, indicate that the production cost $13 million – which was too expensive for that time –, and, although it was highly promoted, it failed at the box office (2006: 244). Consequently, the critiques turned out to be mixed to negative, finding faults particularly with the duration, the long-windedness and the extreme faithfulness to the source text, staying strictly with the happening – that is, the "surface" of the novel – but not showing the criticism behind. Vincent Canby from *The New York Times*, for example, criticized the movie for being "as lifeless as a body that's been too

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[26] A sixth version is the movie *G* (2002) which is loosely based on Fitzgerald's book and represents a modern hip-hop variant of it.

[27] The information on release date, director as well as actors and actresses for the mentioned adaptations was retrieved from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

[28] In this version, for instance, Gatsby dies in 1928 instead of 1922; furthermore, the movie starts with Nick and his wife standing at Gatsby's grave and remembering the Roaring Twenties, emphasized by the insertion of a collection of clips.

long at the bottom of a swimming pool" and reminded that the novel "demands something more perceptive from the moviemakers than mere fidelity to plot"[29]. John J. Puccio from *Movie Metropolis*, who reviews the DVD, released in 2003, finds also some pluses (e.g. music, setting, cast), but in the end has to admit that "[i]t's a movie for people who have already read the book and can fill in the missing details themselves or for people who have not read the book and just want a good romance"[30].

Baz Luhrmann's version was released this year (2013) and, therefore, it is still in the process of criticism and evaluation, also with regard to the Academy Awards 2014. Starring Leonardo DiCaprio as Gatsby, Carey Mulligan as Daisy and Tobey Maguire as Nick, it was one of the most expected movies for 2013[31], not only because it is the fifth adaptation of Fitzgerald's classic, but also due to Luhrmann's reputation as a filmmaker and the production's cast. Besides, it opened this year's Cannes Film Festival which, apart from the publicity, created high hopes. As the former adaptation, this version evoked mixed opinions, ranging from criticisms about the tendency to exaggeration, musical choices and its satiric character to praises for the extravagance, the representation of the 1920's and its originality. Examples are, on the one hand, Christopher Orr from *The Atlantic* who states that "[h]is [Luhrmann's] colors are as bright as those in a detergent commercial; his musical choices as intrusive as the exit cues on an awards show"[32], and, on the other, Elisa Roche from *Express*, commenting that "Luhrmann uses the brightest colours to paint the Roaring Twenties as an era of lavish parties and wild abandon in which the beautiful and damned beguile like falling comets", although she also reprimands the energy and rapid sequence of events and effects which makes it impossible to assimilate everything[33].

The present work focuses on these two versions because, among the available adaptations of the novel, they represent the most similar characteristics: they are both "modern" films, that is to say, they are sound and color motion pictures, having at their disposal advanced technologies and transfer methods; they were produced for the cinema, therefore, they make use of advertisement and publicity strategies for

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[29] Complete review by Vincent Canby for *The New York Times* on March 28, 1974: http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9F06EFDB1E3AEF34BC4051DFB566838F669EDE

[30] Complete review by John J. Puccio for *Movie Metropolis* on November 21, 2003: http://moviemet.com/review/great-gatsby-dvd-review#.UfOVANLjeS0

[31] The release was postponed from December 2012 until May 2013.

[32] Complete review by Christopher Orr for *The Atlantic* on May 10, 2013: http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/05/a-grating-em-great-gatsby-em/275744/

[33] Complete review by Elisa Roche for *Express* on May 11, 2013: http://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/films/398714/The-Great-Gatsby-Review-and-trailer

promoting the movie, and, furthermore, they are subject to a different audience; besides, the two star popular actors and actresses. Consequently, the analysis is based on, more or less, the same prerequisites, although the 2013 movie can use, naturally enough, newer techniques.

3   COMPARISON OF THE 1974 AND 2013 MOVIES

Before analyzing and comparing the selected adaptations, it is necessary to determine the limits of the present work. It cannot deal with the whole range of possible aspects but has to be restricted to certain features. In the following, I will concentrate on specific elements of the narration, the historical background and the movies' context which I consider representative for underlining the filmmakers' choices. Although the representation of the characters on the screen is an essential factor to take into consideration when evaluating an adaptation and its success – especially when dealing with a classic –, I will not examine this in detail or separately from the other chapters for two reasons: firstly, it would exceed the limited scale and reduce the analysis in its variety; secondly, since it is already of particular importance for the film critics, this work rather aims at revealing those aspects that are usually drowned out or not appreciated by the reviews, apart from being difficult to notice at first sight. Nevertheless, they are equally crucial for the adaptation and deserve a closer look.

In my analysis, I will not focus on a precise number of scenes for each section and movie but include those moments that best illustrate the directors' intention. I will first describe how these elements are presented in the book[34] and, afterwards, apply the comparative approach. This strategy serves for exposing the differences between novel and films and, as a result, makes reference to the personal recreation of the source text. For the better understanding, I will use *TGG74* for referring to Jack Clayton's movie, released in 1974, and *TGG13* for Baz Luhrmann's version of 2013.

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[34] Subsequent references in brackets refer to the edition by Wordsworth (2001).

3.1   Narrative elements

The decision to include an analysis of the narration is based on the fact that it provides insight into the movie's general intention and focus which, in turn, are linked to the contextual factors. By comparing how the directors transferred the narrative elements of Fitzgerald's short novel to the screen, we will be able to see which components they emphasized and which ones they set aside. Hence, I will concentrate on the story's narrator, the opening credits and the adaptation of memories, as well as on the elements of the book that are highlighted or dramatized.

   The Great Gatsby is composed of nine chapters and contains a clearly structured main plot with key events and main characters that keep the story together[35] as well as a number of subplots dealing with the relationships and, therefore, supporting the action and the author's criticism. The story is told from the perspective of first person narrator Nick Carraway who in his narration jumps back in time to describe memories and, thus, gradually reveals certain details. This helps to maintain the suspense until the end and creates an "overall dramatic effect", as Northam (1965: 56) comments.

   Both versions use the original title and contain the key characters and events but differ with regard to the chosen aspects. The first contrast can be found in the use of the narrator and his representation in the initial pages which influence the whole understanding of the novel. Nick, who simultaneously observes the happenings and is actually involved in them, is the key of the narration and shares the protagonism with Gatsby. He tells the story retrospectively two years later in 1924 (103) by writing a book (3). We do not only perceive Nick's "literary side" (5) – and therefore the contrast in himself between the money-making bond business and his artistic vein – but we also learn that the whole story is a process of remembering and retelling. Because of this, he constantly refers to the current present (12, 37), allowing different temporal narrative

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[35] Main characters: Nick Carraway, Jay Gatsby, Daisy and Tom Buchanan, Jordan Baker, Myrtle and George Wilson, Meyer Wolfsheim (although secondary, he helps to underline Gatsby's criminal side). The key events are (in chronological order): Nick's first dinner at the Buchanan's, Tom and Nick's visit of the valley of ashes with ensuing party at Myrtle's New York apartment, Nick's first party at Gatsby's where he meets the host, Nick and Gatsby's lunch with Wolfsheim, tea at Nick's where Gatsby and Daisy meet with subsequent visit of Gatsby's mansion, Nick's second party at Gatsby's together with the Buchanan's, sinister day which starts with lunch at the Buchanan's and ends with Myrtle's death, Wilson shoots Gatsby and himself. McFarlane (1996: 13), basing himself on Barthes, calls these actions *cardinal functions* since they represent the "'hinge points' of narrative".

levels[36], and, moreover, anticipating the book's negative ending by pointing to Gatsby's failure, his own disappointment (contrasting with his illusion at the beginning) and the move back West (3) to preserve his traditional values. In fact, by talking about his Midwesterner background and the decision to try his luck with the bond business in the East, he reveals relevant information: he represents the "average" guy who is not part of the high society and contrasts the values of West vs. East and poor vs. rich. Although Nick himself refers repeatedly to a possible unreliability in his account of the events[37], we believe him given that we do not lose the contact with his narration and see in him a kind of John Doe we can identify with. What is more, Nick is the only character that looks behind the façade and establishes a relationship with Gatsby who, in comparison with the selfish and careless East Eggers like Daisy, Tom and Jordan, "turned out all right at the end" (4).

In *TGG74*, Nick is introduced when driving to the dinner at the Buchanan's, first by the images and, shortly afterward, by the use of the voice-over which immediately serves as identification. McFarlane (1996) points to two important aspects of the voice-over use in film. Firstly, this technique for adapting the book's first person narration is mostly periodically used; the spoken words in off "accompany images which necessarily take on an objective life of their own" (1996: 16). Secondly, it increases "a sense of past tense" (*Ibid.:* 16) which, in this case, underlines Nick's remembering of the story from a present point of view. Regarding the first aspect, the movie adapts just the beginning of Nick's narration; the rest is almost completely transferred into images, dialogues or simply left out. On the one hand, this prevents a possible monotony and tedium but, on the other, it provokes the loss of Nick's narrative function, as Desmond and Hawkes (2006) explain: since Nick "virtually drops out as the narrator" (2006: 247) after the first quarter of an hour, we no longer identify the events with his subjective perspective and, what is more, "know things *beyond* the logical limits of Nick's first-person perspective" (*Ibid.:* 247). This is underlined by the fact that Clayton uses Nick's "eyes" just in one occasion, right before meeting Gatsby for the first time, when we see through his eyes at the space between door frame and door (00:33:46).

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[36] In my analysis I use the term "narrative level" not to refer to the different types of narrator but to the narration times: apart from Nick's actual perspective from which he tells the story, and the story itself as it happens, we also experiment a third level, that is, the past events, including the memories and flashbacks with regard to Gatsby's life and his falling in love with Daisy.

[37] Nick's memories are clouded by the time (12) or his drunkenness (20), he is not always present at the events but does not indicate who told him either (99-101), although he is "inclined to reserve all judgments" (3) he does opine and mock, etc.

As for the second aspect, the voice-over does create the feeling of past and Nick anticipates the negative ending – by seeing Gatsby standing on his terrace and looking at the green light, underlined by a doom-laden melody to indicate his potential failure – and his personal disappointment ("By the autumn, my mood would be very different" [00:10:10]). Nonetheless, with the exception of one remark about his fragmentary thinking back, it does not refer neither to the writing of the book nor to the direct present of retelling. Thus, we only perceive two narrative levels or even one, as it will be explained subsequently. Together with the fact that we do not learn about his background or see much about his new life in West Egg and the work in the city (4-5), it is obvious that Nick's position is modified as he becomes less important: *TGG74* moderates his protagonism and the crucial function he takes over in the novel. Clayton replaced it for another emphasis, as it becomes clear when analyzing the opening credits and memories.

The movie starts with Gatsby's mansion, the car and the pool, we hear the sentimental song "When You and I Were Seventeen" resounding and echoing through a record player (00:00:05). The sensation of echo is explained in the second part of the opening credits: the rooms of the house are empty, full of luxurious fittings and the noises of remote parties and piano and jazz music. Afterwards, the camera shows Gatsby's bedroom and displays clippings and photographs of Daisy, the bed and personal items with his initials, the ring he will give to Daisy in the course of the movie, his medals and a bitten sandwich, while playing the love song "What'll I Do" which, together with the previous one, will sound several times in the film. The camera then remains with Daisy's photograph. These first images represent Gatsby's wealth and fortune, his glamorous and hedonistic lifestyle, and also the feeling of past, nostalgia, failure and loss, but especially the obsession with Daisy and their love story. The elements Clayton simultaneously stresses and omits confirm this assumption.

The first emphasis that calls the attention in *TGG74* is Jordan Baker's tournament which, in the book, is just mentioned in passing. The director might have included this additional and extended scene to show the wealthy people's world and to contrast the rich and the poor. To begin with, the connection between the tournament scene and the image preceding it reflects Myrtle's striving for social advancement: first we see her new dog (bought in New York when driving in the car with Tom and Nick because "they're nice to have" [19]) sitting on the bed; one moment later rich women at the tournament hold their dogs on the lap. Moreover, Daisy's plans to set Nick up with

Jordan cannot be translated into action since a rich woman cannot marry a poor man, as she has to admit to herself. This deduction does not only reflect Daisy's own fate but contrasts the financial situations and values of the different social classes.

The director also introduced a shift of importance for the characters of Gatsby and Daisy. First of all, Gatsby's past and the truth about how he worked his way up, including the character of Dan Cody (62-64), are not mentioned[38]. This has three main consequences: firstly, the ignorance of Gatsby's past history prevents us from understanding "his social rise from son of shiftless parents to fabulous millionaire" (Desmond and Hawkes 2006: 251) and, comparable to Nick's case, from contrasting values and personal changes; secondly, the end of the movie with Gatsby's father coming back to attend his son's funeral loses its expressiveness since it seems somewhat divorced from its context; thirdly, *TGG74* attenuates the mystery about Gatsby not only by withholding the gradually revealed details but also by exposing Gatsby's face when presenting him for the first time, which will become even clearer when analyzing Luhrmann's version. On the contrary, Daisy's character gains importance. The movie gives her a more active part, noticeable especially by the increase of speech and close-ups but also by the mirroring of her reactions in certain situations. In the discussion between Tom and Gatsby at the Plaza Hotel, for instance, it is Daisy's scream that represents the climax and the focus of this crucial moment (01:40:00).

Nonetheless, it is particularly the accent on Gatsby and Daisy as a couple that excels in *TGG74*. Clayton introduced several extra scenes in the form of private meetings (conversations, picnics, walks, etc.) to display how they spend the newly gained time together, and combined them with additional kiss sequences to reinforce the romance. Therefore, the movie romanticizes the story and gives priority to love. This notion matches with the adaptation of memories. In the novel, for example, Jordan tells Nick how the lovers met and why, in the end, Daisy married Tom (48). In the movie, this is taken up by Daisy and Gatsby in private conversations. Clayton does not only add additional scenes for the affair but also stresses and dramatizes their cruel fate by making them remembering it together. The recalling of their first kiss is even more symbolic. In the book, separated with suspension points from the previous and the

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[38] Dan Cody was Gatsby's mentor and furthered his career. In the movie we do not learn about their acquaintance nor do we see Cody's picture in Gatsby's office, which is replaced by a photograph of Oxford. Northman (1965:59), for instance, sees in him a symbolic character who reflects Gatsby's fate being "incapable of using his new-found wealth for anything but self-destructive purposes".

following paragraph, it is Nick who retells Gatsby's memory (71). In the film, we deal with a mixture of past and present, flashback and current story, melting together (01:17:23). Daisy and Gatsby "re-experiment" the kiss by dancing in uniform and girl's dress, just as Daisy wished, which underlines the feeling of a past event and matches with Gatsby's desire to "repeat the past" (70). As in the book, we see them walking down the street and hear a far-off voice-over. However, since we cannot distinguish whether it is a reviving moment or a real flashback, the third temporal narrative level – that is, the past events – ceases to apply and, moreover, leads to a chronological account of the events.

Luhrmann's movie differs considerably from the 1974-version, and it is especially the introduction of Nick that underlines this view: remembering the story from the actual present in wintertime, he is a patient in a sanatorium due to his alcoholism, insomnia, anger fits and anxiety. The film also uses the voice-over and, what is more, reflects the exhaustion and frustration in his voice. Right from the beginning, we learn that Nick is sickened by the events ("When I came back from New York, I was disgusted. Disgusted with everyone and everything" [00:01:57]), which, together with the place from which he tells the story in the movie, the season of the year and his actual state of mind dramatizes his disappointment and will contrast notably with the beginning of the story, mirroring summertime, joy, adventure and his own illusion. The movie also takes up the writing of the book: the doctor recommends him to put the story into words since Nick feels uncomfortable to tell it. Thus, it constantly returns to the act of remembering and writing, and highlights some interesting facts. On the one hand, Nick's writing changes during the course of the movie. Initially, we see him writing down his memories in patient journals; later on, he uses a typewriter, changing from a therapy with healing effect to the duty of recording the events and, therefore, professionalizing it. All together, this attenuates the exaggerating effect of the sanatorium, serving to underline Nick's actual feelings. On the other hand, the written words often appear on the screen, adjusted to the images and melting together with them[39], highlighting the process of remembering and combining past and present.

In comparison with *TGG74*, Nick starts the story by remembering the era (see section 3.2) and informing about his personal background: we see his move to East Egg,

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[39] Two moments call especially the attention: when talking about Myrtle's party, the letters are colorful and garish, emphasizing the evening's craziness and Nicks drunkenness; when remembering the valley of ashes for the first time, the letters themselves turn into ashes, highlighting the monotony and dull atmosphere.

his dream of being a writer at Yale[40], the new interest for the bond business and his daily work routine. After that, Gatsby is physically introduced, and this is particularly interesting: the perspective switches repeatedly from Nick looking up to Gatsby's window without recognizing his face, and Gatsby, from the back view with special focus on his ring as a symbol of power and wealth, observing Nick (00:05:00). Here, not only the importance of their relationship is indicated but also Nick's double function of witnessing and being witnessed is stressed. In fact, the movie refers several times to his "double role", either by Nick or other characters mentioning it[41]. If these elements already show the protagonism the first-person narrator holds in *TGG13*, further aspects emphasize it even more: firstly, the voice-over is maintained throughout the whole movie which, together with Nick's constant physical presence, reflects his remarks and opinion and maintains the contact to him as the narrator; secondly, we see through Nick's camera eyes at several places[42]; and, thirdly, we can find many close-ups of Nick's face showing his reactions and feelings.

The opening credits of this adaptation are not as crucial as they are for the prior version since they are restricted to the frame of the Jay Gatsby-logo, moving on from black and white to black and gold with a somewhat tragic music and then starting directly with the green light and Nick's telling. Therefore, the focus of Luhrmann's interpretation becomes clear only when hearing and seeing the narrator's actual presence. The importance of Nick is completed by two further priorities: Gatsby's past and Gatsby and Daisy's romance. As for the first aspect, *TGG13* does display the past story of the eponymous hero by revealing the truth about him. In a flashback, told by Gatsby to Nick and therefore mixing the second and third temporal narrative levels – that is, the story itself and the past events –, we see a quick summary of his parents, a young Gatsby with a dream, from meeting Dan Cody over learning some important life lessons up to his creation of a new personality. Together with the representation of his

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[40] His literary interest is not only highlighted by this reference but also by subsequent remarks, e.g. Tom calling him "Shakespeare" and introducing him as a "writer" to Myrtle and her friends. Moreover, Tom asks him how "the great American novel" is doing which, interestingly enough, could be a reference to the actual book *The Great Gatsby*.

[41] Nick wants to leave Myrtle's party because he feels uncomfortable betraying his cousin Daisy (which also underlines his morality) but Tom animates him to stay commenting on his "observing nature" back in college and his chance to finally be an active part at the party. Later on, when looking out of the window, he sees himself standing outside and looking up to the apartment as the "casual watcher on the street", referring of his position "within and without" the story (00:21:26).

[42] For instance, when Daisy arrives at Nick's for having tea with him, she enters the living room but we can only hear what she says and not see her since the focus is on Nick's face in the corridor (00:53:46). Whereas, after Myrtle's death, we look through Nick's eyes at the hedge and observe Tom and Daisy in the kitchen (01:54:11).

criminal side (see section 3.2), the movie also contrasts and underlines the different shapes and meanings of money. Besides, since *TGG13* repeats Gatsby's rear view several times and we cannot see his face until the first party, the movie maintains the mystery about him even longer.

On the other hand, this version also focuses on Gatsby and Daisy's love story and contains additional scenes for showing their affair (swimming, sunbathing, kissing) as well as flashbacks. In comparison with *TGG74*, we deal here with real flashbacks recreating how they met, fell in love and kissed for the first time. As in the book, it is Jordan who tells Nick and who takes over the first-person narration, situating us five years back, evoking soft and fade images and presenting the characters with a younger physical appearance (00:45:35). This memory is combined with real and filmed images of Gatsby at war and the summary of how Daisy married Tom. The second recall of their first kiss is remembered by Gatsby with Daisy's house appearing in the sky and creating a sepia memory, showing an additional bed scene (01:22:36). Although these scenes and flashbacks romanticize their relationship, we find here an essential difference with Clayton's adaptation: they do not exclude the narrator. Nick is also present in certain scenes and spends time with them; he even dances with Daisy while Gatsby is watching (01:06:23). Furthermore, when Daisy and Gatsby hide from Tom at the second party and kiss, it is Gatsby's morality that is underlined: although he became rich by criminal activities, he refuses to just run away with Daisy since it is not respectable and would shed a negative light on them. Hence, the focus of these scenes lies either on the men's friendship and Nick's presence or Gatsby's qualities rather than on the mere love story. This becomes also clear when examining the character of Daisy. In comparison with *TGG74*, her role is more passive and gains activeness only as part of the romance; she has less speech and fewer close-ups. Apart from that, the crucial moment at the Plaza Hotel does not highlight her reaction but focuses on Gatsby's outburst, causing her escape (01:41:50).

To sum up, we have seen that the directors, although maintaining the key characters and events, draw the attention to different aspects of the novel and highlight them by introducing additional scenes that reinforce this view. Clayton's version moves away from Fitzgerald's narrative particularity – the continuity in the first person narration, different temporal narrative levels, Nick's importance and double function, etc. – and focuses above all on the romance between Gatsby and Daisy. Luhrmann, in

turn, chooses to preserve the temporal narrative scaffolding, which does not only result in Nick's protagonism but also in the revelation of Gatsby's past story; furthermore, although he also emphasizes the couple's relationship and brings in intimate scenes, this rather helps to complete Gatsby's development and to underline Nick's weight.

3.2   The Roaring Twenties

The consideration of the historical background is a fundamental part of the analysis, above all because, in general, there is no great significance attached to it: on the one hand, critics leave it out or restrict themselves to the most obvious elements and, on the other hand, spectators concentrate on the predominant plot and characters which, as they relegate the details to the background, make it difficult to fully perceive the historical elements. Nonetheless, in *The Great Gatsby* the 1920's play a significant role given the fact that it is here where we perceive the author's critical eye. Fitzgerald himself used the word "roar" several times in the book (28, 44, and 73) and, by means of this, alludes to the double function of the term: something that "roars" draws the attention to some elements but, at the same time, drowns out others. The covering of the downside and the creation of a façade is exactly what the Roaring Twenties did and what Fitzgerald criticized. He did not only personify the decline of the American Dream, caused by materialism, but showed the drawbacks of glitter and gold in everyday life. Hence, in this work, I will examine the representation and contrast of some selected technological, economical, social and artistic factors.

From the outset of the novel, technologies and innovations influence the characters' life and the plot's development. I will explore the use of the automobile and the telephone because, although no new inventions, they became available to the populace in the 1920's and turned into the key means of movement and communication. Besides, with over 120 (automobile) and 100 (telephone) references in the book, these elements play a crucial role in certain situations. Firstly, the car is not only a mere means of locomotion that transports characters within Long Island or to New York; it is a status symbol of wealth which also expresses Fitzgerald's negative allusions to this era of mass production and consumption: stress and traffic on the New York roads, danger and death due to bad drivers, poverty as a result of the failure of mass production, best symbolized by Wilson and the valley of ashes. Secondly, apart from the

telephone's obvious benefits as a medium for dates, negotiations and the mere contact and services, the author also muses on the disadvantages related to its fast connection and straightforwardness: it transmits bad news in an impersonal way and, moreover, is used for criminal and illegal businesses. Both *TGG74* and *TGG13* mirror the car's importance and constantly show and refer to automobiles and brands. In Clayton's version, the first meeting of Tom and Nick on Long Island (00:04:40) is particularly symbolic – mostly because it was not literally adapted. Tom, after his polo match, dismounts from the horse and invites Nick to get on the car for their drive to the house. By means of this, the change of age is emphasized: the automobile replaces the horsepower as a means of transport; the animal develops into a pastime or sport. Both movies also connects cars with crucial moments or scenes, e.g. rows and rows of cars at Gatsby's glorious parties, the valley of ashes– hence, cars can also signify a broken fortune and monotony – or Myrtle's death, caused by Daisy in the yellow Rolls-Royce. However, in *TGG74*, although these images reveal the negative aspect of the automobile and do represent danger, poverty and excess, the "stress factor" in the city and the car as a public menace fall somewhat by the way. It is true that Jordan's careless driving is represented and traffic and its effects are outlined, i.e. car rows and the sound of horns in New York City; nevertheless, since these latter details are sometimes just vaguely perceptible, the plot drowns them out[43]. In turn, *TGG13* highlights the dangers: Gatsby, instead of Jordan, is a careless motorist; he drives too fast when picking up Nick for lunch, making the glasses in the kitchen vibrate, and he passes other cars dangerously (00:35:15). Moreover, Gatsby's party guests drive drunkenly (00:23:45), which can also lead to an accident, and, as it will be explained later on, the movie shows the traffic chaos in the city evoked by automobiles (00:38:13).

With regard to the telephone, both movies perfectly display its variety of functions. On the one hand, they picture the facility of the characters' constant contact, by not only regularly referring to the phone in the dialogues but also by showing the device itself in all the possible places and moments. In *TGG74*, Gatsby is contactable in almost every room of his house, Daisy talks to Nick while sitting in the bath tub (00:45:57), and every desk in Nick's open-plan office is equipped with a phone. In *TGG13*, the camera zooms in on the telephone in crucial moments, for example when Myrtle rings at the Buchanan's (00:05:52) or Gatsby waits for Daisy's call before being

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[43] This is the case, for example, when Tom and his lover Myrtle meet in New York and she buys a puppy at the roadside; the spectator's attention is drawn completely to the purchase (00:16:43).

shot by Wilson (02:01:17). Especially this latter scene shows the negative side of the new communication device: the telephone symbolizes Gatsby's hope and excitement – we see Daisy picking up the phone – but also the disappointment and failure – in the end, it was Nick ringing. Both movies reflect Gatsby's dubious phone conversations which obviously are related to criminal activities, show that characters just have to dial a number to be waited on, and mirror the marriage crisis a call can cause.

Another important aspect Fitzgerald highlights is the creation of new business sectors and undertakings due to the economic growth of the United States. Connected to this is the contrast of Tom's "established wealth" and self-made millionaire Gatsby's "new fortune", and therefore the possibility to quickly coming into money, gaining reputation and rising through the ranks – in a word, to jump on the train called "American Dream". The weak point of this: illegal and criminal activities, as in the case of Gatsby who is supposed to have sold the prohibited alcohol in drugstores. In addition, he portrays the different faces of the urban life. The city offers amusement and opportunities such as movies, theatres and shops, especially at night; people spend their leisure time in the city, and the lights communicate a glamorous, flamboyant and captivating atmosphere. However, New York has a downside: automobiles contribute traffic, chaos and stress; people live their anonymous life and act in a superficial way. Nick, being a bond salesman as many others in the city, feels lonely and is unable to make real friends. Both versions contrast the two types of fortune by stressing Tom's traditional wealth and his disapproval of the newly rich, but vary regarding the other aspects. Apart from demonstrating the mystifying phone calls, which is also the case for *TGG13*, Clayton's cinematic adaptation alludes to the criminal activities and the city's weak points but does not elaborate on them. As for the first aspect, the movie contains an additional scene with Gatsby's serious looking assistant who does not only take care of the parties' troublemakers but accompanies Nick to his neighbor's office, displaying his gun (00:32:52). This implies Gatsby's power and the need of protection but, since we do not learn anything about his real past and the way he became rich, the contrast is set aside and the criminality loses its significance. The same holds for the urban life: the movie makes no reference neither to the monotony of the business world nor to the loneliness, anonymity and abyss of the big city. Nick's office rather represents a stress-free and relaxing zone, the horns are covered by birdsongs and by Nick and Jordan's relationship, and we would not connect illegal practices with the New York streets. In consequence, we get a one-sided view of the city.

Luhrmann's version, on the contrary, emphasizes the negative effects of New York. Firstly, the lunch with Wolfsheim gives a specific example of the illegal interconnections (00:40:00): they have to enter the underground restaurant through a secret door in a hairdresser's and Nick is faced with corrupt commissioners and senators making deals with gangsters in the prohibited establishment. The same holds for Gatsby's parties, as will be taken up in the following. Together with the display of Gatsby's past and his creation of a whole new personality, these details underline the protagonist's double face. Secondly, the atmosphere in Nick's office is not only chaotic, hectic and stressful with telephones ringing and people rushing; it is also anonymous since the colleagues don't pay attention to each other (02:00:57). Thirdly, New York is represented as an overcrowded and shrill city; car horns are sounding and trails of smoke are seen through the open windows in the Plaza Hotel; the streets are characterized by the traffic and a potential danger of fast cars, highlighted by Nick and Gatsby's drive to the city (00:35:47)[44]. Shortly before the end of the movie (02:06:11), Nick remembers once again the disappointment and the disgust the city and its people provoked in him, opposing the formerly bright sky with the now darkened and misty view, and the adventurous and attractive rush with the anonymity on the streets.

As for the social changes in the 1920's, although not a key aspect for the plot, the author introduces at different places of the novel the cultural clash and intermingling due to the immigration of African-Americans. He refers repeatedly to Tom's race hate but also to the social advancement of black inhabitants. In both adaptations, the first aspect is literally represented since we hear Tom's specific dialogues about his belonging to the white hegemony: he recommends Goddard's book *The Rise of the Coloured Empires* and fears the dominance of the black race which, at worst, would result in black and white intermarriages. In *TGG13*, this is even ironically emphasized because, when talking about the book, Tom refers to the black waiters in the background (00:09:30). Both movies include the well-dressed black witness of Myrtle's death car but *TGG74* makes no further reference to the social advancement of African-Americans. In the book one interesting allusion, representing the cultural variety and mixture in the big city and the social upgrading, calls the attention: driving with Gatsby in the car to New York, Nick sees a limousine with "three modish negroes, two bucks and a girl" (44). Although there would be no need to literally adapt this clue, there is no

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[44] This scene reminds of other American silent movies, for example *Speedy* (1928), which represent the danger of fast cars and, thus, contemplate the change of age and technology critically.

other remark about the social change and the new and culturally dyed side of the urban areas. Luhrmann's version, however, does represent this scene and, what is more, displays and highlights the role of African-Americans at all social spheres: workers in the valley of ashes, jazz musicians playing by night, dancers in the underground restaurants and waiters at Gatsby's parties but also wealthy guests in the clubs.

The representation of the 1920's' woman is essential since this is not only connected to their new freedom and uncontrolled behavior in public but also to the consumption of mass products. The first aspect is reflected throughout the whole book: women drive cars by themselves, they smoke and drink next to the men and behave unrestrainedly at Gatsby's parties; Jordan Baker gains money as a golf player, she travels all around the country, is unmarried and flirtatious. Apart from that, two crucial situations mirror the women's growing freedom: firstly, it is Daisy who contradicts her own husband on the sinister day and decides in which car the two groups start off to New York (77), setting the basis for the fatal misunderstanding of who drove the death car; secondly, regarding this latter event, it is also Daisy who fixes on driving the car instead of Gatsby (92) to whom everybody instinctively turns as he is the man. Conversely, Tom's lover Myrtle personifies consumption and advertisement: when getting off the train for meeting Tom secretly in New York, the first thing she does is buying the gossip magazine "Town Tattle" and a perfume at the drugstore (18). Therefore, the novel skillfully connects her consumption with the striving for social advancement and her importance for chain stores with New York – in the end, it is the city that offers these opportunities.

Although both adaptations highlight Daisy's decisions and, consequently, show her connection with the following events, they represent the facets of the modern woman to a different extent. *TGG74*, on the one hand, displays and even emphasizes the women's new independence: Daisy drives to the tea at Nick's by herself and not with a chauffeur (00:48:36), she and Jordan take the boat (01:02:16) and, furthermore, allow themselves a great deal of leisure (00:06:40), Jordan's role as independent golf-champion is highlighted through the additional tournament scene (00:23:26). Moreover, it draws the attention to Myrtle's desire to rise through the ranks by not only showing her interest in purchasing a dog and the behavior as rich hostess of her own party but also by including an additional scene of Tom giving her clothes and, therefore, supporting her rise (00:58:05). In *TGG13*, this aspect fades into the background since neither Jordan's independence nor Myrtle's aspiration is emphasized. In fact, the movie

cuts the scenes of Myrtle's consumer behavior completely. Solely the desire of sensation is illustrated by Jordan reading "Town Tattle" (00:07:56) which also matches with the fact that she is always well-informed about rumors. However, both versions stress one important aspect: they successfully use Myrtle and her sister Catherine to personify the mass consumption. These women represent the "average consumer" with cheap and colorful fashion, jewellery and make-up, especially highlighted in Luhrmann's version with Catherine's green nail polish splitting off (00:19:19). Additionally, they contrast with the East Egg girls which have an expensive sense of fashion and draw a strict social line.

The last aspect to be analyzed is the depiction of the parties, the element that best shows the money excess, extravagance and "mask" of the Roaring Twenties. Fitzgerald creates a magic and overwhelming atmosphere, playing with movements, actions and perceptions. Music and dance, artists such as photographers, directors and shooting stars and criminal hints by Gatsby's mysterious phone calls are reflected in one single setting. Whether the private party at Myrtle's New York apartment or crowds of people at Gatsby's night parties, Fitzgerald combines the importance of the new art forms in music – Jazz and Blues – and dance – Foxtrot and Charleston – with the striving for social advancement, also in connection with modern artistic expression such as photography. Mr McKee at Myrtle's sit-in, for example, exhibits his "studies" and looks for more contacts in the upper class in order to advance (22). In addition, Fitzgerald also takes up the prohibition of alcohol, stressed within the bounds of the hedonistic behavior of party guests.

This last section may include the aspects that can be best represented by the medium of the motion picture, having at its disposal a range of different techniques and, particularly, the audiovisual illustration. Both movies recreate the parties in an authentic way. We listen to jazz music (in *TGG74* traditional, in *TGG13* mixed with modern pop songs, see section 3.3), we see people dance, wearing typical fashion (bobbed hair, flappers and sequins), we are pointed to celebrities and the act of socializing, and we view the prohibited consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, the lavishness, madness and lack of moderation, highlighted by those party guests who jump into the fountain. However, it is, once again, the extent of excess that contrasts. Clayton's version represents this element in an attenuated way in comparison with Luhrmann's: whereas in *TGG74* Myrtle's house party mirrors a social gathering (00:18:10), in *TGG13* it is an orgy (00:20:13); while the first adaptation shows a gleeful Saturday night party at

Gatsby's (00:26:50), in the second adaptation the guests seem to celebrate New Year's Eve time and again, reinforced by the festive decoration, fireworks and people that push and shove to get inside, creating a feeling of sensation and excitement (00:24:15). Besides, Clayton focused more and longer on the close-ups of legs, shoes, dresses and clinking pearls, and put more repetitive music to the party scenes. The representation of new artistic expressions in combination with the striving for social advancement becomes also less important since it is just tangentially mentioned. Neither is it possible to identify Mr. McKee as photographer nor is the presence of celebrities highlighted. In turn, *TGG13* does not only take up these aspects but emphasizes them and alludes to Gatsby's shady business connections. On the one hand, the profession of Mr. McKee is underlined by his camera (00:19:19) and the fact that the party guests at Myrtle's take pictures together (00:20:22); moreover, in one of the additional scenes, Nick films Daisy and Gatsby, making reference to the motion picture (01:01:08). On the other hand, film stars, celebrities like Gilda Gray and producers or Broadway directors meet gangsters, corrupt politicians and businessman, making deals and losing their money through gambling (00:25:02). Apart from that, in the second version Nick himself, interestingly enough, also uses the term "roaring" to refer to his drunkenness at Gatsby's first party. Particularly these last details make the difference: the perception of the party and its success might be influenced by the camera techniques and computer editing, however, the allusion to the negative side of Gatsby's life is a clear decision made by the director.

Finally, it is also important to elaborate the reference to Nick's period summary which consists of a sequence of quickly changing clips with his voice-over explaining them (00:03:14). The images – some are taken from existing documentary material, others are filmed – show crowds of people on the streets, New York from above full of skyscrapers, cars and traffic, the Times Square offering advertisement and entertainment, Wall Street and the economy booming, parties, alcohol and the lack of restraint. By introducing this collection, the second movie situates us directly in the historical context and prepares us for the façade the city establishes.

In conclusion, the representation of the 1920's with its splendor and delusion is an essential and necessary element in Luhrmann's interpretation. This version takes up Fitzgerald's contrast of the ages and the expression of the downside, drawing the spectators' attention not only to characters and plot but also to the Roaring Twenties.

Clayton, on the other hand, reflects them in an attenuated way, cutting out particularly the negative aspects and, as a result, shedding a much more optimistic light on New York and on Nick's actually frustrating experience. Here, the historical background loses its significance and rather serves to underpin the story's setting which is mainly represented by the most obvious characteristics of a certain period: costumes and music. Thus, we deal here with two extremes: Luhrmann paying attention to details and exaggerating them, and Clayton interweaving the American 1920's almost invisibly into the story line.

3.3   Contextual factors

This last section moves away from the book-and-film comparison and concentrates on certain contextual factors which complete and consolidate the deduction drawn from the analysis in the previous sections. In particular, I will have a closer look at specific choices the directors made with regard to camera techniques, the use of music and the design of the film cover as well as on their style and possible influences.

Jack Clayton's interpretation of *The Great Gatsby* as a romance does not only find expression in the additional love scenes, kiss sequences and conversations in which Daisy and Gatsby reveal their past together. The movie contains a number of further elements that underline this notion. First of all, the director frequently used the zoomed-in close-up of faces to highlight the characters' emotions and reactions. As already mentioned in section 3.1, this is particularly the case of Daisy, whose constant reflections of feelings, e.g. her crying when talking to Nick at the tournament, serves to portray her character and, in the end, reinforces her active part in the love story with Gatsby. Besides, the images are often covered by a "gleaming effect": Daisy has sparkling eyes, the diamonds of jewellery or clothes glitter and the lights shimmer in the rooms. This does not only create the sensation of a sometimes dreamlike and unreal scene but also reinforces the feeling of overromantization and overdramatization throughout the movie. Apart from these "side effects", the general use of the close-up for other elements, e.g. the dancing feet at Gatsby's parties, and the exceptional length of different scenes, for instance Wilson's walking through the valley of ashes before killing Gatsby, call the attention and lead to a slower and long-winded rhythm of the adaptation.

The choice of music supports the adaptation's focus and intensifies the feeling of nostalgia and failure, but also represents the period the story is set in. We listen to classic Jazz and Blues pieces, Foxtrot and Charleston melodies and popular songs of the 1920's such as "Ain't We Got Fun" or "Yes Sir! That's My Baby". However, throughout the whole movie, two main songs are repeatedly played: "When You and I Were Seventeen" and "What'll I do". The former reflects the beginning and thinking back of the romance, representing Gatsby's desire to "repeat the past"; the latter mirrors the failure of love Gatsby has to experience twice. Interestingly enough, the first lines of this song, "Gone is the romance that was so divine", were taken up to advertise the movie. This paratextual element of the poster (see appendix 1) matches with the rest of the design and underlines the romantic emphasis: Robert Redford as Gatsby stands behind Mia Farrow as Daisy, both dressed in cream and looking in the same direction. The image is slightly blurred and gives the same impression of a dreamlike and unreal scene as do the sparkling details throughout the film. The frame is hold in black and no other elements were used. As a result, *TGG74* advertises a love story to those spectators who are not familiar with the content.

At this point I consider it important to mention Carolyne Bevan's article "The third Gatsby", written for the British Film Institute[45], where she gives documentary evidence of some of Clayton's decisions. Firstly, the director replaced screenwriter Truman Capote with Francis Ford Coppola because the former's first draft "lacked detail about Daisy and Gatsby's past relationship and crammed too much action into its final pages". Although the movie maintains the end of the novel, this decision explains why additional love scenes and conversations were added. Secondly, Fitzgerald's daughter Frances Scott Fitzgerald was entitled to have a say on the screenplay and voiced her opposition against the representation of Gatsby as a racketeer; consequently, she expressed "the need to 'de-Godfather' the script"; and furthermore pleaded for the exclusion of sex scenes. This fits with the rejection of elaborating Gatsby's past and criminal face as well as with the omission of bed scenes. The 1970s underwent notable cinematic changes, in particular with regard to the free use of formerly taboo subjects such as corruption, violence and sexuality. Since this is not the case of Clayton's

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[45] Complete article by Carolyne Bevan for the British Film Institute on March 13, 2013:
http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/third-gatsby.
The British Film Institute was collecting documents and records of Jack Clayton's work which, among others, contains the screenplay and other important papers for the production of *The Great Gatsby* in 1974.

version, we can assume that Frances's influence was here decisive. Thirdly, the answer for the mostly attenuated elements of the Roaring Twenties can be found in the director's opinion against a "slavish attention to period detail if it would be detrimental to the composition of the scene" and his emphasis on producing a movie "for today and of today, which is merely set in 1925", notified to designer John Box, as Bevan gathers.

These explanations might also be connected to Clayton's ideology and aesthetics. However, even though he was known for his literary adaptations, it is precisely because of the variety of his previous book-to-film productions that a specific style is difficult to define: *The Bespoke Overcoat* (1955), *Room at the Top* (1959) and *The Innocents* (1961) deal with different types of sources – theatre, novel and novella – and main topics; additionally, the subsequent adaptation *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* (1987) differs in the use of camera techniques, e.g. in the application of real flashbacks. Apart from that, there are no evident intertextual references in this work which could explain why Clayton adapted the novel in such a classic and traditional way with a romantic focus.

When considering the second adaptation, two main aspects have to be taken into account: the new era of film-making and Baz Luhrmann's ideology and intertextuality. Obviously, for the comparison of two versions which are based on one and the same book, the time of the adaptation cannot be ignored. *TGG13* is embedded in the latest generation of film production, corresponding to the needs of a new spectatorship. Stam (2000: 317) puts this in a nutshell when commenting that "[a] new blockbuster cinema, made possible by huge budgets, sound innovations, and digital technologies, favored a 'sound and light show' cinema of sensation". That is, the spectator wants to be highly entertained and leaves the reality for some hours to immerse into the commercialized world of special effects. There seems to be no longer a limit for the creation of settings and actions: we are facing the business of opportunity. In fact, Max Brooks, author of the recently adapted novel *World War Z*, when asked if he sees a problem in the "Hollywood self-censoring", answers: "Please, it's Hollywood. We're talking about the same industry that brought The Great Gatsby in 3D"[46]. Brooks's remark points to the interest of filmmakers to commercialize stories – whether original or based on previous works – and to "pep them up", leading us to Luhrmann's choice to add special effects

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[46] Full interview "World War Z Author Max Brooks on Zombies, Vampires and Jazz" as written text and podcast on June 21, 2013 by Ali Plumb, available from http://www.empireonline.com/interviews/interview.asp?IID=1724.

and apply a variety of modern camera techniques and computer editing[47]. The shots in *TGG13* are characterized in particular by a quick change of images, dialogues, perspectives and colors, using a range of filming methods such as slow motion for introducing the valley of ashes and underlining its monotony, time-lapse for moving on from Daisy's green light to Gatsby's dock and, hence, connecting the houses through the view, and aerial shots for showing the Buchanan and Gatsby's estate, the party guests and the city of New York from above. Besides, the director implemented different "materials" to either strengthen the authenticity of happenings (e.g. real images of the Roaring Twenties and World War I), to reinforce the development of characters (e.g. clippings about Tom and Daisy's marriage and Gatsby's social advancement) or to connect actual present and the retold story (e.g. letters on the screen). All together, these choices do not only suggest the director's decision to create a vivid movie experience and to entertain the audience but also guarantee a mixed spectatorship: viewers who are interested in the content or literary background and others who simply want to enjoy a film, among them younger spectators attracted by the 3D version. Nonetheless, it has to be mentioned that this entertaining factor is noticeable particularly in the first half of the movie; since the second part experiences a sharp decline of speed, it can also provoke a feeling of long-windedness.

Aside from the colorful images and the quickness of special effects and different techniques, it is above all the sound that excels in *TGG13*. On the one hand, the movie uses a wide range of sound effects to emphasize the vividness and rapid sequence of events, for instance the noise of the engine at the valley of ashes, the ring of the telephone throughout the whole movie or Gatsby's car that screams past at Nick's place. On the other hand, the movie mixes actual pop music with classic Jazz and Blues melodies, which gives the story a modern expression and underlines the extremeness, reflected especially during the parties. This second version does also contain a main theme (namely, Lana Del Rey's "Young and Beautiful") making reference to the season in which the story of the lovers' reunion takes place ("Hot summer nights mid July") and transmitting Gatsby's nostalgic and sentimental feeling. Moreover, the musical decision represents an element of the director's ideology and can be considered an intertextual aspect of his works.

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[47] Chris Godfrey, supervisor of the Visual Effects, shows in a short "before and after" video how certain shots were filmed and, afterwards, edited with the computer. Video available from: http://vimeo.com/68451324.

Before releasing *TGG13*, Luhrmann had already reached a high level of prominence through the adaptation of *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and the musical drama *Moulin Rouge!* (2001). Taking these movies into consideration, we can detect a number of aspects that are similar, leading us to the conclusion that the director might have fallen back upon his own aesthetics and ideas to recreate *The Great Gatsby*. The already mentioned choice of pop songs to set the historical background to music is also a trademark of the previous films: in *Romeo + Juliet*, the soundtrack consists exclusively of modern pop songs that, together with the current setting of the story, break with the classic speech of Shakespeare's play; in *Moulin Rouge!*, known pop songs are, in fact, adapted to the film's musical style and performed by the actors. The quick sequence of shots is another element that is characteristic of the three movies, setting in advance the rhythm and variety of the events. To this we can add the decision to create different temporal narrative levels and to summarize the period of the Roaring Twenties at the beginning of the film, consisting of short and rapidly changing clips, which is also the case for *Moulin Rouge!* and, interestingly enough, takes up the same idea Elliott Nugent had for his version in 1949. Furthermore, all movies are characterized by the loud colors – whether in costumes, scenery or props – and the "muddled" and varied style, provoking the feeling of excess and extremeness. Although Luhrmann's filmography limits itself to three representative works up to now, his handwriting is undoubtedly better identifiable than Clayton's. The similarities underline and reinforce Stam's approach of intertextuality and show that, if these kinds of references can be recognized in a specific work, it is an essential criterion to bear in mind, explaining why the director made certain choices and speaking well for his personal aesthetics and film style.

Last but not least, the poster to advertise the movie (see appendix 2) is also relevant since it confirms the conclusion drawn from the previous chapters. It represents Gatsby in the center of the image[48]; the characters of Jordan and Nick as well as Tom and Myrtle to his left and right, moved to the background; and Daisy below them, with her elbows resting on the poster's frame and looking to her left. The golden border does not only determine the opening credits but can also be found in the movie, e.g. as the organ at Gatsby's place. Therefore, we deal here with a recurring pattern we will identify with Gatsby, his wealth and the hedonistic lifestyle and, what is more, it also

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[48] In the background, we also see the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, an advertisement in the valley of ashes to which the movie constantly refers. Wilson, for instance, connects it to God's omnipresence and justice.

determines the focus of the movie: instead of exclusively promoting the romance of Gatsby and Daisy – even though both actors can be recognized as the main couple of the story – it rather points to the story with the involvement of various characters and the mystery about the eponymous hero. Additionally, and in comparison with the advertisement of *TGG74*, the black background color and the look on the characters' faces allude to a dark and dangerous side of the events and a possible bad ending.

Taking into consideration the different aspects mentioned in this section, it becomes clear that the filmmakers' choices, whether with regard to the content or the way they represented it, are linked to a number of external or internal influences. These concrete decisions create a thread, that is, the focus of the movie is perceivable on different levels – the narration, the representation of the historical background and the context of the movie –, which, naturally enough, reinforces the notion of personal interpretation of the source text.

Conclusion

The present work had the objective of proving that a new version of an already adapted literary work, despite the polemics about an overly modern approach, can successfully recreate the original source and outgrow the prejudices. Furthermore, it aimed at demonstrating that, in order to evaluate the result, a closer and wider look at the process is fundamental. For this purpose, the study drew a comparison between the 1974 and 2013 adaptations of F. Scott Fitzgerald classic novel *The Great Gatsby*, directed respectively by Jack Clayton and Baz Luhrmann, and analyzed specific aspects which are usually drown out or neglected by the critics, even though they play a crucial role when examining an adaptation. From the analysis of the narrative scaffolding, the historical background and the movies' context arose the conclusion that, whereas Clayton's version reduces the story to just one aspect and offers the audience a mere romance, Luhrmann preserves Fitzgerald's variety of aspects and the criticism about the drawbacks of the 1920's in equal shares.

The question whether the newest adaptation is better or worse than the former is obviously subject to a personal judgment and will result in an individual definition of

what is "good" and "bad". Nonetheless, by comparing the representation of the selected aspects, adjusted to this specific source text, and considering the movies as a net of the particular decisions the directors made, the main thesis can be confirmed with the help of two key considerations. Firstly, it is, in fact, the new and contrasting version that takes up and recreates the depth of the literary work which in the 1974 "traditional" adaptation gets lost in favor of the romantic focus. Although each filmmaker has his own interpretation of the original and a depiction of it on the screen – which would explain the shift of importance or the use of special effects and techniques, among other things – it has to be admitted that Luhrmann's version reflects the novel's insights and recreates a *classic* in a personal way, while Clayton reduces it to one more of the innumerable love stories Hollywood produces, attracting a mostly female spectatorship. Secondly, only a variety of factors can do justice to the analysis of an adaptation, moving away from the sole notion of fidelity to the original towards the faithfulness of own cinematic choices. After all, in spite of the fact that he was criticized for his modern interpretation, Luhrmann does succeed to reveal the author's message, and it is especially his own stylistic repertoire – hence, the combination of old and new elements – that best expresses Fitzgerald's position on the historical threshold and his critical eye on the change of ages without setting aside the need for entertainment Hollywood nowadays requires.

It would be interesting to broaden the analysis and to examine those aspects that have been set aside because of the present work's limited scale, for example the representation of the characters or other contextual factors such as the advertising strategies. Additionally, by including an analysis of the selected aspects in the 1949 and 2000 film adaptations and Stam's notion of intertextual dialogism, more influences on the directors' choices could be revealed.

Further research on new film versions of a source text might apply a multi-faceted view: supporting different evaluation strategies for exposing concrete choices and recognizing that a punctilious faithfulness is in contravention of creativity. In the field of film adaptation studies, this way has already been paved by a great number of post-millenial scholars and their contribution of new approaches which, in the future, should be pursued and extended.

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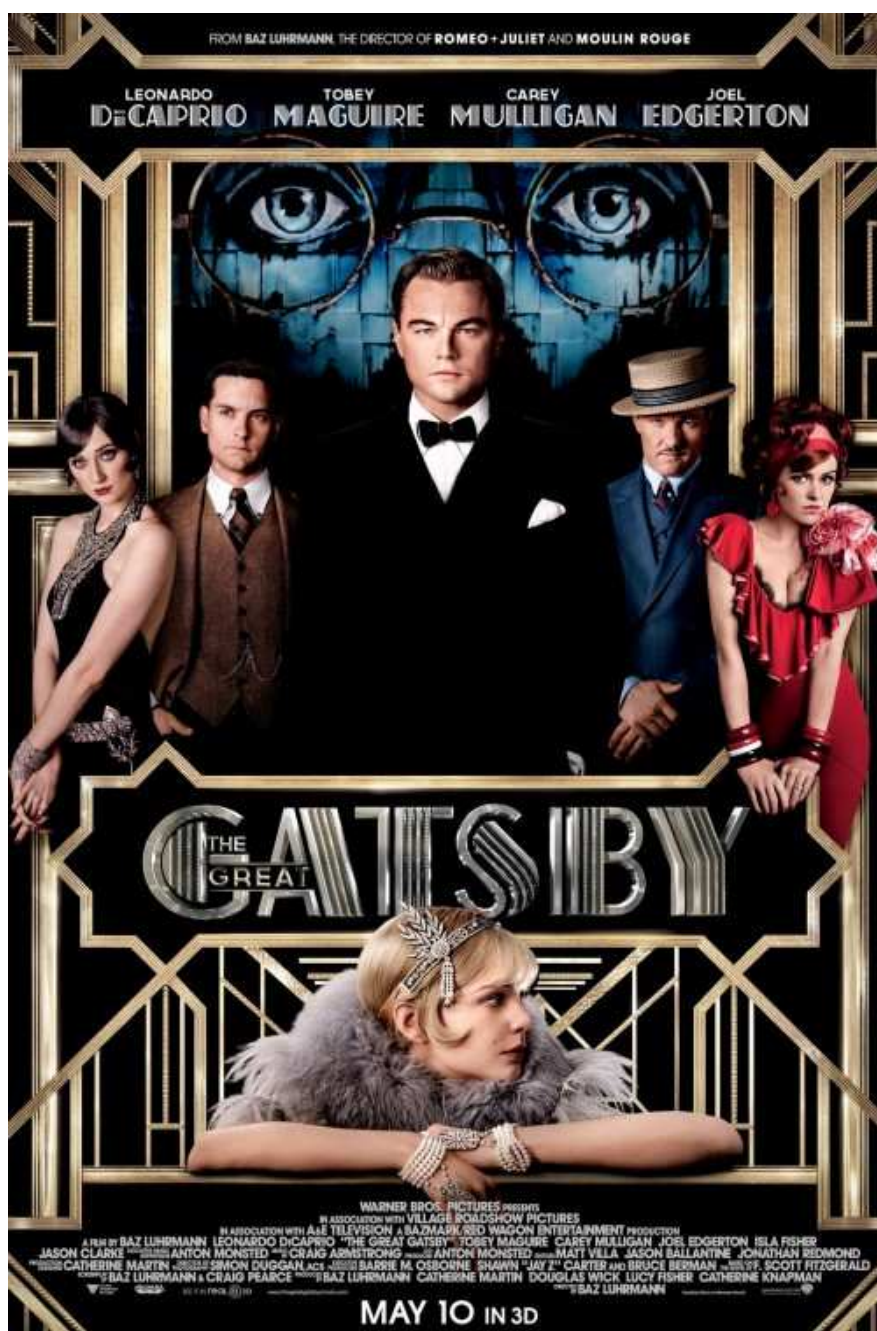
"Young and Beautiful". Performed by Lana Del Rey and written by Lana Del Rey and Rick Nowels. On *The Great Gatsby* [2013 CD Soundtrack]. Interscope Records.

APPENDIX 1: FILM POSTER OF *THE GREAT GATSBY* (1974)[49]

APPENDIX 1: FILM POSTER OF *THE GREAT GATSBY* (2013)[50]

APPENDIX 3: FILM CREDITS OF *THE GREAT GATSBY* (1974)[51]

Directed by	Jack Clayton.
Written by	Francis Ford Coppola. Based on the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
Cast	Robert Redford, Mia Farrow, Sam Waterston, Bruce Dern, Karen Black.
Costume Designer	Theoni V. Alredge.
Music by	Nelson Riddle.
Editing by	Tom Priestley.
Distributed by	Paramount Pictures.
Release Date:	March 29, 1974 (USA).
Produced by	David Merrick.
Running Time	144 min.
Country	USA.
Language	English.

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[51] Information retrieved from IMDb: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071577/?ref_=sr_2 and http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071577/fullcredits?ref_=tt_ql_1.

APPENDIX 4: FILM CREDITS OF *THE GREAT GATSBY* (2013)[52]

Directed by	Baz Luhrmann.
Written by	Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce. Based on the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
Cast	Leonardo Di Caprio, Carey Mulligan, Tobey Maguire, Joel, Edgerton, Isla Fisher.
Costume Designer	Catherine Martin.
Music by	Craig Armstrong.
Editing by	Jason Ballantine, Jonathan Redmond and Matt Villa.
Distributed by	Warner Brothers.
Release Date:	May 10, 2013.
Produced by	Lucy Fisher, Catherine Knapman, Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin.
Running Time	143 min.
Country	Australia, USA.
Language	English.

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[52] Information retrieved from IMDb: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1343092/?ref_=sr_1 and http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1343092/fullcredits?ref_=tt_ql_1.